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## Dress in the United States of America as depicted in postmortem photographs, 1840-1900

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**DRESS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS DEPICTED IN  
POSTMORTEM PHOTOGRAPHS, 1840-1900**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science  
in

The School of Human Ecology

by  
Ryan Jerel Aldridge  
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## ABSTRACT

The results of a content and historical analysis of American postmortem photographs from 1840 to 1900 found in *Sleeping Beauty: Memorial Photography in America* and *Sleeping Beauty II: Grief, Bereavement and The Family In Memorial Photography American & European Traditions* by Stanley Burns (1990 and 2002) indicate that day dress was the most popular form of postmortem dress depicted in the photographs. A comparison of the findings from this examination of the dress of 89 deceased individuals depicted in 84 postmortem photographs with descriptions of dress based on nineteenth century archaeological burial remains and portraits of living individuals indicates that deceased individuals were most often photographed and buried in their Sunday's finest or nicest items of day dress. Deceased individuals were most likely photographed in their burial dress and the appearance gave the impression of a respectable final portrait.

Postmortem dress was described and categorized by decades from 1840 to 1900 and by age and gender including adult male, adult female, child male, child female and infants. Postmortem dress was compared to period photographs, illustrations, and descriptions of extant burial dress. Relationships were examined between postmortem dress and nineteenth century cultural belief systems. Differences in postmortem dress are closely associated with differences in the dates of the photographs and the age and gender of deceased individuals. Day dress, the most popular category of postmortem dress, followed fashion cycles over time and differences in postmortem dress were associated with differences in fashionable dress styles during the period. Postmortem dress depicted in postmortem photographs was influenced by many societal and individual level factors. Many of the customs and beliefs held by individuals, families, and friends in the nineteenth century influenced choices of postmortem dress. Postmortem dress is a

reflection of nineteenth century American culture and the study of postmortem dress leads to a better understanding of customs and beliefs associated with this period.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

During the nineteenth century, the transition from life to death commonly occurred within the household (Jackson, 1977). Family and community members faced death early and often, due to disease epidemics, high child mortality rates, difficult childbirths, and a poor understanding of healthcare and childbearing (Updike, 1992). Families were responsible for constructing and transmitting the meanings of individual deaths across generations (Jalland, 1996). The development of mourning rituals made the grieving process easier to endure, provided closure, and ultimately helped to reestablish some sense of normalcy (Jalland, 1996). Throughout the nineteenth century, mourning rituals progressed into highly structured social displays including mourning clothing, elaborate coffins, the development of funeral parlors, increased funeral goods and furnishings, death processions, cemeteries, the development of the funeral industry, burial specific dress, and postmortem photography. The creation and use of these objects can provide a window into nineteenth century culture through the study of material culture.

According to Schlereth (1982), material culture includes the totality of physical objects made or modified by humans and is the product of culture. The study of material culture uses existing physical evidence to interpret past human activity based upon the underlying belief that physical objects created or modified by humans are evidence of a human mind operating at the time of fabrication that is influenced by individual beliefs as well as the belief patterns of the larger society to which they belong (Schlereth, 1982). The material culture study of extant physical objects related to nineteenth century mourning and death customs can provide insight into individual and societal activities of the past related to death and dying.

Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992, p. 1) state that dress is the “assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body.” An essential preliminary to the analysis of dress is the identification of types of dress and their visually identifiable characteristics (Roach-Higgins and Eicher, 1992). The identification of types and characteristics of modifications and/or supplements to the body during the Victorian era as depicted in postmortem photographs will serve as the basis for the analysis of postmortem dress.

Historians have expanded their definition of historical evidence used to interpret past human activities to include material culture (Severa, 1995). Extant photographs are physical objects created by humans within a cultural belief system and are considered material culture. Ruby (1995, p. 6) states “As socially constructed artifacts, photographs are regarded as objects of material culture that reveal something about the culture depicted as well as the culture of the picture taker.” One element of a portrait photograph that is identifiable is the clothing (Severa, 1995). If the modifications and supplements to the body can be identified in a photograph, the dress can be analyzed. Postmortem photographs contain images of deceased individuals prior to burial and these will be used as material culture objects to describe and interpret postmortem dress between 1840 and 1900.

The use of the daguerreotype for postmortem photographs began in 1840 closely following the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839 by Louis Daguerre (Burns, 1990). Postmortem photographs can provide insight into the cultural and individual belief systems that influenced their use and creation. Extant postmortem photographs provide a visual record of dress between 1840 and 1900. Dress from this period developed from an available repertoire and was influenced by modifications and supplements made by members of particular social groups or specific individuals (Roach-Higgins and Eicher, 1992). By identifying and studying dress

depicted in postmortem photographs, a general analysis of trends and the societal and individual influences related to dress can be examined for relationships. The study of postmortem photographs can be used to broaden the body of knowledge regarding dress in the United States.

The overall research objective for this study is to systematically describe, classify, and interpret postmortem dress in the United States from 1840 to 1900. Specific objectives include the development of the following descriptions and interpretations of postmortem dress based on the sample of postmortem photographs.

1. To describe and classify postmortem dress depicted in the sample of postmortem photographs that date between 1840 and 1900 using content analysis and historical analysis.
2. To compare postmortem dress found in the sample of postmortem photographs with period illustrations, period photographs, and extant nineteenth century burial dress.
3. To infer possible relationships of postmortem dress to cultural belief systems on death and dying and socioeconomic status of the deceased as depicted in the sample of postmortem photographs between 1840 and 1900.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Costume History Research**

Costume history research focuses on the revelation of a relationship between a question and an artifact (Rexford, Cunningham, Kaufman, and Trautman, 1988). According to Rexford et al. (1988), research questions originate from two schools of thought and most questions fall somewhere between the two. One research approach states the artifact itself is worthy of study, and the other approach states the artifact is a means to gain information outside of the artifact. The first school of thought deals with the physical objects, materials, construction, and function of an artifact with little interpretation. While the other school of thought uses artifacts to understand symbolism, ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs related to its purpose within society. The first school of thought is concerned with description and classification of the artifact. The other school of thought sees artifacts within a social context. The authors state that the incorporation of both approaches can enhance and improve the world of costume history research.

Material culture studies are an important part of the research process, because they help us to understand the relationship between an artifact and the culture in which it was created. It is important to identify, classify, analyze, and interpret clothing in order to use it as evidence in a broader context (Rexford et al., 1988). Rexford et al. (1988) recommend the use of Fleming's (1974) model for material culture study that states research on an artifact is not complete until its cultural significance has been interpreted. However, they suggest using a model that best fits the researchers' needs. In order to better ascertain the many cultural meanings of an artifact, material culture studies encourage communication between disciplines and the use of many

methodological approaches. Visual documentation can provide valuable insight into dress either as a support or as an equal with certain forms of written documentation (Adams-Graf, 1995).

### **Classification of Dress**

According to Prellwitz and Metcalf (1980), the documentation of nineteenth century American costume is no easy task, because there are no established methods for dating and classifying dress available to the researcher. Photographs and documents can serve as a basic source for dating garments. Fashion periodicals including Godey's Lady's Book are a valuable resource for documenting period dress by providing illustrations and commentary on current styles, appropriate undergarments, hairstyles, fabrics, and colors. Another reliable and accurate source of documentation on nineteenth century dress design, cut, and construction techniques are tailor's journals, dress cutting diagrams, manuals, and patterns (Prellwitz and Metcalf, 1980).

One of the primary tasks of the costume historian is the classification and dating of articles of dress, which preserves the historical value of the artifacts (Rowold and Schlick, 1983). Pedersen and Loverin (1989) believe it is necessary to accurately date a garment if it is to be used to interpret historical events. Historians may use primary or secondary sources to compare and date garments, which leaves room for interpretation. The classification and dating of dress is a complex procedure and its accuracy and reliability are often determined by the intuitive expertise and knowledge of the historian (Rowold and Schlick, 1983). The trend in the classification and dating of historic costume is to compare the artifact with primary and secondary sources that are often inconsistent with one another and vague in descriptions. However, a well tested, proven systematic approach with a standardized instrument would be most effective in reaching predictable and consistent dates throughout the costume history discipline (Pedersen and Loverin, 1989). The importance of using a systematic approach is the

organization and standardization of information for analysis and comparison. Therefore, Rowold and Schlick (1983) suggest the use of content analysis, which is an objective and systematic approach to gathering information that is unclassified and uncategorized.

Kassarjian states that content analysis must be objective, systematic, and quantitative (1977). Objectivity is the ability of multiple analysts to use the same procedures and data and arrive at similar results. Objectivity makes content analysis scientific by producing replicable and reliable conclusions. According to Kassarjian (1977), systematization ensures the results are relevant and can be generalized without analyst bias. The content analysis must be quantifiable in order to be applied to statistical methods for summarization of the results and for interpretation and inference. Content analysis that is objective, systematic, and quantitative is replicable, general, and has the ability to be interpreted for scientific study. The content analysis procedure involves selecting a sample from a population, a unit of measurement, a theme that is defined as issues, values, and beliefs, or existence or inexistence of a claim, and finally the application of standardized procedures and systematic analysis (Kassarjian, 1977).

According to Paoletti (1982), content analysis can be used to convert forms of nonverbal communication into quantitative data. She states that content analysis is a useful tool to support traditional intuitive research and improve objectivity. Paoletti describes the steps in content analysis as the statement of an objective or hypothesis, development of an instrument that measures significant variables or organizes them into specified categories, assembling an unbiased sample, the application of the instrument systematically to the variables, and the analysis of the data statistically. Sources of study in costume history that are ideal for content analysis include advertisements, fashion illustrations, and photographs (Paoletti, 1982). Content analysis requires a relatively large sample and preferably preplanning or pre-testing of the



instrument to increase the confidence of an objective study. If comparisons are desired, the analysis will have to go beyond descriptive statistics. Two major threats to content analysis are the assurance of validity and reliability. The most effective use of content analysis is in conjunction with traditional impressionistic research, which seeks to reduce subjectivity and capitalize on the advantages of both techniques (Paoletti, 1982).

In a study of men's jacket styles, Paoletti, Beeker, and Pelletier (1987) used content analysis to systematically collect data from a documentary source and extant garments. The study was limited to jacket characteristics that could be viewed from the front such as bridge line, silhouette, lapel style, lapel width, shoulder width, single- or double-breasted styling, center front button shape, jacket length, and pocket style for the breast and side pockets. Descriptors were attached to characteristics such as narrow, medium, and wide. The authors state the importance of a preplanned and pre-tested instrument to improve the consistency of the research. The authors suggest the use of a computer for data analysis, the use of a variety of printed materials for future research rather than one, and the combination of content analysis, seriation, and object study.

A proposed model for material culture study by E. McClung Fleming (1974) recommends defining an artifact through its' properties, which include history, material, construction, design, and function, and performing four operations on the properties to answer relevant questions about the object, which include identification, evaluation, cultural analysis, and interpretation. The model proposes a holistic approach to the study of artifacts incorporating physical and ideological aspects. History identifies who, what, where, when, and why throughout the life of the object. Material seeks to answer what the object is made of, and construction deals with techniques used to shape the materials. Design is concerned with the

particular style of an object and function entails both intended and unintended uses for the object. Important questions related to the artifact are answered through applying the identified properties to the four operations. Identification includes a factual description of the object including a general classification and authentication and states whether or not the properties are accurate. Evaluation develops a set of judgments about the object often in relation to similar historical artifacts. Cultural analysis involves the relationship between the artifact and its period culture, and interpretation deals with the artifact and its significance in modern culture. By following the principles of Fleming's model of artifact study, many aspects of an artifact can be understood through this integrated, systematic approach.

### **Content and Historical Analysis**

A study of nineteenth century American cowboy dress by Laurel E. Wilson (1991), included 76 photographs of American cowboys depicted in posed and unposed photographs. The photographs were selected from the Montana Historical Society and two books. Regarding her study and sample size, Wilson (1991, p. 49) states "Although the sample size is small, the differences between the posed photographs of cowboys and the unposed pictures taken of working cowboys was so noticeable that an investigation to explore reasons for the differences was appropriate." Wilson (1991, p. 50) used content analysis to record data including "the number of figures in each photograph, the number of figures wearing garments identified as those which typified cowboy dress and the number of figures in which some garments were not clearly visible." Wilson (1991) sought to explain the reasons for differences between more stereotypical cowboy dress in posed photographs and the actual dress worn by cowboys on the range.

## **Material Culture**

During the second half of the nineteenth century, burial practices in the United States of America progressed into an elaborate system of rituals and customs that were shaped by events, industrialization, and ideology of the period. By studying burial remains, valuable insight is gained by deciphering the customs and values of a group of people (Brantley, 1998). Burial artifacts are the self-realization, symbolism and material representations associated with the ideas of a period in time. Symbolism associated with artifacts is the attribution of meaning either freely or arbitrarily to objects by humans (Schlereth, 1982). In order to understand the object and its' connection to man, we must understand the meaning and ultimately the symbolism that man has given the object (Schlereth, 1982).

According to Schlereth (1982), the objects and their inherent symbolism are known as material culture, which are created within established cultural structures and influenced by human needs and human values. Objects develop functionally, aesthetically, and symbolically according to human cultural needs and value systems. Schlereth (1982) states that an object's form can be interpreted without a written explanation, and its form is concrete, constant, and visible, but its function is variable and more complex. For instance, the form of a picture can be described by its' physical characteristics such as glass, metal, or paper and having a certain composition of objects imprinted on its surface. The form is easily interpreted through visual examination. However, the function of the picture is more complex to interpret. The photograph could serve as a memento, a work of art, or as a historical document. The photograph could serve different functions for different individuals or have multiple functions for a single individual. The interpretation of any object of material culture involves the study and understanding of both

form and function. Material culture created within the confines of a particular social group's belief system can be used to define and understand the culture's behavior.

Dress is dictated as much by necessity and the physical environment as it is by the order of society and can be studied on many levels including sociologically, historically, structurally, and artistically (Severa and Horswill, 1989). According to Pedersen and Loverin (1989), dress is the reflection of a social group's beliefs, values, and practices. Severa and Horswill (1989) believe the connection between humans and dress runs even deeper when we consider how dress modifies the body itself. Dress is the artifact that is closest to our physical being and often our inner emotional and ideological expressions as well. According to Severa and Horswill (1989), the understanding of the modifications and connections between a person's identity, their body, and their dress are worthy of study. The costume and the body play an important role in material culture and can help us understand information related to the attitudes, beliefs, values, and ideas of a cultural group over time.

Material culture studies involve either verbal or nonverbal forms of communication and documentation and the development of a question or questions to be answered (Severa and Horswill, 1989). However, the methods used to arrive at an answer depend on the artifact and the desired outcome. Severa and Horswill adapted Fleming's (1974) model to focus the method on analyzing dress and modifications including the combination of design and construction, the function of the garment was determined by examination and deduction, and the history was deduced from the artifact and the knowledge of the historian. Severa and Horswill also included Philip Zimmerman's (1981) work that involved the evaluation of an artifact based on others of its kind. According to Severa and Horswill (1989), identification includes the date, maker, use, provenance, materials, and construction method. Evaluation includes functional appropriateness,

quality of materials, workmanship, and the conformance to period standards. Cultural analysis dealt with the object itself and the culture in which the object was created. A complete and thorough interpretation should include period demographics, artistic direction, economics, socio-religious structure, and the progression of fashion. The final aspect of clothing study involves the intuitive analysis of the artifact that incorporates the personal knowledge and intuition of the researcher. Material culture studies are a promising way to obtain information about dress, because many dress artifacts are not accompanied by written documents (Severa and Horswill, 1989).

Textiles are one item of material culture that quickly deteriorates if not preserved under ideal conditions. According to Harris (1993), textiles are inherently prone to decay and begin to deteriorate the moment they are made. Textiles make up a smaller portion of the total amount of artifacts excavated by archaeologists when compared to metal, stone, pottery, and glass, and under many different environmental conditions will disintegrate entirely (Harris, 1993). Many American burial practices involve placing the deceased's body and burial clothing underground, which is an ideal environment for the decomposition of textiles. Photographs on the other hand are pieces of material culture that are often stored and preserved for future generations due to their function as personal mementos and pieces of artistry.

One article of material culture that had a profound impact on life in the nineteenth century was the photograph. For the first time in history it became more feasible and efficient among all classes to immortalize themselves for posterity. Millions of photographs were taken in the nineteenth century and one of the most popular genres of nineteenth century American photography was the postmortem photograph (Burns, 1990). The extant postmortem photographs

are an object of nineteenth century material culture that gives us a glimpse into other forms of material culture that have not survived the test of time.

### **Appearance in Nineteenth Century America**

In nineteenth century America, it was extremely important to appear proper and cultured. Certain possessions and certain appearances gave the impression of having attained culture, including the way a person would carry their body (Severa, 1995). Being dressed in current styles and acceptable forms also was perceived as evidence of being cultured (Severa, 2005). Thus, it became an almost cultural obligation to dress as neatly and fashionably as possible regardless of economic status. In nineteenth century America, all classes had an intense interest in fashion and sought to wear the most fashionable clothing, and the portrait photograph ultimately gave everyone the opportunity to leave for posterity an image of them at their best (Severa, 1995).

In 1830, Louis Godey's *Lady's Book* began its long and successful career in Philadelphia (Stearns, 1931). Martin (1928) states the *Book* became a national institution. Fashion plates featured in *Godey's Lady's Book* served as widespread, fashion inspiration for women within weeks of their publication and can be used to find the earliest date for the introduction of new fashion styles and techniques (Severa and Horswill, 1989). According to Welker (1999), *Godey's Lady's Book* influenced the manners, morals, tastes, fashions, furniture, and homes in nineteenth century America. By 1840, ladies magazines with fashion plates were in every town in the country, and women followed the styles fairly closely (Severa, 2005). *Godey's Lady's Book* last publication was in 1877 (Miller, 1994). *The Delineator*, a popular period fashion magazine, was published from 1873 through 1937 and contains period fashion illustrations and Butterick pattern advertisements (Waller-Zuckerman, 1989).

According to Severa (2005), it was vital for women to be able to reflect changes in fashion immediately. Severa's (1995) study of nineteenth century photographs and her personal body of knowledge accumulated through the examination of many nineteenth century museum dress collections leads her to believe there are certain clues found in the way a person dresses that can distinguish a person's position in life, such as the skillfulness of alterations, the fit, the taste, the expense, dress material, style, and trimmings. Severa (1995) believes visual evidence is the key to unlocking and understanding written documentation related to dress, and without this combination the researcher is handicapped.

### **Death and Dying in Nineteenth Century America**

The reality of death is dealt with in a series of symbols that are responsible for "unifying cultural values and reinforces communal solidarity" (Laderman, 1995, p 44). Symbols of death permeated the lives of the living, including the tolls of church bells that through a recognizable system could provide information of the age and gender of the deceased and mourning dress and paraphernalia (Laderman, 1996). A culture's relationship with death and dying can display variations in religious expression and the "nature of societal change in communities" (Laderman, 1995, p 43). Before the Civil War, Americans' relationship with death was influenced by "changes that were taking place in theology, urbanization, medical and scientific knowledge, and socio-economic relations." (Laderman, 1995, p 44). The funeral and burial practices that evolved in the nineteenth century healed rifts in the community caused by death and "ensured that the dead had a positive social standing in the community." (Laderman, 1995, p 45).

In the early nineteenth century, American families came together to form small interdependent communities where each family death became a social loss for the entire community (Hintlian, 2001). Family members and their immediate community faced death early

and often, because frequently many generations lived within the same household and there was a poor understanding of diseases and childbearing. Loved ones generally died at home and were mourned in the home of the deceased. The family prepared the body for burial and the front parlor was devoted to funerary rites and visitation.

