

# Textile Storage and Display

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## About Me

- ▶ Master's Degree in Material Culture and Textile Studies with a focus on the Care and Display of Historic Textiles
- ▶ 10 years of museum experience
- ▶ Current Exhibits and Education Curator at Pioneer Village
- ▶ I have sewn since second grade
- ▶ For the past 10 years I have worked on reproducing historical garments and understanding their weak points.

# To glove or not to glove?

- ▶ Generally, it is not recommended to wear gloves while handling textiles.
  - ▶ Why? Gloves limit dexterity and our ability to control pressure.
- ▶ What should I do instead?
  - ▶ Well-washed hands, free of lotion and jewelry, are best unless the textile can harm you. Recommend rewashing hands every hour or when transferring between textiles.
- ▶ When should I wear gloves?
  - ▶ Well-fitting Nitrile gloves are recommended when the item you are handling poses a health risk. (Such as arsenic green dyed fabric)
  - ▶ Cotton gloves can be used, but you have less dexterity and touch sensitivity than with nitrile gloves.



## Should it be in the window?

- ▶ NO!
- ▶ Please refrain from placing textiles in direct sunlight. Light is one of the most damaging agents of deterioration and can bleach and disintegrate your textiles.
- ▶ Be mindful of textiles under direct artificial light, especially incandescent and fluorescent bulbs.
- ▶ The most damage comes from Ultraviolet (UV) and Infrared Radiation (IR)

## Should it be in direct contact with wood?

- ▶ NO!
- ▶ Please refrain from placing textiles in direct contact with wood. Wood is acidic and can transfer acid to textiles and other artifacts.
- ▶ **Consider using a barrier such as mylar or Ethafoam between any artifacts on wooden surfaces.**

# Textile Storage and Display- Quilts

## ▶ Folding

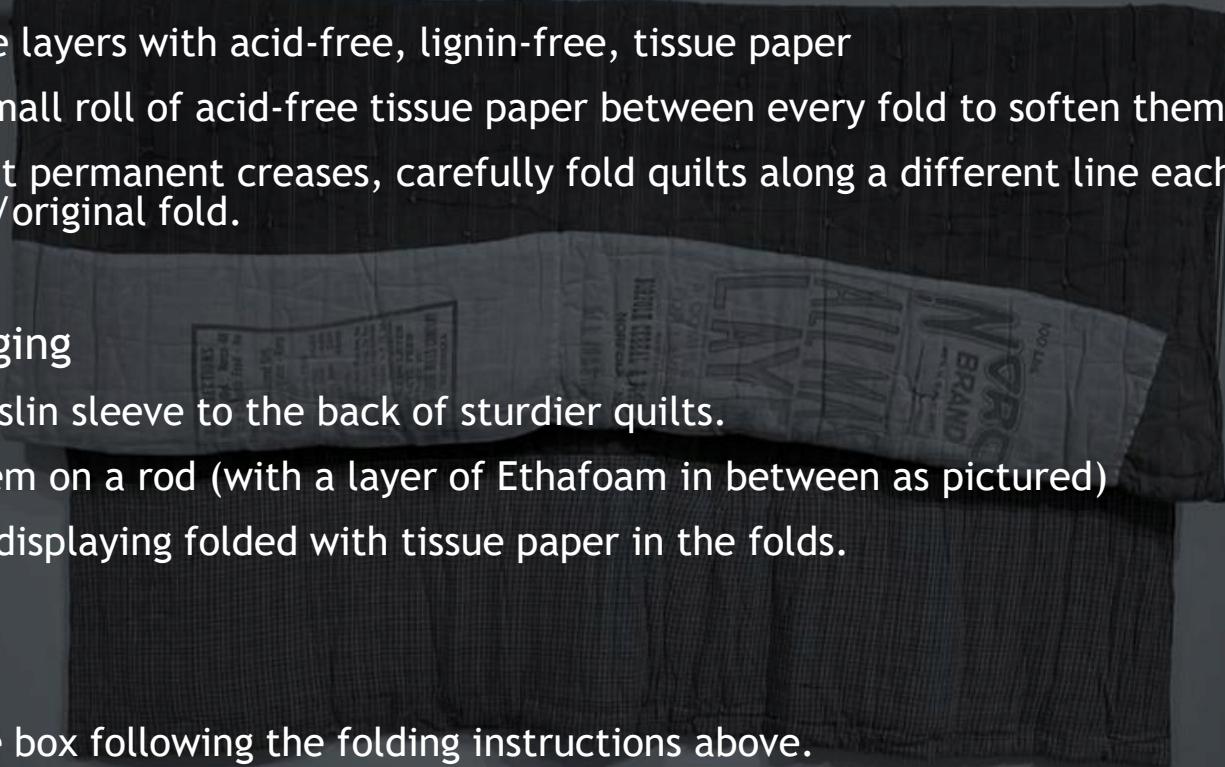
- ▶ Interleave layers with acid-free, lignin-free, tissue paper
- ▶ Place a small roll of acid-free tissue paper between every fold to soften them.
- ▶ To prevent permanent creases, carefully fold quilts along a different line each time. Not along the same/original fold.

