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## **The Cushman Quilt Tops: A Tale of North and South**

**Rachel May and Linda Welters**

*The Cushman Collection in the University of Rhode Island's Historic Textile and Costume Collection includes three unfinished quilt tops and two fabric swatch books, along with over 500 other artifacts. The quilt tops, which were begun in 1833, reveal a family story of North and South that spans two hundred years. The tops were similarly constructed of hexagons with a central star motif, made with the template-pieced mosaic patchwork method. Many of the paper templates remain in the backs of the quilt tops. Dates in the paper fragments range from 1775 to 1940, revealing generations of history from the colonial and antebellum periods to the Colonial Revival movement. The fabrics in the quilt tops and swatch books mark the transition from hand-spun and hand-woven cloth to machine-made textiles. Further, the quilt tops, swatch books, and related archival materials shed light on deeply intertwined family relationships between those who lived in Providence, Rhode Island, and Charleston, South Carolina, and their connection to larger themes in the Atlantic world, notably capitalism, trade, and slavery.*

### **Introduction**

In 1952, siblings Franklin R., Charles, and Julia Cushman donated three quilt tops along with over 500 other objects and items of clothing to the University of Rhode Island's Historic Textile and Costume Collection. The quilt tops were begun in 1833 in Charleston, South Carolina, by the Cushmans' great-aunt, Susan McPherson Sibley (Williams) Crouch, a young bride. Her husband, Hasell Wilkinson Crouch, a doctor in Charleston, assisted with the design and piecing. After his premature death on December

6, 1836, his widow returned to her family home in Providence with her daughter Emily, along with the unfinished quilts, cut pieces, and extra fabrics, which were kept in a trunk. They were discovered in 1917 by Susan Crouch's grandnephew Franklin R. Cushman, a teacher of industrial design and history. He started making two fabric swatch books in 1917 for use in his classes, connecting some of the fabrics in the swatch books with the fabrics in the quilts, adding dates of the fabrics' production, and explaining from whom each fabric came. He began work on the quilt tops, sewing the pieces together in the summers from 1930 to 1940. Franklin noted that his relatives helped to stitch the quilt tops together.<sup>1</sup>

The three quilt tops and two fabric swatch books reveal the story of two interconnected families, one with roots in Providence, Rhode Island, and the other in Charleston, South Carolina. Through the quilt tops, swatch books, and related archival documents, the lives of family members are connected to larger themes in the Atlantic world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notably capitalism, trade, and slavery.

### **The Williams/Crouch/Cushman Family**

Quiltmaker Susan McPherson Sibley Williams (1813–1902) was born April 13, 1813 in Providence, Rhode Island, to an old New England family. Her parents were Jason (1774–1863) and Sarah (Rose) Williams (1778–1863). Her grandparents, both from Pomfret, Connecticut, were Elijah (1744–1825) and Abigail (Chandler) Williams (1747–1834). Susan was the fifth of eight children born to Jason and Sarah, seven of whom

survived to adulthood. Susan's older sister Emily married William Jenkins Harris, a descendent of Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Rhode Island.<sup>2</sup> It was Emily and William's grandchildren who donated the artifacts to the URI Historic Textile and Costume Collection. Susan McPherson Sibley (Williams) Crouch was their great aunt. (See family tree in the Appendix.)<sup>3</sup>

The Crouch family, whom Susan married into on October 11, 1832, had equally deep American roots, but in the South. Susan's husband, Hasell Wilkinson Crouch (1809–1836), was raised in Charleston, the South's largest port. He graduated from Providence's Brown University in 1830, and returned home where he earned his medical degree at the University of South Carolina and became a doctor.<sup>4</sup> Hasell's father, Abraham Crouch (1765–1825), was a lawyer and a notary public in the Customs House in Charleston. Hasell's mother, Sophia Withers (1788–1809), was born in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1788 and died September 10, 1809, a month after Hasell was born.<sup>5</sup>

Susan and Hasell Wilkinson Crouch had two children of their own, Hasell Charles (1833–1836) and Emily Hasell Crouch (1836–1926). The eldest, Hasell Charles, had been ill for months after falling from his crib, and died when he was just three years old. Susan had written to her family that little Hasell had not been "right since he fell out of the crib the first night he slept in it," and, three months later, he fell a second time.<sup>6</sup> In what must have been a devastating moment, the death certificate of little Hasell Charles was signed by his own father, Dr. Crouch, with the cause of death listed as "Inflamm Brain."<sup>7</sup> Emily was born on February 7 of 1836, just months before her brother died. Hasell Wilkinson, Susan's husband, died shortly afterwards, of yellow fever. Susan

Crouch returned to Providence with her daughter Emily to live with her parents, remaining there until her death in 1902; Emily continued to reside there until 1917.

How did Hasell, a native of Charleston, and Susan, from Providence, meet? Several possibilities exist because the South Carolina Crouches had connections to Rhode Island, and the Williamses in Providence had business interests in Charleston. Hasell's grandfather, Charleston native Charles Crouch, had moved to Providence as a journeyman printer in 1762, where he met Mary Wilkinson of Smithfield, Rhode Island. They married in 1763 and moved to Charleston the following year, where he began the *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*.<sup>8</sup> Mary is known to have summered in Newport, Rhode Island, with her children William and Abraham in 1770, 1773, and probably 1775.<sup>9</sup> It was customary for prosperous South Carolinians to escape the swampy conditions of the rice-growing Lowcountry by sailing north to Newport in June and returning to Charleston at the end of mosquito season, as late as November.

On August 24, 1775 Charles drowned at sea when the vessel he was traveling on sank.<sup>10</sup> He had been en route to Philadelphia to purchase printing supplies. Mary was in Rhode Island at the time, but returned to Charleston where she began publishing her own newspaper, the *Charleston Gazette*. Just before the British laid siege to Charleston in 1780, Mary packed up and moved to Salem, Massachusetts, to start a newspaper. By 1781 Mary was living with her two sons in Providence. They remained in the city while Abraham, Hasell's father, studied at Brown University. He graduated in 1787.<sup>11</sup> Abraham continued his studies, earning a master's degree at Brown in 1790. It is probable that Abraham stayed in Providence after graduation to practice law, because he is listed as a "lawyer from Providence" in the accession records of the Gibbes Museum of Art where

his miniature portrait resides (fig. 1). That miniature was painted in 1806, the year the forty-one year-old lawyer and customs house clerk married eighteen-year-old Sophia Withers of Wilmington, Delaware (fig. 2). That same year he purchased the Tucker-Ladson house at 8 Meeting Street, one of Charleston's most prestigious addresses.<sup>12</sup> There the couple had two sons, Charles (1807–1880) and the afore-mentioned Hasell (1809–1836). After Sophia's death in 1809, Abraham never remarried. He sold the Meeting Street house in 1821. He must have continued traveling to Providence, however, because that is where he died on November 2, 1825. Both of his sons graduated from his alma mater, Brown University—Charles in 1829 and Hasell in 1830.<sup>13</sup>