Families in the nineteenth century faced death often because many diseases went unrecognized and unchallenged and child mortality rates were between 30 and 50 percent (Updike, 1992). Epidemics often affected all the young of a family, more than one in thirty mothers died in childbirth, and a soldier was ten times more likely to die of disease than in battle (Updike, 1992). Mortality was readily visible in the home creating an atmosphere for rituals that would allow both members of the family and community to better accept, understand, cope, and face the harsh realities of death. Death did not represent the end of a person's relationship with the community, but through mourning rituals and burial practices, a person could remain a part of the community in the afterlife.

### **Victorians and Death**

Understanding how people responded to death in the past can help us to understand our own beliefs related to death (Jalland, 1996). Nineteenth century Americans encountered the dead or signs and symbols related to death in everyday life while the reality of encountering a corpse or death symbols by Americans at the beginning of the twentieth century was far less likely (Laderman, 2003). The family and religion were the most important institutions in the Victorian era that influenced the meanings and customs regarding death in America and abroad. Laderman (1995, p 39) describes three trends regarding death in nineteenth century America that were influenced by Victorian ideals including "the tendency to valorize the affections of the survivors, the process of memorializing the deceased individual [such as postmortem photography], and the



domestication of the corpse.” Also, Laderman (1996, p 73) describes three prevailing attitudes towards death in the nineteenth century as “a refusal to allow the dead to disappear from the living community, a fixation on the body of the deceased, and a demand that the integrity of the corpse be perpetuated in the grave as well as in collective memory.”

According to Jalland (1996), the major influences on attitudes toward death in the Victorian era included changing religious beliefs and demographic patterns. The Evangelical movement had a profound impact on the Victorian death even in those families that were not practicing Evangelicals. Evangelicals enforced what was known as the ‘good death’, which required a person to be virtuous and courageous in the midst of suffering. The Evangelical ideal of death took place in the home surrounded by a loving family that expressed grief after the person died, and believed in the reuniting of family members in heaven. Victorian attitudes were largely Christian influenced and death was seen as a part of life and not to be feared (Jalland, 1996).

Death took on a new role in Victorian society because of the increased display of affection among family members particularly between husband and wife and parents and children (Jalland, 1996). The Evangelical and Romantic movements brought a kind of warm affection to family life that had never been seen before. Evangelicals believed that it was a Christian’s right to express emotions openly, and they often expressed joy and wept together without shame (Jalland, 1996). Also, the rise in popularity of the Romantic Movement’s literature and poetry encouraged the social display of feelings and influenced the expression of emotion in early Victorian society. Hintlian (2001) states that the movement strongly supported outward expression of sadness and grief. Victorians were encouraged to express their feelings in

words and writing. The decline in Evangelical and Romantic ideals near the end of the nineteenth century led to a breakdown of traditional Victorian beliefs regarding death and dying.

The emphasis on death and grief by Victorian families is understandable when viewed through the high mortality rates of the period, and when the mortality rates began to decline around 1870, so did peoples concerns about death (Jalland, 1996). Near the end of the nineteenth century, doctors began to become more effective at recognizing diseases and alleviating pain, which transformed death from submission to the inevitable to a more manageable process (Jalland, 1996). The decreasing mortality rates among infants, children, and adults reduced the number of deaths encountered by the family and intensified family bonds (Laderman, 2003). Religious decline and medical advancement after 1870 played an important role in the changing views associated with death and dying during the end of the Victorian era.

### **Beautification of Death**

During the nineteenth century, the elaboration of funeral ceremonies and strict observance of mourning customs reflected the change in beliefs regarding death. Death became seen as a welcomed relief from the hardships of life and nothing to be feared. Mourning rituals made the grieving process easier to endure, provided closure, and ultimately helped to reestablish some sense of normalcy among the living (Jalland, 1996). Mourning rituals provided a social structure with many therapeutic benefits including a system of recognizable values and the support of family, friends, and community (Jalland, 1996). Customs associated with death during the Victorian period have been linked to psychological responses developed to cope with death and the influences of a newly industrialized and commercialized funeral industry (Hintlian, 2001). Elaborate mourning customs and the beautification of death can be seen as social behaviors constructed to cope with the death of an individual by associating it with cultural ideas

and events related to the living such as eternal sleep or deal with the grief caused by the loss of a deceased loved one by becoming preoccupied with performing rituals.

Death practices included mourning clothing, adornment of the deceased individuals' home with funeral crepe and wreaths, the construction of elaborate grave markers, and encouragement of decorative arts commemorating death such as jewelry and postmortem photography. Postmortem photography can be used to see the changes in death concepts and funerary practices, from the stark images near the beginning of the period to the late Victorian beautification of death (Burns, 1990).

During the mid-nineteenth century, families were making the transition from burials at home to the use of a professional funeral industry with greater emphasis on purchased coffins (Hintlian, 2001). The cultural shift of death away from the home removed the deceased body from everyday life (Laderman, 2003). The reinterpretation of death and associated behavior can be linked to urbanization, industrialization, and the specialization of postmortem services such as the mass production of coffins that allowed burial customs to disperse throughout the population and enhance the ideals and imagery associated with the beautification of death (Little et al., 1992).

The beautification of death in the late nineteenth century was apparent in the marked increase in the expense and ritual associated with death (Little et al., 1992). As families began to express their grief and emotions publicly at funeral services toward the end of the century, new ideals and images developed regarding death and mourning. Death became a social event that required elaborate planning, preparation, and paraphernalia that came to signify the mourning process. The corpse became the focus of newly developed and often ostentatious death and funeral practices that centered on making death appear beautiful. Customs required the deceased

to be well dressed, often surrounded by flowers and wreaths, and in an upholstery lined coffin if funds permitted (Hintlian, 2001). When the technique of embalming was perfected, it became the social norm for American funerals, and it reinforced the idea of the beautiful death by allowing the body to appear in a peaceful, dreamlike state for viewing days after death.

The use of the burial shroud and nightgown for clothing the deceased during the period reinforces the Victorian beliefs linking death to sleep. Noted nineteenth century photographers Southworth & Hawes advertised the ability to take natural photographs in which deceased individuals often appear asleep (cited in Ruby, 1995, p. 53). Other burial mementos that provide evidence of the importance this belief played on burial customs are the shape of grave markers that resembled bed headboards and the portrayal of the deceased as sleeping in postmortem photographs and at funerals. Coffins were padded with mattresses, lined, and had a pillow for the deceased loved ones head allowing them to rest in peace while the family and friends watched over them during the funeral services (Hintlian, 2001). The body would be arranged for viewing in the coffin to give the appearance of an individual sleeping. With the help of these visual symbols, death is envisioned as eternal rest from the ongoing struggle of life that provided the family with a sense of comfort and familiarity when viewing the deceased. The idea of death as sleep creates a sense of denial and hopefulness for the family of the deceased by allowing them the idea of a possible reunion through reawakening (Hintlian, 2001).

### **Funeral and Mortuary Display**

The Victorian era was characterized by a marked increase in the expense and elaboration associated with funeral and mortuary displays. Greater emphasis was placed on funeral rituals and the grieving process than by previous generations due to a high mortality rate combined with changing religious and ideological beliefs and the development of a professional funeral

industry. The elite attempted to preserve and the lower classes tried to attain social status through the grieving process. Burial of the poor was often “reduced to matters of expediency, sanitation, and social responsibility” while upper and middle class burials afforded differing degrees “of ostentation displayed during the funeral ceremony, mourning rituals, and the number of participants who were involved” (Laderman, 1995, p 35). Lavish funeral displays could draw “curious onlookers” and focus the funeral “on the mourners and the display by the family of the social status of the deceased” (Laderman, 1995, p 35).

### **Funeral Preparation and Practices**

The family drama that took place around the deathbed was common in nineteenth century America (Laderman, 1995). During the first half of the nineteenth century, most deaths occurred at home, which began a series of actions among family members, friends, and community members (Laderman, 1995). According to Laderman (1995, p 32), “the corpse was ritually washed, shaved in some cases, then dressed, usually in a shroud or ‘winding sheet’ during the first half of the nineteenth century, and finally placed in the coffin. The question of who was involved in the process of preparing the corpse is related to gender.” Laderman (1995) describes examples of women playing a major role in early nineteenth century preparation of the body; however, men are also mentioned as participating. By the second half of the nineteenth century, male undertakers had begun to make their mark as the leaders of preparing deceased bodies for funerals and burial (Laderman, 1995).

The body was commonly displayed on the bed or in the parlor where family and friends could view the deceased before being placed in the coffin. A wake was held that allowed family and friends to mourn the deceased and strengthen social bonds among the living. During the course of the nineteenth century, undertakers and manufacturers became the suppliers of funeral

services and paraphernalia, including coffins, shrouds, and winding sheets replacing the home and family members as sole providers for funeral practices. The undertakers “performed all of the necessary, increasingly complicated, and for many Americans, deeply unpleasant tasks associated with the death of a loved one” (Laderman, 2003, p 4). By the end of the nineteenth century, undertakers could assume the responsibility of “locating a casket, notifying friends and relatives, arranging the funeral service, contacting the appropriate religious leader, coordinating the burial with the local graveyard, and preparing the corpse” (Laderman, 2003, p 5). According to Laderman (2003, p 6), embalming and the undertakers role in this procedure “led to the invention of new American traditions that transformed the rituals of disposal and the architectural space of death, as well as the visual, tactile, and olfactory experiences in the presence of the dead body.”

Society’s increased focus on death and mourning during the Victorian period led to an increase in demand for funeral goods and furnishings. In order to display social dominance and class distinction, the upper classes created a need for ever increasing lavishness and ornamentation in funeral goods (Hintlian, 2001). However as time progressed, funeral goods became more prevalent and affordable to the middle class who imitated the elaborate funerals of the rich. This prompted the upper class to move away from lavish funeral displays and adopt more reserved funeral styles that were believed to be a display of the elite’s good taste and manners (Hintlian, 2001). Funeral practices trickled down from the social elite to the lower classes and once adopted by the masses, the customs of the upper class changed in order to maintain their social identity and standing.

## **Coffins and Caskets**

Coffins and caskets are both receptacles for corpses. Coffins are often referred to as wedge shaped and caskets are described as being rectangular. Coffins and caskets can be made of wood or metal. Coffins are sometimes referred to as being produced at home or individually and caskets are said to be mass produced. Coffins were used prior to and throughout the nineteenth century in America. Caskets, or rectangular burial cases, have been used in America since the late 1840s (Burns, 1990). However, the rectangular style was not patented until 1859 and by 1890 it was the most common type of burial case (Burns, 1990).

Coffins are designed for utility, status indication, preservation of the body, protection, and aesthetic representation (Brantley, 1998). The coffin could be used as a symbol to express emotions of endearment toward the deceased, establish social position, and publicly display wealth. According to Brantley (1998), the first metal coffin was patented in 1836. Metal coffins were considerably more expensive than wooden coffins. The Fisk metal coffin became the most popular in America after its introduction in 1848, and the average cost ranged from \$7.00 to \$40.00 (Brantley, 1998). The shape of Fisk metal coffins reduced the amount of air space and as a result slowed the decay of the body preserving it in a sleep-like state (Brantley, 1998).

A burial site in Virginia provides insight into coffin and casket evolution during the nineteenth century. The site shows evidence of an increase in ornamentation over the duration of the century. During the first half of the nineteenth century, many coffins were produced at home for individual burials and made of wood. Caskets or mass produced coffins became more widely available during the second half of the century.

A Virginia cemetery contained the remains of the Weir family and was used as the family cemetery from approximately 1830 to 1907 (Little et al., 1992). Burials from the 1830s and early

1840s contain little ornamentation. One coffin included a hinge and a small number of tacks remained suggesting the possible use of a lining. Various types of metallic caskets became available after 1848. In 1848, the Fisk metallic coffin was produced with a glass viewing plate (Little et al., 1992). Weir burials during this period utilized metal coffins. Between 1852 and 1862, two occurrences of brass bail handle sets occur with graves from this period and decorative white metal coffin screws were found. From 1867 to 1870, brass decorative tacks appeared, white-metal decorative elements continued, and handles were found in greater numbers. Between 1886 and 1907, caskets were decorated with various elements including white metal cap lifters and finials, a latch, bar handles, thumbscrews, iron bail handles, and covered in cloth, which was increasingly common in the later nineteenth century (Little et al., 1992). Coffin and casket designs and hardware grew increasingly embellished and ornate throughout the century supporting the gradual increase of cultural ideals regarding the beautification of death and the influence of social status display among the classes.

### **Funeral Processions**

According to Laderman (1995), funeral processions would begin with mourners, including family and community members and a local minister, gathering at the home of the deceased in order to accompany the body. Before the procession began, prayers or a short discourse could take place (Laderman, 1995). The coffin could either be carried by foot or with the help of a carriage to the burial site (Laderman, 1995). The use of carriages increased over the course of the nineteenth century (Laderman, 1995). From the home, the body could be brought to a public location, such as a meetinghouse or church, for additional viewing (Laderman, 1995). Funeral processions often made their way through public spaces within the community and the



corpse served as a reminder of death to the living in nineteenth century America (Laderman, 1996).

In New Orleans, funeral processions of the early twentieth century provided information about the deceased. The horses pulling the hearse were draped in black and black plumes were placed on their heads for funeral processions of the old and middle-aged. Old people were buried in black coffins and the door of the home was draped in black crepe. Lavender or gray was used for middle-aged and married individuals. White was always used for children (Saxon and Tallant, 1987). Color has been used symbolically by many cultures in death rituals, and many cultures within America shared similar colors and symbols in relation to death practices in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### **Burial Cost**

The cost of burial had a direct effect on the type of burial held for the deceased. In 1847, a first class funeral in Cloutierville, Louisiana cost eighty dollars as opposed to ten dollars for a fourth class funeral (Mills and Mills, 1994). The family had the responsibility of paying for other expenses beside the funeral including the tomb, services, and optional fencing that could more than double the price of the funeral. The deceased were surrounded in luxury for first class burials. In 1854, Crane, Barnes and Co. advertised a cloth-covered burial case that could be lined with white satin and silver plated mountings doubling the cost (Bird, Grauer, and Kuttruff, 2003). Examples of Louisiana burials included bodies wrapped in white silk, and the coffins padded and lined with velvet or satin held in place by gold tacks (Mills and Mills, 1994). These caskets were so lavish they were often placed inside of another more utilitarian casket before being placed in the ground. Everyone could not afford the price of a first class funeral and

elaborate forms of burial became a status symbol for the elite and those wishing to emulate the upper class.

### **Funeral Industry**

Prior to industrialization, funeral rites and burial services were the family's responsibility. In late eighteenth century America, ready-made coffins were being sold by furniture and cabinet makers to subsidize their incomes (Hintlian, 2001). Eventually, other services provided by the community or family members developed into a professionalized American funeral industry. By the mid-nineteenth century, the American funeral industry was well organized in only a few cities and catered primarily to the wealthy (Hintlian, 2001). During the period, families were transitioning from burials and services held at home to an increasing dependence on the funeral service industry for prefabricated coffins, funeral furnishings and parlors. By the second half of the nineteenth century, funeral industry professionals could provide all burial items needed for a proper funeral.

### **Burial Status**

In the nineteenth century, attitudes and behaviors regarding death and dying were separated according to social class (Jalland, 1996). Financial resources, social expectations, and personal beliefs affected the decisions regarding funerals and burials (Hintlian, 2001). When determining status based on burial remains in the nineteenth century, one must consider two factors: (1) the perpetual cycle of social display innovation by the elite and eventual adoption of that display by the masses and (2) the symbolism involved in burial rituals (Little et al., 1992). According to Little et al. (1992), status can be based on power, wealth, or social standing or a combination of the three. A social display may be recognized as actual status or the desire to portray status. High status may be displayed as an expensive and elaborate grave or a subdued,

tasteful understated burial depending on the point in the social display cycle. As the lower classes begin to copy the elite, the elite often change the rules. The rules for proper burial customs are intended to identify status membership and exclude outsiders. The mass marketing of burial goods in the nineteenth century created a difficult setting for the elite to maintain their status and creates a difficult setting for dating burials from the period (Little et al., 1992).

## **Cemeteries**

According to Laderman (1995), deceased bodies could either be buried or entombed usually following some form of discourse. The bodies of deceased individuals could be buried in local graveyards or in “rural” cemeteries (Laderman, 1995, p 44). Laderman (1995, p 36) explains that “‘rural’ cemeteries provided the middle and upper classes with a space for burial more suited to their tastes and expenses than the churchyards and graveyards being swallowed up and disregarded by expanding city life.” Most commonly dirt was thrown onto the grave as “a gesture recognizing the finality of the journey” (Laderman, 1995, p 35). Nineteenth century burial grounds contained a wide display of imagery related to death, including “death’s heads, cherubs, hourglasses, urns, and willows (Laderman, 1996, p 23). Also, the close proximity of burial grounds to communities served as a constant reminder of the dead amongst the living (Laderman, 1996).

According to Little et al. (1992), nineteenth century cemeteries for the upper and middle classes were designed and used as parks for the living. The development of elaborate cemeteries created a place where the living could reunite and interact with the deceased allowing them to remain members of the community. Cemeteries are the burial place of the dead and provide important clues about the lives of the deceased. For example, many early American burial grounds lacked headstones because the poor could not afford them and some puritans considered

such adornments vain (Kay, 1998). Grandiose displays or modest grave markers have social significance, and the evolution of society is reflected in changing mortuary behaviors (Belton, 2000). By examining the characteristics associated with particular burial sites, one can better understand the lifestyles of the deceased.

Cemeteries are created for the dead by the living and mirror the social framework of the time period (Belton, 2000). Material artifacts found in mortuary displays are impacted by popular culture of the period and provide insight into societal structures. However, determining social status by material objects found at a burial site from the nineteenth century can be misleading due to the practice of lower class individuals emulating burials of the higher class in order to suggest higher socioeconomic status and reinforce the cultural ideal of beautifying death.

In eighteenth and nineteenth century New Orleans, socioeconomic divisions among burials began to be seen as a result of church burials that kept the clergy and wealthy, reputable parish members from having their burials in the ground and unearthed from extensive soil saturation. According to Belton (2000), the impoverished were buried in unmarked graves within the ground and upper class individuals were entombed within the church. The middle class were the first to utilize simple, rectangular tombs constructed above ground and made of plastered and whitewashed red bricks with terraced or pitched roofs and occasionally fitted with marble memorial tablets (Belton, 2000). For those who could not afford private tombs, vaults built in the cemetery walls three or four high could serve as a place of burial (Belton, 2000).

New Orleans, Louisiana, has a rich cemetery history. In New Orleans, practically all interments were in tombs or vaults because of the water table being so close to the surface. Many tombs were made of magnificent proportions and design, belonging to wealthy and prominent

families (Saxon and Tallant, 1987). Crypts were built for the poor, vaults erected tier upon tier, usually into the cemetery wall. These crypts became known as ‘ovens’ because they resembled ovens at a bakery. The poor could rent or buy ovens. Ovens were often rented for a year and a day. If no further payments were made, the remains were removed and burned. Ovens could be used again and again by burning the old casket and placing the bones in a depository at the bottom of the vault. One New Orleans cemetery offered ‘three-day burials’ for the poor (Saxon and Tallant, 1987). The families could have a nice funeral for the deceased, place the body in the vault before friends and family, and three days later it was all removed.

Saint Louis Number I cemetery in New Orleans contains a fence that divides Catholic and Protestant graves. The Catholic side is much larger and densely packed than the small space provided for the Protestants. When the cemeteries were viewed in the early twentieth century, the Catholic tombs were made of either stone or whitewashed brick and appeared to dazzle in the bright sunlight; and the protestant graves were overgrown with grass and weeds, and most of the headstones were broken. The observation marks differences of the visual appearance of artifacts linked to religion.

