

Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center

Hours of operation: 10am-3pm Mon-Thu **Phone:** 304-367-4403 **Email:** wvfolklife@FairmontState.edu

Address: Squibb Wilson Blvd. Fairmont, WV 26554

Textile and Costume Collections

CREATOR

N/A

*EXTENT

Linear Feet: 50+ linear feet

Number of Containers: 50+

Number of Items or Digital Files: 0

COLLECTION SUMMARY

This Finding Aid is an umbrella record for all of the textile and costume collections that are currently under the care of the Folklife Center. These collections include the Masquer's Historic Costume Collection, the Joanna Nesselroad Feedsack Collection (previously called the Historic Textile Bag Collection), clothing, books magazines, catalogs, ephemera related to exhibitions, exhibition display items, and correspondence about these collections.

LANGUAGES

English

PROCESSING ARCHIVIST

N/A

Collection Details

Biographical / Historical Note

The Nesselroad Collection was created and curated by Joanna Nesselroad, Ed.D. (1923-2020), an educator with expertise in early childhood education and home economics. While at Fairmont State University, she developed a degree in Child Care and Development. Additionally, she was the regional training officer for Head Start in West Virginia and (in retirement) worked with WVU Extension Service and WV Vocational Home Economics Education. While working as an educator she mentored Beth Newcome, PhD., who shared her love of historic textiles and taught in the Applied Design program at Fairmont State University. Dr. Newcome acquired the Nesselroad Collection while working at Fairmont State University, whose campus was then home to Piermont Community and Technical College. When the University and Community College were forced to use different campuses (a split that started in 2000 and was complete in 2021), the Fashion Design major within the Applied Design program migrated to Pierpoint, and Dr. Newcome went with it. The Nesselroad Collection stayed at Fairmont State and Dr. Newcome continued to use the items for teaching and curation, with the last instance being an exhibition at the Folklife Center in 2023. In 2020, when Dr. Nesselroad passed away, the Joanna Violet Nesselroad Scholarship was created for Fairmont State University students enrolled in Elementary Education.

Many of the items not within a named collection, including magazines and books to patterns and dress frames, were collected and curated over the years by Dr. Newcome.

The Masquer's Historic Costume Collection was created in 1998. It is a collection of clothing items donated to the Masquer's Theatre Troupe at Fairmont State University that were deemed too old and/or fragile to continue using as theater costumes. The items in this collection date from 1850-1950 and all of them were donated by the local community. In Wallman Hall, there are more than 20 linear feet from this collection consisting of the most fragile items. There is more in Colebank, exact linear feet not known. It was intended for this to be a research collection and an assessment was done in 1993 (which is available in Wallman Hall). Dr. Newcome used it for research, teaching, and exhibition, and properly stored the items. Administrative, staff, and budget constraints have halted progress on consistently promoting the collection, curating and deaccessioning items, and doing more than storing the items. The items in Colebank are at risk, as there have been leaks in that building. An inventory (that has not been checked for completeness) done by Dr. Newcome and her students is available in a binder in Wallman Hall, along with other newspaper clippings, letters, and notes related to exhibitions and education endeavors. Please see the end of this document for a brochure related to the collection.

Collection Description

This Finding Aid is an umbrella record for all of the textile and costume collections that are currently under the care of the Folklife Center. This includes the aforementioned named collections and additional items listed below. Please note, these collections and additional items are organized and searchable, but they are not fully cataloged and no information has been entered into our archive software for searchability. There are no clear donation or accession forms. These collections were previously housed in other areas (physically and administratively) of Fairmont State University and Piermont Community

and Technical College. Due to administrative changes, budget cuts, retirements, space constraints, and other factors, the images attached to the end of this document are no longer accurate (e.g. the Masquer's Historic Costume Collection is no longer conceptualized as a collaborative endeavor between different departments and no longer has a curator. The Folklife Center is in charge of storage, upgrades, publicity, organization, advocacy, usage, etc.).

1. Joanna Nesselroad Feedsack Collection (previously called the Historic Textile Bag Collection)
 - a. Collection includes feedsack textiles (dresses, outerware, etc.), correspondence about the collection, correspondence and notes about exhibitions involving the collection (most involving Dr. Nesselroad or Dr. Newcombe), and handwritten item descriptions.
 - b. Items are stored in the cabinets on the left with sliding doors in Walman Hall room 235; inventory and paper documents are in pink filing cabinet on right side of room
 - c. See end of this document for an inventory list- note that the individual items in this collection have cards affixed to them with the donor, donor location, and other information. This information is not available elsewhere.
2. Masquer's Historic Costume Collection
 - a. In Wallman Hall, 20+ linear feet of the oldest and most fragile items stored in boxes and covered with plastic.
 - b. In Colebank, unknown amount of items stored in boxes and covered with plastic.
 - c. In Wallman Hall, several binders with inventory, historical information, letters, newspaper clippings, and other notes related to the collection, preservation, curation, education, and exhibition. This includes an assessment done in 1993 with suggestions for deaccessioning.
3. Catalogs, magazines, and books about fashion, fabric, textiles including *American Fabrics*, *Vogue Patterns*, and *Elegance*. Items mostly date from 1950s-90s although some are older (approximately 15 linear feet, on the right side in shelves in Wallman Hall).
4. Sewing patterns 1900s-1980s (in plastic totes above feedsack textiles in Walman Hall, approximately 15 linear feet)
5. Various costume items from the 70s-80s (Wallman, 10 moving racks)
6. Printed materials and items for use in display (printed exhibition materials, old sewing machines, 8 dress forms/mannequins, tables, thread, etc.) in Wallman
7. Boxes and items in Colebank (including part of the Masquer's Collection)