Susan's grandparents, Elijah and Abigail Williams, lived in Pomfret, Connecticut, after their marriage in 1770.<sup>14</sup> In 1795, the Williamses moved to Providence with two of their sons, Jason and William Hilton. The third, a doctor, remained in Connecticut to oversee the family farm until it was sold.<sup>15</sup> Elijah Williams built a house in 1795 at 51 George Street near Brown University that eventually passed into Jason's hands (fig. 3). One of Elijah's sons, William Hilton, attended Brown University, graduating in 1799.<sup>16</sup> Elijah had run a general store in Pomfret; he and his son Jason operated a grocery store after settling in Providence. That business was dissolved in 1799, about the time Elijah and his sons began partnering with other Providence merchants in various coastal trading ventures.<sup>17</sup> Between 1798 and 1809, father and sons were listed as co-owners on seven sloops, schooners, or brigantines that sailed from Providence to ports south, including Charleston, and beyond to the West Indies.<sup>18</sup> One of Elijah's sons, William Hilton, the Brown University graduate, served as a supercargo (an officer on board a merchant ship in charge of cargo) on a coastal vessel. He died of "fever" in Surinam in 1800 at the age

of twenty.<sup>19</sup> In 1808, one brig owned by the Williamses, the *Mount Vernon*, was seized by customs in Sag Harbor, New York, for violating the 1807 Embargo Act, ending the family's shipping ventures and landing them in bankruptcy court.<sup>20</sup> Elijah, the father, had already moved to Athens, New York, in 1807, where he farmed and operated a tavern.

In 1802, Jason Williams, the merchant, married Sarah Rose, with whom he had eight children, including our quiltmaker Susan. At least one of his sons, Elijah Hilton Williams (1809–1884), known as Hilton, was a good friend of Hasell Wilkinson Crouch. It would seem that the Williamses and the Crouches knew each other for years, because the children socialized together during their young adulthood, leading to the marriage of Hasell and Susan. After the 1809 bankruptcy, Jason returned to his former career as a store owner and began renting rooms in his George Street house, probably to Brown University students.<sup>21</sup> The two Crouch boys might have boarded there. However, it is also possible that Jason and Abraham knew each other from the years between 1795 and 1806, when both Williamses and Crouches lived in Providence, a city of around 7,000 residents. Citizens of similar social standing, like the Williamses and Crouches, would have socialized together, especially considering their Brown University connections. When Abraham Crouch died in Providence in 1825, it was Jason Williams who paid his funeral expenses.<sup>22</sup>

The two families were about to become further intertwined. Letters from the late 1820s document the friendship between Charles and Hasell Crouch and the Williams siblings. Hasell and Susan married in 1832 in Providence and moved to Charleston soon thereafter. Both of Susan's brothers settled in Charleston; Hilton bought a lumberyard in 1831, and Winthrop worked for a general store before becoming a cotton broker.

These details of the Williams-Crouch story illuminate the close connections between families from the North and the South during the colonial era and in the years leading up to the Civil War. Providence and Charleston were both leading port cities, about a ten-day sea voyage from each other. During the colonial period, nearby Newport, Rhode Island, served as Charleston's summer resort; in the post-Revolutionary years Providence's economy boomed from shipping and manufacturing enterprises (including rum and cotton); at the same time Charleston became the Lower South's leading port for the exchange of rice, indigo, cotton, and slaves. This historical backdrop provides the context for the quilt tops and swatch books as well as a window into the dynamics of a family with roots in both the North and the South.

## The Quilt Tops

Susan started the quilt tops in Charleston. The accession notes of 1952 read, “these quilts were begun by Mr. Cushman’s grandmother’s sister, a Charleston, N.C. [*sic*] bride in 1833. Her husband, a young physician, Dr. Hasell N. [*sic*] Crouch, planned the design and color scheme.”<sup>23</sup>

Quilt #1 (accession number 1952.63.124) is thought to be the oldest of the three tops.<sup>24</sup> The accession tag attached to the quilt reads, “Planned and sewn by Dr. and Mrs. Hasell Crouch. It is said that when he had a difficult case to prescribe for, he would work on his patchwork while trying to decide what to do for his patient . . . .” After Dr. Crouch’s premature death in 1836, the unfinished quilt tops were put away with some hexagon pieces cut and ready to be stitched in place, an unknown number of mosaic “flowers,” and additional fabrics for more hexagons. Both Mrs. Crouch and her daughter Emily passed away, leaving the quilts unfinished. Franklin R. Cushman and his relatives completed some of the border patches in the quilts, made new templates for old fabrics, and sewed together hexagons to form new “flowers.” Their stitching is not of the same high quality as Susan’s. Quilt #1 was intended for a bigger bed than quilt tops #2 (accession number 1952.63.125) and #3 (accession number 1952.63.126). (See figs. 4, 5, and 6.) The original hexagons were to be assembled into a large quilt for Hasell and Susan’s bed; the largest of the three tops was the beginning of that quilt. A letter in the Cushman file reveals that Franklin decided to sew the remaining pieces together with those that he made for two quilts in twin bed size; these were sewn together by Franklin and his relatives in 1936.<sup>25</sup> These are tops # 2 and #3. Emily never married, and she lived with her mother in Providence; according to census records from 1880, she worked as an

art teacher.<sup>26</sup> In fact, the Cushman collection at the University of Rhode Island includes a large box of watercolors, some signed by Emily.

All three quilt tops are constructed of mosaic patchwork, in which fabric pieces were folded over hexagonal paper templates, and then basted to hold the shape in place until multiple pieces were whip stitched together. Mosaic patchwork originated in England; the earliest surviving example is a silk patchwork coverlet dated 1718.<sup>27</sup> British emigrants brought the technique to the American colonies in the eighteenth century, and several late eighteenth-century examples exist.<sup>28</sup> Thus, this was neither a new piecing method nor a new pattern in 1833. Hexagon quilts were very popular in the South Carolina Lowcountry well into the nineteenth century. The Charleston Museum has thirty pieced mosaic patchwork artifacts, which were exhibited in 2002; Sharon Pinka included a hexagonal quilt top dated circa 1840 in her report on Lowcountry chintz.<sup>29</sup>

The Hexagon pattern, also called Mosaic or Honeycomb, increased in popularity in the United States in the early 1830s with its publication in 1831 by Eliza Leslie in *The American Girls' Book*, and again in 1835 by *Godey's Lady's Book*.<sup>30</sup> When the Cushman quilts were started in 1833, industrial textile production had taken hold in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and other eastern seaboard states; printed cotton goods constituted a lively trade up and down the coast, and across the Atlantic through America's major ports: Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Charleston.<sup>31</sup> Susan Crouch and her relatives would have had easy access to these early machine-produced textiles to assemble their quilts.

In the mosaic patchwork method, once the quilt top was finished, the quilter generally removed the paper templates from the back and added batting and backing to

the quilt top. However, the earliest extant American examples did not have the papers removed.<sup>32</sup> Mosaic patchwork often was joined to the backing without batting, which required no quilting.