The names of the deceased give us clues of their ethnicity. The Catholic portion is filled with Creoles while most of the Protestant names are Anglo-Saxon. On the other hand, Carrollton Cemetery has a decidedly German atmosphere with names on many slabs and headstones such as Weber, Schaeffer, Muller and Francken (Saxon and Tallant, 1987). In Saint Patrick Number 1 and 2, Irishmen used to be interred free of charge and many Irish names are found on the grave markers. The grave marker as an artifact can provide documentation of the ethnicity of the deceased.

African Americans were buried in the back of Carrollton Cemetery, which was in deplorable condition in the early twentieth century (Saxon and Tallant, 1987). Another African American burial place in New Orleans was Holt Cemetery. The graves were marked with boxes and headboards made of wood and painted battleship gray with black letters. Cemeteries can provide valuable information regarding social and cultural structures of the past. Material culture found in cemeteries can provide insight into the social values and beliefs of the cultures in which they were created.

### **Burial Clothing**

According to Brantley (1998), the use of burial clothing was influenced by the increased use of mass produced coffins during the nineteenth century. Burial garments were often chosen or made before death in order to ensure an appropriate burial appearance. Two nineteenth century diaries record the appearance of burial dress. Kate Stone's civil war era journal from North Louisiana describes the burials of her two brother's killed in the war. The journal entries from 1863 describe one of her brother's as being "dressed in black" and months later the other brother is buried "in a nice suit of clothes furnished by a young friend of his, Tom Moore" (Anderson, 1972, pp 187 and 261). An 1860 South Carolina slave child burial recorded in the diary of Keziah Goodwyn Hopkins Brevard describes the burial dress as "he was neatly shrouded and I gave them a large sheet (No. 5) to put into the coffin" (Moore, 1993, p 50) Burial clothing could protect the body and improve the appearance of a decaying corpse. Age, available materials, social status, and cultural traditions influenced burial dress (Brantley, 1998).

Burial dress provides three-dimensional, physical evidence that can aid in revealing the identity of the deceased. The clothing used to dress the deceased can serve as an indicator of social, ethnic, religious, and economic affiliation. Also, clothing can provide information about a

person's social status, occupation, and age (Brantley, 1998). Burial clothing is a part of a culture's death customs, including historical, religious, and local aspects and reflects the culture's social structure and ideology.

### **Extant Nineteenth Century Burial Remains**

Archeological research of historic sites can provide a better understanding of the relationship between past and present sociocultural traits and trends. An interdisciplinary approach produces more productive and meaningful results. Thus, costume analysis was included in the broad cooperative efforts to study the few nineteenth century cast iron coffin burials that have been studied in detail. Nineteenth century cast iron coffin burials are important to costume historians because they can provide well-preserved remains that allow more detailed observations and a link between the lifestyles of past and present generations (Haglund and Sorg, 1997).

### **Extant Nineteenth Century Burials**

Before cast iron coffins were patented in the mid-1800s, burials in the United States usually consisted of wooden coffins (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). According to Haglund and Sorg (1997, p. 512), the development of better means of preserving the body, such as cast iron coffins and embalming techniques, were stimulated by the Civil War and the "need to preserve remains for return to distant families." The Fisk metallic burial case was patented in the United States in 1848 and was the first metallic burial case to gain widespread acceptance (Brantley, 1998). Other companies acquired the right to produce Fisk metallic coffins and simplified the original design's mummy shape and ornate design simulating folds of drapery, ornamental scrolls, and flowers, which reduced the cost of metallic coffins and made such burial cases more widely available (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). Public appeal for the product was encouraged by the coffins

ability to enhance preservation, protection from water seepage, vermin, contagion, and grave robbers (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). Although new types of metals and materials such as stone, glass, and celluloid were developed after the invention of Fisk metal coffins, wood continued to be the most popular burial material throughout the nineteenth century (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). Cast iron coffins can be used to understand the period shift of encasement for immediate burial to presentation and display “apparent in the change from a mummy shape to a hexagonal, octagonal, or rectangular one, greater attention to interior furnishings (e.g., lining, pillows) and ornamental exterior hardware (e.g., handles, thumb screws, escutcheons), and enlargement of the glass viewing panel” (Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 512).

Investigators of cast iron coffin burials can anticipate excellent preservation of associated fabrics, especially silk and wool (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). According to Haglund and Sorg (1997, p. 524), “the excellent state of preservation in many iron coffin burials, ...offer a potentially rich source of data on life in the United States in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.” (Haglund and Sorg, 1997) Additional interdisciplinary studies of cast iron coffin burials will add to our knowledge of 19<sup>th</sup> century sociocultural trends and burial practices (Haglund and Sorg, 1997).

### **Extant Nineteenth Century Burial Dress**

Postmortem dress found in photographs can be compared to extant burial dress to provide a greater understanding of the dress worn by deceased individuals in postmortem photographs. Extant burial dress can be used to aid in discovering if a relationship exists between dress depicted in postmortem photographs and burial dress. Is the dress depicted in postmortem photograph used in burial or is the deceased individual dressed for the photograph and then changed for burial?



Dress and appearance is often the first thing mentioned when describing a deceased individual in a coffin or casket. For example, “This infant had been buried seventy years but her little features were just as they were when laid to rest. The white muslin frock fresh and white...There was a tiny white rose bud in the baby’s hand.” (cited in Haglund and Sorg, p. 513). The infant described in this passage was found in a cast iron coffin in Virginia in 1940. The observer is careful to note the infant’s dress as a white muslin frock. In Illinois the remains of a 20 to 30 year old male were found in a cast iron Fisk mummy case. The male was described as wearing a cotton shirt and separate collar, bow tie, cotton trousers, and long-sleeved, cotton, shroud-like garment and his thick red hair was described as “...neatly combed and parted on the right side, and his beard was trimmed to about 1 inch in length and covered the side of the face and rim of the mandible...” (Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 513-514). This not only shows us that dress is often mentioned when describing an individual but also the descriptions serves as a record for historical purposes of studying dress. In these cases the dress including hairstyles and accessories are integral in describing the individual and providing historical context and dating for the burial. Also, these examples of burial dress can be compared to dress found in postmortem photographs to better understand the relationship of clothing associated with death and dying in 19<sup>th</sup> century America.

Coffin manufacturers included passages in advertisements from letters voluntarily written by family or friends describing deceased individuals. The chosen passages included in a pamphlet of a coffin manufacturer contain descriptions of appearance and dress. An advertisement from St. Louis, Missouri states “Body of lady removed after being buried ... hair parted naturally.” (cited in Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 523). Another advertisement from Memphis, Tennessee states “Body of child removed after 23 years’ burial. ... The golden hair

curled over the forehead just as some loving hand had gently brushed it years before.” (cited in Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 523). A Louisville, Kentucky advertisement states “Body of child removed after 40 years. ... the hair was fine and silky. The white robe was perfect, and a large yellow rose, pinned on the breast, was apparently as fresh as if just plucked from the bush.” (cited in Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 523) In advertisements from coffin manufacturers and purchasers of coffins, living relatives and friends carefully observed the dress and appearance of deceased loved ones.

One of the most important factors in determining the date of a deceased individuals death is dress. The examination of the burial remains of a 5-year-old boy included a description of the boy’s dress. The boy wore a smock, undershirt, pants, socks, and shoes with no distinction between left and right feet. The analysis goes on to say “The style of clothing suggested that the child had lived about 100 years previously, in the late 1800s.” (Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 514) In this example the tissue was so well preserved the death could have been within weeks, however the clothes provided enough information to place the burial in another historical period. The remains of a 13 to 14 year old boy were found in Washington, D.C (Smithsonian, 2005). The boys clothing dated to the mid-nineteenth century and helped place the burial between 1848 and 1855 (Smithsonian, 2005). The boy was wearing a shirt, vest, pants, drawers, and socks and was later identified as 15 year old William Taylor White, who died in 1852 (Schmid, 2005 and 2007). In 1988, a cast iron coffin was excavated in Louisiana. The coffin contained the remains of a white male, who was about 50 years old at death. He was described as wearing a narrow bow tie style that was introduced after 1857. Also, the thickness of the shoe heel followed shoe styles found in the 1860’s and early 1870’s. The black wool frock coat and trousers were described as day dress attire that could have been worn to church and were typical gentleman’s

dress styles of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A Virginia burial contained the remains of Walter Weir, who died in 1870 and was 31 years old at time of death. He was wearing a black wool, quilted frock coat, matching trousers, a white cotton vest and white shirt with detachable collar, black silk bow tie, white knitted socks, but no shoes. The description of dress included the statement “typical attire of a middle to upper class male of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.” (Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 516). The dress associated with the Tennessee burial of a white male, who was 50 to 60 years old at death helped to date the burial. The ready-made black wool frock coat and trousers had W.C. Browning & Co. New York marked on the buttons. The company was identified in the New York directory from 1860 to 1874 as a ready-made clothing manufacturer. The coat sleeve style was characteristic of the 1870s and fly front trousers were introduced by the 1860s. The shoe’s rounded toes suggested a date in the 1860s to early 1870s (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). The consistency of dates found in the different dress components places the Tennessee burial within an identifiable time period. Owsley et al. (2006, p. 95-96) uses dress to aid in dating the burial of the “Man in the Iron Coffin.”

This style of high-top boot, possessing a narrow waist with a comparatively high stacked heel, is typical of boots made after 1840 and was common during the Civil War period and later....The single-breasted coats of the earlier part of the century gave way to double breasted ones by the 1860s.

These descriptions provide us with information about the appearance and styles of dress worn by deceased individuals and help date burials because clothing styles and characteristics can be placed within certain periods.

Brantley (1998, p. 93) describes the examination of an adolescent’s burial remains in Louisiana as “P.W. was dressed in quality clothing under his shroud. These garments may have been among his best personal garments.” Brantley (1998, p. 103) also states “His clothing was finely made from quality fabrics and excellent workmanship....P.W. was fully dressed in his

better garments, but also was dressed in a shroud and winding sheet. This shows that his family was concerned not only with modesty, but also with showing their ability to afford quality items.” Welker (1999) describes a 27 year old female Louisiana burial in 1852 as wearing a fashionable long, black, silk taffeta gown. Also, Welker (1999, p. 61-62) makes the following statements about Leontine’s burial dress.

Leontine was from a well-to-do Acadian family, which was evident by her personal accessories, such as the gold locket, gold engraved wedding ring, and black kid gloves....She also wore the highest quality of under sleeves and an extremely fine chemisette. The quality of silk fabric used to make the burial gown further supports the family’s ability to afford high quality materials. Leontine was buried in a complete ensemble of current fashionable dress, which reflected her family’s wealth and her position in the community....Her family’s wealth is further evident by the design and style of the burial gown, which allowed Leontine the luxury of observing popular, mid-nineteenth century fashionable dress.

Owsley et al. (2006, p. 95) describes the male burial found in Tennessee as wearing “In addition to the tailor-made suit, this man was wearing a pair of expensive, good quality riding boots.” Owsley et al. (2006, p. 96) also describes his dress as “A tailor-made suit, even if slightly worn and dated, with a silk and wool vest and silk necktie indicates a relatively high social status.” Many of the researchers make statements that the deceased individuals are buried in their finest attire. Even in the case of nightdress or burial specific textiles either the quality of cloth or what the deceased individual is wearing underneath suggest some element of finery or formality.

Not everyone was buried in fashionable day dress. A Maryland burial contained the remains of John White, a white male who died January 4, 1861 and was 40 to 50 years old at his death. Haglund and Sorg (1997, p. 520) describe John White as buried in a white, shroud-like outer shirt that was described as a “typical commercial burial garment of the period.” He also wore a white cotton, long-sleeved, hip length dress shirt, cotton knit gloves, socks, and drawers (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). Brantley (1998) describes the burial of a male teenager buried in

Louisiana between 1852 and 1857. Brantley (1998, p. 91) states that “The shroud, winding sheet, pillow, and the wrist ribbons are burial-specific textiles. They would not have been used by the living.” A Smithsonian online newsletter (2005) reported the finding of two mid-1800s cast iron coffins from North Carolina. The cast iron coffins made between 1854 and 1864 contained the remains of two women, one in her late 30s and one in her late 40s, likely buried in nightgowns (Smithsonian, 2005).

Hintlian (2001, p. 142) states in regards to Clemence’s, Leontine’s sister, burial in a nightgown that attitudes and cultural beliefs are more influential in burial dress decisions than financial status. Many factors influence the decision making process regarding selection of burial dress including cultural traditions and the personal beliefs of the deceased individual before death and surviving family members.

Additionally, as suggested by Wellington’s and Clemence’s financial capabilities and through investigation of historical documents, including the documented purchase of fabric and trimmings at Millard and Armitage, Clemence most likely possessed a variety of clothing options, including fashionable and finely made dresses. Among these options, the final decision was made to dress Clemence in her nightgown rather than any of her other garments.

### **Nineteenth Century Photography**

The invention of photography in the nineteenth century created a new method of capturing a person’s likeness for posterity. The daguerreotype was the first method of photography to gain widespread acceptance in America and set the stage for a new era of portraiture. No longer was the portrait available only to the wealthy, but images of the working classes could now be preserved for future generations. Photography allowed a person’s image to be captured in less time and with greater likeness. The photograph had an almost immediate impact on every aspect of nineteenth century life including the grieving process.

## **The Daguerreotype**

Americans received instruction on the Daguerreotype process a month after its invention on August 13, 1839 (Johnson, 2004). Initially, amateurs began taking photographs in the Northeast particularly New York, Boston, and Philadelphia (Severa, 2005). Severa (2005) states the new industry attracted many entrepreneurs because the process could be learned through reading a manual or trial and error and the investment capital was modest. According to Severa (2005), many young men attracted to the new art form set up informal studios and gave birth to the portrait of the common man. The initial process took nearly 20 minutes to complete and was best accomplished in direct sunlight, but within a year, the time had been reduced to under a minute (Johnson, 2004). The first daguerreotype studio was opened in New York City in March 1840 and by 1853, Americans are estimated to have taken 3 million portraits per year (Johnson, 2004). Portraiture made up the bulk of daguerreotypes until the process was replaced by paper print methods of photography around 1860 (Johnson, 2004). The daguerreotype was heralded for its ability to capture every minute detail of the sitter including the clothing. According to Johnson (2004), the daguerreotype images portray people from a wide spectrum of social classes and have been used by scholars to record the history of nineteenth century dress. Johnson's research explores the effect of the daguerreotype process on people's choice of dress and the daguerreotypists influence on the dress of their clients for technical, aesthetic, and societal reasons (Johnson, 2004).

### **The Daguerreotype Studio**

According to Severa (2005), two types of daguerreotype studios developed by the mid 1840s. Affluent areas in larger cities developed luxurious studios for wealthy clients that became a place to see and be seen. Some of the perks provided to clients by daguerreotype studios

included music while waiting for a portrait, tasteful props, a certain degree of artistry, and ladies dressing rooms with assistants to help with the grooming. In smaller towns, studios catered to the working class and were more informal with reasonable prices. People could bring their valuable possessions with which to be photographed, and the small town daguerreotypist often ventured out of the studio to take photographs, for example photographs of goldmine scenes and the postmortem photographs.

### **The Daguerreotype's Effect on Dress**

Johnson (2004) points out that most of the technological difficulties faced by early daguerreotypist from 1839 to 1842 dealt with color. Some colors did not convert well into the gray, black, and white tones of the daguerreotype. Dark and light colors had different exposure times and white tended to develop first and overexpose causing the white areas to turn black surrounded by a halo effect. Drab or flesh colored garments were recommended to overcome the white exposure dilemma. Drab or flesh colors were darker than white and developed slower. Dull colors allowed darker colors more time to develop detail, but still provided a degree of contrast between the two. Johnson (2004) suggests that a man having his portrait taken could borrow a front or shirt replacement of drab color to replace his white shirt and avoid overexposure. Color continued to plague the daguerreotype error with light colors often appearing dark and dark colors appearing light in the finished portrait. Yellow and red often appeared black and blue and purple often appeared white. Black silk was the preferred fabric for women having their portrait taken. Satin tended to become too lustrous. Worsteds took a long time for the details to develop, which was advantageous for a woman of dark complexion. Women with fair complexions were advised to wear lighter colors. Men were advised to wear fabrics in dark hues, and black was the color of choice. In 1849, Godey's Lady's Book advised men to wear dark vest

and cravats (Johnson, 2004). Some daguerreotypist advised parents to dress children in light colors to reduce exposure time and ultimately time required for the child to sit still. The daguerreotype was able to capture minute detail and parents were encouraged to choose fashionable children's clothing with embellished hems and necklines that displayed the full capabilities of the technology (Johnson, 2004).

Overall, the entire daguerreotype process from the client entering the studio to leaving with his or her portraits was between thirty and forty-five minutes. However, the one exception to the quick process was a technique used to apply color to the grayscale photographs. The process of tinting involved applying dry pigments of fine powder directly on the plate with a fine brush. According to Severa (2005), tinted cheeks or lips could be done immediately, but more complex tinting techniques were time consuming. She states liquid gold or silver could be dabbed on the plate to accentuate jewelry.

The daguerreotype also provides documentation of the adoption of new styles of dress to fit different functions. Many California gold miners gave up their fashionable eastern dress styles such as starched collars, vest, and frock coats in favor of more practical work clothes such as flannel over shirts and broad brimmed hats, with the phenomenon being well documented in before and after daguerreotypes (Adams-Graf, 1995). Also, California gold miners are depicted in functional, worn clothing when photographed panning for gold and newer, more fashionable styles when posing for a photograph in the studio.

### **The Daguerreotypist**

Many daguerreotypists considered themselves artist and used dress as an element that could be manipulated to create fine works of art. Daguerreotypists believed they had superior knowledge in the aesthetics of dress and portraiture. Adams-Graf (1995) explains in his study of



California gold rush Forty-Niner's clothing as depicted in daguerreotypes that pictures of gold miners taken in daguerreotype studios were often posed with props and fashionable dress and in stark contrast to the stained and worn dress depicted in daguerreotypes taken of miners in the gold fields. Many daguerreotypes were taken to send home to friends and family and some were taken before the miners left home for California. Adams-Graf (1995) states that some men entered daguerreotype studios with mining equipment from tents to pans and stereotypical miners dress and wished to have portraits taken of them as miners before they had even panned for the first piece of gold dust.

In the beginning, photography was used to capture aesthetically pleasing scenes and people at their best. People photographed in mainstream portraits strived to present themselves as fashionably as possible. It wasn't until near the end of the century that images of what was considered less desirable subjects were produced because of changes in technology and ideology of the period (Schlereth, 1982). The speed of photography increased and the cost decreased, which allowed articles of dress that are often missing in museums such as the dress of minorities and everyday work clothes to be recorded for history (Severa, 1995).

Early photographers could not capture motion due to the nature of the equipment, and many of the photographs of people were posed or staged to fit the needs of the photographer (Schlereth, 1982). It was considered normal for the sitter and photographer to arrange the portrait setting and the photographer often made suggestions of what to wear due to the technical limitations of the medium (Severa, 1995). Often the artistry of the photographers' poses and props overtook the true character and charm of the individual. Painted backdrops and props were used in studios to create the illusion of being outdoors, in a luxurious mansion, or even in the snow (Severa, 1995). However, the backgrounds and props rarely fooled the eye and are

considered conventions of the day. When using photographs as historical documents, a researcher must be aware of the historical bias evident in photographs.

During the daguerreian era, it was often believed that a person's outward appearance could convey meanings of social class, wealth, age, and gender and people were encouraged to dress suitable to one's social position (Johnson, 2004). Daguerreotypists that were aware of the meanings associated with outward appearance could manipulate a person's dress and posture to present the most proper and honest ensemble for the portrait. Women were encouraged to dress simply and suitably according to their age and social position as not to appear ostentatious. The daguerreotype portrait was seen as a true representation of a person's outer and inner character, and people were often encouraged to take portraits in clothes they wore everyday in order to capture their true selves (Johnson, 2004).

