THE ENGINEERING OF STAYS AND HOOPS: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AESTHETIC

Lynn Sorge
Department of Theatre/Costume Studies
Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

> Whoever has a mind to abundance of trouble,
> Let him furnish himself with a ship and a Woman,
> For no two things will find you more Employment,
> If once you begin to rig them out with all their Streamers,
> Nor are they sufficiently adorned,
> Or satisfied, that you have done enough to set them forth.
> Plaut. Poenulus. Act.1 Scen 2[1]

Although this play was written around 2000B.C., the sentiment expressed here may be timeless. This passage could easily refer to the importance of fashionable dress to the eighteenth-century woman, and to the complex nature of its many and varied components. Primary written documents, portraits, and artifacts reveal that the eighteenth-century lady was often clothed in fine attire, and undoubtedly spent much of her time with those craftsmen and trades people responsible for her overall appearance. She knew well her Stay-maker, Mantua-maker,and Milliner, for example.

The eighteenth-century female silhouette was dictated almost wholly by its underpinnings, with stays, hoops or pocket-hoops often laying the foundation for the petticoat, skirt, bodice, or gown. Worn by all classes, stays can be viewed as one of the few material links between the upper, middling, and lower sorts, representing a kind of visual language spoken by all eighteenth-century women.[2] The image of lower classes wearing hoops or pocket-hoops is not as clearly defined, however. Anne Buck has suggested that women from rural working classes might not have worn hoops,[3] but in more urban settings such as London, the opposite appears to have been true. A.W. Esq., in writing The Enormous Abomination of the Hoop-Petticoat in 1745, lamented a lack of class distinction among wearers of hoop-petticoats, saying that "those of the inferior sort, who will needs be at the top of fashion, and wear their hoops as wide as ladies of the highest quality, are contemptible things; and are accordingly, by all who have any judgement, actually despised."[4]

The silhouette of ladies' gowns changed throughout the eighteenth century, and although these changes sometimes appeared to be almost imperceptible, for the most part they were the result of either fine modifications or overt transformations in the underpinnings of ladies' clothing. Surviving examples of eighteenth-century stays and hoops are often masterpieces in engineering; many reveal their creators to have had a fine sense of proportion, and highly-developed skills as artists and crafts people. In this paper, a style evolution of eighteenth-century stays and hoops will be presented as understood through the

author's examination and documentation of artifacts in collections in England. Attention will be focused on the artistry of the pieces and on the often subtle modifications from one period to another, resulting in silhouette changes throughout the century. Documentation will be provided through presentation and analysis of the artifacts in association with paintings of the period.

One of the early English references to stays comes from Randle Holm's The Academy of Armory, written in 1688. Mr. Holm referred to the "Stayes" as being "the body of the Gown before the Sleeves are put too, or covered with the outward stuff, which have 3 pieces in it: ... the Fore Part, ... the 2 Side parts, ... the Back."[5] He described various aspects of stays construction, including the sewing of bone casings, cutting and insertion of whalebone, and the tabs over the hips which were "cut into Labells at the bottom, like long slender skirts."[6]

Holm might easily have been describing the inside of a bodice, or covered stays housed at Castle Howard, York.[7] Originating c.1700-1710, these stays are believed to have belonged to Queen Anne.[8] Covered with cloth of silver and elaborately embroidered with couched gold and rose silk thread, and spangles, the stays are lined with a fine silk which is now fractured in several places, exposing the interior of the stays. Although there are no openings through which to examine the bones, it is easy to discern that the stays are fully boned with what appears to be split cane. The two bones on either side of the eyelets at the centre back are round instead of flat, have a diameter of 1/4", and are rigid enough to be wood, possibly oak.

Several features of these stays confirm their date of origin to be early in the eighteenth century. The wide neckline and off-the-shoulder straps, high curved back, and long-waisted torso are features of early eighteenth-century stays. As will be seen, later in the century straps moved back onto the shoulder, backs became lower, and waists shortened. The bone casings have not been stitched through to the outside layer of fabric. Instead, after the boned layers had been completed, the cloth of silver was laid on top and attached to the boned under layers at the outer edges of the stays only. The tabs have been wrapped in cloth of silver, the fabric meeting and being stitched in place on the inside centre of each tab. The tabs were then covered with the lining, the raw edges turned under and slip-stitched in place at the edges of the tabs. Later in the century tabs were finished with a binding.

One of the few portraits of Queen Anne which the author has been able to locate is Queen Anne and the Knights of the Garter, painted by Peter Angelis in 1713. The gown worn by the Queen does not appear to be as off-the-shoulder as these stays would suggest, leading one to surmise that they might have been worn with more formal court dress. As Norah Waugh explained, "When the fashions changed about 1680 it was recognised that bare shoulders and a

straight fitting corsage were an excellent setting for the many jewels, heavy embroidery, rich brocades, and laces worn for full dress....In England...the very heavily boned bodice with bare shoulders seems to have been reserved for ceremonial occasions only - coronations, royal weddings, etc."[9]

It is likely that this style of stays was worn by English women throughout much of the early part of the eighteenth century, eventually being replaced by stays such as those from the Museum of London, dated c.1732-35.[10] Fully-boned, these stays have been constructed in a manner similar to those purportedly to have been worn by Queen Anne. The brocaded silk outside fabric has been laid on top of the previously-boned inner layers; the bone casings have not been stitched through to this outside layer. Cataloguing information provided by the Museum suggests the fabric, which has a red and white striped selvedge, is probably Dutch and is later than 1732.

The stays, in fairly good condition, have been lined with linen. The tabs at the sides have been wrapped with cream leather, while those at the centre front and centre back have been covered with the brocaded silk. They appear never to have been lined as the lining of the body of these stays stops at the top of the tabs. These stays also lace in the centre back, but unlike the first pair of stays examined in this paper, the side-front pieces lace over a separate stomacher. Constructed from the same brocaded silk and also lined with linen, the stomacher contains a shallow pocket at the top, and a casing down the centre front for a busk. The stomacher appears to have become contoured to the curved shape of the body, yet it contains no horizontal bones.

These stays are interesting in that unlike the first pair, they have subtle shaping in the seam between the side front and side back pieces, resulting in a form which is more closely contoured to the natural female body. By way of contrast, the pattern pieces of the Queen Anne stays fit together smoothly resembling the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, resulting in a two-dimensional garment which will lie flat on a table. Undoubtedly, the female body was moulded into the shape dictated by these stays, resulting in a cone-like silhouette. Another difference between the two pairs of stays is the angle of the straps. Those of the Museum of London stays would sit firmly on the shoulder, while the first pair would have encased the top of the arms, creating a wider neckline.

The silhouette resulting from these stays can be seen in William Hogarth's <u>The Wedding of Stephen Beckingham and Mary Cox</u> and <u>Miss Mary Edwards</u>, painted in 1729 and 1742 respectively, and in Philip Mercier's 1733 depiction of <u>Frederick, Prince of Wales and His Sisters</u>.

The Gallery of English Costume in Manchester has a lovely pair

of stays dated 1760-1780.[11] Plainly constructed from glazed wool and lined with a natural linen, their pattern pieces reveal a straighter shape than the previous Museum of London stays. The narrow bone casings have been stitched through to the outer layer of glazed wool. The seams have been covered with a narrow linen tape, much of which in now missing. The finish of the tabs is more sophisticated in that the outside fabric layer stopped at the edges of the tabs, the lining was then laid on the inside of them, and the raw edges of the entire tabs were bound with cream kid leather. The top of the stays has been finished in a similar manner, but in addition, the armhole edges have been covered with a 1 1/4" strip of leather showing on the outside, probably to protect the stays from wear. These stays have no shoulder straps, and show no signs of ever having had them.