The three quilt tops are similarly composed, with a central star motif and “flowers” of hexagons arranged on the rest of the quilt separated by rows of white hexagons. The individual hexagons measure approximately 1 5/8 inches to 1 7/8 inches point to point. Quilt top #1 has hexagons pieced into triangular units that form stars around the central “flower,” and quilt top #3 includes smaller star motifs. Two of the quilt tops, #2 & #3, include newer fabrics than the first quilt top (the one with fewer papers). Furthermore, quilt top #1 has a simpler central star surrounding the “flower,” with just an outline of colorful hexagon pieces constituting the star, and a white center. Quilt tops #2 and #3 have more complex central star patterns, with no white space and several rows of colorful hexagon pieces spreading outward to create the star shape. The central stars in these two quilts also include older fabrics, some from about 1800; one of the fabrics in the quilt, with a leaf motif characteristic of the early 1830s, is represented in three colorways. Many pieces of a glazed chintz dated 1829 commemorate the inauguration of President Jackson; fabrics from a black-and-white plate print of two parrots perched on the branches of a fruit-bearing tree (one parrot is eating the fruit) were in production from 1774 to 1811.<sup>33</sup> The tops are a veritable encyclopedia of the checks, stripes, indigos, chintzes, calicos, drabs, and rainbow prints that characterize early nineteenth-century quilts; all three of the main printing technologies of the period—block, plate, and cylinder—are evident.

In their selection of mosaic patchwork for their bed quilt, Susan and Hasell echoed the choices of other Charlestonians. As Laurel Horton has noted, evidence suggests that quiltmakers in Charleston started to practice the technique of mosaic patchwork in the early nineteenth century. It was practiced by upper-class women who came from or married into “families of wealth, education and influence.”<sup>34</sup> The framed center orientation of Susan and Hasell’s quilt is characteristic of other mosaic patchwork quilts made in South Carolina, as are the fabric choices: chintz and small-figured calicoes.<sup>35</sup> Unlike most of the published South Carolina mosaic patchwork quilts, however, a great deal is known about Susan and Hasell Crouch and the history of the quilt tops. Interestingly, correspondence with family members in Rhode Island revealed that Susan’s two sisters-in-law living in Charleston were also planning mosaic patchwork quilts.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Paper Templates**

Because the quilt tops were made in the paper-piecing method and were not yet finished, the papers remaining in the back of the quilts reveal snippets of letters, contracts, magazine clippings, musical scores, envelopes with postmarks, and even a child’s penmanship practice, with phrases and words repeated in the same fragment (fig. 7). The papers give tantalizing clues to the family’s lives across time and their ties to trade.

These papers reveal dates from 1775 to 1940, as well as names of family members, evidence of shipping records from Charleston or Providence to Havana and Barbados (with mention of “shugar,” casks, and lists of calculations), family letters,

clippings from Franklin's high school, musical scores, and even old dictionary entries. The papers indicate dates ranging from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century, with the latter dates pointing to the sections that Franklin had a hand in finishing.

Quilt top #1 has the fewest papers, which remain only around the border. In quilt tops #2 and #3, the papers are clustered in a pattern. The older pieces of paper are identifiable by the color of the paper and the references and dates written on the paper.<sup>37</sup> The earliest date written on one of these older pieces is 1775.<sup>38</sup> Other dates in all three tops are 1798, 1802, 1813 (repeated on three pieces of paper in the quilt tops), 1817, and 1824. Then, the dates jump to 1931, 1934, and 1935, which are repeated five times in the quilt tops. One template has the date 1940; another is cut from an envelope bearing Franklin's name and address at 19 Bellevue Avenue in Providence. The older dates correspond to the older fabrics—those recorded in the fabric swatch books. But newer paper templates also back the older fabrics. The older dates and pieces of paper are clustered together on hexagons of about five rows. It is likely, then, that Susan Crouch and her husband Dr. Hasell Crouch pieced most of the hexagons in the quilt top #1.<sup>39</sup> The more recent fabrics surround hexagons made from the older fabrics and paper templates, implying that Franklin Cushman did some work on quilt top #1 around the edges, but most of the work assembling quilt tops #2 and #3.

### **The Fabric Swatch Books**

The fabric swatches are contained in two loose-leaf binders, with individual fabric swatches attached to each page and handwritten notes written beneath each one (fig. 8). The inside front cover of one of the fabric swatch books reads, "Patches from the pocket

of Abigail [*sic*] Chandler, wife of Elijah Williams, handspun and handwoven about 1775.” (A pocket is a separate article of clothing worn under a petticoat or gown to hold valuables; it tied on at the waist, often in pairs.) The “pocket” is referenced in a letter from Franklin to Miss Mary C. Whitlock, who managed the University of Rhode Island’s Historic Textile and Costume Collection in 1952. This letter reveals that the pocket “belonged to my great, great grandmother, Abigail Chandler, wife of Elijah Williams. She died in the early [eighteen] thirties.”<sup>40</sup> The swatch books include seven different handwoven fabrics from Abigail’s pocket, samples from her daughter Sarah Rose Williams’ pocket, and snippets of dress fabrics from family members. Years later, Franklin even included a few twentieth-century fabrics in his swatch books, such as a page of shirtings dated 1937. The handspun and handwoven cloth does not appear in any of the quilts; most of the fabric in the swatch books is dated (in the same hand) to the 1830s and 1840s. A few are labeled “before 1830” or “ante 1830.” Underneath many of the fabrics is the handwritten name “HW Crouch,” and in the bottom right corner of many pages is the date 1917, which notes the year the swatch books were begun, written in the hand of Franklin R. Cushman.

Susan’s daughter, Emily, owned three trunks, from which most of the fabrics came. She had been accumulating artifacts in trunks since 1839 according to accession notes.<sup>41</sup> After her mother’s death in 1902, Emily remained in the house, taking in female boarders as evidenced in *The Providence House Directory and Family Address Book* for the period 1905–1917.<sup>42</sup> Later in life, probably in 1917, she moved to the home of Franklin Cushman and his two sisters at 19 Bellevue Avenue.<sup>43</sup> Franklin opened the trunks in 1917, about the time she moved in with him to live out her years. The trunks

and their contents were written about in a 1930 newspaper article after Emily's death; the short article featured a woman posing in one of the dresses from the trunk (Franklin refers to this article in his letter). The caption underneath the photograph reads, "An old loose gown...once worn by Mrs. Abigail Chandler Williams and packed in a sea chest which remained in the old Williams house on George St until 1917."<sup>44</sup> The Jason Williams Crouch house no longer stands. It was listed as vacant in 1920, and the land on which it stood now is the location of Brown University's Littlefield Hall, a student residence built in 1925.

