NAPERVILLE, IL — Naper Settlement presents the beauty and perils of 19th-century clothing in the new exhibit, “Infrastructure: Creating 19th Century Clothing Then and Now.” Now on view through November 3, 2023, "Infrastructure” features dozens of garments and accessories from the Naperville Heritage Society and Winnetka Historical Society’s collections. Visitors explore how 19th-century clothing was created and worn in the past, as well as the complexities of today’s recreations for the stage through a partnership with TimeLine Theatre Company.

The exhibit is inspired by the fabric scrapbook of early Naperville resident, Hannah Ditzler Alspaugh. Beginning with the Civil War through her marriage in 1903, Hannah’s fabric scrapbook documents over 50 years of fashion history with meticulously preserved fabric swatches and notations on how her fabric was used, reused, and the memories made while wearing it.

“Hannah’s scrapbook takes us into a world where things were not gotten easily nor discarded lightly,” said Dina Spoerl, exhibits team leader at Naper Settlement. “Her notes document her use and reuse of materials over time, from their original incarnation, alterations to the dress shape and design, and the ingenuity of using the same items for different purposes to avoid waste. Her scrapbook compels us to think about the way we buy and discard clothing now in the age of fast fashion and its dire effects on the environment.”

“Infrastructure” also explains how 19th-century clothing was often dangerous to wear and deadly to make due to the use of arsenic, acid, and other such substances. The recreation of period garments for the stage is also highlighted, including the challenges and triumphs involved in creating costume productions in modern times. Visitors will meet local costume designer Jaime Silverman and learn how 19th-century clothing is recreated for the stage. Beautiful recreations from local productions by TimeLine Theatre Company are also on display.

The exhibit is located in the museum’s three main galleries and Pine Craig Mansion. “Infrastructure: Creating 19th Century Clothing Then and Now” is included in museum admission. Museum admission is free for Naperville residents with proof of residency. For more information, visit NaperSettlement.org/Infrastructure.

PHOTOS – https://cityofnaperville.sharepoint.com:/f:/s/NSPublicRelationsExternal/El-AcYDrGN1KhhgHG02C_O0BNBRXM6cXxuiEirqK8kjezQ?e=gXYtVk

About Naper Settlement
Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor living history museum set on 13 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville. Located 30 miles from Chicago, the museum is home to thirty-one historical structures dating back as early as the 1830s. Featuring exhibits, special events, educational programming and more, Naper Settlement is where history comes alive and the community comes to connect. For more information, visit www.napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.

About Naperville Heritage Society
Founded in 1969, the Naperville Heritage Society is a not-for-profit organization and administrator of Naper Settlement, the City of Naperville’s museum. With a commitment to the community and a focus to the future, the mission of the Naperville Heritage Society is to collect, document, preserve, and support the history of Naperville, Illinois past and present.