There is evidence of a date of origin later than the previous two pairs discussed here. Although the only shaping to be found in the pattern pieces is in the slight shaping of the seams between the front/side front and back/side back pieces, the stays have a rounded form which could not have resulted only from this subtle shaping, or from wearing them. Fully-boned with 1/4" wide whalebone, the secret of their rounded shape seems to lie in a permanently-shaped, curved piece of whalebone placed horizontally across the breast area. It is also highly probable that the stays were moulded into shape with heat as they were being constructed, for Garsault, writing in his Art du Tailleur in 1769, advised stay-makers to "press the stays with a warm iron on the wrong side to make them even; the heat will warm the whalebone and give them the shape they should have."[12]

These stays have been carefully-constructed and the even stitching of the bone casings would suggest that they were created by a professional stay-maker. Compared with the first two pairs of stays, however, the fabric from which these were constructed is much plainer and more common, leading one to surmise that they may have belonged to someone from the middling ranks of eighteenth-century society. Francis Hayman's Rustic Figures Dancing, painted in the 1750's, depicts a lady who could be wearing stays such as these under her gown. Undoubtedly she would have worn her best clothes for this painting. It follows, then, that she would be wearing the best stays she is fortunate enough to own. This style could also have been worn under Mrs. Browne's gown in Thomas Gainsborough's Mr. and Mrs. Browne of Tunstall, painted in 1754-55. Mr. Browne "is thought to have been a wool merchant at Ipswich, and owned property at Tunstall, ...in Suffolk."[13] As members of the working class and land owners, this family probably occupied a place of some prominence among the middling sorts.

The following style of stays appears in relatively larger numbers in English collections. A particularly beautiful pair is to be found in the collection of the Worthing Museum and Art Gallery.[14] Dating from 1775-1785, they have been made from cream

linen, lined with a natural linen. Their construction is similar to the previous pair in that they are lined in the same way, and the tabs and top are bound with linen. The rounded front seen in the previous stays is much more pronounced in these Worthing stays, however. Only partially-boned, they have been cut with a wider front panel than the others documented in this paper, they have a few horizontal bones at the side of the breasts and at the top of the centre back panel, but they have a much wider and thicker curved whalebone placed horizontally across the breast area. Lacing partway down the centre front over a gusset, the lacing is rendered impractical by this non-removable horizontal bone, and a wide busk which has been permanently placed in the centre front.

A major change has transpired in the cut of these stays, and is to be seen in all the stays the author discovered from this period. The front panel was now cut so wide at the top that it went from side seam to side seam, but narrowed to within 1/2"-1" on either side of the centre front at the bottom of the stays. It therefore travelled almost diagonally across the body from the lowest position of the armhole to below the centre front waist. The adjoining side piece correspondingly travelled across the body in a similar manner.

The shape of the seam of the front piece was a sinuous S-curve, or "serpentine line" referred to by William Hogarth as "the line of beauty."[15] In espousing the virtues of the line of beauty, Hogarth said that "the serpentine line, by its waving and winding at the same time different ways, leads the eye in a pleasing manner along the continuity of its variety."[16] When the front curved seam of these stays was joined to the straight seam of the side piece, the result was an accentuation of the narrowness of the waist and the fullness of the breasts, thereby recreating in the garment a variation of Hogarth's line of beauty.

Hogarth illustrated this principle in Plate I of The Analysis of Beauty (figure 1), saying that the precise "line of beauty" is line number 4 as drawn in figure 49 at the top of the plate. Using stays to emphasize his point, he stated that the number 4 pair of stays in figure 53 is "composed of precise waving-lines, and is therefore the best shaped stay,"[17] in his opinion. It is interesting that although the fashionable silhouette of 1775-1785 is rounder through the bust than that espoused by Hogarth as aesthetically pleasing in 1753, the waving, serpentine lines which he considered to be beautiful were used in the creation of the pattern pieces themselves.

The front of these stays is very firm. Although there are no openings through which to see the inside, Garsault said that stays were constructed from five layers, plus bones. The first two layers were of a fabric he called "bougran", then white paper would be laid on the outside of the bougran "so that the black whalebone will not show through."[18] The stays would also have an outside

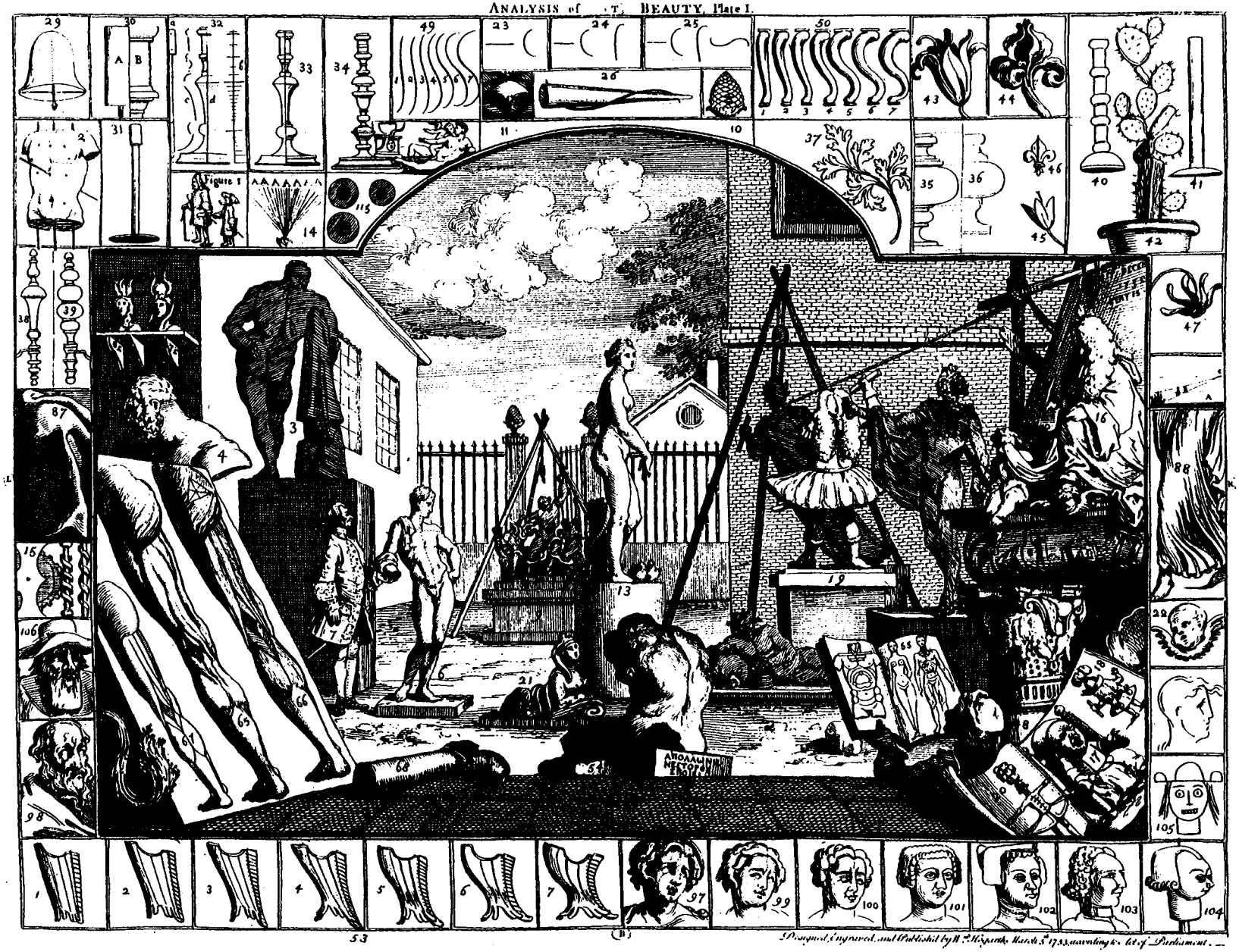


Figure 1. The Analysis of Beauty, 1753, Plate I. Engraving, British Museum, Lo[illegible]n.

layer of fabric which Garsault called "le corps piqué", and finally they would be lined. It is likely that the horizontal whalebone encompassing the breast area would have been shaped with heat before being inserted into the stays, and that the entire stays would have been 'heat-set' upon completion. It appears to be a combination, then, of cut, boning type and placement, heat, and construction techniques which have contributed to the beautifully-rounded, elegant form of these stays, a shape which is so prevalent in the portraits of the period. Of particular note are Sir Joshua Reynolds' 1787 portrait of Lady Skipwith, and The Countess of Warwick and Her Children, painted by George Romney in 1787.