The notebooks each hold about thirty pages of numbered fabric swatches. Some of the fabrics are identified with the source from which Franklin acquired them and the approximate date of manufacture, for example: "NY Merchant Sales—1840–50 Caroline Cromwell," and, "Mrs. Sarah Rose Williams—before 1840—front of her pocket, Providence, RI, 102 George St formerly 51 George St." Some of the fabrics are noted as being, "used in bed quilt," or, "scrap of Betsy Williams' dress—she lived in little red house in Roger Williams Park, Providence. Betsy Williams was [the great great] granddaughter of Roger Williams."<sup>45</sup> One plain white cotton swatch is accompanied by the caption: "sample used for setting in bed quilt—pieced in hexagonal block. H. W. Crouch, Charleston, South Carolina." Another reads, "from Mary Lee Technical High School, Purchased 1862—75c a yard." Many of the swatches are noted with mention of "HW Crouch, Charleston, SC," and either "1830–1840," or, "probably ante 1830." One drab print has a bolt stamp with the date "1830" (fig. 9). Most of the swatches in the books came from leftover fabrics stored in the trunks. However, it appears that Franklin cut up some clothing for swatches, specifically the pockets that belonged to Abigail and

Sarah as well as the dress of Betsy Williams; the Cushman collection does not include such artifacts. Further, an 1830s dress probably belonging to Susan arrived at URI with the sleeves cut off (accession number 52.64.40); the fabric can be found in both the quilt tops and the swatch books, suggesting that Franklin may have used the sleeves for swatches.

It is significant that one of the fabrics is marked with the note, “Probably for slave gowns,” and “HW Crouch probably ante 1830 Charleston, SC” (fig. 10). Franklin probably got this information from Emily, who had learned it from her mother Susan, a first-hand witness to the clothing worn by the slaves in her husband’s Charleston family. The “slave gown” print has a brown ground and features a small geometric pattern; it is found in two of the quilt tops. The calico is a simple print in the cover and pad style that would have required four cylinders. The same print on a dull red ground appears in one of the notebooks. Such designs were economical to print. According to scholars who have studied American slave clothing, field hand clothing was made of “coarse” cloth, especially osnaburg.<sup>46</sup> Shane White and Graham White acknowledge that most slave clothing (especially that for field slaves) was indeed “coarse” and simple, but that tremendous variation occurred in the clothes that slaves wore, as evidenced in the runaway ads posted in newspapers.<sup>47</sup> Patricia Hunt-Hurst researched clothing in fugitive slave advertisements in Georgia, finding that while “homespun” was the most frequently mentioned fabric in the runaway slaves’ clothing, calico was the second highest: women “ran away wearing ‘figured,’ ‘red striped,’ or ‘dark pongee’ calico.”<sup>48</sup> The cloth in the Cushman fabric swatch books is neither coarse nor extravagant; it is of the same quality and weight as other cottons in the swatch books and the quilt tops, though its dull color

made it more practical for everyday use and labor. Probably it was intended for Susan and Hasell's seven house slaves.<sup>49</sup>

Most of the twenty-eight fabrics in the swatch books labeled with the Crouch name are used in the quilt tops (fig. 11). Franklin obtained a moiré print from another source that appears in the quilt tops. All three of the quilts share at least four of the fabrics that are also found in the swatch books. Additionally, two of the quilts share several more fabrics, but these samples are not found in the swatch books.

Franklin intended to use the swatch books in his industrial design classes at Providence Technical High School, in a state known for textile manufacturing. But the curriculum changed, and the swatch books were no longer needed as instructional materials. He gave one book to Miss Grace Whaley, a fellow teacher who went on to supervise home economics teacher training at Rhode Island State College (now the University of Rhode Island).<sup>50</sup> After Franklin's death, she gave the book to the Historic Textile and Costume Collection.

### **Evidence of Mercantile Activity**

The quilt tops and related documents reveal mercantile activity that supported the growing capitalistic economy in the Atlantic world—including the enslavement of Africans. The Portuguese pioneered the purchase of slaves on Africa's west coast for sale to plantations on coastal South America and in the Caribbean. British, Dutch, French, and Americans eventually joined in.

The British were particularly successful on Barbados with sugar plantations in the seventeenth century.<sup>51</sup> They planted only modest amounts of cotton. By the early

eighteenth century, the Caribbean islands were getting crowded. Expansion meant moving the Barbados socio-economic model to North America's southern colonies, which established Charleston as a major port city. Indigo and rice constituted the major crops in the eighteenth century, but with the invention of textile machinery that sped up the production of cotton textiles, entrepreneurs in the young United States economy shifted their attention to cotton in the early nineteenth century. The Crouches and the Williamses participated in this economy.

Papers in the quilt tops include the words "West Indies," "casks," "shugar," "Havana," "Barbados," "Carolyna," and "Charleston." These papers are brown and crumbling with age, and the words are handwritten. The papers also include passages typeset in English, French, and Spanish, which appear to be fragments of legal documents. Examples of French wording found on paper templates include: "et prudents / Comtes / Conseillers, comme / Justiciers, et Regent / ...mit ecclefiatiques ou fecu / ...res patentees. Nous...." The translations are: "and careful [or cautious] / Counts / Advisors like / Justices, and Regents [Law-makers] / ...Ecclesiastics or [ ] / [...res] Patented. We..." A fragment written in a mix of Spanish and English reads in part, "y territorio / Par esca conv / EN testimonio / 1798 / My Office / July 26." All but the words "My Office Jan. 26 1798" are typeset. This is clearly another sort of legal document, referencing a territory, signed in testimony.

Another language included in the fragments is Dutch; there are several mostly indecipherable handwritten Dutch (perhaps Old Dutch) fragments clustered together, two of which read in part, "aller geode / eldlyke die deeze / eezen: Doen wy Burge / Carolyna / son van Charleston / by foelmneelen Ee / Bygantynal," and another reads, "Carolyna

Charle...” seeming to reference Charleston, [South] Carolina. These templates may have been cut from a letter, as the words translated as “go in good” sound like a greeting or sign-off of some kind.

