

**Recommended Books and Websites for Clothing Research:**

**The Era of the American Revolution**

**North West Territory Alliance**

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**How to Get Copies of Books**

- **Interlibrary Loan**—if your local library doesn’t have the book you want, they may be able to borrow it for you from another library. If this service is available, try to provide the staff with as much information as possible about the book you want. The ISBN number is particularly helpful.
- **18th Century Merchants and 21st Century Bookstores**—for items that are "in print."
- **Used Book Sellers**—[http://www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for items that are “out of print.”
- **Beg and Borrow**—from other Revolutionary War reenactors.
- **Googlebooks**—[https://books.google.com](https://books.google.com) for downloadable copies of many books that are out of copyright, including newspapers, magazines, and books published in the 18th century.

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**Note**

This list is intended to provide guidance for those in search of information on clothing during the era of the American Revolution. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of every available resource, but does contain information on some sources that our members have found to be helpful.

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**A. ORIGINAL 18TH CENTURY GARMENTS**

**18thC Notebook** [http://www.larsdatter.com/18c/](http://www.larsdatter.com/18c/)

Internet links to photos of original 18th century garments in museum collections. Arranged by garment.


Grid patterns and drawings of original garments from museums.


Williamsburg's costume curator describes garments in the collection and provides detailed photos of the items from inside and out, scale diagrams of the pattern pieces, notes on construction and fabric, and information on who wore them.


Uses 18th century written descriptions and garments to analyze what Americans considered fashionable and why. She discusses the meaning of a person's choice of style and fabric, clothing myths, how and why garments were altered, and clothing over a person's lifecycle.


Hardcover ISBN 1-880655-08-X. Also available in softcover.

Describes original garments in the Chester County (PA) Historical Society, with photographs and 1 inch scale graphed patterns.


Includes working class garments, although some are after the Revolutionary War time period.


Discusses the difference in cut between upper class stays and those of working women.


Discusses what clothes meant in terms of social definition and identity. Also looks at retailing and distribution, etiquette, the evolution of ready-made clothes, and fantasy wear.


Includes a survey of fashion in our period, an introduction on "The Meaning of Dress in Art," and a chapter on "Image and Reality in Fancy Dress in England."


**B. FABRICS**


Examples of Chintz prints, as opposed to Toile.


*Recommended Books and Websites for Clothing Research*

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18th century fabric samples with notes on the garments made from them by an English lady.


The standard source, containing color reproduction of scrapbooks with sample swatches of 18th century fabric, along with commentary and a dictionary of fabric terms.


Contains swatches of fabric made by the Manchester manufacturing firm of Benjamin and John Bower, and was used for marketing the firm’s products.

C. DESCRIPTIONS OF RUNAWAY SERVANTS AND SLAVES

18th Century Runaway Ad Resources http://larsdatter.com/18c/runaways.html

Links to online collections of runaway descriptions.


The page numbers are different than in Hagist’s Wives, Slaves and Servant Girls, but the entry numbers and text are the same.


The page numbers are different than in Hagist’s Wenches, Wives and Servant Girls, but the entry numbers and text are the same.

D. ONLINE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Search for original 18th century garments and personal accouterments using the collection's search function. Make sure to record the accession or museum number for all items of interest, as this is the simplest way to find them again.

Colonial Williamsburg’s Online Collections http://emuseum.history.org

Use “advanced search,” which allows limiting by time period, etc. Make sure you get the accession number of all items of interest, since the URL associated with the item will lead you back to the main site rather than the specific item.

Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection, New York http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston http://www.mfa.org/collections/search?search_api_views_fulltext=
E. OTHER INTERNET SOURCES

**The 18th Century Material Culture Resource Center**  
http://materialculture18t.wixsite.com/18thcmcrc  
Virtual encyclopedia reference library for the study of everyday objects, primarily those used by the inhabitants of North America and England. Under “Slideshows” are photos of original items of clothing, equipment, etc., organized by topic. Under “Resources” are listed primary source writings and secondary source papers by respected Revolutionary War researchers.

