

# TEXTILE TRAIL

Summer 2020 Volume 51

*Weaving the Textile Story*

Official Newsletter of the  
Textile Heritage Museum

**Est. 2004**

Glencoe  
Alamance County  
North Carolina  
*Edited by DeLayne Jolly*

**In this issue:**

- *Museum Renovations*
- *New Gift Shop Merchandise*
- *Remembering Dixie Belle*
- *Artifact Spotlight*
- *Meet Our Staff*
- *Passing of Friends*
- *Thank you, Kathy Barry*
- *From the Mill Office*



## Changes For Changing Times

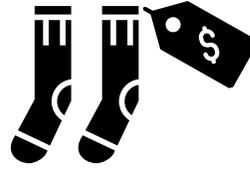


Since March 17, 2020, the Textile Heritage Museum, among thousands of other museums and historic sites, has had to close its operations due to the CoVid-19 pandemic that has taken the world by force. Although we miss our visitors, we have been able to use this time to enhance the interpretation of the museum. We are excited for our guests, long-time and new, to visit the museum and enjoy the added stories and new exhibits of the history of the Southern textile industry. We have also taken steps to ensure that when we are allowed to open our visitors can enjoy the history we have on exhibit as safely and comfortably as possible.

In addition to widening our aisles for guests to have more personal space, we have marked lines six feet apart on the floor of our building to help visitors follow social distancing guidelines. Staff and volunteers will be wearing masks while interacting with visitors, and hand sanitizer is available at the museum. When we begin giving tours again, we will speak to visitors on the porch before welcoming them into the museum building to minimize close indoor contact. We look forward to once again welcoming visitors!



# Updates from THE GIFT SHOP



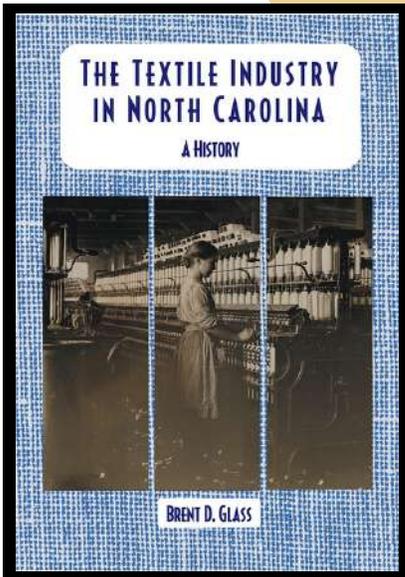
One of the spaces we have had the opportunity to redesign in the recent months is our gift shop! The gift shop is a wonderful place to pick up a souvenir or find a book to learn more about the history of the textile industry. All gift shop proceeds help to support the museum.

## New Merchandise!

We are excited to announce a new item in our gift shop! We are now selling hand milled Shea butter soaps in lemon verbena and lavender chamomile scents, locally made by Greenwich Bay Soaps. The labels are decorated with original Glencoe Mills art; some depict the art showing Glencoe Mills as it originally stood in 1882, and others replicate the colorful label that once decorated the fabric made at Glencoe, Holt's Glencoe Plaids. Our gift shop also boasts books on the textile industry, T-shirts, and mugs with the Textile Heritage Museum logo.



## Book Review



Brent D. Glass' 1992 book *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* traces the history of textile production in North Carolina from pre-colonial days up until the time of the book's publication. Glass, who was director of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History from 2002-2011, discusses the North Carolina textile economy, the culture of mill villages, and the role of evolving textile technologies. Using primary sources to explain the progression of Southern textiles, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina* gives its reader a glimpse into how the textile industry looked to past generations witnessing the South industrialize around them. At only 106 pages and illustrated with rich original photographs, the book is an easy read that comprehensively describes how textiles in North Carolina began and changed with the times. *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* is available in our gift shop!

# Remembering Dixie Belle

1946-2020

Dixie Belle Textiles, Inc. was established in Greensboro, North Carolina, by David H. Cashwell in 1946. In its first years, the company manufactured women's garments such as camisoles, slips, panties, and hospital gowns.



