

Mayflower Education Gazette

Volume I Issue 2

February 2015

Please share this with your local education committee members. We plan two or three (or maybe more) newsletters a year with helpful hints for displays for your meetings, sewing hints and patterns for making outfits, informative articles and whatever else you request.

It is important to focus on multigenerational presentations. Our members all appreciate reminders of forgotten facts as well as new lore. Your input, suggestions and constructive critiques are always welcomed.

In this issue we are presenting our second clothing pattern(s) as well as suggesting a fall educational theme and book discussion material. It may take you a while to gather materials for the display so that you can adapt our recommendations to your particular geographic region while still maintaining historic integrity.

Clothing Projects The Skirt and Men's Breeches

We have decided to feature an article of clothing in each issue. This way you can have a whole outfit for the next BOA meeting or your own state meeting. There are a few commercial patterns and we are investigating them to find the easiest. Several of your clothing items can be quickly and easily made at home. We suggest buying your coif (white hair covering) and felt hat from Plimoth Plantation.

Color of fabric should be solid. Black is not advised. Jill Hall, in communicating back in 2003 said, "Natural shades are always safe; also browns, blues, sandy pinks, brick, brownish orange, olive green, almost any shade of yellow including greenish yellows." She suggests avoiding fire engine red, most purples, and pure black. Grey-purple is acceptable, according to Jill. Black was a difficult and expensive color to achieve with available dyes so was not for everyday use. All dyes were vegetable based and prone to fading, so muted shades were common. Clothes were colorful but not vibrant. Some cloth was undyed and therefore white or gray, the natural color. Stripes are acceptable, but not a print or plaid fabric.



Photo by Gretchen Darche at Plimoth Plantation

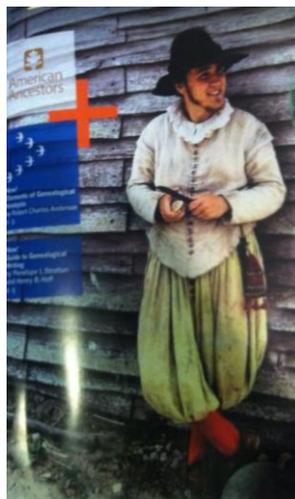
The second article of women's clothing is the skirt. The preferred material is light weight wool, but a heavy cotton such as sail cloth or similar fabric can be used. We realize that you may not want to wear wool in the warmer areas or in centrally heated facilities. You will need a piece of fabric about 40 inches wide (or whatever the bolt width is) and 2 ½ yards long and about 1 ½ yards of twill tape or bias tape for the drawstring.

Directions for a drawstring waist skirt.

1. Cut the fabric from selvage to selvage for two equal size pieces.
2. The top of the skirt is addressed by turning under ¼ inch across the top, pin and iron flat.
3. Turn this edge under two inches, pin and iron flat.
You will now use your running machine stitch along the ¼ inch pressed edge and also across the waist band along the very top edge ¼ inch in from the edge.
This makes a casing for your waist drawstring.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 on the second piece of fabric.
5. If you are hand sewing, a running stitch can be used to make the casing.
6. Pin the two pieces together along the selvage sides with material right sides facing.
7. Stitch a 5/8 inch seam leaving four inch openings from the waist down.
8. Press seams open.
9. Turn under ¼ inch along bottom edge, pin and press flat.
10. Determine length to just above your ankle. Turn the hem edge to this length, pin and press.
11. Hem stitch the hem in place.
12. Use about 1 ½ yards of twill tape or bias tape for the waist tie.
13. With a large safety pin to guide the front end, feed it through the casing of both front and back.
14. Remove safety pin and tie a knot in the end of each side of the tape to stop unraveling.
15. You now have a drawstring skirt with openings at the sides for a pocket (see a later issue).

If you would like to try a pleated waist skirt, please contact either Ellen or Mary at eswayne@comncawst.net or mbrown@ct.metrocast.net

Men's Breeches



Cover of NEHGS magazine Dec. 2014

Connecticut SMD Corresponding Secretary Donna Mangiafico has stitched an outfit for her husband Paul. She used Simplicity Pattern 4059 for the breeches and had success. Paul looks authentic in his outfit. The photos below show Connecticut SMD Treasurer David Grant's breeches that were professionally made by a reenactment tailor. The belt loops are hidden by his waistcoat and no one had seen them until we took these photos. These are not advised for a novice stitcher to attempt.



Questions about this project email us at mbrown@ct.metrocast.net or eswayne@comcast.net

Educational Meeting Display

Our featured exhibit in this issue is Corn/Maize. We developed this display to inform our members about the role of corn in the plantation. Corn was a crop central to the lives of our Pilgrim ancestors. They learned how to cultivate corn for their own food source and as a trading commodity. Tisquantum is credited with instructing the Pilgrims in planting corn seeds in hills with fish for fertilizer. He also taught them to plant beans and pumpkins as nitrogen-fixing companion crops in the same area. These three plants were called the Three Sisters.



Corn display photos by Mary Agliardo



A selection of dried Indian corn was placed to show the vivid colors of this unique vegetable. Flint corn would be more accurate to the 1600's but that is not always available. Some of the corn was removed from a cob and is shown in a receptacle awaiting grinding. A mortar and pestle is used for members to attempt grinding corn.



The freshly ground corn is sifted into the next dish to show useable corn meal. The residue in the strainer is placed in the last dish. This is known as sampe or grits. Each station of the corn display was labeled, but these do not show in the photographs.

We solicited favorite corn recipes from our members and assembled them into a cookbook. This was printed inexpensively and copies were gifted to all attendees at the meeting. This personalization of the display was enthusiastically received by all.

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Book Discussion

The Education Committee does not endorse any author's work. We seek to provide our membership with the most cogent material available. Our mission is to stretch your minds and imaginations for increased understanding and appreciation of your forebears' experiences.

The education committee suggests you read and encourage your members to read Nick Bunker's *Making Haste from Babylon* copyright 2010 Random House. Suggestions for a discussion group or your own thoughts follow.

Pages 297-301 deal with Native American agriculture. The wide range of sustenance that was gleaned from the environment of New England coastal region and attainable for the survival of the colony. This reveals the variety of foods and notes the vitality of the population who were resourceful in their harvesting the bounty. On page 339 Bunker reveals the dullness of corn and clam chowder to the English pallet and introduces the need for livestock to improve the productivity of the colony and attract more settlers.

What are your thoughts on this topic of agriculture? How do you perceive yourself being inserted in this situation? Would you thrive? What are the implications for family remaining in England? How do the types of food available compare/contrast with modern day diets and health issues? Would you be able to sustain on the Pilgrim's fare of the 1620's in New England?

Do you want to continue to have discussions on various issues of the Pilgrim settlement? Please let us know. We can only provide material of interest and value to you if we have your input. Any and all comments, criticisms and suggestions are very welcome. You can contact us at mbrown@ct.metrocast.net.

Please share this with your local education committee members. Don't have an Education Committee, please incorporate some of this information in your society or colony newsletter. We plan two or three (or maybe more) newsletters a year with helpful hints for displays for your meetings, sewing hints and patterns for making outfits, informative articles and whatever else you request.

The education committee can be reached by email at Mary Brown (CT) mbrown@ct.metrocast.net; Ellen Swayne (CT) eswayne@comcast.net; Grace Smith (MI) GraceMI@comcast.com; Joan Miller (PA) reedmiller@comcast.com; Linda White (AR) geniedar1@yahoo.com; James Battles (MD) mdmayflowergovernor@gmail.com.