

Functionality and Freedom: Constructing Meaning of Women's Pants in Reform Dress

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Women's clothing during the nineteenth century was both impractical and hazardous. Clothing styles evolved in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, becoming heavier, with more layers, and more constricting.¹ To create the full skirts appearance of skirts popular during the middle nineteenth century, women wore several layers of petticoats sometimes weighing over fifteen pounds alone.² Even improvements such as the steel caged crinoline invented in 1856 posed hazards. The steel caged crinoline, or hoop skirt, reduced the weight of women's clothing and eased freedom of movement, but increased the risk of death by fire.³ By 1867, crinoline fires accounted for 3,000 deaths and 20,000 injuries annually.⁴ For nearly a century, reformers sought to make women's clothing more functional and practical. By the 1920's corsets and crinolines had fallen out of vogue, replaced by less restrictive dresses. Pants were socially acceptable as women's wear for limited activities but were not commonly worn by women until after World War II.

Several groups in the United States from the 1820's onward adopted styles of reformed women's dress incorporating trousers. The primary reason was functionality although each group associated additional social meanings of women in trousers. In the Owenite Community of New Harmony, pants were a way to reinforce the egalitarian system envisioned by the founders. The Oneida Community adopted a costume for women incorporating pantalets; a style of children's clothing, symbolic of the submissive role of women in the community. During the 1850s,

¹ Patricia A Cunningham, *Reforming Women's Fashion, 1850-1920: Politics, Health, and Art* (Kent, Ohio, Kent State University Press, 2003) :22.

² Catharine Mas, "She Wears the Pants: The Reform Dress as Technology in Nineteenth-Century America" *Technology and Culture*, vol 58, no 1 (January 2017) :37 <https://doi.org/10.1353/tech.2017001>.

³ Alison Mathews David, *Fashion Victims The Dangers of Dress Past and Present* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)163.

⁴ Helene E. Roberts, "The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman." *Signs*, vol.2 no. 3 (Spring 1977) : 557, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3173265>.

“Bloomers” and the Turkish style of dress expanded their freedom of movement as women they sought a greater role in public life and politics.

Pants – A History: Pants, referred to by fashion historians as bifurcated⁵ lower-body garments, are believed to have originated as clothing for equestrians following the domestication of horses. In May 2014, archeologists in the Tarim Basin in western China uncovered graves of two men dressed in pants dating back 3,000 years, to approximately 1000 BC. Outside of the Tarim Basin, evidence of trousers worn by the West Asian Scythians, date to 2,500 years ago.⁶ Scythians were a group of nomadic tribes that occupied portions of Northern China, Mongolia, southern Siberia, and the northern part of modern-day Kazakhstan, during the 9th to 2nd century BC.⁷ Both men and women of the nomadic, equestrian culture wore pants. Among the Scythians, one third of the women were buried with weapons or had injuries consistent with participation in warfare and hunting.⁸ Persians are believed to have adapted pants from the Scythians by the 5th century BC.⁹

In Persia, women and men wore full, loose fitting trousers under clothing from antiquity. The *Šalvār*, took a number of forms across different Middle Eastern cultures.¹⁰ As European

⁵ Gayle V. Fisher, *Pantaloons and Power A Nineteenth- Century Dress Reform in the United States* (Kent, Ohio, Kent State University Press,2001):3.

⁶ Bruce Bower, “First pants worn by horse riders 3,000 years ago Oldest known trousers originated in Central Asia” Science News .Org , May 30,2014, accessed April 20,2019, <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/first-pants-worn-horse-riders-3000-years-ago>

⁷“The Scythians: discovering the nomad-warriors of Siberia” World Archeology, July 25,20017, accessed April 20,2019, <https://www.world-archaeology.com/features/the-scythians-discovering-the-nomad-warriors-of-siberia/>

⁸ Simon Worrall “Amazon Warriors Did Indeed Fight and Die Like Men” National Geographic, October 24, 2014, accessed April 21,2019, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141029-amazons-scythians-hunger-games-herodotus-ice-princess-tattoo-cannabis/> .