*The interior of Dixie Belle's manufacturing center*

In 1948, V. F. Westmoreland, Sr. joined the company and eventually purchased the firm with his son, V. F. Westmoreland, Jr. The Westmoreland family moved the operations to Gibsonville and changed its name to Dixie Belle Lingerie. The company was the first lingerie manufacturer in the United States to produce plus-sized panties. Their mission statement: "To manufacture and produce the best of quality and fit our customers at a fair and reasonable price."

As Dixie Belle Lingerie wraps up decades of successful production and prepares to close its doors, we thank them for their kind donations of unique artifacts and celebrate them for their role in the textile history of North Carolina.



*The American flag on display at the Dixie Belle manufacturing center*

*A look at the label-making process for Dixie Belle products*



*Label maker now on display at the Textile Heritage Museum*



*Two Dixie Belle catalogs from 1965 and 1969.*

*Among the new additions to the Textile Heritage Museum Archives*



*Rolls of fabric at Dixie Belle manufacturing*



*A Singer sewing machine used for decades at Dixie Belle, now on display at the Textile Heritage Museum*

# Artifact Spotlight



**Edwardian Tea Dress**  
1901-1904

*Written by*  
**Jordan Lewis**

We have recently put one of our most stunning examples of an antique garment, donated to the museum by Bellamy Mansion Museum in Wilmington, back into the archives. After years on display, we think that this exquisite Edwardian gown deserves a break. And since the dress will not be on display for the near future, we want to take a moment to talk about the history of this beautiful artifact.

Constructed as separate skirt and bodice pieces, this ensemble is a perfect example of a tea gown from the first decade of the 20th century. Tea gowns were a loose, informal style of dress often worn in the afternoon, when ladies took tea before dinner. Light colors were favored for the spring and summer, and darker colors for the colder months. Although they were only meant to be worn in the company of close friends, tea gowns were very costly, and were meant to convey the wealth and fashion sense of the wearer. Several factors date this specific gown's construction to between 1901 and 1904, including the bishop-shaped sleeves, the trumpet shape of the skirt, its full bodice front, large lace cuffs and high collar, pintuck details, and dropped-shoulder effect.



The waistband of this gown's bodice is printed with a label reading "Helfrich" and "Columbia, S.C." This identifies the dress as the work of Margaretta Helfrich, a prominent dressmaker who operated her own business from 1895 well into the 1920's. Although little information can be found on Margaretta's personal history, we do know the story of her business. Margaretta moved from Baltimore to South Carolina with her family in 1894 and began by working as the head of the dressmaking department for Wooten & McWhirter in Newberry, S.C. By 1895, she had begun working as an independent dressmaker out of her family's Columbia home, and by 1899 she employed four other young female seamstresses. By 1917, Mrs. Margaretta Helfrich Parks was the proprietress of her own clothing shop. Helfrich's remained open until at least 1927.

Although this antique gown retains much of its extravagance, beauty, and careful craftsmanship, its silk lining has badly shattered over the last century, allowing us to examine how it was constructed but also necessitating careful treatment to avoid further damage. The gown has been packed into a new archival box and padded with acid-free paper, where it can be preserved until it is displayed again. If readers have further questions on its construction or are simply interested in this piece of fashion history, feel free to reach out to the museum to learn more.



**Fashion plate from 1904**  
depicting a tea dress  
(Courtesy of The MET)

## Meet Our Staff: *Jordan Lewis*

Jordan Lewis is a rising senior at Elon University majoring in History and Literature. She is from Waxhaw, NC, and joined the Textile Heritage Museum team in October 2019. Jordan loves history and museum work of all kinds, but is especially passionate about working-class, fashion, and living history. She is incredibly grateful for the opportunities working at the museum has given her to be more involved in local history. In her free time, she enjoys sewing and writing.



