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***What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution?*¹**

Fashion's Favourite, the title of Beverley Lemire's 1991 book on the cotton trade and consumer revolution in England, reminded us that in the eighteenth century cotton was a fashionable fabric.² During the second half of the century, decorated cottons like sprigged muslins, printed calicoes and white tufted counterpanes established a remarkable currency as desirable fabrics for dress and furnishing at all levels in the market. They became an indispensable element of fashion. Of course we can debate exactly what 'fashion' means in this context. Is it fashion in the economist's sense of regular changes in visual appearance of any type of good intended to stimulate sales? Is it fashion in the dress historian's sense of annual or seasonal manipulation of normative appearance through clothing? Or is it fashion in the fashion pundit's sense of those forms of self-conscious, avant-garde innovation in dress pursued by an exclusive social or cultural élite – the fashion of royal courts, the eighteenth-century ton, and later haute couture? It is a remarkable feature of cotton's success in the later eighteenth century that it embraced fashion in each of these three senses. In the process, cotton challenged the previous supremacy of silks and woollens as fashionable fabrics. At the start of the eighteenth century the complaints of the silk and woollen producers had secured a prohibition on the import and sale of most types of cotton, then largely sourced in south Asia. From mid-century this ban was increasingly ignored and then repealed. By the 1780s producers of

¹ The author would like to thank Helen Clifford and Matt Adams for collecting some of the data used in this paper. Parts of the research were funded by the Pasold Research Fund and the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior.

² Beverley Lemire, Fashion's Favourite. The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800 (Oxford, 1991).

other fabrics, including woollens, linens and silks, were once again complaining about the damage that cottons were inflicting on their sales.

Yet it is striking that for many historians of these developments, the success of cotton was not simply about fashion. Over the last eighty years, a succession of scholars has proposed that cotton quickly triumphed in the market for unadorned, utilitarian textiles as well as in the realm of fashionable and decorated fabrics. They have suggested that, in the course of the later eighteenth century, cottons replaced linens as plain fabrics for everyday uses like shirting and sheeting. Indeed, this assertion has been so widely accepted that reductions in mortality in the period have been ascribed to the supposed improvements in hygiene that resulted from the use of cotton for these purposes.

M.C. Buer in his 1926 study Health, Wealth and Population in the Early Days of the Industrial Revolution argued that ‘at first this industry was a luxury one, catering only for the well-to-do, but the rapid cheapening of its product by the application of machinery, soon led to production for the masses. Cotton cloth was cheap material suitable for women's dresses *and for body and household linen* [my emphasis]; it wore less well than stout woollen material but that was advantageous from the health point of view since it could be cheaply renewed. Cotton washed easily and therefore its use much encouraged cleanliness.’³ Writing in 1967, J.D. Chambers developed a similar argument as he struggled to account for the fall in mortality in Nottingham from the 1770s. He could offer no explanation except the fact that ‘Nottingham, of course, was a cotton town, the first in fact’. He noted that ‘By the end of the century cotton hosiery, *underwear*, calicoes, bed-hangings and *sheets* [my emphases] would be ousting those of wool; and cotton can be boiled, which is fatal for the typhus louse. The change to cotton would be especially beneficial to the poor of the large towns.’⁴

³ M.C. Buer, Health, Wealth and Population in the Early Days of the Industrial Revolution (London, 1926): 60.

⁴ J.D. Chambers, Population, Economy, and Society in Pre-Industrial England (Oxford, 1972): 104.

