
HOUSTON-LECOMPT PERSONAL ADORNMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1744, an Annapolis physician named Alexander Hamilton embarked on a trip to New England to escape the hot Maryland summer. He kept a journal of his travels, and while lodging in a public house just across the Pennsylvania border, he recorded the following story about a fellow traveler:

Morrison was a very rough spun, forward, clownish blade, much addicted to swearing, att the same time desirous to pass for a gentleman... he would have us know that he was able to afford better than many that went finer: he had good linnen in his bags, a pair of silver buckles, Silver Clasps, and gold sleeve buttons, two Holland shirts, and some neat night caps; and that his little woman at home drank tea twice a day...

He was much affronted with the landlady at Curtis's who, seeing him in a greasy jacket and breeches and a dirty worsted cap, and withall a heavy forward clownish air and behaviour, I suppose took him for some ploughman or carman and so presented him with some scraps of cold veal for breakfast... As soon as he saw his mess he swore, "Damn him, if it wa'n't out of respect to the gentleman in company,"... he would throw her cold scraps out at the window and break her table all to pieces should it cost him 100 pounds for damages. Then taking off his worsted night cap, he pulled a linnen one out of his pocket and clapping it upon his head, "Now," says he, "I'm upon the borders of Pennsylvania and must look like a gentleman; 'tother [cap] was good enough for Maryland... (Hamilton 1744)

This anecdote illustrates how important clothing was in the American colonies for signaling one's wealth and social position. While the landlady may have considered Morrison's demeanor and frequent swearing as signals of his low position, he felt that the insulting scraps she presented to him were a direct result the quality of his cap, and he based his protests that he was a gentleman on the contents of the wardrobe he allegedly possessed.

As this story implies, people in the 18th century were incredibly conscious of clothing, and the messages encoded in personal adornment. This awareness of bodily adornment is something that exists in all human cultures, and as Diana DiPaolo Loren summarizes in the introduction to her book *The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America*, "clothing and adornment are a means of communication: a visual statement about status, prestige, gender, society, politics, and religion" (Loren 2010:8). Personal adornment may also signal one's occupation; whether it is a servant in livery, a kitchen maid, a soldier, or an elite gentlewoman.

The cut of the garment, quality of the fabric, and richness of the trimmings all work together to form a picture that, when viewed by others, indicates which societal role the wearer plays, and therefore, how

the viewer will interact with them (Baumgarten 2002). Does one person defer to another, or do they relate as equals? In unequal exchanges, who does the deferring? Who gets the good cuts of meat and the best service versus the scraps or denial of service? Who is a dangerous person to make angry? Who has the power to increase the social standing of their associates? Personal adornment was a fast visual means for communicating the answers to questions such as these in the American colonies.

After independence, the United States eschewed the English class system as an ideal, but class nevertheless persisted and clothing continued to signal one's role in society. Even as industrialization brought down the cost of making clothing and increased consumer access to goods, brand names and couture entered the scene to facilitate the continued separation of "haves" and "have nots" as expressed through personal adornment.

As a result, archaeologists interested in past cultures could recognize a lot of cultural attributes through careful consideration of bodily adornment. Unfortunately, the pieces of clothing and accessories recovered by archaeologists represent only a paltry fraction of what once existed. Artifacts of personal adornment are generally limited to the metal, bone, and glass components of fasteners and accessories. Thus historical documents and extant garments are essential for understanding clothing and putting the few finds that are available into context.

The following study will approach artifacts of personal adornment recovered at the Houston-LeCompt site as part of a much larger suite of clothing and adornment available to consumers for the nearly 200 years from the mid-eighteenth century to 1930. Not all clothing that existed at the site would leave an archaeological signature, but the artifacts that are recovered illustrate how the inhabitants of Houston-LeCompt adopted changing fashions. This report will use extant clothing to put the artifacts into context, and will draw from historic records such as portraits and catalogs to better understand how each artifact fits into the overall world of clothing and adornment.

In keeping with the analytical methods used for features and other artifacts at Houston-LeCompt, this study will concentrate on four time periods: pre-1800, 1800-1865, 1865-1900, and 1900-1930. Many artifacts of personal adornment do not lend themselves to such divisions, however. For example, Prosser buttons first appeared after 1841 when Thomas Prosser of Patterson, New Jersey patented a method for making the durable ceramic buttons from compressed powdered clay (Sprague 2002). Prosser-style buttons are by far the most common ($n=104$) clothing artifact recovered at Houston-LeCompt, but most cannot be attributed to one of the four time periods of study because they remained popular from ca. 1840-1920. Without the context of the original garment, one cannot easily pinpoint when such buttons were used. It is partially for this reason that this analysis will emphasize extant clothing and historical records that can be more easily dated, while the artifacts will serve to guide which kinds of clothing will be discussed. No report appendix could ever sufficiently educate the reader about the entire history of costume from 1740-1930, but it is possible to explore general trends and typical styles that would incorporate the artifacts recovered.

Each section of this analysis will outline the overall trends in fashion for the period of study. Then further details will be provided about buttons, which merit special attention throughout each period of

study because they are the most common clothing-related artifacts recovered. Button assemblages can be misleading because lack of organic preservation and curation of buttons by site residents are factors that limit the number of buttons that archaeologists find or significantly separate the period of deposition from the date of manufacture. Many popular button styles could be made entirely of thread or wooden molds covered by fabric or thread and these buttons rarely survive archaeologically. Furthermore, buttons are not something that people always throw away when the underlying garment wears out. Particularly in the 18th century, textiles were valuable, so clothes were passed down or sold until they could no longer be worn, and even then they were often used as rags. Viable buttons were useful enough to be removed and retained for possible future use when clothes were dismantled, especially if they were expensive or remained in style. As a result, buttons recovered archaeologically typically represent accidental losses or buttons deposited long after they were manufactured.

Buttons are therefore an artifact type that requires the consideration of reuse. The original manufacture date of a button and the type of garment it originally adorned may have nothing whatsoever to do with the button's eventual deposition at an archaeological site. People kept extra buttons, old buttons, and interesting buttons stashed away just in case. These artifacts entered the realm of craft supplies where they could be adopted for any number of uses like a rag doll's eye, a makeshift poker chip, or a fastener for a costume in a child's school play. Such idiosyncrasies are notoriously hard for archaeologists to interpret, but it is essential to keep them in mind in order to avoid drawing unfounded conclusions.

For example, the affiliation of buttons with clothing and clothing repair tends to land them in discussions of sewing-related activities in archaeological reports, but areas where sewing took place were likely to be areas where buttons were handled carefully as they were sewn onto clothes or purposely removed and retained. Slippery fingers could certainly lose some buttons in such places, but since sewing activities tend to lead to button hoarding, the affiliation of lost buttons with sewing is relatively weak. People who sew see value in keeping buttons; they do not spread them about the yard like chicken feed. One need only go to yard sales, flea markets, antique stores, and their relatives' houses to see this in the form of a button tin, a mason jar full of buttons, or a sewing basket with mismatched buttons tossed in.

The buttons that do end up scattered across sites are much more likely to have resulted from activities that led to wear and tear. Labor intensive activities that put stress on clothing would result in button losses in settings where people may be too distracted to notice, or too tired from their labors to care when a button is lost. It is therefore worthwhile to look at the distribution of buttons on archaeological sites in case high concentrations might point to laundering or other labor-intensive activities like butchering, gardening, wood chopping, etc. This idea also holds true for other fasteners such as hooks and eyes and sew-on buckles.

Other accessories, such as removable buckles, jewelry, parasols, fans, and purses could be stored safely until the occasion called for them, so they might be expected to show up more frequently in living areas as opposed to work areas unless they were deliberately relegated to the midden heap when they became too worn or too outdated to be of value. The differences in how personal adornment items

made it into the archaeological record is therefore significant for interpreting clothing and accessories at any site.

For purposes of this study, only artifacts that are most likely to be clothing-related are discussed, and as a result, some artifacts in the catalogs that share classifications with items of personal adornment are deliberately excluded. This includes items like generic buckles that would be suitable for utilitarian straps like horse tack and luggage straps. It must be acknowledged, however, that like generic buckles, all of the artifacts discussed here can be interpreted in multiple ways and this analysis cannot be considered a definitive essay on how the artifacts were actually used. Instead, the following discussion is designed to provide context in order to familiarize the reader with the wardrobes these artifacts may represent. It is always possible that the artifacts were not limited to the function they were originally created to fit, but instead took on additional meanings and functions as people interacted with them over time. Reuse and recycling of this nature will be discussed if the archaeological context points to secondary functions, but for the most part only the original function of the artifacts at the time of manufacture can be understood through the study of historic documents and extant clothing.

With regard to the background offered here on fashion history, only generalizations can be made as to changes in popular styles. For the most part, ladies' silhouettes were the go-to trend that defined fashion episodes, much like ceramics are the archaeologist's go-to source for diagnostic periods (Figure 1). For example, the 1880s are often called the "bustle" era despite the fact that this descriptive label ignores men's fashions altogether. This in itself is a cultural indicator, since the role of women in society is reflected by what they are expected to wear. Throughout much of the period of study, women were expected to care about all things domestic, including fashionable wardrobes, while masculinity was, in part, defined by the dismissal of fashion as superficial, insignificant, and frivolous (Kuchta 2002). When men cared about appearances, they might avoid doing so outwardly so as not to seem "effeminate." Women of the upper classes in particular were, by design and by way of flaunting one's status, expected to worry about the latest trends in gowns and bonnets no matter how these fashions might have confined their movements (Lynn 2010:165). As a result, literature on costume history from 1770-1930 tends to emphasize women's clothing, and upper class clothing in particular. Examples of lower and middle class clothing, and clothing specifically for labor, can be difficult to study because so few examples survive.

Archaeological data tends to have the opposite bias; lower class, middle class, and work clothes are more likely to show up in the archaeological record, and a lot of the buttons and fasteners that survive after deposition belonged to men. This report will therefore summarize each time period of study as it is described by costume historians, and then compare that overview to the artifacts from Houston-LeCompt. In this way, it should be possible to draw conclusions about the residents of Houston-LeCompt in terms of whether they were trendy and in compliance with period accounts of what people should wear, or if the artifacts they left behind were for the working classes who were typically left out of the literature that defined fashion.

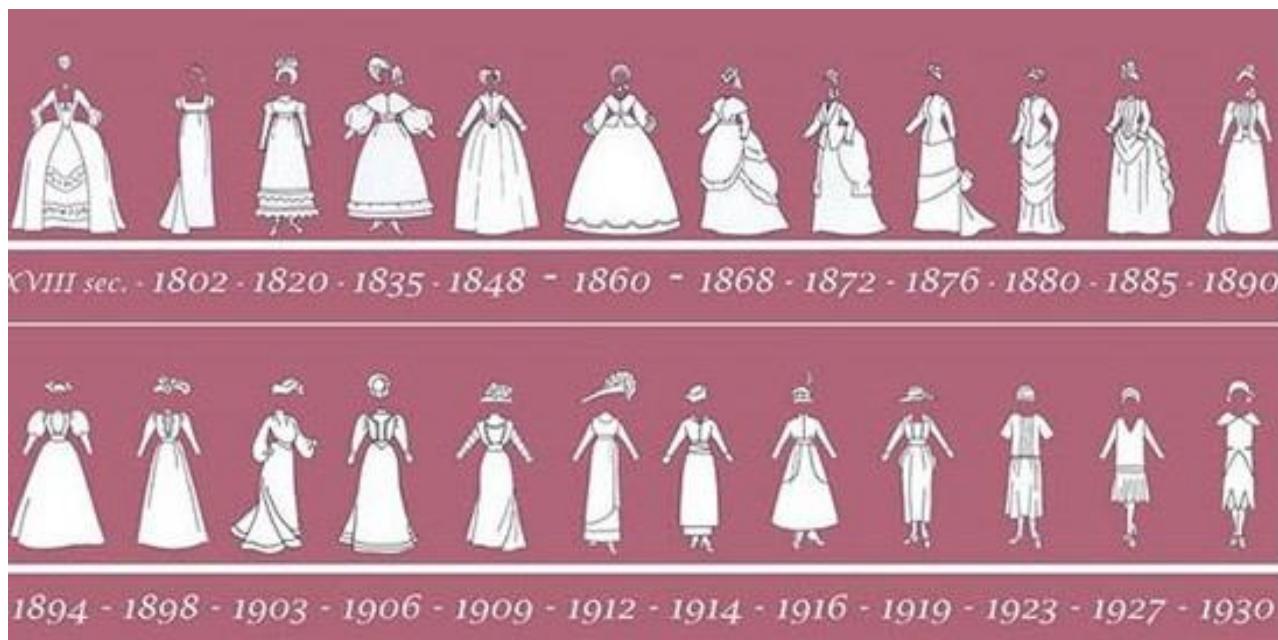


FIGURE 1. LADIES' DRESS SILHOUETTES FROM THE 18TH CENTURY TO 1930 (FESTOONED BUTTERFLY 2013).

2. PRE-1800

2.1 GENERAL FASHION SUMMARY CA. 1737-1800

The Houston-LeCompt site may have been occupied as early as 1737, but there is no definite evidence of clothing-related artifacts that pre-date the last quarter of the 18th century. The last decades of the 18th century represented a transitional period in Western fashions for men and women. Major changes occurred in society and governance at the end of the 18th century that influenced changes in fashions.

From the mid 18th century until the 1780s, typical attire for a man was a suit that included a coat, waistcoat, and breeches, all of which fastened with buttons (Figure 2). Underneath this suit men wore a long shirt that tucked well down into the breeches where it served as a barrier between the skin and the suit (Lynn 2010:14). Drawers as a separate undergarment were therefore not necessary, though many men did have them (Willet and Cunnington 1992). Breeches typically stopped just below the knee where they fastened with a knee buckle that could serve to keep the breeches tight to the leg and to hold up the obligatory stockings that covered the leg from knee to shoe. Men often wore a stock at the neck which was essentially a band of fine fabric that held tight to the back of the neck with a specialized buckle (Figure 3). Cravats were also worn in this period, which were essentially neck cloths that tied at the front according to one's personal taste. Accessories varied greatly by time of day, occupation, and wealth. Headwear ranged from plain wool or knit caps to elaborate tricorn hats over expensive wigs. Virtually all men from slaves to gentlemen wore linked buttons at the sleeve (Rivers Cofield 2012), and those who could afford more expensive jewelry carried watches with decorative watch fobs (Figure 4).



FIGURE 2. THESE CA. 1788 PORTRAITS OF MARY KIMBERLY THOMAS REYNOLDS AND JAMES BLACKSLEE REYNOLDS BY REUBEN MOULTHROP SHOW THEIR FASHION SENSE AS THE END OF THE CENTURY APPROACHED. SHE WEARS A MANTUA MADE OF A PRINTED FABRIC THAT IS OPEN IN THE FRONT TO REVEAL A DARKER PETTICOAT. HER ACCESSORIES INCLUDE A SHEER APRON, A LACE-TRIMMED FICHU, LACE CUFFS KNOWN AS ENGAGEANTES, A CHOKER OF BLACK RIBBON, A FINGER RING, AND A PRODIGIOUSLY RUFFLED CAP. MR. REYNOLDS BOASTS A NAVY BLUE COAT WITH ENORMOUS BUTTONS, A PALE WAISTCOAT WITH MUCH SMALLER BUTTONS, A SHIRT WITH RUFFLED SLEEVES AND A RUFFLED FRONT, AND A COLLAR HELD HIGH BY A WIDE STOCK. HIS ACCESSORIES INCLUDE A WALKING STICK, AN OVOID WATCH FOB AT THE WAIST, AND A SNUFF BOX ON THE TABLE NEARBY. AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM ACCESSIONS 2013.1.1 AND 2013.1.2.



FIGURE 3. MAN'S EARLY 19TH CENTURY STOCK AND CA. 1765-1785 STOCK BUCKLE. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART ACCESSIONS 40.125 (BUCKLE) AND 2006.407 (STOCK).



FIGURE 4. THE 1789 PORTRAIT OF ELIJAH BOARDMAN BY RALPH EARL IS A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION OF MALE ACCESSORIES NEAR THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS 2011). HIS COAT HAS VERY LARGE BUTTONS OF DECORATED BRASS, GILT, OR WOVEN GOLD THREAD, AND HE WEARS GOLD LINKED BUTTONS ON HIS SHIRT SLEEVES. A GOLD WATCH FOB HANGS FROM BOARDMAN'S WAIST, MATCHING THE GOLD TRIM OF HIS WAISTCOAT. AT THE KNEE HIS BUTTONS ARE FABRIC COVERED (PROBABLY WITH BONE BUTTON MOLDS INSIDE) TO MATCH THE MATERIAL OF HIS BREECHES, AND HE WEARS A DECORATIVE GOLD AND SILVER TONE KNEE BUCKLE. FINALLY, VERY LARGE OPENWORK SILVER BUCKLES CURVE OVER BOARDMAN'S PLAIN BLACK SHOES.

Women of the mid 18th century typically wore a gown or mantua with full skirts that opened at the front to expose a petticoat underneath. At the time, the petticoat was not necessarily an undergarment, but instead would be expected to be viewed when the length of the gown stopped at the knee or long gowns were tied back. Gowns attached at the center front of the torso with straight pins or they might be designed to leave a triangular opening at the front for a stomacher, which also attached with pins. These were worn over stays, which were the heavily boned and quilted undergarments that later gave rise to the corset. Like petticoats, stays were not necessarily just undergarments, however. Women could leave off their gowns, especially while laboring at tasks like laundry and cooking, and many works of art show women wearing their stays on view in public without alarming society's sense of propriety (Styles 2007:70). The innermost garment for women, and the counterpart to the male shirt, was the shift (Lynn 2010; Styles 2010; Willet and Cunnington 1992). Like men's shirts, shifts with sleeves might have two buttonholes at the cuff for the attachment of sleeve links. Long lacy cuffs known as engageantes attached to shift or gown sleeves with pins, ties, or basting stitches. Under their petticoats, ladies wore stockings and garters, and sometimes bumpers, paniers, or other padding to increase the

fullness of one's skirts (Takeda and Spilker 2010; Willet and Cunnington 1992). Ladies employed any number of accessories to dress up each ensemble according to their means and tastes.

At the end of the 18th century, this formula for proper dress changed dramatically for both men and women, and the shift was inspired in part by archaeology. The 18th-century Enlightenment was characterized by scientific experiments and pursuits, and archaeology was among them. Deliberate excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the ancient Roman cities made famous for their fall after the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79, resulted in unprecedented exposure to ancient Roman art and fashion.

The last decades of the 18th century were also characterized by upheaval and revolution in Europe and its colonies. The American Revolution, the French Revolution, and successful slave uprising that overthrew French rule in Saint Domingue (Haiti) all impacted the last two decades of the 18th century. Since the emphasis for these uprisings was on freedom and equality, Greek and Roman ideas of democracy and republic served as potential models for governance when monarchical rule was overthrown. Not surprisingly, both costume and decorative arts emulated the ancient societies that had been exposed by archaeology. The neoclassical style was adopted in furniture, art, and architecture, and ladies costume emulated togas with flowing diaphanous gowns (Johnston 2009). Changes in France, in particular, set trends across the Western world as fashion was historically one of its major exports (Takeda and Spilker 2010).

Between 1780 and 1800, ladies gowns changed significantly. Natural waists cinched by stays gradually moved higher until the waistline was just below the breasts and some women stopped using stays or adopted short stays similar in coverage to a modern bra (Baumgarten 2002; Lynn 2010:82). Skirts narrowed as the waistline moved up, so panniers became obsolete. In fact, with high waists at the ribs ladies must have enjoyed their own sense of liberty in having nothing attached to their natural waist to cinch their guts into a narrow silhouette. Undergarments still consisted of shifts, stockings, and garters, though drawers and pantalets started to appear in ladies' wardrobes during this period as well (Willet and Cunnington 1992:110-114). Shoes gradually shed their heels and buckles in favor of flat slipper styles that sometimes attached with crisscrossed ribbons, emulating the sandals of ancient Greece and Rome (Baumgarten 2002). Wigs were also abandoned.

For men the transition that took place was less literally neoclassical, as toga-like garments and sandals were not adopted for daily wear. Instead, menswear shifted in such a way as to subtly reflect an increased respect for equality and disrespect for the excesses of aristocratic finery (Willet and Cunnington 1992:99). Throughout most of the 18th century, the finest men's suits were embroidered and decorated as much as, if not more than ladies' wear. Embroidery rendered in silk, silver, or gold thread—literally made with precious metals, not just thread with a silver or gold color—was popular for men who could afford it, and paste jewels and sequins were often incorporated into embroidery and threadwork buttons (Hart and North 1998). Frilled cuffs, lace, and jewelry also fit the masculine ideal and set the upper classes apart. Much of this conspicuous dandyism was shed as the century closed, however. Embroidery first became more simplistic, again adopting neoclassical motifs, and then faded

out of style. Lace cuffs were shed, and linked buttons were largely replaced by white sew-on buttons, though ruffles at the shirt front were still seen (Willet and Cunnington 1992: 126).

Men's clothing was particularly influenced by military styles, especially during periods of war, so men at the end of the 18th century often adopted boots for daily wear instead of just for riding or uniforms. Boots with brown tops, or tall black boots that became known as Wellingtons, were adopted while shoes with large buckles were on their way out. Perhaps the most notable change in menswear, however, was the shift from breeches that stopped below the knee to trousers that extended to the ankle. The transition occurred first for daywear, and eventually spread to eveningwear as well. This change in men's suits persists to today. Like ladies' wear, men's waistlines also changed as coats and waistcoats that previously extended down over the hips shortened at the front to create the tail coat (Figure 5). This transition was likely behind the widespread adoption of drawers as undergarments, since bunching up a shirt in one's trousers could create undesirable bulkiness that would no longer be hidden by long waistcoats. Wigs and tricorn hats gave way to bicorn hats and a new fashion for top hats (McClellan 1904; Takeda and Spilker 2010; Willet and Cunnington 1992).

For both men and women, the last two decades of the 18th century saw a shift away from heavy decoration with metallic embroidery, lace, and metal fittings such as fancy buttons and buckles to less conspicuous finery. France and French fashion plates continued to influence costume despite major upheavals in governance, and when Revolutionaries adopted the habit of sending the aristocracy to the guillotine, the aristocracy learned to abandon the costumes that they had adopted to set them apart. Silver and gold embroidery with paste jewels gave way to white-on-white embroidery that could still be costly without being gauche. Certainly the cut of one's clothes and the quality of the fabric remained important, and individuals were still able to recognize one's social status by looking at the packaging, but in light of the social cry for less hierarchy and more equality, fashions adopted more subtle clues to indicate class.

BUTTONS: PRE-1800

Throughout most of the 18th century, buttons served as both fasteners and showy accessories on coats, waistcoats, shirts, and breeches. Men wore more buttons than women, though women did wear buttons at the sleeve, as trim decorations, as fasteners for gathering up skirts and sleeves, and on buttoned jackets and coats for activities such as hunting and riding. These buttons varied greatly in material and size.

At the beginning of the 18th century, coats and waistcoats generally had a very high number of very small buttons, but by the end of the century coats boasted larger buttons in smaller quantities. The general rule at this time period was that the further the clothing layer was from the body, the larger the button. The largest buttons of the late 18th century were found on coats, while waistcoat and breeches buttons were smaller, and shirt buttons for the sleeve and neck (whether sewn on or detachable links) were smallest of all.

In terms of materials used, the button depended on the style of garment and the preference of the wearer. In general, the cost of the button was tied more to the material it was made of than the labor



FIGURE 5. MAN'S TAILCOAT CA. 1835 WITH STAMPED GEOMETRIC BRASS BUTTONS SIMILAR TO A BUTTON FOUND AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT. VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, ACCESSION NUMBER T.18-1918.

needed to manufacture it (Takeda and Spilker 2010:18). In descending order of value, metal buttons of gold, silver, silver plate, brass, and pewter were among the options available, but that does not mean that the wealthy always opted for precious metal buttons (Rivers Cofield 2012).

The elaborately embroidered silk suits available to the upper classes often had buttons made to match. These buttons, known by the French term *passementerie*, were made from wood or bone molds covered in embroidered silk or woven thread patterns to complement the decoration of the garment (Fink and Ditzler 1993:16-17; Hart and North 1998; Luscomb 1967:145). Such buttons boasted of conspicuous consumption in that the delicate needlework, sequins, paste jewels, and metallic threads that could adorn these mini-works of art did not make for the most durable of fasteners, nor would they

ever be practical for reuse when it came time for a new coat. The same was true for plain coats with fabric-covered buttons to match. Metal buttons would be more durable, but since textiles were expensive and less durable, having cloth-covered buttons could be less economical, and therefore more of a luxury.

Buttons that were made entirely of metal came in plain and decorative forms. Some late 18th century buttons consisted of thin gilt metal with stamped decoration over a bone mold to give the appearance of a solid metal button without the expense. Composite buttons that combined metal, mother-of-pearl, painted porcelain, glass insets, enamel work, and cut steel were also available in the 18th century (Fink and Ditzler 1993; Luscomb 1967).

2.2 PRE-1800 CLOTHING AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT

A number of clothing-related artifacts (n=36) from Houston-LeCompt can be confidently attributed to the pre-1800 occupation of the site, and while some buttons may be earlier, the diagnostic buckles and sleeve buttons all date to the last third of the 18th century. These artifacts are concentrated in the house cellar feature dubbed Feature 10 in the Phase II and Feature 509 in the Phase III. Because the artifacts are largely confined to one feature, they represent a fairly discrete assemblage that can be viewed as representative of clothing from a limited time frame, and possibly a particular person.

BUTTONS

LINKED BUTTONS

A minimum of three linked buttons were recovered in the house cellar and two additional buttons recovered from the plowzone probably represent linked buttons as well. Linked buttons, today known as cufflinks, were worn by men and women of the 18th century at the sleeve of the shirt or shift, and sometimes also as a closure for the neck of a man's shirt, or in lieu of laces or other buttons on waistcoats. In the world of 18th century accessories, linked buttons were among the smallest and therefore cheapest pieces of jewelry people wore. Labor was typically cheap, so the value of the accessory was tied more to the material it was made of than the time it took to manufacture. This allowed individuals to afford precious metals like gold or silver for linked buttons when they could only afford base metals for heavier (literally) investments like buckles or coat buttons (Rivers Cofield 2012). Additionally, individuals might be more likely to be able to afford a wider variety of linked buttons to change with each outfit, and this may have been the preference at Houston-LeCompt.

With one exception, the Houston-LeCompt sleeve buttons are oval-shaped, which was popular in the latter part of the 18th century, indicating that they likely overlapped in use instead of representing replacement pieces. This idea is further reinforced by their differences; one has a clear glass inset featuring a pink or red neo-classical motif achieved by sandwiching colored foil between the button back and the glass inset (Figure 6A); another had a royal blue glass inset which appears to have been backed by silver (Figure 6B); a third has an opaque turquoise enamel inset with white, yellow, and pink enamel and painting in an unidentified motif (Figure 6E); and the final oval button is a larger oval made entirely of copper alloy with a decorative scalloped edge (Figure 6F). A copper foil insert (Figure 6C) and a copper

alloy or pewter button back (Figure 6D) could have gone with the blue inset. The color variations would have allowed the owner to change sleeve buttons with different outfits, but the differences are not evidence of stylistic changes over time. The final linked button is a plain circular button of copper alloy or pewter (Figure 6G). Although no link is present, the size and shank style match known linked buttons found on other sites (Rivers Cofield 2012).

A Delaware shipwreck known as the Roosevelt Inlet Shipwreck (RIS) offers an assemblage of linked buttons from a discrete shipment that never made it to market, and the Houston-LeCompt sleeve buttons are very similar in style to examples recovered from the RIS. The RIS sank at some point in the 4th quarter of the 18th century, and artifacts recovered from the wreck include at least 133 link-style buttons with discernible shapes, 15 links separated from their buttons, 23 molded glass insets for linked buttons, and 106 conical faceted glass insets for linked buttons or other jewelry. In terms of decoration, no one style or motif appears on more than four buttons, meaning that each style recovered might represent one unique pair of linked buttons (Rivers-Cofield 2012). Ovoid buttons with stamped decoration on flat metal, clear insets with decorative backs, and blue oval insets were present on the RIS (Figure 7). Additionally, the distinctive quatrefoil link style present at Houston-LeCompt was common in the RIS assemblage.

No examples of turquoise enamel buttons were found on the RIS, but similar linked buttons were recovered at New York's ca. 1690-1794 African Burial Ground. One turquoise enamel inset was recovered near the neck of burial 211, an adult, probably male, who may have worn this button at the neck of a shirt (Figure 8A). Additionally, a set of turquoise linked buttons with an added white enamel motif were found under the left humerus of Burial 371, a female aged 25-35 (Figure 8B). These buttons may have attached a shift cuff on a sleeve ending before the elbow, as was popular for women's costume in the 18th century (Bianchi and Bianco 2006; Bianco et. al. 2006; Rivers Cofield 2012). Similar examples were also recovered from a New York City Revolutionary War encampment, which falls nicely into the last quarter of the 18th century (Bianco et. al. 2006:414).

SEW-ON BUTTONS

Slightly concave copper alloy buttons with no marks on the back typically date to the 18th or early 19th century. Throughout most of the 18th century, buttons were cast, which either left a mold mark or necessitated finishing work on a spinning lathe to remove casting defects. Such buttons could be cast in quantity, but they had to be finished one at a time. At the end of the 18th century, new technology allowed buttons to be made from stamped sheets of brass, which was cheaper and faster, and made decoration less labor intensive. Stamped brass buttons tend to be flatter and thinner than their cast predecessors. Maker's marks started to appear on the back of such stamped buttons around 1795 (Hicks 1988).

Most of the sew-on buttons that can be definitively identified as dating to the pre-1800 period were recovered in the house cellar (Feat. 10/509) or in the plowzone above this feature (Table 1). This indicates that little was going on at the site prior to 1800 that would have led people to lose buttons as

they moved around the yard. That could have resulted from an absence of people in general, or an absence of men, specifically, who would be expected to wear and lose buttons as they worked.