## *Passing of Friends*



### **Bob McKean**



Bob McKean passed away on Saturday, May 9th, 2020, after a long battle with cancer. He was a devoted husband, father, and veteran of the United States Navy. Bob spent more than 20 years as a living historian teaching others the skills and crafts of early America. His expertise in restoring and operating vintage looms as well as woodworking craftsmanship made him an unforgettable educator. We will greatly miss seeing him at the Alamance Parks department and local historic sites including Bennett Place, Alamance Battleground, and of course the Textile Heritage Museum.

### **Miriam Pace**



Our dear friend, Miriam Pace, was an inspiration to everyone who had the opportunity to work with her. Her brilliant mind and literary expertise guided the many hours she spent volunteering in the archives of the Textile Heritage Museum, as well as the research departments of Elon University and May Memorial Library. In addition to writing articles for the museum's newsletter, Miriam had recently coauthored two books: *Bringing Textile History to Life in Alamance County, North Carolina* and a children's book titled *Lucy's Story, Living in a Mill Village in the Early 1900s*. She passed away on April 17, 2020, leaving a wonderful legacy that will live on in the museum's archives as well as in our hearts and minds.

## A Thank You to My Co-Founder, Kathy Barry

*Written by Jerrie Nall*

As she prepares to retire, I'd like to tell you about my partner in creating the Textile Heritage Museum. Kathy Barry had lived in Burlington for 14 years and had absorbed the importance and heritage of textile manufacture here in Alamance County, North Carolina and the South in general. She also knew about the Glencoe Cotton Mill and its village because she had driven through the village many times to buy sewing supplies at the store that used to occupy the old brick school at the top of Glencoe Street.

On a family vacation back to Boston, Kathy visited the Lowell National Historical Park in Lowell, Massachusetts, operated by the U.S. National Park Service. What she saw there was inspiring; an 1835 power loom weaving demonstration and lots of exhibits and machinery, but at the end of the exhibit hall, she also saw there was a bare room- as if textile manufacturing had ceased to be. There was no mention that the industry had "moved south." That got her interested to help start a textile museum at Glencoe. She called the Preservation North Carolina representative at Glencoe but was told that they were not in the museum business. She was referred to me right away, and in 2001 we began what has been an incredible and wonderful adventure together.

We traveled to various museums in North Carolina to find out if our idea of starting a textile museum at Glencoe was a sound venture; Charlotte, Raleigh, NCSU Textile College, Wilmington, Spencer Shops. Kathy made appointments with the museum directors and staff members, and our husbands often traveled with us on the trips. We received positive feedback from everyone so enthusiastically while we gathered information on possibilities and pitfalls to avoid. Through our visit to NCSU, Dr. Gary Mock became a key advisor who led us to many other contacts as the museum moved toward having a physical facility at Glencoe which would eventually become the Textile Heritage Museum. We also made many connections with local citizens who had worked in the mills, owned mills, or desired to support our endeavor.

Kathy played a significant role, giving tours, framing pictures, writing grants, doing research, and publishing newsletters. You may not have seen her in our early videos as speaker or key figure, but rest assured, she was there, behind the scenes. She was secretary and treasurer from day one, which was a tremendous job. She has written countless letters, emails, and other correspondence. The talks and exhibits where she shared her knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm in those early days led to the eventual success that has followed.



*Jerrie Nall (left) and Kathy Barry (right)*



*Kathy speaking to students from Korea in 2012*

**Continued on page 7** ➔

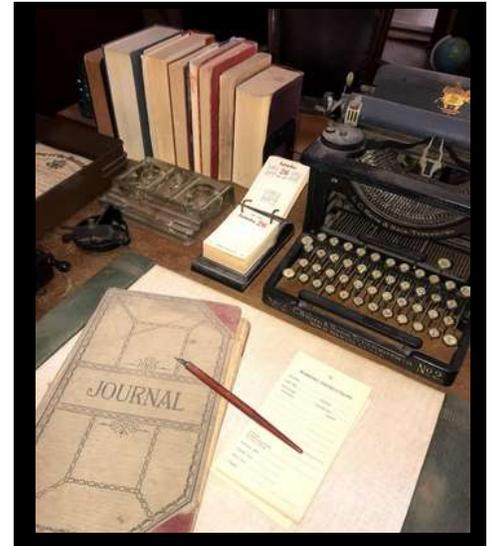
➤ **Continued from page 6 "A Thank You to My Co-Founder"**

Over the years, Kathy has been right in the middle of many of the restoration projects which have been done to the museum building. I remember seeing her down on the floor pulling up old tile, carpet, and a million nails to find a perfectly good hardwood floor under the mess. And what about the many hours she spent doing inventory for key collections of artifacts which are now in the museum? Not only did she do the work physically, but she has always been a wonderful ambassador who has inspired countless people to become supporters of the mission of the museum.