The Churchill House Museum in Hereford is in possession of two pairs of stays which exemplify a progression in style from the previous highly-structured, permanently-contoured stays to those which are less heavily-boned and lighter in weight, the precursors of what might be called 'minimalist' stays worn under the neo-classical gowns at the end of the century.[19] Both pairs have been cut with a wide front panel, but the waist length has been shortened considerably. Each pair has been constructed from only two layers of fabric, plus the lining, and is more lightly-boned than the previous pair. In addition, one pair has a few horizontal bones, but they had not been contoured to the body before being inserted into the stays, allowing the stays to lie flat on a table. The second pair is devoid of horizontal bones altogether. Comparing these stays with those from other periods, it seems probable that they originated between 1785 and 1795.

Stays of this style and shape could have been worn under late eighteenth-century gowns such as those in Gainsborough's The Mall in St. James Park and A Morning Walk, painted in 1783 and 1785 respectively. Although the dates of these paintings are a few years earlier than the 1787 date of the paintings chosen to illustrate the silhouette resulting from the previous stays, because fashion appears to have changed slowly during the eighteenth century, it is likely that both styles were worn at the same time during the period of transition from one style to another.

The Chruchill House Museum has another interesting pair of stays in its collection (figures 2 and 3).[20] Constructed from only two layers of natural linen and a small number of bones, they are unusual in that they have been cut with tabs over the hips similar to the others analyzed in this paper, but they have also been cut with a gusset over the centre of each breast, a feature common to stays worn early in the nineteenth century. It appears, therefore, that these stays are 'transitional', containing elements from both centuries, and probably originating between 1795 and 1810.

Specific features of these stays forecast the evolution of style changes which occurred in stays of the nineteenth century. The side back seam, for example, curves gently into the waist and out again over the hips, shaping which is to be found in corsets of

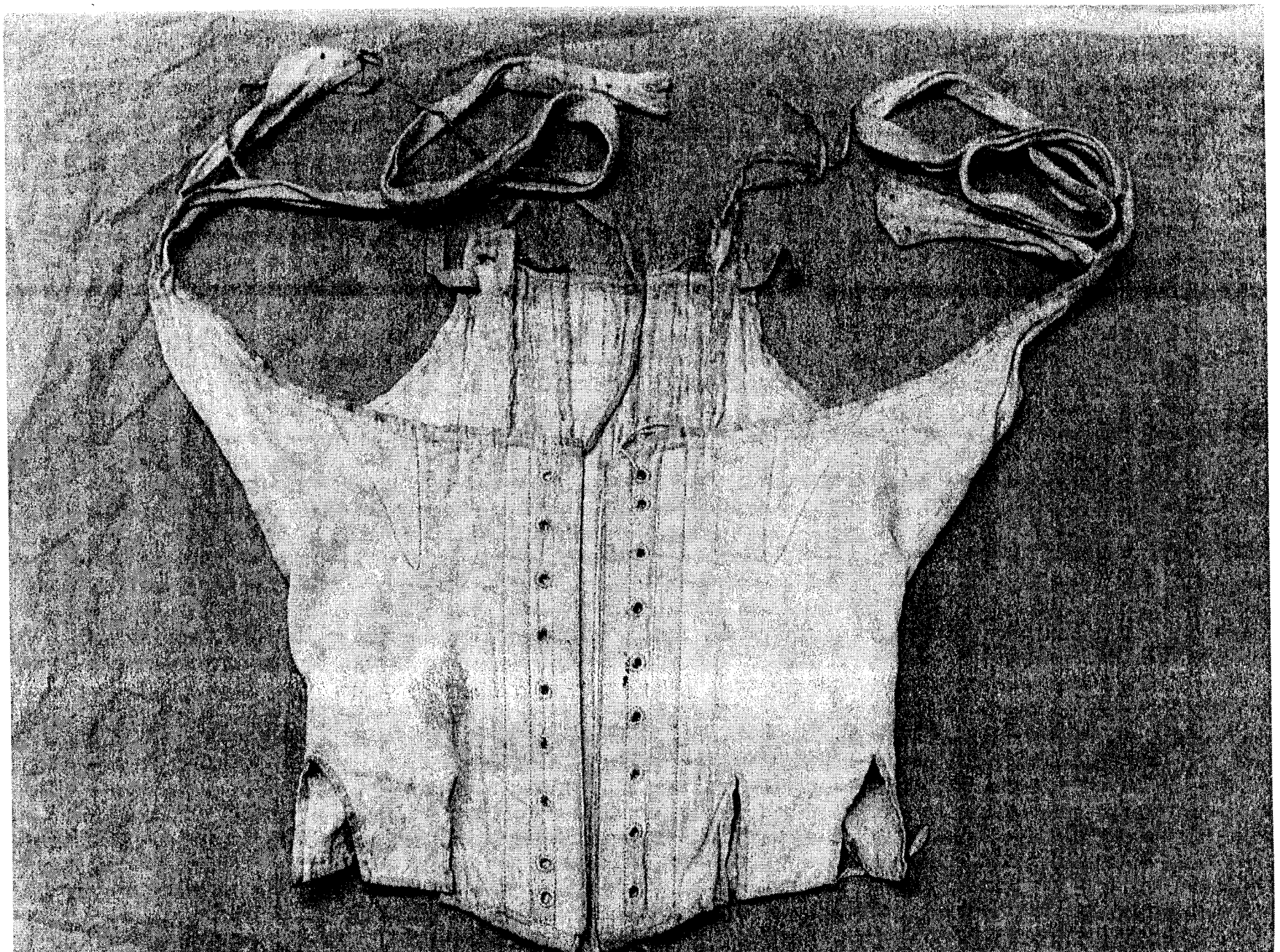


Figure 2. Stays, Churchill House Museum, accession #5637.
Photograph by aut r, with permission of museum.

