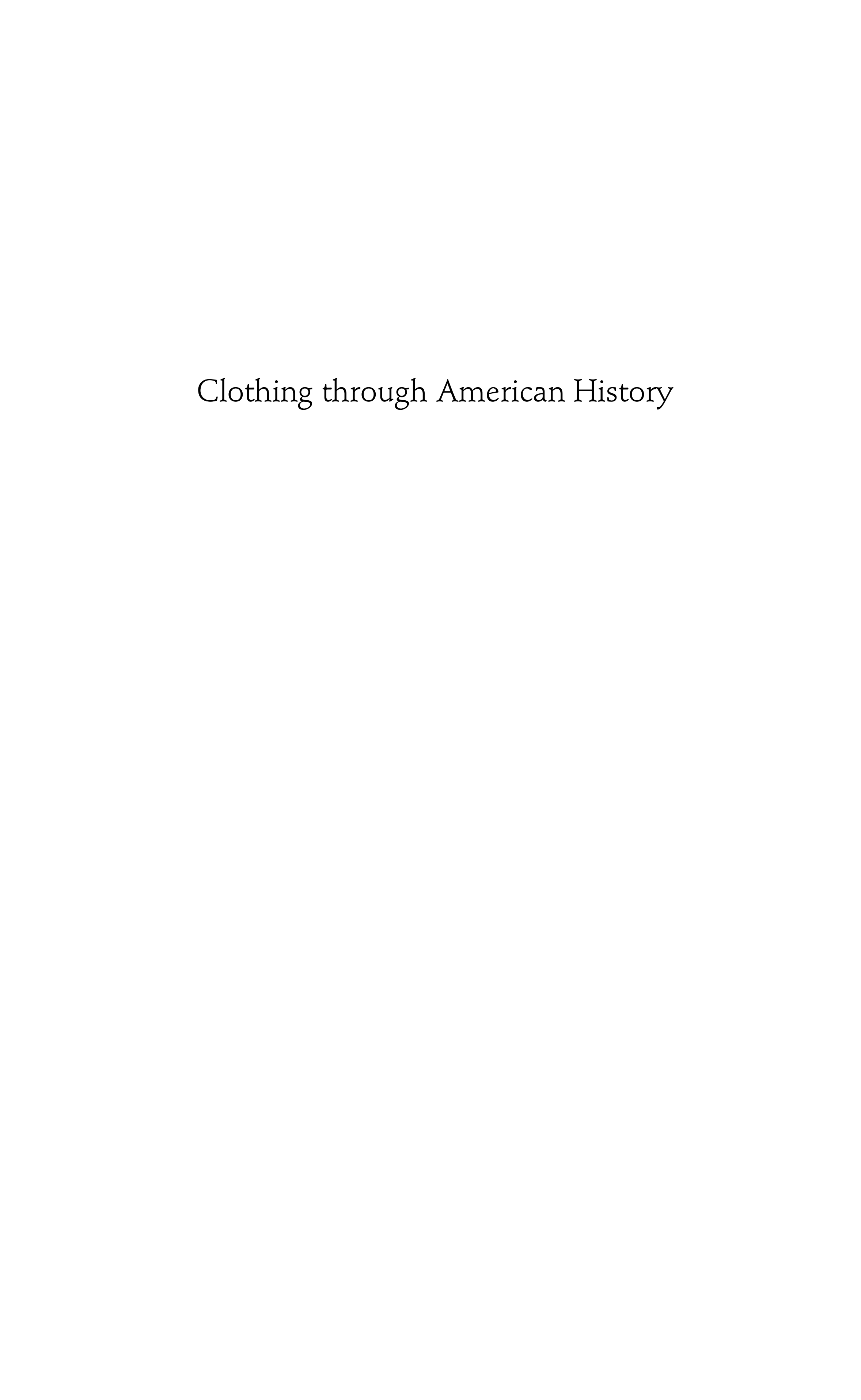
CLOTHING THROUGH AMERICAN HISTORY

The Civil War through the Gilded Age, 1861–1899

ANITA STAMPER · JILL CONDRA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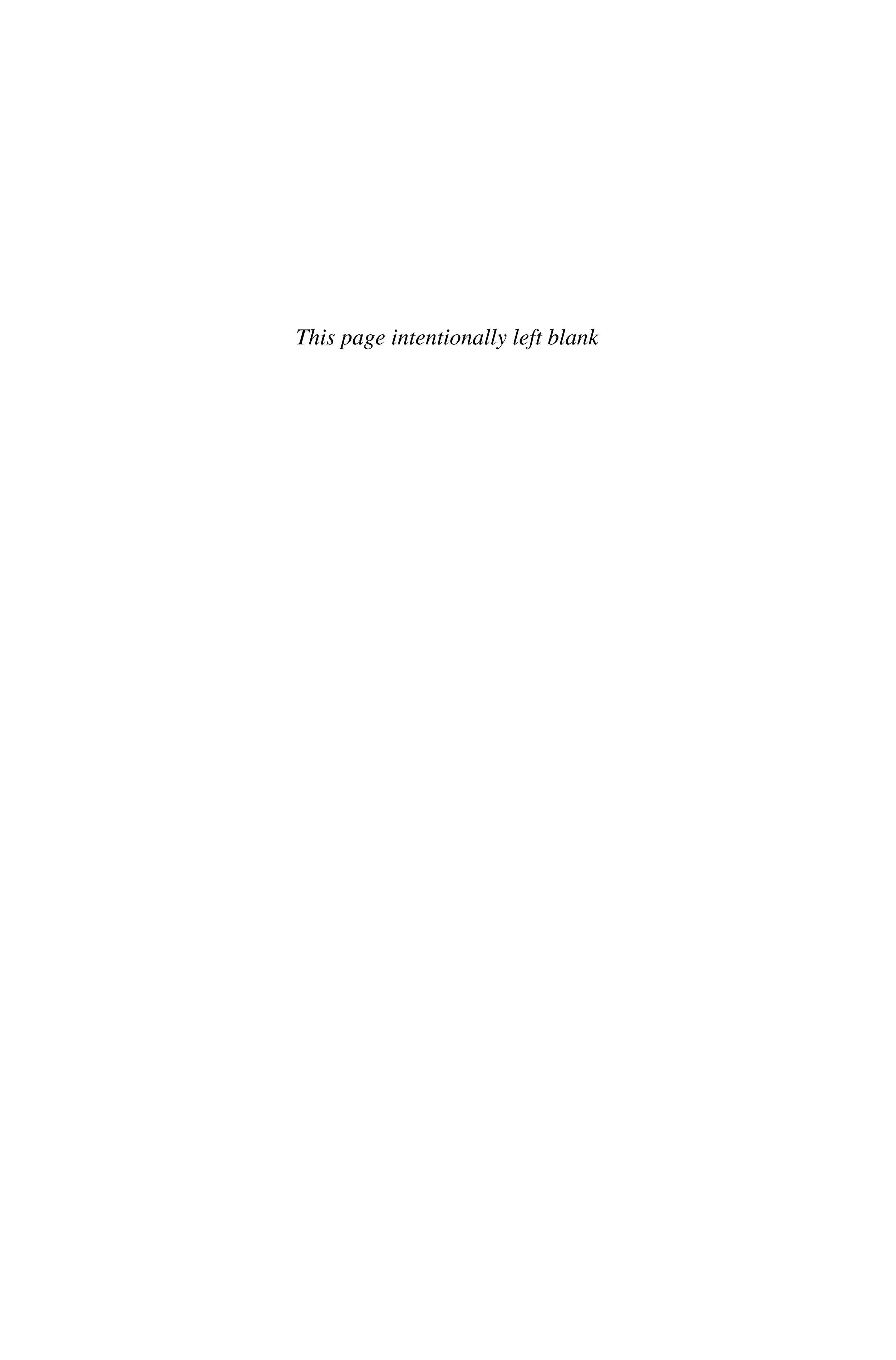
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The Civil War through the Gilded Age, 1861–1899

Anita Stamper and Jill Condra

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PART ONE

Clothing in the Civil War and Reconstruction Era, 1861–1876

Anita Stamper

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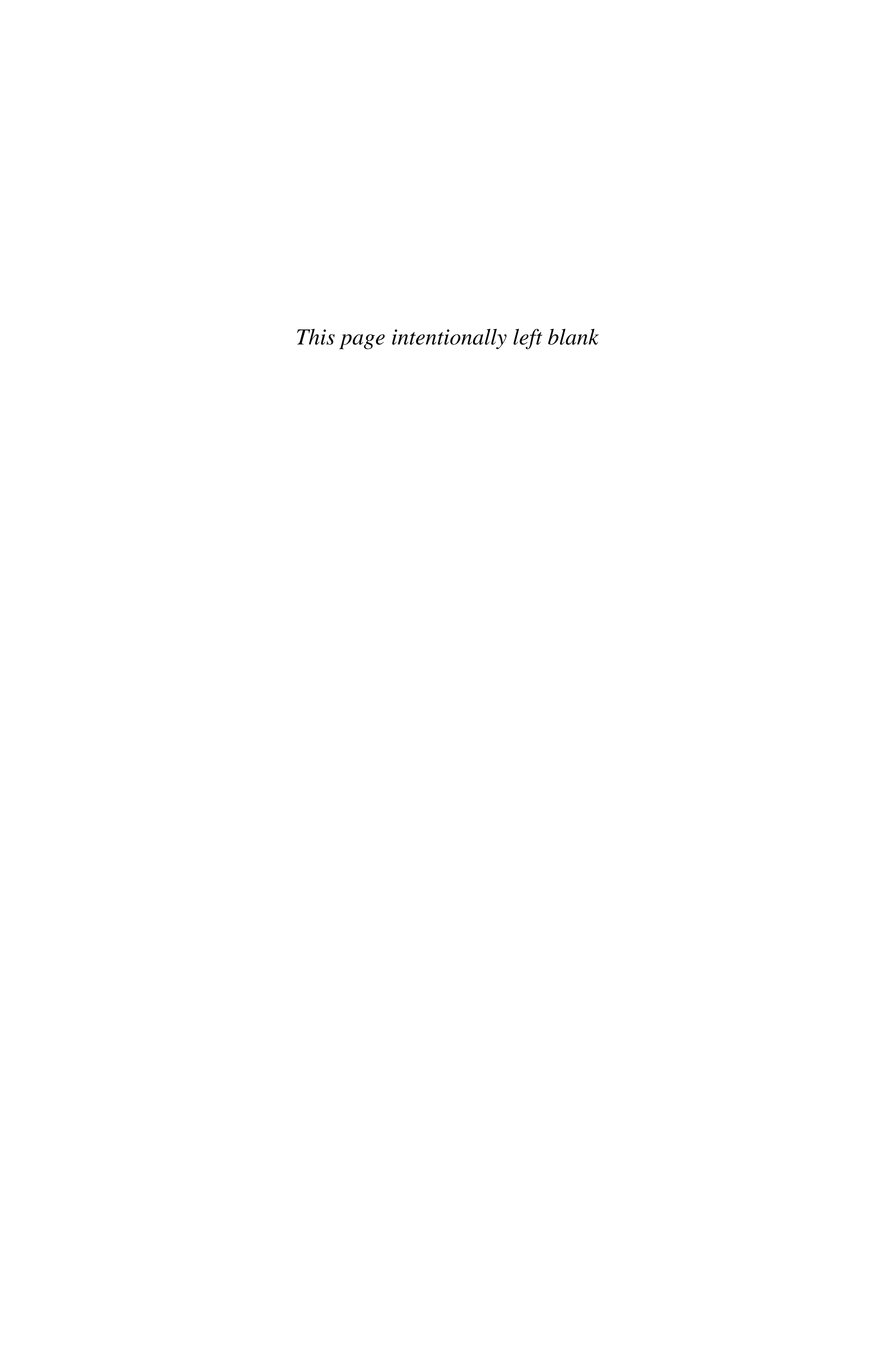

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Introduction

This is part one of *Clothing through American History: The Civil War through the Gilded Age, 1861–1899*. This first half of the volume investigates clothing worn in the United States from 1860 to 1877, during the period of the Civil War and, after that great national tragedy, during the Reconstruction in the South.

The first chapter of Part One provides an overview of the country and a brief history of political events. The second chapter examines the effects of these many major forces in terms of the multiplicity of cultures existing in the United States during the war and Reconstruction Era. Each had different effects upon different groups of the population, depending on geography, economic conditions, and ethnicity. Settlers of the West, for example, were much more affected by the Indian wars than New Englanders, unless sons, fathers, and husbands from New England were a part of the military forces deployed to the new battlefront to be directly engaged in the warfare. Discriminatory legislation would have a profound impact on Chinese and African Americans seeking to carve out a niche for themselves and their families in western states such as California and Oregon, while in New York the draft law, established shortly after the onset of the Civil War, was one of the major flash points for immigrant populations.

The remaining three chapters present how the multiple forces of politics, economics, social change and social adaptation, immigration, employment, geography, background, individual situation, and personal differentiation affected the clothing people wore and their overall appearance. Women's clothing, changing more quickly and at all times the most complicated—as well as the most discussed, sketched, photographed, and considered—is treated in Chapter 3, followed by men's clothing in Chapter 4, and finally infants' and children's clothing in Chapter 5.

The glossary defines words that may be unfamiliar to the general reader. The resource guide includes not only books, but also listings for museums and Web sites where the reader can look for further information, and a list of motion pictures featuring authentic period clothing.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PERIOD

Even a volume considering just 15 years of U.S. history and culture can only scratch the surface. With variations in fiber, yarn, fabrication, coloration method, and trim, fabric itself presents an incredible potential for variation. Throw in the infinite number of variations possible in cut and application of trim, undergarments to support the form, body shapes wearing the garments, and accessories, and you have an exponential number of looks that would have been possible for any sex and any age. Yet there was an identifiable silhouette, a common enough look shared by most people in 1860 (women at least) that allows one to distinguish that look from one that was common in 1875. Those nuances are important, because they allow observers of photographs to narrow down an approximate date or museum personnel to assign a likely period to an artifact. They allow us to place in perspective an extant garment. They help us understand the role clothing played in subduing and emotionally controlling slaves and former slaves by making them visually indistinguishable. It also allows us to appreciate the slaves' ability to express individuality even with the coarsest and barest of provisions. From the words of diaries and letters, moreover, we can understand the role that clothing production played in the lives of women who bore the responsibility, as well as the frequent pleasure, of providing clothing for themselves and their families. There is perhaps no closer link to an individual and to an understanding of that individual than that person's visual self-presentation to the world.

Timeline

CLOTHING IN THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION ERA, 1860–1875

1860

April	The Pony Express completes its first delivery.
	Apaches attack Fort Defiance; they are repulsed by U.S. soldiers, but the conflict continued for several years, even when the fort was closed at the beginning of the Civil War.
November	Lincoln is elected President. His support of the Homestead Act, which included opposition to the spread of slavery, leads to the secession of South Carolina.
December	South Carolina secedes.

1861

	The publication of Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, an autobiographical narrative, focuses attention on the personal and emotional costs of slavery.
January	Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana formally secede from the Union.
	Kansas gains statehood as a free state.

February The Confederate States of America is formed, and Texas joins the Confederacy.

Jefferson Davis becomes president of the Confederacy.

The Nevada and Colorado Territories are organized.

March Abraham Lincoln is sworn in as the 16th President of the United States.

April The Civil War begins with Confederate forces firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina.

Virginia becomes the eighth state to secede from the Union. A portion of Virginia secedes from the Confederate States to rejoin the Union, an act that will lead to the formation of West Virginia.

The Union begins a blockade of Confederate ports, effectively cutting the South off from replacement of consumer goods, medical supplies, and resources for manufacturing of all kinds, including armaments.

Wanamaker's Oak Hall Clothing Bazaar opens in Philadelphia.

May Arkansas and North Carolina secede from the Union.

June Tennessee secedes from the Union and joins the Confederacy.

July The first major battle of the Civil War occurs at Bull Run with Confederate forces winning.

October The first transcontinental telegraph line is completed, effectively ending the need for the Pony Express.

1862

A. T. Stewart opens his first true department on Broadway in New York.

February President Lincoln's son Willie dies at the age of eleven.

May The Homestead Act passes, allowing individuals and families to claim 160 acres of publicly owned land for living and working on the property for five years.

July Congress passes the Pacific Railroad Act, authorizing linkage of the two major rail lines and connecting both sides of the North American continent.

The Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act passes Congress, prohibiting polygamy in the United States and its territories and

limiting the monetary holdings of churches and nonprofits, specifically targeting the Mormon population in Utah.

The Morrill Act (the Land Grant Act) passes, directing that public lands be given to states for the funding of higher education institutions to offer courses of study in agriculture, home economics, mechanical arts, and other useful occupations.

August The Sioux War begins in Minnesota.

September The Battle of Antietam, one of the bloodiest in the Civil War, was won by Union forces.

The Emancipation Proclamation is issued, freeing slaves in Confederate-held territory.

December West Virginia is admitted to the Union.

1863

The Man without a Country, by Edward Everett Hale, is published. The fictional work effectively captures the emotional impact of civil war.

Kit Carson and troops occupy Fort Defiance, charged by the federal government with subduing Navajos and Mescalero Apaches in the region.

February Arizona Territory is organized as a Union territory, despite the fact that largely the same land mass was organized as a territory under the Confederate government in 1861.

March The first national conscription law goes into effect, following the failure of previous attempts to rely on states to draw from the militia those men needed to supplement volunteers. Entering the war without a national conscription act was based on the assumption that the war would last no more than a year.

Idaho Territory is organized.

July The Battle of Gettysburg is won by Union forces. With casualties totaling approximately 50,000, and Lee's forces reduced by about one-third strength, it would be considered by many as a turning point in a war that would still continue another two years.

Vicksburg also falls to the Union, allowing them full control of the Mississippi River and wielding serious psychological damage to the Confederacy, both militarily and on the home front.

The draft riots in New York pit Irish Americans against African Americans and against the federal government for instituting what is seen as a draft forcing the poor to fight in a rich man's war.

November President Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address at a ceremony dedicating the battlefield as the Gettysburg National Cemetery.

1864

Kit Carson's campaign against the Navajos ends with the surrender of nearly 8,000 men, women, and children, who are forced to march nearly 300 miles to Fort Sumner, an event that would become infamous in Native American history as the "Long Walk."

In New York, the tenement at 97 Orchard Street was completed, indicative of a major housing trend for immigrants and other urban poor.

September General Sherman's army captures Atlanta and receives presidential approval to begin a March to the Sea.

October Nevada becomes the 36th state admitted to the Union.

November Abraham Lincoln is elected to his second term as president, defeating George McClellan.

December Concluding his March to the Sea, General Sherman and his troops reach Savannah, Georgia, leaving behind a swath of destroyed homes, towns, and countrysides. He presents the city of Savannah to President Lincoln as a Christmas gift.

1865

Marshall Field and Levi Leiter open a department store in Chicago on Lake Street.

January General Sherman turns northward with the Union forces under his command, defeating Confederate troops at every encounter as he moves toward Columbia, Charleston, and Fayetteville, leaving a wide path of destruction across the Carolinas.

Congress passes the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery.

March President Lincoln is inaugurated as President.

Freedman's Bureau established to address all issues regarding newly freed slaves in the areas under reconstruction.

April Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, ending the Civil War.

President Lincoln assassinated by John Wilkes Booth while attending a play at Ford's Theater.

Andrew Johnson is sworn in as the 17th president of the United States.

The Black Hawk Wars begin in Utah among Mormon settlers and factions of the Paiutes, Navajos, and Utes. Lacking government intervention, open hostilities continue until the government finally sends in troops in 1867.

1866

President Johnson reverses actions of the Freedmen's Bureau and returns all seized lands from the Confederate states to their pre-war owners.

Macy's department store expanded into its second building and became one of the first such stores to employ women executives.

March Congress passes the first Civil Rights Act, providing basic rights to all persons born in the United States, with the exception of non-taxpaying Native Americans. Congress also passes the first Reconstruction Act, over President Johnson's veto, during this month, to be followed by three supplemental acts.

July Tennessee is the first of the Confederate states readmitted to the Union.

1867

Louisa May Alcott publishes *Hospital Sketches*, recounting her experiences as a nurse during the Civil War.

Alfred Nobel patents dynamite, a safer form of nitroglycerine mixed with silica and molded into a stick shape. The addition of a blasting cap and fuse makes the use of dynamite much safer than other explosives and it becomes a major factor in mining technology.

The National Grange Movement is initiated, helping farmers organize, increase political power, and become more efficient.

The first law governing housing requirements, the tenement law, is enacted in New York.

March Nebraska admitted to the Union as 37th state.

July After several attempts, the first transatlantic cable is laid, connecting communications between the United States and Europe.

October The Medicine Lodge Treaty is signed by U.S. representatives and representatives of the Kiowa, Commanche, Plains Apache, Cheyenne, and Southern Arapaho tribes at Medicine Lodge, Kansas.

1868

William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody is employed as a scout and hunter for the U.S. Army, providing bison for troops and railroad workers and supposedly killing close to 5,000 bison in eighteen months.

Strawbridge and Clothier opened their first department store in downtown Philadelphia.

June Arkansas, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina become the second through the seventh states to be readmitted to the Union.

July The 14th Amendment is ratified, providing citizenship to all persons "born or naturalized in the United States."

The Wyoming Territory is organized.

December President Andrew Johnson pardons those who participated in the Southern rebellion.

1869

March Ulysses S. Grant becomes the 18th president of the United States.

May The Transcontinental Railroad is completed, uniting the continent and further encouraging families to settle in the West.

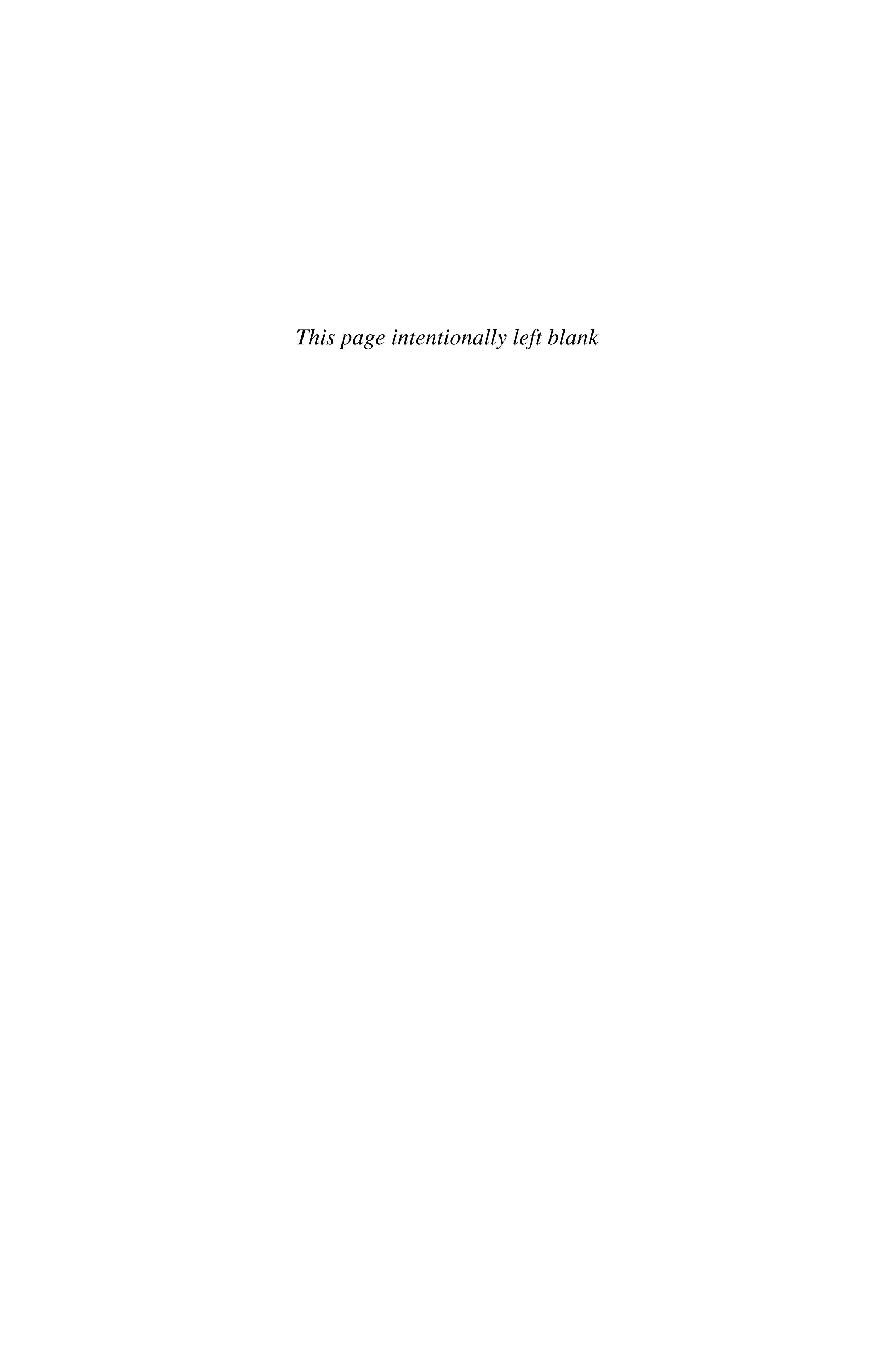
1870

January Virginia is readmitted to the Union.

February Mississippi is readmitted to the Union.

March The 15th Amendment is added to the Constitution, providing voting rights to male citizens.

	Texas is readmitted to the Union.
	The first incorporated department store, Zions Co-operative Mercantile Store, opens in Salt Lake City.
July	Georgia is readmitted to the Union
1871	
October	Much of Chicago is destroyed by the Great Chicago Fire.
1872	The Bloomingdale brothers opened their first store on Third Avenue in New York.
	Yellowstone National Park is created.
August	Montgomery Ward and Company is formed, beginning the mail-order business in the United States.
1873	
	Barbed wire is introduced, eventually leading to a means of clearly defining pastureland and keeping herds contained.
March	President Ulysses Grant is sworn is for his second term.
September	The bankruptcy of Jay Cooke & Company of Philadelphia, a banking firm, was the beginning of the Panic of 1873, a national depression that lasted for several years.
1874	
November	The Women's Christian Temperance Union is formed in Cleveland, Ohio, with Annie Wittenmyer as president.
1875	
	The first electric streetcar is installed in New York.
	The Civil Rights Act of 1875 is passed.



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CHAPTER 1

The United States in the Civil War and Reconstruction Era, 1861–1876

The signal event that defined the years between 1860 and 1877 was the Civil War. Known also as "the War between the States," the conflict between North and South would leave thousands on both sides dead or maimed and a way of life for the South forever changed. Following the war, sections of the South were organized into military regions administered by federal forces, an era known as Reconstruction. Intended to prepare the Confederate states for readmission to the Union and to provide a measure of organization to the area, Reconstruction further alienated most of the southern populace.

Even as the South struggled with the war and its aftermath, westward expansion continued, fueled by the Homestead Act of 1862 (100 Milestone Documents) and completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869. The federal government continued its pattern of making and breaking treaties with Native American groups that threatened to interfere with the push into potential farming, ranching, or gold-mining regions of the Midwest.

Immigration into the western and northeastern areas of the country increased with the war's end, and conflict between whites, immigrant groups, and newly freed slaves escalated. The assimilation of former slaves into the mainstream U.S. economy was never effectively planned nor accomplished. Reconstruction, as well as the Freedmen's Bureau, established in 1865, proved inadequate for the monumental task of providing

Illustration from *Harper's Weekly* depicting the spring fashion for women and children, 1862. Fashion illustrations such as these allowed women throughout the country to know what was stylish, whether they could copy those fashions or just wish for them. (Library of Congress)

for the thousands of previously disenfranchised people (The Freedmen's Bureau). Treatment of African Americans in the South and much of the rest of the country followed a U.S. pattern of discrimination already affecting immigrants from other countries (especially Chinese rail workers) and Native Americans.

Technological improvements, including the telegraph, the sewing machine, and photographic techniques changed the way Americans communicated with each other and produced household necessities. Industrialization, sizing information, development of paper patterns for clothing, and changing roles of women in society began the process of moving clothing production out of the home and into mass production. Even with the hardships of war and its aftermath, women kept in touch with fashion news and used whatever resources they had at hand to clothe themselves and their families. Immigrant groups brought their own sense of fashion and style to the United States, some struggling to retain their ethnic identity, others more intent on blending into their new world. Native American tribes retained unique, identifiable styles that merged traditional and new materials and motifs. Freed slaves struggled to find a place in a society newly opened, yet still, in many respects, closed to them. Dress and appearance were important aspects of that change. Throughout the country, regional differences developed based on necessity and preference, yet within the diversity there was still a basic homogeneity of silhouette and form that helps to identify the period. Newspapers, photographs, fashion and news periodicals, advertising, and improvements in postal service decreased the isolation of the disparate sections of the country and recorded not only the issues, events, and opinions of the day but also the clothing and appearance of the people of the United States.

PRELUDE TO THE CIVIL WAR

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the United States was divided into distinct regions based on economy, population, lifestyle, and many other interrelated factors. The two most powerful factions were

the northern industrialized states with high population density, and the agricultural southern region with a plantation economy requiring slave labor for profitability. As states had been added to the Union, the federal government maintained a balance of those states allowing slavery and those prohibiting it. Kansas was in line for admission to the Union in 1860 and became a lightning rod of conflict between pro- and antislavery forces. Northern industrial interests were concerned about unfair competition should the slavery system expand beyond the South. There was also a growing humanitarian opposition to slavery that added an emotional side to the economic and political discord. The admission of Kansas as a free state was effectively blocked in 1860, indicating a shift in power balance in favor of the free states. This act was the first of two principal events that led directly to secession of southern states from the Union, and, consequently, the outbreak of the Civil War.

The second event that appears as a catalyst in the break between South and North was the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency in 1861. Although Lincoln did not begin his presidential campaign or presidency on a staunch antislavery platform, he was distrusted by southerners, who believed his goal was complete abolition of slavery. In addition to Lincoln's election, the South had lost their majority in the Senate, and this loss of political power threatened to leave them unable to avoid legislation abolishing slavery. For a region whose economy relied almost entirely on slave-produced cotton, the prospect of losing its most lucrative asset was unacceptable.

The South was especially vulnerable to the North's growing power because its plantation economy had never diversified into other areas that would allow it self-sufficiency. Financial backing and institutions, shipping, warehousing and cotton markets, manufacturing, and the all the other components of the South's economic system were furnished by the North. Estimates of southern manufacturing of cotton in the pre-war South were at only about 15 percent of the nation's total (Ulrich 1985, 31). According to calculations based on manufacturing productivity of states reporting in the 1860 census, the 11 Confederate states accounted for less than two percent of the value of manufactured products in the country (Historical Census Browser). In an economy based on slave labor, slaves represented one of the greatest assets. In the pre-war South, the price of slaves continued to rise; therefore, any threat to the legality of owning slaves was a threat of financial ruin to slave owners and their heirs (Wright 1978). This fact was recorded in the autobiography of Louis Hughes in a section describing his owner's distress over the increasing losses of the Confederate army near the war's end:

> The military situation troubled him, for the Union army had conquered nearly everything; and the fact now stared him in the face that he would soon lose his slaves. He never dreamed in the beginning of the war that

> the Unionists would conquer, and that the slaves would be freed; but now he saw that not only all his wealth in the bodies and souls of men was slipping away from him, but that much, if not all of the gain which these chattels had brought him was likely to "take wings and fly away." (1997, 163)

The issue of states' rights to determine their own course of future action was also a large part of the decision of 11 slave states to secede from the Union. Some historians note that the fierce independent spirit behind the Revolutionary War that founded the country still survived in the South. Certainly the decision to secede was based on emotional as well as economic reasons, and it was a decision that was not universally accepted within seceding states or even within individual families. Whether secession would lead to actual armed conflict was also not clearly known at the time. For Southerners, the length and cost of the conflict, as well as its actual outcome, was far from expected. Writing toward the end of the war on April 6, 1865, Dolly Lunt Barges poignantly reflected on the war's beginning:

> Everything looks pleasant, but the state of our country is very gloomy. General Lee has surrendered to the victorious Grant. Well, if it will only hasten the conclusion of this war, I am satisfied. There has been something very strange in the whole affair to me, and I can attribute it to nothing but the hand of Providence working out some problem that has not yet been revealed to us poor, erring mortals. At the beginning of the struggle the minds of men, their wills, their self-control, seemed to be all taken from them in a passionate antagonism to the coming-in President, Abraham Lincoln. Our leaders, to whom the people looked for wisdom, led us into this, perhaps the greatest error of the age. "We will not have this man to rule over us!" was their cry. For years it has been stirring in the hearts of Southern politicians that the North was enriched and built up by Southern labor and wealth. Men's pockets were always appealed to and appealed to so constantly that an antagonism was excited which it has been impossible to allay. They did not believe that the North would fight. Said Robert Toombes: "I will drink every drop of blood they will shed." Oh, blinded men! Rivers deep and strong have been shed, and where are we now?—a ruined, subjugated people! What will be our future? is the question which now rests heavily upon the hearts of all. (Barge 1918, 47–48)

WAR DIVIDES THE NATION

Seven southern states seceded from the Union between the election of Abraham Lincoln and his inauguration. In February 1861, these states—South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas—formed the Confederate States of America on with Jefferson Davis

as president. No military action followed the secession, but at his inauguration, President Lincoln declared the states' withdrawal from the Union legally void and pleaded with the South to return to the Union. The response was a show of force when Southern troops fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, on April 12, 1861. When President Lincoln called for volunteer troops from all remaining states in the Union, four additional states seceded (Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee). Kentucky and Missouri remained in the Union, but factions organized, declared secession, and were recognized by the Confederacy. A portion of Virginia organized and declared secession from the state in order to remain in the Union; they were recognized as West Virginia in 1863.

President Lincoln went formal when he visited Gen. McClellan in the field to determine why the well-supplied and rested army did not pursue the Confederates and win a decisive victory after the Battle of Antietam, October 3, 1863. Pictured are: Allan Pinkerton (left), President Lincoln (center), and Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand. (Library of Congress)

Documents from the time show both sides expecting a short war (or no armed conflict at all) and decisive victory, but that was not the case. Confederate forces scored early victories, stopping several attempted invasions of the South. Led by General Robert E. Lee, the Confederacy attempted an invasion of the North that resulted in the Battle of Antietam near Sharpsburg, Maryland. In the bloodiest day of the war, Lee's army was repulsed. Lee's second attempt to invade the North ended at the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. Lee's losses there are considered to be the turning point of the war. Following that battle, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, effectively declaring free all slaves held in seceding states. No additional major invasions of the North occurred; scattered skirmishes were fought in western territories, but by far the majority of the fighting and hardship of the war occurred in the South. In July 1863, the fall of Vicksburg, Mississippi, after a six-week siege proved a psychological blow to the Confederacy, which had held the city to be unassailable. Further, the defeat opened the Mississippi River to Union traffic relatively unimpeded.

Outnumbered nearly two to one, the South would enlist every available able-bodied man before the war's end. Plantations and their slave-labor forces were left in the care of women with no previous experience in management. Occupied entirely with efforts to finance the war, officials of the Confederacy were aware of the hardships faced by the Southern populace but were either unwilling or unable to devote

Prohibited and Limited Fabric and Trimmings

Officials tried to encourage production, control speculators, and limit foreign imports to necessities. Among the articles prohibited by the Confederate Senate in 1864 were "cotton laces, cotton insertings, cotton trimmings, and laces of thread and other materials. Galloons, laces, knots, stars, tassels, tresses, and wings of gold or silver, or imitations thereof, except when intended for uniforms of officers in the military and naval services." Even human hair "cleansed or prepared for use" was prohibited. Yard goods prices were limited to 25 cents per square yard for cotton cloth, except cottonade, corduroy, fustian, and velveteen, for which the maximum price was 50 cents per yard, which was also the maximum price allowable for linen cloth. Alpaca, cashmere, de laines, lasting, merino, mohair, and Persian cloth could be imported for 50 cents a yard, but bombazine and French merino were listed at 75 cents a yard. Dress silk received the highest allotment at one dollar a yard. (*An act to amend an act entitled "An act to prohibit the importation of luxuries, or of articles not necessaries, or of common use,"* February 6, 1864)

resources to aid the domestic production that would have sustained both the population and the fighting forces. Hampered by their lack of productive capacity, and cut off from supplies of food, clothing, medicine, and munitions by invading troops and naval blockades, Southerners exhibited amazing initiative in creating substitutes, now referred to as "ersatz," for missing necessities. Reworking, making do, and doing without carried patriotic overtones early in the war. Clothing was taken apart and turned; bonnets were trimmed for a fresh look; trading, bartering, and pooling resources made the work more interesting and gave women opportunities for social exchange as well. Women who had no experience making cloth, as well as those who knew the skill, tried weaving to produce needed yardage, and the homespun that resulted represented for many women a visible signal of their patriotism to the Southern cause. By the hundreds, women formed sewing societies to supplement the soldiers' minimal issues for what they thought was to be a short and victorious war.

But as the war went into the second and third years, starvation threatened many, and even the materials for ersatz were lacking. Purchased exemptions for the wealthy, and logistic ones for overseers, soon gave way, and pleas of women to their Confederate officials for assistance brought little relief. In addition, invading troops from the North took whatever food and other provisions they found and often destroyed what they could not use or carry away. General Grant, who was in command of the Union armies, believed the defeat of the South would require both economic devastation and military defeat. His policy was to destroy the economic base of the Confederacy, referred to as a "*scorched earth policy*." In 1864, first General Philip Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley and then General William T. Sherman in Georgia laid waste to the agricultural and industrial areas in their paths. Diaries and letters of women left unguarded in Southern towns give a vivid picture of the fear and hardships of families waiting for the entry of Union troops. In the face of occupation, those Southerners who could afford to so fled, some several times and to numerous locations. The published diary of Sarah Dawson

Morgan gives an excellent and balanced depiction of both anticipating and living a refugee life in the South.

The war ended on April 9, 1865 with Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, nearly four years after it had begun. An exact count of casualties has never been accomplished, largely because of the difficulty in record keeping during the time, particularly during routs in remote locations, and also because of less organized lines of communication and protocol in the Army of the Confederacy. By most estimates, the total casualties of the Civil War were about 618,000 and include those missing in action and those killed by disease and other causes, as well as directly by enemy fire. Of those numbers, probably around 250,000 were Confederate men (Mintz 2007). The losses were enormous on both sides and had a severe impact on the ability of some locations, particularly in the South, to rebuild after the war. And while the military action was over, the nation was far from united. Sentiments that led to the war still ran high, and in the South the utter devastation wrought by invading forces left despair and bitterness that would take generations to heal. In addition, the thousands of freed slaves, outnumbering the white population in some states, were not adequately prepared for the aftermath of their emancipation. Other areas of the nation moved on when the war ended, but for the South, many battles of a different kind were yet in store.

AFTERMATH OF THE WAR

Even before the actual end of the war, Congress enacted legislation to deal with one of the most pressing issues facing the country after emancipation, the fate of the freed slaves, referred to as freedmen. In March 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau was established to oversee the assimilation of freed slaves into the fabric of the country. Underfunded and with limited jurisdiction, the bureau was nevertheless instrumental in assisting many of the former slave population through providing access to education, basic necessities, and reunion with family members separated by slavery and war. The bureau attempted to redistribute land to ensure freedmen had access to means for developing self-sufficiency, even obtaining funds to purchase land that could be sold reasonably to free blacks. Agents helped establish churches and tried to help administer justice when local Southern officials and religious institutions refused to acknowledge the rights and needs of freedmen.

Congress also passed three constitutional amendments to address the status of former slaves. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery; the Fourteenth assured African Americans of basic civil rights, and the Fifteenth granted voting rights to all qualified adult males regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Ratification of the Fourteenth, and then the Fifteenth, Amendments was one of the conditions

for the Southern states to be readmitted to the Union, a process not completed until 1870. Even during the war, the issue of race relations was a significant source of fear to women in the South who were left in charge of the slave-labor force which generally outnumbered their female managers overwhelmingly. With defeat imminent, the Southern populace was especially threatened by the huge numbers of free black citizens and the retribution they might feel justified in taking. In Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana, the slave population was nearly equal to the whites in 1860, and in Mississippi and South Carolina, whites were outnumbered by slaves. While some of the freed slaves migrated to industrial regions of the North or joined the westward movement, the majority stayed in climates and communities with which they were familiar. The legal status of blacks was changed, but the mind set of the South remained that they were somehow less than human, a view that had made slavery acceptable even to Southerners who thought themselves humanistic.

Andrew Johnson took office following the assassination of President Lincoln just five days after the end of the Civil War. Johnson followed a lax policy of allowing many Southern officials to regain control of local governments and pardoning many Confederate leaders. These local governments quickly moved to restrict the ability of the freed slaves to participate in white society and its governance. An angry Republican Congress retaliated by blocking the readmission of the rebel states and passing the Civil Rights Act of 1866 to protect the rights of freed blacks in the South. In March 1867, the first official legislation providing for governance and readmission of the rebel states was enacted by Congress. The Reconstruction Act divided the Confederate states into five districts under military control; required former Confederate states to elect new delegates and draw up new constitutions; required that African Americans, but not Confederate supporters, be allowed to vote in elections; and required the districts to guarantee equal rights to all citizens.

The Reconstruction was a period of social and political upheaval in the South. In addition to military personnel occupation, thousands of adventurers from the North moved to the Southern states to seize political and financial opportunities available in the failed system. Many plantation owners were unable to maintain their property or pay required taxes, and that property became available for sale to the highest bidder. White reaction to the installation of African Americans in political offices, as well as to other uncertainties of the new social order, resulted in the formation of the Ku Klux Klan and other groups intent on restoring a measure of what had been the way of life before the war. Still debated by historians as to its effectiveness in addressing the goals of reconciliation between North and South, Reconstruction officially ended in 1877, two years after the last rebel state had been readmitted to the Union.

MOVING WESTWARD

The population in the West and Midwest had already grown considerably by the time of the Civil War. As more territories in that part of the country acquired the population and resources necessary for statehood, the question of whether they would join the Union as free or as slave states became one of the catalysts leading to actual hostilities.

As an encouragement to those considering settlement in the mid and far western regions of the country, Congress passed the Homestead Act in 1862. The act provided that ownership of 160 acres of land in the West would be deeded to an individual above the age of 21 who would settle on the land, make improvements, and live there five years. The results were important as a part of the country's developing national agriculture policy and did encourage the population of the West. The results were also very different from the intention of the law, allowing much of the land to be assumed, either directly or indirectly, by corporate ownership rather than by individual families. The Act was widely romanticized, but in actuality provided inadequate acreage for profitable farms in what was a very difficult climate for farming. The government was also unprepared for the labor necessary to manage the paperwork and physically inspect the claims that were filed, resulting in wholesale fraud in many locations and resulting, overall, in only about one in five available acres actually going to small farmers (Homestead Act of 1862).

Early settlers in the West had traveled slow and dangerous land routes such as the Oregon Trail, the Overland Trail, the Cherokee Trail, and others. Mark Twain's account of his travel via stagecoach from Missouri to California on the Overland Trail in 1861 is a humorous portrayal of traveling conditions at the time. Wagon trains hauled settlers and as much of the comforts of home as they felt they could pull. Fording waterways, avoiding blizzards, finding sufficient water for travelers and their animals, surviving or avoiding attacks by Native Americans, and just staying on the trails were challenges that thousands of early settlers braved for the prospect of free land, fresh territory, and possible fortunes in gold or silver as discoveries of those minerals continued in Wyoming, Colorado, and the Dakotas. With completion of the railroad joining East and West in 1869, expansion got a tremendous boost, as did the safety of the travelers.

The railroad linked the country not only through more efficient travel but also through swifter exchange of goods and communications. Perishables could be shipped after 1869 with the advent of insulated cars cooled with ice. The Pony Express and stagecoach routes gave way as the major means of transporting mail. As population increased in the new territories, so did the need for a governance structure, and gradually the United States expanded with the addition of new states. The Web site *The Making of the United States of America* provides a snapshot of each

state's admission into the Union, featuring information about key events and the estimated population of states at the time of admission. Kansas was added in 1861 with a population of 107,206 residents, Nevada in 1864 with 40,000, Nebraska in 1867 with 60,000, and Colorado in 1876 with 150,000.

Settlers throughout the West and Midwest found very different conditions than they had known in the East. Self-sufficiency was the primary requirement for carving out a home in largely undeveloped areas with little or no commerce, institutions, or governance. But in most cases, isolation was relatively brief. People tended to settle in rough proximity to transportation, and towns grew up quickly along railroad stops. People also longed for the familiar; sod huts and wild game served as shelter and food in a pinch, but when conditions improved, people looked to acquire those things which they associated with a comfortable life. Towns sprang up quickly along railroad stops. Merchants, bankers, and businessmen also saw the new territories as rich with opportunity and moved in to establish the infrastructure of communities. The goods they sold came primarily on trains from the East, diminishing the extent of regional differences in clothing.

On the far side of the continent, California was to the western territories what New England was to the East. Bustling with seaport trade, California had a population of nearly 370,000 in 1860 and over 560,000 in 1870. Nearly a seventh of those residents were concentrated in the thriving town of San Francisco, whose population had grown from about 400 residents to 56,000 by the 1860 census. Nearly all trade and most newcomers passed through San Francisco ports. The city itself teemed with hotels, gambling parlors, saloons, and dry goods stores. California had been born as a gold-mining destination, but, by the 1860s, it had moved also into agricultural production as the amazing fertility of its land was discovered. Californians were a force behind the formation of the short-lived Pony Express as a better means of overland mail delivery between the two coasts, previously served by steamship every fifteen days. Sacramento and Stockton were also important cities in early California, but they never competed with San Francisco in size or business activity. In Oregon, Portland was the major commercial city, with a population of about 6,000 by 1866 (*The Making of the United States of America*).

THE NATIVE POPULATIONS

The pattern of relations between whites and established native populations continued through the nineteenth century (Michno 2003). When settlers needed or desired land for settlement, ranching, mining, travel, or any other purpose, they pushed into those areas regardless of native populations living there. Often, native tribes confronted these invasions

with armed resistance. This would be followed by retaliation from the settlers, and then an outcry for protection from government forces. This protection often was provided, and fighting escalated. Government forces were nearly always eventually victorious because of superior numbers, equipment, and funding. As native tribes were reduced and became faced with annihilation, they were more vulnerable to treaty negotiators. U.S. government leaders drew up, gained acceptance of, ratified, and then betrayed treaty after treaty with Native American chiefs. As work on the transcontinental railroad progressed, interference from roving bands of natives was crushed. When homesteaders crowded into territories legally open to them, as well as those that were not, military actions against the natives increased. The discovery of gold and silver in the territories became a sure predictor of the loss of that territory to those who had always lived there.

A large group of Plains Indians, the Sioux, were hunters who depended on the enormous herds of native bison that roamed the Plains. They used the animals for food, clothing, tools, and shelter. No other animal came close to providing the Sioux adequate resources to sustain their lifestyle. The coming of the railroads and the government's deliberate campaign to decimate the native buffalo herds as a means of taking away the Indian's livelihood led to a series of bitter battles between the Sioux and the United States Cavalry. In Minnesota, in 1862, Sioux warriors killed hundreds of settlers under the leadership of Chief Little Crow. Retaliation by the U.S. Army defeated the band, but many of the warriors joined other groups and continued to pose a threat.

The Black Hills area of South Dakota was ceded to the Sioux in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. When gold was discovered there, miners flooded the area in the 1870s, and the United States abrogated the treaty. Resulting hostilities led to the slaughter of many Sioux. Leading a force of nearly 300 men and with plans to crush the uprising, General George A. Custer engaged a Sioux war party along the Little Bighorn River in 1876, resulting in the death of the entire Army contingent. The fight is now called "Custer's Last Stand."

In Arizona Territory, the Navajos attacked Fort Defiance in 1860 and nearly secured a victory before retreating. The Army then declared a policy of total war on the Navajos and deployed the policy of destroying foodstuffs, housing, and any sources of livelihood, as well as killing as many of the Navajos as possible. Eventually, the Navajos were expelled from the area and forced to walk during blizzard conditions to a reservation near Fort Sumter, New Mexico. Known as "The Long Walk," the ordeal itself resulted in numerous deaths, as did conditions of near starvation on the reservation. A new treaty in 1868 provided cattle and sheep to assist the remaining Navajos in developing a means of sustaining life on a reservation near their original territory.

In Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, the Apaches were the major threat to soldiers and settlers alike. Determined not to live on reservations, the Apaches were some of the most brazen of the Native American groups in terms of their continuous series of attacks on whites.

The Southern Plains tribes also depended upon buffalo for their livelihood, using every part of the animal in some way. After the end of the Civil War, encroachments increased with near extermination of the huge buffalo herds upon which the Indians depended. The Treaty of Medicine Lodge in 1867 sent the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kataka, and Kiowa tribes to reservations in Oklahoma and Texas, where they depended primarily on U.S. government assistance for survival.

In Utah, Mormon settlements had seriously impacted the Ute tribe as settlements reached deeper and deeper into their land. Beyond the loss of actual land, the settlements disrupted the resources the Utes depended upon. The Black Hawk War erupted in the late 1860s, named for a Ute warrior of that name, and it continued for nearly three years. Paiutes and Navajos joined the Utes, and both sides of the conflict suffered extensive casualties before finally enacting a peace treaty in 1868.

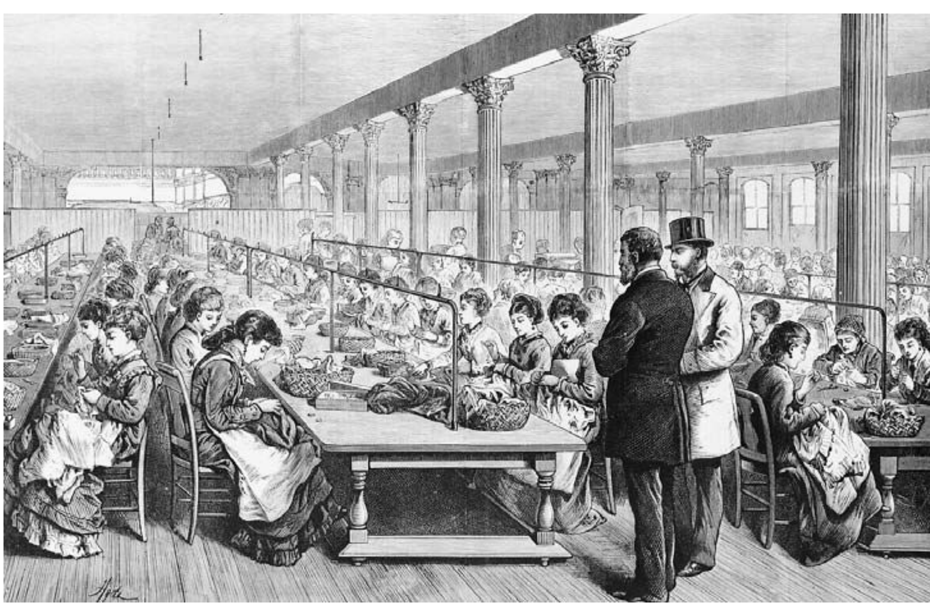
In the Northwest, too, native populations were pushed out of their lands. Living on fish, birds, and vegetation, the Modocs lived in northern California and southern Oregon until white settlers began taking their land in the 1860s. Hostilities reduced their number extensively, and the majority moved to the Klamath reservation in southern Oregon. Escapees from the reservation fought U.S. soldiers in 1872–73, but they were defeated.

The most significant Indian wars in the Northwest involved the Pacific Northwest Nez Percés. The U. S. government took their homeland in Wallowa Valley of eastern Oregon in 1877, ordering the Nez Percés to move into the Lapwai reservation in what is now Idaho. The natives refused and began a series of raids against settlers, leading to retribution from the Army. After nearly escaping to Canada, the Nez Percés finally surrendered and were sent to a reservation in Oklahoma, far from the land, climate, and lifestyle they had always known.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

In the South, the major issue was economic survival. Cities and countrysides were in ruins, railroads largely destroyed, millions of dollars in slave assets lost to emancipation, and the adult male population was decimated. In the wake of the plantation system, tenant farming became a close substitute, with poor white as well as black families living for the cotton they could extract from the land. It was a system that would effectively keep the former slave population from accumulating assets and moving into socially or economically competitive positions with whites.

With this gradual rebuilding, industrialization did occur in the South, but in terms of manufacturing value, the increase from 1860 to 1870 was



In the sewing room at A. T. Stewart's department store in New York City, women stitched on fashions of the day. From *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 24, 1875. (Library of Congress)

slightly less than three percent; during that same period, the value of manufacturing in the remaining states (not including territories) more than doubled, as reported in the U.S. censuses of those years (calculated from 1860 and 1870 census reports). Across the South, women who had lived their lives relying on the services of others for the most basic household chores turned to looking for work outside the home to help sustain themselves and their families. Teaching and taking in sewing and laundry were frequent answers. Invention of the telephone and the typewriter late in the period would eventually provide additional means of acceptable female employment in business offices and telephone companies.

In the North, the beginning of what would be called a "second industrial revolution" began. It was fueled by the new intercontinental railroad, the tremendous wealth of natural resources being discovered in the West, continuing improvements in communications, labor-saving devices for home and manufacturing, the growing trend for national wealth to be concentrated with a few powerful men, and a growing enthusiasm for the very idea of progress that replaced prewar idealism. The Northern economy had been stimulated by war production, and new systems for allocating and managing labor developed to handle the increased volume. Surges of immigrant labor fueled Northern factories and mills.

Especially affected by new production technology was the production of men's clothing. Previous methods of home and cottage production that had grown up to provide men's clothing to the predominantly male

population that had swarmed the West in search of gold proved inadequate for clothing thousands of Union soldiers. Gradually, the factory system of making somewhat standard sizes of men's basic apparel was introduced. Measurements taken of soldiers became the first attempt at standardizing sizes for clothing that was not custom-made to individuals' specifications. No such system would be devised for women's apparel for decades, and mass production of women's apparel was limited primarily to articles of lingerie, coats, cloaks, accessories, and other items for which fit was not an issue or for which a single measurement would suffice for sizing. For children, as well, loosely fitting gowns, petticoats and drawers, blankets, and layette components were among the first items available ready made.

Department stores and catalogs made the new ready-to-wear merchandise available to urban and rural inhabitants alike. Rowland Macy expanded his New York dry goods store into what would be the prototype department store, then department-store chain. John Wanamaker's Grand Depot opened in Philadelphia in 1876. In Salt Lake City, Mormon settlers under the direction of Brigham Young created the first incorporated department store in America in 1870, relieving the religious community from dependence on the non-Mormon merchants and railmen who dominated trade with the West (Schoenherr). Catalog sales of dry goods opened up another avenue of purchase for farmers and settlers who were at the mercy of the prices and merchandise selection of the limited numbers of stores with which they could trade. In 1872, Montgomery Ward initiated his first catalog almost as a one-man venture. Purchasing large quantities of goods with cash and eliminating the middleman allowed Ward to control product quality and to make the goods available at comparatively low prices. Although slow to attract financial backers, Ward's idea caught on in a big way, as did his promise of guaranteed satisfaction with any item ordered through his catalog. In a time of nearly nonexistent concern for consumer welfare, his was a novel idea and one that revolutionized the way millions of Americans would shop (Kim 2000).

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The Grange Movement

The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, established in 1867, was the official name of what would eventually be called simply "the Grange Movement." During the first 10 years of activity, the Grange became an important force for the organization, education, and advocacy of farmers. Initiated by a Minnesota farmer, Oliver Kelley, the organization established cooperatives that gave previously unorganized farmers negotiating power when buying in large quantities and led to a great

competitive advantage for the farmers, who previously had been at the mercy of railroads and shopkeepers for the purchase of necessities. The Grange was also a powerful lobbying organization that championed the cause of farmers. Grange members supported the establishment of the Farm Credit System for financing farm operations, the Extension Service which provided direct education and assistance to farmers and their families, and for rural free delivery of mail. Other issues considered by the Grange were transportation, education, and the safety of farm operations and families. Grange activism led to the establishment and improvement of rural schools for farm children. Perhaps of equal importance is the social aspect of Grange activities. Through meetings and educational programs, the Grange provided a mechanism for farm families living at considerable distance to come together to exchange ideas and information and to establish a sense of community and common purpose.

Temperance and Suffragette Activities

The temperance movement grew from a general social consciousness that included abolitionist sentiments prior to the Civil War, a concern for the living conditions of the urban poor, and, often, suffragist leanings. In urban locations, particularly those with large concentrations of working poor, many of whom were immigrants, there was often a problem of alcohol abuse. Women did not have the power to vote for politicians who might correct such conditions, but they did organize and take public action to bring attention to their position. In fact, temperance organizations were some of the first instances in which women joined together to undertake very public activities to advance their causes. Organizations of women that had formed during the Civil War had typically been sewing circles or groups that met to engage in efforts to support the war by producing materials the troops could use. The temperance activities went much further and were an important factor in providing women experience in establishing and maintaining organizations, experience that would prove valuable in the extended fight to achieve the vote.

Women throughout the Northeast began with informal organizations that held meetings, wrote tracts, and then went public with their message, picketing saloons and trying to discourage any men from entering them. Newspaper reports from the time indicate they had a large measure of at least temporary success, and stories abounded in the 1870s of liquor running in the streets as a result of the women's crusades against the saloon owners. The goal of the movement was complete abstinence from the use of liquor with the exception of medical prescriptions. Even the use of liquor in cooking was discouraged.

The movement eventually spread nationwide, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was formed in 1874 by Annie Wittenmyer,

> **_Mark Twain on the Usefulness of Anti-Alcohol Groups_**
>
> Would you consider the conduct of these crusaders justifiable, I do—thoroughly justifiable. They find themselves voiceless in the making of the laws, and the election of officers to execute them. Born with brains, born in the country, educated, having large interests at stake, they find their tongues tied and their hands fettered, while every ignorant, whisky-drinking, foreign-born savage in the land may hold office, help to make the laws, degrade the dignity of the former, and break the latter at his own sweet will . . . They live in the midst of a country where there is no end to the laws, and no beginning to the execution of them. And when the laws intended to protect their sons from destruction by intemperance lie torpid and without sign of life, year after year, they recognize that there is a matter that interests them personally, a matter which comes straight home to them. (Mark Twain, writing for *The Ladies Repository*, July 1874, 78)

with Frances Willard as its head. Notwithstanding a measure of derision and satire against the movement, the women garnered a large share of support. An editorial in the May 1874 issue of *Scribner's Monthly* referred to "the Great Temperance Movement" and went on to give it full support: "If God and the God-like element in woman cannot help, there is no help. If the pulpit, the press, the politicians, the reformers, the law, cannot bring reform, who is left to do it but God and the women? We bow to this movement with reverence" (111). Churches and religious groups were natural partners, as both held similar positions on alcohol's menace to society.

The women were successful in bringing their mission to the attention of lawmakers, as well as the general public. Congressional documents from the years 1774–1875 give numerous examples of petitions from women's groups requesting action of some sort on the issue of alcohol. On a single day, February 17, 1875, the *Journal of the House of Representatives of the 43rd Congress, Second Session (480–481)* recorded nine separate petitions requesting investigation into and/or legislative restriction of alcohol use.

As with temperance activities, attention to suffrage abated during the Civil War but returned in force afterwards. Two of the leading feminists, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were active in a number of organizations that supported not only women's rights but the extension of civil rights to all. In 1866, they had formed the American Equal Rights Association devoted to universal suffrage, and they opposed passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments because they failed to address women's voting rights. Their opposition led to a rift in the women's rights movement. The more radical National Woman Suffrage Association formed, with Stanton and Anthony at the helm, and the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association was led by Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, Henry Wentworth Higginson, and Julia Ward Howe (Barber).

Although concentrated in the northern part of the country, suffrage activity spread to other parts of the county as well. In the South, some

women who had formed organizations to support the war effort turned those organizational skills to the establishment of groups that would address many of the social ills they witnessed in the South and in the nation as a whole. Black women, too, campaigned for suffrage. One of the most famous of those women was Sojourner Truth, an active public speaker for the cause. In the Midwest, Jane Grey had been an abolitionist, then a nurse in the Civil War. After the war, she edited two Minnesota newspapers, lectured, participated in crusades for woman's property rights and their right to vote (Larson 1934).

There was enormous opposition to suffrage on the part of both men and women. The notion of equality between the sexes was not acceptable to many traditional women, who were comfortable with the paternalistic relationships with which they were familiar. Many men object to the notion of equality, and those who were opposed to temperance were especially opposed to granting women the right to vote, fearing the outcome if females were able to vote in favor of prohibition. But the battle lines were drawn, and as the century progressed, the movement gained slow momentum.

ART AND LITERATURE

Painting

Landscape painting predominated in the early years of the period, with the Hudson River School of particular importance. Albert Bierstadt was one of the first artists to travel west in order to view first hand the reported beauty of the mountains and plains. In *The Oregon Trail*, 1869, he chose burning colors to document the sun setting on westward travelers, their covered wagon, and their grazing animals. Bierstadt became fascinated with the West and painted scenes of the Rocky Mountains and Yosemite Valley in a variety of seasons and lighting conditions. His work was popular and helped communicate the beauty of the West to those who had never traveled there.

Jasper Francis Cropsey was also a landscape painter, but one whose work fell into disfavor by the 1870s. Frederick Church developed a reputation as a landscape painter of tropical scenes, but in the 1860s he turned to scenes of the United States. Martin Johnson Heade's landscapes included the dramatic lighting reflective of storms and often used scenes from the Northeastern part of the country. *Thunderstorm over Narragansett Bay*, painted in 1868, is an excellent example. Heade was one of the first painters to use the marshy areas of the coast for his subject matter. The landscapes of Fitz Hugh Lane were also set at the ocean's edge and included many images of ships and marine life; those of Thomas Charles Farrer were nearly photographic in

their minutely detailed reproduction of landscape scenes around Massachusetts.

Genre paintings that featured depictions of everyday life became popular after the Civil War. Two artists who worked in that mode were Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins. Homer was a freelance reporter during the Civil War and recorded scenes from that conflict. After the war, he often painted scenes in which women workers figured prominently. Although titled *The Red School House*, Homer's 1873 painting offers only a glimpse of the building while the entire foreground of the canvas is filled with the image of the teacher walking away from her school with book in hand. Eastman Johnson was actively opposed to slavery and often portrayed images of African Americans in his work. Originally a portrait painter, he spent nearly 20 years in the 1860s and 1870s depicting everyday scenes of the United States before returning to portraiture of well-known persons in his later years.

Adelheid Dietrich perfected the art of painting floral still lifes very similar to those of the seventeenth century. The flowers are presented in recognizable realism, yet are still much more graceful and unique than a photographically realistic style. Painted often against a dark background, the floral colors are intense and light filled. John Martin Heade also painted floral still lifes, becoming one of the foremost painters in that genre in the 1860s.

Early watercolor works, such as those by Thomas Eakins, were initially done as studies of existing oil paintings rather than as paintings in their own right, and water was viewed as merely a sketching medium. Founding of the American Watercolor Society in 1866 gave more credence to watercolor as a medium for artistic expression and helped promote watercolor artists (Hacker).

Photography

The technology of photography was still very new at the beginning of the Civil War, and the number of successful processes quickly multiplied Tintypes captured dark images of subjects on a metal ground and became a favorite for individual or small group posed portraits that were durable and easy to exchange. Ambrotypes, albumen prints on glass and then paper, stereographs, and cartes de visite were other popular forms of producing photographs. The latter were especially favored for exchanging personal images, as they could be printed onto card stock. Mathew Brady would become one of the most renowned photographers for his role in documenting the devastation of the Civil War. His images of the dead from both sides had a profound impact on viewers. Working with numerous assistants and accepting negatives from other photographers as well, Brady brought the reality of war to the United States. His work survives as an extensive, detailed record of that conflict, the people

who fought and died, and the places affected by the fighting. Timothy O'Sullivan worked with Brady, and then, after the war, undertook photographic documentation of the American West and the Native Americans living there. William Henry Jackson and Alexander Gardner also publicized the West through their photographs. The staging of photographs and use of props to increase their appeal not only publicized the West but led to the development of stereotypes of Native American dress and culture and to the popularization of the Wild West and the cowboy as leitmotifs that would persist into the present day, appearing in stories, paintings, prints, novels, and eventually television and film.

Lone Wolf, a Blackfoot Indian, wearing a mixture of native and adopted dress that was typical, in a photograph by Alexander Gardner, ca. 1872. (Library of Congress)

Literature

Periodicals such as *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Appleton's* provided an outlet for short fiction, poetry, news reporting, and editorial pieces and also included illustrations by notable and unknown artists. It was in the February 1862 edition of the *Atlantic Monthly* that Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was first published. Harper's *New Monthly Magazine*, published throughout the period, gave a monthly report on the current events in the country, reporting on actions by Congress, the president, the Confederate states, and other significant events of the day.

Many poets of the period incorporated events and sentiments from the Civil War in their works. Publishing during this period were the New England poets Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and John Greenleaf Whittier. James Whitcomb Riley from Indiana, known as the Hoosier Poet, wrote simple tales of country farm life, most often in dialect. Southern poets of note include Henry Timrod, Paul H. Hayne, and Sidney Lanier. Emily Dickinson wrote prolifically during this period, but only a hadful of her poems were published until after her death in 1886. Helen (Fiske) Hunt Jackson's poems were popular during the period and received some critical acclaim.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's early success with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was followed in 1869 with *Oldtown Folks*, a realistic study of New England inhabitants and their lifestyle. Many of Stowe's writings

were extremely popular with the public but not well received by literary critics. Another female novelist, Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*, was appreciated by youth and adult readers.

Among American humorists were Henry Shaw and Charles Browne, writing respectively as "Josh Billings" and "Artemus Ward." Both published frequent entries in newspapers of the day and were public entertainers, as well. Samuel Langhorne Clemens, writing as "Mark Twain," was the most famous of U.S. nineteenth-century humorists, but his scope was much broader, including social satire, novels, journalistic accounts of his travels, and essays. *Roughing It* is Clemens's account of his travels to the West and was widely popular across the United States. Perhaps his most famous novel and social commentary was *Tom Sawyer*, published in 1876. Bret Harte and Clemens were friends and spent time together in California. Harte wrote of the wild and unruly mining country he found in that state. *The Luck of Roaring Camp* and *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* were two of his most popular portraits of western life.

Dime novels reached a wide audience of largely working class people, starting in the early 1860s. Most of the stories were simple tales of adventure involving Indians and settlers. Magazines aimed at juveniles were also available. Frank Leslie's *Boys of America* began publication in 1873 and contained illustrations and serial stories that continued over several issues (Dime Novels).

The years from 1860 through 1875 brought some of the greatest heartaches and hardships the citizens of the United States had ever known. But even as many of the states were caught up constantly in the tragedy and destruction of the Civil War, others were so geographically removed that they were not immediately impacted. Their lives moved on at a usual pace. Growth in many areas of the country continued or even increased. Families continued to move west to settle new lands, leaving behind family, friends, and all that was familiar and safe. Miles of rail followed or preceded them, a means for delivering goods to purchase rather than produce. The railroads also helped keep the connection alive between the old life and the new.

Industrial and manufacturing inventions continued to fuel existing industries and initiate the development of others. Goods and services became more readily available to larger number of citizens as the war ended and the painful process of recovery and reconstruction began. So many men were injured or killed that whole communities across the South lacked the physical labor necessary to maintain their families. The numbers of injured and maimed who returned needing medical services and equipment strained a medical industry already inadequate in numbers and training.

Against this backdrop of war and recovery, industrialization, immigration and migration, improved communications and transportation, and the clashing and melding of different cultures, the United States of the

Civil War and Reconstruction periods became a nation of tremendous diversity. From the homeless and destitute in the urban slums and tenements to the wealthiest manufacturing and railroad barons in their palatial homes, every man, woman, and child in the United States variously succumbed, endured, or prospered in the face of overwhelming change. This brief but extremely important period saw the resilient nation and its people forever transformed.

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CHAPTER 2

Society, Culture, and Dress

At the onset of the Civil War, the United States consisted of a population numbering more than 30 million individuals, Within that number, there was the potential for every single individual at any point in time to have clothing that differed in some way from all the others. Humans in every known society use whatever means at their disposal to differentiate themselves from others of their group (either large group or sub-group), but to do so within boundaries that are unwritten, often unspoken, but well understood by other group members. The competing demands of conformity and differentiation constitute one of the major influences individuals experience as they undertake the process of creating their visible identity. The realm within which they make those choices is filled with additional forces that shape what is available, what is acceptable to the group, and what links appearance to a particular geographical area, political group, religious sect, ethnic group, income level, philosophy, or job.

GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION DENSITY

Among the factors that influenced the appearance of individuals during this period was their geographical location in the United States and also the characteristics of that location. There was a higher degree of similarity of appearance within communities than among communities. People in the same community shopped at the same places, which tended to have the same types of goods. The smaller the community, the greater this was a factor.

Distribution of 100 Largest Cities by State in the United States in 1870

State	Number
Massachusetts	14
New York	14
Pennsylvania	9
New Jersey	7
Indiana	5
Ohio	5
Connecticut	4
Illinois	4
Georgia	3
Kentucky	3
Iowa	3
Missouri	3
Virginia	3
California	2
Maine	2
Michigan	2
Rhode Island	2
Tennessee	2
Alabama	1
Delaware	1
District of Columbia	1
Kansas	1
Louisiana	1
Maryland	1
Minnesota	1
Nebraska	1
New Hampshire	1
South Carolina	1
West Virginia	1
Wisconsin	1

(U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998)

As most clothing was still made at home, at least for women and children, sharing of patterns and of fashion magazines containing images and descriptions of new styles and methods of constructing them brought about a higher degree of consistency. Women also assisted each other in clothing design, cutting, and construction.

There was a highly social as well as functional component to clothing construction that corresponded to the more widely recognized social aspect of quilting bees and also reflected a strong work ethic. Women who kept diaries or who engaged in extensive correspondence almost unanimously discussed their household production in their writing. Rarely did women visit each other without carrying with them some work to do. Most often, it was sewing, although knitting was also mentioned in many manuscripts. Women recorded not only that they worked, but they included details of the project and how much they accomplished during the visit. Fitting was especially difficult and often done with the assistance of friends. Cutting was another difficult task for many women, perhaps because the expense of mistakes made the task more daunting. Women who otherwise made their own clothing frequently took fabric to seamstresses or more skilled friends to have the cutting done, then brought the pieces home to finish. Women also shared fabric, lace, and trims of all sorts. Frequent gifts between women friends included fabric and trim or perhaps an accessory, such as a handkerchief or pair of gloves.

Clothing Influences in Urban and Rural Areas

The population density was another major factor in clothing and fabric availability. In 1860, approximately 10.5 percent of the United States population lived in urban areas; this percentage grew to 19.7 percent by

1880 (Harris 2002, 67). Large urban areas offered multiple sources of fabric, trim, clothing, seamstress, and milliner resources. Large urban areas also tended to have a diverse population that included groups of recent immigrants who would still be wearing clothing typical to their countries of origin. Diversity in wealth and social class also meant that on the streets of a city such as Philadelphia, many different levels of clothing quality and style would be represented at any given time.

Location, even within cities, would be a factor as well, as better clothing and more expensive shops were clustered together just as the cheapest and least fashionable shops were self-segregated by property costs and attracted a clientele that, likewise, was segregated by income. Within that diversity, however, there was yet a consistency of silhouette that defined the time. When hoops were popular, they were seen at all levels of quality and class. When hoops gave way to bustles, the same was true. While many saw this democratization of fashion as befitting a democratic country, fashion and behavior critics of the time often differed on that point, as they did on many others. An unidentified columnist writing for *Harper's Bazaar* in the November 2, 1867, issue claimed that uniformity of dress was characteristic of all people in the United States: "the man of leisure and the laborer, the mistress and the maid, wear clothes of the same material and cut. Political equality renders our country men and countrywomen averse to all distinctions of costume which may be supposed to indicate a difference of caste." The statement was not intended

Women at the employment office, 1866. Skirts were shortened to facilitate women's entrance into the workforce. Illustration from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 20, 1866. (Library of Congress)

as approval, for it concluded with a charge that this sameness resulted in a population that looked shabby, as if they were all "turned out in a universal suit of second-hand clothing" (1867, 2). The sentiments so expressed were not universally held, and they also reflect a great deal of exaggeration. While similarity did exist in cut, there were enormous differences in fabric and in both the quality and quantity of trim used in women's and children's clothing. For men, the greatest distinction was quality of fabric and of tailoring.

There were also distinctions made in many of the trades. Female factory workers tended to leave off hoops, or at least to wear much smaller ones if the work they did would have been impeded by wearing hoops. If the work posed a danger of soiling the worker's clothing, aprons were worn as a matter of course. Shorter skirts were typical of workers in jobs that posed a safety hazard if floor-length styles were worn. As more women entered the workforce after the end of the Civil War, the adaptation of clothing to make it more suitable for the job requirements began a slow evolution.

In rural areas, particularly those with sparse populations, the availability of materials for clothing constituted a major impediment to dressing fashionably but also led to a higher degree of conformity among individuals who used the same sources for their materials. If a single mercantile or general store served the population in a radius of fifty or a hundred miles, then a lot of the same fabric would appear on different individuals. During the period from 1860 to 1875, more than 85 percent of the population resided in rural areas.

The major occupations in rural areas were farming or ranching, both requiring long hours of physical labor simply to make a living on the part of every family member old enough to contribute. Hard physical labor required that clothing be adapted for comfort and for durability. Heavy shoes or boots and wool undergarments were necessary to stay warm when working outdoors in winter. Women sometimes adapted men's pants, wearing them under their dresses for additional warmth when needed for outdoor work in winter. Hoops and corsets were usually reserved for visiting or infrequent trips to town.

Clothing Influences in the South

Following the end of the war, the situation in the South seemed filled with insurmountable obstacles. There was, in effect, no government, no social order, no economic system, and a complete dearth of resources from which to recreate a way of life. Beginning secession with no thought of losing the war, with many people thinking that secession could be achieved even without war, there certainly had been no forethought as to the mechanisms for handling defeat. There were not even enough resources to fight the war and maintain a semblance of normal life on the

home front, so the defeated South found it virtually impossible to envision how it would pick up and rebuild.

The very people who had been the educated leaders of the Old South were now considered by the U.S. government to be traitors because of their participation in the rebellion. In addition to loss of leadership and resources, the number of returning soldiers with significant injuries was overwhelming. There were not enough capable men remaining to make up a workforce that could restore economic health to the region. The structures governing social, political, and financial interactions were gone; families were fractured and roles often reversed or ambiguous; and a newly freed population of former slaves had entirely new roles to create for themselves and their families in the face of incredible barriers.

> ***A Heavy Tax Burden for the South***
>
> February 8, 1866: Joe Davenport eat dinner here, he is assessing this county. We are taxed for every hog, sheep, beef we kill, for all the butter, eggs, & chickens we sell: & for everything we sell, it will take all we make to pay taxes.
>
> June 20, 1866: Mr. Darden went to Fayette to see about paying his UNITED STATES TAX; it was $740.36.
>
> October 1, 1866: How hard to be robbed of our property & then have to pay this heavy TAX!
>
> From the Diary of Susan Sillers Darden, Fayette County Mississippi.

Envisioning and then helping create this new order fell to the U.S. government through presidential and congressional actions. It was largely brought to fruition, however, through the direct intervention of the military. For the defeated White South, the multiple facets of reconstruction amounted to a continuation of the war and helped create the psychological attachment to the previous life that would become known as the "*Lost Cause*." Grief for family members and friends thus was only one part of the loss felt individually and regionally.

The costs of the war were assumed by the United States, but that included the South as conquered territory. To the rest of the country, the taxes imposed upon the South must have appeared as an equitable charge for initiating the unbelievably costly conflict. To an already devastated South, however, the taxes constituted yet another act of hostility.

Some well-to-do planter families managed to escape the drastic losses that affected many others and were able to reestablish their former lifestyles without as much disruption. Others were left nearly penniless, with property assets gone, homes often burned or ransacked or shelled, clothing and personal goods lost or stolen, and a dearth of materials from which to recreate.

Adding to the complexities of the situation and engendering even more ill will in the South was what Southerners regarded as a second invasion of northern idealists and entrepreneurs who came to the South for a variety of reasons but were referred to derogatorily as "*carpetbaggers*." The term derived from the typical luggage in which they brought their belongings, a travel bag made of a heavy woven fabric similar that used

for making figured carpets. Some of the new arrivals were representatives of governmental agencies, including the Freedman's Bureau, charged with implementing the reconstruction plans; others came out of idealism, to help with registering blacks to vote, increasing literacy, establishing educational facilities, and like services; others came strictly to see if money could be made. Whatever their motives, they were, to the majority of white Southerners, the enemy. Another faction of that enemy was comprised of Southerners who also aligned themselves with the Republican party and worked toward many of the same goals as the carpetbaggers. These people were called "*scalawags*."

The major sources of income for the entire region remained agriculture, as manufacturing in the South increased only marginally between 1860 and 1870. The land, at least, was still there. Women who were widowed, who never had married, or whose husbands had suffered debilitating injuries in the war became responsible for generating income to support their families. Many became excellent farm and plantation managers. Teaching became another source of employment for women, as did taking in ironing, sewing, and laundry for other families. On February 20, 18866, Margaret Grimball summarized the manner in which several of her neighbors in South Carolina are managing their reduced circumstances:

> Mr Grimball hires a room from them for $15 per Month. Arthur has gone up Cooper River to keep a Store with Prioleau & Alston, for the negroes, he sent to Berkley for Calico of a blue ground, with sprawling red flowers on it, as best suited to the taste of the Customers. They are paid in Rice, & A. sees visions of great success before him.—The end of the war found the old aristocracy reduced to many straights to get on and applying for, & gladly taking, very inferior places. Henry Manigault and his wife are Steward & Matron of the Alms House in Charleston. Williams Middleton is renting out his rooms, James Heyward's wife & daughters & W. H. Heyward's are taking in sewing. Mrs Allston the Gov' [*sic*] widow, keeps a boarding school. The Miss Manigaults teach in Yorkville,—and all over the State people are making efforts to support themselves. (Grimball 1998, 117)

When African Americans were given the right to vote and to be elected in local/state political contests, the blow to southern women was especially harsh, as their former slaves were given rights that they themselves had never had, and still did not enjoy. Many of the freed slaves who were elected or appointed to positions of authority were not given the education or training to fill the positions effectively, creating further difficulties on both sides. During the period in which military control was essentially the only form of government in the South, it was an especially difficult blow to the pride of former Confederate soldiers and to former slave

owners when they were subject to instructions and orders from some of the very persons they had owned, now wearing blue uniforms and a part of the victorious Union army.

Frances Butler Leigh's diary describes the 10 years following the war that she spent trying to revitalize the family's cotton and rice plantations in the sea islands of Georgia, first with her father and then with her husband. Writing on June 23, 1867, from St. Simon Island, Leigh discussed the military redistricting of the south and its control by generals. She commented as follows on the results:

> Each commander in his separate district has issued an order declaring that unless a man can take an oath that he had not voluntarily borne arms against the U.S. government, nor in any way aided or abetted the rebellion, he cannot vote. This simply disqualifies every whited man at the South from voting, disfranchising the whole white population, while the negroes are allowed to vote *en masse*. (Leigh 1998, 68–69)

There were many acts of lawlessness perpetrated by all sides, as well as a rise in vigilante activities in areas where troops were insufficient to maintain order. Many declared this chaotic transitional period to be worse than the war itself, with feelings of hostility still running very high in the South. Reportedly begun as a social club of former Confederate soldiers soon after the end of the war, the Ku Klux Klan achieved the most notoriety of the vigilante groups. Its members targeted the newly enfranchised blacks, as well as carpetbaggers and scalawags, purportedly meting out justice for acts of unlawfulness committed by the above mentioned groups. Completely covered with white robes and pointed hoods that obscured their individual identities, the Klan groups rode at night and initiated a climate of fear for those they opposed, one of pride for those they represented. Eliza Frances Andrews was one of the latter. She wrote in the conclusion of her diary when it was prepared for publication the following sentiments regarding the Klan, known as the "Invisible Empire" because of the anonymity of the hooded members:

> It was the hand that struck us after we were down that bore hardest; yet even its iron weight was not enough to break the spirit of a people in whom the Anglo-Saxon blood of our fathers still flows uncontaminated; and when the insatiable crew of the carpet-baggers fell upon us to devour the last meager remnants left us by the spoliation of war, they were met by the ghostly bands of 'The Invisible Empire,' who through secret vigilance and masterful strategy saved the civilization they were forbidden to defend by open force. (Andrews 1997, 386)

The complicated, destitute, and emotionally intense conflicted atmosphere in the South slowed the recovery that the rest of the country

experienced after the war ended. There was no possibility of returning to normalcy; instead, it would be necessary to create a new South from the remnants of the old. It would take many years for that to be effected. In the interim, fashion was certainly not forgotten, but it did take second stage to the more pressing political and survival issues.

