

*“Done Without Spectacles...”<sup>1</sup>*  
**Three Generations of a Quaker Family and Their Textiles**

*Anne G. Adams*

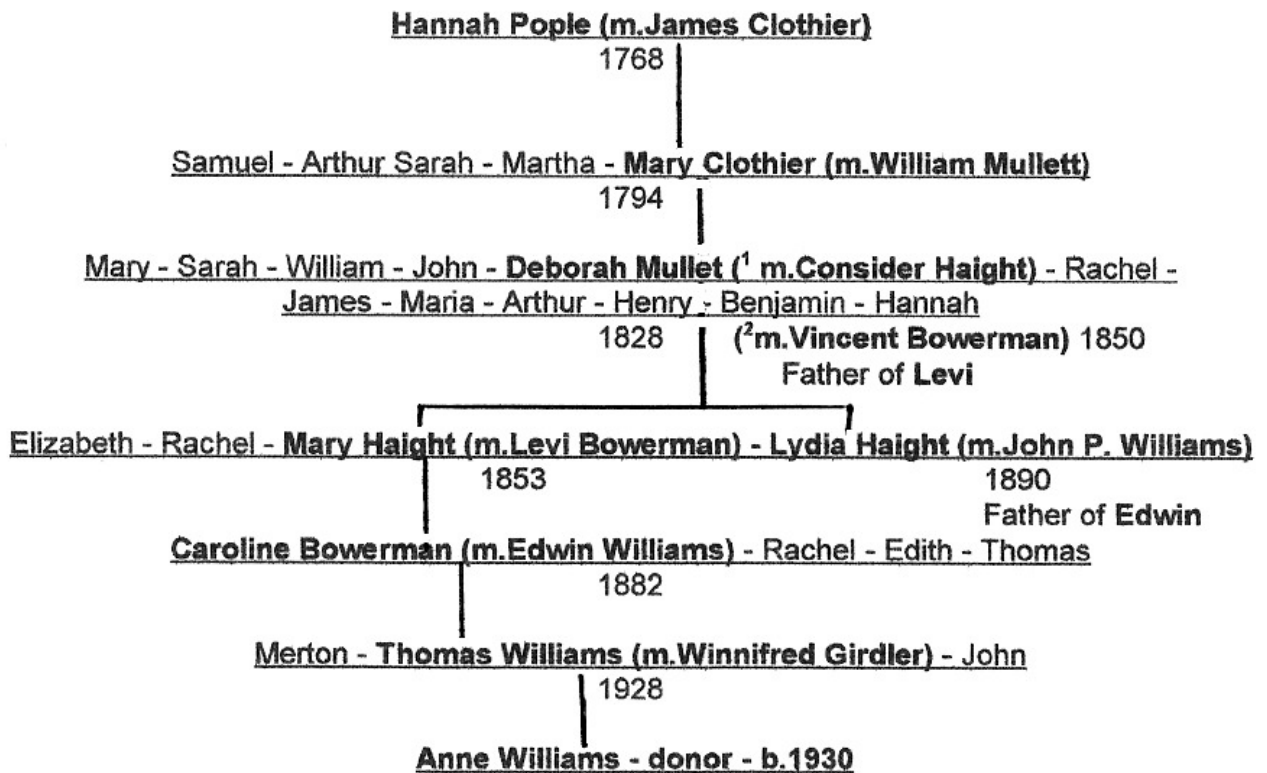
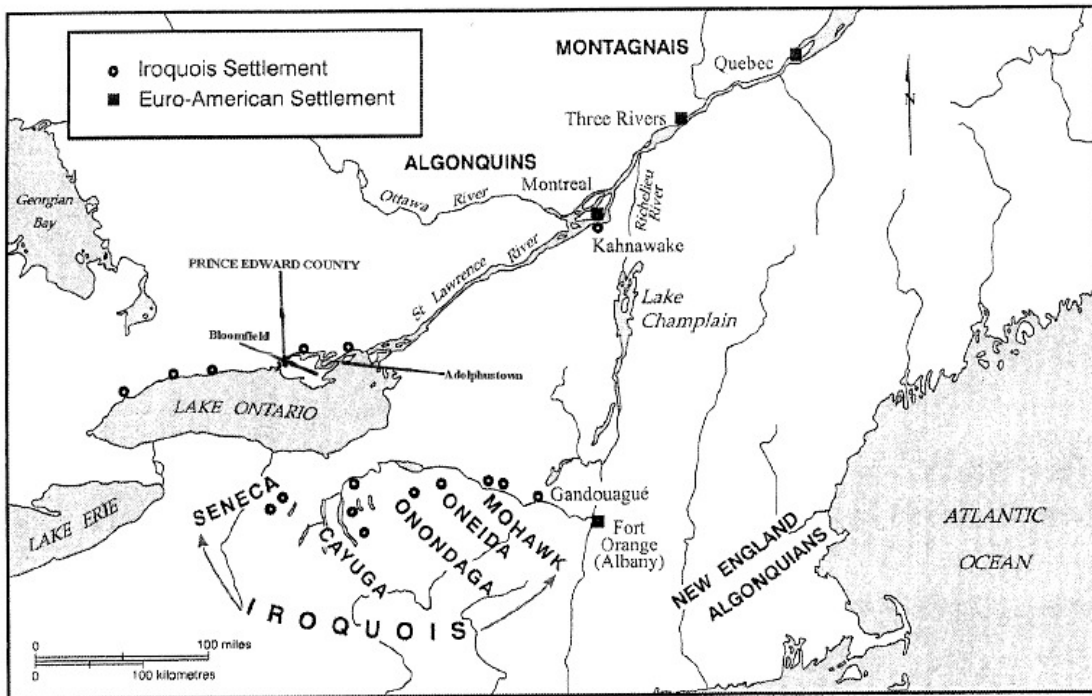
Historical events come and go. Historic artifacts endure and they have their own stories to tell. This study uses textiles to enhance the written story of one Quaker family over three generations. It begins as the story of the Mullett family. With marriage it also becomes the story of Haight, Bowermans, and Williams. It begins as the story of a British Quaker family and then becomes the story of British and American Quakers with typical equanimity, assimilating themselves into Canadian society as Canada itself moves from colony to nation. It is to Anne Williams, the sixth generation, that we owe our gratitude. In 2001 she made an extensive gift of papers, letters, diaries, account books, documents, textiles, and domestic paraphernalia to the Archives of Prince Edward County and the Prince Edward County Museum, in Picton, Ontario.