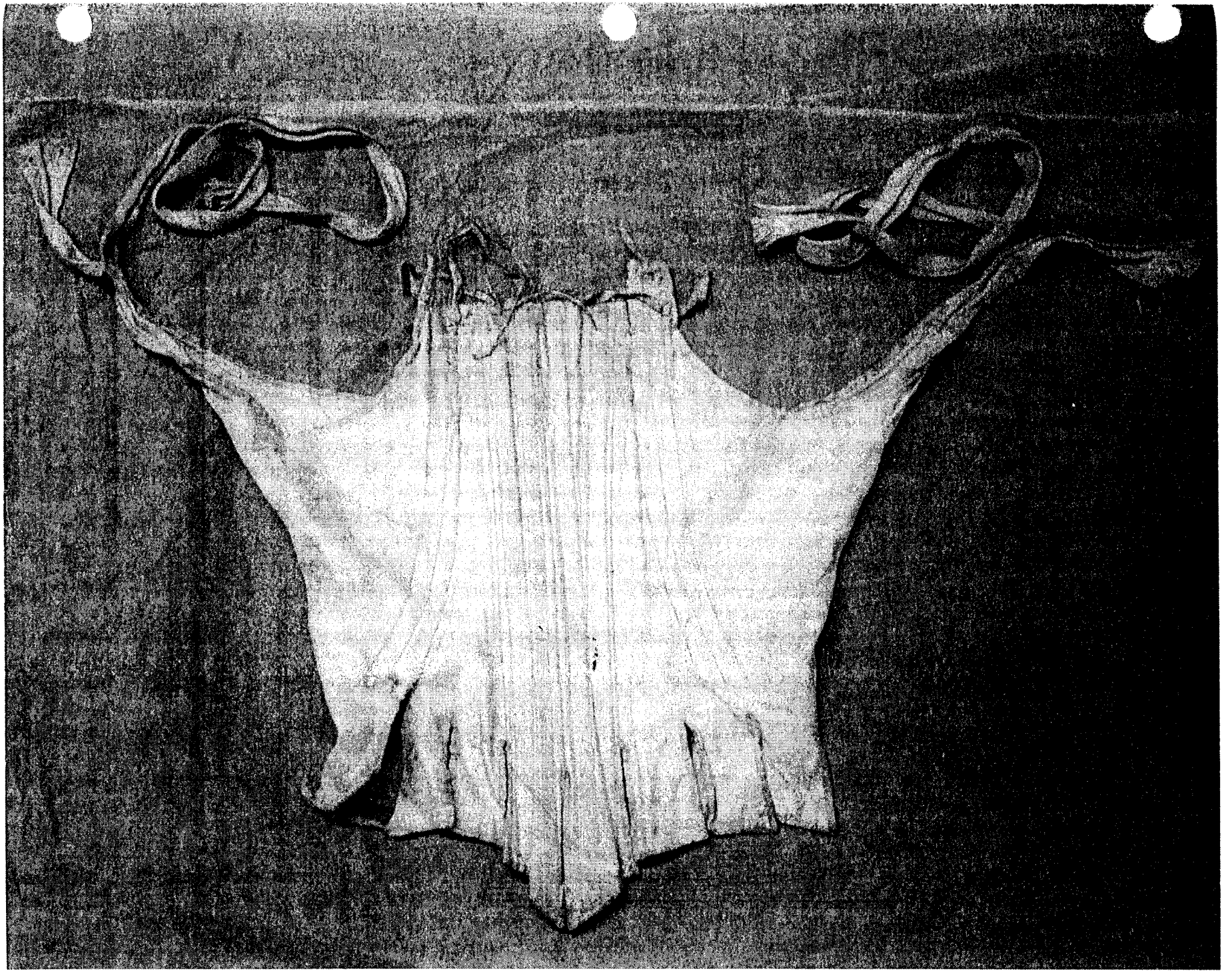
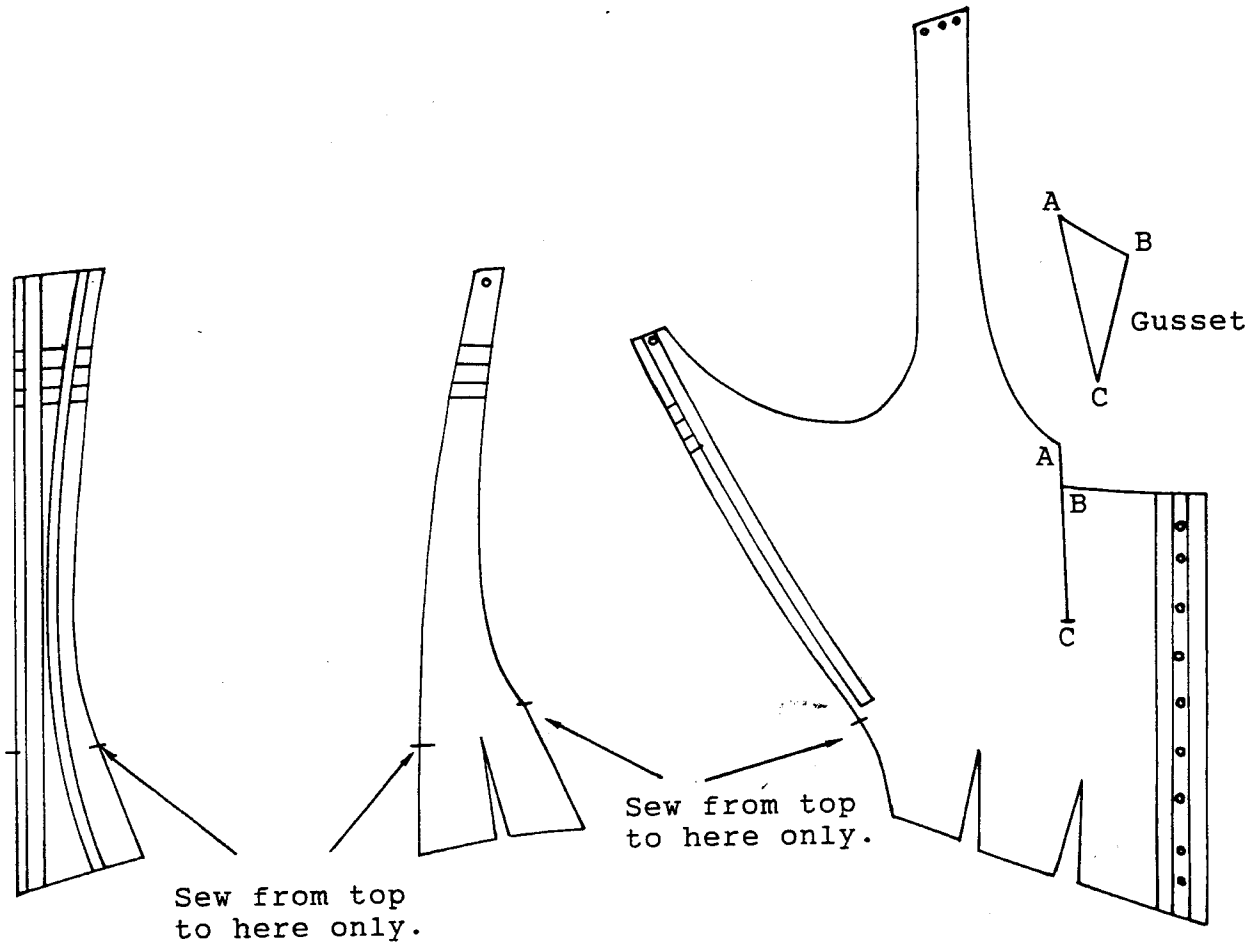


Figure 3. Stays, Churchill House Museum, accession $5637.
Photograph by author, with permission of museum.

Churchill House Museum
Hereford, England

Stays, 1795 - 1810
Accession number 5637



Stays of natural linen, with gusset inserted at top front; lined with linen as well. Top of stays has a drawstring through it.

Stays are boned only on front and back panels; casing on side of front panel has no bone in it.

Top and bottom of stays are bound with natural linen.

It appears as though these stays were altered at one time, because the front panel has been joined to the side panel 2cm above it; this seam is hand-whipped together with unevenly-spaced stitches, as though it was not meant to be permanent, possibly in preparation for a fitting. This must remain conjecture, however, without further research.

Scale: .25 = 1cm, or 1/4" = 1"

Figure 4. Pattern, accession #5637, Churchill House Museum. Pattern drawn by author, with permission of museum.

the nineteenth century (figure 4). Eighteenth-century hip tabs such as those intrinsic to this artifact eventually evolved into similarly-shaped seams curving out over the hips. The size of the individual pieces foretell the future, as well. Compared with the back panels of earlier stays, the two back panels here are relatively narrow, again resembling nineteenth century stays. The wide front section, similar to the front of the previous stays, is a holdover from the eighteenth century. The insertion of the breast gusset in these stays, however, is a precursor of the subtle shaping which eventually resulted in the hourglass corset fashionable later in the nineteenth century.