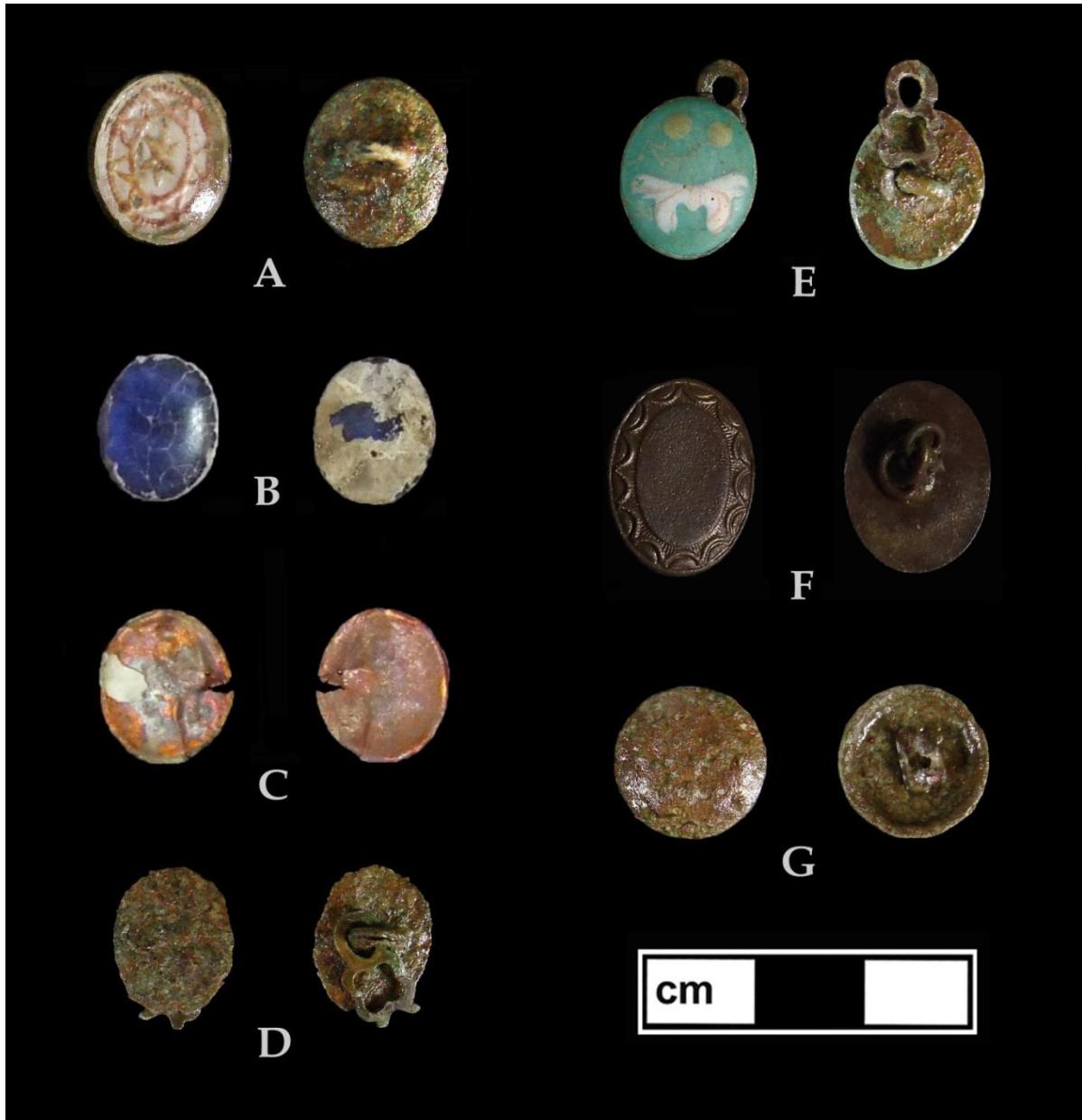


FIGURE 6. LINKED BUTTONS FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT. A) OVAL BUTTON WITH A CLEAR ROUNDED INSERT, A FOIL BACK, AND A GEOMETRIC DESIGN WITH AN ACCENT COLOR OF RED OR PINK (PHASE III, UNIT 3, FEAT. 509, STRAT I, LEV. 7). B) A ROUNDED OVAL INSERT IN BLUE GLASS WITH SOME OF THE FOIL BACK STILL ADHERED (PHASE III, UNIT 3, FEAT. 509, STRAT. 3, LEV. 2). C) A THIN COPPER SHEET TO GO BETWEEN A BUTTON BACK AND A GLASS INSERT (PHASE III, UNIT 3, FEAT. 509, STRAT. I, LEV. 3). D) COPPER ALLOY OR PEWTER BUTTON BACK WITH A QUATREFOIL STYLE LINK (PHASE III, UNIT 1, FEAT. 509, STRAT. 3, LEV. 3). E) COPPER ALLOY OR PEWTER BUTTON WITH A QUATREFOIL LINK AND A TURQUOISE ENAMEL INSERT WITH AN UNIDENTIFIED WHITE AND PINK MOTIF (PHASE III, UNIT 3, FEAT. 509, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). F) OVOID COPPER ALLOY BUTTON WITH CHAIN-STYLE LINK AND A SWAG DECORATION AROUND THE RIM OF THE FACE (PHASE II, UNIT 73, STRAT I, LEV. 1). G) CIRCULAR COPPER ALLOY OR PEWTER BUTTON THAT WAS PROBABLY A SLEEVE LINK BASED ON THE SIZE, FORM AND SHANK STYLE (PHASE III, UNIT 11, FEAT. 509, STRAT I, LEV. 2).

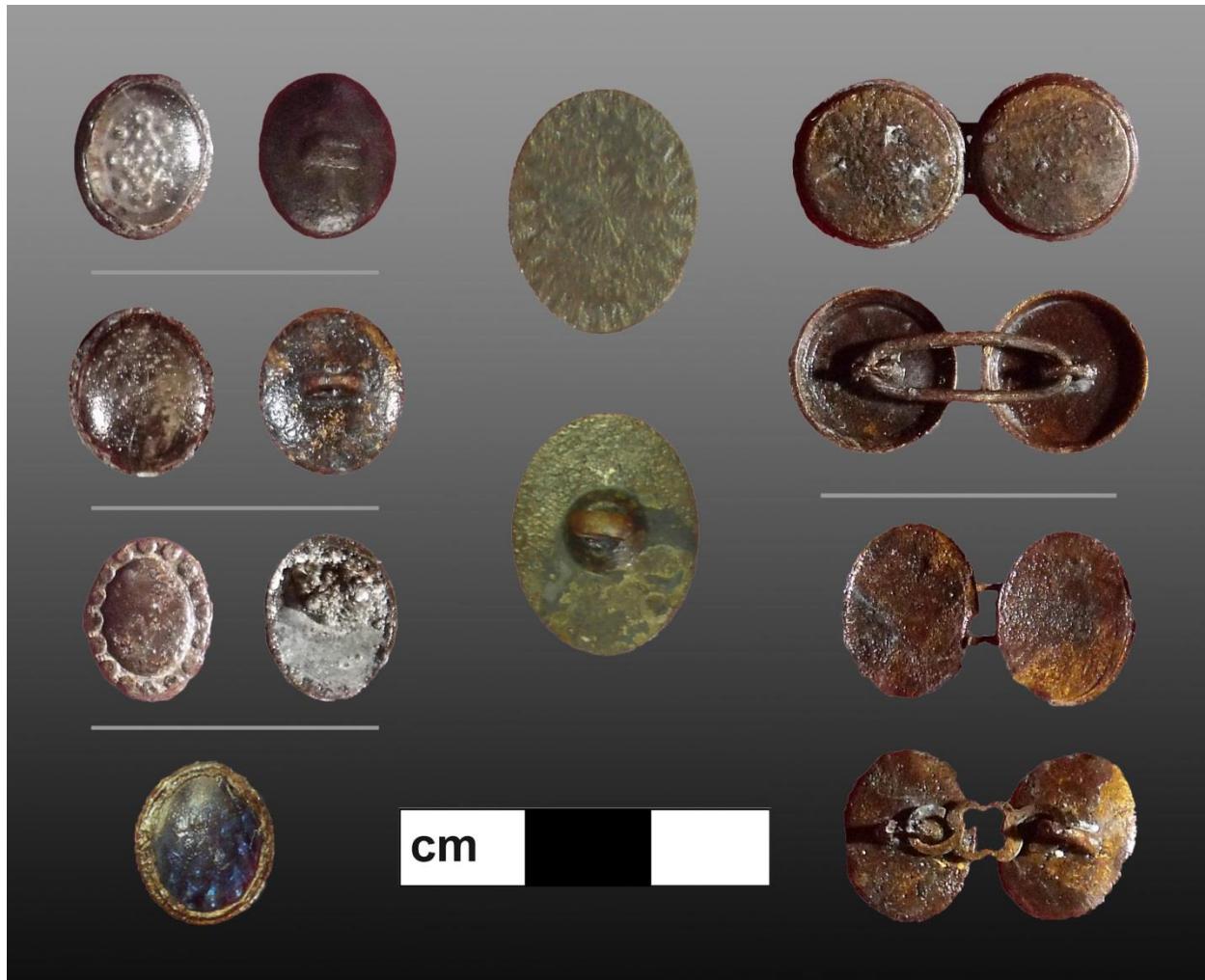


FIGURE 7. SELECT BUTTONS FROM THE ROOSEVELT INLET SHIPWRECK THAT RESEMBLE LINKED BUTTONS FROM THE HOUSTON LECOMPE SITE. COURTESY OF THE DELAWARE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS.



FIGURE 8. TURQUOISE ENAMEL BUTTON INSET FROM THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND BURIAL 211 (A) AND LINKED BUTTONS FROM BURIAL 371 (B). PHOTOS BY JON ABBOTT, ADAPTED FROM BIANCO ET. AL. 2006:418.

Like with the linked buttons, the sew-on buttons from house cellar at Houston-LeCompt are comparable to those found in burials at the African Burial Ground and aboard the RIS. They are consistent with late 18th century styles and they are generally very plain. Only one bone button mold was recovered, compared to 16 metal buttons, indicating either a clear preference for more durable metal buttons as opposed to fabric-covered ones, or a preference for organic wood button molds as opposed to bone ones. Of the metal buttons, most are copper alloy, but two pewter and one white metal button are also present. Only one button is decorative, and it was made in the late-18th century stamped style. It has a geometric design on the front and was gilt (Figure 9). Although this was probably the nicest looking sew-on button in the pre-1800 assemblage, it was not necessarily the most expensive since the stamped sheet method of manufacture made such buttons fairly affordable.

If the Houston-LeCompt pre-1800 sew-on buttons were for higher-end clothing, one would expect to see some more decoration, finer metal work such as silver plate or cut steel, more bone button molds for matching fabric or passementerie buttons, and depending on the recovery methods, silver or copper-alloy threads for covering buttons. Instead, the assemblage is the very definition of middling; not the absolute cheapest materials such as pewter, but nothing fancy or particularly expensive either.



FIGURE 9. THIS DECORATIVE GILT COAT BUTTON WAS MADE IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY FROM A STAMPED SHEET OF BRASS; AN INEXPENSIVE WAY TO MASS-PRODUCE DECORATED METAL BUTTONS. PHASE II, FEAT. 10, TU78, STRAT. I, LEV. 1.

TABLE 1: SEW-ON BUTTONS FROM THE HOUSTON-LECOMPT SITE. TABLE CONTINUES ON THE NEXT FOUR PAGES.

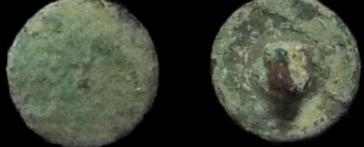
IMAGE	DETAILS	
 	Provenience Phase III, Unit 1, Feat. 509 VII-3 Material Bone Manufacturing Technique Hand-made, turned Date Range ca. 1700-1800 Source Hinks 1988, Type 9A1 Description/Function This large button mold would have been covered with fabric, and at 22mm in diameter it was probably for a coat or breeches	
 	Provenience Phase III, Unit 2, Feat. 509 X-2 Material Copper alloy Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank (missing), spun back to remove casting irregularities Date Range ca. 1720-1830 Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2 Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Large size is indicative of a coat button, or possibly breeches/trousers	
 	Provenience Phase III, Unit 2, Feat. 509 X-3 Material Copper alloy Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank, spun back to remove casting irregularities Date Range ca. 1720-1830 Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2 Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Large size is indicative of a coat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	
 	Provenience Phase III, Unit 3, Feat. 509 I-2 Material Copper alloy Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank, spun back to remove casting irregularities Date Range ca. 1720-1830 Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2 Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Size is indicative of waistcoat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	

IMAGE	DETAILS
	<p>Provenience Phase III, Unit 3, Feat. 509 I-3</p> <p>Material Copper alloy</p> <p>Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank, spun back to remove casting irregularities</p> <p>Date Range ca. 1720-1830</p> <p>Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2</p> <p>Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Size is indicative of waistcoat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.</p>
	<p>Provenience Phase III, Unit 3, Feat. 509 I-7</p> <p>Material Copper alloy</p> <p>Manufacturing Technique Wire shank</p> <p>Date Range Unknown, but probably 18th century based on context</p> <p>Source N/A</p> <p>Description/Function Wire shank, probably of the style that would have gone with a plain cast brass button.</p>
	<p>Provenience Phase III, Unit 4, Feat. 509 II-2</p> <p>Material Copper alloy</p> <p>Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank (missing), spun back to remove casting irregularities</p> <p>Date Range ca. 1720-1830</p> <p>Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2</p> <p>Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Large size is indicative of a coat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.</p>
	<p>Provenience Phase III, Unit 5, Feat. 509 I-3</p> <p>Material Copper alloy</p> <p>Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank, spun back to remove casting irregularities</p> <p>Date Range ca. 1720-1830</p> <p>Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2</p> <p>Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Size is indicative of waistcoat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.</p>

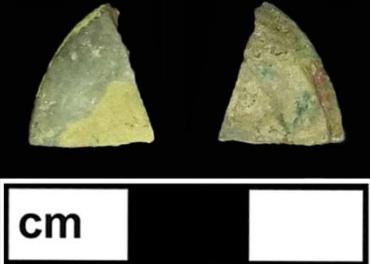
IMAGE	DETAILS	
	Provenience Phase III, Unit 7, Feat. 509 I-2 Material Copper alloy Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank, spun back to remove casting irregularities Date Range ca. 1720-1830 Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2 Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Size is indicative of waistcoat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	
	Provenience Phase II, Test Unit 64, Strat. I, Level 1 Material Copper alloy with white metal plating Manufacturing Technique Face and back cast separately, then joined at the edges Date Range ca. 1680-1800 Source Hinks 1988, Type 3 Description/Function Fragment of a button with white metal plating; too fragmentary to determine the exact type	
	Provenience Phase II, Test Unit 64, Strat. IV, Level 5 Material Copper alloy Manufacturing Technique Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank, spun back to remove casting irregularities Date Range ca. 1720-1830 Source Hinks 1988, Type 2B2 Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave. Size is indicative of waistcoat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	
	Provenience Phase II, Test Unit 70, Strat. IV, Level 2 Material Pewter or copper alloy & iron Manufacturing Technique Cast two piece; pewter or copper alloy face and iron shank (missing) Date Range ca. 1720-1780 Source Hinks 1988, Possibly Type 2B3, but pewter, not brass Description/Function Plain button, slightly concave with incised rim; no mold mark, but doesn't appear to be turned to clean up casting irregularities. Large size is indicative of a coat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	

IMAGE	DETAILS	
 cm 	Provenience	Phase II, Test Unit 72, Strat. I, Level 1
Material	Copper alloy	
Manufacturing Technique	Two-piece cast with eyed wire shank (missing), spun back to remove casting irregularities	
Date Range	ca. 1720-1830	
Source	Hinks 1988, Type 2B2	
Description/Function	Plain button, slightly concave. Large size is indicative of a coat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	
 cm 	Provenience	Phase II, Test Unit 76, Strat. I, Level 1
Material	Copper alloy	
Manufacturing Technique	Two-piece button with dome front and curved back soldered together with two holes left on the back for gasses to vent in the soldering process	
Date Range	ca. 1680-1800	
Source	Hinks 2988, Type 4B1	
Description/Function	Size is indicative of waistcoat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	
 cm 	Provenience	Phase II, Feature 10, Test Unit 78, Strat. I, Level 1
Material	Copper alloy	
Manufacturing Technique	Stamped brass sheet with gilding	
Date Range	ca. 1760-1800	
Source	Hinks 1988, Type 6A1	
Description/Function	Decorative geometric motif with gilding. Large size is indicative of a coat button, or possibly breeches/ trousers.	
 cm 	Provenience	Phase II, Test Unit 89, Strat. I, Level 1
Material	White metal alloy	
Manufacturing Technique	Cast and spun to remove casting irregularities	
Date Range	ca. 1760-1800	
Source	Hinks 1988, Type 2C1; White 2005	
Description/Function	Possible tombac or hard white button, plain and slightly concave. Large size is indicative of a coat button, or possibly breeches/trousers.	

Buckles

A minimum of five clothing-related buckles were recovered in the house cellar: one sterling silver shoe buckle with a steel chape mechanism (Figure 10), one plain fragmentary shoe buckle in three pieces (Figure 11A), one pewter buckle frame fragment with indented decoration (Figure 11B), at least one shoe buckle represented only by a ferrous chape, and one ferrous alloy knee buckle (Figure 12). X-radiography actually identified at least three fragments of ferrous shoe buckle chapes (Figure 11C, D, and F are definite chape fragments, while Figure 1E is a possible chape), but it is possible that two of them represent fragments of the silver shoe buckle chape or the plain shoe buckle chape, so they are not included in the minimum buckle count. Finally, x-rays also revealed an oval frame for another possible buckle chape or an ovoid knee buckle (Figure 11G). However, this ID cannot be confirmed without conservation.

As previously mentioned, both men and women wore shoe buckles throughout the 18th century, and as the century progressed, buckles went from fairly small examples that sat high near the ankle, to fairly large buckles that curved over the instep. After 1720, the chape mechanism for attaching the buckle to the shoe typically consisted of a loop or “roll” with two prongs and a double-pointed tongue. This mechanism was manufactured in steel starting in the last third of the 18th century (Whitehead 1996:103). Since all of the shoe buckle frames from the Houston-LeCompt site are relatively large and curved, and the chapes are ferrous alloys, they fall into this late 18th-century time frame.

The ferrous alloy composition and ovoid shape of the knee buckle in the assemblage also point to a late 18th-century date for its manufacture. Despite abysmal iron preservation at the Houston-LeCompt site, the knee buckle was identified through x-radiography and there was enough core metal left to survive conservation treatment. The orientation of the chape along the long axis of the buckle, and the use of an anchor-style chape are what define this buckle as being for the knee of a pair of breeches. The breeches probably had buttons at the knee as well, but ended with a button hole into which the anchor chape could be inserted. Since the buckle was not sewn on, it could be removed for laundering. Additionally, like shoe buckles, the removable attachment allowed men to wear the same buckles with different garments, or the same garments with different buckles depending upon his preference for the occasion.

Archaeologists often think of ferrous alloy accessories as being the cheapest, lowest class baubles available, especially when compared to examples like a hallmarked sterling shoe buckle, but the latter part of the 18th century represented a boom in popularity of steel accessories and some could be quite expensive. Cut steel buttons and buckles could be made to shine to the point that satirists made fun of the excessive light they gave off (Figure 13). Steel buckles were sometimes finished to look bright blue (“blueing”) or black (“Jappanned”) (Whitehead 1996:103). X-rays did not reveal any evidence of cutwork on the Houston-LeCompt knee buckle, but it is possible that the black or blue finish had been present before corrosion obscured it. As a result, this buckle cannot necessarily be considered less fashionable or even less expensive than a comparable pewter or copper alloy knee buckle.

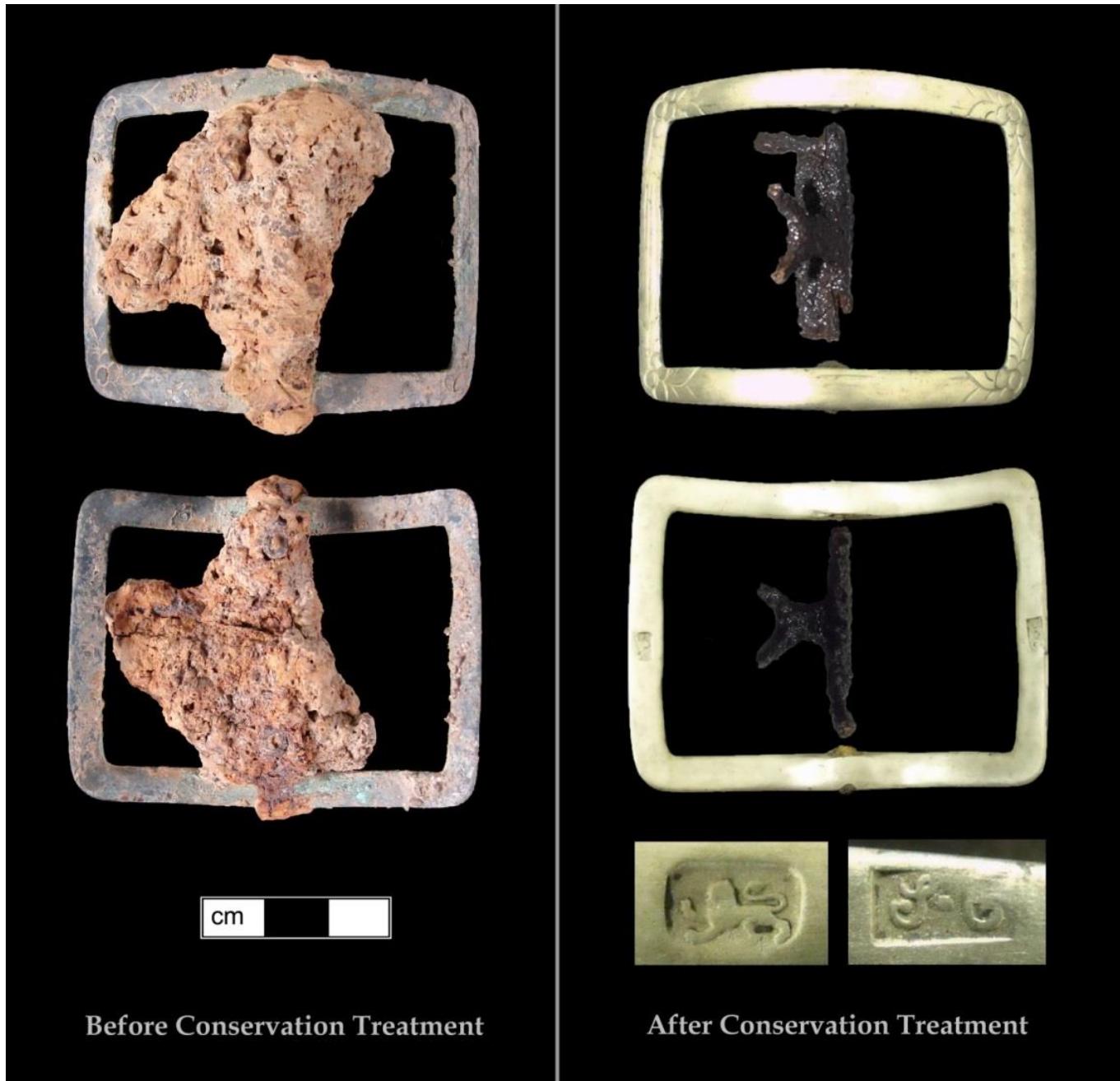


FIGURE 10. STERLING SILVER SHOE BUCKLE WITH IRON SHAPE BEFORE AND AFTER CONSERVATION TREATMENT. THE SILVER BUCKLE FRAME IS MARKED WITH A LION IN A CARTOUCHE, WHICH MEANS THE SILVER IS STERLING. THE SCRIPT INITIALS "S-C" OR "S-E" APPEAR IN ANOTHER CARTOUCHE, THOUGH THIS MARK IS UNIDENTIFIED. THE ABSENCE OF ADDITIONAL MARKS FOR A CITY, DATE, AND DUTY SUGGESTS THAT THIS BUCKLE WAS MADE IN AMERICA, NOT IMPORTED (925-1000.COM 2014).

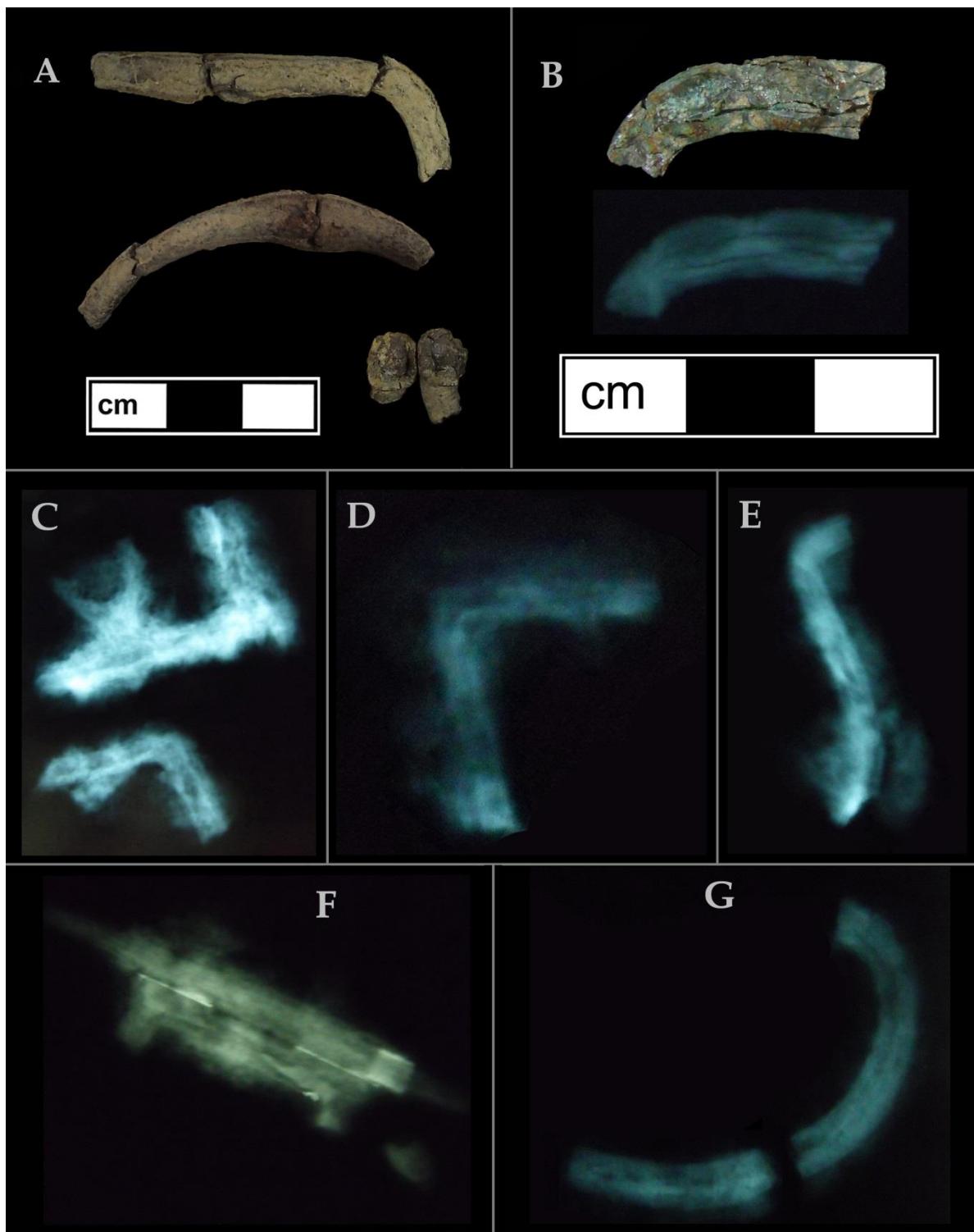


FIGURE 11. ASSORTED BUCKLE FRAGMENTS. A) PLAIN COPPER ALLOY OR PEWTER SHOE BUCKLE IN THREE PIECES (PHASE II, UNIT 82, FEAT. 10, STRAT. IV, LEV. 4). B) PEWTER BUCKLE FRAME FRAGMENT WITH INDENTATIONS FOR DECORATION (PHASE III, FEAT. 509, STRAT. X, LEV. 2). C) X-RAY OF IRON SHOE BUCKLE CHAPE FRAGMENTS (PHASE II, UNIT 64, FEAT. 10, STRAT. IX, LEV. 12). D) X-RAY OF IRON SHOE BUCKLE CHAPE FRAGMENT (PHASE III, UNIT 3, FEAT. 509, STRAT. III, LEV. 3). E) X-RAY OF A POSSIBLE BUCKLE CHAPE FRAGMENT (PHASE II, UNIT 73, FEAT. 7, STRAT. I, LEV. 1). F) X-RAY OF SHOE BUCKLE CHAPE FRAGMENT (PHASE III, FEAT. 509, UNIT 6, STRAT. I, LEV. 3). G) X-RAY OF A POSSIBLE OVOID BUCKLE OR BUCKLE CHAPE (PHASE II, UNIT 66, STRAT. II, LEV. 2).