The Mullett family's emigration from Britain to Upper Canada in 1821 was an economic solution to the decline of the tannery business in south west England after the war of 1812. William Mullett (1768-1865) and Mary Clothier (1774-1845) were both children of well-established Quaker families in the Bristol area. As children they had each attended the very fine Quaker School at Ackworth, York in northern England. Each had come away with well developed skills for getting along in the world. Mary was accomplished as a spinner, weaver, dyer, tailor, and hat maker when she married William in 1795. William was able at tanning, boot making, and chandlery. As each of their eleven children grew up in the house in Frampton, Som-

erset he or she received some education at home. For six there followed a two year spell at the newer Quaker school at Sidcot. Sidcot had been established in the style of Ackworth for Quaker children in the south of England. There they acquired skills similar to those of their parents.

Quakers are bound together by their faith, not their nation. When the time came for the Mulletts to come to Upper Canada they received financial help from their Quaker Meeting and from Mary's brother Arthur. Their destination was a Quaker settlement at Adolphustown, Upper Canada, already well established by Dutchess County Quakers from Revolutionary America. The children of these families had also benefitted from an excellent Quaker education at the Nine Partners' School in Dutchess County, another school patterned after the Ackworth School in England. They brought with them agrarian skills suited to North American soil and climate, some money, and continuing support from those in their families who chose to stay in the new America. It is no wonder that parents and children adapted quickly and put all their skills to good use in Adolphustown. Nor is it any wonder that the arrival of some six or eight British Quaker families in 1821 occasioned few difficulties. It introduced new blood. There was plenty of land available to purchase, and of course "many hands make light work".

To follow the textile trail of the Mullett family we must first consider the paper trail. For that we must acknowledge not only the donor, Anne Williams, but also the dedication



of her uncle Merton Yarwood Williams (1883-1874). It was Merton who gathered the family papers together and subsequently wrote several books, self-published, about his family.

## **The People**

This paper focusses on Deborah Mullett, the sixth child of William and Mary Mullett. Deborah was sixteen when she arrived in Canada. Born in 1804, she lived to 1895 and so her life virtually spanned the whole of the nineteenth century, a time when, in Upper Canada, as in the whole Western world, textile manufacture underwent radical changes. In 1828 Deborah married Consider Merritt Haight an Adolphustown Quaker whose family had immigrated to Upper Canada after the American Revolution. Together they had five children, two of whom, Mary born 1836 and Lydia born 1838, are the focus of the next generation in this study. After the sudden death of Consider in 1838, Deborah leased their farm and began a small school for girls and boys in the Adolphustown community. This meant that Deborah's children received their early education at the hands of their mother, but in a school setting.

Less than ten miles away in Bloomfield, Prince Edward County, lay another Quaker settlement. This one was settled by Quakers chiefly from New York City and Long Island. Despite the fact that the trip required a ferry, there was much coming and going, social and practical, between the two settlements and, of course they went together to the Quaker Yearly Meeting in New York. In 1850 Deborah Mullett Haight married Vincent Bowerman and settled on Vincent's farm in Bloomfield. This brought together Vincent's son Levi and Deborah's daughters Lydia and

Mary – all of them Quakers. Lydia and Mary had been well educated by their mother in her little school near Adolphustown. Levi was a pupil at the West Lake School in Bloomfield.