More recently in the 1990s, David Landes has noted the importance for hygiene of ‘*the introduction of cheap cotton underclothing* [my emphasis] The lack of easily cleaned undergarments was an invitation to skin irritation, scratching, and thus transfer of pathogens from body to hands to food to digestive tract. The new underclothing, in combination with new and cheaper soaps, probably saved as many lives as all the medical advances of the century’.⁵ In the same vein, Woodruff D. Smith in his 2002 study Consumption and the Making of Respectability asserts that ‘In the last years of the eighteenth century, cotton moved strongly to replace linens and mixed textiles as the favored material for shirts and undergarments at almost every income level in Europe and America There can be no doubt that the “revolution” in cotton technology associated with the names of Hargreaves, Crompton, and Arkwright made it possible for cotton to become the primary material, not just for outerwear, but also *for shirts and underclothing* [my emphasis] in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, which contributed to the immense expansion of British cotton production during that period.’⁶

Investigation of this whole issue is dogged with evidential problems. None of the historians quoted provides direct, quantitative evidence at the level of consumers and households for the changes described. Some refer to the broad downward trend in price series for cotton fabrics derived from the records of institutional purchasers and wholesale dealers. Two of them, Bauer and Chambers, refer to comments on the spread of cotton clothing among the labouring poor by the early nineteenth-century radical and inveterate social optimist Francis Place.⁷ But Place’s comments on the benefits of cotton clothing referred not to the universally worn undergarments – shirts for men and shifts for women - but to petticoats and stays which were worn by women over their shifts.⁸ The key problem here is the shortage of alternative sources of evidence and the difficulties associated with using those that are available. The recent boom in studies of consumption

⁵ David Landes, ‘The Fable of the Dead Horse; or, the Industrial Revolution Revisited’, in Joel Mokyr (ed.), The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective (Boulder, Colorado, 1999): 152, note 27.

⁶ Woodruff D. Smith, Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800 (New York; London: Routledge, 2002): 61.

⁷ Buer, Health, Wealth and Population: 196; Chambers, Population, Economy, and Society: 104-5.

⁸ See Dorothy George, England in Transition. Life and Work in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1931): 98.

in early-modern England has relied either on the records of manufacturers and retailers, or on post-mortem inventories, which survive in huge numbers for the period 1550 to 1740.⁹ Inventories have proved an invaluable and flexible source for studies of changing patterns of consumption, bringing a welcome precision to debates about changes in the ownership of goods.¹⁰ Nevertheless, they suffer from severe limitations. Most damagingly for studies of the Industrial Revolution, their numbers and quality decline after the mid-eighteenth century. In addition, the vast majority fail to provide detailed breakdowns of the clothing owned by testators and their social reach is highly skewed towards the wealthier half of the population.

The records of the criminal courts offer an alternative source for studying changes in the ownership of goods. In particular, the tens of thousands of printed trial transcripts that survive for the Old Bailey, the principal criminal court for London, from the late seventeenth century, mostly involving the illegal appropriation of property, offer another perspective on the ownership of goods. It is a perspective that is wider than probate inventories in its social reach, its chronological span and the detail it provides about clothing in particular. But we should remember that it is also a perspective that is more limited in scope than inventories. Inventories promise (although they never entirely deliver) a full listing of the owner's moveable goods. The goods listed in criminal trials reflect the highly selective activity of those who stole. Nevertheless, for goods like sheets and shirts which were very widely owned and used, and readily and frequently stolen, broad trends in the varieties stolen are likely to have reflected wider trends in ownership.

⁹ For use of the records of manufacturers and retailers, see Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and the Commercialisation of the Potteries', in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (London, 1982). For inventories, see Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (London, 1988) and Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989).

¹⁰ For the most sophisticated recent quantitative analysis of British consumption patterns based on probate inventories see Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Haan, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (London, 2004).

The Old Bailey Proceedings have been used to study material life by historians since Dorothy George in the 1920s, but rarely to generate quantitative evidence.¹¹ Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org), the recent digitisation of the trial transcripts from 1670 to 1834, makes the quantification of this source more feasible. It supplies the principal new body of evidence used in this paper. However, as a source it is not without its difficulties. Before 1740 the number of court sittings for which transcripts survive are fewer and the detail in which trials and stolen goods are described tends to be less. After about 1800, as the number of cases increases, the quality of the information provided about material things declines precipitously. From that date, for reasons we do not yet understand, it became very rare for the charge against the accused to itemize the materials from which the stolen goods were made.¹² In other words, the Old Bailey evidence about material things is at its most extensive and reliable during the period 1740 to 1800. This is unfortunate for the purposes of this paper, as the turn of the eighteenth century marks a half-way stage in the growth of the domestic market for cotton fabrics. Consequently, the paper supplements Old Bailey evidence with evidence from criminal indictments from the Courts of Quarter Sessions in Yorkshire, Oxfordshire and Worcestershire, where information about the materials from which stolen goods were made continued to be recorded into the 1820s. It should also be pointed out that the Old Bailey Proceedings Online search engine counts cases, not stolen items. Numbers of individual items stolen and the values ascribed to them (usually second-hand values, unless legal technicalities required otherwise) have to be extracted manually. This has only been done for counterpanes, and the deficiency is again partly made up with evidence from provincial criminal courts.