Clothing Influences Overland and in the West

Life on the Trail

Westward migration toward new homes and lives abated with the beginning of the Civil War, but at its end picked up again. Freedmen and their families joined what had previously been almost entirely white families in looking for opportunities on the frontier. The travel created unique difficulties in every aspect of life. Numerous diaries and sets of correspondence survive and provide an intimate record of the experience. Privacy for married couples was nearly impossible due to the crowded nature of wagon travel. Dressing and undressing, bathing, elimination, menstruation, childbirth and recovery—all of these very private functions had to be managed in a crowd of people. Few details of these particular trials are noted in diaries; it would not have been an

A family poses with their covered wagon during a cross-country migration, 1866. The woman's dress hangs flat and hoopless, a concession to the hardship of wagon travel. (National Archives)

appropriate topic at that time for women to record, but the circumstances of travel would have created problems for women in particular.

There was little opportunity for laundering, and most families had pared down all of their belongings to only those necessities that would fit into the limited wagon space. Water was often unavailable even for the stock to drink; laundering and changing clothing did not take high precedence. Calico dresses worn without hoops was the most common form of clothing for women that was noted in diaries. One writer mentions a group of women in their wagon train who wore bloomer outfits and notes the admiration expressed by the other members of the train at the outfit's functionality (Schlissel 2004, 141). Sarah Raymond Herndon kept a diary while crossing the plains in 1865 and in it defended her functional attire for traveling: "I think we appear much better in our short dresses, thick shoes, and sun-bonnets than we would in trailing skirts, French kid shoes, and hats of the latest style, especially as we are emigrants, and not ladies at home" (Herndon 2003, 8).

Many individuals undertook the long and difficult migration west with high hopes and excitement. Others went because they would have been left behind by their families if they had not, but they were fearful and homesick almost from the first steps of the oxen or mules that pulled their wagons. Even for those eagerly anticipating the change, the trail was filled with dangers. Foremost in the minds of most travelers was the danger of attack by Indians. It was also for the majority of them their first opportunity see and interact with the original inhabitants of the country. The climate of fear and distrust was so great that, even when Indians approached with no hostility, they were perceived as threatening because of the extreme differences in their appearance, manners, and language and because of the settlers' predisposition based on reports of previous depredations. The fear was heightened when the wagon trains passed evidence, sometimes quite fresh, of attacks and death.

Death on the Wagon Train

June 3, 1862: In the afternoon we passed a lonely nameless grave on the prairie . . . It seems so sad to think of being buried and left alone in so wild a country with no one to plant a flower or shed a tear o'er one's grave.

July 1, 1862: In the night I heard Mrs. Wilson's baby crying very hard indeed, it had fallen from the wagon.

July 11, 1862: There was a little child run over by a wagon in Walker's train, who are just ahead of us. The child was injured quite seriously.

July 28, 1862: There was a woman died in this train yesterday. She left six children, one of them only two days old. Poor little thing, it had better have died with its mother. They made a good picket fence around the grave.

August 3, 1862: They had just buried the babe of the woman who died days ago, and were just digging a grave for another woman that was run over by the cattle and wagons when they stampeded yesterday. She lived twenty-four hours, she gave birth to a child a short time before she died. The child was buried with her. She leaves a little two year old girl and a husband. They say he is nearly crazy with sorrow.

Accidents and disease took their share of lives on the trail and probably accounted for more deaths than attacks by Native Americans. Cholera, measles, whooping cough, dysentery, poisoning from bad water, and other maladies took many lives. Childbirth under the best of circumstances often resulted in illness and/or death to both mother and child. On the overland trail, the danger was increased significantly. Many diarists recorded the number of graves they passed and whether they were fresh or old.

Whether to mark or hide the graves was a decision each wagon train made, depending on the area traveled and the danger of the graves being robbed. Some graves were reported as being dug under the trail so that the wagon and animal tracks would obliterate any sign and prevent the body being disinterred for the clothing and personal effects on the body. Other reports noted graves well marked and with signs asking that those coming later would see that any disturbance be repaired. For parents, leaving behind the body of a child hundreds of miles from where anyone in the family would settle was one of the most grievous aspects of the journey, but one which was necessary. Although most hoped they could someday return and claim the body for reburial close to where they settled, only rarely was that realistic.

Arriving

Settlers usually set out with a general idea of their destination but no exact location on which they had settled. A few families traveled to meet a family member who had gone on ahead to stake out a claim or find a place for the family to live, but many other families traveled together into unknown territory. They didn't exactly know when they had reached their destination, as they had traveled with just a general idea of where they wanted to settle. Once they reached the state or territory that was their goal, there might still be weeks of traveling to different areas before a final selection of land could be made if they were planning to homestead. If they had other plans, there was still the matter of finding accommodations until they could obtain or build some kind of housing. The wagon they traveled in sufficed for many until better lodging could be obtained. Depending on the length and difficulty of their journey, they might have arrived with much less in the way of stock, furniture, clothing, household goods, and food that their original plans had indicated.

For the first few years of their residence, the main tasks of the family would be to create a place of shelter, whether it was a log house; a dugout in the side of a bank with dirt for floors, walls, and ceiling; or a plank house with some covering for the cracks between the boards. Only when the family had shelter from the elements could they turn to other tasks such as planning and planting crops if they were farmers, obtaining

employment if they settled in towns, or finding work in mines if that was the goal. It generally took two to four years for a family with good luck to amass enough assets to be able to indulge in anything beyond absolute necessities of food, tools, and perhaps seeds. The age of a settlement area was thus a determinant of fashion, with young settlements retaining styles longer than people in older communities with time to accumulate enough income to purchase new clothing (or the fabric with which to make new clothing).

Cowboys

Although the majority of westward travel was for homesteading property across the Great Plains, for about twenty years following the end of the Civil War another type of migration and development occurred. It started in the border states, beginning with Texas and then spreading into suitable areas where pasturage was available in sufficient amounts to graze thousands of cattle. The large numbers of wild cattle and horses throughout the area had multiplied from strays over the years, forming an available, if not easy, source of herds with which to establish ranches. One of the earliest ranchers to establish a large-scale cattle operation in Texas was James Taylor White, who drove cattle to New Orleans to sell. Thousands more flooded into Texas after the war to look for land and try to gather up enough of the wild cattle to begin herds. What would become an elaborate cult of lifestyle and appearance was thus begun.

Riding herd on cattle was a livelihood ideal for young men who were touch, independent, willing to work hard, and who had no property or assets with which to buy land or start a business. Working for cattle ranchers, a man could learn the business and slowly build a herd of his own with his earnings. Texas led the way in cattle ranching, modeling their ranches and their methods of cattle raising and handling on the Mexican vaqueros. Huge ranges with thousands of acres in pasture land became the norm, and with the swelling numbers of cattle came the need for workers to keep track of them. There were no fenced pastures, only miles of open land, and ranchers identified their cattle by burning a specific brand into their hides.

From the vaqueros, the inexperienced learned what kind of mounts they needed for the work, how to catch the wild cattle, and how to dress so that their clothing offered protection and facilitated their work rather than impeding it. Wider-brimmed hats to provide shade in the glaring sun were a notable necessity. Thick, tough, tightly woven fabric made pants that withstood regular encounters with shrubs and briars without tearing. Leather or animal- skin chaps worn over the pants provided even more protection and could also be trimmed and fringed or made from the hair side of skins with pigmented patterns to increase the decorative value.

A large cotton handkerchief knotted around the neck that could be pulled up to shield the mouth and nose from dust storms was a common component of the costume. Boots were usually worn, but not the pointed-toe cowboy boots common today; those did not develop until later. The life and look of cowboys was romanticized, as was much of the emerging lifestyle, by reporters, photographers, artists, fiction writers, and entertainers.

ETHNICITY AND APPEARANCE

White Americans and European Immigrants

The largest group or category making up the population in the 1860s and 1870s was that of white Americans and European immigrants, either first generation or second and third generation. Clothing from that period that has been saved and is now available for research and study is largely from this group, and largely from the higher classes of this group. The fashion magazines published primarily for this audience, and the market for the newest fashions from Paris and the European continent, whether made there or imported for copying in America, were designed for this population. There is no dearth of information about this group as a whole.

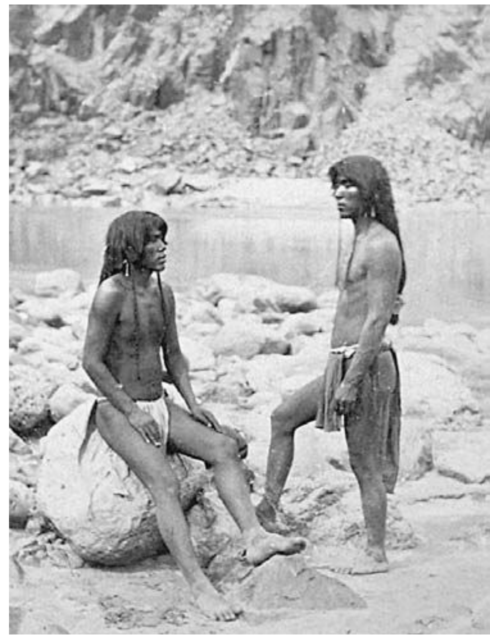
About groups of immigrants who settled during this period, we know that they brought with them the clothing of their origins, so there would have been some differences in appearance, at least at first. Most who arrived had some connections already in place, so there was at least a familiar name or face to help with the initial culture shock and subsequent assimilation into the United States. For this reason, concentrations of ethnic groups were typical in the large Eastern cities where immigrants typically settled at first. New York City, particularly, was filled with such settlements because it was the immigration entry point, via Ellis Island, for all those who were entering the country to live.

Fashion knowledge had long been international by 1860, so there were not such huge differences in appearance between, say, an Irish family and an Ohio family. The males all wore pants, shirts, and jackets; the females all wore dresses of the same general shape and style. Furthermore, most immigrants had a strong desire to merge into the mainstream of American life, in appearance and language as well as in other aspects. Individuals and families typically immigrated because they had few prospects where they were and believed their chances would be much improved in the United States. Particularly for older immigrants and those who left close family members behind, nostalgia was common, but that nostalgia did not extend to preserving cultural differences once in this country. Rather, immigrants wanted to blend in with others with whom they would compete for jobs and living quarters.

Native Americans

During the period following the war, military operations turned to the West and the solution of what was known as the "*Indian problem*." The main issue, of course, was that Indians existed at all, taking up space and land that travelers, miners, farmers, and ranchers wanted. They were in the way, and their culture was so foreign to that of whites of European descent that the latter could find little grounds or rationale for peaceful coexistence. Most reports of first encounters with the native population reflect the fear and disgust aroused by Native American appearances and lifestyles, taken to be indicative of ignorance and savagery rather than mere cultural difference. Stereotypes originating from isolated encounters or staged misrepresentations fueled negative feelings, further creating conflict between the two groups. Many diary references of westward settlers begin with the appearance of the Native Americans they met, and the descriptions were rarely positive. A delightful exception was recorded by Lavinia Porter, traveling around 1860, who described a group of Sioux in the following manner: "I would state here that the Sioux Indians were the finest looking warriors we had seen." She also mentioned one brave who was nearly naked with the exception of a discarded hoop skirt (Schlissel 2004, 130).

Media and art forms played to the conflict and to the misunderstandings, emphasizing what was different and unusual, reporting in lurid detail the many acts of brutality executed by the Indians but rarely presenting an account of the provocations that had led to those actions. Retribution was exacted on individuals, who were seen as representing the enemy as a whole, and this practice compounded the hostility. Photographers who had brought the Civil War realities to life on the pages of magazines and newspapers traveled West to do the same for what would become the highly romanticized legend of the *Wild West*. Magazines, books, and dime novels carried fictionalized accounts of the battles that pitted settlers, cowboys, and soldiers against the marauding bands of murdering savages. Those were the stories that captured the imaginations of readers and helped establish the mistrust and fear that in itself created more tension when meetings did occur.



Two Mohave braves dressed in loincloths, everyday clothing to them, shocking nudity to many settlers. Photographed by Timothy O'Sullivan in western Arizona, 1871. (National Archives)

Nearly nonexistent were accounts of Native Americans as human beings, as mothers and fathers, or as children who also lived in fear. Their fears were fueled not just by direct attacks from the enemy but also by the attacks on their ability to live in their native lands. Their homes were destroyed; their women and children were massacred; the source of livelihood was destroyed; they were forcibly removed from familiar ground and resettled in alien surroundings, often in combination with numerous other tribes with whom they had little or nothing in common.

The results of this conflict in terms of appearance was multifaceted. Those Native Americans who saw the futility of attempting to retain their culture by violent means attempted to participate in a peaceful solution. Hundreds of photographs show Native Americans dressed for the photographer in top hats (to honor the white man) and moccasins, with white cloth shirts and leather leggings. Clothing choices designed to show respect for the U.S. government often elicited ridicule. Tribes and individuals who came to realize that treaties were broken as often or more often by the government who issued them than by the Indians who signed them continued to fight, often to their deaths, rather than face what they saw as the slow death of cultural and physical genocide.

Other adoptions and adaptations of the white man's clothing were made out of necessity. When the herds of bison upon which they largely depended for many of their housing and clothing needs were nearly eradicated, Native Americans turned to the woven cotton cloth and even ready-made shirts and coats that were available at trading posts or could be taken from the captured or dead along the trails westward. Native American women sewed gathered skirts from this cotton cloth and wore them with, perhaps, no tops at all or with tops made from skins or perhaps loose blouses also made from cotton. The ornamentation of clothing took on some of the motifs of European textile decoration as the clash of cultures also provided new sources of inspiration in the design of textiles and clothing or bodily ornaments.

Whereas the consumption of fabric and clothing from white traders was largely due to necessity, counter-influences were seen as well, but to a lesser degree. Fringed or plain leather was adopted widely for making jackets and occasionally pants; buffalo robes were used for warmth; and handwoven blankets became popular for interior use.

Blankets were a major component of the clothing and housing of Native Americans. They were used as bedding, to soften the cradles of newborns, to provide warmth, and even for burial. Depending on the location of tribes, they could be woven of grass fibers, cotton, or wool. Those that have come to be most easily recognized are those of the Navajo and Tlinglits, woven of wool long before nineteenth-century settlement in the plains began. The quality of the weaving craft was such that traders saw a market for woven goods back East and often traded goods that the Native Americans did not have access to otherwise in

exchange for handwoven blankets. Indians also traded among themselves using blankets for commerce.

Early blankets were woven wider than long so they could be wrapped around the body as a form of cape. The thick, dense wool was warm and capable to insulating as well as cutting the penetration of cold wind. These blankets were horizontally striped as they were first woven and later developed more complicated patterning, including rectangles within the stripes, and finally diamonds within the horizontal stripes. The latter was the most common type woven after 1860 and the type of which the largest numbers have been preserved.

The simply striped handwoven blankets provided the prototype for machine-woven wool blankets that stocked trading posts during the last half of the nineteenth century. They were made of machine-spun wool yarns and could be produced much more quickly and inexpensively than blankets that were tediously constructed by hand on simple frame looms.

The Chilkat blankets woven by the Tlinglit Indians of the Northwest were unique, finger-woven blankets with elaborate, stylized animal figures figures comparable to the motifs used to decorate the tribe's other artistic expressions, including totems, utensils, and many functional items. A fine Chilkat blanket would take approximately a year to weave and was thus highly valued by the Indians themselves and by others who came to recognize the aesthetic and representational value of the craft. These blankets were never used for trade as were those woven by the Plains Indians, but would often be presented as gifts to friends, relatives, or high-ranking tribal officials. They were worn at potlatches, or ceremonial occasions, wrapped about the upper body. Although made of wool and very warm, their primary function was social and decorative rather than functional.

Because of the level and duration of hostile interactions with Native Americans, there was little attempt on the part of scholars in the 1860s and 1870s to study the many tribes in an organized way. Photography created images that frequently did not portray the individuals correctly or in context. Artists who used Western themes and images in their work also tended to exaggerate selected stereotypes rather than create balanced presentations of their lives and cultures. In fact, nearly all of the visual information that whites received about the original population was created for them, by them. With the exception of the woven blankets and some baskets, at this time in history, Native American art, whether in dress and appearance, in the decoration of functional objects, or in their embroideries and accessories, was primarily regarded as primitive and crude. Tracing changes in the development of language, art, housing, and other aspects of their individual cultures simply wasn't considered worthwhile. Consequently, much of the visual and oral history that would have enriched all cultures was lost. Oral history within individual tribes was their only recourse. By the time the value of recording tribal

history was realized, much had already changed or been lost. Even many of the photographs taken of individual Indians and their homes and occupations are undated, making it difficult to identify the significance of all that is captured in the imagery.

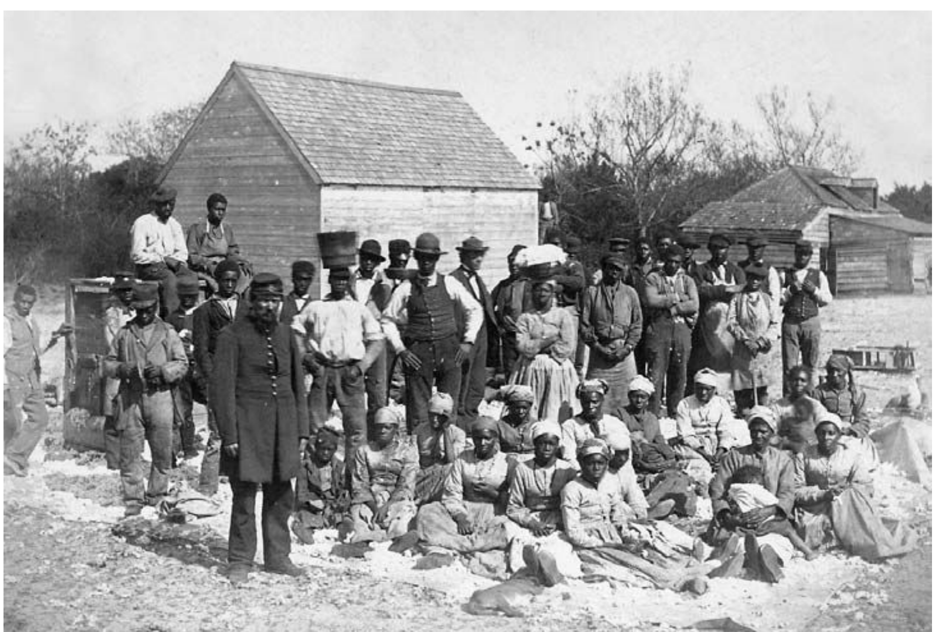
African Americans

Wartime was a period of immense consternation for enslaved African Americans. They tended to believe the war was essentially about slavery and that each battle won by the Union brought them closer to the time when they could walk away from enslavement and know freedom. But the waiting was for them as unsettling as it was for their owners and neighbors. Some took advantage of the absence of males and ran away. Most, however, remained in place until Union troops appeared, offering them protection as they left. Their clothing was, as they left, what it had been before—coarse, cheap, poorly made, badly fitted, and often ragged with wear. The ones in better circumstances had better clothing, and many received gifts of cast-off clothing from the families who owned them.

Even within the constraints and brutality of the slave system and the overriding concern of the planter society to keep the slave population subjected and controllable, the slaves had found ways to differentiate their appearance and to develop unique aspects of clothing and appearance. They combined good clothing they received as gifts or traded for or perhaps even worked for and bought, as some were allowed to hire out if they completed all of the required work. Turbans were typical of headdresses worn by women and became so popular that many planters gave out small lengths of fabric specifically for this purpose. Women also used remnants of garments that were too worn out to be used whole to make the turbans as well, piecing, stitching, dyeing, and otherwise introducing color and decorative elements to create a unique personal statement.

Many slaves became quite adept at using local plant material to develop natural dyes that could be used to alter the appearance of their clothing. They also used combinations of fabric and color that white society found unsettling and upon which many writers made comments. Even in wearing the cast-off clothing of their owners, they did so in a way that made the result uniquely theirs. Men might wear a fine, but worn, wool broadcloth coat with the coarsest woolen jean or drill pants and brogan shoes. Strips of brightly colored silk might be pieced onto the bottom of plain or dyed cotton long cloth. While interpreted as ignorance in how to dress, the practice demonstrated the ability to create a unique aesthetic in spite of efforts to suppress individual expression, and that aesthetic showed a relationship to the colors and shapes of their African heritage (White & White 1995).

As the war brought more and more Union troops into the South and news of the Emancipation Proclamation spread through slave



Slaves of Confederate Gen. Thomas F. Drayton at his plantation on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, during May 1862. The women wear clean dresses of simple cut and turbans; the men's clothing is in good repair, and one man even sports a vest. (Library of Congress)

communities like fire, slaves began leaving in large numbers. Often they left the only home many of them had ever known carrying nothing but their clothing and perhaps a morsel of food. They chose an uncertain but free future over the familiar but oppressive life of enslavement. As some left and some stayed, the fracturing of families, already begun with the selling away of family members to other locations, continued.

The slave system had, in most instances, not been designed to encourage strong familial ties, but rather to encourage loyalty to owners over to kin, hence the trading or selling away of paired adults and of children when they came of age. During the war, family dissolution continued to be the norm as some adult male slaves engaged in the war efforts, primarily on the Union side. When Union troops entered areas, they frequently left with large numbers of African Americans following behind and referred to as "*contraband*." Not all families left intact, but frequently separated at that point or were separated by the chaos of the contraband life, following troops who did not always welcome the additional responsibility of feeding and caring for them. In other instances, slaves and former slaves remaining on the plantations they had known as home were forced to leave; some were treated by invading troops in nearly the same manner as the Southern whites who occupied the plantations. Dolly Sumner Lunt (Mrs. Thomas Burge) recorded the passage of Sherman's

forces over the Georgia plantation where she lived. Several of the male children of her house slaves were forced to leave with the troops:

> Their parents are with me, and how sadly they lament the loss of their boys. Their cabins are rifled of every valuable, the soldiers swearing that their Sunday clothes were the white people's, and that they never had money to get such things as they had. Poor Frank's chest was broken open, his money and tobacco taken. He has always been a money-making and saving boy; not infrequently has his crop brought him five hundred dollars and more. All of his clothes and Rachel's clothes, which dear Lou gave before her death and which she had packed away, were stolen from her. Ovens, skillets, coffee-mills, of which we had three, coffee-pots—not one have I left. Sifters all gone! (Burge 1996, 28–29)

Free African American men tried to enlist on the Union side almost from the first days of war, but they were denied on the basis of existing laws prohibiting their enlistment. As the war continued and the numbers of volunteers dwindled, the possibility of using blacks was reconsidered. The first authorized black regiments were comprised of volunteers from Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, Congress established the Bureau of Colored Troops. By the end of the war, nearly 10 percent of the Union Army was made up of African American soldiers.

Although important to the war effort, early black troops were placed in segregated units. They received unequal treatment in pay and duties and were also subject to prejudicial treatment by fellow soldiers, many of whom did not see the races as inherently equal. If captured by the Confederates, black troops faced more severe treatment and were often executed (Black Soldiers in the Civil War). Troops not only were paid less, but they were required to furnish their own uniforms from their pay, while regular troops were provided with uniforms. The Union troops typically were consistent in the uniforms they wore because the military provided oversight of the basic designs and all of the variations that indicated division and rank. Newly deployed troops were the most likely to meet uniform regulations; as the war progressed, replacements did not always keep up with need, so soldiers in the field replaced worn or ruined clothing with whatever they were able to obtain. In 1864, a federal law was passed that granted equal pay to black soldiers and paid retroactively to those who had earlier been shorted.

As the war ended, the Freedmen's Bureau was established to assist the transition from slavery to freedom. One of the functions of the Freedmen's Bureau was assisting in reuniting families who had been separated during slavery or after emancipation. Some families made their own inquiries and found relatives they had feared they would never see again.

Louis Hughes was able to reunite his family with his wife's mother, tracking her down from Memphis to Cincinnati:

> When we reached the place to which we had been directed, my wife not only found her mother but one of her sisters. The meeting was a joyful one to us all. No mortal who has not experienced it can imagine the feeling of those who meet again after long years of enforced separation and hardship and utter ignorance of one another's condition and place of habitation. (Hughes 1997, 163–164)

Facing the lack of a clear plan for emancipation, the majority of former slave owners felt, or at least exhibited, concern for how provision would be made for their livelihood and also how they would obtain labor to resume agricultural productivity given their lack of capital. Burge's May 29, 1865, diary entry gives an example of one woman's concerns:

> What I shall do with mine is a question that troubles me day and night. It is my last thought at night and the first in the morning. I told them several days ago they were free to do as they liked. But it is my duty to make some provisions for them. I thank God that they are freed, and yet what can I do with them? They are old and young, not profitable to hire. What provision can I make?" (51–52)

Burge eventually settled on sharecropping as an answer and hired many of her former slaves to work the plantation for a share of the crops.

Sharecropping was a solution that many Southern planters adopted, one that allowed former slaves to remain on familiar ground, literally and figuratively, and also allowed their continued economic suppression. Mostly illiterate, unaware of the value of many commodities, and unable to calculate, thousands of African American sharecroppers found it impossible to stay even, much less get ahead. They made their marks for the supplies to create the crops, but depended upon the word of the landowners as to the actual value of those supplies, of their labor, or of the crop when it was eventually sold. Oral histories and the narratives of former slaves often make reference to the sharecropping years as a second slavery, one which depended upon the ignorance of the labor force to effect its results. Certainly not all planters were dishonest in making the calculations; all bore the risk of the investment. Regardless, sharecropping was not a system that lent itself to improving the lot of an impoverished and uneducated group of people who found it nearly impossible to acquire financial assets upon which they could have built new lives for themselves and their future generations. The resulting social and economic system thus remained very similar to that which had existed previously, maintaining and exaggerating the separation not

only of the two races, but also the separation of all those who had means from those who did not.

Rather than assist their former slaves in the transition, many owners, such as Edward McGee, a Mississippi planter and owner of Louis Hughes, kept the family slaves as if there had been no emancipation. He was not alone in his attempts to maintain the status quo in face of the war's results. Hundreds of slaves remained in virtual captivity, fearing for their lives if they tried to leave their former owners. In his autobiography, Louis Hughes recounted his June 26, 1865, flight for freedom to the Union lines and the necessity of engaging troops to escort him back to his owner's home to get his wife and other relatives and friends.

Regarded as individuals, there was clearly some empathy, as well as sympathy, on the part of Southern whites for the plight of their former slaves. Taken as an aggregate, however, the emancipated blacks represented a potential source of danger and disruption, particularly in those states and regions where slaves before the war had comprised the majority of the population.

Black soldiers continued to be recruited and deployed along with U.S. troops, and the military offered a means to secure employment, albeit a dangerous line of work. Military and political officials were concerned about deploying regiments of African American troops to the South, and the end of the war saw a resurgence of interest in settling the hostilities with the Indians so that westward expansion could continue unabated. As a result, the majority of the newly formed or reorganized all-black regiments were sent to Western forts beginning in 1866. The most famous of these troops earned the sobriquet "*Buffalo Soldiers*." Initially their abilities may have been in doubt, but they were eventually recognized for their bravery and competency (Davis 1999).

Latino and Hispanic

For the older communities in the West and Southwest, there was influence from the Hispanic and Latino population. Wide-brimmed hats and serapes used as outerwear were just two of the influences adapted by some ranchers, farmers, and cowboys. Latinos and Hispanics were more likely to maintain their native dress than many of the European immigrants who settled primarily in Eastern cities, at least upon arrival. The physical closeness of the southwestern area of the United States to South America facilitated the availability of fabrics, accessories, and clothing items. There was also greater assimilation of the two cultures with Spanish and Latin American architectural styles, and religious affiliation with Catholicism strongly in evidence. Because of the physical closeness of the South American continent, frequent travel between the two areas was possible.

Many of the Eastern and Southern women who settled in the new frontier reacted with disapproval to the dress and behavior of Hispanic and Latina women. They considered the latter's ethnic clothing too informal and loose fitting (worn without corsets and hoops or bustles), their manner too open and free. Some even smoked in public, drank freely, and associated openly with members of the opposite sex who were not their husbands. The association between looseness in women's clothing, as in not corseted or well fitted, with looseness in behavior was prevalent across the country and increased the social distance many settlers felt between themselves and Latina and Hispanic women. As in many of the encounters between two different cultural and/or ethnic groups, prejudice, misunderstandings, and judgment often resulted, increasing the distance each felt toward the other. Frequent contact, formation of friendships and partnerships, and intermarriage increased the comfort level new arrivals felt with the existing, diverse population in the West and Southwest and led to a high degree of assimilation in many areas.

Illustration of a Californian *vaquero* by Frederic Remington, published in *Harper's Weekly*, 1893. The cowboy wears a wide-brimmed hat and a serape. (Library of Congress)

Chinese

Chinese immigrants, by contrast, did not assimilate. They maintained their cultural and religious traditions, their typical food and clothing, and their patterns of family living, as in an area of San Francisco that would become known as "*Chinatown*." From there many Chinese workers fanned out through the mining area looking for their fortunes. Some individuals and families remained in San Francisco to enter into business ventures that would provide goods and services to their own community but also to any others who wished to patronize their businesses. Eventually, nearly everything the Chinese people had available in terms of consumer goods in China were available to them in America. It was not necessary for them to adapt to American tastes and mores, as they brought their own with them and maintained true to them.

The lack of assimilation was one of the points that engendered much of the discrimination that Chinese immigrants suffered in California and across the country. Like other ethnic groups against whom

discrimination was aimed during this time, the Chinese looked different physically, so no degree of clothing modification would have made their differences invisible. Additionally, because they did not attempt to modify themselves and their habits to fit their new surroundings, they were viewed as setting themselves apart and thereby assuming superiority.

Women and men alike retained the clothing of their homeland. In his *Sketch of Life in the Golden State*, Col. Albert S. Evans described the day and night life along the Barbary Coast district of San Francisco around 1871, including many details of the clothing and appearance of the Chinese people he saw there. He described the females as "clad in their loose drawers or pants of blue or black cotton goods, straight-cut sacques of broadcloth, satin, or other costly or cheap material, according to their condition and social rank." Their shoes were described as made of blue satin with thick soles of white wood and felt, decorated with metallic embroidery. Hair was braided in two plaits that hung down in the back. He interpreted gingham handkerchiefs worn over the head and tied under the chin as being indicative of prostitution. The difference for the well-to-do Chinese was much better quality of fabric for the clothing, and a hair style that was elaborately swept up and mounted on top of the head and held in place rigidly with "some species of transparent mucilage, and fashioned into a rudder-like structure sticking out fully a foot behind." Skewers of gold and silver were stuck in the top and sides of the hair on top, and women wore bracelets of jade, gold, and silver. As for their male companions, Col. Evans described them as "male blackguards, loafers and plug-uglies" (Evans 1873).

Writing several years after the end of Reconstruction but reflecting precisely the attitude of many members of western states, the editor of the Grant County News (Oregon) made the following observations regarding the prevailing view towards the Chinese people: "To every one it is apparent that the Chinese are a curse and a blight to this country, not only financially, but socially and morally. . . . What the Chinaman wears, he brings from China, and what he eats (except rats and lizards), he brings across the ocean, and thus American trade or production reaps no benefit from his presence" (National Park Service 2004). Their self-sufficiency, their strong kinship networks, their allegiance to things Chinese rather than American, their patronage of Chinese rather than American commerce, and their ability to make business successes of nearly everything they started promoted distrust, jealousy, and hatred among their fellow businessmen and laborers.

Pejoratively called "*coolies*" and "m*ongolians*," the Chinese people were the object of continual discrimination almost immediately. Their status in California and in the West did not improve for many years. U.S. law provided for the naturalization of white immigrants only, which allowed local and state governments to make decisions about citizenship, decisions that were usually negative in the case of the Chinese workers.

They were denied access to the justice system or any participation in governance. At times, they were taxed monthly merely for living in the United States.

Because of their legal status and the widespread open discrimination they faced daily, Chinese immigrants faced enormous difficulties in pursuing their livelihoods. They were not allowed to own land, so their mining activities were limited to work they performed for others, often at very low wages. The work they were given was usually the dirtiest, most difficult, and the lowest paid in whatever occupation they entered. At times, if the labor force threatened to overwhelm the need for labor in a particular occupation, the Chinese would be barred from participation. Among the important contributions they made to advancements of technology, transportation, and agriculture were bridge and fence building, road construction, reclaiming marshland for agriculture use, building flumes and roads for improved mine access, and accomplishing unparalleled progress laying the rails through the Sierra Nevada Mountains to help complete the transcontinental railroad linking the east and west coasts of the United States, and worked in and owned cigar factories, almost completely dominating that industry through the 1870s. California woolen mills were begun with the assistance of Chinese labor. Chinese workers also contributed their skill to building shoe and slipper manufacturing. They worked in factories manufacturing all sorts of products from soap to candles and paper bags. When they made successes of the lumber mills they owned, they were prohibited from owning them, and many turned to doing laundry or cooking in those same mills. They mined borax when few other workers could tolerate the stench it made. Anywhere the conditions were too dirty, too hard, too dangerous, or too menial for white workers, the Chinese willingly took up the load and performed with great competency.

EDUCATION

The public education system was not yet in place at the opening of the Civil War. Instead, the establishment of schools was largely left to towns and communities or even individuals who joined together and established schools so that their children could be educated. Attendance regulations were also left to individual communities or towns, and few had instituted any. The school calendar was set primarily by the necessities of the population, and given the large percentage of rural, farming families, seasonal changes and accompanying work largely dictated school sessions. Children were needed to help on farms, where they constituted an important source of labor.

Rural schools were likely to be one-room buildings in which all levels of ability were taught in the same room, but with different ability levels

grouped into classes for instruction and recitation. City schools with larger populations to serve moved toward graded classes, and from the end of the war through the 1870s, states and cities around the country moved to establish free public school systems. These were often segregated by sex and nearly always by race.

Americans believed in the value of education and in its power to effect positive social change. They supported the establishment of tax-based systems of providing free public education to the masses to the extent that nearly every state had a system at least of elementary education by 1875. By that time, there was already a move to extend the free education to high school as well. Urban children were more likely to extend their schooling into the secondary level. Rural children, needing to read, write, and calculate in order to manage their farms, typically attended just a few years of elementary school.

Many families provided educational supplements to the formal education of their children through their own instruction. Nightly readings, assigned calculations to work, verses to memorize, books to read and discuss, all made up some of the less formal but no less important aspects of education in America.

Colleges, universities, and professional schools had been instituted early in the country's development, but were intended for the education of males. Oberlin College and Georgia Female College were exceptions. Oberlin accepted not only women but African Americans long before any other higher education institution would do so, graduating Mary Jane Patterson in 1862. the first African American woman to receive a bachelor's degree in the United States. Changes came gradually. Some of the formerly all-male schools admitted a first woman only after several attempts were made. Ellen Swallow Richards, the founder of home economics as an academic field of study, was admitted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1870 and graduated three years later, the first woman to do so. She continued at MIT, earning the equivalent of a Ph.D. in chemistry, but she was not granted the degree because of her sex.

Rebecca Lee Crumpler was the first and only black woman in the United States to receive a medical degree from the New England Female Medical College, which closed in 1874. She graduated in 1864 and went on to write a medical text, *Book of Medical Discourse*, a volume of medical advice for women and children. Lucy Hobbs becomes the first woman to graduate from dental school. She earned her degree at the Ohio College of Dental Surgery in 1866. Arabella Mansfield was granted admission to practice law in Iowa in 1869, making her the first woman lawyer, although she did not attend law school to earn that distinction. In 1870, Ada H. Kepley, of Illinois, graduated from the Union College of Law in Chicago, the first woman lawyer to graduate from a law school. Slowly, the barriers began to drop as women persisted in attempting to

participate in higher education. As they were granted small gains, they demonstrated their capability to meeting the demands of their studies.

ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

For all but the very wealthy, the amount of work required to maintain a home and family left little time for entertainment, but even the poorest families found ways to enjoy their lives. Most physicians recognized by this time the need even for a frail woman to breathe fresh air and exercise her limbs and lungs. In addition to gymnastic exercises, women also took exercise in other ways. Walking, playing croquet and similar sports of minimal exertion, bathing (or light water play and sometimes even swimming), horseback riding, and sledding were some of the activities open to the active involvement of women. Most schools provided playtime at recess and physical exercise during specific periods designed specifically for formal exercise.

Entertaining practical activities were also numerous. Berry picking, nut harvesting, home or barn construction, harvesting, baking, and even sewing or quilting often formed the focus for planned get-togethers between neighbors and friends. The rarity of these communal gatherings made them all the more enjoyable, and the sharing of news and friendship was at least as important as any work that was accomplished. In towns and cities, ladies visited each other as a part of their social obligations, cementing friendships or just fitting in with the expectations of their group of acquaintances. In the Northeast, the collection and cooking down of maple sap to make syrup and sugar was also an occasion for visiting and celebration, perhaps even dancing. In other parts of the country, cutting sorghum cane, squeezing out the juice, and boiling it down to make sorghum molasses paralleled maple-sugar making.

Schools afforded entertainments as well as education. Spelling bees, music recitals, debates, plays, poetry readings, speeches given by students, and graduation ceremonies at the end of the term were attended not only by parents of the students but by many others in the community who enjoyed the occasion to dress up a bit and enjoy a break in their routine. Churches and religious groups functioned in much the same way. Church services offered much more than just instruction in biblical texts and doctrine. They were every bit as much social activities and entertainment as were other organized events performed before audiences. In addition, the church allowed greater audience participation and specific roles within the church hierarchy for men, at least, to assume. In addition to regular religious functions, churches often hosted memorial services, revivals, holiday celebrations, bazaars, and other occasions for socializing.

Political appearances, speeches, and rallies were entertaining for many people, and attendance was usually very high, regardless of the political party represented. People even attended executions as if they were formal entertainments. When the group that plotted and then carried out the

assassination of President Lincoln were hung in Washington, DC, throngs of people came to watch.

Country fairs became a traditional form of recreation that continues to the present time. Women competed for prizes in sewing, needlework, and all manner of baking and preserving. Quilts were frequently documented while in the process of being made, with an eye to entering them in the next fair. Men might compete for prizes by entering agricultural products or even live animals. In addition, vendors would sell treats at the fair that were rarely available to attendees elsewhere.

In the world of professional sports, baseball's popularity grew both during and after the Civil War. Boxing was practiced, as well, but it was regarded more as a low-class brawl than a true sport during this time period.

One unique form of entertainment that emerged in the United States and became highly popular at the end of the Civil War was the minstrel show. Performed originally by white actors who painted their faces black and played the part of happy-go-lucky, but ignorant and inept, African Americans, the shows were immensely popular with nearly all but the highest social classes. Minstrel shows even attracted large crowds of African Americans, despite the fact that the shows portrayed the worst of stereotypical notions about their race.

The songs and skits of minstrel shows used slavery as the basis for their jokes and portrayals. Musical numbers accompanied the comedy skits, with songs such as "Jump Jim Crow," "Polly Wolly Doodle," "Oh Susanna," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Dixie," and "Blue Tail Fly" sung to the accompaniment of banjos, tambourines, and castanets. Minstrel shows were the first form of purely American musical entertainment, and they became the most popular form of stage entertainment in the nation. Resident companies in big cities played to regular audiences, and traveling shows took minstrelsy all over the country, with white and black performers alike donning burnt-cork black face to portray African Americans. For the latter, it was their first performance venue on a professional stage. (Kendrick 2009)

Larger cities boasted several theaters, and in the 1860s melodrama was one of the most popular theatrical form. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe, was transformed into a melodrama that was one of the most popular and successful of all time. More than 50 companies were performing versions by the 1870s. Also popular were juggling, tumbling, pantomime, musical revues, comic operas, and Shakespeare revivals. The most common production form was a resident company, but there were touring companies as well. There was also considerable sharing of theatrical productions and stars with England (Turnbull 2004).

Perhaps the most popular form of entertainment in the United States was the circus. Originally stationary in a location that welcomed audiences with new material again and again, the introduction of the large tent for performances meant that the circus could travel, and most did.

Advertising became extremely important for the circus once performances might be limited to a single day or two. There was no time to establish the kinds of relationships that had existed with audiences in the past. Now, timing was everything. Huge posters and broadsheets announced that the circus was coming, where it would be, when it would arrive and open, and also provided what the promoters hoped would be sufficient enticement to stir the interests of a huge potential audience. Nearly everyone who could afford to do so attended. For thousands of children, attending a performance of a traveling circus proved an exciting first glimpse of strange animals and amazing feats.

Music was ever popular as entertainment, both for performers and for audiences. Many families owned a musical instrument of some type, even if just a banjo or fiddle. Middle and upper class homes often had a piano and provided lessons for their daughters. Learning to play an instrument, usually the piano, and to sing well were considered part of the education of many girls and young women. Sheet music was widely available, if somewhat expensive, but the introduction of posters and fliers then known as "broadsides" made the lyrics of popular songs available to the masses at a very low price, sometimes as low as a penny. They were even given away at medicine shows.

Families at home together in the evenings or on Sundays also enjoyed quiet entertainments. They might read aloud to each other, tell stories, recite poetry, or play music. Cowboys on the plains, soldiers around their camp fires, and travelers stopping for the night might also sing, play music, or tell stories. Card playing and gambling were games often enjoyed. The stereoscopic viewer brought to life still images of distant places, stories in picture form, lessons on a variety of topics, and even pornography. The introduction of a compact, hand-held stereoscope in 1859 combined with the increasing skill and technological advancement of photographers to popularize this form of recreation. The viewer allowed two still images to be seen simultaneously so that they appeared as a single, three-dimensional image.

An entertainment underworld was available primarily to men. Saloons, gambling halls, opium dens, and houses of prostitution provided diversions less often discussed, but nonetheless well attended. Many soldiers' letters during the Civil War make reference to nightly excursions to nearby towns or to visits from village women who came to the encampments to conduct business. So prevalent was prostitution in areas close to long-term encampments that cities like Memphis; Washington, DC; and Richmond, Virginia, gained the reputation for being centers for prostitution, and little was done by the military on either side to suppress the activity. The result was an upsurge in venereal disease, which at that time had no known cure (Lowry 1994).

Holiday celebrations provided another form of entertainment, generally family oriented. The primary holiday was Christmas. No matter the

circumstances of individual families, a consistent effort was made to bring significance to the occasion. The beloved "Little House" books written by Laura Ingalls Wilder about her childhood during this period recount in detail the making and exchanging of Christmas gifts, the preparation of holiday meals, and the family circumstances at each year's celebration. In diaries and letters, as well, writers discuss the Christmas season in detail. Most especially remember preparing gifts and anticipating a special sense of family togetherness. Parents tried to give the occasion a festive feel, even if doing so meant nothing more than preparing a single holiday treat. A Christmas tree was typical for families who could afford to buy one or who were able to cut a tree. Decorations were often meager, especially in poorer families, and ornaments were often homemade or might consist of small gifts tied to the tree. The custom of hanging Christmas stockings was in place at the time, and young children believed in the existence of Santa Claus. More in tune with the nature of children than in past decades, parents (mothers in particular) often wrote of their own attempts to make their children's Christmas holidays memorable. In the 1870s, one young mother discussed her efforts at creating "sweet lifetime rembrances [*sic*]" for children at Christmastime. Before emancipation, the Christmas holiday was also observed by slaves, even when they may have found little other cause for celebration the remainder of the year. Most plantations maintained a tradition of giving slaves additional food, fabric, cast-off clothing, time off from work, or other means of recognizing the holiday. House slaves, who participated closely in the everyday life of their owners, typically received personalized gifts. Special feasts were often prepared for all plantation inhabitants, although typically their consumption was racially segregated. Dolly Lunt Burge recalled in her diary the contrast of the wartime holiday with past Christmas times in her household.

> DECEMBER 24, 1864. This has usually been a very busy day with me, preparing for Christmas not only for my own tables, but for gifts for my servants. Now how changed! No confectionery, cakes, or pies can I have. We are all sad; no loud, jovial laugh from our boys is heard. Christmas Eve, which has ever been gaily celebrated here, which has witnessed the popping of fire-crackers [the Southern custom of celebrating Christmas with fireworks] and the hanging up of stockings, is an occasion now of sadness and gloom. I have nothing even to put in Sadai's stocking, which hangs so invitingly for Santa Claus. How disappointed she will be in the morning, though I have explained to her why he cannot come. Poor children! Why must the innocent suffer with the guilty? (Burge 1996, 44–45)

Across the South, many Christmas stockings hung empty as the war neared resolution and the meager stores of food and clothing neared total depletion.

Children of Lt. Montgomery C. Meigs (probably Mary Montgomery, Charles Montgomery, and John Rodgers) in a donkey cart with a dog, ca. 1851. In the nineteenth century, parents began to see childhood as a phase of development and those who could afford it provided education, toys, and books to their children. (Library of Congress)

Even in Northern states and those across the Plains and toward the West, the tradition of Christmas was celebrated in whatever way residents could contrive. There was not yet the tradition of purchasing extravagant presents, and the holiday season was not the retail make-or-break point it would become in later years. Gifts tended to be simple, few, and handmade. Toys were becoming popular, but bought ones certainly not universally so. Well-to-children would no doubt have expensive dolls, wagons, wheels, riding quirts, and similar entertainments. For many girls, a cloth doll, made and costumed at home with scraps left over from apparel construction, was eagerly welcomed. Boys might receive a hoop to roll, a wooden whistle, or an animal carved from wood. All children looked forward to candy and possibly a rare piece of fruit such as an orange, as well as knitted stockings, socks, and caps. Clothing was often a welcome gift as well as necessity.

The Fourth of July was another widely celebrated U.S. holiday. For the young nation, commemorating its independence from colonial status and rule by England was a joyous event. Picnics, fireworks, parades,

bands, songfests, and similar entertainments marked this political holiday in towns and settlements everywhere. The Fourth of July was one of the few occasions that gave excuse for workers of all sorts to put down their tools and celebrate together. Towns, whether large or small, generally sponsored these occasions, and residents for miles around would ride or drive into town and spend the day. It was an opportunity to discuss politics, to see what new fashions were being worn, to exchange advice, and to show off one's children. For isolated settlements where farms were miles apart and there was no town to organize a celebration, residents themselves often created one by setting aside the day to share work, food, and a sense of community. After the outbreak of the Civil War and for many years thereafter, celebrations of the Fourth of July in the South were fewer and more restrained than they had been previously.

TRANSPORTATION

For many, walking was the most common mode of transportation for relatively short distances. Even long distances were often undertaken by people on foot, carrying food and drink with them and planning to stop at any likely residences for overnight lodging when possible. Throughout the country, hospitality to strangers needing a place of shelter for the night was unquestioned. Diaries and letters written by Southerners during the war and by settlers headed West during and after the war are filled with references to stopping at private houses for food and lodging. Rarely are there indications that hospitality was refused them.

For women, walking alone was disproved, yet many did so from necessity. In town, there was less danger, but a woman unescorted supposedly had no protection from receiving unwanted attention from strange men, so doing so was not considered genteel. In rural areas, there was less standing on ceremony. Women more frequently walked unescorted, and many children regularly walked several miles to school.

For longer distances, travel on horseback was common for men but frowned on for women. Women might ride with companions and in emergencies, but otherwise would not have ridden horseback as a customary means of travel. Wagons, coaches, carriages, surreys, barouches, landaus, buggies, gigs, and sulkies were some of the common modes of travel for in town and for long distances. Wagons were typically used by rural families to transport goods as well as people. The covered wagons typical of settlers headed west had coverings of canvas pulled over bowed wooden uprights that provided passengers with room to stand while still remaining covered inside the wagon. Most settlers modified existing farm wagons to fit their needs. Those who could afford Conestoga wagons had more durable, heavier, and larger vehicles that required a dozen oxen to pull them and could carry around 10 tons of cargo. They originated in Conestoga, Pennsylvania. The term coach, or stagecoach, was used to

indicate a public conveyance that traveled between towns, sometimes for very long distances. The other types of conveyances were typical of individual or family vehicles used for short-distance travel.

Where available, trains proved the ideal mode of travel. They were faster and smoother than other modes, and some of the private cars created for the elite of commerce and society were veritable hotels on wheels, with all—or nearly all—of the comforts of home. For regular travelers, the decor was much plainer, but the advantages in speed and convenience were remarkable. One of the great difficulties in the South during the war years was maintaining the railways. One of the North's tactics to interfere with the South's movement of troops and supplies was to disrupt rail travel by destroying tracks. Such destruction took several years to repair and slowed the development of rail travel after the war.

By the time the two sides of the continent were finally linked by the transcontinental railroad's completion in 1869, the length of the trip from east to west was cut from five or six months to about a week, and the cost was much less, about a tenth of stagecoach travel. For the first time, shipment of stock and produce across the continent was feasible. Ranches could locate further and further from their eventual markets because of the speed with which the herds could be shipped when ready. Plus, they arrived still fat and healthy instead of dwindled in herd size and individual animal size from extended cattle drives. The location and layout of towns was influenced as well, with easy access for loading and unloading freight a prime consideration. The long lines of wagon trains dwindled and eventually disappeared. Their expense and danger was no longer necessary when much better methods of making the trip were available more cheaply.

Prior to the completion of the transcontinental railroad, many travelers to California and the Pacific Coast made the trip by sailing all the way around the southern end of South America or else by crossing the Isthmus of Panama and then sail to California or other points along the Coast. Rail travel essentially eliminated that method of making the trip.

Wealthy North Americans sailed to Europe for shopping excursions, for entertainment, for touring, and sometimes for business. They enjoyed handsome suites, elegant dinners, and on-board entertainments. Steam engines gave the ships' crews better control of navigation and much faster speed.

COMMUNICATION

The United States Postal System and a wide system of private enterprises were the primary means of communication between the population during the Civil War and Reconstruction era. Despite federal organization and oversight, the actual operations and their efficiency proved uneven at best and depended primarily upon the distance to be traveled and the

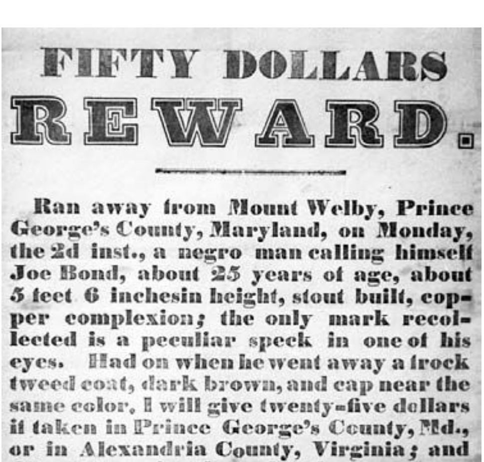
accessibility of areas between which letters and packages were to be transported. In major cities, mail delivery might be daily. In remote areas, monthly was more likely the standard.

Whatever the frequency, the importance of this communications route was vital. For soldiers during the war, for prospectors far from family and home, and for settlers traveling toward the promise of free land and homes, mail was a comforting link with loved ones, as well as the way many learned of deaths and losses. The letters that survived are among the richest sources of documents about the personal aspects of this historical period.

Periodicals and then catalogs of consumer goods added to the personal mail that was transported, extending the availability of many household goods, fabrics and trims, jewelry and accessories, and ready-to-wear clothing, to the even the most remote areas through the package delivery of private companies. Even in many towns, mail was not always delivered directly to individual residences but rather to post offices for pickup. For long distance transportation of mail, stagecoach and individual messengers made an inconsistent system. The initiation of the Pony Express was a major improvement. Individual riders carried the mail between designated stops where it would be handed off to the next rider, so that there was essentially no downtime.

Although the Pony Express loomed larger than life in the stories and legends it inspired, the system was actually in operation only from August 1860 to October 1861 when completion of the telegraph lines across the continent superseded it as the best method of delivering messages.

Nearly all major cities published newspapers regularly, and these also served as an important source of information across the country. Political events and issues were widely discussed in newspaper articles, and in addition to local, regional, and national news, newspapers often contained advice columns or articles aimed at women. In addition, newspaper advertisements were an invaluable source of information about the availability of household goods and clothing. Dry goods and mercantile stores, tailors, and milliners advertised their services and products, often including descriptions and prices. Today, the extant copies increasingly are a source of information through preservation



FIFTY DOLLARS
REWARD.

Ran away from Mount Welby, Prince George's County, Maryland, on Monday, the 2d inst., a negro man calling himself Joe Bond, about 25 years of age, about 5 feet 6 inchesin height, stout built, copper complexion; the only mark recollected is a peculiar speck in one of his eyes. Had on when he went away a frock tweed coat, dark brown, and cap near the same color. I will give twenty-five dollars if taken in Prince George's County, Md., or in Alexandria County, Virginia; and fifty dollars if taken elsewhere and returned to me, or secured so that I get him again.

T. R. EDEL

Piscataway, Prince George's, December 5. 1850.

A handbill advertising a reward for a runaway slave gives a description of what the slave was wearing when he disappeared, 1850. Nearly all such ads and handbills recorded clothing descriptions through the early years of the war. (AP/Wide World Photos)

and digitizing projects that make them available to a wide audience. Names of fabrics, colors and styles of shoes, prices for making a man's suit, and even the clothing worn by runaway slaves were recorded in newspapers.

Magazines were printed and widely distributed for a variety of audiences. Some periodicals were directed specifically toward children, with the idea that they could entertain older children or be read to younger ones. Suggestions for activities, stories and poems, and illustrations were included in these magazines. For women, a number of periodicals were popular, and prominent among those were *Godey's Lady's Book*, *Peterson's Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Demorest's*. *The Lady's Repository* contained articles on art, literature, and religion rather than fashion and manners. For the general public, periodicals such as *The Overland Monthly* brought a greater sense of connection to the two sides of the continent. *Appleton's* contained primarily general literature. Widely influential magazines of the time included *Atlantic Monthly, Century*, *Galaxy*, *Littel's Living Age*, *North American Review*, and *Scribner's*.

The availability of newspapers, magazines, books, and then catalogs offering information about fashion and styles made the assimilation of comparable fashions relatively easy to achieve even by families living in relative isolation. In addition to the advertisements and images directly suggesting what was fashionable and written advice pointing out what was not, content also covered what was worn at social and political events. Thus the nation's leaders in those realms became, whether they wished it or not, fashion examples to the rest of the population. For every political speech, reception, inauguration, or official appearance, there seemed to be a news article about what was worn. Both politics and fashion found audiences hungry for the news. Mary Todd Lincoln, a woman very much interested in fashion, was nearly as newsworthy as her husband, the President. When Mrs. Lincoln appeared in public, women devoured the news of how she appeared–how long her train, how low her corsage, how weighty her diamonds.

MANUFACTURE AND ACQUISITION OF TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

Textile Fabrics

The limited resurgence of home weaving as a means of producing significant amounts of fabric for both clothing and home furnishings died out almost completely a year or so after the war ended. For those who could afford them, fabrics manufactured in the North or in England were again available, and the growing improvements in the manufacture of yarn and fabrics meant many of these were less costly than previously. Plain woven cotton fabrics manufactured on power looms were easily

and inexpensively made and thus available to nearly everyone. Ornamentation with simple, small designs in a limited number of colors via the process of roller printing yielded a wide variety of patterns and a fabric that was widely known as calico. For the poor of any race, calico was a bargain—a durable, inexpensive fabric that was washable. This latter feature meant women could at least present a clean and neat appearance, even if their dress was not made of silk or wool and was not in the very latest style. For farm workers, settlers, and for children everywhere, calico was the fabric of choice. Calico was made up in the styles of the day and in wrappers for housework, pregnancy, and to use as a robe before dressing.

In the winter, woolen and worsted fabrics in plain or twill weaves were common for men's and boy's clothing. For women's good dresses, the list expanded to a bewildering variety, some with definitions that leave much to conjecture. As for the fibers used, silk was the most expensive and indicative of the highest quality in formal clothing and that of the upper classes. Even women in the South suffering enormous reversals of fortune commented on the embarrassment of exchanging silk dresses for calico. One woman stated in her letters that she simply would not wear calico as it was the cloth of slaves and lady's maids. For these women, it was preferable to rework old silk dresses a second or third time rather than wear a fabric that symbolized a social caste beneath them. Eliza Andrews wrote of her delight in being able to wear nice linen underclothing, although borrowed, near the end of the war:

> March 8, 1865: Cousin Bessie lent me one of her fine embroidered linen nightgowns, and I was so overpowered at having on a decent piece of underclothing after the coarse Macon Mills homespun I have been wearing for the last two years, that I could hardly go to sleep. I stood before the glass and looked at myself after I was undressed just to see how nice it was to have on a respectable undergarment once more. I can stand patched-up dresses, and even take a pride in wearing Confederate homespun, where it is done open and above board, but I can't help feeling vulgar and common in coarse underclothes. (Andrews 1997, 110–111)

Gradually, a few stores began to receive some of the fine cotton fabrics that had been so long unavailable. In summer, cotton fabrics such as lawn, muslin (plain, figured, or cross barred), poplin, cambric, percale, jaconet, tarlatan, muslin, and mousseline were some of the lightweight textiles specifically mentioned by women describing their clothing and by fashion magazines providing descriptions of what others wore or what was the latest in Paris. Calico, homespun, or linsey were mentioned very frequently by women writers, but rarely acknowledged by the fashion

magazines as worthy of discussion. Many times, fabrics were described simply with an indication of the fiber content and color, such as green silk or pink silk. How heavy or light, how open or dense, what type of yarns, or what weave pattern was used were left to the imagination.

Finishing techniques available on fabrics were indicated by many fabric names. "Lustre," "glacé," and "brilliant" were three such fabric names that indicated, either through finishing or manipulation of yarns and dyeing, that the resulting fabrics had a lustrous appearance. Chemists continued to experiment with synthetic dyes, producing colors in brilliant tones not seen in nature. Fanciful names were used to describe, or at least give an air of uniqueness, to the colors.

Even in summer, fabrics made of wool, or wool combined with silk, were commonly used for good dresses that could be worn year-round with appropriate outerwear for warmth. Fabrics like mousseline de laine, or just delaine, were made of wool, but they were sheer and lightweight. Luster combined cotton and wool and was heavier than delaine, but it was still mentioned in summer, as was grenadine. Crepe and bombazine were often made of wool, but were also among the most common fabrics to be designated as appropriate for mourning clothing and could be worn in any season. During the war years, many women never got out of mourning.

Fabrics such as alpaca, cashmere, plush, velvet, velour, mohair, and wool reps were fabrics that were usually reserved for dresses to be used in the winter, although there were exceptions even then in cases when the fabric was especially sheer or lightweight. Silk fabrics such as pongee, satin, faille, bengaline, moiré, grosgrain, or bayadere were appropriate for any season, particularly for dressy occasions. Sheer fabrics for overskirts, undersleeves, veils, and other forms of ornamentation included tulle and illusion.

Women of limited means often left dresses relatively plain, especially if the fabric was brocaded, letting the fabric itself be sufficient. Others used self or contrasting fabric to construct trims such as ruching, quilling, ruffles, or they applied bands of straight or bias fabric. Trimming was removed from worn dresses and applied to new ones, especially if it was of good quality. Eliza Andrews described how she and her friend, Mett, managed to create satisfactory looks by remaking and sharing:

> February 16, 1865: Mett wore white suisse with festoon flounces, over my old blue Florence silk skirt, the flounces, like charity, covering a multitude of faults. She was a long way the prettiest one in the room, though her hair is too short to be done up stylishly. But my dress was a masterpiece [*sic*!] though patched up, like everybody else's, out of old finery that would have been cast off years ago, but for the blockade. I wore a white barred organdy with a black lace flounce round the bottom that completely hid the rents made at dances in Montgomery last winter, and a wide black lace bow

> and ends in the back, to match the flounce. Handsome lace will make almost anything look respectable, and I thank my stars there was a good deal of it in the family before the Yankees shut us off by their horrid blockade. My waist was of light puffed blonde, very fluffy, made out of the skirt I wore at Henry's wedding, and trimmed round the neck and sleeves with ruchings edged with narrow black lace. . . . My train was very long, but I pinned it up like a tunic, over a billowy flounced muslin petticoat, while dancing. (Andrews 1997, 95–96)

Lace, even when machine made, was carefully saved and reused as long as possible. Valenciennes, point applique, and blonde were favorite laces, the former especially favored for trimming undergarments and sleepwear. Purchased trims like braid, guipure, and ribbon were also widely used to ornament new dresses or to revive old ones. Functional fabrics for household use, or men's and children's clothing included stout twill weaves such as drill or jean. Flannel, with its brushed wool surface, made warm undergarments, nightwear, and even shirts.

Embroidery

Among the most important group of innovations that changed entirely the nature of fabric ornamentation were the embroidery machines. Introduced in 1828 by M. Josué Heilmann of Mulhouse, France, the first of these machines was hand operated and consisted of a frame in which the fabric was stretched, a pantograph which controlled the placement of stitches based on a graphic design, needle bars and pincers to move them, and the carriage mechanism for pushing the needles through the fabric (Morris 1962). Because the needles were double pointed and threaded in the middle, they could be pushed, then pulled completely through the fabric before the fabric moved into place for the next stitch. Then the needles were pushed and pulled through to the alternate side, and the movements continued. The resulting embroidery was thus very nearly the same on both sides, with the exception of the small floats between motifs of the design. These were apparent on the back only. From a distance, the difference was difficult to detect.

Although faster than hand embroidery, handloom embroidery was not in its early years advantageous enough in speed and accuracy to become widely adapted, but by the years 1869–1875, it was increasingly becoming available as an import. A variety of cloth and thread types were used, including colored silk on silk ground, as well as all white, usually of cotton thread and cotton or linen ground. All-over sprigged designs, as well as borders and insertions, were produced. Eyelet embroideries, or those in which holes make up an important aspect of the design, were also being made at this time, but often the filling pattern to these holes was done by hand, even as late as the 1870s (Clark 1908). Many of the eyelet

patterns evolved as an alternative to English white work embroidery and Ayrshire work, a white-on-white fine embroidery originating in Ayrshire, Scotland. The Museum of Textiles in St. Gallen, Switzerland, has an extensive collection of lace and embroidery covering this period, including many fine examples of handloom embroidery.

The introduction of mechanization into the ornamentation of fabrics and garments was a major factor in extending the accessibility of fashionable items to a much wider and more diverse population than had been true of entirely handmade laces and embroideries. Having the leisure time to design and execute these trims or the financial means to purchase them was less of a differentiating factor among classes when nearly identical items could be produced inexpensively by machine. The embroidery machines did for lace and trimmings what roller printing had done for calico years earlier—they blurred the distinctions between classes in some aspects of clothing.

Clothing

Technological innovations applied not just to fabric and finishing, but to clothing manufacture as well. Sewing machines had been available long before the war but became increasingly available afterwards and became a major influence not only in how clothing was constructed but in the development of apparel and accessory manufacturing and the resulting need for a labor force to fuel the industry. The major growth of the industry was in the North, so an additional societal change that occurred was the influx of women, of unemployed and destitute Southerners, and also of newly freed slaves who also looked to the North and urban locations for work to support themselves and their families.

Cheaper garments, made quickly and with less attention to detail, fit, and trim, were especially needed for an emerging consumer class and to equip those who lived in the West in areas without accessible shopping. For men of limited means who yet wished to maintain the appearance of good hygiene, new technological innovations made this feat much easier. Collars and shirt front inserts could be purchased and maintained much more cheaply than a full white shirt, and with the coat buttoned high, only the wearer would know the difference. A short blurb in the January 1860 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* asked readers if they had heard of the new "patent collars" for men. The entry heading is labeled "Paper shirt-collars," indicating the chief substance of this new apparel item.

Perhaps one of the greatest changes in clothing manufacture occurred as a direct result of the war's duration. Typically, soldiers were given a clothing allowance and regulations to follow for appropriate style, trim, and color. Many arranged to have their uniforms made by family members. Others hired seamstresses or tailors. The result was well fitted uniforms that were based on each man's measurements. That process

worked well enough when there was not a war, when the total number of troops was relative small, and when it was a volunteer army with men joining on their own volition who had the opportunity to consider such details as arranging for sewing.

The scope and length of the Civil War changed that method of providing uniforms to troops completely. There had to be much faster production of thousands of uniforms. There was no time to measure every soldier and make his uniform specifically for him. The military thus undertook a study of men's sizes, measuring a large number of men and using that data to develop a sizing system that would allow mass production without losing the possibility of a relatively decent fit. The findings of that data collection and the resulting sizing system proved so successful that the system was adopted by the menswear clothing industry for civilian clothing. No such development occurred for women's clothing, which continued to rely on direct measurements during this period. Corsets, hoops, stockings, undergarments, nightgowns, coats, shawls, cloaks, and similar loosely fitted garments were mass produced, but dresses were not because of their closely fitted nature.

The advances enjoyed by the Union troops were not replicated in the South. The Confederate soldiers relied almost entirely on family members, seamstresses, or sewing societies to craft their uniforms. The result was not always in keeping with the designs approved by the Confederate government, and when the first wave of sewing was done, there were not enough goods comparable for replacements. Susan Darden wrote of the sewing society established near Natchez, Mississippi. The Presbyterian Church agreed to assist with the provision of supplies, and the ladies themselves contributed through an initiation fee of one dollar each. They concluded that the men would have "checkered shirts & linsey pants" (Darden 1861, 334–335). In a later diary entry, she mentioned her daughter bringing home red flannel shirts to sew buttons on for the men in a Captain Coffey's company. The result was a difficulty in telling from a distance, and sometimes even up close, which troops were on which side.

> May 8, 1865: Some of our Confederates wear a dark, bluish-gray uniform which is difficult to distinguish from the Federal blue, and I live in constant fear of making a mistake. As a general thing our privates have no uniform but rags, poor fellows, but the officers sometimes puzzle me, unless they wear the Hungarian knot on their sleeves. It makes the letters, C.S.A. (Andrews 1997, 233)

Clothing and Textile Retailers

The advent of department stores and the increase in mail order businesses spurred major changes in the way clothing, accessories, trims,

and fabrics were made available to consumers. The former was the beginning of an entirely new way of shopping, especially for women, and the latter was indicative of the availability of identical apparel merchandise to women all over the country, regardless of their distance from a town, the size of their community, or the part of the country in which they lived.

Illustration from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, of women in the elevator on opening day at Lord & Taylor's in New York City, January 1873. The clothing is typical for men, women, and children of comfortable wealth. (Library of Congress)

The establishment of department stores like Stewart's (1846), R. H. Macy & Co. (1858), and Bloomingdale's (1872) in New York City totally changed the way retailers organized and presented merchandise to customers. Personal attention to the customer, effective presentation of the newest styles, and the grouping of related items in the same location all made shopping a thoroughly enjoyable experience rather than a necessity. Shopping became entertainment, with women meeting to enjoy the pleasure of the experience together.

The formation of Montgomery Ward and Company in 1872 initiated the mail-order business. Furnishing nearly everything a family could want or need, catalog shopping offered reasonable prices that were generally much lower than those of the local dry goods stores, good selection, and delivery at least to the local post office if not direct to the customer's door.

RITUALS AND MORES OF THE LIFE CYCLE

The beginning of life was a time of joy for many and a time of heartbreak for others. Most young girls and women did not engage in discussions with their mothers about the actualities of pregnancy and childbearing and thus entered the process with ignorance and fear, the latter due to their awareness that many women did not survive childbirth. Women were hesitant to speak plainly about their pregnancies or to ask questions of experienced women who might have been able to give them some useful advice. Diaries and letters in which women divulge their news to family members did so with very oblique references that only later become clear when a newborn with a name suddenly joins the family circle. A comment about not being able to loan out her wrappers would be a blatant clue that the woman writing was pregnant and would need loose clothing to conceal her condition. Others might mention sewing on little things. The code was well understood to readers at the time. It is only

today that readers unfamiliar with the old language wonder what some of these references mean. The fear that accompanied pregnancy was justifiable. Infection was a major risk with every birth. Lack of hygiene on the part of those assisting in the birth process figured into some infection-related deaths. Others resulted from conditions that might have been unrecognizable in the expectant mother given the lack of sophistication in medical knowledge, as well as the lack of prenatal care for the expectant mother. Multiple births, exceptionally large fetuses, breech-positioned babies, pre-eclampsia and eclampsia, and insufficient pelvic size to accommodate the baby's head were just a few of the other conditions that could turn childbirth into a potentially deadly situation. Damage to the pelvic floor and tearing that could result in urinary or fecal incontinence for the remainder of the woman's life were also possibilities of a difficult childbirth.

In the majority of families, childhood was not devoid of responsibilities. Once children were old enough to develop competency at any household task, they were expected to make their small contributions to the family by sharing in the workload. Even female children of three or four could hold a skein of yarn for an older child to wind into a ball, carry their dishes to be washed, or pick up things to help maintain neatness. As children developed more skill and reasoning ability, they took on more complicated and important tasks. They were taught to sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and piece together scraps to help make quilts. They would have made their beds, hung up their own clothing, helped sweep the house, and helped their mother in the garden or with cooking, laundry, and preserving food. Male children began at a very early age to be given different kinds of chores than female children. Their work, along with their donning of pants, signified their different paths. Sons were more likely to assist their fathers with farming, even if only in simple ways such as carrying drinking water to field workers, picking up sticks and kindling to build cooking and heating fires, and helping plant and harvest the crops. Boys also learned to hunt when old enough to handle the necessary weapons, and they helped bring meat to the family table. In towns, the family's work would have been different, but children were still expected to assist. The housework to be done did not change much for female children, but they might also be expected to help with any outsourced manufacturing work that their parents did at home. The development of the apparel and shoe industries was such that much work in villages was put out to individual families with varying amounts of work already done. Garments might already be cut out, for example, and women would pick up bundles of cut shirts to bring home and sew together. Children would have been expected either to help with some of this sewing or to relieve the mother of household tasks so that she could spend more effort earning an income. Children in larger cities were often entrepreneurs, selling papers, matches, shoe

shines, and a variety of other goods and services suitable to their youth. Children often had to assume adult roles following the death of a parent, most frequently mother who had died in childbirth.

Mate selection and marriage occurred at an early age for most youth. Some women married in their early teens and started families within the first year of marriage. The dating process was only loosely supervised by parents in the majority of households and often consisted of nothing more formal than sitting together in church, the girl entertaining visits in her home, with parents present if not always in the same room through the entire visit, or perhaps attending events together if they lived in an urban environment. A man's request to call on a woman was equivalent to announcing his intention to pursue a relationship. Propinquity was a leading force in mate selection, and with local travel still somewhat limited, young people tended to marry within the same community or nearby communities. When more women worked outside the home, the workplace became an additional opportunity for meeting potential mates, as did secondary and post-secondary educational institutions that admitted both sexes. Despite the young age of the U.S. and European origins of the large numbers of white Americans, the European tradition of parents dictating marriage choices did not find its way into U.S. life. Self-selection was practiced almost universally, although parents did often exercise veto rights if the proposed marriage partner was completely unacceptable due to ethnicity, social status, or financial means. Direct parental intervention occasionally occurred in the wealthiest classes, where marriage was seen as a critical component in maintaining social and financial status. The wedding itself also varied in importance and visibility according to social status. For the few at the top, weddings took on all the trappings of the most exalted social events of the time and in so doing moved from a private, family-oriented rite of passage to a public presentation of wealth, gifts, and finery that would be photographed and presented to the nation via newspapers and magazines of the time. The ceremony moved from the home to the church or other public venue. Along with the bride, groom, and minister as the requisite core for the ceremony, numbers of attendants were added for both bride and groom, swelling the size of the wedding party and its expense. Formal clothing and white silk for the bride's dress became the requisite attire for all who could afford a dress for a single occasion. More guests necessitated the need for larger spaces, hence the move to churches for the ceremony. Presentation of gifts to the couple became commonplace, as was the practice of displaying them for others to see. Meanwhile, the majority of weddings continued to be simple affairs that did not require much outlay of money at all. Maybe a small payment for the person performing the ceremony would be made; otherwise, everything was simply provided by family. White was not required for wedding dresses and often was not worn for reasons of economy and the need for clothing

that would serve multiple uses. Family members might gather in the home and enjoy a cake or pie baked for the occasion, and that was the extent of the wedding celebration. A simple gold ring was the most many brides hoped for, and not all received one if finances were tight. Gifts from close friends might include trousseau items that had been sewn and ornamented for the occasion. Family gifts might include useful items for setting up housekeeping, such furniture, linens or bedding, livestock, or farming equipment.

The average life expectancy during this period hovered just above 40 years of age when calculated from birth to death. For males and females who survived to age five, however, the expectancy increased to about 57–58 years (Mapping History). Given the tremendous number of male deaths resulting from the Civil War, there is surprisingly little difference between the life expectancy of men and women who survived the perilous first five years when comparing the figures from 1860 and 1870. The dangers of death from childbirth appear to factor heavily into these figures.

Medical science was in a very crude stage of development at this time, and many of the treatments for illness—bleeding, application of plasters, doses of opium, laudanum, alcohol, quinine, and calomel—were not only ineffective but added to patient complications. Patent medicines were widely available, and no governmental agency controlled their manufacture of claims of efficacy in treating an amazing list of diseases. The source of many illnesses was not understood, leading to an inability to make accurate diagnoses, even if appropriate medicines had been available. The role of bacteria in disease and infection was not yet known. Thus, although hygiene was sometimes suspected of playing a role in illness and infection, the suspicion was not widespread enough to encourage hygienic practices. During the war, doctors operated on hundreds of patients in rapid succession without sterilizing equipment between patients or washing their hands. When doctors attended women in childbirth, they were unaware of the need to wash their hands before they manually assisted with a difficult delivery or tried to turn a child who was presenting in breech position. The results were frequently fatal.

Children were especially vulnerable to illness, as they had less resistance and less ability to verbalize the source of their pain or discomfort. They, like adults, were treated with medicines that often made them weaker and less likely to survive their original illness. The sentiment with which children were treated in life continued in descriptions of their deaths. Mothers describing the deathbed words and demeanor of their young children often attributed to them almost angelic and very knowing minds as they spoke their farewells to parents and kin by their beds.

Descriptions of dressing and otherwise preparing bodies for burial were frequent in diaries and letters. Best clothing was usually selected or even bought specifically for the occasion. Some women were buried in their wedding clothes, as that was their very best. Susan Darden lived near

Natchez, Mississippi before, during, and after the Civil War. Her diary is filled with the details of her life and of her community, including the deaths of children and grandchildren, neighbors, and friends. When a neighbor, Mary Whitney, died from what was diagnosed as a congestive chill, Susan described the preparation for her funeral: "Julia said she and Mandy put up her clothes. She cut out a lock of her hair, wrote her name on it, put her rings in a box, put them in her trunk. Julia says Mary was laid out in a white mireno [*sic*] dress made open before, the sleeves fasten round the wrist; rouche around the neck; looked very natural" (Darden, 106).

Descriptions of clothing and appearance of the dead are common, as are discussions of the process of laying out the bodies of dead friends and relatives and saving personal items of the deceased. The trunks of clothing, rings, locks of hair, and other personal effects were, for many children, the only concrete evidence they had of a lost parent or other family member.

One rare discussion of body preparation noted the decomposition of the body and how the slave who recounted the experience, Louis Hughes, and a relative of the dead Confederate soldier tried to improve the body's appearance before it was viewed by the parents:

> He had lain on the battlefield two days before he was found, and his face was black as a piece of coal; but Dr. Henry Dandridge, with his ready tact, suggested the idea of painting it. I was there to assist in whatever way they needed me. After the body was all dressed, and the face painted, cheeks tinted with a rosy hue, to appear as he always did in life, the look was natural and handsome. We were all the afternoon employed in this sad work. (Hughes 1997, 118–119)

Photographs were taken of the dead when it was possible to do so, especially of young children who had died. The sentimentality with which children were considered in life extended into death.

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CHAPTER 3

Women's Fashions

ENVISIONING THE FASHIONS

Sources for studying women's fashions of the Civil War and Reconstruction era are many and varied, each type having specific contributions to make as well as limitations in their relevance to a broad spectrum of women. Fashion plates, which were hand-tinted engravings or lithographs that displayed the current fashions, and images published in the women's magazines provide excellent coverage of what was proposed as appropriate fashions for upper-class women as well as for the many others who aspired to upward mobility. There was some hierarchy of social class to which each magazine appealed, but it is within the text rather than the images that the subtle differences in audience can be perceived. The illustrations gave women of any means the general idea of structure and form which apparel was supposed to take and usually included the most elaborate manner of trimming possible. It was understood, and also underscored in the texts of some magazines, that readers could adjust the recommendations based on their own needs and means through their choices of fabric and trim.

The closest adherence to the fashions described and depicted in women's magazines such as *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Peterson's Magazine* corresponded to two major factors: means to purchase and availability of goods. The relatively small numbers of women at the very top of the socioeconomic ladder might well have dressed similarly to the fashion plates of the day, but extant photographs, prints, and actual garments

indicate the rarity of the ultra-trimmed confections so beautifully pictured and colored in *Godey's Lady's Book*. This lack of total representation does not, however, reduce the value of the fashion plates for interpreting general trends of the time. With archival resources providing access to the full run of the periodical, it is possible to evaluate changes as they were displayed month by month, year after year. The movement of the armscye seam, the shape and size of the sleeve, the prevailing necklines, the general mode of wearing the hair are all examples of changes that occurred gradually over the period from 1860 to 1875 and which can be charted using these print sources.

Photographs, written accounts of the time, and surviving textile and fashion artifacts are therefore necessary to determine both the degree and the rapidity with which the fashions proposed by fashion magazines were adopted. Published photographic studies such as Joan Severa's *Dressed for the Photographer* cover a breadth of material from several states and allow a comparison with fashion-plate images. Artifact analyses such as the extensive study published by Elsa McMurry provide a depth of information not obtainable from either photographs, drawings, text, or engravings. McMurry visually dissected period garments to determine their dimensions, methods of construction, textiles used, colors, linings and other underlying fabrics used, pockets, trims, buttons, and virtually every detail of the garments. While the sample was limited to garments with a northeastern provenance, there is ample reason to extrapolate general structural information from her study, which included 31 dresses dated 1860–1875.

Museum and historical society archives across the country contain a wealth of information, much of which has not been explored in great depth as it relates to women's clothing and is often available only locally for research and study. Individual studies of these regional collections add to the growing body of documentation to help form a clearer picture of what women actually wore, as do costume and textile exhibitions and their accompanying catalog materials. Written information from diaries, letters, journals, plantation day books, mercantile store records, newspaper advertisements, and similar documents are becoming more readily available electronically, adding the potential for much broader studies of costume.

Museum and family collections of actual garments tend to favor those that were worn to or associated with specific occasions, another limiting factor in extrapolating information from those garments to the entire population. Everyday and work clothing was just that—it was not special and was not saved deliberately. Wedding dresses, the clothing of children who died, clothing perhaps saved for later use that never materialized, these were the types of clothes that typically found their way into collections to be studied by subsequent generations. Relying upon those sources only as being representative of the total population in the

country at that time would be misleading, but they are quite valuable in illuminating a particular segment of the population and providing a level of detail unobtainable in photographs, written text, or drawings.

Outerwear and undergarments are also shorted in most collections, simply because they were retained less often than good dresses. This makes the process of studying their construction and drawing generalizations from the surviving pieces more difficult than instances in which large numbers of garments are available from many parts of the country.