The waist length of these stays is considerably shorter than that of the earlier stays, additionally providing verification of a 1795-1810 date of origin. It would follow, then, that this pair of stays, or corset - to use the nineteenth-century term, was designed to be worn with a gown with a higher waist such as that in George Romney's 1796-1801 painting of Adam Walker and His Family.

The Churchill House Museum also has an artifact known as a 'pair of jumps' which has been created from only two layers of fabric - an outer layer of cotton piqué lined with one layer of lightweight cotton (figures 5 and 6).[21] There is no evidence that originally they were created with bones in them, even though there are a few rows of backstitching which resemble bone casings.

Constructed in a manner unlike the others analyzed in this paper, the top and bottom edges of these jumps have not been bound. Instead, the piqué and lining were placed together right sides to right sides. The top, bottom, and centre front edges were then sewn through both layers, leaving a small opening through which to turn the stays so that the wrong sides face each other.

Although these stays have not been cut with breast gussets like those in the previous artifact, a similar shape has been achieved through an acutely curved centre front. They are similar, too, in that they have hip tabs, and are at least as short-waisted, thereby dating from approximately the same time or possibly a few years later than the previous pair, 1795-1810.

It does seem possible that an artifact such as this might indeed have been a pair of stays worn under the lightweight gowns of the turn of the century, providing the minimal support required by a young, slim figure. Alternately, this artifact may also have been a pair of jumps worn when its owner was feeling poorly, or was relaxing in the privacy of her own home.

It is clear that stays styles and shapes changed more frequently during the last quarter of the eighteenth century than at any time previous to that, bespeaking volumes of what was to become the norm in the nineteenth century where it was not unusual for the fashionable silhouette to change as often as every five to

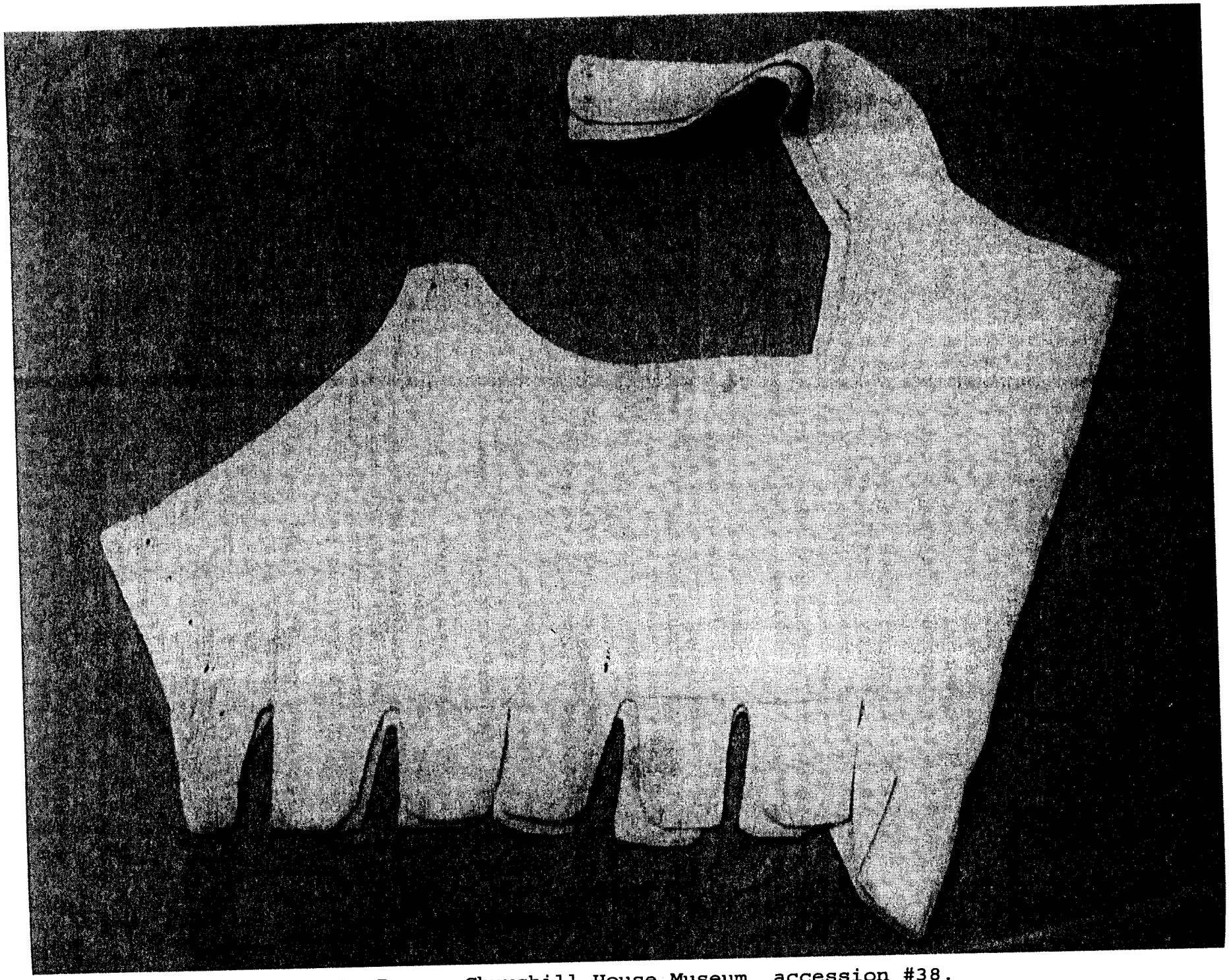
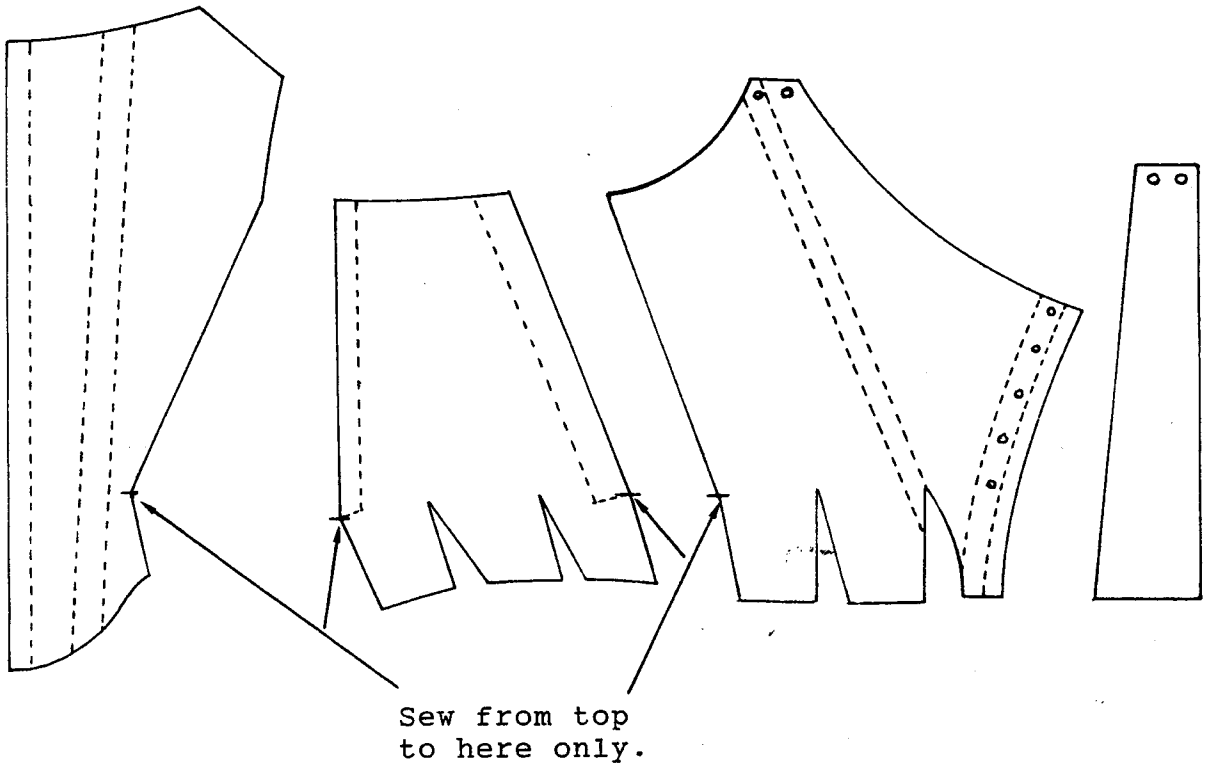


Figure 5. Jumps, Churchill House Museum, accession #38. Photograph by autho with permission of author.