This paper employs these sources to map some of the uses to which cottons were put by consumers up to the 1820s. The evidence presented in Tables 1 and 2 confirms the early

¹¹ Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1925). Also see Madeleine Ginsburg, "The tailoring and dressmaking trades 1700-1850," *Costume*, 6 (1972): 64-9; Madeleine Ginsburg, "Rags to riches: the second-hand clothes trade 1700-1978," *Costume*, 14 (1980): 121-35; Beverley Lemire, "The Theft of Clothes and Popular Consumerism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Social History*, 24 (1990): 255-276.

¹² This is also true of the manuscript indictments. See Greater London Record Office, OB/SR: Old Bailey Gaol Delivery Rolls (Middlesex), 1800-1830, *passim*.

and rapid success of cottons in the realm of decorated and fashion fabrics for clothing and furnishing. Table 1 addresses both clothing and furnishing. It provides a decade by decade count of Old Bailey cases which mention printed or painted fabrics, which were commonly used both for women's outer garments, especially gowns, and a variety of furnishings, especially hangings and curtains. Not only did the numbers of printed fabrics stolen increase hugely, doubling in the 1770s and again in the 1780s, but that increase reflected the triumph of cotton. Between the 1740s and the 1760s numbers of cotton prints and linen prints were broadly similar, but from the 1770s to the 1790s linen prints were eclipsed. The success of printed cottons did not reflect the fact that they were cheaper than printed linens. Table 2 provides price data for gowns stolen in the Midlands and the north of England, and pawned in York in the later eighteenth century. In all these sources, cotton gowns were consistently ascribed a higher value than linen gowns, suggesting that the greater popularity of cotton gowns lay in their superiority in appearance and other functional qualities, not in their cheapness relative to linen.

Table 3 addresses furnishings more narrowly. It provides a decade by decade count of Old Bailey cases which mention counterpanes. Counterpanes, usually woven in distinctive tufted decorative patterns, were one of the great domestic furnishing success stories of the eighteenth century. Gradually replacing quilts, rugs and coverlets, even in cheap lodgings, they brought prosperity to the fancy weavers of Bolton, Lancashire and an appearance of crisp, decorative cleanliness to beds. Counterpanes, which were usually bleached white, could be made from linen as well as cotton. As with printed fabrics, from the 1740s to the 1760s the numbers of counterpanes made from linen and from cotton were broadly similar. From the 1770s, however, linen counterpanes were eclipsed by their cotton equivalents. It was cottons that accounted for most of the big increase in the numbers of cases mentioning counterpanes in the 1770s and 1780s. And as with printed fabrics, the shift away from quilts made from a variety of materials to counterpanes made from cotton reflected taste more than price. In the 1790s the mean value of quilts stolen

from lodgings with rents under 6s a week was 2.74 shillings, while the mean value of cotton counterpanes stolen from the same kind of lodgings was 3.38 shillings.¹³

Cotton emerges from these late eighteenth-century sources as a hugely successful fabric in its decorated forms, both printed and woven, for use in both clothing and furnishing. Wherever appearance was crucial, cotton succeeded. Its success appears to have depended more on its superior properties than on its cheapness. It is significant that at this period cotton fabrics were virtually never supplied by overseers of the poor to paupers either for outer garments or furnishings; paupers went on having to make do with cheap, coarse linens, woollens and worsteds.¹⁴