In 1850 the West Lake Boarding School (1841-1869) was a thriving institution. This school was founded and funded by Joseph Gurney a visiting preacher, brother of Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker mother of prison reform in England. Joseph was very familiar with the Ackworth School in Yorkshire and set up the West Lake School on the same pattern; but there was a difference. West Lake School was the first co-educational school in the area and the practical egalitarian Quakers, hoping for financial success, opened their doors to non-Quakers as well as Quakers. They also gave precedence to boarding pupils. This meant that the village children, even Quaker ones could only attend if a boarding student place was not taken. It is evident that this policy opened the door to assimilation of the Quakers into the surrounding Methodist community. Up to that time Quaker daily life made only a vague bow to the social mores of their Methodist neighbours. The ornamental aspects of Victorian Upper Canadian life had had little influence on the Quakers. The women continued to spin, dye, weave, and tailor in the Quaker way, and they were confident of their ability to take their place in an egalitarian domestic world. Their children had followed suit.

Levi Bowerman felt fortunate to be a day pupil at the West Lake School. His best friend there was John Williams, the son of a Methodist farmer prominent in the Bloomfield area. While there, Levi and John formed a friendship that proved to be life long.

As time went on Levi Bowerman married his stepsister Mary Haight, daughter of Deborah and Consider. Levi and Mary also farmed

in Bloomfield. They had four children, two of whom, Thomas and Edith died young. Rachel and Caroline survived. Rachel married Caleb Stanley Williams, a Methodist, in 1886. Caroline, whose textiles play a vital role in this study, was born in 1855, and married Edwin Allison Williams in 1882. Both Stanley and Edwin were the sons of John Williams, Levi's best friend from his school days.

Their fathers had gone to the Quaker school, but Caroline the Quaker and Edwin, the Methodist, had gone to the Common or public school in Bloomfield. By the time Caroline was ready for a more advanced schooling, the West Lake School had closed due to declining enrollment. She was registered to go to the new Quaker school one hundred and thirty miles away in Pickering, Ontario.

“Carrie starts tomorrow to Pickering to school...”but the next day we read in Vincent Bowerman's day book “...she did not go to school. She back out.” Carrie's (Caroline) wish to be at home was respected and she continued school at the public school in Picton. When she married Edwin Williams they were married by the Methodist preacher with the blessing of both families.

It should be noted here that the Bloomfield Quakers did not at any time disown those who married outside their faith. It is also helpful to remember that the American Quakers and the Methodist United Empire Loyalists had lived side by side in New York State for several years. There was little enmity as they shared farming practices and attitudes set long ago in America. Further, at this time in Bloomfield, a village of about five hundred, there were three Quaker Meeting Houses within a short walk of one another; Hicksite, Conservative and Progressive. Any enmity Quakers felt was among themselves and was

of concern to the men rather than the women and children, who continued to run their lives with equanimity.

Caroline continued in the Quaker way in her attitudes and the raising of her children. As Carrie Williams she becomes the third generation of this study because she also continued the tradition of female concern with textile production, both plain and fancy, and it is in her work that we see the final shift of the Bloomfield Quakers to the Methodist Victorian society around them.

Carrie and Edwin had three children. They left the Bloomfield area in 1884 to farm in another township in Prince Edward County, less than ten miles away. For reasons not disclosed they left their first born son, Merton Yarwood Williams (1883-1974), with great grandmother Deborah Mullett Haight Bowerman and her unmarried daughter, great aunt Lydia, sister to Carrie's mother Mary. So it was that the Bowerman household was now made up of four generations. This is of great importance in this textile study because it was this Merton Williams who became the keeper of family history in the Quaker way. Merton continued to be part of this household until he became an adult. Early in 1889 Edwin was killed in a tragic accident and Carrie returned to the Bloomfield family with her other children -- Thomas (born 1884) and John (born 1886) each named for an early Canadian ancestor, one Quaker and one Methodist.

In 1890 Lydia Haight, Deborah's daughter was married to John Platt Williams II, by now the widower father of Edwin Williams and special friend to Levi Bowerman, husband of Lydia's sister Mary. The Mullett, Haight, Bowerman Williams family unit was now closer than ever. Carrie still continued in the Quaker way.

No family stories were wasted on young

Merton, and he grew up with a healthy Quaker-minded respect for the tales of his early Canadian ancestors. He knew of the arrival of William and Mary Mullett his great great grandparents in 1821; he knew of the Adolphustown settlement; he knew of Deborah's move to Bloomfield to become the wife of Vincent Bowerman in 1850; he also had read the diary of his paternal great grandfather Consider Haight, who recorded a walking trip to the Nine Partner's School in New York State in 1824. In addition, he knew a special event had taken place in 1860 when English relatives who had settled in Baltimore, Maryland made a trip to Bloomfield to visit Deborah's father William then a very old man. This family made a gift to Deborah of many family silhouettes, photographs and other papers. One of the party had kept a journal of the trip and sent it to Deborah, and of course the curious Merton had read it also.

