

HISTORICAL EVENTS WHICH AFFECTED THE COSTUMES  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% P.A.G. U.S.A.

HISTORICAL EVENTS WHICH AFFECTED THE COSTUMES  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By

IRENE MARSHALL HORTON

Bachelor of Arts

University of Tulsa

Tulsa, Oklahoma

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APPROVED:

T. H. Reynolds  
In Charge of Thesis

T. H. Reynolds  
Head of Department

D. E. McIntosh  
Dean of Graduate School

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July, 1940  
Stillwater, Oklahoma

I. M. H.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <u>Chapter</u>  | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| I. HIGHLIGHTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY OF THE<br>NINETEENTH CENTURY.....   | 1           |
| II. AMERICAN COSTUMES OF THE NINETEENTH<br>CENTURY AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO<br>HISTORY AND ECONOMICS..... | 8           |
| CONCLUSION.....   | 67          |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....   | 69          |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

| <u>Figure</u>   | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| I. through V., Silhouettes.....   | 13-23       |
| VI., Grecian Classic Influence.....                                     | 25          |
| VII., Empire Dress and "Empire Puffe" Sleeves worn in<br>early day..... | 28          |
| VIII., Figure Shows Waistline Down to Normal and Smaller                | 31          |
| IX., Figure Shows Normal Waistline and Crosswise<br>Trimming.....       | 33          |
| X., Leg-of-Mutton Sleeves.....  | 35          |
| XI., Bell-Shaped Sleeves.....   | 39          |
| XII., Showing Hoops, Small Waist.....                                   | 41          |
| XIII., Hoops and Off-the-Shoulder Neckline.....                         | 45          |
| XIV., Showing Pleats and Fringe.....                                    | 47          |
| XV., Dress Showing Polonaise.....                                       | 49          |
| XVI., Showing Child's Dress.....  | 51          |
| XVII., Skating Costume.....   | 54          |
| XVIII., Showing more slender Silhouette, Using Plaid.....               | 56          |
| XIX., Shelf-like Bustle.....  | 58          |
| XX., Suit with Revers.....  | 60          |
| XXI., Gay Nineties, Large Sleeve in Blouse, Gored Skirt                 | 62          |

## CHAPTER I

### HIGHLIGHTS OF AMERICAN HISTORY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

As a student of history, and of costume, it seemed that research to discover whether or not there were any relationships between historical events and costume, and to what extent the relationships, if any exist, were influenced by economic conditions, might be interesting. Since the writer was more familiar with American history of the nineteenth century than with that of any other period, she chose that period for this study.

This seemed a wise choice not only because of her knowledge, but because it was a century of radical changes in American life.

In the year 1799,

The revolutionary period came to an end with the death of its master spirit, George Washington: In his farewell address....(he) had left a solemn legacy to his countrymen to avoid foreign entanglements, holding it to be the true American policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see a nation sufficiently strong and well organized to begin inaugurating a definite policy of foreign relations. Then came the development of the west and the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1794, which stimulated the growth of industry and commerce in the South.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin Emerson, Jr., A History of the Nineteenth Century, Year by Year (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1900), 48.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Channing, A History of the United States (6 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935), IV, 430-433.

During the first quarter of the century we had the War of 1812. There was practically no foreign competition from 1808 to 1814 in trade and commerce. The period of restriction had greatly stimulated production of commodities which had previously been imported. The War of 1812 tended to stimulate manufactures. The factory system indicates concentration of all processes of production in one plant. In contrast to English factories, American factories soon concentrated the processes of spinning, weaving, and dyeing under one roof. From the beginning, the cotton industry led all manufactures in amount of capital invested, in number of persons employed, and in value of products. Industry was localized in New England because of suitable labor supply and water power as this was not an agricultural district.<sup>3</sup>

Cotton manufactures did not thrive in the South because of lack of skilled operators, but they developed wealth from growing and exporting cotton.

The stream of westward migration which preceded the year 1819, continued in less volume throughout the '20's.

The settlers for the Southwest during the Jacksonian migration were supplied by the Southeast. The people moving westward were not only the poor but plantation owners who brought their slaves with them.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after the first quarter of the century (about 1831-41) side by side with the growth of democracy went a strong feeling of public responsibility toward the poor, the weak, the friendless, the

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<sup>3</sup>Walter Lynwood Fleming (Editor), The South in the Building of a Nation (12 vols.; Richmond, Virginia: Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909), V, 299-335.

<sup>4</sup>R. S. Cotterill, The Old South (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936), 174.



unfortunate, and even the criminal. Along with humanitarian reforms were educational, moral, and religious advancement.

The discovery of gold in California in 1849 increased the westward migration and expansion which had been developing rapidly since 1830.<sup>5</sup>

By 1840 the railroad had extended to a mileage of 2618 miles and continued to expand rapidly until the Civil War.<sup>6</sup>

The years from 1860 to 1865 saw the country engaged in a civil war which was to leave

Much of the country (South) a mere commons with all landmarks obliterated save here and there a blackened chimney keeping watch like a grim sentinel over the desolation... The South from Virginia to Texas was dotted with towns which had been partly or completely ruined...<sup>7</sup> Transportation of course had utterly broken down throughout a great part of the South. ...Everyone with the exception of a small class of speculators and war profiteers was impoverished...

