

DRESS LIKE A PLANTER

by Sylvia Jacquard

Randall House Museum curator and seamstress-tailor Bonnie Elliott is making it easier for those wanting to dress correctly for the Planter anniversary events by holding workshops this summer at Randall House in Wolfville called “Dress Like a Planter”. Elliott, who has a Masters degree in the history of dress, has been involved in costume reproduction in Nova Scotia for many years.

The 2 hour sessions will be held every Thursday until the Museum closes on September 15th. If the interest is there, workshops may be held throughout the winter as well (contact Elliot at 542-9775 at Randall House or at home 582-7882 after Sept. 15). Participants learn about the types of fabrics and techniques used at that time and receive Elliott’s expert assistance

as they construct the various pieces of a Planter outfit. For women this would entail a handkerchief, pockets, a cap, a shift, and a gown and for men it would be a shirt, breeches, vest and coat.



Linen was the main fabric used in shifts, shirts, caps, pockets and handkerchiefs with cotton, wool or silk being used for gowns, vests and breeches and coats. Clothing was attached by buttons, tapes or pins. Women’s clothing being fitted at the arms but pinned or tied in front and at the waist could be made to fit during all stages of pregnancy.

Pictured above, Meadow Pinch gets some sewing assistance from Randall House Museum curator Bonnie Elliott as her mother Cindy Wood stitches on part of her Planter outfit. Cindy Wood and her daughter are making costumes for their participation in an upcoming Whispers From the Graveyard event. Randall House Museum curator Bonnie Elliott (inset) shows the members of the Dress Like a Planter class one of the Museum’s artifacts, a tape loom which was used to make woven tapes (used for ties, apron strings and garters).