

The Distinct Influence of the British

Genealogy Tips by Jeannette Holland Austin

Virginia settlers were influenced in so many ways by the British. In dress, style, architecture, customs, laws and so on.

I can remember when modern America followed the dress styles of France and Italy. I have photos of my great aunt wearing her fur coat whenever she went to Atlanta, and especially to the famous Fox Theatre.

Whenever the hem was lengthened or shortened, everyone made the adjustment. Until the Hippie movement of the 1960s when that generation decided that "anything goes."

Hems of skirts were both long and short; shoes and boots of all styles were part of the mix, and a fad of stringy necklaces, gaudy pins and rings changed the landscape. Until then, everyone dressed appropriately, wearing hats, gloves and carrying umbrellas to match. I was working downtown Atlanta at the time. Suddenly, everything changed from the appearance of nicely dressed people with good manners to a slum city of deadbeats. Atlanta took on the appearance of motorcycles, leather coats and pants, and the clothing of the "flower children." viz: ragged, torn, faded, etc. Hairstyles went long and stringy for everyone.

They slept on the street and in parks. It was a period of utter disgrace as LSD entered the scene and young girls were stolen away. However, the period of the foreign styles mimic had last for hundreds of years.

This is the way that it was for Virginians throughout the early periods of immigration, the 17th through 19th centuries. In those days, people

saved just about everything. The seams were removed and the old dress was used as a pattern for the new dress.