Meanwhile the industrial North was pressing forward with a speed which seemed to leave all old landmarks behind and which year by year wrought new social changes.... Economically the nation of 1865--a nation which had hardly advanced to the Missouri, which used iron alone, which had a modest railway system and but one and a half billion dollars invested in manufacturing, was a world away from the nation of 1878--a nation which had pressed to the Pacific, which was producing huge quantities of steel, which had the finest railway system in the world and which had invested nearly three billions in manufacturing. The impetus behind this stride was at its greatest in the years 1865-1873; Northern industry was booming when the war ended, and the boom had eight years to run.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Channing, *op. cit.*, V, 1-34.

<sup>6</sup>Mark Sullivan, *Our Times* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), 257.

<sup>7</sup>Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), 2.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 3, 4, 31.

The crash which ended this period came on September 18, 1873, with the closing of the Jay Cooke banking house in New York.<sup>9</sup>

During the winter of 1874-1875, there were long bread lines and increasing demands for relief in New York, Boston, and Chicago.

Despite the abundant harvest, wrote B. F. Nourse, 'many thousand families will be nearer to hunger than for many years for lack of employment, and the circle of enforced idleness, disability, and poverty widens daily.'<sup>10</sup>

It was perfectly natural that such would bring about a belief in the virtue of economy. No one was willing to buy anything which he did not absolutely need. Transports fell rapidly, and the American people refused to send to Europe for any goods that could in any way be considered luxuries.

Politically, the white Southerners had a hard struggle during Grant's first administration.

But economically and socially, even in these confused years, there was a certain amount of progress.<sup>11</sup>

Thus by the summer of 1876, the political revolution which gave the white Southerners full control of their states was seen to be approaching completion.<sup>12</sup>

The sturdy growth of manufacturing gave the South an entirely new social and economic class, composed of the mill operative, the miner and the foundryman. Particularly did the textile industry confer invaluable advantages upon the poor whites who furnished most of its hands. It gave employment to girls and women who would

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<sup>9</sup>Ellis Paxton Oberholtzer, Jay Cooke, Financier of the Civil War (2 vols.; Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Company, 1907), II, 378-439.

<sup>10</sup>B. F. Nourse, Commercial and Financial Chronicle, August 7, 1875, cited by Allan Nevins, The Emergence of Modern America, 299.

<sup>11</sup>Nevins, op. cit., 349.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 357.

otherwise have remained household drudges; it increased the family income and raised the standards of living... All over the South, the income yielded by the new industries had a stimulating effect, and by 1878 the most phases of poverty were vanishing. 'Within the last year or two,' one Southerner wrote, 'broadcloth is seen and ladies wear costly outfits.' Carriages were still little used, as being too costly, but well-kept buggies were numerous.<sup>13</sup>

A demand for suitable clothing was caused by the revived interest in social life and travel, and by the changed status of women,

...a change produced primarily by the rough buffets which sent Southern girls to work outside the home.<sup>14</sup>

In the old days, girls had moved in an atmosphere of tradition and romance.

It forced tens of thousands of sheltered women to do all the washing, cooking, and serving; it sent innumerable widows and orphaned daughters to support themselves by opening boarding houses, acting as dressmakers, or managing shops.<sup>15</sup>

By 1878, the mountain resorts, watering places, mineral springs, and centers were again popular. In cities like New Orleans, Richmond, and Charleston, the festivities of the pre-war period were being revived.

From 1875 to 1883 the most striking thing in American history was the commercial development of the country. Never had there been such undertakings; cities were rapidly built, towns and villages increased. Railroads and other corporations came into being with

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 360.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 361.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 362; Arthur Wallace Calhoun, A Social History of the American Family (3 vols.; Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1917), III, 11; Francis Butler Simkins, The Women of the Confederacy (New York: Garrett and Massie, 1936), 116-118.

such capital and power as the country had never before dreamed of.

By 1880 the railroad had practically covered the then settled portions of the country with a total of 93,671 miles. Later this mileage reached a maximum of 254,251 in 1917.

In the newer parts of America the railroad came first, industrial organization came afterward, and was based on the railroad.<sup>16</sup>

The story of the growth of the railroad is a story of adjustment of a settled, pre-existing order to the coming of the railroads.

To many an American community the arrival of two parallel lines of iron brought a change, momentous, economically, and often poignant.<sup>17</sup>

In two recent motion pictures, Union Pacific and Dodge City, we got some idea of the importance of the railroad and a very good picture of costumes in the last quarter of the century.

When oil was first discovered, it was used as a medicine, put up in bottles and sold as a kind of "cure for all ills."