These are some of the languages spoken in the Caribbean. This fact, along with the repeated appearance within the hexagonal paper templates of the words “West Indies,” as well as references to “shugar,” “weight,” “lbs,” “casks,” “Seaman,” “Sloop,” “Master,” “Captain,” “Lists of the Vessels,” “Shipping,” “Helmsman,” and “Property” provide evidence of mercantile transactions between the West Indies and Charleston. Hasell Wilkinson’s father, Abraham Crouch, in his position as notary in Charleston’s Customs House (located in the Old Exchange Building, which functioned as Charleston’s slave auction site), surely witnessed the buying and selling of slaves.<sup>52</sup> He may have even boarded slave ships arriving from Africa, enumerating the human cargo, prior to the 1808 law banning the transatlantic slave trade. Abraham lived in the upper strata of Charlestonian society; his home on Meeting Street was just steps away from the city’s social elite, including Nathaniel Russell (1738–1820), a transplanted Rhode Island merchant who built a grand Neoclassical home at 51 Meeting Street in 1808.<sup>53</sup>

The repetition of the words “shugar” and “casks” is evidence of the rum trade between the US and West Indies. “Havana” and “Barbados” are mentioned—both major sources of sugar and molasses to be made into rum at the American distilleries. Merchants used Rhode Island distilleries (a major industry in the late 1700s and early 1800s) which produced a preferred brand of rum. We know that Rhode Island and Charleston were involved in New England’s nefarious “triangle trade”: sugar and molasses from the West Indies were traded for manufactured goods in New England

(especially Rhode Island rum) which was in turn traded for slaves in West Africa, who were sold in the West Indies.<sup>54</sup> No evidence exists that ties either the Crouches or the Williamses to slave ships, but Susan Crouch's family was part of the West Indies trade.<sup>55</sup> As previously mentioned, William Hilton Williams, Susan's uncle, died of yellow fever in Surinam. His grandmother Abigail's pocket, when discovered by Franklin, had included a silhouette of William as well as an oration on "Sympathy" that had been corrected by his tutor, Mr. Fish, at Brown University in 1798. His clothes, some of which are now in URI's collection, were returned to the family in his sea chest.

Susan's father and brothers were active in the coastal trade in the years following the American Revolution. Susan's brothers, Hilton and Winthrop, shipped goods back and forth between Providence and Charleston from the 1830s to the 1880s, when they died in Charleston. Both brothers' businesses relied on slave labor, and Winthrop continued buying and selling enslaved people into the 1850s.<sup>56</sup> After Susan moved back to Providence, Winthrop sold her slaves, buying one for an acquaintance. Slavery was a fact of life for the Crouches and the Williamses.

As Ronald Bailey argues, the rum trade was closely connected to the production of Caribbean sugar, spermaceti candles, cotton grown in the southern states, the ship building industry, and the slave trade—and later, the industrial production of cotton cloth. He states: "These early industries provided the foundation and part of the initial capital for the industrialization of New England."<sup>57</sup> Rhode Island's merchants, living in a small place with no raw materials to export, relied on trading, smuggling, and privateering in the eighteenth century. Only a handful of merchants got into the slave trade because of the expense and risk involved. "The great majority of Rhode Island vessels," like those

owned by the Williamses, “were engaged in the coastal trade.”<sup>58</sup> From the profits gained through the rum trade and the slave trade sprang the cotton textile industry that fueled New England’s economy in the nineteenth century. Charleston, home to the Crouches, was the largest American receiving port for slaves during the colonial period.<sup>59</sup>

Recent publications have begun to address the issue of northern complicity in southern slavery over the economic juggernaut posed by cotton’s growth. Madelyn Shaw and Lynne Zacek Bassett curated an exhibition and catalog titled *Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts & Context in the Civil War*, pointing out that “countless Americans maintained family and business ties across state and regional divisions,” including slave traders, rum distillers, and manufacturers of negro cloth for sale to plantation owners.<sup>60</sup> Edward E. Baptist offered a history of the interpretation of slavery in America in *The Half Has Never Been Told*, drawing attention to the Atlantic trade, its expansion in the American South, and the cotton empire that fueled America’s economy in the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup> Sven Beckert globalized the history of cotton in *Empire of Cotton*, emphasizing the role of slave labor in building that empire: much of the cotton grown in America ended up in Manchester, England’s cotton mills for production into inexpensive cloth sold in emerging markets.<sup>62</sup> Christy Clark-Pujara’s *Dark Work* describes the history of slavery in Rhode Island, including the connections between northern textile mills that produced “negro cloth” and southern cotton growers.<sup>63</sup>

Susan and Hasell followed in the footsteps of Hasell’s father, Abraham Crouch, who held twelve slaves in his household of four whites, as recorded in the 1820 census in Charleston, South Carolina. Earlier members of the South Carolina Crouch family also owned slaves; Mary Wilkinson (a Rhode Islander) and Charles Crouch owned three

slaves.<sup>64</sup> In 1830, at Brown's Commencement Exercises, Hasell gave an oration on "Southern Slavery."<sup>65</sup>

The introduction of machine-printed cottons is evidenced by Susan and Hasell Crouch's acquisition of the fabrics in the quilt tops and fabric swatch books, most of which are noted to have been made between 1830 and 1840. The later shift to textile manufacture is evidenced in the fabrics that Franklin R. Cushman notes, in the fabric swatch books, were offered through "merchant sales" in New York. The fabrics from the pockets of Abigail and her daughter Susan show the transition from homemade to factory-produced cloth in New England. As Connecticut and Providence residents, the Williams family would have had access to early domestically manufactured fabrics as well as imported cloth. Several of the fabrics are represented in multiple colorways, suggesting a connection to the textile industry. Family correspondence includes numerous mentions of fabrics, some of which Susan requested from family members in Providence. Jason Williams' store carried a variety of fabrics including calicos in 1832 and 1833.<sup>66</sup> A letter from Hasell to Susan's family reports that she bought "a French muslin that Eliza [Susan's sister] saw at Harwoods and admired so much" and was making it into a dress.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps this is the fabric labeled "Eliza's double gown" in the swatch book (fig. 8). Susan also requested unbleached muslin. Susan had all manner of imported and domestic fabrics available to her in Charleston's shops. But, the correspondence shows that the family shipped parcels back and forth that contained fabrics. Probably fabric prices in Rhode Island, near cotton manufacturers, were lower than Charleston's prices. Susan's shop owner father, Jason Williams, could buy both

locally printed and imported fabrics at wholesale prices, which even with shipping costs were probably lower than Charleston's retail prices.

Susan's quilt tops and Franklin's swatch books represent a transitional period in America's industrial history. In the swatch books, the blue-and-white linens made by Abigail Williams speak to the pre-industrial era. The fabrics in the tops include the imported block prints and large-scale copperplate prints from the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries as well as the small-scale patterns characteristic of early cylinder printing. A few of the earliest fabrics may be printed on linen or linen-cotton blends.<sup>68</sup> American textile printing was in its infancy during the 1820s, and a few of the fabrics in these artifacts may have come from American print works. A few short years after these quilt tops were started, the American textile industry grew into an important economic engine for both the North, where most of the mills were located, and the South, which supplied the raw material (cotton), as well as a ready market for finished cloth.

### **From the Civil War to the Colonial Revival**

The files on the Cushman, Crouch, and Williams family, and the quilt tops themselves, span notable events from the Revolutionary War (with the mention of the date 1775 in one of the quilt top papers), to the Civil War, the abolition of slavery, the start of the Industrial Revolution, the Spanish American War, and World War I. Susan's two brothers who resided in Charleston lost their businesses in the Civil War; Hilton's lumber yard was ruined, and Winthrop's company—R. & J. Caldwell—was burned. Winthrop recovered, forming W. B. Williams & Son and hiring his brother as a clerk.<sup>69</sup> Hasell Wilkinson's grand-nephew, Hasell Wilkinson Crouch (1879–1938), fought in the Spanish American War.<sup>70</sup>

Years later, April 14, 1917, mention of war continues, in a letter to “Cousin Emmie,” from “Trezevant”:

Well it looks like real war in Washington here! Soldiers guarding the railroad and other bridges, the water works, the Government buildings & clerks all required to show a pass to gain admittance to their offices...Germany has been killing our people & snubbing & insulting us & blowing up our factories by plots. I hope we will, with the help of England & France just entirely annihilate the Kaisir & all that he stands for.<sup>71</sup>

His frustration, towards the end of the war, is clear. Later in the letter, he writes of more personal news: “I was certainly very glad to have that photo of the ‘Old House.’ It is a very good picture and is a quaint looking old place. I wonder *when* it was built. Do you know?”