By combining all of the sources, however, it is possible to develop a general understanding of how garments where constructed, by whom they were constructed, how they functioned, how they differed among the different groups of people who wore them, and also to some degree the meaning that dress and appearance carried at this time. The language of dress had many nuances, but it spoke eloquently and strongly all the same. In the South, dress often spoke the language of secession and support for the South as women made, wore, and sang about their homespun dresses. In Northern cities at the same time, women of means and leisure wore that information for the world to read. Women were judged by their appearance, whether they were saloon girls in the west, blockade runners from the South, nurses during the war years, or socialites in any city. Knowing that, most women feared appearing coarse or run-down or out of fashion. They did not wish to appear to be dressing beyond, or below, their means, their social class, their community group, or their years.

National or Regional Dress

Women's fashions showed a remarkable consistency of silhouette and general stylistic characteristics across the United States and across divisions in socioeconomic status. Women of all social classes and circumstances were aware of fashion trends and were, for the most part, interested in trying to follow those trends. The degree to which individual women were able to match the fashion plates published monthly by the popular periodicals of the day varied, however. Distance from sources of goods, access to fashion news through personal contact or printed material, financial ability to purchase new materials, and the demands of everyday life dictated the degree to which it was possible, feasible, or even desirable to follow fashion.

The second factor connected with wearing the highest fashions was residence in highly populated cities with a large trading base, such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, New Orleans, and San Francisco. Population density and access to ports for ease of shipping gave rise to large mercantile establishments that could readily offer both domestic and imported fashion textiles, trims, accessories, and ready-to-wear clothing (mostly under garments and outerwear). Newspaper advertisements in

Natchez, Mississippi, newspapers published during the period indicated shiploads of goods coming into port from Philadelphia, New York, and Liverpool via New Orleans.

Some clothing and textile materials were available during the period from mail order catalogs, and fashion magazines advertised the services of companies that would make clothing to measure. However, in general, as distance increased from urban areas, fashions changed somewhat more slowly, were interpreted in less sumptuous materials, displayed more simplicity of cut, were trimmed less or not at all, and used reduced amounts of fabric.

Another difference, although one not easily noticed visually, was the number of garments in a woman's wardrobe. Women of lesser means attempted to create the latest fashions in whatever materials they had at hand, but they tried to have at least one really good dress that used quality textile materials, often silk. Second best might be only one or two dresses, perhaps reworked from an earlier period with trim added and made suitable for visiting or traveling. Work clothing varied according to the amount of work for which the women were responsible. For information of this nature, we are indebted to the proportionately small numbers of women who wrote diaries, journals, or letters including this information, to the fewer articles of clothing that have survived, and the smattering of informal images that show women at work or at least wearing work clothing. The sample of written accounts, especially diaries, is obviously limited to women of sufficient education to be able to write and to have the leisure for writing.

On the frontier and among the poorer classes, women were actively involved in much more than the traditional feminine work of sewing, cooking, and overseeing the house and children. They might have worked crops, cut wood, help build shelter, driven cattle, or whatever else in their lives furnished livelihood. Some women in the north were engaged in factory work. For working women, safety and practicality often meant leaving off many aspects of what was considered fashionable dress. Hoops and corsets might be set aside for an afternoon of plowing behind a mule or team of oxen. If isolation was such that the women rarely came in contact with other women or families, there might not even be hoops, but even on the frontier many women wrote of tight lacing and trying to maintain what they grew up believing to be a genteel appearance.

In her well-documented treatment on frontier fashions, Sally Helvenston remarks on the strength of fashion influence, as well as its diversity, on the frontier. As women joined their husbands and began to move beyond a subsistence level of living, they began to replace the clothing they had brought with them with that which was as fashionable as they could manage. They created patterns from their original clothing, from that of women newly arrived or just visiting en route to another location,

Hard work in the elements called for appropriate clothing, here pants under the woman's shortened dress, no binding corset or tangling hoops. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1866. (Wisconsin Historical Images, WHi-2382)

and they eventually tended to develop fashions that bore great similarity in general effect to those worn by women in eastern cities, and, increasingly, in larger western cities as well. Helvenston notes, however, that for all of their similarity to what might be considered a national norm, fashions within individual locales represented a high degree of conformity. In fact, the fabrics available to one woman in a small community would not differ considerably from the fabrics chosen by the other women; the pattern one woman received in a letter or in a precious fashion magazine would be shared directly with close friends, then copied as nearly as possible by those more distant from the immediate source. Within their reinterpretation of those fashions, women tended to follow the overall national fashion dictate, which was to avoid attracting undue attention. Women who could afford better fabric and trimming than

her neighbors would typically forgo that luxury and instead attempt to indicate by her clothing her sense of camaraderie with those in her social group.

Another aspect of the question of regional dress is the impact of the war. Fashion periodicals of the time made few references to the impact of the conflict on women's fashions. While newspapers occasionally urged economy, and shortages in textile production occurred due to the demands of the military, in general northern women's fashions did not stand still but continued to evolve in terms of specific costume details such as sleeve style and silhouette. The greatest effect was in decreased textile production for domestic consumption and a greater demand for military production.

In spite of the severe hardships that most areas of the South experienced as a result of the Civil War, the degree to which the clothing of Southern women differed from that of other areas was less extensive than songs, stories, and romanticized notions would portray. The effects of the war were not immediate in any event. As the war continued over years, clothing wore out, and replacement fabric was very difficult to obtain. Joseph Addison Waddell, of Augusta County, Georgia, kept a diary during the war years and remarked on both the scarcity of fashion goods and the lack of apparent effect on the appearance of women in the area: *"money* is plentiful, but alas! it cannot be used as food or clothing. But I discover no change in female attire—the ladies seem to dress quite as much as formerly—How this happens I do not know" (November 21, 1863).

Anne Shannon Martin kept a diary of her time in exile from Vicksburg. Living with her husband in a boarding house in Eufala, Alabama, she wrote almost daily of the negotiations involved in purchasing, trading, returning, and using fashion goods. Fabric was available in stores in very limited amount, was occasionally of such bad quality it could hardly be used, and was exorbitantly expensive when it could be had at all. Writing on March 12, 1864, she noted the following proposed transaction: "I think Mrs. Hackett, estimable lady as she is, is a very shrewd hand at a bargain. She had a pair of single homemade corsets, that she was willing to let Mrs. Howard have for six yards of calico. That, at ten dollars a yard, would be sixty dollars, quite a respectable sum for a pair of homemade corsets. Mrs. Howard very prudently declined to bargain." (Martin, March 12, 1864).

A few women were better circumstanced. Lucy Iron Neilson described purchases her sister made near Columbus, Mississippi: "[Sis Hattie] bought four new silks, & then I gave her back the two moire antiques she had given me. She gave a thousand dollars [no doubt Confederate money] apiece for two of her dresses & $800 for the other two. Her bonnet was $325. Her clothes were all very pretty, & oh, mercy, made us poor girls very envious" (Book II 1864, 10). Amanda Worthington's sister

managed a trip to New Orleans to obtain supplies for the family. Amanda recorded the results in her diary:

> Sister got home and she had so much to relate about her trip. She just spent 1000 dollars, got everything we wanted and didn't *have to take the oath*! . . . Sister brought me a good many photographs for my album, "David Copperfield", some new music, a pair of French corsets, a beautiful linen chemise & band, a Balmoral skirt, two pairs of shoes, one of them is a beautiful pair that cost six dollars & a half, handkerchiefs, stockings, perfume, a set of black and gold jewelry that is very pretty, a new hat, had two dresses made for me, a rept silk and a lustre, and got me a black & white gingham and a calico, a tucking comb and an invisible net. She got the same number of things for herself, and a silk dress, worsted cape, a hoop, a pr. Shoes, stockings, & got Father a coat, pr. Shoes, two bottles of brandy, 2 sacks of salt, a bls. Flour, 1 of sugar. She brought a great many things for Willie too, and a suit of clothes for sam and a cravat, pocket-book, and calico for two shirts for him. So we are all well supplied. (January 13, 1864)

Compared to Neilson's description of purchases, Amanda Worthington's sister may well have used U.S. money rather than Confederate, as New Orleans was occupied by Union forces at the time. The preceding quotation presents a very different picture of circumstances late in the war than that experienced by many women, but the family existed at the top echelon of Southern society. The Worthington family owned three plantations in Washington County, Mississippi. All of the family members were well educated, and the plantations produced thousands of pounds of cotton every year. They suffered a tremendous financial loss toward the end of the war, but they were able to recover to a large degree and continue to hold respected and powerful positions in post-war Mississippi society. Across the South would have been other families in similar circumstances, able to deal with their reduced circumstances yet still appear in respectable, even current, fashions for the social activities they continued to enjoy.

For many Southern women, scarcity descended in totality with their forced evacuation of permanent or temporary homes or with the invasion of Union troops who frequently laid waste to everything that would have supported the Confederate war effort. The published diary of Sarah Dawson Morgan documents her and her family members' attempts to prepare for an expected invasion of their home city of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in mid August, 1862, packing and repacking, planning and then making new plans, responding to one false alarm after another. When they finally leave the city, they carry as much as they can on their persons and leave trunks of possessions at the home of a friend. Before they are able to retrieve the trunks, they hear that their friend's home

and all of its contents had been destroyed. She was devastated to learn that all of the provisions she thought would see through the coming winter months were gone, and her family was left with little more than what they wore and the few items they had managed to carry away. They had packed dresses, nightgowns, undergarments, and cloaks as well as the family silver and her father's law papers, which would have allowed them to collect money owed to them. She described herself and her family as "beggars" without the contents of their trunks (Morgan 1970, 174–175).

When Sarah's mother and sister were able to return to the house when the fighting was over, they found the furniture smashed with axes, all ornaments either carried off or broken to bits, and the women's clothing torn to shreds. Many southern women's diaries and letters contain similar accounts of food, clothing, livestock, books, everything, taken as plunder, and much of what could not be carried off smashed or torn to ruins so it could not be used again. When the Union armies invaded an area, the residents frequently suffered a total loss of provisions that could have sustained them. The tactic was aimed at weakening the South by decreasing domestic support of the war. What resulted was a population in the Southern states that exhibited very uneven circumstances and appearances at least from the middle to late war years. Many women continued to live relatively unharmed by this type of destruction, while others were reduced instantly to homelessness with only what they were able to wear or carry away from their former homes.

In spite of this diversity of circumstance and in interpretation, the overall conformity of female fashions from 1860 to 1875 was owing in large part to information available to women through fashion periodicals. The written word and the colored as well as black and white illustrations in *Godey's Lady's Book*, *Peterson's Magazine*, and *The Demorest*, to name some of the most popular of these periodicals, served as one of the main means of fashion dissemination. Circulation records of the periodicals and diaries of women who wrote about their lives attest to the usefulness of this source of information. Women exchanged ideas, patterns, and actual work as they created the fashions of the day.

Godey's Lady's Book published an article by Elzey Hay, of Georgia, in July 1866, in which Hay describes the difficulties of being fashionable

A Sister's Advice on How to Cut Out a Skirt

October 1870, Lettie Walton of Austin, Texas writing to her sister, Mollie McLemore of Vaiden, Mississippi: "My Dear Sister, . . . If you have not yet cut by the long skirt pattern I sent perhaps this from Bazar of 22*nd* will be of service. The round or lower skirt measures from three yds & half to 3 & 3/4 in width. It contains a very broad gored front breadth & a broad side gore & two straight back breadths each three quarters of a yd wide. The same round effect may be given to skirts when two side gores & one must touch the floor all around except just in front. The front and side are sewed plainly to the belt, the entire fullness being massed behind in French gathers" (Watkins-Walton).

while living under a blockade. Of particular value to them was access to any available fashion periodicals or plates:

> Now and then a Godey or a "Bon Ton" would find its way through the blockade, and create a greater sensation than the last battle. If it was rumored that Annie or Julia had a book of fashions, there would be an instant rush of all womankind for miles around, to see it. I remember walking three miles once to see a number of the Lady's Book, only six months old; then learned that it had been lent out, and, after chasing it all over town, found it at last, so bethumbed and crumpled that one could scarcely tell a fashion-plate from a model cottage. (Hay 1866)

There is one final factor that is important in considering articles of dress that have survived or photographs that are found and trying to determine an approximate date if no history is associated with the garment, and that is the existence of women who chose for whatever reason not to follow prevailing fashions. Some may have developed a personal aesthetic different from fashionable dress and did not need the support of the masses to feel confident with that look. There were ethnic and religious groups in the United States that dressed according to the norms of their groups rather than the larger culture. Immigrant groups, in particular, struggled with the desire to meld into their adopted country's culture, while maintaining some of the familiar and important aspects of the culture they left behind. Some women experienced what has been called "fashion freezing." They stopped following fashions at some period in their lives and forever clung to the outdated looks of what some researchers believe they felt was the high point of their lives, often long after the articles they needed to support the look were no longer manufactured or sold.

It is often possible to arrive at a reasonably accurate date that a photograph or a garment would probably not have preceded. It is much less a sure thing to propose that a garment could not have been worn after a certain date. It could have, and many were. The study of periods and the fashion changes within them allows the development of some general guidelines that permit students of the period to have a general idea of what would have been worn, how people would have appeared, or what garments might be useful for reenactment or interpretation of historic sites. There are always exceptions, as there are with any study of periods past, that make the work both interesting and somewhat uncertain. The pictures formed from the myriad sources of information generated in the past are somewhat like the models of dinosaurs, complete with teeth, flesh, and skin. They are approximations generated by a collection of factual bones.

GARMENT SPECIFICS

The Silhouette

The point of greatest conformity for female fashions was the overall form of the primary garment worn for day and evening. The shape was wide rounded shoulders, narrowing to a pinched waist, and swelling outward to great width over hoops, or crinolines, both terms that were used during the period. The hoop-supported bell skirt was well entrenched across the country by 1860. Period photographs from New York to Lake Tahoe to Savannah show women who look markedly similar with their narrow waists and wide shoulders rising from huge bell skirts. Photographs of working women, frontier settlers, camp followers, and other women also show a number who did not wear hoops, even to be photographed. The fashion for large dome-shaped skirts supported by spring-steel hoops was so well entrenched, however, that those who did not wear them were definitely in the minority. Schoolgirls and their mothers alike referred to buying, wearing, mending, hating, and loving hoops when they wrote about their daily lives. When one women wrote about taking them off to travel, she indicated shame at having her aunt know she had been so coarse in her appearance.

A change took place in the size and shape of the hoops between 1860 and 1865, however. The fashionable skirt began as a dome that was circular at the base and quite full immediately below the waist. The skirt was cut in rectangular panels that were gathered, or gauged, into the waist to fit, the fabric at the top equaling the fabric circumference at the hemline before gathering. If the skirt were removed from the waist or the waistband and the gathering stitches removed, the fabric would once again be a rectangle, with no cut places that would have lessened its usefulness for making over into a new style. Sleeves were full for the most part, at least in the first part of the decade, and when a woman's arms were at her side, her silhouette from nearly any angle was one of a large haystack, as the sleeve fabric filled in the area around the waist so that its smallness was not seen except in close proximity. A bonnet that framed the face and flowed downward via ribbons and a curtain over the back hair added to this shape, as did many pieces of outwear that were loose and cloak-like in shape.

Although many women, particularly in the South and remote areas of the country, retained the basic skirt shape through the war years, women who maintained a fashionable appearance quickly began to show the change in skirt circumference shape from a circle to an oval. Back length increased, and fullness was moved more to the back and sides to create a flatter look in front. Gathering and gauging was replaced by flat pleating and then cutting and tapering seams to create even more flatness immediately below the waist, and corsets lengthened as well to maintain the desirable body shape. This change is obvious from fashion plates of

the period and in many surviving northern garments. The wife of President Lincoln, Mary Todd Lincoln, was considered quite fashionable by her contemporaries, with her activities and appearance receiving lengthy coverage in fashion and news periodicals. Photographic portraits of her show her adoption of the changing skirt shape and length.

Nina Sturgis Dousman wearing an elaborate, trained dress, showing the very latest in the new silhouette, 1873. (Wisconsin Historical Society, WHi-5388)

From 1865 to 1870, emphasis continued shifting to the back with a continued flattening of the front. Overskirts were popular by 1865 and continued in fashion through 1875, becoming more and more elaborate. They were often looped and bunched to the back. By 1870, the prevailing silhouette was a soft triangle. Overskirts that looped to the back and hemlines longer in the back contributed to the triangular look, as did elongation of the head by flatter hair at the temples and sides and higher coiffures and hats. The underpinnings for the silhouette changed as well, with hoops much smaller and elliptical in shape, or sometimes simply half-hoops that supported the backward thrust of the skirts but contained no wires that would cause the front to project. The triangular silhouette continued through 1875, but with a pronounced slimming of the skirt over the hips and more fullness toward the back with a true bustle effect in many garments at this time. By 1875, skirts were almost completely flat in front, so that the front silhouette was very narrow and hourglass shaped, while the side silhouette was very sharply a triangle, or in extreme cases almost a lowercase letter *h*.

Dress Bodices

In 1860, dress bodices differed in only minor details from the end of the preceding decade. The general shape either closely fitted the body with seaming and darts or was cut with slightly more fullness that was gathered to the waist. Bodices were joined to the skirt or made separate, and beginning in this period a jacket-style bodice called a "basque" began to appear, usually with the skirt portion of the jacket cut on. As the period progressed, the basque style became more common. By the time the bustle skirt was fully developed, the most common bodice style was the long, tightly fitted basque, resembling a suit jacket. Occasionally a false vest, sewn to the basque at the side seams and then free to the

front closure, was included in the suit. As the bustled back of the skirt became larger and more prominent, the back "skirt" of a long basque might have a split to spread over the bustle or else pleats for the same purpose.

Bodice styles can be further evaluated based on neckline style and trim, closure, method of fitting, waistline position and treatment, sleeve style, and typical ornamentation. The terms used to refer to the top part of the outfit varied and were often used interchangeably. Fashion periodicals frequently called the bodice a "*corsage*," a "*waist*" (more often when it was made separately from the skirt), a "basque," a "basquine," and other terms, many of which had specific nuances of style and meaning. Women who wrote about making or trimming a body were actually referring to the top part of the dress, and that was the most frequent term they used.

Neckline Treatments

The necklines of day dresses were usually cut high (jewel, or round, neckline). High necklines were often bound or finished with a narrow, straight band that assisted in attaching the small white collars or narrow ruffles of fabric or lace that were popular. The collar was basted to the band and served to protect the neckline from soil and wear. Women could change the neckline trims to give a more or less formal look to a garment or to freshen last year's style at very little expense. Narrow bias bands are also evident on surviving dresses, as is corded piping. Dresses meant to be worn with capes, jackets, or any type of wrap that had a collar might leave off the trim at the neck, as would dresses meant to be worn for work.

Neckline trims for day dresses were often rather narrow white linen or cotton bands. They might meet or cross at the center front of the neck, where they were usually finished with brooches. The collars were often edged with lace or decorated with embroidery. Small ruffles, or frills, were also substituted for collars and served the same function. In general, the appearance of these neckline trims was subdued because of their narrow dimensions.

A very small proportion of fashion illustrations and photographs reveal alternatives to this neckline treatment for adult women's day dresses. Sometimes the dress bodice was cut in a low square or high V, or the top edges were turned back to form lapels. In such cases, the open space was filled with a chemisette or guimpe, so that the resulting neckline still conformed to the high round style. Chemisettes can be considered both regular clothing as well as a type of undergarment, as they both showed and were hidden during use. They were cut with a front and back and open sides. Some are pictured with a small band at the

bottom edge, to be used for pinning to the skirt or bodice. Others are pictured plain. Fine white linen or cotton, often trimmed with lace or tucks or self fabric shirring or rushing were typical for chemisettes, and fashion periodicals offered women many examples to follow in cutting and trimming them. Matching undersleeves were often included in such instructions.

The guimpe was similar in function to a chemisette but cut more like a blouse and often with attached sleeves. The guimpe was designed to be worn under low-cut and/or short-sleeve bodices, the latter functioning as a kind of jumper.

The necklines for young women's formal, or evening, dresses were predominantly cut low and wide, often falling off the shoulders by an inch or two and dipping, sweetheart fashion, to a point toward the center front. Ruffles of self fabric or lace, ruches, ribbons, bows, and flowers could be added to these necklines for decoration and to provide a more modest appearance that the original line of the bodice would have given. Rows of gathered or flounced decoration worn at the necks of these low dresses were called "berthas." Older women often wore their best day dresses for evening functions rather than dress in what might have been an unbecomingly low neckline.

Bodice Waist Treatments

From 1860 through 1865, the most common bodice bottom cuts were round in front and back, pointed slightly below the waist in the front and round in the back, or pointed in both front and back. Occasionally the front would have double points separated by only an inch or two. Pointed bodices, especially those that were pointed in both front and back, were more common to evening wear than for day dresses but were found in both. Fashion periodicals of the time show a large number (but still a minority) of pointed bodices, but photographs and surviving garments show a minority of the pointed bodices. The style reduced the amount of fabric from the skirt that could be used to restyle a garment. Even if the skirt fabric was turned under and gauged to the bodice, evidence of the fold and stitching lines would have been hard to remove. The round bodice gave full use of the skirt material in case it became soiled and had to be turned or if it subsequently had to be worked into a new style.

The round bodice was also easier to sew. From necessity, most women had little choice but to make their own clothing and assist with sewing for family members, but they were not universally skilled at the task. Many diaries and letters reflect their difficulty and their elaborate system of trading work in order to do more of the things they were able to do well and to seek assistance with those tasks they could not easily

Lizzie Harris, actress, photographed between 1860 and 1865, wearing a dress with a separate bodice ending at two points below the waist. (Library of Congress)

accomplish. A young girl in Greenville, Mississippi, admitted in her diary that she could not pleat a skirt. When she needed to mend a dress that was ripped off at the waist, she had to ask her mother to do it, in return for which she sewed sleeves into her mother's dress and hemmed some other items. Other women complained of the muscle pain resulting from hours of sitting over a sewing machine, and others expressed hesitancy at cutting into a length of fabric for fear of ruining it for lack of cutting skill. Lack of access to assistance from skilled dressmakers, whether women who sewed commercially or else friends or family members, may have influenced the popularity of simple styles among many women.

Bodices were mostly worn at the natural waistline in 1860. Contemporary fashion texts often refer to a slow rise in the waistline eventually ending in a slightly empire style; by 1865, fashion periodicals represented the majority of their fashions with slightly raised waistlines. In actuality, photographs do not show uniform adherence to this change. Especially in the south, the ability to rework a gown to raise the waistline would have presented problems for many women. The problem was not in shortening the bodice but in being able to then lengthen the skirt to maintain the unchanged total garment length. McMurry's study of extant dresses from the 1860s does not support an actual change in the waistline position. Her theory is that the increased detail and lengthening back of the skirt might have given an impression of a raised waistline in some fashion illustrations and photographs.

From 1860 through 1865, the majority of bodices were made attached to the skirt. Bodices that were joined to the skirt were often piped or corded, but some were joined into an inset waistband. Waistband seams were not usually corded. Dresses with gathered fitting were more often inset into waistbands than were fitted bodices. Short bodices that were made separate from the skirt early in the decade were usually finished at the lower edge with corded piping and were cut slightly longer than the waist to cover the skirt waistband. A style seen occasionally had tabs or elongated decorative flaps that extended several inches below the waist in the back and were often elaborately trimmed. As the lower back of the figure gained prominence through drawing back the drapery and creating greater fullness below the back waist, bodices

were more often made separate from the skirt. Separate bodices also were made with either a single or double point at the center front lower edge.

Another feature seen with increased frequency in the late 1860s and into the 1870s was a below-the-waist addition to the separate bodice which was called a "*basque*," thereby confusing the use of the term to some degree. Even within a few months, *Godey's* used the term "*basque*" to describe two very different styles. In the February 1864 steel fashion plate, the dress described as having a basque features a short jacket, rising almost to the waist on the sides, and dropping to about six inches below the waist in the back, where the fabric is divided into three petals that are bound along the edges and trimmed with small pompom fringe. Just five months later, the February 1865 fashion plate features a dress with a basque which is a full-blown jacket buttoning to the waist in front, then flaring outward for what appears to be about 10 inches. The jacket then tapers down into a much longer back, perhaps as much as 18–20 inches below the waist, with no interruption of trim; both jackets have the coat-style sleeve.

In most cases, use of the term "*basque*" referred to a skirted (or peplum) bodice, especially as back fullness increased to bustle proportions. When the bustle effect was at its largest, the basque bodice was the only type easily worn. The back of the jacket would be either split or pleated so that it could expand over the bustle and cover the waistband, and often a portion of the skirt as well. In the interest of saving as much fabric as possible, any part of the garment not intended to be seen was often made of a less expensive fabric than that used for the garment proper. The skirt portion of the jacket was several inches long in the back, often coming over the fullest part of the hips, and could be either the same length all around or shorter in the front. In most cases, the above and below waist portions of the basque were cut together as one piece, and waistline fitting was accomplished by horizontal as well as vertical darts and curved vertical seams. Surprisingly, very few basques during this time were seamed at the waist, a design detail that would have allowed more economy of fabric and also would have allowed more fullness to be introduced below the waist more easily.

Bodice Fit

The most common bodice fitting style was cut with a plain front and princess-seamed back. The front was cut in two identical pieces that closed at the center front and included two darts from the waistline toward the bust point. Less frequently, three darts were used on each side. The darts were closer together at the waist, fanning out slightly as they approached the bust. In many cases they were boned to maintain the shape of the dress. An alternative, less common, front cut had

princess seaming from the waist to about mid armscye. Both of these front styles yielded a smooth fit and also required construction skill to render the bodice an exact match for the wearer. A more forgiving cut, and one more appropriate for work clothing, substituted gathers for darts and shaped seams. Some gathered the fullness cut in from the shoulders only at the waist, but others exhibited gathers at the upper part of the shoulder seam as well as at the waist. *Godey's Lady's Book* pictured such a dress in brown in their April 1861 issue, referring to it as a nurse's dress. The back is not visible, but extant dresses show such a cut with a back yoke of about six inches, with the lower portion of the bodice gathered into the yoke and then into the waist.

In fitted bodices, the back was cut in three pieces. The center back piece was somewhat T-shaped, included the upper armscye, and then curved severely in toward the center as it approached the waist. The side back pieces that set into this were also curved deeply so that the resulting seams produced a very close fit. Boning at the center back seam and partially up the side back seams was common. Basque bodices also fitted very tightly with boning that extended from above to below the waist, thus enhancing the vertical line of the female silhouette.

The majority of surviving dresses from this period show evidence of having been lined, even if the lining is not still intact. Glazed cotton, cotton twill, and similar fabrics were used for lining. Lining was an area for creativity when supplies were limited, and some bodices in museum collections show a variety of lining fabrics used within a single garment. Linings not only gave support and body to dress fabrics, they also absorbed much of the abrasion from boned corsets and added longevity to the dresses.

In addition to linings, many bodices were made with built-in support that fastened separately from the bodice closure with hooks and eyes, often the flat brass type. These underpinnings resembled a corset somewhat in that they were usually boned and added support to garments that fitted tightly over them as well as to those that closed with loose, unsecured folds. These built-ins were used in the loosely gathered bodice styles, and would have provided some level of figure control even if the dress was worn without the usual corset.

A final element contributing to the fit of bodices was padding to enhance the wearer's form. Breast pads have been found in surviving garments, usually made of wool or cotton wadding and shaped into pancake-like inserts that are found more often above the breasts. These would have filled in hollows that appeared from the full top of the bust to the immediately smaller area at the armscye of the dress. Some dresses have also been found with an early version of dress shields in place, made either of lining fabric, dress fabric, or some other fabric entirely and basted in place to protect the inside of the sleeve and of the dress in the area immediately under the arm.

Bodice Closure

In the early 1860s, most day dress bodices closed at the center front, although a few closed in the back. Front closures could be with buttons and buttonholes or with heavy hooks and eyes, which were used for hidden closures. Sometimes both would be used, the hooks and eyes taking the strain of a tight fit, while the buttoned garment could retain a smooth appearance and less likelihood of the buttonholes, made close to the garment edge, ripping out from wear. If a bodice was lined, the lining might close with hooks and eyes and the over bodice with buttons and buttonholes. Dresses lapped left over right as well as right over left.

Flat brass hooks and eyes were commonly used for closures in both under and over bodices. They were very strong and able to handle the stress of garments that fit the body very tightly. In some cases, the buttons were sewn on as decoration with the actual closure accomplished by hidden hooks and eyes. From 1865 through 1875, most common were hand-worked buttonholes covered with heavy thread in a knotted stitch. McMurry's study of 31 extant dresses from the period included seven closing only with hooks and eyes in the front, 12 with both worked buttonholes and buttons, six with buttons sewn on for decoration but without worked buttonholes, two that hooked in the back, and two that had no closures at all in the bodice proper, but had loose folds of fabric covering a hooked underbodice. Shank-style buttons were by far the most common, often formed over wooden molds.

Reference to the use of buttoned closures in *Godey's Lady's Book* increased from 15 in 1860 to 33 in 1865. Buttons were frequently covered with fabric, either matching the garment or of contrasting trim such as velvet. Of the 33 references noted in 1865, the largest number (7) were to velvet buttons, followed by steel (6), jet (5), and pearl (5). Also mentioned were gilt, white, silk, fancy, black, chenille, and novel-shaped. Crocheted buttons over a rigid mold are evident on surviving dresses.

As the basque bodice became more and more popular through the late 1860s through 1875, front closures with worked buttonholes became the norm. These buttonholes were typically worked very close to the front edge of the basque and placed very close together.

Clara Barton, 1870. The bodice closure is typical of the time with closely spaced, worked buttonholes. Barton's hair style and jewelry are also typical of the time. (Library of Congress)

Sleeve Treatments

The full bell-shaped or pagoda sleeve of the previous period continued in evidence in fashion plates through 1864, each year showing fewer and fewer. The last ones pictured were significantly smaller at the bottom than in 1860. When worn, the pagoda sleeve was wide at the base and accompanied by an undersleeve that could itself be wide and open, finished with flounces of self fabric or lace, or closed at the wrist with a narrow band. The undersleeve and chemisette or collar were often made as a set with matching embroidery or other type of trim. The bell sleeve most often ended above the wrist, allowing a few inches of the undersleeve to show. Both shorter and longer versions were also worn. In April 1863, the fashion editor gave directions for a bell-shaped undersleeve that she referred to as being in the style of the "old" pagoda, an epithet that signaled the passage of this sleeve style as an item of fashionable dress.

Two other types of sleeves predominated during this five-year period, both concurrent with, then replacing the pagoda style. The bishop sleeve was especially suited to work and everyday dresses and is the type most often seen in photographs from the Civil War period. The bishop sleeve was gathered or pleated at both the top and bottom, although the fashion periodicals used some leeway in how they applied the term. Some sleeves shown in black-and-white illustrations with more detailed instructions for sewing did not display gathers or pleats and were still called a bishop sleeve. In general, however, accepted usage of the term is to indicate a sleeve with fullness that is controlled at the top and bottom. Civil War photographs show a large number of women dressed in sleeves of this type. The sleeves appear to be cut in a curved manner, shorter at the inside of the arm, so that the resulting shape is curved with fullness over the elbow. Pictured cuffs appear to fit the wrist fairly closely, fastening with buttons. Cuff widths varied from a narrow band to deep gauntlets fastened with several buttons.

Fashionable additions to the bishop sleeve as well as to some of the other types were epaulette-style oversleeves, also called "jockeys." In some cases, these were puffed, but in most instances they were flared and edged with trim, almost like little skirts that belled out over the low sleeve cap. Some children's short sleeves of the period echoed this structural detail.

The third type of sleeve that was in general use during this period was a tailored, two-piece coat sleeve. The term itself was used in fashion periodicals of the day. In construction, the technique, if not the dimensions, was identical to a tailored coat sleeve of today. The upper portion of the sleeve was cut in one piece with a convex curve over the elbow and a concave curve at the inside of the arm. The under part of the sleeve repeated this curve sequence, so that when seamed together, the sleeve had a very definite curve that would have followed the curve of a slightly relaxed

arm, smaller on the inside of the elbow and larger, curving, around the outside of the elbow.

In dimensions, the coat sleeve could be quite large, especially if it was designed to be worn over undersleeves or a guimpe with puffed sleeves. As early as 1860, *Godey's Lady's Book* made references to a tight fitting coat style sleeve, but few examples are pictured throughout the war years. The following description appeared in the January 1860 issue: "For plainer dresses, the great novelty is the introduction of tight sleeves, as in the gored dress of October number, and demi-tight, as in the fashion-plate. . . . When the sleeve is quite close to the arm, it has often a jockey, puff, or short flounce at the shoulder, flat bows, or macaroons, going from the wrist half way to the elbow. Demi-tight coat sleeves, with a seam on the back as well as the inside of the arm, are in very good taste" (91). Many sleeves shown in period photographs were made with jockeys, and these were either trimmed in keeping with the remainder of the garment or left plain. For fabric with a linear pattern, such as plaids, checks, or stripes, the jockey would usually be made in a contrasting cut to the rest of the sleeve to give it prominence.

Most of the coat sleeves in this period did not end in cuffs, but were often trimmed so that there was the appearance of a separate insertion at the bottom. In June 1860, *Godey's* suggested having two sets of sleeves for traveling dresses, one moderately tight and the other flowing. The tight one was to be worn for traveling, and the suggestion included making a dozen pairs of "plain linen wristbands, an inch and a half wide, where a relay of undersleeves, or even time to make the change, is not always to be had" (573).

Regardless of sleeve style during the first 10 years of this period, all had a long shoulder seam, creating a very low armscye which gave an elongated, sloping appearance to the shoulders. McMurry's study of American dresses found shoulder seams as long as nine inches, and none shorter than about seven inches, excluding dresses with short sleeves. Even nightgowns were constructed with a very long shoulder seam and resulting dropped armscye. The construction detail resulted in a small armscye which was somewhat restrictive of movement. Armscye seams were usually finished with piped cording, a detail which would have added significant reinforcement to what would have been an area of considerable stress on the garment.

From the late 1860s through 1875, the coat style of sleeve predominated and was more closely fitted to the arm than previously. The armscye also began to raise so that it would fall approximately at the top of the shoulder in some dresses by 1875. The raised armscye and higher cap to the sleeve gave a more erect appearance to the upper body as well as greater freedom of movement.

Undersleeves or cuffs were worn with virtually every type of sleeve. As indicated earlier, there was good sense and economy in protecting ones

best clothing from soiling and wear, and many of the ornamentation of the garments were also very functional. Separate cuffs or undersleeves of washable linen or cotton were especially useful for women who worked at all with their hands. If the silk or wool of the dress itself became soiled at the sleeve edge, the cuff would cover it up.

For formal, or evening, dress for younger adult women as well as for young girls' formal and summer day dresses, short sleeves were appropriate. Older women often did not adopt the typical formal attire shown worn by younger women but appeared at formal occasions wearing clothing made in the same style as their best day clothing, although perhaps trimmed more richly. The short sleeves of formal or day wear were generally puffed, with gathers at the top and bottom. Other styles were flounced. In any case, they were made to create fullness around the upper part of the arm. The very low, dropped shoulder was used on the short sleeve style as well as on dresses with longer sleeves. In almost all cases, short sleeves and low necklines appear together on dresses.

Waists

Waists, or what we would today call blouses, came into use during the 1860s. The waist was a style of garment for the straitened circumstances of the South, as well as for many women in difficult circumstances. If called a "waist," the garment would certainly have been made of a fabric not intended to match the skirt with which it was worn. When dresses gave out at the bodice, they could be remodeled by ripping off the bodice, adding a waistband, and wearing the garment with a waist, often combined with a jacket or a wide belt. The Garibaldi shirt was such a garment and one frequently mentioned in fashion periodicals. It is evident in period photographs as well, often made in dark fabrics. In March 1862, *Godey's* recommended the Garibaldi shirt, particularly for home dress and for young ladies. It was recommended to trim it with black braid on the pleats and cuffs of the sleeve and wear it with a piqué collar and cuffs. (311) The Garibaldi was recommended in red, but was made in other colors as well, mostly dark or rich colors. The red tones were favorite, as evidenced by the use of the term to refer to colors such as salmon or scarlet ("scarlet, or Garibaldi-colored"). It is difficult to determine a precise definition for a Garibaldi, other than it was worn as a blouse or shirt with a skirt of unmatched fabric. Early mentions of the term were used in *Godey's* to describe outerwear and then a boy's suit. An introduction of the garment as a new style for women was made in the January 1862 issue:

> CONSPICUOUS among the Parisian novelties of the season, and to all appearances destined to produce a change amounting to revolution in

> ladies' costume, is the Garibaldi shirt, which can be had in printed flannel, merino, muslin de laine, printed cambric, foulard, or pique. In shape and pattern it is made in the same way as a gentleman's shirt, with plaits in front, extending just below the waist, full sleeve, small collar, and cuffs to turn down, corresponding with the collar, all being of one material; the ends are left so as to go underneath the dress skirt, and are long enough to allow of the shirt hanging over in bag fashion all round, producing an easy and graceful effect. It is the prettiest and most elegant garment that a lady can put on for morning, breakfast, or demi-toilet, and is already in great demand in fashionable circles. (*Godey's Lady's Book*, January 1862).

In July of that same year, the regular "Chitchat upon the Fashions of New York and Philadelphia" described white waists with box-pleated fronts, tucked backs and very wide sleeves. The author says that the waists "could be worn as Garibaldies, or plain waists at pleasure," but does not note what is needed to transform the white waist into a Garibaldi. Descriptions continued through 1865. Instructions for making them were varied: They were to be made of striking colors and trimmed only with contrast; they were to be made of white muslin and trimmed with puffs, tucks, and insertions; or they were to be made of white alpaca trimmed with magenta ribbon. These shirts were either gathered or pleated into a waistband or were cut longer and tucked inside the skirt waistband. After 1865, this fashion item waned as the longer basque bodice became more popular.

Dress Skirts

Because of its large size, the dress portion of women's dresses made the greatest contribution to the overall appearance and also consumed the greatest amount of textiles. The skirt during the war years remained extremely full at the bottom and gradually changed shape from a circular dome to a more tapered bell. *Godey's* made reference to the new shape as early as January 1860, referring to the hoops that supported the new shape as "taking the form of an umbrella." By 1865, the change is notable in fashion plates, less so in photographs, especially of Southern and frontier women.

At its fullest point at the hem, women's skirts were usually over three yards but rarely the six or ten that are occasionally reported and were mentioned in *Godey's*. All of the dresses from 1860–1865 in the McMurry's study fell between slightly more than three yards to slightly more than four and one-half yards. When the dome shape was worn, even gauging—usually hand whipped to the waistband or bodice—of the fullness all around the waist was most typical. There would have been a huge differential to accommodate in setting the skirt to the bodice or to

a waist band, and the technique most commonly used contributed to the full effect immediately below the waist. By 1865, more dresses showed a tapering bell shape, and the method of controlling the fullness had begun to diversify as well.

Double or even triple box pleats created a thick but flat waistline seam. Many fashion plates illustrate this method of controlling fullness, and surviving dresses attest to its usefulness. Knife pleats were also popular, usually lapping toward each other at the center front and center back. Skirts were made with full breadths of fabric as well as tapered, or gored, sections and occasionally godets inserted from the hemline to increase the fullness there. When some excess fabric was cut from the seams as they sloped toward the waistline, a still flatter effect was achieved. The February 1861 *Godey's Lady's Book* gave the following instruction regarding the method and results for creating a gored skirt: "In some of the gored dresses—we mean where each separate breadth of a plain skirt is gored—one edge of each breadth is trimmed and made to lap over the next. It is a pretty style for some materials. Skirts gored in this way insure a good slope, and are generally becoming; but few people like to waste the material, and prevent all future repairs by turnings, upside-down, where economy is a consideration, as we are glad to suppose it is with most of our readers" (191). Only one of the 1860–1865 dresses in the McMurry study had a gored skirt, but in the second half of the decade this construction technique increased to accommodate the required flatness for the accepted fashion silhouette. By the end of the decade, fashionable skirts were often made quite flat in front, often by virtue of two shaped front gores, with all of the skirt's fullness thrown to the back with pleats or gauging. By the 1867, the most fashionable style of skirt was nearly flat in front, with gores used to create the smooth effect over the stomach and sometimes hips, depending on the amount of drapery used in an ornamental fashion. As skirts became more elaborate and the bustle entered the fashion scene, nearly all fashionable dresses were made of gored or pieced sections. By 1875, the overall circumference of the skirt was reduced and also concentrated in the back with a very flat and straight front.

Flounced skirts continued to be featured in fashion periodicals throughout the early 1860s but do not appear as frequently in collections or photographs. One dress in the McMurry study, a printed muslin summer dress, had four flounces, each sewn to an underskirt with the hem edge free. Flounces would appear to be an ideal structure to handle the size differential of typical waist and hemline circumferences, but they also were much more tedious to construct and yielded a garment with little potential to be reworked. In the first half of the decade, the long plain skirt was by far more common for all but the fanciest of formal garments or the few who could afford the latest fashions.

As flounces disappeared and the skirt became elliptical by the mid 1860s, other types of drapery were introduced, and the relatively plain full skirt gave way to more complicated constructions that used two layers of skirt, the overskirt and underskirt. The upper front of the underskirt, if visible, was often plain, but ornamentation increased at the lower edge. Often two types of companion fabric were used for both layers, but the same fabric was also used with trimming highlighting the structural edges in many cases. Dresses that were not truly made in multiple layers were sometimes trimmed to imitate the new fashion.

In the late 1860s, many skirts not only were constructed of two parts, but the top layer began to take on a variety of shapes by means of drawing up with cords to create poufs of fabric. Although the fashion was often described as functional in origin to protect walking dresses from soiling and wear, it became a fad in all types of women's clothing. In the April 1867 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, every dress pictured with the exception of a riding costume was double skirted. From the late 1860s through 1875, dress skirts become so complicated in their construction and method of looping up and puffing out that it was difficult even for women at the time always to know instinctively how they were meant to be worn: "So many of the polonaises are so much looped in the skirt behind, that it requires some talent to find out how one's folds, flaps, fans, and other imaginative draperies are to be worn when new models are sent home. There are buttons and loops, strings, hooks and eyes, and buttonholes, in such profuse selection, that some ladies twist their dress skirts up all wrong" (*Godey's Lady's Book*, August 1872, 197). The resulting appearance of the female form has been likened to a piece of upholstered furniture. Many of the poufs of drapery began at the side, so that the skirt created a rather large footprint, albeit considerably smaller than in the early 1860s. Combined with a bodice that still appeared to have a somewhat shorter than normal waist and slim-fitting sleeves on many dresses, the figure was definitely bottom heavy.

By the 1870s, the drapery was more frequently confined to the extreme back of the dress, creating a much slimmer silhouette when viewed from the front. Although hoops, half hoops, or small crinolines were used in some cases to support the back of the garment, they were decidedly out of favor by the 1870s, replaced in most cases by stiffened fabric undergarments that were ruffled, poufed, or otherwise constructed to hold out the bustle portion of the new skirt fashions. Many skirts of the period were lined, another feature that prolonged their useful life by protecting them from the abrasive wear of the hoops. Linings also gave more body to the skirts and helped, in the absence of sufficient petticoats, to camouflage the sharp rings of the hoops. Linings were of cotton or linen, both glazed and unglazed. In addition to linings, most skirts had at least one additional layer of fabric used to face the hem, and sometimes interfacing

as well. Wool braid was also applied to the inside of the hems. All of these fabrics helped protect the bottom of the dress from the greatest danger to its longevity, which was the dirt and abrasion associated with its proximity to floors, streets, and dirt.

Dresses lengths were close to the ground for adult women. Skirts made longer in the back, or trained, were featured in many fashion periodicals. They were especially popular as the domed and then bustled skirt shapes came into fashion. Because of the obvious increase in soiling and abrasion during wear, trained skirts were limited to wear at special occasions and/or adoption by women of considerable means. Photographs of women obviously at work or prepared for work often show a slight elevation so that the skirt did not actually touch the ground as long as a woman maintained upright posture. Other photographs show skirts that obviously did touch, occasionally even slightly drag on the ground. Even a slight difference in hoop size, number of petticoats worn, degree of stiffness of those petticoats, and other factors could have made achieving consistent fit of skirt length a difficult process. Skirts that were constructed to be worn over a certain circumference of hoops or petticoats would be longer on the body if worn over smaller ones. Women traveling on the frontier or those fleeing Northern invaders to the South often found themselves unable to carry with them all of the parts of their wardrobe to which they were accustomed, again resulting in variety in the appearance of hem lengths. In almost all cases, however, the skirts by adult women would rarely be more than a very few inches above the ground, so that women's shoes are almost never seen in photographs and usually were not depicted in fashion illustrations.

Princess Dresses

In October 1861, the author of "Chitchat upon Philadelphia and New York Fashions" in *Godey's Lady's Book* made the following pronouncement regarding dresses that were cut all or partially in one piece from the shoulder to the hem, today called a princess style:

> The style of dress known as the "Gabrielle" will still be popular this fall for street or house dresses, for the mixed woollen stuffs especially. It is more generally known as "the gored dress." The *Imperatrice* is a decided improvement on the original Gabrielle; it is more graceful and more easily worn by all figures. In front it is formed like a long casaque, widening considerably at the bottom. At the seam, under the arm, there are wide plaits, like other dresses, and the back is flat and rounded at the waist; the sleeves are with elbows and turned back cuffs. (359)

Two dresses were featured in that month's fashion plate and in subsequent years of the period. None appeared in McMurry's study of

dresses from these years, and it is sometimes difficult to identify them in photographs. Women's writings give evidence that the princess style of dress was adapted, even in the South during the war years. A Gabrielle dress was among the presents Amanda Worthington received when her sister navigated the wartime conditions to travel to New Orleans from Greenville, Mississippi to purchase goods.

The princess cut was an extravagant garment for the times and place. By cutting bodice and skirt in one, skill in cutting and fitting were crucial, as a mistake would ruin a huge length of fabric. Women who were not skilled at sewing and who did not have access to skilled assistance would have had considerable difficulty in adopting this style. In March of 1862, *Godey's* vetted them for the coming season but pronounced them on the way out after that. (311)

Jackets and Wraps

The terminology of outerwear (and of fashion in general) from this period is somewhat confusing in comparing correspondence and journals from the time to written descriptions found in fashion periodicals. Fashion terms often changed meaning over time, and people did not always use terms in the same context from place to place, or in general conversation as compared to the affected, European-inspired writing of the fashion periodicals. In spite of the inexact nature of the terms used, there are several common types of outerwear in use during the period. Women and children, especially, wore shawls, cloaks, coats, and jackets to keep warm in the winter. In summer, women typically wore light shawls or jackets for propriety or ornamentation or to meet the perceived demands of fashionable appearance.

The Zouave Jacket

The Zouave jacket was popular throughout the war years, often combined with the Garibaldi shirt and separate skirt. Usually made in dark colors, the Zouave jacket was cut like a bolero, coming high at the neckline and then curving away at the hem, which came about to the waistline. As it was an open garment, it was always worn over a shirt or waist. Like the Garibaldi, the Zouave showed military influence and was supposedly derived from the uniforms worn by European, and then American, military units. First photographed during the Crimean War, Zouave units were the elite of the French Foreign Legion and wore flashy uniforms of baggy trousers, open vests, long sashes, and tasseled hats. An American, Elmer Ellsworth, initiated an American unit in Chicago in 1860, and the units became highly popular throughout the country. The original prototype was made of red wool and decorated with black

Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, officer of the Federal Army and his wife, Ellen Mary Marcy. Mrs. McClellan wears what is essentially a Zouave jacket over her dress. Ruching of self-fabric rather than military-like braid is used for trim, 1860–1865. (Library of Congress)

braid looped and scrolled in a somewhat military fashion. Once the garment became popular, it was interpreted in many other fabrics and colors. Various forms of the bolero style, in most cases made with the coat style sleeve, were seen all over the country and appeared with regularity in fashion magazines and photographs of the time. Before it was called the Zouave jacket, a nearly identical style was described in Godey's Lady's Book simply as a jacket or a sleeveless jacket, if the model did not have sleeves.

Shawls

Shawls continued in popularity throughout the period, although they were supplanted by many other types of outerwear. India, or cashmere, shawls were the most valuable, reportedly costing over $1,000 to as much as $5,000 in 1860. *Godey's* reported in February of that year a full description of their manufacture and noting the scarcity of people with such fortunes to be able to afford them in the United States. Imitations made in France and England, as well as woven Paisley shawls from Scotland, were as popular and nearly as highly prized.

Shawls were worn both as long rectangles that looped over the arms or as triangles that covered the shoulders and arms. Square shawls were folded in half diagonally to create a triangular shape, and shawls that were knitted or crocheted were made as triangles. Some paisley shawls were woven in rectangles twice their width so they could be folded with the rough inner floats of colored yarns hidden in the middle. The resulting square was then folded a second time to create a triangle shape, usually with just the top corner turned down over the back by two or three feet and the remainder of the fabric making a large warp. These shawls were very thick and warm and were ideal for covering dresses with full hoop skirts. Other shawls worn for warmth were made from plain or printed cashmere, camel's hair, velvet, and wool. Shawls were also worn in summer and were made more for more decorative purposes. These could be made from lace, silk, organdy, or from the same material as the dress with which they would be worn.

Cloaks and Pardessus

Cloaks were circular garments that were cut with sufficient fullness to cover the large skirts of the time, and an amazing number of variations appeared in the fashion magazines under this term. What we would today call a "cape" was then called a "cloak," and the term "cape" was used to indicate a covering of the neck, either at the base of a bonnet or a separate very short garment that could be worn over a dress as a large collar, fastening at the neck, or over a cloak to provide additional warmth to the neck and shoulders.

In general, cloaks were cut, if not in a full circle, at least approaching that shape. Some were gored to produce a smoother fit at the top of the body, and to take less fabric. Others were pictured with yokes to which the flared pieces could be attached. Most were long, stopping a foot or so above the dress hemline, but a few were made shorter so that they cleared the hands and allowed freedom of movement without additional structural modifications.

Not all cloaks had hoods, but many did. Some styles featured shorter over-capes, like long pelerine collars, that served to cover the arms while still allowing the hands to be free. A few full styles of garments referred to as "cloaks" in the fashion columns even had arm slits in the sides; others were cut up from a long hemline to provide the same access, resulting in long, flap-like appendages in the front.

As most cloaks were winter garments intended for warmth, they were made in wool or velvet, sometimes trimmed in fur or swansdown, and were lined. They were occasionally made in the same fabric as the costume with which they were to be worn, but this would have been an extravagance that few women could have afforded. Plain cloth and dark colors would have suited the majority of America's women because of its serviceability with a wide variety of dress fabrics and patterns. The prevalence of dark colors was noted by *Godey's Lady's Book* in December 1862, praising the reappearance of red cloaks at a time of "public mourning, when our streets have worn so monotonous and sombre an aspect" (606). Most women of modest circumstance would have owned a single thick, warm cloak that would have been worn for the majority of outdoor activities. When cloaks became too worn to continue being used, they would have been cut down for children in the family, made into other garments, or used for work wear.

In the early 1860s, the term "*pardessus*" was used by fashion editors to indicate an outerwear garment that we would today call an overcoat. It was made in much the same fashion as a cloak, but with sleeves. It is difficult to determine the distinction between a sleeved cloak and a pardessus, and they may well have been the same thing. By 1865, *Godey's Lady's Book* pictured garments with arm slits rather than sleeves, clearly the same style as a cloak, and referred to them as pardessus. They served the same

The women gathered with officers on a garrison porch at Fort Monroe, Virginia, wear, from the left, a cape, or cloak, with slits rather than sleeves, a large shawl wrapped loosely around the arms, no wrap at all, and a short sacque jacket, 1864. (Library of Congress)

function, although many of the pardessus tended to have a closer fit in the upper body.

The Paletot

A short version of the pardessus, usually more fitted and appearing often in the same fabric as the dress, was known as the "*paletot*." It frequently pictured and described in fashion places throughout the period from 1860 to 1865. Many outfits were pictured in *Godey's Lady's Book* featuring the paletot, most of them appearing to be a suit, and occasionally they were referred to as suits. No mention was made of what was worn under the paletot, however, so it would appear that the paletot served as the dress bodice. Certainly the paletot could have served as an alternate bodice. It was considered an appropriate traveling garment, and, with a regular short bodice of matching fabric, it could easily have been replaced for dinners and receptions with a dressier look.

The paletot rarely was pictured falling below above-knee level. In almost all illustrations it is shown fairly closely fitted to the body, but an occasional illustration will show one that has some fullness in either the front or the back.

Undergarments and Nightwear

Throughout this period, undergarments played a critical role in providing the necessary constriction and extension required by fashionable silhouette. Undergarments also played an important role in preserving outerwear, given the limited means women had for cleaning silk and wool garments. Layers protected other layers from perspiration and body soil, while more layers protected the dress from abrasion caused by boned corsets. There were also garments for sleeping and relaxation that could be considered a form of undergarment, as they were not intended for public viewing.

The two most important components of a woman's understructure were the corset and the crinoline or hoops. Both of these garments changed in shape as fashions in outerwear changed. At times, hoops were declared out of fashion, and some women were seen either without them or at least with very limited hoops in the dress back only; corsets were rarely left off, even by dress reformers who adopted other aspects of healthful dress.

Corsets

In the early 1860s, corset styles tended to be short, as the full skirts of women's dresses provided such a contrast to the waist already that tightly laced corsets were not as necessary to create the wasp-waisted appearance that was considered the fashion ideal. Corsets of the period generally extending just a few inches below the waist, as women's hips would be completely invisible under their wide skirts. A short corset that was actually little more than a wide waist cincher was also occasionally worn and would have been an ideal undergarment for the waist and skirt fashions. In most regular corsets, the bust was covered, and often gored pieces created a type of bust cup. As the skirt shape changed to oval with a flatter front and more smoothness at the waist and hip area, corset length descended. By 1875, fashionable corsets were made to mid-hip length, as the typical silhouette at that point revealed the female form very distinctly from neckline to feet, at least in the front and at the sides.

Corsets were constructed of a variety of materials, from silk to heavy cotton twill. When gores were not used to provide extension above and below the waistline, numerous shaped pieces were seamed together to achieve the same results. Typically in a dress corset, every seam and dart was boned with whalebone, steel, or even oak splits for women in the South during the war years. Sometimes additional strips were placed in pockets to give rigidity to the corset. Busks, which were additional shaped pieces of stiffening, were inserted into the fronts of most corsets. Steam molding added a semi-permanent stiffening to corsets and made them less susceptible to breakage, a problem thousands of women faced

A longer corset was required for the styles popular by the 1870s. (Duke University Libraries Digital Collections)

when the pressures of the flesh were greater than the resistance of the boning used. Mending stays or corsets is a common refrain in many women's diaries of the period, as were steps taken to keep them from needing to be mended:

> This morning I concluded I would wash a pair of corsets of mine—I was afraid to trust them to Charlotte as they were my *pet* corsets; they fit me so nicely & were not the least worn out, only soiled, & I was afraid

> Charlotte would break the splits. So I took them myself & washed them with a *brush* & hot water & soap & they look almost as nice as new now—not a split in them broken. (Worthington, September 29, 1865)

Most corsets closed in the front with metal brads and eyelets, more rarely hooks and eyes, and laced in the back. Women who wore corsets that closed only in the back required assistance in dressing, and such corsets would not have found common acceptance for the majority of middle-class and working women. A woman who dressed herself would have had to adjust the lacing herself prior to putting on the corset, then hook it in front to complete dressing. A few corsets featured other methods of closure, such as buckles and straps, but the most common was the metal brad front closure. Its introduction in mid-century had all but assured the demise of the handmade corset for most women because the manufactured corset with its metal closure was much stronger and less likely to tear under the strain of wear.

So interwoven into the culture of femininity was the ideal shape that women in virtually every situation attempted to achieve at least something approaching that shape through the use of corsetry. There is no evidence to suggest that factory girls, frontier women, or even domestic servants did not wear corsets. In fact, the number of editorials published at the time deriding the fact that class distinctions were no longer clearly being made by women's clothing make it clear that nearly anyone who wished to could at least appear to be a proper lady. Maybe the best of ready-made corsets were beyond the reach of many women, but there were many levels of quality as well as secondhand goods, hand-me-downs from employers or family members, and patterns with which women could make their own corsets. Many corset manufacturers targeted working-class women in their advertisements, even to showing domestic servants obviously wearing a corset under their clothing. Price ranges of ready-made corsets also made it evident that they were being manufactured for a wide range of socioeconomic classes. Even women in penal, charitable, or mental institutions were provided with corsets, albeit of the roughest, least attractive kind. (Summers 2001, 10-17)

There was an association between virtue and lacing that few women wished to violate by leaving off their stays. The allusion to loosening one's stays as a prelude to sexual activity permeated everyday life, so that women who were called "*loose*" were not being described physically so much as morally. Other terms that were used to describe behavior were very closely linked to costume and appearance. Terms such as "*upright*," "*restrained*," or "*upstanding*" certainly describe a corseted woman's physical appearance as well as her reputation just as "*unbridled*," "*unrestrained*," and "*loose*" were epithets linked to appearance. A woman's body was not to be let loose to jiggle or sway or flop in such a way as to incite the base appetites of others or the woman herself. The body was to be constrained

within appropriate undergarments that were to be taken off only in privacy or within the confines of the marriage bedroom. Sarah Hale, editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, as well as author of several books covering etiquette, considered a woman's clothing to be an effective indication of her morality, and the corset was a requisite part of that appearance.

Although there is some disagreement as to the extent to which tight lacing of corsets negatively impacted feminine health, most authorities agree that much of the lore surrounding ultra-tight lacing is myth. Corsets were sold by waist measurement, and surviving corsets can certainly be measured, but the measurements do not indicate how closely the two halves were drawn together by the laces. Conceivably the back sections could have spread by several inches. Certainly during pregnancy they would have had to spread to accommodate the increasing stomach girth, as few women could afford to buy corsets specifically designed for maternity wear.

The dress reform movement offered an alternative to corsets that was designed to provide a more healthful garment while still preserving some of the staid posture society dictated for the virtuous woman. The emancipation waist was a closely fitted underbodice very similar to a closely fitted corset cover. The waist was proposed in the 1870s, when corsets were particularly long, high, and tight. Its main feature was that buttons along its lower edge allowed the weight of the skirt and petticoats to be borne by the waist and entire upper body rather than pulling directly on the woman's waist. Like many of the attempts to reform dress for rational or health reasons, the emancipation waist was not particularly successful.

Some women, no doubt, did carry lacing to an extreme that was injurious to their health, but evidence does not support the notion that this was ever anything more than a small minority, possibly with fetishistic or obsessive connotations. For most women, the corset was simply an accepted item of apparel they would not consider themselves dressed without, just as today women view wearing brassieres as essential (Kidwell & Steele, 52-53).

Hoops and Crinolines

If the corset was the barometer of a woman's morality, then the size of her crinoline might have been the barometer of her fashion consciousness. Both were a part of the language of dress. Hoops had been adopted almost universally in the 1850s, but they continued to be worn by most women who considered or wished to consider themselves fashionable through the 1860s, and with some modifications continued to be worn even in 1875. What changed was the circumference at the bottom, as well as the overall shape.

Made of graduated steel rings attached to vertical cloth tapes that sewed into a waistband, hoops were essentially wire cages that propelled the skirts outward away from the legs, giving them the desired sweep without

the weight of numerous petticoats to achieve the same spread. Amelia Bloomer, the woman whose name became associated with women's dress reform, believed the crinoline to be an acceptable alternative to the numerous, heavy petticoats required previously and is reported to have adopted the crinoline and given up the bloomers named for her.

A hoop from 1865 shows the modification in shape to allow a flat front and an oval rather than a round hem shape. (McCord Museum, M18825)

Lighter overall weight in the below-waist portion of the dress was certainly one result of wearing a crinoline. Disadvantages included their unpredictability outside in windy conditions, the difficulty of managing to sit in them without suffering accidental exposure when they flipped up or sideways, the range of motion they entailed and its negative impact on furnishings and knick-knacks about the house, as well as danger of fire because of the amount of oxygen available to feed the flame should the skirt sweep through the fireplace and begin to burn. Regardless of negatives, they were accepted and worn by all who could afford them or who could manage to do their required work while wearing them. Smaller hoops were recommended for women to wear when traveling or working, and *Godey's Lady's Book* even recommended having several sizes to accommodate a variety of activities. If a woman could afford only a single crinoline, then she was advised to go with a medium size that would be the most versatile.

Beginning with the severe change in silhouette occasioned by the adoption of the bustle in the 1870s, some hoops were left off altogether, but manufacturers were quick to develop new styles that would push out the back drapery of the new bustle shape. In February 1872, *Godey's Lady's Book* makes the following report on the modified crinoline:

> First, we have the tournure, or half crinoline, a design of which was given on the extension sheet of last month's magazine. Again, imagine an ordinary skirt, minus the front half of it; this front half is replaced by two bands, fastened together, and joined on to the tournure, which can be more or less puffed out according to taste. A very ingenious system of cords allows of its being enlarged or diminished at will. It is trimmed at the bottom with a deep flounce. This half crinoline is light and pleasant to wear; it is made of either white muslin or gray or scarlet woollen stuff. There is also another new crinoline, the front part of which forms a plain

apron; there is a tournure at the back, and two or three steel circles in the lower part, but at the back only; the front is buttoned all the way down. This crinoline is generally made for the winter of colored woollen material. (203)

The half crinolines were but a stopgap measure, however. The fashion life of the crinoline was for all practical purposes over by 1875: "Now that "tilting hoops" are going out of fashion, let one thing be said in their favor—the wearers of them were never liable to arrest for "having no visible means of support" (*Godey's Lady's Book*, October 1867, 366).

Drawers

An advertisement in the May 1871 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* gives a listing of the types and number of garments that a young woman preparing for marriage would be expected to have in her trousseau, the cost of the garments, and a total for the whole set of $230. While the complete trousseau would be beyond the reach of many women, the list gives an idea of the specific undergarments worn at the time and approximately what was recommended as an ideal number of each:

Clothing	Price for One	Total
6 Muslin Chemises	$2.50	$15.00
6 Linen Chemises	$5.00	$30.00
6 prs of muslin drawers	$2.00	$12.00
6 prs of linen drawers	$4.00	$24.00
3 Plain Skirts	$2.50	$7.50
3 Tucked Skirts	$3.50	$10.50
3 Muslin Night-dresses	$4.00	$12.00
3 Muslin Night-dresses	$5.00	$15.00
3 Tucked Yoke Cambric Night-dresses	$7.00	$21.00
3 Tucked Yoke Cambric Night-dresses, Embroidered	$10.00	$30.00
2 Flannel Skirts	$7.00	$14.00
3 Dressing Sacques	$4.00	$12.00
1 Delaine Robe	$15.00	$15.00
3 Corset Covers	$4.00	$12.00

The advertisement indicated that any single article or the entire package could be obtained from Lord & Taylor Ladies' and Children's Outfitting Department. The department store even offered to send out directions for measuring should the buyer require these, and the garment(s) could be sent C.O.D. as well (493).

The two items worn directly in contact with the body were the drawers and chemise, and these items would be required in the greatest number precisely because of their body contact. They would need to be made of wash cotton or linen and changed frequently as they were the first line of defense against soiling the corset and the silk and wool dresses that could not be laundered.

Drawers were two large tubes joined at the waist to a waistband with fabric extensions to fit around the buttocks and crotch. The crotch was not seamed together but was occasionally faced rather than hemmed to give added security and durability. Patterns and diagrams for drawers in *Godey's Lady's Book* in the 1860s showed straight legs with very few waistline gathers and a slightly shaped waistband. In 1862, more gathers at the waist increased the garment ease, and there was seaming from the waistline down for about five to seven inches. Also, the later drawers were finished with ruffles. Both types closed in the back with ties. In 1869, drawers were illustrated with fuller legs gathered into a band and ending with a ruffle. An innovation shown in 1870 was a narrow waistband in front and a drawstring in back, allowing for considerable adjustment in size for an expanding waistline. This style appeared to close at both sides with buttons and buttonholes.

The drawers for adult women usually came to just below the knees and were not intended to be seen. They were most usually made of white cotton or linen, fabrics that could be scrubbed and even boiled for cleaning, because both fibers increased in strength when wet. Decoration took the form of tucks, ruffles, and occasionally lace at the bottom edge. Fabric already decorated with pintucks, insertions, and handloom embroidery were widely available, so women who made their own drawers could still buy the tucked, gathered, or embroidered trims that made them attractive.

Drawers could were made with either straight waistbands that closed in the back or on the side, or occasionally were made with a pointed, yoke-like waistband. *Godey's Lady's Book* frequently published directions for making drawers, often indicating they are of a new style, but all looking nearly identical throughout this period. Only slight differences in fabric, closure, waistband shape, and trimming distinguished one pair from the other.

Chemise

Sketches of and directions for making chemises were also provided in most of the women's magazines, and women's letters and diaries indicate they frequently made these garments themselves. Like drawers,

chemises were made large, so fitting was not a problem. Even women who were sorely pressed to make a good job of fitting fashionable dresses could easily master the straight cuts and simple construction of these undergarments. The chemise throughout this period was characterized by low necklines, very short sleeves, and approximate knee length.

The main fitting area of the chemise was the band that constituted the neckline. Very similar to a narrow yoke, the band was made of a double thickness of fabric, usually the same kinds of wash fabrics used for drawers. The main body of the chemise was then gathered or tucked into the band. Some chemise patterns featured a short placket in the center front for opening, but many were made with a low enough neckline that no additional opening was required; they could be pulled on over the head. Sleeves were extremely short, often little more than a slightly shaped band attached at the armscye location, which was low on the arms as it was with bodice sleeves. An occasional pattern will feature underarm gussets, which would have increased the garment's comfort and allowed more upper arm mobility. Those would have been particularly useful for working women.

As with drawers, a wide variety of quality and elaboration were possible on the chemise. At its simplest, it protected the corset from direct contact with the body. The chemise could be removed, laundered, and replaced many times before the corset became soiled enough to require the dreaded laundering that might break its bones and initiate a lengthy repair session. It could also be used as a nightgown when the more typical long gown with sleeves was either unavailable or too hot for comfort. Other than modes of trimming and opening, the basic shape, fit, and purpose of the chemise changed very little during the years of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

At its most ornamented, it was an element of under attire that could be seductive, its viewing a possible indication of impending sexual availability of the wearer.

Corset Cover

The chemise and drawers went on first, followed by the corset, and then the corset cover was the final layer of protection for the corset. As bodices were often boned there was a potential for abrasion that would wear away at the corset, the more expensive item, other than hoops, of the entire undergarment suite. The corset cover was a short body or waist that was made of white cotton or occasionally linen. Women writing about this garment often called it an underbody. A front buttoned closure was common as was a waistband at the waist edge. If there were sleeves, they were short, adding some protection to the underarm area,

as this is the part of extant garments from this period that show the most degradation from perspiration. Occasionally a dress shield of sorts will be found in garments, but most women relied on their layers of lingerie to provide the most protection.

Hosiery

Although women's feet were not often shown in fashionable attire, it was nevertheless considered requisite to wear stockings to protect the legs and feet and to prolong the life of shoes. Knitted stockings and socks were commercially made and available at this time, but most of them were seamed along the bottom of the foot and the back leg. For fine stockings knit of silk, the seams were not particularly uncomfortable, but for wool or cotton stockings meant for winter and/or work dress, they could be most uncomfortable, leading many women to knit their own in the round, avoiding the abrasive seams.

Other women, such as Amanda Worthington, used old garments, presumable made of machine knit fabric, to make stockings during the war: "After dinner I began making me a pr. Stockings out of an old undershirt of Bert's, as I am extremely *hard up* for stockings–mine being literally of the *darndest* kind" (June 1, 1863).

Beginning in the early 1860s, small, circular knitting machines were advertised both for family and for industrial use. They were described as being so simple in operation that even children could master them, and the possibility of setting up small household manufacturing operations was suggested as well as using the machines just for the family's needs. Industrial use of knitting machines increased rapidly along with constant improvements in the technology of machine operation as well as the various parts that made production more consistent and efficient.

In the United States, production value of the knitting industry climbed from slightly over four million dollars in 1860 to nearly eleven million in 1870. These figures included knitted hose and socks for men, women, and children, as well as shirts, drawers, suspenders, caps, gloves, shawls, and a variety of similar garments that were made from cotton, wool, and silk (Wehrle 1995, 54). The machines could shape garments directly as they were being knitted, leaving just a few seams to be constructed to complete the garment. Some knitted all-in-one garments would be suggested by reformers as the ideal protective undergarment for women and children, particularly if made of wool. Although the alternative garments were not widely adapted by women, knitted hosiery certainly was, especially of the finer yarns and of silk fiber, which would have been very time consuming to knit by hand because of the very small gauge, or number of stitches per inch of fabric.

One of the first such garments, patented in 1868, was the emancipation union under flannel, which combined top and drawers in one. Another version was patented in 1875 and named by its designer, Susan Converse, the Emancipation Suit. Converse's design featured separating drawers and bodice which could be buttoned together at the hips. These garments were no doubt adopted by a few women interested in increased warmth and comfort, but for the most part they penetrated fashion in only a very small way, public opinion being fairly constant that an uncorseted woman was a loose woman (Cunningham, n.d.).

Petticoats

The introduction of the hoop had eliminated the need for multiple petticoats to hold out the wide skirts, but petticoats were still needed to cover the hoop when it was worn so that the steel rings would not be visible as breaks in the skirt fabric. As skirt fullness moved toward the back, so did the fullness in petticoats, so that by 1875, petticoat fronts have no gathers at all, and the back is made slightly longer and very fully gathered. Usually made of cotton and following the general shape of skirts, petticoats added another layer of protection for garment fabric and also added warmth and weight to the wearer. In winter, at least one petticoat could be made of flannel for added warmth; in summer, lighter fabrics would have been chosen.

Sleep and Leisure Wear

Nightgowns were pictured in many of the women's magazines of the time, and both patterns and instructions were provided for making and trimming them. In style, most pictured nightgowns are long and tapered several inches toward the back, creating a slight train effect. Many artifacts from the period exhibit this same style. Front buttoning closures were most typical, and the sleeve followed the general styles of outer garments with the greatly elongated shoulder seam and dropped, small armscye. As with the chemise, drawers, and corset covers, trim varied from nonexistent to extremely elaborate, with tucks, pleating, lace, and embroidery. White cotton was the most prevalent fabric used for its comfort, ease of care, and economy.

The term "*sacque*" was used to describe a loosely fitting coat or jacket, and it was also used in reference to robes, both long and short, that were worn upon rising from bed, during periods of illness and convalescence, or for relaxing before beginning the process of formal dressing. The term was also used for loose dresses or jackets that could be worn during pregnancy. Some diarists used the term "*wrapper*" for what would seem to be the same type of garment, an informal and

loosely fitted gown that would be worn at home for doing housework and could also be used as a maternity garment when and if the need arose.

Menstrual Products

Although not technically clothing in the accepted sense and certainly not fashionable in any sense, menstrual products were nonetheless required by women, and a number of inventors were interested enough to apply for patents for products that would, they hoped, help ease women's concerns about flow that would stain their clothing during the menses. Kidd and Farrell-Beck's study of U.S. menstrual product patents between 1854 and 1921 is an exhaustive treatise of a major developmental period in commercial menstrual products for women. Support systems and either an absorption or a collection method were patented, usually separately, but were developed tangentially as they had to function together. Supporters could be suspended from either the waist or the shoulders and ended in front or behind with clips or some method of attaching the supporter to either an absorbent bandage/napkin or to a "*catamenial* sack," one of the common names given to the non-absorbent receiver. The latter was made of rigid material which received and held the menstrual discharge until emptied and cleaned for repeated use. Vulcanized rubber was the preferred material for menstrual receivers, lined with a textile fabric for improved comfort. For women who suffered damage during childbirth, continual discharges resulted, requiring the use of these products at all times (Kidd and Farrell-Beck 1997).

Accessories

Purses

Purses are rarely in evidence in period photographs or in the fashion plates by which word of the latest styles was spread. *Godey's Lady's Books* throughout this period did, however, give instructions for the making of small bags or purses which could be carried via a chain or cord suspended from a clip or hook-like mechanism attaching to the belt. Most of these bags with chains were attached to a metal frame at the top with the bottom hanging free and rather soft. Some small bags closed instead with drawstrings. In the April 1861 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, such a purse is shown with indication it is to be attached to a gilt clasp (meaning the frame as well). All were relatively small and could be used in place of pockets when the latter were not available and a woman needed to carry money or keys or other small items. These could be knitted or crocheted, and some often contained beading that was

incorporated into the actual structure during construction. Charts for creating colored designs with beads were widely available in magazines and needlework books, which also contained elaborate instructions for a variety of needlework types. So common was the habit of making these small purses that the silk used for their construction was referred to throughout *Godey's* as "*purse silk*" regardless for what use it was being prescribed.

In addition to handmade bags, manufactured bags were available in leather, needlepoint, and a variety of other materials, including those used for handmade items. The increasing availability of trains with the laying of new tracks and the completion of the transcontinental railroad gave rise to a new kind of bag, called a "handbag." Originally the handbag was intended for travel and was made larger than the small purses previously typical and most often of leather or at least a heavy fabric. The handbags constituted a type of luggage for women as they traveled and were made substantial enough in size to carry a few necessary items during the trip but not so large as to be unwieldy for women who might have to retrieve and carry their own bags. By December 1872, instructions for making one of these appeared in *Godey's*. The bag measured 17 inches by 16 inches and was constructed of thick cardboard sandwiched between two sheets of thin leather, the outer one enhanced with embroidery.

Gloves

From 1860 until the end of the decade, short gloves coming just over the wrist were preferred for all but formal/evening occasions, in which case longer gloves of white kid, coming to or even over the elbows were worn with evening dress. Colored gloves became more popular than the standard ivory or black after 1870, although they are mentioned prior to that in *Godey's*. Most references to proper attire for horseback riding indicate soft leather gauntlet gloves as the best choice. For women of fashion, any public or semi-public event would have dictated wearing gloves, but for the majority of American women gloves were not seen as a fashion or social requirement with the possible exception of events such as attending church, funerals, or weddings or traveling by public conveyance. Gloves were also worn for warmth in cold weather, and specialty gloves for gardening or heavy cleaning were used for utilitarian purposes.

Hats and Hairdressing

For church, traveling, or attending many daytime social occasions, women typically wore a hat or bonnet. Those functions that indicated gloves as appropriate would also have dictated a head covering. For formal

evening events, women more typically dressed their hair with flowers, ribbons, decorative or some combination of those, with only older women wearing a bonnet or hat. At home, those same older women would have worn a soft cap over their hair, while the majority of women did not when inside.

Hairpieces helped many women achieve the high, piled or braided styles popular in the 1870s. (Hulton Archives/Getty Images)

For most of the 1860s, women wore their hair very simply parted in the middle and combed to the back, where it was caught in a net or twisted into a bun. Many of the nets used for this purpose were of thick yarn or even narrow, knotted ribbon, which also could be further decorated with embroidery or beads at the crossing of the net material. The hair was combed back from the face and rolled under with the net keeping the roll in place. A comb often held the top of the net in place at the crown of the head or even closer to the front if the comb was also highly decorative. Hair worn with nets usually just covered the back of the neck. Fine nets, having no decorative function, were worn at home just to control the hair when more elaborate arrangements were not desirable. For young, unmarried women, hair was often worn loose, especially if it contained some natural curl. Quite a few photographs turn up in private collections and some publications showing that loose hair was certainly a choice that was available. It is nearly impossible, however, to find drawings or photographs of women with side parts. The power of social expectations was so great that even to diverge from that expectation in parting one's hair was nearly unthinkable.

The other popular method of dressing the hair in the early years of this period was to twist it into a soft bun held in place with hairpins and often combs as well. The hair was slightly puffed over the ears and the bun worn slightly above the neck. For evening or when not wearing a head covering, a braid was sometimes wrapped around the top of the head. Often these were made of false hair, as there were ample devices available to add to the coiffure when needed.

These early hairstyles were complemented by bonnets that covered much of the head and framed the face with a brim that turned outward (spoon bonnets). Wide ribbons held them in place under the chin, where the large bow that resulted when the ribbons were tied all but hid the wearer's neck. An enormous variety of trim was used to effect some

sense of uniqueness in this basic shape and style of head covering. Women who could not afford to have a new hat or bonnet could have nearly the same thing through a change of trimmings at a nominal cost. New ribbon, bows, flowers, fruit, and similar items could totally change the color scheme and look of a bonnet.

Although fashion writers maintained a distinction between the terms "*bonnet*" and "*hat*," most women did not, and it is nearly impossible to distinguish them from photographs and most drawings, especially those intended for public viewing. For women who worked on farms and who settled the western frontier, bonnet had a very specific meaning, and it was a style that continued well into the mid twentieth century. A "work bonnet," "Quaker bonnet," or "slat bonnet," as they came to be called, had large brims that functioned almost like blinkers to completely protect the wearer's face from sunlight. The curtain of the bonnet usually extended well over the back of the neck to protect that area of skin as well. These work bonnets were made of cloth which could be washed regularly, starched, and pressed to maintain the brim. They were sold ready made, but many women made them.

A cap, on the other hand, was less structured and more often confined to casual or home wear than were the more formal hats. Caps were pinned to the hair, typically covering the crown, and were worn toward the back of the head. They were made of fabric and trimmed with ruffles, lace, and ribbons.

As the dress silhouette changed from a bell to a dome to finally a triangle, the overall figure was attenuated even more by hairstyles that rose higher on the head, uncovering the ears and introducing curls, especially in the very top, where bangs were now quite common. Instead of a smooth hairstyle with a simple bun, women tended to wear their hair curled with the masses of curls in a cascade from the forehead to below the back of the neck.

As hairstyles evolved in the 1870s, hats and bonnets became much smaller and were worn perched either on the top or the top back of the head. Rather than the large ribbons that tied on earlier bonnets, these tiny hats were held in place by smaller ribbons or even elastic cords that slipped under the chin or under the swept-up hair in the back.

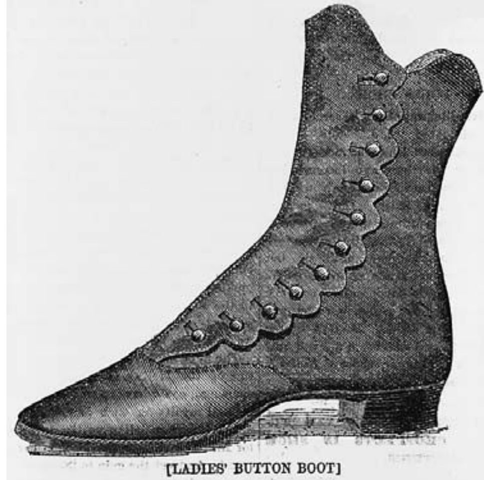
Young women were likely to adopt the changing hairstyles more quickly, and older women often kept the styles of earlier periods long after they were considered fashionable. It is not uncommon to find in group photographs containing several generations of women hair and head covering styles that span a decade or two in terms of what would have been considered fashionable at the time. Some women in the South who recorded their wartime experiences resorted to braiding palmetto straw to make bonnets for themselves when there were no milliners to serve them and no materials available save what they could gather.

The took scraps of trim from dresses that were worn out and used that to adorn old bonnets as well as the ones they made.

Shoes

As dresses were long, nearly to or even at the ground in most cases, footwear is rarely seen in illustrations or photographs. Advertisements, museum artifacts, patent records that pertain to shoemaking, and a few printed catalogs from the time constitute the majority of information we have about women's footwear. Southern women's written records from the war years indicate that footwear was one of the most coveted items in (or not in as the case was at the time) the wardrobe. Hats and dresses were wonderful, but if the shoes were worn through, walking was all but impossible, and walking was about their only reliable mode of transportation. Women reported wearing men's shoes, shoes that were too small, shoes that were too big, shoes intended for slaves, shoes with cardboard and folded paper trying to serve as an innersole when the outer one was worn through in places. Men and women alike tried to make shoes, for themselves and for family members, from anything they found at hand. Luggage, leather trunks, upholstery from chairs, anything that was or approximated leather was likely to end up as shoes. Some people even tried to use the skins of animals they hunted and killed for food to make foot coverings. When stores in the South obtained any stocks of shoes, they sold them out nearly as soon as the word reached the area's inhabitants.

