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FORGOTTEN FASHIONS: FEATHER PELERINES OF THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY

BY

ANNA ROSE KEEFE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN

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2016

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

OF

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ABSTRACT

Feather pelerine capes are featured in publications as collection highlights of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum, and Historic New England and described as superlative examples of the nineteenth century's fascination with exotic fauna and the natural world. Made from three-quarter circles of undyed cotton, the capes are lined with down and covered in peacock, pheasant, and fowl feathers arranged in geometric and floral patterns. All the text surrounding feather pelerines is clear about one thing: there is no scholarly consensus on where these capes came from or who made them.

The aim of my research is to advance the study of feather pelerines by uncovering their origins and the roles they played in Western fashion during the nineteenth century, as well as to understand why the biographical data surrounding feather pelerines was forgotten. The first article argues that feather pelerines were produced in Commercolly, India, and that capes inspired by feather pelerines may also have been made in New England and England. The second article investigates how feather pelerines evolved in social memory over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as fashions and the role of fashion within museums changed.

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Lastly to my family, my mother read through the first twenty pages of this and said, “Ugh, kill me now,” but she finished it anyway. You have all my love and thanks.

PREFACE

This is written in the manuscript format following the guidelines put forth by the University of Rhode Island Graduate School. The author intends to submit it to an appropriate refereed journal for publication, following acceptance by the University of Rhode Island.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
PREFACE	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
MANUSCRIPT 1: NINETEENTH-CENTURY FEATHER PELERINES	1
Introduction	2
Hawaii	7
Native American Tribes of the Great Lakes Region	9
England	15
New England	20
China	23
South Africa	26
India	28
Conclusion	35
MANUSCRIPT 2: FINDING MEANING IN FORGETTING: UNDERSTANDING THE LOST ORIGINS OF FEATHER PELERINES	38
Introduction	39
Forgotten Origins of Feather Pelerines	52
Conclusion	63
APPENDIX A	66
APPENDIX B	74
APPENDIX C	90
FIGURES	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY	138

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Assorted Feather pelerines.	92
Figure 2. Feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum.	93
Figure 3. Feather pelerine with lappets and muff.	94
Figure 4. 'Ahu 'ula. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.	95
Figure 5. Junius Brutus Stearns. Washington and the Indians (1847).	96
Figure 6. Feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum.	97
Figure 7. John Hayter. Chief Boki with wife Liliha (1824).	98
Figure 8. Costume Parisien. Fichu de Cygne (1807).	99
Figure 9. Ingres. Mademoiselle Caroline Rivere (1806)	100
Figure 10. Ostrich feather boa and matching muff.	101
Figure 11. Feather pelerine cape. Norwich Castle Museum	102
Figure 12. Purple feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum.	103
Figure 13. Backside of purple feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum.	104
Figure 14. Chinese wedding headdress. Fine Art Museums of San Francisco.	105
Figure 15. Pheasant feather cape. Te Papa Museum, New Zealand.	106
Figure 16. Queen Kapi'olani wearing pheasant cape. Hawai'i State Archives.	107
Figure 17. Feather evening cape. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.	108
Figure 18. Chinese rain cape. Rhode Island School of Design Museum.	109
Figure 19. William Holman Hunt. The Birthday (1868).	110
Figure 20. Feather cape. National Museum of Natural History.	111
Figure 21. Fichu de velours. Costume Parisienne (1813).	112
Figure 22. Actress modeling fashionable taxidermic birds.	113
Figure 23. Adriaen Hanneman. Posthumous Portrait of Mary 1 Stuart (1664)	114
Figure 24. 'A Bird of Prey', Punch (1892)	115

Figure 25. Antoine Watteau. Pilgrimage to Cythera (1718-19).....	116
Figure 26. Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry – Avril	117
Figure 27. Ackerman’s Repository of Arts, Literature, &c. (1822)	118
Figure 28. The Lady’s Magazine (Fashions, 1825)	119
Figure 29. The Ladies’ Museum (The Mirror of Fashion, 1829)	120
Figure 30. The Ladies’ Museum (The Mirror of Fashion, 1829)	121
Figure 31. La Belle Assemblée (Records of the Beau Monde, 1831)	122
Figure 32. Court Magazine and la Belle Assemblée (Carcon, 1832).	123
Figure 33. The Ladies’ Penny Gazette (Fashions for December, 1832)	124
Figure 34. Ladies’ Pocket Magazine (English Fashions, 1835)	125
Figure 35. Journal des Dames et de Modes (Modes, 1836).	126
Figure 36. Journal des Dames et de Modes (News and Fashion, 1837)	127
Figure 37. Journal des Dames et de Modes (News and Fashion, 1837)	128
Figure 38. Ladies’ Pocket Magazine (Foreign Fashions, 1838)	129
Figure 39. Journal des Dames et de Modes (Modes, 1838).	130
Figure 40. Journal des Dames et de Modes (Modes, 1838).	131
Figure 41. The New Monthly Belle Assemblée (Fashions for January,1840).	132
Figure 42. The New Monthly Belle Assemblée (The Toilet, 1852)	133
Figure 43. Feather collar or cape. Peabody Essex Museum.	134
Figure 44. Feather barbule, 400x magnification.	135
Figure 45. Feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum	136
Figure 46. Swansdown feather barbules, 400x magnification.	137

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. List of Terms Used in Article One.	3
Table 2. Pelerine and Tippet in Fashion Publications.	67

MANUSCRIPT 1

Prepared for submission to an appropriate referred journal following approval by the
University of Rhode Island.

Nineteenth-Century Feather Pelerines

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NINETEENTH-CENTURY FEATHER PELERINES

Introduction

Fashionable, nineteenth-century European women enthusiastically decorated their ensembles with feathers. They adopted and admired feathers as trim for hats, gowns, bonnets, and fans. Many different types of feather shoulder coverings were also popular during this time, including feather-covered collars, boas, and capes. Some feather shoulder coverings fell in and out of fashion quickly, while other forms, such as the feather boa, have endured to the present day.

One particular type of feather-covered cape, referred to as a feather pelerine, became popular during the first half of the nineteenth century (Figure 1). All but forgotten today, the origins of feather pelerines have eluded scholars. A unique tradition distinct from other feather capes, feather pelerines are made from two layers of cloth, where the exterior layer is covered with peacock, duck, and other feathers arranged and stitched down in a decorative pattern. The interior layer is completely covered in down feathers, gathered into small bundles and stitched in rows (Figure 2). Some, but not all, of these feather pelerines have two lappet panels extending vertically down the front, and others have matching muffs (Figure 3).

The term *feather pelerine* will be used to identify the feather capes that are the focus of this study. Though the term *feather tippet* is more common in primary source documents, the word tippet evolved over the course of the nineteenth century and refers to a variety of differently shaped shoulder coverings. Pelerine is a more static word and was chosen to alleviate confusion. A list of the terms used to discuss various shoulders coverings in this paper is located in Table 1. Further exploration of

the terms used to refer to shoulder coverings in the nineteenth century can be found in Appendix A.

TABLE 1.

Terms Used to Discuss Shoulder Coverings

Term:	Usage in this paper:	Nineteenth-century definition:
Cape	Generic term, a synonym for all types of shoulder coverings.	A cloak with a hood; a cloak or mantle generally; an ecclesiastical cope. (Oxford University Press, 2016)
Pelerine	A small cape that covers the shoulders, with or without lappets. In this paper, the term pelerine is used solely for discussing feather pelerines, and no other type of shoulder covering.	Any of various forms of woman's mantle or cape; <i>esp.</i> a long narrow cape, usually of lace or silk, with ends meeting at a point in front. <i>N.B. The name appears to have been used for several different styles of cape popular for periods between the mid-18th and late-19th centuries</i> (Oxford University Press, 2016).
Tippet	A feather boa or other non-pelerine-shape feather shoulder covering.	A garment, usually of fur or wool, covering the shoulders, or the neck and shoulders; a cape or short cloak, often with hanging ends. Now worn chiefly by women and girls, or by men as a part of certain official costumes (Oxford University Press, 2016).
Boa	A long feather or fur covered scarf.	A snake-like coil of fur worn by ladies as a wrapper for the throat (Oxford University Press, 2016).
Cloak	A Hawaiian feather cape or other large, ceremonial shoulder covering.	A loose outer garment worn by both sexes over their other clothes (Oxford University Press, 2016).
Mantle / Mantelet	A Native American feather shoulder coverings or other large, ceremonial cape.	A loose sleeveless cloak. <i>N.B. The word was formerly applied indiscriminately to the outer garments of men, women, and children; at times it referred to various specific pieces of clothing. Its application is now chiefly restricted to long cloaks worn by women and to the robes worn by royal, ecclesiastical, and other dignitaries on ceremonial occasions</i> (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Though more than fifty feather pelerines exist in museum collections, very little is known about them. In early twentieth-century curation, personal opinions were sometimes recorded as fact, and objects that passed into collections did so without the detailed, written provenance expected today. In 1986, when the Metropolitan Museum accessioned its first feather pelerine, curator Stella Blum wrote frankly about the confusion she faced identifying the object. Though Blum eventually decided that the cape was European, she initially assumed that it was Chinese, due to its, “exotic appearance” (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982, p. 32). Today the Metropolitan Museum suspects the feather capes in their collection might have been made by Native American craftspeople, but they are not confident as to this fact, and the online record for one feather pelerine now reads, “Geography: United States(?) Culture: Native American(?)” (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015).

The British Museum’s website also addresses the confusion surrounding these capes. Online, their current catalog entry for a feather pelerine reads:

This feather cape illustrates the difficulties in accurate identification of objects in museums.... Records from this period are sometimes limited, incomplete or inaccurate. This feather cape has taxed the minds of anthropologists and curators and still remains a mystery (The British Museum , 2016).

Feather pelerines are not rare objects. They exist in museum collections all over the world. European, South African, Chinese, Indian, Native American, and Polynesian artisans are all listed in collection records as the possible makers of feather pelerines.

In the last twenty years, scholars have debated the origins of feather pelerines without coming to a consensus as to where these capes came from or how they were

used. Nancy Oestreich Lurie and Duane Anderson first suggested that Native American artisans produced feather pelerines as tourist souvenirs (Lurie & Anderson, 1998). Two subsequent articles by Adrienne Kaeppler and J. C. H. King refuted the Native American evidence, suggesting instead that feather pelerines were European-made (Kaeppler, 2000; King, 2000). In a response to Kaeppler and King, Lurie and Anderson stated that, “Neither [King nor Kaeppler] provided sufficient evidence to cause us to change our hypotheses. We hope this exchange of ideas will lead to further discoveries... that will help settle the matter once and for all” (Lurie & Anderson, 2000).

In particular, the lack of primary-source documents has created confusion about the origins of feather pelerines. Today these capes lack definitive attribution, and the way they were worn and used during the nineteenth century is not understood. Adrienne Kaeppler wrote, “Ethnologists need a specialist on English clothing design of the nineteenth century to come to our rescue” (Kaeppler, 2000, p. 102). This study examined feather pelerines as fashion objects in an effort to uncover more about their origins.

Artefactual evidence from eight feather pelerines in New England museum collections served as the basis for this analysis uncovering the origins of feather pelerines in nineteenth-century fashion. Artefactual evidence was compared to documentary evidence from newspapers, fashion publications, and travelogues of the nineteenth century using a material culture approach based on the work of Phillip Zimmerman and Gregg Finley (Zimmerman, 1981; Finley, 1990). Description of this methodology and discussion of the motifs and features of feather pelerines is located

in Appendix B. A list of the feather pelerines that were viewed online as part of this study can be found in Appendix C.

The most frequently listed sources for feather pelerines are England, Chinese artisans working in South Africa, Native American tribes in the Great Lakes Region, and India. A review of primary sources suggested that China, New England, and Hawaii also needed to be considered as potential sources for feather pelerines. Three museums attributed capes to Abyssinia, Burma, and Norfolk Island, but no additional sources provided evidence to suggest that those claims deserved consideration, so they are not discussed further (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p. 8).

Using databases of digitized nineteenth-century newspapers, books, correspondence and other documents, references to feather shoulder-coverings were gathered in English, French, and German. Search terms included “feather pelerine,” “feather tippet,” “feather cape,” “feather capelet,” feather fichu,” “feather victorine,” “feather mantelet,” “feather collar,” as well as variations of those phrases like, “tippet of feathers,” or “peacock capelet,” and translations like, “fedder-mantle,” and “fichu de paon.”

The following sections discuss the references to feather pelerines and other feather shoulder coverings found in nineteenth and early twentieth-century written sources. Evidence from documents was compared to information gathered through object study. The discussion is organized geographically, evaluating Hawaii, North America, England, New England, China, South Africa and India all as possible places where feather pelerines originated.

Hawaii

The place best known for producing feather-covered garments is Hawaii. Yellow and red feather cloaks are an important part of Hawaiian culture (Figure 4). Called “sacred cloaks” or *ahu’ula* in Hawaiian culture, no object has greater value. Only celebrated warriors and members of the royal family owned feather cloaks (Malo, 1951, p. 165). Prior to the nineteenth century, Hawaiian feather cloaks fascinated Europeans after Pacific Islanders mistook the explorer James Cook for a deity and presented him with seven feather cloaks (Hiroa, 1944; Cummins, 1984). After Cook’s expedition returned to England in 1780, the cloaks went on display in London (Brigham, 1899, p. 67). Subsequent travelers bemoaned the fact that native Hawaiians would not sell them feather cloaks for any sum of money, making the capes in England very valuable (Percy & Timbs, 1826, p. 88).

Despite the popularity of Hawaiian featherwork in the nineteenth century, it is unlikely that Pacific artisans were responsible for making the feather pelerines that are the focus of this study. The materials and techniques used to construct Hawaiian feather cloaks are too different. Feather pelerines are constructed by stitching individual feathers onto a white cloth backing using a zig-zag or catch stitch. For the exterior of the pelerine, the feathers are trimmed into shape, the base of each feather’s stalk is removed, and the feathers are stitched down in evenly spaced rows. The pelerine’s lining is made by removing barbs from the stalk of the feather, gathering the barbs into bundles and stitching the bundles down in evenly-spaced tufts. Two layers of cloth are almost always used in feather pelerines, an interior backing and exterior backing, and the two are never cut from the same material. Though the backings are

both white cellulose plain-weave cloth, the exterior backing is always a lighter-weight material.

Hawaiian feather cloaks are constructed by priests as part of ceremonies. Priests attach small bundles of 'Ō'ō bird feathers to a net made from olona plant fibers, while chanting prayers (Labiste & Herberg, 2015). The capes have only one layer of backing material, and no feathers lining the cloak. In Hawaiian featherwork, feathers are tied to a ground net in groups; in feather pelerines the exterior feathers are stitched into place individually. The small tail feathers used in Hawaiian cloaks are not cut or trimmed before they are attached. Feather pelerines treat plumes differently, trimming them into oval shapes to highlight distinctive features, such as the “eyes” of peacock’s feathers.

Some Hawaiian feather cloaks made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contain pheasant and peacock feathers, but these later cloaks are deeply ceremonial garments. They look different from feather pelerines and are meant to preserve and reflect Hawaiian traditions. In 1881, King Kalakuaa returned from a tour of the world with a collection of pheasant and fowl feathers, which were made into three full-length riding capes for his wife, Queen Kapi’olani (Kamehiro, 2015, pp. 89-90). These later feather cloaks were made for officials of the Hawaiian government and were never for sale (Caldeira, et al., 2015). Hawaiian artisans are unlikely to be the makers of feather pelerines because of the differences in construction technique and ritual significance, though occasional similarity in motif meant that Hawaii could still be considered as a source of design inspiration.

Native American Tribes of the Great Lakes Region

In their analysis of feather pelerines, Lurie and Anderson came to the conclusion that Native American tribes in the Great Lakes region manufactured feather pelerines from 1830 to 1860 as souvenir items for tourists (1998). To support their claim, they referenced an allegorical painting, *Washington and the Indian Council* (1847), by Junius Brutus Stearns (Figure 5). The painting depicts an imagined 1753 meeting between Washington and members of the Onondaga tribe; one woman in the scene appears to be wearing a peacock feather pelerine.

The link between this painting and feather pelerines was established earlier by Emma Hansen and Sarah Boehme, curators at the Plains Indian Museum and the Whitney Western Art Museum (Hansen & Boehme, 1997). Lurie and Anderson stated that the existence of this painting unequivocally proved that feather pelerines were manufactured by Native artisans, even though Midwestern tribes did not have access to peacock feathers in the 1750s, and that the painting was completed almost a century after this meeting supposedly occurred. They suggest that the artist, Stearns, must have included a feather pelerine after seeing them on Native American women in the 1840s (Lurie & Anderson, 1998).

J. C. H. King and Adrienne Kaeppler disputed Lurie and Anderson's hypothesis, and both take issue with this painting. Kaeppler and King are specialists in Native American and Pacific Art respectively. They state that the garments worn by other members of the council are fantasy pieces, just as the scene itself was an imagined meeting. In this painting feathers are misplaced on fur headdresses, and according to King, the red and green shield in the foreground does not resemble any existing piece of Native American material culture (2000, p. 94).