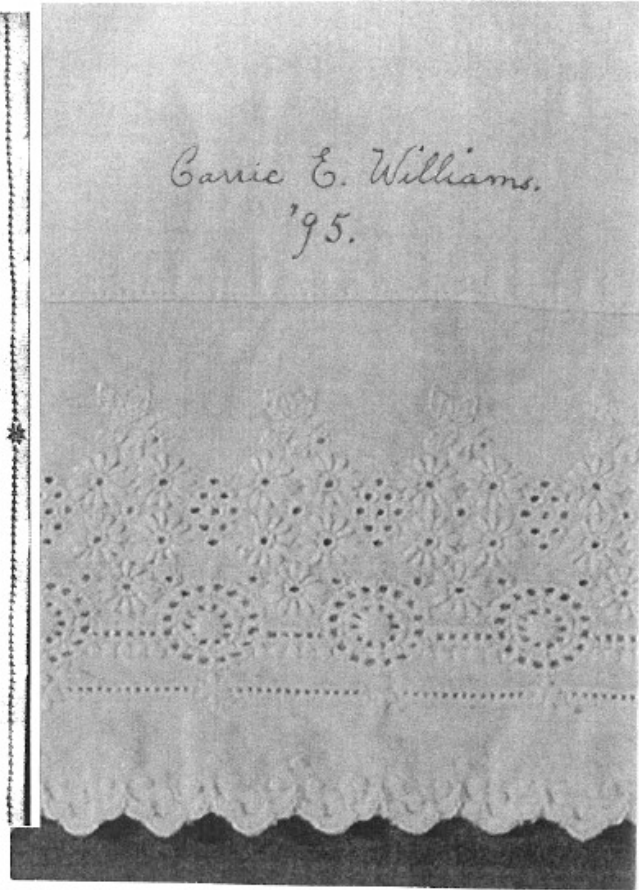
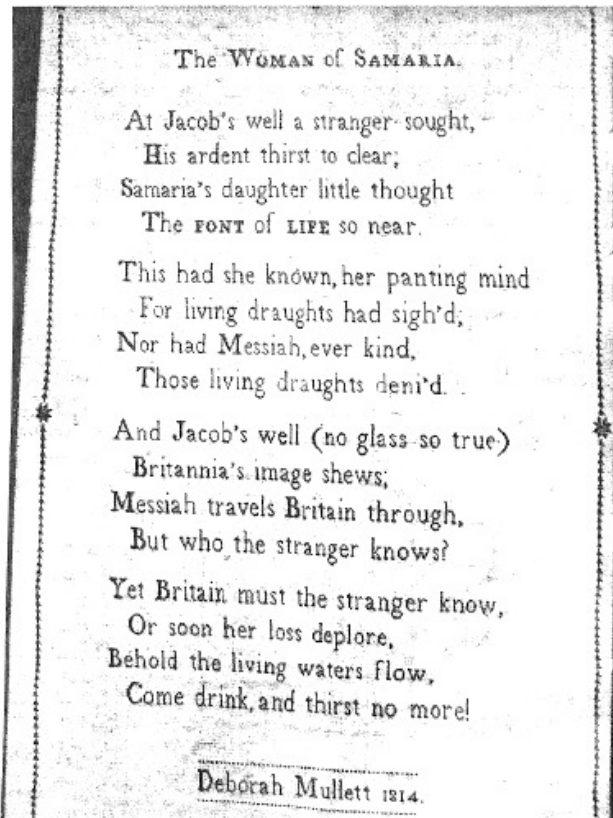
In 1892 when Merton Williams was eleven years old another significant event took place. Great grandmother Deborah's first cousin Columbus Clothier came from England to Canada with his niece and nephew. He came expressly to see Deborah and her extended family. Of all the Mullett family in Canada, it had been Deborah who had kept in closest touch through the letters she had written first to the English grandmother, Hannah Clothier, that she and Columbus had shared, and later to Columbus and his father Arthur.<sup>2</sup> Family records tell us that the bond Columbus felt for the Canadian cousins was because Columbus was born on the very day the Mullett-Clothier family left Bristol. In fact this was the reason he was named Columbus.

Deborah Mullett Haight Bowerman died in 1892 just two months after Columbus' visit. At this point the trans-Atlantic connection might have been lost. Instead it took on a

new life. John Williams, Lydia's husband, and Columbus Clothier were of an age and struck up a close friendship. Both being farmers they exchanged ideas and seeds for many years to come. So it was that the Quaker Mullett/Clothier family relationship was now sustained by the Methodist Williams family.

In 1894 another pivotal event took place. Carrie Williams, still very much of the Quaker faith, took a position as housemother at the Westtown School in Westtown, Pennsylvania. She took her three boys Thomas, John and Merton with her and they became students at yet another Quaker school fashioned after the Ackworth School. This position lasted only one year but it had a great effect, particularly on Carrie. The Westtown Quakers were considerably more enlightened, especially in matters of dress. The Bloomfield and Adolphustown Quakers were still adhering to the plainness of early nineteenth century Quakers. Carrie's textile production after 1894 shows us how she responded to new influences. Upon their return to Canada in 1895 the boys went to the high school in the County town of Picton, and each went on to live a somewhat more cosmopolitan life. Only John stayed on to farm in Bloomfield.