Accessories such as boas or shawls were used by the daguerreotypist to hide physical defects or to enhance the portraits artistry (Johnson, 2004). Thus, accessories in daguerreotypes may not have been worn the way pictured in everyday life, or they could have been props borrowed from the studio to meet the needs of the photographer. A good daguerreotypist made sure every aspect of a person's dress from ribbons and collars to every strand of hair and drape of fabric was in perfect place before the picture was taken, which distorts how the clothes would have looked on a person in duties of everyday life (Johnson, 2004).

### **The Daguerreotype as a Record of History**

Paper prints came into popularity in the 1860's most importantly because they were cheaper than hard images (Schlereth, 1982). With the decreased cost in photographs came a need to store and preserve the abundance of images that households had begun to collect; albums were designed to house pictures of family, friends, and places. From the beginning of photography,

many people recognized its importance in recording cultural or family history and photographs became treasured belongings of households and historians (Schlereth, 1996).

The daguerreotypes were often too truthful when exposing ill fitting clothing, which might be either too large or too small, or have wrinkles, stains, holes, and tears. However, the daguerreotypes ability to capture minute detail is a great advantage to the historian in its ability to capture how clothing was worn and its appearance on the body (Johnson, 2004). Also, there are far more extant daguerreotypes than garments, which provide a broader spectrum of what was worn during the period (Johnson, 2004). Daguerreotypes provide a glimpse of lower class dress that is often not preserved to the extent of the upper class. Much of the dress depicted in daguerreotypes has deteriorated over time, and the portraits provide researchers with a means to view the clothes, as they would have been in their original condition (Johnson, 2004). The dating of daguerreotypes provides a valuable tool for dating dress and often reveals that styles were worn long after their appearance in fashion plates and magazines (Johnson, 2004).

A researcher must be aware that when studying daguerreotypes many things must be taken into consideration. Hunt (1990) indicates the need to collect the largest number of photographs possible, and Borchert (1982) stresses the inclusion of other forms of historical documentation including written records to overcome inherent biases of the photograph and ultimately the photographer. It is difficult to identify color in a daguerreotype and the photographer may have had a hand in the dress, fabric, colors, accessories, and their arrangement. Most of the population would have only one daguerreotype portrait taken of them in their lifetime due to cost, and their dress was influenced by the technology and artistry involved in the daguerreotype.

According to Schlereth (1996), historical photography as a source of historical evidence can distort bias, abbreviate, and misinterpret reality. However, all sources of historical evidence have their limitations and proper research can account for these shortcomings and establish the credibility of certain artifacts. Schlereth (1996) also states that there is little doubt that photographs are visual artifacts, but the historical significance of the photograph is left to the judgment of the researcher. In order to fully understand photography, the technology involved must be accounted for and that includes the process, materials, and style, and the source of the photograph and the models and methodology used to study the photograph must be identified (Schlereth, 1996).

### **Postmortem Photography**

According to Laderman (1996, p 76), postmortem photographs created a “more intimate, restorative image of the deceased” that filled the nineteenth century American “desire to keep the dead among the living.” Photographic innovations in the 1840s allowed “for more realistic simulations and lifelike representations” (Laderman, 1996, p 77). Death portraits served as a memorial to the deceased and were treasured by family members. They were often publicly displayed in the home and would be carried, as a memento of the deceased loved one (Burns, 1990). Death portraits provide a historical record for family members on a personal level and for the study of funeral, mourning, and burial practices during the period on a cultural level. By observing the material culture and clues provided by the photographs, we can better understand the different ideas surrounding death and burials. The death portraits give us a glimpse into many aspects of the nineteenth century and provide evidence of dress worn by the dead, which otherwise would go unrecorded.

Laderman (1996, p 78) describes postmortem photographs as “expensive but popular specialty item for middle- and upper-class.” Photographic studios that took postmortem photographs were located in urban and rural areas and “would travel to isolated homes in order to capture the image of the corpse desired by the family.” (Laderman, 1996, p78). Postmortem photographs became sentimental reminders of death and deceased loved ones within “a safe, nonthreatening environment — the confines of a framed, domesticated picture” (Laderman, 1996, p 78). In the nineteenth century postmortem images became a mechanism that “ensured immediate recognition, affectionate reminiscence, and domestic coherency.” (Laderman, 1996, p 78). Laderman (1996, p 78) explains the postmortem photograph “offered an inventive, personal way of linking the corpse to the memory of the living.”

Memorializing the deceased through photography was a common practice in the nineteenth century (Burns, 1990). The photographs played an important role in the mourning and memorialization process for many families. Postmortem photography can be used to provide visual evidence of burial related artifacts such as clothing and caskets from the nineteenth century. Postmortem photographs show people as they would have appeared before burial and provide a glimpse into the lives of those buried. Portrait photographs are most useful to historians when the date, sitter, photographer, circumstances of the portrait, and expectations of the audience are known; however, the bulk of extant photographs are anonymous (Severa, 1995). One thing for certain about a portrait photograph whether the stated criteria are defined or undefined is the identification of the clothing (Severa, 1995).

### **Dating Postmortem Photographs**

According to Burns (1990), the most important criteria for dating nineteenth century postmortem photographs are the type of photograph, the position of the body, and the objects

surrounding the deceased. Photograph types refer to the material and method used to capture the image and can be divided into hard images and paper prints. Hard images are preserved on silver-coated copper, glass, and iron, while paper prints are images on paper. Daguerreotypes are images preserved on silver-coated copper and were always placed in a case (Burns, 1990, Johnson, 2004, & Adams-Graf, 1995). The daguerreotype was the original form of photography made available to the masses through studios and professional photographers in 1840, and their use continued into the 1860's. The ambrotype was introduced in 1854 and began to lose popularity around 1865 (Burns, 1990). The ambrotype was an image preserved on glass and was also always cased. The tintype was an image produced on a thin sheet of iron and was a popular form of photography from 1858 to 1880 (Burns, 1990). Popular paper prints included carte de visites used from 1860 to 1875 and is defined as a 2 1/8" by 3 1/2" print pasted on a 2 1/2" by 4" card; stereoviews, which were created from 1860 to 1890, and are described as two 3" by 3 1/4" prints pasted on a card; and large format albumen prints used between the dates 1860 to 1885 and measured 6" by 8". Cabinet cards, which measured 4" by 5 1/2" prints pasted on a 4 1/4" by 6 1/2" card, were developed in 1875 and large format silver prints began in 1885 (Burns, 1990). Large format silver prints were the most popular form of nineteenth century photography to survive into the twentieth century and usually measured 5" by 7" to 11" by 14" (Burns, 1990). Hard images are designated by photographic technique, material used and developing process; while paper prints use different photographic techniques, they can also be distinguished by size. The type of photograph gives a good indication of the photograph's date because the materials and methods used to preserve the images are identifiable and certain techniques were used within defined periods of time.

The positions of the bodies and objects in the photographs are also important in dating postmortem photographs, and Burns (1990) provides the following guidelines. From 1840 to 1860, photographers concentrated on the upper half of the body and often took profiles of the face for adults. The small size of children and infants allowed for full body shots. The body could be photographed lying in a bed, sofa, coffin, or seated and little was done to beautify the image. In the 1860's, the image of infants in a baby carriage became popular and continued to be used throughout the rest of the century. In the 1870's, adults began to be photographed with flowers, usually holding a wreath, and throughout the decade wreaths became more popular. The evident beautification of death through the inclusion of flowers and new cloth lined caskets in the 1880s and 1890s was enhanced by changing funerary practices and the use of certain types of photograph technology including larger print formats. The photograph type and image composition provide valuable insight into the date of the photograph.

### **Postmortem Photograph Descriptions and Classifications**

The custom of photographing corpses, funerals, and mourners has been around since the beginning of photography and can be found across the United States and in most social classes and many ethnic groups (Ruby, 1995). During the first 40 years of photography (ca. 1840-1880), professional photographers regularly advertised that they would capture a deceased persons likeness (Ruby, 1995). Ruby (1995, p.60) states "The ease with which nineteenth century photographers discussed the task of photographing the dead is surely some indication of how culturally normative the practice was."

Laderman (1996, p 77) describes postmortem photographs as depicting the deceased "in a state of rest or sleep, usually in the home, surrounded by family and accompanied with flowers or such religious effects as a cross or a bible." Laderman (1996) states that signs of blood and

rigor mortis visible in early postmortem photographs clearly identify the body as deceased.

Themes and styles found in nineteenth century postmortem photographs include “the corpse on a couch, bed, crib, or a mother's lap” and focus on “the upper torso and the face” (Laderman, 1996, p 78).

Ruby (1995) describes how the standardization of clothing and the transition to ready to wear obscured the ability to determine social status, profession and ethnicity. Ruby (1995, p. 61) states “We are left with an image of what someone looked like and little about his or her character or personality.” Ruby (1995, p. 66) states articles such as flowers, books, or religious paraphernalia were “sometimes placed in the hands or on the chest in an attempt to compose the image.” Ruby (1995, p. 69) believes objects placed in photographs “look more like standard props used to enhance the composition” and rarely convey personal information about deceased individuals.

Ruby (1995, p. 66) claims that most of the postmortem photographs he examined from 1840 to 1880 “concentrated on the facial features of the deceased” and “regardless of whether the image was a close-up or not, the body rested on domestic furniture, often a sofa, usually draped with a coverlet or sheet.” When visible, the setting “appears to be the living room or parlor of a private home” (Ruby, 1995, p. 66). According to Ruby (1995, p. 66), coffins are rarely shown and dead children are sometimes displayed “asleep in a buggy.”

According to Ruby (1995), there are three styles of postmortem photograph from 1840 until 1880 including two styles that deny death and one that portrays the deceased with mourners. Ruby (1995, p. 63) attributes changes in photographic styles at the turn of the century to “technical and social changes in funerary and burial customs.” Ruby (1995, p. 65) also states that the idea of death as “the last sleep” “is a commonplace convention in nineteenth-century



photographs-one that dominates from 1840 to 1880” and thus heavily influenced photographic styles of the period. Ruby (1995, p. 72) states “A variation of the “last sleep” pose represents an attempt to actually conceal the death.” Deceased individuals could be photographed in an “upright position-often in a chair” and the eyes could be left open or painted on afterwards creating the illusion of a live person (Ruby, 1995, p. 72). Ruby (1995) describes coffins as being absent from early photographs because they destroyed the image of death as the last sleep. He also states that before coffins were mass produced, they were unattractive and usually constructed after the person died. From 1880 to 1910, the most common image was that of the entire body, usually in a casket, thus making it impossible to pretend that the deceased were asleep or “dead, yet alive” (Ruby, 1995, p. 75)

### **Summary and Conclusion**

According to Severa (2005), the portrait is a powerful material culture document. The method used to research material culture is examination of the artifact, and by studying it to draw conclusions about the person who made or used the item. Photographic portraits provide a glimpse into a past way of life, and by studying these surviving documents; we are able to learn a great deal about the relationships between dress and culture. Severa (2005) believes dress itself is a powerful tool for dating images and understanding culture because it follows the trends of society very precisely, but does not set the trends. Dress is one aspect of a social trend that includes religious movements, the prevailing moral climate, communication, music, architecture, and art (Severa, 2005).

The invention of photography in the 1840s created an avenue for surviving family members to create a memento of deceased loved ones. Postmortem photography produced the most accurate likeness of a deceased individual and was used to capture the memory of a dead

person for current and future generations. During the nineteenth century, the postmortem photograph evolved along with changes in technology, religion, science, and cultural beliefs.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

Postmortem photography provides a visual history of changes in American customs (Burns, 1990). Mortuary practices during the Victorian era served as a medium for the competitive expression of status and status aspiration, which is considered by Cannon (1989) to be the driving force behind patterns of mortuary elaboration and simplification. The use of postmortem photographs began circa 1840, and they played an important role in the mourning and memorialization process for many families throughout the Victorian period (Burns, 1990). Queen Victoria has been cited as a supremely, influential model for nineteenth century mourning behavior (Jalland, 1996). Following the death of her husband in 1861, the much-respected queen wore mourning dress for the remaining 40 years of her life and spread the culture of mourning to all classes of society (Taylor, 1983). The death of Queen Victoria in 1901 marked the end of the Victorian era and symbolized the end of already fading beliefs and attitudes associated with the period (Tortora and Eubanks, 2005).

The analysis of dress depicted in postmortem photographs from 1840 to 1900 was used to classify, interpret, and illuminate dress in its social context. The research is designed to answer questions related to postmortem dress, burial dress, and cultural beliefs regarding death and dying during the Victorian Era. The study is similar to the investigation of cowboy dress by Wilson (1991), which sought to explore reasons for differences in dress among nineteenth century photographs of cowboys. The postmortem dress study will identify the differences by categories and investigate reasons for those differences. Research questions include the following. What styles of dress are depicted in postmortem photographs from 1840 to 1900? What styles of dress do different age and gender groups wear in postmortem photographs? Is

there a relationship between postmortem dress found in the sample of postmortem photographs and extant burial dress from the Victorian Era? Is there a relationship between socioeconomic status and postmortem dress? Does postmortem dress reflect changing cultural beliefs related to death and dying? What can dress reveal about the people in postmortem photographs?

The sample of postmortem photographs used in this research was derived from available published materials. The information provided by the source for each photograph was used in describing, classifying, and interpreting postmortem dress. *Sleeping Beauty: Memorial Photography in America* (SB I) by Stanley Burns (1990) and *Sleeping Beauty II: Grief, Bereavement and The Family In Memorial Photography American & European Traditions* (SB II) by Stanley Burns (2002) served as the sources of postmortem photographs used in this study. In *Sleeping Beauty: Memorial Photography in America*, Burns (1990) includes 76 postmortem photograph plates from 1840 to 1930, and he states the volume reveals the changes in death concepts and funerary practices during this period. The postmortem photograph plates are compiled from the Burns Archive, institutions, and individuals. Burns (1990) describes the most important categories for identifying postmortem photographs as: (1) the photograph type, which is based on format and processes, and (2) the photograph style, which is based on pose and paraphernalia in the photograph. During the nineteenth century, the sample of postmortem photographs was affected by the cost and access to a photographer or photography studio, and the sample of extant burial dress was affected by the survival of cast iron coffin's, which were relatively rare due to expense (Owsley et al., 2006). However, cultural standards indicate that the lower classes followed the upper classes in the nineteenth century. So if the wealthy and middle classes were being buried in their Sunday's finest, we can suggest the lower classes would be doing their best to imitate this practice. The sample of photographs explored in this study are

valuable because they are useful in exploring the attitudes and practices relating to death and lead to a better understanding postmortem and burial dress in nineteenth century America.

The process of describing and classifying postmortem dress includes identifying and recording the location and date the photograph was taken. The research includes only photographs taken in the United States. The location and date of the photograph was determined by a stamp or writing on the photograph or the location and date provided by the published source of the photograph. The present research focused on photographs from the United States in order to study burial dress and customs in America; and the photograph dates must be between 1840 and 1900, which is the time postmortem photography was used during the Victorian era. The dates were used to organize the photographs chronologically and to compare postmortem dress found in the photographs with fashionable dress of the same periods.

The age of the deceased was recorded within specified age ranges including infant, child, and adult. Postmortem photographs with deceased individuals that appear to be between the ages of 0 and 2 years old were considered infants and between the ages of 3 and 14 years old were considered children. Any deceased individual that appears 15 years and older was considered an adult (Woods, 2000). Postmortem photographs that have written or stamped ages, the person's life span or other information pertaining to age provided by the source of the photograph was used to determine the age of the deceased. The gender was determined by masculine or feminine physical attributes associated with the deceased. The age of the deceased and gender was used to group photographs with similar characteristics in order to observe relationships among groups and within groups.

Material objects in the postmortem photographs excluding the dress worn by the deceased was considered surroundings. Surroundings may include furniture, coffins or caskets,

backdrops, props, family members, and friends. Material culture is purposely created in accordance with an established cultural structure (Schlereth, 1982). Thus, material culture objects found in postmortem photographs can be used as tools to understand the culture.

The postmortem dress was further described and classified using standard terminology and imagery. Fairchild publisher's, *Survey of Historic Costume*, Fourth Edition, by Tortora and Eubanks (2005) and *The Fairchild Dictionary of Fashion*, Third Edition, by Calasibetta and Tortora (2003) provided primary references for widely accepted terminology, dress descriptions, and imagery related to dress. Other sources for terminology, descriptions of dress, and imagery included *Dressed for the Photographer* by Joan Severa (1995), *Natchez Victorian Children: Photographic Portraits, 1865-1915* by Joan W. Gandy and Thomas H. Gandy (1981), and *American Victorian Costume in Early Photographs* by Priscilla Harris Dalrymple (1991). Most of the dress styles described as day dress by Severa (1995) can be found in the postmortem photographs. Also, most of the styles worn for portraits as described by Severa (1995) can be found in the postmortem photographs. Severa is regarded as an expert in dating and identifying nineteenth century dress from photographs. Not only was the sample of nineteenth century postmortem images compared with the findings of Severa, the results were also compared to extant nineteenth century burial remains. The description, classification, and interpretation of postmortem dress were used to identify relationships to extant burial dress, socioeconomic status, and cultural beliefs related to death and dying.

Table 1 presents the constructs, conceptual definitions, and operational definitions used in this research. According to Crano and Brewer (2002), the correct definition and identification of constructs and conceptual and operational definitions help to enhance the validity of a study. A construct is defined as an abstract theory or concept. A conceptual definition seeks to define

Table 1

## Constructs and Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Construct	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Region	Geographic location	United States
Date	Year the postmortem photograph was taken	1840 through 1900
Age	Infant, Child, Adult (life expectancy from 38.9 years in 1850 to 49.6 years old in 1900) (Kerstens, 2005)	Infant – a child in the first period of life (0 to 2 years) Child – a young person between infancy and adulthood (3 to 14 years) Adult – a person that has reached maturity/reproductive age (15+ years) (Woods, 2000)
Gender	Masculine or feminine physical attributes	Male or Female
Surroundings	Physical objects excluding the body and clothing of the deceased in the photograph	Other individuals, coffin, furniture, funeral goods, flowers, religious objects, candles, etc.
Postmortem Dress	Modifications of or supplements to the body	Jewelry, clothing, gloves, shoes, socks, hats, jackets, hairstyles, eyeglasses, pants, suits, shrouds, etc.

the construct. An operational definition makes constructs and concepts scientifically researchable by redefining abstract theories into empirical terms that can be observed or manipulated (Crano and Brewer, 2002).

Postmortem dress was compared to extant American burial dress described in literature relating to the archaeological recovery of nineteenth century burial remains. Sources include Burial Dress of an 1850's Male: A Material Culture Study from South Louisiana by Elizabeth Brantley (1998), An 1852 Female Burial Gown from South Louisiana by Deborah Welker (1999), Clemence's Clothes: The Mortuary Material Culture of an 1857 Burial by Persephone Hintlian (2001), reports by Douglas W. Owsley et al. on the analysis of nineteenth century burial remains found in Forensic Taphonomy: The Postmortem Fate of Human Remains by William D. Haglund (1997), and "The Man in the Iron Coffin: An Interdisciplinary Effort to Name the Past" by Douglas W. Owsley et al. (2006).