Feathers are an important part of eastern-seaboard Native culture (Sibley, Jakes, & Swinker, 1992). Turkey feather capes, in particular, are given to tribal grandmothers as a sign of their status. The Lenape tribe, also known as the Delaware, made feather capes up until the late 1700s, but according to Moravian missionaries, they had stopped doing so by the mid-1800s (Rementer, 2014). These feather capes are constructed using techniques similar to those employed by Hawaiian priests. In 1655, a visitor to the Lenape saw feather capes being made and wrote, “In the first place they tie them with meshes like nets, yet very fine, then fasten the feathers in the meshes, so neat and strong that not one feather can come loose from it; it would sooner go clear off” (Lindestrom, 1925, pp. 221-222). These Native American feather capes are constructed with a knotted-net base, rather than a hide or textile backing.

According to traveler John Lawson, in 1709 the Santee of present-day North Carolina made feather cloaks to use as both garments and blankets. Some of these cloaks are made from a variety of feathers arranged in patterns, while others are made from bird skin, with the feathers still in place:

Their Feather Match-Coats are very pretty, especially some of them, which are made extraordinary charming, containing several pretty Figures wrought in Feathers, making them seem like a fine Flower Silk-Shag; and when new and fresh, they become a Bed very well, instead of a Quilt. Some of another sort are made of Hare, Raccoon, Beaver, or Squirrel-Skins, which are very warm. Others again are made of the green Part of the Skin of a Mallard's Head, which they sew perfectly well together, their Thread being either the Sinews of a Deer divided very small, or Silk-Grass (Lawson, J., 1709).

In addition to the use of bird skin with attached feathers, eastern North American tribes employed two different techniques to create featherwork (Sibley, Jakes, & Swinker, 1992). In the first method, feathers spun into yarns were woven into cloth, creating a shaggy-surfaced material. John Smith describes this technique at use

in Virginia: “We have seen some vse [*sic*] mantels made of Turkey feathers, so prettily wrought & woven with threads that nothing could be discerned but the feathers” (Smith, 1624). Sibley and Jakes believe that both the figured silk-shag match-coat seen by Lawson and the turkey feather mantles described by Smith were made from feather-twined yarns and not by stitching feathers to cloth.

Additional scholarship supports the use of feather-wrapped cordage among the Choctaw and the Maidu, and records the use of bird skin garments among the Natchez (Brown, 1976). In the eighteenth century, the Natchez also made feather mantles by stitching feathers to a net backing. Du Pratz wrote that:

The feather mantles are worked on a frame similar to that on which wig makers work hair. They lay out the feathers in the same manner and fasten them to old fish nets or old mulberry bark mantles. They place them in the manner already outlined one over another and on both sides. (Swanton, 1911, p. 63)

Swanton also records Durmont’s observation that some tribes, “made for themselves a kind of mantle which they cover with the finest swan feathers fastened on this cloth one by one” (1911, p. 63).

When trying to prove that feather pelerines were produced by Native American tribes, Lurie and Anderson built their argument around a feather pelerine in the collection of the Iowa Museum of Natural History. This cape is attributed to the daughter of the Mesquakie Chief Poweshiek. Owned by a doctor in Iowa City, this feather pelerine was supposedly given in payment for medical services in 1839 (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p. 4). This cape has peacock feathers arranged in a floral pattern over the shoulders. Lurie and Anderson conclude that it would have been possible for

Native Americans to acquire peacock feathers from merchants and as proof, Duane Anderson references a Mesquakie's purchase of cock feathers in 1832 (1985, p. 163).

Exotic feathers were available in America; most were imported, though some attempts to raise peacocks in North America had already begun. Boehme and Hansen state that "Research has shown that peacock feathers, in fact, were available periodically for trade to the Sauk and Mesquakie in the 1830s, and sold for the expensive sum of 25 cents each" (Hansen & Boehme, 1997). Attempts to find evidence that supports this price were unsuccessful, but even assuming this figure is correct, Native American tribes would have had trouble acquiring the large quantities of costly feathers needed to produce feather pelerines.

In the early nineteenth century, the feather trade was just beginning to expand. Ostrich feathers had been perennially popular as part of court dress in Europe, and feathers were used in military uniforms, but the demand for plumes skyrocketed as economic prosperity made nonessential items, like feathers and silk flowers, popular among the growing middle class. Most commonly seen as trims for hats and bonnets, feathers also were used in the construction of muffs, fans, and decorative objects.

In the 1830s, North America exported some feathers from wild game birds, but not until the 1850s-60s did the domesticated bird farms transform the plume trade into a profitable, large-scale industry, and make exotic plumes available to less wealthy consumers (Hunter, 2014, p. 192). The Mesquakie would have had to trade for the expensive, imported feathers used in feather pelerines, and no evidence was found that they ever traded for peacock feathers. Without more research into the trade of nonessential fashion items in early-nineteenth-century frontier regions, knowing if the

Mesquakie had access to the more exotic feathers used in feather pelerines is not possible.

The pelerine that Lurie and Anderson base their analysis on is very similar to a feather pelerine in the Peabody Essex Museum's collection (Figure 6). Comparison of close-up images suggested that they were constructed using identical techniques and stitches. Also alike in size and shape, both have a floral-vine design on the shoulders, rather than the more common crescent and triangle motif (as seen in Figure 1). The backing of both capes is a white, plainweave cellulosic material. Examination of the Peabody Essex Museum's cape reveals that it has almost 200 peacock feathers on the exterior, plus additional peacock feathers on the lappets. Some of those peacock feathers may have been cuttings from larger plumes, but each tail feather contains only a single "eye" or ocelli, and over 100 ocelli feathers are attached to the Peabody Essex Museum's cape. If the Mesquakie could purchase peacock feather for \$0.25 each, a feather pelerine like this would require at least \$25.00 worth of peacock feathers in addition to other exotic plumes, as well as the time and labor needed to stitch everything together.

At this time, tribes in the Great Lakes region derived the bulk of their monetary income from yearly annuities paid out by the United States government. In 1839, the annuity paid out to the entire Sauk and Fox tribes (known today as the Mesquakie) was \$47,000. According to a treaty negotiated with the United States in 1838, that amount was to be distributed among the 2,300 members of the tribe; giving each person approximately \$20 if the money was split evenly. However, we know the money was not circulated evenly. Chief Poweshiek, whose daughter is supposed to

have manufactured a feather pelerine, was one of four chiefs responsible for collecting and distributing the annuity, and riots in the early 1840s reveal that two other chiefs, Keokuk and Appanoose, took most of the annuity for themselves (Green, 1974).

The tribe's individual yearly incomes are not recorded until the 1890 census, but imported plumes were expensive. The Iowa History Museum's pelerine has at least \$25 worth of peacock feathers on the exterior. Other capes contain additional exotic feathers, like pheasant or parrot, that the Mesquakie would have struggled to acquire. The Mesquakie might have traded to acquire feathers in certain situations, but given the cost of materials, it is unlikely that such a valuable object was given as a gift, in lieu of payment for medical services. On the frontier, in the 1840s, most doctors capped their fees at \$25, for even the most complicated surgeries (Bettman, 1956). Extenuating circumstances aside, paying the doctor with money or providing him with a less costly gift would have been cheaper.

Furthermore, the cape in this story is a lone object, made as a one-time gift, and is not the product of an industry or group of artisans. More than fifty feather pelerines exist in museum collections; the garments must have been produced on a larger scale. The provenance of the Iowa History Museum's feather pelerine is suspect. The claim that an "Indian Princess" made this cape appeared in the 1930s, one-hundred years after its construction (Kaeppler, 2000, p. 98). Neither Stearn's painting nor the Iowa cape's provenance is reliable enough to prove that Native American tribes in the Great Lakes region constructed feather pelerines. Native American tribes have a long history of featherwork, but feather pelerines are made with different materials and different construction techniques.

England

Another common attribution for the origins of feather pelerines is Europe, particularly England. Some museums cite the 1824 visit of King Kamehameha II to London as the event that inspired English artisans to create feather pelerines (Historic New England, 2015). This idea originated with Captain A. W. F. Fuller, a private collector who owned several feather pelerines (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p. 9). Lurie and Anderson dismiss the connection between feather pelerines and Kamehameha II's visit. They rely on assertions made by Madeleine Ginsburg, the Victoria & Albert Museum's first Curator of Dress, who stated that there no pictures of the Hawaiian royals in their feather capes were circulated, and that the visitors did not seem to interest the women's press (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p. 9). Kaeppler refuted Ginsburg's claim that there were no images of the Hawaiian delegation, pointing to an oil painting by John Hayter (2000). This picture showed Hawaiian Governor Boki wearing a feather cape; it was reproduced as a popular lithograph print in the 1820s (Figure 7).

J. Susan Corley found more than 80 references to the Hawaiian royal visit in the press (2008). The King and Queen are described as being very well-mannered and well-dressed in European fashions. Mary Berry reported that one member of the King's retinue, probably Governor Boki, wore a feather cloak in public, but that everyone else wore English-style garments (1865, p. 353). The Hawaiian Queen Liliha and all of her ladies wore modified European clothing and accessories; their only reference to traditional Hawaiian dress was the decoration of their fashionable turbans with scarlet and yellow feathers (Scott, 1824, p. 188).

This decision to appear in European dress was purposeful. The King and Queen of Hawaii sought to control representations of themselves and impress the English with their “civilized” state. Kamehameha II sought a personal audience with George II, hoping to gain the protection and support of the British crown. They wanted to display Hawaii’s status as a commercial center for Pacific trade and downplay the idea that the island was a “paradise lost in time” (Caldeira, et al., 2015, p. 117).

Examination of English fashion trends of the 1820s suggests that the Hawaiian royal visit inspired some fashions, just not feather pelerines. Before Kamehameha’s visit, in 1823 and early 1824, white and rose-colored feathers were the most stylish trimmings (Dean and Munday, 1823). In 1825 and 1826, after Kamehameha’s visit, white, rose-colored, black, and green feathers were the highly recommended bonnet trims (Dean and Munday, 1825). But, directly after Kamehameha’s visit, a brief trend, lasting from December of 1824 through February of 1825, saw black bonnets trimmed with yellow and scarlet feathers, like the headdresses worn by Queen Liliha and her entourage, praised in the fashion press. “The bonnets are very handsome; black is often seen crowned by plumage, each feather of which is of a different color: yellow and scarlet are the two most predominant mixtures” (Dean and Munday, 1824, p. 344).

In the late 1820s, flowers supplanted feathers as the most desirable trimmings, but when feathers became fashionable again, Pacific-inspired trends also reappeared. In 1831, *Royal Lady’s Magazine* described a fashion for white dresses trimmed with red and yellow feather borders. The article stresses how the feathers should be

arranged close together, to look like velvet or fur. They also suggest that tropical plumes such as toucan feathers should be used (Sams, 1831).

Europeans frequently associated Hawaiian featherwork with velvet or fur. When the explorer James Cook first saw a Hawaiian feather cloak, he was struck by how the closely stacked plumes appeared to be something other than feathers, “The ground of them is a network, upon which the most beautiful red and yellow feathers are so closely fixed that the surface might be compared to the thickest and richest velvet...both as to feel and glossy appearance” (Cook, 1999, p. 332).

The feather-trimmed dress described in the *Royal Lady's Magazine* was inspired by Hawaiian feather garments. The color and choice of tropical feathers and the treatment of feathers so that they resemble velvet is suggestive of Hawaiian featherwork. The popularity of red and yellow feathers on bonnets in 1824 is also related to the Hawaiian state visit. Contrary to what Ginsberg claims, English fashion was influenced by the 1824 Hawaiian state visit. What is seen in fashion publications, though, is that English women chose to incorporate bright colors and the look of feather-fabric into their wardrobes. No fashions for feather capes inspired by the Hawaiian royal visit are described in the popular fashion publications of the late 1820s.

At this time, European fashion had its own tradition of feather shoulder coverings, distinct from feather pelerines. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, swansdown and marabou boas were popular in England and France (Figure 8). J. C. H. King points to a nineteenth-century “palatine de marabou” referenced in a French magazine, suggesting that this might be a feather pelerine (Celnart, 1838, p.

232; King, 2000). The phrase “palantine de marabou” translates to marabou-feather pelerine, but this garment is probably a white-feather boa and not a feather pelerine. These boas, or tippet-boas, are frequently discussed in the French fashion press in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Unlike feather pelerines, feathers boas are not constructed by stitching feathers to a backing. They are more commonly made from birds’ skin, tanned with the feathers still in place. Household management guides describe how to clean feather boas, warning that hot water will shrink the leather backing, and ruin the garment (Leslie, 1845, p. 63). Feather boas are discussed under the heading of ‘Furs’ in fashion publications, as similar boas made from costly furs, like ermine, were also popular. An 1805 portrait by Ingres, displays a white ermine boa that could be reproduced in feather or fur to similar effect (Figure 9). Ostrich and swan skin were popular materials for these boas, as was the skin of the grebe bird. One variety of grebe bird was so frequently used to make tippet-boas that it became known as the tippet-grebe (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1810, p. 177).

These boas and tippets survive in many English museum collections and are often accompanied by matching muffs (Figure 10). They could be purchased in shops, though copies also were made at home out of poultry feathers (Bourne, 1835). The fad for these feather-skin fashion scarves declined in the mid-nineteenth century. A character in a William Makepeace Thackeray story is in danger of losing his entire fortune when shares of The Consolidated Baffin’s Bay Muff & Tippet Co. become worthless (1841, p. 602).

Swansdown collars and boas enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in the late-nineteenth century, and by this time they had become a familiar part of English dress. Referenced in other novels, authors use swansdown boas to convey character and evoke visual imagination. In Tess of the D'Urbervilles, when Tess become a well-dressed fallen woman, she wears a dressing gown with a “frill” of down feathers around her neck. The ensemble conveys her new wealth and her new idle lifestyle (Hardy, 2003). In Dicken's Little Dorrit, Mr. Meagle's fluffy white beard is described as appearing like a swansdown tippet tied around his neck (Dickens, 2003). Though few swansdown tippets and boas exist in museum collections, they were popular enough accessories in the nineteenth century that these authors assumed that readers knew what type of person purchased a feather boa and what those boas looked like. Some scholars have confused references to swansdown boas with feather pelerines, but the two are very different objects.

England was probably not the place where feather pelerines were produced. Primary sources discuss the production of feather accessories and boas, but do not mention peacock feathers, down linings, mixtures of feathers, or anything that could connect English feather shoulder coverings to feather pelerines. The high volume of English sources that discuss the production of feather boas and the total lack of sources that discuss the production of feather pelerines suggests that feather pelerines were not made in England. However, in the survey and material culture analysis of feather pelerines, an odd pelerine stood out, found in a collection in Norwich, England (Figure 11).

The materials, motifs, color palette, and shape of the lappets are unlike other extant feather pelerines, suggesting that it is an imitation, made by different artisans. Though England does not seem to have been involved in any large-scale production of feather pelerines, this unique pelerine appears to be a copy of other pelerines, possibly made on English soil. English artisans were responsible for fashions in feather shoulder coverings and may have produced a few copies of feather pelerines, but they do not appear to have been the primary place of production for the garments.

New England

New England also was involved in the production of feather boas and other feather shoulder coverings. Some unusual feather capes exist in New England collections alongside feather pelerines. Like the Norwich feather pelerine, visual similarities between these strange capes and other feather pelerines exist, but they differ from nearly all feather pelerines in terms of backing material, feather type, color palette, construction technique, shape, and size. Though no evidence ties New England to the large-scale production of feather pelerines, New England women may have been making garments inspired by feather pelerines, using different material and techniques.

Most feather pelerines are made from similar feathers, mounted on similar cloth, but one down-lined pelerine at the Peabody Essex Museum stands out for its use of unnaturally-colored purple feathers (Figure 12). The cloth backing of this pelerine has aged at a much faster rate than the cloth used in other pelerines. The feathers on this cape are less densely stitched down, and the cape itself is significantly smaller

than other pelerines (Figure 13). A material-culture driven workmanship survey of feather capes identified this purple pelerine as unusual.

Though the garment looked like a feather pelerine, the backing material, the feather variety, the construction techniques, and the shape were unlike any other feather pelerine. This suggested that this purple piece was not made by the same artisans as the other pelerines in this study. As it was found in a New England collection, without any biographical data, possibly it was made in the surrounding area.

Though very few museums attribute their feather pelerines to American artisans, novelty shoulder coverings were popular in New York and New England during the nineteenth century. (LeCount, 1994) Records of agricultural and mechanics' institute fairs of the 1830s and 1840s list domestic crafts and novelty items made by locals entered in competitions at fairs. The makers' names and home towns are listed alongside descriptions of their projects, and feather capes are frequent entries in these fairs.