Caroline Bowerman Williams' last home in the 1920's was with her son Thomas in Calgary, Alberta. With her had come a trunk full of personal effects. Long after her death the trunk was to become a curiosity to Anne Williams, born 1930, the daughter of Thomas, granddaughter of Carrie, great granddaughter of Mary, great grandniece of Lydia and great great granddaughter of Deborah Mullett with whom our textile study begins. From each of these women we have not only written records, but we now have their textiles.



### The Textiles

For some forty years there has been in the Public Library in Picton a slim, red-bound self-published book. It contains letters written by the children of William and Mary Mullett to their grandmother Hannah Clothier in Street, Somerset, England. The letters are a textile historian's dream:

1<sup>st</sup> mo.17,1823

Dear Grandmother

I have sent thee a ball of thread of our own manufacture that I thought would do for knitting...

Thy ever affectionate granddaughter

Rachel Mullett

4<sup>th</sup> mo.6, 1823

My dear grandmother,

...oh how I wish we had thee here! ... Aunt Martha queries if I can spin sufficiently to be able to spin thee some caps. No, my dear Grandmother I cannot. I can spin fine enough for sheets, etc. of which I shall send thee a sample which will do for thee to sew coarse work with... The enclosed skin please present my cousin M.G. with my dear love – also a small piece of my wedding gown.

thy affectionate granddaughter

Mary Mullett Clendenan

1<sup>st</sup> mo.16, 1825

My dear grandmother

... I have learned to make shoes since we have been here and I have made all they [sic] shoes since I have been able to... when cousin Edward returns as he talks of I expect there will be a great many things sent home by him. He has sold one of the coats he

brought out with him for 200 acres of land...  
I shall conclude with dear love to all relations  
and partake a large share thyself.

From thy affectionate Grandson  
James Clothier Mullett”

1<sup>st</sup> mo.21, 1825

My Dear Grandmother,

... We make all our own things most [sic]  
– soap, candles, candlewicks, ropes, thread,  
bed linen, blankets and William and James’  
shirts for them to work in – also we have a  
cloth gown apiece of our own spinning, and  
they are very comfortable for this cold coun-  
try – people are very often froze here... Oh  
what a favour I should think it if I could live  
within the compass of such a nice meeting  
house as Bristol. No person can tell but those  
that are deprived of it... Mother desires her  
love to thee, and wishes me to ask thee to  
send her out a piece of yard wide Irish cloth  
for her own wear... and my dear grandmother  
when thou hast a few shillings to spare wilt  
thou buy me some cloth to make a large cloak  
on purpose to wear in the sledge, the coarser  
and thicker the better. I do not know how I  
can pay thee unless ‘tis by promising to write  
to thee, and spin thee a piece of sheets or  
anything else that thou would like in our way.  
We die [sic] our own cloth and stockings...  
Mother have sent thee a hand-towel of our  
own spinning... We often tell mother she  
never had so many servants before... We are  
becoming tailoresses since being in Canada.  
We make our own starch, and I have learned  
the way to make butter and cheese, also straw  
hats. I have made seven this summer... We  
have not begun our winter’s work yet; spin-  
ning flax so that we shall be very late in the  
spring with it. We shall have a great deal of  
wool to spin next summer as Mother intends  
having William Faulkner on shares. He keeps

about one hundred and fifty sheep so you may  
think we shall not have much time for play...  
I finished off about nine pound last spring. I  
wish we had got a bit of it to send thee, but if  
Edward should return we will send thee a  
large piece. We have a great many grasshop-  
pers here, so many that if we have any cloth-  
ing out of doors they will eat it right up. They  
ate up the tail of Father’s coat most last sum-  
mer, that was happened to be left out. We  
cannot afford for they to eat up our cloth as  
clothing of every description is very dear in  
Canada. We have made two feather beds be-  
sides bolsters and pillows since we have been  
here... We spun a hundred yards of cloth last  
year, woolen and linen...

Once more I remain thy ever affectionate  
and faithful granddaughter  
Deborah Mullett”

2<sup>nd</sup> mo.9, 1830

My dear grandmother.

... I have, at last, just made up thy kind  
present [her cloak, see letter 1825], and it af-  
fords more comfort than thou canst think  
when I go out for a ride in the sledge with my  
dear husband; I have lined it all through with  
cloth of my own spinning and colouring; I  
will send thee a bit of it. I made seventy five  
yards of flannel this last summer. I have two  
gowns of it for everyday wear. It would look  
coarse to my friends in England, but alas they  
know but little of Canada... I often wish I had  
all my relations’ old clothes that they have  
thrown off; I wish my aunt Martha and her  
dear daughter would send me a box of their  
old cast offs...