A very different picture emerges if we turn to the question of whether plain cotton fabrics ousted plain linens in their more mundane uses, especially shirting and sheeting, or what Buer, with his interest in hygiene, called 'body and household linen'. Table 4 provides a decade by decade count of Old Bailey cases which mention shifts and shirts. Cotton shirts appear very early, from the 1680s, which is consistent with what we know about the efforts, not very successful, of the East India Company to promote the use of Indian cottons for shirting in that decade.¹⁵ But what is most striking is that despite some growth in the numbers of cotton shifts and shirts in the course of the eighteenth century, their numbers remained small compared with shirts and shifts made from linens (well under 10%). This remained the case even in the last two decades of the century, when cottons were trouncing linens in the market for decorated fabrics.

¹³ For the furnishing of London lodgings, see John Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and their Furnishing in Eighteenth-Century London', in John Styles and Amanda Vickery (eds.), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven, 2006).

¹⁴ My unpublished analysis of six sets of detailed overseers' accounts drawn from various parts of the country does not support Steve King's over-generous interpretation of the range of fabrics provided by parishes to paupers. See Steve King, 'Reclothing the English poor, 1750-1840', *Textile History*, 33 (2000): 37-47.

¹⁵ John Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London', *Past and Present*, 168 (2000): 124-169; also Beverley Lemire, 'Transforming Consumer Custom: Linens, Cottons and the English Market, 1660-1800', in Brenda Collins and Philip Ollerenshaw (eds.), *The European Linen Industry in Historical Perspective* (Oxford, 2003) and 'Fashioning Cottons; Asian trade, Domestic Industry and Consumer Demand, 1660-1780', in David Jenkins (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2003).

As has already been pointed out, after 1800 the Old Bailey data lacks information about materials. However, it is possible to trace the relative fortunes of cotton and linen shirts and shifts after that date in provincial criminal records. Table 5 provides counts of the numbers of stolen shifts and shirts made from the two materials that appear in cases tried at Quarter Sessions in the West Riding of Yorkshire, Oxfordshire and Worcestershire between the 1750s and the 1820s. For the period up to 1800, the results are consistent with the Old Bailey evidence, taking into account the smaller number of cases. No cotton shifts or shirts were stolen at all. After 1800, it is only in the 1810s that cotton shirts and shifts begin to appear. Even in the early 1820s they accounted for only 20% of those stolen in Yorkshire.

The same was true of bed sheets. Up to 1800 cotton held an insignificant share of the market for bed sheeting in London. Table 6 provides a decade by decade count of Old Bailey cases which mention sheets. Cotton sheets, like cotton shirts, appeared quite early, in the 1700s, but thereafter their numbers remained tiny, even in the 1780s and 1790s. After 1800 their fortunes can be traced in provincial criminal records, although, as at the Old Bailey, there were markedly fewer prosecutions for thefts of sheets than for thefts of shirts and shifts. By the 1820s, cotton sheets accounted for 25% of the stolen sheets identified by material in the West Riding of Yorkshire Quarter Sessions. This represents a significant increase compared with the Old Bailey at the end of the eighteenth century, but linen sheets still accounted for a large majority of the sheets stolen.¹⁶

Even in the 1820s, therefore, cotton was only starting to gain a foothold in the markets for plain shirting and sheeting. Historians have been premature in their estimates of when cotton succeeded in these markets. But why was there such a discrepancy between the timing of the substitution of cottons for linens in the markets for fashionable, decorated fabrics and in the markets for plain, utilitarian fabrics? The obvious answer is price, but, as we have seen, cotton's early success in the markets for decorated fabrics was not initially a matter of its cheapness as compared with decorated linens. C. Knick Harley has

¹⁶ West Yorkshire Record Office, Wakefield, Q/4: West Riding Quarter Sessions Indictment Books, 1821-1825: 5 cotton sheets stolen, 15 linen sheets stolen.