Kathy has always been an important part of the reason why Alamance County is now blessed to have such a unique facility dedicated to the textile industry. Where can one go locally, state-wide or even nationally to find a historic mill village so significant? An immense history could have been lost without Kathy's many hours of devotion. I owe her a deep debt of gratitude far beyond any words I may write. More importantly, people will enjoy her many contributions to this part of our history, which must be shared with all those who visit historic Glencoe in the years to come.



As you have read and seen in this newsletter, much has changed within the 6,000 square foot museum exhibition galleries, and we are eagerly awaiting the time when we can share your heritage with you. It has certainly been and continues to be an educational journey for our staff as we "pass the torch" to a new generation of interested history enthusiasts and professionals. We continue to learn a tremendous amount in this vast ocean of textile history. From cotton to thread, from hosiery to carpet, from mill worker to mill president, and from hand sewn to machine processed, it is indeed a fascinating study of the industrialization of America.



We have also been planning for a brighter and broader future with more educational programs for our students and teachers, special events for our community, and strategic plans of a larger more in-depth museum for the long-term future. So, we are reaching for high goals and achievement to continue to preserve a heritage our forefathers worked so hard to establish, which has built a strong America over more than two and half centuries.

Finally, as the Glencoe Mill Store motto was during its 74 years of operation: "Many Thanks" for your continued support. We will see you soon!

*John Guss,*

**Historic Properties Superintendent**

## Our Mission

To collect, preserve, and interpret the history of the Southern textile industry and the cultural heritage of the Southern mill village.

## Hours of Operation

**Tuesday-Saturday**

**9 am - 5 pm\***

*Please call ahead to arrange tours for groups*

*\*Hours currently altered due to national health and safety closures, please call for more information.*

## Textile Heritage Museum, Inc.

Staff, Board of Directors, and Support

<i>Director</i>	Jerrie Nall
Alamance Parks Staff	
<i>Historic Properties Superintendent</i>	John Guss
<i>Historic Interpreters</i>	DeLayne Jolly
	Jordan Lewis

### Board of Directors

Gary Harris	Dr. Samuel Powell, President
Rusty Holt	Jason Copland, Vice President
Ann Honeycutt	Harry Brown
Tom Lindley	Lynn Cowan
Mark Payne	Chris Powell
	Charles Stedman, Museum Attorney

<i>Director of Alamance Parks</i>	Brian Baker
<i>Audio Visual Consultant</i>	Chris Powell
<i>Volunteer Archivist</i>	Sue Watson
<i>Textile Consultant</i>	Dr. Gary Mock
<i>Photography</i>	Mary & Jennifer Archer
<i>Event Photography</i>	Michael Jordan

## Contact Us



### Website

textileheritagemuseum.org



### Facebook

Textile Heritage Museum



### Instagram

@textileheritage1880



### Phone

(336) 270-6374



### Email

textileheritagemuseum@gmail.com

## Volunteers Needed!

**We need your support!** Become a part of helping to preserve and interpret America's textile heritage.

*We are a 501 (C-3) non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.*

*Please mail all donations to: Textile Heritage Museum, Inc. 2406 Glencoe St, Burlington, NC 27217*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ New  Renew  Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 Individual Membership     \$100 Textile Designer     \$500 Textile Preservationist

\$50 Family Membership     \$250 Textile Superintendent     \$1,000 Textile Benefactor

I would like to make a donation of \_\_\_\_\_ in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a donation of \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

I work for a company which will provide a matching gift and have enclosed the signed form

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_