⁹ Dolores Monet “A History of Trousers and Pants in Western Culture” Belatory.com Last Updated January 3, 2018, accessed April 20,2019, <https://bellatory.com/fashion-industry/A-History-of-Trousers-and-Pants-in-Western-Culture> .

¹⁰ Entry for *Šalvār* “CLOTHING xxvii. Historical lexicon of Persian clothing” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, accessed April 20, 2019, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/clothing-xxvii>.

nations became more engaged in the Middle East through trade and imperialist endeavors, casual apparel of the nobility underwent change. The letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) wife of the British ambassador to the Ottoman court from 1717 to 1719 ¹¹ describe the attire she wore during her time in Constantinople. She describes is “a pair of drawers, very full, that reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats.” Over the trousers are layered a smock, a waist coat, and a caftan fastened with a girdle, ”four fingers broad.” The ensemble was completed with a fashionable head covering.¹² “Turkish Style,” such as described by Lady Montague, began to make its journey back to Europe as leisure wear, and attire for masquerade balls during the seventeenth century, after an Ottoman ambassador visited France in 1607.¹³

A Community of Cooperation, Women’s Pants Come to America –New Harmony, Indiana:

In the 1820’s New Harmony, Indiana was the site of a “utopian experiment” by Welsh reformer, businessman, and philanthropist, Robert Owen (1771-1858).¹⁴ In January of 1826 a group of scientists, scholars, and educators, including geologist and educator, William Maclure, journey to the New Harmony community¹⁵ transforming the site into a hub of scientific research and study.¹⁶ The “Communal Society of Cooperation” was based on the idea of equality of members regardless of sex, occupation, or economic output. Food, housing, education and clothing were

¹¹ “Early Modern Period Sources Letters, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu” *Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media*, accessed April 21, 2019, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/modules/lesson4/lesson4.php?menu=1&s=11> .

¹² James Archibald Stuart-Wortley-Wharnccliffe, ed. *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 3 ed. Vol.1 (London, Henry G. Bohn, 1861) :296-297 <https://archive.org/details/lettersworksofla01inmont/page/n5> .

¹³ Ekrem Buğra Ekinci, “Turquerie: Evolution of Turkish theme in European art, style” *Daily Sabbath* July 10, 2016, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/feature/2016/10/07/turquerie-evolution-of-turkish-theme-in-european-art-style> .

¹⁴ “New Harmony Indiana,” *Indiana Archives and Records Administration*, accessed April 18, 2019, <https://www.in.gov/iara/2757.htm> .

¹⁵ Donald F. Carmony and Josephine M. Elliott, “New Harmony, Indiana: Robert Owen's Seedbed for Utopia” *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (SEPTEMBER 1980): 171, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27790455> .

¹⁶ John Fletcher Clews Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral World; Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (New York, Scriber & Sons, 1969):37-39.

similar for everyone, with each member offering their skills to the service of the community.¹⁷

Owen was an early advocate of expanded rights for women including access to contraception and the right to dissolve unhappy marriages.¹⁸ These ideas were over a century ahead of their time and highly unpopular in the early nineteenth century. Owen and his followers were frequently misrepresented by contemporaries as promoting immorality and “Free Love.” Owen was a deist, an advocate of “Free Inquiry”,¹⁹ and vocal in his disagreement with organized religion of the day, placing him in conflict with many of his contemporaries.²⁰

The clothing developed for use in the community was intended diminish distinctions in society based on dress and outward appearances,²¹ to reinforce the equality of all members, and free women from restrictive clothing that constricted the body and impaired movement.²² A letter by Sarah Pears, of the New Harmony community to her aunt in April of 1826, describes the costume:

The female dress is a pair of undertrowsers tied round the ankles over which an exceedingly full slip reaching the knees, although some have been so extravagant as to make them rather long, and also the sleeves long.²³

Pears described the men’s costume as consisting of full pantaloons that tied at the ankle with loose fitting, collarless “top garment” bound with a belt at the waist. Both men’s and women clothing were described as of black and white striped cotton. Members of the older

¹⁷ Carmony and Elliott, “Robert Owen’s Seedbed for Utopia,” 173.