The inquiry about the house is in the spirit of the Colonial Revivalists, who celebrated the Colonial houses that were previously seen as homely.<sup>72</sup> In fact, the Jason Williams Crouch house was included in a 1918 publication on Providence and its Colonial houses.<sup>73</sup> Considered old-fashioned for much of the nineteenth century, people gradually became more accepting of colonial architecture, and began to celebrate it as “Picturesque,” linking it to a humble, morally strong past.<sup>74</sup> The waves of immigration from eastern and southern Europe compelled old New England families to celebrate their long histories in North America with an emphasis on colonial heritage; they held Martha Washington teas wearing old family heirlooms and revived craft skills of olden times such as quilting. It was at this time that hexagon patchwork made a comeback;

known as Grandmother's Flower Garden, it became one of the favorite quilt patterns of the Colonial Revival period.

In the spirit of Colonial Revivalism, Franklin R. Cushman started putting together the fabric swatch books in 1917; he began with the homespun fabrics from the pocket of Abigail Chandler Williams. The Colonial Revival movement was at its peak in the 1920s and 1930s, when the article about the family's objects was published in 1930 under the title "Attic Treasures" in the Providence newspaper, with an image of a woman reenacting that past as she wore an antique dress and looked into a mirror.<sup>75</sup> She's photographed from the back, so we see her face in the mirror—an apt analogy for the Colonial Revival, re-envisioning ourselves through the past.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Franklin R. Cushman, the history teacher, seemed to be fully engaged in remembering his family's past. Luckily for us, he provided the University of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Historical Society with detailed notes on the artifacts and documents he donated.

In a coincidence of colonial revival activity, in 1921, Ethel Stanwood Bolton and Eva Johnston Coe, with the Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames of America, published *American Samplers*. Included in the book is documentation of samplers by Susan McPherson Sibley Williams and Emily H. Crouch, which are not pictured, but described in detail. Susan's was made when she was just seven years old, in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1820. The documentation of Susan's sampler reads:

Williams, Susan McPherson Sibley. 1820. Providence, R.I. 7 yrs. 9" x 8 ½". 3 alphabets. Chain and cross-stitch. "Behold the child of innocence how beautiful is the mildness of its countenance and the diffidence of its looks." "Be good and be happy."<sup>77</sup>

The University of Rhode Island's Historic Textile and Costume collection does not own the Williams samplers, but it does house dresses, shawls, and other artifacts once used by Abigail, Susan and Emily. One dress is made of fabric that appears in both a quilt top and the swatch books (accession number 52.64.40). The style of another loose-fronted dress, a beautifully stitched wrapper, is in a mid-1830s style that corresponds with the date when Susan was pregnant with Emily (accession number 52.64.41). She wrote home about sewing a dress for her expanding waistline.<sup>78</sup> Dresses attributed to Susan after her return to Providence show that she wore fashionable clothing in then-current fabrics. It is fascinating that the story of this family comes full circle, starting with the history of the quilt tops, paper templates, and swatch books, and their reference to slave dresses and the rum trade in the West Indies, through several wars, to the early twentieth century's interest in reviving this history in the Colonial Revival. Franklin continued to work on the quilt tops in the 1930s as represented by the papers in the back of the quilt tops. Fragments of documents from the schools where Franklin taught, letters and envelopes printed with his address (19 Bellevue Ave.), and magazine clippings mention, among many other things, the art of Norman Rockwell.

It is remarkable that these quilt tops and fabric swatch books, and the accompanying letters and documentation, cover such a broad span of United States history, from the late 1700s to the early 1950s. And equally fascinating are the stories of the people who lived through these times—the births and deaths of their children, their travel and correspondence from North to South, the way they sustained contact with one another through letters and photographs, their choices to marry or to stay single, the worry they expressed when waiting to hear from a nephew, their longing to see their

sisters, their sense of regret in writing of bad news. The story of Susan McPherson Sibley (Williams) Crouch (fig. 12) holds particular intrigue. What must her life have been like for those four short years of marriage? How did she survive the death of both her son and husband in one year (an event not uncommon in those days, but certainly no less difficult for the survivors), as well as the birth of her daughter in that same year? In letters to her brothers in Charleston in her later years, she frequently mentions a male friend, so perhaps she had found love again, or at least companionship.

Did Susan feel any regret that various family members owned slaves and earned their living by servicing the plantation system? She never mentions whether she is pro or con, but she adjusted quickly to owning enslaved people. Her brother Winthrop was decidedly pro-slavery; Franklin characterized him as a ‘fire-breathing southerner’ in his notebooks at the Rhode Island Historical Society.<sup>79</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In looking at the fabrics in the quilt tops and their connection to the fabrics in the swatch books, as well as these papers in the backs of the quilt tops, we find the story of a family whose ancestors were witness to, and participated in, a rapidly shifting American economy—and because of their locations in Charleston and Rhode Island, as well as mention of “slave gowns” alongside one of the fabrics in the diary—and slavery as well. We can trace the roots of the cotton plantations in the South, and the shift to machine-spun and woven cotton in the North. Fabrics in the swatch books dated between 1830 and 1840 that match those in the quilt tops mark the early years of the textile printing industry in the United States. The quilts, papers, and letters from the family members (archived at URI and the Rhode Island Historical Society) tell the story of a family rooted in both

Providence and Charleston, serving and surviving in multiple wars, sustaining their connections with letters, photographs, visits, and occasional shipments of gifts up and down the coast. And, the preservation by the Cushmans of this collection of clothes and artifacts, and their investment in recovering these stories and continuing to make the quilts, reveals their involvement in the Colonial Revival movement.

*Thanks are extended to Professor Margaret Ordoñez, Director of URI's Historic Textile and Costume Collection, for identifying fabrics in the quilt tops and to Susan Jerome, Collections Manager of the Historic Textile and Costume Collection for her help. Appreciation also is due to Ned Lazaro, Curator at Historic Deerfield, Linda Baumgarten for sharing information on the Cushman donations to Colonial Williamsburg, and to Matthew Haught of the University of Memphis for sharing his research on the printer Mary Crouch. Many thanks go to Lynne Bassett for her helpful suggestions.*

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<sup>1</sup> The collection came to URI in three donations, the first from Franklin R. Cushman, and the second and third from his siblings. Before his death in 1952, Franklin distributed many other pieces, including quilts and furnishing fabrics, to other museums and historical societies. Grace Whaley, who had worked with Franklin, later donated one of the two swatch books.