That as late as the 1840's was substantially all the use man knew how to make of a substance which by 1925 was to enable him to move about on the surface of the earth at more than fifty miles an hour; to go above the clouds and beneath the waters and direct his movements there at will; to cross the Atlantic Ocean either through the air above or in a submarine; which was to drive twenty million automobiles, thousands of railroad engines, and hundreds of ships. By 1925, the raw material of the leering little patent medicine business of 1840 was to be sixth of the country's industries and indispensable to the first, the automobile business.<sup>18</sup>

Oil having pioneered the trust path to monopoly, whiskey followed...next was sugar.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Sullivan, op. cit., 257.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 307.

By February, 1898, the following additional commodities were, in one form or another, combinations, glass, copper, rubber, coal, reaping and binding and mowing machines, gas, lead, threshing machines, steel rails, steel and iron beams, wrought iron pipes, iron nuts, stoves, school slates, and castor oil.<sup>20</sup>

Along with the expansion of industry and capital was a territorial expansion. In 1898, Spain agreed to evacuate Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam, and the Philippine Islands were added to the United States.

This period of growth and prosperity known as the gay '90's was paralleled by one of extravagance in dress. Very large balloon sleeves with stiffening dominated the costume in which the wide flaring skirt played no small part.

Thus we finish a century--

The changes that came were due less to new conceptions of education than to economic causes, and political conditions that accomplish them.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 197.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### AMERICAN COSTUMES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO HISTORY AND ECONOMICS

Modern designers get their inspiration from the history of the past. The continent of America was peopled by immigrants from Western Europe and more especially from England. English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, Dutch, Swedes, Germans, French, and Spanish came to the new land, bringing with them their native customs and culture. In the melting pot of these varied racial customs lies the history of American civilization and costumes.

We must go back still further in tracing the origin of the modern vogue. Archaeologists assure us that six thousand years ago, women painted their faces, and penciled their eyebrows, very much the same as they do today.

Our fashions then are the product of not only our immigrant forefathers but of an ancient civilization.

Fine art reached its peak in design in the eighteenth century. A work of art lives on or reappears because of its own merit. We are the result of past history and past thinking. Costume design, or any art, has small beginnings and grows and absorbs all. Like a series of bubbles which burst leaving only the good, each decade gives a new interpretation.

This more complex conception of life in which are involved mainly three general factors, the appetites, the intellects, and the desires for material objects, has furnished the elements for the ideals of civilized peoples since the fifteenth century, sometimes, dictated from one angle, sometimes from another, according to geographic position, surrounding conditions, and national or local mental

development. A passion for culture, for art, or for amusement, and even for the pleasures imagined to be found in over-indulged appetites, or the greed for personal gain, called commercialism, have been ever and again the central ideas around which a period has been formed and a style crystallized.<sup>22</sup>

This then sufficiently worked out, elaborated and lived through, gave us that marvelous eighteenth century of artistic social expression. When in turn this became effective, it was interrupted by the concept already formulated, of the scientific and commercial nineteenth century development, as a dominating factor around which to build a nation's life interest.<sup>23</sup>

The economic, scientific, artistic, religious, and social influences and development all go to make up the history of the times.

Professor Dale, of the University of Oklahoma, in his lecture at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, said, "History is a story of the development of a nation and a people."<sup>24</sup> The dress of the people reflect all interests and developments.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, dolls dressed in the latest fashion were sent out from France to the different countries. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, instead of fashion dolls, monthly magazines with fashion plates, published in France and England were being sent regularly to America.

One of the earliest of these fashion books was The Ladies' European Magazine, edited by a group of women of fashion and first

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<sup>22</sup>Frank Alvah Parsons, The Art of Dress (New York: Doubleday Doran Company, 1928), 318.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 319.

<sup>24</sup>Taken from a lecture given by Professor Dale, of the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, on July 6, 1938.

published in London in 1798. Another, La Belle Assemblée, or Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine, was issued regularly in London from 1806 to 1833, when a new series was started of which the Honorable Mrs. Norton was editor, and the name was then changed to The Court Magazine and Monthly Critic.

This periodical was quite as popular in the United States as in England, judging from the mutilated plates in the copies I have seen. ... A letter from Paris every month kept its readers in touch with the Court of 'Great Mogul,' as Walpole called fashion, and the Calendar of the English Court, which formed the supplement of the second series was evidently read with great interest on both sides of the ocean.<sup>25</sup>

Ackermann's Repository, published in London in 1809, was another periodical which contained especially tasteful plates of the latest mode. In Philadelphia, Mr. Dennie's Port Folio, which appeared with the first year of the century and had great local celebrity from 1801 to 1805, gave a column or more of its racy pages to the novelties in dress. Under the heading, "Festoon of Fashion," a brief review of the modes in France and England was given, but "Mr. Old School," (pen name of the editor) indulged only in pen portraits of the costumes. All these magazines have been long out of print, but odd volumes of them may be found in many of our libraries. They are faithful records of the social life of their time.

After the first quarter of the century, fashion magazines published in America became very popular.

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<sup>25</sup>Elizabeth McClellan, History of American Costume (Philadelphia: G. W. Jacobs and Company, 1904), 274.