For one event a Mrs. Waters of Boston produced, "One Pelerine Cape of Feathers," for which she was awarded a diploma (an award for excellence). Three other Massachusetts women each entered objects into the same show, all described as, "One Feather Cape" (Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, 1837). At the Plymouth County Cattle Show, Sarah P. Worcester of Bridgewater entered a feather cape and muff and was awarded a \$1 prize (Barrett, 1836). At the American Institute Fair of 1829, a Miss Eliza Blooms of Newtown, Long Island, received high

commendation for a feather cape (H. Niles & Son, 1829). Unfortunately, none of the sources provide images or details describing the capes any further.

Similar trade fairs were organized by mechanics' institutes in England. They sought to display the technical skills of local artisans (Auerbach, 2001). This desire to assert domestic technical ability was even stronger in New England, and the fairs displayed an encyclopedic range of products, from farming tools and technological innovations, to crafts made by local women. Many of these domestic crafts are exoticized novelty items like feather capes.

Without additional evidence saying how the capes entered in fairs relate to feather pelerines is difficult. References to New England women manufacturing feather capes can be found in bird-rearing manuals, suggesting that the capes made by Americans were made from a single type of feather:

The long downy doubly feather about the thighs and on the lower parts of the sides of the Wild Turkey, are often used for making tippets, by the wives of our squatters and farmers. These tippets, when properly made are extremely beautiful as well as comfortable (Audubon, 1832, p. 16).

At this time the word tippet could refer to either a boa or a pelerine-like cape. In this case though, tippet probably meant a boa because other sources mention brown and grey turkey feather "tippets" as an affordable substitute for chinchilla fur "boas" (Montemerli, 1870, p. 20). White turkey feathers also were used to mimic the appearance of marabou (Trail, 2005). Just as swansdown boas were affordable substitutes for ermine fur boas in England, turkey feathers boas were made by American women who could not afford marabou or chinchilla fur boas.

Another mechanics' association fair in 1833 mentioned a New York woman who spent four years constructing a cape made from parrot feathers (The American

Institute, 1833, p. 179). In their discussion of feather capes, Lurie and Anderson said that they came across an American feather pelerine that used parrot feathers, but do not indicate where or when they found it (1998, p. 7). That parrot feather cape could be another American imitation of feather pelerines, similar to the purple cape at the Peabody Essex Museum.

Differences in technique and materials suggest that more than one set of artisans produced feather pelerines. While additional evidence suggests that the majority of feather pelerines were produced in India, copies of Indian feather pelerines could have been made in America. The capes entered in the mechanic's fairs are probably exoticized feather accessories. Without any references to down-feather lining, or patterns of feathers, knowing how similar the mechanic's fair capes were to feather pelerines is difficult. These objects may be mimicking feather pelerines, feather boas, or be an entirely different type of feather shoulder covering.

China

Some curators have suggested that feather pelerines could have been made by Chinese artisans working in Asia or abroad (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p. 10). China has a long tradition of featherwork, but the techniques used to manipulate feathers in Chinese art are very different from those used to construct feather pelerines. A description of Chinese featherwork published in 1858 describes how feather garments were rare in China and were confined to members of the court with rank and wealth. It details the techniques used to produce traditional "goose velvet," a waterproof fabric with feathers woven in as supplementary weft yarns, and states that feathers were mainly used to produce women's headdresses (The Royal Commission, 1858, p. 64).

The techniques employed by Chinese feather workers also are described. Plumes were first coated with glue, which stiffened and immobilized the feather barbs. Once dry, feathers were cut into shapes, and then glued into place (The Royal Commission, 1858, p. 65). Blue kingfisher feathers were particularly popular. Often used in fans and headdresses, the DeYoung Museum has an example of Chinese kingfisher featherwork in its collection (Figure 14).

Both the techniques and materials used in Chinese featherwork are different from those employed to make feather pelerines. However, China was considered as a possible origin for feather pelerines after two primary sources mentioned feather capes imported from China. One described a copy of a Chinese feather cape made by a ‘Yankee Girl’ from Ipswich:

We were shown yesterday... a very handsome “Ladies Cape,” made from the feather of the guinea hen. It exhibited much dexterity and cunning workmanship, and appeared to us quite as valuable as the “far-fetched and dear bought” articles imported from China, last season, and sold at from twenty to thirty dollars each. (Bost. Transcript, 1833)

No images accompany the text, and no mention of the costly Chinese capes was found in previous articles in New England newspapers. One possibility is that this imported Chinese cape could have been a pheasant feather cape, similar to an object in a New Zealand museum collection (Figure 15). Pheasants are originally native to Asia. King Kalakuaa of Hawaiian commissioned three pheasant feather capes for his wife, after traveling through Asia in 1881, but the pheasant-feather cape at the Te Papa Museum does not look like the cape commissioned by King Kalakuaa (Figure 16) (Caldeira, et al., 2015). If not made in Hawaii, then the cape at the Te Papa could have been made in Asia, or in China. The shape of the Te Papa’s cape would have been quite

fashionable when the Ipswich article was written. The small high collar over the wide-shouldered pelerine is characteristic of the early nineteenth century, making that cape a desirable accessory in 1833.

Another possible connection between China and feather pelerines came from a 1913 newspaper article. The story describes a feather cape imported from China that was to be worn at a grand ball celebrating the anniversary of California statehood. (Parlors will exhibit many historical relics, 1913, p. 4) The article mentioned that the cape would be donated to a museum after the ball. Today the de Young has two feather pelerines in its collection, including one donated in 1912 (de Young | Legion of Honor, 2016) (Figure 17). No other feather pelerines entered California collections in that decade, suggesting that the de Young pelerine is the feather cape described in 1913.

Though many attempts were made to uncover further sources that might connect China with feather pelerine production, no other evidence was located. Other sources pointed to the Asian subcontinent, India and Bangladesh, but not to China. Possibly, the connection could be with the Old China Trade and not with China specifically. Captains stopped at various ports in Africa and India, purchasing and trading on their way to Guangzhou. As no other pelerines in museum collections have provenance records that associate them with China, and no other evidence was found connecting China to feather pelerines, probably Chinese artisans were not involved in the production of feather pelerines. Eventually, because no stronger connections could be made, China was discarded as a potential source for feather pelerines.

A curator at the British Museum, H. A. Joyce, was the first person to claim that these capes were the product of Chinese artisans, suggesting that feather pelerines were manufactured by Chinese workers in South Africa. Later Joyce, recanted his theory, admitting that he had no evidence to support his hypothesis (The British Museum, 2016). For their article, Lurie and Anderson contacted colleagues at the MacGregor Museum in South Africa and learned that no records included any Chinese immigrants present in South Africa between 1822 and 1890 (1998, p. 8).

Both Stella Blum at the Metropolitan Museum and H. A. Joyce at the British Museum immediately associated feather pelerines with China for unknown reasons (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982). Chinese rain capes have a similar shoulder shape, but they are made from palm fibers (Figure 18). No comparable feather-cape tradition exists in China. Some undiscovered connection may exist, but no other sources connect China or Chinese artisans abroad with the production of feather pelerines.

South Africa

South Africa is not discussed in relation to feather pelerines outside of Joyce's attribution to Chinese artisans working in South Africa, but research revealed discussion of a feather tippet made in South Africa. This piece went on display at the Great Exhibition in England in 1851. The Great Exhibition was housed within the Crystal Palace, in Hyde Park, London. It was the first World's Fair exhibition and was organized by Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria. With over 100,000 objects on display, the Great Exhibition sought to display the manufacturing prowess and wealth of the British Empire. Contributions from foreign nations were organized into courts:

the American court displayed Colt rifles alongside farm tools; the French court displayed fashionable textiles alongside the cutting-edge machinery used to produce them (Picard, 2014).

The Great Exhibition was a cultural battlefield that sought to define England's place in the world and instill in visitors an idea of what it meant to be British (Auerbach, 1999, p. 5). Countries seen as uncivilized were treated like mythical places. The displays of non-Western nations were curated from a historical perspective, ignoring present-day realities. This offered middle-class Londoners a chance to feel modern and superior, viewing non-industrial nations as anachronisms, left behind by the narrative of British progress (McClintock, 1995, p. 56).

Some of the products on display were hybrid objects, contributed by missionaries and other Europeans abroad. Hybrid objects were physical manifestations of colonial idealism; they employed non-Western materials and craft techniques, but were shaped in ways that appealed to English consumers. Hybrid objects did not describe themselves as technologically advanced, as the British contributions to the exhibition did. They were one-of-a-kind oddities that showed how non-Western traditions might be appropriated to suit British taste.

One such object was a feather tippet, made from South African bird feathers, contributed by the Agricultural Society of the Cape of Good Hope (The Royal Commission, 1851, pp. 949-950). The family credited with making this tippet contributed other samples of leather and tanned hides. Since it was made by leatherworkers and not featherworkers, this object is probably constructed from

feather-covered bird skin, not from feathers stitched to cloth. Though no image of this item exists, it was probably not a feather pelerine.

South Africa exported a huge number of ostrich and marabou feathers to Europe. In the early nineteenth century, the main source of ostrich feathers was wild birds located in North and West Africa. In the mid-nineteenth century, during the “plume boom,” feathers became a more valuable luxury commodity. To compete in this market, British merchants established domesticated bird farms in South Africa, supplanting the indigenous tribes who originally hunted ostriches (Boum & Bonine, 2015). The family who contributed the South African feather tippet was possibly part of the European feather industry in South Africa.

This tippet displayed at the Great Exhibition is the only located nineteenth-century example of a South African feather cape imported as a Western fashion object. It was not made by African or Chinese artisans, but by European settlers. Unfortunately, no information exists as to what the garment looked like, or what happened to it after the Great Exhibition. No other evidence was found to suggest that feather pelerines could have been made in South Africa.

India

India is a reoccurring, but not widely accepted, attribution for feather pelerines. Though the Peabody Essex Museum changed all of its collection records to list “Chinese in South Africa,” based H. A. Joyce’s misguided advice, the original donors said that the objects were from Calcutta (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p. 7). Other records from the Great Exhibition describe feather capes from India. “A central attraction of the Indian court is...some beautiful feather tippets, entirely made of the

plumage of the peacock” (William H. Allen and Co., 1855, p. 497). An all-peacock feather pelerine can be found in a portrait of William Holman Hunt’s second wife, Edith (Figure 19). This picture, *The Birthday* (1868), showed Edith wearing a feather cape covered in peacock feathers and lined with bundles of white down. Though no other surviving feather pelerines are exclusively peacock feathers, the cape in the portrait is identical in size and shape to other feather pelerines.

In this portrait, Edith is holding the expensive presents she has received for her birthday. An all-peacock feather pelerine would be a costly garment, and this image contextualizes feather pelerines as luxury items. Edith’s pelerine does not have the crescent or floral-vine pattern typical of most feather pelerines, but peacock breast and tail feathers alternate to create a triangular pattern around the neck, hem and center front opening of the cape. In feather pelerines, triangles are popular motifs, and other capes have similarly arranged feathers.

Peacock feathers had been considered luxury items in Europe for centuries. Both the blue breast feathers and the green eye-spots (ocelli) feathers are easily recognizable. Ocelli feathers were perennial favorites of Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelites, and various other artistic movements of the nineteenth century also adopted peacock feathers as a motif and material for design. Over the course of the nineteenth century in Europe, ocelli feathers went from being considered a symbol of misfortune and the evil eye to being a coveted decoration (Jackson, 2006).

During the age of Company rule from 1757 to 1858, the British East India Company controlled the Indian subcontinent. Local rulers who were stripped of their power tried to reassert their importance through lavish displays of luxury goods.

Peacock feathers in particular were used to display wealth in post-colonial material culture. English travelers who witnessed the splendor of the maharajas' courts were struck by their decadence and brought objects back to Europe as souvenirs of the mysterious and beautiful "East." Many objects featured peacock feathers, and as nineteenth-century fascination with eclecticism and Eastern design grew, so did the popularity of peacock feathers. (Jackson, 2006)

The Great Exhibition of 1851 displayed the most opulent objects from Company-ruled India, including cloth of gold and fabulous gemstones. No additional references mention peacock feather capes, but other feather shoulder coverings were on display in the Indian court. Listed under the heading of "Feathers" are "tippets, manufactured by natives; grey, white, black and swan's-down boas, grey and white muffs; Commercolly muffs; fur muffs for the neck; victorines – from Commercolly" (The Royal Commission, 1851, p. 160). Another source also mentioned Commercolly, "In the Exhibition the down of the young adjutant crane was shown to advantage in the form of muffs, tippets, &c., from Commercolly" (Tomlinson, 1852, p. cxxx).

Commercolly was a town in the Pabna District ten miles south of the Ganges River. An industrialized area, with multiple factories controlled by the East India Company and local rulers, Commercolly was an important center for indigo, silk and cotton manufacturing (The East India Company, 1836). Commercolly was frequently mentioned as a site of feather production in conjunction with feather boas and feather tippets. The first identified reference to Commercolly and feathers was in 1827, when the East India Company advertised a cache of grey "Commercolly feathers" on sale at its London Headquarters (Parbury, Allen, and Company, 1827, p. 762). Many of the

birds associated with the Indian feather trade, predominantly storks, cranes, and egrets, are white-plumed as males and grey-plumed as females.

A mid-century source states that, “Commercolly is celebrated for its feathers. They are either prepared singly, for headdress, or made into tippets, boas and muffs; some of them are exceedingly beautiful” (Indian Topics, 1850, p. 252). A later-nineteenth century source states that “The down of the young adjutant bird is made into ladies’ boas and victorines. The under-tail coverts are collected and sold in considerable quantity. They are known in trade as Marabout or Commercolly feathers” (Balfour, 1871, p. 1082). Under-tail covert feathers cover the tail feathers, improving airflow. The adjutant bird mentioned here is probably the lesser adjutant stork or greater adjutant stork because in the nineteenth century, white stork under-tail covert feathers were highly prized and sold as marabou feathers (Trail, 2005).

What is unique about the feather shoulder coverings produced in Commercolly is the fact that they are made from the feathers of multiple birds. A travel guide lists what to do when heading down the Ganges river, describing Commercolly in this way: “This is the famous manufactory for ladies’ boas, muffs, and tippets of down and variegated feathers” (Rushton, 1842, p. 34). Most nineteenth-century feather capes are described as containing feathers from only a single bird. Feather pelerines are a mixture of down feathers, peacock, and duck feathers, with chicken, pheasant, and stork feathers often mixed in. India is the only place described as producing feather shoulder coverings made from multiple different feathers.

Travelogues provide some additional details about the tippets manufactured in Commercolly:

We made our purchases without much regard to utility; mine, however, included a present for home, in the shape of a lady's tippet manufactured of feathers, arranged in a rich variety of colours, and representing the figures seen at the corners of rich English or French flowered shawls, the inside being lined with down as white as the driven snow. In the making of such articles, the natives of India certainly excel, and a rich variety of them are constantly on sale, astonishingly cheap, compared with what they will fetch in England. (Gooch, 1845, p. 361)

This source is valuable on several different levels. This is the only description of a nineteenth-century feather cape made from a variety of feathers, arranged in a pattern, and lined with down. The description of the motif as “representing the figures seen at the corners of rich English or French flowered shawls,” matches the feather pelerines with floral-vine motifs at the Peabody Essex Museum and the Iowa Museum of Natural History. The source also states that a variety of feather tippets are on sale in Commercolly, suggesting that other designs, such as pelerines decorated with crescents or triangle motifs, might also be for sale.

In her response to Lurie and Anderson, Kaeppler offered further evidence that feather pelerines were produced in Asia. Kaeppler worked with Forensic Ornithologists Roxie Laybourne and Beth Ann Gilroy to identify the feathers used in object #425,081, a feather pelerine at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History (Figure 20). Lurie and Anderson stated that the feathers used in the construction of feather pelerines were common North American game birds. Laybourne, known as the “feather detective” among her peers, found that the feathers in the Smithsonian’s pelerine were mallard, falcated teal, garganey, ruddy shelduck, lesser adjutant stork, and peacock, the original range of which varies from “India to China, Greater Sundas, Malaya, Thailand, Africa, Borneo, Burma, Hong Kong, Eurasia, Philippines, and Sri

Lanka” (Kaeppler, 2000, p. 101). The feathers could have been acquired in other areas through the plume trade, but would have been cheaper and easier to acquire in Asia.

Though almost no feather pelerines are currently attributed to artisans from the Indian subcontinent, many donors’ records mention sea captain ancestors who purchased feather pelerines for their female relatives at markets in India or Calcutta, on the way to China. One of the major port cities of the Old China Trade was Salem, Massachusetts, and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem has more feather pelerines than any other museum in the world (The Peabody Essex Museum, 2016). Donors in England also thought that their feather pelerines had been brought back from India or Calcutta when they first bequeathed these capes to museums (The British Museum , 2016). Lurie and Anderson dismissed India as a possible site of production after consulting with two American specialists on Indian dress. The specialists said that feather pelerines did not resemble traditional ethnic dress in India, even though records pointed to feather pelerines being souvenirs intended for export and not traditional dress for Indian use (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p. 9).