thy affectionate Granddaughter  
Deborah Haight

Until 2001 there was no sign of any fam-  
ily textiles that could be directly attributed to

the Mullett family or their descendants. On the off chance that Anne Williams might have even remnants of Mullett textiles a letter was sent to her asking just that question. Within two weeks a box arrived with a letter asking that its contents be given to the Prince Edward County Museum. Now it was a textile historian's dream come true. Textiles, documented and in many cases initialled, were now in the hands of the Prince Edward County Museum. They complemented the papers given to the Prince Edward Archives a few months earlier. The textiles included a sampler made in 1814 signed by Deborah Mullett, linen threads, some dyed, some undyed, initialled blankets made by Deborah's daughters Lydia and Mary, some linen pieces unfortunately not attributable to any one person, a lace doily made by Mary Haight Bowerman's daughter Carrie and a book mark made by Carrie for her son Thomas in the late 1890's. These textiles along with other ephemera which accompanied the original gift of family papers allowed the Prince Edward County Museum to mount an Exhibit in the summer of 2002, giving due recognition to Anne Williams' wonderful gift. By sheer coincidence the Williams family of Bloomfield was holding a family reunion that same summer. This meant that other descendants were able to enjoy Anne Williams' gift. Subsequently other direct descendants of the Mulletts volunteered information and pictures of pieces belonging to and made by these same women. There is much more research possible.

### **Deborah**

Of extant Mullett family textiles we begin with a sampler made by Deborah Mullett in 1814. It is worked in the style of the extract

samplers made by girls at the Ackworth School in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Two things about this sampler were striking. First, we know by its date and by family records that Deborah worked this sampler at home under her mother's guidance. Her mother had gone to the Ackworth School and Deborah had later attended the Sidcot School, but she was there from 1816-1818. Second, its extract has a political tone that would never have appeared on a Quaker *school* sampler.

This sampler in its frame turned up in the first box of papers sent by Anne Williams in 2001. It has much to say. First of all we know Deborah experienced pride of accomplishment in its making. She worked it very well using good linen and black silk thread. She admired it enough to bring it with her to Upper Canada. We have no evidence that she made any samplers at the Sidcot school, but if she did they appear not to have survived. Second it continued to be of value to her throughout her life. In December of 1889 Deborah recorded in her diary that she was "fixing up an old sampler for Lydia. It is marked 1814." Lydia at the time was about to marry, and the sampler was to be a gift to Lydia.

The second thing to come to light was a little book *Keeper's Travels in Search of His Master* (1807). Small skeins of finely spun linen yarn in a variety of colours lay between its pages – a testimony to Deborah's skill as a spinner and dyer, and to her moral training as she had carefully signed her name to establish her ownership of the little book.

Of Deborah's third and last existing piece the collection has only paper documentation. The papers included a small paper on which is written the following: "D. Bowerman, Age 80, made without spectacles 1885." A further



notation written by Gerald Williams, a great grandson of Deborah's from Rachel Bowerman Williams' family: "This paper taken from Quilt made by her and pieced by Mrs. Horn." In other words it appears Deborah did only the quilting, but still considered it her piece. The whereabouts of this patchwork quilt of brownish prints are known. However a written request for a picture brought no response. In her later years Deborah kept two diaries. The first is dated 1874-82, and the second 1886-1892. The diaries have much to say and certainly leave no doubt that textile production was a central feature of Quaker womens' lives throughout the nineteenth century.

11 mo. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1876 - ...Mary finishing her carpet.

11 mo. 29 - ... my seventy second birthday. Lydia washing, Mary weaving...myself making flannel shirts for Rachel.

12 mo. 8<sup>th</sup> - Mary put down the rag carpets, and papered the rooms.

4 mo. 29. 1877 - ... Elizabeth and Rachel sewing carpets together.

5 mo. 18 - Lydia Haight washing blankets outside.

7 mo. 25 - Mary weaving out a piece of cotton warp.

11 mo. 20 1879 - ... Mary putting a piece of cloth in the loom for full cloth.

On the other hand we know that the dry goods shop in Picton was offering all manner of textiles and trims by 1860. From the written account by one of the Baltimore Mullett relatives when they visited Deborah and her father that year we read:

What a strong contrast does the Cana-

dian life present to the southern luxurious ideas of living, where the proclivities are for show and indulgence, where many servants must be kept to do a very few things and where the happiness of both maid and mistress is weighed by the lightness of her cares and exemption from toil... In Canada a couple love each other and they marry, they perhaps buy a hundred acres of land and by degrees the tall forest is cleared, first just enough for a log cabin and garden, then... they both work and work hard, the husband in the forest and the wife in the house. Her work though cheerfully performed is seldom finished for her busy fingers must supply the heavy cloth and warm stockings for the winter. So she cards, spins, dyes and weaves the wool and makes it into comfortable clothes. Then she manufactures her own linen (what capitol stuff it is)...

But my dear cousin Deborah has been what I suppose you will call more fortunate, for she has made a second marriage with one every way worthy, who having served his apprenticeship at hard labour in the woods is now reaping his reward in a hundred and eighty acres of well cleared land producing fine crops."

One of these crops was flax for the express use of the women in the family. Vincent Bowerman records this fact in his daybook. This account then continues.