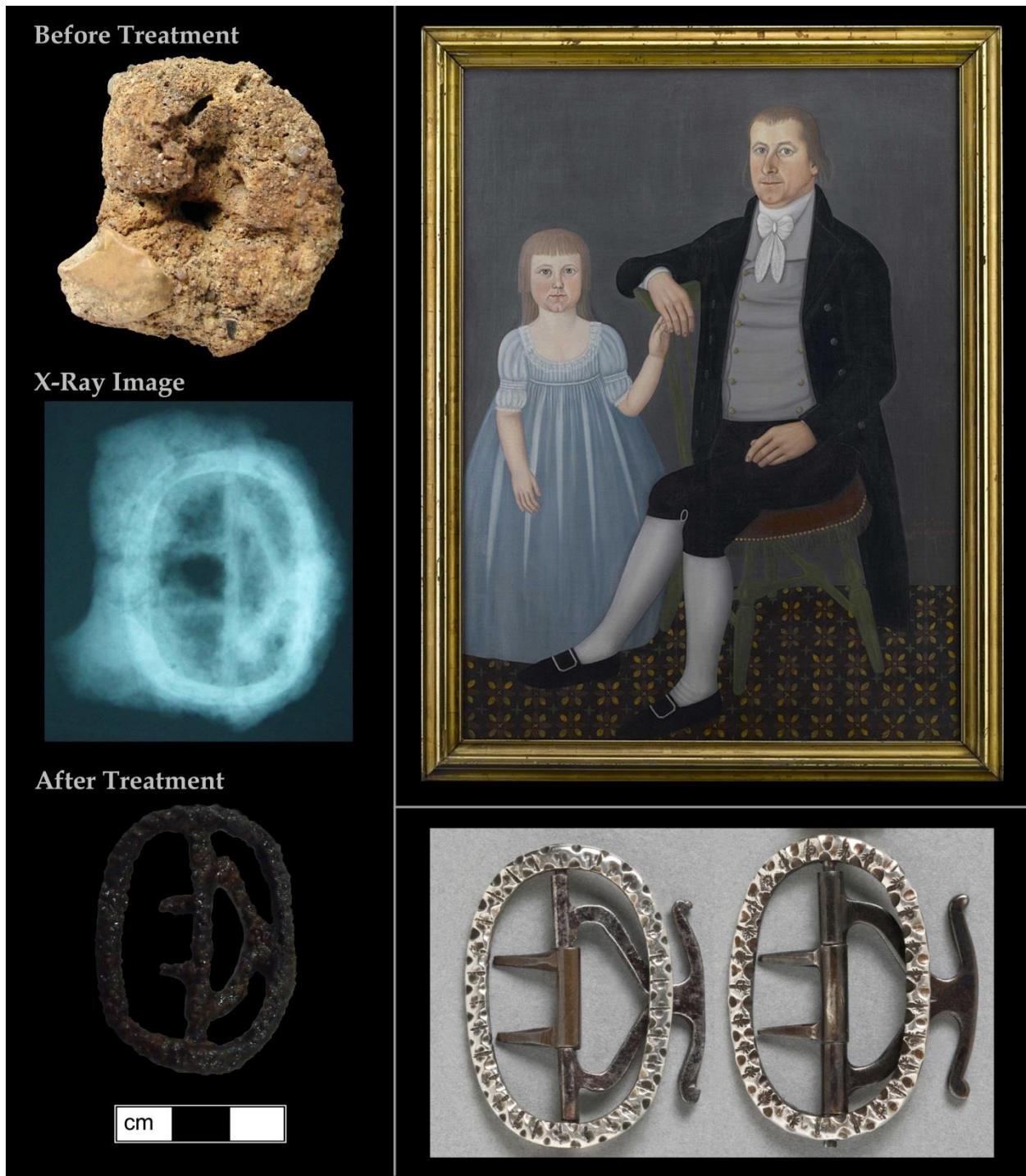


FIGURE 12. A FERROUS KNEE BUCKLE (PHASE III, UNIT 3, FEAT. 509, STRAT. 1, LEV. 6) WAS NOT RECOGNIZABLE UNTIL IT WAS X-RAYED AND THEN CONSERVED (RIGHT). THE SHAPE IS OVOID LIKE THE KNEE BUCKLE WORN BY COMFORT STARR MYGATT IN HIS PORTAIT WITH HIS DAUGHTER LUCY, CA. 1799 (TOP LEFT: JOHN BREWSTER, JR., YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY). EXTANT KNEE BUCKLES SIMILAR TO THE HOUSTON LECOMPT EXAMPLE SHARE THE OVOID FRAME AND STEEL ANCHOR CHAPE, BUT THE FRAME IS SILVER INSTEAD OF STEEL (BOTTOM LEFT: PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART, ACC. 1929-168-17A, B).

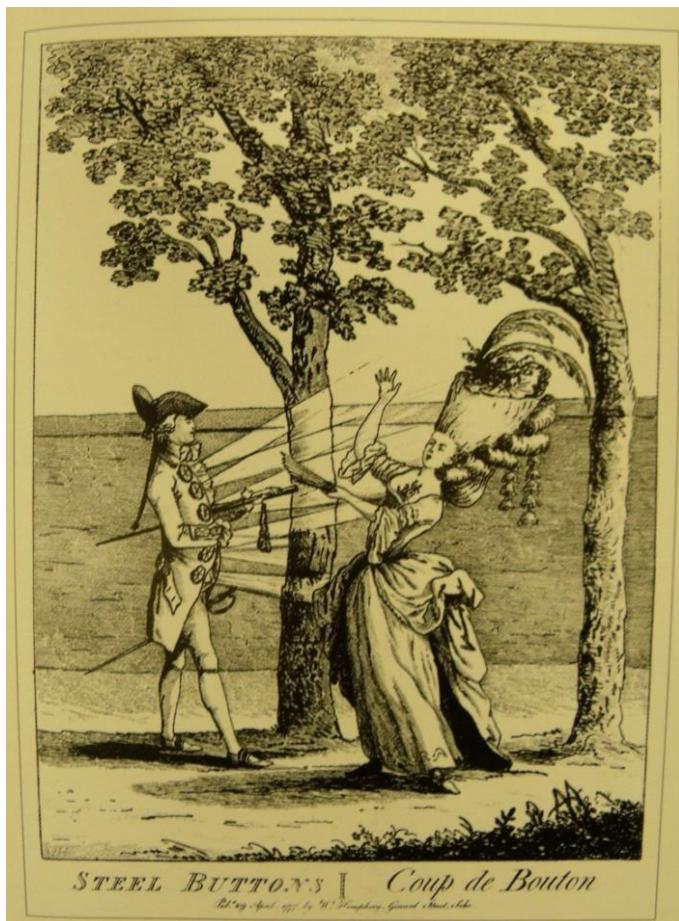


FIGURE 13. CUT STEEL BUTTONS WERE SO SHINY THAT 18TH-CENTURY SATIRISTS MADE FUN OF THEM. *STEEL BUTTONS: COUP DE BOUTON*, ETCHING BY WILLIAM HUMPHREY, C. 1777. LEWIS WALPOLE LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY.

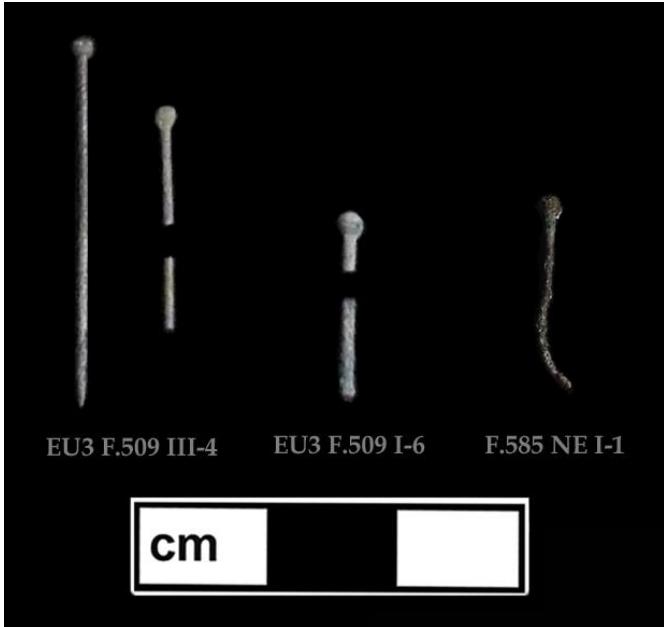


FIGURE 14. PINS WITH WOUND HEADS.

The fourth buckle identified is represented by only a small pewter frame fragment, but it has a simple indented decoration indicating that it is not part of any of the other buckles identified (Figure 11B). It most likely belonged to another sub-rectangular shoe buckle, but because the fragment is so small, the possibility that it was a knee buckle, stock buckle, or even a hat buckle cannot be ruled out.

Overall, the buckle assemblage falls comfortably into the latter decades of the 18th century or the very early 19th century. The diversity of materials is interesting, but not unexpected, as people in the 18th century often chose to wear a mixture of metals depending on what they could afford rather than going for an all “yellow gold” or “silver” look.

OTHER FASTENERS

PINS

There are not many straight pins in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage, but the ones that are present should be acknowledged as possible pre-1800 clothing fasteners (Figures 14 and 15). Pins were an all-purpose fastener in the 18th century, so the examples found at Houston-LeCompt could have been used to fasten clothing, to fasten papers (like a staple or paperclip), to swaddle and diaper babies, or for any other function a person found them to be useful for. Although commonly associated with sewing because of their purpose in the 21st century, sewing was only one of many applications for these handy fasteners.



FIGURE 15. THE WATERCRESS GIRL, BY JOHN RAPHAEL SMITH, SHOWS A YOUNG LADY WHOSE GOWN IS CLOSED AT THE FRONT WITH STRAIGHT PINS (INSET), CA. 1780. FROM THE YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART.

Pins enjoyed so many uses in part because they were so affordable. Pin-making was cited by the economic philosopher Adam Smith as being a perfect example of the efficiency gained by adopting division of labor, since a pin-making operation with ten men, each with a particular task, could churn out about 48,000 pins in a day (Smith 2003[1776]:10-11). In 1697, pins were imported to Maryland valued at 12 pence per thousand. For the sake of comparison, clay tobacco pipes imported on the same ship were valued at 20 pence per gross (*Sheffield v. Stark* 1695-1705), indicating that one pipe had the equivalent value of about 19-20 pins. Pins were easily lost, so they are common archaeological finds, though perhaps not as common as tobacco pipe fragments since they are so small and prone to breakage.

Pins with wound heads were used until the invention of new pin-making machines around 1830 (Beaudry 2006:21). Four of these pre-1830 pins were recovered at the site: three from Feature 509, Unit 3, and one from Feature 585, NE Quad. All could have been lost off of clothing as people moved about, or in the case of Feature 509/10, stored with clothing in the cellar. Pins were more common on women's clothing, though, so if the ones from Feature 509/10 were from clothing, they may have been Mary Houston's. Given the construction of the log house and plank floor above the cellar, pins could easily have been lost among the dust and dirt that accumulated and fell through cracks into the cellar when the floors were swept. Sandy micro-strata noted in the Phase II excavations of Test Unit 64 could be evidence of such sweeping episodes.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

BEADS

A single irregularly-shaped wound glass bead from Feat. 10/509 (EU3, II-1) is also worthy of inclusion in the discussion of personal adornment. Given its proximity to other pre-1800 artifacts and its irregular shape, the bead is probably an 18th-century artifact (Figure 16C). Mechanical manufacture of perfectly spherical beads did not come about until 1817 (Dubin 1987). In the 18th century, beads were used on common jewelry, though they also decorated other items such as lace bobbins, tassels, and rosaries. Their myriad uses make them difficult to categorize as anything more specific than decorative objects. From about 1550 until the Industrial Revolution, access to colonial trade made it possible for people to get more precious materials such as gold beads, pearls, coral, and gemstones, so glass beads had little cachet as jewelry (Dubin 1987). The pre-1800 bead at Houston-LeCompt was therefore either an example of early costume jewelry or a decoration for something other than personal attire.

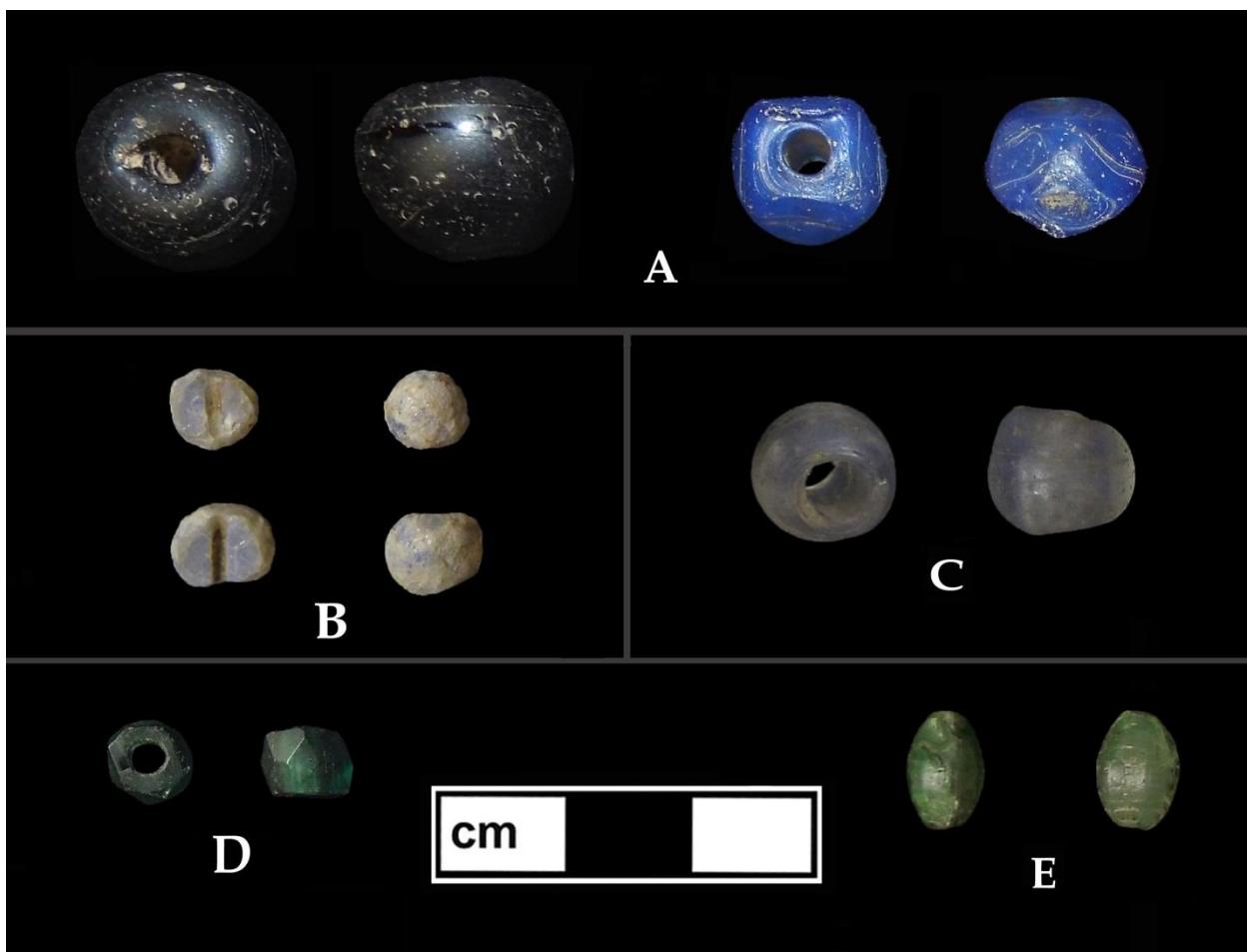


FIGURE 16. GLASS BEADS FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT. A) BLACK AND BLUE WOUND BEADS FROM SU4 MODERN PLOWZONE, B) UNIDENTIFIED DECAYED BEAD FRAGMENTS FROM FEAT. 667, SW QUAD, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1, C) WOUND COLORLESS BEAD FROM FEAT. 509, STRAT 2, LEV. 1, D) DRAWN AND CUT GREEN BEAD FROM FEAT. 667, SW QUAD, STRAT. 3, LEV. 3, D) LIGHT GREEN MOLDED BEAD FROM PHASE II, UNIT 76, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1. THE CONTEXT AND IRREGULAR SHAPE OF BEAD C SUGGESTS THAT IT COULD BE A PRE-1800 BEAD. DATING THE OTHER BEADS IS PROBLEMATIC, BUT SINCE MOST OF THE 18TH-CENTURY CLOTHING IS CONFINED TO FEAT. 509/10, THEY ARE PROBABLY FROM THE 19TH OR EARLY 20TH CENTURY. NECKLACES OF GLASS BEADS WERE ESPECIALLY POPULAR IN THE 1920S.

2.3 Interpretation

As individual specimens, the pre-1800 clothing artifacts at Houston-LeCompt could have many different interpretations, but most of the artifacts are clustered in Feat. 10/509, especially Phase III, Unit 3, making it possible to view them as distinctive sub-assemblage within the Houston-LeCompt collection. The knee buckle is indicative of male attire and the matching coat or waistcoat buttons are also most common on male clothing. Since these were found in proximity to the linked buttons and shoe buckles, the surviving accessories as a whole could represent a portion of a man's wardrobe that was tucked away for storage and remained together until the cellar was filled.

This hypothesis is bolstered by the presence of furniture hardware in the same general location, namely, Feat. 10/509 and Phase III, Unit 3. Drawer pulls, a decorative escutcheon, small drawer knobs, iron hinges, a possible lock, iron straps, and two iron hooks could all be part of a trunk or blanket chest used to store clothing (Figure 17). Why such a piece of furniture was left in the cellar along with its relatively valuable contents, however, is worth considering.

An examination of the historical data at Houston-LeCompt offers a possible explanation for the deposit. Historical records indicate that Mary Houston was living at the site and operating a farm there by the end of the 18th century. Her husband Jacob had died in 1793. In these circumstances, it is easy to imagine Mary Houston packing her late husband's things away in a trunk for sentimental reasons, or in the hope that the clothing and accessories might someday be of some use. Fashion changed dramatically at the turn of the 19th century though, leaving Jacob's clothing outdated. Buckles were no longer popular for shoes or knee breeches, and small white sew-on buttons replaced linked buttons on most shirt necks and cuffs. Jacob's clothing could therefore have languished in the cellar since it was never needed again.

The archaeological record indicates that the cellar would have been a terrible place to store a wooden chest or trunk full of clothes. The brick lining of the cellar probably had at least some leaks or moisture wicking from the surrounding soil, the floor was dirt, and micro-strata of sand indicate that the floor planking above was not much of a barrier to dirt falling through the cracks to the space below. If the cellar was also prone to flood, the wood and cloth could have rapidly deteriorated. Perhaps conditions in the cellar promoted moisture, rot, mold, pests, and general decay of the chest and clothing to the point that the items did not seem salvageable or worth sorting through after a certain amount of time. Even though some of the items had value, such as the silver shoe buckles, it seems that they were forgotten.

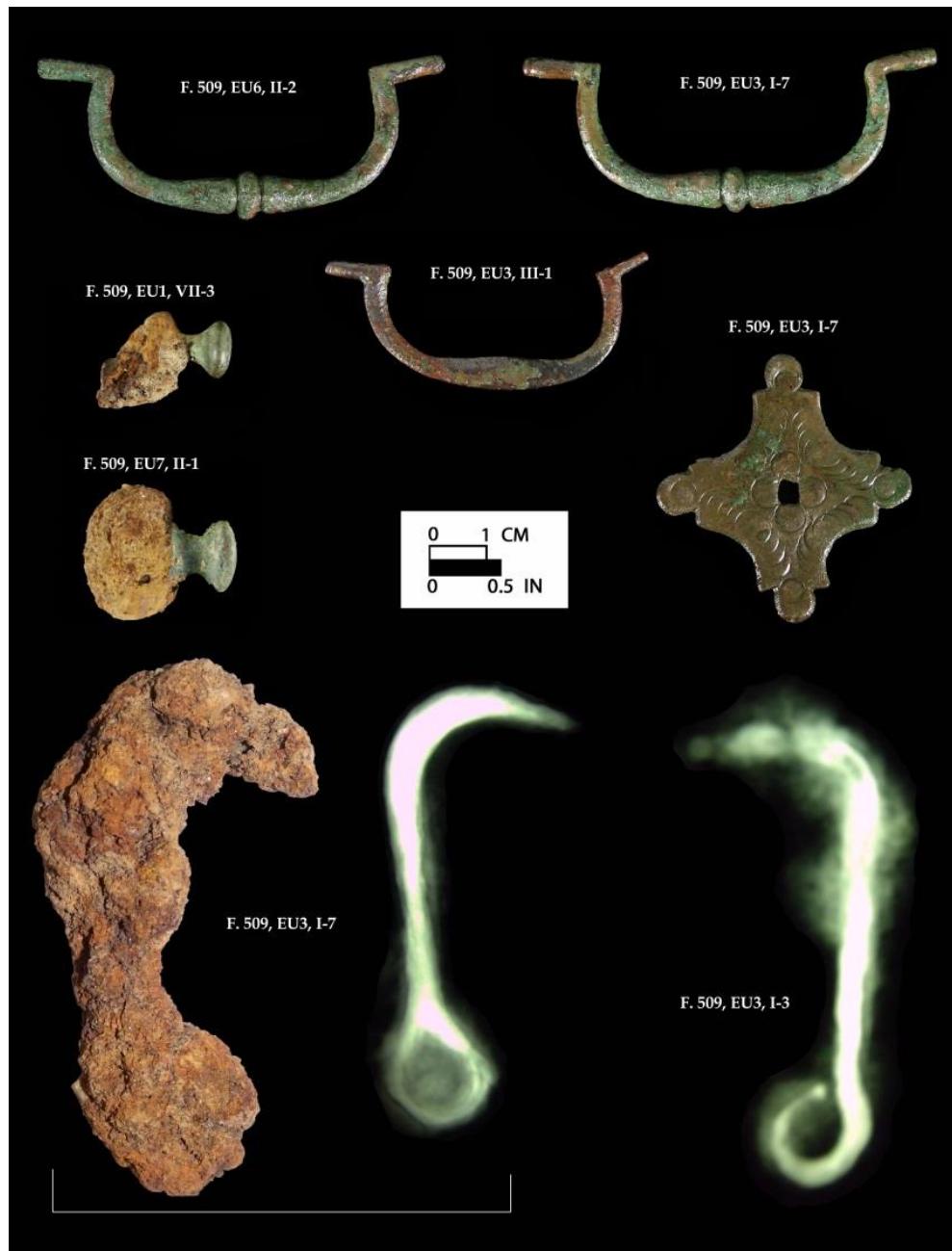


FIGURE 17. FURNITURE HARDWARE FROM FEATURE 10/509 (ABOVE) COULD HAVE BEEN USED ON A STORAGE CHEST FOR CLOTHING IN THE CELLAR. NOT PICTURED IS A POSSIBLE IRON LOCK THAT IS TOO DETERIORATED TO IDENTIFY. THE CONJECTURAL DRAWING AT LEFT SHOWS HOW THE ARTIFACTS COULD HAVE BEEN USED ON ONE PIECE OF FURNITURE. U-SHAPED HANDLES COULD BE DRAWER PULLS OR SIDE HANDLES, BRASS KNOBS MAY HAVE BEEN NEEDED FOR SMALL INTERIOR DRAWERS, AND SOME CHESTS HAD HOOKS TO KEEP THEM CLOSED, ESPECIALLY IF NO LOCK WAS PRESENT OR THE TRUNK LOCK WAS BROKEN.



As for the pre-1800 clothing artifacts found outside of Feat. 10/509, there is not much to speak of. One tombac coat button and one ovoid linked button were found in the plowzone and both could have been used in the early 19th century. Another pre-1800 style button was recovered in Feat. 667, a root cellar presumed to have been affiliated with the house kitchen. The button was found in association with relatively early 18th-century ceramics in an area that may represent a brief pre-Houston occupation by Samuel Guthery. If that is the case, it would not be surprising to find a button that was lost from a man's coat. It is striking, however, that no other evidence of mid-18th century menswear was recovered at the site. If Guthery lived there for any significant length of time, he should have been wearing, and occasionally losing, shoe and knee buckles, linked buttons, and more coat, waistcoat, and breeches buttons. The absence of such artifacts suggests that he was either extremely poorly clothed, or he did not live at the site for very long.

Overall, the pre-1800 clothing assemblage is typical of what would be expected for a modest farmer. The finest object by far is the silver shoe buckle, which stands out as an anomaly in the assemblage. None of the other items were made of silver or even silver plate. Instead, they are made of pewter, white metal, steel, or brass that could be tinned to look silver. The dominance of plain sew-on buttons is a contrast to the variety of decorations for linked buttons, but this, too evidences economy in clothing choices. Linked buttons were the smallest and cheapest accessories to acquire, so it was no hardship to have several pairs, especially if they were not made of precious materials such as silver and gold (Rivers Cofield 2012). The absence of any silver and gold links at the site, despite the presence of a number of styles, is therefore consistent with the choice to change up one's outfit with the equivalent of costume jewelry as opposed to fine jewelry.

The anomalous silver buckle, however, could indicate that the residents of Houston-LeCompt did have finer items in precious materials, but for the most part these did not make it into the archaeological record. Given that buttons usually end up in the archaeological record as accidental losses, silver buttons do appear fairly frequently in archaeological assemblages, but as previously discussed, the pre-1800 clothing items at Houston-LeCompt seem to represent storage of old clothes rather than losses that occurred in the course of daily life. For this reason, the assemblage represents a deliberate selection of items relegated to the cellar, and it is entirely possible that most valuables were sold, handed down, or melted down instead stored. If that is the case, perhaps the silver buckle represents a sentimental keepsake that was held back despite its commercial value. Furthermore, if someone cashed in most of the valuables and only stored the remaining items, this could explain why the clothing was ultimately abandoned in the cellar instead of retrieved before the elements could take their toll.

Still, despite this possibility, it is this author's opinion that the clothing from the cellar could represent a fairly complete wardrobe for a man of modest means. Unlike today, many people of the 18th century were accustomed to wearing the same outfit nearly every day, so middling sites with a lot of clothing-related artifacts tend to have been occupied for a long period of time. In the case of Houston-LeCompt, the pre-1800 accessories cluster at the end of the 18th century. The linked buttons, sew-on buttons, knee buckle, and shoe buckles are contemporary with one another, and there is enough variety to suggest a decent wardrobe as opposed to inexpensive leftovers. Coat, waistcoat, and breeches buttons

are represented, and there is a selection of sleeve buttons and buckles to allow the wearer to change up his suit even if he wore the same one regularly. Additionally, at least three different styles of coat buttons are present; pewter, plain brass, and decorated stamped brass. It is easy to picture these as belonging to a man's 'grubby' coat, daily wear coat, and fancy dress coat, or perhaps coats of different weights for different seasons. All of this suggests a fairly complete suite of clothing for a man of modest means.

Unfortunately, this interpretation is somewhat problematic in that it accounts for all of the pre-1800 clothing items in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage except for a single button found in the side yard (Phase II, Test Unit 89, Strat. I, Level 1). Given the significant presence of pre-1800 buttons and buckles in the house and cellar area, it is reasonable to expect that people living at the site prior to 1800 would have lost more than one button in the yard. Did no one work or play outside of the house while wearing these accessories? How is it that there was only one incidental loss to be recovered archaeologically? While it is possible that the yard space was used differently in the 18th century, and archaeological sampling of high-potential areas skewed the recovery towards 19th and 20th century activity areas, this seems an inadequate explanation since pre-1800 feature contexts other than the cellar were identified and excavated. Without additional evidence or historical information about life at Houston-LeCompt before 1800, there is no way to explain the apparent lack of clothing evidence beyond the house and cellar.

3. CLOTHING FROM 1800-1865

3.1 GENERAL FASHION SUMMARY CA. 1800-1865

The neoclassical styles that arose at the end of the 18th century dominated the first 20 years of the 19th century as much of Europe became embroiled in the Napoleonic Wars, and Napoleon himself drew inspiration for his quest to build an empire from the example of ancient Rome (Johnston 2009; Takeda and Spilker 2010). By 1820, the Napoleonic wars had subsided and changes in fashion began that had less to do with large international events than with idiosyncratic trends. Between 1820 and 1840, ladies' waistlines migrated down again, and hem diameters increased, adopting more of an A-line shape.

The short puffed sleeves of the earlier decades began an odd metamorphosis of their own, expanding to enormous bubble-like proportions at the shoulder that required specialized padded undersleeves (Lynn 2010:168). These lengthened into long gigot or leg-o-mutton sleeves for a few years before the voluminous portion of the sleeve gradually moved down the arm from shoulder, to elbow, to forearm until finally, by 1840, it disappeared as if it fell off once it reached the cuff (Johnston 2009).

At the close of the 1830s, dresses once again had cinched natural waistlines that required stays or corsets, and skirts were once again full. The invention of metal eyelets (grommets) in 1828 allowed tighter corset lacing without harm to the fabric, so narrow waists were easier to achieve (Takeda and Spilker 2010:21). The hourglass or bell-shaped silhouette this created dominated ladies wear into the 1860s (Lynn 2010).

Menswear did not change quite as dramatically. The three-piece suit continued to consist of trousers, a coat, and waistcoat, which later became known as a vest. Menswear also remained plain compared to the excesses of 18th century adornment (Johnston 2009:7). Tails continued in use as did long frock coats with a narrow waist and skirt-like fullness from the waist that ended just above the knee (Davis 1994). Narrow waists were desirable for both men and women to create an hour-glass silhouette. The fashion-minded men of this period employed corsets to cinch the waist and strategic padding for areas deemed worthy of emphasizing, such as the shoulders, underarm, chest, and calves (Davis 1994; Takeda and Spilker 2010; Willet and Cunnington 1992). Trousers were no longer as tightly fitted to the leg, but collars were so high and tightly fitted they flirted with the ears (Willet and Cunnington 1992). Boots again fell out of popularity in favor of shoes, but the top hat continued to dominate headwear for men.

Major changes in how clothing was manufactured were underway during this period. The invention and spread of the sewing machine in the mid- 19th century revolutionized the clothing industry and home sewing (Takeda and Spilker 2010:12). Models patented in the U.S. in the 1840s and 1850s launched companies like Singer and made sewing machines affordable and accessible for personal use. Although hand-work continued to be popular and necessary for buttonholes, embroidery, and other tricky stitching, sewing machines sped up the process of sewing straight seams immensely by the 1860s. Instead of just hurrying up the process of making clothes, manufacturers used this opportunity to make clothes more complicated and ornate (Takeda and Spilker 2010).

Industrial production also changed other aspects of clothing, such as fasteners and foundational garments. Flexible metal busks were introduced for use in corsets, and metal wire hoops were strategically assembled to create cage crinolines that supported ever-widening hems without the extra weight of layered petticoats (Johnston 2009). Not coincidentally, the adoption of these crinoline hoops made pantaloons, previously present but of dubious reputation, essential undergarments for warmth and modesty (Lynn 2010:22).

Buttons enjoyed a boom as American manufacturers, such as the Scovill company in Connecticut, began mass production of metal buttons and dominated the American market by the 1830s (Luscomb 1967: 174; Tice 1997). As mentioned earlier, the Prosser technique for making high-fired ceramic buttons was developed in the 1840s, and Goodyear was making hard rubber buttons by 1851 (Fink and Ditzler 1993; Luscomb 1967:91). Thus the first half of the 19th century was dominated by hand-made garments, but the period from 1850-1865 was one of transition as fashion and industry joined forces to dramatically change what people wore.

The language of clothing changed in this period as well. "Stays" became "corsets," "shifts" became "chemises," "waistcoats" became "vests" and so on. It is possible that the names of clothing changed in part because of a shift in thinking about what was, and was not, decent and proper to see or discuss. A marked shift in society's sense of propriety took place in the early 19th century that continued through the Victorian Era. Anything that could be seen as relating to sexuality was closeted, including references to undergarments deemed 'vulgar.' Willet and Cunnington (1992: 97) cite a prudish fear of sex in the 19th century as the reason why, "Underclothing, especially women's, came to be shrouded in a moral fog

of reticence." Changes in terminology seem to be connected with this attitude; stays and shifts could be visible, but corsets and chemises were most decidedly undergarments in need of full coverage. The garments still served the same purpose, but their milieu shifted from public to private.