This is true: feather pelerines are not an example of traditional Indian dress. The fact that feather pelerines were sold in tourist bazaars and described in travel guides suggests that they were tourist items, meant to appeal to travelers. Commercolly was mentioned in tourist guides as a spot to purchase fashionable goods, and the words “authentic” or “Indian” were never used to describe the feathers for sale in Commercolly (Rushton, 1842, p. 34). Feather pelerines were described in relation to European fashion trends as garments that were already popular in London (Gooch,

1845, p. 361). Feather pelerines were a response to English fashion trends and tastes and did not relate to an indigenous craft.

A Bengal soldier who fought in the British army recounted a story about feather pelerines from his childhood. When visiting the Taj Mahal with family, he overheard a conversation between other pilgrims from the countryside. Having never seen an English person before, one old woman concluded that they must be hatched from eggs, because she had seen a pale woman, “covered with feathers of the most beautiful colours” (Duff, 1876, p. 186). The narrator later understands why the old woman thought this when, “I afterwards frequently saw this sahib driving his lady about, and she wore a tippet made of peacock’s feathers, which the old woman thought were wings” (Duff, 1876, p. 186). Western consumers bought feather pelerines in India, but the garments were not related to traditional Indian dress, and Indian natives outside of Commercolly were not familiar with feather pelerines.

Commercolly also produced indigo, cotton, and other clothing-related exports (The East India Company, 1836). This connection with English fashion made artisans in Commercolly ideally suited to monitor and respond to trends in Western fashion. Feather muffs and boas pre-date feather pelerines, becoming popular in the late-eighteenth century and lasting well into the nineteenth century (Anderson, M., 1825; Modes, 1807). Commercolly exported ready-made boas and muffs made from the feathers of local birds (The Royal Commission, 1851, p. 160). Feather pelerines likely developed as an attempt to capitalize on the demand for other feather shoulder coverings produced in Commercolly in the early-nineteenth century.

Conclusion

The nineteenth century was a time of discoveries and advancements as naturalists and explorers turned up new plants, animals, and phenomena from ever-more distant lands. Fashion also engaged with naturalism, as women sported trendy, sometimes exotic, feather and fur accessories. The pristine white, elongated-columnar shape of ermine and swansdown boas would have appealed to neoclassical design enthusiasts in the first few decades of the nineteenth century.

Taxidermic animals were used in fashion and furnishings in the later nineteenth century. In many cases, “the more exotic the natural history specimen the better” (Johnston, Kite, & Persson, 2005, p. 108). The styles of the 1830s and 1840s had a less-specific approach to exoticism that fused natural elements with non-European motifs to embellish Western fashion. The fashions of these decades “captured romantic fantasy,” with flowers, feathers, and over-the-top accessories (Johnston, Kite, & Persson, 2005, p. 80). The use of peacock feathers in feather pelerines would have invoked Indian and the Middle Eastern design, a type of exoticism that conjured up sensual thoughts of indolent, mysterious lands (Hiner, 2010).

Feather pelerines represented those exotic fantasies that fascinated nineteenth-century Europeans. The few primary sources that referenced how feather pelerines were worn by Western women described the garments as statement pieces meant to capture the imagination and not as functional capes that provided warmth or protection (Duff, 1876; Gooch, 1845). Feather pelerines also speak to the relationships that defined colonialism.

As geopolitical and economic power shifted, artisans adapted and incorporated Western influences into their products. European colonizers treated the people they encountered as alien and different, but, while the English sought to impose their values upon India, they were also fascinated by the non-European design aesthetics and motifs of the region. This tension, between wanting to Anglicize colonies while also fetishizing their non-Englishness, was played out over the course of the nineteenth century at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and in fashion trends, and is expressed in feather pelerines.

Feather pelerines have a fashionable, Western-inspired shape, but the arrangement of feathers on their surface evokes the appearance of many different regional featherwork traditions. Hawai'ians, Native Americans, Maori, Peruvians, and others produced culturally-important feather capes and feather accessories. This is part of the reason why scholars struggled to attribute feather pelerines to a specific culture (Lurie & Anderson, 1998). The appeal of feather pelerines comes from their non-specific, chaotic-exotic appearance, and not from the cultural practices that created them or the meanings that their makers gave them.

If feather pelerines had been a direct copy of Indian dress, they might have suggested that their wearer had “gone native.” Westerners who participated in cross-cultural dressing appeared to reject the superiority of European dress and customs, and could be viewed as dangerous and radical. The not-too-ethnic look of feather pelerines would have made them perfect for consumers who prized objects that conformed to European tastes over objects that represented an existing cultural tradition.

Based on the information presented in primary source documents and gathered through object study, evidence suggested that feather pelerines were produced in Commercolly, India (known today as Kumarkhali). This is further corroborated by the provenance owners of feather pelerines gave to museums. Early curators dismissed India as a potential site of manufacturing because these capes did not resemble the ethnic dress of any province, but Indian craftsmen were responding to outside influences when they constructed these garments.

Further research into feather pelerines might incorporate additional feather identification by a qualified expert, if museums could be persuaded to supply feather samples. Identifying the feathers used in each cape would assist in categorizing feather pelerines. Those pelerines that employed feathers from Asian birds would likely be from India, while those pelerines that incorporated feathers from domestic European and American birds might be capes produced in England or America and inspired by feather pelerines.

Feather pelerines are hybrid objects that display the pressures nineteenth-century Indian artisans navigated as they attempted to appeal to Western tourists. Intersectional objects like these often defy categorization, as they engage with multiple cultures. Though they represent a complex set of influences, in terms of production and origins, feather pelerines are *from* India and are not “Indian” as others have argued. The ability of feather pelerines to represent escapist, exotic fantasies as well as the reality of Victorian colonial industries makes them important objects, worthy of study.

MANUSCRIPT 2

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Finding Meaning in Forgetting: Understanding the Lost Origins of Feather Pelerines

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FINDING MEANING IN FORGETTING: UNDERSTANDING THE LOST ORIGINS OF FEATHER PELERINES

Introduction

More than fifty feather pelerine capes exist in museum collections. (Figure 1). These small feather capes are distinctive, with peacock and duck feathers arranged in floral and geometric patterns on the exterior, and down feathers covering the interior (Figure 2). They often have two “lappet” panels, extending down from the center-front opening and are similar in shape to fashionable nineteenth-century capes known as pelerines (Figure 21). Though collection records and primary sources use many terms to refer to these objects, they will be referred to as “feather pelerines” herein, to distinguish them from all other types of feather capes and boas.

The origins and uses of feather pelerines have been debated by scholars; currently there is no consensus as to where these objects actually came from (Lurie & Anderson, 1998; Kaeppler, 2000; King, 2000; Anderson D. C., 1985; Lurie & Anderson, 2000; Hansen & Boehme, 1997). Scholars struggled to locate primary source documents that referenced these pelerines, with curators suggesting that they might have been Native American, European, Chinese, South African, and/or Polynesian. The first article in this thesis investigated the origins of feather pelerines. A combination of verbal and nonverbal sources suggested feather pelerines were made in Commercolly, India, and worn by fashionable European and North American women (see pages 35-40).

These capes were popular in the nineteenth century when feathers, taxidermic birds, and other exotic animal products were fashionable (Figure 22). As fashion trends evolved, the value of feather pelerines changed, and at some point, they became

distanced from their original biographical data. Once feather pelerines became unfashionable, the factual information that accompanied them disappeared, as it was no longer a selling point. Feather pelerines initially appealed to consumers looking to cultivate exotic, sophisticated aesthetics, but when small shoulder capes with lappets fell out of fashion and conspicuous consumption of exotic bird feathers became controversial, feather pelerines became outdated and were forgotten.

Some donors must have considered feather pelerines too valuable to discard and donated them to museums instead. These pelerines in collections are not accompanied by detailed, specific provenance however, but by the hazy recollections typical of unused, outdated objects. Once feather pelerines were no longer in fashion, social memories of these objects waned, and by the time feather pelerines were obsolete in fashion their biographical data had also disappeared.

This confusion was further compounded by the role of fashion and clothing within nineteenth- and twentieth-century museum collections. Museum curators' disdain for accessioning fashionable clothing into collections because of its fashionability and not for its representation of culture ensured that feather pelerines were approached as curiosities and not historic garments. The relationship between consumer and commodity, and curator and object shaped the data that accompanied feather pelerines. The information that did not contribute to the present value of feather pelerines was minimized or forgotten.

Current values play a role in shaping social memory, particularly with fashion trends. Feather pelerines were subject to a series of nineteenth-century social pressures that led to their decline as a fashion trend. Once in museums, their

provenance was reshaped and obfuscated by co-present museum cultures and the evolving role of fashion within encyclopedic museums.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, three articles discussed feather pelerines without coming to a consensus on their origins (Lurie & Anderson, 1998; Kaeppler, 2000; King, 2000). Some may disagree with the supposition that feather pelerines were produced in India and the place of origin for feather pelerines is discussed in a separate paper (see pages 1-50). The undeniable confusion surrounding the origins of feather pelerines is the focus of this paper. Some of the feathers used in the production of feather pelerines are sourced in Southern Asia, and the discussion of these pelerines as relates to the plume trade and nineteenth-century fashion is relevant to feather pelerines, regardless of where they were constructed.

The prevalent material culture methodologies approach object analysis by considering the available data about an object's history and physical features in a specific order. Each step of the methodology is dependent on the information gleaned in the previous step. The presence of information is important, and the absence of information is unfortunate and something that must be overcome before the object can be properly studied. E. McClung Fleming suggested that researchers begin by assembling a body of distinctive facts, encouraging scholars to undertake painstaking research alongside connoisseurship to assemble the biographical data necessary for material culture analysis (Fleming, 1974, p. 156).

Jules Prown focuses his method for material culture analysis on so-called "mute objects," which may not have significant biographical data. In Prown's methodology the internal evidence gathered from an object is compared to the external

evidence available, and a hypothesis is supported when theory and biographical data align. Prown accommodates for the fact that a theory may be valid even if it is supported by external evidence, but does not offer assistance for verifying theories in the absence of biographical data (Prown, 1982 p. 7, 10).

These two widely used material culture methodologies fail to guide researchers through approaching objects with contradictory information or untrustworthy biographies. In these and other methodologies, evaluation and conclusions are based on the information that surrounds an object. The metaphor of “listening” to objects and extrapolating what an object is “saying” is frequently employed, and the idea that “silence” from an object also can be informative is ignored. In reality though, the absence of information can be just as telling as its presence, though few methodologies draw significance from the voids, where information is lacking or missing altogether.

One prominent study of forgotten objects of material culture is James Deetz’s In Small Things Forgotten (1977). Deetz used archaeological records, physical artifacts and historical documents to rediscover elements of daily life lost to scholars. Related to “the common man,” these details, the “small things forgotten,” were widely known and considered mundane during their time. Deetz’s focus was information so often overlooked that it was left out of written records and existed only in social memory.

Deetz focused on archaeological findings deemed inconsequential by other scholars—soil stains and pottery shards—and sought to uncover what goes unspoken about the ordinary. Though groundbreaking, this approach is not applicable to all

forgotten objects. Deetz frequently refers to his subjects as unremarkable objects, and methodologies used to assess unremarkable objects are not suited to all types of material culture. The removal of meaning from broken shards of pottery is predictable; the removal of meaning from a large group of well-preserved objects is worth notice. The confusion surrounding feather pelerines goes beyond small things forgotten. Feather pelerines are documented in historical records, present in museum collections, and the subject of much debate. They were eye-catching, luxury objects, uncommon in their day and age. The lack of ideological understanding of feather pelerines is at odds with their physical presence in nearly every major encyclopedic museum collection worldwide.

To better understand how objects are forgotten, the processes behind social memory and collective forgetting must be considered. Material culture scholar Adrian Forty writes about how objects embody collective memory and facilitate forgetting (1999). Forty's focus is on public buildings and war memorials, but his theories can be applied to other types of material culture in an attempt to understand why some objects are remembered and others forgotten.

Forgotten objects often relate to social values that are no longer relevant (Forty, 1999). Past events and ideologies are frequently at odds with current values. To resolve this conflict, we unconsciously seek to forget or minimize discussion of the events and ideologies that do not reflect well upon us. An object becomes irrelevant, and its role within society begins to be forgotten when the motivations behind the creation of an object are no longer applicable to a society. This phenomenon, where co-present relationships between culture and artifact shape collective social memory

and understanding of an artifact, is seen in many different situations (Fewster, 2007). The way that a society currently interprets an object becomes accepted fact, and when other narratives are ignored or suppressed, then additional biographical data about the object is forgotten.

In a discussion of memorials, Susan Küchler explored the social process of forgetting further. Küchler defines the process of iconoclasm as the divestment of a memory-containing object in an attempt to “finish” that memory (Forty, 1999, p. 53). Iconoclasm and intentional destruction contribute to an object’s exclusion from social memory. Barbara Mills expanded upon this idea further, in an anthropological, ritualistic context (2008). Iconoclasm also can be achieved through structured deposition, when inalienable objects, too precious to destroy but no longer functional, are intentionally discarded in safe, sacred spaces. Structured deposition helps us to understand how objects might be forgotten without being destroyed. Ideas are erased, objects retired, and narratives reinterpreted all as part of the active process of social forgetting.

Most material culture studies of memory focus on how governments seek to manipulate social memory through architecture and public spaces. These are applicable to this study because they suggest that social memory can be consciously manipulated through personal engagement with material culture (Fewster, 2007, p.2). Discussions of how social memory functions rarely address forgetting, even though it is the natural inverse of memory. “While the topic of social memory has generated a vast literature since the late 1980s, the relationship between objects and memory

continues to be uncertain—and relatively little has been written about forgetting” (Forty, 1999, p. 2).

Other well-known theories of material culture do not discuss forgetting but accommodate for the possibility (Fewster, 2007). Appadurai and Kopytoff have a two-sided view of the exchange between owners and objects. They argue that commodities can be considered alongside consumers, and that both objects and people have social lives (1986). In this social theory of objects, when an object can no longer speak to the values and motivations of current consumers, then it is shut out of the current conversation. When items of material culture no longer engage with co-present culture, then they are silenced and forgotten.

Lowenthal’s approach to material culture is more one-sided. He argues that consumers employ material culture to construct identity (1985, p. 41). When something cannot be used to create an identity relevant to current social values, then it loses purpose and becomes obsolete and forgotten. Lowenthal acknowledges forgetting. He views it as a necessary process that must be employed to bring order to memories but does not address the process by which forgetting is achieved (p. 205).

The growing interest in memory studies has resulted in recent discussion of forgetting. New developments include a classification of the seven types of forgetting including repressive erasure; prescriptive forgetting; forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity; structural amnesia; forgetting as annulment; forgetting as planned obsolescence; forgetting as humiliated silence (Connerton, 2008, p. 59). Connerton’s study of forgetting suggests that it is not just historians who control narratives of the past; societies also may reconstruct their own stories through a

process of organized forgetting. Habitual behavior and repeated practices represent a particular set of remembered concepts. Those narratives and behaviors excluded from the social activities of a society also are excluded from social memory, becoming what is “socially forgotten.”

Theories of material culture that discuss social memory often focus on how objects and memory co-create identity. Though these studies rarely mention adornment, clothing is very relevant to discussions of identity. As a nonverbal social marker, many different theorists have explored how clothing and fashion function as a material representation of identity. Entwistle, Davis, and Butler have all addressed how fashion creates and displays gender identities (2000; 1992; 1993). Veblen, Simmel, and Bourdieu have explored how fashion operates in relation to class identity (1889; 1904; 1984). Other theorists, in particular Barthes, have conceptualized fashion as a form of semiotics, an unspoken code for broadcasting identity (1985).

Discussion of social memory is relevant to theories of fashion, and fashion can be viewed as a part of social memory. Both fashion and memory exist only in relation to our social and cultural experiences (Kavanagh, 2000, p. 17). Both are constantly evolving, embodied, repeated processes. Both create identity and link together social groups, not only by what they choose to remember and display, but also by what they choose to forget.

The messages conveyed by styles of dress are understood by viewers and consumers and are part of social memory. As Hiner said, “Because of its trivialized status, the feminine fashion accessory could accomplish ideological work imperceptibly, both avowing and disavowing its connection to some of the most

complex processes of modernity” (2010, p. 1). Fashion trends spread in viral, non-verbal ways; audiences are often passive carriers of information, unconsciously transmitting knowledge. Clothing frequently expresses unspoken messages and statements, and because it is sometimes viewed as frivolous, fashion trends are a good example of unrecorded social memory and forgetting. Fashion trends may rise, spread, decline, and be forgotten without receiving serious consideration in written records.

Even in eras with an active fashion press, clearly that social memory is conscious of certain meanings and motivations behind fashion trends that are otherwise unrecorded. In the study of feather pelerines’ origins, the popularity of feather boas in the early nineteenth century is also explored (see page 25). In winter 1807, descriptions of French fashions state that swansdown boas and associated shawls are a new type of ridiculous garment. “Fichu de cygne et schall s’associent, c’est un autre genre de ridicule,” but in the same year the same publication also reports that the fashion for swansdown boas is growing, “La mode des fichus de cygne va croissant” (L’Abeille du Nord, 1807, p. 116, 155).