In February, 1850, the Godey's Magazine, published in Philadelphia, printed an account of the magazine and something of the work of the publisher.

Twenty years ago--can it be so long?--a magazine of elegant literature was cast, doubtfully, upon the uncertain stream of public favor--its name the Lady's Book and Louis A. Godey the publisher.

It was a novel enterprise at the time, and few thought it would outlive the first year of its nativity. It soon became apparent, however, that its management was in the hands of one who knew the wants of the time, and had the tact and taste required for its supply. But a little while elapsed ere the Lady's Book was to be found on the tables of most lovers of polite literature; and wherever it made its way, it became a favorite. ... He was not only the pioneer of magazine literature in the country, but the first to lead the way in a liberal compensation to American authors. ... Side by side with the literary improvement of the Book, advanced its artistic excellence. From a second-hand steel engraving, one in three months, plates engraved expressly for the work were given in every number. At this point in the history of the enterprise, competitors for public favor entered the field. ... Soon in the race that began, two elaborately finished steel plates were given in each monthly issue; then three plates, and at length four steel engravings, by artists of the first ability, besides a fashion plate embellished every number of the Book. ... Of Mr. Godey, personally, we can speak from an intimate acquaintanceship of many years. We know him to be a high-minded generous, liberal-hearted, sincere man: a fast friend, and a good citizen.<sup>26</sup>

Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale was editor of Godey's Lady's Book.

For many reasons, Mrs. Hale's name is a particularly appropriate one with which to open these character sketches of American women; and not the least of these is the fact of her long connection with the Lady's Book as its editor, as well as her life-long devotion to the womanly mission, through the medium of her ready and accomplished pen, of educating and elevating her sex.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> "Louis A. Godey," Godey's Lady's Book, XLI (February, 1850), 87.

<sup>27</sup> Ella Rodman Church, "Life of Sarah Josepha Hale," Godey's Lady's Book, XCIX (July, 1879), 69.

Mrs. Hale first edited the Ladies' Magazine. In 1837 the Ladies' Magazine of Boston was united with the Lady's Book of Philadelphia, and was published as the Lady's Book and Magazine.

In 1842 Charles J. Peterson was a partner of George R. Graham in the ownership and management of the Saturday Evening Post and in the editorship of Graham's Magazine. Louis A. Godey had recently made an outstanding success of his Lady's Book, with its hand-colored fashion plates, its sentimental engravings, and its miscellany of innocuous essays, poems, and tales. Peterson and Graham talked the matter over and agreed that a two-dollar competitor for Godey's three-dollar women's journal would be a likely venture. Graham's, though not an avowed women's magazine, had been forced to publish colored fashions in order to compete on the three-dollar basis. Graham evidently anticipated that a cheaper fashion magazine would cut into his rival's rising circulation without hurting his own somewhat more general magazine. At any rate, Peterson founded his new Ladies' National Magazine while still associated with Graham--that is, in January, 1842. In the next year, however, the venture appeared to be a success. Peterson resigned from Graham's and sold his interest in the Post.<sup>28</sup>

In the early years of the magazine, Peterson had difficulty in finding a name for his magazine.

...Five different titles were used in 1843. In 1848, the publisher began using his own name in the title, first as Peterson's Ladies' National Magazine, and later as Peterson's Magazine; the latter title became fixed from 1855 until the changes of the nineties...<sup>29</sup>

Peterson died in 1887, and Mrs. Peterson disposed of the magazine in 1892. The stock company which purchased the magazine abandoned fashions.

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<sup>28</sup>Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1938), 306, 307.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 308.

SILHOUETTES

OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% FAGO S.A.

Figure I - 1812



STRATMOR

100% RAG U.S.A.

Figure II - 1830

STRATMOR

100%



STRAITHMORE PAROCHMENT

DOYBAG U.S.A.

Figure III - 1864

MENT





STRATIMORE P

100% RAG - II

Figure IV - 1874

DRE PARCHMENT

50% RAG U.S.A.



Figure V - 1892

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% RAG U.S.A.



The dress of the nineteenth century was a varied panorama, and a bewildering array of silhouettes. These changes, however, were gradual, there being no sudden change from one extreme to another. For example, the fashion did not change from leg-of-mutton sleeves to a tight sleeve. The fullness might be found at the elbow or the forearm and next the long tight model. The full skirt would probably be followed by the bustle and draped back before the long slender figure came into vogue, or the order may be reversed depending upon where one starts in the cycle. The many changes found in the nineteenth century may have been caused by the history of the times.

Facilities for travel were greatly improved. News traveled by magazines. Commerce and manufactures were developing rapidly.

The manufacturers, who were desirous primarily in the furthering of their own commercial interests, did much to foster a natural desire for change in dress. The dissemination of wealth and cheapening of machine-made materials caused the dress of society women to be quickly copied by those not so socially prominent, and naturally led to a desire for constant change.

The well-dressed woman of the early nineteenth century wore a simple short-waisted dress. This was made of a very soft material which hung in folds, giving the figure a natural graceful contour.