The little town of Picton is only five miles distant where they can procure merchandise of every description and so replenish their cupboards and ward-

robes when the domestic manufactures give out. They still however adopt the primitive mode of life, and not a mouthful of the bread of idleness is eaten in that house.

Further, if we return to Deborah’s diaries we realize that later on age and exigency combined to encourage Deborah to join her daughters and their girls in patronizing the dry goods store in much the same way their Methodist neighbours did.

3<sup>rd</sup> mo. 18, 1876 ... Paid Sarah Levens 3/ for turning my bonnet... got two afternoon aprons for myself and a ribbon for my head.

9<sup>th</sup> mo. 13 ... went to Picton with Mary and got myself some muslin for caps and two neckerchiefs...

3<sup>rd</sup> mo. 21 Levi and Mary on the Market... bought me 6 yards of factory cotton for some shirts and a ball of sun(?) thread 50¢

12 mo. 14 1878 Mary was on the Market... brought me 5 yards of red flannel.

6 mo. 1879 Myself trying to cut Father some shirts – quite an undertaking, more than I expected. Shall not try it again.

9 mo. 17 1880 ... went to Picton... I got myself some cotton for night-gowns, silk, and wadden [sic] for Lydia’s quilt.

10 mo. 26 ... making Father a couple of new flannel shirts myself two night gowns.

10 mo. 18 1881 I have finished this day a daycap for myself... now 77. Most likely it will be the last I shall ever try to make.

## **Mary and Lydia**

Although their mother’s diaries tell us that Mary and Lydia were constantly involved in textile production and the making of clothing throughout their lives, the collection contains only four examples of their work. But these examples are definitive. From the hands of each we have a cream coloured linsey-woolsey sheet and a colourful plaid blanket. Each is made of two loom widths. Each is the work of an expert. The linen warp threads are finely spun with great tensile strength. The woolen weft is consistent and smooth. The weave is flawless and the joins so carefully done that even in the plaids the join is barely noticeable.<sup>3</sup> All four were woven between 1853 and 1856 which makes it safe to assume that Mary and Lydia were possibly preparing for homes of their own. Mary was married in 1853. A further interesting point is that the colours used in the plaid blankets are almost identical to the little skeins found in Deborah Mullett’s little book.

From another source<sup>4</sup> the Museum later acquired a photograph of cotton pillowcases made by Lydia in the early 1900’s. It is possible that the cotton was woven by Lydia from purchased threads but that is conjecture. The only thing we know for sure is that they are handmade and handtucked. Their importance lies more in what they are not, than in what they are. It is likely that Lydia, in her old age, settled for “boughten” cotton much like her Methodist neighbours.

## **Carrie**

There is no evidence that Carrie Bowerman or her sisters were directly involved in domestic textile production. They were brought up in the Quaker way, and probably

by osmosis became at least conversant with textile production, but they did not attend a Quaker school. There was a plainness in their lives that by the 1860's would have set them apart from their Methodist neighbours but changes were coming. Until 1867, the year of Confederation the Quakers of Canada still held their Yearly Meeting in New York. This time coincided with what is today known as *American Fancy*, characterized by imaginative, colourful decorative arts especially popular and affordable to a burgeoning American middle class. Even the Quakers of Prince Edward County, isolated somewhat by its geography, were not entirely immune to their surroundings. As well Quakerism was and is a constantly evolving way of life. By the 1860's it was becoming aware of the perils of rigidity. The Bloomfield Quakers were plain, but they were also practical. Methodism in Ontario (formerly Upper Canada) was seen as the religion of opportunity. Methodists were largely responsible for improvements in public education, a subject of great importance to the egalitarian Quakers. They formed much of the merchant class in Prince Edward County, and certainly they were now the backbone of the farming population. At the same time the Quaker community was fraught with internal dissension. These factors, combined to force even the most traditional Quakers, such as the Mullett, Haight, Bowerman connection, to broaden their point of view. They purchased fine sewing machines. They took up the use of manufactured cottons. They hired dressmakers and bought machine-made shoes. Great-grandmother Deborah records this shift in her diary.

2<sup>nd</sup> mo. 21 1875 Levi and Mary went to Picton, got flannel for Lydia and Carrie...

2<sup>nd</sup> mo. 26 ... Carrie got her new black dress brought home, Lydia got her coat cut, and left it to be made.

By 1894-95 when Carrie and her three sons spent a year at the Westtown Quaker School in Pennsylvania, she was still a Quaker, but ready to move on from her plain life. The elaborate bookmark embroidered TBW the initials of her son Thomas, and the lace doily were a start. The cotton pillowcase with a purchased eyelet trim and a signature, Carrie E. Williams '95 done in india ink is definitive. No longer is linen marked with a stitched linen initial; in fact no longer is the "linen" linen.

As with Lydia, the Museum was fortunate to receive images of other artifacts made by Carrie Bowerman in the early 1900's – a cheerful patchwork quilt and a crocheted pillow covering. Both of these are worked very much in the style of her Methodist neighbours. By this time the Quaker Meeting Houses were all but gone from Prince Edward County and Adolphustown. The process of assimilation accelerated.