Arrangement Description

N/A

Separated Materials

N/A

Related Materials

N/A

Location of Originals

N/A

Immediate Source of Acquisition

N/A

Subject Headings

N/A

Processing Note

N/A

Using the Collection

ACCESS STATEMENT

Collection is open and available for use.

RIGHTS STATEMENT

Copyright has not been assigned to Fairmont State University. Copyright restrictions apply regarding books and publications in these collections.

PREFERRED CITATION

[ITEM DESCRIPTION], [COLLECTION TITLE AND DATE]

Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center, Fairmont State University, Fairmont, WV

FSU Historical Textile Bag Collection

A. Cotton Commodity Bags

- a. Constructed Usage Bags
 - i. Money, toys, seeds, flour, food
- b. Greige
 - i. Branded
 - ii. Paper Label
- c. Limited structural design
 - i. Woven (twill, toweling)
 - ii. Fabricated (metallic threads)
 - iii. Stripes and checks (gingham)

- d. Pastels
- e. Applied Surface Print Patterns
 - i. Floral
 - ii. Geometric
 - iii. Specialty/wartime/pop-culture
 - iv. Pre-printed
 - v. Bordered/complete designs

f. remnants

B. Constructed Garments/Items

- a. Infants
 - i. Outerwear.....T.I.O
 1. dresses.....T.I.Od
 2. shirts.....T.I.Osi
 3. shorts.....T.I.Oso
 4. jumpers.....T.I.Oj
 - ii. Underwear.....T.I.U
 1. diapers.....T.I.Ud
 - iii. Accessories.....T.I.A
 1. blankets.....T.I.Ab
 2. belly button bands.....T.I.Ad
 3. caps/booties.....T.I.Ac
- b. Men/Boys.....T.M / T.Mb
 - i. Outerwear.....T.M.O
 1. shorts.....T.M.Oso
 2. shirts.....T.M.Osi
 - ii. Underwear.....T.M.U
 - iii. Accessories.....T.M.A
 1. caps.....T.M.Ac
 2. ties.....T.M.At
- c. Women/Girls.....T.W / T.Wg
 - i. Outerwear.....T.W.O
 1. dresses.....T.W.Od

During the spring semester of 1998, in anticipation of the Fairmont State College Masquers 75th Anniversary celebration (1923-1998), a collaborative project began to retire the historical clothing and related accessories (1850-1950) from the active production wardrobe of the Masquers theatrical costumes. In 1923 when the FSC Masquer's troupe was formed, donations of clothing and accessories were made by the community to start a production wardrobe. Since then many of the garments have become far too fragile for active use, thus it was time for them to begin their second contribution to the college, that of historical artifact, for study and research. This led to the establishment of the Masquers' Historic Costume Collection established in 1998.

The purpose of this project is to preserve this unique collection which represents the people of North Central West Virginia and to make the Collection available to students, faculty and the community for research, pattern drafting, material cultural study, visual history of fashion design, and costume reproduction. Ms. Polly Willman, Historic Costume Consultant, Preservation Services for Costumes and Textiles, Arlington, Virginia and former senior conservator of the Smithsonian Institution, made an initial assessment of the collection in 1998 and determined it to be a valuable collection including both manufactured apparel and handmade items, typical of this region. She also noted the high style of many of the ladies' dresses at the turn of the century, reflecting the good prosperity of Marion County and the area at that time. The collection includes apparel and accessories for women, men and children. Of particular interest were several maturity dresses from 1890.

Assisted by students from the History of Contemporary Fashion class, this retirement culminated in April of 1998 with the first public exhibit of 36 garments from the Collection. The Exhibition was well received by the college and community and stimulated awareness and enthusiasm for this and similar collections of academic value. The clothing collection is part of the larger collection of Theatre Achieves now being preserved and is also an auxiliary research collection for the West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State College.

The collection represents a collaborative interdisciplinary appreciation of historic artifacts as part of the history of Fairmont State College. Support comes from the School of Fine Arts, Department of Speech and Theatre, the Fashion Design program in the Community and Technical College, the West Virginian Folklife Center, and the Office of the Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs. The Collection plans, both short and long range, include: financing, storage, display, and institutional and public educational services.

For more information about the collection, contact:

Dr. Beth Thorne Newcome, Professor of Applied Design, FSC&TC, 367-4298
JoAnn Lough, Professor Emerita of Speech and Theatre, FSC, 367-4175
Dr. Judy P. Byers, Professor and Director of the West Virginia Folklife Center, 367-4286

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Masquers est. 1923