Fabrics had changed greatly to suit this new silhouette. The heavy stiff materials of the former period were replaced by soft, clinging muslin, gauze, and crepes.

Figure VI - Early 1800

GRECIAN CLASSIC INFLUENCE

From Julius M. Price, Dame Fashion  
(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,  
1913), 39.





In a letter to her mother, Miss Southgate, a society girl of Scarborough, Maine, tells something of the dress and materials used at this time:

July 17, 1800

I must again trouble my Dear Mother by requesting her to send on my spotted muslin. A week from next Saturday I set out for Wiscassett, in company with Uncle William and Aunt Porter. Uncle will fetch Ann to meet us there, and as she has some acquaintance there, we shall stay sometime and Aunt will leave us and return to Topsham; so a long visit in Wiscassett will oblige me to muster all my muslins, for I am informed they are so monstrous smart as to take no notice of any lady that can condescend to wear a calico gown. Therefore, Dear Mother, to ensure me a favourable reception, pray send my spotted muslin by the next mail after you receive this, or I shall be on my way to Wiscassett. I shall go on horseback. How I want my habit, I wish it had not been so warm when I left home and I should have worn it. I am in hopes you will find an opportunity to send it by a private conveyance before I go, but my muslin you must certainly send by the mail.<sup>30</sup>

Bonnets were small and close fitting and made of a great variety of materials.

Lady Brownlow's *Reminiscences* suggests that it was not the fashion to wear anything on the head in Paris in 1802.<sup>31</sup>

France in the early part of the century was having a period of Grecian classic influence, probably because of the excavations in Pompeii the last part of the eighteenth century. There is little evidence that the exaggerated extremes of this fashion were reached in America.

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<sup>30</sup>McClellan, *op. cit.*, 280.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 281.

Figure VII - Early 1800

EMPIRE DRESS AND "EMPIRE PUFFE" SLEEVES

WORN IN EARLY 1800'S

From Frances H. Haire, The American Costume  
Book (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company,  
1934), 132.



This slender statue-like figure with the natural graceful contour, so quickly adopted with restrictions outside France, lasted nearly throughout the reign of Emperor Napoleon. This is the reason for the name "Empire" for high-waisted dresses and the short sleeve which is now called "Empire Puffe." The hair was worn in flat ringlets about the face, imitating the classic modes.

Because much jewelry was worn in the first few years of the century, there was bound to be an inevitable change, and for several years very little was used.

During the first Consulate and the Empire, France was possessed with a pseudo-classic mania in women's dress. This revival of classicism is attributed by Ashton in his "Dawn of the Nineteenth Century" to the influence of the painter David. Clinging draperies and Greek and Roman hair-dressing were carried to an extreme which was not noticeable in England or America, although followed in both countries to some extent. The simple domestic tastes of George III and Queen Charlotte set an example both in dress and social gayeties which was notably free from extravagance. The English princesses, so loved by Miss Burney, spent much of their time embroidering their own dresses for state functions; while in our own country, President Adams and his wife were living very quietly and, according to the graphic letter of the latter, most uncomfortably in the new home of the government in Washington, indulging in but few entertainments, and going to Philadelphia for most of their shopping.<sup>32</sup>

While ladies were subtracting, gentlemen were adding and beginning to wear long trousers. There was a gradual standardization taking place in men's clothes the first third of the century. In this we see reflected simplicity and the principles of democracy.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 274, 275.

Figure VIII - 1822

FIGURE SHOWS WAISTLINE DOWN

TO NORMAL AND SMALLER

From Price, Dame Fashion, 54.



Figure IX - 1923

FIGURE SHOWS NORMAL WAISTLINE  
AND CROSSWISE TRIMMING

From Price, Dame Fashion, 52





Figure X - 1832

LEG-OF-MUTTON SLEEVES

From Price, Dame Fashion, 54



The masculine wardrobe has never returned to its colorful quality and luxuriousness of materials, jeweled buttons, shoe buckles, and enameled snuff boxes.

The chimney pot hat went through many changes, the brim varied from straight to slight roll, the crown retained its usual height through with slight changes in its width at base and tip. Since 1870, men's dress has changed comparatively little.

After 1810 we see, started slowly at first, the evolution of the silhouette which reached such large dimensions in the thirties. By 1822 the waistline was down at its normal position and much smaller, sometimes referred to as the wasp waist. By 1835, the leg-of-mutton and other cuts of sleeves had grown so large that it was necessary to go through an ordinary door sideways. They were held out with a wide frame or cushion stuffed with down, tied around the arm. It took as much material for a pair of sleeves as it did for a skirt.

From 1830 to 1848 the drooping shoulder was a marked feature of the gown. The shoulder was emphasized by berthas, scarfs, and small shoulder capes. For daytime wear the bodice was cut high and a turned down collar was used.

Since the top of the silhouette was growing larger, for the sake of balance it was necessary to widen the skirt and increase the number of crosswise decorations to add breadth.