In areas not so directly impacted by the shortages of the war, shoe styles for day and social wear seemed to favor boots. Soft leather or cloth uppers seem to be most worn and are featured in many newspaper advertisements at the time. They typically buttoned on the outside of the foot, but some laced. Dress boots were just that; they were not intended for hard wear or work wear as the fabric was too easily soiled or worn. When women reported working outside or walking long distances, they often mention putting on their "*sturdy boots*." These weren't described beyond that, but one can assume no great difference in cut other than that they were made with more simplicity and from thicker materials and with a thicker sole. The soft, white leather boots that lace or button, often with a



Newspaper advertisement for women's boots, August 1874. (Library of Congress)

scalloped overlay on the side containing the buttonholes, found in museum collections appear very fragile and easily worn out. Most of them have small heels that taper somewhat. The tops came about four inches above the ankle. Slippers, mentioned for formal or evening wear, also had heels but slipped on the feet without buttoning or lacing.

Jewelry

In a thorough treatment of jewelry, both made in the United States and imported, Martha Gandy Fales' *Jewelry in America 1600–1900* discusses materials, styles, inventions, the jewelry business itself, and leading names in the trade, as well as some of the social events that served to popularize many types of jewelry. A photograph of Mary Todd Lincoln wearing a complete set of seed pearl jewelry bought for her by her husband and made by Tiffany & Company is shown in the book (211), followed by a color plate of the necklace and bracelet set (213). *Godey's Lady's Book* describes "The Grand Presidential Party" that occurred in Washington on February 5, 1862, with details of Mrs. Lincoln's appearance: "The only ornaments were a necklace, earrings, brooch and bracelets, of pearl." Weddings of well-known personalities of the time, as well as political events such as President Lincoln's inauguration, influenced fashions for jewelry and dress. As in all other aspects of appearance, the major motivating force for the majority of women was to demonstrate her acceptance of and adherence to the social norms of the day. Jewelry types popularized by women of note were imitated stepwise downward in less expensive materials and with less detail so that nearly every woman had at least some piece of jewelry with which to adorn her person.

A number of technological advances allowed the mass production of jewelry in a variety of styles and finishes. Filled and plated gold, for example, was not detectable by the naked eye and was used for many mass-produced pieces. Finishing techniques were also mechanized so that polishing or burnishing the surface for a sheen was no longer such a laborious process. Roller mills mimicked the effects of hand chasing, embossing, turning, and engraving. As the first step in some enamel styles, mechanized engraving allowed the mass production of memorial and mourning jewelry with colored or black glass filling the spaces cleared by engraving. Enameled jewelry was especially popular through the end of the period, with both champlevé and cloisonné methods employed. Granulated metal and coiled or twisted wire were also used as the primary decorative element or combined with stones in jewelry. Advances in diamond cutting using steam-driven machinery, improved settings allowing more light through the stones, and an influx of stones themselves at reduced prices made diamonds the most popular stone for jewelry for those who could afford them.

Hair was used as an inclusion in some pieces, perhaps a lock or loose plait covered with glass, or in others braided to make the main body of a drop or a bracelet, capped at both ends with metal. Although the notion of hair jewelry as an aspect of mourning or of sentimental attachment is popular, the majority of hair jewelry during the 1860s and 1870s was manufactured of hair that was collected for the purpose. Many women did learn to work hair themselves, and some companies offered to create pieces using hair sent to them, but the bulk of this jewelry was manufactured for anonymous sale.

For daytime wear, the brooch was the most visible and common piece of jewelry worn. Dress bodices frequently featured detachable collars that were secured in the center front with brooches. All but the poorest of citizens would have at least one brooch to highlight the dress neckline or secure the placement of a scarf or fichu. Cameos were popular for these brooches, as were jet, all metal with a variety of surface finishes, enamel work, worked-hair designs, seed pearls, regular pearls, and both precious and semi-precious stones. Many of the brooches made at the time were offered with matching pairs of earrings, nearly all in a drop style with ear wires.

With evening wear, necklaces were more frequently worn than brooches. The low necklines and off-shoulder bodice styles provided the necessary framework for displaying elaborate necklaces that fitted the neck rather closely. Seed beads of coral or pearl might be strung singly then combined in thick twists and centered with a large drop for the center front of the neckline. Similarly, large pearls, beads, set stones, enameled links, chain, or worked gold was flexibly joined and centered with a more elaborate motif. Despite the evidence in written records of jewelry sales, advertisements of same, and extant pieces worn for formal occasions, *Godey's Lady's Book* rarely showed such necklaces in their fashion plates. Necklaces for day wear were sometimes seen combined with brooches and tended to be longer, less elaborate, and frequently just chain or simple beads, perhaps with a cross as the drop.

Watches with chains and fobs were used in women's dress as well as in men's. Watches made specifically for women were smaller in size and more feminine in decorative detail. Watches were also worn suspended from dark cord in lieu of gold chain. Watches opened in the back to expose the mechanisms, and this space allowed also for the inclusion of a lock or hair or a small picture of a loved one, functioning thus as a locket. Lockets themselves were popular and could be suspended from short necklaces, long chains, ribbons, watch chains, or worn as brooches if they were made with a convertible function. Locket faces were most often engraved but could be set with stones as well or even enameled. Many skirts had small pockets constructed to hold a watch.

Bracelets were frequently made in matched sets and worn one on each arm. Many of the illustrations in *Godey's Lady's Book* in the early 1860s

show gold bracelets, usually rather wide, worn in this fashion, often as the only jewelry pictured, as the elaborate bonnets with their under-chin ribbon ties obscured the normal location of a brooch, and the low-necked gowns were shown in the majority of cases with no necklace at all. Photographs from the period, however, show the use of brooches more often than bracelets.

As hairstyles lengthened, added curls and waves, and exhibited more elaborate styling during the mid 1860s through 1875, combs became a more important fashion accessory. Combs to ornament and stabilize women's coiffures were made of iIvory, horn, tortoise shell, as well as silver, gold, and less expensive metals. The June 1860 issue of *Godey's* offers the following recommendation regarding hair ornaments: "Tortoise-shell combs seem legitimate ornaments for the hair, and they always look well and ladylike; if the combs be too high, the effect is stiff. Jewels in the hair are effective, but gilt and tawdry ornaments are entirely to be avoided; pearls in dark hair are very pleasing, and, as they are to be bought excellently imitated, may be worn in good taste."

For women's clothing, belt buckles provided yet another location that could be enhanced by jewelry. During the years that belts were fashionable, the materials and ornamentation of belt buckles available to women equaled that of other jewelry types. For those in poor circumstances, very cheap metal buckles were available. Belts could also be tied for closure, either in the front or back, or hooked together in the back.

Wedding rings became an expected part of the ceremony by the 1860s, and for many women a wedding ring might be the one piece of real gold jewelry they would own. For families of means, the loss of a family member often meant the purchase of mourning rings for at least close family members. These might be engraved or enameled with a sentiment, name of the deceased, or dates of birth and death. Figured and plain gold rings were common as were rings set with diamonds and other gemstones. Photographs of these years often show women wearing two or more rings on each hand. Both the amount of jewelry owned and the value of individual pieces varied according to the owners' economic status.

Other Accessories

Umbrellas, or parasols, were used for protection against both rain and sun. For most women, these were relatively simple, often of dark solid or patterned silk, and they were valued for their utility. For women with the means to afford elaborate fashions, more trimmings could be had on the parasols, and they could also be had to match specific outfits. If used for sun protection, parasols were usually smaller than those used to keep off rain. Some had collapsible handles, called "*carriage handles*," so that they could be folded when traveling.

Women would have carried a handkerchief as a matter of practicality. Often these were decorated with delicate embroidery or lace edgings, as they would be viewed when used. White linen or cotton would have been the fabrics used for handkerchiefs at that time. Although practical, handkerchiefs were also decorative items that were sometimes carried in a gloved hand for show. Women also used fans. These are shown in some portraits of the period. Fans, too, were functional, but they were also used for purely decorative purposes, especially those made of lace or painted silk stretched over ivory ribs.

Ribbons were used in conjunction with many other trimmings on dresses, bonnets or caps, and even shoes. They were also worn as independent trims at or around the neck. Sometimes the length of ribbon would be simply crossed in front and fastened with a brooch. Other wearers formed the ribbon into a flat bow held in place with a brooch.

Lace was especially favored for summer shawls that were not truly wraps. That is, they were not worn for warmth, but rather for decorative effect. Either white or black lace was selected to enhance the color of the garment worn underneath, and these shawls were often shaped in an oval or half circle that extended to a considerable length in the back. By this period, lace was being made by machines and was thus affordable to many who could not have been able to obtain handmade lace due to its extremely high cost. The popular true laces were often imitated by machine and given similar names to the real item. Even the imitations were expensive, as the technology was still relatively new, so the numbers of women who would have worn large pieces of lace, such as a lace shawl, were few.

SPECIAL OCCASION DRESS

Bridal

Bridal clothing is one area in which representations in popular fashion magazines differed greatly from what was actually worn by the majority of brides across America. In *Godey's*, the wedding dress was always represented in white or ivory. In actuality, many brides in 1860 opted for other colors, even black, although there were strong social influences that pushed the concept of white as the best and most proper choice for brides. For one, the marriage of Queen Victoria herself to Prince Albert provoked a tremendous amount of interest in America as in other countries, and the Queen chose white. Her choice, which was a clear break with the royal past, is reported to have been influenced more by her interest in encouraging English manufacture than in setting the new standard for wedding attire. The gown of heavy silk satin and the long veil of Honiton lace were both domestic products, and Honiton lace certainly enjoyed a renewed surge of popularity following the royal wedding. Fashion books as well as newspapers reported in detail on both national

and international political and social events, and there was a tremendous amount of interest in the wedding of the young English queen.

Along with the emerging custom of marrying in white, the wedding itself was in a period of transition from being a private affair conducted at home with close friends and family in attendance to a more elaborate and public celebration. The majority of the U.S. population was still living in rural areas, and for them weddings continued to take place more often at home than in church. The dress worn was merely the best that could be afforded. Practicality ruled much more frequently than did the romance of a white wedding dress. White soiled easily, and silk was not considered a wash fabric in the nineteenth century. A good dress that could be worn long after the wedding as a best dress was much more useful to many brides than an overly ornamented gown in a color that would not bear multiple wearings.

But this picture was changing. In the United States, the 1863 wedding of Charles Stratton (Tom Thumb) and Lavinia Warren became the ultimate public relations spectacle due to the influence and financial support of P. T. Barnum, by whom the couple were employed. There was tremendous public interest in this wedding, and Barnum was a master of exploiting any possible event for its publicity value. Due to the huge numbers expected at the reception, it was staged at a hotel. The wedding gifts were publicly displayed, and many were from public figures such as President and Mrs. Lincoln. The bride's gown was created by Mme.

The wedding of Tom Thumb and Lavinia Stratton captivated the nation in 1863 and helped move the wedding ceremony from a private to a public event. (Library of Congress)

Demorest, who wrote regularly for *Godey's Lady's Book*. The gown was of course white, ornamented with point lace that cost reportedly more than $50 a yard. The wedding marked a huge change in style from weddings as private ceremonies marking an intimate event to weddings as formal, public events. For women who could afford to do so, a formal wedding in a church allowed a much larger audience, and white was the expected hue for the gown (Wallace 2004).

In addition to the gown itself, other accouterments of wedding apparel included shoes, veil, gloves, orange blossoms, stockings, and eventually special lingerie. Orange blossoms, available by mail order from numerous sources, were made of wax or other ingredients, and became the requisite flower symbolizing marriage. If not used directly on the headdress to hold the veil in place, they would surely appear somewhere on the costume.

Burial and Mourning

On some occasions, the wedding dress was also the bride's shroud. Life expectancy was short in the 1860s and 1870s, and for women the childbearing years were especially treacherous. The diary of Susan Sillers (Mrs. Jesse) Darden, a planter's wife living in Jefferson County, Mississippi, recorded the death and preparation for burial of a friend in 1873: [Julia Wade] had got Mr. Wade to lay out all her burying clothes (a brown silk, her wedding dress) a week before her babe was born." In fact, Mrs. Wade died nearly a month following her baby's birth. Diaries frequently record similar events and note the burial clothing. Women were buried in their best outfit; if they were young brides, their best would be their wedding clothing. Neighbors and friends cleaned and prepared the body, selecting the newest and best of the deceased's wardrobe for her last public appearance.

For the family members and friends left behind, social etiquette required wearing specific clothing to indicate the degree of relationship to the deceased. In the social groups which observed the rules of mourning closely, the period was marked by clothing color and styles, trims allowed, the length of time for each stage of morning, and even activities allowable during the stages. In the majority of rural America, the rigor of these observations did not apply. Family members might wear dark or black to the funeral, but afterward life had to go on. There was not the leisure to observe lengthy periods of inactivity or the financial ease to purchase special clothing just to mark periods of mourning. Those practices would have been observed in urban areas and among the social classes with money and leisure time. For them, black crape was the required fabric, but many other fabrics were used as well. Throughout the war years, black was a common color for silk and wool fabrics because there was such a great loss of life among so many thousands of

families, that few people, at least in the eastern side of the nation, escaped knowing someone who was a war casualty.

Maternity

Very little information was recorded in women's diaries and correspondence regarding the specifics of designing or making maternity clothing. Evidence in extant garments indicates some dresses were modified to allow for expansion during a pregnancy, perhaps with an underbodice that laced and was thus adjustable. Part of the reason for the lack of direct information about maternity wear is the hesitancy many women felt when talking about pregnancy itself. Social dictates of the time indicated this not a topic of polite conversation, so many women talked around the topic even when writing to their family members about their own or an acquaintance's pregnancy. Lucy Irion Neilson writes to her sister about the pregnancy of her friend in the following manner: "Fannie Richards is going to housekeeping this winter. She has gone in to sacques. You know what that means" (September 14, 1870). Even in describing her own pregnancy, she talks around and around the topic without ever saying directly what she means:

> I know you both would laugh to see me sitting up in dresses made of your old ones, the dark calicos which you left. I thought I would wear them awhile and then make quilts of them. Yes, actually thinking of making quilts for you to go to housekeeping with. Don't think I am going to the extreme of economy. I am not—only wished to wait awhile before getting new home dresses, for you know things do happen most years and who knows? I am not trying to excite your curiosity or expectations unduly, but I can't tell yet how the world goes. (December 4, 1871)

While adjustments could be made to existing garments for the early months of pregnancy, the later months required more ease. Sacques, or loose-fitting jacket-like tops, would provide such ease, and skirt waistlines were easily let out as the waistline expanded. Wrappers, or loose-fitting dresses that often gathered into a bodice yoke and then flowed unimpeded to the floor except when belted or tied at the waist would also have proved excellent for maternity wear. As wrappers were frequently mentioned as appropriate clothing for housecleaning, cooking, or other household tasks that would have soiled good dresses, they would not have represented apparel made only for a limited-time use. They would also have helped to disguise the pregnancy to some degree. Lucy later recorded wearing a velvet sacque to an entertainment and keeping it on all night even though sweating profusely under it as she had no other means of hiding her expanded body. She also mentions hoping that she can alter two of her dresses so that she will be able to go visiting.

WORK CLOTHES

There were no standard work uniforms for the few women who were employed outside their homes during this period. However, women did modify their clothing for specific activities. Women working in mills and other places of mechanized production often left off hoops and shortened their dresses as a means of reducing the risk of accidents on the job. Women who lived on farms or were either traveling to or living on the frontier also left off their hoops for the trip and for the majority of the time they required to perform subsistence labor once they arrived at their destinations. If they brought hoops with them, they would have worn them to social occasions in the towns nearby, but otherwise hoops would not have formed a part of these women's everyday dress.

The most important goal of rural and frontier women was to stay alive in the face of numerous dangers, hardships, and accidents, both human and of nature. Occupational gender distinctions tended to fade

When women worked, they wore what worked—here at a Pennsylvania camp site, what worked was a rough sweater with sleeves rolled up, a warm head covering, an apron, and a simple skirt, 1861. (Library of Congress)

in the face of necessity. Women and men alike had to build shelters with whatever was at hand. When bad weather threatened and crops were ripe, both partners had to work the fields. Fashionable dress would have impeded that first order of business, so women managed to create clothing for themselves which was more functional that what would have been found in urban centers. For the most part, they did not lose interest in fashion; they just postponed the time in which they could indulge and directed their efforts toward securing a level of economic stability for the family that would mean financial ease in their future. Women might wear pants or shoes belonging to a brother, husband, or even son to work outside in freezing or wet weather, and they did so without becoming "*unsexed*," the great fear that had derailed the many attempts at dress reform that involved women wearing pants of any kind.

Women's wardrobes already contained clothing that was appropriate for work in their loosely fitting wrappers or sacques, the same garments they turned to when pregnancy forced them out of their regular clothing. Tandberg's study of freedom in dress for nineteenth-century women includes dresses from the 1860s that were either made or modified to incorporate more looseness that would have facilitated both physical motion and pregnancy. One dress had a bodice with no darts or bones; another separate bodice that could be adjusted with ties. Loose sleeves also made work movements easier, so most garments for this purpose have bishop-style sleeves (Tandberg 1985).

SPORTS CLOTHING

The relationship between physical exercise and overall health was generally accepted by 1860. What was not a matter of general agreement was appropriate dress for such activity. Calisthenics were recommended for young girls and women, and in organized, sex-segregated facilities such as gymnasiums or primate homes, costumes including some form of bifurcated garment was acceptable. In Simon Kehoe's 1866 book instructing women in the use of Indian clubs for exercise, women are pictured in skirts about mid-calf in length, worn over drawers or some form of loose trousers that are tucked into their boots. The dress top is similar to other styles of the time with short sleeves. A separate section of the book instructs "the ladies."

Most women would not have appeared in public or in mixed company in such attire, but it proved functional and comfortable used as it was intended. Women who did not have access to any formal instruction for physical exercise obtained theirs by walking or just fulfilling the ordinary tasks of the day, which for the majority of women in America could be very physically taxing.

Swimming, or bathing, was a popular activity for women across quite diverse social strata. For girls and young women who lived in rural settings, the streams and ponds that might be present in their vicinity provided ample opportunity to indulge in both physical activity and good fun. One women diarist in Mississippi wrote of impromptu dips in the nearby stream with no special clothing, while another created a bloomer costume to wear fishing: "This morning the soldier left and Sallie and Sister and I went fishing–we got ourselves very muddy and draggled and had very poor success. When I came home I commenced making me a bloomer costume so I can fish without getting so muddy" (Worthington June 1, 1863).

Instructions for Women on Using Indian Clubs for Exercise

As a means of exercise, both pleasing and beneficial, there is nothing for ladies more suitable and simple than the Indian Clubs.

We append a few simple movements, only by way of introduction, for the reason that all of the foregoing exercises are just as well adapted for ladies as for gentlemen, though ladies, of course, should use lighter weights.

The weight for ladies is from three to five pounds. The dress should be loose, and the arms free to move in any position, and nothing to prevent a full expansion of the chest.

Many of the exercises can be executed with such skill and grace as to approach "the poetry of motion," and when accompanied by music they can be rendered pleasing accomplishments.

Half an hour with the Clubs, daily, divided morning and evening, will soon do away with much that is artificial about womankind, and promote the natural development of a graceful form and movement (Kehoe 1866, 74).

The earliest bathing costumes were very similar to the bloomer outfits with short dresses and pants extending to the ankles. One of the incentives to the development of more functional swimwear was the introduction of swimming pools or tanks open to the public as well as formal instruction and then competitions in swimming. Private resorts often featured swimming facilities as well, and these were favored by the upper classes. Many women wished to learn to swim because of the danger of drowning in boat or ferry accidents. Swimming, or water exercise, was also recommended as a healthful activity for women and children. Competition for swimming prizes was held as early as 1872, and by the summer of 1874, several competitions were held in the New York area (Johns & Farrell-Beck 2001). By the late 1860s, modifications were being seen in the bathing costumes worn for competitive swimming, and these changes spread, of course, to all water-play or sport clothing rapidly. Short sleeves, or no sleeves at all, shorter skirts or no skirts at all, and more closely fitted bodices or jackets replaced the heavy costumes of earlier years.

Other than walking, calisthenics, and swimming, the only other formal sport to receive much attention in the case of women's lives during this period was riding. In this activity, there was very little development to decrease the danger to women of wearing socially prescribed riding habits. The custom during this period was for women to ride side saddle, as straddling a horse was considered decidedly unfeminine. When mounted

Bathing dresses as illustrated in *Godey's Lady's Book*, July 1864—complete with hats and shoes. (Library of Congress)

on a horse wearing a side saddle, the woman's right knee would be hooked around the top of the saddle while the left leg was extended with the foot in a stirrup. In order to protect the rider's modesty, the riding skirt was made with a voluminous skirt that was also quite long—below the feet when mounted. An obvious danger to the woman was that the extra skirt length would become entangled in the horse's gear in case of a fall, and the rider would not be able to free herself from a runaway animal. Nonetheless, this style remained throughout the period, with tailored jacket styles and often top hats to boot included in the overall costume.

ALTERNATIVE DRESS

The Bloomer dress reform movement that had begun in the 1850s continued into the next decade, but never became a major factor in women's fashions. There were several women who continued to wear the bloomer costume, but they often received public humiliation when they appeared in public in bifurcated garments. Satirists, husbands, ministers, and many women reacted very emotionally to garments that seemed to obscure, even to a minute degree, the traditional separation of roles and appearances between the sexes. In fact, one of the main thrusts of detractors from reform dress was that the style unsexed women or made them more like men. This association, in particular, led many women, who

on a rational level thoroughly accepted the principles of the bloomer style, to forgo actually adopting it. Members of the suffragist movement tended to distance themselves from it as well because of the controversy surrounding the types of women who adopted bloomer dress.

One group did wear a costume closely resembling the bloomer style. Female members of the Oneida Community, which occupied a communal living space in New York State for nearly 20 years in the late 1840s through the late 1870s, are shown in numerous photographs wearing simple dresses with long, full sleeves, high necklines, and bell-shaped skirts without hoops that stop below the knee. Under these dresses are straight-leg pants that appear to be made of the same fabric as the dresses. The Oneida Community attempted to be self-sufficient, which meant that all members had to work and be productive. Apparently they decided that their adopted style of dress helped facilitate that productivity. Given that community members were ostracized and ridiculed by most of the rest of society for their unusual beliefs and practices (such as male continence as the preferred method of birth control and the practice of complex marriages), any additional negative publicity they might receive because of their dress styles was likely of very little consequence to them.

Aside from its wholesale adoption by females at the Oneida Community, the major usefulness of the bloomer costume was in the arena of private life. At least some women adapted the concept for work or exercise, both of which they expected to practice removed from public view. Amanda Worthington made herself a bloomer costume in 1863 to wear fishing because her earlier forays into this adventure had left her with very muddy clothing. Joan Severa's book on nineteenth-century dress features a number of individuals who opted for the bloomer style as functional for them.

Originating in England and including artists and designers such as William Morris, the Aesthetic Movement included clothing as well as every aspect of an individual's surroundings, from furniture to upholstery fabrics, to embroideries and tapestries. In part, the group's designs were a reaction against the worst aspects of mechanistic design. The Aesthetes believed that the machine should be a tool of the designer, but they saw modern designs originating solely from the machine's capabilities. Their age was one in which the ability to reproduce designs from earlier periods was more easily accomplished than ever, and machines could now reproduce many aspects of design previously possible by hand. The result was a cheapening of design and a loss of aesthetics with motifs from incongruous periods thrown together without regard for the unity or uniqueness of the resulting object. Jewelry, fabric design, and nearly every aspect of furnishings for homes were affected by this type of manufacture, and those who joined the Aesthetic Movement dressed in a fashion that were somewhat reminiscent of the medieval period, with

flowing dresses that did not appear to be worn over the tightly laced corsets and certainly were not worn over hoops. The fashion from 1870–1875 was to define garments with ever more trimming. The trimmings were now made by machine, from pleated, gathered, and ruched frills to embroidery, braids, passementerie, and even lace. Dresses themselves could be made in much more complicated cuts because of the speed that the now widely available sewing machine added to the stitching process. The simply cut and trimmed garments of the Aesthetic Movement repudiated all that was considered fashionable by mainstream society. Although the movement originated in England, it spread to other countries as well, including the United States.

Other attempts were made to lead women's fashions in a healthier direction. Largely, these centered around reducing the weight of too many petticoats (which the crinoline had obviated), reducing the extent of tight lacing, and reducing dangerous elements of dress. Hoops were dangerous around open fires and complex machinery, yet they offered less weight for a woman's waist to support and were thus adopted by Amelia Bloomer herself as an acceptable alternative to the bloomer costume. The full, domed hoops eventually gave way to only partial, back oriented hoops and bustles that created a much smaller footprint for the garment when it was untrained, but many women added a train that constantly attracted dirt from the floor; also, the silhouette that accompanied the bustle look was more tightly laced than previously. The "emancipation waist" was one such a garment introduced in the mid 1870s as an alternative to tight lacing. It was a well fitted bodice that buttoned up the front and usually included buttons around the bottom for attaching the petticoats directly there instead of their weight being suspended form the waist of the wearer. Each garment style worn during the years from 1860 to 1875 offered at least one advantage that could be interpreted as more healthful than before, but each was also offset with other disadvantages.

These movements were about as successful as the bloomer costume had been. Fashion appeared to move and change as a result of complex social and personal forces that did not respond to logic. Fashion would eventually change and allow much greater freedom of movement, less restriction of lungs and waist, and a more healthful effect on women's bodies in general. These changes did not, however, rise out of any reform movement but instead evolved gradually as increased physical activity for women, larger numbers of women in the workforce and thus needing functional clothing, and many factors that are too complex and interwoven to be reduced to a few simplified statements.

Aside from the intentional reform qualities of the above mentioned styles, other small groups maintained distinct patterns of appearance. These alternative groups do not really answer the strict definition of fashion as being change oriented, as the members chose not to change in response to social expectations or pressure. Immigrant groups, for

example, often contained individuals who chose to retain their unique cultural identity rather than melt into the American mainstream. Others in those same groups, specifically the younger immigrants and children born in the United States, learned English and adopted U.S. customs and clothing as quickly as possible. They believed their chances of becoming financially and socially successful depended upon their ability to shed their apparent differences and blend seamlessly with their peers.

Some religious groups specified acceptable dress for their community members. In the Midwest, the Icarians shunned uniqueness or differences from each other by their manner of dress. Sarah Herndon, crossing the plains in 1865, wrote of this community in her journal:

> They seemed the most humdrum, slow-going, even-tenor, all-dressed-alike folks I have ever seen. Every dwelling is exactly alike, log-cabins of one room, with one door, one window, a fireplace with stick chimney . . . The floors, windows and everything in the houses were scrupulously clean, but not one bit of brightness or color, not a thread of carpet, or a rug, and all the women's and girls' dresses made of heavy blue denim, with white kerchiefs around the shoulders and pinned across the front of the waist, the skirt above the ankles, and very narrow and heavy thick-soled shoes. (15)

Other religious groups, such as the Quakers and Amish, wore plain clothing, simply cut and untrimmed, as a statement of their beliefs and to set them apart from their more worldly neighbors.

CLOTHING WORN BY ETHNIC GROUPS

African American's Clothing

For free African Americans, there was little distinction of dress from native-born Americans or assimilated immigrants. They dressed according to the fashion of their peer group, and in many instances that included members of other ethnic groups as well. In the North, Oberlin College was in the forefront of institutions that opened their doors to women and to minorities. Mary Jane Patterson graduated from Oberlin in 1862, the first African American to receive a college degree in the United States. As was true of all social and class groups, free African Americans dressed in such a way that their appearance blended with, rather than stood apart from, the people and groups with whom they interacted.

During the war years, the clothing of slaves and former slaves differed little from that of slaves prior to the war. Typically, they wore simple clothing of coarse cloth. So typical was the fabric produced (largely in the North) for slave clothing that it was often sold simply as Negro cloth.

Other names for this coarse but durable cloth are osnaburg, sheeting, shirting, Lowell cloth, lonels, or even jean (a twill weave). Plain weave cotton for summer and wool for winter was typical.

The cut of slave clothing was very simple, as haste in production was one of the most important considerations. Box-like cuts for sleeves, bodices, and skirts were typical. Clothing for slaves was intended to be functional and durable and to preclude individual expression. The uniformity of the clothing was both functional, as far as the economies of its production, and social, as one means to strip slaves' individual identities. Clothing and appearance was one of the slave owner's important tools for demoralizing and oppressing the slave population. Fit, therefore, was not emphasized, and most clothing was made in very crude gradations of size. Rope belts or other ties were sometimes used to provide some control over dress length as well as better fit at the waist. Occasionally some variation was allowed for extremely small or extremely large slaves, but, for the most part, slave clothing was distinguished by its uniformity of cloth and construction and its crudeness of fit. Plantation account books from all of the Southern states provide a fairly consistent picture of how clothing was distributed, although very little of construction. Phillips' study includes several such accounts, and typically women would receive a couple of dresses in the spring and again in the fall, with fabrics suitable for the season and climate of the individual plantation. A woman might receive also a pair of shoes, a shift or chemise each season, a blanket, and possibly even some additional fabric, a petticoat, and a handkerchief. Some plantations distributed aprons for house servants, and these are occasionally depicted in period illustrations. Coats, loosely cut and similar in style to those worn by male slaves, were also worn in some cases.

Tandberg attempted a more structural analysis of the cut and construction for Louisiana and Mississippi, using actual garments and photographic evidence. She suggested two dress styles, one with a V-neckline and short wide sleeves, another with round neckline and long full sleeves typical of the bishop sleeves of many women's dresses during this period. For work, the long sleeves were most often worn rolled up. In hot weather, the buttoned front could be unbuttoned for a few inches at the top and the edges turned under, a style that could have given rise to depictions of dresses made with V-necklines.

Many African American women adopted a headdress that was unique compared to any other group of women during this period. The wrapped-cloth headdress, occasionally made in the same fabric as the dress but also in other fabrics, was the universal style worn by slave women, and it continued to be worn for some time after emancipation. Some plantation records indicate the turban-like headdress was required attire for female slaves, but many others make no mention of this proscription. Whether or not it was a part of the overall socialization of the

Five generations of a slave family in Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1862. The women's dresses show the simple style and mixture of fabric patterns that might be found together. (Library of Congress)

slave population to look different, and subservient, to the free population, its adoption and individualization by slave women allowed it to serve a totally different function, that of helping establish a unique appearance while having only standard issue with which to work. What fabric or combination of fabrics a woman used to fashion her wrap and the style in which she wrapped the fabric around her head were both her choice.

Even within a population identified by the uniformity of their clothing, there were many avenues for women to develop a unique style in addition to the manner of using the head wrap. Many plantation households handed down clothing from the white family members to servants most closely connected to household work. Nurses, personal servants, housekeepers, and cooks, for example, spent time in close proximity to their owners and in many instances did develop personal relationships with

them. Not all of the overly romanticized stories of slaves being "like family" were entirely without basis. There were friendships that developed between the two totally disparate groups of people, at least to the extent that a friendship can exist between a person owned and an owner of people. Women of the house often rewarded favorite servants with items of clothing either from their own wardrobes, being outgrown or too worn for further use, or even allowed them occasional special garments, fabrics, trims, and accessories which allowed the recipients to distinguish themselves from their slave peers.

That hierarchies existed among slave populations has been well documented. White and White explore both the bases and the visible forms of social distinctions that were played out with clothing. They theorize that it was not so much that some slaves wore clothing that was identical in form and fabric to that of their masters and mistresses, but that they wore it in ways that were totally incomprehensible to their owners. A fancy dress worn with bare feet, a silk dress lengthened with patchwork panels of various cotton and linen fabrics, dresses mended with a rainbow of patchwork pieces, all of these were ways the African American population displayed their unique aesthetic. The result was a mixture of styles, colors, and fabrics that white Southerners found unsettling and at times offensive.

After the war, it would be years before the majority of former slaves would find themselves in financial circumstances that would allow them the same access to fashion that free women throughout the country enjoyed. The democratization of fashion that characterized much of the nineteenth century would come more slowly to this group of newly emancipated citizens.

Native American Clothing

Native American women's clothing was as diverse as the tribes with which they were identified. There is no single representative image that can begin to give an idea of the diversity present in the original clothing or in its transformations. During the Civil War and Reconstruction period, there was very little systematic attempt made to document regional or tribal idiosyncrasies of appearance. The Indian was a popular topic of photography, but was often incompletely documented as to place, tribe, date, or other information that would have allowed a study of native costume during its period of great change brought about by contact with the white population with their styles and the ready-made cloth fabrics that accompanied their entry into a territory. Photographs of this period show the use of cloth for dresses and shirts, but very little adaptation of the styles used by the whites. The exception is for some Indian wives of white men, who adopted completely the dress typical of

the social group into which they married. In other cases, the women did not change their style of dress, but their husbands adopted some of the Indian costume.

Typical of many tribes in the Midwest and West was a female dress made of brain-tanned deer hide, or buckskin. The resulting leather was very soft, pliable, long wearing, and warm. Most used two hides that were attached at the shoulders and down both sides by stitching, although Comanche dresses often contained three skins for a more elaborate folded top that was almost cape-like in its proportions. In some tribes, the original edges of the hides were left as they came from the animal, with uneven parts hanging down to form a somewhat decorative edge at the folded over neckline and at the sides and hemline. The hair at the skin's edges as well as the tail could be left on to form decoration. Plains Indians more likely fringed this edge. The costume often included buckskin leggings that fit the legs tightly and came from the ankles to the knees. Two-skin dresses with straps rather than a complete bodice were worn by the northeastern Indians. Sleeves were constructed separately, joined together at the back, and could be added like a small jacket when weather demanded.

Etla, wife of Lone Wolf, of the Kiowa Indians, wears a buckskin dress with a deep neckline fold and fringed edges, 1855–1865. (Library of Congress)

Some women wore skirts rather than dresses. The simplest version was a single hide wrapped around the hips and anchored at the waist with a tied belt. The overlap was left unstitched, functioning as a slit that allowed freedom of movement. Stitched skirts were often fringed very deeply for that same purpose. In addition to the buckskin used for skirts, several groups, including those in Florida and in the Great Basin area of California used grass, bark strips, and other fibers to construct skirts that were twined or plain woven for a band that could be from two to several inches deep at the top. The remainder of the string or fiber strips was left open. Winter cold required more covering, often just a shawl or cape made of fur or skin.

Native American women in the lower and island South favored elaborate tattoos and painted decorations on their skin, which might be covered only with decorations or minimum body coverings such as breechclouts or short skin or fiber fringe skirts. In the summer, women of many tribes left off clothing entirely or wore just a breechclout.

Moccasins of skin covered the feet, although twined slippers of plant fiber were worn by both Woodland and Southeast Indians.

In general, each group used the skins, furs, and plant materials that were indigenous to their geographical area to make their clothing and to decorate it. Shells were used extensively for decoration among tribes living close to either the ocean or the gulf. Beads were formed of found minerals and used to decorate moccasins and other clothing until trade brought glass beads in bright colors. These were quickly adopted by the majority of Native American tribes, who would develop signature styles of embroidery with the beads, often borrowing from European and American whites for some design inspiration, such as floral sprays which had not been typical before contact. Feathers, teeth, claws, mud, paint and dye, and virtually anything that could be used for functional or decorative purposes was, and with the same consistency of design among individual tribal woman as would be found in the women of a small settlement in Nebraska or in a small town in Maine or Kentucky. Changing more slowly, less reliant upon economic circumstances, but all the same a cohesive force among the women and the social functions of the time were Native American fashions. As the many tribes became subdued by the Army's forces following the Civil War and began entering reservations, their ability to sustain their native costume was curtailed. Many were relocated far from their original lands, and the reservation lands often barely provided food enough to prevent starvation. The materials they had used for clothing and food were no longer available to them, and so began the transition from what had been traditional dress to a new version that relied much more heavily on materials which the Indians did not create directly but imported from manufactured sources (Gibby, 2001).

CLOTHING ACQUISITION AND DRESSMAKING

By far the majority of women during this period sewed. They were aided by family members, friends, local dressmakers and milliners, and occasionally itinerant tailors and dressmakers, but they still were responsible for making most of their own clothing and that of their children. Southern women in slave-owning households often had the services of slave dressmakers, with whom they might work. These slave seamstresses worked not only on clothing for other slaves but helped make clothing for family members as well. That unpaid labor pool dwindled as the war progressed. The shortages that developed during the war spelled the end of most dressmaker's business, so women of circumstance who had used their services before found themselves with neither fabric not professional assistance. Not all women were equal to the increased demands on their abilities.

Many women admitted their lack of skill in dressmaking and attempted to obtain help from others for parts of the garment construction process. Anne Shannon Martin's 1864 diary of her years in exile during the war contain frequent references to the difficulties she faced in trying to interpret what she and her friends believed to be the latest fashions She recorded working on a single gingham dress on five different occasions, making and remaking portions of it, and finding the results not to her liking. In her last reference to the dress, she admitted hiding it when a friend called because she was ashamed to be caught working on it yet again. Time after time she recorded ripping out old dresses preparatory to having them washed and made over, only to find she could not manage to cut the new pattern from the old cloth. Her collars did not fit well, her skirt was first too long and then too short, and in general she had a hard time of it.

Dresses and patterns that made it somehow through the blockade served as both inspiration and direction for cutting new styles from old ones. The following quotation from the Martin diary illuminates the frustrations many women experienced in trying to create new fashions:

> A request came from Mrs. Howard that I would come to her room. I suspicioned it had something to do with the cutting out of the Gabrielle. Sure enough, she had it on the floor, walking around, and stooping over it with a very apoplectic expression of countenance. She is trying to make the dress I bought at first, a light ground with bunches of flowers on it. She had been working at it all day, without getting it cut out even. I pitched in, and between us we got it cut out before long, much to her relief and gratitude. (Martin, March 10, 1864)

There was a social aspect to sewing and other forms of clothing production that has not always received the attention it deserved in studies of women's work or circumstances during this period. Quilting bees have received much attention in terms of their social importance as a venue for interaction among families living in some degree of geographical isolation from near neighbors. Sewing and knitting seemed to occupy a very similar role, albeit in a less organized and formal way. These networks served to spread the dissemination of fashion information as well as construction techniques.

Much of the self-reported social activities of women during this period included references to making clothing during social calls, of taking sheets to hem, socks to knit, patterns to cut, and similar portable sewing jobs so that the time spent visiting would not unproductive time. One woman reported in her diary of a group of friends who visited together in the evening and held knitting races, starting socks and seeing who could have the greatest amount completed by the end of the evening.

Patterns and Sewing Machines

A variety of aids from printed diagrams to drafting systems and even paper patterns were available to women to assist them in interpreting newly pictured or encountered fashions for themselves. Early issues of *Godey's Lady's Book* provided pattern diagrams that indicated how each piece of the cut garment would look. These diagrams did not, however, give any directions for achieving a fit via the use of individual measurements, assuming instead a high level of cutting and fitting skill on the part of their female audience. In September 1862, however, there appeared in the magazine extensive instructions for measuring, cutting, and fitting, ending with the promise that "These directions followed, a woman possessed of some ingenuity and taste can cut different 'fancy' styles without the assistance of a dress-maker" (307). An immense improvement was provision of actual patterns paper patterns, either included with some magazine subscriptions or available for ordering through magazine advertisements and pattern catalogues.

In *Cutting a Fashionable Fit*, Kidwell provides extensive details about both the paper pattern business that was well underway by 1860 and the drafting systems upon which paper patterns were based. These systems were also widely marketed independent systems intended for the use of amateur and budding professional dressmakers. Kidwell makes it clear that these systems and paper patterns were aimed at the growing numbers of women who needed to make their own clothes and who where not particularly skilled at fitting them or at interpreting the required cuts for emerging styles. Two sources of paper patterns were especially known, Mme. Demorest's and Butterick's. The former produced the patterns under the management of Clara Curtis Demorest, a very successful female business woman, who was a force in the fashion world through her publication (*Mme. Demorest's Mirror of Fashion*), through her fashion products, and through her successful management of what would become a large fashion conglomerate.

Ebenezer Butterick was a major competitor with Mme. Demorest, beginning with patterns for men's and boys clothing, later adding women's and girls dress patterns as well. By 1871, the Butterick catalog of paper patterns contained illustrations for women's and children's undergarments, dresses, jackets, waists, and aprons and is reported to have sold more than six million patterns that year alone (Jenson and Davidson, 12).

The patterns and the drafting systems that were sold before and concurrently with paper patterns, were an incredible boon to the women who had a hard time translating the published fashion illustrations into three-dimensional fabric equivalents that fit their bodies. As Kidwell points out, these systems were designed specifically for women's use (2). Comparable systems for tailoring men's clothing simply did not exist,

as it would have been presumptuous at that time to imagine women could be professional tailors.

Another major factor that made the progressively more complicated fashions of the 1870s possible was the sewing machine. By 1860, many women had access to sewing machines. Exact sales figures across the country are not known, but licenses to manufacture sewing machines by companies having patent rights gives a fairly accurate estimate of availability, especially in comparing prewar and postwar figures. Nearly 40,000 licenses had been sold in 1860, increasing to about 67,000 by the end of the war. Within another 10 years, that number had increased to over half a million (Cooper, 41). Early models were beyond the reach of many women due to their expense, but competition among inventors and manufacturers began to lower the price and as less expensive models were created specifically for the family market, often lighter in weight than those intended for commercial clothing production. The sewing machine companies themselves also initiated what would become a hallmark of U.S. domestic purchasing, installment buying. The introduction of lease/purchase and installment buying had made the acquisition of sewing machines possible by a much wider group of women.

A woman operating a Singer patent sewing machine, ca. 1860. The machines allowed more and faster production of apparel and increased the expectation of increased output for many women. (Getty Images)

When available, the machines were used for at least the long seams of skirts and the fitting seams of bodices and sleeves. That left a considerable amount of handwork to be done on the dresses. Skirts that were set on evenly all around the waist were usually gauged, a process that required evenly spaced running stitches all around the skirt upper portion; these stitches were then pulled taut, which created a series of even, tiny cartridge pleats that were then hand whipped to the bodice lower edge or to a waistband. This was the technique used for most skirts in the previous decade, gradually being replaced by pleating and goring during the 1860s.

It was more likely that a woman in the Northern states would have owned sewing machines and would have used them during the war years. Women in the South had sewing machines; period diaries and correspondence indicate acquisition of these machines; regional almanacs and newspaper advertisements indicated they were sold in sufficient

quantities that many Southern and frontier cities began to offer repair services during the time. The problem in the South during the war years was access to thread that was strong enough for use on the machines and the lack of parts for repairs when the machines broke down, which they often did.

Women in the Midwest and West also used sewing machines, and by the late 1860s machines were widely used across the country. The machine was promoted as a labor-saving device, and many demonstrations of its speed in sewing long seams supported the claim in actual sewing minutes required. The social impact, however, was not as clear-cut. It was a different type of sewing that could be done on a machine, more solitary and often less comfortable. Many women who owned and used sewing machines complained bitterly about the muscle strain and fatigue caused by using the devices for long periods of time. Writing from Austin to her sister in Mississippi, Lettie Walton wrote on October 16, 1870:

> Last Tuesday morning I sat down to make Will four pr. Drawers that day on the machine—but company & one interruption after another prevented my making more than one pr. The next day I made three & finished them all to sewing on buttons & company after supper prevented me doing that. The next day I commenced about 11 o'clock & made Newton two pr. Drawers—& after supper cut out three pr. for George & finished them next day. Will just fussed about my working so hard when he came home last night & found me suffering so with my back. Said he would rather pay $2.50 a pr. For making drawers. My machine is a treasure—Don't sell yours unless you can get what you gave for it. You can learn to sew on it. I have learned to sew better on the machine this year than I learned in nine. I have had mine ten years. (Watkins-Walton)

Mastering the new technology was easier for some than for others, and women in remote locations often had difficulty in securing repair services when the machines broke down. Those who could afford the machines which operated by foot treadle found increased speed and comfort compared to the table-top models that required one hand be used to supply the power. As a result of the increasing sophistication of this technology, women found that they could complete many aspects of sewing drudgery much more quickly on the machine; they also found that the expectations of their output increased accordingly.

Sewing done on a sewing machine was not something that could be carried along on a visit, thus women often found this type of work to be more tedious and lonely. There were circumstances, of course, in which women congregated at the home of someone who owned a sewing machine and traded out work for its use, but for the most part the central role of sewing as a focus for much direct female-to-female social interaction began to fade.

The Dressmaker

Compared to the menswear industry, commercial production of clothing for women as ready-to-wear really did not begin to develop until the end of the century. During the Civil War and Reconstruction period, urban areas continued to rely heavily upon the services of local milliners and dressmakers. Large cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, Charleston, Cincinnati, St. Louis, New Orleans, Denver, and Chicago had well-established businesses, mostly female owned and operated, to provide dressmaking services. In more rural areas and in the South, the textiles and trims that dressmakers required to sustain their practice were of limited availability during the war and for several years thereafter as the Southern economy struggled to rebuild. Whether dressmaking services were offered out of urban shops or by traveling assistants who lived with the families they assisted, business was a struggle for southern dressmakers.

Ready-to-wear clothing for women during this period consisted largely of outerwear such as cloaks, shawls, and coats, or undergarments and accessories. Stylish clothing was made to measure. The tightly fitted styles of women's dresses made it very difficult to produce properly fitted apparel without basing the cut on specific body measurements. Large numbers of women simply made their own garments without the assistance of dressmakers and seamstresses, relying on their own skills, as well as on the assistance of family members and friends.

Typical practice was for women to visit dressmakers in person for assistance with measuring and for fashion advice. Dressmakers might have small shops where their customers would bring their fabric and trims, or they might work out of milliner's shops or mercantile stores. Dressmakers typically kept copies of current fashion magazines for the women's use to choose styles and trims. In towns with meager populations, the services of a dressmaker might be much more informal and offered out of a woman's home.

Garments could also be ordered from dressmakers advertising in fashion periodicals or newspapers. In this case, as with personal contact, the garment was not made until it had been ordered. Women were given directions in many of these advertisements as to which measurements were needed, and then the garment was made to those measures. The detailed garments pictured in mail order catalogs of the time can lead to the impression that garments were ready made, but such was not the case.

In the South, many women who were left destitute and often alone by wartime family casualties and loss of property tried to eke out a living by taking in sewing. Women who could afford to use their services did so, often for making chemises or children's shirts or other sewing for which highest quality was not critical. Not all of these women were possessed of the skill to be commercial seamstresses. Some of these women were

skilled, but they attempted the work for survival, having very few other outlets for employment in the years immediately after the war. Writing to her sister in Austin, Texas, Mollie Mclemore of Vaiden, Mississippi related in a single letter dated June 23, 1871, the situation of three such women:

> [I] got a lady near here to make me one [chemise]—& she made such a botch of it that I wouldn't let her try another & thought my old ones would hold out until I went to the hills & would then let Mrs. Ware make me twelve. She sews beautifully & is in very reduced circumstances. She is the wife of one of your music teachers—I sent your chemise a few days ago to a lady I had just heard of taking in sewing—she is a nice woman was very wealthy before the war–has the reputation of being an elegant hand with the needle. (Watkins-Walton)

After the war, many women in the South who had lived comfortably before found themselves looking for any means to support themselves and their families. Even women who had been able to find teaching jobs before the war often were unable to do so for some time afterwards. Dressmaking was a means to support oneself, barely, and having access to drafting systems, paper patterns, and sewing machines gave those who could afford them the tools to become successful.

As the western frontier developed, itinerant dressmakers and tailors traveled from one population center to another, often staying with families weeks or months to help with the season's sewing, continuing a practice that had been in place in earlier periods and other locations. Others settled in towns and worked out of dry goods stores, where families could come to have assistance with some of their clothing construction. Women and young girls often assisted in these enterprises for pay, earning very little, but at least some, cash. As towns increased in population and affluence, the number of resident dressmaking establishments increased, as did the level of specialization within.

In a small establishment, the dressmaker would handle all of the major aspects of each order, from helping the customer select the style, fabric, and trims to cutting, sewing and finishing each garment. If she could afford to hire assistance, it was usually just for basting, plain sewing of long seams, and some hand finishing details such as buttons and seam finishing. With growing size and profitability, a dressmaker's business could include several professionals who specialized in different aspects of garment cutting and construction.

The elite and wealthy traveled beyond the country to fill their need for the most current fashions. Europe, especially France, was considered to be the fashion leader. Fashion terms and even the spellings of some words prevailed in many fashion magazines as a way of emphasizing this influence. The concept and practice of *haute couture*, with luxurious salons, fashions presented on live models, and each design made to the

purchaser's measurements was originated by Charles Frederick Worth, an Englishman who moved to Paris and opened his shop there in the late 1850s. By the end of the 1860s, the Worth enterprise was creating apparel for nobility throughout Europe and for American socialites. He introduced not only the ambience of the salon and the showing of garments on live models, but he also developed a system of unit construction that would allow the very rapid production of a style once it had been chosen and the fabrics selected. Many dress styles used interchangeable garment pieces, so that with very little alteration in cutting, but with great creativity in fabric and trim selection, two garments structurally very similar could be made to look quite different (Coleman, 34).

Worth, and those that followed him in the *haute couture* practice, transformed the role of dressmaker as a technician—a person who primarily assisted women in bringing their own design concepts to fruition—and became the source of the design itself. Couturiers provided artistic inspiration that included styles, underpinnings, fabrics, and trims. Worth and other design houses sold fabric and trims, and Worth often had his own fabric designs executed for use in his fashions. The influence of the couture method of dressmaking reached much further than the small numbers of women who could afford to travel to his salon and choose individual garments. As early as the 1860s, Worth models were being exported to New York, New Orleans, and other major metropolitan areas for the express purpose of being copied by local dressmakers. In 1874, Lord and Taylor advertised in *Harper's Bazar* a Worth outfit which had been imported specifically for copying in U.S. markets (Coleman, 34–37).

Fabric

Only natural fibers were available for clothing, and the most commonly used of these were cotton and wool. Linens and silks were used as well, but in smaller quantities and in more expensive cloth. Most women tried to have at least one good silk dress. In limited economic circumstances or in isolated geographical areas, not all women achieved this goal, but most did. In consideration of usefulness, that single best dress was made in dark silk which would serve for any formal occasions, from weddings to funerals. If black itself was not chosen, then dark gray, brown, or even a very dark purple would suffice. During the Civil War, the need for mourning clothing was especially great, and dark clothing appears in most photographs from that period. Many women's diaries make reference to sewing with, wearing, borrowing, buying, exchanging, or in some way having access to silk clothing, so it was not by any means rare. It would have been rare to have found it in abundance in the wardrobes of the women who made up the masses of female population in the United States during this period, however.

Godey's Lady's Book made ample reference throughout every month of the period to silk dresses, despite the overwhelming evidence that silk did not make up the majority of women's clothing fabric in the United States. "Taffeta," "satin," "velvet," and "moiré" were terms that always indicated silk, and these were especially common in descriptions of the monthly steel fashion plates. The term "silk" used only with a color was also quite common and could have referred to a plain woven fabric. Less frequently mentioned were China silk, foulard, pongee, glacé, reps, corded silk, poult de soie, brocaded silk, changeable silk, and broché (embroidered) silk.

Wool and cotton made up the bulk of textile materials used for women's clothing. In summer, cotton fabrics predominated, and the warmth of wool was favored in winter. Thick fabrics of cotton or silk were also used in winter. Marseilles was a thick cotton fabric woven in a three-dimensional pattern that resembled quilting. Cloaks and wraps were made of this, as well as of velvet, alpaca, cashmere, and a variety of worsted or woolen fabrics. Summer wraps were more likely of pique, a variety of silks, or even sheer lace.

For dresses, wool was worn in summer for best dresses and in winter for more general wear. Sheer or at least lightweight wool fabrics included delaine and barege, although fibers other than wool could be used in barege. Fabrics of some form of wool or wool blend include flannel, wool reps, jean, worsted, cassimere, cashmere, alpaca, woolen, woolen grenadine, and mohair lustre. Wool was also used in stockings, socks, petticoats, and a limited amount of fitted underwear for women and children.

Cotton was frequently mentioned in newspaper and magazine advertisements and in women's letters and diaries and found in many surviving dresses of the period. Because of its ease of care, cotton could be washed, although the elaborate dresses with yards of trim and stitched-in boning represented a challenge for the very best laundresses to clean. For wrappers, sacques, morning robes, petticoats and drawers, everyday stockings and socks, and for everyday dresses, calico is probably the most common of those fabrics. Roller-printed cotton fabric was widely available and very inexpensive compared to other fibers, and became the signature fabric for everyday, work, and best dresses for the majority of U.S. women. Gingham, lawn, muslin, cambric, organdy, percale, book muslin, piqué, nankeen, and poplin were names of other popular cotton fabrics during this period.

Throughout the war, there was significantly less raw cotton available for either Northern manufacturers or those located in England to use for making cotton yarn for fabric. Southern production had always been minuscule. One of the military and economic strategies of the Confederate states was to burn existing stores of cotton. The policy had been effected with the hope that withholding this critical raw material from international markets and, particularly, the manufacturing cities in

England, would encourage foreign support of the South. Southern leaders also speculated that withholding cotton from northern manufacturers would weaken the economic position of the Union and assist in what was expected to be sure victory. Many written accounts make reference to burning cotton, and planters who did not comply were regarded as traitors to the cause. Sometimes they had their cotton burned for them. The war-years diary of Amanda Worthington includes numerous references to smoke rising from burning stockpiles of cotton, including their own, and makes it plain that those who did not comply were to be ostracized by society. Although Worthington fervently condemned the farmers who were believed to hold stores of cotton unburned, her own father withheld several hundred bales that fell into Union hands. The confiscation of that resource was featured in a woodcut for the *Harper's Weekly*, May 2, 1863 cover. The strategy only served to deprive the South of resources they could have used to shore up their economy during the war years, and it added to the scarcity of this fiber for the population and the armies of the South.

Wool was also in short supply because of the necessity of using available stores for the war effort. The constant need to manufacture wool uniforms and blankets took first priority. In general, however, the Northern states did not experience anything approaching the severe deprivations of the Southern states that had been nearly entirely dependent upon Northern enterprise for manufactured cloth, shipping of goods, and banking. The South simply did not have the capacity to manufacture the textiles they needed for military use, much less for domestic consumption.

Women of the South did turn to domestic production in an attempt to support the war effort, but there were not adequate supplies for their output to be more than a token of what was needed. Cotton cards were in such short supply that some women attempted to spin uncarded cotton and use it to weave a very coarse cloth. Also, the South had become very reliant on the importation of northern and foreign manufactured textiles with the consequence that not a large percentage of the female population could spin and weave. They had never done so. There were some who did, and their work became the stuff of legend—politically, socially, and emotional satisfying, but not economically significant.

CLOTHING MAINTENANCE

Cleaning

Cleaning of clothing was the primary aspect of maintenance, and in the case of fabrics that were not washable, a plethora of alternate methods existed to prevent shrinkage (in the case of wool and hair fibers) or bleeding and fading of dyestuffs (in the case of silks). In fashionable

dresses, as many as three fibers might be present in any single costume. A silk dress might well be lined with glazed cotton and have wool or hair braid at the hemline to protect against wear. Complex garments such as these were best dealt with in an offensive mode, trying to keep the garment from becoming soiled initially rather than effectively removing stains and soil. Aprons were worn to cover the skirt and bodice front of many women's dresses. The aprons could be washed regularly; the silk or wool dress remained clean. The layers of undergarments also protected the outer garments from becoming soiled by bodily secretions. Eventually, however, damage would occur, and the remedies were given out by current publications, traded between neighbors, suggested in letters between women, and always subject to updating as another method become known and recommended.

Brushing and folding clothes neatly before putting them away was a common method of removing surface lint, hair, dander, dust, or any material that would have caused unsightliness or damage to the garment. Granular substances could work their way down into the fabric between yarns and in the yarn interstices, causing abrasion that would eventual weaken the fibers due to movement and the swelling/shrinking caused by fluctuating temperatures and humidity. Protecting dyed fabric from sunlight damage was also important, as the sun would both fade and weaken the fibers. Closets were not a feature of the typical home then, regardless of income level, so many garments were folded and placed in drawers or trunks if they were not hung from pegs on the walls. For hung garments, protection from household dust as well as sunlight was paramount, so sheets or other loose fabrics could be draped over the garments.

If staining from spilled or splashed materials was the problem, the remedies depended to a large extent on the staining agent as well as the textile fiber. Fuller's earth might be rubbed into an oily stain in silk or wool, allowed to sit for a period to soak up as much of the substance as possible, then rubbed and/or brushed out. Cold water might be applied to a liquid stain, such as wine or juice, in wool, blotting out the excess water and repeating to remove as much of the color as possible. This might work well in a darker hue, but it did not remove the stain from white or light tints.

For wash cottons and linens, laundering was the method of choice. For large households that had assistance with laundering or had the function performed entirely by servants, marking laundry items with indelible ink or embroidery so they would be sorted and returned to the correct owner was an important part of the process. The laundering process itself was intense, using strong soap, hot water, and maximum agitation. Petticoats, drawers, chemises, corset covers, as well as household linens were treated in this manner. A washboard, or metal surface with raised and twisted ribs to abrade the fabric, was used for stubborn soil

In this 1869 advertisement, the virtues of a washing machine are made evident. The maid's turned up dress indicates her status. (Library of Congress)

or stains. Otherwise, soiled laundry was stirred in tubs or kettles of boiling water with soap mixed in before being transferred to rinse tubs or kettles. Water was removed by hand wringing. Washing machines with wringers attached were available in the late 1860s. The wringer consisted of two rubber rollers that the fabric was passed between to squeeze out excess water. Power was supplied by a hand crank. Stained linen or cotton could be boiled with a number of cleansing and/or caustic ingredients, as per these instructions from *Godey's Lady's Book*, November 1866, on the recommended method of removing scorched discoloration from linen:

> Add to a quart of vinegar the juice of half a dozen large onions, about an ounce of soap rasped down, a quarter of a pound of fuller's earth, one ounce of lime, and one ounce of pearlash or any other strong alkali. Boil the whole until it is pretty thick, and lay some of it on the scorched part, suffering it to dry. It will be found that on repeating the process for one or two washings, the mark will be completely removed without any additional damage to the linen; provided its texture is not absolutely injured as well as discolored.

Women in rural areas made their own wash soap for the most part, using rendered fat from butchered animals boiled with lye. When finished cooking, the soap solution would be ladled out in large containers to set up before

it was cut into blocks for storage. The blocks would then be shaved or grated into the hot wash water to dissolve. This was a strong cleansing agent and one that could not be used on silk or wool because of its strong alkali base. Drying the rinsed fabrics in the sun aided in removal of some stains.

Laundered cotton and linen garments were often starched before drying and ironed afterward. Garments would be immersed in cooked laundry starch before hanging out. Ironing was usually preceded by a sprinkling down with water to make the fabric smooth more easily, and irons were heated on the stove until hot enough to use. Ideally, a laundry would have two heavy irons, one to be heating up while the other was cooling down in use. Women on the road, whether fleeing invading soldiers or migrating west to resettle their households, would have had limited access to any but the most primitive laundering facilities—perhaps some soap they could use when the campsite provided enough water to use for this purpose. A heavy iron wash kettle might not have made the trip, so buckets or the riverbank itself would at times suffice.

Mending, Remaking, and Refitting

Particularly when funds for or access to materials for new clothing were limited, women worked hard to preserve whatever they had. Mending was a critical aspect of that process. Dresses were often stepped on and torn; the seams were split during wear; sparks from open fires burned holes; fabric in areas of hard wear wore through. As long as there was the possibility of salvaging the entire garment, mending was undertaken. Small patches were applied to cover holes; seams were re-sewn; tears were carefully darned or mended with stitches. Socks and hosiery were mended frequently to present further wear when a stitch broke. Lace was mended for the same reason, and each of these fabrics required special skills to reproduce the missing or broken stitches without making a visibly flawed area in the garment.

But women went far beyond that to not only to salvage a garment, but often to turn it into a new design entirely. Unpicking was a common, if not popular, activity in the South during the war. Lacking new material to make up in the styles they heard about, women took existing garments apart and recut them to approximate more fashionable dresses. Even when the dress would be returned to its original form, women often resorted to unpicking and turning dresses so they could be used long after the original right side had become too soiled to look acceptable. Whole dresses could be taken apart and turned inside out, then resewn. Skirts were not only turned inside out, but at times upside down as well if the hem was especially worn. Ruffles, ruching, or other trim could be added at the bottom if shortening was required to eliminate the damaged part of the skirt. New bodices could be made for skirts that had outlived the original bodice. The popularity of the separate waist and

skirt was no doubt as much for its versatility in this regard as for its perceived stylishness.

Women also picked apart and remade portions of garments when their size changed, but adequate new material was unavailable for clothing that would fit. Most women tried to purchase additional yardage when they bought fabric for a dress or other garment, planning to have some scraps available for letting out should this become necessary. Tucks in the design of dresses for growing children made the length adjustable through a couple of years.

Maternity clothes were not specifically made as such, so women had to adjust existing clothing as their waists expanded in the early months. Later in the pregnancy, most women would have stayed home when they could no longer appear in clothing that was of the fashionable style. At home, they would have worn loose wrappers or full-cut dresses without waistline seams that were drawn in with a belt for fitting. If they had to leave the house, they would have covered this garment with some type of cloak or wrap, even in summer. Rural women were less bound by these fashion restrictions and would have continued their regular activities as much as possible up to the time of childbirth, wearing their loose wrappers as they continued to make crops, milk cows, or whatever else their lives required.

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CHAPTER 4

Men's Fashions

The study of men's clothing during this period is more difficult than that of women's from the individual perspective as well as from the perspective of studied artifacts. There is much less written by men about their own clothing, other than the difficulty of obtaining it and keeping it maintained. Costume collections throughout the country are also lacking in the variety of clothing that exists for women and even children. Gender roles and the work related to those roles explain much of that difference. Women's work involved obtaining (buying, making, trading, reworking) clothing for her family, and it also involved keeping it clean, mended, and presentable. If she were in the upper levels of economic and social class, her role would have been to supervise much of this work, but whether she performed the actual labor or not, she would have been intimately involved in the clothing of all her family.

Men were interested in clothing, no doubt, but their primary concerns were serviceability, appropriateness, and possibly comfort. There were exceptions, but for the most part, men, even those who purchased their own wardrobes out of necessity, did not write in great detail about fashionable dress. They did not compare themselves to other men on the basis of ties and collars, nor did they make their own shirts and coats. The male relationship with fashionable dress was, in the main, somewhat detached.

Women typically saved the clothing that remains for us to examine today. They conserved locks of hair and perhaps a best dress when a woman died in childbirth so that the surviving children would have

A three-piece frock suit is worn with a white shirt and a tie for this studio portrait of Peter the Interpreter, a Potawatomi Indian, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1867. (Wisconsin Historical Society, WHi-23940)

physical relics of the deceased parent. They saved the clothing of children who died before them, perhaps to use again if the need presented itself, but also to hold on to a fragment of the life that was gone. They also saved clothing worn at signal events in their lives. Perhaps a wedding dress was folded into a trunk, or perhaps a ball gown worn to some other special event was stored away. Countless women set aside a trunk of unseasonable winter clothing until the time came to wear it again. Regardless of the stories connected with the millions of clothing artifacts that have survived, the relative scarcity of men's clothing, as well as work clothing for either sex, are well known to museum curators and clothing historians.

There is a degree of similarity to men's clothing of the Civil War–Reconstruction era, however, that is apparent from nearly any photograph, and the codification of what was appropriate at particular times of day or events was well understood. As was true of women's fashions, men's appearance fluctuated more across socioeconomic levels than across geographic areas. The frock coat, which constituted casual dress for the New York businessman and the Washington politician, represented Sunday best for the Missouri farmer going to church with his family.

In addition to the many archival photographs and collections, an additional set of photographs was used in the analysis of upper-class male clothing between the years 1861–1865. All of the photographs were taken in the Mathew Brady Photography Studio in Washington, D.C. during these years and were collected in an album by James Wadsworth. The album, part of the James Wadsworth Family Papers housed in the Library of Congress, has been digitized and made available online as part of the Civil War Photographs Collection. It contains 200 posed photographs of leading public figures of the day, including then President Abraham Lincoln. Numerous military leaders, politicians, and even entertainers are in the album. Although representative of only one slice of the population of that time, it provides a sound basis for drawing conclusions as to what was then considered appropriate dress. Most of the photographs are of the head and shoulders only, so they provide limited

information about the lower half of the costume. They do, however, show the variety of facial hair that was fashionable, hairstyles, collar and tie styles, and some information about the types of vests and jackets they wore. Where appropriate, frequency percentages calculated from these photographs are used in the remainder of the chapter to add specificity to generalizations about men's appearance.

INFLUENCES ON MEN'S FASHIONS

The Civil War

The Civil War exerted perhaps the greatest influence for a variety of reasons. Patriotism ran extremely high, especially in the South. Diaries and letters reveal that there were significant social ramifications for men who were not in the army. Although there were legitimate reasons for men to seek and receive exemptions, those who did so were at risk for being credited with cowardice as motivation. Gray, the official Confederate Army uniform color, was a well accepted color for men's apparel, but if one of the exempted men were seen wearing that color in civilian dress, it caused even greater negative attention. The Civil War diary of Amanda Worthington from around Greenville, Mississippi, records her disgust with a neighbor who frequently appeared in public in a gray morning coat.

The sheer numbers of men on both sides who were in the military during the war meant that the uniform was by far the most common male fashion for at least the years between 1861 and 1865. The uniform exerted fashion influence on the clothing of women and children through the proliferation of braid trim. The costume of the Zouave soldiers was also very influential to both sides, and women adopted a short jacket which they called the Zouave.

Although men were able to purchase many clothing items ready made prior to the Civil War, many of those were shirts, jackets, outerwear, and undergarments made from knitted fabric. The manufacture of slave clothing by Northern businesses is also well documented. Until the advent of the sewing machine, much of the clothing intended for slaves was handmade, often bundled and given out to women who could then stitch it together at home. Sewing machines made centralization of labor more economical and did much to spur the increase in the men's clothing industry. The war itself put immediate strains on this industry in the North and led to major increases in capacity. For the Union forces, an allotment of uniforms was provided to the soldiers, with the exception of officers, who purchased their own uniforms. As the federal government began to realize the scope of the required investment due to the lengthening of the war, they began the first study of men's sizing to determine the most efficient sizes in which to have the uniforms

manufactured. The result was a tremendous set of data made available to the makers of men's clothing, data which was turned to commercial production standards when the war was ended.

For soldiers of the South, there was no men's garment industry to speak of, and the government, after the initial thrust of the war, would become barely able to feed its troops, much less keep them in regulation uniforms. They did the best they could: Often having a coat of any kind was more important than the color of its cloth. Southern women bore the brunt of clothing their men, paying to have garments made or making them themselves. As cloth became scarce, they made the most of whatever they could get, regulations totally aside. Made over clothing from other family members often had to suffice. Women throughout the South gathered at sewing clubs and circles, making shirts, knitting socks, pulling apart cotton clothing to make lint for bandages, doing whatever they could with whatever they had to keep the Confederate troops clothed and warm.

Volunteers Wanted for Bragg's Army

Persons who are liable to Conscription, under the several acts of Congress, have now an opportunity of offering their services to their country and receiving all the benefits hitherto extended to Volunteers. They are invited to enlist, under the guarantee, that they will be described on the master rolls as Volunteers, receive the bounty of Fifty Dollars, and have the privilege of joining any company attached to the Army.

The undersigned are authorized to receive recruits and furnish them transportation to the Army. It is presumed that the patriotic societies of Adams county will supply the necessary clothing.

T. Otis Baker
J. J. Gorkau
Lieuts. and Recruiting Officers

(*The Natchez Daily Courier*, February 12, 1863)

Men's clothing lent itself to commercial production much more readily than women's because of the less exacting fit required of male styles and also because the male body, lacking a bust line, is easier to outfit with a minimum of measurements. Shirts were loose, as was the popular sack coat. The frock coat skimmed the body but did not constrict it. Pants could be made to waistline measure and hemmed as necessary. Only the vest was actually designed to hug the body. In this case, the most important measures were the chest and waistline, as the sleeveless style accommodated variation if shoulder width. If a vest did not meet across the stomach, however, men did not wear it.

Westward Expansion

Westward expansion continued to fuel the need for clothing bought ready made, although not to the extent as in the previous decade. Many men migrated toward the western part of the country to search for a better life. Some sought gold and other mineral treasures from the veins that continued to be discovered and mined. Others looked for land and a place

to settle that was less populated and offered more opportunity for the adventurous or those who wished to live more independently and closer to the land. Homesteading promised that for many, and many men explored that option alone at first, in order to scout out the best land or claims, planning to send for their families when they had obtained a roof to cover them. For those men—and for the thousands who lived without family as they mined, drove mule teams, or laid track for the railroads that would link the two sides of the continent—there was a ready market for clothing. Shirts, underwear, hats, shoes and boots, pants like the riveted Levi's or other durable styles and fabrics, vests, and coats were available in small towns all over the country, but were sold in more quantity, relative to raw population numbers, in the newly settled areas. Small-town general stores stocked clothing for men just as they did food, dishes, hardware, and whatever else the people could not provide for themselves.

Growing Separation of Home and Work

For the growing numbers of men who worked in the trades and businesses of the growing towns and cities of the United States, work remained separate from home and family. This was not the case for families depending on some form of agriculture or home industry for a livelihood. The hierarchy of work and its separation from agriculture was signified by the appearance of the workers. Men in the upper classes, termed "*gentlemen*," wore what was nearly a uniform that would evolve into the three-piece suit of today's businessman. Either the frock coat or the morning coat was the accepted garment for daytime business and social occasions, and either garment was worn with vest and contrasting pants. A top hat completed the garment in the eastern part of the country, while a lower-crowned hat was preferred in the west and midwest, where the frock coat was by far the most common form of day wear for men. For casual wear, these men might wear a sack jacket, shorter, more loosely cut, and buttoning higher toward the neck.

Men lower in the social and business class were much more likely to wear a sack jacket or suit as their best garment. Also given the attribution of being the forerunner of today's three-piece suit, the sack jacket was better fitted than in the previous decade, but still was cut loosely over the body and lacked the somewhat fitted waistline seam of the frock or morning coats. This feature made it

Rules for the Clothing and Appearance of Gentlemen

The dress of a gentleman should be such as not to excite any special observation, unless it be for neatness and propriety. The utmost care should be exercised to avoid even the appearance of desiring to attract attention by the peculiar formation of any article of attire, or by the display of an immoderate quantity of jewelry, both being a positive evidence of vulgarity. His dress should be studiously neat, leaving no other impression than that of a well-dressed gentleman (Martine 1860, 48).

easy to fit to a variety of individual size idiosyncrasies. Thus the sack jacket was one of the first ready-to-wear *suits* to be widely offered. Socially, the codification of clothing according to type of work as well as to projected affluence underlined the importance of looking the part. Especially for young men seeking to establish themselves in a career, wearing clothing that would not separate them from their already established colleagues was critical.

Ethnic Identification and Blending

For many ethnic groups, there was a conflict between maintaining cultural identification with the country or ethnic group of origin and adapting to the ways of their adopted country. Numerous religious groups maintained a specific appearance as a means of distinguishing themselves from the larger population, although this was not always the case. Orthodox Jews were much more likely to dress in a way to indicate their ethnic and religious identity, while others of Jewish descent did not wish to be identified as such. Discrimination was a strong force in the United States, even though the nation labeled itself a melting pot. For example, in California during this time, Chinese immigrants were not eligible for citizenship and were not allowed to testify in a court of law.

In urban areas where large groups of one nationality or another settled and created their own ethnic communities, there was likely to be more identification by dress among the residents than in cases where families of specific ethnicity were dispersed within larger, heterogeneous populations. The latter were more likely to dress similarly to their neighbors.

Native Americans maintained visual links with their heritage regardless of their location, which during this period usually was either in battle with or hiding from federal forces, or else they were gathered into reservations. As reservations were not designated for residence by a single tribe, they became a force for weakening the distinctions between individual tribes. Another situation that changed Native American appearance was the available materials with which they could fashion clothing. Most of the animal species upon which they had depended for making and decorating the bulk of their clothing were either totally depleted or else extremely scarce. For Native Americans who had been relocated hundreds of miles from their native lands, so that the old resources were no longer available.

THE CLOTHING

Jackets and Coats

For day wear, the most formal of social or business jackets was the cutaway coat. The style consisted of a fitted upper garment that came just to or slightly above the waist in the front and then either tapered from the

center front to long tails in the back or was cut parallel to the waistline from center front to the side, from which point the back tails were cut. The coat in black was always in good taste, but it was also made in other dark colors.

The morning coat was worn with contrasting pants and vest. The pants were often in gray, but other colors, even stripes, were acceptable. A white or black vest, white shirt with black tie, and a black top hat completed the ensemble. While still recommended by some etiquette books and seen in photographs, the morning suit was rapidly declining in day use and moving instead to attire only for formal evening events.

As the morning coat became passé for day wear, it was replaced by the frock coat, which would continue to be worn throughout the period, although it, too, would be replaced by the majority of men with the sack coat or suit by the mid seventies. The frock coat typically had wide lapels, was either double or single breasted, and was seamed at the waist to a slightly flared skirt that came to just above the knee. The frock is invariably dark in photographs, but could have been black, dark blue, or even burgundy. It was often worn with dark pants, but whether they were of matching fabric is difficult to tell in most period photographs. Lighter colored pants were also acceptable, as were sedate stripes.

The front of the frock coat might have tiny vertical darts to fit the jacket top more closely to the body from the waistline seam upward. In the back, curved seams began at the waist just a few inches from the center back seam and ended at about the middle of the back armscye seam. Some fitting was also provided by the center back seam and side seams from armscye to waist. The center back panel extended to the hemline with a pleat and/or split at the center back to give mobility to the lower body while walking or riding.

The frock coat could be either single or double breasted. Many were trimmed at the collar and front closing with braid, and many also had contrasting collars and/or lapels, most frequently of velvet. The notch of the collar varied in size and in symmetry, with the symmetrical notch the most common. A few designs show a longer notch on the lapel portion. The sleeves were slightly contoured to the shape of the arm by seams that followed the outside elbow line of the arm, ending with buttons and a plain hem.

The sack jacket had been worn in the decade earlier, cut very loosely and with loose sleeves, as well. In the 1860s, the cut was closer to the body, and the sleeves were often tapered toward the wrist. Although typically shorter than the frock coat, some versions were nonetheless rather long, as much as mid thigh. The cut of the sack jacket was much more similar to today's suit coat, with the back relatively straight and unfitted through the waist, and the front made in the same manner. Patterns, photographs, and surviving examples show no darting or additional seaming to create a more fitted shape.

The sack coat usually had lower front pockets and a breast pocket plus an additional inside pocket. The front pockets were welt, or tab, in style; that is, the bag of the pocket was inside the garment with only self-fabric lips, or welts, finishing the opening. This style differed from the frock coat, which had only hidden pockets inside the front or in the side seams or both. Another difference was in the placement of the armscye, which was higher and a little more fitted than that of the frock coat. Both styles of garment were worn throughout the Civil War era, with the frock regarded as the more formal of the two.

The sack coat buttoned higher than the frock, sometimes even at the neckline, in which case the collar was constructed more like that of a shirt than of a jacket. Some of the obviously homemade jackets worn by Confederate soldiers near the end of the war, when supplies were almost nonexistent, were made with this type of collar. For women who had no experience in tailoring men's outer clothing, the shirt style would have been much easier to master than the more complex, slower, and more demanding than the tailored notched collar style. Most sack coats feature the typical notched collar of the more formal frock. In wear, only the top button was closed, allowing the vest front to show.

The sack coat was also made in dark fabric, but unlike the frock, matching pants and vest were considered fashionable. The term "*of a piece*" refers to what today would be noted as a three-piece suit. The matching sack suit was often made of figured or patterned fabrics, even plaids, checks, and stripes. Some sack coats were unlined, particularly those for summer wear or those more cheaply made.

Although made of sturdy wool for winter, and for many men for the entire year, linen was sometimes used for summer sack suits. The lighter weight sack jackets were made with a looser fit than those made of wool and were usually to about mid thigh in length. Braid trim was occasionally used as edging of the collar and front opening, and those with notched collars occasionally had contrasting collars. These would have been used for dressier occasions than those with such trim.

Vests

Ubiquitous throughout this period was the vest, also known as waistcoat. Almost every formal, posed picture of men shows them wearing a vest under their coats. What varied was the fabric and the style, but the garment itself was apparently regarded by males as essential to being completely dressed. Even manual laborers and men with a very worn and scruffy appearance overall usually wore a vest over their shirt or overalls or pants and braces. In some cases, the vest substituted for a coat. It would have been exceedingly rare to see a man in public wearing only a shirt.

For the most part, these vests were made in contrasting fabric to the coat. Photographs from the period show many that are dark and could well be of the same fabric as the coat. Others are small patterned brocade, probably of silk, although fine cotton could also be used for brocades. Brightly colored silk brocades were still sold for making up into vests, and ready-made vests were still advertised as being available during the 1860s in period newspapers.

Most vests had collars, but some did not and had a high V-shape. The collars were either notched or shawl, but were usually made smaller than that of the suit. There was no obvious relationship between the collar of the coat and that of the vest, perhaps because vests could be worn with many different jackets and jacket styles. The exception was the evening vest, which was typically silk and either white or black.

Vests were lined, often with a high quality cotton that was also used to make the back of the vest. The practice of using lining fabric for the vest back is one that continues today. Originally the style would have conserved the more expensive fabric used for the vest proper and would have been less bulky in some cases.

Vests usually had several pockets, including two watch pockets. In most cases, these were made in the welt, or tab, style. Vests also had back belts that buckled or tied to control the back fullness and allow a better fit in the vest front.

Pant styles and the ubiquitous vest are clearly visible in this mixed group of men in front of an ambulance shop, April 1865. Aprons add protection for those likely to be soiled in their work. (Library of Congress)

Pants

Men's pants closed with a button fly during this period and were made with plain fronts and waistbands but no belt loops. Men typically wore suspenders to keep their pants up, with buttons on either the inside or outside of the waistband. Front pockets were sewn into the side seams, made with a slanted opening from the side seam to about two inches from the side seam toward the front (called "*mule ear*" pockets), or welt pockets made parallel to the waistband on each side of the fly. The back of the trousers might have none, one, or two welt pockets. On some trousers, a yoke was set in to the back, slightly pointed into the center back seam and notched at the top. A narrow attached belt could be adjusted for better waistline fit. Trousers for riding, whether for military or civilian use, typically had reinforced areas in the seat and along the front and back inseams.

Trouser legs were left uncreased for a round look similar to a stovepipe. In many cases, the hems were contoured to rise slightly in the front and taper longer in the back over the heel of the boot or shoe. The leg fit rather loosely, which would have increased comfort for working men. Some examples of pants were fuller at the top, tapering as they neared the foot.

For winter, slacks were made of durable wool fabrics such as worsted twill or satinet, or cassimere. In summer fabrics such as cotton jean, linen plain weave, or lightweight wool were used. Natchez, Mississippi, newspapers list many items of men's apparel ready made and also cloth for sewing men's, women's, and children's clothing. The January 3, 1861 edition of *The Natchez Daily Courier* lists "Indigo Blue Jeans, a very fine article manufactured in Baltimore for planters suits" among other fabrics including osnaburgs, brown domestics, linseys, kerseys, jeans, long cloths, bleached domestics, and Tennessee truck for trousers. Many of these fabrics, such as the osnaburgs and brown domestics, were intended for slave clothing.

The fabrics used for pants, or trousers, could also be used for overalls, although heavy cottons predominated for this work-related item of apparel. Just as today, the bib overall protected working men's shirt fronts, and possibly their vest fronts as well. Bib overalls also eliminated the need for wearing suspenders.