<sup>2</sup> Emily and William's second daughter, Mary Elizabeth Harris, married William Allerton Cushman, a descendant of Robert Cushman, financial agent to the Plymouth Colony who arrived in America on the ship *Fortune* on November 9, 1621.

<sup>3</sup> Genealogical information was compiled from URI accession records, Ancestry.com, Findagrave.com, MSS 34, Series F, Vol. 1-8: Franklin Cushman's Notebooks (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).

<sup>4</sup> *Historical Catalogue of Brown University, 1764–1914* (Providence, RI: Brown University, 1914), 156.

<sup>5</sup> According to an image from her grave, she had two infants at the time. "This truly amiable Lady thus early snatched away from her two infants and grieving Friends was the highly affectionate consort of Abraham Crouch Esq. of this city ...." (Findagrave.com).

<sup>6</sup> Susan Crouch to Emily Williams, letter dated 7 May 1836, MSS 34, Series E, Correspondence (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society.)

<sup>7</sup> *South Carolina Death Records, 1821–1955*, www.ancestry.com.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Henry, "Exception to the Female Model: Colonial Printer Mary Crouch," *Journalism Quarterly* 62, 4 (1985): 725–726.

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- <sup>9</sup> Carl Bridenbaugh, “Charlestonians at Newport, 1767–1775,” *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 41, 2 (1940): 45, 47.
- <sup>10</sup> Henry, “Colonial Printer,” 728–733.
- <sup>11</sup> *Historical Catalogue of Brown University*, 73.
- <sup>12</sup> Meeting Street (1–42), Charleston County Public Library, [www.ccpl.org/content.asp?id=15675&action=detail&catid=6025&parentid=5747](http://www.ccpl.org/content.asp?id=15675&action=detail&catid=6025&parentid=5747)
- <sup>13</sup> *Historical Catalogue of Brown University*, 154, 156. Hasell’s name is spelled “Hazell” in Brown University records.
- <sup>14</sup> George Chandler, *The Chandler Family: The Descendants of William and Annis Chandler Who Settled in Roxbury, Mass.* (Worcester, Ma: Press of Charles Hamilton, 1883), 291.
- <sup>15</sup> “For Sale” advertisement listing the property of John Williams. *Providence Gazette*, 22 March 1799.
- <sup>16</sup> *Historical Catalogue of Brown University*, 70.
- <sup>17</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 21 June 1799.
- <sup>18</sup> Survey of Federal Archives, *Ship Registers and Enrollments of Providence, Rhode Island, 1773–1939* (The National Archives Project, 1941).
- <sup>19</sup> *Historical Catalogue of Brown University*, 70.
- <sup>20</sup> Letters from Jason Williams to Elijah Williams, 30 August 1808 and 9 October 1808, MSS 34, Series F, Vol 1, pp. 28–29 (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).
- <sup>21</sup> Guide to the Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society.
- <sup>22</sup> Receipt, MSS 34, Series C, Jason Williams’ Papers (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).
- <sup>23</sup> Letter from Franklin R. Cushman to Miss Mary C. Whitlock, 8 March 1952, Cushman Collection, Accession Records, Historic Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island.
- <sup>24</sup> As recorded in the accession notes by Miss Mary C. Whitlock, “Practically all the pieces in the main part of the quilt are earlier than those of the 2 quilts [2 & 3].”
- <sup>25</sup> Franklin Cushman Notebooks, Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society.
- <sup>26</sup> 1880 United States Federal Census Records, Providence, RI ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)). Additionally, in an 14 April 1917 letter from Cousin Trezevant to Cousin Emmie, he asks after her artwork and wonders if she is still painting. Series C: Jason Williams Papers (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).
- <sup>27</sup> Bridget Long, *Elegant Geometry: American and British Mosaic Patchwork* (Lincoln, NE: International Quilt Study Center and Museum, 2011), 11.
- <sup>28</sup> Deborah E. Kraak, “Early American Silk Patchwork Quilts,” in *Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University, 1997), 18–20. The Newark Museum holds an unfinished top dated 1793, the Bache family of Philadelphia holds a 1790s unfinished top, and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art holds a quilt made by Sarah Ewalt Spencer (1766–1842) of Bedford, Pennsylvania, acc.no.1982.165, dated 1794 (Lynne Z. Bassett, email communication, February 2013).
- <sup>29</sup> The Charleston Museum, *Mosaic Quilts: Paper Template Piecing in the South Carolina Lowcountry* (Greenville, SC: Curious Works Press, 2002); Sharon Fulton Pinka,

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“Lowcountry Chintz: The Townsend/Pope Quilt Legacy,” ed. Lynne Zacek Bassett, *Uncoverings* 2013, (Lincoln, NE: American Quilt Study Group), 76.

<sup>30</sup> *Godey’s Lady’s Book* used Eliza Leslie’s hexagon piecing design without crediting her. Hexagon piecing reached wide popularity and then fell from favor; in 1846, calico hexagon patchwork was dubbed “a beggar’s patchwork” by author Catharine Maria Sedgwick. See: Lynne Z. Bassett and Jack Larkin, *Northern Comfort: New England’s Early Quilts, 1780–1850* (Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 62, 72.

<sup>31</sup> Linda Welters and Margaret T. Ordoñez, eds, *Down by the Old Mill Stream: Quilts in Rhode Island* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2000), 29, 134–136.

<sup>32</sup> Examples of quilt tops in which the makers left the papers in the back include the Anna Tuels quilt at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art and the Leverett-Saltonstall quilt at the Peabody Essex Museum. (Lynne Z. Bassett, email communication February 2013).

<sup>33</sup> The commemorative presidential fabric is printed in red with the date 1829. The URI Historic Textile and Costume Collection owns a length of the same fabric in blue. As for the black and white fabric with parrots, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation owns a similar piece of fabric donated by Franklin R. Cushman. The fabric in the Williamsburg collection is white and “china blue” (the pieces in the Cushman quilt are black and white), and it is dated 1774–1811. The piece at Williamsburg is said to have been a remnant from fabric used for chair and window seat covers, and window curtain tiebacks. Form No. 148, Curator’s Worksheet, Accession No. 51-364, 1-2, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

<sup>34</sup> Laurel Horton, “An Elegant Geometry: Tradition, Migration, and Variation,” in *Mosaic Quilts* (Charleston, SC: The Charleston Museum in cooperation with Curious Works Press, 2002), 14–15.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–15.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Winthrop Williams to the Williams family, 8 November 1834, MSS 34, Series F., Vol. 7, pp. 53-54 (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).

<sup>37</sup> The older papers have turned brown with age, and some are crumbling and falling out of the tops. Newer papers are from letters, glossy magazines, and advertisements, and remain mostly intact.