Clothing serves as a mirror of the society in which it is worn at both the individual and societal level (Taylor, 1983). Therefore, the study of dress is a key to a deeper understanding of the developments that take place in society (Taylor, 1983). Dates of postmortem photographs and dress can be compared to observe if style features changed during the period. By looking at the dress styles over time and observing whether or not the features are altered or remain constant, a relationship can be identified as to whether or not postmortem dress followed the period trend of increased elaboration over time found in other material objects (Little, Lanphear, and Owsley, 1992 and Burns, 1990). The comparison of postmortem dress with fashionable dress can shed light on whether or not fashionable dress influenced postmortem dress styles from 1840 to 1900. The comparison of age and gender with burial dress can reveal possible relationships between different styles that may have been worn by different age and gender groups. The beautification of death in the nineteenth century was apparent in the marked increase in the expense and ritual associated with death (Little et al., 1992). According to Taylor (1983), the wealthy increased funeral expenses and ostentation throughout the Victorian era in order to



distinguish themselves from the lower classes; and the working classes struggled to recreate funerals of the rich as nearly as they could afford. For this reason, social class may be difficult to determine on the basis of postmortem dress alone. Severa (1995) states the socioeconomic status of an individual is visible in the craftsmanship, materials, and design details of a garment. Good craftsmanship, expensive materials, and proper execution and increased number of design details suggest higher socioeconomic status. The belief that death was rest or sleep was popular during the period (Burns, 1990). The number of burial garments that resemble nightgowns can be observed to see how frequently they were used during the period. Postmortem dress was analyzed to examine the possible relationships with the cultural beliefs and customs regarding death and dying during the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Description of the Sample

The sample of nineteenth century postmortem photographs consisted of 84 images, 58 from *Sleeping Beauty: Memorial Photography in America* (SB I) and 26 from *Sleeping Beauty II: Grief, Bereavement and The Family In Memorial Photography American & European Traditions* (SB II) by Stanley Burns (1990 and 2002). Appendix A provides a complete listing of all the photographs included in this study. The 84 images were divided into six decades from 1840 to 1900. Of these images, 21 photographs were dated between the years 1840 to 1849, 25 were between 1850 to 1859, nine were dated between 1860 to 1869, six photographs between 1870 and 1879, 11 photographs were between the years 1880 and 1889, and 12 photographs were dated between the years 1890 to 1900. Burns (1990) dated three photographs (SB I, Plate 17) with a date range from 1845-1855, and these were placed within a decade based on dress and photograph characteristics. Burns assigned precise dates to 19 photographs and circa dates to 65 images.

Nineteenth century photographic images can be divided into two types, hard images and paper prints. Hard images in the sample included 41 daguerreotypes dating from 1842 to 1863, seven ambrotypes dating from 1845 to 1865, and five tintypes ranging from 1863 to 1885. Paper images in the sample included one albumen print from 1865, four carte de visites dating from 1865 to 1870, also, three stereoviews dating between 1868 to 1882, 14 cabinet cards dating from 1874 to 1891, and nine silver prints that ranged in dates from 1885 to 1900 (see Table 2). The largest percentage of photographs was daguerreotypes, which consisted of 49 percent of the sample. The largest portion of the photographs was in the first two decades between the years

1840 to 1859 making up 55 percent of the sample. Daguerreotypes make up 86 percent of the photographs from the first two decades.

Table 2

Postmortem Photographs by Photographic Technique and Decade

	Hard Images			Paper Prints						
	Daguerreotype	Ambrotype	Tintype	Albumen Print	Carte de Visite	Stereoview	Cabinet Card	Silver Print	Total	% Total
1840s	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	25
1850s	19	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	25	30
1860s	1	2	2	0	3	1	0	0	9	11
1870s	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	6	7
1880s	0	0	1	0	0	1	8	1	11	13
1890s	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	12	14
Total	41	7	5	1	4	3	14	9	84	100
% Total	49	8	6	1	5	3	17	11	100	

Of the 84 postmortem photographs, 42 of the photographs (50 percent) were given a city, state, or territory of origin (Appendix B). The other 42 photographs are of unknown origin within the United States of America. The majority of the labeled photographs were from the Northeast, which comprised 54.8 percent of the known sample. Six of the pictures were from New York City with a total of 10 from the state of New York. Regional designations given in Table 3 are based on the regions used by the U.S. Census Bureau (2001).

Table 3

Postmortem Photographs by Regions

	Northeast	West	South	Midwest	Total
	23	2	7	10	42
% Total	54.8	4.8	16.6	23.8	100

The 84 postmortem photographs depicted a total of 89 deceased individuals, of which 28 are adults, 31 were children, and 30 were infants. There are 9 adult females, 19 adult males, 17 child females, 14 child males, 13 infant females, 2 infant males, and 15 gender indeterminate infants. From SB I, Plate 53 depicted twin gender indeterminate infants and Plate 63 was a photograph of 2 male children sharing a casket. Plate 82 from SB II was a photograph of an adult female and a gender indeterminate infant, and Plate 78 was a photograph with three male children lying in a bed. Infant gender was specified by Burns when known and if not labeled was classified as indeterminate.

The adult female photographs dated between the years 1843 to 1891. The adult male photographs dated between the years 1843 to 1890. The child female photographs were dated between the years 1842 to 1900. The child male photographs were dated between 1848 and 1900. The infant female photographs were between the years 1844 to 1884. The infant male photographs dated from 1872 and 1893. The infant indeterminate photographs dated between the years 1845 to 1900. The majority of images from each gender category are in the daguerreotype era and within the years 1840 to 1859 with the exception of child males, of which the majority of images are from the cabinet card and silver print era and date between the years 1880 to 1900. Twenty-three of the deceased individuals are photographed in coffins or caskets. Twelve of the deceased individuals photographed in coffins are from the periods 1880 to 1900. Thirteen of the individuals photographed in coffins are adults with four of the adults being female. Seven infants, three male children, and no female children were photographed in coffins. Sixteen postmortem images depict parents holding their deceased children or infants. Seventy-nine percent of the deceased individuals were photographed lying down.

## **Postmortem Dress**

Dress depicted in the postmortem photographs examined in this study was compared with dress depicted in extant nineteenth century photographs of individuals who were alive at the time the photographs were taken. Garments, hairstyles, and accessories found in postmortem photographs were examined and provide evidence of how deceased individuals were dressed and most likely what they were wearing when buried. The determination of postmortem dress characteristics was strongly influenced by the photographic technique and style. The clarity of images and the style of the photograph whether frontal, profile, above the waist, above the neck, or a full body image played a significant role in the ability to determine specific dress features. Table 4 indicates the portions of the bodies that were visible in the photographs. The most prevalent group of pictures was full body views, which made up 30 percent of the entire sample. Within the full body images 51 percent dated from the 1840s to 1850s. The second most popular genre of photographs in the sample were above the waist views, which made up 21 percent of the sample; this was followed by 15 percent of the photographs showing deceased individuals from above the hip. Fifty-seven percent of the above the waist images and 69 percent of the above the hip photographs were from 1840 to 1859. The photographs were selected by Burns based on photographic techniques and popular styles, and the analysis of postmortem dress was determined by observation of dress visible in the sample.

### **Adult Male Postmortem Dress**

Adult male postmortem photographs were divided by decade and photograph technique (see Table 5). The study included a total of 19 adult male individuals depicted in postmortem photographs. The majority of adult male photographs were from the first three decades and 42.2 percent were daguerreotypes.

Table 4

## Portions of the Body Visible in Postmortem Photographs

	Above Neck	Above Shoulder	Above Chest	Above Waist	Above Hip	Above Knee	Above Ankle	Full Body	Total	% Total
1840s	1	1	2	6	4	0	3	4	21	23
1850s	0	1	4	5	5	2	5	3	25	28
1860s	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	3	9	10
1870s	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	6	7
1880s	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	5	13	15
1890s	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	10	15	17
Total	2	2	10	19	13	6	10	27	89	100
% Total	2.25	2.25	11.25	21	15	7	11.25	30	100	

Table 5

## Adult Male Postmortem Photographs

	Daguerreotype	Ambrotype	Tintype	Albumen Print	Carte de Visite	Stereoview	Cabinet Card	Silver Print	Total	% Total
1840s	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	21
1850s	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	31.6
1860s	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	15.8
1870s	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	5.3
1880s	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	4	21
1890s	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5.3
Total	8	2	2	0	2	1	2	2	19	100
% Total	42.2	10.5	10.5	0	10.5	5.3	10.5	10.5	100	

Based on the examination of adult male postmortem photographs, the adult male postmortem dress was divided into two major categories, day dress and shrouds. According to Burns (2002, Plate 19), many men were buried in their “best clothes or plain white shrouds. Families who could afford costly outfits frequently buried their men in special white garb.” Day dress was further divided into three subcategories (see Table 6). The first subcategory included day dress that contained either all or some of the elements that were considered appropriate for business attire or church attire in the nineteenth century including a shirt, tie, vest, coat, and trousers. Most of these garments appear to be in good condition and have little wear. Condition and appearance of the garment was a factor for determining placement in this category. The second subcategory is day dress that appeared to be casual or manual labor oriented in appearance with visible evidence of wear. The first two subcategories shared similar dress elements but the condition and appearance of the dress within each category are different. The final subcategory designates occupational dress and includes dress that denotes service or membership within a particular organization or occupation such as a uniform or ecclesiastical dress. The shroud category of adult male postmortem dress includes night dress or shirts, which have a shroud like appearance. The shroud category includes garments that appear to be a light tone in the photograph and the deceased individuals are not wearing vests or coats. Day dress was depicted in both natural settings, such as seated in a chair or lying in bed, and within coffins. Two of the four shrouds were photographed in sleep like settings with pillows and bed coverings and the other two deceased adult males were photographed in coffins.

The postmortem adult male dress category that was depicted most frequently in the images was day dress. Seventy-nine percent of the adult male postmortem photographs depicted day dress with business or church day dress making up the largest subcategory of day dress. In

the caption for Plate 21, Burns (1990) refers to adult male individuals as usually being buried in their “Sunday finest.” Eight of the 19 (42.1 percent) adult male postmortem images depicted deceased adult males wearing shirts, ties, vest, and coats.

Table 6

Adult Male Postmortem Dress by Categories

	Day Dress			Shroud		
	Business or Church	Casual or Manual Labor	Occupational	Shroud, night dress or shirt	Total	% Total
1840s	3	0	0	1	4	21.1
1850s	3	0	1	2	6	31.6
1860s	0	1	2	0	3	15.8
1870s	1	0	0	0	1	5.2
1880s	3	0	0	1	4	21.1
1890s	0	1	0	0	1	5.2
Total	10	2	3	4	19	100
% Total	52.6	10.5	15.8	21.1	100	

The adult male postmortem images contained 11 images that were from the waist or above, and eight images that depicted dress below the waist as well as above the waist. The majority of the images depicting dress above the waist make certain dress styles difficult to determine. Also, the position of the body either lying or seated makes it difficult to determine length and fit of the coat. Design characteristics that distinguish between a frock coat and a sack coat deal with the length of the coat and the presence or absence of a waistline seam. Frock coats have a waistline seam, are typically longer and more fitted than sack coats, have longer lapels and button lower than sack coats. Sack coats do not have a waistline seam; have a looser fit than frock coats and have smaller collars, short lapels and button closer to the neck.

Tortora and Eubank (2005) state that the frock coat transitioned from country wear towards more formal wear in the eighteenth century. During the first half of the nineteenth century, frock coats were one of “the most common types of coats” worn by men and was worn



for everyday use (Tortora and Eubank, 2005, p. 291). In the 1840s, Severa (1995, p. 20) describes the frock coat as being mainly worn for formal day occasions or by “more important” or older people, and Dalrymple (1991) describes the frock coat as a component of gentleman’s attire. During the nineteenth century, the frock coat transitions from everyday dress in the first half of the century to being reserved for the older generation, formal daytime wear, and special occasions into the late 1890s.

According to Tortora and Eubank (2005, p. 319), the sack coat was “introduced in the late 1840s for casual wear.” The coat is described by Severa (1995, p. 19) as “lighter weight, softer material, and lack of lining and waist seam” making the coat comfortable, relatively inexpensive, and easy to mass-produce. Also, the sack coat is described as closing high at the neck barely showing the neck tie and having extremely narrow and small lapels (Severa, 1995). In the 1840s, the sack coat could be worn for leisure or daytime business (Severa, 1995). Although the sack coat was considered “informal attire,” Severa (1995, p. 20) is careful to point out that “the most threadbare and wrinkled sack coat, worn by an obvious working man” is usually accompanied by a hat, tie and vest in public. The sack coat is described as the most popular style for informal wear in the 1860s and 1870s. In the 1880s, the sack coat becomes shorter with narrower sleeves replacing the oversized sack coat of previous decades and being so prevalent in photographs it “must be taken to have been universally acceptable as day wear” (Severa, 1995, p. 388).

Based on the descriptions by Tortora and Eubank (2005) and Severa (1995), a total of 6 deceased adult males are depicted (SB I Plates 8, 28, 32, and 48 and SB II Plates 3 and 58) wearing frock coats, because the coats have long lapels that button low on the body (see Figure 1). From SB I, Plates 42 and 58 and Plate 53 from SB II fit descriptions of sack coats because the



**Figure 1. Deceased adult male wearing a frock coat.** SB I (1990), Plate 28, circa 1849 depicts a deceased adult male wearing a frock coat, vest, shirt, and wide tie.

coats have short lapels that button closer to the neck. Plate 60 from SB I depicts a criminal wearing a coat style that is difficult to determine and ends near the waist or is pulled to the back. The coat style in SB I, Plate 25, was indeterminate because the deceased adult male is covered with a textile to the chest, but the coat appears to be a frock coat because the coat opening does not button near the neck. Of the 11 deceased adult males wearing coats, seven are wearing frock coats, three are wearing sack coats, and one is wearing an unidentified style. The dates of the frock coats in the photographs are 1843, two from 1849, 1850, 1854, and two from 1880. These dates are consistent with the popularity of frock coats as day dress and formal day dress in the nineteenth century. The postmortem images containing deceased adult males wearing sack coats are dated 1868, 1871, and 1885, which are consistent with the popularity of sack coats for day dress. The sack coat from 1885 is an example of the narrower and more fitted style introduced in the 1880s (Figure 2), which contrast with the two earlier sack coats that are more loosely fitted. There is one double breasted frock coat depicted in Plate 32 from SB I that is dated 1850 and one double breasted sack coat from SB I in Plate 58 that is dated 1885. All of the other coats appear



**Figure 2. Deceased adult male wearing a double breasted sack coat.** SB I (1990), Plate 58, circa 1885 depicts a deceased adult male wearing a double breasted sack coat, narrow tie, and patent leather shoes.

to be single breasted. All of the deceased adult males with the lower half of the body visible are wearing trousers to accompany there coats, vest, and shirts, which were a standard for male day dress throughout the nineteenth century. Frock coats and sack coats are worn by deceased males throughout the nineteenth century and sack coats appear in postmortem images as the style became generally acceptable for day wear.

Adult male shirt collar styles were divided into three major categories, standing, turned down, and collarless. Shirt collars were identified on deceased adult males in both the day dress and shroud categories. Eight collars were determined to be standing collars, four collars appeared to be turned down, one shirt was collarless, one collar was not visible because it was hidden by a long beard, and one collar was hidden by what appears to be a tie around the neck. The postmortem images containing standing collars were dated 1843, two from 1849, 1850, 1853, 1854, 1856, and 1871. Eighty-eight percent of the standing collars were from 1843 to 1856. The dates of the turned down collars were 1858, two from 1880, and 1885. Seventy-five percent of the turned down collars were from the 1880s. The image of the criminal wearing a collarless

shirt was dated 1890. The men's collar styles are comparable to nineteenth century fashion with collars transitioning from standing to turned down collars.

In the 1840s, Dalrymple (1991, p. 1) states men's collars "were either the very high, stiff 'parricide' type, with points that projected over the cheeks, or the later, turned down style that was popular with younger men." Severa (1995, p.20) describes collars in the 1840s as being "not large and was worn stiffly starched and turned up under a tie, sometimes with a narrow turndown over the tie." In the 1850s, Dalrymple (1991, p. 11) states that "High collars were very much in evidence despite the fact that turned-down collars were more up-to-date." Tortora and Eubank (2005) describe collars from 1850 to 1870 extending to the jaw with no major changes in shirts from earlier periods, and shirt collars from 1870 to 1900 as stiff, standing collars with removable starched collars ranging in shape from straight to fold over. Severa (1995, p. 388) describes collars in the 1880s as either the "stiff, standing style, popular late in the decade, or a medium-sized turn down style." Both standing collars and turned down collars were worn during the nineteenth century, standing collars being more popular and taller in the first half of the century and shorter to medium standing collars or turned down collars coming into fashion in the second half of the century.

Vests were visible in six of the adult male photographs. Some other images could have a vest but if so they are hidden under a buttoned coat or the photograph is unclear. The images with vests are dated 1843, 1849, 1850, 1856, 1868, and 1880. One vest is light colored, four are dark colored, and one is plaid. Most of the vest collars appear to be notched, but one vest has an identifiable shawl collar. Severa (1995, p. 20) describes vests in the 1840s as having shawl or notched collars, double or single breasted, usually cut to match the suit and sometimes cut in "white cotton." The light colored vest from 1843 with a notched lapel could be an example of a

white cotton vest. The image with the plaid vest was dated 1856. Severa (1995, p. 105) states that dress vests in the 1850s could be of “elaborately woven, patterned silks.” Dalrymple (1991, p. 11) describes vests of the 1850s as “fancy” and that they “added verve to the scene.” Plate 39 from *American Victorian Costume in Early Photographs* (Dalrymple, 1991) depicts a male wearing a plaid waistcoat in the 1850s. The deceased adult male was 16 years old at death and could have been dressed in this fashionable vest style since he was perhaps a younger adult and more likely to wear current styles. The image of the adult male dressed in the vest with a shawl collar is dated 1868. According to Severa (1995, p. 209), “Vests of the sixties were usually collared, often with the shawl collar.”

Eight of the adult male postmortem photographs contain neckwear. Three adult males are wearing cravats and two of the images date from 1843 and one from 1856. The cravats from 1843 are clearly asymmetric and patterned. It is indeterminate as to whether the cravat from 1856 is asymmetric or patterned. Four of the adult male images contain bowties. The bowtie from 1854 is wide, solid and dark. The bowties from 1880 and 1885 appear to be narrower than the bowties from earlier decades. One adult male from 1858 is wearing a light colored shroud and bow tie. Colle (1972, p. 78) states that “White bow ties became the formal cravat for evening wear in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.” Two of the items of neckwear from 1849 and 1850 are indeterminate as to whether they are cravats or bowties but the knots are visible and very wide in comparison to later bowties. According to Dalrymple (1991, p. 1, 11) in the 1840s, men’s “cravats and neckcloths were wrapped and tied in a variety of ways” and in the 1850s, men’s neckwear had “considerable variety and exuberance” and could be “modest or flamboyant, and bow ties were popular.” As for the narrower bow ties in the 1880s, Dalrymple (1991) mentions that narrow bow ties were becoming more common in the 1860s and by the 1880s coat collars buttoned

higher and narrow bow ties predominated. Many of the earlier neckwear styles are similar to the style described by Severa (1995, p. 388) in the 1880s as being “seen wrapped all the way around the neck, having no collar to cover it.” Colle (1972) points out that the rise of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century influenced cravat and bow tie styles from being larger, wider, more variety, colors, patterns, and more freedom in tying style towards a more practical, smaller, narrower, and uniform appearance.

The deceased adult male in Plate 58, circa 1885, from SB I is wearing patent leather shoes (Figure 2). This is the only postmortem adult male photograph in the sample that depicts male footwear. Tortora and Eubank (2005, p. 350) state that “patent leather shoes were used with both day and evening dress” from the period 1870 to 1900.