Shirts

Made of cotton, linen, light wool, or perhaps flannel, men's shirts were made along one basic style with numerous variations of collar, cuff, and front opening treatment. At its simplest, the shirt had a faced or bound opening at the center front that closed with a single button and pulled on over the head. This style would have been quick and easy to make as it lacked the complicated tabbed front that was more common. Long sleeves, full at the armscye and gathered into a cuff, made for

An Advertisement for Clothing, 1861

Clothing and furnishing goods listed for sale by Wm. H. Forbes, Natchez, Mississippi in *The Natchez Daily Courier*, January 10, 1861:

BLACK AND COLORED CLOTH FROCK COATS;
BLACK CLOTH DRESS COATS;
Fancy Cassimere PALTOTS and SACS;
Silk mixed Cassimere Paltots and Sacs;
Grey, Steel and Mixed Harris Coats, Paltots and Sacs;
Black, Blue and Cadet Satinet Sacs and JACKETS
Fine Silk Plush OVERCOATS;
Fine Black Doeskin PANTS;
Fine Black Cloth PANTS;
Fancy Cassimere PANTS, various styles;
Blue and Black Satinet PANTS;
Heavy Kersey JACKETS and PANTS;
Fine Black Satin, Silk and Velvet VESTS;
Fine Fancy Silk and Velvet VESTS;
Fine Fancy Cassimere VESTS;
Black and Cadet Satinet VESTS;

Furnishing Goods
Superior Quality of Shaker Flannel SHIRTS and DRAWERS;
Superior Quality of Merino Flannel SHIRTS and DRAWERS;
Fine Red Flannel and Canton Flannel UNIONSHIRTS and DRAWERS;
Lamb's Wool, Merino and Cotton HALF HOSE;
Black, White and Colored KID GLOVES;
Fancy and Black Silk and Satin TIES and SCARVES;
Linen, Cambric and Silk HANDKERCHIEFS;
Fine Linen and Cotton FRENCH YOKE SHIRTS of every size and quality;
Trunks, Valises, Carpet Bags, Umbrellas, etc.;
INDIA RUBBER COATS and LEGGINGS;
BOOTS and SHOES in great variety;
OILED COATS and KERSEY SUITS, for negroes;

In all making one of the most complete stocks in the South.

comfort and ease of fitting, and a long tail helped keep the shirt tucked into pants during work and other physical activity. Many shirts had a back yoke, in which case the bottom of the shirt gathered or pleated into the lower edge of the yoke for additional fullness around the male torso.

Patterns and drawings from the time show tab fronts on nearly all shirts, with elaborate pleating and closure with studs rather than buttons on shirts intended for evening wear. Detachable collars were widely accepted during the time, and shirts often had just a narrow band collar to which other styles of detachables could be buttoned. For a man who

did not have a woman's assistance with maintaining his clothing, the advent of these detachable, sometimes even disposable, collars and cuffs allowed a single shirt to be worn for work and then, with the addition of the collar and possibly cuffs, be worn for Sunday best.

Many collars folded over from that band, but many men continued to be photographed in a standing collar, some so high that the points came up to the cheeks, others about half that high. In the James Wadsworth Photograph Album, fully one fourth of the sitters wore the stiff standing collar. No other single style was so common. For formal evening wear, a folded collar with the pointed tips folded back like wings was worn, today called a "*wing tip collar*." Shirts for evening wear would typically have French cuffs, requiring cuff links, while all others closed with buttons and buttonholes.

Overcoats

For winter wear, a heavy, long overcoat would have been worn for protection. Made of a thick wool, often napped for additional warmth, the coat might have had a large detachable capelet that extended over the shoulders and provided additional protection from precipitation. Elaborate variations might have multiples of this short cape, each somewhat shorter than the other, with the shortest on top.

The overcoat followed the same general style of the frock coat but without the waistline seam and with a looser fit overall, as it was meant to be worn on top of all the other typical layers of male clothing. Both single and double breasted versions were worn, and often the sleeves were cuffed. A back belt might be included to introduce a slight amount of fitting at the waist. A center back pleat and/or split let the skirt of the coat expand for mounting and riding a horse.

A lightweight variation of the overcoat was the duster, made of thick cotton such as duck, or a tightly woven linen or even of oil cloth. The purpose was to protect primarily from dust and/or rain. The duster would serve as a raincoat in any season, while the heavier overcoat was strictly a winter garment for very cold weather. In warmer climates, a duster may have been sufficient even in winter when worn over a wool jacket, a shirt and vest, and an undershirt. In style, the duster was like a long sack jacket, with the same loose fitting and high buttoning, often right up to the neck, although how many buttons men actually fastened was a matter of individual preference.

Undergarments

For men, the function of undergarments lacked the body/silhouette altering characteristic of women's corsets, bustles, and hoops and served more the same purpose as women's chemises and drawers. In all seasons, men's undergarments served to protect the more expensive outer

garments from soiling, with the exception of the shirt, most often made of wool that could not be laundered. Therefore, fabric that would absorb bodily oils and perspiration were favored for undergarments. In cold climates and in winter, warmth became an additional factor, and wool or a blend of wool and cotton became the preferred fabrics, while in summer cotton was most frequently chosen. Lightweight muslin or a jersey that was machine knit specifically for undergarments were typical summer fabrics.For winter, wool jersey or brushed flannel were the norm.

At the very least, a man would wear a pair of drawers, shaped very similarly to his trousers but cut closer to the leg. They fastened with a fly front and buttoned waistband. In the back, a yoke or faced, simulated yoke split from slightly below the waist to the top edge and closed with a tie. This allowed adjustment in fit at the waistline. Early drawers came to mid calf, while later ones were made to the ankles; however, there was much variation in how individuals preferred the length.

The undershirt was made very like the basic form of the shirt but cut much closer to the body and without the gathers at yoke and sleeves. In the 1860s, the one-piece union suit was available. It was made of cotton jersey with ribbed cuffs at the sleeves and legs and with a long buttoned front. Alternatively, wool knit or cotton flannel was used, the latter less comfortable for a one-piece garment, due to lack of stretch.

Socks were available ready made, but many women continued to hand knit them as well. Knitting clubs and socials were a common feature during the war years, as women worked to furnish soldiers with whatever garments they had the materials to make. Knitting machines were capable at that time of making hosiery, and there was a ready market for the especially fine grades made of yarn so small it would have been very difficult and time consuming to hand knit. Dress hose or longer socks for formal occasions were preferred in the smaller gauge. For everyday, cotton or wool fibers were used. Socks were knitted to size, but with some flexibility, as the knit structure was stretchy.

Accessories

Hats and Caps

Men wore hats almost as universally as they wore vests. Only rarely in photographs do men appear out of doors without a hat or cap. For dress in cities, the top hat was still expected to be seen with the frock coat. Occasionally, a top hat can be spotted among many other types being worn with a sack jacket, but less formal styles were most often seen with the less formal type of jacket or suit.

The top hat had a relatively narrow brim compared to the height of the crown, which might be as much as eight inches above the wearer's natural crown. The top had was most often made of beaver finished fun, or

even of beaver hair maid into felt, but silk top hats were also worn, especially in evening.

More common dress hats for rural towns were the bowler, the homburg, or the slouch hat. The bowler had a rounded crown, looking very much like a slice from the top of a bowling ball, and a narrow, rolled up brim. The homburg, especially popular in the 1870s, was made of stiff felt. The brim was wider than that of the bowler, curved upward slightly, and had a straight-sided crown that was flat on top. The slouch hat was made of a softer felt with a deep, soft crease in the crown that ran from the front to the back of the hat. The slouch hat remained popular well into the twentieth century.

Although felt was the most common material for hats, straw was very popular in summer. Some of the styles noted earlier were also made in straw. Cloth caps were popular as well. Soldiers continued to wear their Kepi, or forage, hats even after their military days were over. Other styles of cloth caps, some with small brims, were favored by men who worked near or on the sea.

Coming into popularity by the 1870s was the head covering we today call a "cowboy hat." The brim was wider than that of the slouch or homburg, and the crown was somewhat taller and rounder, but still with the soft crease from front to back. Some relationship to the South American sombrero can be seen, but the cowboy hat was smaller in all respects. A chin cord or strap helped keep the hat in place when riding or working in windy situations. From the beginning, this style of hat was more common in the west than in the eastern or middle part of the country.

Shoes and Boots

Boots were the most common type of footwear worn by men during this period. Pull-on boots of soft leather with softly squared toes predominated during the Civil War years. Group photographs of men show very little variation on this type of shoe. Occasionally a man will be photographed with tall boots worn outside and over his trousers, but this is an exception that applies more to riders than to the population as a whole. The typical boot was worn a few inches above the ankle, with all but the toe and heel covered by trousers.

For the working man, slave, farmer, or other man whose days were spent in hard manual labor, the brogan was worn. It was a heavy, tough leather high-top shoe that laced up the front and had a thick sole. Brogans were advertised in nearly every Southern newspaper and town up to and during the war, as long as any stock lasted. Plantation diaries and day books indicate the brogan was *the* shoe ordered in a limited number of sizes and given out to male slaves once or twice a year as the need dictated. They were stiff and uncomfortable until broken in, but

then they fitted themselves to the foot and offered the wearer exceptional durability.

Ties and Scarves

Worn with collared shirts, ties predominated over ascots or scarves worn at the neck so much that the latter is seen as a rarity in period photographs. Most ties during this period were black and appear to be little more than lengths of ribbon knotted in a thousand different ways by the wearer. The 200 male photographs in the James Wadsworth collection show almost that many variations on the exact width of the tie and its manner of knotting. Some are neatly tied, but many look as if they were tied in the dark, with sides unmatched in length and angled in different directions. In more distant photographs, it is usually very difficult to tell exactly how the tie looks, as the perspective yields little more than a dark spot in the middle of the white collar. Most neckties that can be clearly seen are relatively narrow, but the gnarled arrangement of ribbon or fabric sometimes makes it impossible to tell if there is a bow in the tie or just an awkward knot. Certainly nothing like the precision of today's necktie knot is seen in general.

Andrew Gregg Curtin, governor of Pennsylvania from 1861 to 1867, poses for a studio portrait dressed in a matching vest and pants with contrasting sack coat. His upturned collar, black tie, watch chain, and leather gloves illustrate acceptable fashion for public figures during the early 1860s. (Library of Congress)

Men without a jacket are rarely seen with ties. Typically the tie would be added along with the detachable shirt collar, and that would be worn for Sunday best, which would also require a jacket. Thus manual laborers are frequently pictured with a vest only. Working men such as physicians or clerks, might take off their coat during work, leaving on the collar and tie, then don the coat again when leaving work, just as men do today.

Gloves

The well-dressed, fashionable man would always begin his day wearing gloves. They were made of soft leather and offered in basic colors such as white, black, brown, and gray. For evening wear, white gloves were to be worn, because etiquette forbade that a man would handle a woman's bare skin with his bare hands. It was impolite, plus there was the danger of having sweaty palms, which would certainly have been an

unacceptable repulse to his dance partner. Some men wore work gloves suitable to their occupations in cases where protection from abrasive tools was a problem, such as digging, railroad work, and similar occupations. Leather was used for these gloves as well, but of a thicker type that offered more protection to the wearer than the thin, soft leather of dress gloves.

Umbrellas and Canes

A man wearing a morning or frock suit and top hat, with gloves on his hands, would also be carrying either an umbrella or a cane as a part of his overall look. A cane was the most common accessory carried, and there was no relationship to ambulatory infirmity in its use. It was an accessory, pure and simple. Men did not lean on their canes as they walked, but they swung them jauntily along with each step, perhaps using them to whisk some offending debris out of their paths or raising them to hail a friend. These were decorative canes made of carved wood and possibly ornamented at the holding edge with gold, ivory, ebony, or other expensive materials. The head, or top, of the cane was rarely curved or shaped as today's walking canes are but were instead made straight with a rounded or knob top subject to ornamentation.

Umbrellas were used for the practical purpose of protecting the holder from rain, but they also doubled as canes when folded or closed. The handle might end the same way as the cane, with a knob or other ornamental finial at the end, but it might also be curved. Like canes, umbrellas varied from the most economical, plainest possible, to very expensive creations heavily ornamented and made with very expensive materials. The common man was unlikely to be seen going about his daily routine with either one of these objects, which would have been just a hindrance to him, something extra to carry and keep track of as he went about his work. If he needed to walk in the rain, then he would carry an umbrella open and in use. Otherwise, he would carry it only if rain was in the predictable future or recent, damp past.

Jewelry

In keeping with their rather sedate appearance overall, jewelry was kept to a minimum on men of good taste. For evening and other very dressing occasions, such a man might wear gold or diamond studs in his dress shirt. Cuff links for shirt sleeves having French cuffs was another potential place for expenditure on good jewelry. Rings were acceptable as long as they were kept to a minimum and were not overly flashy. A carved intaglio ring with gold setting, for example, was acceptable. Several faceted diamonds in a huge ring would have been regarded

as vulgar. The one area in which nearly every man who could possibly aspire to self decoration indulged himself was in ownership of a pocket watch and chain. His clothing was made to receive the watch in a special pocket, and there were buttonholes specifically for attaching and looping the chain. Finally, there was a true function for this piece of jewelry, for how else was one to evidence punctuality in all things without a means of determining the exact time. If a gold chain was above a man's finances, then even a flexible cord would suffice. Gold watches were precious and out of the reach of most men, but filled gold or silver, and even base metals were made into watches for those who could not afford the best.

Hair and Facial Hair

Although not regarded as dress, the way men cut and combed their hair and the type, amount, and shape of their facial hair did more to alter their appearance than nearly anything else they might do. Although an almost infinite variety of facial hair arrangements seems possible from a cursory glance at a number of male images from the period, either in isolation or in group photographs, a study of the James Wadsworth album indicated that just two styles of treating facial hair accounted for over 50 percent of the 200 images. Most men wore a full beard (34%), and the next most common style was the clean-shaven face (23%). The remaining 43% were divided into seven various styles, from mustache only (13.5%); sideburns only (10%); mutton chop whiskers that began as sideburns but ended curving upward across the cheek and ending near the mouth or even growing directly into a mustache (9.5%); a mustache and goatee (6.5%); a rim of whiskers beginning with sideburns, continuing along the edge of the jaw, and meeting under the chin with no hair actually coming over the chin edge; goatee only (3.5%) and a combination of goatee, mustache, and sideburns (.75%). The sample is not representative of the population as a whole, but of those upper-class, influential men who were educated and in most cases financially secure. Examination of other groups of men photographed at about this time indicates that the sample actually does seem to be reflective of men in general. Certainly the full beard was very common. Quite a few men were clean shaven, although not as many in random photographs as were in the Wadsworth group. All of the other styles of facial hair can be seen by looking at Civil War pictures, especially those of soldiers.

Parts of the country that were less populated are less frequently represented in photographs, but every state maintains collections of documents and photographs that relate to its early history. Museums, state archives, university archives, and historical societies have made immense strides in documenting their holdings and digitizing them so that the public can have access to this information that for so long has been

inaccessible to researchers or the general public without extensive travel. These sources allow at least informal verification of information gleaned from a single study.

Another fortunate aspect of the Wadsworth photographs is that they are interior portrait shots of men without hats. Most informal photographs taken out of doors show virtually every man wearing a hat, so it is difficult to draw conclusions about how the hair was typically worn. In this set of photographs, 187 of the 200 men wore their hair short, either above the ears or coming just to the ears. One hundred and twenty parted their hair on the side, and 61 combed their hair straight back with no part at all. Others varied from bald to so disheveled no conclusion could be drawn. One other interesting observation about the hairstyles, however, was that quite a few men combed their hair from the back of the head forward at the sides. This was done even when the hair was parted and combed to one side; the back hair would come forward to about the position of the ear and then curl slightly up or down so the ends did not actually extend over the face. Nineteen of the men surveyed chose this particular hairstyle.

MEN IN THE MILITARY

For the war years, the military on both sides was the single greatest regulator of male appearance. On both sides of the conflict, military authorities set down exactly how every aspect of every rank in every type of

Company E of the 4th U.S. Colored Infantry stand in double file wearing official issue uniforms. (Library of Congress)

service was to look. The colors of the jackets, the pants, the braid and facings used as trim, the insignia, and even the various hats conveyed specific information about the group to which that particular soldier belonged. Images of regulation uniforms were drawn up in color and became part of the instructions given to those men who furnished any or all of their own uniforms. For Union soldiers, the regulations were copied to the manufacturers who made up many of the uniforms that became standard issue.

Although African Americans were initially prohibited from enlisting in the Union army, the Emancipation Proclamation made their enlistment and recruitment possible. Many free and recently emancipated African Americans joined the North for the remainder of the war. They did not join as regular enlisted men, however. Even in this effort they were segregated into black units, often assigned non-combat duties and menial support work, and paid less than white soldiers. They faced racial prejudice among the troops with whom they fought, yet, in spite of these conditions, they volunteered in number. Nearly 180,000 African Americans had joined in the war effort by the time it ended (Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877, 2002).

As the war progressed, there was less strict enforcement due to distance from suppliers, damage to existing uniforms, and other circumstances. There was probably some borrowing from men no longer needing some of their issue, including weapons as well as clothing and shoes. When the army was unable to furnish needed clothing, soldiers turned to family and friends, and the replacements furnished from these sources often fell short of the official regulations. For this reason, pictures of soldiers in the field that were taken once the war was well in progress cannot be interpreted too strictly as to the rank and order represented by the uniforms.

For the Confederate forces, there was never the level of consistency achieved with actual uniforms that might be implied by drawings and regulations that have survived. There simply was no method for outfitting the number of soldiers needed with that many uniforms. There was some manufacturing in the South, but it was in no way sufficient either for that level of demand or for the speed with which the outfitting was required. Home sewing had to supplant officially contracted manufacture, and therein lay the huge diversity that existed in what the rebel soldiers actually wore. An official gray might have been selected, but women working at home dyed fabric with whatever they had to use. Butternut yellow-brown had to suffice for gray if butternuts were growing locally and gray dye was not available.

After the war, many of the U.S. troops who remained in the service, as well as incoming recruits, were responsible for two main charges—overseeing the reconstruction of the South so that states could be readmitted to the Union and subduing Native American tribes in the Western area

of the country, where relations between settlers and Indians remained a source of great tension. Military protection for settlers had been negligible during the war because there were not enough troops to cover both conflicts. During the years of the Indian wars, forts were built and soldiers stationed across the developing country to contain the conflict and herd as many Native Americans as possible into reservations.

The African American troops who had served during the Civil War presented a potential problem if used in the Reconstruction efforts. The federal government had reservations about having thousands of armed, freed slaves assigned the task of keeping order among their former owners. The two regiments formed after war were the 10th Cavalry Regiment, formed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1866 and the 9th Cavalry Regiment, formed in New Orleans, Louisiana, on August 3, 1866. Assigned to the frontier and heavily engaged in the Indian Wars, members of these units would become known as "Buffalo Soldiers" (Milliken 2008).

Throughout the vanquished South, troops in uniform established martial law during the period in which states tried to reestablish workable forms of government and meet the requirements to be readmitted into the Union. The military thus remained a significant force in the culture of the United States.

CLOTHING OF THE WORKING MAN

Outside of the military, the popularity of uniforms to distinguish workers by their clothing had not developed. The chief difference in clothing for work and clothing for all other occasions was in its condition and its utility. Many pieces of work clothing were so designated because they were no longer in a condition suitable for wearing anywhere but to work. Torn, faded, worn, sometimes threadbare garments were used for work as long as they could be held together enough to serve their function.

Manual laborers, including farmers, typically developed a work costume that was linked to the work they did, although this was far from achieving the level of a uniform, but rather simply a matter of selecting items of apparel that performed well for the particular work. A blacksmith would need a leather apron to protect against burns; a butcher would need a large apron to protect his clothing from bloodstains. Men panning for gold frequently wore rubber boots to protect against the nearly constant wetness of their work. In each situation, there was not so much a radical difference in actual costume style and cut as in quality of fabric and the way the garments were worn.

There were garments that had been created particularly for their durability, such as the riveted Levis introduced for miners in the West, but these were worn for many occupations where hard work was a constant. In most clothing intended for work, the fabric would have been

more durable, its stitching reinforced at stress points, and allowing more ease for comfort in movement, but the basic style of pants and shirts used for work clothing was not significantly different from that designed for dress. In work shirts, color was more common, and even figured fabrics can be seen, mostly stripes.

Brogans or rough leather boots would likely have been worn rather than the softer, less durable leather of pull-on dress boots. Photographs of miners specifically show a taller boot, often worn over the pants. Mercantile stores advertised rubber boots at the time, and it is likely these would have been used for work in wet and mud. Overalls are occasionally seen in pictures of working men. They would have been an alternative to trousers with suspenders and would likely have been more durable and comfortable, as the overalls were not fitted tightly to the waist as were the waistbands of trousers.

For many workers, aprons were a standard part of the work costume. Blacksmiths, butchers, surgeons, or cooks, for example, would likely have worn aprons when performing their work. Some miners are pictured wearing what appears to be thick work gloves. Settlement increases in the West stimulated the cattle industry, and with it a growing importance of the men who worked with the cattle. Their way of life would be immortalized, if in a distorted manner, in movie and television westerns of the twentieth century. In the 1870s, however, the job was hard, dusty, often lonely, and even dangerous work that required special clothing. Leather or hide chaps protected the lower legs from brambles and briars when riding horseback. The wide-brim cowboy hat was adopted, along with the accouterments of life on the range: guns, saddles, holsters, colorful handkerchiefs around the neck for mopping sweat from the face, and boots with canted heels. Entertainers such as Buffalo Bill, Calamity Jane, and Wild Bill Hickok exaggerated this simple work costume and made it the stuff of fantasy.

CLOTHING WORN AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS

African Americans

The majority of slaves who were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation left the plantations where they had spent most of their lives with little more than the clothes they wore and whatever they could carry in bundles. Most left on foot, not knowing what lay ahead. As slaves, they already were among the most poorly dressed of the Southern population, and as weeks stretched into months of war, there simply was not enough concern given to their condition to see that they were provided with clothing as it wore out. Not until the war was over did the government establish an organization to provide for freed slaves and displaced, impoverished whites.

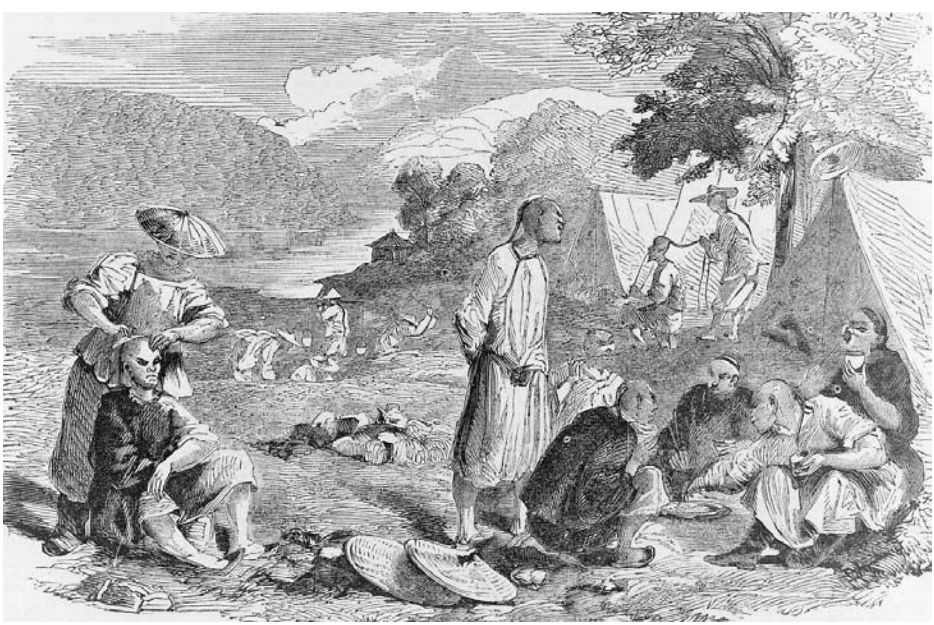
Operating between 1865 and 1872, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, more commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau, took on the task of providing clothing, food, and shelter and helping facilitate the process of creating a new social order based on equality. It was a huge task, and one that was poorly funded, considering the extent of damage done previous to and during the war, but it was at least a measure of sorely needed aid. For some slaves freed early in the war, there had been no expectation of exactly what freedom would mean in literal terms, and what thousands found as they flocked to the liberating troops was that the military was in no way prepared to help them. In fact, no provision had been made for them at all. Most wanted to follow the troops, but in fact the addition of huge numbers of people to feed and help was more than the regiments had resources to carry out. The result was dissatisfaction on both sides. The Freedmen's Bureau attempted to smooth the transition of former slaves into the mainstream of U.S. life. A large part of that was providing clothing that was comparable to what was being worn generally by white men. Photographic evidence indicates black Americans dressed no differently than did white Americans.

Chinese Americans

Chinese Americans, whether recent immigrants or those born in the United States, were the subject of intense prejudice and unequal treatment. They were labeled "*Mongolians*" and made the subject of exclusionary and discriminatory laws and taxes, called "license fees" to avoid charges of illegal unequal taxation. When they were overly successful in their businesses, laws were initiated to create favor for their competitors. Unions excluded them from membership, and local authorities in the states having high populations of Chinese Americans managed to create ordinances that would result in their segregation in distinct communities.

Chinese Americans for the most part retained at least a version of their native fashions in clothing, footwear, hats, and hair styles. So distinctive was their appearance, with long braided queues of hair, loose tunics, and loose pants, some above the ankle. Hats were very wide brimmed and shallow crowned, with the crown sometimes pointed or the entire hat like a very wide, shallow crown serving also as a brim. The shoes they wore were flat, simple slip-ons, usually of a dark color. Clothing for special occasions might include brightly colored brocaded silks, but work clothing was light or dark. The unique aspects of their dress made them easy targets for caricature.

In spite of the prejudice against them, Chinese Americans made important contributions to the culture and economy of those areas where they settled in great numbers, such as in California. Even as some



An illustration of Chinese American miners relaxing in camp, *Harper's Weekly*, October 3, 1857. (Library of Congress)

industries tried to shut them out, others tried to hire as many as they could because of their record of productivity, which was a huge factor in the rapid completion of the western section of the transcontinental railroad.

Native Americans

Before they were invaded by settlers and their lands taken, individual tribes across the country had very unique and distinctive styles of dress, from the treatment of hair to the pattern of trim and the shape of the moccasin. The main similarities were that they used what they had to form their clothing and its decoration. Every part of an animal was used. Bones were tapered, smoothed, and drilled to make needles. Sinew was stripped into narrow strings and threaded into the needles to sew garments together. The skins of larger animals were used to make shirts, pants, gauchos, and moccasins. The fur of smaller animals might be used as trim on garments or worn separately. Seeds, shells, porcupine quills, drilled and polished beads, bones and teeth were all used in creating a fashionable appearance.

But then the Indian Wars raged through the West with the purpose of isolating and then removing every possible tribe. Their removal would allow the unhampered settlement of the fertile lands they considered themselves caretakers of by the waves of settlers washing over what

had been the last frontier. They were relocated to areas where the land was not in demand, usually because it was difficult to access and lacking in game or fertility. Cut off from all of the raw materials with which they typically made their clothing, they adopted many items of dress worn by their enemies. Cheap woven cloth replaced doe and buckskin for pants and tunics or dresses. Machine-woven blankets replaced their robes of buffalo fur or bearskin or even the handwoven ones that now would bring high prices for tourists visiting nearby trading posts.

Tribes also influenced each other, as there would typically be more than one tribe in a reservation. By the mid 1870s, group photographs of Native Americans show an almost unintelligible hodgepodge of Native American and mainstream white American fashions. A neat light-and-dark striped cotton shirt can be seen worn with long braids and a bear claw necklace. Beside that figure may be another man who wears only a blanket over naked chest with leather boots visible at the blanket edge. The overall picture of Native American dress by 1875 was one of multiple influences, no longer communicating tribe membership as clearly as in the past, no longer Navaho or Hopi or Apache dress, but Native American. Unfortunately, interest in Native Americans did not begin before this period of assimilation, so the records of their clothing was never adequately documented before it began to change. There are many photographs of Native Americans, but so many are not dated that it is hard to pinpoint exact changes and when they occurred.

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CHAPTER 5

Children's Fashions

Thousands of children who lived through the Civil War and Reconstruction periods were marked by the stresses of parental separation and fear of permanent loss. Many children did lose their fathers and many one or more brothers as well. Very few families were immune to the loss of close or distant relatives due to the war. Fewer still were protected from the hardships and shortages of the wartime economy. For children in combat areas, the very real danger of being killed by fire or bullets or any number of other means was a constant companion. When the war was over, the ranks of destitute families and orphaned children multiplied. Estimates of the numbers of vagrant street children run as high as 6,000 in Boston and 30,000 in New York (Mintz, 131).

Both cities and industry grew explosively in the years following the war. Thousands of immigrants poured into the country, thousands of freed slaves migrated north to find what they hoped would be greater opportunities than in the South, and thousands of pioneers crossed the country in wagons or on trains to start new lives in regions barely known. Mintz considers this period one of great diversity for children in terms of their experiences and their living conditions (334). Only a small minority enjoyed a relatively protected childhood in which they really could be children with time to play, grow, and learn. For countless others, introduction to the world of work came very early. Rural children as young as six or seven could help with home gardens, tend cattle, watch over younger children while their parents did the harder labor, or help prepare meals and mend clothing. Where mining was practiced, children helped

in many aspects of that work, and young girls worked in textile mills throughout New England, usually sending their earnings back home to help support the entire family.

When he or she was not working, school occupied much of a child's time. By 1870, approximately 60 percent of America's children attended grammar school (Mintz, 135). In the South, those numbers were lower than in the Northeast, Midwest, and Far West, and schools also differed in structure, formality, and rigor. Towns and cities with sufficient population typically had better prepared teachers and a more formal curriculum. Rural areas were more likely to have one-room schools where all eight grades convened and were taught by a single teacher, with each grade coming forward to recite from lowest to highest. Rural school teachers were usually less prepared in terms of their own formal education and were often women. The school season for rural schools was typically around six months as compared to nine in urban schools, and students more often dropped out of school early in rural schools. Students in rural schools often stopped formal education around the age of puberty, leaving to work on family farms or to take paid employment when that was available. Schools in urban areas typically saw students enrolled in school until the ages of sixteen or seventeen years (Mintz, 135).

When the population was particularly sparse in a large geographic area and the resources to maintain several schools equally sparse, boarding schools filled the void. Although a popular view of young women's education during this period is that young girls at this time were sent off to finishing schools to help prepare them for courtship by polishing their etiquette, music, needlework sills, and deportment, in actuality many of these schools were quite rigorous. They might include the above mentioned topics, but a solid menu of academic subjects was included as well.

The subject matter taught in U.S. schools was as diverse as the schools themselves, but many written records of girls and boys in school indicate a fairly strenuous course of study that might include literature, philosophy, foreign language, mathematics, rhetoric, music, geography, history, and sometimes drawing. Writing essays and speeches, memorizing poems or selections of verse for recitation, reading assignments, and completing all forms of homework was discussed in letters and journals kept at the time.

The context for examining the clothing, entertainments, behavior, and treatment of children is critical during these years, as it exerted a strong influence on the children's clothing. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a very different way of viewing children was in place than had been the case at the beginning of the century, and it was a view that acknowledged the emotional rather than economic (via labor) value of children. Particularly for very young children, society's overall philosophy regarding the nature of childhood strongly influenced what was

considered appropriate dress. As children matured, they dressed to reflect both their age and their sexual differentiation.

When newborn children were viewed as having little more feeling or intelligence than an amoeba, as in previous centuries, clothing was selected based on what worked best for the caretakers of the child, particularly in infancy. The practice of swaddling, for example, had been based on the notion that the child really had no sense of comfort or feelings, but was rather a lump of clay to be molded into an adult only with great application of effort. Limbs were stretched and massaged, then bound into straight positions to prevent bending of the growing bones, but also to keep the child immobile and thus requiring only minimal attention from a busy mother or nurse. Childhood was not even a consideration of society or of parents, other than the obvious burdens placed on parents by the care children required before they could move about unaided and upright.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the entire attitude toward children had changed, along with an increased affinity for things that at least seemed to be somewhat natural. Swaddling had long since been dropped from the recommended treatment of children by physicians and advice writers as unnecessary for the proper formation of bones. Bones would naturally grow straight if nourished properly. The child's comfort was now considered, and the idea of keeping an infant tightly bound in linen wrappings for 12 or even 24 hours before release for cleaning was appalling to the majority of the public. There were, however, still pockets of the practice

In another reversal from previous times, the nineteenth-century child was seen as innately innocent, learning sin and all manner of bad behavior from the environment and from inappropriate associates. The practice of sending children off to wet nurses for the first several months or even year of life was no longer practiced by those in the financial and social position to do so. Even hiring live-in wet nurses was considered to be fraught with danger, due to the association of the young innocents with members of classes below their own. *Godey's Lady's Book* attempted to instruct mothers on the dire results of doing otherwise in the September 1865 entry under "Paris Items." Referencing a French physician, the article indicates that in Paris one third of the children born die in infancy due to inadequate nutrition: "The Parisian mothers send forth their infants to hireling wet-nurses, who carry them off to a nursing village. One nurse will carry off three or four little ones, and feed them by breast or hand, as she finds it cheap or convenient. Sometimes she will place one or two infants out at a less price than she receives from the parents" (271). The doctor goes further and pronounces a child fed by hand to be a dead child, reflecting on the increasingly common practice of bottle-feeding infants with cow's milk or some mixture of ingredients deemed acceptable by the mother as a substitute for breast milk.

A mother with her sons, Frederick, Maryland, 1862. All wear some variation of the Zouave jacket. (Library of Congress)

The view of children as innocent and angelic led to an exquisite romanticization of infancy and childhood. Short stories and poems published for family consumption often featured infants or young children exerting the power of their goodness, simply by their existence, to heal the infirm, reform sinners, repair broken relationships, and, in general, make the world a better place because they graced it with their presence. Many of the pieces of fiction printed in popular women's magazines of the time contained such examples of children's abilities to enlighten and reform the adults they came into contact with.

The idealization of childhood required a concurrent remodeling of motherhood. The diaries and letters of the women themselves presented a more balanced view of impending motherhood, many joyful, others fearful or despairing. Among the distraught were women with several children already and insufficient resources for them, much less one more. Women who did not want more children tried by whatever means were available then to avoid having them, whether by celibacy, taking the many potions sold with suggestive names for the purpose of preventing

or losing a pregnancy, or by abortion. Abortion, however, was rapidly becoming more difficult as states continued to pass legislation making it illegal. As interpreted at the time, the Comstock Act, passed by Congress in 1873, made the prohibition of abortion a federal law and drove the practice underground.

The pedestal to which Anne Firor Scott (1970) saw Southern women elevated was, to an extent, the ultimate goal for wives throughout the country. Expected to marry, women were then given enormous responsibility as wives for the well being of the family unit. And yet they commanded virtually no authority. Like children, they personified goodness. If wives failed to bear any or enough children; if their children turned out badly; if any aspect of their sphere was less than ideal, they were failures in the eyes of family and neighbors. Figuring foremost in their lives was the goal of bearing and nurturing the children who were now so idealized.

Mothers were expected to nurse their own children—it was the right thing to do, the natural thing to do. Women who elected to do otherwise were often satirized in cartoons or portrayed as vain, heartless, or even unsexed in fiction and nonfiction of the time. Not only nursing became the subject of lectures to women. The entire experience of motherhood was often portrayed in image and in text as the highest calling to which a woman could aspire. In a lengthy treatise on this topic, Marion Harland wrote "A Christmas Talk with Mothers" for the November 1865 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*, in which she laid out clearly the prevailing societal position on a woman's role in her family and in society. Harland proposed giving a public lecture, entitled "The Rights of Babies and the Responsibilities of Mothers." Among the former was the right to be heard, whether they cried in pain or discomfort or needed to speak by way of explanation, their right was to receive that encouragement from their mother. They were also to be allowed their time of childhood, to play freely without undue and untimely responsibilities given them before they were able to comply. The author encouraged reasoning with children rather than speaking harshly or using corporal punishment. She reminded parents that they, too, were once children and suggested they consider reasons for children's actions first and their own convenience last. The advice, taken literally, is not very different from that to be found today in parenting-advice books, and it indicated a very different view of children than in past centuries.

Harland described the mother's responsibilities: in her view, the epitome of motherhood: "She nourished them, from her bosom; bathed, dressed, and undressed them, and herself laid them down for the nightly and midday slumber; made most of their clothing with her own hands; as they grew older, directed their studies" (491).

Hand in hand with the view of children as innocents came a corresponding tendency to ignore sex and gender differentiation in behavior

Advice on Infant Fashion, 1875

The little folks claim our attention first this month, not but what their fashions have been described over and over again in the descriptions given of their mamma's toilets, as they are the exact copies in miniature of those worn by older persons. In infants' clothing little or no change is noticeable. Infants' robes are still made very long, and with high neck and long sleeves. The handsomest imported robes are made of organdy muslin, elaborately embroidered and edged with Valenciennes lace. Simpler robes are made of French Nainsook, and trimmed with insertion, edging, tucks, puffs, or crimped plaitings edged with lace, as fancy dictates (*Godey's Lady's Book*, July 1875).

and dress. They were infants, period, not infant boys and infant girls. As the two sexes were differentiated by treatment and appearance, children began to leave behind their unspoiled, youthful innocence and move closer to the world of adulthood and all of the vices and weaknesses that came with it. Infants were dressed entirely alike at birth and for the first couple of years, beginning very subtly to show some distinct variations according to sex.

As age progressed, so, too, did the gender distinctions shown by the children's clothing. For female children there was less change, as both sexes wore the clothing assigned to the female sex. Girls just kept wearing skirts, although shorter skirts than adult females, but otherwise with styles nearly identical to that of older women. Some little girls were pictured wearing what were obviously miniature versions of hoops, when hoops were fashionable. Presumably, more little girls were dressed in starched petticoats to give their skirts the desired fullness, but as soon as girls were old enough to wear their skirts long, hoops were definitely considered necessary for a fashionable look. There were a few distinctions, but, overall, the styles were consistent. For male children, however, the distinction between the sexes would become increasingly apparent. Boys gave up skirts and dresses and donned short pants, then, finally, the long pants signifying approaching manhood. For girls, there was no such demarcation of age combined with gender.

For children touched by the long years of war, the amount and quality of their clothing was subject to the uneven availability of textile materials and the time for mothers to spend carefully stitching the decorative objects that would have been typical a few years earlier. As more and more men left their families to fight, women strove to maintain whatever type of occupation their husbands had been responsible for before. This new task was in addition to their usual work of maintaining the household and providing clothing, food, nursing care, and education to their children. In areas of the South that were under Union control, supplies for clothing might be nonexistent, so children typically wore what could be provided from older siblings' clothing or remade from adults' clothing as they grew out of what they had worn at the beginning of the war. As was true for the adults, making do was the guiding force for fashion during these years.

INFANCY

The two prevailing concerns regarding infants was their own survival and the survival of the mother. Both were in question throughout the nineteenth century. Infant mortality was a serious issue given the lack of knowledge about the childhood diseases that ravaged families and communities. Less common diseases were vaguely described as "chills," "rising bile," or simply "the fever." Most treatments were not particularly related to what is now known about the causes and cures of disease. Doctors were sent for in times of illness, but they often provided the placebo of their reassuring presence rather than any actual treatment that would reverse the course of a serious illness. Women who wrote about their lives nearly always report on the deaths of their own children and of other family members and acquaintances. Favorite clothing might be put back along with a lock of the deceased child's hair for remembrance. Attic trunks still give up these reminders of the children whose short lives were commemorated by cloth. Usually, baby clothing was passed down until worn out, but when a child passed away, a still pristine garment was often saved.

Infants were dressed first in long clothes—"gowns," or "robes," as they were then called—that were invariably white and served to keep the baby covered to guard against chilling. The length was usually double the baby's leg length, or even body length, in order to keep the lower body warm and covered when the child moved and kicked in its sleep. The gowns were made of plain white cotton, sometimes linen, and fancier ones were made of lawn, dotted Swiss, batiste, dimity, or piqué. The quality of fabric used for baby gowns and the amount of decoration such as lace, embroidery, tatting, crochet work, insertions, or pintucking, depended upon the social and financial status of the family and the amount of time the expectant mother had to prepare the layette.

Gown styles for the period typically show wide necklines, sometimes squared with short sleeves set on as small rectangles. Drawstrings could then be used to fit the neckline to the child and to allow later expansion. Curved necklines were also made wide and allowed some adjustment. Advice givers, columnists, and physicians of the time alternately suggested that infants were kept too hot or that they were in danger of dying from a chill by having their necks and chests constantly exposed by popular low necklines or off-shoulder styles. It was hard for mothers to know which advice to follow, and extant gowns, as well as patterns, drawings, and photographs show a mix of high necklines. The very low necklines are almost horizontal across the chest and upper arms.

The gown most commonly had a yoke that came to the underarms or slightly longer, with very full skirts gathered onto the yoke lower edge. There was, however, a wide variety of alternative styles, including round, higher necklines and gowns cut with the skirt and bodice as one and

pintucked to control the size of the bodice. A few tent-shaped gowns were also worn, flaring from the shoulders to the hem. They required less fabric to make and were more typical of infant clothing in poorer families.

Often the same gowns and other layette items would be worn for all of the children in the family, so it was not considered excessive to spend a tremendous amount of time on garments that would be worn for only a short period before they were outgrown; the same garments would typically be worn again and again by different infants. These gowns were made to last much longer than the typical baby clothing of today. Drawstrings at the neckline allowed the size to be adjusted inward for a very small newborn and let out as the child grew or to accommodate a larger newborn at a later date. Back openings were often without buttons and buttonholes, so the gown could be adjusted further by a wide overlap early on and a narrower one later.

Gowns used for christenings are not different in general appearance than those worn for any other special occasion such as going visiting or posing for a photographic portrait. The best gown would be used for such occasions, and many times it was used for many occasions with plainer gowns reserved for everyday use. The generally sheer or light weight cotton and linen fabrics used for them would not have been thought inappropriate for fall and winter use because of the layering used for infants.

Under the gown, infants wore one or two petticoats. Pairs of petticoats provided more protection against accidental soak-through when the infant's diapers were overfull. Wool flannel could be used for the skirt portion of petticoats and was even more absorbent than cotton, plus it provided more warmth in winter. Even in summer, the use of flannel was not regarded as excessively warm for infants, despite infants being less capable than adults of regulating their internal temperatures. Petticoats usually consisted of a wide band that wrapped around the upper torso to the infant's underarms and lapped in the back where it was pinned or tied to fit. Small straps could be used over the shoulders, but extant objects in collections often do not have straps. The skirt was gathered onto the band at the waistline and was only slightly shorter than the gown. Embroidery or trim was used on the petticoat hem. If the family could afford elaborate gowns, the rest of the layette was usually trimmed as well. In families of lesser means, plain fabric, perhaps saved from some previous use, was used.

Undershirts, usually short sleeved, were also provided for warmth. These could be purchased ready-made of knitted fabric, usually wool, or they could also be made of woven fabric. Undershirts were rectangles of cotton, less often linen, wider than long with short sleeves that were little more than rectangular strips of fabric sewn to the upper sides of the shirt with angled underarm seams. Undershirts were worn under

petticoats and over bellybands, which were wrapped around the baby's stomach at least until the umbilicus had healed. Bellybands were wide bands of cotton cloth or wool flannel. They were fastened with pins or ties and were considered a necessary part of the layette, then called the "infant's wardrobe."

Stays might also be used, particularly after the bellybands were left off. Stays were not at all like the garments used to compress adults' figures, but were instead bands with shoulder straps that served as a way to fasten other garments via buttons at the waistline. More examples of the petticoat/band combination survive, indicating that was the more common practice.

Diapers were folded from lengths of absorbent cotton and fastened with pins, or else were tied together where the ends met. Safety pins were relatively new, and some diapers were still fastened with straight pins, presenting a hazard for the babies and their mothers. Diaper covers were used as well, and these were available in waterproof fabrics. The Eureka waterproof diaper was advertised in the late 1860s in New York newspapers and in *Godey's Lady's Book*.

The use of coated fabrics for diaper covers prevented the infant's clothing and bedding from becoming wet and requiring frequent changes. Although advertised during the time period, the extent to which they were commonly used is not known. Another way of protecting the child's clothing as well as that of caretakers was to use wool soaker pants. Soakers were made of thick, absorbent wool. The majority of the country's population did not have sufficient means to furnish clothing, diapers, and bedding for multiple changes per day, so preserving the cleanliness and dryness of the fabrics used by and around the infant was of paramount importance.

At night, infants might wear a nightdress, plainer than the day gown and often with long sleeves. With undershirt, diapers, diaper covers, drawers, and warm socks, baby was ready for a warm night's sleep. Butterick even offered a pattern for an infant's wrapper in the 1873 pattern catalog, an extra layer of warmth for early mornings before the family hearth had fully warmed the house.

Drawers for infants covered the diaper and soaker and covered the legs for additional warmth. These were basically two tubes that met at the waistline, where they tied. The crotch opening allowed for ease in changing diapers. Alternatively, or in summer, diaper covers might be worn. *Godey's Lady's Book* issued patterns for diaper, or napkin, covers in the May 1867 issue. The covers were triangles with a drawstring inserted in the back two-thirds of the longer (waist) edge of the triangle. The two side points were wrapped around the body, crossing in the front, then the point opposite the waist was drawn up between the legs and buttoned, pinned, or tied in place. In the mid 1870s, Ebenezer Butterick's pattern catalog featured a very similar design.

For protection of their clothing, infants were provided with bibs, not very different from those used today in general style, but often festooned with embroidery, braid, binding, and other forms of decoration. Bibs covered much of the dress bodice front and buttoned or tied in the back behind the neck. Aprons or pinafores were also used for a similar purpose and protected more of the gown. Particularly as children became old enough to creep and adopt short clothing, the longer aprons, often wrapping from the back with side buttons, formed tabard-like, were popular.

Babies also wore socks, which could be knitted long enough to cover much of the legs as well as the feet. Women's magazines of the period contain numerous diagrams and instructions for making and ornamenting all of the items of a baby's wardrobe. Both socks and shoes, or bootees, for infants were often knitted at home. Soft shoes, such as those stitched from cloth and embroidered, knitted, crocheted, or made from very soft leathers were worn for warmth.

For additional protection in cold weather, children were also provided with capes, made of double fabric layers and hooded or loosely gathered at the neck. Capes varied from elaborately quilted and decorated items to simple, often pieced, wraps meant solely to provide warmth. Blankets were used as wraps as well, much as they are today, particularly for very young children. They were very adaptable for a wide range of infant sizes, which a fitted outer garment would not have been. The rapid rate of infant growth indicated flexibility in garment fitting so that a new wardrobe would not be required every couple of months. Tucks, wrapped closures, and loose fit were all recommended to extend the usefulness of infants' clothing from first use for several months. Capes and blankets were infinitely adjustable and could be used as long as the infant was not mobile.

When infants were taken out of doors, even in the summer, they usually wore caps of some sort. For warm-weather wear, sheer fabric such as batiste, lawn, fine linen, or even organdy might be used and ornamented with hemstitching, drawnwork, tatting, lace, tucks, or a variety of machine and handmade laces. In winter, caps were more often made of wool and could be made of woven cloth or knitted to shape. Hoods with long curtains to cover the back of the neck were also worn with shawls or with jackets. Although not as common as looser wraps, jackets were made in a simple, boxy style for wear over gowns. They were called "sacques" at the time.

All garments thus described as belonging in an infant's wardrobe were used in families of some means. For the poor, for farm families of limited income, for new settlers in the West and Midwest barely managing a subsistence living, or in urban families living in crowded tenements, infants might wear only an older child's shirt and what cloth could be spared for use as diapers. Achieving the fashionable, idyllic vision of cherubic

babies dressed in white clouds of fine cotton and linen required money. Most often, it was lack of means, not lack of fashion knowledge, that marked the differences in how infants appeared.

Toddlers

As children became old enough to begin crawling, they were considered old enough to move into short skirts or dresses. Although at one time it had been considered unsightly to see humans, even very young ones, crawling about on all fours, crawling were now recognized as an important developmental step for children as they perfected their gross motor skills and sense of balance necessary to began learning to walk. Shortening skirts at this period, usually around the middle of their first year, encouraged children in their first independent locomotions.

Toddlers continued to be dressed in much the same layers as when they were infants, with the exceptions of bellybands. Dresses were often cut in a flared style that allowed more freedom of movement than full, gathered skirts. Styles of short dresses varied considerably, but many featured the wide, off-shoulder neckline and very short cap sleeves seen in infants' gowns. Princess seaming controlled fit and reduced the amount of fabric with which the crawling youngster had to content. Long-sleeved dresses were also shown in fashion periodicals and Butterick's

Nine small children in dresses, one with a cape, 1875. They could be little boys, little girls, or both. (Library of Congress)

pattern catalog. All of the long sleeves but in two dresses were of the coat style. The two exceptions were slightly gathered where set into the armscye and again at the wrists with double ruffles below the inset wristband. In the 1873 edition, dresses for girls that featured the same styling details as women's dresses were shown for girls as young as one-half to five years. (Pattern descriptions indicated the ages of children for whom the patterns were sized.). Several patterns for girls' polonaises were nearly identical in styling to women's, with the inclusion of bustles in the back. Some of these were recommended for girls aged from two to nine years. In fact, all of the girls' dress patterns had similar age ranges, indicating no particular distinction was made in the style of dresses for very young girls and those who were several years older.

If they had not worn drawers as infants, children old enough to walk about would generally begin wearing them, long enough to be seen clearly below the shorter gown (also called "frock" or "coat") and usually trimmed at the lower edge with embroidery, crochet, tucks, or ruffles. In this form, they would be called "pantalettes" or "pantaloons." The longer drawers allowed dresses to be quite short without the risk of cold legs.

Once children began walking, subtle differences were sometimes shown between styles for girls and boys, although no strict rules governed this practice. Fashion periodicals and pattern descriptions indicated styles that could be used for boys or girls, but they also indicated at times styles specifically for one or the other. In photographs, sometimes the only clues as to the sex of unknown sitters for studio portraits are the props used. Little boys might be holding toys that signified their sex, such as small riding whips, horses, or boats. Girls were more likely to hold a doll if any toy was shown in the photograph. Boys' dresses might have box pleats rather than gathers to control fullness, but not always. Military-type braid trimming was more common on boys' dresses than on girls' dresses, but it was used on both. Both boys and girls wore their hair long and curled, but girls more often parted theirs in the middle, while boys more often parted theirs on the side. Although the preference for many parents was to keep young children's hair long, some also preferred to cut it short, both for boys and girls. For a busy mother with little assistance from family or servants, hair dressing could be an onerous chore when several children had long hair to be taken care of, and a haircut made tangles, drying washed hair, and even washing the hair less time consuming.

Although the first short dresses were usually white for ease in washing and bleaching, printed cotton calico became a likely substitute for summer play clothing, while wool was suitable for winter clothing. Fabrics in general were heavier than for infants' long robes, with more and brighter colors and more pattern. Trimming was also quite different from the white frills of infant clothing. Braid trim or applique work of self

fabric, perhaps ruched and used to outline the main contours of the apparel item, was quite popular. Many coats, cloaks, and dresses exhibited trim with military influence, but not in imitation of any known military uniforms.

When children began to walk, they were given shoes that were more substantial than the soft foot coverings used previously for warmth or decoration. High-top, soft leather boots were the most common type of shoe worn by toddlers. These were certainly the most serviceable, provided support for the ankles, and were easier to keep on children's feet. Slip-on shoes with ankle straps were dressier, but were not as functional for children just beginning to walk.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Once children were toilet trained, greater differences were shown in boys' and girls' clothing. The exact age varied considerably between two and four, but photographs indicate that the age of breeching was closer to four than to two. Some mothers, reluctant to give up their children to this new milestone of development, held on longer to the more childish clothing and hair styles, perhaps even as long as six years of age, although this would be exceptional.

For the children who continued in dresses, there were some similarities to adult dress, but essentially the clothing very clearly proclaimed their immaturity. A very popular dress style, especially for warm seasons, was made with a very wide, off shoulder neckline and short, puffed sleeves. The style reflected the popular infant-gown style of the period and resulted in quite a bit of neck and skin exposed. The popularity of this style can be seen in photographs from all parts of the country and may have been the occasion of more than one sermon to mothers about the danger of exposing children's necks and shoulders to cold air.

Carte de visite of a young girl during the Civil War, 1865. (Library of Congress)

Boys' Clothing

When boys first took off their dresses, they enjoyed a major rite of passage toward adulthood. A cartoon drawn for the April 1860 issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* illustrates the significance of this

passage, as a little boy with long blond curls dons his first pair of short pants, trimmed at the hemline with white ruffles. In his pride, he assumes a superior attitude with head held high, posing for the admiration of friends and family alike. His mother eventually finds him asleep in his bead still wearing his new trouser suit. When later he climbs up on a chair stacked with books in order to see his new clothing more clearly in the mirror, he falls and tears the trousers in numerous places. As his mother observes the damage, he sits dejected, again wearing the dress of his youth, so recently put aside (718).

Younger Boys

Breeching a little boy typically began with short, loose-legged pants or knickerbockers. Both styles came just below the knee. The trouser styles were hemmed or faced, while knickerbockers gathered into a band similar to the cuff of a long sleeve. If the band fitted the leg closely, it would require an opening to allow the pants to be put on over the boy's feet. Other styles were made large enough to put on without an opening.

The pants were pleated into a waistband at least at the back, sometimes all around. Closures could be a buttoned fly front or a drop front. Side pockets were usually included, but not always, and braid trim could be applied flat down the side seam. If used in that manner, it would often be continued around the hemmed edge of the trousers.

With knickerbocker pants, boys wore loose tunics that were left loose for work or play but belted at the waist for dressier occasions. Another popular variation was a tucked-in shirt or tunic worn under a short bolero or Zouave jacket. Except for the pants, this was a popular style for adult women's wear at the time. Except for the tunic, boys' jackets were cut short, most just to the waist and had front openings. High necklines with round collars or sailor collars, V-necklines with a single button closure (or no closure at all) might be faced or sport a shawl collar or have the front top edges turned back like lapels.

Undergarments consisted of an undershirt and pair of drawers. These could be combined in a one-piece garment with gathers at the waistline and neck and a button-front opening. The drawers would be hemmed a little shorter than the boy wore his short pants, as these were just functional and not designed to be seen the way pantaloons were under boys' dresses.

Undergarments were made of white cotton, more rarely linen, for warm seasons. Wool was recommended by many health authorities for winter undergarments. Certainly wool would have provided more warmth than cotton. Knitted stockings might extend far enough for their tops to be covered by the bottom of the pants. Otherwise, socks were worn with the typical high-top shoes. For severe weather, leggings

extending from above the knee to over the top of the shoe provided excellent protection if made from thick, water-resistant wool. Overcoats, warm hats, and gloves would also have been worn if the family could afford them.

Carte de visite of P. H. Martin wearing a play uniform with a drum, 1862. (Library of Congress)

Older Boys

A second rite of passage for male children was attaining the age to wear long pants and thus to take his place among the other men in his family. Sources vary considerably as to when boys might first put on long pants. In fact, there was no universal agreement upon the exact age at which a boy might be given the distinction of maturity signified by long pants. The part of the country, the clothing available in the family, the customs within an individual family or within a given community, parental notions, and other factors were of influence. Some references cite five or six years old as the time at which boys might wear long pants, while others say it occurred more typically at ten to twelve years of age.

Boys in long pants no longer dressed much differently from adult men. Only the size was adjusted. In practice, very few boys of eight or twelve had occasion to don the complete suit of clothing that would have been typical of a banker or politician, but if the occasion presented itself, then the children would have been dressed accordingly. Otherwise, a shirt and pair of pants would have sufficed for work, play, or other informal activities.

The upper classes were more structured in observing the nuances of age/clothing distinctions. They could have afforded more variation in clothing styles, and their children were more likely to have the leisure to engage in a variety of entertainments that would have occasioned different attire. Working-class children often wore long pants sooner, because they had to assume financial and labor responsibilities at an earlier age. If a boy's father died at an early age, it was the oldest son who would have had to step up and assume the role of man of the house, even if his years did not really qualify him for that role. Especially during and after the war, so many children were orphaned that boys grew up much more quickly because they had to assume their father's role as best they could.

Boys' long pants were constructed in the same manner as those of adult males. Side pockets were typical, and most fastened with a

buttoned fly front. A smooth waist set into a waistband on which buttons were sewn for attaching suspenders was the usual design. Variations with pleats at the front, back, or both were also seen. In large families, boys' pants were handed down from one boy to the other with as little modification as possible. For this reason, styles persisted beyond a specific time if they fit boys coming along in the family. Trouser length, in particular, might look quite varied in a given population of boys roughly the same age, because many of them would most likely be wearing clothing previously made or bought to fit boys with longer or shorter legs. Sometimes in informal photographs or illustrations, boys will be shown with pants legs rolled up, a useful convention for pants that were too short. If rolled up, their actual length was immaterial. They would never be rolled up so far, however, as to indicate that they were short pants with cuffs.

For older boys, a tailored jacket, single or double breasted, and with lapels and collar just like a man's frock or sack coat were worn for dressy occasions. The sack coat was by far the most common style for boys and young men. Vests were made in much the same styles as those for men and in a variety of fabrics, both solid and patterned, dressy and casual. The waist-length jackets so common for younger boys were rarely seen with long pants.

Older boys were more likely to wear fitted drawers rather than the full, bloused drawers of their younger years. The 1873 Butterick catalog showed patterns for both gentlemen and boys, using the identical sketch for each and differing only in the style number used and sizes offered. The smoothly fitting drawers had legs set into a sloped seam that ran from crotch almost to the waist, setting into a buttoned fly-front section shaped almost like today's fitted jockey shorts. Drawstrings at the ankles allowed expansion for dressing and a tight fit over socks later. If made of knitted jersey, as many store-bought pairs were, they would have been much more comfortable than if made of a firmly woven fabric.

Some drawers and undershirts were combined into a single garment, but this was not a general practice until later years. Wool was favored for warmth; for many boys, their mothers' laying out of the scratchy woolen underwear was the uncomfortable sign of the approaching winter season.

Coats and cloaks similar to those worn by men kept boys warm and dry also. Waterproofing was available on fabric and on ready-made garments, and a waterproof cloak would have been very desirable for boys who had to work outside. These seem to have been the exception, however, as most extant examples of older boys' clothing do not include waterproof outer garments. Protective hats of felt or knitted wool were worn, as were small caps worn more for fun than for any real protection they afforded.

Most shoes for boys were high topped, and they laced closed, although buttoned tops were also available. Photographs indicate that older boys

were much more likely to wear laced shoes or occasionally boots than any other type of foot covering. Socks of knitted cotton or wool were worn and helped ease the pain of new shoes or those newly handed down after being broken in to the shape of an older sibling's or relative's foot. During the war years when supplies for Southern families were so extremely difficult to obtain, shoes were in especially short supply for lack of materials from which to make them. Socks were critical for comfort then, as boys as well as girls wore whatever they could get, regardless of how much too big they might be.

In the summertime, country children went barefoot. Spring was often marked by cleaning and putting away the children's (and maybe the entire family's) shoes until the next school year or cold season began. Not all children began wearing shoes just because the school year started but instead waited until colder weather.

Sleepwear for well-to-do boys might consist of a cotton nightshirt, made longer than a regular shirt and worn over drawers. Other boys might sleep in their underwear, especially during hot weather. Boys traveling west or working at hard labor might just fall into bed, or into a bedroll outside, wearing what they had worn all day.

Older Girls

As noted earlier, girls did not experience a major change in fashion styles according to age, with the exception of wearing low necklines and short sleeves for day wear. Their adult counterparts reserved this style for evening occasions. Girls' dresses continued to be shorter than women's as well, showing the girls' boots and often edges of pantalettes as well. When hoops were popular, girls wore hoops in proportion to the size of their skirts. When hoops were given up and bustles introduced, girls' dresses featured bustles. Butterick patterns for girls' dresses, overdresses, basques, cloaks, wrappers, jackets, and polonaises are virtually identical except for sizes/ages indicated in the descriptions. Likewise, in *Godey's Lady's Book*, the girls and women dressed in nearly identical styles.

Numerous articles were published during the time advising mothers not to put their daughters into corsets because of the danger to their health. Other writers indicated that corsets were fine as long as they were not boned and did not compress the young body too much. Some mothers apparently did believe that the young body needed to be trained into the hourglass shape so popular by the 1870s, but wearing real corsets was usually reserved until girls approached or reached puberty.

Young girls pictured in fashion plates wore the fancy dresses of affluence, with hats, carefully coiffed hair, jewelry, and similar details. In photographs, such complete dressing up is rare except for some of the posed studio portraits of the well-to-do across the United States. As with the clothing of all ages, financial means created a huge gulf between the

idealized fashion image and what real people actually wore. Jewelry is shown much more frequently in photographs than other accessories. Even very young children were often shown wearing coral jewelry, believed to have beneficial properties for the young ones. Older girls often wore lockets on chains or ribbons. Bracelets and rings were also fairly common among those who could afford such luxuries.

CLOTHING FOR WORK AND SCHOOL

In all but the most affluent households, girls as well as boys worked. Girls were likely given duties that corresponded with expectations of their future roles, and they helped with cooking, laundry, cleaning, mending and making clothing, and watching over younger siblings. Laundry at the time was largely a hand process, as only the well-to-do were able to afford hand cranked washing machines with a wringer attachment. In most households, water was heated in large iron kettles over open fires and laundry washed by hand in tubs, scrubbing stains and spots on a metal, ribbed washboard using soap made at home from fat and lye. Girls who were too young to participate in the laundering process would be given responsibility for watching younger children while their mother did the heavier work. As soon as they were able, they would add cooking to their list of chores. Gathering wild fruits and nuts and helping in the kitchen garden were also expected.

For work, girls put on dresses that were no longer were good enough to be seen in company. These might be worn and patched, faded, and ill fitting, handed down from one or more older siblings or other adult females. Photographs show women working in modified versions of the bloomer costume, really just trousers put on under their dresses for warmth when working outdoors in winter. Likely, girls did the same if their work took them outside in severe weather. Most girls might have just a couple of good dresses, probably calico, which they would take pains to keep clean and intact. Diarists also mention wearing wrappers to do work around the house. Patterns were given for girls' wrappers, but it is far more likely that their mothers had worn wrappers during pregnancy and used them afterward as protective garments over other dresses or alone as a work garment. It is unlikely that wrappers were made in great numbers for girls to use as work clothing. The girls whose circumstances required them to participate in a great deal of family work usually would not have had special occasion clothing other than the limited amount for social/religious events and/or for school.

In the South, schooling for boys and girls was more privately financed than public, and so the population attending was very different than in typical schools in the North. The population was more dispersed in the South, and often several families would jointly create a fund to

operate a school. They would hire the teacher, one of the families would provide lodging and board, and then would open the school to all children in the community. Most students were children who could be spared from work, girls and boys alike. In nearly all of the South before the war, it was not legal to educate slaves, so the schools were typically filled with children of similar circumstances and ethnic backgrounds.

A Girl in Silk in the Snow

Yesterday morning the ground was covered with a beautiful white carpet of snow, and we all snowballed each other, but I didn't relish the sport much as I had on my silk dress or my store clothes as Will H. says (Worthington, February 17, 1862).

For most children going to school, a clean calico dress was the extent of their finery, but wealthier children could attend wearing their best clothing. In her war years diary, Amanda Worthington, whose father owned several large plantations in northern Mississippi, specifically mentioned wearing a silk dress to school during the opening year of the war. She makes fun of a visitor for being surprised at not finding all the girls wearing calico. She describes often throughout her school years the specifics of dress. No doubt her school clothing was quite different from that of the majority of U.S. schoolgirls. Amanda Worthington was a member of one of the wealthiest families in the state at the time, yet she had to learn many basic household tasks that she had never done before because of the financial exigencies of the war years. Sewing, mending her clothing, cleaning, caring for ill family members, and putting up food for later use were among the tasks she regularly performed, and she did not wear silk then.

Northern public schools, as well as those that developed across the country as small knots of settlers gathered in enough numbers to justify the expense, had a greater mix of attendees, but the centralized location of neighborhood schools locations still predicted a certain homogeneity of students. School was not reserved for only the most fortunate. On the contrary, students in the poorest of clothing attended. Boys, and sometimes girls, often came to school barefoot until the ground began to freeze.

Boys participated in the work that was typical for their fathers, often farming, as the United States was still largely an agricultural nation except for the urban populations. Feeding and tending animals, gathering eggs, milking, working in the crops, gathering wood, helping in the mines, sawing timber, and building were just some of the many activities for which boys might be given responsibility. They attended school along with girls when they could be spared from work. The long-standing and still current practice of suspending school during the summer months was initiated because parents needed their children's help during the crop planting, tending, and harvesting seasons.

***Harper's Weekly* illustration depicting a schoolmistress and her students, September 20, 1873.** (Library of Congress)

CLOTHING WORN AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS

Children of immigrants were more likely than their parents to adopt the clothing of their U.S. peers. They learned the new language faster, often teaching their parents. For them, fitting in with children their own age was much more important than maintaining a visible attachment to a former culture. In fact, much of the generational upheaval between immigrant parents and their children is the result of the conflict between assimilating into the new culture or of maintaining the previous culture. By far the majority of children new to the United States would have tried to reduce visible differences between themselves and their peers as possible. Their appearance, thus, would have tended to be very similar to other schoolchildren.

For African American children in slave families, clothes were few and of lowest quality. Before slave children were old enough to work, they were regarded as potential workers only. Their owners were concerned that they be well and strong, but not at all about how they looked. Clothing given out for children was rarely more than a long shirt. Sometimes very young children wore nothing at all in the hot summer months. As they grew old enough to run about and play, they were issued the long shirts, coming about to their knees. Mostly these were left loose, but girls might choose to belt or tie theirs to give them more an appearance of a dress.

As soon as children were old enough to work, they were given specific jobs and clothes suited to those jobs if it was deemed necessary. Sometimes even very young children were given training jobs so they became accustomed early to their roles as laborers, and these jobs might include wearing specific clothing similar to that issued to adult slaves. For boys, that would be pants, shirt, jacket, and shoes. On some plantations, socks, bedding, lengths of cloth, hats, and even vests might be part of the issue; on others, the list was very lean. Women would receive a dress, petticoat, and shoes. Adult clothing was often ordered already made from Northern manufacturers, but children's clothing was often made on the plantation because of the quickly changing sizes of children. As clothing was given out on most plantations only twice yearly, clothing that tore or split its seams was not replaced, and photographic records of contraband during the war show many children wearing nearly threadbare pants, especially.

Immediately after the war, former slaves had no means to procure any clothing beyond what they had carried when they left their former homes. They continued wearing these clothes until they were nearly in tatters or until they were able somehow to find others. Some Southern Civil War diarists reported that much of the looting of captured towns was given over to former slaves, some of whom were even seen wearing the fine dresses of their former mistresses. How much of such accounts was fact is hard to tell, but it is doubtful that more than a handful of former slaves augmented their wardrobes in this fashion. Most of the freed slaves photographed during the war are wearing the most meager of costumes, boys and girls alike often barefoot with their clothing torn, ill-fitting, and obviously made of the coarsest cloth. It would take several year s before the appearances of former slaves reflected an ability to find a livelihood as free persons.

If developing a clear chronology of Native American adult dress is difficult, for children the records are even more spotty. By 1860, clothing of nearly all of the Native American tribes and subgroups reflected materials and styles made available by white Americans. Reservations, with residents of several tribes intermixed, often relied on commercially woven cotton cloth for making the majority, if not all, of their summer clothing. The animal skins, furs, and plants indigenous to the areas from which they had been driven were no longer available to them, and so original clothing styles were gradually replaced by government issue or what they gleaned through trading. Animal skins, even when scarce, continued to be used for at least part of the clothing, but they were reserved for adult adult clothing. Children wore woven cloth. Styles and cuts of garments retained as much traditional detail as possible, but, again, influences from other cultures were reflected as well. In parts of the west and southwest, Spanish influence can be credited with the full, gathered cloth skirts worn by girls and women. Dense gauging or gathering would not

have been possible in thick animal skins, but it was easily accomplished in lightweight woven cotton.

Infant dress probably changed the least following contact, particularly for those tribes who used cradleboards for infant transportation. Swaddling was an extreme rarity among white Americans, but continued to be used by most tribes with the exception of those in the Southeast and in Arctic regions. The infant was first swaddled in clean cloth and then put into a cradleboard that featured a rigid back and soft sides, often hooded. The method of constructing the actual boards varied by tribe, with back boards made from wooden boards, straight tree branches bound or laced together, or even stiff reeds bought together. The sides could be made of skin, fur, bark, or cloth. Rarely was a cradleboard used for more than one child, as each was made especially for the child at birth, with intricate decorations often added by the mother to express beliefs about or wishes for the infant.

The cradleboard was not only part of the infant's apparel but primarily served to secure and transport the child. A cradleboard could be propped against a tree while a mother worked; it could be hooded or lashed onto a horse for riding with the mother, or it could be hung on a wall or tree to be roughly at eye level with adults. For nomadic tribes in particular, the cradleboard was a highly utilitarian object that was also in most cases highly decorative. It continued to be used well into the following century. (Hoxie 137)

Although complete nudity in adults was uncommon, even in hot climates, it seems to have been acceptable for young children. There are accounts and some photographs of children appearing to be about two or three years of age wearing nothing at all. Older children seemed mostly to have worn clothing similar to the adults of their tribes. In discussing the dress of Plains Indians, Paterek (1994) indicates the breechclout as being a very important item of male attire, symbolic of sexual prowess and a part of every male costume. However, there are some rare examples of its use by prepubescent girls in what would have been the exact opposite practice from that of European American families, where little boys wore female clothing until maturing into the garments associated with adult masculinity.

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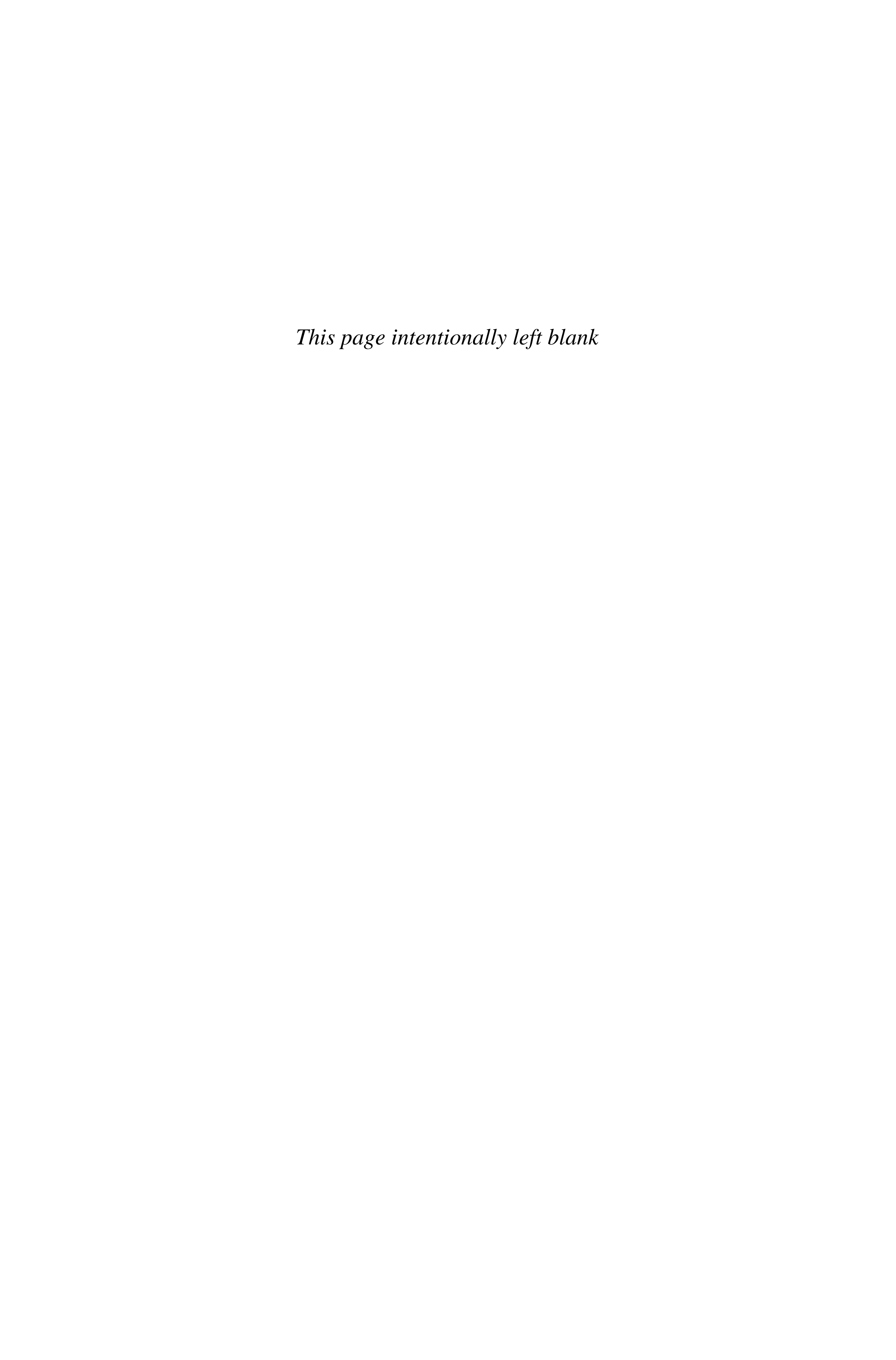

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The special nature of children is made evident by Eastman Johnson's use of light in *Christmas-Time, The Blodgett Family*, 1864. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY)

Fashion plate from *Godey's* fashions for February 1865, showing five women wearing fashionable gowns and a child holding a cat. (Library of Congress)

The last formal reception President Lincoln held at the White House in 1865 is depicted in this hand-colored lithograph by Anton Hohenstein. The clothing represents the height of fashion at the time. (Library of Congress)

***Pitching Quoits*, Winslow Homer, 1865. The large canvas shows a group of Zouaves, possibly the 5th New York Volunteers, in camp.** (Harvard Art Museum/Art Resource, NY)

***The Illustrated Newspaper* painted by Platt Powell Ryder in 1868, depicts not only the growing emotional importance of children but also the role of the mother in instructing them.** (Brooklyn Museum)

Silk ball gown designed by Charles Frederick Worth, ca. 1872. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY)

An 1880s wedding dress with no bustle, but with a train. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY)

Sunday afternoon on the island, **1884–1885, by Georges Seurat shows stylish clothing for men and women with accessories of the period.** (Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

Man golfing in clothing designed specifically for the sport. The women watching are wearing bowler hats and day dresses, ca. 1890. Illustration by Edward Penfield. (Library of Congress)

Young girls play music, 1888. Painting by Auguste Renoir. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY)

Cover of the November 1894 issue of *Harper's*. Illustration by Edward Penfield showing exaggerated puffed sleeves on the woman's bodice. (Library of Congress)

A scene from Kate Greenaway's *Almanack from 1894*, showing two children in typical Greenaway dress clothing. (New York Public Library)

Young girl from a wealthy family, dressed in a fur-trimmed coat and hat, carrying her doll, 1898. (Library of Congress)

Woman's trade cloth dress of the Plains Indians decorated with elk teeth in a typical symmetrical design, 1900. (The Trustees of the British Museum/Art Resource, NY)

Glossary: The Civil War and Reconstruction Era

alpaca: The fiber taken from the alpaca, a member of the camel family indigenous to the Andean mountainous regions of South America. The fiber is like wool in most major properties. Although related to the llama, the alpaca has no stiff, brittle hairs mixed with its softer, more lustrous coat. If the term is used in reference to a woven fabric rather than just to the fiber content of a fabric, it is used to indicate a plain-weave, dress-weight fabric made with alpaca yarns used in the weft, or filling, direction and cotton yarns used in the warp. It typically had a lustrous finish. At times, writers used the term "*mohair*" to describe alpaca fabric, but mohair is the hair of goats and is coarser and more wiry, also more lustrous, than alpaca. "*Brilliantine*" is another term that was used for this fabric.

barège: A lightweight dress fabric made with yarns that have been highly twisted, usually silk in the warp direction and worsted wool in the weft. The fabric was made with a leno or gauze weave to produce an openwork fabric that was still durable. When the count was very low, the resulting fabric would be almost gauze-like and could be worn for veiling. When a higher count, the fabric remained lightweight but would be used for dresses.

bayadere: A striped silk fabric in brilliant colors. The stripes were either straight or slightly wavy, creating an effect of movement, or optical illusion, due to the close proximity of contrasting, high-intensity colors.

bleeding: In reference to fabric, the term means loss of excess dye stuffs in the laundry water or in spilled liquids. Bleeding can transfer dye to other, lighter fabrics, but it does not always result in a visible lightening of color in the fabric that bled.

blonde lace: Sometimes also shortened to "*blonde*," the term originally referred to unbleached silk lace handmade on pillow using bobbins to twist and interweave the yarns. Some blonde lace was actually black, having been dyed rather than left the pale ivory color of the natural silk. Generally, by the 1860s and 1870s, the term was used to refer to silk lace made in an ivory color.

bombazine: A favored fabric for mourning, made with a silk warp and worsted (fine wool) filling woven in a twill pattern, then dyed black.

brilliant: A lustrous finish applied to any fabric, the term does not indicate any particular fiber content.

broadcloth: A wool fabric woven in plain or twill pattern and having a high yarn count and a napped finish. It was (and still is) used for jackets, skirts, winter dresses, and menswear.

brocade: A patterned design, often very elaborate, woven into fabric, made by combining individual weave types such as plain, satin, and twill. If made of contrasting colors, the design shows to greater effect. If the yarns are the same in both directions, the design is more subtle and shows through the varying degrees of light reflectance caused by the different weave types. After the Jacquard loom, invented in 1801, was distributed in the United States, brocaded fabrics were produced here as well as imported. Technically any fabric can be brocaded: The term refers to the process of introducing the design rather than any other property of the textile (i.e., brocaded silk, cotton brocade, brocaded ribbon).

brogans: Men's coarse leather shoes intended for work. The shoes distributed to slaves were usually brogans. They were hard and stiff and took considerable wearing to shape somewhat to the wearer's feet, particularly as most shoes made during this period were made on a straight last, meaning they were not shaped for left and right feet but made so they could be used on either foot. The soles were usually attached to the shoes with wooden pegs rather than stitched on, and the resulting shoe was very sturdy and long lasting. During the Civil War, many soldiers wore brogans because of their durability. Even women, when they no longer had any shoes that remained in good enough shape to wear for walking, wore brogans rather than go barefoot.

calico: A balanced plain-weave fabric of cotton that was roller printed with simple designs in a limited number of colors. Calico was the dress fabric for the masses and became almost the symbol of frontier women's clothing.

cambric: A plain-woven cotton or linen fabric with a light luster on the face produced by *calendering*, that is, pressing between rollers to create the luster and finer texture. It was produced in a wide variety of qualities, the best being linen of a very fine yarn and high count. Combed cotton yarns, with the short fiber pieces removed during the combing process, could be made much finer than yarn that was only carded, so combed cotton cambric was the next grade. Cheap cambric was made of carded cotton yarns that were larger and woven with more space between them.

camel's hair: The hair of the Bactrian camel, used for textile fabrics. It is similar to wool but has greater warmth, lightness, and softness. It was used for winter clothing during this period.

cashmere: A very soft, luxurious wool fiber made from the undercoat of the cashmere goat. It may be spun into a yarn by itself or blended with wool, usually lamb's wool, for increased durability. Often the woven fabric made from cashmere yarn was referred to simply as "*cashmere*." Shawls hand woven from cashmere fiber were often called Kashmir shawls. The finest of these reportedly were so light that they could be pulled through a woman's ring. They were also very expensive and rare. They were supplanted by Paisley shawls, loom woven and patterned in Paisley, Scotland. They were heavy and dense and typically were folded in half to make a square that was wrapped around the body like a cape, the top of the triangle folded down to make a pointed faux collar. Both men and women wore these as wraps.

changeable silk: A silk fabric, usually plain weave, that is woven with contrasting colors of yarn in the warp and filling direction, giving the fabric an iridescence when the wearer moves.

chaps: Cowboys wore chaps, leather over-britches that covered at least the outer and front parts of their legs, for protection from rough brush and briars while riding, and from the horns of angry cattle while attempting to drive or brand them, Chaps were designed in a style similar to women's drawers, being essentially two tubes that pulled up over the legs individually and then fastened to a belt around the waist. They covered less of the lower body than drawers, however, as they left the stomach and seat free. The basic chaps were utilitarian, but even in the 1860s, many cowboys began to choose styles that were more decorative, many with fringe, silver conchos, worked leather, decorative skins, and other details that added color and texture to an otherwise fairly basic male outfit.

chenille: The term is used to indicate a type of yarn with which a fabric or trim is made. Loosely twisted filling yarns are woven into a leno weave

ground with the warp yarns, in pairs, crossing from left to right between each insertion of a filling yarn. This weave prevents shifting and adds durability to the fabric. After the fabric is woven, it is cut into strips between each twisted pair of warp yarns and given additional twist, thus producing yarn that resembles a caterpillar. It is an expensive process in that a fabric is first woven, then cut and twisted to produce yarns that had to again be either woven or fabricated in some way to be used in the final product.

corded silk: Corded silk was woven with disparate sizes of warp and weft, or filling, yarns. Typically, the weft would be considerably larger than the warp. The finer warp was used in much greater proportion than the weft, so, when woven together, the smaller and more flexible warp yarns took on the weave crimp and completely covered the weft. The result was a fabric with a pronounced crosswise ribs or ridges. The size of the ribs depended on the size of the weft yarns. Any fiber could be made in that fashion, and corded fabrics included taffeta, faille, bengaline, ottoman, and reps.

coutil: A very strong fabric made of cotton, woven with medium sized yarns in a high count in a warp-faced herringbone weave. It was used for apparel that would be subjected to a high degree of stress, such as corsets.

crepe: Sometimes also spelled "*crape*," this was textured fabric produced from highly twisted yarns. In black, it was considered by many to be the ultimate fabric for mourning wear, so much so that to say someone was "wearing crepe" meant they were in mourning. In colors, it was used for women's clothing primarily. Because of the manner of twisting and setting the yarn, the fabric was easily affected by moisture, which resulted in very high shrinkage.

cross-barred: This is a term that refers to a checked pattern made by a heavier cord than the yarns used to weave the fabric, run in at regular intervals in both the warp and weft direction. The term was also used with other fabric names to indicate the method in which the fabric was decorated, such as cross-barred muslin or cross-barred lawn.

drill: A sturdy, tightly woven cotton twill, usually a 2/1 twill, resulting in two-thirds of the warp yarn appearing on the surface. Drill was very similar to jean or denim and was used for stout work clothing for men and boys and for household applications.

faille. *See* **corded silk**.

figured muslin: Muslin that has a woven-in design; the term "*figured*" simply means that the fabric so named has the design inserted during the weaving process, not printed on the surface later. Usually the designs associated with this term were relatively small, all-over patterns.

flannel. A wool fabric of either twill or plain weave made with strong, high-twist warp yarns and larger, low-twist weft yarns. After weaving,

the fabric surface was brushed to lift some of the loose fibers from the weft yarns and create a nap of these fibers on the surface, where they functioned to trap air and provide insulation. Flannel was widely used for infant's undergarments to insure their warmth. It was also recommended by some writers for women's winter corsets and petticoats. In cold climates, undergarments made of flannel were widely worn for protection from the elements.

glacé silk: A silk dress fabric with a glossy finish.

grenadine: A leno woven fabric made with hard-twisted yarns. Fiber content could have been cotton, silk, or wool. Open spaces creating a decorative pattern were typical but not requisite.

grosgrain: (also called "*gros grains*"). A large-ribbed fabric usually woven with weft yarns that were many times larger than the warp, creating a large crosswise rib. The warp yarns were usually silk and the weft cotton. It was woven in a regular fabric width as well as in narrow widths as ribbon. Very similar to faille and bengaline. See also **corded silk**.

guipure: Trimming used on dresses and jackets or for collars and cuffs. It was made of woven straight tape that was folded, curved, gathered, and otherwise shaped into designs, then held together with decorative stitching. It could be made by hand or joined by machine. It was rather heavy in terms of visual weight.

illusion: A very sheer fabric such as net or tulle used for veils, hat trimmings, dress trimmings, or even for whole dresses made over an opaque lining.