## ▶ Display/Hanging

- ▶ Sew a muslin sleeve to the back of sturdier quilts.
- ▶ Drape them on a rod (with a layer of Ethafoam in between as pictured)
- ▶ Consider displaying folded with tissue paper in the folds.

## ▶ Storage

- ▶ Acid-free box following the folding instructions above.
- ▶ Rolled around an acid-free tube (I would still roll tissue paper between the layers and cover the outside of the roll with something like Tyvek to protect it from light and dust in storage.)



# Textile Storage- Clothing

- ▶ Hanging: padded hangers
- ▶ Acid-free, lignin-free Archival Boxes
  - ▶ Always place a layer of acid-free tissue paper between the textiles and the box. Add tissue paper between folds, garments, and in areas needing support, such as sleeves.
- ▶ Acid-free, lignin-free tissue paper
  - ▶ Buffered: Includes alkaline additives to neutralize acid.
    - ▶ Best for plant based fibers such as linen and cotton
    - ▶ Can cause damage to protein-based textiles such as wool, silk, and leather
  - ▶ Unbuffered: When in doubt, this is the way to go
- ▶ Periodically check your acid-free boxes and tissue paper for acid absorption using a pH testing pen such as the Abby pH pen.
- ▶ Temperature and humidity (Drastic fluctuations of either can cause damage)
  - ▶ Temperature range 64-68 degrees is ideal
  - ▶ Humidity: Most textiles prefer to be stored around 50% humidity



Abbey PH Pen

Not Acidic

Acidic

# Textile Display - Clothing

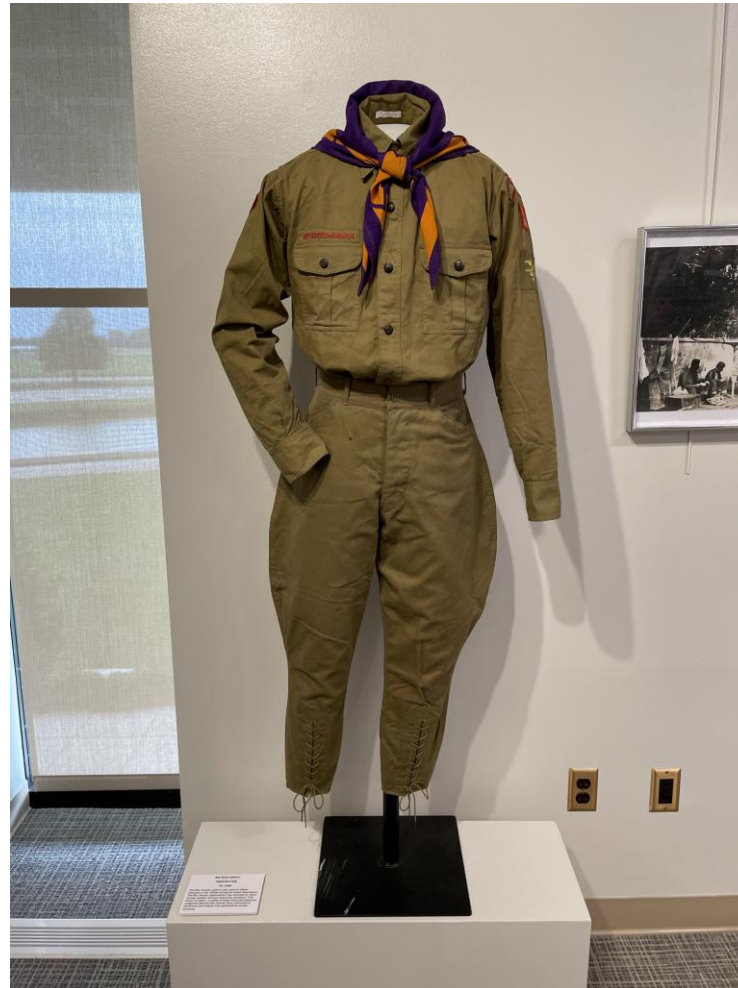
- ▶ Acid-Free, lignin-free, unbuffered Tissue Paper
- ▶ Stockinette (4-8" widths) to recover dress forms
- ▶ Ethafoam
  - ▶ My favorite Limbs! When rolled, they fit into sleeves and pant legs.
  - ▶ Use anywhere there would be a bone or corset/stays
  - ▶ Shoulder pads! A small piece folded in half can support garments and/or build out the shoulder of the form.
- ▶ Fine glass head pins (to pin sheets and Ethafoam to the form.)
- ▶ 100% cotton sheets
  - ▶ I use these to pad out dress forms to larger sizes, protect textiles from touching the floor during exhibit installation, create petticoat supports, and support fragile textiles while lifting.
  - ▶ Make sure they are washed in a mild detergent that is dye-free and not scented, such as ECOS or Orvus. You do not want detergent residue and scent transferring to your garments.
  - ▶ Please wash these every time they are used.