<sup>38</sup> As Deborah Kraak points out, a dated template does not prove that a quilt was started on that date. See: Kraak, “Early American Silk Patchwork Quilts,” 20.

<sup>39</sup> A letter from Franklin R. Cushman explains further: “The work on [the two bed quilts] was begun by our grandmother’s sister, a Charleston, S.C. bride in 1833. It is of block print calico with white borders. The color scheme was made by her husband, a young physician. After his death in 1936 [*sic*], the partly completed quilt was put away with all the pieces cut and ready to be put in place. The cut pieces were sewed in place in the summers 1930–1937, to make two quilts—twin bed size. Both Mrs. Crouch and her daughter had died leaving the quilts unfinished. Mrs. Crouch was in her ninetieth year, her daughter, an artist, had just passed her ninetieth birthday.” Letter from Franklin R. Crouch to Miss Mary C. Whitlock, 8 March 1952, Cushman Collection, Accession Records, Historic Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Franklin R. Cushman to Grace Whaley, 1 March 1952, Cushman Collection, Accession Records, Historic Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island.

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<sup>41</sup> The Cushman Collection at the University of Rhode Island includes three trunks, which may include the trunk in which the unfinished quilt tops were stored. Due to space limitations, the trunks (Trunks 4, 5, and 6) were deaccessioned when an attic storage area was deemed unusable in 2015.

<sup>42</sup> *The Providence House Directory and Family Address Book* was viewed for 1903, 1905, 1907, 1909, 1911, 1913, 1915, 1917, and 1920, 1921–1922; available at: [cdn.providenceri.com](http://cdn.providenceri.com). The house number had changed to 102 George Street, but no longer existed in 1921–1922.

<sup>43</sup> *The Providence House Directory and Family Address Book* lists E. H. Crouch as living at 102 George Street in 1917, but by the time the next directory was printed (1920), Emily H. Crouch was a member of Franklin's household at 19 Bellevue Avenue.

<sup>44</sup> The Abigail Chandler Williams referred to in the article must be the granddaughter of the first Abigail Chandler Williams, as the dress dates to the 1840s. Her dates are 1803–1865. Newspaper clipping, Cushman Collection, Accession Records, Historic Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island.

<sup>45</sup> The Betsy Williams Cottage is in Roger Williams Park in Providence. It is part of the National Historic District. Betsy Williams (1790–1871) bequeathed the house to city of Providence upon her death. [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ri0275/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ri0275/).

<sup>46</sup> Gerilyn G. Tandberg, "Field Hand Clothing in Louisiana and Mississippi During the Ante-Bellum Period," *Dress*, 6 (1980): 89-103; Madelyn Shaw and Lynne Zacek Bassett, *Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts & Context in the Civil War* (Lowell: American Textile History Museum, 2012), 19–25.

<sup>47</sup> Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Past and Present*, 148 (1995): 155.

<sup>48</sup> Patricia Hunt-Hurst, "'Round Homespun Coat & Pantaloons of the Same': Slave Clothing as Reflected in Fugitive Slave Advertisements in Antebellum Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 83, 4 (Winter, 1999): 733.

<sup>49</sup> The number of slaves owned by Susan and Hasell is mentioned in Franklin Cushman's Notebooks, Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society.

<sup>50</sup> Accession no. 1952.64.127.

<sup>51</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

<sup>52</sup> "Exchange and Provost Building," [www.nps.gov/nr/travel/charleston/exc.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/charleston/exc.htm).

<sup>53</sup> Nathaniel Russell House Museum, Historic Charleston Foundation, (<https://www.historiccharleston.org/Russell.aspx>).

<sup>54</sup> Jay Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700–1807* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 6, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Neither Williamses (or their business partners) nor Crouches are listed as owning slave ships. *Ibid.* 282–285.

<sup>56</sup> MSS 34, Series E, Box 3, Folder 12 (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).

<sup>57</sup> Ronald Bailey, "The Slave(ry) Trade and the Development of Capitalism in the United States: The Textile Industry in New England," *Social Science History*, 14, 3 (1990): 386.

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- <sup>58</sup> J. Stanley Lemons, "Rhode Island and the Slave Trade," *Rhode Island History* 60, 1 (2002): 101.
- <sup>59</sup> Kenneth Morgan, "Slave Sales in Colonial Charleston," *The English Historical Review*, 113 no. 453, (1998): 906.
- <sup>60</sup> Shaw and Bassett, *Homefront & Battlefield*, 6.
- <sup>61</sup> Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).
- <sup>62</sup> Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2014).
- <sup>63</sup> Christy Clark-Pujara, *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 93–94.
- <sup>64</sup> Henry, "Colonial Printer," 727.
- <sup>65</sup> Reuben Aldridge Guild, *History of Brown University, With Illustrative Documents* (Providence, RI: 1867), 394.
- <sup>66</sup> MSS 34, Series 3, sub-series 2, Folder 9, 1830–32 (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).
- <sup>67</sup> Letter dated 27 June 1834, MSS 34, Series F, Vol. 2, p. 67 (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).
- <sup>68</sup> Margaret Ordoñez (URI) has been conducting research on eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century fabrics previously assumed to be 100 percent linen, and has discovered that many of them are linen-cotton blends.
- <sup>69</sup> Elijah Williams papers, Rhode Island Historical Society.
- <sup>70</sup> The name "Hasell," which was Emily Crouch's middle name, was given to other children in the Crouch family.
- <sup>71</sup> "Cousin Trezevant" to "Cousin Emmie," 14 April 1917, Series C: Jason Williams Papers (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).
- <sup>72</sup> W. Barksdale Maynard, "'The Best, Lowliest Style!' The Early-Nineteenth-Century Rediscovery of American Colonial Architecture," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 59 no. 3 (2000): 338–357.
- <sup>73</sup> The Jason Williams Crouch house is pictured in Norman M. Isham, "Providence and Its Colonial Houses," *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs* IV, 3 (June, 1918): 7.
- <sup>74</sup> Maynard, "American Colonial Architecture," 339.
- <sup>75</sup> Newspaper clipping, Cushman Collection, Accession Records, Historic Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island.
- <sup>76</sup> Scholar Beverly Gordon wrote, "For the past two decades scholars have been exploring the meanings of the colonial revival, the movement in which Americans turned to the colonial past for images, artifacts, and symbols that seemed to give them a sense of themselves." Beverly Gordon, "Spinning Wheels, Samplers, and the Modern Priscilla: The Images and Paradoxes of Colonial Revival Needlework," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 33 no. 2/3 (1998): 163.
- <sup>77</sup> Ethel Stanwood Bolton and Eva Johnston Coe, *American Samplers*, Massachusetts Society of Colonial Dames & Harvard University, (1921, books.google.com): 242.
- <sup>78</sup> Letter dated 7 December 1834, MSS 34, Series E., Correspondence (Elijah Williams Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society).

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<sup>79</sup> Franklin Cushman made this comment in the correspondence he transcribed in his notebooks. See MSS 34, Series F, Vol. 2, p. 27.