This publication did not record why the trend for swansdown boas became popular, as it did not appeal personally to the author. Despite this publication’s objections to feather boas, the trend persisted and grew, lasting well into the second-half of the nineteenth century. In this case, primary source documents suggest when this fashion trend became a part of social awareness, but additional information about how widespread social memory viewed swansdown boas is absent from the written record.

Theories of social memory and material culture help to explain the confusion that surrounded the production and consumption of feather pelerines. Appadurai and Kopytoff's social conceptualization of objects suggested that the use and popularity of feather pelerines would have declined when they no longer spoke to the motivations of current consumers (1986). Lowenthal suggested that when feather pelerines could no longer be used to create a strategic identity they would have declined in popularity, and they may have been discarded if they cast negative aspersions on their owner's identity (1985). Forty's theories advanced this further (1999). For feather pelerines to have been truly forgotten, they had to relate to some social values that were at odds with the ideals of a subsequent era.

These considerations were compared to Connerton's seven types of forgetting (2008). Three of Connerton's categories—prescriptive forgetting, repressive erasures, and humiliated silence—were state-run methods of forgetting and not applicable to consumers' or collectors' motivations. Forgetting as annulment is the result of too much information and not applicable in this case. The last three types of forgetting—structural amnesia, planned obsolescence, and forgetting that is constitutive of a new identity—seemed appropriate and were all considered in relation to feather pelerines.

Planned obsolescence is a method of forgetting designed to approach consumer goods. In cultures of mass consumption, the acquisition of objects new to the market provides consumers with distinction among their peers. In this sense, the appeal of an object is based on its new-ness, buyers understand that the object will become obsolete and forgotten once it is replaced by newer items. In Simmel's theories of dox and paradox, as consumers negotiate the tension between conformity and individuality,

new fashions are created, adopted, and abandoned (Simmel, 1904). Obsolescence is built into the idea of fashion, and fashion requires obsolescence to exist; there must be some counterpoint style that is not in fashion.

The last two types of forgetting also were applicable. In structural amnesia, societies prioritize particular sets of details, routinely forgetting information that is not valued within their existing social framework. Forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity describes a type of forgetting that is less akin to loss and associated more with gain. In this sense, forgetting is an opportunity to gain new memories by discarding those that do not assist with the management of one's current identity. These two types of forgetting recall Appadurai, Kopytoff, Lowenthal and Forty's theories, which state that changing social values dictated an object's place in social memory.

Considered together, these types of forgetting suggested that feather pelerines became obsolete when they were no longer capable of advancing their owner's social and personal identities. Only when feather pelerines no longer reflected well upon their owners, either because they were unfashionable or for other reasons, was it possible for them to be forgotten. This also suggested that, for them to be forgotten, the standards that made feather pelerines popular had to be replaced with a new set of ideals.

An area that requires further theoretical consideration is the motivations donors have when offering items of clothing to museum collections, and the evolution of costume and dress within museums. To understand this in relation to feather pelerines, two anthropological ideas were considered alongside other material culture and

memory theories: Wiener's view of inalienable objects and Mills' interpretation of structured deposition (1992; 2008). Mills' work on the ritual retirement of powerful, inalienable objects can be used to understand donors' desire to place valuable items of costume and dress in museum collections.

Clothing is inexorably tied to personal identity. "Criticism of clothing is taken more personally, suggesting a high correlation between clothing and personal identity and values" (Prown, p. 13). Additionally, in the nineteenth century, display of exotic, expensive garments like feather pelerines would have broadcast wealth and status. Though valuable items of Western fashion are not ritual objects in a religious sense, feather pelerines were powerful objects within their social setting.

Before being donated to museums, feather pelerines appear to have been passed down in families (The Peabody Essex Museum, 2016). For those who inherited feather pelerines from their family members, the garment would have been ideologically associated with the physical body of its former owner, as well as the original owner's identity and social status. An inalienable object like this, which was once used to construct identity and represent symbolic wealth, would assume subjective values even when it no longer reflected well on its owner's identity. Donors may have been unwilling to discard or destroy feather pelerines if they saw them as family heritage, leading them to seek out other ways of retiring these objects.

Mills described how the Chacao sought out patterned, prescribed methods for the ritual retirement of valuable objects, and the same impulse is mirrored in donors' seeking to entrust valuable items of costume and dress to museum collections. Through this structured deposition, the donor is no longer responsible for the care of

the object, and it is discarded in a way which respects the original owner and the perceived value of the piece. Through its inclusion in a museum collection, the piece is isolated from the original circumstances of its use, and it becomes part of a shared past. In this sense, the objects are decommissioned from their original function and given new ideological potential to enrich the community and become part of new social memories. For items of clothing in museum collections the transformation is from functional, wearable garments to non-wearable objects of cultural and artistic heritage.

Some owners of feather pelerines may not have valued them highly enough to donate them to collections. Likely other feather pelerines were remade into hats or other accessories, consumed in acts of iconoclasm. However, that so many feather pelerines exist in museum collections without biographical data describing their origins or uses is unusual.

Feather pelerines in museum collections have contradictory descriptions, making it impossible to trust any single attribution as true. Similar groups of undocumented objects must exist, and current methods for object analysis rely too much on biographical data to be used in their analysis. Research attempting to gather information on feather pelerines resulted in a lot of contradictory data, and the inconsistency of attributions in collections records made extrapolation through connoisseurship and comparison with like objects impossible. In cases such as this, rather than over-relying on what little information is known, investigation into the void, where no information was available, provided the data necessary for understanding the trajectory of feather pelerines in nineteenth-century fashion.

The following section provides an in-depth background into how feather pelerines were conceptualized in European fashion, and how evolution of social values resulted in the confusion surrounding their origins. The physical data, or internal evidence, gleaned from examination of feather pelerines suggested that the motifs and patterns on the exterior and the use of colorful feathers (particularly peacock) were the two features that linked all feather pelerines. Through investigation of exoticism and feathers in fashion, feather pelerines were then related to themes prevalent in the nineteenth century including the use of animal products and the role of the natural world, the popularity of exoticism and non-Western motifs, and the role of costume and dress within encyclopedic museums and ethnographic collections. The ways in which these themes contributed to personal and institutional identity, as well as consumer motivations, were considered to see how each issue might relate to feather pelerines and contribute to forgetting.

Forgotten Origins of Feather Pelerines

When they first came to Europe, feather capes were seen as a form of dress in harmony with nature. The earliest feather shoulder coverings in Europe were all fancy dress, costume pieces. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, feather capes evoked visions of uncorrupted exotic civilizations. In the early 1600s, Mary, Princess of Orange, wore a feather cape to a masquerade ball. In a portrait displaying her ensemble, Mary wears a pure white gown decorated with lace and pearls (Figure 23). She is attended by a Black servant wearing cloth of gold and a pearl earring. Through a window behind her, a pair of Greek statues is visible. This image conveys purity, as well as exoticism and wealth. Other descriptions of dramatic plays and ballets

demonstrate how feather capes captured European imagination. They were employed as costume pieces for tragic Native Queens and Princesses, representing the natural riches of precolonial tribes (Pacheo, 2014; Francozo, 2012).

By the nineteenth century, nature was often associated with morality. The natural world was seen as nurturing and purifying, a pastoral setting uncorrupted by modern vices (Ruskin, 2010). The unspoiled beauty of nature was supposedly capable of inspiring moral goodness, but at the same time nature also was seen as something that needed to be tamed, analyzed, and understood. Missionaries' discussion of non-industrial societies used the same language that Ruskin and other nineteenth-century theorists employed to discuss the natural world (Mackenzie, 2003). Both nature and non-industrial societies are discussed as passive, untamed recipients that benefited from European oversight.

Westerners saw themselves as the undeniable rulers of nature and saw the natural world as something that had been created as a resource for humans. Darwin's *Origin of Species* caused such outrage because the theory of "man from apes" gave humans un-advanced, earthly origins (1859). Additionally, Darwin's theories rejected the widely-held belief that God had created humans in his image to be the ordained rulers of the Earth (Lyon, 1972). Ideas that the Earth was something to be shared with another species were unpopular in the nineteenth century.

Just as the Orient was romanticized as an unspoiled, untamed paradise, the natural world also was a source of fascination for the nineteenth-century public. An earlier essay republished in the nineteenth century does not mention feather pelerines by name but provides a glimpse into the ethos behind the animal products industry:

I consider woman as a beautiful, romantic animal, that may be adorned with furs and feather, pearls and diamond, ores and silks. The lynx shall cast its skin at her feet, to make her tippet; the peacock, parrot, and swan shall pay contributions to her muff; the sea shall be searched for shells, and the rocks for gems; and every part of nature furnish out its share towards the embellishment of a creature that is the most consummate work of it (Isaac, Tuckey, and Co., 1836).

Feather pelerines embody this sentiment. As garments, feather pelerines would have been inconveniently fragile. They are not practical; many other shoulder covering popular at this time would have provided better warmth and coverage. The appeal of feather pelerines is based on aesthetics, not function. That said, their design does not try to mimic the natural world. The feathers are trimmed and cut; they do not retain their original shape or emulate the plumage of birds. Even those feather pelerines that feature vegetative motifs do so in a perfectly symmetrical way, suggesting the shape of a vine without bearing resemblance to any existing plant (Figure 6).

The treatment of animal products as a material unencumbered by deeper meanings or symbolism is telling. It suggests that it is human prerogative to use the bounties of the natural world in any way desired, as if selecting the choicest elements of various animals, and combining them to make decorations were an act of destiny. The owning and wearing of exotic, rare bird feathers was seen as natural because in the hierarchy of the world, nature was designed to be useful to humans. Feather pelerines position consumers in a hegemonic relationship with the natural world itself.

The nineteenth-century plume industry was huge, and feather-pelerine production was only a single facet of the feather industry in Commercolly. By the early twentieth century, descriptions of the plume trade make it clear that the Commercolly feather industry had collapsed, presumably leading to the end of feather

pelerine production. After almost a century of aggressive hunting, the area eventually ran out of birds to sustain high-volume feather exportation (Watt, 1908, p. 141).

Descriptions of the Indian feather-export industry hint as to the size and scope of feather harvesting. A single dealer (and there were many feather dealers; this description is of a Kingfisher feather merchant) employed nearly 100 different hunting parties, each containing four to five hunters and a cook. These parties were made up of local, unemployed workers, provided with basic equipment and sent out once a year. They did not return for six to eight months, and they spent the interim scouring the subcontinent for particular birds. Profits from this industry were large. During the years 1858 to 1860, the export of kingfisher feathers alone was valued at £27,570, equal to about 3 million pounds today (Balfour, *Cyclopaedia* Vol. 1, 1871).

Feathers were acquired through the harvesting of whole bird skins. This was a lucrative business as late-nineteenth century hats and bonnets were often decorated with taxidermic birds. At the height of the feather trade, 1870-1900, millions of bird skins passed through European fashion capitals (Boudreau, 1999). “Dead” plumes, ironically those feathers that had fallen off live birds, were worth less than “live” plumes, which were skins removed from dead birds, and by 1903, the average amount of money paid for feathers was twice the plumes’ weight in gold (Ehrlich, Dobkin, & Wheye, 1999).

Many birds, particularly terns and egrets, were hunted almost to the point of extinction, resulting in a fashionable society boycott of taxidermic birds. Merle Patchett’s analysis of fashion and the feather trade casts light on the decline of the plume industry. In the late nineteenth century, the American Audubon Society

sponsored lectures entitled “Woman as a bird enemy,” encouraging women to reject feathers in fashion or at the very least only use domestic feathers to trim their hats. Eventually the United States government became involved, limiting the birds that could be hunted legally, instituting bag limits, and controlling the trade of feathers from endangered species (Patchett, 2012)

Women who did wear feathers were painted as predatory in the popular press. Satirical cartoons and essays sought to interpret the wearing of feathers as unfeminine (Figure 24). Birds often were captured while sitting on their eggs, meaning that the chicks starved once they hatched. This disruption of natural maternal instinct was emphasized in publications that condemned the feather industry, associating the wearing of feathers with violence, vanity, and perversion (Patchett, 2012). After the Plumage Bill of 1920 failed to pass the first time it was put to the vote, Virginia Woolf published an essay on the topic. While other commentators cast women as bloodthirsty slaves to fashion, Woolf asked why women were condemned for their love of beauty and fashion, whereas men were not rebuked for the hunting of birds or for the profits that they made in the feather industry (Woolf, 1920).

The nineteenth-century fashion industry consumed a staggering number of creatures, with very little thought given to environmental conservation. The backlash specifically against the feather trade began in the 1880s and lasted well into the 1920s. Although feathers also were used in home furnishings, anti-feather crusaders focused on fashionable clothing. These conservation movements worked to make fashionable feather objects undesirable; during this time many feather pelerines were entrusted to New England museum collections.

The anti-plume movement was most successful in Boston, where Harriet Hemenway and Minna Hall led 900 socialites in a pledge not to accessorize with feathers (Patchett, 2012). With a new moral commitment not to own exotic plumes, Bostonian women would have been obliged to dispose of feather pelerines, if they owned them. Historic New England owns six feather pelerines donated in the early twentieth century. Similarly, the Peabody Essex Museum has thirteen feather capes, most which were accessioned between 1880 and 1930 (The Peabody Essex Museum, 2016). The first museums to acquire feather pelerines were located in eastern Massachusetts, and were offered these garments in the late nineteenth century, during the height Boston's fashionable feather boycott.

Feather pelerines were valuable objects; the feathers used in their construction were not cheap, but at that time displays of exotic plumes had become morally offensive to some members of society. Feather pelerines could no longer have been worn or used fashionably by the socially conscious women of Boston. Even if women in other parts of the country were still sporting feathers, they would have been particularly controversial in New England. Faced with the pressure to no longer own feathered accessories, some women must have chosen to donate their objects to museum collections rather than throw them away, and more than anywhere else, feather pelerines appear in collections in New England.

Nineteenth-century donors to the Peabody Essex Museum stated that their feather pelerines were from India, from somewhere around Calcutta. Exactly what information was given and how curators viewed that information was not recorded, but in the following decades, records were altered to state that those feather pelerines

had been made in South Africa by Chinese artisans. (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, pp. 15-16). Some of this confusion is related to the fact that museums never thought of feather pelerines as fashionable garments. The collections that took in feather pelerines, deeming them worthy of preservation, categorized them as anthropological objects. Some collections records relate feather pelerines to Hawaiian featherwork, a genre of art from which they differ in almost every material way. Other feather pelerines are accompanied by unbelievable provenance, such as the “Indian Princess” who gifted a feather pelerine to her white savior (Lurie & Anderson, 1998).

Evidence suggested that feather pelerines were created for Western consumers, intended to be fashionable, decorative objects. As many other cultures produced feather capes, some of which curators were familiar with, feather pelerines were assumed to be examples of ethnographic dress. Had feather pelerines been recognized and understood as fashionable garments, they would not have been placed in anthropology departments. When feather pelerines first begin to appear in collections, donated to late nineteenth-century museums outside of Boston, the popular boycott of feathers nearby might have prevented donors from thinking of them as fashionable garments. Regardless, the accessioning of feather pelerines into ethnographic collections necessitates that the curators of those collections were unfamiliar with the actual background of the objects.

Even though feather pelerines first appeared in Europe and America in the late 1820s and early 1830s, their entry into anthropology collections did not occur until the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Objects in ethnographic collections were not required to be old, but the connection with Western fashion

would have been forgotten before feather pelerines could be categorized as ethnographic curiosities. The first feather pelerines accessioned into collections, before the 1890s, are associated with India, but as time goes on fewer attributions mention India or the subcontinent, and more list other, unsupported origins as potential sources for feather pelerines (Anderson & Black, 1888).

Part of the reason why the origins of feather pelerines were minimized in the nineteenth century was that the value of the object was not based on its origin. Feather pelerines were part of the Western fascination with the exotic eclectic aesthetic. This design aesthetic, popular in the mid-nineteenth century, appears to celebrate non-Western design, but does so in a way that reinforces ideas of Western imperialism. By bringing together elements of design from many different cultures, Western consumers reduced the value of these objects to the purely aesthetic, stripping them of their cultural context, and asserting that their most important function was to decorate Western environments. The act of selecting from among foreign design elements and bringing them together harmoniously established Western consumers as global connoisseurs, expert judges in matters of taste. (Hoganson, 2007)

Feather pelerines intersect with many different themes in nineteenth-century fashion. They can be considered as examples of the growing international trade involved in the fashion system, the influence of English fashion on tourist items, or the popularity of Hawaiian feather cloaks and other feather shoulder coverings in the nineteenth century. But the reason why they appealed to Western consumers had nothing to do with these intersectional pressures. Feather pelerines were valued because they evoked a non-specific exotic aesthetic and were not treated as the

product of a specific people or province. The relationship between initial consumers and feather pelerines dictated that their biographical data was obsolete and easily forgotten.

The confusion surrounding the fashionable origins and uses of feather pelerines was further exacerbated by the fact that clothing was held in low regard by many nineteenth-century and twentieth-century museums. The few fashionable garments museums chose to accession often were housed in decorative arts collections and were considered frivolous examples of design (Taylor, 2004). Certainly issues of gender bias contributed to this widely held belief. Today museums have accepted that clothing displays social and cultural history, but equating fashion with art is still contested (Steele, 2008).