recently warned us against exaggerating the extent of price reductions in finished cotton cloth in the twenty years before and after 1800, despite dramatic improvements in spinning.¹⁷ Price series for linens equivalent to those Harley has generated for cottons are lacking, but W.G. Rimmer points out that linen spinners responded vigorously to the very high flax prices during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, when trade with northern Europe was disrupted. They converted to power spinning and improved preparatory processes to increase dramatically the yarn yielded by each pound of raw flax. After 1815, when flax prices fell by nearly a third, there was a buoyant market for domestically-woven light household linens, of which shirting and sheeting undoubtedly comprised a large part.¹⁸

Even if price series were available for cotton shirting and sheeting and linen shirting and sheeting, direct comparison between yardage prices for the two fibres might be inappropriate. Linen is stronger than cotton, and one of the complaints voiced against cotton was that it lacked durability. As early as 1681, the author of The Trade of England Revived claimed that worsted linings like ‘perpetuana or shalloon will wear out two coats’, while ‘glazened calico will hardly wear out one coat’.¹⁹ Later Daniel Defoe famously dismissed calico as ‘ordinary, mean, low-priz’d, and soon in rags’.²⁰ If these complaints were justified, cotton yardage prices would have needed to be well below linen yardage prices to compete successfully in a market segment where durability was crucial. Consumers at all social levels washed household linen frequently, both for hygiene and appearance, but they had little choice but to employ ineffective soaps and correspondingly brutal washing techniques. If cottons were less hard-wearing, they would have needed a price advantage sufficiently great to cover the cost of more frequent replacement.

¹⁷ C. Knick Harley, ‘Cotton Textile Prices and the Industrial Revolution’, Economic History Review, 51, 1 (1998): 49-83.

¹⁸ W.G. Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds, Flax-Spinners, 1788-1886 (Cambridge, 1960): 73-4, 128, 144.

¹⁹ Anon, The Trade of England Revived (London, 1681): 16-17.

²⁰ Daniel Defoe, A Brief Deduction of the Original, Progress, and Immense Greatness of the British Woollen Manufacture (London, 1727): 50.

Moreover, we should remember that the physical characteristics of manufactured goods do not necessarily remain constant. Harley's work on the changing fineness of cotton yarns in the later eighteenth century should alert us to the possibility that product definitions could be changed. We should consider whether cotton shirting and sheeting might have become more durable, and therefore better able to substitute for linen, as raw cotton supply after 1800 increasingly became standardized on American upland cotton and technical innovation continued in all aspects of the production process, especially weaving. Finally, we need to ask whether there were exogenous changes that affected the way the qualities of fabrics made from cotton and flax were judged. In particular, did improvements in domestic washing, especially soaps, work to counteract any disadvantage cotton suffered as a result of inferior durability?

Whatever the explanation, the over-optimistic prophecy made in 1785 by Samuel Salte, London agent for the muslin manufacturer Samuel Oldknow, that 'the fashion of wearing calico shirting will obtain very much' took the best part of half a century to come true.²¹ It was only after 1825 that cottons really began to eat into the market share of linens for shirting and sheeting. Edward Baines, the editor of the Leeds Mercury, noted in 1829 that the Barnsley linen weavers were suffering because 'cotton fabrics have of late come much into competition with linens, and one article in particular, cotton shirting is now very much in request'.²² And it was not until the 1850s that the market for domestically-produced linens actually collapsed.²³

In conclusion I want to highlight two implications of these findings for the economic and social history of cotton fabrics.

The first concerns the status of cotton textiles as a category. There is a tendency in some recent literature on product innovation in Europe from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century to present cotton as if it were a single product, protean and infinitely

²¹ Michael M. Edwards, The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815 (Manchester, 1967): 36.

²² Quoted in Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds: 164-5.

²³ Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds: 239.

substitutable for textiles made from other materials. There is no doubt that cotton enjoyed spectacular success in the long term, much of it by capturing markets previously served by other fibres. Nevertheless, we should remember that its success was uneven across the various markets for textiles, that adapting cotton to new uses sometimes required radical (and difficult) reworking of what defined it as a product, and that producers in other fibres were capable of responding in kind. These are not simply matters of price. We need to pay more attention to the specific material characteristics and qualities of goods, to ask how those attributes were contrived, to explore the tastes and preferences of those who consumed them, and to understand how goods were used. In other words, we need to engage with products as artefacts with their own, distinctive life-histories; artefacts that were designed, made, bought, used and discarded.