India shawl: A shawl actually woven in France, but with Asian-inspired patterns. It was made in wool.

jaconet: A very sheer cotton dress fabric.

jet: Black fossil coal that was used extensively for jewelry and was especially favored for mourning jewelry.

linsey: Also called *linsey-woolsey*, indicating a combination of linen and wool fibers. Usually wool would be used in the weft and linen in the warp. It was a coarse, loosely woven fabric.

lonels: This term is actually a corruption of *long els* (a unit used to measure cloth). This was a coarse cloth used primarily for slave clothing or rough household linens.

lustre (luster): A plain weave fabric with cotton warp yarns and lustrous wool weft yarns, such as mohair, alpaca, or worsted.

mohair: The hair taken from the angora goat. It is very long and lustrous and has excellent resilience. Because of the length of the hair, it could be spun into extremely fine yarns. It is much less likely to shrink than regular wool and so was easier to launder when used for dresses or suiting fabrics.

moire: A fabric initially very similar to faille or bengaline but finished to randomly flatten the ribs on the surface, producing a watered, iridescent appearance due to the variation in the degree of light reflectance off the surface of the fabric.

mousseline: A sheer, lightweight dress fabric. If made of wool, it might be called "*mousseline de laines*" or just "*delaine*" (*laine* being the French word for wool). Delaine was commonly used by women diarists to describe fabrics they were using for dreses. *Mousseline de soie* was, literally translated, muslin of silk, and it was woven of silk rather than wool, but in a similar manner.

muslin: A plain-weave cotton fabric varying in weight from very sheer to heavy enough for bedsheets or furniture slipcovers. When used in describing dresses, the term usually referred to one of the better quality, very lightweight cottons favored for cool summer dresses.

Negro cloth: Basically this was any coarse, cheap cloth that was used to make slave clothing. At one time it was made from hemp fiber, later from cotton, and sometimes contained coarse wool.

percale: A plain-weave cotton cloth more substantial than muslin and less sheer, having a balanced and higher count of warp and weft yarns. It was piece dyed, printed, and finished in other ways. Roller printed in small figures, it formed the ground for what would be sold as *calico.*

plush: A warp pile very similar to velvet in construction, but with a longer pile woven less densely. Plush was used for coats, capes, cloaks, and otherouter wear for winter seasons. The pile was usually made of wool or mohair.

point appliqué: Point appliqué lace was a combination of machine-made net, or ground, on which needlepoint sprigs are applied after being made separately. It was a way for women to have true, needle-made lace (needlepoint lace), but at an affordable price, as only the motifs were true lace.

pongee: A silk dress fabric made with thick and thin weft yarns that give a slight texture to the fabric. It was a plain weave, unbalanced in count, with a higher number of warp yarns that were usually filament in length. The weft yarns were typically made of spun silk that was slightly irregular, producing the slubs and thick and thin places.

poplin: An unbalanced plain-weave fabric with small crosswise ribs and a dense construction. It was made of either silk or cotton and was a very popular fabric for women's dresses. A similar fabric but lighter in weight was "*poplinette*."

quilling: A narrow, fluted or braided dress trim resembling a row of pointed quills. It was often made of the same fabric as the dress it trimmed or, if that was too heavy, then in a lighter-weight fabric of the same color.

reps. See **corded silk**.

satin: A silk fabric woven with a predominance of warp yarns floating on the fabric face to produce a high luster. Typically, satin weaves will have warp floats that cover four to six weft yarns before interlacing, and then going under only one weft before coming back to the surface. The result is that, in a 6/1 satin, 6/7ths of the warp yarn is visible on the front. This weave, combined with smaller warp yarns in higher numbers, yields a fabric in which the weft yarns are not visible at all, increasing the luster. The use of low-twist filament warp also adds to the light reflectance.

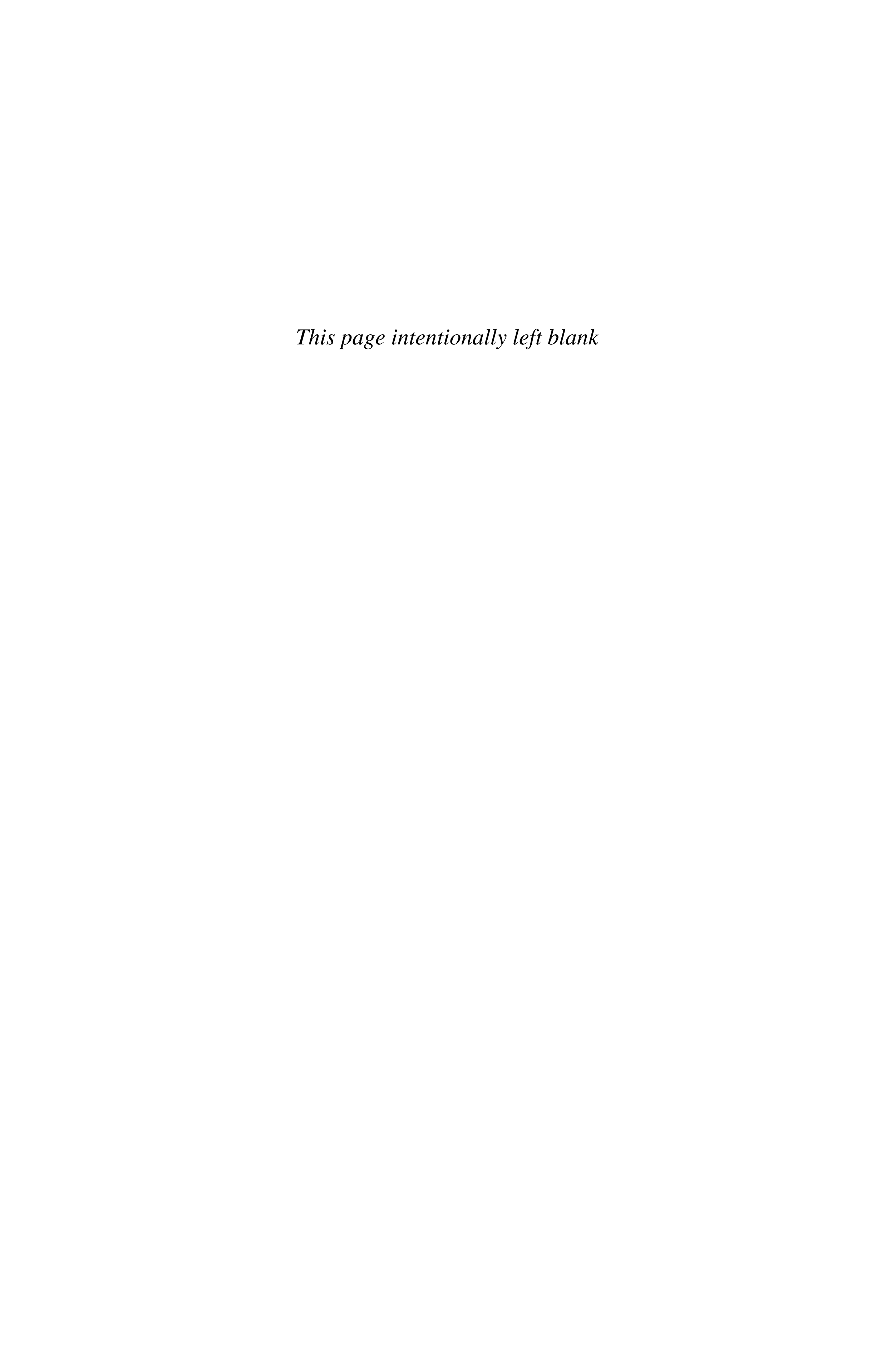
tarlatan: (or **tarlatane**) A thin, open weave cotton fabric stiffened with starch to give it body.

tulle: A sheer net fabric with a hexagonal mesh. It was used for millinery, dress trimmings, dress overskirts, false sleeves, and in other similar applications.

Valenciennes: A handmade lace created on a revolving pillow while manipulating large numbers of threads wound on wood or bone bobbins. It was a flat lace, meaning both the ground and the motifs were created at the same time. Due to its fineness, linen thread was used for handmade Valenciennes. The lace was sheer and was one of the few handmade laces that continued to compete with machine-made lace long after the latter was introduced.

velour: A cotton warp pile fabric with a longer pile than velvet.

velvet: A warp pile fabric with silk warp. The weft could be either cotton or silk, but was more often silk. The pile is short and remains semi-upright after finishing, giving the fabric a rich hand and appearance.



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Resource Guide: The Civil War and Reconstruction Era

ONLINE SOURCES

African American History, University of Washington Library Web Site. www.lib.washington.edu. This site presents digitized coverage of major events and times in the history of African Americans in this country. Some sites are housed at other locations but link directly from this history site. Twenty of the linked presentations cover the Civil War/Reconstruction period.

American Art. 2006. The National Gallery of Art Web Site. www.nga.gov. The National Gallery includes sections on painting, sculpture, works on paper, photographs, decorative arts, and architecture. A flexible search engine is provided; there are weekly Web tours; and there are specialty categories prearranged for viewing online.

Accessible Archives. www.accessible.com. On this commercial site that requires a subscription, the complete run of *Godey's Lady's Book* from July 1830 through December 1896 is available with fully searchable content. Also included in the database are several African American and Civil War–era newspapers and additional materials covering the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Civil War Home Page. www.civil-war.net. Extensive collection of images, presentations, and documents, as well as links to other sources covering just about every aspect of the war.

Cornell University Library's Making of America Collection. http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/. Focusing on the antebellum through reconstruction period, the Making of America Collection (MOA) contains digitized books and journals and allows both viewing of page images as well as searching digitized text for full-text searches.

Encyclopedia of Cleveland History: Garment Industry. http://ech.cwru.edu. Provided jointly by the Case Western Reserve University and the Western Reserve Historical Society. Offers an aspect of garment development history that is often overlooked in books that focus more on New York to the exclusion of other locations.

Home of the American Civil War. ww.civilwarhome.com. The major feature of this site is the provision of thousands of links to Civil War information. Originally the index of links to Internet information on the Civil War was maintained by the Louisiana State University Civil War Center.

Library of Congress American Memory Collection. http://memory.loc.gov. This is one of the best sites available for access to an extensive collection of images, original documents, sheet music, maps, prints, and even sound and film recordings. The specific collection categories include advertising, African American history, architecture and landscape, cities and towns, culture and folklife, immigration and American expansion, literature, maps, Native American history, performing arts and music, presidents, religion, sports and recreation, technology and industry, war and the military, and women's history.

Liberty Park, USA Foundation. www.libertyparkusafd.org. The section on Native Americans extensively treats nearly every aspect of Indian history, including treaties, major tribes or divisions, culture, symbols, music, home life, and language. Although many of the links are faulty or just plain weird, the main site links provide an excellent overview and a basis for further investigation.

Oberlin College Digital Collections. http://dcollections.oberlin.edu. Photographs of artifacts in the museum collection as well as digitized images of Oberlin students in the class of 1862.

The National Park Service. www.nsp.gov. In the section entitled "History and Culture," the National Park Service Web site provides a good search engine and links to a number of photographs and excerpts from original documents.

The Sewing Academy. www.elizabethstewartclark.com. This site provides some free patterns and others at reasonable prices as well as sewing information, style guides, photographs, and links to sources. The audience is reenactment families, but the information is useful for a wide audience.

The Valley of the Shadow Project. valley.vcdh.virginia.edu. This project provides digitized original documents, including diaries, correspondence, images, maps, newspaper excerpts, census records, and military records in presenting the Civil War through Reconstruction era through the lenses of

two towns in the United States, one in the North and the other in the South. It is an outstanding, award-winning resource for gaining a human perspective on this volatile period.

Wisconsin Historical Society. www.wisconsinhistory.org. The Wisconsin Historical Society provides an unusually large collection of digitized photographs from the Civil War through Reconstruction period, as well as from other times. Especially of interest are the clothing and textile items, which have been photographed and well described, many including the maker and/or wearer of the clothing. Photographs, many identified by name, are also a part of this rich site.

MUSEUMS

America Textile History Museum. 491 Dutton Street, Lowell, MA. The museum is in the process of digitizing its collections, and many artifacts are currently available through the online catalog.

Art Institute of Chicago. 111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL. The museum houses a large textile collection, including nineteenth-century holdings of printed and woven textiles, quilts, and coverlets.

Boston Museum of Fine Arts. 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA. Contains over 27,000 textile artifacts, as well as an extensive collection of jewelry.

Kent State University Museum. Rockwell Hall, Kent State University, Kent, OH. Collections include fashion from the eighteenth century to the present and outstanding examples of textiles.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art. 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. More than 30,000 examples of costume and textile arts are represented in the museum's holdings.

Museum of the City of New York. 1220 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY. The museum houses an excellent collection of primary source material on fashion history and also has an examples of Charles Worth creations worn by some of New York's most fashionable women.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Costume Institute and Antonio Ratti Textile Center. 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY. Among the finest museums in the world, the Met has excellent holdings in costume and textiles as well as textile examples in the American decorative arts division. The American Wing also contains examples of textiles and interiors in the period rooms.

Philadelphia Museum of Art. 26th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA. The museum's textile and fashion collection contains many examples of woven and printed textiles, lace, embroidery, and American-made quilts, coverlets, and samplers.

The Museum of the Confederacy, 1201 East Clay Street, Richmond, VA 23219. In addition to housing extensive collections of Civil War memorabilia, images, and artifacts, the Museum has an online presence that provides access to information about its holdings, currently including artifacts relating to Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. http://www.moc.org.

The National Civil War Museum. One Lincoln Circle at Reservoir Park, Harrisburg, PA 17103. Also maintains a Web site at www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org.

Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian. Fourth Street & Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C.

Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian Cultural Resource Center, 4220 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, MD 20746.

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Glory. Directed by Edward Zwick. 122 minutes. Distributed by TriStar Pictures, 1989. Story of the Massachusetts 54th, the Union's first all black regiment of the Civil War.

Modern Marvels: The Transcontinental Railroad. 50 minutes. Distributed by A & E Home Video, 2006.

The Civil War. Directed by Ken Burns. 11 hours. Distributed by Public Broadcasting Service, 1990. Documentary covering the entire war from the causes to the end of conflict.

The Way West. Directed by Ric Burns. 360 minutes. Distributed by Steeplechase Films. A documentary covering the period of westward expansion that occurred largely between 1845 and 1893.

We Shall Remain. Directed by Chris Eyre, Ric Burns, Dustinn Craig, and Stanley Nelson. Five 90-minute episodes. Distributed by Public Broadcasting Service. Treats the history of Native Americans from the Mayflower through the siege at Wounded Knee in 1973.

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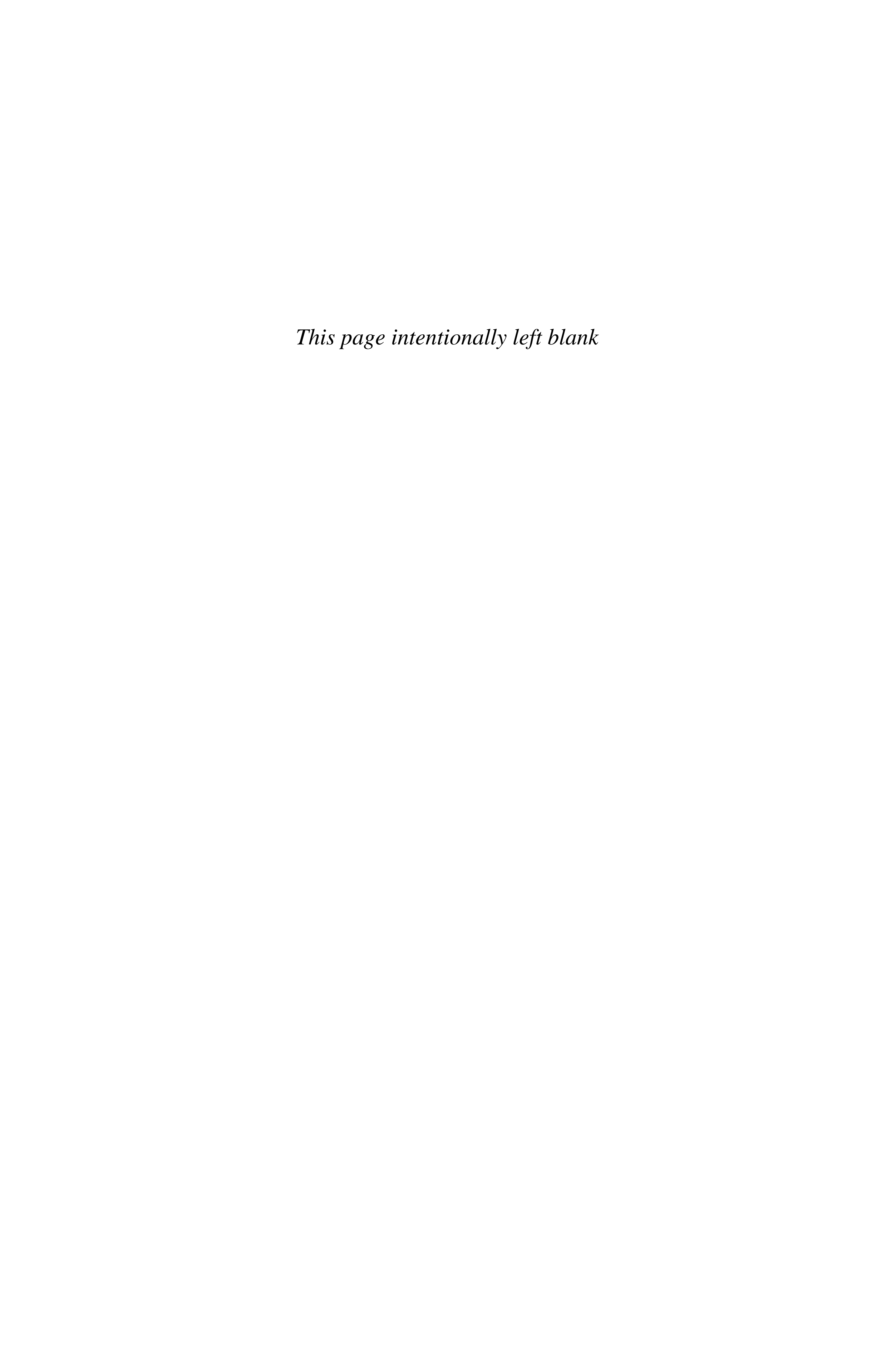

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PART TWO

Clothing in the Gilded Age, 1877–1899

Jill Condra

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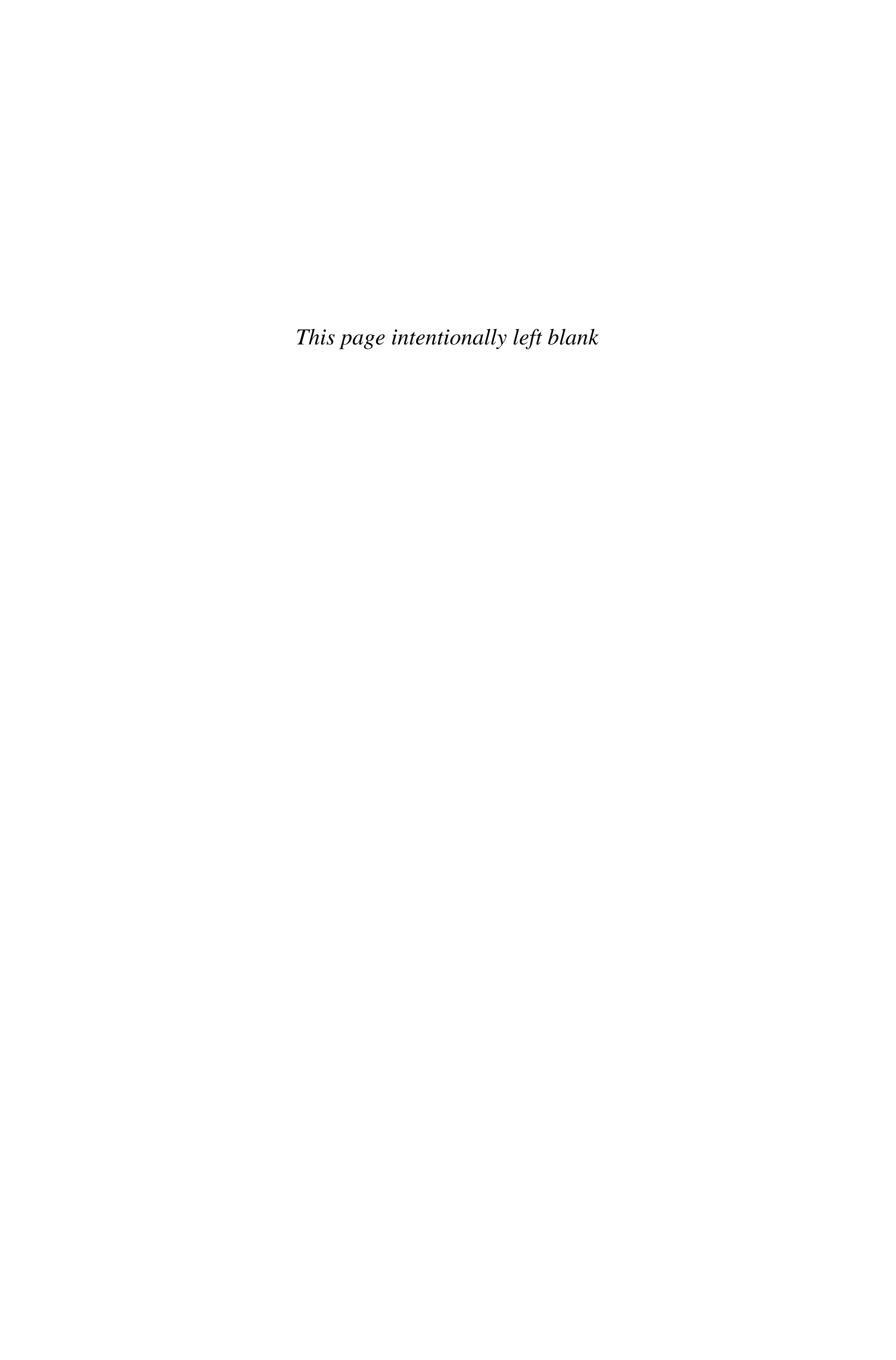
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Introduction

It becomes clear very quickly when researching the fashions of the Gilded Age in America from 1876 to 1900 that there was a myriad of influences on women's, men's, and children's clothing choices. There is an abundance of information about fashions of the western hemisphere, especially Victorian-era England, and, of course, the fashion mecca of France. United States fashion, while influenced heavily by these leaders in style, was coming into its own just as the country was becoming a world power with enormous advances in technology, industrialization, and an economy gone wild. Men were becoming increasingly rich, and power was measured by the amount of wealth a man could acquire. Fashion, in both clothing and housing design, was often the external symbol of that success, and so fashion consciousness was very important in establishing one's place in the loose but definite hierarchy of U.S. society. Cities were bustling with fashionable women in impractical but beautifully decorated dresses, hats, and parasols. Men, in their restrained dark suits, exuded an aura of power and seriousness in a competitive business world. Children were being dressed as children for the first time, not as miniature versions of their parents. At the same time, the urban centers had their settlements of people of a rather less fashionable sort who were forced by economic factors to live in tenements in overcrowded conditions with little money or resources available to them.

These people were often new immigrants from Europe, or rural migrants who came to the cities to find work and perhaps attain the American dream of freedom, wealth, and success. While these newcomers were not part of fashionable society, this did not mean they were uninterested in what was being worn by the wealthier ranks. Newly established magazines and newspapers ran stories about families such as the Vanderbilts and Astors, entertaining readers with their detailed accounts of the gowns they wore to the many luxurious balls and parties. Stage actresses were also very popular celebrities about whom people were interested in reading, and the clothing they wore also influenced styles that women chose to wear.

When discussing Gilded Age fashions, it is important to recognize that it is not a topic that can be narrowed down so easily to the geographic borders of the United States. Although there are distinct differences in the fashions and the trends of clothing worn in Europe and England compared to the United States, there is also a lot of overlapping style with fashions being worn on both sides of the Atlantic. Wealthy Americans still often viewed the old European and British traditions as the most proper. They attempted to maintain certain levels of etiquette and behaviors in their lives in the United States. While they were attaining the wealth they needed to establish lavish lifestyles seen previously only in the old world, Americans borrowed heavily from their wealthy counterparts in Europe and England for fashionable clothing, etiquette, and housing design. At the same time, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, the more relaxed societal structures in the United States caused uniquely U.S. fashions to be developed and enthusiastically adopted. The tuxedo, worn by men as a formal evening suit, is a good example of a U.S. fashion innovation. It had a more relaxed cut and was significantly less constricting than the tailored English suits. Clothing for sports was commonly worn for specific activities, and parts of the leisure dress eventually became accepted as daily wear, not solely worn for a specific sport as originally intended. Although the diffusion of fashion was very often from the continents of Europe (especially Paris) and England toward the United States, there was also the start of fashion innovation moving from U.S. toward Europe and England.

Fashion is also constantly changing, and it becomes more difficult with the quick pace of change in the Gilded Age to separate the fashions of one period from another, especially at the beginning of the period comprising 1876–1900. Especially for women, there was a predominant fashion for dresses and gowns that had been popular for approximately six years already. This was considered the first bustle period, as it was followed by two other styles of gowns, both also including back interest, that were popular from 1878 to the mid eighties and then from about 1885 through the 1890s. There were three bustle periods, the first starting in the earlier *Reconstruction* period. Where we pick up our study of

fashion, near the end of the first bustle period, the style of gown is described, but the main fashion emphasis of the Gilded Age starts after the first bustle period and continues to the turn of the century.

From a research perspective, fashion information from the Gilded Age is plentiful, and there are multiple resources readily available to any costume researcher. Thanks to the advances in the technology of the period, researchers can look not only at painted portraits for visual information on fashions. The advent and popularity of the photograph meant that many different kinds of people can be studied, not only the wealthy who could afford to have their likeness painted. Photographers were setting up studios all over the United States during the Gilded Age, and all kinds of people, both rich and poor, had their portraits taken. This is helpful for studying the clothing that was worn, but the information found in the photos must be taken with some reservation, as with any visual source from previous centuries. People were often photographed in their best clothing, or indeed some were provided with clothing from the photographers' own collections. The idea that people were photographed in studios in their everyday garb must be put aside, but at the same time there is value in the photographs as the studios would have stocked commonly worn items that were in fashion at the time for their patrons to wear for their portraits. There was a trend at this time for people to have their pictures taken, then placed on cards known as cartes de visite. People were dressed fashionably and these cards can now be used as fashion information. Photographers did venture out of the studios, however, to record in photographs the people out in the world going about their everyday business. Those images are very valuable sources of information about what was worn every day—by working people, city dwellers, and farmers, for example. Paintings are still valuable sources of fashion information, and the Impressionists of the period attempted to capture everyday scenes of people in their everyday clothing. General fashions are easy to see in these paintings, although details are sometimes hard to see. Illustrators such as Charles Dana Gibson were extraordinarily important, and in the case of Gibson helped to create a whole fashion trend in the Gibson Girl with her shirtwaists with extremely full leg-of-mutton sleeves and belted skirt.

Literature of the time is also very useful for identifying the clothing people wore. From the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain to the novels of Edith Wharton, clothing of all kinds is described in great detail, both for the poor and the extremely wealthy. These descriptions can be used as sources of fashion information in combination with the visuals to provide excellent images of what was worn. Other written sources, such as the dime novels popular in the Gilded Age, as well as Wild West shows touring the world, provided images about what was worn in the Wild West, and in many instances have provided the romantic image of the cowboy. These were not necessarily accurate in depicting

what was actually worn, but certainly added to the myth and persona of the cowboy and perhaps provided the basis of what cowboys eventually adopted as their style of dress, especially in the twentieth century.

Extant examples of clothing from the Gilded Age is more plentiful in museums across the country than clothing of previous periods. As with other eras however, the clothing that is often found in these collections reflects only the best of clothing that was worn. This so-called Sunday best was kept and preserved (not worn often enough to wear out) and passed down from generation to generation, ending up in museums for us to study. The clothing worn daily was not seen as important or valuable enough to preserve and pass down, and so its presence is sorely lacking in collections and other sources of visual and literary information that are often counted on for information about these types of dress. Slave dress and clothing worn by others marginalized by society is very difficult to find and understand fully. In this era, however, more than in any other time period, there is some information available, though few extant examples remain.

Undergarments were sometimes kept and passed down, so stays (corsets) and petticoats are found in many collections. Recently, in England, the drawers belonging to Queen Victoria, for example, sold at auction for thousands of dollars, so there is continued value attached to these garments, especially when they come with such esteemed provenance. The drawers in this case were passed down through generations of a family who worked for the queen back in the nineteenth century.

Catalogs are another very rich source of information. With the advent of retailers providing all sorts of goods, especially geared to those people living outside the urban centers, illustrated catalogs provide detailed descriptions of clothing as well as prices. It is astounding how many goods were for sale, not only clothing, but hardware, kitchen and household goods, horse-drawn carriage equipment, and much more. As a source of fashion information, it is valuable to see the kinds of materials used, and the illustrations provide details of all the different styles of clothing, including collars for men, aprons for women, jewelry, dresses, children's clothing, shoes, parasols, gloves, men's suits, hats, and, of course, suits, dresses, and skirts. Not only are they valuable for the costume historian but also for any student of material culture, and one can spend hours combing through one season's catalog featuring all the fascinating goods needed for daily life in the late nineteenth century.

I would like to acknowledge staff at the Goldstein Museum of Design at the University of Minnesota for allowing me to trawl through their collection. Seeing the actual garments and methods of construction allows for the best understanding of the costume of any era, for example, the elaborately flounced skirts and the intricate bustles with their springs, bent wood, and screws.

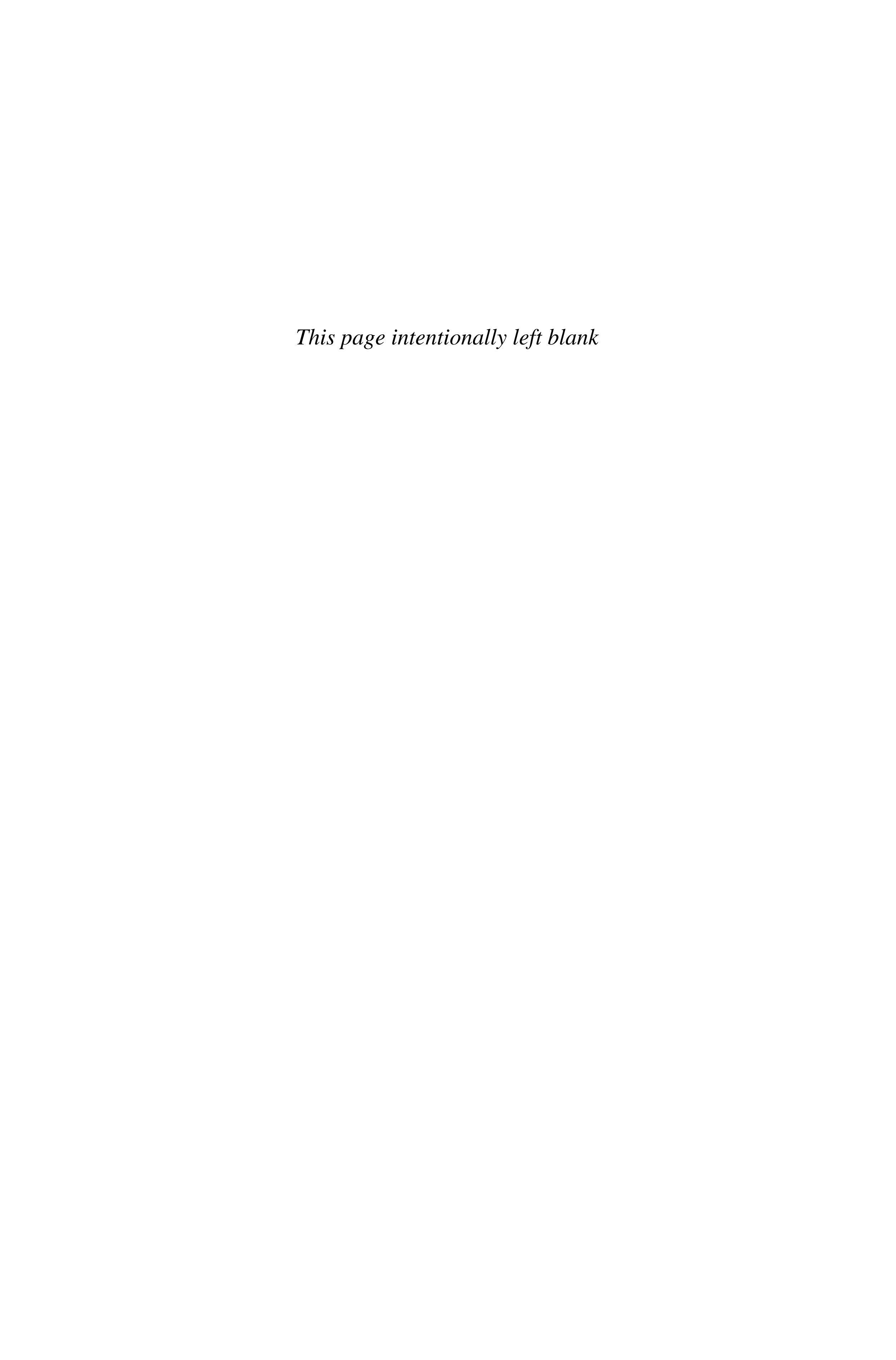
ABOUT THIS SECTION

Part Two of this book is divided into chapters focusing on the Gilded Age, generally set between 1876 to 1899. Sometimes, however, information is provided from the adjoining time periods, both before 1876 and after the turn of the century, to allow for greater understanding of what was happening in fashion at the time. It is not always possible to restrict discussions about fashion to strict dates, as some trends have their roots in previous periods, and some continue into the next period, but for the most part the information is within this period.

The first chapter provides an overview of life in the Gilded Age, starting with a timeline of highlights, and then followed in more detail, providing context for understanding why people wore what they did. In addition, the chapter looks at economics, urban expansion, technical evolution, the development of factories, industrial development, urban living, entertainment, newly established wealth, poverty, politics, mass communication in the form of magazines, books, and newspapers, and much more. It is impossible to fully understand clothing history if one does not also get a sense of the general social, political, and technological history of a particular period.

The second chapter outlines the powerful social significance of clothing in the period, followed by chapters three through five, which detail the clothing worn by men, women, and children. In each of these chapters, there is an attempt to cover many types of clothing worn by not only the wealthiest people but also poor immigrants living in New York City tenements, newly freed slaves, domestic workers, ragamuffins, and Wild West cowboys.

Each chapter on clothing also looks at clothing worn close to the body in the form of underwear, the main garments like gowns and suits, outerwear worn to protect the body from the elements, as well as accessories and grooming products. Though much is covered in each section of the book, there is no way any single work of this length can cover all the details of each and every garment and accessory, so careful selections have made in order to provide a complete overview of styles of the Gilded Age in the United States. This book also includes a comprehensive list of print resources and Web sites of museums and other useful sites for those who seek more information about certain aspects of dress. Film titles are also provided for those who want to see good examples of the fashions of the Gilded Age in living color.



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Timeline

CLOTHING IN THE GILDED AGE, 1876–1899

1870s Americans begin their acquaintance with the Arts and Crafts Movement originating in England

Alexander Graham Bell files patent for electromagnetic telephone

1877 The Great Railway Strike, protesting wage cuts and poor working conditions

1878 Billy the Kid begins his career as a frontier outlaw

Edison's Electric Light Company established

H.M.S. Pinafore by Gilbert and Sullivan was written, later to become a hit in the United States

Impressionist Edgar Degas paints *Dancers*

1879 Woolworth's five and dime store opens

Women allowed to argue cases before the Supreme Court

Thomas Edison invents incandescent light bulb

Horseless carriage patented

1880 Barnum and Bailey Circus formed

1881 President James Garfield assassinated

Telephones become increasingly common in households

Vaudeville becomes a popular form of entertainment in the United States

1882 Dow, Jones & Co established as a financial news company

Thomas Edison provides commercial electricity to New York City

Oscar Wilde tours America lecturing on the Artistic (Aesthetic) Movement

1883 Adopted standard time zones to help regulate clocks across the United States

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows begin production

Civil Rights Act of 1875 declared unconstitutional

Andrew Carnegie's first public library established in his hometown of Dunfermline, Scotland

Joseph Pulitzer buys the *New York World*

1885 Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* published

First 10-story skyscraper, The Home Insurance Building, built in Chicago

1886 American Federation of Labor established

Statue of Liberty unveiled

Frances Hodgson Burnett publishes *Little Lord Fauntleroy*

Coca-Cola invented

Deadly Haymarket Square labor riot occurs in Chicago

Geronimo surrenders to U.S. forces

1888 The Dawes Severalty Act passed, allotting land to Native Americans

1888 President Cleveland creates Department of Labor

Kodak No. 1 camera and roll film introduced to amateur photographers

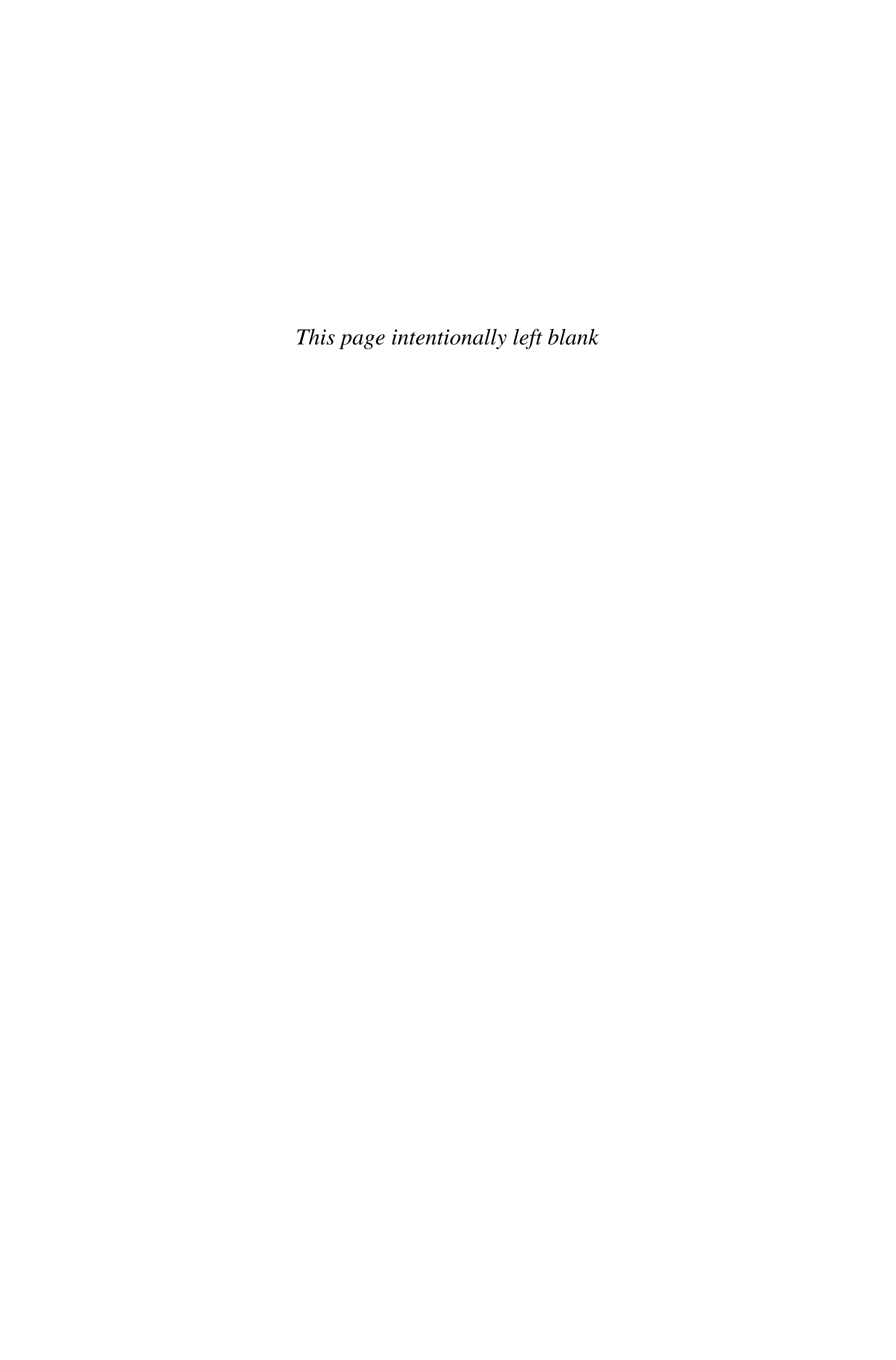
1889 Isaac Merritt Singer begins selling the first electric home sewing machines

Wall Street Journal first published

Andrew Carnegie's first U.S. library opens in Braddock, PA

1890 Garment workers in New York strike for seven months and win the right to unionize

	Sherman Anti-Trust Act passed by Congress, limiting concentration of power and monopolies of large companies
	Western frontier officially closed
	Jacob Riis releases *How the Other Half Lives*, documenting the poor in New York through photography
1891	First patent for the motion picture camera filed by Thomas Edison
	Ivory Soap Company launches advertising slogan "Ivory Soap. It Floats"
1892	The start of the Tin Pan Alley song factories in New York
	General Electric established by J. P. Morgan and Henry Villard
1893	"Panic of 1893" was the beginning of the economic depression that lasted until 1897
	Sears, Roebuck and Company is formed
	Vogue Magazine is launched
	World Columbian Exposition in Chicago
	City Beautiful movement gained popularity
	Work begins on the skyscraper (17-story) Manhattan Insurance Life Building in New York
1894	The Pullman railroad strike over declining wages eventually cripples the railway industry nationwide
	Labor Day holiday made an official federal holiday
1895	*L'Art Nouveau* gallery opens in Paris, introducing this art style to the world
1896	Henry Ford builds his first motor car
	The Waldorf Salad of apples, walnuts, and mayonnaise dressing invented at the Waldorf Hotel in New York
1897	The first amusement park created on Coney Island
1898	The Spanish-American War
	Cuba occupied by the United States (released in 1902)
1899	Thorstein Veblen coins the phrase "conspicuous consumption" when he publishes *A Theory of the Leisure Class*
	Interpretation of Dreams by Sigmund Freud published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CHAPTER 6

The United States in the Gilded Age, 1877–1899

Entrepreneurs, robber barons, industrial growth, mass immigration, urban expansion, railroad development, and consumerism all marked the period in the United States known as the Gilded Age. The old puritan strictures were being quickly and thoroughly abandoned in the new economy, where luxury was something to be admired and consuming products was what many people felt defined their worth. The West was open to those who dared venture to find wealth in oil, lumber, gold, and cattle, and the railways were being built to accommodate the wave of people making their way West. Men with money had power. The great changes in industry produced a lot of wealth for a few notable families who became the toast of New York and other large cities at the time and ruled the social world within. Andrew Carnegie, a steel man; John D. Rockefeller, an oil man J. P. Morgan, of the finance and banking sector; the Astor family, of real estate wealth; and the Vanderbilt family, who were leaders in shipping and railways, are a few notable names of the Gilded Age. Snobbery was raised to new heights as these families competed to achieve greater social notoriety and higher social status and influence at the highest rungs of society.

From 1876 to 1900, society became much more diverse, not only with the help of vast differences between the rich and poor in the United States but also with the influx of the varied ethnic groups flocking to the shores of a free nation from Europe and Asia, making the

face of United States drastically different from earlier in the nineteenth century. Wealthy and largely white leaders of industry were joined by an ethnically diverse working class who populated the factories and built the railroads joining East and West. Within the working class, tension developed between the industrialist owners and the workers, which lead to strikes and the development of labor movements. Labor unions and women's leagues were part of the much hoped-for solution to continued strife within the modern industrial economy. Racial tensions rose. Gains that had been made in the Reconstruction Period were quickly lost for many African Americans, who lost many newfound rights at this time. Finally, the financial panic of the mid 1890s proved the beginning of the end of the Gilded Age, when the U.S. economy nosedived into a deep depression. A dramatic realignment marked the beginning of the new century.

The incredible wealth of the period was reflected in the luxurious lifestyles of the captains of industry (alternately known as the robber barons) who built extravagant and opulently furnished neo-Renaissance homes, paid great attention to patronizing the arts, and dressed in exquisite fashions. Despite the luxurious lifestyles of the wealthy, philanthropy was on the rise. Andrew Carnegie is still well known today for his endowment of public libraries in thousands of towns and cities in the United States and Canada. The wealthy lavished attention on other charities and causes as well, including hospitals, museums, and universities, many of which still bear the names of their famous benefactors.

Because money had immense power, political influence was easily bought, as is alluded to by Mark Twain in his book *The Gilded Age*, when he refers to congressmen getting rich after entering office. While politicians had a responsibility to the public, industrialists could exploit natural resources and labor, flouting the law with little consequence.

The younger men of wealthy families of the Gilded Age were not as likely to succeed as their fathers had. They often became wastrels, leading lives of leisure and fun. Often contributing nothing to society, they became notorious for ruining the magnificently successful businesses their fathers had started. Many travelled the world, playing polo, racing the new motor cars, or gambling in the Riviera.

Landmark events occurred during this period that have become part of everyday modern life and continue to play significant roles in the twenty-first century. Technological innovation, for example, was moving at a pace never before seen in history. Basic innovations we take for granted now, such as the rail system joining the east and west coasts of the United States, telephones, electricity, agricultural equipment that allows farmers to produce food for a large population, and factory systems that provide the myriad of goods used in everyday life, were all innovations in their infancies during the Gilded Age. This was a period of great and lasting change.

Both urban and rural life changed forever. Millions of people migrated from the countryside to the newly bustling cities. Leaving behind the perceived innocence of the rural lifestyle, they faced the excitement and challenge of living in increasingly crowded and dangerous cities, where people lived, worked hard, and played hard. The United States experienced mass immigration from multiple countries around the world. Scandinavians and Germans pushed west of the Mississippi to take up farming in Minnesota and North Dakota. Millions of people flooded New York City, a city that then had to cope with rapidly increasing numbers of people to be housed, fed, and put to work. Irish, Jewish, and many other Europeans left their homes in search of the riches and freedoms promised in the new world. Black migration in the southern United States also meant that the urban populations of Atlanta, Savannah, Memphis, and Nashville changed, although there remained as yet few African Americans in northern cities. Adapting to new social structures occurred gradually. Ultimately, the massive upheavals allowed a new culture to develop in the United States, richer for all the diversity provided by the new arrivals.

The post–Civil War reconstruction was largely complete by the 1870s, and the U.S. government had made dramatic and necessary changes to its running of the country. Desperately needed government control was beginning to take shape, where industries were more regulated and civil reform was key to controlling a society that could otherwise have spun completely out of control. The urban population explosion was both good and bad in terms of the effects it had on the people living in both cities and in rural areas being abandoned by both young and old fleeing to the cities. With increasingly concentrated areas of industry, such as urban factories, there was great opportunity and wealth to be had in more sectors and for more people. Newly wealthy industrialists ran things in evermore ambitious and efficient ways in order to provide the maximum profit at the least expense and with the greatest efficiency. Garment factories were becoming increasingly important: Fashion was being provided to the masses through increased efficiency in production and new paper patterns that allowed multiple garments to be constructed by factory machines and sewing machine operators. Garment factories were greatly influenced by the new methods of efficiency facilitated by the new machines and the factory system itself. Workers sat, day in and day out, at the same sewing machines, working one small portion of a garment over and over again, while their neighbor sewed the next part of the same garment. One worker could spend countless hours simply sewing one seam on thousands of shirts as they passed down the assembly line.

Factory owners were determined to get the most out of workers. They were known to provide less than adequate working conditions, forcing them to work in excessive heat, with unhealthy levels of dust in the air

Many young women, like this shoe vamper in Lynn, Massachusetts, worked in textile mills and shoe factories during the nineteenth century. Photo ca. 1895. (Library of Congress)

(from textiles losing their tiny fibers, which then floated in the atmosphere). Garment workers were rarely given breaks or days off. Government reform during the last part of the nineteenth century was meant to help workers by limiting daily and weekly work hours. In the textile industry, working conditions were terrible. Though there were signs of improvement, it was years before the true horrors of factory conditions were revealed in the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, the labor force was often represented by unions, and, for the first time, workers felt they had rights as a group to air their dissatisfaction with working conditions. The Labor Day holiday we know today was started in 1894, reflecting the new respect for the rights of workers. The government was wrestling with the changes from a rural agrarian economy to one less dependent on production of food and more on industrial production.

The Indian Wars officially ended in the Gilded Age when, by 1890, the U.S. Army had defeated the armed Indian resistance in key battles. In 1877, the War of the Black Hills was lost by the northern plains Sioux, Cheyennes, and Nez Percés. In 1886, the legendary Apache warrior Geronimo surrendered to U.S. forces, marking the final important Indian action against the U.S. government. Indian capitulation came in 1890 with the massacre of a band of unarmed Sioux in South Dakota. There was much pressure on the U.S. government to deal with mounting demand for the western tribal lands that were so appealing to fortune-seeking whites. In 1887, the government passed the Dawes Severalty Act, granting reserve land and promoting land ownership to individual Native Americans for a period of 25 years, after which they could sell it. A family was granted land to own and make economically viable with framing or ranching, and after 25 years the land was often sold to whites are low prices, by which time the allotments had been fractured thanks to hereditary laws imposed on the owners. This act was intended to civilize the Native American Indian, but, as with many programs aimed at assimilation to white culture, it forced women to become homebound, dependent, and domestic, and men to work in the fields. These roles were counter to a culture that had been in existence for thousands of years. The misguided reformers who suggested this policy, although

perhaps well intentioned, caused upset the Native American social structure. The act was terminated in 1936.

With the urban population explosion came upheavals in how people lived their lives. Victorian morals, those strict and proper customs espoused by England's Queen Victoria, were challenged as more people crowded the cities, where poverty was rampant, living conditions crowded and dangerous, and people increasingly desperate to survive. Etiquette was rejected in favor of survival. This desperation led to certain dangers and changing attitudes to work ethics, crime, sexual behavior, family, leisure, manners, and dress in terms of what was once proper. Big cities such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia saw the most change and growth. For example, New York's population went from 616,000 in 1860 to more than 3 million in 1900 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 11–12). Countrywide, the number of people living in urban centers more than quadrupled in the final 40 years of the nineteenth century.

While eastern cities became major urban centers, exploration west of the Mississippi continued. This activity was directly tied to the expansion of the railway that had joined both coasts in 1869. While the east was largely urban, there were still vast tracts of land that were unsettled and large populations that were considered rural scattered across the west. Before the frontier officially closed in 1890, rumors quickly spread the hope of riches waiting to be claimed in the West. Great myths developed about the extent of wealth and opportunity in the West. While some tales were overblown fiction, there were opportunities to be had. Mining, ranching, and land speculation were all considered exciting and possibly lucrative ventures for those with energy and adventurous spirits. At the same time, the culture of the cowboy and all things Western was a source of romanticism, especially for young boys who admired the characters of the Wild West. Western land values had greatly benefitted from the railways crisscrossing the country. The value of a piece of land was based on its proximity to a prospective rail line planned close by, and the process of selecting the paths of the rail system was greatly debated and became crucial to people with financial interests in lands around the rail system. Whereas at one time high value was placed on land along river systems (which brought travelers and goods along the water in boats), the railways meant that new geographic areas far from waterways could become important centers in the new economy. Towns competed for people, industry, and businesses. Company towns, such as Pullman, Illinois, also became popular, where a whole community would be developed by one company, and everything would be controlled by the owner. The company provided all amenities, such as housing, retail, water, sewage, banks, and so on, were provided for the workers. This left residents with little choice in terms of services and prices, to the exclusive profit of the company owner. Owners of company towns often took advantage, of their workers' dependency.

U.S. PRESIDENTS IN THE GILDED AGE

Between 1876 and 1900 there were five U.S. presidents. Each was Republican, with the exception of Grover Cleveland. The role of the government in people lives was changing quickly. Capitalists vying for wealth and power clashed with men in office elected to serve the interests of the people. While governments tried to bring some order to the chaos of rapid capitalistic economic development, there were other serious issues facing each president, including international problems, and domestic social and labor issues.

The nineteenth president of the United States was elected in 1877 and remained in office until 1881. Rutherford B. Hayes (1822–1893), a Republican, advocated banishing liquor and wine from the White House and was considered an honest and moderate reformer. Hayes was the first to allow women the right to plead in the Supreme Court. A financial conservative at a time when the economy was fueled by fierce competition among the capitalists, Hayes put the first telephone in the White House, installed by Alexander Graham Bell himself.

James A. Garfield (1831–1881) a Civil War veteran, Garfield served in Congress for 18 years. He won the Republican presidential nomination in 1880, then won the election by a small margin. Garfield's was only one of the many closely contested presidential elections of the Gilded Age. During his term he was successful at ousting rival senators for dispensing patronage. He was in the process of dealing with the U.S. republics when he was shot on July 2, 1881. He died in office a few months later. Garfield's vice president, Chester Arthur (1829–1886), took office as the twenty-first president in 1881, becoming a champion of civil service reform during his first term.

Grover Cleveland is unique in that he served two noncontiguous terms in the White House, once in 1885 through 1889 and next in 1893 through 1897. In his first term, he angered railroad tycoons, vetoed pension bills for Civil War veterans, and also vetoed a bill that would provide aid to drought-stricken farmers, claiming they would become dependent on government aid. Cleveland's second term was one of considerable difficulty, given the economic depression of 1893. There was rampant unemployment, farms faced foreclosed mortgages, and businesses in every sector were failing. Accordingly, Cleveland introduced a federal income tax of 2 percent on annual incomes greater than $4000. He maintained the gold reserves, but when 125,000 railroad workers went on strike in 1894, which was known as the Pullman Strike, he used federal troops to brutally end it. Several workers were killed and many more injured during the strike.

William McKinley, the last president of the Gilded Age, served fourteen years in Congress. In 1891, he was elected governor of Ohio and he served two terms before ran winning the presidency in 1897. The

economy was beginning to show signs of life with business, agriculture, and general prosperity returning, and so McKinley turned his attentions to foreign matters, including the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the Philippine-American War in 1899. Begun in support of Cuba's fight for independence from Spain, U.S. involvement had an economic as well as ethical basis because of its financial interests in industries such as sugar and tobacco. The U.S. forces defeated the Spanish fleet in Cuba, and then promptly seized other Spanish interests such as Manila in the Philippines, as well as annexing Puerto Rico, Guam, and Hawaii in order to help protect Pacific shipping interests. The Philippine-American war was followed by uprisings against the United States in their new territory. McKinley successfully ran for a second term in 1901, but he was assassinated in September 1901 in Buffalo, New York.

WOMEN IN THE GILDED AGE

With the dramatic changes of the industrial revolution affecting all aspects of life in the Gilded Age, it is no surprise that women and the nature of women's work also changed. The private sphere previously reserved for women was slowly expanding and women increasingly left the house to earn a wage to help support their families. The factory system was taking over in U.S. cities and towns, and there was a need for workers of all kinds, including women, especially in the clothing-production sector. Retail stores were opening, including large department stores and clothing shops selling all kinds of ready-made garments and accessories. Women were often employed at these stores in the Gilded Age. They worked as seamstresses, as they had done before, as well as in the domestic-service industry as maids, cooks, and in other household positions. Working-class women in the late nineteenth century became increasingly emancipated and politically active, making long strides toward securing rights that until then had been reserved for men. Women were active in several movements and were reformers, suffragists, labor activists, and temperance activists. Often they made moves into these very controversial spheres against the wishes of their husbands, who wanted their wives to remain at home raising the children and taking care of domestic life. Other husbands were supportive of their wives efforts.

Woman's suffrage became a serious goal for women, and several states had strong vocal groups advocating the right to vote for all adults, both men and women. Wyoming was the first state to grant women the vote in 1869, and leaders of the movement like Susan B. Anthony (the Working Women's Association, 1868) were heard calling all women to move to Wyoming, a free state. The National American Woman Suffrage

Association (NAWSA) was formed in 1890. State-by-state campaigns were launched by the organization to secure women's enfranchisement. Colorado was the first state to successfully pass an amendment granting the right to vote in 1893, followed by Utah and Idaho in 1896, and then Washington, California, Oregon, Kansas, Arizona, Alaska, Illinois, Montana, Nevada, New York, Michigan, South Dakota, and Oklahoma after 1900. In some cases, the vote was given only to widowed or unmarried women before all women were granted their rights, leaving the men to do the voting for the family. Suffragists were not all women: Some men, including husbands of prominent leaders, helped in the efforts to secure the right to vote for women. During the struggles, many of the activists were arrested and jailed for their actions. It was often difficult for women to fight, given the societal assumption that women were passive and unable to be confrontational. Many were mocked for their participation in the movement, but this did not stop the march toward freedom for all women.

Closely associated with the suffrage movement was the temperance movement, with the same women often involved with both. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was established in 1880. The temperance movement was established to help reduce the amount of alcohol consumed, especially by men. Alcohol was blamed for much of the crime and problems in society. Without it, or so it was believed, everything

Suffragettes in a horse-drawn cart advertising women's suffrage in New York City, ca. 1900. (Getty Images)

would improve, and people would lead upstanding lives of moral purity and urban slums would be eliminated. The movement was often peaceful, but there were incidents of violence and arrests were made. The temperance movement eventually succeeded, temporarily, in banning alcohol in the United States during the 1920s.

Working women quickly saw the inequality of their treatment as workers in the industrial system. On the whole, strikes and labor organization were popular at this time, with some noteworthy and sometimes violent strikes in the railroad industry as well as the factories in the large cities. In clothing and textile factories, conditions were indeed dismal for many workers. The factories were unacceptably hot, stuffy, and crowded, and people were expected to work long hours for little money. Although conditions were improving thanks to the developing union movements, textile factories remained dangerous, oppressive, and unsanitary places to work into the next century. Many women working in these factories were immigrants or rural migrants, too timid to challenge the system that paid the measly wages they needed for survival. The organization of labor was a long time in coming, but the International Ladies Garment Workers Union was finally formed in 1900 after years of working toward the goal of better conditions for garment factory workers, who were largely women. Shoe stitchers, typists, bookbinders, and others had been organized for the rights of women for a decade by the time the Gilded Age began, and in 1881 the Knights of Labor began admitting women, establishing a Women's Work Department from 1885 to 1890. The Women's Educational and Industrial Union formed in 1877. Women's clubs, comprised of well-intentioned white middle-class ladies, sprang up all over the United States in the Gilded Age, some of them eventually becoming active union organizations aimed at helping workers gain unpaid wages and better working conditions. Many were established to promote women's educational, social, and industrial advancement in the progressive era. As women were the consumers of the family, it was to their advantage to have their rights as consumers and producers protected, and in last decade of the nineteenth century the Consumer League of New York was established, which led to the National Consumer League in 1899.

The initial struggles of women to attain their rights and provide moral guidance within society were met with resistance. To the credit of these maverick women, their causes were taken up by other women well into the following century. After 1900, women in much of the world did indeed achieve the right to vote. Women also attained some independence early on that was then magnified with the onset of World War I, when women whose husbands were off at war were forced to become independent. Many of the causes women started in the late Gilded Age became crystallized in the twentieth century and are perhaps taken for granted today.

RURAL LIFE IN THE GILDED AGE

While the cities were booming centers of business and industry, rural life and agricultural methods were also changing drastically. With new methods of planting, growing and cultivating crops, large tracts of land were owned by a single company that could produce large crops successfully, thanks to mechanization. The successes of farmers were directly reflective of railway expansion, because farmers could ship their grain further and more efficiently and could export food as well. Agriculture became a big business. In addition to small, family-owned farms, there were vast expanses of land managed like corporations to improve efficiency and production. Often, farms were owned remotely and managed by experts from far away. With international trade, farmers were faced with tariffs and competition. Eventually rail transport rates became exorbitant, and the prices of wheat and cotton (two key crops) fell in the world markets to the point that family farmers, not those corporations who were causing the upheaval, began to organize to better their situations. Cooperatives were formed that meant the individual farmer was no longer floundering on his own, but was part of a larger group that would have a louder voice in matters of insurance, better shipping rates, cooperatively owned grain elevators and other processors, banks, and having the ability to buy seed and equipment in larger volume, thus reducing prices for all. Reforming the quickly dwindling farm sector created a movement among farmers that allowed them certain political power in Washington. This new power garnered support from some in the public and fear in others. The idea of people cooperating in a climate of fierce competition was not only unfashionable, but, in some people's minds, could cause the downfall of a flourishing capitalistic economy that was based on competition. Populism and the farmer's alliance were forces to be reckoned with.

In rural areas, ranches popped up all over the newly opened western states. Cows and sheep roamed freely into the mid 1880s, and they were herded by cowboys who rounded them up and moved them from one section of grazing land to another. The cattle were then slaughtered and sold as beef. In the 1880s, ranchers began to fence in their herds, creating barriers to the old cattle drives and to promote self-contained ranches.

Women were joining their husbands in rural communities in the West that were becoming more conducive to family living. Smaller urban/village centers were developing as a result of the concentrations in population from immigrants taking advantage of land grants. In Minnesota, the Germans, Scots, Ukrainians, and Scandinavians settled land and started to make lives in areas west of the Mississippi and, later, beyond the Dakotas. Although it is difficult to imagine, once things had settled for the family, women made every effort to dress in clothing equally as fashionable as the urban ladies back east. It was not always practical to

have bustle skirts and large swaths of expensive draping fabric, such as when feeding the pigs or harvesting a garden, but women made small adjustments to their clothing in order to try to be both fashionable and practical. With more access every day to sources of information in the form of magazines, newspapers, and catalogs, it was easier for men and women to stay in touch and keep up with fashion, business, and politics.

URBAN LIFE IN THE GILDED AGE

Cities were expanding quickly with more and more people descending on urban infrastructures unprepared to deal with the influx. With immigration from abroad and rural-urban migration from the countryside to the cities, city leaders were constantly adjusting to the new reality: overcrowding, crime, transportation problems, dirt and pollution, unemployment, corruption, poverty, and integrating all the disparate groups into a harmonious life in a small (relative to the large expanses of the countryside) space. Urban slums were growing. Tenements were overcrowded and dirty, not to mention unsafe. And yet, the dreams of the people arriving each day persisted. They were certain that with dedication and hard work they could become rich and work their way out of the slums. And many people did, especially in this era. Many immigrants were fleeing worse situations in their homelands, such as the Jews who left Russia because of rampant religious persecution. There was plenty of opportunity in the United States, more than in their homelands or in the dwindling rural economy from which they came. For most, however, success remained an elusive dream, but a dream whose power perhaps explains why people tolerated such suffering.

City plans and designs developed in this time and have remained much the same since, especially in terms of the structure of the urban plan. A city was and is like a tree trunk with rings radiating out from the center. In most cases, the commercial and residential sectors are kept separate. The heart of the city, downtown, was the financial district surrounded by high-end retail shops, large department stores, some manufacturing, office buildings, and apartment buildings. Directly surrounding the downtown were the poor and overcrowded slums and tenements occupied by factory workers and laborers. The next layer of the city was residential living for the lower and middle class, which became increasingly better as the sprawl moved away from the downtown core. The suburban neighborhoods, on the outskirts, were for the wealthy who could afford to build larger houses on larger pieces of property, and which provided green space and parks. These areas were cleaner and safer. Planned neighborhoods popped up in many big cities. Of particular interest was the middle-class housing development called Overbrook Farms in Philadelphia, which was built in 1892, and

developed by Herman Wendell and Walter Bassett Smith. William Price and Horace Trumbauer were among the many important Gilded Age architects commissioned to design homes for the neighborhood. The planned community was on the Pennsylvania rail line and combined both larger, higher-end, single-family homes in one section and more modest homes and twin homes (duplexes) in other sections. Neighborhoods like Overbrook Farms developed in urban areas to satisfy the demand for housing for the ever-increasing population but also to address social concerns that came from urban living.

With all the people moving into the cities, there was a need for culture and entertainment for those on days off, and those with more time to fill thanks to ever-shorter workdays and workweeks that allowed Saturday and Sunday to be freely spent with family and friends. There was a demand for theater, symphony, vaudeville, opera, dance halls, and spectator sports like baseball. Specific buildings were needed for these entertainments, and they were incorporated into the fabric of the cities. All these activities also required special dress.

For couples stepping out, streets were littered with horse manure from horse-drawn carriages and horse rails, though there were fewer horse rails in the Gilded Age. Investors like Jay Gould developed elevated rail lines in the 1870s in New York for transporting people around the city on extensive rail lines covering most of the city, but these were extremely noisy and burned coal, creating constant air pollution and dirt. These too became increasingly clean as the eighteenth century closed. Eventually, these were electrified and became the first underground subway systems many cities still depend on today. Underground subways started to be built in the 1890s. Cable cars and then steam locomotives replaced the horse rails in the last thirty years of the century with buses running along cable lines powered by one central steam plant. The transit cars covered many miles of the city and could get anyone anywhere they wanted to go, but they were expensive and became outdated with the introduction of electric trolley systems.

Wealthy private citizens, however, still preferred to drive in their personal horse-drawn buggies, and many styles of buggies were available to buy in various prices. Traffic jammed up the streets teeming with people, crowded and dirty with the aroma of sweat and horse manure. The state of the streets is enough to make one question the practicality of the clothing worn, especially by fashionable women, with long skirts, their trains flowing out behind collecting all kinds of debris. Some have even suggested than women were sometimes surprised to find small vermin and bugs collecting in their skirts, along with the dust and grime off the streets.

The crowded urban atmosphere could be exciting, filled with interesting and fun things to occupy one's time. As the century closed, the issues of quality of life within the cities was being addressed by reformers and

government alike in attempts to clean things up. The motor car, or horseless carriage, was introduced in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century with many different designs and constructions. The first commercial mass-produced car was designed and sold by Ransom Olds (Oldsmobile). Called the Oldsmobile Runabout, it sold for $650. These cars were selling in the thousands by the early 1900s. The new mode of transportation went far in helping to rid the streets of horse manure. It also created a whole new market for styles of clothing geared toward driving, for both men and women. Pleasure driving occupied many a wealthy couple, with the men trying to impress their girlfriends with the fast speeds their motor cars could attain.

LEISURE IN THE GILDED AGE

People had much more money and time as a result of the successful business climate of the day. With all the crowding and discomfort of hot summer days in the steaming city, people were more than ever interested in spending time at the seaside or out in the countryside enjoying the open spaces and clean air. Resorts and seaside escapes were frequented by those who could afford either to buy or rent a summer place, and a whole culture developed for vacationing and leisure. Sports like swimming, cycling (often in new cycling clubs) and relaxing were the main occupation of the days, and large dinners and dances occurred in the evenings. The social season was very busy. Amusement parks flourished, with the first roller coaster being built in 1884 at Coney Island. Clothing had to reflect these changing priorities, and men and women adapted their styles to the occasions. Swimwear became important, and in an era where covering up was essential for a proper lady, it was a challenge to dress appropriately. Bicycle riding was another such activity that took off in the Gilded Age, and became so popular that women felt they could finally wear trousers for the first time without being ridiculed or thought immoral.

Men were encouraged to participate in competitive sports. Being fit and healthy was a sign of manliness, and the Muscular Christianity movement organized orderly games for children. Adults supervised the play and rules were set, and there was competitive play between teams. The YMCA (Young Man's Christian Association) was established in the United States in the early 1850s, showing young men how to socialize with competitive sport and promoting aggressiveness rather than crushing it. In addition, college sports were becoming more popular and started to draw crowds of spectators in the 1890s. Football (1869) and professional baseball (1871) in particular were popular, and remain so in the United States today. Women were not encouraged in the same way as men to participate in competitive sport. They were actively discouraged from being competitive. However, they were encouraged to keep fit with gymnastics and less aggressive activity. Women's colleges

such as Wellesley (1873), Smith (1875), and Bryn Mawr (1884) sprang up, and within those colleges women competed in many different sports.

EDUCATION IN THE GILDED AGE

The system of educating the young established at this time has changed littleSchooling for young children became more formal than ever before, and attending college became increasingly common. The younger students, boys ad girls aged 6 to 14, were educated in the basics of reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics. In rural areas, the one-room schoolhouse was ubiquitous. A youth culture developed around high-school teen-agers. As a result of pooling all the children together in individual school buildings for years at a time, a culture of youth naturally developed, allowing an intermediary stage from childhood into adulthood. During this interim period, young people could develop along with peers before they faced the challenges of the adult world.

The new public system of education created opportunity for all children no matter their family's income, thus helping to improve the literacy rates among all groups of people. In high schools, students of different backgrounds mixed and learned in the same settings. A high school diploma became a requirement for admission to colleges at this time. Higher education became more accessible to a wider group of students.

MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, LITERATURE, MUSIC, AND THEATER

Reading

White literacy rates were very high, but immigrant and black literacy rates had been very low. Despite this there was a vast array of things to read, from great literature to dime-store novels, self-help and etiquette books. Popular fiction for young people, with thrilling stories of struggling for success, sold in the millions. What a person read was thought to show the class to which they belonged or aspired to.

Publishing became a big business. The combination of standardized education and Andrew Carnegie's commitment to establishing libraries in cities and towns across the country allowed more people access to books and meant more people were reading. Booksellers went door to door selling books to rural women. Actually, the advent of the Avon cosmetics company came about because of the ingenious idea of a bookseller who included a free perfume sample in his book orders. When the perfume became more popular than the books, he established a company to sell cosmetics door-to-door instead. The Avon name came about in the 1950s but the company had its roots in the Gilded Age. The

Montgomery Ward mail-order catalog also featured books for sale with a comprehensive list of both popular and serious literary titles for sale.

People also followed closely the etiquette books that sold in the millions in this period. This was perhaps because people were acquiring wealth for the first time and needed advice about how to behave and dress in higher society, and perhaps because it was also a time of rigid Victorian rules. These books advised men and women on all things to do with home life, entertaining, raising children, dressing, dealing with domestic servants, cooking, and so on, and were popularly given to new immigrants so they could learn the correct way to behave if they intended to integrate.

Reading magazines and newspapers was very popular in the Gilded Age and many different kinds of publications emerged in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. Styles of journalism and types of magazines developed at this time that still remain the basis for similar publications today. Fashion magazine such as *Harper's Baza(a)r*, launched in 1867, and *Vogue* magazine, launched in 1893, and later published in Paris and London, became widely read sources of fashion information. *Demorest's Mirror of Fashion* started circulating in 1860 and provided advice for women on all things domestic, promoting the use of French fashion paper patterns that were developed by the magazine owner's wife. *The Delineator*, published between 1873 and 1937, featured color plates of fashionable women, as did some of the other publications of the time. The images showed the latest trends in fashion, and were accompanied by written descriptions. Women followed the advice of fashion writers as best they could given individual wealth and physical access to goods. The fashion plates found on the pages of the magazines, although indicating the ideal in fashion at a given time, did not necessarily reflect what women were wearing in reality. Magazines often showed children in the illustrations, and sometimes men, but not as often. Magazines helped launch the careers of many artists, illustrators, and writers. Illustrator Charles Dana Gibson, for example, who created the Gibson Girl, was among those who started as illustrators for magazines. As with literature, there was a distinction between what was high art and popular art. For the first time, illustrators became very well known and widely seen by the masses of people who read the magazines and catalogues that featured their work. Advertising became important for selling goods and to many who read magazines like *Century*, *Scribner's*, and *Harper's*. Readers paid great attention to the advertisements, often with graphics drawn by well-known illustrators like Gibson and Howard Pyle.

The popular magazine *Ladies' Home Journal* began publishing in 1883 under the editorial leadership of Louisa Curtis Knapp and grew into a well-respected women's magazine addressing issues of domestic importance such as needlework, gardening, cooking, and child rearing. It also offered women, especially from the late 1880s and onward, poetry and

literature (Louisa May Alcott wrote for the publication). There was also coverage of fashion trends in every issue. *Godey's Lady's Book* was the bible of all things proper for U.S. women in the nineteenth century, in publication from 1830 to1898. The magazine entertained women with topics including poetry, cooking, and fashion, and provided information on appropriate sports and leisure for women. It was the magazine that most young debutantes turned to in order to learn about society and how to navigate the complexities of the coming out ritual in society. Editor Sara Josepha Hale believed women were domestic creatures who guarded moral goodness in a family. She also believed they should be educated adequately, not only in domestic matters but also in literature, introducing them to important writers like Irving and Longfellow.

Newspapers took on a new style of reporting in the latter part of Gilded Age, especially in the late 1890s with intense competition between Joseph Pulitzer, who owned the *New York World*, and William Randolph Hearst, who owned the *New York Journal*. Both men were very wealthy and very competitive with strong opinions about politics and definite ideas about how to run a newspaper. Both competed for readers, the peak of this battle taking place at the end of the 1800s, especially surrounding coverage of the Spanish-American War. The now-derogatory term "yellow journalism" was coined at this time and is the label given to newspapers with particularly sensational headlines that helped increase the circulation of a paper. Pulitzer and Hearst ran exaggerated stories about characters of the Wild West, such as Geronimo, as well as about celebrities and criminals. These were considered down market papers that were also eye-catching and popular.

A lady's education, including reading great works of literature, was not emphasized in this era. At the same time that more and more colleges were opening, women were beginning to see that knowledge of more than fashion, society gossip, and needlework was useful, especially if they wished to brave the public sphere in any way. According to respected novelist Edith Wharton, middle and upper class girls and women were not encouraged to read, some clearly did choose to read, and those who did enjoyed all the proper literature, despite the great availability of low-brow mass market fiction being churned out every year. The proper lady only read the classics along with U.S. and British writers recommended by reading advisors, including such authors as Charlotte Bronte, Anthony Trollope, Henry James, Hamlin Garland, Louisa May Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, and in the later Gilded Age

The National Police Gazette

The weekly National Police Gazette, owned by Richard Kyle Fox in the Gilded Age, was wildly popular with working class people. It reported on gruesome crimes, sexual scandals, theater gossip, and sports and was heavily illustrated on pink paper. Nudity was not uncommon in the paper, blatantly antagonizing the prudish sensibilities of the middle and upper classes.

younger writers like Kate Chopin, Booth Tarkington, Bliss Perry, James Lane Allen, Jack London, and others dominated the literary world and were widely read. These were not, however, always the most popular selling books in terms of numbers. The books by these writers have survived for their quality, but there were many more books that sold millions of copies in the Gilded Age and were considered less than high-brow literature. These enduring titles included popular children's books like *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1886), which became extremely popular, so much so that little boys were dressed in the Lord Fauntleroy suit in imitation the main character of the book. Other notable best sellers were *The Wizard of Oz* (1900), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1885), *Treasure Island* (1883), *War and Peace* (1886), and the Sherlock Holmes books. Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Emile Zola, Mark Twain, Anton Chekhov, Edith Wharton, Henrik Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw, and Oscar Wilde created masterpieces. In fact, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner coined the phrase Gilded Age in their book titled *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-day*, published in 1874.

People could buy the most popular writers in "libraries," or prepackaged anthologies of multiple volumes (30–150 volumes). These collections offered readers the literary basics, with a smattering of styles and genres from different writers. People were also exposed to shorter stories and poems published in dozens of different magazines that also featured fashion.