¹⁸ Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral World*, 61-62.

¹⁹ Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral World*, 86.

²⁰ Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral World*, 61-62.

²¹ Carol A. Kolmerten, *Women In Utopia* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990):56, <https://archive.org/details/womeninutopiaide0000kolm/page/46>.

²² Kolmerten, *Women In Utopia*, 67.

²³ Sarah Pears, “ Letter from Mrs Pears to Mrs Bakewell , April 8,1926” in Thomas Pears and Sarah Pears, Thomas Clinton Pears Jr. ed, *New Harmony, An Adventure in Happiness; Papers of Thomas and Sarah Pears* (Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1933) :82-83, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000001032145;view=1up;seq=9>.

generation of married women such as Pears had not adopted the costume but some of the younger members of the community did adopt the attire.²⁴

It is likely that Owen would have been familiar with fashion trends in Europe but unlikely he would have borrowed directly from fashion trends of leisure wear of nobility due to his beliefs about society. The style of women's attire adopted at New Harmony resembled a brief fashion trend in France during the early nineteenth century. A fashion plate from 1810 depicted three women wearing long loose dresses with full legged trousers gathered at the ankle underneath.²⁵

New Harmony was founded upon equality among members regardless of gender and the attire adopted sought to create a community of equality, but failed in practice. Women continued to be engaged in gendered work, such as cleaning and meal preparation. Instead of performing these chores within their households, they were expected to perform these roles for the entire community, while still performing these duties for their households. Women did gain the right to vote and political privileges in the community during the final year of the settlement in 1827.²⁶

Pantalets and Perfection- The Oneida Community: John Humphrey Noyes (1811-1886) founded a religious community in Putney, Vermont in 1846²⁷ on the idea that persons could become “perfect followers of Christ”, freed from sin during their lifetime therefore gaining holiness necessary for salvation.²⁸ Noyes, was the son of Vermont congressman, John Noyes.

²⁴ Pears, *New Harmony, An Adventure in Happiness*, 82-83.

²⁵ Image “Les Graces en Pantalons” *Le Bon Genre* 42 (1810) in Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming Fashion 1850-1920* (Kent, Ohio, Kent State University Press, 2003): 34.

²⁶ Carol A. Korfmer, “Egalitarian Promises and Inegalitarian Practices: Women's Role in the American Owenite Communities, 1824-1828” *Journal of Education*, vol. 33, no 1 (Spring 1981): 32, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27796837>.

²⁷ Charles Nordhoff, “The Perfectionists of Oneida and Wallingford” in Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States from Personal Visit and Observation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875): 261-262, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=etas>.

²⁸ Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 51-52.

His mother, Poly Hayes Noyes was the aunt of President Rutherford B. Hayes. Noyes was educated at Dartmouth College, and later at Yale Theological Seminar,²⁹ where he was denied ordination for expressing unorthodox beliefs.³⁰

Noyes formed his first religious community based on a communist model. One of the principles, “Complex Marriage” was an understanding that all men and women in the community were married to one another. Monogamy was prohibited and condemned by Noyes as “a tyrannical institution that did not exist in Heaven and eventually would be abolished on earth.”³¹ The practice of “Complex Marriage” among Noyes and his followers was unpopular with surrounding community near Putney, Vermont. In October of 1847 Noyes was charged the adultery. After posting bail, other members of the association learned of warrants for their arrest, prompting the relocation of the group to Oneida, New York.³²

After relocating to Oneida, New York a number of changes were implemented within the organization, including changes to prescribed dress of female members. To distinguish members from those of the “world”, traditional “fashions of dress and personal adornments were discarded.”³³ The first annual report of the Oneida community in 1849 addressed changes in

²⁹ New England Historical Society, “John Humphrey Noyes Finds out Sex and Silverware Don’t Mix” accessed April 20, 2019, <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/john-humphrey-noyes-finds-out-sex-silverware-dont-mix/>.

³⁰ Entry for “Oneida,” *America and the Utopian Dream*, Library. Yale.edu, accessed April 26, 2019, <http://brbl-archive.library.yale.edu/exhibitions/utopia/uc10.html>.