Carrie Bowerman Williams was born a Quaker, and a Quaker she remained in all the important ways. She still adhered to the Testimonies of plainness and equality among the sexes. In 1913, she went to England to further acquaint herself with the Mullett/Clothier relatives, and returned with many notes and photographs. The photographs give evidence of Quaker womens' acquiescence to fashions of the day. Gone are the daycaps Deborah continued to make and wear to her dying day, and the dresses though not elaborate are mainstream.

Her sons Merton, John, and Thomas also retained many Quaker values, not the least of which was record-keeping. In 1928 the ever

curious self-appointed family historian Merton went to visit the same families in England. He wrote:

The Writer has stood in the upper rooms of the Clothier home in Street, where Mary Clothier was born, heated by a fireplace [sic]. I have walked over the cobblestone floor of the kitchen of that home facing the great fireplace and corner nooks where the old people sat.<sup>5</sup>

It was not only the British connection that the family retained. The equanimity with which the Adolphustown Quakers visited back and forth with their Dutchess county relatives, and those in Bloomfield with their Long Island and New York City families persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Levi Bowerman, Mary Haight’s husband, wrote as careful a history of the Bowermans in America as his grandson Merton wrote of the Mulletts. Merton also wrote a history of the Williams family in Upper Canada.

The Anne Williams Collection, containing all these papers and more, leaves researchers with much to analyze. Without Carrie Bowerman Williams’ trunk this study would not have been possible. Some questions remain. What makes this collection valuable? How does it benefit the broader history of this part of Canada?

The value of this *collection* lies in its rarity. How often is the historian privy to such a complete, contained collection of family papers accompanied by the textiles and domestic trivia documented in those papers? The combination brings a reality that conjecture can only hint at. The ordinary becomes extraordinary. The experience supercedes the event.

The importance of this *study* lies in the

fact that a public exhibition was possible. The Exhibit “*Made without Spectacles... Three Generations of a Quaker Family and their Textiles*” ran until December of 2003. If the papers had come to the Archives without the textiles would they have occasioned much public attention? The short answer is no, because the Archives have at present no space for exhibition, though the need for this is recognized. If the textiles had come to the Museum without the accompanying papers would they have warranted exhibit space? Again the answer is probably no. This collection of textiles without documentation would have occasioned a different reaction. The sampler would have joined the Museum’s small collection of samplers done mainly by United Empire Loyalist families. The blankets and sheets would have been remarkable because of the fine quality, but beyond that would have been considered typical. They might have acquired Quaker attribution because of the linen warp, but it would have been at best an educated guess. The later pieces, of Carrie Bowerman’s work, would have occasioned little interest. Every small museum in Ontario has a good collection of domestically worked Victorian textiles, woven and / or embroidered. Carrie’s signature on the pillowcase would have been the only point of interest.

This is a case of the sum being far greater than its two parts. Each part enabled the other to acquire the attention it deserved.

How does it benefit the broader history of this part of Canada? Upper Canada in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is an interesting microcosm of 18<sup>th</sup> century British North America. Because of the close connection of church and state religious affiliation was the dominant force in its development. Anglicanism was the religion of authority. A large pro-

portion of Anglicans continued to consider themselves as British people living in America. Methodism, the religion of opportunity, was for the most part the faith of those who considered themselves to be people of British origin working to develop a specifically North American colony within the British Empire. Much of Upper Canada/Ontario history has been constructed on the divergent and convergent paths of these two denominations, almost to the point of exclusion of other Protestant denominations, sects, and Roman Catholics. Historians in recent years have set about correcting this oversight. Quakerism in Upper Canada is a story of assimilation. By its very nature it has not commanded the attention it deserves. In a recent review of Robynne Healey’s book, *From Quaker to Upper Canadian*, to be published in November 2006 by McGill-Queens University Press, it is written “[This] is the first scholarly work to examine the transformation of this important religious community from a self insulated group to integration within Upper Canadian Society”. This textile study is proving to be timely.

#### Notes:

1. This title is a bow to Deborah Mullett Haight Bowerman. She recorded this fact with most accomplishments, especially after her daughter Lydia needed spectacles in middle age.
2. Arthur Clothier, Mary Mullett’s brother, had been one of the sponsors of Mary and William when they set sail for Upper Canada in 1821.
3. By way of contrast the collection also contained a contemporary woolen sheet made by Mary Jane Williams. Mary Jane was the first wife of John P. Williams II, of whom Lydia Haight became the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife in 1890. The spinning of the yarn was not consistent, and the weaving was uneven. Casual washing methods resulted in matting. Mary Jane, a Methodist lacked the expertise of her Quaker neighbours.

4. We are fortunate to have several images of other Mullett family textiles from Joanne Lauth of Florida – a great, great, great granddaughter of Deborah Mullett.
5. The William Mullett and Mary Clothier Family in Canada 1821-92. P.29

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