BUTTONS CA. 1800-1865

The early 19th century represented a decline in the popularity of showy decorative buttons. Over-accessorizing in general was passé, so menswear shed its enormous coat buttons in favor of modestly-sized buttons that were plain brass or covered in textiles to match the coat, waistcoat, or trousers so as to blend with the garment (Fink and Ditzler 1993). When ladies wore buttons for riding habits and the like similar rules applied. In keeping with the theme of modest buttons, the early 19th century was the heyday of the Dorset button; a small threadwork button rendered over a metal ring that was typically used for white clothing such as shirts, infant gowns, and ladies' muslin and lawn gowns (Figure 18). The main exception to the modest use of buttons of the early 19th century was the popularity of the military look inspired by the Napoleonic wars (Figure 19). Ladies' garments such as pelisses and spencers saw an uptick in the use of buttons as decorative trimmings and fasteners during this period as they mimicked the uniforms of the men (Johnston 2009).

From 1830-1865 men continued to fasten coats, vests, and trousers with buttons while women tended to wear buttons as decoration on outerwear. Undergarments increasingly attached with buttons for both men and women, even on petticoats and pantalettes where drawstrings or hooks and eyes had previously dominated. The gradual adoption of braces or suspenders in menswear also increased the number of buttons employed. Plain bone, shell, or Prosser ceramic buttons were used for suspenders and undergarments that would not be visible when one was fully dressed.

Changes in children's clothing also started to necessitate more plain utilitarian buttons. Miniature pantaloons, petticoats, and shirts for children employed buttons at the waist to keep everything together under whatever outerwear the children wore. No doubt the secure buttoning of everyone in the family into their many layers was a technique for maintaining the full coverage that social mores of the Victorian Era deemed essential.



FIGURE 18. THIS CA. 1800 INFANT GOWN HAS DORSET BUTTONS AT THE SHOULDER FOR FASTENING A SLEEVE-GATHERING STRING. IT CLOSES AT THE BACK WITH TWO TIES AND ONE DORSET BUTTON. SIMILAR FASTENERS WERE USED ON LADIES GOWNS AS WELL. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



FIGURE 19. THIS CA. 1815-1820 SILK PELISSE SHOWS THE USE OF BUTTONS AS A MILITARY-INSPIRED TRIM ON LADIES' OUTERWEAR (VINTAGE TEXTILE 2014A).

3.2 HOUSTON-LECOMPT CLOTHING, 1800-1865

The clothing signature in the archaeological assemblage that can be definitively assigned to the period from 1800-1865 is very small. This is somewhat unexpected given that the site was presumably occupied by Mary Houston, her son James and his wife Helen during this period, but the data is consistent with clothing trends of the time and a lack of diagnostics. The problem has less to do with the presence of people and clothing than with the overlap of manufacturing techniques that came from the 18th century or continued into the late 19th century. Furthermore, fewer buttons, buckles, and metal fasteners were used in this period than had been used in the 18th century, so fewer artifacts would be expected to survive in the archaeological record. Mary Houston's wardrobe probably consisted of high-waisted gowns of relatively affordable materials. These gowns would fasten with thread buttons, Dorset buttons, ties, or pins (Figure 20), leaving little or no non-organic materials for the archaeologist to recover.

BUTTONS

Manufacturing techniques for early 19th century buttons often continued 18th century traditions or represented new techniques that were used well into the late 19th and early 20th century. For example, a number of the unmarked brass buttons shown in Table 1 have a manufacture date of ca. 1720-1830 (Hinks 1988). These buttons could date to the early 19th century, but given their strong archaeological association with late 18th-century buckles and linked buttons, probability favors their use on late 18th-century clothing.



FIGURE 20. CA. 1800 BIB-FRONT DRESS THAT ATTACHED WITH STRAIGHT PINS (VINTAGE TEXTILE 2014B). PIN HOLES ARE VISIBLE AT THE CORNER OF THE DROP FRONT. THIS MODEST GOWN IS THE TYPE OF DRESS MARY HOUSTON MAY HAVE WORN WHEN SHE LIVED AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT.

Back marks and diagnostic decorative motifs are the best way to identify early 19th century buttons. As industrial production ratcheted up in the 19th century, adding back marks became an easy way of advertising the quality of the button or the manufacturer. The terms “gilt” and “treble gilt” appear on

buttons from Houston-LeCompt following this trend (Figure 21:B-C). Two buttons from the site have the name Scovill, indicating their manufacture by a prominent button manufacturer in Waterbury, CT (Figure 21: C-D).

Two military style buttons with eagle motifs can be dated to the mid-19th century. A small Naval button depicts an eagle and fouled anchor motif dating to ca. 1837-1855 (Figure 21A), while the back mark of the other eagle button dates it from ca. 1850-1865 (Figure 21D; Tice 1997). Houston-LeCompt was occupied by James Houston and his family from 1816 until his death in 1849. James' 2nd cousin, James Boggs, then moved in as a tenant. Although they occupied the site when the military buttons were manufactured, it is unknown whether either James was affiliated with the armed services. As previously discussed, buttons can represent incidental losses by site inhabitants or visitors, or they can be curated and reused. Similarly, military uniforms can enter the mainstream as hand-me-downs or surplus clothing, making it unadvisable to suggest that the presence of the buttons at Houston-LeCompt illustrates the presence of a soldier. It does however, indicate that military actions and operations did affect the site in this period, even if it was just indirect acquisition of old uniforms or incidental losses by visitors. Additionally, the naval button is from Feature 667, SW Quad, Strat. 4, which provides a good TPQ of 1837 for the filling of that feature.

Several more Houston-LeCompt buttons could have been used between 1800 and 1865, but their dates are not definite. These include hand-carved bone buttons (Figures 22-23), shell buttons (Figure 24), stamped brass buttons with no maker's marks (Figure 25), and hard rubber buttons which were introduced in the mid-19th century and patented by Goodyear in 1851 (Figures 26). The brass and bone buttons could be pre-1800 or post 1865, and rubber buttons continued in use throughout the second half of the 19th century. Shell buttons were used between 1800 and 1865, but they also remained very popular into the 20th century so it is possible that none of the buttons shown in Figure 24 pre-date 1865.



FIGURE 21. HOUSTON -LECOMPT BUTTONS WITH MAKER'S MARKS OR DECORATIONS THAT PLACE THEM IN THE 1800-1865 TIME PERIOD. FOR PROVENIENCE INFORMATION, DESCRIPTIONS, AND CITATIONS SEE TABLE 2.

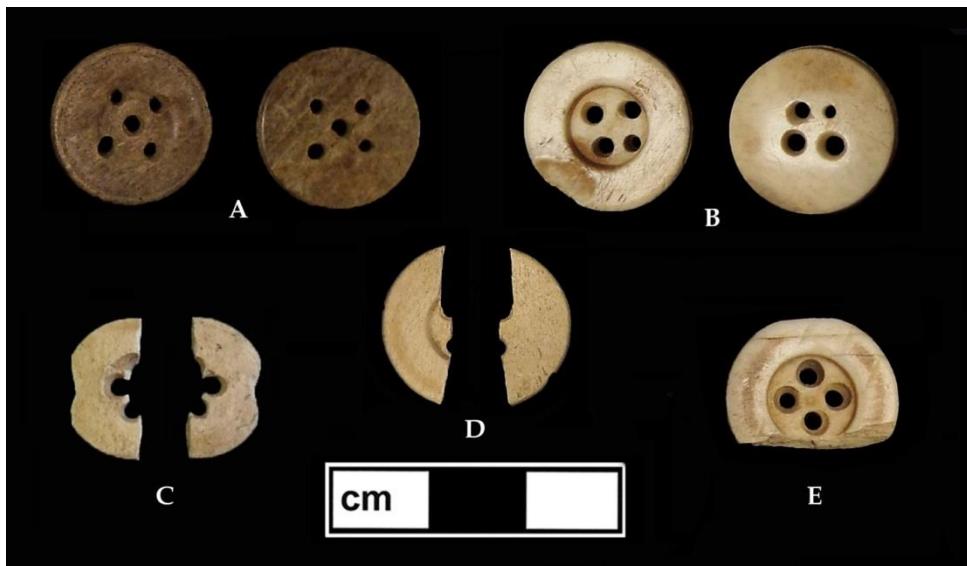


FIGURE 22. ASSORTED BONE SEW-THROUGH BUTTONS. FOR PROVENIENCE INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTIONS, SEE TABLE 2.

FIGURE 23. HAND-TURNED BONE BUTTONS WERE USED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF OCCUPATION AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT. THE LONGEVITY OF THE BONE BUTTON CAN BE SEEN IN ITS USE ON A CA. 1830-1850 QUILTED SILK PETTICOAT (LEFT) AND A BOY'S SHIRT IN THE STYLE OF LITTLE LORD FAUNTERLOY, CA. 1895-1910. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



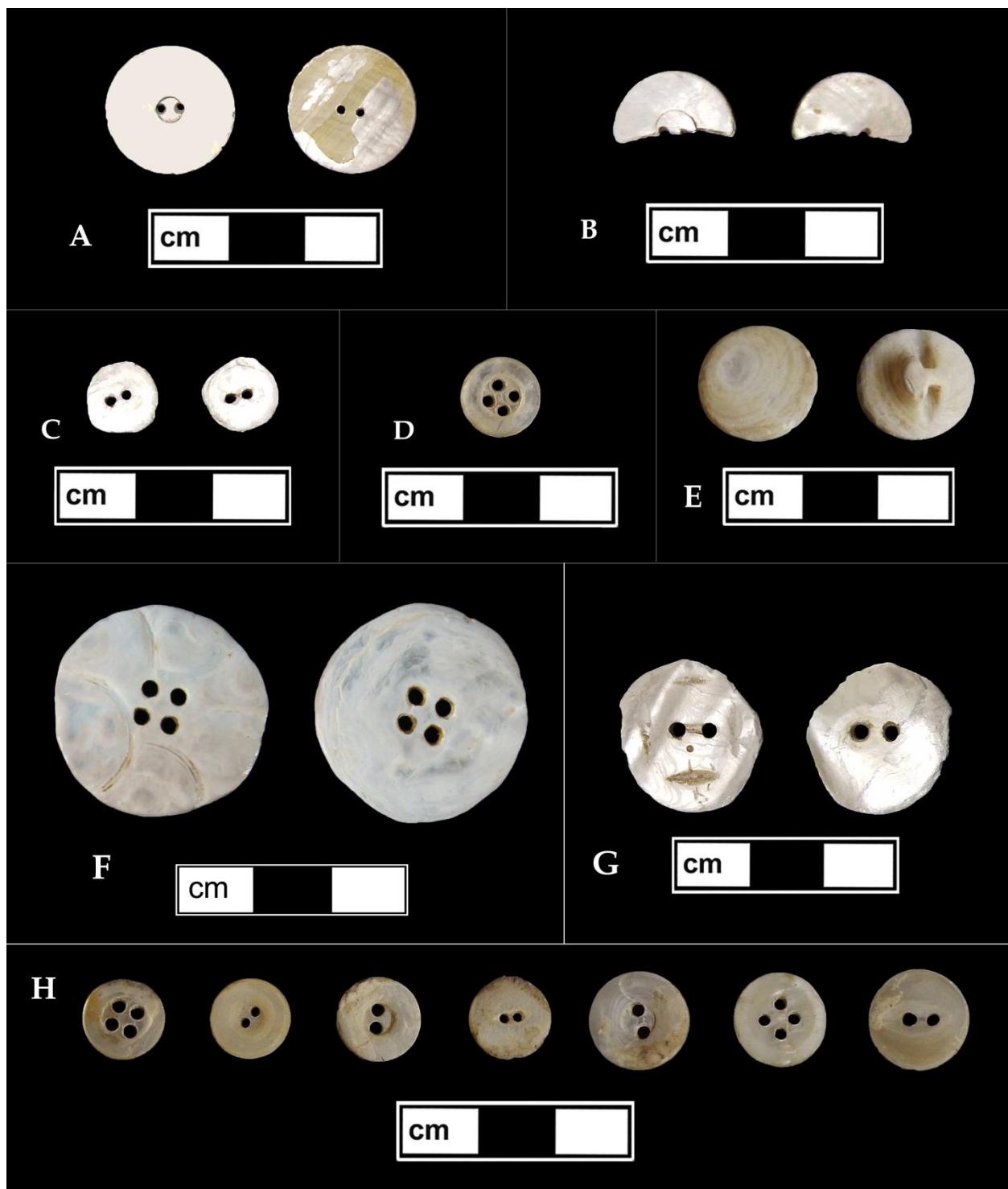


FIGURE 24. ASSORTED SHELL BUTTONS. FOR PROVENIENCE INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTIONS, SEE TABLE 2.

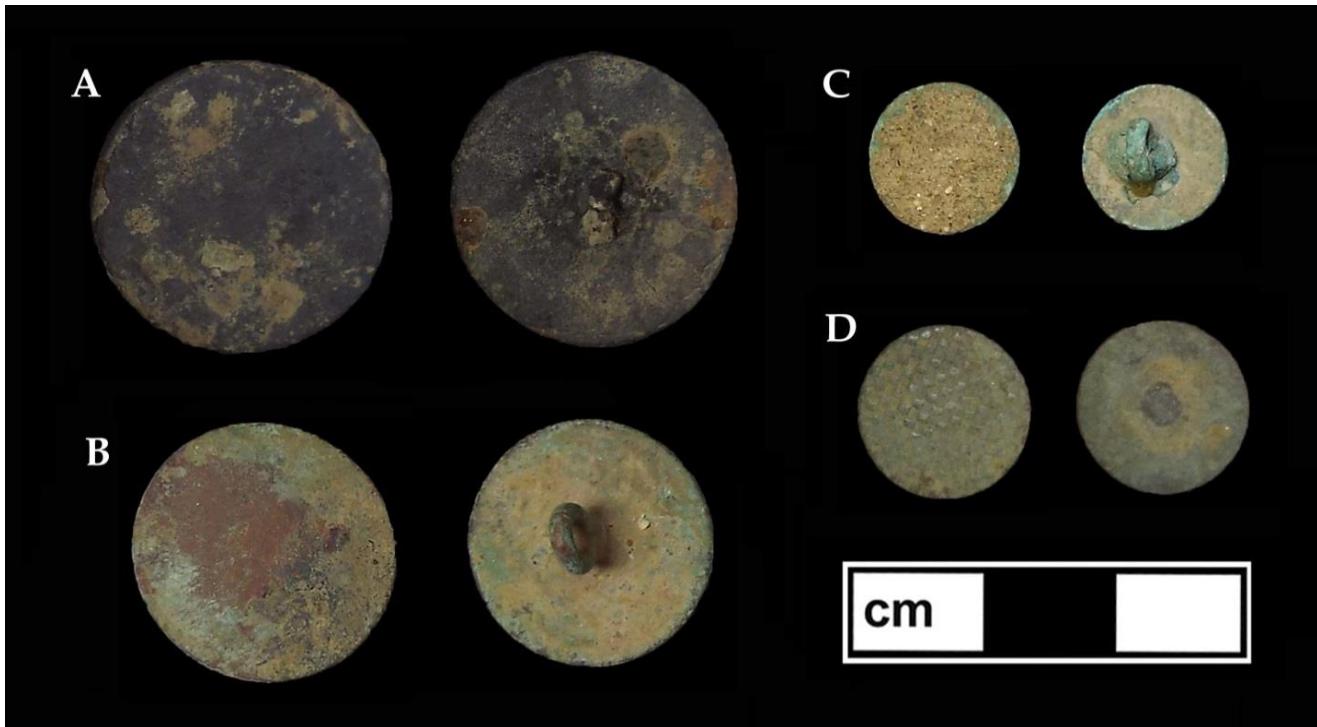


FIGURE 25. ASSORTED BRASS DISC BUTTONS. FOR PROVENIENCE INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTIONS, SEE TABLE 2.



FIGURE 26. TWO HARD RUBBER BUTTONS. TOP: PHASE III, SU 5, MODERN PLOWZONE, MARKED "N. R. CO GOODYEAR'S P.T. 1851". BOTTOM: UNPROVENIENCED BUTTON, NO DECORATION OR MARKS.

TABLE 2: PROVENIENCE AND DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BUTTONS IN FIGURES 21-22, 24-25.

FIGURE	PROVENIENCE	DESCRIPTION
21A	Phase III, F. 667, SW Quad, Strat. IV, Level 1, kitchen cellar	Federal Navy button with an eagle over the fouled anchor, ca. 1837-1855 (Tice 1997:156-157)
21B	Phase II, Unit 82, Strat. I, Level 1, house foundation and cellar area	Plain brass button with missing shank, marked "GILT" on the back with an ivy wreath, ca. 1770-1810 (Hinks 1998, type 6B1)
21C	Phase II, Unit 87, Strat. I, Level 1, trash burning area, backyard midden	Plain brass button marked "SCOVILLS/ TREBLE GILT" on the back, ca. 1827-1840 (Tice 1997: 31-32)
21D	Phase I, FF11-3385	Button with eagle motif with a partially legible mark on the back reading "WATERBUTY/ SCOVILL M," ca. 1854-1865 (Fink and Ditzler 1993:67; Tice 1997)
21E	Phase III, SU9-MPZ, backyard midden	Plain brass button marked on the back "LONDON * IMPERIAL" in concentric circles, ca. 1790-1830, (Hinks 1998, Type 6b1)
22A	Phase II, Unit 71, Strat. I, Lev. 1, backyard midden	Five-hole sew through bone button
22B	Phase II, Unit 19, Strat. II, Lev. 3, backyard midden	Four-hole sew-through bone button with a depressed center
22C	Unprovenienced	Four or five-hole sew through bone button half with a depressed center
22D	Phase II, Unit 93, Strat. I, Lev. 1, house foundation and cellar area	Four or five-hole sew through bone button half with a depressed center
22E	Phase II, Unit 98, Strat. I, Lev. 1, backyard midden	Four-hole sew-through bone button with a depressed center, missing about 1/3 of the rim
24A	Phase I, Surface, FF11-2953	Plain brass disc button with missing shank
24B	Phase II, Unit 65, Strat. I, Lev. 1, backyard midden	Plain brass disc button with alpha shank
24C	Phase II, Unit 66, Strat. IV, Lev. 3, unit over the cellar, within the house foundation	Plain brass disc button with alpha shank
24D	Phase II, Unit 67, Feat. 7, Strat. I, Lev. 1, backyard midden	Brass disc button with a checked pattern on the front; missing the shank
25A	Phase II, Unit 94, Strat. I, Lev. 1, decayed brick floor and outdoor work area	2-hole sew-through button with very small holes set in a central depression just big enough to surround these holes
25B	Phase I, Surface, FF11-676	2-hole shell button with a circular depression around the center holes
25C	Phase II, Unit 70, Strat. I, Lev. 1, house foundation and cellar area	2-hole sew-through button, too worn to determine if decoration had been present
25D	Phase III, Feat. 687, Backhoe, well	4-hole sew-through button with recessed center
25E	Phase III, Feat. 759, North ½, Strat. 1, Lev. 1, charcoal-rich feature probably related to the nearby backyard work area (Feat. 724)	Plain shell disc button carved with integrated raised, sew-through shank on the back
25F	Phase I, Surface, FF11-524	4-hole shell button with some decorative arc-shaped grooves
25G	Phase II, Unit 70, Strat. I, Lev. 1, house foundation and cellar area	2-hole sew-through button, 'fish-eye' depression at the center with four more fish-eye depressions around the center for decoration
25H	Phase III, Feat. 687, Strat. 1, Lev. 1, well	2 Sew-through four-hole buttons with depressed centers, 2 Sew-through two-hole buttons with eye-shaped depressed centers, and 3 Sew-through, two-hole buttons with circular depressed centers

A final category of buttons that entered the scene between 1800 and 1865 is known to archaeologists as the Prosser button, based in the name of the inventor who patented the high-fired ceramic technique used to make them (Sprague 2002). Collectors tend to call these “China” buttons, and they are also sometimes called porcelain or glass with dubious accuracy (Luscomb 1967; Sprague 2002). Although these buttons were in common usage by 1865, their popularity continued and they will be discussed below along with other buttons from the late 19th century.

BUCKLES

Most buckles that were popular in the 18th century went out of style in the early 19th century. Shoe buckles were largely discarded in favor of slipper-style shoes or Wellington boots. Knee buckles disappeared as trousers replaced knee breeches. Women did adopt belt or girdle buckles with increased frequency in the 1820s and 1830s (Figure 27), but no such buckles were identified in the Houston-LeCompt collection. In fact, none of the Houston-LeCompt buckles can be confidently attributed to this time period.

OTHER FASTENERS

Hooks and eyes were frequently used as attachments for female clothing in the early 19th century, but the Houston-LeCompt site has fairly poor iron preservation, so small ferrous hooks and eyes might not survive. Only one possible early ferrous hook was identified through x-radiography (Figure 28). The location of the possible hook (Feature 509/10) and its robust size indicate that it could be from the early site occupation or clothing stored in the cellar. A brass hook (Phase II, Unit 70, Strat. 1, Lev. 1) and a brass wire bar for a hook (Phase III, Feat. 687, Strat. 1, Lev. 1) were also recovered, but these appear to be later thanks to the context and the machine-made quality of the wire.

The pins discussed above could date to this period, since machine-made pins did not become available until the 1830s (See Figure 14). Additionally, two machine made pins in the assemblage could have been made any time after the 1830s (Figure 29).

OTHER ACCESSORIES

If Mary owned jewelry such as earrings, necklaces, and bracelets, the only possible evidence in the assemblage is the discovery of beads, a watch fob spinner, and paste (glass) jewels. Unfortunately, drawn and wound beads such as those recovered at Houston-LeCompt beads cannot necessarily be attributed to a particular time period (See Section 2.4 above and Figure 16). The same is true of a three-sided glass fob spinner that could have been worn by men or women (Figure 30), and several paste jewels that may have been used on accessories of the 19th century (Figure 31). Molded paste insets similar to those in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage have been recovered on 18th-century sites (Rivers Cofield 2002-2014), but they remained in use through the 19th century and the Houston-LeCompt examples seem to have been deposited with later artifacts. None were found in the cellar feature with other Pre-1800 artifacts. Similar conical faceted and molded shapes were used on 19th century buttons (Bottom of Figure 31), but that is not to say the artifacts were not from jewelry or some other bejeweled accessory. Unfortunately not enough is known about the evolution of pastes to narrow the date down.



FIGURE 27. THIS 1827 WATERCOLOR OF A WOMAN AND CHILD BY ADAM BUCK SHOWS THE POPULARITY OF GAUZY FLOWING WHITE GOWNS, PUFFED SLEEVES, GIRdle BUCKLES, AND SLIPPER-STYLE SHOES. THE WASITLINE IS JUST STARTING ITS DESCENT BACK TO NATURAL LEVELS AND SLEEVES ARE GETTING FULLER AT THIS PERIOD. NOTE THAT OTHER THAN THE BUCKLE AND A FINGER RING, NEITHER THE WOMAN NOR THE CHILD IN THIS IMAGE APPEARS TO BE WEARING ANYTHING THAT WOULD SURVIVE IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD. THE BRITISH MUSEUM, ACCESSION NUMBER 1987,0307.10

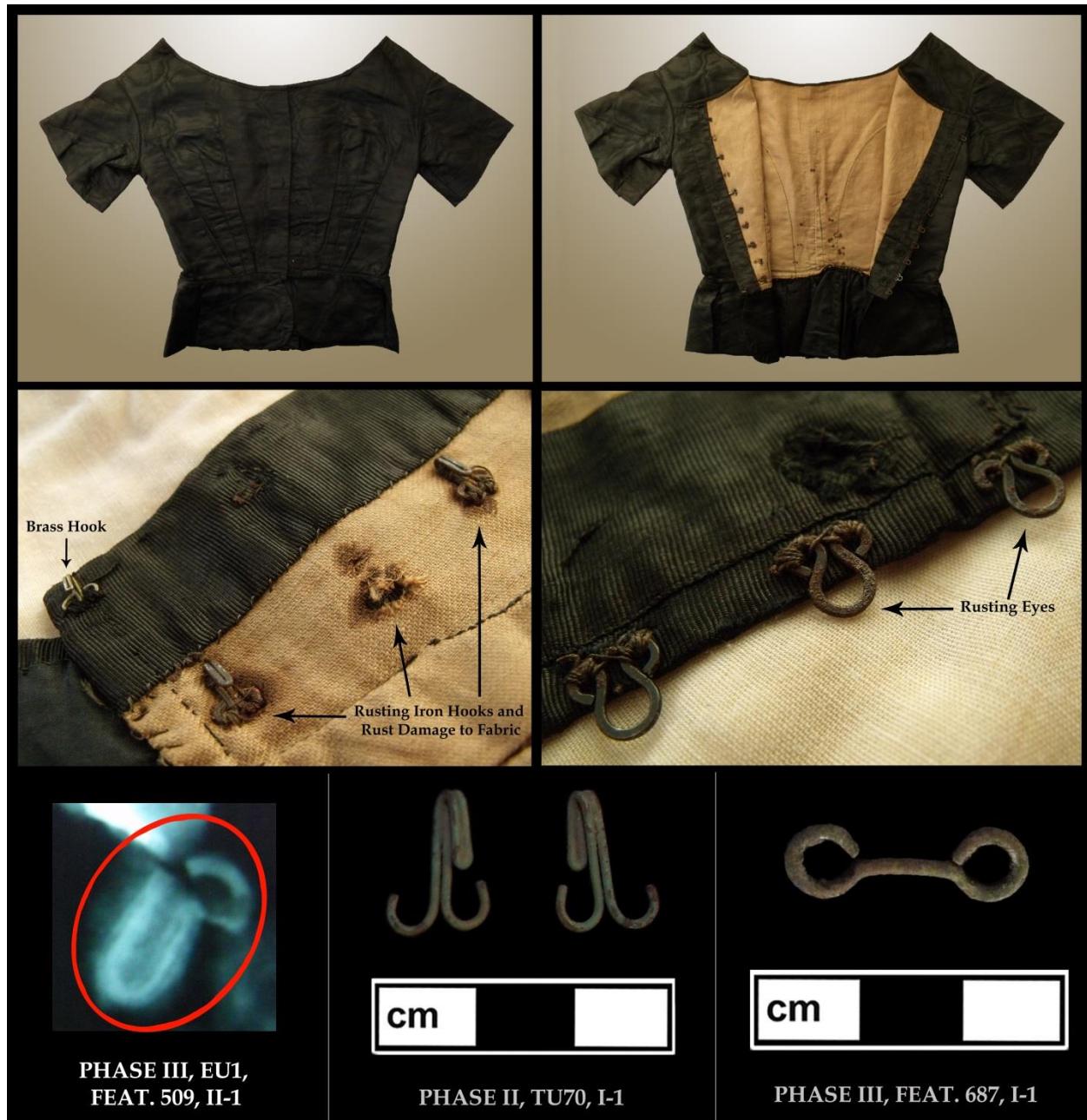


FIGURE 28. HOOKS AND EYES WERE FREQUENTLY USED AS ATTACHMENTS FOR FEMALE CLOTHING IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, BUT THEY WERE OFTEN MADE OF IRON AND WERE PRONE TO RUST AS SHOWN ON THE MID-19TH CENTURY BLACK BODICE ABOVE (FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION). THE HOUSTON-LECOMPT SITE HAS POOR IRON PRESERVATION, SO SMALL FERROUS HOOKS AND EYES MIGHT NOT SURVIVE, THOUGH ONE POSSIBLE FERROUS HOOK WAS IDENTIFIED THROUGH X-RADIOGRAPHY (BOTTOM LEFT). A COPPER ALLOY HOOK (BOTTOM CENTER) AND BAR FOR A HOOK (BOTTOM RIGHT) WERE ALSO RECOVERED. SINCE HOOKS AND EYES WERE USED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF OCCUPATION, IT IS DIFFICULT TO DATE THEM, THOUGH CONTEXT INDICATES THAT THE IRON ONE COULD BE EARLY, AND THE BAR FROM FEATURE 687, THE LAST WELL AT THE SITE, IS PROBABLY LATE.

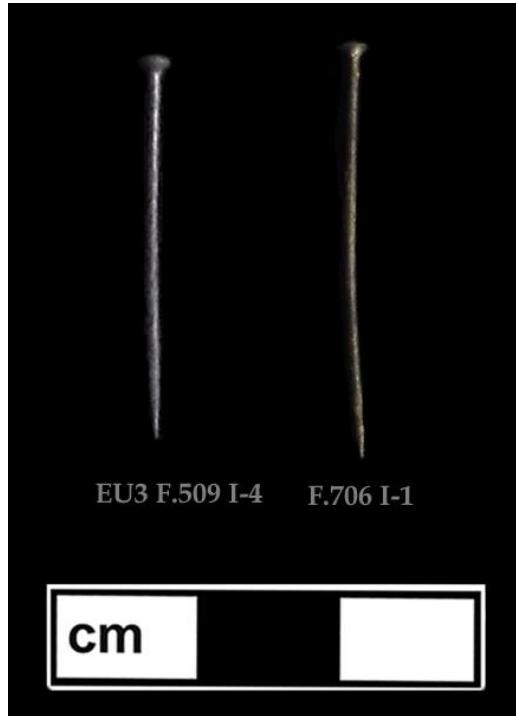


FIGURE 29. MACHINE-MADE STRAIGHT PINS FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT.



FIRST QUALITY ROLLED GOLD & GOLD FILLED CHARMS



cm

FIGURE 30. THREE-SIDED WATCH FOB SPINNERS WERE USED THROUGHOUT THE HOUSTON-LECOMPT PERIOD OF OCCUPATION. LEFT: AN 18TH-CENTURY WATCH FOB (PENACEK 2011). TOP RIGHT: ASSORTED WATCH FOBS OFFERED BY MOORE & EVANS IN 1898 (HINKS 1991:301). CENTER BOTTOM: A LATE 19TH CENTURY WATCH FOB WITH A THREE-SIDED SPINNER (EBAY 2014H). BOTTOM RIGHT: GLASS FOB SPINNERS OF UNKNOWN DATE FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT (PHASE II, UNIT 70, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1).