The second concerns the health benefits that historians have often ascribed to cotton undergarments. The evidence presented here suggests that such benefits are unlikely to have accrued before 1825. But it is hard to see that cotton actually had the great advantages over linen in this respect that have been claimed (although Buer and Chambers appear to have believed that undergarments were previously made from wool, for which there is no evidence). Linen shirts, shifts and sheets were washed frequently and, if it is true that cotton was less durable, with less anxiety about wear. If this was the case, then the important issue from a hygiene point of view is the level of ownership of body and household linen throughout the population. In England this seems to have undergone a long-term increase from the sixteenth century, in several parts of the country at least.²⁴ Francis Place, of course, emphasized the importance for hygiene of washable, cotton outer garments, but we need to ask how frequently such garments were actually washed. We should remember that washing printed cottons was not without its drawbacks. Although their colours were relatively fast, they did fade when washed.²⁵

²⁴ Overton, et al, *Production and Consumption in English Households*: 108-11; Christopher Husbands, "Standards of living in north Warwickshire in the seventeenth century," *Warwickshire History*, 4, 6 (1980-1): 203-215.

²⁵ One owner of a stolen cotton gown was able to identify it at the Old Bailey because it had never been washed. 'These things are all my property; this gown was made by a friend of mine, it has never been washed'. Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 30 September 2005, Oct. 1797, trial of Mary Hodges (t17971025-5).

And woollen garments did not have to remain dirty. Woollen clothing could be dismantled, scoured and then reassembled, and there were less drastic cleaning methods that did not involve washing. The whole issue requires some new thinking about the textiles involved, the ways they were used (including how they were cleaned), and the relationship between clothing, washing and the transmission of disease.

Table 1. Old Bailey cases that mention printed/painted fabrics, 1674-1834.

	printed cotton	printed linen	all cases (offences)
1670s	-	-	408
1680s	1	-	2,369
1690s	1	-	3,166
1700s	1	1	776
1710s	13	7	2,854
1720s	3	11	4,811
1730s	10	22	4,697
1740s	18	21	3,935
1750s	11	9	4,061
1760s	20	16	4,102
1770s	68	40	6,155
1780s	181	27	7,320
1790s	164	4	5,563
1800s	185	3	7,058
1810s	211	1	10,908
1820s	182	-	16,445
1830-4	90	-	8,482

Source: Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 30 September 2005.

For cottons keyword searches on cotton, calico, calicoe, callico, callicoe, muslin, chintz, chints, chince (although note that chintzes could be linen); for linens keyword searches on linen, linnen, flaxen, harden, hempen, cambrick, holland, lawn. For both fabrics keyword searches on printed and painted.

Table 2. Values of gowns according to material, 1770-1799.**2.1. Mean value of stolen gowns at Yorkshire Assizes (North and West Riding cases), 1780-9:**

Silks	7.57s.	n=7
Cottons	7.78s.	n.=9
Linens	6.57s.	n=7
Worsted stuffs	4.75s.	n=4

Source: Public Record Office, ASSI 44, Northern Circuit Indictments.

2.2. Mean value of stolen gowns at Oxfordshire and Worcestershire Assizes, 1770-99:

Silks	35.00s.	n=11
Cottons	12.58s.	n.=25
Linens	5.61s.	n.=8
Worsted stuffs	7.00s.	n=2

Source: Public Record Office, ASSI 5, Oxford Circuit Indictments.

2.3. Mean pledge value of gowns pawned to George Fettes, York, 4 weeks across 1777-8.

Silks	4.36s.	n=11
Cottons	4.43s.	n.=20
Linens	4.00s.	n.=4
Worsted stuffs	2.40s.	n=14

Source: York City Archives, Accession 38: Pledge book of George Fettes, pawnbroker, York, 1777-8, pledges of single items only.