The majority of hairstyles are parted on the side and slicked down or slicked back. Of the hairstyles that are clearly visible, the soldiers and one of the criminals have medium length unkempt hair. Only one of the deceased adult males wearing business or church attire has a full beard. The other men have clean shaven faces, clean shaven faces with full sideburns, or a trimmed goatee and moustache. Both of the men in the casual or manual labor category, both of the criminals, and both of the civil war soldiers have full beards. The clergyman has a clean shaven face. In the sample, facial hair seems to be related to occupational or status.

The deceased male in Plate 60 SB I was labeled as a “train robber and murderer.” His trousers, shirt, vest, and coat appear heavily worn (see Figure 3). His shirt style is referred to by Dalrymple (1991, p. 67) as a “typical workshirt” of the nineteenth century that being a collarless flannel with four-button opening or placket. The other deceased male individual in the casual or manual labor category is dressed in a “come-as-you-are” appearance (Severa, 1995, p. 104) (Figure 4). He is wearing a fashionable sack coat and shawl collar vest for the photograph date

but the suit appears heavily worn. Severa (1995) describes his striped shirt as being available for the period but not appropriate for dressier occasions. The shirts of the deceased male individuals in the business or church attire category appear to be light in color value or white. Severa (1995, p. 209) describes shirts for dressier occasions as being “uniformly white” and “Shirts were most commonly white, but stripes and checks and plaids were available.”



**Figure 3. Deceased adult male train robber.** Plate 60, 1890, from SB I (1990) is a deceased adult male described as a train robber and murderer and is wearing collarless shirt, vest, coat, and trousers.



**Figure 4. Deceased adult male in casual or manual labor category.** Plate 42, circa 1868, from SB I (1990) is an image of a deceased adult male in the casual or manual labor category of day dress and is wearing a striped shirt, shawl collared vest, sack coat and trousers (left). The male individual from *American Victorian Costume in Early Photographs* (Plate 112, 1860s) depicted in the photograph on the right is wearing a vest with shawl collar (right).

The adult males dressed in shrouds, shirts, or night dress make up a unique group of images. Severa (2005, p. 20) states “A man would rarely, if ever, be seen in public in his shirt sleeves during this decade [1840s].” Severa (2005) even compares shirts to underwear. It is interesting that these men or family members would be dressed in garments that appear to be reserved for private occasions. The shrouds appearance may be deceiving because according to Burns (2002, Plate 19), “Families who could afford costly outfits frequently buried their men in special white garb.” In the postmortem images, the shrouds appear to be light in value or appear white, have full sleeves and shoulders, and worn without coats or vests. Two of the adult male postmortem images placed in the shroud category also contain neckwear. Figure 5 depicts an image dated 1853 of a deceased adult male wearing a shroud or shirt with a very full torso and sleeves and a very tall standing collar that extends beyond the chin.



**Figure 5. Deceased adult male shroud.** Plate 19, circa 1853, from SB II (2002) depicts a deceased adult male wearing a shroud that is a light value or appears white and tall standing collar that extends beyond the chin.

Three deceased adult males were placed in the occupational dress category. The dress worn by these individuals or their appearance is indicative of their occupation. One of the



individuals is a civil war soldier photographed wearing his uniform (Figure 6). Burns (1990) labels the individual in Figure 7 as a clergyman and he is depicted wearing ecclesiastical dress.



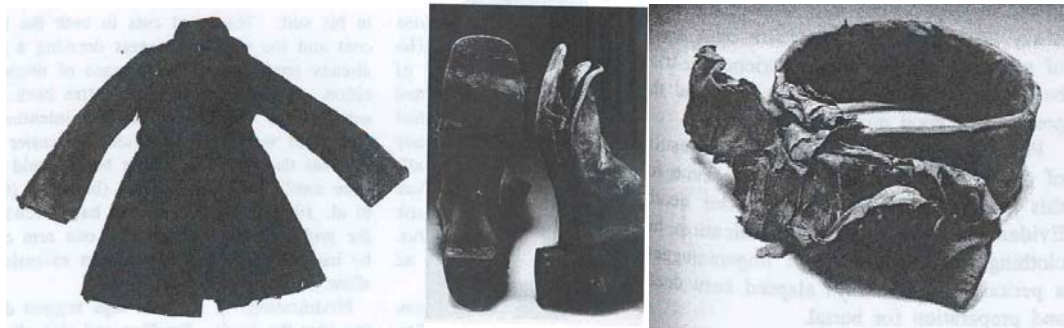
**Figure 6. Deceased Civil War soldier.** Plate 43, 1865, from SB II (2002) depicts a Civil War soldier dressed in a military uniform.



**Figure 7. Deceased clergyman.** Plate 41, circa 1859, from SB I (1990) depicts a clergyman dressed in ecclesiastical dress.

Dress can reveal clues about the lives of deceased individuals. Within the category of deceased male individuals, clothes may be a strong indicator of status and occupation denoted through the differences in dress and appearance. However, dress can also be deceiving because many lower class individuals seek to imitate the styles of the upper classes in order to portray status.

In “The Man in the Iron Coffin,” Owsley et al. (2006) describes the dress of a 35 year old white male, who died in 1862 and was identified as Isaac Newton Mason. His burial dress consisted of a black broadcloth, single-breasted frock coat, a deteriorated vest that had a wool front and silk back, a silk bow tie, trousers and boots (see Figure 8). His dress was a factor in determining his “relatively high socioeconomic status” and would have been acceptable for most occasions (Owsley et al., 2006, p. 96).



**Figure 8. Extant burial dress.** Taken from “The Man in the Iron Coffin” by Doug Owsley et al. (2006). The black broadcloth, frock coat, riding boots and necktie worn by Isaac Newton Mason for burial.

Another extant burial example is the Louisiana burial of a white male, about 50 years old at death (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). The deceased male is described as wearing a frock coat, white shirt, and bow tie. Costume analysis helped date the burial by the narrow width of the bow tie and thick heel of the shoe placing the burial in the late 1860s.

A Virginia burial that contained the remains of Walter Weir, who died in 1870 at the age of 31, also provides evidence of male individuals being buried in day dress. Weir was dressed in a black wool frock coat, matching trousers, a white cotton vest and white shirt with detachable collar, and black silk bow tie, white knitted socks, and no shoes (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). Weir’s dress is described as “typical attire of a middle to upper class male of the mid-nineteenth century.” (Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 517)

A Tennessee burial contained the remains of a 50 to 60 year old white male named William Alexander Burns, who died in 1867 (Haglund and Sorg, 1997). Burns was described as wearing black wool frock coat and trousers, shirt, underclothing, socks, and shoes (Haglund and Sorg, 1997).

Deceased male individuals photographed in coffins coincide with extant burial remains of day dress. Day dress was the most prevalent style of dress for deceased male individuals in the sample of postmortem photographs. Postmortem photographs can also be used to show new styles adopted by males in the nineteenth century. The deceased adult male photographed in 1885 wearing a double breasted coat is one example that can be used to illustrate new dress styles adopted in the second half of the century. According to Owsley et al. (2006), single breasted coats were replaced by double breasted coats in the 1860s. Severa's (1995, p. 387) description of fashionable coat styles in the 1880s as having "extremely narrow and small" lapels and closures high at the throat, which is similar to the double breasted coat, can also be used to show the adoption of new men's coat collar and lapel styles in the nineteenth century.

Not all male individuals in the sample of postmortem photographs were dressed in day dress. An alternative to day dress attire for male burials was a shroud. Often, deceased males that were either buried or photographed in shrouds still maintained some elements of day dress including shirts, collars, neckties, and trousers. According to the description of 19<sup>th</sup> century burial remains in Beardstown, Illinois, a white male, 20 to 30 years of age at death was buried in a "cotton shirt and separate collar, bow tie, cotton trousers, and long-sleeved, cotton, shroud-like garment" (Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 513). A nineteenth century Maryland burial contained an adult male, 40 to 50 years at death, identified as John White, who died January 4, 1861 (Haglund and Sorg, 1997, p. 520). White was described as wearing "a white, shroud-like outer

shirt...typical commercial burial garment of the period.” (Haglund and Sorg, 1997 p520). White also wore a white cotton, long-sleeved, hip length dress shirt, cotton knit gloves, socks, and drawers.

Male individuals that died under special circumstances, such as soldiers, were frequently buried in uniforms or occupational dress. The deceased criminal Rube Burrows described by Burns (1990) as a train robber and murder is photographed wearing a collarless shirt and heavily worn coat and hat. Severa (1995, p. 104) states that it was common for men to be photographed in a “come-as-you-are” look, “often appearing to have stopped in direct from the day’s work, and are thus seen in more well-worn, wrinkled, and older-looking clothing than are women.” There is also evidence of this practice in adult male postmortem photographs.

### **Adult Female Postmortem Dress**

The adult female postmortem dress category contained nine images. Five of the nine (55.6 percent) adult female images were from the 1840s with 77.8 percent in the decades 1840 to 1859 (see Table 7). Six of the adult female postmortem images were daguerreotypes.

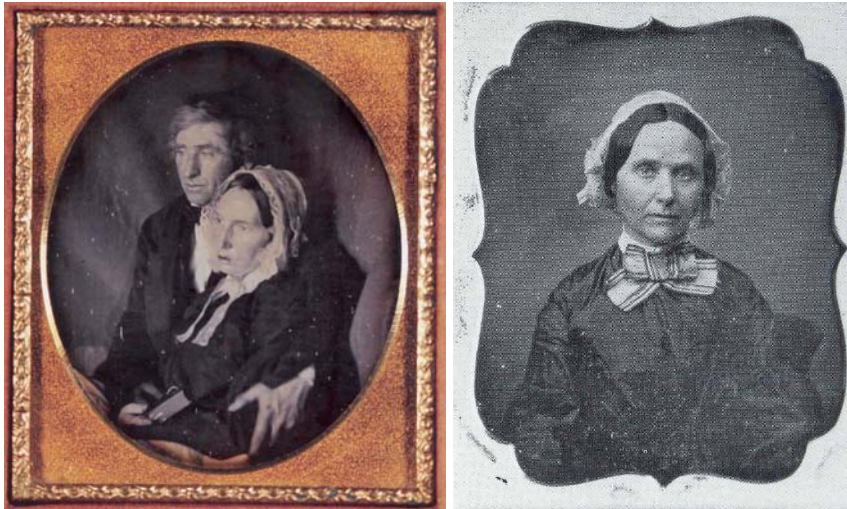
Table 7

Adult Female Postmortem Photographs

	Daguerreotype	Ambrotype	Tintype	Albumen Print	Carte de Visite	Stereoview	Cabinet Card	Silver Print	Total	% Total
1840s	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	55.6
1850s	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	22.2
1860s	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1870s	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1880s	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1890s	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	22.2
Total	6	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	9	100
% Total	66.7	11.1	0	0	0	0	22.2	0	100	

Adult female postmortem dress can be divided into two categories: day dress and shrouds. The images of deceased adult females wearing shrouds also contain elements of day dress styles. Burns (1990, Plate 21) describes the adult females dress as a “white burial gown” and states “women, when it could be afforded” would usually be buried in a white burial dress and “these dresses for women, girls, and infants resembled the white confirmation or wedding dress.” Plate 6, circa 1843, Plate 14, circa 1844, and Plate 40, circa 1858, from SB I and Plate 2, circa 1845 and Plate 80, 1891, from SB II were placed in the day dress category. Day dress is described as dress styles that would have been worn to a public occasion while the adult female was alive. The visible day dress in the deceased adult female category appears to be dark in value or appears black. Shrouds were determined based on light value or white appearance. Plate 21, circa 1846 from SB I and Plate 25, 1856, from SB II depict deceased adult females in shrouds. The dress in two adult female photographs was deemed indeterminate because one photograph was unclear and the other female was covered to the neck with a dark textile, but her hair is fashionably arranged for the period of the photograph, 1840s, with a center part, hair arranged over the ears, and the rest pulled back into a bun or chignon.

The day cap was a fashionable item of clothing from the 1840s and can be seen in the adult female postmortem photographs from this decade (see Figure 9). Four of the deceased women are wearing light valued or white day caps. Severa (1995, p. 10) describes the day cap “of more or less sheer white cotton is associated with the 1840s dress, both everyday and dressy attire.” Three of the four women wearing day caps are from the 1840s. The dress of the deceased adult female depicted in Figure 10 has many style features associated with fashionable dress for the period. The postmortem photograph in Figure 10 is dated circa 1844 and according to Severa (1995), the dress contains elements of fashionable dress for the decade including a fan bodice



**Figure 9. Day caps.** Plate 2, circa 1845, from SB II (2002) depicts a deceased adult female wearing a day cap (left). Plate 18, 1840s, from *American Victorian Costume in Early Photographs* depicts a living adult female wearing a day cap (right).



**Figure 10. Adult female fashionable day dress.** Plate 14, circa 1844, from SB I (1990) depicts a deceased adult female wearing a fashionable day dress with fan bodice, full skirt, sleeves, and collar. The adult female depicted in the photograph dated 1849-50 from *Dressed for the Photographer* (p 70) is wearing a similar fan bodice.

and full skirt. However, the large bell sleeves and trim are more reminiscent of the second half of the 1850s. Three of the deceased adult females from the 1840s wearing day dress have a light valued or white collar or neck ribbon clearly visible at the neckline. Severa (1995, p. 12) states



“White collars were universally worn for daytime.” Even deceased women photographed in shrouds wear elements of fashionable dress such as day caps and gloves (see figure 11).



**Figure 11. Deceased adult female shroud.** Plate 21, circa 1846, from SB I (1990) depicts a deceased adult female in a shroud with day cap and gloves.

All of the postmortem photographs contain adult females with neatly arranged hair. Even when there is little done to beautify the image as in Figure 12, the female’s hair is still fashionably arranged. Severa (1995, p. 10) describes arranging the hair in the 1840s as “a fashion element shared by all classes, as it could be accomplished without any expenditure at all....a little practice before the mirror enabled a poor girl in the 1840s to have as lovely a hairdo as the richest belle...” Tortora and Eubanks (2005, p. 287) describe the typical female hairstyle of the



**Figure 12. Deceased adult female hairstyle.** Plate 16, circa 1843, from SB I (1990) is a postmortem photograph with little done to beautify the image; notice the stream of blood running from the nose, yet the adult female’s hair is still neatly and fashionably arranged for the period.

1840s as “Parted in the middle, the hair was pulled smoothly to the temples where it was arranged in hanging sausage-shaped curls or in plaits or with a loop of hair encircling the ears. At the back, the hair was pulled into a bun or chignon.” The elderly lady from 1856 is the only deceased female that appears to have sausage curls. All of the other deceased females from the 1840s and 1850s have a loop of hair encircling the ears.

Postmortem photographs can also be used to show the continued use of dress items even after they are no longer considered current fashion. According to Severa (1995), the day cap lost popularity among younger women in the 1850s but elderly women continued to wear the style. Plate 25, circa 1856, from SB II shows an elderly woman wearing a day cap.

The analysis of extant burial remains found in Louisiana of a 27 year old female named Leontine revealed that she was wearing a long, black, silk taffeta gown, with bell-shaped, cuffed pagoda sleeves, embroidered under sleeves, full, five panel skirt, embroidered cotton chemisette, two long petticoats, knee length chemise, knee length cotton knit stockings, head kerchief, tortoise shell hair comb, gold locket, wedding ring, wrist length black kid gloves and black cloth shoes (Welker, 1999). According to Welker (1999, p. 62), “Leontine was buried in a complete ensemble of current fashionable dress, which reflected her family’s wealth and her position in the community.” Welker (1999) is careful to mention that Leontine was buried in “fashionable dress” and her dress was seen as a display of social status.

Hintlian (2001) examined the remains of Clemence Elisabeth Gaude, Leontine’s sister, also from Louisiana. She was wearing a full length white cotton muslin night gown, mid-calf length short sleeved chemise, ankle length petticoat, handkerchief, knee length stockings, tortoise shell hair comb, religious scapular, and was buried with a folded winding sheet. Postmortem photographs contained dress similar to both extant burials. Hintlian (2001, p. 142)



describes Clemence as a wealthy woman who would have had a “variety of clothing options, including fashionable and finely made dresses” in which to be buried and “the final decision was made to dress Clemence in her nightgown rather than any of her other garments.”

### Children’s Postmortem Dress

The child male postmortem photographs consisted of 14 images. The majority of the images (52.7 percent) were in the decades 1880 to 1900 with five cabinet cards from the 1880s and three silver prints from the 1890s (Table 8). The child female postmortem photograph category contained a total of 17 images. The majority of the images were from 1840 to 1859 with 52.8 percent of the total photographs being daguerreotypes (Table 9).

Table 8

Child Male Individuals by Postmortem Photographs

	Daguerreotype	Ambrotype	Tintype	Albumen Print	Carte de Visite	Stereoview	Cabinet Card	Silver Print	Total	% Total
1840s	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7.1
1850s	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	14.2
1860s	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	21.5
1870s	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1880s	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	35.7
1890s	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	21.5
Total	3	0	1	1	0	1	5	3	14	100
% Total	21.5	0	7.1	7.1	0	7.1	35.7	21.5	100	

Children’s postmortem dress can be categorized as day dress and shrouds or night dress. All of the male children were photographed in day dress styles of the period except for one male child, who is photographed pre- and postmortem in bed and is presumably wearing a night shirt in both pictures. The boy’s hair is unkempt in the picture taken just before death and combed,

Table 9

## Child Female Individuals by Postmortem Photographs

	Daguerreotype	Ambrotype	Tintype	Albumen Print	Carte de Visite	Stereoview	Cabinet Card	Silver Print	Total	% Total
1840s	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	17.6
1850s	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	35.3
1860s	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	17.6
1870s	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	11.8
1880s	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5.9
1890s	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	11.8
Total	9	2	0	0	2	0	2	2	17	100
% Total	52.8	11.8	0	0	11.8	0	11.8	11.8	100	

parted on the side, and slicked down for the postmortem image. The male children's day dress differed mainly by age. Male children that appeared younger wore typical styles that contained elements that were reserved for and denoted childhood such as short trousers, tunics, and particular coat styles (Figure 13). The male child in Figure 13 is pictured wearing a tunic with



**Figure 13. Deceased male child wearing tunic.** Plate 38, circa 1850, from SB I (1990) is a postmortem photograph of a younger deceased male child wearing a boy's tunic style day dress.

ankle high leather shoes placed on a toy wagon at his side. Older adult male children wore styles that mimicked the cut of adult day dress including shirts, vests, and coats (see Figure 14).

According to Severa (1995), adolescent children dress styles imitated those of adults. Figure 14 shows a father with his deceased son and the son's dress imitates his fathers.



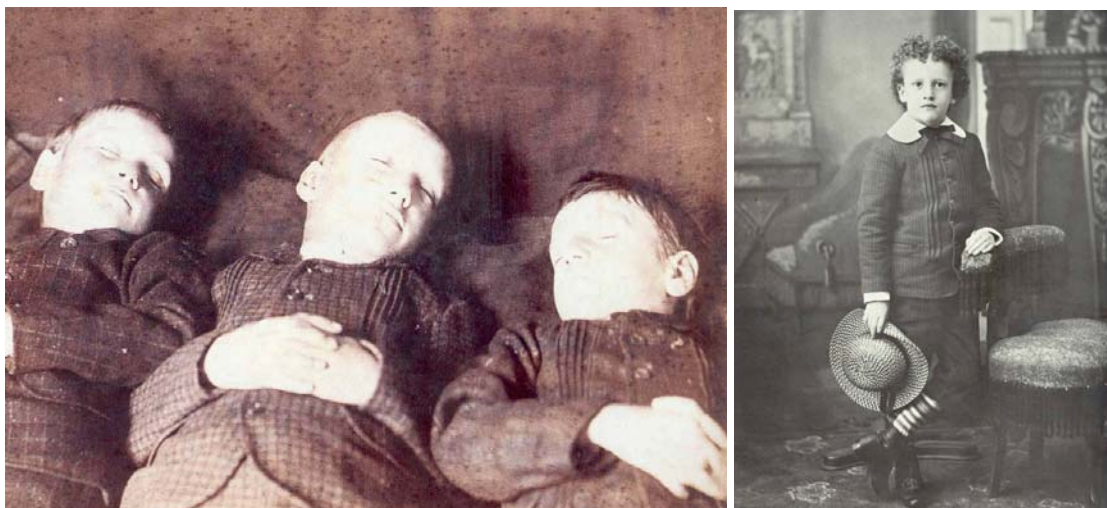
**Figure 14. Deceased male child wearing day dress similar to an adult male.** Plate 50, 1865, from SB II (2002) is a postmortem photograph of an older deceased male child wearing day dress similar to his fathers.