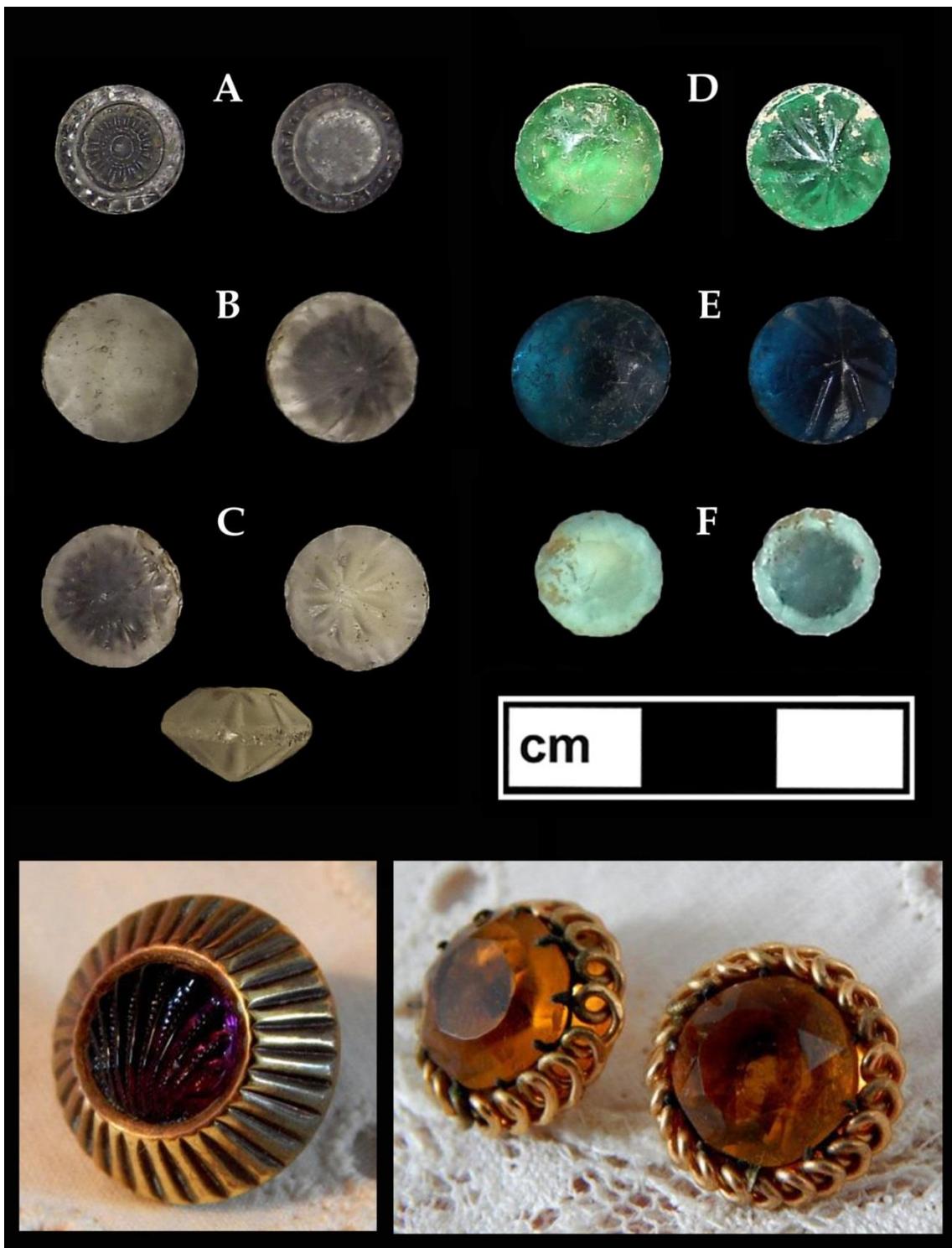


FIGURE 31. PASTE INSERTS FROM HOUSTON LECOMPT RESEMBLE JEWELS ON SOME 19TH CENTURY BUTTONS (ETSY 2014 C AND F). FOR PROVENIENCE AND DESCRIPTION INFORMATION, SEE TABLE 3.

TABLE 3: PROVENIENCE AND DESCRIPTION INFORMATION ABOUT PASTES FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT.

FIGURE	PROVENIENCE	DESCRIPTION
31A	Phase II, Unit 87, Strat. 1, Lev. 1	Colorless molded inset with a geometric design
31B	Phase III, SU4, Historic Plowzone	Colorless paste, faceted front and molded ribs on the back
31C	Phase II, Unit 76, Strat. I, Lev. 1	Colorless paste, faceted front and molded ribs on the back
31D	Phase II, Unit 72, Strat. 1, Lev. 1	Green paste, faceted front and molded ribs on the back
31E	Phase III, Unit 1, Feat. 745, Strat. I, Lev. 1	Blue paste, faceted front and molded ribs on the back
31F	Phase III, Feat 687, Strat. 1, Lev. 1	Aqua cut glass paste, diamond cut

Other accessories that could fall into this time period are parasol parts (Figure 32) and a purse frame (Figure 33). One parasol handle slide and one parasol spine tip were recovered at the site. Both are in a style used in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is possible that both the parasol parts and the purse frame predate 1800, but they are discussed here because they were not found in association with other pre-1800 artifacts in the cellar, and were instead in yard middens along with a high concentration of 19th and early 20th century artifacts. If the parasol parts and purse do represent a pre-1800 accessory, they were apparently used into the 19th or 20th century before they were discarded.

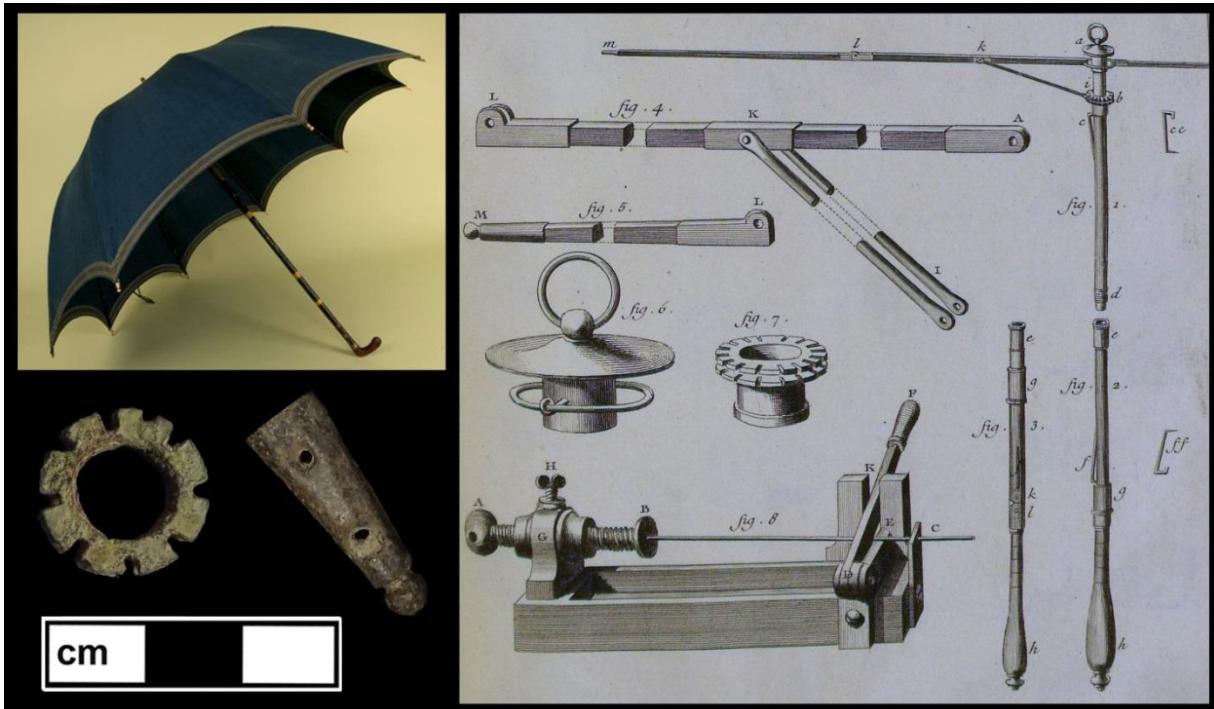


FIGURE 32. THE HOUSTON-LECOMPT ASSEMBLAGE INCLUDES AN UMBRELLA JOINT (PHASE II, UNIT 100, FEAT. 34, STRATUM I, LEVEL 1) AND SPINE TIP (PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRATUM I, LEVEL 1) IN A STYLE THAT WAS USED IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES. THE CA. 1790-1810 PARASOL SHOWN (TOP LEFT) HAS SPINE TIPS WITH THE SAME KIND OF KNOBBED END. THE MID-18TH CENTURY DIAGRAM (RIGHT) FROM DIDEROT AND ALEMBERT'S (1751-1765) *ENCYCLOPEDIE* SHOWS BOTH THE JOINT (Labeled FIG. 7) AND THE SPINE TIP (FIG. 5 M).



FIGURE 33. ONE PURSE FRAME FRAGMENT WAS RECOVERED AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT (TOP LEFT; PHASE II, UNIT 100, STRAT. I, LEV. 1). SIMILAR PURSE FRAMES WERE USED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF OCCUPATION OF THE SITE. EXAMPLES SHOWN INCLUDE A LATE 19TH OR EARLY 20TH CENTURY COIN PURSE WITH A MOTHER OF PEARL EXTERIOR AND RED SILK-LINED INTERIOR COMPARTMENTS (CENTER LEFT, SHOWN CLOSED AND OPEN). THIS WAS A VERY COMMON TYPE OF SOUVENIR PURSE, AND THERE IS A PORTION OF DECAL REMAINING ON THE FRONT INDICATING THAT THE PURSE WAS A SOUVENIR FROM NIAGARA FALLS (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION). A MID-LATE 19TH CENTURY PURSE BEADED WITH A BIRD MOTIF ON THE FRONT HAS A RING TO HANG ON A BELT CLIP OR CHATELAINE, AND THEREFORE HAS AN UNDECORATED LEATHER BACKING BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE RESTED AGAINST A SKIRT AND WOULD NOT BE SEEN (TOP AND CENTER RIGHT; EBAY 2014B). THE BOTTOM IMAGES SHOW A KNIT PURSE WITH WHITE GLASS BEADS CA. 1815-1830 AND A CROCHETED PURSE WITH CUT STEEL BEADS SPELLING THE INITIALS "IB" CA. 1880-1900 (FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION). THESE FOUR EXTANT EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PURSE FRAMES WITH MANY HOLES CLOSE TOGETHER SO THAT NEEDLEWORK OR TEXTILES COULD BE ATTACHED (BOTTOM) AND PURSE FRAMES WITH WIDELY SPACED HOLES (TOP RIGHT AND CENTER LEFT). THE LATTER TYPE WOULD HAVE HAD A CORRESPONDING METAL PLATE ON THE INTERIOR, SANDWICHING LEATHER OR ANOTHER MATERIAL BETWEEN THE PLATE AND THE FRAME, WHICH WERE THEN JOINED BY SMALL RIVETS. THE FEW HOLES IN THE COPPER ALLOY PURSE FRAME FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT, AND STAINING FROM THE CORROSION OF IRON RIVETS WHERE THERE ARE HOLES, INDICATES THAT IT WAS NOT FOR A NEEDLEWORK OR TEXTILE PURSE, BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN COMPARABLE TO THE LEATHER-BACKED PURSE OR SOUVENIR PURSE.

3.3 INTERPRETATION

The paucity of clothing-related items that definitively date to the first half of the 19th century makes interpretation of site use at the time difficult, at least as it relates to clothing. Of the five dateable buttons (Figure 21), one was surface collected, two were recovered in the house and kitchen area, and two were recovered in the backyard midden. This is not promising data for distribution analysis, but to add in Prosser, bone, shell, and unmarked metal buttons would be misleading since these do not have narrow date ranges. The same is true for the parasol parts and the purse frame. There are some 19th-century patterns in the clothing artifacts, but these will be discussed below because of the need to include artifacts that post-date 1865.

4. CLOTHING FROM 1865-1900

4.1 GENERAL FASHION SUMMARY CA. 1865-1900

The period from 1865-1900 saw an ever-increasing dependence on machine manufacturing for clothing and accessories, but again it was ladies' wear that changed most drastically as popular dresses and foundations differed dramatically with each passing decade. New chemical dyes were invented that resulted in the availability of bright colors, while at the same time the widowed Queen Victoria popularized black mourning dress and mourning jewelry from 1861 until her own death in 1901 (Fink and Ditzler 1993; Johnston 2009).

In 1865, ladies' gowns still boasted a somewhat bell-like silhouette, though cage crinolines were generally structured to direct the bulk of the skirt behind the wearer (Johnston 2009). Various belts, jackets, or separate bodices which had ruffles or other decorative fabric work were often added as adornment to flow down the back of large skirts. Separates also began to appear, whereby women might wear a shirt, skirt, and jacket instead of the one-piece gowns that dominated the first half of the 19th century. Inspired by military uniforms, clothing for women was often embellished with cords, stripes, and buttons reminiscent of officers' coats (Johnston 2009).

Narrow waists were still in vogue, and mass-produced corsets with metal fittings helped ladies "train" their ribs and hips to comply with the trend. Whereas earlier stays typically employed baleen (whalebone) boning, laces up the back, and wooden busks inserted into the front, corsets after 1865 generally had steel busks fitted with slot-and-stud closures. Introduced in 1848, slot-and-stud closures at the front of the corset allowed wearers to leave back laces in place except for tightening (Figure 35; Bloomingdale Brothers 1988[1886]; Lynn 2010; Takeda and Spilker 2010). These foundations served to mold women's bodies to fit changing trends. As tight-fitting dresses came into vogue, the chemise and pantaloons were sometimes combined into one less bulky undergarment that came to be known as "combinations" (Lynn 2010:28).

In the 1870s, the rear-oriented crinoline evolved into the bustle dress as skirts gradually drew in at the front and sides and decorative draping and adornments continued to pile up on gathered skirts at the back. As with many extreme trends, the bustle era started awkwardly as early bustles sometimes fell



FIGURE 34. TWO LATE 19TH-CENTURY CORSETS WITH SLOT-AND-STUD CLOSURES. THE CORSET ON THE RIGHT HAS AN OPEN WEAVE FABRIC SUPPORTED BY BONING TO MAINTAIN BODY SHAPE WHILE LETTING THE SKIN BREATHE. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

below the waist and offered an unflattering droopy-drawers appearance where women looked bulky and stiff at the hips and rear. Fortunately, this era was also known for the popularity of wearing black, which offered a somewhat slimming effect to counteract the awkward early bustles.

In the 1880s the bustle outgrew its awkward adolescence and matured into its full glory, which was often so high that satirical cartoons depicted women with tea trays atop them (Lynn 2010:165). This look required a great deal of architecture to achieve, so dresses were increasingly made in multiple pieces that layered over one another. A frenzy of invention took place in pursuit of the perfect bustle foundation as new, thinner configurations of crinolines were devised (Figure 36), and contraptions made of wire, springs, and ruffled canvas were adopted to add body to the behind (Figure 37).

Corsets both cinched the waist and curved in at the pelvis to push the hips back and rear end up, and this new preference in ladies' posture helped define the styles that followed the decline of extreme bustles (Lynn 2010). The 1890s saw skirts take on more of an A-line, though the bulk of fabric still flowed toward the back where they could include a train. Bodices went from tightly fitted at waist and sleeve to pigeon-breasted with leg-o-mutton sleeves much like those of the 1830s (Johnston 2009). By 1900, sleeves retained only a slight puff at the shoulder, but the S-shape created by pushing the chest out in front and the rear out in back dominated, as did very high necklines reinforced by stiffened fabrics and boned collars (Johnston 2009; Lynn 2020).



FIGURE 35. CAGE CRINOLINES CREATED A STRUCTURE TO SHAPE SKIRTS WITH WIRE HOOPS OR SPIRALS AND WOVEN TAPES. THE EXAMPLE SHOWN HERE IS FROM THE 1870S OR 1880S WHEN THE FRONT OF THE SKIRT WAS FLAT AGAINST THE BODY AND THE OVERALL DIAMETER OF THE SKIRT WAS SMALLER THAN IT HAD BEEN IN EARLIER DECADES. A UTILITARIAN WIRE BUCKLE ATTACHED THE CRINOLINE IN FRONT AT THE WAIST. APPARENTLY THE WOMAN WHO WORE THIS SKIRT WAS A BIT SHORT FOR THE MASS-PRODUCED UNDERGARMENT, BECAUSE STRAIGHT PINS WERE USED TO TAKE UP THE BACK TAPES AT THE WAIST (SEE DETAIL). THE HOOP WIRES ARE MADE OF FERROUS METAL ENCASED IN TAPES WITH A LOOSE WEAVE. THEY ARE HELD IN PLACE BY WHITE METAL ALLOY TUBES THAT CINCH AROUND THE WIRE HOOPS (BOTTOM RIGHT). THIS PLAIN CRINOLINE WAS THE CHEAPEST STYLE AVAILABLE IN THE 1886 BLOOMINGDALE'S CATALOG (BLOOMINGDALE BROTHERS 1988[1886]:34). FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

The rapid changes in ladies' clothing styles are an indicator of how industrialization was changing the fashion industry. The department store was on the rise, and as the new century dawned consumers increasingly ordered their clothing from catalogs such as Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward, which distributed mass-produced consumer goods to more people at lower costs. By 1900, companies like



FIGURE 36. VARIOUS BUSTLE SUPPORTS FROM THE AMERICAN TEXTILE HISTORY MUSEUM. TOP ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: CA. 1884-1888, ACC. 1996.24.571; CA. 1886-1888, ACC. 1996.24.620; CA. 1886-1888, ACC. 1996.24.623. BOTTOM ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: CA. 1885, ACC. 1996.24.589; CA. 1898, ACC. 1996.24.616, CA. 1884-1886, ACC. 1996.24.588.

Bloomingdale's and Wanamaker's were specifically targeting rural customers who often chafed at the limited options and lack of quality offered at their local country store. Bloomingdale's marketing strategy from its founding in 1872 until after World War II was to cater to the working class by selling ordinary items of good quality at low prices. They did so by reaching out through mail order catalogs and offering in-store amenities to make their department stores a destination for rural shoppers (Villa Bryk 1988).

These changes impacted menswear and children's clothing as well. In general, men continued to wear coats, vests (Figure 37), and trousers over shirts and drawers, but they also adopted work clothing that was both enabled by industrialization and necessitated by the existence of industrial jobs. For example, overalls, heavy-wear shirts, and denim entered the scene along with the heavy-duty fasteners needed to stand up to the stress of holding thick fabrics together. Additionally, mass-produced menswear increasingly depended on new gadgets and accessories that obviated the need for a custom fit or the expertise of a valet. Suspenders held up pants that did not fit quite right, adjustable sock garters held up stockings, clip-on bow ties appeared, and removable pre-starched collars and cuffs made the preparation and maintenance of men's shirts a bit easier (Bloomingdale Brothers 1886; Montgomery Ward & Co. 1895; Schroeder 1971; Sears, Roebuck Co. 1902).

In short, the period of 1865-1900 was characterized by the increased industrialization of clothing manufacturing and an explosion of consumer options. Hand sewing went from an essential component of almost every garment, to a skill that was largely called upon only when a machine did not yet exist to accomplish the task.



FIGURE 37. THIS SNAZZY VEST CA. 1870S EPITOMIZES TRENDS OF THE LATE 19TH CENTURY. BRIGHT COLORS ENABLED BY NEW DYES WERE WOVEN INTO ELABORATE PATTERNS FOR VEST FABRIC. MACHINE-MADE FABRIC-COVERED METAL BUTTONS WITH FLEXIBLE CANVAS SHANKS DECORATE THE FRONT, WHILE THE INTERIOR BUTTON TO SECURE THE VEST FLAPS PROPERLY IS A HARD RUBBER BUTTON WITH THE "GOODYEAR'S" MARK. FINALLY, A MASS-PRODUCED WIRE BUCKLE ADORNS THE BACK STRAPS TO ENABLE ADJUSTMENT. THIS KIND OF BUCKLE WAS USED ON ALL KINDS OF GARMENT STRAPS AND WILL BE DISCUSSED FURTHER BELOW. VEST FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

BUTTONS CA. 1865-1900

Many buttons that first appeared before 1865 continued in use throughout the 19th century (metal, bone, shell, hard rubber, Prosser ceramic, etc.). The plastic material celluloid entered the scene as well, and became extremely popular between the 1870s and 1930s since it could be made to imitate ivory, coral, jade, marble, glass, wood, or horn (Fink and Ditzler 1993:60-61). Buttons were also used in greater quantities. For example, women's fashions drew inspiration from military uniforms of the Civil War so that buttons were used with increasing frequency as trim details and bodice closures (Figure 38). As bodices lengthened in the 1870s and 1880s, the number of buttons used as front closures increased (Figure 38).

Another jump in button usage resulted from the adoption of heavy-duty work-clothes buttons in the last decades of the century (Luscomb 1967:224). Jeans, overalls, work trousers, heavy shirts, and jackets were specifically manufactured for hard labor and they employed an assortment of metal hardware as fasteners like wire clips and buckles for straps and suspenders, rivets instead of stitching for heavy seams, and new kinds of buttons that were riveted to fabric instead of sewn on. Since durability was the priority, even sew through buttons used for flies were often made of metal (Figure 39).



FIGURE 38. 1864-1870 WOMAN'S BODICE WITH MILITARY-INSPIRED TRIM AND BLACK GLASS BUTTONS (LEFT) AND AN 1880 GOWN WITH A LONG BODICE CLOSING AT THE FRONT WITH 25 BUTTONS. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART ACCESSION NUMBERS 2009.300.6579 AND C.I.69.33.13A, B.



FIGURE 39. EXAMPLES OF LATE 19TH-CENTURY AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY WORK CLOTHES. TOP ROW: CA. 1920S OVERALLS WITH DETAILS SHOWING BUTTONS AND SUSPENDERS (EBAY 2014J). BOTTOM ROW: WORK PANTS RARELY SURVIVE, BUT EVEN WORN OUT WORK PANTS SUCH AS THESE STILL HAVE THE FASTENERS ATTACHED (DAVESKISEVEN 2014). THE FLY CLOSES WITH METAL SEW-THROUGH BUTTONS AND A CLIP, WHILE RIVETED "DONUT" BUTTONS ARE PRESENT AT THE WAIST FOR ATTACHING SUSPENDERS.

In addition to the increased use of buttons on outerwear, undergarments designed to protect stringent standards of modesty in the Victorian period also contributed to button use. Prosser buttons and shell buttons became staples for use on undergarments such as chemises, pantaloons and drawers, corset covers, and men's shirts (Figures 40-43). This is not to say that Prosser buttons and shell buttons all represent underwear though, because they were used on outerwear as well (Figure 44-45). Decorated Prossers and shell buttons with decorative carving are more likely to come from outerwear, though they could have been used on undergarments, and plain buttons could have been used on outerwear. In other words, there are some trends, but no hard and fast rules when it comes to these buttons. Still, the use of white buttons on the many white undergarments that most people wore in the second half of the 19th century can often be important archaeologically. As the clothing that receives most frequent washing, underwear is most likely to lose its fasteners in the laundry, so clusters of Prosser buttons and shell buttons on 19th-century sites may be indicative of laundry areas.



FIGURE 40.
EXAMPLES OF LATE
19TH-CENTURY
PANTALOONS WITH
PROSSER BUTTONS
(TOP), AND EARLY
20TH CENTURY
PANTALOONS WITH
SHELL BUTTONS
(BOTTOM). FROM
THE AUTHOR'S
COLLECTION.



FIGURE 41. TOP: LATE 19TH OR EARLY 20TH-CENTURY CORSET COVER WITH PIE-CRUST STYLE PROSSER BUTTONS. BOTTOM: LATE 19TH OR EARLY 20TH CENTURY INFANT CORSET WITH PROSSER BUTTONS. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



FIGURE 42. THREE COTTON CHEMISES DATING FROM CA. 1860-1890. ALL HAVE SMALL SHELL BUTTONS AS CLOSURES AT THE FRONT (CENTER IMAGES) OR SHOULDER (BOTTOM). CHEMISES FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



FIGURE 43. DIAPER COVERS, KNOWN IN THE 19TH CENTURY AS PILCHES, HAVE SHELL BUTTONS AS ATTACHMENTS. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



FIGURE 44. EARLY 20TH-
CENTURY BOY'S SUIT WITH
SHELL BUTTONS. FROM THE
AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



FIGURE 45. ASSORTED CHILDREN'S CLOTHING WITH SHELL BUTTONS, CA. 1860-1905. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

4.2 HOUSTON-LECOMPT CLOTHING, 1865-1900

The archaeological signature of clothing at Houston-LeCompt from the latter half of the 19th century is more substantial than evidence of the preceding decades. Again, this seems to have more to do with changing fashions than with intensity of occupation or a change in activities at the site. Buttons appear with greater frequency because they increased in popularity for men, women, and children. In fact, all kinds of clothing attachments appeared in greater frequency because industrial production made them more affordable, more easily available, and also more disposable.

BUTTONS

Many of the buttons from the Houston-LeCompt site that could date to ca. 1865-1900 have already been discussed in Section 3.2 (Figures 22, 24, 26). Bone, hard rubber, shell, and Prosser buttons continued in use, so in the absence of maker's marks and diagnostic styles, these cannot be classified as being pre- or post-1865. However, there are buttons in the assemblage that represent trends of the ca. 1865-1900 period.

GLASS BUTTONS

Glass buttons, especially in black, are well represented at the site, and these were very popular in the late Victorian period (Figure 46). Strict mourning traditions required a lot of black clothing, but black glass offered propriety with some shine to dress up an ensemble. These buttons were often called "jet" even though they are glass imitations of that material (Fink and Ditzler 1993:34).

METAL BUTTONS

Several different styles of metal buttons in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage probably date to this period. Some are one-piece buttons made in a mold using manufacturing techniques that had been around for a long time, but incorporating decoration that points to a late 19th century date. For example, two large buttons with decorated concave faces correlate to extant children's clothing of the late 19th century (Figure 47).

One metal button from the Phase I surface collection (FF11-3312) is missing its shank, but a circular opening on the back indicates that it could have once had a "flexible" shank which was essentially a canvas bulge emerging from the button for sewing onto a garment (Figure 48). This shank style was invented in 1825, but continued in use, especially for fabric-covered buttons (Luscomb 1967: 70).

The Houston-LeCompt assemblage also includes a pewter button typical of ladies' bodices of the 1870s and 1880s, with a floral motif on the front and the word "DEPOSE" on the back (Figure 49). The mark "DEPOSE" is not a maker, but is instead French for "registered" (Kovels.com 2014). Just as late 19th and early 20th century goods made in the U.S. often have patent information, European goods also adopted registration systems in this period to protect manufacturers from infringement and set goods apart as being "official" instead of generic. The presence of such a button at Houston-LeCompt is an interesting illustration of how clothing styles had changed there in 100 years. In the late 18th century, pewter buttons would have been used primarily by men and they were valued less than brass and silver buttons, and possibly even less than fabric or threadwork covered buttons. By the end of the 19th

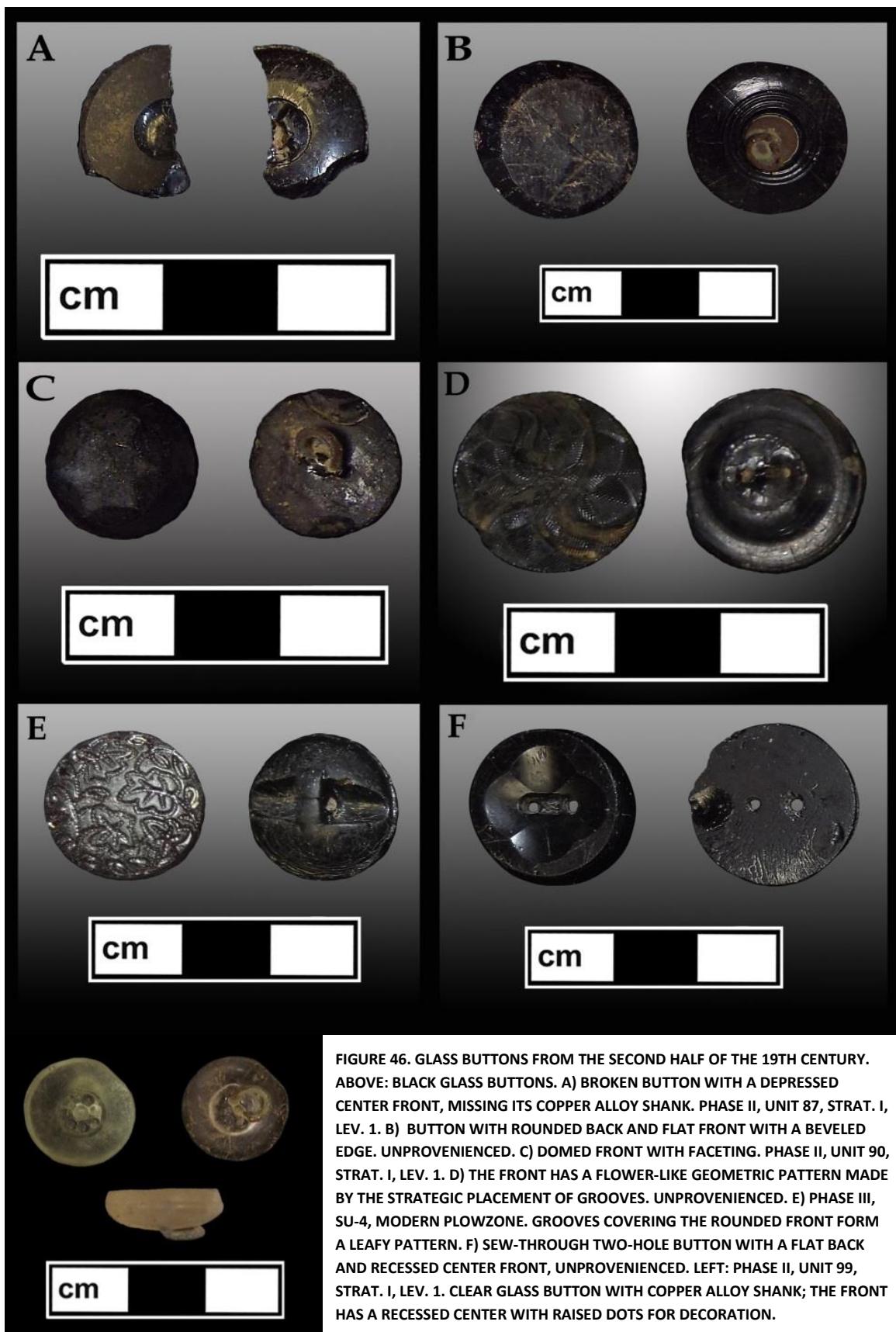


FIGURE 46. GLASS BUTTONS FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

ABOVE: BLACK GLASS BUTTONS. A) BROKEN BUTTON WITH A DEPRESSED CENTER FRONT, MISSING ITS COPPER ALLOY SHANK. PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRAT. I, LEV. 1. B) BUTTON WITH ROUNDED BACK AND FLAT FRONT WITH A BEVELED EDGE. UNPROVENIENCED. C) DOMED FRONT WITH FACETING. PHASE II, UNIT 90, STRAT. I, LEV. 1. D) THE FRONT HAS A FLOWER-LIKE GEOMETRIC PATTERN MADE BY THE STRATEGIC PLACEMENT OF GROOVES. UNPROVENIENCED. E) PHASE III, SU-4, MODERN PLOWZONE. GROOVES COVERING THE ROUNDED FRONT FORM A LEAFY PATTERN. F) SEW-THROUGH TWO-HOLE BUTTON WITH A FLAT BACK AND RECESSED CENTER FRONT, UNPROVENIENCED. LEFT: PHASE II, UNIT 99, STRAT. I, LEV. 1. CLEAR GLASS BUTTON WITH COPPER ALLOY SHANK; THE FRONT HAS A RECESSED CENTER WITH RAISED DOTS FOR DECORATION.