Music and Theater

In this time period, popular music flourished. In much the same way that literature was available to the masses, so was music. Music was published and sold as sheet music to be played by individuals in homes, saloons, or public theaters. Opera

Edith Wharton (1862–1937)

Edith Wharton, born Edith Newbold Jones, was part of the upper echelons of old New York society, growing up among the well-bred, privileged, and wealthy leisure class. She was taught to dress well, and her mother was one of New York's best-dressed women, engraining the importance of fashion into her daughter from a very young age. Wharton wrote dozens of works of fiction, the two best-known being *The House of Mirth* (1905) and the Pulitzer Prize–winning *The Age of Innocence* (1920), both of which are set in the Gilded Age in "Knickerbocker society" in old New York, where women passed their days visiting others in their social circles and dressing according to specific events throughout the day. They lived their lives according to sound of the dressing bell, which alerted them to the next change of clothes and the next social activity. Wharton was troubled by the seeming shallowness of keeping up with fashion and yet was herself a frequent client at both the House of Doucet and House of Worth, buying and wearing exquisite clothing, while filling her books with criticism for women who followed and valued fashion. Her books are excellent sources of information on the culture of clothing in the Gilded Age, and her recollection of details of etiquette and the use of clothing are thorough, giving the reader a good idea of what went on in fashionable society at the time. Her portrayal of fashion practically makes it another character in the story. Reading her books and watching the Hollywood films made of the books is an entertaining method of learning about some of the fashions and details not presented in scholarly texts.

had once been very popular but was eventually replaced by operettas like those by Gilbert and Sullivan, who combined both singing and regular dialog in their plot-rich plays such as *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1880), and *The Mikado* (1885). The United States was hungry for such entertainment. Opera remained popular with all classes until it eventually became the domain of the wealthy. Vaudeville acts were also popular from the 1890s. These shows were inexpensive to attend and provided a variety of acts for every taste from comedy to music to short plays. Vaudeville artists became celebrities thanks to coverage in magazines and newspapers of the day. This was the start of celebrity culture that has continued into the 21st century. People, especially women, wished to read all about celebrity lives in gossip magazines and imitated their styles of dress and grooming. Some popular actresses of the Gilded Age included Ellen Terry, Sarah Bernhardt, Eleanor Duse, and Lily Langtree.

Other popular theatrical entertainment included Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which was the show that popularized the myths of the wild west and helped create the image of the cowboy and cowgirls for those who did not have firsthand knowledge or exposure to the real Wild West. These shows featured legendary celebrities such as Annie Oakley, an expert markswoman. The variety show that also featured lassoing demonstrations and other entertainments. The shows toured the country and became very popular in cities across the United States in the Gilded Age.

Early fashion icon, Sarah Bernhardt, 1883, wearing a fashionably trimmed hat. (Library of Congress)

Musical instruments were mass produced and were available from mail-order catalogs. Waltzes, ragtime, military marches, polkas, and hymns were all popular. Ballads became sheet-music best sellers. *Swanee River, Oh! Susanna*, and *Camp Town Races* were all hits. New York's Tin Pan Alley was a popular place for composers to hang out and create music, and many companies set up in this area, hiring composers to churn out popular songs were romance, good times, and nostalgia. The labor and temperance movements used popular music to promote their causes. Coon songs of the 1880s and 1890s reflected the intense racism in society at the time which saw lynchings, murders, segregation and voting restrictions against blacks. The offensive songs helped bigoted whites justify their racist views of black people.

In summary, music of all kinds was popular in the Gilded Age and largely depended on the wealth and sophistication of the people. Popular music essentially got its start in this time. With more music available in the form of sheet music and mass-produced instruments more people could learn to play music, and short ballads and hymns were played in more placed by more people. Popularly priced and entertaining theater marked a departure from serious opera and symphonic music for the first time, and it allowed many more people to experience the joy of music and theater. All of these traditions that established in the Gilded Age have carried forward to modern society, with the cult of celebrity and popular culture remaining important today.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE GILDED AGE

Photography gained popularity in the nineteenth century. From the 1870s to 1900, advances in camera technology made it easy and relatively inexpensive to use. During the Civil War, photographers recorded much of what went on, and before the gilded age, daguerreotype photo processing recorded the many visiting cards popular in society in the mid-century. Thousands of photographic portraits were taken in the last half of the century, and by 1890 the photograph started to replace the hand-drawn fashion illustrations that had been seen in fashion magazines to that point. In the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, however, photography was something that many people could participate in with the innovation in 1888 of the Kodak No. 1 camera and roll film. With the simple press of a button, anyone could take a picture. The processing was all taken care of by the company Many U.S. families cherish photos that have been passed down through generations. Thus, many families can easily see the kinds of people their ancestors were, what they looked like, how they lived, and how they dressed. It is after this point that historians can use photographs as fashion history evidence, and be quite certain they are seeing what real people wore. People were able to photograph common scenes snapped in an instant that captured a more realistic version of life than earlier posed portraits had. Jacob Riis (1849–1914), a Danish immigrant, was one of the foremost photographers and journalists of the Gilded Age. One of his more famous works is *How the Other Half Lives*, which documented the lives of the poor in New York in 1888.

Photography was also used as an art form, and Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) was one of the best photographers of the time. His goal was to make photographic art accessible, in ways that traditional art had not been in the past. Some of his major works included *The Steerage* (1907), *Winter on Fifth Avenue* (1897) and the photograph of his future wife the famous painter Georgia O'Keeffe.

ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND INTERIOR DESIGN IN THE GILDED AGE

The Gilded Age looked to the past for inspiration in all things related to the visual arts, especially in interior design and architecture. At the same time, however, fine art was revolutionized in this period, with new movements replacing the old styles that were being recycled. The visual arts were eclectic and sometimes confusing with multiple styles jumbled together. Interior design, architecture, and art all revived old styles in some way. The Italian Renaissance played a large role in Gilded Age U.S. architecture, for example, and the wealthy imported all kinds of Renaissance art from the old world to decorate their lavish homes. Furniture and other aspects of interior design looked to the Rococo, Gothic, Renaissance, Louis XVI, and neo-classical forms, mixing and matching what they thought was the best part of each into a new, rather jumbled and overly-ornate style. This also translated into fashion where sleeves may be from the medieval times and on the same gown, the skirt might feature a polonaise that reflected the style of the eighteenth century. Patrons of the arts in the United States were wealthy families, such as the Carnegies, Morgans, Vanderbilts, and Rockefellers—the U.S. elite. They commissioned large architectural pieces and devoted themselvesto supporting high art of all kinds.

Some distinctly U.S. painters and sculptors took their inspiration from the past, as well as many who broke away from old traditions. Many U.S. artists were trained in Paris at the Académie des Beaux Arts. Painters looked to the Classical, Renaissance, and Baroque styles to inspire their creations. United States realism found its way into painting with Winslow Homer (1836–1910) painting in both water color and oil paints. *Lifeline*, one of the more well-known Homer paintings from 1884, is a dramatic painting of a rescue at sea. Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) As a reaction against conservative and backward-looking artistic tastes, the Impressionist painters surfaced in the 1890s in the United States, as well as the Arts and Crafts Movement of the nineties, and the Art Nouveau period that lasted until 1910.

Impressionism

The art movement known as Impressionism began around 1873 when Claude Monet (1840–1926) and others began using painting to communicate a general impression of a scene or object using unmixed primary color applied to the canvas in small strokes so the colors meshed together to simulate reflected light. The radical style was rejected by a jury from the annual Salon de Paris. The Impressionists, in protest, instead created a Salon des Refusés in 1867 and 1872, which became more popular than the traditional Salon de Paris. These artists often painted outdoors, by rivers, in

cafés, and on the streets of Paris, painting everyday scenes of people going about the mundane business of living. Other than Monet, the principal painters of the French movement included Pierre Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley (*Sand Heaps*), and Berthe Morisot. After the 1870s, painters such as Edgar Degas and Paul Cezanne continued in the Impressionist tradition. Vincent Van Gogh was one of the most influential artists of the era. The Impressionists were independent of the mainstream and struggled not onlyto make a living but also for public acceptance.

Paintings in the Impressionist style remain a resourcs for the student of costume history, showing people doing everyday things in the clothing they would have worn, not only for special occasions, but for simple walks in the park or picnics by the beach. Though details may be difficult to see in many of the paintings in terms of intricate design detail, often the most current and fashionable silhouettes, colors, and accessories are represented well and provide a good sense of style at the time.

Artistic and Social Reform Movements

Social consciousness was gaining momentum at the end of the nineteenth century with women agitating for rights, dress reform, and temperance, among other causes.

City Beautiful Movement

At the end of the nineteenth century, with urban expansion occurring in the United States, almost half the population lived in cities, and there were increasing problems of poverty, crime, and overcrowding. People were in the mood for civic pride, and removing all the blight that had fallen upon them, and the place to start was in the layout and design of the city and the buildings within it. After all, people had been coming to the cities to find the good life, and instead many faced far worse conditions than they had left. As the poor overtook the centers of many cities, the wealthy moved away from the core to safer and cleaner suburbs. The city centers quickly went into disrepair, prompting all kinds of reform movements including the City Beautiful.

Labor unrest often sparked riots. Most of the urban poor were employed in manufacturing or railways and in protesting their working conditions upheaval followed, such as the Haymarket Riot in 1886 and Pullman strike of 1894 where railway workers went on strikes that turned violent. The economic depression of 1893–97 caused great despair, violence, and division. The squalor of the cities was often captured in photographs by Jacob Riis, who as a journalist and reformer himself brought much attention to the problems faced by those living in tenement buildings and other inferior, unsafe housing.

An impoverished family in a New York City tenement. Photo by Jacob Riis, ca. 1889. (Library of Congress)

City Beautiful leaders believed that by creating a more beautiful city, inhabitants would be inspired to better moral standards and in turn better behavior. If a city was beautiful, it would also be clean and housing would be better. The wealthy would be more likely to return to shop and open businesses, and there would be pride and civic loyalty among the inhabitants, or in other words, it would provide social control, as well as a real sense of community. Order, dignity, and harmony were the cornerstones of the the City Beautiful movement. The utopian White City, a massive homage to the perfection of urban design featured at the World Columbian Exposition in 1893 was a tribute to urban planning. Transportation, green spaces, and excellent sanitation were all wrapped up in a well-balanced package. The White City inspired urban planning in the United States well into the twentieth century, and the public embraced the ideal from the outset.

Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic Movements

The Arts and Crafts Movement is probably most known for the designs of William Morris in England (1834–1896). The movement developed in Britain, but spread throughout the world, offering alternatives to the rapid modernization occurring as industrialization spread

and manual labor became supplanted by machines. The movement itself stemmed from a search for authentic, original, or meaningful design in the face of the eclectic revivalist styles of late nineteenth century design. It was, on the surface, anti-industrial and those who followed the movement felt that the machine-made products of the modern era were without the soul achievable only by handcrafting. Surprisingly, some proponents of the movement advocated in favor of mechanization, saying that machines were a necessary part of life and relieved the repetitive tasks of craft, say, printmaking, for example. It was unrealistic to think that products made by hand could be as affordable as those that were machine made. Reconciling the craftsmen's skill and the efficiency of machines became the great debate right up to and after the turn of the century. How, essentially, could the machine enhance the craftsmen's skill without making him or her a slave to the machine?

The creative products of the Arts and Crafts Movement share a certain recognizable style of vertical and elongated designs, a rustic look, and the use of repeated design motifs. Leaving a textile or tapestry unfinished gave it a certain hand-crafted look and was a common practice of artists in this movement. Every step of the creation was supposed to be done by the same pair of hands, not divided up into smaller specialized tasks performed by many different people. William Morris was not only a textile designer and tapestry artist, but he also wrote many books, poems, and articles and was an active socialist during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. He also painted, designed furniture, created stained glass, designed books, wallpaper, tiles, and other decorative arts. Though he was British, his influence on U.S. style, especially in interior design, was great.

Art Nouveau

In the last decades of the nineteenth century there was a concerted effort to unite the visual arts into one distinct style or art form that would be appropriate for the future and the new, more modern present. Art Nouveau artists and designers held that the visual arts should exist in harmony, meaning that architecture, interior design, and decoration, should coordinate with personal adornment like jewelry, textiles, clothing, and household goods. All these elements should conform to the Art Nouveau style. The urban center was the focus of the Art Nouveau movement, with curved cast iron (a new technology) seen on public buildings and inside and outside of private homes. The new style translated to graphic art in magazines and in advertisements. Art Nouveau was often reflected in fashion, especially in the curvilinear lines of jewelry and in textile design, with swooping, curved lines featured in natural, often floral designs. René Lalique and Charles Comfort Tiffany are decorative artists whose glassware and lamps epitomize the style. It is a visual form that has lasting appeal even a hundred years later.

Architecture and Interior Design

In the Gilded Age, large urban centers experienced great demand for housing (for both the rich and poor). Construction flourished. Large-scale projects and smaller houses and apartment buildings sprang up. Each urban center had its darlings of design, from Richard Morris Hunt in New York to Louis Sullivan in Chicago, each of whom made their mark on the cityscapes of Gilded Age United States. The first skyscrapers were built thanks to advances in technology, including the advent of metal-frame construction. Many state capitol buildings, with their impressive domes and massive classical columns, were designed and built around this time.

The newly rich of the Gilded Age included shippers, railroad tycoons, silk importers, land speculators, and bankers and stock traders. Many had no idea how to live a rich lifestyle and did not fully grasp what was tasteful and what was not acceptable. Thus, many newly rich turned to professionals who rescued the millionaires from committing errors in taste. Architects were among thrse advisors. Building design in the period reflected the same eclectic style combining old styles to create the most elaborate types of homes such as those by neo-classical renaissance revivalist architect Richard Morris Hunt, who designed the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty and the façade for the Metropolitan Museum in New York, as well as some of the most elaborate homes in the Newport, Rhode Island area. Hunt designed some of the most amazing homes in the United States, including homes for the large Vanderbilt and Astor families. Other architects employed by wealthy families included the partners McKim, Mead, and White, and the partners of Warren and Wetmore.

The interiors of lavish homes maintained all the grandeur of the outside facades. The tendency to mix styles was particularly seen inside homes, where all kinds of colors, furniture styles, and knickknacks were mixed together to create the unique look. Many rooms were dark and had claret-colored wallpaper with a small print on it, framed by dark wood trimmings on the wall and massive, dark wood furniture, which was all very rich in color and often intricately carved. Plaster moldings and elaborate ceiling designs included ornamental plaster edges and ceiling medallions, further decorated with intricate mural drawings to enhance the plaster designs. Plasterwork was used for mirror frames built into the walls and ceilings had large chandeliers hanging from plaster flowers. Swooping, dramatic spiral staircases had lovely curved balusters. Walls were not only papered in paisley and floral William Morris papers, but painted with texture to create faux graining, or a marble effect, or they were gilded. Floors were often wood parquet with complicated geometric designs and edging. They were littered with richly colored and patterned rugs that were thrown liberally around the rooms. Tile was also popular in the Gilded Age and used in kitchens and bathrooms as

well to decorate other parts of the house. Bedrooms tended to be lighter in color than the rest of the house, with lively color choices like sea-foam green with cream accents, and the furnishings filled the spaces with areas to sit, dress, and, of course sleep. Homes of the very wealthy had large rooms dedicated to housing the many garments women wore regularly. Furniture design was borrowed from older styles with heavy (both visually and literally) overstuffed sofas that were very soft and trimmed with tassels and braiding, often set in wood frames of rich mahogany, which was also the wood of choice as well for dining tables and side tables. On top of these were placed the electric lamps with the popular and lovely Tiffany glass shades. Windows were dressed with patterned fabrics and trimmings of tassels that were sometimes reflected in the clothing women wore. Great swoops of fabric were draped as valances across windows with rich velvets and patterns with decorative bows and ribbons. China and small figurines were displayed in the massive cabinets that lined the walls of the dining rooms, and art hung crowded together in sitting rooms showing off the cultured tastes of the occupants. These were the makings of a proper, well-appointed Gilded Age home, and parts of these fashionable interiors were adopted by many others with much less money to spare. As with clothing fashions, as time progressed, more of the accessories of the high class home were made less expensively and therefore available for mass consumption. Rural homes often had many of the same furnishings as the wealthy homes, but in cheaper imitations of lesser quality. Home interiors still displayed the prevailing eclectic style, despite being less elaborate than the homes of the wealthy.

TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY

Clothing and textile technologies both improved dramatically. Production methods swung from predominantly hand made (hand woven, hand sewn) to machine made. For the most part, fabric quality improved with standardization. Fewer or no mistakes were made, so fabric displayed a perfectly even appearance impossible to achieve by hand. For this reason, many consumers preferred factory-made clothing. Dye technology also improved and became considerably more reliable. These synthetic dyes held their color and resisted fading from washing or exposure to the sun, and this allowed more intense colors to be produced.

Fashion dictated which types of fabrics were needed in order to best show off the latest styles, especially for women's clothing. Bustles, for example, required stiff yet luxurious fabric that would hold the form of the silhouette. Chemical processes were used to stiffen or improve fabric strength, the acceptability of dyes, and to create luster in otherwise dull fabrics like cotton. The process of mercerization became widely used to achieve glossy luster in cotton. Silk was often weighted with mineral salts in the 1870s. In part this was to give silks the body they needed to carry

off the dramatic flounces. Unfortunately, weighting silks also caused great damage to the delicate fabric, making it break down more quickly. Many of the silk pieces held in museums today show signs of breaking down due to the weighting of the silk, and they are to be handled with great care, if at all. Weighting silk was common until the 1930s. Although women abandoned and then re-adopted it through the years, in the end, weighted silk wore badly and was too expensive to remain in use.

Ready-to-Wear Clothing: Catering to the Mass Market

Tailoring and dressmaking became the forte of fewer and fewer people as men's, women's, and children's clothing all became more widely available as ready to wear, made in factories by sewing machine operators. These garments were not fit specifically to one person by a specialist in clothing design and construction. Mass production of men's clothing, in particular, shows a shift from tailor-made suits and shirts to ready-made clothing offered at a men's store or the men's section of a department store like Macy's. Up until the 1860s, people were not interested in buying mass produced clothing, except for undergarments (crinolines and corsets) and unstructured cloaks. Dresses were otherwise made by hand and were one of a kind.

The reasons for these developments include innovations such as the home sewing machine and the advent of the tissue-paper pattern patented by Ebeneezer Butterick in 1863 that allowed women to buy a pattern, choose a size, then proceed to make a garment with reasonable confidence that it would fit. Along with the paper pattern came the idea of standardized sizing that would help in manufacturing clothing for retail sale for many different body types. One key invention of the time that allowed for even more efficient mass manufacturing of garments was the cutting machine, first introduced in 1872. It allowed eighteen layers of fabric to be cut to identical shape. This machine was adapted once electricity was introduced, becoming even more efficient and easier to handle (it became smaller), cutting up to 100 layers at a time. Each piece would then be combined and sewn to others in a piece-work assembly line on the sewing floor: One person would sew a part of the garment and pass it along to the next person to sew a different part, and so on until the garment was complete. Though home sewing was very popular, the amount of time that many working women could devote to making the family's clothing was limited. Demand for ready-to-wear clothing increased in the United States. It was considered to be suitable for everyone, laborer, immigrant to middle class alike, although the wealthy still had their clothing individually tailored, often ordering their fashions from London (for men) and Paris (for women) every season.

CHAPTER 7

Society, Culture, and Dress

Clothing is and always has been an important communicator of status, place, occupation, wealth, poverty, personality, and taste. In early civilizations, the clothing people wore told the story of who they were. Certain styles were worn by certain people of rank, colors were reserved for the elite, and laws proscribed what people could and could not wear. Dress has been used for ceremony and rights of passage in every culture throughout time: for example, mourning dress, wedding attire, and christening gowns. As the nineteenth century opened, any flamboyance that had been seen in previous centuries, for both men and women, was abandoned in favor of a classical revival, with simpler, much less ornate dresses for women and subdued suits for men. At the end of the nineteenth century, things were significantly more ornate as the Gilded Age presented itself to those in the United States lucky enough to succeed in the new economic environment where greed, ambition, and allure were intertwined and competition was fierce. There was a profound shift in wealth, and the developing white-collar sector of the economy meant there were many men who had money for the first time in their lives. The wives of these men had the money to spend on goods that reflected the new culture of consumption. People aspired toward anything new and modern. They adopted many manners and styles of dress solely for that reason, despite the obvious absurdity of some of the styles. Advances in technology were causing significant shifts in the social order, especially after the Civil War ended. In terms of fashion, this was true thanks to advances in the manufacturing and processing of

garments, and there was a drastic shift as well in the organization of the clothing industry. For many, the new, mass-produced garments seemed anonymous and without interest. The older, established families commanding substantial funds continued to set standards of etiquette and dress, while those with newly acquired wealth looked to those who had occupied this level for decades in order to try to fit in. There were rigid ideas about the places of women within society, although by this time things were starting to change, and, by the end of the century, women were venturing farther afield from their homes. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, there was great divide between men and women and the ways in which they spent their days. The sheltered ideal of family, safe from all the discord in the urban centers, was starting to change. Some women began to thrust themselves into the public arena, shattering the old image of women as modest, simple, and tender, becoming instead brash and loud in their efforts to bring about universal suffrage or promote other causes. Social contradictions in how women should behave became confusing and were reflected in the clothing that women wore. With styles quickly changing, different styles vied for prominence within each era. The bustle was popular in the 1880s, with its shelf-like, overly ornamented extension at the back. But as the nineties approached, this style might be worn by one woman alongside another fashionable woman who wore a much simpler tweed gored skirt with no bustle. This stylistic mix was in part thanks to the multitude of choice offered to women thanks to mass production and the changing way in which women acquired clothing.

The major issue in the Gilded Age focused on the division between home and work (the private and the public) and, to an even greater extent, on differences between men and women. Social roles were changing. Although men were still the workers and supported their families, women more and more frequently left the home to work in the outside world. Wealthy women worked for special or charitable causes, perhaps, but for poor and lower class women working, was necessary to help maintain the family. Single women, divorced women, and widows often had to find paid work in order to survive. Many occupations were especially suitable for women, such as typing, working in a shop, teaching, and so on. The woman was still expected to maintain the spiritual and physical well-being of the family, and how she was supposed to accomplish this was perplexing. She had to manage to seem modest and spiritual and uphold the family's status. Fashion is a perfect mirror for studying this dilemma. How did a woman maintain an interest in fashion, and show her ability to follow it, especially when there were those who found it vulgar and showy? This is a constant concern of the novels of Edith Wharton, and indeed it was a problem that she herself struggled with throughout her life growing up in wealthy New York society during the Gilded Age. How could she be both fashionable and at the

same time be taken seriously as a woman of letters? Certainly, the same dilemma plagued the consciences of many of her female contemporaries. In part, as department stores became more popular and well established with all classes, the contradictions and constraints of life in the Gilded Age lessened. Such stores were designed to promote the best of both worlds and allowed women to see how to live both ways. *Having* things symbolized a civilized life, and identity was found in the things people possessed.

ACQUIRING FASHION IN THE GILDED AGE

Many people were still dependent on having their clothing made by dressmakers and tailors, or they made clothes themselves. In the United States, acquiring clothing was gradually made simpler with mail order catalog businesses and department stores selling fashionable clothes right off the rack. This made access to fashion much more democratic and allowed even those with smaller incomes to buy the most current fashions, even if they were in lesser quality fabrics and had less ornamentation. The Singer sewing machine company introduced a machine that could be used in the home. As a result, the home sewing industry boomed in the last part of the nineteenth century. Many women sewed clothing for their families. The development of paper patterns also inspired women to make their own clothing, as the most current styles were placed on thin tissue paper and the proper size could be cut out and reused over and over again to make the same dress style in different fabrics. Butterick made patterns available after 1863, and they were widely used.

Department stores had been opening during the last part of the nineteenth century. R. H. Macy's, Saks and Company (later Saks Fifth Avenue) and Bloomingdales provided not only fashion for New Yorkers but also showed women how to live the ideal lifestyle by offering them many types of products, both needed and desired, to make their lives "better." In Chicago, Marshall Field's went through an expansion in the 1870s. The lower-priced Sears Roebuck started in 1886, operating a very large mail-order business catering to the rural populations. Montgomery Ward and Co., also from Chicago, was founded as the first mail-order catalog company in 1872. All department stores sold hundreds of varieties of dry goods, including textile and clothing products, some very utilitarian and some high fashion. Such stores offered customers a range of prices along with a great variety of styles. The number of goods being mass produced continued to increase as demand grew. These giant stores created dazzling displays. They staged (and some still do) special events, put on special openings, and created incentives and promotions to attract customers. To many, the pristine presentation of the department store represented a kind of ideal. Many women wanted their lives

and families to reflect that ideal. Department stores made a dramatic impact on the ways in which women consumed for their families. The stores were placed in cities where there was easy access to transit in the city centers. They occupied excessively large spaces, with huge interiors ideal for displaying goods. Giant plate-glass windows along the streets displayed the goods that could be obtained within. The department store was geared toward people of all classes and offered a variety of merchandise, some for wealthier clientele and also some made of less expensive materials and more plainly decorated for those with less money to spend. They carried a large variety of newly branded products distinguishable by their names. They offered fixed prices for goods and did not depend on bartering to finalize a transaction. Within the department store's great expanse, people were encouraged to browse and study the goods and displays before making their decisions on what to buy. The stores were bright and clean and offered a vision of the perfect life to the female consumer who had money to spend. Women were able to buy goods because they wanted them or because they were appealing in some other way, not simply because they needed them. Women were no longer limited to simply buying food and other basics but were also responsible for buying everything for the family. Magazines helped encourage consumption in the Gilded Age by promoting the lifestyles of wealthy socialites and by aggressively advertising the latest goods and fashions.

As for much of this century, children no longer dressed like miniature versions of their parents as they had for centuries before. Especially in the upper classes, there was a division between the clothing of children and the clothing of adults. Children's styles, exclusively worn by children, were made available at department stores for women to purchase. While women continued to make clothing for the family, especially in the middle and lower income levels, children's styles now had features that made childish activity easier, especially in the very young toddler and baby stages. As girls grew up, their clothing started to mimic features of their mothers' clothing, but skirts remained shorter and decorations fewer and more appropriate to young girls. As boys grew, their clothing also took on features of their fathers' garments, but again, they were designed to accommodate the movements and lifestyles of a child. For example, boys wore breeches to a certain age, then later transitioned into adult trousers. Working class boys—those who worked in factories, for instance—wore the same kinds of clothing as their fathers, a sort of uniform, perhaps overalls and a cotton shirt, that allowed easy movement and were easily washable. Babies and toddlers were for the most part dressed alike in dresses, making it difficult to tell the gender of the child. Boys wore their hair long and in curls, just like girls, but distinctly unlike adults. There was an emphasis on reforming children's clothing to make it more healthy in the middle of the nineteenth century that continued in

the Gilded Age, helping to spark the changes to more age appropriate clothing for children.

The contradiction of the new consumer economy and the old values so deeply engrained in people was very difficult, for women especially. Women were expected to maintain moral order in the home, as well as being obliged to show how modern and wealthy, the family had become. The commercialization of fashion somehow had to exist with family morality.

Women were very enthusiastic consumers, the targets of seduction by the growing number of magazines featuring the perfect clothing for the ideal woman. All of this socially significant clothing was offered in the department stores that directed women how to achieve the impeccably decorated home and correctly dressed family. Gowns for women were flamboyant and helped to indicate the wealth and status of the wearer, but it was perhaps not as easy to distinguish new and old money as people thought. There were very subtle cues that made it evident to those in the know, namely women of the older generations of wealthy families. In the country, competition for status was not as overt, and some form of practicality in dress still remained. Big urban centers like New York differed in terms of fashion from the much more conservative and puritanical Boston or from the wildness of San Francisco. Chicago was distinct from Philadelphia, and so on.

With their restrained uniforms of dark suits in plain styles, it is easy to see why men, for the most part, seemed not to take part in the fashion world of the late 1800s. Compared with the overly ornate styles of the eighteenth century and earlier, men's dress took on a decidedly dull tone. It was thought that having any interest in display and dress showed a tendency toward the feminine and in turn made a well-dressed man decidedly unmanly. The male dress code was conservative, and there was certainly uniformity in city wear, which symbolized a certain level of respectability. There were few sources of fashion information for men. Any magazines directed to men at most advertised clothing for the leisure

Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929)

In his best known book, Norwegian American sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen took a critical look at the consumption patterns of modern society. In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, published in 1899, Veblen coined the term "conspicuous consumption" based on his long observation of society in the Gilded Age. The term implied that people (wealthy or not) consumed goods in order to impress others and perhaps to gain a toehold on the next rung of the social ladder. He described the current set of values and the prevailing social attitudes that promoted the use, and more precisely the misuse, of wealth. In addition, he pointed out the many ways people wasted resources in modern nineteenth-century society. Veblen used Darwin's theory of evolution to analyze the modern economy and the capitalistic system. Veblen's ideas on institutional and evolutionary economics were influential. He noted that social and cultural change impacted economics. Veblen suggested that fashion—which ultimately illustrates the ideas of conspicuous consumption best with rapidly changing styles adopted and abandoned quickly—was the symbol of enforced leisure and masculine power in a society.

activity they promoted. By the end of the 1880s, there were more magazines for men, geared to young urban males and promoting the ideal man. This ideal consisted of an exercised body, a chivalrous manner, and solid values, on the outside semingly uninterested in the frivolity of fashion. The ideal man wasn't, however, completely uninterested in clothing and grooming. There are dozens of instruments advertised in the catalogs of the 1890s for men to improve their looks, which prove that men were concerned about appearances and fashion was important, if not emphasized for men. Status was revealed in the details of the suits men wore. There was a wide range of qualities in suits. With technical advances, tailoring was taken to new heights. Thus, status was found more in fit and fabric than in style. Cutting utensils, accurate modes of measuring the human form, and pattern making all helped to create the subtle differences between a well-tailored suit for a gentleman and an off-the-rack suit for the less wealthy man. There were, as with women's dress, rapid changes in the smallest details and competing fads in pant styles, ties, and shoes, for example, but all in the most subtle ways that could be easily missed unless closely observed.

Fashionably dressed men and women blow bubbles at a party from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, November 25, 1882. (Library of congress)

In the cities, the clothing worn by proper ladies was nothing if not impractical. Its intention was to preserve appearances at whatever cost, financial or physical. Keeping up appearances was the key to maintaining a culture that people knew and understood. There was great contradiction in society at this time as well. It was considered a travesty when a woman flagrantly disobeyed the rules of dress. There were strict requirements for every facet of social life, and wearing appropriate clothing was especially important in all situations. Etiquette books outlined in precise detail what should be worn and when. How a woman should present herself in order to maintain her good standing was essential, for if she differed from the expected, wearing the wrong color to a ball or the wrong style skirt to an afternoon visit, she would be fodder for gossips all over town. A lady would plan her day around her social interactions, such as invitations to dinners and lunches (hosted, of course, by the right sort of people), going to the opera, and balls. Impeccable dress was a woman's social duty, and it was taken

very seriously. The rules of dress and the rules of etiquette were closely intertwined. Good form was essential to achieve and maintain good standing in a society that itself was in its infancy compared to the old world order of Britain and Europe.

In the United States, the hard-won ideals of democracy sometimes clashed with the upper crust's exclusionary tendencies towards those who had no established name or old money. There were levels of social classes, especially in New York society, for example, but people were proud of the fact that their social order was new and not bound by the old world's preoccupation with royalty and title. That anyone could achieve wealth and prosper in the United States was a point of pride. However, there were still subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) lines drawn between those with money and those without, and those with old money and those with new money. Such a society was based on ceremony, proper manners, and privileges. The use of fashion to display a person's acceptance of this lifestyle was key. Women from more established wealthy families did not wish to appear vulgar when donning the most recent fashions, and though they often purchased them in season from the couture houses of Paris, they would either re-style or simply wait a season to wear them so as not to appear too concerned about fashion. It was a tricky game fashionable people played: Although they placed great importance on what was worn, they also found it repulsive that the whims of fashion should dictate their lives. Something so frivolous and shallow was contradictory to what people believed themselves to be. It took great effort and financial resources to be fashionable. There were women who found it exhilarating than there were who longed to dress plainly and more comfortably.

Women attracted to simpler ideals sometimes escaped the fashionable life of the city and made their way west, where they could dress more plainly and not be forced into wearing restrictive fashions, preferring the loose-flowing styles made of simple cotton that allowed them to work and move without restriction. Styles such as the Mother Hubbard dress, commonly worn by rural women or pregnant women were significantly more comfortable, and, reformers argued, healthier. Unfortunately, urban women who attempted to wear comfortable dresses like the Mother Hubbard outside of the house were arrested for being indecent. The Mother Hubbard was acceptable as a house dress, but because it was worn with little or no corseting it was considered indecent to wear in public.

The frivolity of the leisured classes was frequently ridiculed and criticized in magazines and literature, and reformers made it clear that they found the fashions favored by the upper class ridiculous and impractical. In Britain, for example, *Punch* magazine was notorious for its mockery of high fashion, although reformers and those who espoused the Aesthetic Movement did not escape its barbs.

Clearly, the clothing worn by those who attended balls and fancy suppers were too expensive for most people to afford. Still, interest in fashion was pervasive, and even those who could not afford luxury were interested in what was worn and attempted to dress as well as possible given their financial means. This became easier, much to the chagrin of some ladies, once fancy (yet lesser quality) fashionable gowns were made available to the masses through department and specialty stores. Women in the United States, in contrast to European women of the lower classes, still had the idea that there was the chance that they could aspire to a better station in life. Such social advancement was indeed the dream of millions of immigrants. This meant that working women were too proud to wear the peasant dress of the Europeans, despite its utility and cheapness, because it symbolized being stuck in poverty with no possibility of moving up in the world.

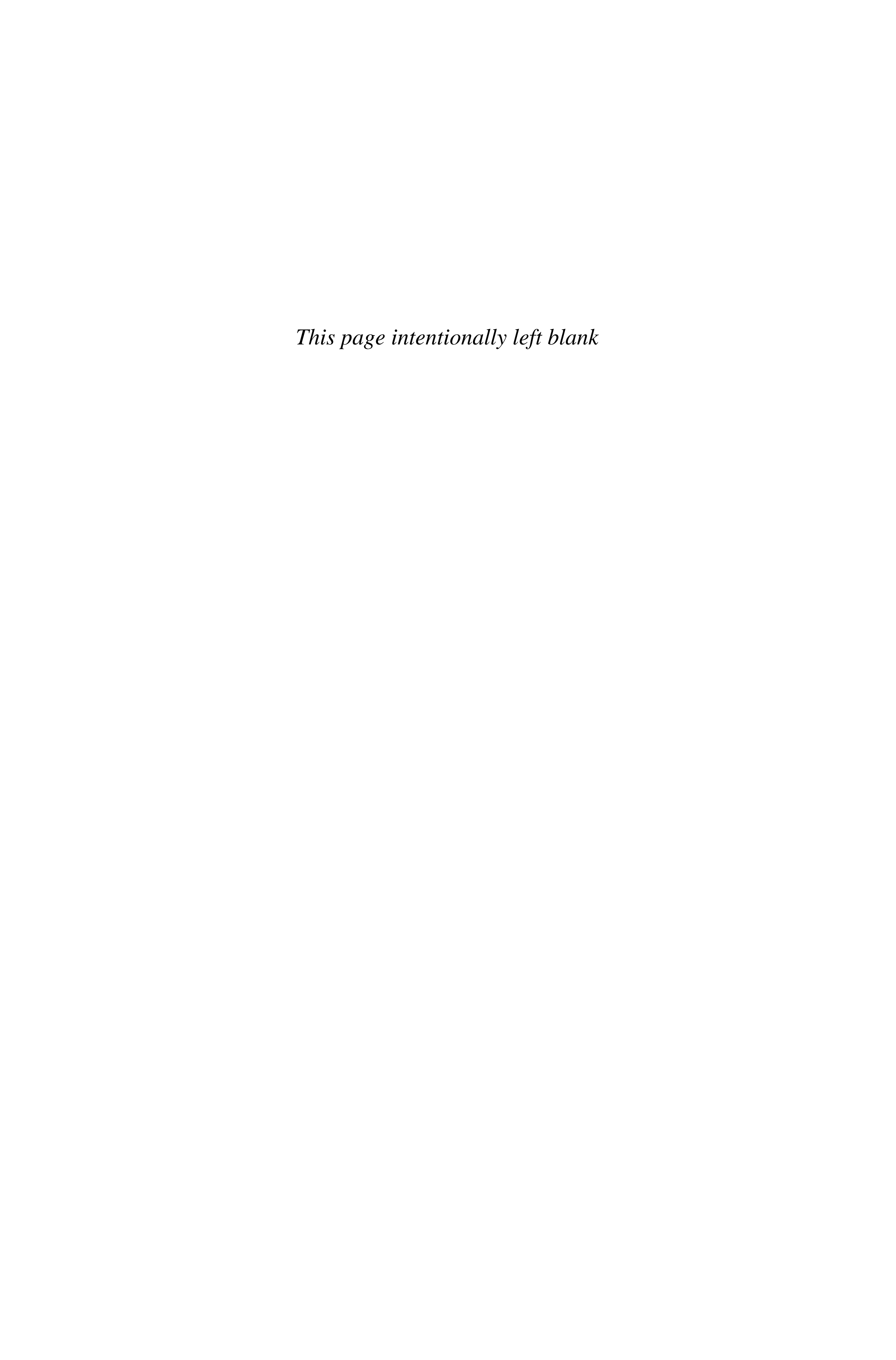
Women continued to make clothes for themselves and their families, although with the increasing number of department stores stocking ready-made children's clothing it was tempting for women to simply buy clothes for their families if they had the money. Sewing machines had become wildly popular, and many women had their own machine at home, so it was possible to continue making the family wardrobe. Women who worked outside the home, putting in long hours in factories or shops, had less time to make their family's clothing, but they had the option to purchase ready-made styles from stores. Lower income women continued to make family clothing in order to save money, and women shared patterns between families, using and reusing the new paper patterns (developed by Butterick) for multiple family members.

Once the reformers, including the suffragists and feminists along with the abolitionists, became more vocal, the whole framework of old society began to crumble. Women were seen as a force to be reckoned with outside the home. As women's colleges opened and more women became formally educated, they started to question all the rules of the older generations, including those of fashionable manners and dress. Such well established rules, however, were difficult to change, and it took a long time for some freedom to emerge. In the Gilded Age, rules were well ensconced and most men and women followed along.

Participating in sports and leisure in the Gilded Age became increasingly popular for both men and women. Bicycling, tennis, swimming, basketball, baseball, and other sports prompted a big shift in the types of clothing both men and women wore. For men, there was a shift to comfortable sweaters and loose jackets to accommodate the need to move the upper body freely while playing certain sports. For sports such as baseball, entire uniforms were designed specifically for players. Knickerbockers, short knee-length trousers, were popular for sports like golf and baseball, and baseball caps were designed to shade the sun from the face, much as baseball caps do today. Men were encouraged to

compete in sports, so teams became popular, especially with college-aged men. Identifying players with their teams meant the beginning of the practice, continued today, of designating specific uniform colors for particular teams. College sports became very important in the Gilded Age, with football being of particular interest. Women, however, were not encouraged to participate in competitive sports. Instead, they were directed toward participation in gymnastics, bicycling, and similar non-competitive sports. There was a general understanding that exercise promoted health, and women were strongly encouraged to stay active. Competitive sports for women did exist, especially in the growing number of women's colleges, and student players had to dress in a certain way in order to move freely enough to succeed at the game. Women were still corseted, and the restricting nature of the undergarments women wore for daily dress were not at all conducive to sport and leisure. Some sports, such as archery, could be played in a full dress and corset, but others, such as cycling, were nearly impossible in such garb. Special bifurcated skirts, essentially trousers, were worn by women while riding bicycles, and distinct footwear and headwear were also worn for each activity. The overarching problem with developing clothing for women's sports (swimming, for example) was how to cover the body to maintain a social standard of decency, not showing too much skin. Wearing a corset and skirt was seen as essential to maintaining an upstanding place in society, and only women of ill-repute were seen without a corset. Trousers, however, eventually became semi-acceptable for women to wear for cycling, but the practice was still a great source of agitation for the more morally strict older generation. The social acceptability of leisure and sports fashion was a major concern in the Gilded Age, when financial success allowed people more free time to play and exercise.

Nineteenth-century fashion was closely identified with the contrast between the roles of men and women and between the old and new, a constant battle in the Gilded Age. Society had profoundly changed as a result of the new industrial economy and resulting increases in consumption. This led to even more drastic changes to accommodate the people's demands for new goods. Constant social change meant a fluid fashion system: Clothing changed quickly to appeal to rapidly shifting tastes, and such rapid fashion transformations gave rise to avid consumerism in the new marketing and retail industries.



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CHAPTER 8

Women's Fashions

OVERVIEW

For women of the Gilded Age, clothing was a very serious business. The highly ornate styles of the seventies and eighties reflected the great economic prosperity of the U.S. middle and upper classes. The beautifully flamboyant use of luxurious fabrics in extraordinary designs, with exaggerated bustles or purposeful and artful layering of swathes of material, was symbolic of good times and changes felt in other realms of society. Increased time was devoted to leisure and for all people, the working class included, more time was spent away from jobs and with family and friends, which required different kinds of clothing. Working girls and rural women, though not in a position to afford luxurious gowns, still paid great attention to what was in style and read about all the latest fashion news in magazines, newspapers, and catalogs. Fashion was made more affordable and accessible to all women, and it was used by many women to establish themselves in certain social circles, whether they were new immigrants attempting to assimilate or trying to move up the social ladder. Clothing was symbolic of many things, including status and wealth, and the Gilded Age was a peak of excessiveness in fashion. Tougher economic times and wars in the next century deflated the fashion bubble, the 1890s being the precursor to more sober styling in women's dress to come.

Fashion for women of the Gilded Age was a continuation of the full-bustle period from the beginning of the 1870s. Bustle gowns were

Illustration of a woman wearing a bustle on the cover of *Crusader Magazine*, ca. 1875. (Library of Congress)

opulent in a way that fashion had been a hundred years before, but near the close of the nineteenth century styles became more sedate with tailor-made styles becoming de rigueur in the 1890s. At the beginning of the Gilded Age in 1876, near the end of the first full-bustle period, it is possible to point to a few new innovations, such as the tea gown and the tennis dress, but there are many versions of dresses and gowns with different design details meant to be worn by certain classes of people for very specific occasions. Fashion was not exactly the same all over the western world, and there were differences in styles worn in Europe, Great Britain, and the United States. United States fashion was coming into its own even then, with slightly more relaxed ideas about clothing than the courts of Europe and England would have allowed, especially when one looks beyond the upper classes. For privileged city women, rules were strict, and fashion was very important. Guide books were carefully followed, and women wore only the clothing prescribed for certain times of day and different occasions. Although many women were able to afford fashionable luxury thanks to the industrial boom and increase in wealth, there were those who were not as wealthy and could not afford the great expense of the high-fashion lifestyle. Sports and leisure were becoming increasingly important for many people of this era, including women, so new innovations developed out of the need to be conservatively covered up and properly corseted, while at the same time being able to move more freely, get wet while swimming, and to look pretty, all at the same time. To the modern reader, it might seem impossible to imagine some of the clothing women wore while they tried to maneuver their way through their lives, getting around in skirts too tightly tied at the knees to be able to walk properly, or bathing in full wool dresses, leggings, petticoats, and blouses heavy enough to drown in. But that is indeed what women wore, and that makes it a fascinating time in fashion history.

It becomes more difficult to pigeonhole fashion in this period, as there were many styles of acceptable gowns and dresses, and tastes were

catered to, thanks to the mass production of clothing and availability of dresses for every income level. Just as with art, interior design, and architecture, fashion was often inspired by design details from the past, so one dress might have a neckline, sleeve, and cuff from the 1700s combined with a skirt from the 1600s, featuring slashes and other Renaissance detailing.

Women producing their own clothing using sewing machines were able to act as both seamstress and designer, adding what they liked and omitting what they did not like in a certain dress pattern. The differences between the way people in the cities dressed and the way they dressed in the rural areas and small towns also allowed for more variety and diversity during a single time period.

The French fashion industry, the leader in fashion, was hindered by the Franco-Prussian war (1870–71). This development is perhaps responsible for the eclectic mixtures of styles that were popular thereafter. The development of the bustle, the use of multiple colors in one dress, and the mixing of textures and patterns created confusion and disturbed the sense of unity and balance in design. By 1876, the cuirass bodice, with its extended lines flowing below the waist, made the body look long. The lines were further prolonged as the bustle was lowered from the hips to the knees and the hemline was adorned with interesting decorative designs.Giant ribbon details and bows were applied lower and lower on the skirt as the eighties approached. The cuirass bodice was a separate and very tight bodice with

A Lady's Garment List

A wealthy lady needed several different outfits for each day. Following is a list of the various items that would have been found in a lady's wardrobe in the Gilded Age.

Undergarments and morning or night clothes: drawers, chemise, combination, hoop skirt, pannier bustle, petticoats, vest, long underskirt, peignoir, morning dressing gown, jacket for night, night dress, cloth wrappers.

Suits: traveling suit, habit suit for riding.

Dresses: Evening dress, foulard dress, overdress, polonaise, morning dress for wearing on the street, promenade dress for walking, dress for visiting or receiving visitors, church dress, carriage dress, picnic outfit, traveling dress, princess dress, Watteau gown or wrapper, ball gown, gown for the theater, dress for lectures or concerts, opera gown, dress for the seaside or country weekend, tea gown, dinner dress. A lady may have had several skirts to match a single bodice, Basque, Princess Polonaise, Princess dress, blouse and skirt.

Clothing for leisure and sports: Flannel bathing suit, sacque dress for skating, tennis dress, riding habit (trousers).

Outerwear: Dolman cape, circular cape, sacque coat, redingote, single or double breasted coat, shawls, circular mantle, mantelets for day and evening, waterproof coat, ball mantle, pannier mantle, MacFarlane, traveling mantle, surtout.

Hats: hood, hat, bonnet, mob cap (married women wore these at breakfast).

Accessories: Muff, satchel, reticule, parasol, handkerchief, stockings, shoes, gaiters, garters, fan, flower bouquet holder, skirt supporter, aprons, brooches, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, collarette, fan holder, gloves, mitts, belt (to hold reticule, dance card, fan etc), lace pin, scarf pin, cravat, jabot, fichu.

boning (like a corset), very tight at the waist to keep it stiff, that ended below the waist, usually at hip level, sometimes in a point in the center-front and sometimes in a semi-circular flowing edge. It was usually buttoned down the center front, had long or short sleeves, and kept the wearer upright and stiff in the torso.

***Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes*, a painting by John Singer Sargent. Mrs. Stokes illustrates the look of the late Gilded Age with exaggerated sleeves and a shirtwaist with a full skirt. Mr. Stokes is wearing a light colored suit with a relaxed fit.** (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY)

Walking was difficult, with complicated ties pulling the fabrics close to the knees on the inside of the skirt. The princess dress was the result of this elongated body shape, and it had a very tubular silhouette with long lines. In the early eighties, the long silhouette with accentuated rear end was created by manipulating the fabrics by folding, tucking, and buttoning masses of material. The back bustle, which had largely moved so low it was no longer a *bustle* at all, was coming back up to the waist level, where it reached its largest by 1884. It then declined after that to the end of the decade. Dress reformers of the eighties were hoping to free women of the crushing weight of gowns with bustles made from curved steel (12 horizontal curved slats) and the other boned and laced cages worn to support the large bustle, plus all the extra fabric to encase the steel cages, and also the passementerie (elaborate trimming and edging) and beading applied to bodices and skirts. Garments were extraordinarily heavy, weighing from 12 to 40 pounds. If there is ever a chance to look at original examples in a museum, viewers should be aware of the weight of some of the garments, especially compared to modern clothing. The financial panic of 1893 and the economic depression that followed caused great turmoil for all kinds of people, and had a great effect, as it usually does, on the fashions women wore. In general, women did indeed lighten their clothing weight, literally taking pounds off their daily toilette. This was also in part to accommodate the increased physical activity of women that started in the Gilded Age. Women led more outgoing and less cloistered lives. The skirt became much less important in the nineties, and the focus of

the female figure moved to her ballooning sleeves, which became an increasingly larger leg-of-mutton style as the decade and century closed. Small waists were still in fashion, but skirts were less flouncy and much less intricately folded, draped, and decorated. Cascades and swags were things of the past. Gored skirts fell from the waist, and women were unencumbered in movement from the waist down. Although the flounces were gone, trimmings were still very much an obsession, and necklines and sleeves were beaded, beribboned, bowed, and trimmed with lace, though not on the same scale as the last 30 years. The collar crept closer to the chin and was stiffened with boning. The tailored look of the Gibson Girl, represented in the portrait of Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes by John Singer Sargent (1897), featured the long plain skirt, belted waistline, blouse with a bow tie and large sleeved jacket falling to the hips (left open in the portrait).

From the 1870s through the 1890s, being fashionable meant being laced tightly into corsets, fitted bodices, and long heavy skirts with trains and bustles at the back. There were excesses of fabric used in creating massive bows, as well as sweeps of fabrics draped elaborately and very deliberately in horizontal interest in the skirts and hems. Sleeves and bodices changed in shape over the period but were also beautifully and extravagantly decorated. Dresses for women often took over 12 yards of fabric to make. Tortora (1995) has divided the bustle styles into three distinct time periods from 1870–1890. Starting in 1870 and remaining popular until 1878, the bustle was full and was created by manipulating the fabric and draping in just the right way in the back of the skirt. The bustle started at the waist, protruded out, and then several tiers of artfully placed fabric cascaded down to the hem. The bodice had basques (short or long skirts) extending from the waist of the bodice that flattened the front and sides of the skirt, leading the eye back toward the more interesting bustle section of the skirt. The inside of the skirt was often littered with extra pieces of string or tape that had to be tied just so, in order to support the extra fabric puffs, keeping them high in the back. The construction of these garments was not a simple undertaking; manipulating all the fabric into the right shape was daunting. From 1878 to 1883, the princess dress was one piece, interrupted by a waist seam, and had vertical seams and darts. Sometimes the princess polonaise was worn over a separate underskirt. The princess line was popular, still with a little fullness in the back, but was smoother and less flouncy, and it used significantly less fabric. The bodice and skirt were made in one piece and the skirt was smooth along the hips and front, protruding somewhat lower in the back and falling to the ground with decorative swathes of fabric (a sort of "bustle") at knee level in the back, leading to a small train that dragged along the ground. Sometimes the princess polonaise, a fitted bodice and draped overskirt, was worn over a separate underskirt. From 1884 to 1890, there was a return to the large, rigid bustle that started at

the waistline and extended back in an even more exaggerated manner than the first bustle.

Women's dresses of the Gilded Age fall into many categories, divided into styles named for their use, such as the walking suit, and often distinguished by whether or not the gown would be worn in the day or evening. Upper and middle class women of the Gilded Age devoted a great amount of time to dressing. Women would dress differently for a morning stroll than they would for an afternoon tea or for lounging at home in their private rooms. They most certainly would have had to change their clothes for evening supper, and especially if they were dining out or attending a ball, certain standards of dress were expected of them, and the gown would have to be up to snuff and fashionable in order to be acceptable in the company women sought to keep. There were visiting dresses, promenade dresses, walking suits, ball gowns, and morning dresses, and all were accessorized differently. If their gowns were not smart enough, women would not attend an event, preferring to stay home rather than be embarrassed by wearing the wrong thing.

Women in the working classes, and rural women who worked on farms, women in the Wild West, and others who did not live and prosper in the cities abided by an entirely different set of rules for dress. Though often trying to keep up with fashion, they were not as bound by the strict rules of fashionable society. Immigrant women and women of different races and ethnic origins, such as African American women and Jewish immigrants, also dressed in unique ways. There were certain similarities, but the luxurious beauty and quality of the fabrics, the decorations, and the extravagant styles worn by women in the upper rungs of society was not exactly shared by women in the lower classes. As throughout history, the poor wore versions of the dress styles of the wealthy, but without the means to buy the materials needed, nor the opportunities to wear such fine dress, they adapted the styles to suit their needs and lifestyle. In this period, for example, they may still have a bustle of sorts, but it would not be as large, and the dress would not have much decorative application or extra fabric. Although the silhouette was similar, the dresses were quite dissimilar. In reality, fashionable dress was exceedingly impractical, limiting movement and allowing only walking, sitting, reading, needlepoint, and visiting. The gowns of the upper classes did not allow much physical freedom for women.

CLOTHING IN DETAIL

Silhouette

This period in fashion is often referred to as the "bustle period," but the shape and style of the bustle was not consistent through the 20 years from 1870 to 1890. The first bustle style (1870–1878) was one in which

skirt fabrics were folded and gathered in such a way as to add fullness at the back. Added ruffles and flounces made the exaggerated back even more impressive, while the front of the skirt remained straight. The bodice fit more or less closely to the body and was smooth to the natural shoulders, essentially following the natural lines of the body. After 1878 and until 1883, the cuirass bodice became all the rage. The skirt's bustle did not exactly disappear, but it took on a new shape. Back fullness was not jutting out directly from the waist but was created lower instead, below the hips or around the knees, where bows, gathers, and extra fabrics were added, and a train dragged behind on the ground. The skirt was otherwise quite closely fitted to the natural shape and slim lines of the body. After 1884 and until the tailor-made suits became fashionable in the 1890s, the rigid bustle made a brief reappearance with a shelf-like bustle extending straight back from the waist.

Bodice and bustle, 1887. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY)

Interestingly, in the 1880s, the ideal figure for a woman was rather more portly than at other times. The stout Queen Victoria was a good example of the figure. The Rubenesque figure of fashion was one of womanly curves accentuated by hip pads, corset pulling in the waist and forcing the breasts up high. Women of average heights of five feet, three inches were weighty at 140–160 pounds (Coleman, 1989). Those without natural curves were more dependent on underpinnings like corsets and padding to achieve a fashionable silhouette.

In the 1890s, the silhouette changed considerably, and the focus was largely pulled away from the back of the skirt. Instead, the upper arms and shoulders were made extremely large, while the waist was tiny. The skirt was long to the floor, gored, but still had some gathering at the back waistband. Skirts, especially for daytime, were not as decorated with layers of fabrics piled on one another, and gathering and flouncing was gone, replaced by a smooth, flat skirt. The bust line was also more of a focus, as the hips and bust were made more pronounced by the tiny waistlines.

Fabrics and Colors

There was a huge range of fabrics available for women's clothing, especially as machine-made materials became more common. Some considered the machine-made fabric of better quality because of the

evenness of the weaves and the consistency of production. Fabrics and trimmings for dresses and accessories in the 1870s and 1880s were exquisite for women of fashion. At the beginning of the period, in 1876, women's dresses were adorned with puffs, pleats, knots, loops, ruching, twisting and draping of fabrics, lace appliqué, silk tulle appliqué, beads of gold and frosted glass, in addition to baubles. The profusion of trimmings in a lady's outfit made it well known that she was a woman of means and was part of fashionable society, sometimes even helping to elevate her station in society. Different fabrics were often combined in a single dress, and, in the different decades, color schemes varied. As dye technology improved, more vivid, darker, and more intense colors became fashionable, simply because the technology allowed for these colors to be created and maintained without fading. Natural dyes were still used, but the addition of new synthetic dyes meant that the muted colors created by natural dyes were not the only choices any longer. The new synthetic dyes, recent nineteenth-century inventions, were also much better at holding their intensity and did not fade as much as natural dyes. Fashionable society jumped at the chance to have their gowns created in intense colors like electric blue, bronze, black, linden green, emerald, orange, brown, pink, coral, green, blue green, and violet, with all kinds of contrasting combinations. In the 1890s, boldly striped and patterned fabrics were popular, and, by the turn of the century, women were using lace as overlay for all kinds of garments.

As with men's clothing, black became very popular for women in the late nineteenth century and was considered easy to coordinate with other colors, allowing for interesting design choices. Black was not only suitable for the mourning period, it was also a fashionable choice for many ladies. Black was often the base fabric color for a floral or striped fabric. Plain colors like beige, tan, olive, gray, terra cotta, claret red, and dark blue were popular in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Evening colors tended to be pastel greens, blues, and pinks, with some more intense colors added, such as intense yellows and gold, along with black.

In the 1870s and 1880s, sometimes contrasting colors or various shades of the same colors were mixed together in one dress. Bodices and skirts were made to wear together. Matched fabrics and patterns, even if there were several fabrics within each of a pair of garments, were meant to be worn together. However, blouses and skirts did not match one another in the same way and could be easily interchanged without worrying about matching. Often the blouse was a plain white and was combined with a different colored skirt of a different-weight fabric, such as wool. Designers also combined textures to create interest, so a satin was combined with velvet or grosgrain, to create a contrast in texture that was both visual and tactile. A bodice might combine velvet basques trimmed with satin ribbon, lace inserts, and the skirt might be of satin, with trimmings and layers of different colors. Pocket flaps and cuff

trimmings often contrasted with the bodice fabric. Skirts were often overlaid, with gauze on top of satin. The rich fabrics of the 1880s included patterned velvet with parts left in uncut loops creating a certain motif, heavy satin, brocade, and faille. These fabrics were used for the outsides of the skirt or the bodice. These were easy to manipulate into different flounces and gathers to achieve just the right drape and fullness. The fabrics were sometime stiffened with cotton backings so that they held their folds and stayed in place when the lady moved.

Fabrics for cooler seasons included wool, velvet, tweeds for tailor-made suits, cashmere, silk rep, satin, cloth, plush, tulle, and camel hair. Summer fabrics were cambric, silk poplin, printed cottons, foulard, grenadine, Indian muslin, batiste, gingham, sateen, lawn, veiling, cashmere, faille, gauze, crape (crepe), grosgrain, percale, and grenadine. For outerwear, women chose fabrics like lamb's wool, cashmere, homespun cloth, cheviot, velvet, mohair, tulle, and lace. Fur, such as Persian lamb, sealskin, beaver, sable, mink was also used for trim and muffs. Outerwear garments were often heavily decorated and could be extremely heavy to wear. Silk fell out of favor when it was weighted with mineral salts, making it more expensive and of lesser quality. Weighting silk caused it to wear out quickly, and women felt they were being taken advantage of by merchants, who sold silk by weight. Then, as time went on, women found that the treated silk wore very badly and began to shatter and developed holes much more quickly than non-weighted silk. It is still easy to find examples of weighted silk in museums today, but they are increasingly impossible to handle as they fall apart very easily when touched and are very hard to conserve. Thus, the slump in silk sales due to this weighting and a boost in sales of other fabrics, such as wool, significantly influenced the designs of women's gowns.

Trimmings made the dresses of 1870s and 1880s particularly luscious. Designers and dressmakers used all manner of trim to decorate a gown and usually combined many different types of trimming and decoration within one skirt or bodice. Even in the early 1880s, when the bustle moved downward and the focus of the skirt was closer to the knees, that interest was often created by combining, folding, and gathering fabrics and then creating long, beautifully decorated trains. Some common decorations included pleated flounces, embroidered fabrics, passementerie, beads, baubles, lace, garlands, ribbon, roses, ruching, crocheted fabrics, and buttons. Fancy clasps and pins often added to the overall design.

In the 1890s, bodices were tailored and made or overlaid with light fabrics like chiffon. The translucent chiffon fabric was also used for creating ruching and ruffles on shirtwaists. A shirtwaist was a tailored bodice with many similarities to men's tailored shirts, but with increasingly large sleeves as the turn of the century approached. Some women's shirtwaists buttoned at the center front, and some buttoned down the

Black velvet evening dress from 1887 with a tight bodice, puffed sleeves, and bustled skirt. (Victoria & Albert Museum, London/Art Resource, NY)

back. Faille and taffeta were used as layers, creating the oversized puffed sleeves that required more rigid and easily manipulated fabrics to achieve the exaggerated puffs at the upper arms. Summer fabrics included piqué, linen, dimity, lawn, dotted swiss organdy, and fine-weave cottons for shirts and skirts. Lower-priced clothing was sometimes made of wool voile or printed challis, and women could shop for printed, factory-made calico house dresses off the rack at shops and department stores.

The Dress Bodice

The cuirass basque bodice was the unique bodice style of the Gilded Age. The cuirass extended over the hips in long vertical lines and was accented with a plastron in the front and back of contrasting colors. The Breton costume was a good example of the use of plastron that was square and started at the bust and ended below the hips with a border of embroidery or decorative buttons, matching the basques, that extended down the hips over the skirt. The bodice was tight and had various necklines for day and night, depending on the occasion. For day, necklines were in a V-shape or squared, or they featured a standing band collar and buttoned from the neckline to the bottom of the bodice. Necklines were decorated with lace. The intent of the tight bodice was to produce a slender silhouette, and the shoulder was in the natural position and followed the shape of the woman. For evening or more formal occasions, the neckline could be worn much lower with a deeper décolletage, sometime filled in with lace or ruffles to add modesty. The bottom of the bodice could either end in basques at the hips, which could continue down to the knees and become part of the skirt, or end in squared tabs resting on the hips. The bottom of the bodice on the sides would usually end at the skirt waistband, but often in the back there were long, graceful rounded points (with organ-pipe pleating) adding interest to the back of the bodice and adding to the volume of the ever-diminishing bustle.

Necklines varied in the first and second bustle periods, spanning 1870–1890. Some were high-necked and closed tight around the neck, while others were squared or in the V-shape for daytime gowns. The back of the neckline was always high, almost to the hairline, no matter the style of the front of the neckline. For evening, many women wore very wide, off-the-shoulder necklines, or plunging V-necklines, although the lower

the plunge, the more likely it was to be filled with lace or other translucent fabric to keep the lady respectable. In the nineties, shirtwaist necklines were very high and stiff or decorated with lace trim high up near the chin for daywear. Evening gowns had very low V-necks or round or square necklines. After 1893, once again evening gowns were designed with off-the-shoulder styles or very wide, low necks.

There were a few options for women's bodices in the 1880s as well, including the belted blouse, a shorter version of the basque. The Norfolk jacket was also adopted by women, and the short princess dress or polonaise was worn over the dress. The neckline style was high and fitted, even boned and trimmed with lace around the chin area. The bodices were quite plain, with fitted sleeves to the wrist, until the late part of the decade, when puffs became popular. For evening, women sometimes wore sleeveless dresses with wide straps over the shoulders. The bodice was quite plain and the focus of the costume was on the skirt.

Zouave jackets were worn periodically from about 1860 to 1900. These were named after the uniform of the Algerian Zouave troops who fought for France, including during the Crimean War. These jackets for women were made of silk, velvet, or plain cloth. The Zouave was essentially a bolero style, ending under the bust line, which was short with rounded fronts fastened only at the neck and open otherwise. The three-quarter length pagoda sleeves gradually widened at the elbow.

Shirtwaists, as blouses were called in the 1890s, were tailored bodices gathered at the waist with a belt, often of the same fabric, cinching in the lady's natural waistline. In the late 1890s, the popular Gibson Girl look featured shirtwaists. In 1895, shirtwaists had excessively large sleeves puffed out from the shoulder and narrowing at the elbow to a tight, turned-back cuff at the wrist. The bodice was fitted to the shape taken by the corset with a large bosom and tiny waist flaring out at the hips over the plain gored skirt. Some shirtwaists had two rows of knife pleats from the shoulders, meeting at the center front belt, as well as box pleats in between with either detachable crush collars (with horizontal gathers as a high neck) or with attached lay-down collars (similar to men's dress shirts today). Women often added another layer of puffing at the neck and shoulders, further exaggerating the horizontal look, often extending past the already exaggerated shoulders. Women also wore chemisettes. These looked like full shirts but were worn underneath a jacket and were in fact only a collar (in various designs such as wing and lay down), some with pin tucks in vertical lines parallel to the front button closure and some with no added details. These options allowed women to get the most wear out of the most expensive part of the wardrobe, the skirt and bodice, which were interchanged with other pieces to create new outfits. Shirts and chemisettes were often white, but also were available in colors and textured fabrics to add interest to an otherwise plain garment.

Sleeve Styles

Throughout the 1870s and part of the 1880s, sleeves were kept fairly simple, slim fitted to the arm and curved to allow the elbow to bend in a natural manner. Sleeves in this decade were trimmed in the same way the rest of the dress was, with ribbons, bows, lace cuffs, and rosettes, among other decorations. Usually the sleeve was kept short for evening (elbow length) and was extended to the wrist for daywear. Shoulder placement was in its natural place, with no extra gathering or height at this time. Fabrics for sleeves were sometimes different from the bodice, but were always a complimentary color to match the bodice. The contrast could be in color with two shades of similar colors, or two fabrics with identical color but differing texture.

By 1888, bodice shoulders were slightly wider and more squared, with women in an erect posture. The sleeve's shoulder seam was slightly gathered, with a little height—an indication of things to come in the nineties. By 1893, once the bustle had grown smaller and was merely a simple padding, the sleeves became enormous leg-of-mutton style, a more dramatic version of the late 1830s Gigot sleeve. Sleeves had begun to grow in the previous year. At its most dramatic height, the upper arm of the sleeve required as much as two and a half yards of fabric. Wrists were decorated with lace cuffs, and elbows were very close fitting. The large sleeve style did not last all that long. After 1896, sleeves gradually began to decrease to a more manageable size.

The nineties leg-of-mutton sleeves were layered affairs, with up to four different fabrics piled on top of one another to help create the excessive volume. The sleeves were cambric or light silk, or the same fabric as the garment to which a puffed sleeve was mounted using a crinoline interlining attached to the outermost fabric. Sometimes chiffon, with its light and airy texture, was the final outside layer to add a little lightness and color contrast to the sleeve. Sleeves would often be crushed by outerwear, and women were constantly having to readjust their sleeve puffs after removing coats. The layers of stiffer fabric made this easy to do.

Skirts

In the early 1870s, the crinoline period gave way to the bustle, and designers showed off their great talents for adding embellishments on the voluminous skirts with high, accentuated rear ends. These were created with extremely complicated designs, in which vast swathes of fabrics were draped in such a way as to create volume and texture. By the end of the decade and until 1882, gowns became more slim fitting and streamlined, thanks to the uninterrupted vertical line of the princess dress. It was toward the hem that the interest lay. Skirts featured large bands of

extra fabrics and huge bows pulling the skirts in around the knees. They had heavy trains at the back, which often combined and contrasted with all the fabrics used in the dress. These fabrics were layered together to draw attention to the bottom of the skirt that swept along the ground as the lady walked. The detachable trains had matching edges to the rest of the gown. A walking dress had a hidden underskirt so it could be very plain fabric with only the edging needing to be fancy with plisse, velvet, cashmere, or embroidery decoration. The back of the skirt was trimmed and decorated and draped elaborately and had a small train out the back. Along with the detail of the skirt moving it was at the end of the decade when women began to have more trouble with movement (e.g., walking) as the skirts were too tight to manage a normal stride length. Though the full bustle was not seen between 1878 and 1883, women still accented their bottoms with bum pads when they wore the slimmer princess dress or cuirass bodice, but these were considerably smaller than the frame bustles that emerged again in the middle of the eighties. The underskirts were important in these designs as they showed from under the skirts in the back, and were trimmed, pleated, ruched, flounced, gathered, tucked, puffed, fringed, and trimmed with ribbons and other edging of myriad materials and colors.

Fabric choices were varied at this time and often showed drastic contrast in texture, color, or fabrication. Skirts were also often made with matching layers draped in many directions, both vertical and horizontal, and sewn into place. Fabrics could be manipulated with either horizontal gathering, diagonal or vertical pleating, and great curves of draped fabrics, sometimes creating a zigzag look. The attention to detail in the skirt's fabric textures, decorations, and draping was key to fashionable skirts. Edges were treated with pleats, flounces, and fringes and were rarely left plain. Fabrics included chevron-patterned silk, ribbed weaves, moiré, shiny satin, organdy, plaid, stripes, and cambric (chambray), on calendered cotton with a glossy, stiff finish that was easy to fold and kept its form.

By 1885, the rigid bustle reappeared and was much more exaggerated than it had been in its initial appearance in the early seventies. It proved drastically different from the small puff pads women wore in the late seventies and early eighties. The bustle started at the hollow of the lower back and protruded straight back from the waist, quite far, and was supported by rigid wood or metal bustles that were attached to the waist. These were called the "Canfield" or the "Langtrey" (makers of the bustles) and were hinged so that they could be raised, collapsing the bustle when the wearer sat down and springing back out when she stood up. The fabrics were drawn back and were bunched and puffed up into elaborate creations of layered colors and textures. The luxury of the rich and sumptuous fabrics, all pulled together and placed in just the right way, was a wonder of artistry on the part of the designer.

Although evening skirts in the eighties continued to have trains, trains largely went out of fashion for daywear. The train was a detachable piece of fabric that tied to the waist. Although but one layer among many, it was extra long. Because it was removable, women could choose to wear it or not. The fabric usage for skirts was extraordinary and having a skirt with 3.5 yards around the hem was not unusual. By 1882, skirts were decorated with an overlay of an apron in the front. It was not a working apron by any means and was made of beautiful fabric, and sometimes gathered horizontally from the hip and then trimmed with braiding or extra ruffles.

Skirt supporters were important in helping to hold the train or maintain the correct fold and fullness in the skirt back and front. The skirt fabric was clamped in between two spring clips suspended from a long cord tied around the lady's waist. The hinges and hooks could be adjusted to change the appearance of the skirts and train.

The 1890s brought an economic depression. Such developments are often felt in the world of fashion, and, for the most part, the luxury seen in the previous decade was much less visible in the nineties. By 1893, the bustle became smaller and the hourglass silhouette became popular, with its tiny waist, wide hips, and large bust. Back padding was not at all as extensive as in the past, and skirt decoration faded away. The new skirts were gored, with several separate pieces of fabric sewn together in triangles to create a smooth waist and hip area with gradual flaring toward the hemline. There was a balance between the lower part of the skirt and the large shoulders of the sleeves and the ruffles around the high neck. Skirt backs were pleated only part way to leave fullness, and hips were padded in order to achieve the desired wasp-like silhouette. Fabric choices for plain skirts became more conservative, and decorative design was applied much more discreetly, with lines of buttons or perhaps some beautiful embroidery or braiding. For evening, the same gored skirts were seen, but in more luxurious and decorated silky fabrics, and they sometimes maintained the train out the back.

Underclothes

The Gilded Age was a time of new innovations as far as the underpinnings of gowns were concerned. New garments and fabrics were introduced in an attempt to make women more comfortable, more hygienic, and to accommodate increasingly active lifestyles in which women walked, played tennis, participated in archery, and rode bicycles. Wool, popular with the hygienic clothing movement of Dr. Gustav Jäger (1832–1917), a German naturalist and hygienist, was introduced as an ideal fabric for underclothing and was recommended highly for its abilities to absorb perspiration and keep the woman warm in winter and cool in summer. Women who found the weight of all the various layers of

The Layers of a Proper Lady's Toilette

The undergarments worn by a typical middle class lady in the late 1880s seem to us excessive, but in order to achieve the fashionable look there were at least nine layers of garments needed, and these added about 25 pounds that had to be carried around all day. It is no surprise women called for reform in dress. The undergarments not only helped form the silhouette but also helped to protect the main outer-garments from perspiration and body oils. Clothing was exceedingly difficult to launder, and laundering was very time consuming.

Layers of undergarments in the 1880s

First layer—Wool, silk, or cotton stockings that ended above the knee and were held with tight elastic garters that often impaired circulation in the legs.

Second layer—Knee length drawers in white cotton with open inner seams and a waist closure.

Third layer—A loose white cotton knee-length chemise or knitted, tight-fitting, hip-length vest.

Fourth layer—Short white- or cream-colored wool, cotton flannel, or cotton muslin petticoat may have been worn, but only when the lady wore the knitted vest (as it replaced the lost length of the knee-length chemise).

Fifth layer—A longer petticoat in a dark or light color that could be brushed or washed regularly to get rid of street debris.

Sixth layer—Cotton or silk corset made of flexible steel, bone, or some other material to stiffen. The corset extended from hips to arm pits and transformed the body into a prescribed shape, but also ensured that the outer gown's bodice did not wrinkle and that it lay smoothly. The corset was hooked or buttoned up the front and laced tightly at the back.

Seventh layer—A simple, light, sleeveless corset cover made of cotton or linen.

Eighth layer— Bustle to support the extra fabric at the back of the gown. These were increasingly technical garments with springs, screws, and pulls to adjust the size of the bustle.

Ninth Layer—The dress bodice and skirt were put on last. The bodice was also sometimes stiffened with bone inserted in the seams. The overskirts and bodices were often heavily decorated with ribbons, beads, and other adornment, adding great weight to the outfit.

Total weight: 25 lbs

clothing too heavy felt gratified to have the weight of undergarments dramatically reduced toward the end of the nineteenth century. The frou-frou and frills on undergarments, much like in the crinoline period, reappeared after the conservative hygienic wool craze had waned, and by the 1890s, chemises, petticoats, and drawers were once again decorated with ribbons and lace.

Undergarments were made of various fabrics, including cotton, silk, and woolens, depending on the decade and climate. The colors were usually light cream and perhaps pink or black. Chamois leather was also used for undergarments and these undergarments were seen in combinations (the chemise and drawer in one piece) as well as simple drawers.

Women needed to style their hair and apply makeup before putting on the bodice because they would not be able to lift their arms once dressed, especially in the 1880s.

The Chemise

The chemise was a knee-length undershirt made of linen or cambric with short sleeves and a buttoned opening down the front. Usually there was some sort of decorative trimming applied to the neckline and sleeves, and it was fitted at the waist and bust. Depending the time of day it was to be worn, evening or daytime, the neckline was cut lower or higher. For evening, the chemise was cut very low, and instead of being fastened in the front as the day chemise was, it was sometimes fastened down the back. By the Gilded Age, chemises were shaped to fit the curves of the breasts, with darts or seams to accommodate. This garment was worn beneath the stays (or corsets) and was made deliberately of very fine fabric so as not to add bulk—and, therefore, further discomfort. As the 1870s wore on, more and more craftsmanship was put into the making of the chemise. Several designs were available, all attempting to make the chemise as comfortable as possible, so with the addition of gored, princess seams, box pleats, and so on, different styles could be chosen depending on the type of gown the woman was going to wear.

The chemise continued as it had been throughout the 1880s, when at the end of the decade it was replaced by the empire style, with a high waist ending just below the bust and short puffed sleeves. Trimmings of lace and frills continued to be applied around the neck and hem. In the last decade of the century, at the same time the large-sleeved bodices were being worn, chemises were considered out of style. Most women replaced their chemises with combinations (chemise and drawers combined in one garment).

By the 1880s, new materials accompanied new designs Women could choose from cambric, batiste, and nainsook, all of which were trimmed with fancy lace, ribbons, and gathers.

Drawers

Drawers (underpants) were meant to be worn closest to the skin. Although these were relatively new innovations, they were welcome additions to the woman's wardrobe. The bifurcated garment had a waistband,

gathered fabric starting just below the waist, and the crotch area was kept open for decades after the drawers were introduced for women's wear. During the late nineteenth century, drawers were closed with buttons in the back, and the open inside seam was eventually closed. When dresses were quite form fitting, the drawers were to be worn shorter, barely touching the knee. By 1895, the drawers took on great widths in the legs, becoming as wide as the petticoats (20 inches to 2 yards around). Sometimes the silk drawers were lined with flannel, keeping them pretty but also warm.

Sanitary Products

Menstruation is not commonly covered in many of the books and literature about female fashion, but it is perhaps important to consider in terms of the lives of women in the nineteenth century. The Victorian lady never openly discussed her menstrual cycle or the sanitary products she used, she rarely wrote about it in her journals, and it was assumed that women knew how to deal with this "curse" without it being something publicly acknowledged. Of course, women did have to deal with the monthly advent of the menstrual period in some way, and in the last half of the nineteenth century there were many types of products designed and patented to help them manage, ranging from elastic belts to which a cotton or linen pad was attached, to much more invasive devices to catch the flow of fluid from the inside. By the 1890s, catalogs were advertising products especially for women's periods, including brands such as the disposable Faultless Serviette and Serviette Supporter made of soft sateen and elastic that wrapped around the hips and to which the absorbent "health napkin" was placed. Before this time, the pads were washed in the same way a baby diaper was and then reused, but it seems in the 1890s that women were encouraged to burn the serviettes after use, resulting in a disposable pad that was meant to be less expensive than laundering at the time. The pads were sometimes inserted into long slim envelopes that were pinned to the bottoms of corsets or other undergarments. Sometimes pads were attached to belts held around the waist, and sometimes the pad was attached to suspenders that went over the shoulders. The tampon was not commonly used in the nineteenth century though patents were given for rubber cups that were inserted to capture the flow of menses. Ultimately, it was quite common for women to retire to bed, claiming some other ailment that was much more polite to discuss. Keeping clothes clean and avoiding embarrassing leaks through the clothes was easier if one was homebound. Bed rest did, however, also help to promote the idea that women were frail or the "weaker sex," as they were "ill" so much of the time, when in fact they were simply experiencing a perfectly natural occurrence. Such was the veil of secrecy surrounding women's health and the hushed protocol of the Victorian era.

Combinations and Vests

Combinations were first introduced in the late 1850s and became very popular over the next 20 years. The purpose of this garment was to combine the drawers and chemise usually worn as two separate garments. These garments were sometime knitted and sometimes woven. At a time when dresses fit more snugly, combinations were considered a brilliant solution because they were not bulky. Combinations either buttoned behind or in front and sometimes had sleeves. The neckline style depended on the type of gown to be worn over the combination. This was the foundation closest to the body and was worn under the corset and all other manner of undergarments. Combinations could be made in the usual fabrics, such as cambric and linen, or in nainsook, washing silk, merino, or calico.

In the 1880s, woolen combinations of natural wool were popular. Other forms of combinations put together not only the drawers, but also added the petticoats, and were worn over the corset. Under the corset, women would have had to wear a vest for comfort. Fine muslin was often used in the 1890s as combinations took on new forms and designs. These were generally decorated with frills and lace at the neck and knees. Chamois leather combinations were sometimes worn over the corset. By the 1890s, women wore tight-fitting knit, ribbed, sleeveless, ankle-length combination suits that combined the vest (a tight-fitting undershirt) with long underwear that buttoned up the front. Jersey vests were also popular and comfortable. These were similar to what we currently refer to as T-shirts and were made of knitted ribbed jersey with round necks or V-necks and short or capped sleeves. Jersey vests were long, ending around hip level. For winter, the vests were made of cotton, camel hair, or wool, and often there were matching drawers for a vest if they were not made into combinations. The winter vests had long sleeves.

The Bustle

The bustle was supported by a contraption of bent wood or metal, screws, springs, and laces. Consequently, the bustle was first called the "cage crinoline." Bustles were attached to the body around the waist and were made up of several pieces of wood bent in a half circle. The parallel slats of wood were a half inch wide, and when the woman sat down, the slats would all collapse together only to spring back into place when the woman stood up. She could sit more comfortably but also maintain the bustle silhouette when she stood. Other types of bustles were also attached to the waist and included some made of braided wire, bustle hoops sewn into a fabric base or horsehair bustles that were part of the petticoat layer worn under the skirt.

By 1895, the bustles advertised in the Montgomery Ward catalog were on sale for one cent each while supplies lasted, clearly indicating that the

style had run its course. In order to attain the slight fullness in the back, women still had some help in the form of a bum pad they tied around their waists.

Woman wearing a corset that helped give her an extremely small waist and silhouette fashionable at the time. (Library of Congress)

Petticoats

The petticoat layer of fabric was alternately adopted as part of the main garment, peeking out from under the overskirts, to strictly as an undergarment, not to be seen on the outside. A great number of petticoats were worn layered one upon the other over the years, especially in the crinoline period before the introduction of the cage crinoline. In order to achieve the full skirted look of the fashionable gown, multiple layers were worn to increase volume. In the Gilded Age, women still wore one or more petticoats, but these did not create the fullness exclusively.

Corsets/Stays

Corsets were made of stiff fabrics such as sateen, or jean and steel or bone slats were inserted into fabric and cushioned on the side closest to the skin to allow for comfort. In the 1870s, stays, as corsets were known, were long and molded to the hips. They were made very rigid and did not allow the torso much movement or comfort. The long corset pushed the flesh back and down with the end result being a high large bust and low, large rear end, emphasized with excess fabric and flounce on the outside. Some were flexible enough to allow some motion, but the whole purpose of the corset was to keep the torso in place, smooth and in a shape that flattered the style of dress. A narrow waist was achieved through tight lacing that pulled in the waist as tight as possible. Some corsets, by the 1890s, had extra openings that could be loosened with laces around the pelvis to relieve pressure on the internal organs, others had inserts of elastic to allow for some ease of movement and comfort to the lower organs. In the 1880s and 1890s corsets were elegant and beautifully made, for example, a corset of black sateen with embroidery in pink, green, and yellow. The corsets were shaped to accommodate the bust and hips, curving to the shape of the body, with a long smooth waist. Corsets came in light colors, and then in black near the end of the century, and they were often trimmed with lace at the top. The corset had hooks joining the front at the center, and then laces in the back to pull

it tight. Some had shoulder straps but many did not. Often younger girls and women wore shoulder-strap styles. Girls were still corseted from the age of two at the turn of the century. They wore less stiff *corset waists* that covered the waist and torso, but were less restrictive of movement and had shoulder straps. The shape of the woman's corset was curved so the top formed over the breasts and went lower under each arm and higher again in the back.