³¹ Entry for “Oneida,” *America and the Utopian Dream*, Library. Yale.edu.

³² Constance Noyes Robertson, “History of the Oneida Community”, Jack T. Erickson, ed, *Oneida Community Books, Pamphlets and Serials: 1834-1972*, Syracuse University Library Department Special Collections Oneida Community Collection, <https://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/o/OneidaCommunityCollection/umifilm.htm#HISTORY%20OF%20THE%20ONEIDA>.

³³ Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 55.

women's dress, outlining a new style of dress and new hairstyles for women, although no clothing modifications were adopted for male adherents.³⁴

According to the report "some of the leading women in the Association took the liberty to dress themselves in short gowns or frocks, with pantaloons." The style according to the report was modeled after clothing of children. The changes were attributed to comfort and increased modesty. Long hair took a great deal to maintain; therefore shorter styles were more practical. But Paul in 1 Cor. 11 stated that long hair was appropriate for women. The Association examined the topic more in depth and concluded that a woman's long hair was for the purpose of covering. Therefore, with more modest clothing long hair was unnecessary. The Association recommended a new short style of hair similar to one worn by children.³⁵ Women's dress of the Oneida Community gave the appearance of a straighter legged pant worn under a long dress.³⁶ This differed from full loose pants that gathered at the ankle of the Turkish style, or the full loose pants worn by both men and women at New Harmony. Noyes used clothing to reinforce the system of patriarchal power, with a man presiding over his wife and children. Man was the "head of a woman" that were to embrace meekness and submissive.³⁷

Despite the view of female inferiority, men and women shared domestic chores such as cooking, serving meals, cleaning and laundry. Women participated in traditionally male outdoor activities associated with agriculture. The community developed manufacturing facilities for

³⁴ *First Annual Report of the Onieda Association: Exhibiting its Principles, and Transactions to Jan. 1, 1849 Digital Edition*, Syracuse University Library Department of Special Collections Oneida Community Collection, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://library.syr.edu/digital/collections/f/FirstAnnualReportOfTheOneidaAssociation/>.

³⁵ *First Annual Report of the Onieda Association, Digital Edition*, Syracuse University Library Department of Special Collections.

³⁶ "#148 Anna Boyles with O.C. Mop Ringer" Syracuse University Library, Department of Special Collection, Oneida Community Collection, Digital Edition, reproduced from *William A. Hinds Album (1906)* held by the Oneida Community, Mansion House, Inc, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://library.syr.edu/digital/images/o/OneidaCommunityPhotos/>.

³⁷ Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 55-59.

lucrative products including, food products, metal traps and silk thread.³⁸ The Oneida community operated for thirty- two years, until dissolving in 1880.³⁹

Pants Beyond the Home: By the 1830's, gymnasium, and medical retreats in the United States adopted modified clothing, including loose fitting pants, for functionality and modesty.⁴⁰ An April 1832 article appearing in Atkinson's Casket describes and provides illustrations of exercises for women to strengthen muscles in the arms shoulders and back an correct, "weakness of muscles on one side , that leads to lateral curvature of the spine." The Illustrations depict a woman in a loosely fitted dress, trimmed with a ruffle. Under the dress, another slightly longer loose-fitting layer fits under the skirt portion of the dress, also trimmed with a ruffle. The legs are covered with loose fitting pantalets of trousers.⁴¹ Outfits similar to these were adopted by spas and water cure facilities for the next several decades, and remained in use for exercise throughout the nineteenth century.⁴² By 1841 the "Turkish" style of dress had come into vogue for girls up to fourteen or fifteen years of age and was advocated by *Godey's* magazine. The outfit consisting of a short frock with pantaloons or pantalets allowed for freedom of movement for exercise for healthy development of the body.⁴³

Pants in Public Spaces-Bloomers, Pants for American Women: In 1851, Elizabeth Smith Miller, traveled from her home in Geneva, New York⁴⁴ to visit her father's cousin,

³⁸ Wonderly, "Oneida Community Gender Relations", 1 4-18.

³⁹ Wonderly, "Oneida Community Gender Relations", 3.