**At the Sign of the Golden Scissors Blog**  
http://thegoldenscissors.blogspot.com  
Blog by Hallie Larkin and Stephanie Smith. Includes photos of original garments, tutorials on sewing techniques, and 18th century illustrations showing common styles of caps, neck handkerchiefs, etc.

**London Lives 1690-1800: Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis**  
http://www.londonlives.org/index.jsp  
A fully searchable edition of 240,000 manuscripts from eight archives and fifteen datasets.

**Marquise Costume Site**  
Large database of paintings illustrating costume, period patterns, plates from Diderot's Encyclopedia, and articles on dressmaking, costume, and using art for costume research.

**Pinterest**  
https://www.pinterest.com  
Save research on Pinterest Boards, share pins with other reenactors, and “Follow” other 18th century boards on the site. Enter a phrase into the search, such as “18th Century Gown,” or something more specific, such as “18th Century Pink Open Robe Gown.” Once you find something, click on the pin to go back and check the original source from which the image was pinned. Hopefully this will be a museum collection or verified auction house. Be sure to get full information such as location, date, accession number, and the URL.

**Probing the Past: Virginia and Maryland Probate Inventories, 1740-1810.**  
http://chnm.gmu.edu/probateinventory/  
Searchable database of estate inventories that lists what items were owned by the deceased, sometimes including the number of shifts, gowns, jackets, etc.

**Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913**  
http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/index.jsp  
Searchable index of trials. Allows you to find 18th century written references to clothing and accessories mentioned in trials for theft, etc.

**Wm Booth, Draper at the Sign of the Unicorn.** Facebook Page retrieved March 16th, 2017.  
https://www.facebook.com/wm.booth.draper/  
Paul Dickfoss posts period artwork that illustrates how garments were worn, along with his commentary.

F. SEWING, MENDING & ALTERING


Burnley and Trowbridge, *Historic Fashion Tutorial Series*  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCySy8zO2XCnsSM1STJc0r6A/videos  
Videos on some of the stitches used in 18th century sewing.

Includes a study of what color thread was used and the type of fabric used for patches.


Instructions and diagrams for 18th century hand stitches.


Describes how gowns of expensive English silk were significantly altered over time to reuse the fabric, but keep the style up-to-date.


Includes information about basic women’s garments, and instructions for making some of them.

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**G. PERIOD ARTWORK AND HOW TO USE IT**


*Lewis Walpole Library Digital Image Collection*  [http://images.library.yale.edu/walpoleweb/](http://images.library.yale.edu/walpoleweb/)

Art collection, including satirical prints, from the late 17th century through the mid-19th century.


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**H. PERSONA DEVELOPMENT**


18th century collection of prints about manufacturing and how things work.


A standard source, showing photos of original military equipment, but also personal accouterments such as pocket watches, eating utensils, camp equipment, etc.

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**I. FEMALE FOLLOWERS OF THE ARMIES**


Rees, John U. "The number of rations issued to the women in camp." New Material Concerning Female Followers With Continental Regiments © 1998, 2002
http://www.revwarr75.com/library/rees/wnumb2.htm
Rees, John U. "'Some in rags and some in jags,' but none 'in velvet gowns.'" Insights on Clothing Worn by Female Followers of the Armies During the American War for Independence © 1990, 2002
http://revwar75.com/library/rees/wcloth.htm

J. SOURCES TO AVOID
These were once standard research sources for NWTA members. Current research now shows that they contain a lot of errors and "misinterpretations," and therefore should not be used for clothing research.
• Klinger, Robert. Distaff Sketchbook.
• Klinger, Robert. Sketchbook '76.
• Oakes, Alma & Margot Hill. Rural Costume: Its Origin and Development in Western Europe...
• NWTA Ethnic Clothing Guide by Bill Burke