

Archival Equestrian Materials Presented at the Art Museum

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- John M. Peck (American) Woman's riding hat, 1800-1825. Beaver felt, lace, and gilt. Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts. SK B.18.U.F.1.1. Photo by Petegorsky/Gipe.



- John M. Peck (American) Woman's riding hat and hat box, 1800-1825. Beaver felt, lace, and gilt. Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts. SK B.18.U.F.1.1. Photo by Petegorsky/Gipe.



- Apsáalooke (Crow) saddle. Maker Unknown. Leather, glass beads, paint, and iron. Joseph Allen Skinner Museum, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts. SK K.65. Photo by Laura Shea.

The Material Life of Equestriennes,

A recent display at the [Mount Holyoke College Art Museum](#) featured this traditional English women's riding hat and saddle. Estimated to be about two hundred years old, the hat is still remarkably intact. And it is remarkably different from the impact-resistant plastic or resin helmets worn by today's equestriennes. Constructed out of beaver felt, lace, and gilt, the hat was one of two items in *The Material Life of Equestriennes*, which also featured an Apsáalooke (Crow) saddle. Affixed to the inside of the hat, made by Boston milliner John M. Peck, is a well-worn illustration of an eagle and American flag.

Selected by interns—and equestriennes—**Madeline Ketley '17** and **Katia Kiefaber '17**, the hat and saddle represent the long history of equestrianism at Mount Holyoke, which will celebrate its centennial in 2020.

In putting together the exhibit the interns recognized their work as “laying the cultural context,” according to Kiefaber, of campus equestrian activity, which began long before the College's program was officially established. With the support of the Almaria History in Museums J-Term Internship, the students conducted research at [Skinner Museum](#), which houses both objects in its permanent collection, and Archives and Special Collections.

—By **Sara Rottger '19**

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