Churchill House Museum
Hereford, England

Jumps, 1795 - 1810
Accession number 38



Jumps of one layer of cotton piqué, lined with white cotton.

There is no binding around the edges. Instead, the two layers were placed right sides to right sides, sewn around all the edges, and turned so that the wrong sides are facing each other. The top stitching lines are running stitches, and there are no bones between them.

Strap is attached to the back, and laced to the front.

Scale: .25 cm = 1cm, or 1/4" = 1"

Figure 6. Pattern, accession #38, Churchill House Museum.
Pattern drawn by author, with permission of museum.

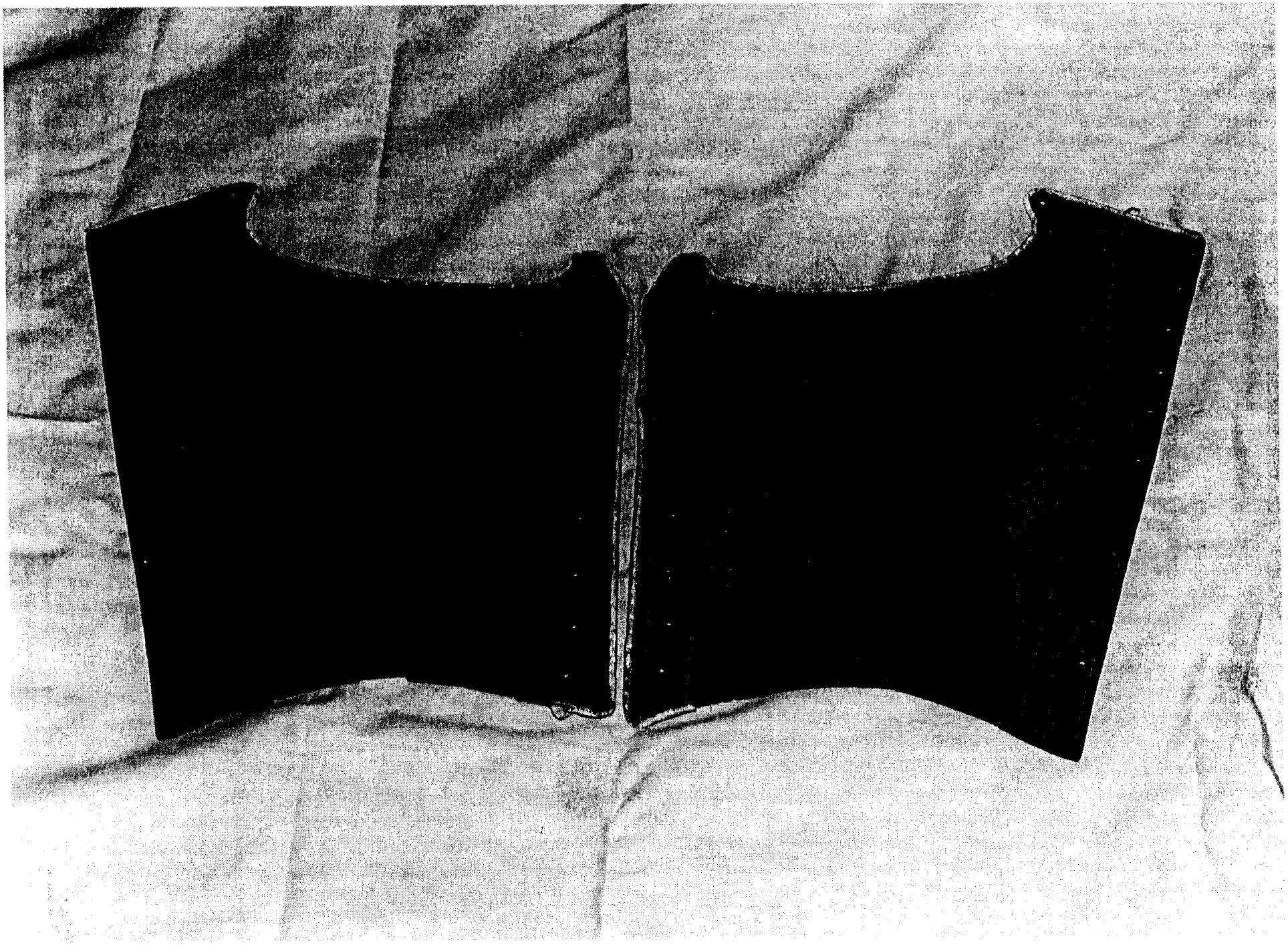
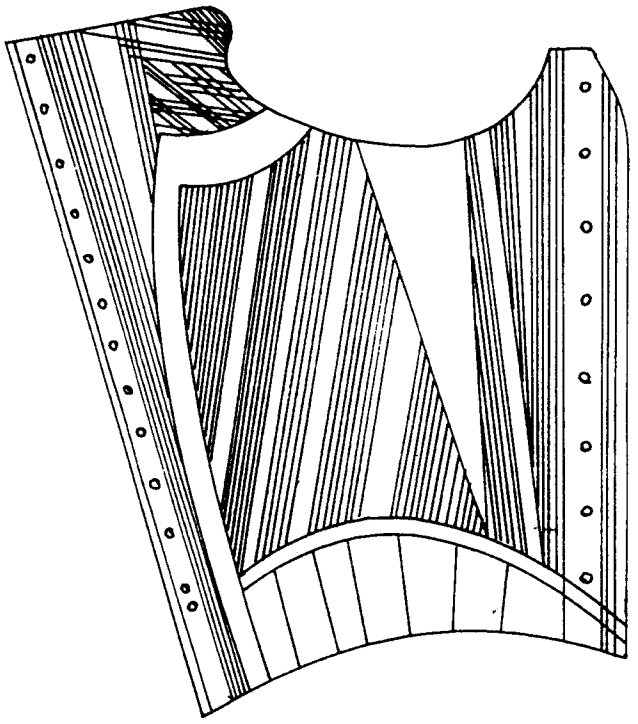


Figure 7. Leather stays, Worthing Museum and Art Gallery, accession #1976/444 Photograph provided by museum.

Worthing Musuem and Art Gallery

Leather Stays
Accession number 1976/444



Brown leather stays, unlined, and containing no bones.
Lines on pattern show scoring with a cutting tool, and are not evenly spaced.
Top edge, armhole, centre front, and small portion of bottom front are bound with cream leather.
These stays show no signs of ever having been worn.
The proper left back has "Lot 136" written on the outside.

Scale: .25cm = 1cm, or 1/4" = 1"

Figure 8. Pattern, accession #1976/444, Worthing Museum and Art Gallery. Pattern drawn by author, with permission of museum.

ten years.