During the period from 1810 to 1837, the growth of sleeves and skirts paralleled the growth and prosperity of the nation.

Black velvet dresses were exceedingly fashionable for the winter of 1823, made very short and trimmed with flounces of black lace. A novel combination is described in a French magazine: 'The dresses most in favour are of

black velvet, made very short and flounced with black lace; one of these flounces is set on at the edge of the hem, and is of a very rich pattern, which is admirably displayed over a white satin dress worn under the velvet one, and made as much longer than the upper garment, as the lace is broad.<sup>33</sup>

Although lace has never been manufactured at its best in this country, it is interesting to know that in 1823 a successful effort was made in Massachusetts.<sup>34</sup>

This effort was made in Medway, Massachusetts, by Dean Walker & Company, with

a singularly constructed loom, made in this country, from the recollection of a similar machine examined by one of our (Dean Walker & Company) artists in England, and who, by his genius and memory has thus obtained what he wished, without violating the law of England against the exportation of machinery... The lace is pronounced by good judges to be of a superior quality, and that it will not suffer in comparison with the imported, made from the same material, while the price is stated to be much lower. The widest is very beautiful, and richly and tastefully wrought. We may add that it is destined to become very fashionable as we learn that the proprietor, on a late visit to Washington, was very much gratified to find a liberal purchaser in the lady of one of the honourable members of the cabinet.<sup>35</sup>

A contributor to the "National Recorder" in 1829 paid a graceful tribute to women saying: 'The history of woman is the history of the improvements in the world. Some twenty or thirty years ago, when manual labour performed all the drudgery, some five, six, or seven yards of silk or muslin or gingham would suffice for the fitting and flirting of the most gay and volatile of the sex. But as soon as the powers of steam are applied, and labour is changed from physical to intellectual, the ladies, in their charitable regard for the operative class of the community, begin to devise means for their continued employment, and as

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<sup>33</sup>McClellan, op. cit., 391, 393.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 394, 395.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

Figure XI - 1857

BELL-SHAPED SLEEVES

From Godey's Lady's Book, XVII  
(April, 1857), 387.

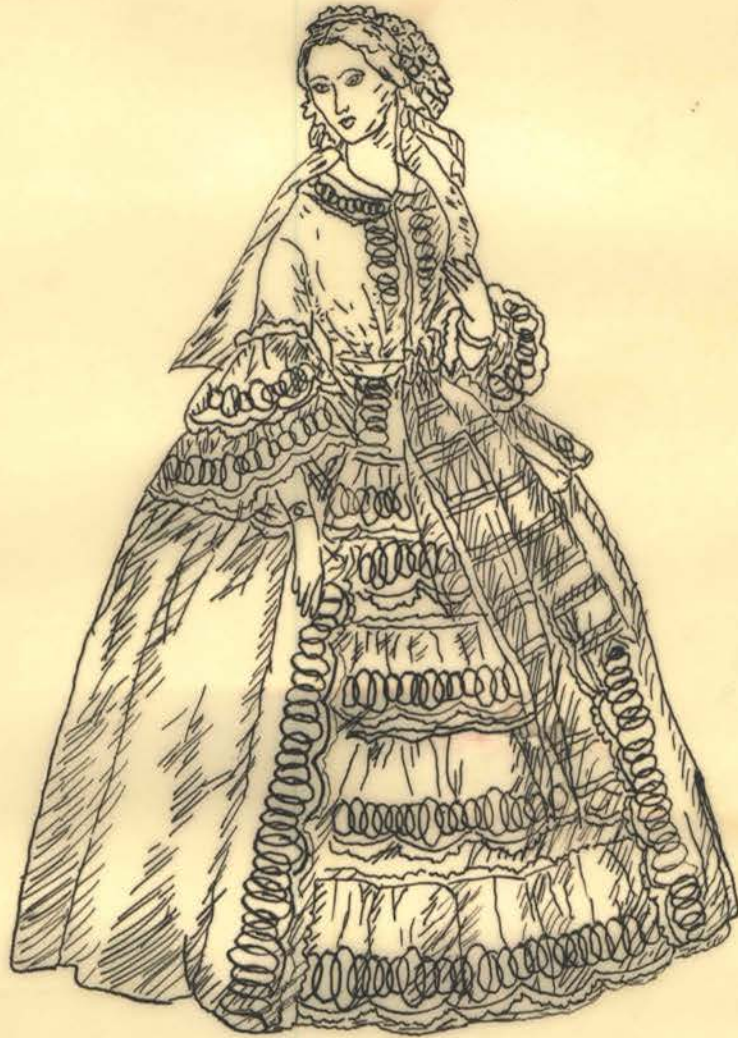


Figure XII - 1862

SHOWING HOOPS, SMALL WAIST

From Price, Dame Fashion, 126.





the material is produced with half the labour, the equilibrium must be sustained by consuming a double quantity.<sup>36</sup>

Velvet and stiffer silks and brocades were used as the sleeves and skirts grew larger. Early in the century a machine for making net was invented. This made it possible for a wider use of a fabric which had been very costly.