However, items of dress have been perennially popular among collectors of ethnographic objects. Early collections of foreign curiosities often featured personal accessories and adornments. Clothing is tied to identity and the human form, and ethnographic garments offered titillating proof of the existence of exotic bodies. Though curators did not yet conceive of clothing as a universal language, academic anthropology recognized the informative value of clothing and dress in the late-nineteenth century, long before museum collections of clothing and textiles were common. “Fashionable urban European dress, condemned as the main symbol of feminine frivolity, was not considered worthy of collection until 300 years after the dress of ‘savages’ was shown” (Taylor, 2004, p. 67).

Misunderstood, supposedly ethnographic curiosities like feather pelerines are common in museum collections. Sometimes curators are aware of them; other times

incorrect attributions have gone unquestioned, and no one is aware that specific objects require further research. Early scholars did not always list their sources, presenting their personal theories as facts. These curatorial opinions are cited repeatedly, until they became unquestioned truths. Modern-day scholars may fail to recognize these fallacies or hesitate to question them because they are so often repeated (Garoutte, 1981).

Additionally, connoisseurship, once the method of material culture and art historical training espoused by Harvard and other top-tier schools, encourages scholars to treat their own opinions as facts (Bruckner, 2002, p. 2581). This method is responsible for many unsupported hypotheses and is very susceptible to cultural and personal biases. Connoisseurship training is no longer enough, but collection records still contain attributions based on educated opinions rather than evidence or facts.

Museums attempt to accumulate pieces that are good examples, items that can represent all other like objects. Curators frequently discuss how pieces “fill in gaps,” in a collection (Pearce, 1994, p. 201). This idea, that collections can be “complete” and that they should not possess gaps, drove early museum collecting patterns. Nineteenth-century curator Franz Boas, known as the father of modern anthropology, felt that a museum, “should be an archive of all which can be obtained of the human condition of time or space” (Fairservis, 1971, p. 7). This mindset prioritized collecting unique objects over mundane pieces. Those curators who followed in Boas’ footsteps readily accessioned enigmatic objects about which they knew very little because unique, or unfamiliar objects were thought to be more special. When creating collection records, they compensated for their confusion by making educated guesses.

Modern collections are filled with items that are misunderstood and under-documented. Past estimates stated that as many as 80% of the cultural materials in museum collections were inadequately documented (Sturtevant, 1987, p. 8).

Once deposited in a museum context, feather pelerines were separated from their original social settings. The circumstances under which feather pelerines were originally useful was suppressed, and the objects become part of the museum's narrative. Objects included in anthropology collections were seen as anthropological, and objects included in collections of history museums were seen as historical documents. When placed on display behind glass, objects were stripped of their original meanings and readily took on whatever meaning the museum prescribed for them.

The process of sustaining social memory must be continuously repeated. As the wearing of exotic bird feathers took on new meaning, consumers sought to distance themselves from that fashion. The act of wearing feather capes to appear fashionable ceased for a time. No longer associated with stylish dress, feather pelerines were decontextualized as purely exotic objects. This, combined with the anti-fashion collecting culture that dominated museums at that time, ensured that the origins of feather pelerines were forgotten.

Alongside issues of eclectic exoticism and cultural imperialism, feather pelerines came to represent the hegemonic relationship between the nineteenth century and the natural world. The "forgetting" of feather pelerines was due in part to the evolution of public opinion regarding the nineteenth-century plume industry. When conspicuous consumption of exotic feathers fell out of fashion, feather pelerines

became ideologically compromised and ceased to reflect well upon their owners. As the motivations behind their creation became obsolete, their biographical data was forgotten, and by the time they entered museum collections, the stories behind feather pelerines were no longer part of social memory.

Conclusion

Feather pelerines are problematic objects, created in the liminal spaces on the outskirts of the British Empire. They defy easy categorization, representing the intersection of a complex set of cultures and pressures. Through their relationship to imperialism, environmentalism, and the gendered sphere of fashion feather pelerines embodied a set of ideals unsavory to twentieth-century collectors.

The problems storing and conserving items made from animal products meant that clothing and textile collections rarely seek out fragile feathered items. J. C. H. King stated that it was remarkable any feather pelerines survived the twentieth century; not only are they fragile items, susceptible to carpet beetles, clothes moths, and mold, but many twentieth-century curators of costume and dress considered the collecting of animal products to be ideologically problematic (2000, p. 95). When considered as fashionable objects, feather pelerines represented colonial capitalism and unsavory environmental exploitation, a topic few collections sought to preserve.

Given the role of textiles as second-class citizens within museums, there must be other misunderstood items of clothing and dress lurking in collections. As feather pelerines demonstrate, many curators once relied on guesswork, rather than in-depth research, to assign attributions to items of clothing and dress. The date when clothing and textiles were deposited in museum collections provides information about why

they were preserved. With each era came a different view of fashion and adornment. When no other biographical data is available it is possible to understand why an object was brought to a collection by looking at when it was acquired. Understanding the history of clothing in museums can assist scholars in their attempts to identify and reinterpret misunderstood objects. In the case of feather pelerines, this casts light on how fashionable garments could have been accessioned into ethnographic art collections and why these garments were saved after their origins were forgotten.

Feather pelerines embody a controversial set of nineteenth-century motivations. In addition to engaging with issues of exoticism and consumption, they also speak to the relationship between nineteenth-century fashion and the natural world. A lack of biographical data may suggest that there is some sort of unsavory truth in an object's history. While these issues may not have been narratives curators sought to develop in the past, they are an undeniable part of nineteenth-century fashion history and should be acknowledged.

By approaching feather pelerines at the base level, as garments covered in feathers that evoke a non-Western aesthetic, meaning was extrapolated which reconnected feather pelerines with their original social context. To understand the trajectory of feather pelerines and the confusion surrounding the origins of these pieces, it was necessary to consider the motivations and values that encouraged the production of feather pelerines. Despite the lack of reliable external evidence, by considering the lack of information as an important signifier it was possible to study the trajectory of feather pelerines in the nineteenth century.

When researchers approach under-documented objects, they should be prepared to encounter problematic ideals, or at the very least, social motivations irrelevant to modern society. Museums may be baffled by forgotten objects, but they are valuable cultural documents. Forgetting is an act that must be performed, the more a particular narrative is repeated, the further ingrained it becomes in collective social consciousness. Reversing the process of forgetting is difficult. Artifacts can complicate the process of forgetting, and their existence confirms events and stories that may be left out of conventional historical narratives. By researching the stories behind misunderstood objects, museums can uncover overlooked perspectives, and develop new outlooks on history.

APPENDIX A:

TERMINOLOGY

When searching for feather pelerines in primary source documents at the beginning of this study, I had difficulty telling if the phrases “feather pelerine” or “feather tippet” referenced the objects I called feather pelerines, or if they referenced a difference type of feather-covered cape. The Cunningtons and other twentieth and twenty-first century scholars used tippet, pelerine, and other terms as synonyms, but descriptions and images in nineteenth-century ladies’ magazine suggested that the terms used to describe shoulder coverings had distinct meanings that evolved over the course of the nineteenth century (Cumming & Cunningham, 2003).

The word pelerine originated in the mid-eighteenth century to describe small scarves and neckerchiefs (Oxford University Press, 2016). Pelerine means female pilgrim in French. The name of the garment is believed to come from the small, fashionable cloaks worn by the subjects of the 1718 Watteau painting, “Pilgrimage to Cythera” (FIDM Museum, 2010) (Figure 25). By the nineteenth century, the word pelerine referred to a shoulder cape often, but not necessarily, with two lappet panels extending down on either side of the front opening.

The word tippet is even older. It originally referred to a Medieval ornamental tail of material, either a hanging sleeve or a liripipe attached to a hood (French, 1851). Early fitted over-gowns, the cotehardies of the mid-fourteenth century, often were pictured with decorative, knee-length pieces of material attached to the sleeves called tippets (Figure 26). As hood decorations, tippets were made from cloth, but as sleeve decorations tippets were more often fur (Netherton, 2006). By the nineteenth century

tippet had become a versatile term. In some years it was used to describe small capes that encircled the neck and covered the shoulders, while at other times publications seem to associate tippets with fur and feather boas (French, 1851, p. 274).

These inconsistencies required establishing definitions for tippet and pelerine within each decade of the mid-nineteenth century. This was most important for understanding sources from the 1830s and 1840s which appeared to be describing what I called feather pelerines, but which used the phrase feather tippet. Table 2 presents a list of publications that described and pictured shoulder coverings related to feather pelerines.

TABLE 2.

Pelerines and Tippets in Fashion Publications

Year	Publication	Caption or description	Reference/ Commentary
1822	<i>Ackerman's Repository of Arts, Literature, &c.</i> (General Observations on Fashion and Dress, 1822).	In London Fashions, as part of a Promenade Dress, "Long tippet and muff of chinchilla" (p. 363).	Figure 27 - Displays a long fur boa.
1825	<i>The Lady's Magazine</i> (Fashions, 1825).	As part of an evening dress, "...a narrower pelerine cape of ermine falls over the whole..." (p.123).	Figure 28 - Pelerine is the collar portion of a larger cloak.
1829	<i>The Ladies' Museum</i> (The Mirror of Fashion, 1829)	In the General Monthly State of Fashion, "A long pelerine tippet is worn with this," and, "A long tippet with a pelerine back, of marten-skin or chinchilla" (p. 58).	Figure 29 - Pelerine-tippet covers the shoulders and has two long lappets.
		In the description of a walking costume, "A boa-tippet of Chinchilla is worn round the throat, the ends	Figure 30 - Image displays a long fur boa.

		descending nearly to the feet” (p. 356).	
1830	<i>La Belle Assemblée: or, Bell's court and fashionable magazine</i> (Bell, Fashions, 1830)	In Fashions for March, “Whatever the costume is for out-door dress, a boa-tippet forms and indispensable part of it.” (p. 117).	No reference image. The word tippet has morphed into boa-tippet.
1831	<i>La Belle Assemblée: or, Bell's court and fashionable magazine</i> (Bell, Records of the Beau Monde, 1831)	In Fashions for October, “A boa tippet is indispensable; those of swan’s-down are a present most in favour, but by the end of the month they will be in a great degree superseded by sable” (p. 167).	Figure 31 - Image displays a long, narrow white boa.
1832	<i>Court Magazine and la Belle Assemblée</i> (Carcon, 1832)	In Fashions for December, “A pink satin dress... with sable boa” (p. 316).	Figure 32 - Image displays a long brown boa
1832	<i>The Ladies’ Penny Gazette; Or, Mirror of Fashion</i> (Fashions for December, 1832)	In Fashions for December “The cape, or tippet (for it is in the form of one) is quite round, being drawn down before and hind to the shape of the bust” (p. 49).	Figure 33 - Garment described as a tippet is a shoulder cape with long lappets and matching muff.
1833	<i>The Lady’s Magazine</i> (Fashions, 1833)	In Fashions for May, “The forms have not varied since they came out first; at the neck they are décolleté... The form at the back is that of a very large pelerine or tippet” (p. 299).	No reference image. Author considers pelerine and tippet to be synonymous here.
1834	<i>Court Magazine and la Belle Assemblée</i> (Fashions for January, 1834)	In Fashions for January, “The pelerine is shallower, and the mantle shorter than those of last year, but they are quire [<i>sic</i>] as ample. Cashmere, satin, and silk are the materials employed for mantles; we some already some trimmed with fur, but the most elegant are those ornamented with embroidery... Several are adorned with olives, brandebourgs, and other	No reference image. Discussion of figured patterns on pelerines reminiscent of language used to describe feather pelerines. (Gooch, 1845)

		kinds of fancy silk trimming” (p. xxii).	
1835	<i>Ladies’ Pocket Magazine</i> (English Fashions, 1835)	London Carriage Costume in English Fashion Section, “A sable fur tippet” (p. 27).	Figure 34 - This tippet has neither lappets nor length, it fits like a small shoulder cape, not like a long scarf or boa.
1836	<i>Journal des Dames et de Modes</i> (Modes, 1836)	In Mode section, “Comme nous l’avons déjà dit, la fourrure prendra une grande vogue cet hiver; déjà tous les mantelets, manteaux habillés, pelerines de soirees son garnis de cigne: c’est ordinairement avec la grebe, les premières fourrures qu l’on porte: leur legerete a encour quelque souvenirs de l’ete” (p. 505)	Figure 35 - Garment in picture is described as a <i>manteaux varsovien</i> , or a “Warsaw cloak.” Text described the fashion for similar “evening pelerines” lined with swansdown.
1837	<i>Ladies’ Magazine and Museum</i> (Paris Intelligence - The Court, News, and Fashion, 1837)	“The newest mantelets and pelerines of embroidered muslin have short sleeves attached to them, which come off and on” (p. 346) and, “With trims and all the pelerine should only reach the shoulder” (p. 421)	No reference images. Mantelet and pelerine used as synonyms, and length of pelerine clearly described.
		“Feathers are excessively fashionable just now. Ostrich, marabouts, willow feathers, knotted feathers, nuances (shaded), peacock, and cock’s feathers: war declared upon the feathered tribes!” (p. 347)	No reference image.
1837	<i>Journal des Dames et de Modes</i> (trans. in Paris Intelligence – The Court, News and Fashion, 1837)	“The <i>Camaillette</i> is a round pelerine, with a hood attached to it; the pelerine of satin, the lining of fur” (p. 133).	Figure 36 - Pelerine here is a fur-trimmed hooded shoulder cape with matching sleeves.
		“Pelerine for theatres of green satin, wadded and trimmed with swansdown” (p. 362).	Figure 37 - Image displays a small, fur-trimmed quilted

			shoulder cape that crosses in the front.
1838	<i>Ladies' Pocket Magazine</i> (Foreign Fashions and Novelties, 1838)	In description of evening dress, "Low corsage decorated with a pelerine fichu of gold blond lace" (p. 143).	Figure 38 - The pelerine-fichu here has round lappets and made of a light-weight fabric.
1838	<i>Journal des Dames et de Modes</i> (Modes, 1838)	In Costumes Parisiens, "Robe de reps garnie de Cygne avec boutons d'or" (p. 42).	Figure 39 - Though this a dress and not a shoulder covering, the image shows the popularity of swansdown.
		This shoulder covering is not described in the text. Caption reads, "Robe de satin avec corset et ornements de velours," and does not mention the garment worn by the woman in red (p. 81).	Figure 40 - The pelerine is not described in the text, but the text does say that marabou and swansdown are the most fashionable bonnet trimmings. The image shows the continued popularity of swansdown-lining garments.
1840	<i>The New Monthly Belle Assemblée</i> (Fashions for January, 1840)	As part of a morning dress ensemble, "Pelerine of moderate size, descending in front considerably below the waist in rounded ends" (p. 56).	Figure 41 - Pelerine here is a small one-piece shoulder cape with a long front.
1842	<i>The Court magazine and Belle Assemblée</i> (Paris Fashions, 1842)	In a description of fashion for fur, "Muffs are universally worn, and a lady cannot possibly do without a boa, a round fur tippet – pelerine as we call it – and a palatine, or long fur tippet" (p. 217).	No image. The text introduces the term palantine, and shows that pelerine and tippet were used as synonyms for round capes.
1844	<i>Blackwood's ladies Magazine and gazette</i> (Fashions, 1844)	"There are many mantelets composed of poult de soie, with the newly introduced velvet trimmings; the	No reference image. Text describes a pelerine

		pelerine capes to these mantelets are trimmed with a fluted volant” (p. 224)	as a part of a larger mantelet.
1845	<i>Magazine of the Beau Monde</i> (Fashions in Fur, 1845)	In Fashions in Fur, “Furs most in request are Sable, Chinchilla, Marten, Minx and Ermine. For Dress and Evening wear, three-quarter length, and the long flat lined dress tippet of the Miniver or Spotted Ermine, the Tailed Ermine, &c., are invariably worn. The Parisian ladies of fashion are wearing the long wide Ermine Scarf at the Theatres, &c., &c.” (p. 165).	No reference image. The only place the word tippet appears in this year is at the end of the section describing what furs were popular in January, 1845.
1848	<i>Ladies' Cabinet of Fashion, Music, & Romance</i> (London Fashions for the Month, 1848)	In a description of winter fashions, “A robe, usually of one of the new woolen materials, and a muff and tippet of real of mock sable” (p. 58).	No references image or further discussion of the tippet’s shape.
1852	<i>The New Monthly Belle Assemblée</i> (The Toilet. Costume for September, 1852)	Shawls and other shoulder coverings in the fashion plates are not described in the text. The focus is instead on fashion for detachable sleeves and collars. Fichu-gilet (vest-like capes) are discussed in the text, but are not pictured in fashion plates. (p. 164)	Figure 42 - Though two figures in the plate wear shawls, the accompanying text makes no mention to their shoulder coverings. This indicates changes in the style and popularity of small capes.
1853	<i>Peterson's Magazine of Art, Literature and Fashion</i> (Fashions for May, 1853).	“The hood was flat and the lace with which it was edged fell over the shoulders, and formed a deep pelerine” (p. 322). “Many of these pelisses have hoods, which cover the neck-piece and form a pelerine trimmed with a very deep lace...” (p. 484).	No reference image. Pelerine is used to describe a portion of a garment; tippet is not used anywhere in the publication.