Plate 36 from SB I is an image of Christopher Hogan, a deceased male child, from 1854 (Figure 15). Christopher Hogan is wearing a plaid garment. Dalrymple (1991, p 11) states “Dresses for little girls and boys, [were] frequently in plaids or checks.” His plaid shirt was a common fabric choice for children's day dress styles in the 1850s. According to Severa (1995, p 108), the male child pictured in Plate 38 from SB I is also wearing fashionable fabric for the



**Figure 15. Deceased male child wearing plaid.** Plate 36 from SB I, circa 1854 depicts Christopher Hogan, a deceased male child, wearing a plaid garment (left). Plate 49, 1850s, from *American Victorian Costume in Early Photographs* depicts a small boy wearing a similar plaid dress (right).

1850s that being “fabrics used for little children were printed with tiny patterns in many colors.” Severa (1995, p 108) describes examples of remaining children’s fabric from the 1850s in museums as having “tiny toys printed on dark grounds.” Three deceased brothers depicted in the same postmortem photograph dated 1883 (SB II, Plate 78) are wearing similar suits to the ones described by Gandy and Gandy (1981, pp 104 and 105) as “a suit for school boys stocked by most small town dry goods stores in the 1880s” and “school-boy specials” (Figure 16). The “school-boy” suits are also depicted in an image from 1888 in Gandy and Gandy (1981, p112) and an image of a class photograph from the Cathedral Commercial School, 1892, which depicts some male children wearing a similar suit, with vertical tucks on the front of the suit coat, worn by the deceased brothers in the postmortem image. The deceased brothers were likely photographed in the clothing they wore to school.



**Figure 16. Male children wearing “school boy specials.”** Plate 78, 1883, from SB II depicts deceased brothers wearing “school boy specials” (left). The photograph from *Natchez Victorian Children* (p 104) depicts a male child wearing a similar garment style.

Female children were dressed in day dress styles for postmortem photographs and provide a glimpse of changes in fashionable dress from 1840 to 1900. Two female children were not placed in the day dress category and are described as wearing a shroud or night dress. The

two female children wearing shrouds were dated 1884 and 1878. Both of the female children have on light valued dresses with similar decorative elements such as lace trim and ribbons but the factor that differed was the length of the skirt. Female children described as wearing shrouds or night dresses have longer skirts than female children wearing day dress. The female child shroud or night dress category depicts skirts well below the knee and in the full body image, the skirt reaches the ankles.

Severa (1995) describes dark colors, prints, and plaids as fashionable for female children prior to the 1860s and 1870s. According to Severa (1995, p. 107), “the fabric used for little children were printed with tiny patterns in many colors [1850s].” In the 1870s, Severa (1995, 315) describes the predominating colors as “red, peach, and creamy white” with “lighter pastel colors favored for girls” and slightly older girls wearing “cotton dresses with bodices and skirts gathered to a band at the natural waist” (see Figure 17). Tortora and Eubank (2005, p. 381) describe female children’s dress from 1900 to 1920 that shares similar dress style characteristics worn by female children in postmortem images from the end of the nineteenth century as “many girls of all ages wore white, light-, or cream-colored lingerie dresses” decorated with embroidery, smocking, and lace. Light colored dresses worn by child females can be seen throughout *Natchez, Victorian Children: Photographic Portraits, 1865-1915* by Gandy and Gandy (1981).



**Figure 17. Deceased female child wearing light day dress.** Plate 69, circa 1895, from SB I (1990) depicts a deceased female child near the end of the century showing the change in day dress to lighter colors.

These descriptions of female children's dress in the nineteenth century explain the evident change of dress styles and values or colors in postmortem photographs. The ten postmortem photograph Plates depicting female children in medium, dark, or patterned fabrics are dated between 1842 and 1870. The five Plates containing light valued dresses with waist and puffed sleeves are dated between 1868 and 1900. Of the female children postmortem images in which the skirt length is visible, all of the skirt lengths end near the knee except for the girls placed in the shroud or nightgown category, which end at the ankle. Severa (1995) describes the length of girls' skirts as getting progressively longer after the age of five but never above the knee even for very young female children.

All of the female children's day dresses have a waistline seam. One of the female children from circa 1844 with her whole body depicted in the image is wearing pantalettes and gaiters. Severa (1995, p. 24) describes female children shoes of the 1840s as "Girls' [shoe] dress styles were either the low slipper or the ankle-high boot, or gaiter, of cloth and patent leather." Severa (1995, p. 24) states "Long, narrow drawers of white cotton reaching to the ankles (usually called "pantalettes") seem to have been worn from about age five to about age thirteen or fourteen." The age description of pantalettes supports the placement of this deceased individual in the female child category. Postmortem dress often reflects changes in fashionable dress. Most of the deceased children photographed are wearing fashionable day dress styles and this may be evidence that this was the only portrait taken of them and parents wanted them to appear as they would have in a portrait taken while alive.

Female children are depicted in postmortem photographs with dress accessories. The female child wearing the checked dress in Figure 18 has on a coral necklace. According to *A Perfect Red* (2005, p. 21) by Amy Butler Greenfield, "Wealthy children were given red coral





**Figure 18. Female children wearing coral necklaces.** Plate 26, circa 1852, from SB I (1990) and the photograph of two female children, 1854-56, from *Dressed for the Photographer* (1995) depict similar coral necklaces and hairstyles.

necklaces to guard them from illness.” Severa (1995, p. 198) cites Peterson’s, August 1863, as stating “Cameos and coral all the rage.” Severa (1995, p. 130) describes a living female child from 1850-55 as “This well-dressed little girl wears a string of coral beads...” Also, Severa (1995, p. 137) describes a female child as wearing “a string of corals, a traditional baptismal gift for a little girl, usually from a godparent.” Severa (1995, p. 162) describes a double strand of coral beads worn by a female child from 1856-58 as “certainly a birth gift from a godmother or godfather.” Coral necklaces decorated with gold charms similar to the one worn by the deceased female child in SB I Plate 26 dated 1852 are also depicted in photographs on living girls. Severa (1995, p 152) shows a photograph dated 1854-56 of sisters both wearing coral necklaces and hairstyles similar to the deceased girl in SB I Plate 26. Gandy and Gandy (1981, pp 82 and 83) includes images of young girls wearing similar coral necklaces with gold charms from about 1880. The female child depicted in SB I Plate 59, 1884, wears a bracelet with charms, which

was “favored by young girls” in the 1870s (Severa, 1995, p. 305). Female children are also photographed in mitts, which are mentioned as fashionable accessories for the nineteenth century. Severa (1995, p. 11) describes mitts, or fingerless gloves, as not going out of fashion during the century. Mitts were associated with dinner and party dress and were not for everyday wear. Severa (1995, p. 11) states “photographs show very young girls, some well-dressed young women, and many older ladies wearing mitts.”

The female child’s hairstyle in SB I Plate 26 is very similar to a hairstyle worn by a living girl from 1852 described by Severa (1995, p.137) as “cut short, parted in the center, and tucked behind her ears in the common style.” Female children also are depicted with sausage curls and hair bows. The accessories and hairstyles show that elements of popular day dress made their way into postmortem photographs and elements such as bracelets and necklaces could have been precious mementos from beloved family members.

One of the female child postmortem images appears to be a shroud although most of the body is covered by a textile. Two postmortem photographs provide additional insight into children’s postmortem dress. A postmortem image of twin brothers, one deceased and one alive at the time of the photograph, show the children dressed in identical suits (Figure 19). The photograph shows the deceased brother wearing a day dress style worn by a living individual. Figure 20, a postmortem image of child sisters, one deceased and one living at the time of the photograph, show the girls dressed in different garments. One sister is wearing a patterned pinafore and solid smock and the deceased sister is wearing a light valued garment both described as appropriate female children’s dress of the period. The deceased sister was probably photographed in her best dress for her final portrait while her sister who was living at the time the portrait was taken is wearing a more ordinary day dress style.





**Figure 19. Twin brothers, one deceased and one living.** Plate 46, 1863, from SB I (1990). Twin brothers wearing identical day dress styles for children.



**Figure 20. Sisters, one deceased and one living.** Sisters wearing Plate 92, circa 1900, from SB II (2002). A postmortem image of sisters wearing different dress styles. The deceased sister is wearing a light valued dress with light stockings and boots.

According to two reports of extant children's burial dress, they were both dressed in shroud like garments. It is possible that children may have been photographed in day dress for their final portrait and then placed in their shroud like garments for burial. There are only two images in the sample that show children in coffins so the evidence for children's burial garments is quite limited. Both of the images are from later in the period and are of male children with day dress similar to adult styles. Haglund and Sorg (1997, p. 523) describes a "child removed after

40 years...the hair was fine and silky. The white robe was perfect...” Brantley (1998) describes the burial dress remains of Louisiana teenage boy who died between 1852 and 1857 as wearing a shroud with wrist ribbons, handkerchiefs, cravat, shirt, undershirt, trousers, and socks. Both of the extant burial remains contain children wearing a white robe or shroud.

### **Infant Postmortem Dress**

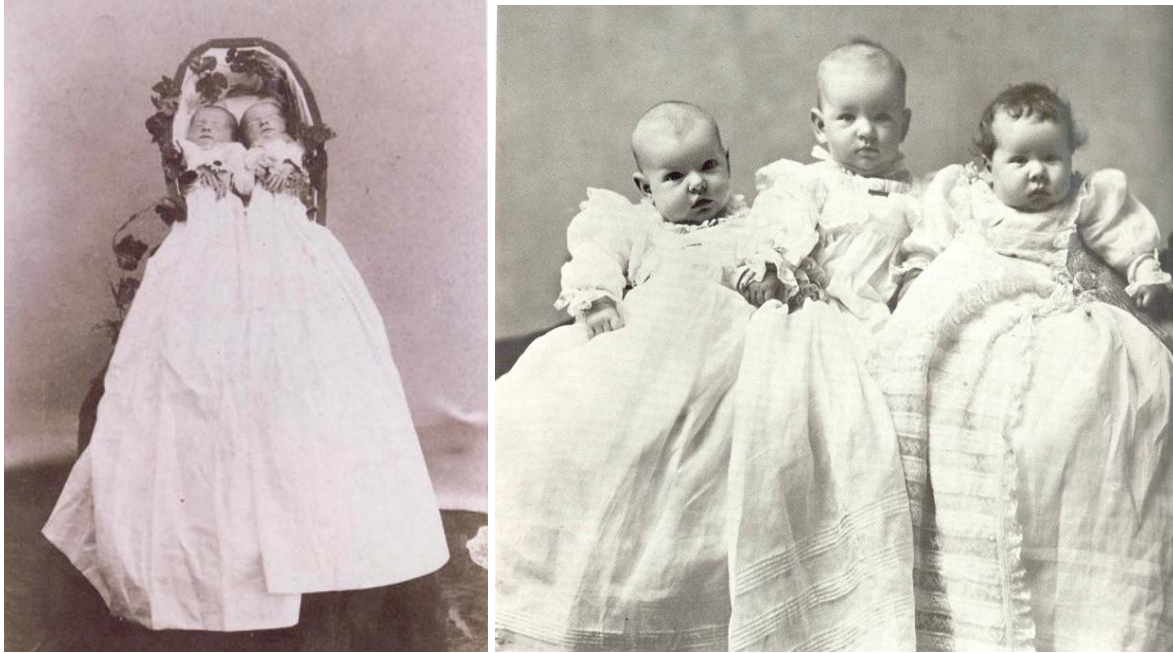
The infant postmortem dress category consisted of a total of 30 individuals. The majority of infant postmortem images were from the 1840s and 1850s. Fifty percent of the images were daguerreotypes (Table 10).

Table 10

Infant Individuals by Postmortem Photographs

	Daguerreotype	Ambrotype	Tintype	Albumen Print	Carte de Visite	Stereoview	Cabinet Card	Silver Print	Total	% Total
1840s	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	26.7
1850s	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	26.7
1860s	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.3
1870s	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	10
1880s	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	10
1890s	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	7	23.3
Total	15	2	2	0	0	1	7	3	30	100
% Total	50	6.7	6.7	0	0	3.3	23.3	10	100	

Postmortem infant dress can be divided into two basic categories day dress and shrouds. The day dress category can be subdivided into two categories based on length, these are light valued long gowns (Figure 21) and light valued short gowns (Figure 22). Twelve of the infant gowns were long and light valued, five of the gowns were short and light valued, and nine of the infant gowns were light valued but length was indeterminate because the picture did not depict



**Figure 21. Long infant gowns.** Plate 53, circa 1890 and Plate 70 circa 1890 from SB I (1990) depict long infant gowns of light value worn until the infant reached the age of six to nine months (Severa, 1995).



**Figure 22. Short infant gowns.** Plate 5, circa 1854, and Plate 17, circa 1845 to 1855 from SB I (1990). Shorter infant dress worn by toddlers that allowed them to walk.

below the waist. The long light valued gowns ranged in date from 1845 to 1893 with six from 1840 to 1859 and six from 1880 to 1900. The short, light valued gowns were dated 1845, two from 1854, 1871, and 1900. The dates for long and short light valued infant gowns reinforce the idea that length was determined by age throughout the century rather than changes in fashion. Of the 30 infant postmortem images, four postmortem photographs did not fit into one of these

categories. One of these images contained a female infant wearing a red tinted short gown (Figure 23). The gown appears hastily made around the neckline, shoulder seams and armholes, and the fabric surface contains many creases and wrinkles. Another infant is photographed wearing a red tinted, short, paisley printed dress with pantalettes. The third infant is nude and covered by a textile up to under the chest. The fourth deceased infant is dressed in a shroud (Figure 24). The rest of the infant postmortem images that were not full body contained images of infants in light gowns that appear similar in style to the long and short gowns worn by other infants in the sample.



**Figure 23. Hastily constructed infant gown.** Plate 33, circa 1852 from SB I (1990). An exception to the light valued infant's day dress is this garment that appears to be hastily constructed and is tinted red.



**Figure 24. Infant shroud.** Plate 30, circa 1846, from SB I (1990) appears to be a burial specific textile or shroud with sleeves that extend beyond the hands and are tied together. The sleeve and hand tie edges are pinked.

Nineteenth century photographs of living infants provided insight into dress worn by deceased infants. In *Natchez Victorian Children* (1981, pp 186 and 187), photographs from the 1890s depict small infants wearing long light valued gowns that reach well beyond their feet. Godey's Lady's book, April 1852 states "one yard is quite a sufficient length for everyday wear." (cited in Severa, 1995, p. 114). Severa (1995, p. 218) describes a long infants dress in a photograph dated 1860-64 as "The baby girl is dressed in the extremely long, short-sleeved white dress of the period..." Severa (1995, p. 281) describes a male infant in July 1868 as wearing a "short-sleeved, fine muslin baby dress [that] has a very long skirt..." Severa (1995) describes infant's clothing as being characterized by age with smaller infants too young to walk wearing long white gowns and older infants wearing shorter gowns that allowed them the freedom to learn to walk. Severa (1995, p. 23) describes "cumbersome skirts until nine months old" replaced by frocks "short enough to allow the toddler to begin walking without entangling his or her legs" and "very little children, both boys and girls, wore for everyday loose, simple frocks or smocks that were made without waist seams and were often drawn up on drawstrings at the wide neck and at the short sleeve edges." It is evident in the pictures that the younger infants have on longer gowns and the older infants have on shorter gowns. Tortora and Eubank (2005, p. 321) describe the long infants dress as a "christening gown."

No examples of extant infant burial dress have been located. Infant's postmortem dress found in the sample of photographs is consistent with infant day dress of the nineteenth century. Infants are photographed in both natural settings and inside coffins. In the 1840s, Severa (1995, p. 23) describes infant everyday dress as "loose, simple frocks or smocks that were made without waist seams and were often drawn up on drawstrings at the wide neck and at the short sleeve edges." This is a typical description of nineteenth century infants' day dress by Severa (1995).

Severa (1995, p. 210) also refers to infants' day dress as "Babies of both sexes were still dressed alike in this decade [1860s] in extremely long, white dresses with equal amounts of frilling, lace, and tucks." Shorter frocks replaced long cumbersome frocks that allowed toddlers to walk without entangling his or her legs (Severa, 1995). As the century progressed Severa (1995) describes infants dress as becoming much longer and covered with whitework embroidery. Severa (1995, p. 107) states "From birth to about six to nine months, boys and girls were still dressed alike in long dresses, about a yard in length usually, though fancy christening gowns are shown in the magazines at nearly twice that length." Severa (1995, p. 107) also states "At six to nine months children were put into short dresses so that they could move more freely and learn to walk." By noticing the size of the children in postmortem photographs, one can begin to observe that smaller infants are wearing longer smocks and larger infants are wearing shorter smocks. *Dressed for the Photographer* (1995) includes a postmortem image of a mother holding a deceased female infant (Figure 25). Severa (1995, p. 165) describes the deceased infants dress as being "well over a yard in length." The infant is dressed in a long white gown that extends



**Figure 25. Deceased and living infants wearing similar dress.** A postmortem image of a deceased infant (left) and a living infant photograph (right) taken from *Dressed for the Photographer* (1995, pp 64 & 164) that depict similar dress styles and poses.



well beyond the feet and resembles the long white gowns worn by deceased infants in SB I and SB II. *Dressed for the Photographer* (1995) also contains a photograph of a mother and living infant. The living infant is wearing a long light valued gown that appears to be over a yard in length and similar to the gown worn by the deceased infant. The similarities in the dress of living and deceased infants suggest that infant day dress styles were appropriate for postmortem images.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The two research approaches to costume history discussed by Rexford et al. (1988) were incorporated into this study of nineteenth century postmortem dress as depicted in postmortem photographs from *Sleeping Beauty: Memorial Photography in America* and *Sleeping Beauty II: Grief, Bereavement and The Family In Memorial Photography American & European Traditions* by Stanley Burns (1990 and 2002). Postmortem dress, which was described and classified as an object of material culture, was also placed within its social context through the consideration of period demographics, artistic styles, economics, religious structures, and the progression of changes in dress. Dress styles were identified and described within each age and gender category of the sample of photographs. Postmortem dress depicted in the photographs was then placed within its social context to better understand the meanings and relationships associated with dress and nineteenth century American culture.

A comparison of the findings from this examination of the dress of 89 deceased individuals depicted in 84 postmortem photographs with descriptions of dress based on nineteenth century archaeological burial remains indicated that deceased individuals were most often photographed and buried in their Sunday's finest or nicest items of day dress. This practice was interpreted to have given the impression of a respectable final portrait of the deceased individual. The comparisons of postmortem photographs and archaeological burial remains also show similarities and indicate a strong likely-hood that individuals were photographed in their burial dress. A content and historical analysis approach was used to better understand the general categories and styles of postmortem dress in the nineteenth century. Postmortem dress was



described and classified within age and gender categories. The age and gender categories include adult male, adult female, male child, female child, and infants. Postmortem dress depicted in the photographs was comparable to day dress and shroud descriptions and imagery from the nineteenth century and to extant burial dress descriptions from archaeological studies of burial remains. Postmortem dress also reflected changes in fashionable dress styles from 1840 to 1900 and shrouds or nightdress were alternative choices to day dress styles.

