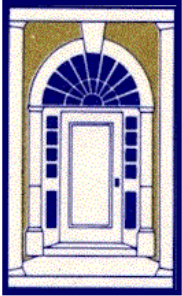


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Museum-wide Exhibition at Historic Dumbarton House Features Rare and Never-before-displayed Artifacts

***Preparing for the Ball: Costume of the Early Nation*
Exhibition January 9 through July 4, 2009**

Georgetown, Washington, D.C. – Organized to coincide with the 2009 U.S. Presidential Inaugural festivities, a six-month exhibition at Georgetown's Federal-era Dumbarton House, *Preparing for the Ball: Costume of the Early Nation*, will open to the public on January 9, 2009, and continue through July 4, 2009. Visitors to Dumbarton House will experience the historic Museum as a backdrop for a museum-wide exhibition of period clothing, accessories, jewelry, fashion plates, and manuscripts, from 1775 to 1825.

Shown in the various rooms and passages of Dumbarton House, exhibition artifacts will be placed in locations appropriate to preparations for an evening out by its historic residents and domestics. Included are elements of clothing worn by men, women, children and servants, many of which are being presented to the viewing public for the first time. Highlights include a waistcoat owned by Joseph Nourse, the first Register of the U.S. Treasury and first resident of Dumbarton House (1804-1813), and a dress that descended through the family of Nelly Custis, granddaughter of Martha Washington, and reared by George and Martha Washington at Mount Vernon. Also reunited after 200 years is a child's dress and necklace worn by Phoebe Pemberton Morris shown along side her 1796 portrait that shows the two pieces by Charles Willson Peale, currently on loan to Dumbarton House.



Silver Earrings, c. 1800, owned by Martha Washington. Dumbarton House Collection.



Waistcoat of Joseph Nourse, c. 1780, "America's First Civil Servant." Dumbarton House Collection.

During the Federal era, clothing changed from the structured, formal conventions of late 1700s dress to less rigid and more democratically-inspired fashions. The diversity of styles adopted reflected the influence of neoclassicism, contemporary political and military events, and the growing mechanization of the textile industry.

Co-curated by S. Scott Scholz, Museum Curator at Dumbarton House, and Mary D. Doering, Collector/Independent Scholar, the exhibition features objects from the collections of Dumbarton House; Wyck, A National Historic Landmark House & Garden in Philadelphia; and the private collection of exhibition co-curator, Mary D. Doering. Ms. Doering's collection has a focus on English, French and American clothing and textiles of the 18th and early 19th centuries yet expands into the mid-20th century. She has amassed an impressive private collection of period attire including extremely rare examples of every day clothing, undergarments, and accessories from the periods of our early nation. In March of 2008, the magazine *Art & Antiques* listed Ms. Doering as having one of the top twenty-five collections of antiques and decorative arts in the country because of her specialized focus on early attire.


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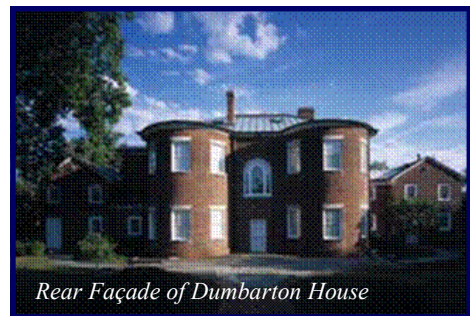
This special Dumbarton House exhibition will complement regular docent-led public tours, Tuesday through Saturday, hourly, 10am-1pm (Federal Holidays schedule varies, but the Museum will be closed on Inauguration Day, January 20th).

Preparing for the Ball: Costume of the Early Nation is made possible through the support of *The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America* (www.nscda.org) and the *Friends of Dumbarton House*.

For additional photos and information, contact MissyGroppel@DumbartonHouse.org.

Docent-guided tours are offered at Dumbarton House Tuesday through Saturday, hourly, 10am to 1pm. (Federal holidays schedule varies; Dumbarton House will not be open on Inauguration Day). Admission to Dumbarton House is \$5.00 for Adults/Seniors, and free to children, youth, and students with current ID. Groups are welcome, but reservations are recommended for 10 or more guests. Dumbarton House is located at 2715 Q Street, NW, in the heart of residential Georgetown, Washington, DC 20007. Limited parking and ADA-access is available behind the Museum via 27th Street at Q. Metrorail: Red Line, DuPont Circle's Q Street exit. Metrobus: D-1, D-2, D-3, D-6 to 27th Street stop. DC Circulator's Georgetown connection, 28th Street, NW stop. For more information: www.DumbartonHouse.org, Info@DumbartonHouse.org, or 202-337-2288.

The mission of Dumbarton House, a Federal period historic house, ca. 1800, is to preserve the historic structure and its collections and to educate the public about life in Washington, DC, during the early years of the Republic. The museum features a significant collection of Federal era decorative arts, paintings, and furniture, and is one of only few such properties open to the public in Washington. Dumbarton House serves as the headquarters for *The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America (The NSCDA)*, a women's organization that actively promotes our national heritage through historic preservation, patriotic service and educational projects. The NSCDA is comprised of 45 state societies that own or support 80 other properties around the country of architectural or historic value (www.nscda.org). Dumbarton House is accredited by the *American Association of Museums*. 



Dumbarton House hosts a regular schedule of special tours, free concerts, lectures, tastings, school programs, and summer camps, and is also available for private rentals such as corporate, social, and wedding events. **For additional information, contact: 202-337-2288, info@dumbartonhouse.org, or www.dumbartonhouse.org.**

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