In a review of digitized fashion publications from the nineteenth century, the word pelerine was associated solely with small shoulder capes. Even when publications made no reference to a garment called “the pelerine,” the term was used to describe the portion of capes or cloaks that covered the shoulders. Some pelerines have lappets in the front, others do not. The word pelerine did not require the garment to be longer in the front.

Small shoulder capes shaped like and similar to feather pelerines went by the name pelerine in the 1820s and early 1830s. By the late 1830s and 1840s, these small capes also went by the name paletot and mantelet. Small decorative shoulder coverings were discussed extensively in the fashion press during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but around 1850, small capes declined in popularity, and the word pelerine was more commonly used to discuss the shoulder portion of a larger cape or jacket.

Before 1825, the word “tippet” was associated with boas and long scarves. During the late 1820s, those same garments were called tippet-boas. By the 1830s, long scarves were just called boas, and the word “tippet” was used to refer to small shoulder capes. Regardless of the shape of the garment, “tippets” were almost always made from fur or feathers. The shape changes over the course of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but the association with furs and feathers remains consistent. The term “tippet” declines in use during the 1840s, when it exclusively described fur accessories for winter (shapes not specified), and by the 1850s, the word “tippet” rarely appeared in fashion publications.

. Tippetts and pelerines frequently were pictured in the fashion plates of the 1830s, but they were not seen in later fashion plates. In fashion magazines, the images were reserved for displaying the newest, most fashionable styles, and by the late 1840s, tippetts and pelerines were no longer new. By 1850s, shoulder capes had been eclipsed by larger shawls and smaller collars to the point where many later publications did not include the words “pelerine” or “tippet”. Those that did mention tippetts and pelerines referenced the objects in descriptions of what was already being worn in town. They are not seen in images of the latest fashions or discussed in the sections that predict new styles.

Swansdown boas were popular in the early years of the nineteenth century, but shoulder capes lined with feathers do not become common in the fashion press until the 1830s. Though none of the garments pictured in fashion publications have feather-covered exteriors patterned like feather pelerines, the presence of similar down-lined pelerines in fashion publications meant that Western consumers would have associated feather-lined shoulder capes with pre-existing fashions.

An 1840s travelogue discusses the feather pelerines for sale in Commercolly markets (Gooch, 1845). The shape of feather pelerine and the idea of a shoulder cape lined with white down would have been familiar to travelers, as similarly shaped pelerines appeared in fashion publications in the late 1830s. The brightly patterned exterior of feather pelerines would have been the unique selling point of the garment. The peacock-covered exterior of feather pelerines is unlike any shoulder coverings found in Western fashion publications, further suggesting that feather pelerines were not constructed in Europe.

APPENDIX B:

MATERIAL CULTURE METHODOLOGY

Material culture is a diverse, interdisciplinary field of study focusing on artifacts produced or modified by humans. Objects are the physical evidence of culture and the ways in which objects are created and consumed provides information about the needs, beliefs and values of a particular community at a given time (Prown, 1982). People rely on objects and goods to help negotiate complex cultural systems (Gordon, 2000). Combining the study of objects with written records helps researchers comprehend the present and interpret the past.

Scholars of many disciplines use material culture to better understand human behavior. When tracing the development of material culture as a field, Thomas J. Schlereth divided scholarship into three eras: Age of Collection, the Age of Description, and the Age of Interpretation. Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, the study of material culture was driven by the desire to collect unique, seemingly superior objects. Scholars of art history, anthropology, archeology, and architecture recognized the academic potential of object study and sought to acquire the most valuable pieces for their collections. (Schlereth, 1982)

During the mid-twentieth century, the focus switched from collecting objects to considering and describing their features through connoisseurship. At this time, historians of folk life and folk art began to employ material culture scholarship, and interest shifted away from the rare and valuable towards objects that displayed traditional techniques, technological advancements, and national identity. Since the 1980s, material scholarship has been driven by the desire to interpret objects,

contextualizing and relating them to cultural themes and historical movements.

Strategies for doing material culture analysis also have evolved. As part of the current Age of Interpretation, scholars moved away from inquiry based on intuition and connoisseurship towards methodical analysis based on coding and scientific data (Schlereth, 1982).

Many fields are informed by material culture and many different trends in current scholarship. Schlereth refers to material culture studies as a multi-faceted, “gigantic Barnum and Bailey circus tent under which a variety of acts takes place simultaneously” (Schlereth, 1982, p. 2). Essentially, material culture makes use of both verbal and nonverbal sources to conduct historical research. Where material culture differs from a traditional document-based approach to history is that it relies on objects as the primary source of information.

Clothing and textiles were overlooked by material culture scholars for many years. In 1982, Jules Prown discussed the scholarly potential of adornment saying that

The potency of this material as cultural evidence can be tested by the simple act of criticizing someone's clothes; the reaction is much more intense than that aroused by comparable criticism of a house, a car, or a television set. Criticism of clothing is taken more personally, suggesting a high correlation between clothing and personal identity and values. Although personal adornment promises to be a particularly rich vein for material culture studies, to date little significant work has been done with it (Prown, p. 13)

The act of wearing clothing is an almost universal process, found across all levels of society. In the past few decades, adornment has been reinterpreted as a type of material culture, in acknowledgement of how personal appearance is a key part of identity construction and communication (Entwistle, 2000; Butler, 1993). When assemblages of clothing and textiles are considered together, demonstrations of

individual identity through clothing can be read as demonstrations of community identity (White, 2002). While much has changed, a great deal of unexplored potential remains for further material culture studies of clothing and textiles.

Later-twentieth-century material culture scholars developed methodologies for study, creating specific frameworks for considering objects and interpreting cultural meaning (Prown, 1982, p. 5). These methodologies aspire to control unconscious bias by organizing how researchers consider objective facts. They have prescribed steps that must be completed in a specific order, mimicking scientific method or equations. In theory, the use of these models should mean that the conclusions drawn in a material culture analysis can be replicated by other scholars.

A widely-adopted framework for material culture analysis is E. McClung Fleming's "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model" (1974). Fleming performs four scholarly operations on five different properties of an object in an effort to ensure that all features of an object are carefully and objectively considered. Fleming's method results in the cultural analysis and interpretation of the object, when the object is contextualized within its own time and then related to the present. Many subsequent methodologies are modifications of Fleming's approach. Another prevalent methodology was developed by Jules Prown (1982). Prown's method provides a framework for connecting with artifacts. By making an emotional yet unbiased connection with an artifact, scholars can come closer to understanding its "true meaning" (1982). These two methodologies have been tweaked and expanded upon by scholars, but remain the most popular approaches for object analysis.

A separate and growing division of material culture studies does not employ the traditional methodological approaches to assess the physical features of objects and instead focuses on the functions of artefactual evidence within a culture. Rather than drawing conclusions from a particular physical object, these studies draw conclusions about the nature of materiality and the ideological importance of objects within cultures. This symbolist approach seeks to uncover the abstract meanings of objects rather than to depict historical development (Schlereth, 1982, p. 42). A traditional methodological approach to material culture uses objects to better understand history at a certain time; the symbolist approach uses history to better understand how humans relate to objects across time.

This thesis investigated feather pelerines from two points of view. The first article employs a modified version of Fleming's methodology, proposed by Gregg Finley, to do artifact study and investigate the origins of feather pelerines (1990). The second article is a theoretical consideration of how objects function in culture, drawing on the theories of symbolist material culture scholar Adrian Forty (1990). Both articles consider the origins of nineteenth-century feather pelerine capes. The first seeks to uncover what those origins are through object study; the second seeks to consider why those origins were forgotten through the study of how objects relate to social memory.

In the search for a model to use, Fleming's model for artifact study was considered. Originally published in the 1974 issue of the *Winterthur Portfolio*, this popular method was ill-suited to these artifacts because Fleming's model is not well-equipped to handle the contradictory attributions assigned to feather pelerines. The first step in Fleming's method is to gather information about an object, beginning with

its history - where and when it was made, by whom, for whom, as well as the changes in ownership, condition of the object, and function of the object (1974, p. 154).

Research into the provenance of feather pelerines uncovered a great deal of information. Unfortunately, the data often contradicted itself, suggesting seven different possible makers and origin sites. Understanding the history of feather pelerines was the goal of this thesis. This data was not available at the beginning of this study. A model that could assist with differentiating fact from fiction was required.

Fleming suggests using evaluation and comparing the artifact with like objects to assist with the process of identification, assuming that researchers will be able to compare their object to a well-curated piece and benefit from the knowledge of other scholars. Many feather pelerines are in museum collections, but none are well-curated. Museums openly admit that these objects are not understood and that no consensus exists as to their origins. Beginning this study with identification and evaluation, as proposed by Fleming, was impossible. Prown's methodology for artifact study also was considered and similarly dismissed because it too is ill-suited to handle large groups of objects with contradictory data.

Fleming and Prown's methodologies typify what Schlereth calls the Age of Interpretation (1982, p 7). The need for these structured methodologies grew out of the vast amounts of information uncovered and catalogued by earlier scholars, members of the Age of Description. Interpretive methodologies are designed for approaching well-described objects, with ample, accurate biographical data. This study required a methodology designed for description, not solely interpretation.

After reviewing other material culture studies, the decision was made to use a combination of two other methodologies to consider feather pelerines: Gregg Finley's approach to artifact study and Phillip Zimmerman's workmanship theory (1990; 1981). Finley assumes that objects are facts and that written documents may just be opinions, combining the nuanced cultural analysis of Fleming's method with a healthy dose of curatorial skepticism. Finley's methodology is two-part. In the first level of analysis, the investigator gathers physical data from an artifact and then comparative data from other artifacts, similar to the steps of Fleming's model. Where the models differ is in their division of the artifact's properties. Fleming's five properties are history, material, construction, design, and function. Finley's are material, construction, function, provenance, and significance. Finley does not begin his analysis with history, as Fleming does.

Artifact history is considered in Finley's fourth property, provenance, but with this model researchers are not required to accept provenance as fact. Only after gathering all the physical data should researchers incorporate verbal sources into their analysis, and as verbal sources are gathered, researchers are encouraged to reconsider the properties of the artifact. If provenance does not agree with verbal and nonverbal evidence, it can be discredited. As Finley's methodology is built on observable evidence, rather than curatorial data, it was well suited to a study of feather pelerines.

The ability to reconsider and reevaluate curatorial attributions was key to this study. In level one of Finley's analysis, researchers minimize bias by focusing on the object's properties, rather than relying on judgements and valuations of earlier scholars. The work of other scholars is later gathered, and considered, but is always

open to interpretation. In level one, the inquiry is open ended; the goal is not to prove or disprove any theory but to gather as many primary and secondary sources as possible. Any information related to the object, community, and time period is relevant, whether it agrees or not with the presupposed conclusions suggested by other scholars. Given the scholarly debate surrounding the origins of feather pelerines, the researcher needs to step away from existing scholarship and ground the study in primary source data because evidence was found for and against each of the proposed origin sites of feather pelerines.

Level two of Finley's analysis guides the researcher through the interpretation of their evidence. In level one, researchers can explore general questions about a large pool of objects. In level two, the most informative sources and artifacts are selected and related to the research problem. Scholars begin the study with a broad research objective, and at the end of the first level, Finley encourages scholars to refine their objectives and research strategy based on the gathered data. This might include focusing on a single feature that distinguishes an object from like items or giving deeper consideration to a newly discovered source.

Whereas level one is focused on cataloguing and recording, physical features, sources, and related objects, level two is focused on organizing that information and relating the evidence to a larger research question. This is cultural analysis. Scholars must go beyond the objects in question to connect with themes and values of a particular community at a given time. In level two, the artifact is evaluated as a source for historical scholarship, and verbal and nonverbal sources are brought together to achieve the research objective. This process, establishing primary source data in level

one, and relating that data to a larger research question in level two, is easily adapted to suit the needs of different objects.

In any material culture study, researchers must be methodical. Each feature of the object must be considered in order, but this should not result in an inflexible approach to object study. In Finley's method, the information gathered about the object is reconsidered at each step of the process. This ability to question and evaluate evidence led to the selection of this model. Other methodologies treat written sources as unimpeachable fact, stating the researcher cannot credit artefactual evidence that does not agree with existing scholarly opinions (Prown, 1982). All of the written data surrounding feather pelerines cannot be true. The provenances assigned to identical objects are too contradictory to all be correct.

This study did not set out with the goal of verifying a pre-decided provenance for feather pelerines. In level one of the analysis, all available data about nineteenth-century feather shoulder coverings was gathered. Much of this evidence did not relate directly to feather pelerines, but understanding the variety and popularity of feather shoulder coverings was invaluable. Grounding this study in a wider survey helped to determine which verbal sources were references to feather pelerines, and which were references to other types of feather shoulder coverings.

In the second level of analysis, the information gathered was organized into different categories, based on the site of origin each source discussed. Finley's level-two analysis was repeated for each potential place of origin, connecting references to feather capes with the nineteenth-century economic and social themes of the region. Using this method, the site with the most explicit verbal and nonverbal links to feather

pelierines, Commercolly, India, was determined to be the most probable producer of the objects. To draw this conclusion without the ability to set aside contradictory data in the initial stages of this study would have been impossible. Only after impartial physical evidence and data from nineteenth-century sources was gathered were collection records and the opinions of other scholars considered. Finley's second object property, construction, also was considered in relation to Phillip Zimmerman's theory of workmanship, discussed below. These two approaches assisted in further describing feather pelierines and collecting the information necessary to interpret the objects.

Zimmerman's workmanship theory guides material culture scholars in considering how objects relate. By examining construction details, component pieces, and stylistic features objects can be organized into categories based on workmanship and technique (1981, p. 283). This type of structural analysis was necessary to determine if one or more groups of artisans produced feather pelierines. Other scholars presupposed that a single culture made all feather pelierines, but because so many different origins were proposed, possibly more than one group of artisans could have produced these capes.

Some theories about the origins of feather pelierines were obviously untrustworthy. One curator admitted that his theory that feather pelierines were made in South Africa by Chinese artisans had no evidence to support it (Lurie and Anderson, 1998, p11). But that should not suggest that all other theories were fabricated; possibly feather pelierines could have been produced in one location first and then inspired production of similar capes elsewhere.

A workmanship-based approach is particularly well-suited to analyzing historic clothing, helping researchers to move beyond the appearance of a garment to consider the social and economic ramifications of the materials and techniques used in production. When a set of garments is visually similar, examining the differences in workmanship helps to distinguish where and for whom each piece was made. Material culture analyses of clothing frequently consider the properties of workmanship—choice and quality of materials and trims, finishing techniques, interior structure of the garment and evidence of reuse or remaking. In the absence of labels or maker's marks, workmanship theory provides a framework for analyzing these features and categorizing large groups of similar objects.

This model provided a framework for extracting information from a large group of objects and organizing that data so that it could be interpreted. Two considerations in workmanship theory are required; the first is the actions necessary to make objects. The skill level required to construct two pieces that look identical differs based on the type of object. Understanding if an object was made by a highly-skilled craftsman or a less-skilled laborer provides information about its origins.

Certain techniques, such as finely-detailed carving, require a highly-skilled artisan. This type of work attempted by an inexperienced artisan will be obvious. This delicate work is known as workmanship of risk. Other objects that can be mass produced by unskilled labors are examples of workmanship of certainty. Simple forms, or the use of machines, ensure that identical goods can be produced, regardless of the maker's skill level (Zimmerman, 1981; Pye, 1968, p. 4-5).

Feather pelerines fall into a third category: the workmanship of habit (Zimmerman, p. 285). Skill is needed to assure the constancy and quality of the piece, but the object is not at risk of destruction during the construction process. The construction of feather pelerines shows a high degree of constancy and similarity between pieces. This would not be the case if different groups of artisans made these garments. In this type of workmanship, production may employ mental templates rather than a physical stencil, machine, or mold; it is repetition of production that builds the maker's skills. The same stitches and stitch lengths are used across most feather pelerines. The techniques used to join pieces together are identical. Some skill is required to trim and handle the feathers without damaging them, but if a feather is damaged, it is easily discarded and replaced. In the construction of feather pelerines, small mistakes could be corrected without risking the quality of the final piece.

The second thing to consider in workmanship theory is the frequency and choice of techniques and materials. Categorizing a large group of seemingly like objects is difficult. But items made by the same group of artisans will display the same techniques and employ many of the same materials, particularly if they are examples of workmanship of habit. Relationships between objects are considered to be strong when the objects share traits that are exclusively theirs, suggesting that these features were characteristic of a particular shop or craftsman (Zimmerman, p. 291).

Zimmerman guides researchers through organizing objects into groups. Within a group, similar objects may have standardized parts that are modified in simple ways, but the basic shape, construction techniques, and materials should be the same. A weak relationship between two objects, based on differences in construction and

workmanship, suggests that the objects have different makers. Recording the physical features of an object allows the researcher to analyze large groups of objects in relation to one another.