Short shoulder capes, lace and silk scarfs, and long fur boas were about the only wraps which could be worn with the enormous sleeves.<sup>37</sup>

Shawls made of lace, fine wool, or silk from far-off China were used.

In 1830, the skirts were somewhat fuller than they had been, elaborately trimmed and gathered at the waist into a band which often was hidden under a belt.

The costumes became more elaborate and required more material each year. The panic of 1837 did not seem to cause a break in the development of the more elaborate costume.

The skirts were getting fuller and fuller, the petticoats were growing in width and abundance, and in 1854, crinoline and hoop skirts were introduced. Everyone wore them, even the seven-year-old girls. They grew larger until compared with them, the colonial hoops were moderate.

In 1854 came the invention of a cage-like frame of about twenty light steel wires held together by strips of muslin. Many women got the desired effect by reeds in the hems of their petticoats. Six or

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 406.

<sup>37</sup>Mary Evans, Costume Throughout the Ages (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1938), 96.

seven petticoats were necessary. The bodice of the dress was close fitting with long sleeves that spread into a bell shape below the elbow, had long shoulders, and a neckline that encircled the throat closely.

Some materials we read of at this time were tarlatan, tulle, moiré, Irish poplin, English alpaca, and jaconet. Plaids, checks, and stripes were more in demand than designs of floral motifs. Fur, fringe, and braids were popular trimmings.

Accessories in vogue during the period were handkerchiefs elaborately trimmed with lace and hand embroidery. Fans were a necessity because of the corset and the abundance of clothing. Dainty parasols, of moiré or batiste lined with flattering colors, lace-edged or covered entirely with black or white lace, and having handles of wood or ivory with knots of carnelian, coral or agate had their places in the ladies' wardrobe. Small muffs of fur or velvet or a combination of both were important. Jeweled lockets or crosses suspended from the neck on slender chains or velvet ribbons, necklaces, bracelets, rings, watches and watch chains, and bandeaus of gold for the hair adorned the ladies. Metal buttons with colored stones were quite modish fastenings for the front of the bodice.

The sewing machine invented by Howe in 1841 was being used very extensively by mid-century. Before this time all sewing was done by hand.

The extravagance in dress kept pace with other economic and social extravagances and growth during the pre-war period.

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% RAG U.S.A.

Figure XIII - 1866

HOOPS AND OFF-THE-SHOULDER NECKLINE

From Godey's Lady's Book, LXXII  
(June, 1866), 477.



Figure XIV - 1870

SHOWING PLEATS AND FRINGE

From Godey's Lady's Book, LXXXI  
(September, 1870), 290



Figure XV - 1870

DRESS SHOWING POLONAISE

From Godey's Lady's Book, LXXX  
(May, 1870), 490.





Figure XVI - 1870

SHOWING CHILD'S DRESS

From Godey's Lady's Book, LXXX  
(January, 1870), 104.

STRATHMORE PARCHM

100% RAG U.S.A.



Conditions during a war necessarily will affect the clothing. Since the industrial North was still prospering, "dame fashion" carried on, while the pride and ingenuity of the Southern lady enabled her to be very charming at social functions where she was seen. This is shown in Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind, when Scarlet used the draperies to create a very clever costume for her trip to Charleston. A Southern lady is said to have used yards of muslin in making a garment, and to make it still more attractive she sewed many gourd seeds on for trimming.

The period of speculation and corruption following the Civil War ended in the panic of 1873. In 1870 the American fashion was less elaborate. The skirt had lost a great deal of fullness and a bustle was shown. Two types of dresses were popular, the Polonaise, a close-fitting gown with elaborately draped-up skirt and train, and the Gabriel which was a princess dress. The bodice was cut high at the neck and finished with ruche and jabot of lace.

After 1876, bustles dropped away and sleeves and skirts became scantier until 1880, a graceful natural figure was the fashion. After this decline during the depression period of the 1870's, the vogue gradually developed a more elaborate costume to reach its height in the gay and prosperous '90's.

By 1885 bustles were back again, this time they were flat like a shelf, and the silhouette was tall, trim and queenly. New bonnets and hats were made to please everybody. A sentence in the first fashion article of the May issue of Good Housekeeping in 1885, read as follows: "Jackets and Jerseys are braided all over and are easily done at home

Figure XVII - 1878

SKATING COSTUME

From Peterson's Magazine, LXXIV  
(December, 1878), 282.



Figure XVIII - 1879

SHOWING MORE SLENDER

SILHOUETTE, USING PLAID

From Godey's Lady's Book, XCVIII  
(April, 1879), 286.

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% RAG U.S.A.



Figure XIX - 1887

SHELF-LIKE BUSTLE

From Price, Dame Fashion, 154.





Figure XX - 1891

SUIT WITH REVERS

From Price, Dame Fashion, 158



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100% P.A.S. U.S.A.