# Textile Display - Clothing



Before

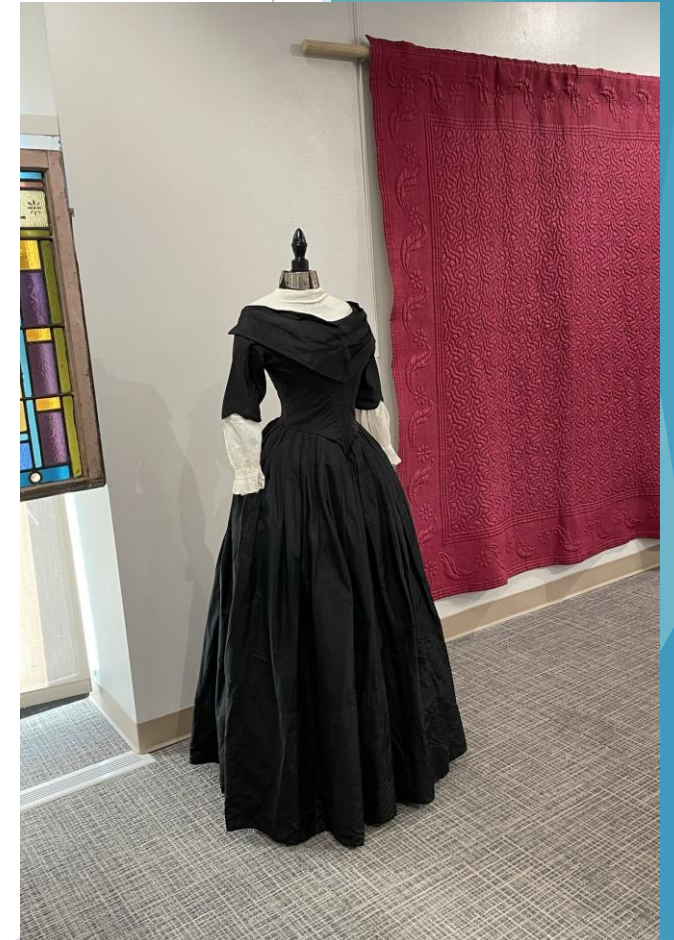


After

# Textile Display - Clothing



Before



After

# Get creative!



Before



Coat not touching the stand



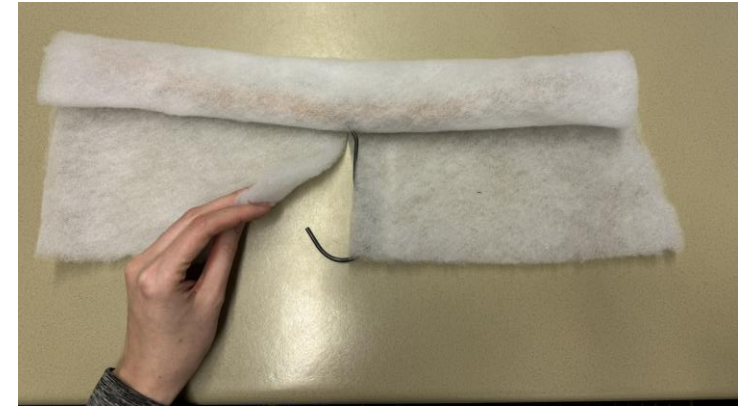
After

# Textile Display - Clothing

# Dress Forms/Mannequins

- ▶ Store Mannequins- only for short-term
  - ▶ Limitations:
    - ▶ Potentially acidic and can leach onto textiles, degrading them from the inside.
    - ▶ Not size adjustable, can strain fragile textiles if too big.
    - ▶ Not pinnable, cannot be recovered/have a barrier added
- ▶ Antique dress forms
  - ▶ Limitations:
    - ▶ Likely acidic, but can be recovered with Ethafoam and stockinette
    - ▶ Condition and structural integrity
- ▶ Carve your own Ethafoam dress forms
  - ▶ Cost effective and can be adjusted to the individual garment
  - ▶ Limitations: This requires time and training
- ▶ Specialty made archival dress forms
  - ▶ Often made from covered Ethafoam
  - ▶ Limitations: VERY expensive



