

Non-document History



The Estampie: A medieval dance

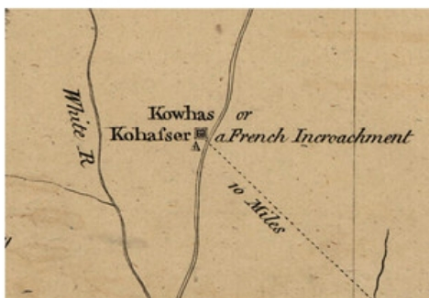
We will never know exactly how the Estampie was danced because we don't have records of the exact movements themselves, but dance historians have tried to understand what it would have looked like through the music manuscripts that survive. Troubadours of the time wrote about their distaste for the formality of the older "Carol" dance. The Estampie was born, and popular enough to have been recorded in multiple written instances. The Estampie and other medieval and folk dances raise the question: How do you preserve, display, and archive dance?

The Bacton Altar Cloth: Priceless gown or altar cloth?

The Bacton Altar Cloth is the earliest example of a dress owned by Elizabeth I, and it was rediscovered in 2015. It was being used as an altar cloth in St Faith's Church in Bacton, Herefordshire, England. This garment shows an interesting aspect of clothing history. Besides the fact that extant garments simply don't survive due to their fragility and natural fiber content, the ones that do survive are often not in their original shape or construction. It was very common practice to use fabric in every way possible for much of history because it was so valuable. Dresses that were out of style or older were reworked to be fashionable, or altered to fit younger sisters and cousins- or in the case of this dress, turned into an altar cloth.



18th Century Jesuit Writings on the Abenaki: Proselytizing or Recording History?



As has been the case for many groups throughout history who have been oppressed, the record keeping practices for many Native American groups were destroyed or suppressed by European colonization. This leads to a problem where the writings and records most readily available are often through a white missionary or colonist perspective. However, in an interesting case, the Abenaki people of northeastern America have been able to use Jesuit missionary maps and records to fight for recognition of their own land and indigenous status. This is both a problem of their own record keeping not being available or recognized, yet also a solution to use these logs for modern government recognition.

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