Figure XXI - 1896

GAY NINETIES

LARGE SLEEVE IN BLOUSE

GORED SKIRT

From Price, Dame Fashion, 162.



when carefully stamped."<sup>38</sup> At this time our American textile mills and factories of all sorts were plentiful, producing each year more and better fabrics.

The lady of this period wore bonnets, tight bodices, tight sleeves and draped skirts with the bustle, which was so intricately made.

In the latter years of the eighteenth century the two new republics, France and America, had much in common. Intercourse between the two nations increased steadily with the result that French ideas of dress were immediately and wholeheartedly adopted by the citizens of the United States.<sup>39</sup>

In 1890 the top of the sleeve began to show a slight increase in size. Gradually the fullness became more conspicuous until by 1895 the leg-of-mutton or the huge balloon sleeve with its stiffening and lining, dominated the entire costume. From the elbow to the wrist it fitted the arm closely. "Unable to compete with this innovation the bustle disappeared."<sup>40</sup>

At this time we find the high "chokers," tight-fitting basque and heavy skirts lined with taffeta and worn over many ruffled petticoats. The petticoats, coquettishly displayed by lifting the train in walking, were made of bright, rustling silks, or muslin trimmed with embroidery and lace. Good materials were imported and costumes were sent from Worth's in Paris or made by the home dressmaker.

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<sup>38</sup>Quoted from materials sent writer by Good Housekeeping.  
Materials contained data from first publication of May issue, 1885.

<sup>39</sup>Evans, op. cit., 178.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 102.

Revers of cloth, velvet or lace spread from points at the waist to a width of several inches at the shoulders, thus repeating the lines of the hourglass silhouette. The tailor made the suit coat, fitting snugly at the waist, usually extended to the finger tips. In 1896, its sleeves were but moderately full. The blouse for the suit was of colored silk, was cut with a high neckline, and a jabot or frill added a feminine touch to an otherwise severe costume.

Simplicity of cut, fabric, and decoration in women's clothes received impetus from the newly introduced sports of golfing and bicycling. These with the older sports of tennis and skating increased the wardrobe demands of all women who make a pretense of keeping abreast of the times. In addition to the costumes suitable for evening, home, visiting, walking and riding, the well-dressed woman was called upon to acquire these garments and their accessories that were appropriate for the men's sports. The bicycle required a short skirt, full bloomers, trim shirt waists and masculine tie, while golf demanded a circular cape. Strange to us now is the fact that both golf and tennis were apparently well played in skirts of the same width and length as those worn on occasions requiring no agility and energy of the body. Even the new bathing suits had large sleeves, high collars, and small waist lines, with full, short skirts and bloomers. Ten years later the new past time of motoring required long dusters of linen or silk and large veils to protect the dress and hat of the open car's fair passenger from the dust of the road.

Such was the beginning of the far-reaching influence that woman's entrance into the field of sports soon acquired over her whole mode of dressing. Thirty-five years later the sports frock was no longer an incidental garment, but the all-important one, whose ease of fit helped to revolutionize the cut of every other garment in the feminine wardrobe.<sup>41</sup>

Women not only were becoming more interested in sports but they were entering the business and industrial world. For their work they

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 106.

needed a more practical garment, consequently the shirt waist became very popular. With the many interests of the period, the women needed the dresses to suit the various occasions. These changes of the '90's led to the Gibson girls of the twentieth century.



## CONCLUSION

Research and study have shown that there are some relationships between the historical events and costumes of the nineteenth century.

However, in some cases the parallel between historical events and costume seemingly has not proved true, for these reasons:

1. The personalities within the same period differ. Some women would not dress very elaborately if it were the vogue, and economically they could afford to do so.
2. Fashions are designed for those in the higher economic levels.
3. In the nineteenth century, styles were still coming from France. The changes in costume there were very closely connected with their history. In America we did not follow all of these changes because we were so busy with our own growth and development.
4. Sometimes, as in the Civil War period, the pride and ingenuity of women cause them to use their own creative ability to make from something they already possess, a beautiful and becoming gown.

It has been shown in this study that elaborateness in costume follows very closely the periods of economic growth and expansion, while in the periods of depression the silhouette decreases. Although there are cases where the parallel seems not to be very close, we have proved that modern design in costume is influenced by history.

Every incident of the historic and prehistoric contacts of people, each great epoch of migration, conquest, trade and amalgamation have affected style and created fashion. Our clothes, if properly understood, tell the history of civilization and indicate the present level of culture.

The costume of today is the expression of the day's utilitarian and aesthetic needs interpreted in the traditions of many golden yesterdays. Fabric, ornament, cut, drape and color are each as reminiscent of the past as interpretive of today.

Consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, designers are affected by the arts of the past. The basis of all costume design then should be a knowledge of costume history, plus the imagination to re-interpret in the spirit of the season.

Back of this modest exposition is the sincere wish that the costume designers of the future may have as accurate a knowledge of the distinguished history of their medium as our architects, painters and sculptors have of theirs, and the hope that in time the art of dress may be placed where its record in loveliness warrants: among the fine arts.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Women's Wear Daily, July 7, 1938, (New York, New York).

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