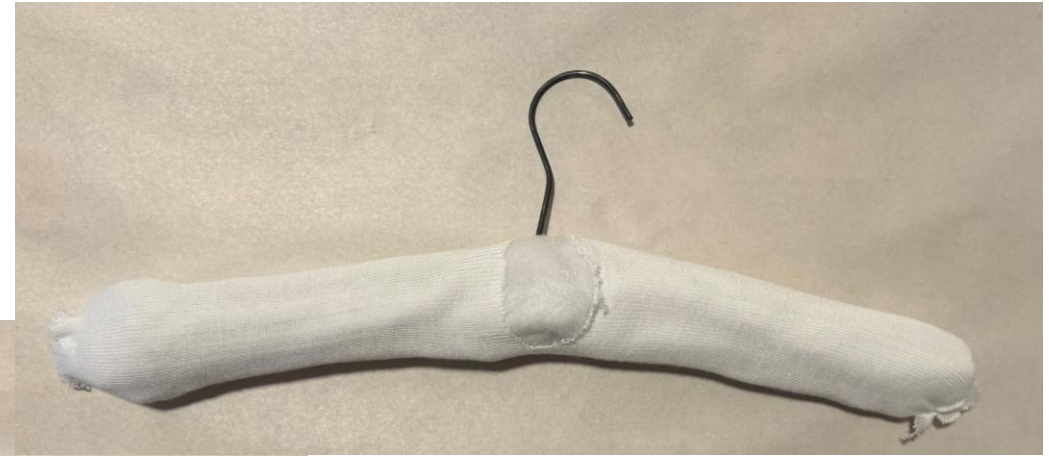


Welcome to Padded Hanger 101



Stockinette should be cut longer than your hanger with a very small hole in the center.

Cover polyester or cotton batting with stockinette. (Unbleached cotton stockinette is preferred to polyester.)



Be careful not to cut a big hole for the hanger to go through.

Close the sides with small flat knots or sew. Avoid bulky knots shown on the bottom hanger.



# Cover in stockinette



The knot is bulky and could cause damage



Better-Flat knot



Best- sewn closed

# Closing your padded hanger

## To wash or not to wash?

- ▶ The goal is to use less invasive cleaning methods first.
- ▶ Vacuum using a low-suction HEPA-filtered vacuum through a fine fiberglass screen (a soft brush can help)
- ▶ Freezer for wool or bug infestations (freeze, thaw, freeze, thaw, vacuum)
- ▶ Wet wash only when necessary
  - ▶ **Not recommended without prior training and/or consultation with a conservator.**
  - ▶ ORVUS WA Paste
  - ▶ Spot clean/handwash, very gently
  - ▶ Always support wet textiles
  - ▶ Rinse area until water is clear and free of soap

# Words of advice

- ▶ Always handle textiles with care; many are more fragile than you can see.
- ▶ Do not eat or drink around your historic textiles.
- ▶ You do not have to have all of it right to do some of it better.
  - ▶ Improve what you are doing and then build from there.
- ▶ When in doubt, ask.
  
- ▶ Please do not use staples or sticky labels to display textiles or attach signs to textiles.

# Where do I get archival storage materials?

- ▶ Gaylord Archival
  - ▶ Boxes, Acid Free Tissue Paper, Abbey pH Pen, hat stands, twill tape
- ▶ University Products
  - ▶ Boxes, acid free tissue Paper roll
- ▶ Uline
  - ▶ Ethafoam rolls
- ▶ Lineco
  - ▶ Mylar
- ▶ Talas
  - ▶ Boxes, Abbey pH Pen, humidity and temperature testers, acid-free tissue paper, mylar
- ▶ Amazon
  - ▶ Twill tape, Stockinette Orvus, Nitrile Gloves
- ▶ Farm Supply Store
  - ▶ Orvus
- ▶ And so many more! This is in no way an all-inclusive list.

# References

- ▶ The Care and Display of Historic Clothing by Karen M. DePauW
- ▶ A Practical Guide to Costume Mounting by Laura Flecker
- ▶ Ford Conservation Center and Nebraska History Conservation Documents
  - ▶ Storage & Exhibit Materials
  - ▶ Caring for Flat Textiles
- ▶ American Institute for Conservation
- ▶ Preventive Conservation: Collection Storage by Lisa Elkin & Christopher Norris

Questions???

Contact Alyssa Smith

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