⁴⁰ Cunningham, *Reforming Women's Fashion*, 24-28.

⁴¹ "Callisthenic Exercises" Atkinson's Casket, April 1,1832, in Atkinson Casket vol. 7 (1832) :186-187, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000000684078;view=1up;seq=220>.

⁴² Warner, "The Gym Suit Freedom at Last," 144-161.

⁴³ Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, " How to Begin, Rules For Invigorating the Constitution" *Godey's Ladies Book*, vol. 22(January 1841): 41, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015005001519;view=1up;seq=381>.

⁴⁴ Entry for "Elizabeth Smith Miller" *Women's Rights National Historic Park New York*, accessed April 27,2019, <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/elizabeth-smith-miller.htm>.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton⁴⁵ in Seneca Fall, New York, in a new style of dress she had been experimenting with for a few months. According to Miller, she had become frustrated with her cumbersome long skirts while gardening. She shortened the skirt of her dress to four inches below her knee and paired her shortened dress with Turkish trousers.⁴⁶

Miller was from a wealthy politically involved family that supported abolition of slavery and women's suffrage.⁴⁷ Miller's father, abolitionist Congressman Gerrit Smith,⁴⁸ was a philanthropist, a business partner of Jacob Astor, and one of the largest landowners in the United States. The Smith estate served as a station on the Underground Railroad during the 1840's and 1850's.⁴⁹ Miller's mother, Ann Carrol Fitzhugh Smith, was a leader in the temperance movement.⁵⁰ Miller's father's cousin Elizabeth Cady Stanton was an abolitionist and had been involved early on in the movement for women's right to vote.⁵¹ Stanton's connections planted Miller's dress reform ideas in fertile soil. Stanton and Miller met with Amelia Bloomer, publisher of the temperance and women's suffrage magazine the *Lily*, after which Bloomer modified some of her own clothing. Bloomer offered press to the new dress reform movement through her journal.⁵² When readers realized Bloomer had adopted the costume, subscriptions increased and letters poured in from across the country, asking for patterns.⁵³

⁴⁵ Judith Mesinger "The Feminist Movement as Reflected in the Gerrit Smith Papers" *The Courier*, vol. X no. 3 (Spring 1973): 45, accessed April 2, 2019, <https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=libassoc>.

⁴⁶ Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 79-82.

⁴⁷ "Ann Carol Fitzhugh Smith" *History of American Women, Abolitionists*, accessed May 2, 2019, <http://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2016/05/ann-carroll-fitzhugh-smith.html>.

⁴⁸ Entry for "Elizabeth Smith Miller" *Western New York Suffragists: Winning the Vote*, accessed April 27, 2019, <https://rrlc.org/winningthevote/biographies/elizabeth-smith-miller/>.

⁴⁹ "Ann Carol Fitzhugh Smith" *History of American Women, Abolitionists*.

⁵⁰ Mesinger, "The Feminist Movement as Reflected in the Gerrit Smith Papers," 54.

⁵¹ "Elizabeth Cady Stanton" *History.com*, updated August 21, 2018, accessed April 28, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/elizabeth-cady-stanton>.

⁵² Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 81-82.

⁵³ D.C. Bloomer, *Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer* (Boston: Arena Publishing Co, 1895):68-69, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000004510024;view=1up;seq=78>.

Godey's had praised Turkish dress for teenage girls a decade earlier,⁵⁴ but were not receptive to similar reform of adult women's clothing. In September of 1851 *Godey's* broke their silence about the new fashion trend. "We have chosen rather to allow it to take its natural course, without interference, not doubting...the ladies would eventually settle it." *Godey's* did agree with "a reform in the length of ladies' walking dresses" as the current styles did not conform to "neatness and comfort."⁵⁵

Response in newspapers ranged from curiosity and lampooning the new peculiar style of dress, to growing hostility as the trend persisted. As a novelty, the Bloomer style of dress was not a threat. Miss C.C. Cushman undertook a 500 mile walk in 500 hours, dressed in a pink silk "Bloomer costume" trimmed in "cherry Colored ribbon."⁵⁶