FIGURE 47. TWO BUTTONS FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT HAVE DECORATED CONCAVE FACES SIMILAR TO EXAMPLES ON EXTANT CHILDREN'S CLOTHING OF THE LATE 19TH CENTURY. A TWO-PIECE BUTTON WITH A STAMPED BRASS FRONT AND IRON BACK (BOTTOM LEFT; FEATURE 687, SW QUAD, STRAT. I, LEV. 1) IS SIMILAR TO BUTTONS ON THE SLEEVE CUFF (TOP LEFT) OF A GIRL'S SILK DRESS (CENTER) FROM THE LATE 19TH CENTURY (EBAY ITEM 2014E). A BOY'S COTTON JEAN PLAYSUIT, CA. 1860 (TOP CENTER AND RIGHT) HAS CONCAVE BUTTONS WITH A GEOMETRIC DESIGN SIMILAR TO ONE OF THE UNPROVENIENCED BUTTONS FROM THE SITE (AUGUSTA AUCTIONS 2005).

century, however, a small pewter button represents women's clothing and it boasts the cachet of being a registered French import in a time when brand names and haute couture were developed to establish a hierarchy in the fashion industry. This button may not be evidence of French couture at Houston-LeCompt, however, since "French" buttons of this style were mass marketed to consumers in catalogs (Montgomery Ward Co. 1885).

WORK-CLOTHES BUTTONS

Evidence of French fashion is far outweighed by evidence of heavy labor in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage. Metal sew-through buttons and riveted buttons, sometimes called "donut-hole" buttons for the hole at the center, are present in copper alloy, ferrous alloy, and white metal alloy (Figure 50).



FIGURE 48. SWISS WAISTS WERE A POPULAR TREND OF THE 1860S, AND THIS EXAMPLE BOASTS PURPLE TRIM AND FABRIC-COVERED BUTTONS WITH A "FLEXIBLE" CANVAS SHANK (AUTHOR'S COLLECTION). A METAL BUTTON (FF11-3312) SURFACE COLLECTED AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT HAS A PERFECTLY CIRCULAR BACK OPENING THAT MAY HAVE HAD A SIMILAR CANVAS SHANK.

While most are generic, the manufacturers of work clothes adopted branding and boasted about the quality of their products in logos that sometimes made their way to buttons. Button manufacturers such as Scovill's in Connecticut made customized buttons for uniforms and clothing companies (Luscomb 1967).

One brand name button in the assemblage says “Sweet-Orr” and shows six men playing tug-of-war with a pair of pants (Figure 51). Sweet-Orr started making work clothes like overalls in 1871. The tug-of-war logo became an iconic representation of the company in the 1880s, and they later capitalized on the logo as a sales gimmick by staging contests to act out the scene on the logo. Sweet-Orr dramatically increased their sales in the 1920s by holding tug-of-war demonstrations at factories and union meetings (Dickinson 1921; Sales Management 1923). Although the company started in the late 19th century, this particular button probably dates to the early 20th century when the tug-of-war contests were so popular.

SHELL BUTTONS

Shell buttons were frequently used in the second half of the 19th century as shown in Figures 40, 42-45. A portion of the shell buttons from Houston-LeCompt shown in Figure 24 probably date between 1865 and 1900, but there are no well-documented stylistic hints to separate them from pre-1865 shell buttons or post-1900 buttons.



FIGURE 49. A SILK BUSTLE DRESS CA. 1880-1885 HAS SMALL METAL BUTTONS ALONG THE BODICE SIMILAR IN SIZE TO A PEWTER BUTTON FOUND AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT (BOTTOM LEFT; PHASE II, UNIT 4, STRATUM II, LEVEL 2). THE BUTTON IS MARKED "DEPOSE" ON THE BACK, WHICH IS A FRENCH REGISTRATION MARK. SIMILAR BUTTONS WERE ADVERTISED FOR SALE IN THE 1885 MONTGOMERY WARD CATALOG (MONTGOMERY WARD CO. 1885:85), AND SOME WERE EVEN SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED AS "FRENCH" (BOTTOM RIGHT). DRESS FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

PROSSER BUTTONS

Prosser ceramic buttons were invented and adopted prior to 1865, but they were incredibly popular throughout the second half of the 19th century. Luscomb (1967:183) suggests that they peaked in the 1860s, but they were still available to consumers as “Agate” buttons into the 20th century (Schroeder 1971; 1004). Collectors have various names for these buttons, such as “calico” for buttons with prints to match fabrics, and “bull’s-eyes” for buttons with painted concentric circles. There are also collector’s descriptions of shapes, including “dish,” “pie-crust,” “tire,” and “sawtooth” (Baubles and Buttons 2012), but these terms do not seem to have been used by the people who first used the buttons. Sales catalogs list fairly generic descriptors like “fancy,” “pearl,” and “colored edge” (Montgomery Ward Co. 1885:85; Schroeder 1971:1004). Most of the buttons made and recovered archaeologically are white, but some are decorated or have a colored body (Luscomb 1967), and these have a higher chance of having been used on outerwear.



FIGURE 50. ASSORTED WORK-CLOTHES BUTTONS. FOR PROVENIENCE INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTIONS, SEE TABLE 4.

TABLE 4: PROVENIENCE AND DESCRIPTION INFORMATION FOR THE ASSORTED WORK-CLOTHES BUTTONS IN FIGURE 50.

FIGURE	PROVENIENCE	DESCRIPTION
50A	Phase II, Unit 87, Strat. I, Lev. 1	Copper alloy riveted donut button
50B	Phase II, Unit 87, Feat. 1, Strat. I. Lev. 1	Copper alloy riveted donut button
50C	Phase III, SU9, Modern Plowzone	Ferrous riveted donut button
50D	Phase III, Feat. 687, Strat. I, Lev. 1	2 Ferrous riveted donut buttons
50E	Phase II, Unit 82, Strat I, Lev. 1	Ferrous riveted donut button fragment
50F	Phase II, Unit 87, Feat. 1, Strat. I. Lev. 1	Possible sew-through or donut iron button, very corroded
50G	Phase III, Feat. 687, Strat. 1, Lev. 1	Possible sew-through or donut iron button, very corroded
50H	Phase II, Unit 93, Strat. I, Lev. 1	Ferrous sew-through button
50I	Phase II, Unit 11, Strat. I, Lev. 1	Ferrous button, unidentified type
50J	Phase III, SU5, Modern Plowzone	Copper alloy button face with iron backing, train motif on the front
50K	Phase II, Unit 11, Strat. I, Lev. 1	Copper alloy and iron riveted donut button
50L	Phase II, Unit 100, Feat. 34, Strat. 1, Lev. I	Sew-through copper alloy button with thread lines and some backing fabric preserved by corrosion
50M	Phase II, Unit 70, Strat. I, Lev. 1	Ferrous sew-through two-hole button
50N	Phase III, SU4, Historic Plowzone	Copper alloy sew-through four-hole button
50O	Phase III, SU4, Modern Plowzone	White metal sew-through two-hole button
50P	Phase III, SU6, Modern Plowzone	White metal sew-through four hole button marked "SUNBURY TROUSERS"

Over 100 Prosser-style buttons were recovered at Houston-LeCompt, so they will not all be shown, but Figure 52 offers examples of the different kinds of Prossers at the site. Because the buttons are so abundant, they offer the best chance of mapping activities such as laundering. This will be discussed in the interpretation section below.

BUCKLES

None of the Houston-LeCompt buckles can be definitively identified as belonging to the period between 1865 and 1900, but there is one buckle that was introduced during the late 19th century and remained extremely popular into the 20th century. The buckle is made of ferrous wire and was used for all kinds clothing, such as crinoline straps (Figure 35), straps for tightening waists (Figures 37 and 53), and even straps for "suspensories" that provided support for men's testicles (Figure 53). The multi-purpose nature of this utilitarian strap buckle makes it difficult to interpret other than to say that it generally was not made to be shown as adornment; it was just a cheap, functional, and adjustable fastener. The Houston-LeCompt strap buckle was recovered in a provenience with riveted work-clothes buttons, and if they had all been used on the same garment then they were likely from some kind of heavy-duty pants.

OTHER FASTENERS

Other fasteners that could date to the late 19th century include slot-and-stud closures for corsets (Figure 54), and slides and hooks for suspenders (Figure 55). Both categories of closures could also have originated in the early 20th century, but their use first became widespread in the last decades of the 19th century as discussed above.

Another hidden fastener of sorts that was used in the late 19th and early 20th century was the hem weight. Rough lead hem weights were used prior to industrialization, but after industrialization they took on a regular disk shape with a central hole and bar for sewing (Beaudry 2006). One hem weight was recovered at Houston-LeCompt (Figure 56).

OTHER ACCESSORIES

In the 1880s and 1890s mourning attire was frequently dressed up by using black glass or jet beadwork to decorate bodices, shawls, collars, etc., and the Houston-LeCompt assemblage includes a little black flower-like jewel that probably dates to this period (Figure 57). A bar pin or lace pin made of rubber also represents popular Victorian jewelry (Figure 58). Comb fragments of rubber or celluloid (Figure 59) could be from the late 19th or early 20th century.

4.3 INTERPRETATION

The use of ubiquitous and durable Prosser buttons in the second half of the 19th century is very helpful to

archaeologists. Concentrations of Prosser buttons are expected in areas where laundering and heavy labor take place, and Houston-LeCompt does have evidence for a work area. The test units with the highest frequency of buttons correspond to yard features, Phase II Feat. 16 and Phase III Feat 724, that include evidence of burning and are near postholes for a tripod (Phase II Units 77, 91, and 94, and Phase III SU5). The area therefore probably served as a work yard where cauldrons of water were boiled for any number of tasks, including the household laundry. Additional postholes in the vicinity that have not been identified as to function could represent several generations of clothes lines.

The general yard midden also has a high number of Prosser buttons and fasteners. The probable laundry/work area is on the edge of the midden, but one of the wells used at the site in the 19th century, Feat. 697, is situated somewhat centrally within the midden. The path from the well to the work area traverses the midden and has a number of unidentified postholes that either date to the first half of the

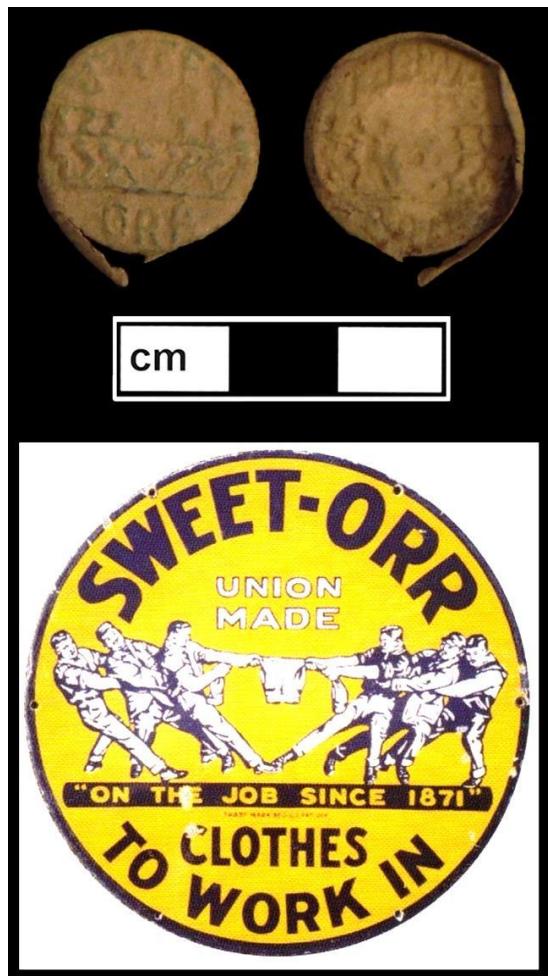
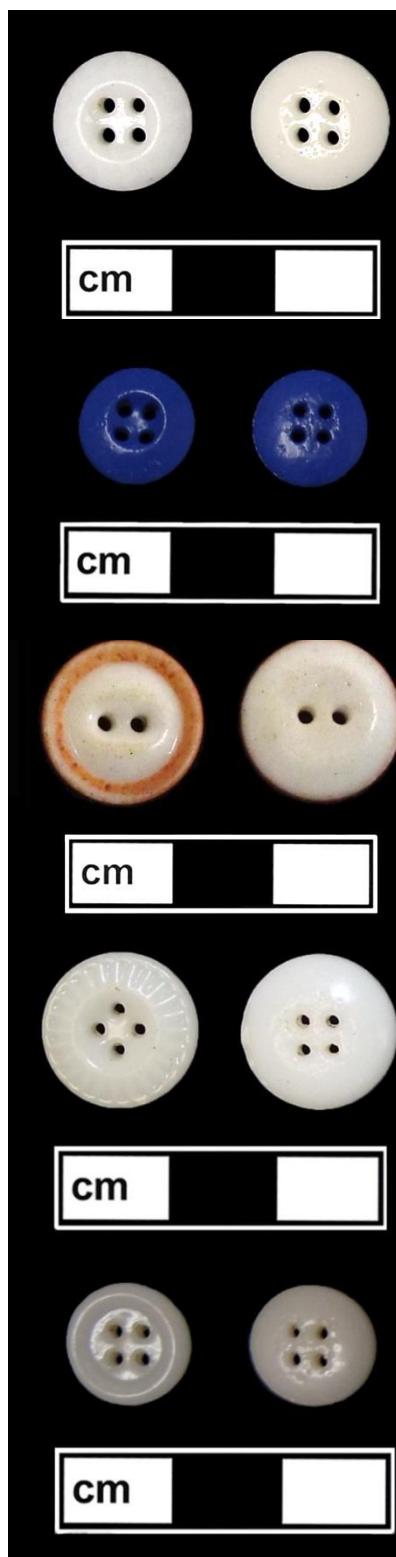


FIGURE 51: A WORK-CLOTHES BUTTON FROM THE PHASE III, SU6 MODERN PLOWZONE HAS THE SWEET-ORR BRAND NAME AND THEIR ADVERTISING MOTIF OF SIX MEN PLAYING TUG-OF-WAR WITH A PAIR OF WORK PANTS. THE SAME MOTIF APPEARED ON THE COMPANY'S POSTCARDS, BOXES, AND SIGNS (PORCELAIN SIGNS 2012).



24¹ Agate Buttons, White and Colored.

(See cuts for sizes.)

10280 Agate Buttons, white,
full shirt size; 12 dozen on
card.
Per card.....\$0.03
Six cards..... .16



10280



10282

Per gross, Per
doz.

10282 Agate Buttons, white, large.....\$0.07 \$0.42



10288

10285 Agate Buttons,
white, large.
Per gross.....\$0.09
Per 72 doz..... .48
10288 Agate Buttons,
white, large.
Per gross.....\$0.10
Per 72 doz.... .50



10285

10291 Agate Buttons, gross, 72 doz.
white, largest or full
underclothing size.....\$0.11 \$0.60

10293 Agate Buttons,
white, colored edge,
shirt size (No. 1½)..... .14 .75
10295 Agate Buttons,
colored edge, shirt size
(No. 20)..... .25 1.35

10297 Agate Buttons, white, colored edge,
extra large size..... .35 1.80
Nos. 10293, 10295 and 10297 come with brown,
black, green, pink, red or blue edges. Please mention
color wanted.

White Fancy Pearl Agates.

(See cuts for style and size.)

10300 Pearl Agate
Buttons.
Per gross...\$0.08



10304



10302



10300

\$0.14

10302 Pearl Agate
Buttons.
Per 12 dozen..... \$0.14



10305

10304 Pearl Agate Buttons.
Per gross..... \$0.20

10305 Pearl Agate Buttons.
Per gross..... \$0.25

FIGURE 52. LEFT: ASSORTED PROSSER BUTTONS (TOP TO BOTTOM: PLAIN WHITE "DISH" SHAPE, PHASE II, UNIT 78, STRAT. I, LEV. 1; BLUE-BODIED, PHASE I, FF11-2272; COLORED RIM, UNPROVENIENCED; "PIE-CRUST" OR "FANCY PEARL" PHASE II, UNIT 90, STRAT. 11, LEV. 2; "TIRE" SHAPE, PHASE I, FF11-903). RIGHT: AGATE BUTTONS OFFERED BY MONTGOMERY WARD AND CO. (1885:85).

19th century or cannot be dated (Features 704-709, 711-716, and 722-723). It is possible that a lot of clothing fasteners were lost by people hauling water with heavy buckets, or that a clothesline was responsible for some of the posthole features since the postholes do form a rough line from the well to the laundry area. If a clothesline was located along this line, the midden might have acquired a lot of buttons as people shook out the laundry, pinned it to the line, and let it blow in the breeze until dry. This conjecture is bolstered by Phase II Units 71 and 80 which overlap this hypothetical clothesline and after the laundry area, these units yielded the highest number of Prosser buttons per Phase II unit (n=5 and n=4 respectively). Although the button quantities are not high enough to make statistically-based conclusions, they do make good fodder for hypothesizing, and these speculations will be explored further in the final summary along with the non-Prosser clothing articles of the late 19th century.

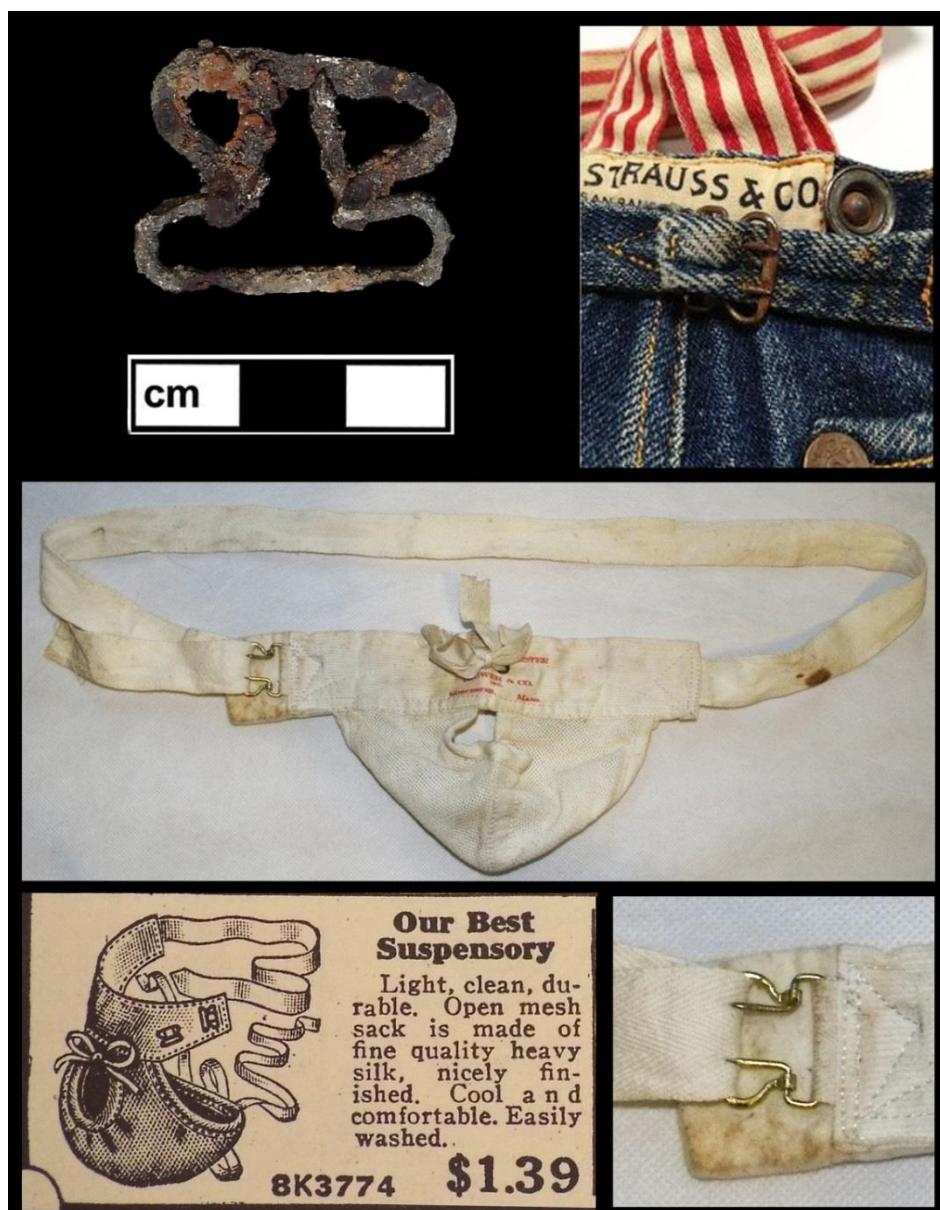


FIGURE 53. A WIRE STRAP BUCKLE FROM PHASE III, FEAT. 687, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1 COULD HAVE HAD MANY USES. ONE CONSEQUENCE OF THE MECHANIZED CLOTHING INDUSTRY WAS THAT THE EXACT SAME BUCKLE FORM COULD APPEAR ON JEANS (TOP RIGHT; OZARK DRY GOODS 2012), A WOMAN'S CRINOLINE BELT (SEE FIGURE 35), A VEST (SEE FIGURE 37), OR A MAN'S "SUSPENSORY" (BOTTOM THREE IMAGES; FROM A TRUNK BELONGING TO THE AUTHOR'S GREAT GRANDFATHER AND MIRKEN 1970:637).

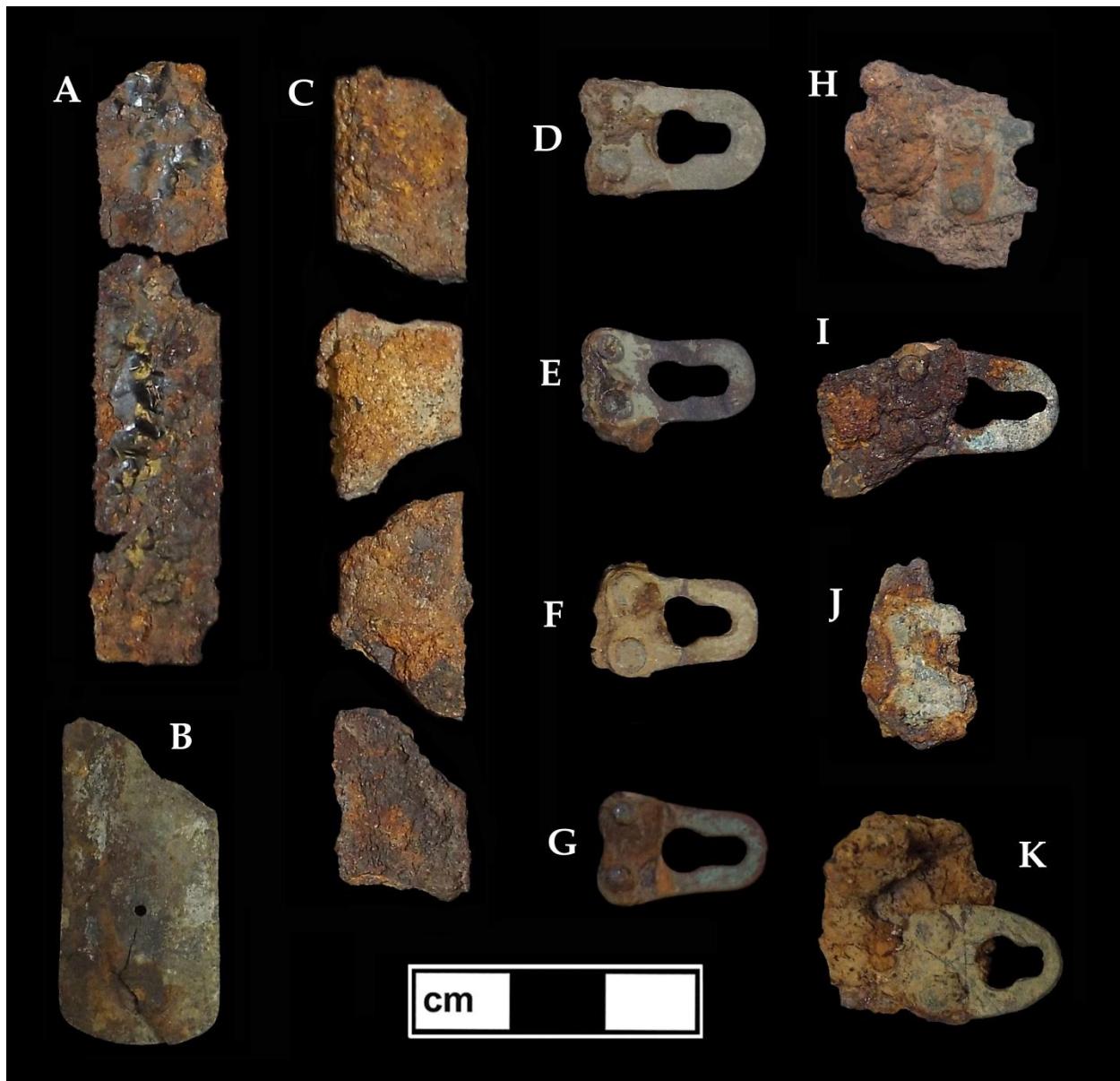


FIGURE 54. EXAMPLES OF CORSET HARDWARE RECOVERED AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT. A) THIN FERROUS BUSK FRAGMENTS WITH SOME REMAINING BLACK COATING WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO TRY TO PREVENT THE BUSK FROM RUSTING AS IT CAME IN CONTACT WITH SWEAT (PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRAT. 1, LEV.1). B) BUSK FRAGMENT WITH A HOLE FOR A MISSING STUD (PHASE II, UNIT 65, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). C) PROBABLE BUSK FRAGMENTS (PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRAT. 1, LEV.1). D) CORSET HOOK (PHASE II, UNIT 80, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). E) CORSET HOOK (PHASE II, UNIT 82, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). F) CORSET HOOK (PHASE III, SU3, HISTORIC PLOWZONE). G) CORSET HOOK (PHASE III, SU6, MODERN PLOWZONE). H) CORSET HOOK FRAGMENT WITH PARTIAL BUSK STILL ATTACHED (PHASE II, UNIT 73, FEAT. 7, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). I) CORSET HOOK WITH PARTIAL BUSK STILL ATTACHED (PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRAT. 1, LEV.1). J) CORSET HOOK FRAGMENT WITH PARTIAL BUSK STILL ATTACHED (PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRAT. 1, LEV.1). K) CORSET HOOK WITH PARTIAL BUSK STILL ATTACHED (PHASE II, UNIT 67, FEAT. 7, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). AT LEAST THREE DIFFERENT HOOK SHAPES ARE PRESENT, GIVING THE SITE A MINIMUM CORSET COUNT OF THREE.



FIGURE 55. LATE 19TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURY SUSPENDERS OR OTHER CLOTHING-RELATED STRAPS WERE PRESENT AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT AS EVIDENCED BY BUCKLE FRAGMENTS AND STRAP ADJUSTMENT BARS. TOP LEFT AND CENTER: 1890S SILK SUSPENDERS WITH CLIPS THAT SLIDE UP AND DOWN TO ADJUST LENGTH (EBAY 2014F). TOP RIGHT: CLOSE-UP OF GARTER STRAPS FROM THE CORSET SHOWN IN FIGURE 60 WHICH ADJUSTED WITH SLIDING BARS THAT COULD BE LOCKED IN PLACE WITH FLIP BARS. A) COPPER ALLOY STRIP WITH SERRATED EDGES SUCH AS WOULD BE USED ON A SUSPENDER OR OTHER ADJUSTABLE STRAP (PHASE II, UNIT 5, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). B) FRONT BAR FOR A SLIDING STRAP ADJUSTER SUCH AS THE ONE SHOWN ON THE GARTER STRAP OF THE CORSET (PHASE II, UNIT 67, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1). C-D) SUSPENDER CLIPS (UNPROVENIENCED).



FIGURE 56. LEAD HEM WEIGHTS WERE USED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF OCCUPATION AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT, THOUGH THE EARLY ONES TENDED TO BE IRREGULAR FLATTENED LEAD DISCS AS OPPOSED TO REGULATION MASS-PRODUCED WEIGHTS OF THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY, SUCH AS THE ONE FROM FEAT. 687, SW QUAD, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1 (TOP LEFT; BEAUDRY 2006: 167). HEM WEIGHTS WERE SEWN INTO GARMENTS THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO FALL A CERTAIN WAY, SUCH AS COAT AND JACKET FLAPS OR GOWN TRAINS (BRADFIELD 2009). THE CA. 1909-1915 BLACK SILK JACKET SHOWN HERE FROM SEVERAL ANGLES HAS BEEN PARTIALLY DISMANTLED BY THE REMOVAL OF THE BUTTONS AND A BLUE SILK LINING. THIS EXPOSED 11 HEM WEIGHTS; ONE FOR THE CORNER OF EACH FLAP PLUS ONE AT THE CENTER BACK. JACKET FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



FIGURE 57. 1887 MOURNING GOWN (LEFT) AND CA. 1886-1890 CAPE (TOP RIGHT) WITH ELABORATE BLACK BEADWORK (METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART ACCESSION NUMBERS C.I.68.53.8A, B AND 1980.187). A MOLDED GLASS BEAD (UNPROVENIENCED) AND A SMALL BLACK GLASS FLOWER-LIKE DECORATION (PHASE II, UNIT 72, STRATUM I, LEVEL 1) FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT COULD HAVE ADORNED SUCH A GARMENT OR THEY COULD REPRESENT JEWELRY TO GO WITH THIS POPULAR STYLE (BOTTOM RIGHT).