The differences in postmortem dress can be attributed to differences in dates of the photograph. Day dress, the most popular category of postmortem dress, followed fashion cycles over time. The differences in postmortem dress were associated with changes in fashionable dress styles over time. Dress categories can also be defined by age and gender. Postmortem dress differed with each age and gender category, except for gender within the infant category. According to Roach-Higgins, Eicher, and Johnson (1995), dress can be used to visually invite responses to outward similarities and differences between human beings, including age and gender. Each society determines which body modifications or supplements declare gender roles (Roach-Higgins, Eicher, and Johnson, 1995). Age and gender are linked in social dress expectations (Roach-Higgins, Eicher, and Johnson, 1995). Postmortem dress follows these societal rules and can be divided into categories based on age and gender.

The progression of dress expectations may become more complex as individuals progress through various life stages and societal systems, including religious, economic, and political (Roach-Higgins, Eicher, and Johnson, 1995). Thus, the adult male category includes the most dress divisions from playing the largest role in societal systems in the nineteenth century and infants have the least complexity in dress having not progressed through many life stages. However, even within the infant category there is distinction of age by dress. Infants too young

to walk were dressed in long gowns and infants that were old enough to begin walking were dressed in shorter gowns. Within child male and female categories, older male and female children dressed in styles that resembled the styles of adults while younger children wore styles reserved for only children. Within the adult male and female categories, age can sometimes be determined by the adoption of new styles by younger generations and the continuation of outdated styles by the older generation. Economic structures can also influence the use of dress to express occupational identity in complex labor systems (Roach-Higgins, Eicher, and Johnson, 1995). Thus, the postmortem dress of a business man may differ from that of a soldier, laborer, clergyman, or criminal and vice-versa.

After examining the American postmortem photographs found in SB I and SB II using a content and historical analysis approach the evidence suggested that day dress was the most popular form of postmortem dress. Eighty percent of the deceased individuals in the sample of postmortem photographs were dressed in day dress. Even in the extant burial case of Clemence, who was buried in a nightgown with a chemise and petticoats, her hair was neatly arranged and adorned with a comb and her teeth were in place (Hintlian, 2001) and in the case of P.W. he wore his “quality clothing” possibly “among his best personal garments” under his burial shroud (Brantley, 1998, p. 93). As suggested by Brantley (1998), the desire to appear fashionable and with modesty and propriety could have been a consideration when family members or individuals chose postmortem dress and burial dress.

Postmortem photographs were compared with life portrait photographs to examine possible relationships between postmortem dress and fashionable dress of the period. This is most obvious in adult males and female children. In the sample, day dress for both men and women was more prevalent than burial specific textiles. Ruby (1995, p. 61) states that people

were most often photographed in their “Sunday best.” Postmortem photographs share this similarity with living portraits. Infants dress depicted in postmortem photographs is consistent with nineteenth century fashionable dress for infants.

Hintlian (2001) states that many factors influence burial dress decisions. The cultural belief of death as the last sleep is only one factor that may have influenced the postmortem photographs of the nineteenth century. Based on this study, these postmortem images are most likely considered portraits of dead people. The people that viewed these images during the nineteenth century would have been aware that the individuals in these photographs were deceased no matter what the artistic capabilities of the photographer. Thus, these images would represent a final chance to capture a deceased individual in a portrait.

Nineteenth century photographs portraying living individuals examined for this study contrast strongly with the styles of postmortem photographs. Living individuals were often photographed standing or seated and with their eyes open. Postmortem photographs generally contained images of deceased individuals lying, with their eyes closed and depicted in coffins. Postmortem images would have been immediately recognizable as such in the nineteenth century. Postmortem images are portraits of deceased individuals and the illusion that these people are asleep can only come secondary to the need to capture an image of an individual for future generations. The primary concern of these photographs does not appear to be the photographer’s artistic talents. Burns (1990 and 2002) and Ruby (1995) come from a photographic perspective and place emphasis on the photographic techniques and the abilities of the photographer to influence the final image. However, this study focused on dress in postmortem images and the photographers and photographic techniques may have had little influence on postmortem dress because it is likely that family members, or possibly even the

deceased individuals prior to death, chose burial clothing. It is also unlikely the corpse would be dressed more than once after death due to complications of dressing an individual arising from naturally occurring circumstances such as bloating and rigor mortis.

The portrait is first an object of material culture and can be assigned cultural values and beliefs but it is inherently a piece of paper depicting dark and light values that create an image. The visible contents can be identified and studied with greater clarity and understanding than the concepts and beliefs attached to the photograph, which will be different in different periods of time. Thus, it is difficult to assign cultural beliefs and ways of thinking in the nineteenth century to photographs examined over 100 years later. Much of the evidence used by Burns (1990 and 2002) and Ruby (1995) does not incorporate literature, such as diaries or letters, from nineteenth century American consumers of postmortem photography regarding their beliefs and reactions to the images. The ideal of death as sleep in the nineteenth century is a broad, abstract ideal yet the photograph is physical evidence of nineteenth century culture. Many societal and individual level factors influenced and provide insight into the creation and ideology behind postmortem images and if the photographs are not well documented it is difficult to draw conclusions about the beliefs behind the postmortem images. It is impossible to be sure that all of the individuals photographed in the sample of images believed in the ideal of death as sleep and thus had an image taken that represented such an ideal. The closeness to death experienced by people in certain aspects of everyday nineteenth century life created an environment where postmortem photography served as a process of capturing and affirming a person's death and ultimately acknowledging his or her life.

Future studies could include analyzing postmortem photograph to infer possible relationships between postmortem dress and socioeconomic status, ethnicity, regions, and

religion. Further research could also examine a larger sample of postmortem images with more images from each region. Regions could then be examined to determine if differences in postmortem dress exist within different geographic locations. Postmortem images of deceased individuals with documented religious belief could be used to learn if differences in postmortem dress exist between different religions. Documented postmortem images can be used to determine if heritage or nationality influence postmortem dress styles. Further research on day dress and shrouds as burial dress could shed light on the decision making process. Postmortem dress and appearance could be examined pre and post photography to see if changes occurred through the use of extant burial dress and paintings. A comparison of nineteenth and twentieth century postmortem and burial dress could further illuminate the changing beliefs and customs regarding death and dying in America.

### **Conclusion**

In the nineteenth century, high mortality rates, the transition from life to death often occurring at home and the elaboration of death paraphernalia and mourning rituals made death a part of everyday life. The customs of the living and the dead blended together. Customs linked to the dead are customs of the living and customs of the living are associated with and attributed to the dead. In order to understand the customs associated with deceased individuals, we must look to the customs of the living. Nineteenth century America was concerned with keeping the dead among the living through the use of cemeteries that were used as parks and built near cities, coffins and embalming techniques that were designed to preserve the body and mourning rituals that included dress and postmortem photography.

Postmortem dress can serve as a continuation of living traditions and preparation for the afterlife as a bridge between life and death. The act of dressing the body for the final time can

provide family members or friends with closure and an opportunity to bond or pay final respects to the deceased individual. The person may be deceased but the clothing is linked to living traditions and could have been worn while the person was alive, which links the person to living customs easing the transition and grieving process. The time spent cleaning and dressing the body may have been a healthy and important part of the grieving process for nineteenth century individuals allowing them to face the reality of death while holding on to the memory of the loved one. Also, nineteenth century Americans were concerned with appearance in public and dress customs of the living carried over into death. Extant burial dress and postmortem photographs indicate that deceased individuals wore elements of day dress and undergarments. The process of dressing a deceased individual in respectable day dress may be friends and family members last chance to honor and show respect for the deceased individual. Postmortem dress is one of the last chances for a family to publicly display the status and wealth of the deceased individual and give material possessions as gifts or offerings. Postmortem dress can be used to show the customs of everyday life transition into death customs.

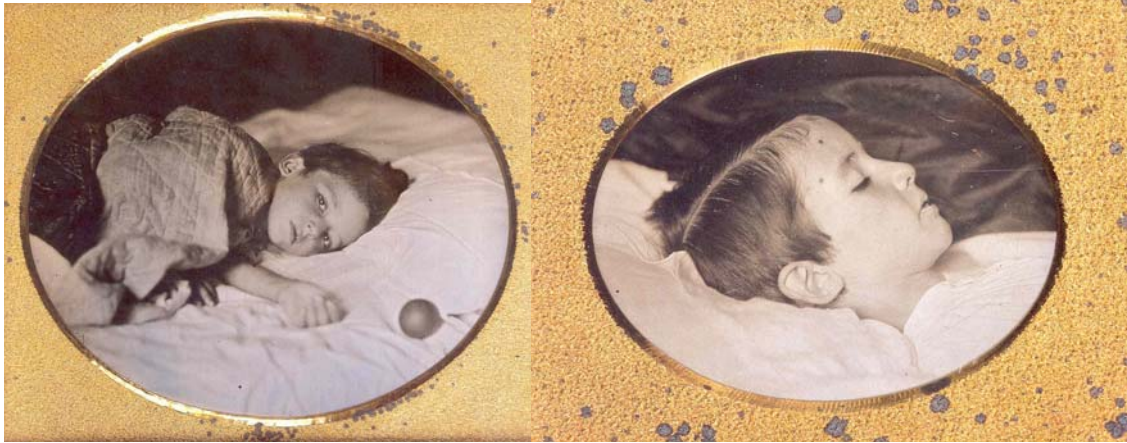
In addition to age, gender, and time period, other factors such as cost, religion, ethnicity, heritage, and cultural background may have influenced postmortem dress. Burial paraphernalia could be expensive and the cost of purchasing a shroud for burial could have been a determining factor. The cost of purchasing or producing new clothing for burial may have been cost prohibitive for some families and used or borrowed clothing may have been more feasible. Some families may have not wanted to part with more expensive or new items of clothing such as shoes that could have had more years of wearable life. Families wishing to display status and wealth or portray status or wealth may have buried individuals in expensive or new items of dress, or deceased individuals could have been buried in new items of dress as a display of

respect and honor. In addition to cost, religious, ethnic, and cultural customs may deem different types of postmortem dress appropriate or inappropriate. Modesty, religious symbols and imagery, and shrouds versus day dress could be influenced by religion, tradition, culture or heritage.

Postmortem dress reflects fashion. Burial in current or fashionable dress styles is to some extent dictated by the cycles of fashion and what styles are available during the period. However, personal preferences or cultural standards towards the acceptance or rejection of certain dress styles whether they include color, material, construction technique, etc. are apparent in the diversity found in postmortem dress. Thus, personal preference of the deceased individual prior to death or of the family's decision toward one style of dress or another was likely a factor when choosing postmortem dress.

The very existence of photography may have influenced the postmortem appearance of individuals. The fact that postmortem photographs were taken for the first time in the nineteenth century may have influenced postmortem dress. For infants, children and adults, the postmortem photograph could have been the only portrait and certainly the last photograph taken of them. Family members and friends could honor the deceased individual's memory by providing a respectable portrait of their loved one. The pride and attention placed on the postmortem appearance of deceased individuals is apparent in a pair of photographs from *Sleeping Beauty I* (1990) (Figure 26). Plate 7 depicts a premortem and postmortem image of a young boy. The premortem image captured the boy lying in bed on his side facing the camera, arm askew, hair disheveled, textile pulled to his chin and a ball at his side. The postmortem image contains a more carefully

controlled appearance. In the postmortem image, the boy is photographed closer up and in profile, his hair neatly parted, combed and slicked down, his light valued night shirt or shroud



**Figure 26. Pre and postmortem photograph of a male child.** Plate 7 from *Sleeping Beauty I* (1990) depicts the difference in appearance of pre- (left) and postmortem (right) images of a young boy.

exposed, and the background carefully arranged. The contrast in the appearance of the young boy in the pre- and postmortem images provides a glimpse into what was likely a nineteenth century practice of presenting the deceased individual in a respectable manner for their final portrait created through increased attention placed on the appearance of the individuals dress.



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**APPENDIX A**  
**COMPLETE SAMPLE LIST**

Source SB I or II	Plate No.	Circa	Date	Photo Technique	Age Group	Gender	Portion of Body Visible(*)
I	2	c	1852	daguerreotype	child	female	AA
I	3	c	1848	daguerreotype	infant	female	FB
I	4	c	1853	daguerreotype	infant	indeterminate	AA
I	5	c	1854	daguerreotype	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	6	c	1843	daguerreotype	adult	female	AS
I	7	c	1848	daguerreotype	child	male	AC
I	8	c	1843	daguerreotype	adult	male	AW
I	9	c	1844	daguerreotype	infant	female	AH
I	11	c	1853	daguerreotype	infant	female	AA
I	13	c	1842	daguerreotype	child	female	AA
I	14	c	1844	daguerreotype	adult	female	AH
I	15	c	1848	daguerreotype	infant	female	AH
I	16	c	1843	daguerreotype	adult	female	AN
I	17a	c	1845- 50	daguerreotype	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	17b	c	1845- 50	daguerreotype	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	17c	c	1850- 55	ambrotype	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	20	c	1846	daguerreotype	child	female	AA
I	21	c	1846	daguerreotype	adult	female	AH
I	22		1845	daguerreotype	infant	female	AW
I	23	c	1853	daguerreotype	infant	indeterminate	AA
I	25	c	1854	daguerreotype	adult	male	AC
I	26	c	1852	daguerreotype	child	female	AK
I	27	c	1844	daguerreotype	child	female	FB
I	28	c	1849	daguerreotype	adult	male	AW
I	29	c	1851	daguerreotype	child	female	AW
I	30	c	1846	daguerreotype	infant	indeterminate	AW
I	32	c	1850	daguerreotype	adult	male	AW
I	33	c	1852	daguerreotype	infant	female	AK
I	34	c	1856	daguerreotype	adult	male	AW
I	35	c	1855	daguerreotype	child	female	AH
I	36	c	1854	daguerreotype	child	male	AW
I	37	c	1858	ambrotype	adult	male	AS
I	38	c	1850	daguerreotype	child	male	AH
I	39	c	1858	ambrotype	infant	female	FB
I	40	c	1858	ambrotype	adult	female	AH
I	41	c	1859	ambrotype	adult	male	AC
I	42	c	1868	carte de visite	adult	male	AA
I	45	c	1872	stereoview	infant	male	AW

Source SB I or II	Plate No.	Circa	Date	Photo Technique	Age Group	Gender	Portion of Body Visible(*)
I	46		1863	tintype	child	male	AK
I	47	c	1885	tintype	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	48	c	1880	cabinet card	adult	male	FB
I	49	c	1883	cabinet card	infant	indeterminate	AC
I	50		1882	stereoview	adult	male	FB
I	51		1893	silver print	infant	male	FB
I	52		1885	cabinet card	child	male	AH
I	53	c	1890	cabinet card	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	55	c	1868	stereoview	child	male	FB
I	56	c	1870	carte de visite	child	female	AK
I	57	c	1890	silver print	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	58	c	1885	silver print	adult	male	FB
I	59		1884	cabinet card	child	female	AK
I	60		1890	silver print	adult	male	FB
I	63	c	1890	silver print	child	male	AC
I	64		1889	cabinet card	child	male	AW
I	67	c	1900	silver print	child	male	FB
I	68	c	1900	silver print	infant	indeterminate	FB
I	69	c	1895	silver print	child	female	FB
I	70	c	1890	cabinet card	infant	indeterminate	FB
II	1	c	1847	daguerreotype	infant	female	AA
II	2	c	1845	daguerreotype	adult	female	AW
II	3		1849	daguerreotype	adult	male	AW
II	4		1849	daguerreotype	adult	male	AC
II	7	c	1854	daguerreotype	infant	female	AH
II	9	c	1854	daguerreotype	child	female	AK
II	11	c	1853	daguerreotype	child	female	AC
II	19	c	1853	daguerreotype	adult	male	AW
II	25		1856	daguerreotype	adult	female	AC
II	27	c	1853	daguerreotype	infant	female	AA
II	34		1862	ambrotype	child	female	FB
II	41		1865	carte de visite	adult	male	AN
II	43		1865	tintype	adult	male	AH
II	47	c	1868	carte de visite	child	female	FB
II	48	c	1871	tintype	infant	female	FB
II	50		1865	albumen print	child	male	AW
II	52	c	1865	ambrotype	child	female	AW
II	53	c	1871	tintype	adult	male	AH
II	54		1874	cabinet card	infant	female	AC
II	56	c	1884	cabinet card	infant	female	FB
II	58		1880	cabinet card	adult	male	AK
II	65	c	1878	cabinet card	child	female	FB



Source SB I or II	Plate No.	Circa	Date	Photo Technique	Age Group	Gender	Portion of Body Visible(*)
II	78		1883	cabinet card	child	male	AH
II	80		1891	cabinet card	adult	female	AA
II	82	c	1890	cabinet card	adult/infant	female/indeterminate	AW
II	92	c	1900	silver print	child	female	FB

**\* - Abbreviations – above neck (AN), above shoulder (AS), above chest (AC), above waist (AW), above hip (AH), above knee (AK), above ankle (AA), full body (FB), indeterminate (IN)**

**APPENDIX B**

**POSTMORTEM PHOTOGRAPHS BY CITY, STATE, AND TERRITORY**

Source: SB I or II	Plate No.	City	State/Territory
I	60		Alabama
II	58	Bodie	California
II	92	Red Bluff	California
II	19	New Haven	Connecticut
I	46	Atlanta	Georgia
I	42	Princeton	Illinois
II	54	Columbus	Indiana
I	64	Ft. Wayne	Indiana
I	67	Mayfield	Kentucky
I	11	Boston	Massachusetts
II	25	New Bedford	Massachusetts
II	7	Salem	Massachusetts
II	11	Portland	Maine
I	51	Duluth	Minnesota
I	50	Blanchard	Missouri
II	4	St. Louis	Missouri
II	56	Hammond	New Jersey
I	53	Philipsburg	New Jersey
I	52	Derrick	New York
I	6	Geneva	New York
II	1	Green Island	New York
II	34	Manlius	New York
I	2	New York City	New York
I	4	New York City	New York
I	15	New York City	New York
I	36	New York City	New York
II	9	New York City	New York
II	27	New York City	New York
I	22	Cleveland	Ohio
II	78	Norwalk	Ohio
II	47	Vernon	Ohio
I	25	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
II	3	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
II	52	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
II	50	Reading	Pennsylvania
II	2		Pennsylvania/New Jersey
II	53		Pennsylvania/Ohio
II	48		South Carolina
II	82	Staunton	Virginia
II	41		Washington, D.C.
I	49	Waukesha	Wisconsin
II	80		Oklahoma Territory

## **VITA**

Ryan Jerel Aldridge was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and raised in Gonzales, Louisiana. In 2002, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in textiles, apparel design and merchandising from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Following graduation, he received an associate's degree in respiratory therapy from Our Lady of the Lake College and worked in the neonatal intensive care unit at Woman's Hospital.

In 2006, Mr. Aldridge was accepted into the Master of Science program in the School of Human Ecology at Louisiana State University. Mr. Aldridge worked as a graduate assistant in the School of Human Ecology from 2006 to 2008. Awards and honors include a research presentation at the Costume Society of America Southeastern Region Symposium 2007, a poster presentation at the International Textiles and Apparel Association Conference 2007, the Jim Liles Student Award, the Dr. Harvy F. Lewis Endowed Graduate Student Travel Fund, and the Edith Spring Arnold Graduate Scholarship. After receiving his Master of Science degree in December 2008, he will pursue a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the School of Human Ecology at Louisiana State University.