The following physical features were used to organize feather pelerines:

- Method of attaching feathers
- Distance between rows of feathers
- Size and shape of pattern pieces
- Presence of lappets or closures at the center front
- Type and color of feathers used on the exterior
- The backing material to which the feathers were stitched

First-hand examination of eight feather pelerines involved the recording of this data; those feather pelerines that could be viewed online were organized based on these categories as well.

Nearly all feather pelerines employed a catch-stitch to secure feathers to the backing material. Density of feathers was similar across all capes as well. One feather pelerine had noticeably less-dense rows of feathers on its underside, PEM#1849 (Figure 43). This was the only cape that had noticeably exposed backing material.

The clear majority of feather pelerines viewed in person and online were the same size. Only one piece was noticeably smaller, again PEM#1849, which was tentatively catalogued as a feather collar, based on its size. In addition to being the outlier in feather density and size, PEM#1849 also differed in terms of backing material. In all other feather pelerines, the exterior feathers were stitched to one layer

of cloth and the interior down bundles were stitched to a second layer. In PEM#1849 both interior and exterior feathers were stitched to a single layer of cloth.

Feather pelerines were initially separated into groups based on the presence of lappets. Examination of four feather pelerines with lappets and four without, revealed that lappets were made separately and attached after the rest of the cape had been constructed. Thread pickings remained where the bottom seams had been opened to insert the lappets. These were still visible because the seams had never been resewn. Due to this fact, feather pelerines with and without lappets were all placed in the same category.

The length and width of lappets varied one to two inches, but otherwise materials and construction techniques were similar across all lappets and consistent with the rest of the garment. Another feature which linked lappets together was how the edges of the cloth backings were so precisely cut. Whenever possible, selvages were used for the long edge of the lappets, and those edges that were not selvages were cut following a thread, so that the edge had no loose threads and was perfectly straight. In many cases, these edges were left raw and not turned over or hemmed. The lappets were decorated with a repeating pattern of inverse triangles, and the bottom edges of the lappets were curved on every feather pelerine, except for one cape in England, in the collection of the Norwich Castle Museum (Figure 11).

This Norwich pelerine also stood out because it had a wider variety of feathers on the exterior than any other pelerine, contained a layer of padding in between the exterior and the lining, and was one of two capes lined with silk cloth instead of feather down. The other feather pelerine lined in silk was found in the Te Papa

Museum in New Zealand (Figure 15). This cape, GH016753, is distinctive because it had the least amount of variety in the exterior feathers. Made from pheasant feather and peacock tail feathers, this cape was the only piece to have a second, small feather collar around the neckline and silk ribbon ties.

The extremely high level of similarity in material and construction technique suggested that, excepting the three outliers discussed above, the same group of artisans made all other feather pelerines. Written evidence describing feather capes in private collections in Bath and Portland, Maine, suggested that other capes similar to these outliers might exist (Lurie & Anderson, 1998, p 15). However, attempts to acquire photographs of those feather pelerines for further comparison were unsuccessful.

Zimmerman's workmanship theory helped to establish that one culture was responsible for producing most feather pelerines, but also suggested that at least three feather pelerines were imitations made by different artisans. This information was used to further the analysis of the data gathered in level one of Finley's methodology. Each proposed origin site had evidence for and against the claim that feather pelerines were made there. The knowledge that multiple sites could have produced capes inspired by feather pelerines helped to frame and interpret this contradictory data.

In addition to the workmanship analysis, microscopic analysis also was used to gather physical data about feather pelerines, as part of Finley's first object property, material. A downy barbule from the inside of a feather pelerine found in a storage box was examined using an Olympus BH-2 transmission light microscope (Figure 44). The barbule was most likely from PEM #E33482, as it was found in that object's wrapping (Figure 45).

Collection records frequently list swansdown feathers as the lining of feather pelerines. To evaluate this claim, samples of swansdown feathers were removed from taxidermic birds in the Rhode Island School of Design Nature lab and examined microscopically (Figure 46). The micro-features of the barbule removed from PEM #E33482 did not match any of the swan samples. The barbule had some similarities to bird feathers from mallards or geese, both members of the same order and family as swans, *Anseriformes anseridae*. However, nothing was a perfect match, and the only conclusion drawn from microscope analysis was that the feather was not from a swan or any other member of the genus *Cygnus*.

Ornithologists at the Cornell Ornithology lab and at other northeastern Universities were consulted in an attempt to identify the feather. Those who responded said that they were unable to conclusively identify the feather without access to a larger sample. At this point, attempts to identify the barbule were abandoned. Images of the feather are included in this section for purely heuristic purposes, as the conclusions drawn from microscopic analysis ultimately did not inform the conclusions of this study. A future study of feather pelerines might incorporate additional feather analysis, provided an institution was willing to supply samples.

Gregg Finley's model for material culture analysis was chosen for this study. This model builds on Fleming's method of artifact study and was selected because it assisted with extrapolating meaning from contradictory biographical data. The challenge with feather pelerines was to gather as much physical evidence as possible, given the lack of other information available. Phillip Zimmerman's workmanship

theory assisted with this, confirming the existence of one major production site of feather pelerines and establishing criteria for identifying copies of feather pelerines that could have been produced in other locations.

This approach framed the research into the origins of feather pelerines, leading to the conclusion that most feather pelerines were produced in Commercolly, India, but that capes like feather pelerines possibly also were produced in England and the United States.

APPENDIX C:

FEATHER CAPES FOUND ONLINE IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Name of Institution:	Object Name and Number:	Additional Information:
British Museum	Feather Cape AOA.5897	Small bundles of yellow and red feathers attached to an olona fiber net. Likely, this was given to a sea captain who gave the cape to his financiers. Semi-circular shape possibly reflects European Influence. http://tinyurl.com/oh5e37x
British Museum	Feather Cloak AOA.HAW.133	Collected in 1778, on Captain Cook's third voyage, from Kahekili, chief of Maui. Made with a fiber net and yellow & red feathers.
Cleveland Museum of Art.	Feather Pelerine	Traditional crescent and inverted triangle pattern with two front lappets. http://www.clevelandart.org/art/1996.14
Colonial Williamsburg	Feather Cape 1996-656	Tasha Tudor's "Barnyard Cloak". She says, "these were all the rage during Jefferson's presidency." 1801-1809. Green, blue and white feathers. http://tinyurl.com/lulcv4f
Historic New England	Pelerine Cape 1923.508	Stripes of feathers and inverted triangles on the lappets. Two layers of linen canvas, feathers attached with a catch stitch, garment lined with eiderdown. Peacock feathers included. http://tinyurl.com/mlg4jg4
Historic New England	Pelerine Cape 1923.509	Linen panels, lappets on the front. Figurative pattern "eye and palm tree" is unique among pelerines. http://tinyurl.com/k74f888
Historic New England	Pelerine Cape 1927.918	Crescent and triangle pattern with inverted triangle patterned lappets. Lined with down, linen background. http://tinyurl.com/kgenlv9
Historic New England	Pelerine Cape 1929.279	No image online. Description is copied from another object. Printed images in books suggest it has stripes and triangles on the lappets. http://tinyurl.com/mtutxae
Historic New England	Pelerine Cape 1932.102	Rows of triangles and stripes, mostly brown feathers, has attached lappets. No image online. Same descriptions as 1932.104 http://tinyurl.com/n3n4gej
Historic New England	Pelerine Cape 1932.104	Rows of triangles and stripes, mostly brown feathers, has attached lappets. No image online. Same descriptions as 1932.102. http://tinyurl.com/lxl8dbx

Newfane Historical Society	Feathered Tippet 88.158	Item has a pattern of crescents and triangles; front lappets have inverted triangles. Not available for viewing online.
Norwich Castle Museum	Feather Pelerine Cape. Number unknown.	Feathers attached to a cotton backing, with a silk lining. Vegetable fiber is used to pad the cape out. Stripe pattern of brown grey and white feathers the pattern continues down the long lappets. Listed as 1825-1835. http://tinyurl.com/ndmn6ql
Metropolitan Museum of Art	Pelerine 1981.527.1	Identified as European c. 1840. Has lappets with inverted triangles, body with triangle and crescent pattern, mimicking collar shape. Cotton ground, peacock feathers. http://tinyurl.com/kjb38jm
Metropolitan Museum of Art	Shoulder Cape (Pelerine) 2007.252	Identified as Native American – Great lakes region c. 1830-1860. Lappets with inverted triangles, triangle and crescent pattern, mimicking collar shape. Only three crescents in the design, with orange, brown, white, and black feathers. http://tinyurl.com/n3ba7uz
Museum of Fine Arts Boston	Feather Cape 20.806	Crescent and triangle pattern in shades of blue, green, white, and brown, with long front lappets. http://tinyurl.com/qhetezg
Museum of New Zealand	Feathered Cape GH17084	Identified as European. Peacock, mallard, turkey and guinea fowl feathers sewn on cotton. Peacock feather crescent and inverted triangle pattern with no front lappets.
Smithsonian	Feather Cape or Pelerine 148919.	No images. Records state that Chinese artisans made these for the local gentry in South Africa. Two types of duck feathers attached to two layers of linen cloth; both birds are native to China. http://tinyurl.com/lzm8y5r
Smithsonian	Feather Cape or Pelerine 361216.	No additional information. Part of the collection of Mrs. Sarah Goodmeade. http://tinyurl.com/lzm8y5r
Strawberry Banke	Unknown	Comes from 1820-1830s, includes peacock feathers. Images can be seen on the museum curator's blog at http://tinyurl.com/3q3sa49
Vermont Historical Society	1987.20.1	Rows of beige feathers, no color, no patterns, no front lappets. Two grosgrain ribbon ties at the neck. No images available online.
Victoria & Albert Museum	Feathered Pelerine T.28-1910	Claimed to have been made in Great Britain. Identified 1830-1840. Crescent and triangle pattern. Peacock and domestic fowl feathers stitched to cotton buckram. http://tinyurl.com/myqe3em

FIGURES

Figure 1. Feather pelerines (clockwise from top left). Feather pelerine, Cleveland Art Museum (Acc# 1996.14); Feather cape, Strawberry Banke Museum (Acc# Unknown); Feather pelerine, FIDM Museum (Acc# Unknown); Feather pelerine (with detail), Historic New England (Acc# 1927.918).

Figure 2. Down-feather lining of a feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum (Acc# E25325).

Figure 3. Feather pelerine with lappets and muff. Image courtesy of LiveAuctioneers.com.

Figure 4. 'Ahu 'ula (Hawaiian feather cloak). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (Acc# 09670/1909.007). Photograph by Hal Lum and Masayo Suzuki.

Figure 5. Junius Brutus Stearns. Washington and the Indians (1847). Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

Figure 6. Feather pelerine with peacock-feather floral pattern. Peabody Essex Museum (Acc#E37111).

Figure 7. John Hayter. Chief Boki with wife Liliha (1824). National Library of New Zealand.

1807.

Costume Parisien.

(785)

Capote de Velours, Garnie en Cygne. Fichu de Cygne.

Figure 8. Costume Parisien. Fichu de Cygne (1807).

Figure 9. Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres. Mademoiselle Caroline Rivere (1806). The Louvre.

Figure 10. Ostrich feather boa and matching muff. Image courtesy of Daguerre.

Figure 11. Feather pelerine cape. Norwich Castle Museum. Number Unknown. Image taken from Conservation Design Services (2014).

Figure 12. Purple feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum (Acc# 1849).

*Figure 13. Backside of purple feather pelerine, showing sparsely applied down.
Peabody Essex Museum (Acc# 1849).*

Figure 14. Nineteenth-century Chinese wedding headdress. Fine Art Museums of San Francisco (Acc# X1989.139).

Figure 15. Pheasant feather cape. Te Papa Museum, New Zealand (Acc# GH016753).

Figure 16. Queen Kapi'olani wearing a pheasant feather cape commissioned by King Kalakuaa. Hawai'i State Archives (Acc#PP-97-1-050).

Figure 17. Feather evening cape, donated 1912. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (Acc# 39808).

*Figure 18. Chinese rain cape (*mino*). Rhode Island School of Design Museum (Acc# 2014.21.5a).*

Figure 19. William Holman Hunt. The Birthday (1868). Private Collection.

Figure 20. Feather cape. National Museum of Natural History (Acc# 425,081).

Figure 21. Fichu de Velours, Redingote de Merinos. Costume Parisienne (1813). Similar small, high shoulder capes, called pelerines in English, had lappets extending down the front and were popular in the early nineteenth century.

Figure 22. Actress Christie MacDonald modeling fashionable taxidermic birds. Image courtesy of the Burr McIntosh Studio

*Figure 23. Adriaen Hanneman. Posthumous Portrait of Mary I Stuart (1664).
Mauritshuis Museum.*

Figure 2. 'A Bird of Prey', *Punch*, 14th May 1892.

Figure 24. 'A Bird of Prey', *Punch*, May 14, 1892. Taken from Patchett (2012). Note the feather boa around the bird-woman's neck.

Figure 25. Antoine Watteau. Pilgrimage to Cythera (1718-19). The Louvre.

Figure 26. *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry - Avril (detail) (15th Century).* Frères de Limbourg. The long white bands hanging from the center figure's black sleeves would have been called "tippets."

Figure 27. Ackerman's Repository of Arts, Literature, &c. (*General Observations on Fashion and Dress*, 1822). "Long tippet and muff of chinchilla" (p. 363).

Evening Dress.

Invented by Miss Peppercorn & introduced for the Lady's Magazine, N^o. 1825.

Figure 28. *The Lady's Magazine* (Fashions, 1825). "...a narrower pelerine cape of ermine falls over the whole..." (p.123).

MORNING VISITING DRESS.

WALKING DRESS.

FRENCH COSTUME FOR JANUARY, 1829.

Figure 29. *The Ladies' Museum (The Mirror of Fashion, 1829)*. "A long pelerine tippet is worn with this" (p. 58).

Figure 30. *The Ladies' Museum (The Mirror of Fashion, 1829)*. "A boa-tippet of Chinchilla is worn round the throat, the ends descending nearly to the feet" (p. 356).

Figure 31. *La Belle Assemblée*: or, Bell's court and fashionable magazine (Bell, *Records of the Beau Monde*, 1831). "A boa tippet is indispensable; those of swan's-down are at present most in favour" (p. 167).

Figure 32. Court Magazine and la Belle Assemblée (Carcon, 1832). “A pink satin dress... with sable boa” (p. 316).

Figure 33. The Ladies' Penny Gazette; Or, Mirror of Fashion (Fashions for December, 1832). "The cape, or tippet (for it is in the form of one) is quite round, being drawn down before and hind to the shape of the bust" (p. 49)

Figure 34. *Ladies' Pocket Magazine* (*English Fashions*, 1835). "A sable fur tippet" (p. 27).

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 35. *Journal des Dames et de Modes* (Modes, 1836). “Deja tous les mantelets, manteaux habilles, pelerines de soirees son garnis de cigne: c'est ordinairement avec la grebe” (p. 505).

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 36. *Journal des Dames et de Modes* (trans. in *Paris Intelligence – The Court, News and Fashion*, 1837). “The Camaillette is a round pelerine, with a hood attached to it; the pelerine of satin, the lining of fur” (p. 133).

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 37. *Journal des Dames et de Modes* (trans. in *Paris Intelligence – The Court, News and Fashion*, 1837). Shoulder cape top-center described as, “Pelerine for theatres of green satin, wadded and trimmed with swansdown” (p. 362).

Figure 38. *Ladies' Pocket Magazine (Foreign Fashions and Novelties, 1838)*. "Low corsage decorated with a pelerine fichu of gold blond lace" (p. 143).

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 39. *Journal des Dames et de Modes* (Modes, 1838). “Robe de reps garnie de Cygne avec boutons d’or” (p. 42).

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 40. *Journal des Dames et de Modes* (Modes, 1838). The pelerine is not described in the text, but the image shows the continued popularity of swansdown-lining garments.

FASHIONS FOR JANUARY.

*Figure 41. The New Monthly Belle Assemblée (Fashions for January, 1840).
 “Pelerine of moderate size, descending in front considerably below the waist in
 rounded ends” (p. 56)*

Figure 42. The New Monthly Belle Assemblée (The Toilet. Costume for September, 1852). Though two figures in the plate wear shawls the accompanying text makes no mention of their shoulder coverings. This indicates major changes in the style and popularity of small capes.

*Figure 43. Feather collar or cape (underside). Peabody Essex Museum (Acc# 1849).
Note the distance between rows of down feathers.*

Figure 44. Feather barbule, 400x magnification. Removed from PEM #E33482. Peabody Essex Museum. Note the pointed, prong-like nodes along each barbule.

Figure 45. Feather pelerine. Peabody Essex Museum (Acc# PEM# E33482, in the center front of the image).

*Figure 46. Swansdown feather barbules, 400x magnification. Removed from *Cygnus olor* (mute swan). RISD Nature Lab. Note the blunt heart-shaped nodes along each barbule.*

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