Stays for infants and children, and those used for orthopaedic purposes could be discussed in this paper, but space limitations make this not possible. Although falling outside the chronological context of this paper, a pair of leather stays in the collection of The Worthing Museum and Art Gallery merits mention, however (figures 7 and 8).[22] Constructed from only one layer of thick, heavy leather, these stays are unboned and unlined, but boning and seam lines have been scored in them with a sharp cutting tool. The top edge, armhole, centre front, and a small portion of the bottom front have been bound with a cream leather. Lacing in both the centre front and centre back, the stays show no obvious signs of wear, and may not have been worn at all.

Examination of these stays brings several questions to mind. What appears to be the armhole spans from the back armhole to close to the centre front. If this is the case, the armhole curve would rest under the breasts. The bust of the stays measures 24", and the waist measure is 20". It seems likely, therefore, that the fronts laced across a stomacher, now missing.

Written in ink on the outside of the proper left centre back, among the eyelets, are the words "Lot 136." Was this an identifying symbol written there by the stay-maker, or was it part of a "lot" to be auctioned, and if so, when? Ink analysis would provide clues.

P. and R.A. Mactaggart have documented a pair of leather stays which, at first glance, appear to be identical to the Worthing stays.[23] Upon closer examination, however, subtle differences in the scoring design can be discerned between the two pairs, but the dissimilarities are so slight that it is entirely possible that both pairs have come from the same 'lot'. Not having seen the Mactaggart-documented stays personally, and being able to view them only in the Strata of Society conference proceedings journal, makes it impossible to decipher whether or not they have an identification mark similar to "Lot 136" found on the Worthing stays.

The Mactaggarts have suggested that leather stays "were used extensively, and were probably produced widely," but have stated that only at Diss were they able to find "any surviving record of their being made."[24] The Universal British Directory of 1791 mentioned "the making of stays" in the general description of Diss, and the names of three Stay-makers were listed, but the term 'leather' was not mentioned at all.[25] The origin of these stays remains a mystery, but the discovery of two pairs which are almost identical is indeed exhilarating, and suggests the possibility of stays such as these having been mass-produced for the ready-made clothing trade.[26]

The author of The Enormous Abomination of the Hoop Petticoat

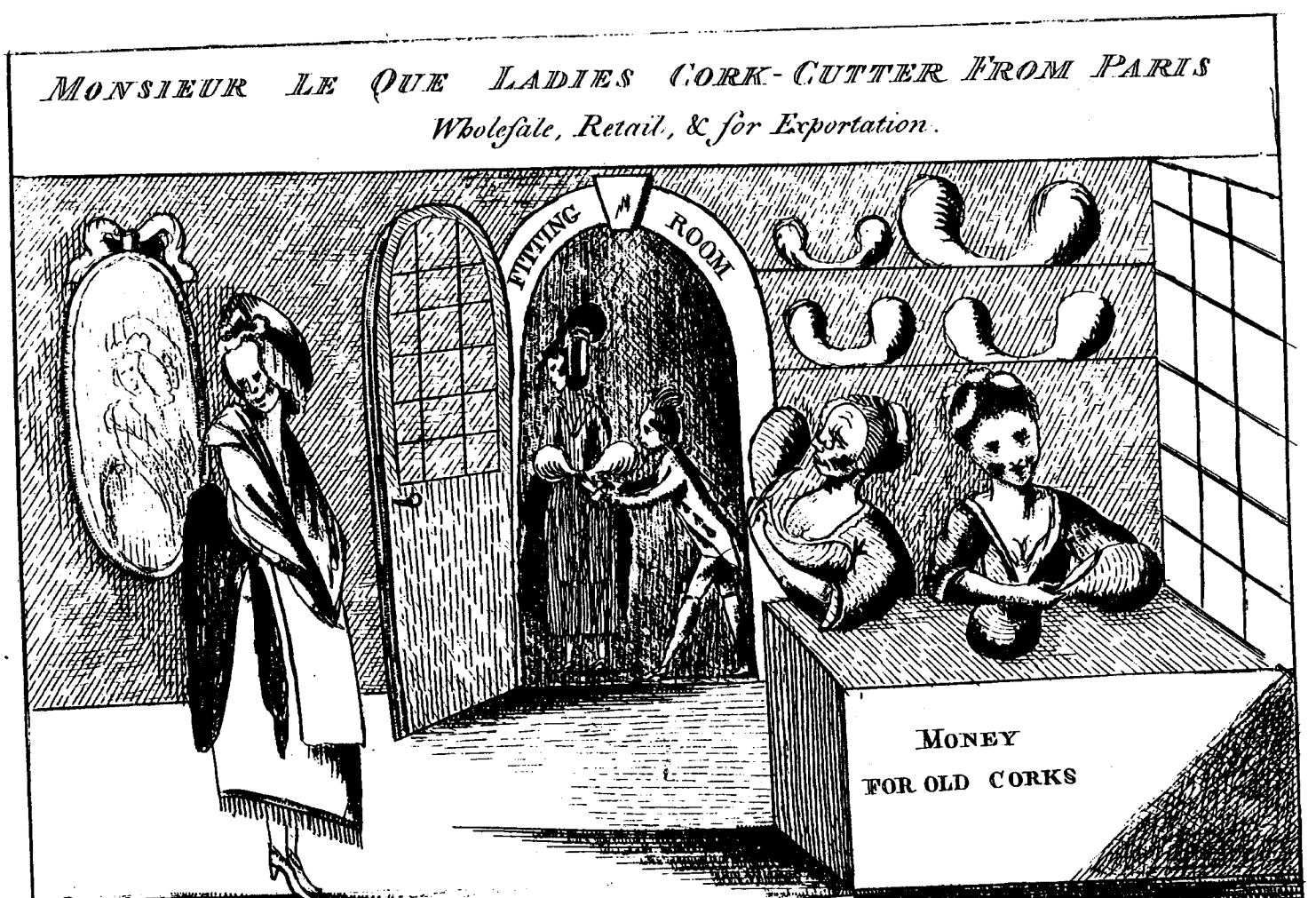
has said that the hoop made its appearance in England "in, or about, the Year 1709," but it was not seen in France until around 1718.[27] Worn by all ranks of society in one form or another until well into the second half of the eighteenth century, its virtues were hotly debated. Ladies' diaries provided an outlet for moralists to record their views, and could be purchased already containing verses and aphorisms on various subjects. The following excerpt from The Ladies Diary of 1753 is indicative of the moral tenets of one segment of society:

> I dwell upon the rural Plain,
> Where Innocence and Freedom reign;
> I never with the Belles resort,
> Nor ever wish'd to see the Court.
> To touch the Mode I ne'er was bred,
> To flirt a Fan, or Pin my Head
> No Joseph wear to shew my Shape,
> No Hat and Wig the Men to Ape;
> No Hoop or Cane sets off my Cloths,
> I want not to allure the Beaux.
> You are a very good girl, Miss![28]

On the other hand, certain segments of society were delighted with the hoop. R. Campbell, for example, sang its praises, saying that hoops "are Friends to Men, for they let us into all the secrets of the Ladies' Legs, which we might have been ignorant of to Eternity without their Help; they discover to us indeed a sample of what we want to purchase, yet serve as a Fence to keep us at an awful Distance."[29] Undoubtedly, Mr. Campbell was expressing the views of many of his male counterparts.

