



m.m. memos
Margaret Miller

Wedding dress part of a family's roots

A dress of heavy beige silk, lovingly sewn by hand nearly a century ago, and a child's dress of brown silk and velvet are the elder statements of a display of wedding gowns that can be found these days at at Greenmead, Livonia's historical site.

I enjoyed looking over the whole display, but I stopped longer before those two, even though I have seen them many times before.

They belonged to my great-grandmother and grandmother, and I still find amazing their beauty and painstaking workmanship and the stories about how they were worn to the altar.

For preservation of both dresses and stories, I am indebted to my aunt, who placed life's top value on anything connected with her family, and to those earlier relatives who left her the treasures to preserve.

GOING BACK through the years, I have to start in 1842 when my great-grandmother was wed, at the age of 21, in Sheffield, England.

Her dress was brown silk and velvet, not the materials you think of now as wedding dress fabric. But they were practical and they were carefully saved by the bride, who was widowed after the birth of three children.

This lady became a prototype for today's displaced homemakers — she opened a small shop in

her home and eked out a living selling buttons and pins and other notions.

And she saved her wedding dress. It came in handy later when her older daughter made a good match and her younger daughter needed something elegant to wear to that wedding. The brown silk and velvet became the child's dress standing now in the parlor at Greenmead.

IT WAS a few years later that the son of the family came to this country to seek his fortune. He found a job in Detroit with a Great Lakes shipper. Once established, he returned to Sheffield to visit his mother and was smitten by the charms of his younger sister's friend from Edinburgh.

Then it was back to Detroit to earn a few more dollars, buy a house and finally send for his Scottish love.

She sewed her wedding dress in the months she waited and arrived by ship at New York on a grey November day in 1894. My grandfather met her ship, and they hurried to the nearest church. That's where that silk dress was worn for the repeating of long-ago wedding vows.

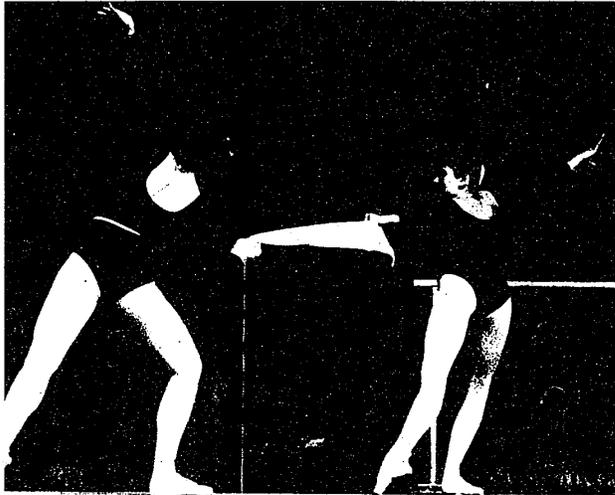
The dresses have been stored with care for a lot of years while more family history was being enacted. I'm glad to be the custodian now, and I hope also to be custodian of some of the qualities those forebears represented.

They were quite a bunch.



Tug of war

Susan Tezac (left) and Jean Jambas (right) look like they've adopted a strenuous game of tug of war as a pastime. They really have a "Three-Quarter Pastime." That's what they're really doing. It's a series of four ballets choreographed by Jill Eathorne Bahr, a former Farmington resident who is the director of Mississippi Ballet Theatre. The "Three-Quarter Pastime" was performed at Detroit's Masonic Temple as part of the Mid-States Regional Ballet Festival. For ballet buffs who missed it the first time, the company will perform the dance at 7 p.m. June 15 in building J, room 306 on Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus, Farmington Road north of 11 Mile. It's part of the Farmington Area Arts Commission's summer series, "Art in the Park."



Milburns mark 65th anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Milburn Sr. of Farmington Hills will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on May 31.

They have lived in the Detroit area all of their married life and have lived in Farmington Hills for 50 years.

Milburn is retired from Local 58 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers since June, 1961. He and his wife Jo have four children, Josephine Turnbull of Redford Township, Ray Jr. of California, Earl of Livonia and Carl of Milford.

They have 12 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.



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