

MARTHA HOWARD PETTICOAT

Applicant: Canton Historical Society

Martha Howard
Petticoat
c. 1830

photo credits:
Canton Historical
Society



Project Description:

Although the Historical Society was founded in 1893, it was not until 2010 that textile conservation began in earnest. Prior to that time, our textile collection (which is largely representative of women's contributions to the history of Canton) was relegated to a trunk in the basement of the Historical Society building. In 2010, the Historical Society funded the cleaning and stabilization of the Martha Howard 1787 Quilt, and in 2014 CPA funds were secured to repair the Friendship Quilt which dates to circa 1853.

At this time, the Canton Historical Society is seeking CPA funding for a unique article of historic clothing: Martha Howard's petticoat (pictured above). Martha Howard is closely tied to the Canton's early history. She married the Reverend Zachariah Howard, (the third minister of the First Congregational Church) in 1787. The couple lived in the David Tilden House (the Little Red House), where Martha remained until her death in 1856.

Like the Martha Howard quilt, this petticoat is a valuable part of the Town's historical inventory. Experts at Colonial Williamsburg believe it was made sometime between 1830 and 1840. In response to our inquiries about this petticoat, the Curator of Textiles and Costumes in Colonial Williamsburg stated that its "history and relationship to the salmon quilt (Martha Howard's) gives it special added value to your historical collection" and added that this petticoat is "certainly worthy of professional attention."

The funds sought from the Community Preservation Act will pay for a highly experienced and capable conservator who will restore this unique piece of Canton's past. The cleaning and stabilization process will repair the garment and will result in a level of protection that will allow the Historical Society to place the petticoat on display.