The evolution of changing shapes of eighteenth-century hoops or pocket-hoops can easily be traced through examination of paintings of the period. The author of The Enormous Abomination of the Hoop Petticoat stated that the round hoop first made its appearance in England "in, or about, the Year 1709," and was worn until 1743 when it became flattened in the front and back, extending out over the hips at the sides.[30] A Conversation in the Park by Philip Mercier, 1720-25, The Wedding of Stephen Beckingham and Mary Cox by William Hogarth, 1729-30, The Jones Family by Hogarth, 1730-31, and William Atherton and his Wife, Lucy, of Preston, Lancashire by Arthur Devis, 1742, show the round hoop being worn. Paintings from the mid-1740's through the early years of the 1750's show the side hoop being worn under the gowns of this period. Thomas Gainsborough's The Gravenor Family painted 1747-50, and his Conversation in a Park, c. 1750, in addition to A Family Group on a Terrace in Garden by Arthur Devis, 1749, clearly portray this style of hoop.

The side hoop in various sizes was worn with formal dress by the aristocracy until around 1775, but remained in use for Court dress until it was abolished by King George IV in the 1830's.[31]



39720

Figure 9. Monsieur Le Que Ladies Cork-Cutter From Paris, 1777. Engraving, British Museum, London.

Pocket-hoops replaced side hoops for less formal dress until 1775-1780, when they were replaced by bum rolls as suggested by the engraving Monsieur Le Que Ladies Cork-Cutter From Paris, dated 1777 (figure 9). In Mary, Countess Howe, painted in 1760, Gainsborough's subject does not appear to be wearing a side hoop. The soft folds of her silk gown probably rest on top of two simple pocket-hoops.

Research in England uncovered no round hoops, and only one set of pocket-hoops. There were several side hoops warranting close examination, however, of which examples will be given here. The Gallery of English Costume and the Laing Art Gallery have side-hoops in their collections which are similar to each other in cut and construction.[32] Each has quilted, padded sections over the hips, and while the Laing hoop has been cut in more sections than the Gallery of English Costume hoop, both have similarly-shaped pattern pieces, and ties on the middle and bottom rows of cane to help maintain their elliptical shape. They have been assigned different dates of origin by their respective museums. The Laing Art Gallery hoop has been dated 1740-50, while the Gallery of English Costume hoop is dated c. 1770. The latter hoop, purchased along with the gown and petticoat with which it was worn, has a well-documented provenance. The Laing Gallery knows little about its artifact. It is entirely possible that it did originate during the 1740's, however, from a time shortly after the transition from round to side hoops.

Two small hoops, each containing single rows of cane, from the Hereford and Worcester County Museum and the Gallery of English Costume are possibly a simpler version of the previous hoops.[33] While each has been created using different-shaped pattern pieces, both of them extend out over the hips, and are fairly flat in the front and back. The Gallery of English Costume hoop is broader at the sides, however, and is more complex in its pattern design. It is possible that it may have been created for someone from a wealthier class.

In the short span of a paper such as this it is possible to give only a taste of the riches which have been preserved in the collections of museums and art galleries, and to present only examples of the chronological development of eighteenth-century underpinnings. Shining through the brevity of an analysis such as this, though, is evidence of an aesthetic which was pleasing not only to the woman of the eighteenth century, but to the modern eye, as well. It is obvious that creators of stays and hoops were artists as well as crafts people, and through their art, they created some of the most subtly beautiful shaping ever seen in garments.

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges financial support for this research from the Canada Council, the Canadian Federation of

University Women, Dalhousie University Killam Foundation and the Women's Alumni, and the Nova Scotia Department of Recreation. The author is indebted to Richard Robson, Castle Howard Costume Gallery Collection; Eve Finney, Churchill House Museum; Althea Jarvis, Miles Lambert, Gallery of English Costume; Anita Blythe, Hereford and Worcester County Museum; Caroline Imlah, Laing Art Gallery; Jill Spanner, The Museum of London; and Ann Wise, Worthing Museum and Art Gallery, for making the artifacts available for study. Thanks also to Pegaret Anthony, Madeleine Ginsburg, and Maureen Heneghan Tripp.

Endnotes

1. Quoted in: John (Mary) Evelyn, The ladies Dressing-Room Unlock'd, and her Toilette spread (London: 1690) n.p.

2. Until recently, there has been a widespread belief that those from the lower sorts did not wear stays. This misconception has largely been laid to rest through the research and writings of authors like Beverly Lemire who has documented the sale of ready-made and second-hand clothing, including stays, in Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 194. It is unlikely that the upper classes would have purchased clothing from these markets, but highly probable that those from the middling and lower sorts could have procured their stays in this way. In addition, P. and R.A. Mactaggart have stated that "stays were worn by the poorest class of all - those on parish relief." P. and R.A. Mactaggart, "Some Aspects of the Use of Non-Fashionable Stays," Strata of Society (Norwich, 1973): 20.

3. Anne Buck, Dress in Eighteenth-Century England (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 121. In giving detailed descriptions of dress of all classes in England, Buck stated that farming women "wore stays to give the fashionable shape, but not hoops."

4. A.W. Esq., The Enormous Abomination of the Hoop-Petticoat, as the Fashion Now is, And has been for about these Two Years (London: 1745), 24.

5. Randle Holm, The Academy of Armory (Chester, 1688), 94.

6. Holm, 94.

7. Castle Howard Costume Gallery Collection, York, accession # 2296.

8. This information has been provided by Richard Robson, Curator of the Castle Howard Costume Collection, who emphasized that it has yet to be substantiated, however.

9. Norah Waugh, Corsets and Crinolines (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1954), 37.

10. The Museum of London, accession #49.77/7.

11. Gallery of English Costume, Manchester, accession #1970.202.

12. Francois Alexandre de Garsault, Art du Tailleur (Paris: 1769), 42.

13. Gervase Jackson-Stops, ed., The Treasure Houses of Britain (Washington: National Art Gallery, 1985), 395.

14. Worthing Museum and Art Gallery, Worthing, accession #57/200.

15. Joseph Burke, ed., The Analysis of Beauty by William Hogarth, 1753 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 55.

16. Burke, 55.

17. Burke, 65.

18. Garsault, 44.

19. Churchill House Museum, Hereford, accession #1621 and #2611.

20. Churchill House Museum, Hereford, accession #5637.

21. Churchill House Museum, Hereford, accession #38. The term "jumps" is somewhat confusing. It appears that different museums ascribe this term to different garments. Churchill House Museum has called the artifact being discussed here "a pair of jumps", for example, but another British museum has called a quilted waistcoat a "pair of jumps." In "A Georgian Lady's Personal Accounts," Costume 25,(1991): 23, author Melina Godman has pointed out that while "the young lady paid 13s. for a pair of Canvas Jumps (a loose unboned bodice worn instead of stays) ... it only cost 6s. to have two dresses made." The relatively high cost of these jumps allows for the possibility that they bore a closer resemblance to the quilted waistcoat than to the Churchill House Museum jumps.

22. Worthing Museum and Art Gallery, Worthing, accession #1976/444.

23. Mactaggart, 26. The stays documented by the Mactaggarts are in the collection of the Hampshire County Museum Service.

24. Mactaggart, 28.

25. The Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce, and Manufacture, 4 vols. (London, 1791) vol.2, 829.

26. For more information on the ready-made clothing trade in the eighteenth century, in addition to Lemire's Fashion's Favourite, see also B. Lemire, "Popular Fashion and the Ready-made Clothes Trade, 1750-1800," Textile History 15 (1984).

27. Enormous, 6.

28. The Ladies Diary (London, 1753), 27.

29. R. Campbell, The London Tradesman, 2nd ed. (London: 1757), 212.

30. Enormous, 6.

31. Millia Davenport, The Book of Costume, 2 vols. (New York: Crown Publishers, 1948), 655.

32. Gallery of English Costume, Manchester, accession #1953.71; Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, accession #G-1086.

33. Hereford and Worcester County Museum, Hartlebury, accession #1980-47; Gallery of English Costume, Manchester, accession #1953.431.