

## **MISSION AND COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Smith College Historic Clothing Collection (SCHCC) advances the academic inquiry of women of diverse economic and social backgrounds through the study of their dress from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to today. This distinctive collection fosters interdisciplinary research, inquiry, and connections through engagement with tangible evidence of women's lives.

### **PEDAGOGICAL AND SCHOLARLY IMPACT**

The Collection is a liberal arts archive or laboratory offering a wide range of primary resources for scholars across many fields. Clothing is a medium of inherent interest to our students and one that reflects current trends in scholarship. These include the meanings and modes of "making", the expanding focus on archival work and primary source material, and the growing emphasis on community, materiality and story. The Collection seeks to engage the sciences through questions of textile development, preservation and environmental effects; the social sciences through a broad range of social issues embedded in clothing style and manufacture; and the arts and humanities- again, in broad and complex ways, through the stories that clothing tells to the art of its construction.

### **COLLECTIONS SCOPE AND MANAGEMENT TODAY**

The Collection holds clothing and accessories of dress for women of all social classes from 1790 to the present. Every attempt is made to collect items which reflect lives of women from a broad social and economic spectrum. The value of a garment may be the story that comes with it, in spite of the condition. Objects which reflect a special technological development or a political movement which affected women's lives are particularly important.

The focus is the "uniforms" of women's many roles and jobs. These are mostly but not exclusively, everyday clothing. The aim is to gather the humble as well as the couture, the well-worn work clothes along with the clothing for a single special occasion, the unique homemade piece as well as the mundane manufactured example.

### **VISION FOR A NEXT GENERATION OF THE COLLECTION**

At this point any further expansion is limited by the lack of storage facilities.

If we combined our collection with that of Historic Northampton (currently offered to us), it would be the first and one of the finest study collections available to undergraduate liberal arts students and scholars.