A riddle appearing in a New York newspaper humor section in early 1852 reflected the negatively changing opinion of the Bloomer costume. "What is a Bloomer! One who *pants* for notoriety." The 1852 edition of *Ladies' Wreath* published a story of an educator counseling his students on manners of appropriate dress, warning young girls about the dangers of 'Bloomerism'. In the dialog, the author seeks to clarify that the Turkish style of dress among its native wearers was a costume worn indoors in the privacy of the home, aiding in freedom of movement to perform household chores, but was not worn in public spaces.⁵⁷ Trousers represented a deeper danger in society as, "one of the many manifestations of that wild spirit of socialism or agrarian radicalism which is at present so rife in our land." By breaking down,

⁵⁴ Hale, "Rules For Invigorating the Constitution," 41.

⁵⁵ "The New, or Proposed New Costume" *Godey's Lady's Book* v43 (September 1851):180, accessed April 27, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015010806654;view=1up;seq=229>.

⁵⁶ "A New Speculation" *The St. Louis Union*, in *The Evening Post* (New York), October 31, 1852, www.newspapers.com.

⁵⁷ William M. Nevin Professor, "The Bloomer Dress" in Helen Irving ed., *Ladies' Wreath an Illustrated Annual* (New York, J.M. Fletcher & Co., 1852):252 <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433076018625;view=1up;seq=725>

“distinctive grades and orders” “natural distinctions in character and sex” would dissolve jeopardizing “moral government and civilization”. Distinction of sex was believed to be more than physical, extending to aptitudes and character. It was argued that men were inclined to “thought and invention,” therefore should be engaged in business and politics, whereas women were believed to be motivated by “impulse and feeling,” and therefore should be engaged in matters of the domestic sphere.⁵⁸

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first to abandon the costume near the end of 1853. Stanton encouraged others including Lucy Stone to her former mode of dress, due to the negative attention the costume had brought to the movement for women’s rights. Susan B. Anthony returned to her long skirts in 1855, motivated in part by ridicule and harassment she experienced while wearing the costume. Stone recalled an incident when she and Anthony were surrounded by a group of men and boys while attempting to walk to a post office. Stone and Anthony experienced “only a little rough treatment” and were aided in their escape by a male acquaintance.⁵⁹ Elizabeth Smith Miller continued to wear the costume with the support of her husband who accompanied her in public⁶⁰ and under pressure from her father until the early 1860’s. Amelia Bloomer, abandoned the costume for practical reasons after moving with her husband to Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1855.⁶¹ The “high winds which prevail here much of the time,” made Bloomer’s shortened skirts impractical. She was “annoyed and mortified” by the high winds lifted her skirts at times over her head and shoulders.⁶² In 1858 Bloomer abandoned pantaloons and adopted the wire hoopskirt that was lighter weight than previous styles of

⁵⁸ Nevin, “The Bloomer Dress,” 253.

⁵⁹ Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 101-103.

⁶⁰ Mesinger, “The Feminist Movement as Reflected in the Gerrit Smith Papers,” 51.

⁶¹ Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 104.

⁶² Bloomer, *Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer*, 72.

undergarments worn with full skirts.⁶³ Bloomer recalled her previous costume as “convent and comfortable” particularly as a “working dress.” Despite the experiences of Anthony and Stone, Bloomer “never encountered any open opposition” and “was always treated with respect” when wearing the Bloomer costume.⁶⁴

Since the 1820’s at New Harmony women wore pants in private communities. It would be another two decades before American women would wear trousers in public spaces in the United States. From 1851 to 1853 women across the United States experimented with wearing trousers in public spaces. Reporters from Iowa, described women traveling West to Oregon dressed in pants, paired with a loose sack coat, wide brimmed hat, boots and gloves.⁶⁵ Women in pants faded from memory over the next few decades, retiring to health spas, private communities, and gender segregated spaces, resurfacing again in the twentieth century as women assumed greater roles in public life.

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⁶³ Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power*, 105.

⁶⁴ Bloomer, *Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer*, 73.

⁶⁵ “The Muscanite (Iowa) Journal” in The New York Times ,August 27,1852, www.newspapers.com.

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