FIGURE 58. HARD RUBBER OR VULCANITE BROOCH FRAGMENT WITH BRASS PINS FOR THE ATTACHMENT OF DECORATIVE ELEMENTS (PHASE III, SU9, MODERN PLOWZONE). A RUBBER PIN VERY SIMILAR TO THE ONE FROM HOUSTON LECOMPT WAS OFFERED FOR SALE IN THE 1886 BLOOMINGDALE'S CATALOG WITH THE BUYER'S CHOICE OF EITHER DULL OR POLISHED FINISH (TOP RIGHT: BLOOMINGDALE BROTHERS 1886:127). A COMPLETE VICTORIAN BROOCH ON THE RIGHT EXHIBITS A SIMILAR CYLINDRICAL SHAPE WITH ANGLED ENDS (BOTTOM: ETSY 2014D). THE DECORATIVE BALLS ARE PROBABLY ATTACHED WITH PINS SIMILAR TO THOSE ON THE EXAMPLE FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT.

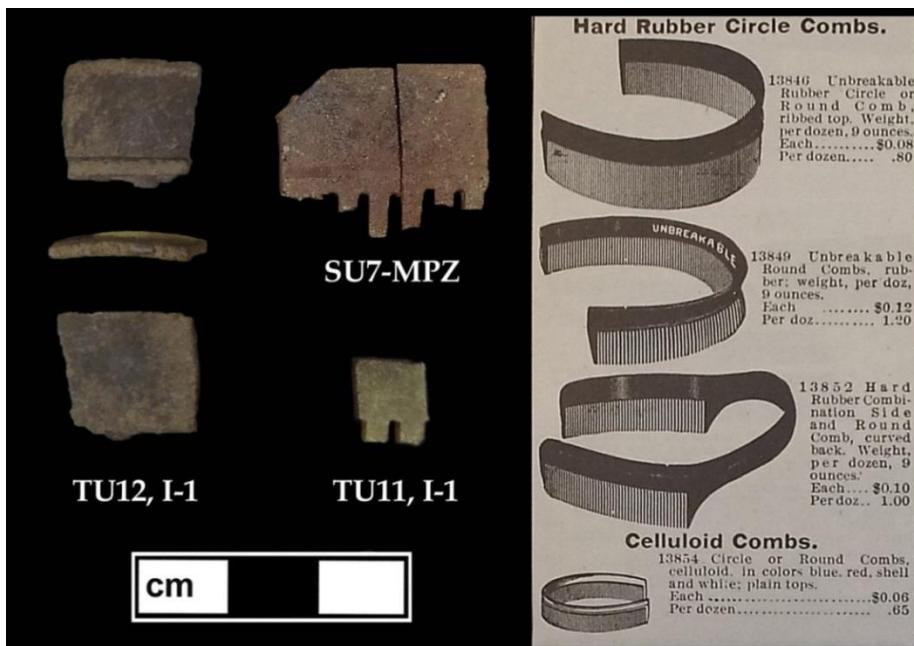


FIGURE 59. FOUR COMB FRAGMENTS WERE RECOVERED IN THE PLOWZONE. THREE VIEWS OF THE FRAGMENT FROM PHASE II UNIT 12 ARE SHOWN TO ILLUSTRATE THE SLIGHT CURVE PRESENT. ALL OF THE FRAGMENTS ARE CURVED, INDICATING THAT THEY ARE COMBS TO BE WORN IN THE HAIR AS OPPOSED TO FLAT COMBS FOR WORKING OUT TANGLES. SIMILAR COMBS MADE OF RUBBER AND CELLULOID WERE ADVERTISED IN THE MONTGOMERY WARD CATALOG (1895:106).

5. CLOTHING FROM 1900-1930

5.1 GENERAL FASHION SUMMARY CA. 1900-1930

A new century is typically welcomed with a sense of change, and while the 19th century dawned in Western societies changed by political revolution, the 20th century dynamic was driven by social and political adjustments to the age of industry. The so called “Progressive Era” was largely defined by the changes that took place, and fashions were a reflection of larger cultural trends.

Specialized work clothes in denim proved a permanent fixture in menswear when their milieu expanded to include daily wear and they became the “jeans” that have dominated informal fashion for nearly a century. Along with this shift came the increased use of rivets, riveted buttons, and other heavy-duty fasteners.

Experimentation with synthetic materials ratcheted up in the early 20th century as elastic, celluloid, rubber, and new fibers for making fabric, such as rayon became mainstream. Additionally, items that had previously been labor intensive and expensive to make, such as lace, could be produced by machines and used with abandon. Opulent gowns with layers of embellishment were characteristic of the Gilded Age, but so were practical walking suits and dresses. Furthermore, the adoption of transportation by bicycle and automobile created an opportunity to invent fashions for new activities (Bradfield 2009). Dusters, driving goggles, and split skirts for biking are among the garments that people wanted (Schroeder 1971; Sears, Roebuck Co. 1902).

Men of the early 20th century had plenty of ready-made clothing to choose from, including suits, shirts, drawers, work clothes, socks, shoes, hats, and all of the accessories needed to make them fit well. Ladies also had more choices in ready-made clothing, as well as the option of buying pre-assembled kits for making their own dresses at home (Bloomingdale Brothers 1886; Montgomery Ward & Co. 1895; Schroeder 1971; Sears, Roebuck Co. 1902). Affordable machine-made lace made it possible and trendy for women to wear dresses comprised almost entirely of lace or eyelet, which became known as lingerie dresses for their transparency. To protect modesty, camisoles, pantaloons, and petticoats were available in various styles, as were one-piece camisole/petticoat and camisole/pantaloons “combinations” (Lynn 2010; Willet and Cunnington 1992).

Paradoxically, as industrialization allowed dainty lace dresses to quench the social thirst for feminine attire, major upheavals in gender roles were underway that allowed women more freedom in their dress. Whereas crinolines and bustles were high-maintenance styles that could limit movement, new clothing options for women of the early 20th-century resulted in the demand for exercise and the promotion of women’s health. Controversial biking trousers introduced in the 19th century for women gradually gained acceptance, and women embraced sports such as tennis, fencing, and biking. Skirt hem rose, as did the popularity of high boots, and trains became less common, all of which allowed for more practical movement (Bradfield 2009). Not coincidentally, these shifts took place alongside the women’s suffrage movement and the increased participation of women in the industrial workforce. By 1910, the cinched waist of the S-shape silhouette gave way to higher waistlines, allowing women some

freedom to breathe, though skirts were worn narrow and corsets elongated, so mobility could still be limited (Figure 60; Bradfield 2009).

The onset of World War I, however, changed everything. WWI was a fully industrial war that employed chemical weapons, tanks, planes, and all kinds of new arms to cause loss of life on a scale the people had never seen before. The impact of this war is often overshadowed by that of the Second World War in the cultural memory of the present day, but to the people of the early 20th century, the impact of this war must not be underestimated. America's distance from Europe and delayed entry into the War certainly created a buffer that Europeans lacked, but U.S. social norms were still reconfigured in permanent ways. As men fought, women nursed the wounded and became more independent in the workforce and at home, strengthening their claim to rights that many had already been clamoring for through the suffrage movement.

Fashion was the visual reflection of the social upheaval wrought by WWI. After the War, ladies' hems moved up to actually expose stockings, not just tall boots.

Waistlines dropped to hip level as a straight, boyish barrel-shaped silhouette was adopted by women, along with a short bobbed haircut that must have shocked the Gibson Girl generation (Bradfield 2009). Perhaps most liberating of all, the metal-boned corset was largely abandoned. How silly it must have seemed to waste steel on corset boning when it was needed to make ammunition for the troops. When the War was over, the young trend-setting generation who had endured it entered the Roaring 20s with the desire to have fun and feel free, while the dictates of class divisions and old-fashioned values lost power and importance.

As industry was able to shift away from war, the flood of consumer goods and invention that had started in the 19th century resumed with renewed vigor. Just about everyone could have just about anything. Costume jewelry made of glass and bright plastics like Bakelite were worn without shame as variety in



FIGURE 60. EARLY 20TH CENTURY CORSETS CONTINUED TO USE SLOT-AND-STUD CLOSURES, AND SOMETIMES ALSO HAD BUILT-IN GARTER STRAPS. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

costume and fashion became affordable, motivating a shift whereby people were less inclined to own just a few high-quality clothes and accessories than they were motivated to buy a quantity of affordable things that were both more disposable and more subject to changes in trends. Long strings of beads were worn as necklaces, brooches and pins adorned cloche hats, and beaded and bejeweled handbags and shoes were selected to match favorite outfits.

The wealthy of previous generations may have had clothing specialized for every occasion, but as the 20th century dawned the middle and lower classes joined the trend. Cheap ready-made goods allowed most of society to adopt specialized clothing for different activities such as work, play, eveningwear, Church-dress, swimming, driving, sleeping, lounging, etc. Now, nearly 100 years later, the trends that defined the early 20th century— increased wardrobe diversity, cheap ready-made clothing, and rapidly changing style trends— still persist.

BUTTONS: POST 1900

Buttons at the turn of the 20th century were similar to those used in the late 19th century. Hard brown rubber buttons seem to have fallen out of favor, but bone, shell, Prosser, and metal work-clothes buttons continued in use, along with hooks and eyes, slot-and-stud corset closures, and other fasteners introduced in the 19th century (Luscomb 1967; Lynn 2010). However, major changes were in store between 1910 and 1920.

Around 1900 the button met its most formidable new competitor since the hook and eye: the snap. Snaps were available in the late 19th century, but their use on clothing did not become mainstream until the early 20th century (Montgomery Ward 1895). Buttons, hooks and eyes, and snaps could be used interchangeably and often appear in peaceful coexistence on the same ensemble (Bradfield 2009). Outerwear, underwear, wallets and purses, gloves, shoes, and other accessories all welcomed the new fastener. Even corsets adopted snaps at the breast to allow easy access for nursing (Lynn 2010:132). Not all snaps were clothing-related, however, as they had many applications on leather and cloth travel cases, bags, and the like.

Just as snaps moved in on the button's territory, new materials arrived for making the buttons that were still used. By the 1920s Bakelite and Casein had joined celluloid as popular plastics for making colorful molded buttons, especially for decoration on outerwear (Fink and Ditzler 1993). However, the instability of such early plastics could keep them from surviving the burial environment. Similarly, another popular material of the 1920s, vegetable ivory, was made from the tagua nut, which is the seed of a South American palm tree and would also decay in most burial environments (Luscomb 1967:209-210; Mirken 1970:249).

Perhaps more importantly though, was the decline of the Prosser button that had reigned over the mundane button world since the mid-19th century. Ceramic buttons had been a staple closure for cotton, wool, and other relatively heavy fabrics, but in the teens there was a shift towards gauzy, lightweight materials that fastened with lighter hooks and eyes or snaps, and this trend dominated the 1920s. A parallel shift occurred in undergarments as thin silks and elastic replaced bulky cotton, and in turn, the territory of the Prosser was decidedly reduced. Those undergarments that did have buttons

could use lighter shell, rubber, or plastics (Lynn 2010: 34-37). By 1927, the “Buttons” section of the Sears, Roebuck Catalog no longer offered ceramic buttons for sale (Mirken 1970:249).

5.2 THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT

As might be expected, there are more clothing and accessory-related artifacts at Houston-LeCompt dating to the late 19th and early 20th century than there are artifacts from the other time periods. This has less to do with an increased investment in clothing or an increase in the wealth of the inhabitants than it does with the availability of mass-produced consumer goods. People had more clothes and more different kinds of garments. Additionally, many of the items were industrially produced in such a way that reuse and repair might not have been possible. For example, buttons attached to work clothes with rivets increased in popularity, but these buttons could not be reused when the clothes they were attached to wore out.

BUTTONS

UNDERGARMENTS

As previously mentioned, early 20th century buttons for undergarments continued trends set in the 19th century. Prosser and shell buttons were especially popular for white cotton underthings through the 1910s (Figures 40-43). There were also new variations to accommodate industrial production techniques. For example, high-fired ceramic buttons appeared with relatively large holes that were made to attach with canvas tape. This type of button was present at Houston-LeCompt (Figure 61). Instead of hand sewing such buttons, the canvas tape could be sewn on by machine. The resulting fastener was strong and well able to hold up to frequent laundering (Figure 62).

By the 1920s, however, buttons were less common on ladies’ underwear. Snaps, elastic, and lightweight fabrics discouraged the continued use of bulky buttons. Some transitional undergarments used both buttons and snaps (Figure 63), but in general there was a movement towards lighter fabrics and lighter fasteners such as plastic buttons instead of ceramic, or snaps. No plastic buttons were identified in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage, but this is not surprising given the period of occupation. Early 20th century plastics might not survive in the archaeological record.



FIGURE 61. THREE CERAMIC BUTTONS WITH TWO LARGE HOLES WERE COLLECTED AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT. TWO WERE SURFACE COLLECTED, FF211-2111 (SHOWN) AND FF11-2489, AND ONE WAS FROM PHASE II, UNIT 80, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1. THIS TYPE OF BUTTON WAS MADE TO ACCOMMODATE CANVAS TAPE INSTEAD OF THREAD ATTACHMENTS AS SHOWN IN FIGURE 61.



FIGURE 62. CERAMIC BUTTONS WITH TWO RELATIVELY LARGE HOLES APPEAR ON EARLY 20TH-CENTURY UNDERGARMENTS SUCH AS THIS GIRLS' "LITTLE WONDER" BRAND UNDERSHIRT, WHICH INCLUDES BUTTONS TO CLOSE THE FRONT AND ATTACH OTHER ARTICLES SUCH AS DRAWERS AND SKIRTS AT THE WAIST. THE BUTTONS ARE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE WOVEN TAPES INSTEAD OF THREAD, MAKING FOR A STRONG FASTENER THAT COULD BE ADDED WITH A STRAIGHT MACHINE STITCH. CLIPS AND STRAPS COULD BE ADDED THE SAME WAY. AS THIS GARMENT SHOWS, MULTIPLE FASTENING OPTIONS WERE INCLUDED TO ALLOW FOR GROWTH OR MULTIPLE LAYERS. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.



FIGURE 63. THE SHAPE AND EMBROIDERY STYLE ON THIS SET OF CAMISOLE AND KNICKERS DATE IT TO CA. 1900-1911 (BRADFIELD 2009). THE CAMISOLE IS PUT ON OVER THE HEAD AND THEN BOTH FRONT AND BACK FLAPS ARE WRAPPED AROUND THE WAIST AND FASTENED WITH SNAPS. THE CLOSURE FOR THE BOTTOMS IS A TRADITIONAL SHELL SEW-THROUGH BUTTON. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

MEN'S SHIRTS

Some buttons in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage represent the presence of early 20th century men's shirts (Figure 64), and it was during the 1920s and 1930s that shirts first shed their status as undergarments and became acceptable for casual dress (Lynn 2010: 16). Shirts for daily wear could button up the front much as shirts today, but dress shirts typically buttoned up the back and had extra buttonholes to accommodate studs and cufflinks. Additionally, the early 20th century was the heyday of removable starched collars for men, and these were affixed to shirts with collar buttons or studs that varied in size and decoration depending on the type of collar or the position of the stud. Of the collar studs found at Houston-LeCompt, only one appears to be decorative with a mother-of-pearl face (Figure 65A). A decorative cufflink for a man's dress shirt was also recovered at the site, and it, too has a shell inset

(Figure 66), so these would have gone well together on one outfit. It was in this period that cufflinks were established as men's dressy accessories as opposed to the everyday sleeve closures that 18th-century linked buttons represented.

WORK CLOTHES

Houston-LeCompt has work-clothes buttons in far greater abundance than dress shirt buttons (Figure 50), but this is not unexpected. Not only was the site tenant-occupied in the early 20th century, but removable studs and cufflinks are also far more likely to be retained by their owners instead of lost as people worked around the house. Cuff and stud sets lived in jewelry boxes and the like when not in use, while work-clothes buttons were sewn on or permanently riveted to fabric. The tenants clearly did have some dressy attire, based on the cuff and collar buttons as well as costume jewelry, but it is the clothing they used to work around the house and yard that was most likely to suffer wear from labor and laundering.

The work-clothes buttons were already discussed in section 4.2, but some are worthy of additional note. For example, one button has a train motif on the front (Figure 50J) that is comparable to extant changeable buttons with a patent date of 1918 (Figure 67). Changeable buttons have a wire shank as if for sewing, but some work clothes had small buttonholes that the shank passed through so that wire rings, like a key ring, could be run through the shank (Vintage Workwear 2011). This precluded sewing and made the buttons removable for laundering. Trains were popular motifs for overalls and other work clothes since railroads employed a lot of the people who needed these heavy-duty garments when on the job. The Sweet-Orr button discussed above also probably dates to the 20th century (Figure 51).

Another interesting button in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage that dates to the early 20th century is a white metal sew-through button that reads "U.S. Army" (Figure 68). Regulation World War I wool trousers or jodhpurs employed these buttons for flies, again suggesting that inhabitants of Houston-LeCompt were either connected to the armed services in some way or they obtained some clothing as Army surplus.

BUCKLES

Three early 20th century buckles in the Houston-LeCompt assemblage probably represent clothing. One is a plain copper alloy buckle with silver-colored plating (probably nickel) that would have been appropriate for a plain leather belt. Such buckles can be found in early 20th-century catalogs (Figure 69). A small figure-eight-shaped metal buckle also has a silver appearance and it is decorated with raised dots at the ends giving it an Art Deco look that is consistent with trends of the 1920s and 1930s. This buckle could have been for a very thin belt, but it was perhaps more likely used on a strappy shoe of the late 1920s (Figure 70). The final buckle that dates to this period is a fragment of a shell belt slide (Figure 71). The 1927 Sears, Roebuck catalog advertises such slides as being "The Latest in Belt Slides," suggesting that they were a new trend in the late 1920s (Mirken 1970:249).



FIGURE 64. EARLY 20TH CENTURY MAN'S SHIRT AND DETACHABLE COLLAR. THE SHIRT HAS A BACK CLOSURE AND CUFF PLACKETS FASTENED WITH SHELL BUTTONS. BUTTONHOLES AT THE NECK OF THE SHIRT HAVE CORRESPONDING BUTTONHOLES ON THE DETACHABLE COLLAR FOR REMOVABLE STUDS. BUTTONHOLES ON THE BREAST FRONT NECESSITATED THE USE OF DECORATIVE STUDS, AND CUFFLINKS WERE NEEDED TO FASTEN THE SLEEVES. FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION.

SOLID GOLD COLLAR BUTTONS.

COLD FILLED COLLAR BUTTONS.

COLLAR BUTTONS COLD AND GOLD PLATED.—Prices, Each.

Collar Buttons

Men's Three-Piece Set, white gold filled, pair of links for soft cuffs, front and back collar buttons.
4K2060 - Complete set.....95c

Men's Set; gold plated. Pair of separable cuff links, mother of pearl center, collar pin, two pearl buttons (front and back) mother of pearl backs.
4K2062 - Complete set.....50c

Collar Button Set, Yellow gold filled, mother of pearl backs. For front and back of collar and cuffs and wrists, dozen.....95c	10-k. Solid Gold 4K2068 .75c
Plain gold filled backs, without mother of pearl.....4K2066 - Set one dozen70c	14-k. Solid Gold 4K2070 .98c
	10-k. solid gold Collar Button. 4K2072 .85c
	14-k. solid gold. 4K2074 \$1.10
	10-k. solid gold Collar Button. 4K2076 .80c
	14-k. solid gold. 4K2078 \$1.00

A

cm

B

cm

C

cm

D

cm

E

cm

FIGURE 65. LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MEN'S DRESS SHIRTS HAD STIFF REMOVABLE COLLARS THAT ATTACHED WITH COLLAR BUTTONS. A) COPPER ALLOY WITH MOTHER OF PEARL FACE AND FOLDING "SHOE FRONT"; PHASE III, SU 5, MODERN PLOWZONE. B) PLAIN COPPER ALLOY BUTTON WITH SPHERICAL STUD; PHASE II, UNIT 96, STRATUM I, LEVEL 1. C) PLAIN COPPER ALLOY BUTTON WITH SPHERICAL STUD; PHASE II, UNIT 82, STRATUM 1, LEVEL 1. D) SMALL CERAMIC COLLAR BUTTON; PHASE III, SU 7, MODERN PLOWZONE. E) CERAMIC COLLAR BUTTON WITH MISSING STUD POINT; PHASE I, SURFACE, FF11-2197.



FIGURE 67. THE 1894 S.F. MYERS & CO JEWELRY CATALOG ILLUSTRATES LEVERED CUFF BUTTONS SIMILAR TO AN INLAID COPPER ALLOY CUFF BUTTON RECOVERED IN THE MODERN PLOWZONE OF SAMPLE UNIT 9 AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT (HINKS 1996:250).



FIGURE 66. THIS DENIM WORK JACKET HAS REMOVABLE BUTTONS EMBOSSED WITH A TRAIN PATTERN AND STAMPED WITH A PATENT DATE OF 1918 (VINTAGE WORKWEAR 2011). THE SAME BUTTON WAS RECOVERED AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT (FIGURE 50J).



FIGURE 68. SURVIVING WORLD WAR I ERA UNIFORMS SUCH AS THE JODHPURS SHOWN HAVE BUTTONS READING "U.S. ARMY" JUST LIKE A WHITE METAL ALLOY BUTTON FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT, SU 6, MODERN PLOWZONE (EBAY 2014!).



FIGURE 69. SILVER-TONE BELT BUCKLE OF PLATED COPPER ALLOY WITH AN IRON TANG (UNPROVENANCED). THIS TYPE OF BUCKLE WAS ADVERTISED ON BELTS IN THE 1902 SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOG (SEARS ROEBUCK 1902).



FIGURE 70. A SMALL PLATED BUCKLE WITH ART-DECO INSPIRED DOTTED DECORATION (PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1) IS PROBABLY FROM A STRAPPY SHOE OF THE 1920S OR 1930S SUCH AS THOSE SHOWN HERE (BOTTOM LEFT- FASHION ME FABULOUS 2009; RIGHT- EBAY 2014M).



FIGURE 71. SHELL OR "PEARL" BELT SLIDES SUCH AS THE FRAGMENTARY EXAMPLE FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT (TOP LEFT; PHASE II, UNIT 5, STRAT. I, LEV. 1) BECAME POPULAR IN THE 1920S AND 1930S AS SHOWN IN THE 1927 SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOGUE (TOP RIGHT; MIRKEN 1970: 249). A SIMILAR SLIDE BUCKLE IN AN OVAL SHAPE WAS USED ON A BLACK VELVET JACKET OF THE LATE 1920S OR EARLY 1930S FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION (BOTTOM).

OTHER FASTENERS

Some artifacts that fall into the category of “other fasteners” of the early 20th century have already been discussed. Slot-and-stud closures continued in use on corsets until the 1920s, and were then incorporated into some girdle styles even after the 1920s, so some of the examples in Figure 54 are likely to be from the 20th century.

Other fasteners that represent new developments in clothing of the early 20th century include a copper alloy clip used for rain gear such as rubber coats and footwear, marked “PAT APR 24/1900” (Figure 72), a variety of snaps (Figures 73 and 74), safety pins (Figure 75), and an unidentified clip with a cubist-style crackle pattern stamped on it (Figure 76). Notably absent from Houston-LeCompt is any evidence of zippers, which did not enter regular use for clothing until the 1930s.



FIGURE 72. THE HOUSTON-LECOMPT ASSEMBLAGE YIELDED ONE HEAVY-DUTY CLIP FOR A RUBBER SHOE, BOOT, OR RAINCOAT (PHASE III, SU-5, MODERN PLOWZONE). MANY PRODUCTS USED SUCH CLIPS AS SHOWN IN EARLY 20TH-CENTURY CATALOGS. THE BOOTS ON THE LEFT AND RAINCOAT ON THE RIGHT WERE OFFERED IN THE 1927 SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOG (MIRKEN 1970: 335, 408). THE SHOES AND MACKINTOSH LEGGINGS SHOWN IN THE CENTER ARE FROM THE 1908 SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOGUE (SHROEDER 1971: 1050).



FIGURE 73. SNAPS WERE ADVERTISED IN THE 1902 SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOG (1902: 947) AS AN "INVISIBLE SEW-ON FASTENER," AND THE INVENTION WAS NEW ENOUGH THAT THE DESCRIPTION EXPLAINS WHAT THE SNAP COULD BE USED FOR (BOTTOM). SOME OF THE SNAP TYPES FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT ARE SHOWN HERE, INCLUDING SEW-ON SNAPS WITH FOUR OR SIX HOLES (TOP RIGHT, FEAT. 687, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1; CENTER LEFT, PHASE II, UNIT 74, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1), AND SNAPS THAT WERE RIVETED TO A GARMENT (TOP LEFT, SU9 MODERN PLOWZONE). LARGE SNAPS FOR FLIES OF JEANS AND SIMILAR HEAVY DUTY USES WERE RIVETED WITH THE FACE ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE FABRIC FOR SHOW AND FOR PRESSING THE SNAP CLOSED, WHILE THE FUNCTIONAL PART OF THE SNAP WAS HIDDEN. SMALLER SNAPS WERE IDEAL FOR LIGHTWEIGHT FABRICS POPULAR IN THE 1920S, AND THE TWO SNAPS ON THE TOP LEFT HAVE A LIGHTWEIGHT FABRIC IN A CHECKED PATTERN STILL ATTACHED.



FIGURE 74. A HEAVY-DUTY SNAP IN THE ASSEMBLAGE THAT READS "LIFT THIS SIDE" IS ONLY INDIRECTLY RELATED TO PERSONAL ADORNMENT AS IT WAS PROBABLY USED ON A POUCH OR BAG THAT SOMEONE CARRIED. THIS STYLE OF SNAP WAS POPULAR FOR AMMUNITION POUCHES IN WORLD WAR I (RIGHT; ICOLECTOR.COM 2014) AND WORLD WAR II (LEFT; AUTHOR'S COLLECTION). THE POUCHES OFTEN HUNG FROM CANVAS "WEB" BELTS WITH WIRE LOOPS THAT ATTACHED THROUGH METAL GROMMETS. WEB BELTS COULD CARRY A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MILITARY SUPPLIES SUCH AS FIRST AID KITS, CANTEENS, WEAPONS, AND AMMUNITION. THE SNAP AT HOUSTON-LECOMPT COULD BE FURTHER EVIDENCE OF ARMY UNIFORMS OR ARMY SURPLUS, BUT IT IS SILVERED WHILE MOST MILITARY SNAPS HAVE A DARKER PATINA. THIS COULD INDICATE ITS USE ON A NON-MILITARY BAG THAT WOULD NEED NO CAMOUFLAGE.

Sensible Safety Pin.
Highly Polished, Nickel Plated.
No. 2

Good Safety Pins for little money.
No. 2½

Illustrations Show Exact Size : ; :

No. 3

No. 18R5026 Safety Pins. No. 2 No. 2½ No. 3
Price, per dozen..... 1c 2c 3c
If by mail, postage extra, per dozen, 2 cents.

No. 18R5028 Large Safety Blanket Pins, 4 inches long; the most substantial and practical pin made.
Price, six for 16c; each..... 3c
If by mail, postage extra, each, 2 cents.

Ladies' Pin On Supporters.
No. 18K324 Ladies' Pin 'On Supporters. Made of heavy quality sile webbing with small frill on side. Trimmed with good quality adjustable nickel slide buckle and fiber button clasps. Colors, black, white, pink or light blue. State color wanted. Price, per pair... 16c
If by mail, postage extra, per pair, 2 cents.

Great Values in Hose Supporters.
No. 18K326 This is a very beautiful Side Supporter. The top part is 1½-inch satin band, stitched on both sides, and the lower part is a beautiful fancy frilled mercerized elastic with pretty bows of silk ribbon, adjustable nickel buckle and fiber button clasp. Colors, black, white, pink or light blue. State color wanted. Regular 35-cent value. 21c
Our price, per pair... Postage extra, per pair, 2 cents.

Ladies' Safety Belts.
No. 18K340 Ladies' Safety Belts. Made of sateen, with elastic band across hips. Easy and convenient. Sizes, 22 to 36. Ask for one inch larger than your exact measure. Comes in even sizes only. Give waist measure. Color, white only. Price... 13c
If by mail, postage extra, 2 cents.

Washable Cloth Belt.
No. 18K342 All Elastic Washable Dainty Cloth Belt. Made of high grade elastic, cream color. Has no straps to roll or cut, no buckles to rust or stick, and it can be readily washed and cleaned. It is antiseptic, porous and comfortable. Easily slipped on over the limbs. A regular 50-cent article. Made in four sizes, as follows: Small, 19 to 24 inches. Medium, 25 to 28 inches. Large, 29 to 32 inches. Extra large, 33 to 36 inches. Be sure to state size wanted. Price, for belt with two napkins... 27c
Postage extra, per set, 4 cents.

FIGURE 75. SAFETY PINS FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT (TOP LEFT) HAVE SILVER-COLORED PLATING SIMILAR TO THOSE ADVERTISED IN THE 1902 SEARS ROEBUCK CATALOG (TOP RIGHT; SEARS, ROEBUCK CO. 1902:945). BY THE TIME THE 1908 SEARS CATALOG CAME OUT, SAFETY PINS ALSO APPEARED AS PART OF OTHER PRODUCTS FOR SALE LIKE HOSE SUPPORTERS (BOTTOM LEFT) AND SANITARY BELTS FOR WOMEN (BOTTOM RIGHT; BOTTOM IMAGES FROM SCHROEDER 1970:998). THE HOUSTON LECOMPT PINS SHOWN ARE UNPROVENIENCED (RIGHT) AND FROM PHASE II, UNIT 95, STRAT. I, LEV. 1 (LEFT).



FIGURE 76. UNIDENTIFIED CLIP WITH A STAMPED CRACKLED PATTERN REMINISCENT OF THE CUBIST ART MOVEMENT OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

COSTUME JEWELRY

By the beginning of the 20th century, consumers had access to an ever increasing variety of mass-produced goods, including relatively cheap costume jewelry. Most of the jewelry recovered at Houston-LeCompt (Figures 77-82) appeared only after cheap mass-produced options were widely available. This is not surprising given the tenant occupation of the site. If tenants had fine jewelry, they probably would have been careful not to mislay it, but they could adopt costume jewelry without great fear of losing a valuable investment if it broke or went missing. The assemblage includes two finger rings (Figures 77-78), two rhinestone pins (Figures 79-80), and unidentified jewelry fragments (Figures 81-82). Interestingly, all three bar or lace pins (long, skinny brooches) from Houston-LeCompt, including the hard rubber pin, were recovered in the same unit (SU6), as if someone decided that this type of accessory was "so last season" and just discarded them all in the midden at the same time. Alternatively, this could just be evidence of someone throwing out the broken pieces in the jewelry box.