Table 3. Old Bailey cases that mention counterpanes, 1674-1834.

	cotton counterpanes	linen counterpanes	all counterpanes	all cases (offences)
1670s	-	-	-	408
1680s	-	-	-	2,369
1690s	-	1	1	3,166
1700s	-	-	-	776
1710s	-	-	-	2,854
1720s	-	-	1	4,811
1730s	-	1	2	4,697
1740s	1	2	8	3,935
1750s	2	3	8	4,061
1760s	7	5	17	4,102
1770s	21	11	37	6,155
1780s	55	7	88	7,320
1790s	44	10	81	5,563
1800s	10	1	94	7,058
1810s	-	-	130	10,908
1820s	-	-	148	16,445
1830-4	-	-	83	8,482

Source: Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 30 September 2005.

Table 4. Old Bailey cases that mention shirts or shifts, 1674-1834.

	cotton shirt/s	cotton shift/s	linen shirt/s	linen shift/s	all shirt/s	all shift/s	all cases (offences)
1670s	-	-	1	-	3	9	408
1680s	1	-	14	1	47	21	2,369
1690s	1	-	25	12	66	36	3,166
1700s	-	-	25	1	37	3	776
1710s	1	-	66	13	118	52	2,854
1720s	1	-	75	25	257	90	4,811
1730s	4	1	110	38	384	169	4,697
1740s	3	1	187	59	416	213	3,935
1750s	8	-	210	122	365	222	4,061
1760s	6	-	193	112	437	225	4,102
1770s	8	2	422	234	588	290	6,155
1780s	28	-	384	159	827	355	7,320
1790s	29	3	285	130	543	235	5,563
1800s	17	2	10	1	646	252	7,058
1810s	4	-	5	-	851	293	10,908
1820s	3	-	9	2	1,098	446	16,445
1830-4	5	-	6	1	638	231	8,482

Source: Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 30 September 2005.

For cottons keyword searches on cotton, calico, calicoe, callico, callicoe, muslin; for linens keyword searches on linen, linnen, flaxen, harden, hempen, cambrick, holland, lawn, dowlas, dowlas, canvas.

Table 5. Shifts and shirts stolen, provincial Quarter Sessions, 1750-1825.**5.1. West Riding of Yorkshire Quarter Sessions, shifts and shirts stolen 1750-9, 1780-9, 1821-5.**

	cotton	linen
1750-9	-	28
1780-9	-	62
1821-5	8	42

Source: West Yorkshire Record Office, Wakefield, Q/4: West Riding Quarter Sessions Indictment Books, 1750-1825.

5.2. Oxfordshire and Worcestershire Quarter Sessions, shifts and shirts stolen, 1750-1820.

	cotton	linen
1750-9	-	12
1760-9	-	14
1770-9	-	7
1780-9	-	24
1790-9	-	20
1800-9	-	12
1810-9	3	23

Source: Oxfordshire Record Office, Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions rolls, 1750-1820; Worcestershire Record Office, Worcestershire Quarter Sessions, 110: Sessions Rolls, 1750-1820.

Table 6. Old Bailey cases that mention sheets, 1674-1834.

	cotton sheet/s	linen sheet/s	all sheet/s	all cases (offences)
1670s	-	-	3	408
1680s	-	43	86	2,369
1690s	-	65	110	3,166
1700s	1	36	47	776
1710s	-	79	121	2,854
1720s	1	54	205	4,811
1730s	1	74	294	4,697
1740s	1	125	309	3,935
1750s	-	238	322	4,061
1760s	2	182	300	4,102
1770s	-	325	384	6,155
1780s	2	285	521	7,320
1790s	3	267	450	5,563
1800s	4	19	509	7,058
1810s	4	4	725	10,908
1820s	-	1	962	16,445
1830-4	3	2	448	8,482

Source: Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 30 September 2005.

For cottons keyword searches on cotton, calico, calicoe, callico, callicoe; for linens keyword searches on flaxen, Russia, holland, harden, hempen, linen, linen, dowlas, dowlass, canvas.