FIGURE 77. COPPER ALLOY OPENWORK FINGER RING WITH A SETTING FOR A PASTE JEWEL. THE SETTING IS COMPARABLE TO POPULAR STYLES OF THE 1920S. SU4, HISTORIC PLOWZONE.

FIGURE 78. EGYPTIAN MOTIFS WERE INCREDIBLY POPULAR IN THE 1920S AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF KING TUTANKAMEN'S TOMB (BRADFIELD 2009:359), AND A COPPER ALLOY RING FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT (PHASE II, UNIT 77, STRAT. I, LEV. 1) HAS SYMMETRICAL SNAKE-LIKE OPENWORK DECORATION IN AN EGYPTIAN REVIVAL STYLE THAT WAS IN KEEPING WITH THE POPULAR FILIGREE SETTINGS OF THE ART DECO PERIOD. EXAMPLES OF THIS STYLE OF SETTING IN SILVER AND WHITE GOLD ARE STILL AVAILABLE FROM ANTIQUES DEALERS (JM PIERCE 2014; MIMI DEE ARTWEAR 2014; THE THREE GRACES 2014). NOTE THAT THE RING IN THE CENTER OF THE FIGURE HAS AN EGYPTIAN SCARAB AS THE STONE IN THE SETTING IN KEEPING WITH THE EGYPTIAN REVIVAL STYLE (MIMI DEE ARTWEAR 2014).





FIGURE 79. THE ART DECO RHINESTONE ARROW PIN FROM SU6, MODERN PLOWZONE, IS IN AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY STYLE THAT CAN STILL BE FOUND FOR SALE ON EBAY (2014G) AND ETSY (2014B).



FIGURE 80. OPENWORK BAR PIN WITH FOUR RHINESTONES FOUND IN SAMPLE UNIT 6, MODERN PLOWZONE (SU6-MPZ).

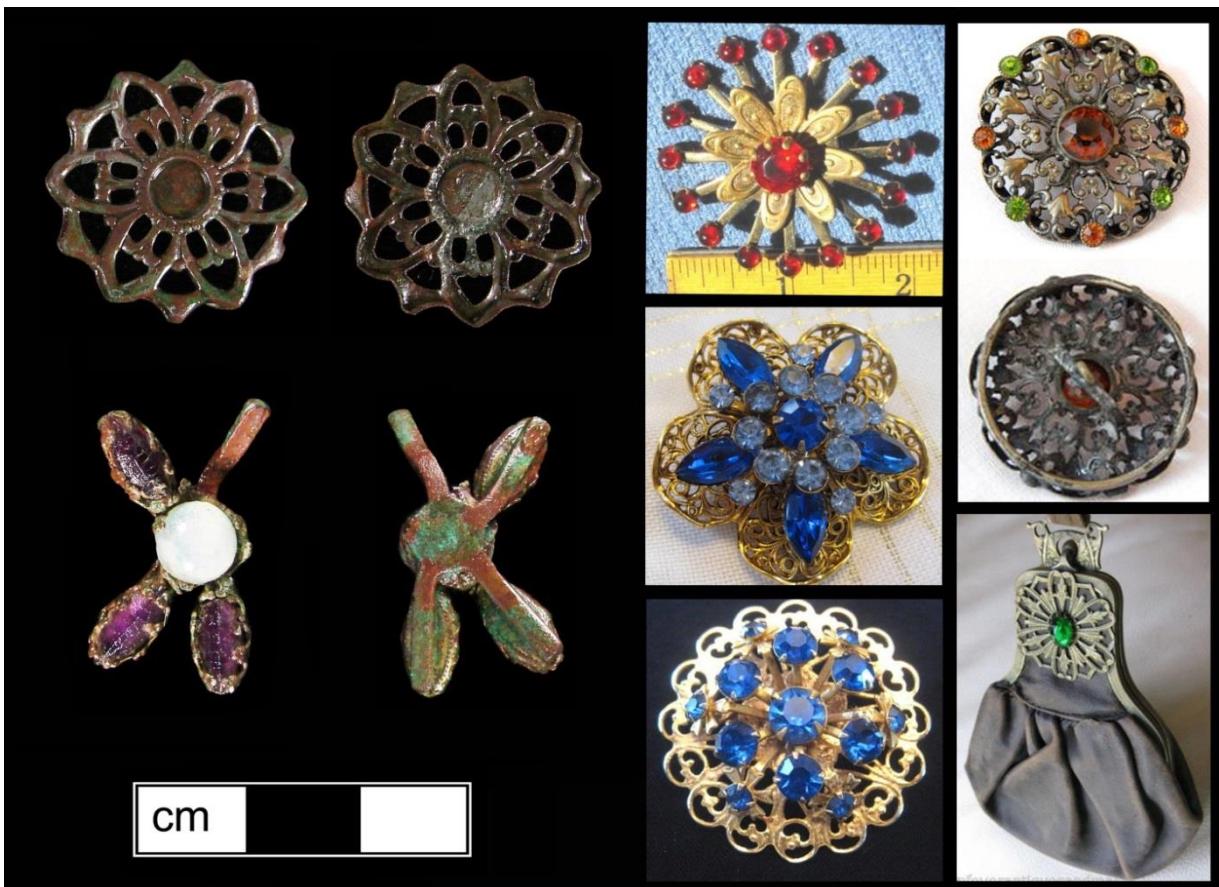


FIGURE 81. A FAUX FILIGREE GEOMETRIC JEWELRY PIECE (TOP LEFT; SU5-MPZ) AND A FLOWER-SHAPED JEWELRY PIECE WITH PURPLE AND WHITE INSETS (BOTTOM LEFT; TU 90, I-1) COULD BE PART OF A LATE-19TH OR EARLY-20TH CENTURY BROOCH SUCH AS THE THREE SHOWN IN THE MIDDLE COLUMN (EBAY 2014D, K, AND L). ALTERNATELY, THEY COULD BE FROM OTHER ACCESSORIES SUCH AS A BUTTON (TOP RIGHT; ETSY 2014G) OR A PURSE (BOTTOM RIGHT; EBAY 2014A).



FIGURE 82: JEWELRY PARTS SUCH AS THIS GILT SETTING FRAGMENT FROM AN AREA WHERE TRASH WAS BURNED IN THE BACKYARD (PHASE II, UNIT 87, STRAT. I, LEV. 1) COULD BE A PIECE OF A RING OR OTHER JEWELRY, BUT EVEN BUTTONS COULD HAVE SUCH SETTINGS FOR PASTE JEWELS (BOTTOM; ETSY 2014F).

FOOTWEAR

Footwear at Houston-LeCompt is represented by the buckle mentioned above, plus shoe sole fragments, hooks for shoelaces, and metal grommets (Figure 83). The shoe fragments include leather upper components and rubber soles. The regularity of the double row of stitching on the sole fragments and the simple fact of their survival suggest that the shoes are machine made and date to the latter part of the period of occupation. Some of the copper alloy hooks and grommets have preserved the leather around them thanks to the toxicity of copper alloy corrosion which protects organic materials from being consumed by microorganisms in the burial environment.

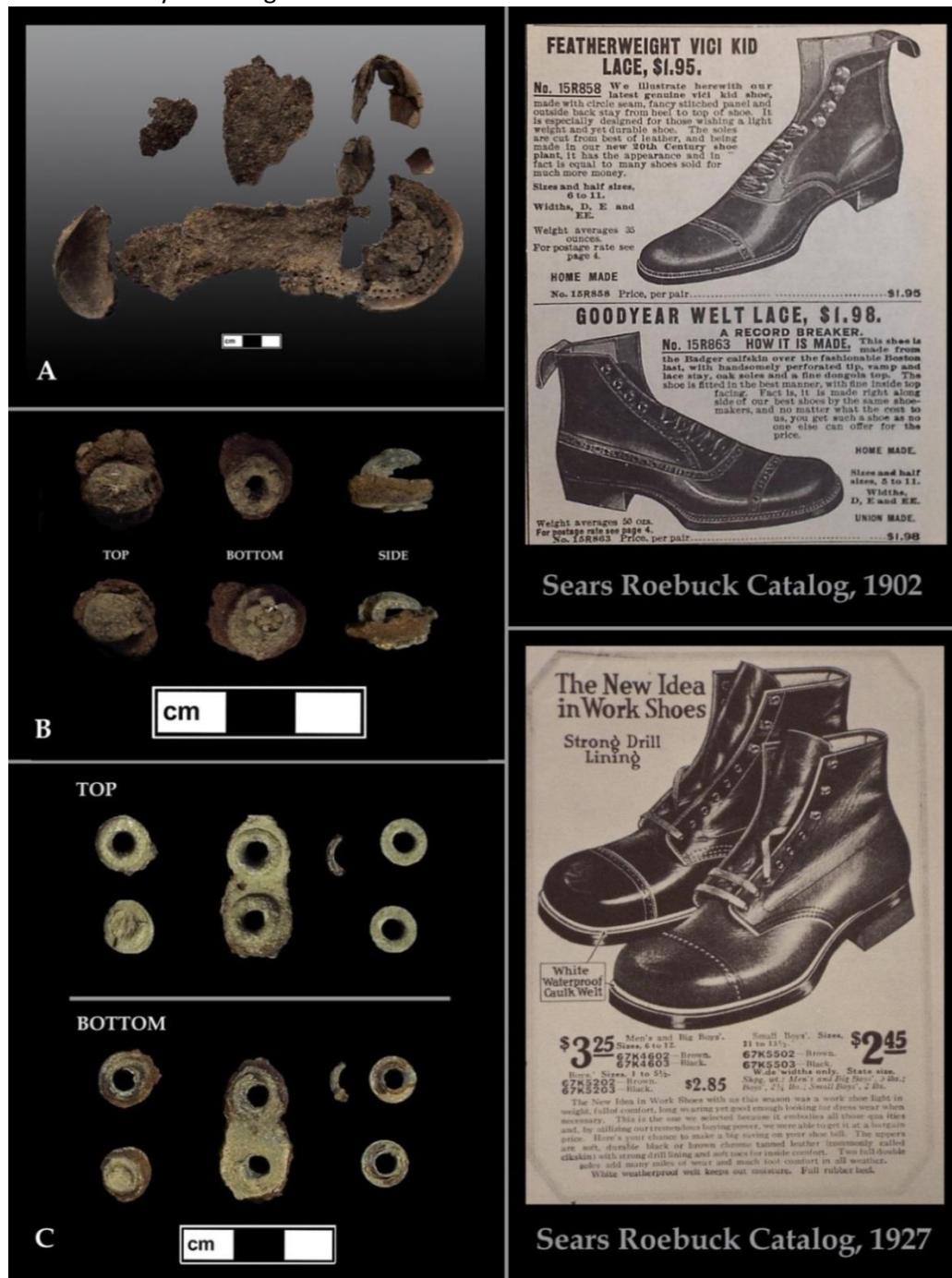


FIGURE 83. SHOE SOLE FRAGMENTS WITH DOUBLE ROWS OF STITCHING FROM FEAT. 667, NORTHEAST QUAD, STRAT. I, LEVEL 1 (TOP LEFT), AND COPPER ALLOY HOOKS AND GROMMETS FROM FEAT. 687, STRAT. I, LEVEL 1 (BOTTOM LEFT) ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE MASS-PRODUCED HEAVY-DUTY WORK SHOES AVAILABLE IN THE SEARS ROEBUCK CATALOGS FROM 1902 (TOP RIGHT; SEARS, ROEBUCK 1902:1044) AND 1927 (BOTTOM RIGHT; MIRKEN 1970).

Sears Roebuck Catalog, 1902



Sears Roebuck Catalog, 1927

The total assemblage yielded 15 grommets or grommet fragments, though only the ones with leather surviving ($n=4$) can be confidently attributed to footwear. Once they were adopted in 1828, metal grommets were also used on articles like corsets (Figures 34 and 60), belts (Figure 74), and drawstring openings for articles such as suspensories (Figure 53). Some grommets could therefore be pre-1900 finds.

MISCELLANEOUS

Additional artifacts of adornment in the assemblage include a clasp for a wallet or purse (Figure 84), a fragment of a spectacle lens (Figure 85), and a large red glass jewel that is too large to be for most kinds of costume jewelry (Figure 86).

Ladies' Pocket Books.

NOTICE.—Our pocket books are selected from the best makes in the country, and we are prepared to offer the latest and best-styles and qualities in the market at very reasonable prices.

13132 Light American Lizard Grained Leather with silvered catch, leather-faced flap, cloth lined, coin pocket with snap frame, and four regular pockets. Size, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 4$. Weight, packed, 4 ounces. Each... \$0.25

13134 Embossed Morocco Grain Leather with silvered catch and two ornaments on flap, leather faced, coin pocket with snap frame and four regular pockets. Size, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 4$ inches. Weight, packed, 4 ounces. Each... \$0.25

13143 Seal Grain Leather, embossed, silvered catch and two ornaments on flap, leather faced and lined, four regular pockets and coin pocket with nickelized snap frame. Size, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Each..... \$0.50

13145 Seal Grain Leather with fancy embossed fine calf flap; oxidized catch, outside card pocket and coin pocket with fancy nickelized frame, two regular pockets under flap; size, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Each..... \$0.50

13149 Colored Grained Calf Leather, with silvered catch; leather faced and lined, four regular pockets and coin pocket with nickelized snap frame; size, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Each..... \$0.65 Postage05

FIGURE 84. TOP LEFT: A POSSIBLE WALLET OR PURSE CLASP DECORATED IN THE ART NOUVEAU STYLE (FEAT. 687, SOUTHWEST QUAD, STRAT. I, LEV. 1). THE 1895 MONTGOMERY WARD CATALOG OFFERED PURSES AND WALLETS WITH SIMILAR CLASPS (RIGHT AND CENTER LEFT). EXAMPLES OF SUCH WALLETS CAN STILL BE FOUND FROM ANTIQUES DEALERS AS SHOWN ON THE BOTTOM LEFT (EBAY 2014C).



FIGURE 85. A CIRCULAR EYEGGLASS LENS FRAGMENT FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT (PHASE II, UNIT 11, STRAT. 1, LEV. 1) HAS A SIZE AND SHAPE SIMILAR TO THOSE USED ON POPULAR SPECATCLES OF THE 1920S. RIGHT: GOOGLES OFFERED IN THE 1927 SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOG (MIRKEN 1970: 771).



FIGURE 86. A LARGE FACETED RED JEWEL FROM HOUSTON-LECOMPT (SU4-MPZ) IS TOO LARGE FOR MOST JEWELRY, BUT IT COULD BE FOR A LARGE PURSE CLASP SUCH AS THE CA. 1900 EXAMPLE SHOWN HERE (NIFOROS 2014), OR A HAT PIN SUCH AS THE EXAMPLE ON THE RIGHT WHICH WAS FEATURED IN THE 1898 MOORE AND EVANS JEWELRY CATALOG (HINKS 1991).

5.3 Interpretation

The marked increase in artifacts of personal adornment during the late 19th and early 20th century at Houston-LeCompt is consistent with increased access to mass-produced and mass-marketed consumer goods. Any time a site is occupied first by land owners and then by tenants, it is interesting to examine differences in the kinds of goods the different inhabitants owned. At Houston-LeCompt, there are a lot of accessories, jewelry, and fasteners that can be attributed to tenant occupations; far more than those that date to the owner's occupation in the early part of the 19th century. In part, such differences could result from tenants choosing to invest in their own portable goods since renters have little incentive to invest in property improvements. However, this study has shown that the discrepancy has little to do with the relative wealth of the different people who occupied Houston-LeCompt over time. Instead, changes in clothing styles, materials, and production are reflected. Mary Houston may well have had a finer, more expensive wardrobe than the tenants who lived in her house 100 years later, but a fashionable wardrobe for her would have had few non-organic components that would survive archaeologically. By contrast, the tenants of the early 20th century had access to an abundance of metal fasteners, cheap jewelry, and accessories. They were able to purchase more durable goods that survive archaeologically, and in many cases the goods were disposable or affordable to replace. Consumer goods were also available across social boundaries thanks to the equalizing force of the mail order catalog.

As a case in point, the Houston-LeCompt adornment artifacts have uncanny similarities to those found in the Jackson Homestead assemblage curated at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. Jackson Homestead was the 19th and early 20th-century home of an African-American family in Montgomery County, Maryland. The site is located within the boundaries of a tract called "Prospect of Peace" purchased by Zacharias Downs (b. ca.1750-d.1831) in 1801. By the time he wrote his will in 1825, Downs listed 10 slaves among his household; five adults and five children. Among them was Malinda Adams Jackson, whose family occupied site 18MO609 (Furgerson et. al. 2011).

Malinda Adams Jackson was born into slavery in December 1825. Her mother, Rachel, was willed to Zacharias Downs' daughter Ann Magruder Downs along with 100 acres of land in 1831. Presumably, Malinda stayed with her mother, because she and Rachel are both listed as part of Ann Magruder Downs' household in the 1850 census. By that time Malinda had her first son, John Adams. In the 1850s, Malinda married Thomas Jackson, a laborer on a neighboring plantation, but the couple apparently continued to live apart as was common for married slaves of different owners. The Jacksons had at least five children together between 1855 and 1865: George, Milburn, Thomas E., Emma, and Mary E., all of whom lived with Malinda as part of Ann Downs' household (Furgerson et. al. 2011).

The Civil War and the end of slavery do not seem to have parted the Jacksons from Ann Downs' household, but the dynamic was certainly altered. In 1869, Malinda Jackson purchased 8.75 acres of the Prospect of Peace tract from Ann. When Malinda died between 1870 and 1879, her son John Adams became the head of household, possibly after an absence in which he served as a Baltimore mariner.

John then lived at the house along with his wife, children, and unmarried half siblings (Furgerson et. al. 2011).

The property was occupied by different descendants of Malinda Adams throughout the following decades as some of her children married and raised families there, some family members moved away for good, and others came and went depending on their circumstances. The Jacksons also hosted farm laborers as boarders. In 1910, seven family members and two boarders lived at the site. Catastrophic fire marked the end of occupation at Jackson Homestead ca. 1915. By the time Malinda's daughter Mary E. Jackson sold the property in 1916, no one was living there, and no one was listed as occupying the site from that point on (Furgerson et. al. 2011).

Phase III excavations took place when the site could not be avoided by plans to build a new roadway known as the ICC (Intercounty Connector) in Montgomery County, Maryland. A main focus of the study was the Jackson family's main dwelling (Structure A). Archaeological and historical evidence indicates that Structure A was constructed for Zacharias Downs' slaves in the first quarter of the 19th century as a 10' x 13' single-room 1.5 story log quarter with a fieldstone foundation and chimney. At some point after Malinda Jackson bought the property in 1869, but before 1890, a balloon-frame two story addition measuring 13' x 20' was constructed, again on a fieldstone foundation. This house burned ca. 1915, presumably while people still lived there, so clothing, furniture, and household objects were deposited in the archaeological record in such a way as to make it possible for archaeologists to make conjectural drawings of the internal arrangement of the house's contents. Additionally, artifact caches interpreted as spiritual or religious in origin were identified in the chimney and around the foundation. This structure was fully excavated with 100% collection and over 160,000 artifacts were recovered at the site (Furgerson et. al. 2011; Schablitsky 2011).

The Jackson Homestead assemblage makes an interesting comparison to Houston-LeCompt. Artifacts include shoe parts, purse frames, a purse or wallet clasp like the one from Houston-LeCompt, black glass buttons, hard rubber buttons, Prosser buttons, brass buttons with iron backs, collar buttons in ceramic and metal, bar pins, safety pins, black glass jewels for mourning attire, assorted colorful glass insets for buttons or jewelry, beads, finger rings, suspender and garter buckles and slides, and corset hooks (Figure 87). The Jackson Homestead artifacts parallel Houston-LeCompt nicely, indicating that the inhabitants of both sites had access to the same goods. The main differences between the two sites are the period of occupation—Houston-LeCompt has artifacts from the 18th century and 1920s that are not present at Jackson Homestead—and the quantity of artifacts. Jackson Homestead has far more clothing-related artifacts as would be expected from a house that was destroyed by fire with a whole family's possessions inside.

Jackson Homestead is a case where both land ownership and clothing seem to have been a priority. This supports the premise that the late 19th and early 20th century explosion of consumer goods should lead to greater quantities of clothing-related artifacts at all sites, regardless of occupation by owners or tenants.



FIGURE 87. ASSORTED ARTIFACTS FROM JACKSON HOMESTEAD, INCLUDING STRAP BUCKLES, FINGER RINGS, A PURSE OR WALLET CLASP, SUSPENDER CLIPS, SAFETY PINS, A PURSE FRAME, SUSPENDER SLIDES, STICK PINS, CORSET HARDWARE, BLACK GLASS BUTTONS, BAR PINS, RUBBER BUTTONS, BLACK GLASS INSETS OR JEWELS, COLLAR BUTTONS, BRASS/IRON COMPOSITE BUTTONS, PROSSER BUTTONS, BEADS, AND ASSORTED COLORED GLASS INSETS OR FAUX JEWELS.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The information presented here is by no means a comprehensive examination of clothing from ca. 1780-1930, but it does provide context for the artifacts of personal adornment recovered from Houston-LeCompt. The pre-1800 artifacts are perhaps easiest to interpret thanks to their convenient clustering within the cellar feature and the relatively clear functions served by different forms of buttons and buckles. Being able to determine a knee buckle from a shoe buckle by the type of chape can help archaeologists determine both fashions and gender, as was the case with the cache of clothes in the Houston-LeCompt House cellar. There seems to have been a storage chest of late 18th-century men's clothing stored and apparently abandoned in the house cellar. While it is mysterious that all but one of the pre-1800 clothing-related artifacts cluster in the cellar and house area, as if no yard activities of the 18th century led to accidental losses of buttons or buckles, the clothing stored in the cellar indicates that the family did own these accessories.

Unfortunately, the early 19th century occupation by Mary Houston and her family is largely invisible in the archaeological record thanks to the lack of enthusiasm for durable hardware such as buckles on the part of early 19th-century Americans. By the time clothing fasteners that can survive the burial environment reentered the mainstream, tenants were in residence at the site.

The clothing remnants of the late 19th and early 20th century dominate the Houston-LeCompt assemblage, and they are fairly well distributed across the site. The 19th and 20th century artifacts also tend to co-occur within proveniences around the site, making it difficult to separate the pre- and post-1900 periods in discussions of yard usage. Most artifacts are, of course, from plowzone, but the mixing was also true of features. For example, the trash burning area identified in Phase II Units 4 and 87 yielded a small button with a back mark dating it to ca. 1827-1840 (Figure 21C), but it also included late 19th-century black glass and Prosser buttons, the late 19th-century pewter "DEPOSE" French button, work clothes buttons, and a buckle that was probably for a strappy shoe of the 1920s. Granted, plowing could explain some of the mixing, but it is also possible that trash burning took place in the area over a long period of time. Alternately, the trash burning was a late phenomenon, but the early buttons represent examples that were reused or curated for some time before deposition.

Another interesting feature in terms of clothing artifacts is the last Houston-LeCompt well, Feat. 687. The artifacts tend to be from the late occupation of the site, as would be expected for fill of the last abandoned well, and it is easy to imagine the people filling the well by using it to dump any trash lying around the yard, or resulting from the abandonment of the house. Artifacts include a hem weight, snaps with fabric still attached, shoe parts, assorted buttons, including riveted work-clothes buttons, Prosser buttons, a wallet or purse clasp, and a generic strap buckle.

Finally, for general patterns in clothing distribution, the relationship between the house, the yard midden, and the laundry/work area is worth further consideration. Again, clothing-related small finds are not found in quantities that lend themselves to statistical analysis, but that should not stop archaeologists from playing with the data that is present. In order to look for the laundry area, Prosser buttons were a primary focus, but there are a lot more artifacts to draw from to see if the “Prosser prediction” discussed in Section 4.3 holds up under scrutiny.

In order to explore distributions further, non-feature data was gathered from three areas of the site; the house/kitchen/cellars area, the backyard midden, and the laundry/workspace. Then total counts were calculated for four categories; Prosser buttons, corset hooks, fasteners, and accessories. Prosser buttons were chosen because they appear in quantity and the results have already been discussed. Corsets were chosen just for fun and the distribution skews toward the midden. Two corset hooks were found in the house, four in the midden, and two additional hooks were in the burn area (Phase II Unit 87) associated with the midden. This makes sense since worn out corsets would be discarded or burned, not reused.

The really meaningful categories, however, are fasteners and accessories (Figure 88; Tables 5-6). As discussed in the introduction, deposition patterns for these categories should be different. Fasteners are most subject to loss during laundering, heavy labor, and daily activities as clothing wears out and fasteners break. Accessories such as purses, parasols, jewelry, combs, and eyeglasses are likely to receive a different level of care since they can be put away and protected when not in use.

The results of the analysis indicate that the laundry/work area has the highest number of fasteners per unit, while the midden is second and the house is third. This supports the “Prosser prediction” of the location of the laundry. By contrast, twice as many accessories per unit were recovered near the house and laundry compared to the midden. The numbers are far too small to take on much significance when it comes to accessories, but it is interesting that they were less likely to end up as general yard scatter. If features were included, such as the wells and the trash burning area, the number of accessories would be much higher, but that would represent deliberate discard, not necessarily a pattern of losses taking place where the items were stored or used.

Overall, the clothing-related artifacts at Houston-LeCompt are in keeping with larger cultural trends for modest rural households. While the stored pre-1800 clothing is perhaps the most intriguing revelation of this analysis, the enthusiastic adoption of post-industrial consumerism on the part of the late 19th and early 20th-century tenants is also significant, as it illustrates the effectiveness of mass-marketing, mail order businesses, and the importance of changing fashions throughout different levels of rural society.

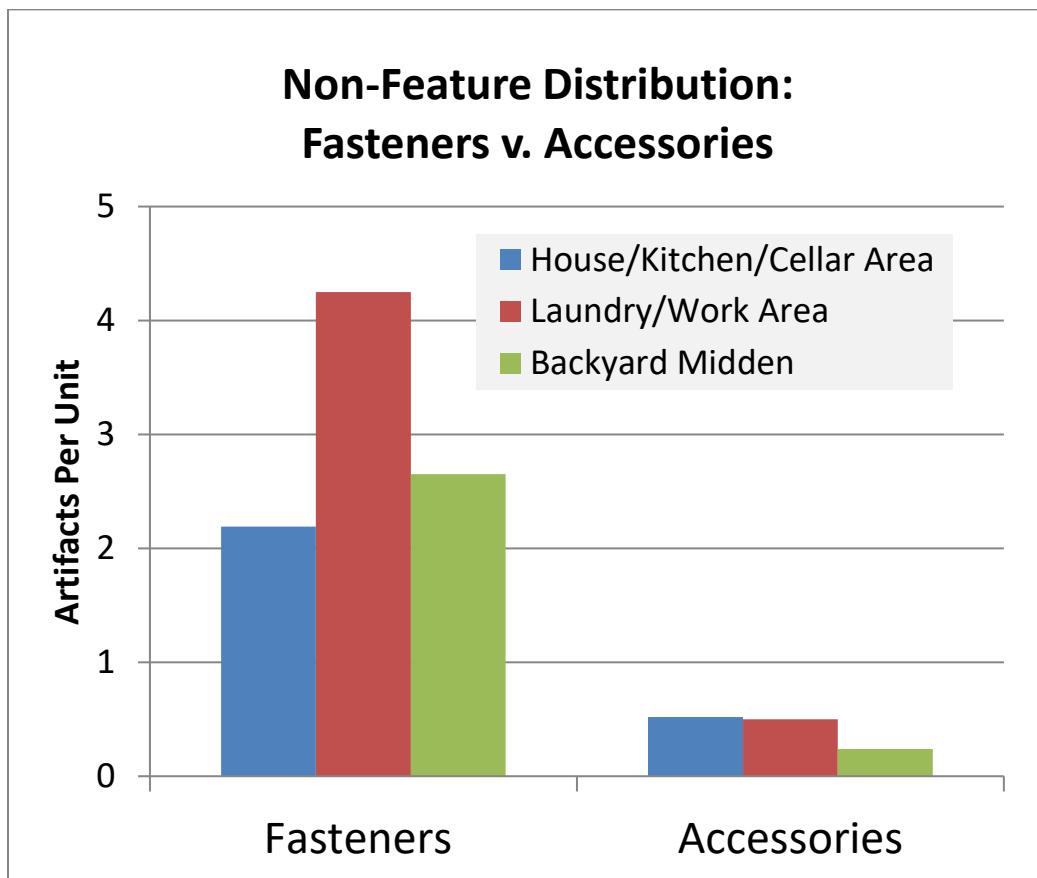


FIGURE 88. GRAPH SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF FASTENERS AND ACCESSORIES IN NON-FEATURE CONTEXTS.

TABLE 5: PARAMETERS FOR ANALYSIS OF FASTENER AND ACCESSORY DISTRIBUTIONS.

Contexts Included	Fastener Categories	Accessories	House/Kitchen/Cellar Area Units	Laundry/Work Area Units	Backyard Midden Units
Non-Feature Contexts from Phase II and Phase III	Boot Clip Buckle Button Corset Grommet Hooks/Eyes Snap Suspender	Bar Pin/Brooch Bead Comb Eyeglasses Finger Ring Fob Glass Decoration Jewelry Part Parasol/Umbrella Paste Jewel Purse	Phase II Units: 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 76, 78, 82, 84, 85, 90, 93 Phase III Units: SU2, 3, 4, EU 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11	Phase II Units: 77, 91, 94 Phase III: SU5	Phase II Units: 5, 19, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 74, 80, 83, 86, 92, 95, 96, 100 Phase III Units: SU6, 9
	Total Artifacts: 135	Total Artifacts: 25	Total Units: 21	Total Units: 4	Total Units: 17

TABLE 6: COUNTS FOR THE FASTENER AND ACCESSORY DISTRIBUTIONS.

	House/Kitchen/Cellar Area		Laundry/Work Area		Backyard Midden	
	Total	Artifacts/ Unit	Total	Artifacts/ Unit	Total	Artifacts/ Unit
Fasteners	46	2.19	17	4.25	45	2.65
Accessories	11	0.52	2	0.50	4	0.24

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