Women's corset covers were worn over top of the corset and were made of muslin, in either very plain or more decorative styles. The covers were sleeveless and fitted the torso, had either round or square necklines, and some had lace trimming on the neckline while others were completely undecorated.

Nightwear

Women's nightdresses had high necklines and decorated yokes of lace, and they buttoned down the front. The long sleeves had cuffs that were often decorated with lace or had embroidered ruffles as edging. These were made of white cotton and hung loose from the bottom of the yoke to the ground.

Outerwear

The period was dominated by the dolman cloak for outerwear, but there were many styles that came and went, accommodating the size of the bustle and changing sleeve designs as the decades passed. Women wore cloaks, waterproofs, paletots, chesterfield coats, pelerines (shoulder capes worn over the main outer garment), and circular capes (sometimes hooded), mantles, and mantillas that were shaped like a shawl but manipulated to look like a mantle of sorts. Women sometimes recycled their out-of-fashion, yet still-valuable, cashmere shawls and made them into mantillas.

The paletot emphasized long slender lines and was either short or long and could have short or long sleeves. In 1878, sling-sleeved dolman wraps were introduced. Dolman wraps had what looked like regular sleeves, outlined on the sides of the cloak in a natural position where the arm hung by the side, but these "sleeves" were not separate from the bodice, keeping the woman's arms tightly bound against her sides inside the cloak. This style clearly made it difficult to move the arms. The sleeves of the dolman were merely decoration on a shaped cape, with shoulders seams and a straight drop down the side seams to the hips or sometimes to the ground. The dolman often ended above the bustle in the back, as it was difficult to cover the bustle without crushing it. The wrap was sometimes very heavy and made out of lined silk, velvet, or wool. It could be lined or unlined, and was most often trimmed with heavy braiding, fur, chenille, jet beads, fringes, or was decorated to match

the gown. They were also sometimes ornately beaded, adding to the already impressive weight of the garment.

In the 1890s, the problem with outerwear was that it could crush the huge sleeves, or just did not fit over the sleeves to begin with. Sleeves were then made of resilient fabrics, heavily starched or lined so they would spring up once outwear was removed. The jackets and coats were also made with large leg-of-mutton sleeves and tight forearms, and were of either long or short lengths. They were often made of black fabric, but those designed by the couturiers were heavily decorated to match outfits. Capes and mantles were easiest to wear because of the large sleeves, and the variations on the cape were many and varied. There was a great variety of fabrics used, and they were often decorated with beading and embroidery and had high collars. Long velvet evening cloaks had large open sleeves and silk quilting for lining. They were very were dramatic. Opera cloaks were formal cloaks and were made in many designs and fabrics.

Accessories

Well-dressed women and young girls carried small dainty umbrellas called "*parasols*" (from the French word) to shade them from the sun and also as a beautiful addition to the outfit. Parasols were made of a number of different fabrics, but some popular materials included faille or linen. Parasols were sometimes lined and sometimes not lined. The parasol itself was not particularly large but could be heavily decorated with ruffles, overlaid with lace, trimmed with ribbon and tassels, and sometimes patterned with embroidery. The long and ornate wood or ivory handle was often carved in decorative motifs, such as in the shape of a lion or snake. Parasols were more often made in light colors, such as pink or ivory, or they were made to match the colors in a particular dress.

Muffs, or hand warmers, were popular for several centuries before the Gilded Age, and they were still used, but falling out of fashion and being replaced by warm gloves and mittens that were easier to wear and allowed a lady to use her hands, even in cold weather. The muff was a long tube or cylinder made of wool, velvet, seal skin, Persian lamb, or other type of fur. The tube opened at both ends so that each hand could be inserted at the sides. A lady could then have her hands held together in front of her at waist level. Muffs were larger in the 1890s and made of chinchilla and sable, which were luxurious and warm. Some muffs also doubled as reticules or satchels. The top of the muff was designed to open and close with decorative clasp, and the lady could put small articles she might need to have close by. Some muffs also had a long chain or rope that went around the neck and allowed the muff to hang, easily accessible at the waist, when not in use.

Reticules were small silk, netted, and beaded purses that were used from 1860 to 1890. Often these small purses had short strings on top and were

hung from the wrist or hand. They were especially practical for women wearing dresses with no pockets and were meant to hold small articles that a lady wanted close at hand.

Belts of all kinds were worn by women throughout the period. They were made from many different types of materials, including leather and various fabrics, often matching the gown or suit. Belt buckles became very important accessories and were sometimes heavy metal and sometimes smaller decorative buckles studded with jewels for dressier occasions. As with all other aspects of dress in this period, belts could be elaborately decorated with ribbon, embroidery, and velvet to match the dress and accentuate certain details. Chatelaines were used by women to attach small articles to their belts. The small chain was fastened to the belt and then attached to important accessories such as the fan holder, fan, or erasable ball tablet that was used to record the names of those gentlemen a lady would dance with at a ball.

Fans were often carried by women and were also beautifully decorated with carved ivory sticks, silk tassels, feathers, painted silk, embroidery, and peacock feathers. Large feathers could be used as the whole fan, with an added decorative handle, or smaller feathers were combined to create a larger fan by joining the feathers to sticks that folded closed easily. Fabric folded fans were made of stiffened silk or linen, and were folded and attached to a set of sticks that opened and closed easily. The fans were attached to metal fan holders that hung from the belt so the lady could have her hands free.

Brooches, *scarf pins*, and *lace pins* were all popular accessories for women and served as decorative and often useful additions to an outfit. Flower bouquet holders, for example, were small gold or silver brooches that pinned to the dress bodice. There was a metal ring through which a small bouquet could be threaded, adding a special decoration to the outfit. Scarf pins were straight pins, often 2 ½ inches long, that held the scarf with a certain manner of puff and held it in place on the outfit. Brooches often were worn as part of the matching trio of earrings, bracelet, and ring. *Earrings* were popular when the hair was worn off the face. Earrings required pierced ears and came in many sizes of drop style or studs. Earrings were made in silver or gold and had precious or semiprecious stones mounted on decorative settings. There was a trend in the Gilded Age for women to make their own matching sets of *necklaces* and earrings out of covered silk buttons, hand painted with floral designs. Button medallions were mounted on silk ribbons and tied around the neck. Lace medallions were also joined together on ribbon and worn as necklaces. A *collarette* was worn tied tightly around the neck and was created by box pleating a piece of satin and joining it to a stiff band. It was then decorated with fine lace and metal coins or flowers. The ends hung down the back of the neck from a pretty bow at the nape. *Cameos* were set in both square and oval settings and were sometimes mounted

on rings, made into brooches, or were pendants hanging from a chain or ribbon around the neck. *Bracelets* were often heavy bangles and were decorated to match sets of jewelry, often engraved silver or gold and half an inch wide. *Rings* were worn, as today, in many different styles and widths and stones came in various sizes and types, and were both precious or semi-precious.

Women and men both wore *gloves* daily, not only to protect their hands from the cold, but also from the sun and dirt and for driving or other activities. Gloves for women fit closely to the hand and were elegant, sometimes long, in the gauntlet style, and sometimes coming only to the wrist. Gloves were trimmed with lace or gathered ruffles at the tops, and often gloves for colder weather were leather and trimmed with fur at the wrists. Women also wore mitts that covered the top and palm of the hand but had no fingers except the thumb. These were made of silk jersey or lace and often were very long, up to the elbow. Gloves were made of soft kid leather, silk jersey, or silk taffeta, and were often buttoned on the inside of the wrist or at the top of the glove to accommodate different sizes.

Aprons

These little additions to a woman's outfit have been forever important as both an accessory and as protection of the finer clothing worn underneath. It was not only the maid who wore aprons, but women from early times have worn them for one reason or another. The apron was a utilitarian garment by the time of the Gilded Age, but it was worn in different designs by both men and women, distinguishable by the design. For example, while maids wore white pinafores, tradesmen such as the butcher wore blue-striped aprons, and gardeners wore blue aprons. Generally, women had very few dresses and needed to protect what they had, so wearing aprons helped with this and also meant that they had to launder their dresses less often, a task that was arduous to say the least in the late 1800s. There are two main designs of utilitarian aprons: the half apron worn tied around the waist and covering the lower half of the body and a full apron with a bib covering the upper half as well. The designs of aprons changed with the fashion, becoming wider and fuller when fuller skirts were worn underneath, and then becoming narrower when worn with less flouncy styles. Decorative designs, color, and trimmings for aprons also came and went depending on the fashion of the times. In the last part of the nineteenth century, an apron for women was heavily decorated. With household science and women's work being elevated by the writing of such women as Catherine Beecher in 1841, housework was redefined as a serious profession. Wearing an apron was a part of the persona of the ideal housewife and was something to be proud of. Aprons of the industrialized United States changed in

design and purpose, moving away from the simple house aprons toward multiple designs specifically for other professional work in hospitals, restaurants, shops, and factories. Governesses and shop assistants wore black sateen aprons.

White aprons varied in length for women, but they were generally long enough to cover most of the skirt (ankle length) and were often hand sewn and decorated with machine-made lace, trimmings, and ties. The bib that was worn over the bodice front was not tied around the neck but was buttoned or pinned to the front of the dress (known as "pinafores"). Half aprons (which tied around or were fastened at the waist) were also ankle length, often white, and made of linen or cotton, trimmed with flounces or factory lace. Cloth was woven in significantly narrower widths (around 25 inches) in the Gilded Age, so two or three widths were needed to make the wide aprons needed to cover the large skirts that were in fashion at the time. Aprons made of handmade lace would have been used for dressier occasions, so there were the work aprons (made of cambric or linen) and those worn for entertaining or receiving guests (perhaps in gingham or linen). Work aprons would have not only been used to protect garments from splashes, spills, and flour, but would also have been used for gathering, wiping, drying, and holding hot dishes. These working aprons are hard to find in museums, as most would have been discarded once they were too dirty or full of holes and replaced with new ones. Aprons for working were often made from oilcloth, which was waterproof and protected the clothing well. White muslin and checked gingham aprons in colors were advertised in the Montgomery Ward catalog in 1895. These designs were long to the ankle, and they had long ties, trimmings of lace, and sometimes pockets on the front for storing small necessities. Aprons were advertised in fabrics such as gingham, muslin, satin-finish muslin stripes with lace and chambray trimmings, with 2–6 inch deep hems and Swiss muslin inserts and tucks or colorful floral designs stamped onto the front. Women would have also spent time applying embroidery to their aprons to make them more lively and pretty. Aprons continued to be worn well into the next century, becoming particularly popular in the 1950s.

Beauty and Grooming

Women wore little makeup, but face creams and lotions were becoming popular as part of the daily grooming routine. White or tinted powders were applied to the face to achieve a pale complexion that suggested delicacy and gentility. Tanned skin meant that the lady had to work outdoors and meant she was not wealthy enough to avoid the harsh sun on her skin. Parasols helped to keep the skin pale, and so were very popular items for women to carry, rain or shine. Delicate, translucent skin on the chest was also desired, so shielding the skin from the

sun was crucial. Women's cosmetics were not heavily colored, and women wore perhaps only a little rouged powder to brighten the face, but other makeup was discouraged for women, except for actresses, who wore many kinds of makeup on their faces, chests, and shoulders. Popular for Gilded Age women were the many perfumes available.

Women paid attention to grooming in the Gilded Age, and having one's hands manicured was not uncommon. The manicure process was developed in France by a foot doctor, who soaked the hands in soapy water, then used wooden sticks to push back the cuticles and clean the nails in much the same way manicurists do today. Men originally did beauty treatments on women, but because there was such a taboo surrounding men touching women's bodies, eventually this became an occupation for women. Salons catering to beauty and grooming, including those for nails, popped up in big cities like New York in this period.

There was an increasingly large market for beauty products to make skin pale (by using powder), as well as multiple hair care products to remove curls. The Avon company has its origin in this era, when a book salesman named David McConnell started to include a gift-with-purchase of a bottle of perfume with his book orders. He found that the women enjoyed the scent so much that he got out of the book business and started to sell the perfume door to door instead. The Avon name, however, did not come about until the 1950s. Ivory soap was also invented in this period, when too many bubbles were introduced into the soap mixture and the manufacturers found that the soap could float and yet work just as well. Thus, in 1879, Ivory was marketed as the "soap that floats," Chapstick is another innovation from the Gilded Age, developed by Dr. C. D. Fleet in the1880s.

Shoes, Socks, and Stockings

From 1876–1882, stockings were worn for everyday wear. They were patterned with beading, or colored in multicolored stripes, both horizontal and vertical, or were embroidered with clock motifs (ornamental designs added to the leg and instep such as zigzags and diamond patterns), especially around the ankle, which peeked out naughtily from under the skirts while a lady sat or walked. Stockings were often colored to match the dress or the slippers, but in the eighties black was very popular. Made of cotton or silk, these stockings came up to the thigh, where they were held up with garters which were also attractively decorated with lace and ribbon. Once elastics were placed on the bottoms of corsets, stockings were attached, and so there was no longer any need for the tight garters that constricted blood flow.

Shoes were worn to protect the feet but also became a means of conveying status and class. Shoemaking (cordwaining) gave way to mass-

An advertisement from a shoe store with a woman wearing a dress and hat typical of the time showing off mid-calf length boots and stockings, 1872. (Library of Congress)

produced shoes in the Gilded Age. Handmade shoes were still often considered more comfortable and a better fit, but the number of styles available by mail order by the mid-1890s proves they were very popularly bought from stores and catalogs. Guilds had been established in the twelfth century, and by the eighteenth century shoemaking had become a trade like any other and responded to fashion market demands. Boots were in high demand in wartime, and mechanization took over manufacturing. In 1856, Singer sewing machines were adapted to sew leather, so shoes were easily machine made and because of this more uniform in fit and design. In the 1830s, shoes were marked for left and right feet, but they were actually of identical shape, and it was only after 1850 that shoes began to take the shape of the left and right feet. By 1877, left and right shoes had become definitely distinguishable.

Shoes and slippers were worn indoors and were made of fabric to match the lady's dress or were white for evening. If the gloves were not made of fabric, such as silk, they were made of fine kid leather in black, brown, or white. They were long and thin with a narrow toe, squared off in the 1870s and rounder in the 1880s. Slippers were often slip-on style, with no backs, and shoes more likely to have full coverage of the back of the foot and small heels. Heel height varied depending on the occasion, but often had medium-high Louis XV heels inspired by eighteenth-century fashionable shoes. Rosettes and metal buckles decorated the tops of the shoes. For outdoor use, women wore boots, which were more sturdy but less fashionable or pretty, that went to the lower calf. These were sometimes covered with gaiters, which were hard canvas covers buttoned up the side to protect the leather. Ankle boots also had button closures up the inside of the leg. Women needed a button hook made of wire to help do up the buttons.

By the 1890s, shoes had very pointy toes and still had medium-high heels. Boots were made with leather and fabric combinations with the foot made of leather and the upper part that covered the ankle made of strong durable fabric. These were buttoned or laced. Women wore

oxfords (lace-up shoes) with their tailored outfits. These were sometimes decorated with patent leather caps on the toes, combining black and brown in one shoe. For evening, women wore soft kid leather slippers, or pumps with small buckles decorated with pearls. Fur-edged velvet boots were used outdoors in winter and were lined with quilted satin for warmth. Many styles of boots were available, some with button closures on a scalloped edge running up the outside of the leg and foot, and some with ties on top of the foot and front of the leg. Boot lengths varied from just above the ankle to halfway up the calf and were tapered to accommodate the shape of the leg. The shoes were mostly made of soft kid leather and had one-inch heels, or very flat heels called "*spring heels*" for those who disliked the higher heel. Boots were also made of cloth with dark and light colors combined with patent leather caps on the toes and the back of the heel. These also featured one-inch heels.

Hair Styles

Hair styling was a task most often performed by men and involved adding a lot of volume with the help of hairpieces. The upswept hairstyles with different bang styles and the chignons and buns at the back were often made with the help of fake hair, especially when women had thin hair that could not possibly be made into the voluminous styles that were fashionable. Selling hair, that was then made into hairpieces, was a way for women to make some money—as there was no such thing as synthetic hair, the demand for human hair was high. Poor women and nuns, who upon entering the convent had no need for long hair as their heads were covered, sold their hair, as did prisoners and paupers. When money runs low in the Louis May Alcott novel *Little Women*, the character Jo sells her hair, for example. Hairpieces could be purchased ready-made and styles included extra bangs (fringes) that were curled or feathered, "*switches*," or long bunches of hair of about 20 inches long that could be matched to the color of the woman's real hair. These were even available in grays for older women wanting to add volume to their coiffure.

In the 1770s, with the first emphasis on the back bustle, women swept their hair up and high at the backs of their heads, held with hairnets. Alternatively, they wore a large, elaborate, loose braid, or, for evening, cascades of falling curls. From 1876 to the 1880s, with the emergence of the cuirass style in dress, a sleeker hairstyle was adopted, smaller and neater, worn close to the head and high on top. The bangs (fringe) became the focus for a small fashionable touch and these were sometimes very ornate with tight (and often fake) curls adorned with diamond clips. There were many styles of hair accessories for adding a little touch of fashion to a hairstyle, such as decorated hair combs, and many kinds of hair pins, often set with semi-precious stones or pearls.

With the ideal Gibson Girl came the newer, looser hairstyle of the 1890s, with a pompadour bun or twist high on the head. The hair was poufed out with the help of extra hairpiece inserted into the hair, then the hair manipulated to conceal it. There was no more forehead adornment, and the hair looked much more natural around the face.

Hats and Bonnets

Millinery (hat making) was very diverse, and no single style dominated the whole period. Many shapes were worn, and milliners had the task of working around the tastes of the ladies, as well as rising to the challenge of the elaborate hairstyles, both of which could set great limitations on the hat makers, but which also accounts for the diversity of hat styles.

In the 1870s, hats were quite small but were trimmed with lace, ribbon, velvet, feathers, whole birds or stuffed rodents, and flowers. Bonnets that tied under the chin were still worn. For evening, both hair and hats were both elaborately decorated with jewels, feathers, and flowers. Indoor caps were no longer regularly worn by most women, though some older ladies continued to wear them for breakfast and perhaps with a tea gown in the afternoon. Country women and domestic servants wore the mob cap as a matter of habit and to keep their hair hygienically tucked away.

In the late 1870s and early 1880s, smaller-brimmed hats, called toques, became popular. These were small bonnets perched on top of the head over tight, high hair. In the late 1880s, hats that were the shape of flower pots, as well as hats with and strong vertical lines, were de rigueur. These were decorated with many strange little things like feathers, bugs, beetles, flowers, small fruits and vegetables, and birds, as well as the more standard ribbon, velvet, and tulle. This was perhaps an homage to Marie Antoinette's headdresses, which were similarly adorned. The decorations sometimes included preserved mice or birds, thanks to the new and booming art of taxidermy. Bonnets were tiny in the eighties, to accommodate the larger chignons and false hairpieces showing off both the front curls and fringes (bangs) as well as the hair at the nape of the neck.

By the nineties, hats had flat crowns and wide brims. They were quite plain in comparison to the previous decade but could be decorated with combinations of flowers and fur, or raffia and moss. The straw was often dyed in intense colors and decorated with contrasting colored ribbons. Between 1893 and 1898, the crowns of women's hats rose and began to resemble the various shapes of hats from the past, including the sugarloaf, but the trimmings are what made the hats particularly tall. The straw boater, with its wide flat crown and brim was popular for men, women, and children, as it had been since the 1860s. It was worn straight on the head, or titled slightly, and continued to be worn well into the twentieth century. A more masculine design similar to the men's homburg, a sort of fedora, was also worn by women. A smaller and more delicate hat was still worn for fashionable

dinners and in the afternoon. Bonnets were much less popular in the 1890s and were mainly worn by older women, nurses, and women in mourning.

For different sporting activities there was also a multitude of hat styles, the design of which depended on the activity. Hats such as the yachting cap and the tam-o'-shanter, which was a soft cloth hat with a pompom, were used for yachting and golf, respectively.

Types of Dresses

Promenade Dress

The promenade dress, as the name suggests, was worn by women as they walked outside along the city streets, meeting friends and neighbors. Between 1878 and 1882, the design changed as the bustle deflated in the back, moving the back interest lower on the legs toward the knees, where there continued to be added fabrics such as flounces and bows. The skirt and bodice were often in one piece during the early Gilded Age in the form of the princess dress. The train that swept the ground behind the lady was often removable, and at this time the front and back did not necessarily have to be the same color or type of fabric. The train was often made of decorated brocade or velvet, while the front could be embroidered satin or shirred fabric. The sleeves were straight and often three-quarter length with bows at the elbows and long lace cuffs. By 1885, the walking suit began to take on the appearance of overstuffed furniture, using wool flannel and braid similar to what was used in chair and couch design of the day. The skirt and bodice were separated once again into two separate pieces so that the lady could interchange the tops and bottoms and create different looks. The bustle reappeared in the mid-1880s with exaggerated fullness.

By the 1890s, promenade dress designs were significantly more tailored and obviously inspired by men's suits, with a three-quarter-length jacket with wide revers (lapels) and huge sleeves. Women wore waistcoats with these suits. The shirts and jackets were tailored to the body, but they featured exceptionally large leg-of-mutton sleeves that created very wide shoulders and upper arms, narrowing at the wrist. The skirts no longer had bustles in the back but were often flat in the front, long, and although not at all flouncy, they were fuller in the back. The skirt length was either to the ankle or ground. The more dramatic S-curve silhouette, with its large bosom and rear end, was still a few years away.

Wrappers and Tea Gowns

Tea gowns originated in women's boudoirs (informal sitting rooms or bedroom) from the peignoir, which was a loose-fitting but smart-looking housecoat or dressing gown. Once men were allowed to join in the tea-time meal there was a need to wear something more formal, yet still

The Gibson Girl

The Gibson Girl was an ideal of feminine beauty created by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson in 1890. She was tall, with a narrow wasp waist and a large bust and hips. She had a high forehead and small mouth (cupid's bow) and small straight nose. She was pictured as always being calm, confident, and independent, ideal attributes of the era. She wore a pompadour hairstyle, puffed out with the help of false hairpieces (made of horse hair) for added volume. The look was popular in the 1890s and was certainly not a feminine version of the nineteenth-century woman, but instead showed a rather more masculine look, especially given the shirtwaist, based on men's shirts, that buttoned down the back with a trimming of lace. The Gibson Girl even wore a tie, although a more feminine one than a man would have. Sleeves could be straight or puffed leg-of-mutton style. There was also a Gibson man, representing Gibson's ideal man. He had a clean-shaven face, slicked-back hair parted in the middle, a square jaw, and slim waist. He was often pictured with the Gibson Girl.

comfortable, for women to relax in before they had to dress up for supper. Tea gowns were made in silk, satin, and foulard fabrics. The tea gown was designed to be more comfortable than other dresses and suits and had a loose front and Watteau pleats in the back. The dress was often not even tied in at the waist, though sometimes a loose belt cinched the waist. The dress had a high neckline and could have a yoke from which the rest of the gathered fabric would fall freely. By the 1890s, tea gowns, like all other dresses and shirts, had extremely wide shoulders and puffed sleeves. Often the shoulders were exaggerated with an extra piece of ruffled or stiffened fabric covering just the shoulders, or a cape ruffle that gathered from the shoulders to the waist in the back and extended to the bust line over the shoulders in the front. These gowns were made of more comfortable fabrics, such as cotton/cashmere blends, wool serge, and cotton in the warmer months. Tea gowns were made in rich colors or light pastels according to the predominant fashion.

Wrappers, like tea gowns, were dictated by trends of the decade, but were less dressy than the ball gowns or dresses worn for more formal occasions. These dresses were made of chambray, light prints, stripes, sateen, and other fabrics, and were made in all kinds of colors and prints to suit the tastes of many women. The Watteau back was also incorporated in this design, and the sleeve and neck designs varied by decade, for example, very full sleeves in the nineties, and a small train out the back in the early eighties.

Princess Dress

The princess dress promoted slim vertical lines, uninterrupted by a waistline seam or large bustle at the back. Instead, the skirts gathered around the knees and had long trains out the back, again adding to the long lines the dress created. The bodice was rigid thanks to the boning added to the seams, allowing it to have very smooth lines. Some house dresses, especially in the 1880s, were princess cut and had short trains.

The basic design, with the vertical lines, was adopted for many occasions, both for day wear and evening wear, and were variously decorated in elaborate luxury or plain and minimal straight lines.

HIGH FASHION AND HAUTE COUTURE

Women of different income levels got their dresses in different ways; some made their own, which became much easier with the advent of home sewing machines and commercial home sewing patterns; they bought fashionable clothes in department and specialty fashion shops, ready made off the rack; they ordered them from seamstresses in the United States, and those with the most money to spend on their gowns ordered them from the haute couture designers in Paris at the design houses of Worth, Doucet, and Pingat. Some women took the fashion plates that designers provided every season and carefully copied the dresses and made their own versions.

Haute couture gowns were often made with two bodices for one skirt, with one of the bodices appropriate for day wear and one for evening with a lower décolletage and shorter sleeves. According to Coleman (1989), the day bodice was smaller than that worn for evening to accommodate eating and sitting in the evening. Skirts were designed to fit the hips rather than the actual natural waistline, whereas the natural waistline could be measured better in the bodice where the tight corset would pull in to the desired measurement. Women were expected to marry in their early twenties, and their goal was to have a waistline the same number as their age at marriage. So if the ideal age of marriage was 21years old, then a 21-inch waist was the goal. Though there have been reports of women's waistlines at this time measuring in the mid-teens, it seems unlikely, given the more robust figure that was fashionable at the time.

Haute Couture

Though not the only Paris designer for U.S. women, Charles Frederick Worth (1826–1895) was probably the most important fashion designer, or couturier, of the last half of the nineteenth century. Other designers were great competitors and included Jacques Doucet (1853–1929) or Émile Pingat (1820–1901) and Jeanne Paquin (1869–1936). These couturiers all designed for the fashionable and wealthy in Europe and the United States, but Worth had a special place among U.S. women of the Gilded Age. Dressmaking prices were more reasonable in Paris than they were in Boston and New York, where the dressmakers were thought by those who frequented Paris designers to offer clothing that was inferior in fit and quality, especially compared to gowns created at the House of Worth.

The House of Worth

Charles Worth's designs were not simply "dressmaking," but were considered wearable art for beautiful women. Worth designs were known to have large-scale design motifs in floral patterns and sumptuous materials. Clients included the Hewitt sisters and Junius Spencer Morgan (J. P. Morgan himself selecting fabrics to be used in his daughter's gowns). The first lady of New York society was also a Worth customer, Mrs. William Astor, and her daughter purchased many of Worth fashions from Paris, as did the Vanderbilt women. Worth was recommended to many of the families of wealth and privilege in the United States to create the look that would launch their debutante daughters into high society, and perhaps introduce them to the elusive "titled" European husband so sought after by U.S. young ladies in search of a husband at the time. Clientele not only came from New York and Boston. Newly wealthy women from Cleveland, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and Chicago also became devoted Worth fans. Actresses were very much a focus for the everyday woman, and there was a constant stream of gossip in the many magazines that were widely available. Many actresses wore Worth gowns. Lily Langtree and Sarah Bernhardt wore gowns contracted with the House of Worth for performances.

Charles Worth, although a Paris designer, was in fact British, living and designing in the most important fashion center in the world. After moving to Paris he worked his way up with other designers, learning the craft, eventually earning a reputation as the most influential designer of the day. He is now considered to be the first real haute couture designer. Worth really gained his popularity in large part thanks to the French Empress Eugenie, the fashionable wife of Napoleon III. She helped to put his fashions and name on the map as far as all of European royalty and aristocracy were concerned. Worth is said to have had a great rapport with wealthy U.S. women, and speaking English no doubt helped, but he also guided them and helped them maintain (or achieve) a certain place in society by dressing them appropriately, much like the architects did in designing housing for the newly wealthy in New York. Worth had expensive tastes himself and appreciated that when one had the means to have the best in life, one should be provided it. He is said to have appreciated that U.S. women never needed to know the prices of gowns—they were happy (happier, according to Worth, than European royalty) to pay, whatever the costs. He saw U.S. women as particularly fashion loving and aimed to please them.

Charles Worth's designs, and subsequently those of his sons who took over the business when their father retired, were noted for their use of luxurious fabrics that were very expensive, magnificent, and beautiful. The fabrics from Lyon were excellent quality silks, and he frequently bought from those artisans. Satin, plush, tulle, and rich damask were fabrics of choice for Worth gowns. The lines and silhouettes were not particularly

noteworthy or different from other fashionable gowns. He made dresses for all occasions, including day dresses, evening and ball gowns, and wedding or debutante gowns, among others as demanded by clients. The trims were exquisite whatever the occasion and included the best quality of ribbon and lace, cascading knife pleats, fur trimming, and perfectly draped trains that were beautifully embroidered and decorated with birds, shells, feathers, wheat motifs, butterflies, leaves, flowers, and scalloped edging. Rich embroidery and beading was only the best, in gold and silver thread and beading with complicated designs and details. In the late 1880s, Worth pared down the trimmings and puffed the sleeves as was the style. Exaggerated flouncing at the shoulders and necklines refocused the eye upwards. Like other designers, not only in fashion, but in housing and decorative art as well, there was a great reverence and lots of borrowing from other centuries in a Worth gown. Couturier gowns were well known, as were Saville Row suits for men, for their impeccable fit and cut that flattered all figures with perfectly placed and perfectly constructed seams and gathers. Without a doubt, when wealthy U.S. women wanted the very best luxury dresses, they went to Paris and visited the House of Worth.

REFORM IN WOMEN'S DRESS

The complete opposite of the haute couture gowns so coveted by U.S. women in the Gilded Age was represented by the Dress Reform Movement, which became increasingly popular in the 1880s. The roots of dress reform were closely intertwined with the movement for health reform. With cities becoming increasingly populated and dirty, health was of great concern to many. Health reformers pleaded for people to attain a healthy and fit body, to wear natural bodices, to take lots of fresh air, eat pure food, and drink clean water. Many people did not agree with traditional allopathic medicine, like blood letting, and they turned to homeopathy, hydrotherapy, hypnosis, medical phrenology, vegetarianism, physical education, and dress reform. For a healthy body and life, prevention of disease was seen as the key, and reformers were anti-prescription and anti-apothecary, rejecting the tonics and medicines recommended by traditional doctors. Women were finally allowed to become physicians, and they, along with some reformers, were able to stress the understanding of how the woman's body worked and debunk the myths that surrounded women's health at the time, including that corsets were healthy for the body.

Despite the etiquette books and the strong views of many in society, there was some rejection of the popular fashions of the late nineteenth century. Reformers, who had been vocal earlier in the nineteenth century, said that fashionable dress restricted movement and deformed the body, causing unnecessary stress to the skeleton. Dresses were unhealthily heavy to wear, and corsets that constricted the rib cage

caused injury to the inner organs. Long skirts (especially those with a long train out the back) were generally unsanitary, as they dragged along the ground and brought up dirt, insects, and sometimes even vermin into the skirt, which was then brought into the house. The main goal of reformers was to make dress more healthy for women, and they mainly attacked clothing styles that were worn outside the house. The clothing worn in the home, such as looser tea gowns and house dresses, was not as maligned, as it often allowed women to remove their corsets and wear looser garments. There were many differing views on how to reform dress. Some reformers just wanted to alter the underpinnings by loosening the undergarments. This was interpreted as loosening the woman's morals because prostitutes did not wear corsets. Other reformers wished to keep the fashionable look, but sought to create less constricting methods of achieving that look. It was thought that reforming underwear could be the best solution, as it did not alter the outside appearance of the fashions but made the clothing healthier and less restrictive. More flexible corsets, bloomers, and equestrian tights were all things that were more comfortable and reformers encouraged women to adopt these garments. More radical reformers wanted completely new clothing and styles that allowed for active life and greater participation in society. Trousers were a good example of this kind of radical proposal in dress reform that had been laughed off in the 1850s when Amelia Bloomer (1818–1894) first tried to promote the style. Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) was a vocal supporter of dress reform, speaking out against the restrictive clothing women were expected to wear. When trousers were introduced again later in the century, those women who wore them were considered anti-fashion. Promoters of aesthetic dress for women called for complete reform in underwear, abandoning the corset completely, and promoting the loose "*aesthetic*" gowns that looked more like nightgowns than anything a fashionable lady would wear outside her bedroom. Styles readily promoted by reformers of all kinds were the basic house dress called the Mother Hubbard, the tea gown, and the wrapper. These became popular dresses women wore for comfort at home.

Dress reform was not a new concept. People of the day recalled the laughable bloomers that were shunned in the middle of the nineteenth century when Amelia Bloomer first tried to convince an unwilling public to adopt the bifurcated garment. By the end of the century, however, with the great concern about health in general, fitness was seen as important for both men and women, and physical activity was encouraged by doctors, but the state of women's health in particular was deeply troubling as the extent of corseting and the tight lacing to manipulate the body to a fashionable silhouette was thought to cause ill health. Dress reformers were different from those who promoted aesthetic dress, but they are in many ways intertwined with the aesthetic movement, with slightly different inspirations often resulting in similar demands of fashion—a more

comfortable, natural mode of dress. People started to question social values of all kinds, and this attitude included criticizing the role of women in society, the evils of alcohol, and the artificial forms that fashion took. Critics said fashion was bad for women, meaning that they would never be full members of society unless they could shed the constricted clothing that lead to political oppression and economic dependence on men. Women's behavior was controlled by social strictures. Etiquette books abounded, explaining in minute detail what was acceptable behavior in every situation and what should be worn for which occasion. These books were best sellers, and most households had copies to refer to when unsure of what was appropriate in a given situation. Women adhered to the strict rules for fear of ridicule or being ostracized. Women were closely scrutinized in action and appearance. If rules were ignored or misunderstood, it could cost a lady her place in fashionable society. Women were very conscious of their clothing as indicators of their personal value, and clothing seen as a mediator of social relationships. Clothing was different in the public and private spheres, and by no means was it considered appropriate to wear clothing typically reserved for the boudoir outside on the street. Reformers included both men and women, who were educators, physicians, feminists, artists, architects, members of communal religious groups, educated people, actresses, dancers, opera singers, and club women concerned about women's role in society. City women of the privileged classes did volunteer work with women's organizations or worked on committees but also were working on the achievement of impeccable social position.

Artistic Dress

The Aesthetic Movement started in the 1830s and lasted until well into the twentieth century, until approximately the 1930s. Though the movement started with the British, it spread through Europe and North America during the century. It was a reaction in a time when following fashion meant you were modern, and fashionable women were perceived as progressive in terms of social values, hierarchy within society, and control over nature (e.g., the natural shape of the body). Aesthetic dress was philosophically different from dress reform. It originated with the Pre-Raphaelite Movement in art, originated when a group of painters in Britain became disillusioned with the general direction of visual art, in which they included fashion. They thought fashion was unnatural and ugly and sought to reform the ideas around dress. The main idea of the movement was to promote greater appreciation for all things natural, as well as to promote a more natural visual style. Artists such as William Morris are closely linked to the Aesthetic Movement. His textile designs, with their natural themes of printed leaves and muted natural colors, continue to appeal to people today. Aesthetic Movement artists painted

women in dresses specifically designed for the painting session (a sitting), not in clothing that the women would have worn outside of the studio. So it is difficult to attribute any fashion movement based on the clothing of women in the paintings, but there are multiple sources, some mocking the movement (e.g., *Punch* magazine regularly satirized the group with unflattering images of women who looked like men and men who were very effeminate). These styles were inspired not by the current trends in dress, but from the clothing of the Medieval and Renaissance eras. After the 1850s, they were also inspired by anything Japanese (especially for fabrics). The styles they developed were really only worn by followers of the Aesthetic Movement. By the 1880s and 90s in the United States, the Aesthetic Movement in dress was being promoted by British poet and playwright Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), who undertook a lecture tour in 1882 to promote the ideas. He is said to have dressed for his lectures in a version of the aesthetic dress in an attempt to make the point. This velvet outfit combined knee breeches, which at this point were mainly worn by young boys, and a loose-fitting jacket and shirt. He added to the overall look with a soft, wide collar, and flowing necktie, and wore his hair long, which added to the relaxed look of the whole style, but also made him look all the more effeminate. This was at a time when most men dressed in tailored, well-fitting suits in somber colors for serious business in a competitive business world. The idea of wearing such youthful and effeminate clothing was laughable given the cut-throat world of business that had developed in the late nineteenth century. And that was precisely the point Wilde was trying to make in dressing the part. The Aesthetic Movement promoted beauty, comfort, and health, not harsh lines and rigidity.

For women, the aesthetic look was also looser and less structured in the torso, freeing women's bodies to take a more natural shape, which many found laughable or indecent. Many fashionable women wore the tea gown, which was a much looser-fitting dress, but this was reserved for wear in the privacy of the home, not out in public. Dressing for activities outside the home was still much more structured, and it seemed out of place to wear the more comfortable styles in public. Those women who adopted the aesthetic style had a more languid, relaxed look about them. Some thought made them look disheveled and inappropriate, with loosely styled hair and a more natural posture. The shapes varied from decade to decade, with tubular empire lines, to wide skirts, bustles, and then back again to the empire line. Emphasis was placed on the bust at one point, then the waist, then shoulders, and so on. In the 1890s, the aesthetic women's style took on the very wide leg-of-mutton sleeves that were stylish for all women, but this was because the large sleeves allowed for easier movement and thus went along with the philosophy of the movement. Overall, the look was one that many considered "*undress*," and although it was comfortable and healthier, women for the most part were not comfortable with the idea of being so casual in public, so the movement never gained a

mass following. It was meant to show the body in its natural state as a beautiful thing, not needing excessive manipulation of corsets and bustles, but the appreciation was not widely shared by society as a whole.

The Aesthetic Movement was important by virtue of the ideas it promoted, and it points out the failings of the prevailing fashions of the time. Fashion limited what women could do. As they could not move freely in the gowns, so their behavior was determined by the clothing they wore. The movement toward more natural lines and appreciation of the natural form as espoused by the leaders of this movement allow us a window into an alternate lifestyle. The movement underscores that there were of course prevailing fashions accepted by large numbers of people, and those reflected the time, but in the Gilded Age there were groups of people who vehemently opposed the dominant fashions for fundamental reasons. The Aesthetic Movement took a more naturalistic approach to life in a time when artifice was highly valued and people competed for everything from business to achieving a certain place in society. Not everyone was in agreement with the prevailing customs, and it is important to see that there were alternatives, even among the moneyed classes, to the fashions and behaviors of the time.

Maternity and Nursing Clothing

In the nineteenth century, it was not at all acceptable to flaunt a growing belly during pregnancy, and women did everything they could to conceal the fact that they were pregnant, so conservative were the behaviors and attitudes about sex. For this reason, there is little information about how pregnant women dressed, and few advertisements and extant examples of maternity clothes. By the middle of the nineteenth century, when clothing was so fitted it was hard to wear regular dresses for the whole pregnancy, women wore clothing that was specially made to accommodate the growing belly. Corsets had to be adjustable to expand as the pregnancy progressed, and women wore large shawls to conceal the belly. But mostly, women stayed home, especially at the end of the pregnancy when it became too difficult to conceal it. It was thought at the time that confinement and resting for long periods before and after birth was the best for the mother's and baby's health. Women would not have needed to worry as much about their attire if they were confined to their beds. Dresses that women did wear included the Mother Hubbard style with the loose fabric hanging freely from under the yoke, and the less constrictive tea gowns. Both were appropriate for women who were expecting.

Nursing a baby presented another challenge for women in the face of the prudishness of the Victorian times, but, by the 1890s, Montgomery Ward was advertising nursing corsets with removable flaps that made it easier for women to nurse their babies. It would have been very difficult

to have to undress completely in order to nurse, given the complex dress designs and all the underpinnings.

Wedding Attire

The debutante dress of all white was the first of the adult woman's important gowns. She wore this to her coming out ball, and it was exceedingly important that it be perfect so she would be launched into society and onto the marriage market properly in hopes of finding the most suitable husband. Once she found him, the wedding planning could begin, with all the details and traditions that were expected. The white wedding gown was of paramount importance in certain circles and indicated purity.

Weddings were reported in newspapers and readers devoured the detailed descriptions of the bride's and bridesmaid's dresses. The newspaper reports are excellent sources for costume historians researching the bridal toilette. The bridal outfits closely followed current fashions, so bustles came and went, and in the 1890s the large sleeves and tight waists were incorporated in wedding dresses. Wedding dresses were not always white or ivory. Often women, especially when married in the afternoon, wore colored dresses instead of white ones. Wedding dresses were sometimes re-styled and used again after the wedding, as was the custom of the upper classes in the 1880s. A lady wore her wedding dress on the occasion of hosting her first dinner party. Men's dress changed very little, and they wore the same somber colors they did every day.

The bridal toilette or trousseau included many garments, such as her wedding dress and going-away-dress, corsets (decorated with orange blossoms), chemises, trimmed shirts, wrappers, dressing gowns, nightdresses, collars and cuffs, stockings, shoes, gloves and other articles the bride would take with her from her childhood home to her married home.

The bridal dress of the late 1870s and into the early part of the eighties was made of heavy plain or corded silk, merino, alpaca, crape (crepe), lawn, lace, or muslin, depending time of year. Cuirass bodice dresses had high necks covering the bride's chest, and long sleeves covered her arms. The skirt followed along the fashion cycle of the bustle, which was high in the back until the long lean silhouette of the princess style became fashionable, lowering the bustle to the knees with a long train. The full bustle appeared again for wedding dresses in the mid-eighties. A long train was often used in white weddings even when not in fashion for day wear, and often trains were separate pieces attached at the waist that trailed quite far behind the bride as she walked up the aisle. The long train was carried by young boys dressed in their Lord Fauntleroy suits who were called "train bearers." In the late seventies and early eighties,

the great swathes of fabric were pulled from the front and piled artfully onto the back and formed into a train. On her head, the bride wore a bonnet, and a long or short lace or tulle veil (sometimes over her face) or a garland of orange blossoms on top of her head. In her kid-gloved hands, the bride carried a bouquet of white flowers such as orange blossoms (real or silk). Very little was needed in terms of jewelry. If worn at all, it was limited to simple pearls or diamonds. On her feet, the bride wore white satin slippers over white stockings, sometime decorated with clocks, as was fashionable at the time. The more lace decorations there were weighing the bridal gown down, the wealthier she appeared to be.

The going-away outfit is something that has endured over the century since the Gilded Age. It is a suit used by the bride to change into after the ceremony and reception as she leaves the party to head off on her honeymoon and her new life with her husband. This dress was often used for traveling, so it was designed in much the same way a traveling suit would have been. It may have been made of neutral-colored silk in a walking-dress style, but with some fancier trimming to make it special. On her head the bride wore a smart bonnet. This outfit could have also been worn as the wedding outfit for those married in very small informal ceremonies, especially for second marriages.

The 1890s style was rather less elaborate than the styles of 1870s and 1880s. The bodice was simple and plain cut, narrow waisted, with a skirt that lay smoothly over the bride's hips and reached to the floor. The fullness of the train spilled to the floor and extended back for a short distance. The bodice was the focus of attention with its huge sleeves, and it was decorated with vertical tucks, folds, and pouched panels. The waist was often wrapped in a large sash. If a bodice was not tucked and pouched it had a square or oval yoke with chiffon or lace frills, creating a high, boned, upstanding collar. Wedding dresses were consistently ivory in color once more, and this trend continued well into the next century for formal weddings. Up until the present day, many young brides dream of a white wedding.

Bridesmaids were dressed alike and much less elaborately than the bride, but they often also wore white or a lighter color such as pink, with white tulle overlay trimmed with flowers. Bridesmaids wore a veil like the bride until the 1890s, but it was usually shorter than the bride's. Bridesmaids in the wedding wore colorful contrasting colors to the bride's white in the seventies and eighties, although the tradition of a white wedding had the bridesmaids dressed in white like the bride until this time. Small fancy hats were perched on top of piled-up hair for bridesmaids.

The wedding dress was different for women who were marrying for the second time. Widows, for example, did not wear white dresses but

wore more neutral tones. The dresses were less elaborate than those worn in a first marriage, and the bridesmaids also wore neutral colors, though they were lighter than the color worn by the bride.

Mourning Clothes

Etiquette dictated the dress for formal occasions such as weddings and mourning. There were strict rules about what was appropriate given each stage of mourning. Queen Victoria was notoriously dressed in mourning clothes from 1861, when her beloved Albert died, until her death in 1901, and she attracted great attention to what one wore upon the death of a family member. While the queen maintained her mourning period for her lifetime, there were less drastic prescribed periods that were acceptable throughout the Gilded Age. A widow wore mourning clothes for two years, a child mourning a mother or father observed mourning dress for one year, and parents mourning children also wore mourning clothes for one year. Mourning a grandparent, brother, or sister lasted six months, while the mourning period for an aunt or uncle lasted three months. Of course, it is logical that some people could be in constant mourning clothes, especially if they came from a large extended family, as they would probably have been continually in mourning for someone. Not only was a lady's dress affected, but her social interactions were also curtailed in respect to the person who had died. There were different stages of mourning as well, with full mourning requiring dull black dress lacking any ornamentation and a black veil called a "*weeping veil*," and second mourning where women could start to add certain jewelry, lace trimming, and other ornamentation. The veil could be lifted from the face in second mourning, but was still placed on top of the head. The half mourning period near the end of the prescribed time allowed even more ornamentation and then a move back into colorful fabrics of all kinds, until the time when the fashionable dress of the day was finally allowed.

Mourning clothes were usually black and generally followed the silhouettes of fashionable dress, but the use of material was dictated, and the fads of fashion were avoided. The clothing was meant to be very plain, showing little tendency to fashion, which made those women in mourning stand out in the crowd of other women in their finery or bows and ruffles. Crepe fabric was the basis of dresses in this period, with very plain linen or cambric trims, collars, and cuffs. For women of lesser means, going into mourning proved very expensive, as a whole new wardrobe was needed. Many dyed their own clothes black for the period and then bleached them back once they were out of mourning. For others who wore the same dresses day after day there was a certain amount of wear and tear, so the sections of crepe that were worn out or had holes were simply patched up with new fabric.

Clothing for Sports and Leisure

Sports were rapidly becoming popular with U.S. women in the last part of the 1800s. Women rode horses, played tennis, golfed, swam, did gymnastics, walked and hiked, roller and ice skated, and most of all, they were crazy for bicycle riding. All women were encouraged to participate in activity to keep healthy, but competitive sport was frowned upon as being too much against the natural character of women, who were perceived as dainty, agreeable, and passive. Competition was considered far too masculine. Having said that, with women's colleges emerging at the time there were some associated competitive sports for women. Whatever the sport, however, it was unlikely that women could move well enough in their fashion clothing to participate well. They required entirely different sets of clothing to play at sports. These outfits included shortened skirts, as well as split skirts conducive to riding a bicycle, which in the 1890s developed into a kind of trouser women could wear. A gymnasium suit in the nineties was a long, belted tunic with a yoke and puffed sleeves, and knee-length trousers tightened at the knees worn with stockings and flexible slippers that tied around the foot and lower leg.

The bicycle costume of the 1890s included a tailored, waist-length jacket, in a short double breasted design with wide revers and large leg-of-mutton sleeves with tight forearm. The blouse worn underneath the

Female students wearing exercise garments including knee-length bloomers and long-sleeved tunics, ca. 1899. (Library of Congress)

jacket was tied at the neck with an ascot-style tie. The rider wore very wide, knee-length pants that were tightened at the knees, giving the legs a balloon effect. These were worn with stockings and boots.

The bathing costume of the late seventies and early eighties included full coverage of the body because showing much bare skin was impossible given the moral climate of the time. The bathing suit was made of dark-colored (or red) alpaca, serge, or bengaline fabric made into a loose-fitting short-sleeved top with very large short sleeves, a lace-trimmed fall collar, buttoned down the front and tied at the waist with a fabric belt. The bodice was long and ended around the knees, but the lady also wore dark, knee-length trousers with lace-trimmed, gathered knees. On their feet female bathers wore tie-up, flat, Roman-style sandals. All of these garments when saturated with water made for a heavy outfit that did not dry quickly. In the mid-eighties and nineties, there was more skin showing in the bathing costume, with wider necklines in a square or V-shape, and they were sleeveless. The top was quite long and belted at the waist, and women wore knee-length trousers that were loose at the bottom. Women bathers also wore hats of flimsy fabric in a number of designs, some with lace trimming and others with small visors at the front. Women would change into these outfits in small changing huts on wheels that could be moved to the water's edge with the door opening onto the water. In this way, women could discreetly change into their bathing costumes and not be seen by anyone on the beach.

Fencing was another sport women found entertaining, and to participate in it they would wear simple, long tennis skirts, no corset, and an easy-fitting high-necked blouse with long sleeves. On her hands the lady would wear buckskin gauntlet gloves to protect the skin from gashes, and draped around her waist she wore a long fabric sash that hung low on the hips in a knot. She wore the same style of face-protecting mask as fencers use in present-day competition, with a full, round dome of wired mesh covering the whole face.

Lawn tennis was becoming increasingly popular in the Gilded Age, and by the 1880s there was a mode of dress specifically for women players. Skirts were considerably shorter, coming to mid-calf length, but they still had at least two layers of fabric, and an over skirt gathered or bowed at the back. The bodice was high necked and long or short sleeved and was covered with a crewel-work tennis apron or pinafore with a pocket. Women also wore a longer polonaise with less decoration than day wear normally dictated, but still quite long in the skirts. Hats varied in style from the tam-o'-shanter to a straw or cloth bonnet that was less decorated than regular daywear. In a time when the knees were quite restricted, the tennis dress pulled in considerably less than regular clothing, which allowed women to take a longer stride. The nineties tennis suit had wide shoulders, a ruffled blouse, a small waist, and a long wide

skirt. Ladies wore a flat-crowned, wide-brimmed hat perched on top of their heads.

In the late seventies and early eighties, roller skating was popular with women. They would strap on shoe-shaped platforms fitted with four wheels over their shoes. Skating dresses did not have trains, but they would feature attention to detail at the knees in the back and the long, fitted, cuirass bodice, with fitted arms and long vertical lines. For ice skating, women would wear gowns. On top they would add a long, warm plush or wool coat and a muff.

Fashions of Rural Women and Women in the Wild West

The Mother Hubbard

Rural women were often seen wearing the Mother Hubbard dress. This dress style is likely named for the character in the nursery rhyme and the illustrations that accompanied the original *The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog*, written by Sarah Catherine Martin (1768–1826). The dress was often made of cotton fabric in colors or patterns and had a high neck and yoke covering the chest. From under the yoke the rest of the gown fell from ample gathers into a loose flowing skirt, all made from one piece of fabric. It had long full sleeves that tightened at the wrists and was worn with either a soft corseting, or no corset at all. The style required fewer petticoats, so it was comfortable and easy to wear. The Mother Hubbard was worn by rural women but also adopted as a morning house dress or maternity frock by urban women seeking comfort and coverage. In the city, it was considered unacceptable to wear the loose dress out of the house, though as time progressed some dared. They were chastised by mayors and others in the city who disapproved of the seemingly vulgar attire, considered too loose to be proper.

For rural women, however, the Mother Hubbard was a practical way to cover up while working at intensely physical and frequently dirty tasks. Rural women could not dress in fashionable gowns of the day, with bustles or tightly tied knees. These styles were not conducive to doing any kind of physical activity, and on farms most of the work involved a lot of exertion, dirt, and heat. The Mother Hubbard was the best option for farm women. They tucked the ample skirts up into the bands of their petticoats or drawers and went about their work. Farm women also shortened their skirts somewhat so that the dirt and dust from the farmyard would not soil the skirts as quickly, meaning less frequent laundering. They adjusted current styles to suit their physical jobs, and unlike those ladies in the urban centers who barely moved in a day, farm women had to consider heavy lifting, dirt from animals, cooking, and cleaning in their fashion choices. It was not that rural women did not follow fashion. Quite the opposite. They read with interest about what was being worn by

The Dangers of Wearing a Mother Hubbard Dress

In some states, the Mother Hubbard was considered so indecent, unless it was belted, that women could be heavily fined. Fargo, North Dakota, and the state of Oregon posted bills in the mid 1880s informing women that they would face fines if they wore the dress in public, as it would "scare the horses and ruin business" (*New York Times*, October 26, 1884). In Chicago, the Mother Hubbard was closely associated with prostitution, although the style was usually altered, with the neckline cut lower and hemline higher. Some rural women faced with grueling work also faced fines for wearing trousers in public.

fashionable women, and when they were required to go into town, they wore better dresses or belted their Mother Hubbard dress. Women had better dresses for wearing to church on Sundays, and for special occasions, but there was always a certain practicality that was not seen in the very fashionable gowns of the urban wealthy and middle class women.

The Wild West

The Wild West was largely a man's world, populated solely by men at first, who were clearing land and making homes for their families to join them later when things were more established. The women who made their way West were often particularly strong, independent women, often looking for an alternative to the highly controlled and etiquette-driven lives they had led in the East. They were eager to shed all the trappings that the etiquette books instructed, and they were looking for a life that was less stifling. Women living in the towns and villages in the Wild West were certainly not unaware of or unconcerned about fashion. With magazines, newspapers, and mail-order catalogs easily accessible, fashion information flowed from the large cities. Most people living in towns in the West wore the same types of clothing as those in the urban east. Depending on the trade or profession of the person, the clothing was largely uniform, so bankers, lawmen, nurses, merchants, and teachers looked all as they did back East. And as the century closed, all kinds of goods could easily be shipped westward with the ever expanding railway system. This meant that those women who were interested in fashion, and many women were eager to keep up with current fashion trends despite living in relative isolation in the west, could purchase and wear fashionable clothing. Women who lived in the towns though looked different from the women living on farms. The clothing worn by working and farm women out west roughly matched the clothing worn by the same working women in the east, though the perception of stylishness was that those women secluded in the west were less well dressed and far behind the times in terms of their clothing. In the Wild West, being up to date on the latest fashions was considered a mark of civility, and people considered frontier dress a mark of low social status or crudeness. For those women who were in some ways running away from their lives back East, it was liberating to shed the rigid corsets and restrictive fashions and adopt the simple, shorter house dresses and Mother Hubbard made of washable cotton. The dresses still maintained

some of the design details of popular fashion, but only those that still allowed the women to work hard and move freely. So women would have ribbons as decoration or small lace trims at the neckline and sleeve cuffs, but nothing as fancy or elaborate as was seen on the cuirass or princess style dresses of the late 1870s or 1880s. Large puffed sleeves of the 1890s translated well to the plain cotton frocks worn by women in the West. With several sets of clothing, women were bound to dress at least in some fashionable styles if only on Sundays or for special parties. Most often, though, women wore simple day dresses rather than the extremely fashionable and often impractical styles that were in fashion in the bigger cities.

DRESSING FOR DOMESTIC SERVICE

The nineteenth century was the beginning of uniform dressing for all kinds of people. Different professions could be distinguished from one another by the uniform they wore. Those women who worked in domestic service were, for the most part, expected to "put on the livery," which was a uniform bought and paid for by the household where the young women worked. In past centuries, in England and France, the livery of a household was often designed to distinguish those servants of one household from others when they were out without their mistress or master. So the designs of the uniforms were sometimes colored in such a way to match one another, and were often branded with the coat of arms or other distinguishing mark of the household. They could in fact be quite elaborate costumes made of beautiful and luscious fabrics like silk (in the eighteenth century for example) and brocade. This was not so in the nineteenth century in America. Uniforms were much more plain. Wearing a uniform for domestic service was considered by some as an outward sign of servility, which was undemocratic and very un-American. Many disliked or refused to wear a uniform, and it caused no end of grief to the mistress of a household when a servant refused to cooperate.

Domestic service was an occupation for women in a society where women had increasingly greater options for work. There were still, however, limits on what an uneducated woman could do. Irish immigrant women, who arrived in the United States poor, single, unskilled, and uneducated were often employed as domestic servants. Many Irish girls had come to the United States because of the potato famine in the middle of the century, and they continued to immigrate well afterwards, escaping the devastation left in the wake of the famine. There was a ready workforce, and middle class women in the United States were also more in a position to hire servants, given their newly acquired wealth. As they settled into lifestyles with more leisure, no longer needing to be part of the production of goods in the new economy, they were expected to *consume* them. They found they had less time for keeping their own homes, and they needed help.

Many maids lived in the house of service, and they were paid well considering they were not expected to contribute money for room, board, or laundry. Thus, domestic service was for some a desirable occupation, much preferred to working in a shop or factory. It was only after the turn of the century that a revolution of sorts in domestic service occurred, where servants lived out and came to work daily. This changed the nature of the relationship for both the mistress and the servants, who then had more free time to explore the outside world, connect with their cultural community, have families of their own, and so on.

There was thought to be quite a problem with domestic servants at this time, and guidebook upon guidebook was written to help the mistress manage her household staff. Rules were firmly established in books like *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, in which issues of etiquette and behavior were outlined in detail so as to clear up any confusion about the proper roles of the mistress and her servants. Each of the household staff were set straight as far as understanding what was expected of them in the job, but also how to behave outside the residence. If, for example, the maid happened across her mistress in public, it was unacceptable to address her, and she would act as if the servant did not exist. Certainly there were many instances where domestic servants were accepted as part of the family, but it was not encouraged if a mistress was to successfully manage her house. Wearing a uniform was part of the process of making clear distinctions between the servant girl and the mistress of the house. In order to put the domestic servant in her place, and to constantly remind her of that position, livery was seen as the perfect way to maintain control. However, many servants were uneasy with wearing a uniform, and this added to the problems between mistress and servant. In a supposedly classless society, where rigid lines were not formally drawn between people, unlike in England or Europe, separating the family from the maids and other domestic servants was not always welcome. Many of the domestic servants were in fact immigrants from Europe, who had come to the United States to get away from a rigid class system and experience freedom. They were particularly unhappy about having to participate in domestic work in the first place, never mind being forced to wear a uniform that further set them apart and made them feel marginalized by their mistresses.

There are many small distinguishing details within uniforms that can be used to identify one servant's job over another. Waitresses wore different styles of aprons and mob caps than chambermaids, and laundry girls wore different clothes altogether because of the nature of their heavy, wet, and hot work. For morning, however, in a proper household, the servant was expected to wear a morning toilette of printed fabric dresses and aprons. In the afternoon and evening, the servant was expected to change clothing and wear a dark-colored (often black) dress with a white apron and cap. Of particular importance to the

mistresses in this time was that the maid be clean, with clean teeth, fingernails, and hair. She was expected to have a daily bath and wear only freshly washed undergarments.

In some photographs, maids are represented in dresses that vaguely follow the fashions of their mistresses. For example, a maid's dress in the bustle period may have had a slight accent to the rear as a gesture to current fashions. As more ready-made clothing was made available to more people, domestic service girls were able to spend their money (many were able to have extra money from their pay thanks to having no living expenses) on lesser quality, but still highly fashionable dresses that looked much like those worn by their mistresses. This caused concern on the part of the mistress, who wanted their domestic staff to look their place in the social spectrum. Many servants did not, however, have enough time to themselves to bother with fashionable street clothing. Service was an occupation that took up nearly all a girl's waking hours, depending on her job in the household. She had two distinct sets of clothing, one for work and one for her off time.

JEWISH AMERICAN IMMIGRANT CLOTHING: A STORY OF ASSIMILATION

Jewish immigrant women had distinct challenges in coming to the United States. Many observed the orthodox rules of dress, so shedding their ideas of acceptable clothing styles took time and meant they had to learn whole new methods of dressing and grooming if they wanted to assimilate into their new culture. Married orthodox immigrant women observed the "minhag," an accepted group of traditions in Judaism, which meant that they shaved their heads. Only their husbands were allowed to see them without some sort of head covering, such as a wig or head scarf. It was essential that women covered their heads when they left the house. Often Jewish women came from Eastern European countries or Russia. Frequently, such women had faced great challenges when their husbands had come to the United States to start their new life (get a job and establish housing), leaving them to raise their children alone and in poverty. They faced challenges when they arrived in the United States. Often their husbands had assimilated into the culture of the city, wearing modern clothing and being less strict about their religious observation. When the women arrived, wearing their old-world clothing styles, the men were often embarrassed, and they quickly encouraged their wives to assimilate through their dress. Many women were told to leave their clothing behind as they would be expected to accumulate new clothing once they arrived.

The clothing they were used to wearing in the old country looked like eighteenth-century peasant garb—drab colors and loose cotton frocks. Everyone in the family would dress in their best clothing on the Sabbath,

but for other days of the week it was unacceptable to dress in their best. Often they did not even wear shoes except on the Sabbath. Given the lack of money and customs regarding clothing, dress styles changed little over time. The fashions worn in New York and Chicago (where many Jewish immigrants settled) were very different and extravagant by comparison. Women who chose to assimilate cast off their wigs and head scarves and adopted the more colorful and elaborate styles of the American women they saw on the streets of the big cities. Women shopped in department stores if they could afford it, or bought fabrics and garments from market stalls or small shops in their neighborhoods where they could barter on the price. Assimilation into U.S. society was seen as important to new (especially younger) immigrants. Reform-minded men and women were instrumental in attempting to assimilate women into their new homes, which were often in the poor tenements of the big cities.

Reformers wanted to educate immigrant women in the proper etiquette of their new home. Jane Addams started Hull House in Chicago's west side in 1889 and taught domestic life skills and home economics to new immigrants. Her teaching, however, was based on British Victorian morals, values, and standards, which were decidedly different from those of immigrants. Rules of dress were taught as part of this education, and women were educated as to what types of garments were acceptable for which occasions. The role of clothing in assimilating into U.S. culture was key to the transformation from the old world to the new world. Recent immigrants could look the part as they became American. Women bought or made their clothing in U.S. styles in order to fit in. Young women were especially enthusiastic about adopting new fashions. Because they often worked outside the home (in shops or garment factories), they felt they needed to dress for their new lives. They felt they could spend a certain amount of money on their clothing, especially if they worked in shops where they would be judged on their appearance. The young women often overdid the excesses of style with high heels, tight skirts they could barely walk in, tight corsets, and very fancy hats. Though they had little money, they could obtain many items through bartering or making their own clothes. They then decorated them with even more flamboyant and excessive bows and swaths in an attempt to look more American. They also often wore too much makeup for conventional tastes and hairstyles that were seen as excessively extravagant, These young women appeared to feel that they had to keep up with the current fashions if they were going to fully assimilate. Many young women were criticized, especially by older women, for not being more judicious with their money and for spending it on fashion and appearing gaudy. The etiquette books that abounded at the time were often directed at new immigrants. They constantly pleaded for and directed these young women to be more tasteful in their clothing choices and to

act a certain way if they were going to fit in. Some followed the advice and some did not. Even though many never left their own predominantly Jewish neighborhoods, they were judged, especially young women and girls, on their abilities to look American.

For many immigrant women, it was too difficult to continue in their old world traditions and many lost their religious faith as they made efforts to assimilate. The United States offered them the freedom to choose their actions and beliefs. Women would not only dress up on the Sabbath, a day traditionally reserved for wearing their best clothes, but would take time every day to look their best and wear good clothes.

CLOTHING OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

The post Civil War era meant that many African Americans who had previously been enslaved were eventually freed from their masters and the rules they had previously been forced to live by. Enslaved people had been provided with their clothing by their masters, who would buy bulk clothing and yard goods that could be used to make whatever other garments were needed. Unfortunately, the provisions were usually sparse, with enslaved children allowed two long shirts per year, and perhaps a pair of shoes until puberty when they were expected to work in jobs that required more clothing. The fabrics were ordered in bulk, and the slave owner would determine what garments would be made out of the goods. He then passed along the instructions to the slave women themselves to produce the clothing. Although all owners were likely different in their provisions of clothing, some more generous and some less so, the clothing was generally hard to come by, poor quality, and often wore out before the new set of garments was available. Children were severely underdressed and would have to go naked if they wore out their two knee-length linen shirts allotted each year, until the new ones were made. Women were provided with different kinds of dresses depending on their roles within the plantation, but they generally wore chemises, turbans, head scarves, sun bonnets or palmetto hats, and brogan shoes. They had warmer, simple frocks or slip dresses for winter, and cooler, cotton fabric dresses for summer. Enslaved women were expected to make under-drawers with whatever fabrics they could muster up. Sometimes they used the legs of men's trousers to fashion some kind of underwear that would suffice. Men had two pairs of trousers, one coat, a hat and pair of shoes. Some slaves, both men and women, were sometimes given the cast-off garments of their owners, much in the same way domestic help were sometimes paid in Europe with grand gowns. In the case of the slaves, however, these were hardly grand gowns, and were basic and utilitarian, though much better quality than what was otherwise provided.

Enslaved people were allowed some choice in their dress for special occasions. For weddings or other festivities they would wear as fancy

Four African American students dressed in long skirts and white shirtwaists in 1899. The women also wear straw boaters on their heads. (Library of Congress)

clothing as could be afforded, and some were given cast-off garments from the plantation family. For special dances or social gatherings, which were few, women did attempt to add cheer with extra color and decoration, though the garments were still very plain.

It is very hard to locate extant garments made and worn by freed African American slaves from the nineteenth century, so commenting on their fashion and dress is difficult. Slave dress is recorded and shows what was bought and worn by the workers, but, once freed, there is little evidence about what was worn. There are some generalities that can be gleaned from the photographs available, but as with all photography of this period, these costumes are not necessarily indicative of what was actually worn. As with portraits of the past centuries, women dressed up when they planned to have their image taken, and would not necessarily have worn even their own clothing, but instead could have rented outfits for the occasion.

Once slavery was abolished, and the slaves were finally free in the last part of the nineteenth century, many chose to remain on the plantations as paid workers. The skills that women had acquired making all their own garments were useful for some of the women who chose to work outside the plantations. They often became highly skilled, and in some cases were highly sought after, seamstresses, providing gowns for elite women. Elizabeth Keckley is best known for being the dressmaker, friend, and confidante of Abraham Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln. She was also present at the Columbia Fair, the World's Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. Keckley was very fashionably dressed, in the manner

of any well-to-do white woman, and styled her hair and clothing according to the latest fashion.

African American women also filled jobs in the garment factories of the Gilded Age, as well as often becoming domestic help in city homes. In the case of domestic servants, their dress was the same as servants, and they wore uniforms with aprons as would the Irish or Jewish girls who also participated in domestic service at this time. Factory girls dressed in utilitarian garments, but they were as fashionable as they could afford to be given the nature of the hard, hot work they had to do each day.

Women in the post-slavery era wore what they could afford and what suited the occasion best. Ready-made clothing provided them with the opportunity to buy fashionable dress and some did, but for the most part African American women dressed in ways similar to before their freedom for quite a long time, wearing simple cotton dresses of rural style. Eventually, African influences began to creep into the dress worn by these women, though it is only an assumption that women knew of the culturally specific apparel from stories and songs passed down orally over generations. The lost African styles began to take hold and produce a unique mode of dress with color, design, and motifs unique to African heritage.

AMERICAN INDIAN DRESS

During the Gilded Age, American Indian women, like their white counterparts, experienced transitions in their dress styles throughout much of the nineteenth century. While hide clothing had been worn throughout time, and continued to be worn in the period between 1876 and 1900, cloth dresses in the western style were more commonly worn throughout much of the United States. In the southwest, native Americans had been wearing westernized styles since the early 1800s, but they still maintained their traditional dress styles for ceremonial purposes. With more exposure to white people, new technologies, new styles, and new materials all meant that the American Indian women dressed differently from they way they had before. Though entire volumes could be written about the many different styles of American Indian dress, only certain styles will be covered here. For each tribe, the style of dress and the decorations were applied to the dresses differed in manner and symbolism. Often, certain styles of dress and decoration signified the status of the wearer within her tribe. Wealth was shown with more ornate and heavy application of shells, for example, in the trade cloth dresses of the northern plains Indians. Others would apply coins or different-colored beads as signifiers of status and wealth. Though not following the styles of the white women, American Indian women had their own unique, but similar, methods of communicating status through their clothing. Dress was used as protection against the harsh

elements and changing weather but also, clearly, beauty was important. The women made all the clothing and used whatever means they could to construct and decorate their garments and moccasins. The clothing of the Plains Indians women was in transition in the Gilded Age. The people occupied lands from the Mississippi westward to the Rocky Mountains and from Canada to Texas and included tribes such as the Arapahos, Blackfeet, Cheyennes, Comanches, Plains Crees, Pawnees and Sioux, to name a few.

For centuries, Indian women used animal hides to make clothing. The dresses they made were often ornately decorated and cut to use the whole hide. Color was added, sometimes through the use of paint, but most often with beads and dyed porcupine quills that were sewn onto the garments. The main components of a plains Indian women's clothing were a dress, leggings, and moccasins, all made from the skins of animals. Later in the nineteenth century, trade cloth was used to create dresses that were much the same style as those made from animal hides, but were made from rough wool dyed in indigo, red, or yellow. These fabrics, called "trade fabrics" were traded between Europeans and plains Indians and were made in Scotland or England in the wool factories specifically for the American Indian market. The dresses were decorated, as well, in much the same ways as the hide dresses. Women accessorized their outfits with belts, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and hair pipes (a type of thin, long bead often used in breast plates), and then wore robes or shawls as outerwear.

There were three basic styles of hide dresses, and these differed in construction and decoration. Certain tribes favored one design over another, and the style also depended on the type of animal hide chosen. There were the sidefold dress, the two-hide or "tail" dress, and the three-hide dress.

The sidefold dresses were worn by the central plains Indians. This dress style was made from tanned animal skin such as buffalo. The large skin was folded lengthwise and then sewn down the left side with an armhole left open and shoulder strap added to keep the dress from falling down. Each tribe had their own methods of decorating the dress. Often, fringes were left hanging, and they were decorated with lines of beads, shells, or coins in geometric patterns. This style usually had no sleeves and had a straight neck hole with the flap hanging over the top of the bodice to the waist. The skirt was straight and belted at the waist. The belt held a knife pouch (a simple pouch to hold the knife) that hung down. Dresses were decorated with elk teeth, pony beads, and animal tails. The long parts of the skirt (legs of the animal hides) were used to cover the legs for modesty, a practice somewhat similar to that of Victorian women and their ideas on proper etiquette for women. Riding horses meant Indian women had to arrange their skirts to cover their legs. Later, when blankets were commonly used, women covered their legs with blankets while they rode. Sleeves were sometimes made from

the legs of animals and attached, and the yokes were heavily beaded with blue beads.

The two-hide dress was made from two large animal skins joined with side seams. These dresses were mainly worn by the northern plains and plateau Indians, such as the Cheyenne and the Sioux people along what is now the border with Canada. The hides were lined up so that the head of the animal would be at the top, and the two front legs of the animal hide would form the sleeves of the dress. So, there was one long seam from the neckline to the wrist, then from under the armhole to the bottom hem of the skirt. Often, some fur was left on the edges of the dress hems to hang as decoration, and the tail was also left to hang down the center-back of the hem. The dress fell to mid-calf length and had an uneven hemline decorated with colored patches and beaded borders. The fronts and backs of these dresses were identical. Women also decorated these dresses with elk teeth, along with other materials, especially around the 1890s when they started to use brass tacks and coins and designs became much more elaborate. The plateau women had long fringes hanging from the chest, arms, and hem. The hem was uneven with various lengths of fringe. The neckline was decorated with colored beading. The belts worn with this style of dress were sometime very wide, up to eight inches, and very long, with a knife sheath or pouch hanging at the front.

The three-skin dress was worn by Comanche women. It was made from three separate skins—one for the top and two joined together to make the skirt. The heads of the two skins were joined on the right side, while the tails of each skin were joined on the left arm. The sleeves were sewn on the top of the arm and left open underneath so there was a certain cape-like quality to the sleeve design. These dresses were also decorated with beads, quills, and other materials. There were large bands of color applied with paint to the three-hide dresses worn by women in the southern plains. These dresses were much more colorful than those worn by other plains Indians, and had long fringes around the hemlines and hanging from the yoke and sleeves.Tin cones and seed beads or shells were used as decorations. Women of the southern plains also carried fans, wore aprons, belts with metal disks two inches wide and full beaded moccasins. Headdresses included turbans or headbands made of hide, decorated with beads that they wore over their long hair that was braided in two long braids. As with all the other dresses of different plains Indian women, they also wore the knife sheath or pouch dangling from their belts. Unique to this area, ribbon decorations were added to skin dresses, but they were also decorated with cowrie shells in rows along the yoke.

Depending on the design of the dress, belts were sometimes used to pull in the waists, and women wore moccasins, leggings, and robes or shawls. Once fabric was introduced and used more widely, a piece of

cloth could be wrapped around the waist as an apron, particularly on the southern plains. Moccasins were soft-soled hide shoes with beading decorating the tops of the feet. Sometimes the leather leggings that covered the lower leg were incorporated onto the moccasin so as to make a long boot, but moccasins were also often just ankle length. The leggings were sewn on only one side and the seam was usually worn on the outside of the leg. Leggings were knee length. In some tribes, leggings were beaded or decorated with quillwork, or fringes, and were tied at the ankles. The designs were usually in horizontal domestic motifs. Later, leggings were also made of the thick wool traded by Europeans. Belts were often made of leather heavily decorated with beads, usually in geometric patterns, and were very long so they were tied and then left to hang. Knife sheaths were decorated with brass tacks, beads, or other designs.

Robes and shawls were worn for warmth, but also to denote status and a woman's place within the tribe. Wool blankets were worn later, after trade cloth was introduced closer to the end of the nineteenth century. The wool fabric was often in a plaid design, indicating the origins of the fabrics as Scottish and traded by the English and Scots. Robes were also made of bison hides, especially for the highest ranking women.

TRADE CLOTH DRESSES

With the use of trade cloth, sewing and dressmaking changed in the later part of the nineteenth century. Different utensils were needed (such as cutting utensils) to allow simple shaping of the dresses. While the traditional design for dresses closely followed the shape of the animal hide, the cloth dresses could be any shape, so some redesigning was needed. At other times, women abandoned the traditional shape and style of the hide dresses and adopted Western dress styles. The trade cloth ranged in fiber content from heavy, scratchy wool (plain and plaid) to cotton calico, velvet, corduroy, and ticking. The fabrics were Euro-American, made in factories. The coarse wool was navy, red, or sometimes yellow. Early cloth was called "saved-list," and was produced in England. It was essentially a blanket fabric with the selvage edge of white that saved the expensive dye on a piece of fabric that was usually cut off before use anyway. In North America, however, this white border acted as an edge decoration and was valued rather than removed and discarded.

Trade-cloth dress designs varied from area to area and tribe to tribe as they did with the hide dresses. The northern plains Indians created dresses out of two pieces of fabric hemmed straight at the bottom and sewn down both sides, and then they added long, narrow, straight sleeves. The fabric was rough, so the dresses were sometime lined with soft muslin or the women wore undergarments of muslin. The bodice was decorated at the top with rows of elk teeth. The more covered with elk teeth the dress was, the higher the status of the wearer. These

lines were either in half circles or came to a V-shape in the center front, moving diagonally from the shoulders. The neckline was a triangular cut with an insert of colorful fabric in a contrasting color. If the women wore shawls, these were made from plaid wool or cotton.

Some details depended on the tribe or area where the dresses were worn. In the central plains, women's dresses had wider square pieces made into the sleeves rather than long rectangles. The sleeves were not sewn from under the arm to the cuff and were left loose along the bottom, so they had a wing-like appearance similar to that of the plateau-style hide dress. Skirts were made fuller by adding gores (triangular pieces of fabric). The gussets were often longer than the skirts and were left to hang longer at the hem, helping to imitate the uneven hems of the original hide dresses. Ribbons, braid, and eventually metallic sequins were used along with elk teeth (and imitation elk teeth made from carved bones), covering the bodice in various designs. The plateau women trimmed the bottom hem with colored stitching in geometric rows. These women also wore a decorated fabric belt.

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CHAPTER 9

Men's Fashions

OVERVIEW

In the United States by the Gilded Age there was a great variety of clothing worn by men, often based on their profession, their wealth, and where they lived. While some styles crossed from one segment of the population to another, differences in dress style told much about a man and his place within U.S. society. City men dressed in very somber and dark suits that had evolved from the beginning of the nineteenth century and had changed very little. Young men began adopting more casual clothing, often taken from leisure activities and made into day wear, and many men wore clothing they bought in department stores and men's shops in towns and cities, or they ordered their clothes from mail-order catalogs. Upper and middle class men sometimes had their clothing tailored abroad, but only a select few men could afford such luxury. Completely new styles of dress were adopted by the brave frontiersmen as they ventured past the Mississippi to become farmers, ranchers, miners, or cowboys. The rough and dangerous work these men did required rugged and comfortable clothing, not tailored suits, so the market was flooded with the clothing they needed, which at once combined styles worn by the original Spanish cowboys, plus elements from North American Indian dress. Small towns drew populations that included professionals, such as bankers and lawmen, and each group of men dressed to suit their professions and places in society. The contrasts were marked: Men very deliberately dressed to advertise their professions and life stations.

Suit Styles in 1895

In the spring and summer catalog for Montgomery Ward & Co. in 1895, the number of suit styles available for men covered all occasions, including evening and day wear, with complete suits composed of coats, waistcoats, and trousers of different styles.

Suit styles included:

The single-breasted sack-style suit with a high-collared jacket with a rounded cut-away at the front and two flap pockets on the hips, worn over loose trousers.

The single-breasted square-cut suit with a long straight jacket with a high neckline and several flap pockets, worn over baggy trousers.

The double-breasted sack suit had a square cut jacket in the double-breasted style with wide revers (lapels) and two flap pockets on the right hip and one breast pocket on the left. Arms were comfortably loose and the trousers were baggy with slightly tapered ankles.

The three-button cutaway suit included a frock-coat design with a waist seam, three buttons above the waist, and fabric cut on an angle to the back of the knees, showing the front of the trousers from the waist down. The trousers are wide with tapered ankles.

The double-breasted Prince Albert dress coat (named for Queen Victoria's consort) is a knee-length, fitted frock coat with a waist seam and four sets of button on the front to the waist. Under the waist, the fabric is closed, but hangs freely and is not buttoned. The trousers appear from the knee down only.

The full-dress evening suit is a wide-open jacket with deep lapels showing off the short waistcoat underneath and cut straight across the hips in the front falling directly down the back into two pieces or tails. The trousers are smooth in front with no gathering for fullness and fall straight to the instep with little tapering at the ankle.

By the Gilded Age, clothing for men had long been subdued and somber. Status and wealth was no longer exhibited in beautiful costly fabrics, expensive hand-tailoring, and lovely accessories. The interest in fashions of Edward VII, himself a male fashion plate and socialite at the time, for many U.S. men who were striving to achieve a certain level of manliness, was seen as effeminate. Men were more interested in being physically fit, active, and masculine males, nothing like their grandfathers and great grandfathers of previous centuries who wore makeup and paid great attention to fashionable, flamboyant, and beautiful clothes and accessories.

In a departure from previous centuries, men's clothing in the nineteenth century became quite plain, with little or no decoration or color. Unlike the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where men's dress was almost as highly ornate as women's, with ribbons and lush silks, the nineteenth-century man was having none of that. The war of 1812 and the U.S. Civil War was as much responsible for late nineteenth-century men's fashion as anything else. Men became used to wearing well-fitting uniforms, and they wanted to keep on wearing such garments after the wars ended. Men of the Gilded Age were fiercely competitive in business and other pursuits, and the dark-colored suit was worn as a symbol of seriousness and industry. The tailored suit is most often associated with Savile Row in London, where many wealthy U.S. gentlemen ordered their suits. But the middle classes were also wearing the same styles of suits, though often mass produced and bought off the rack. The status of the wearer could be seen not in the richness of the fabrics and the decorations as in the past, but in

details such as fit and tailoring. Any small wrinkle or crease across the back of a jacket was noticed and meant the wearer had not been properly fitted by a tailor. The cut and tailoring were the most important features of a suit. In the United States, though, not all men were urban industrialists, bond traders, or businessmen. Out west, the legendary cowboys dressed in distinct costume, as did the rural farmer, prospector, and different ethnic groups and immigrants. Native American men dressed in distinctive clothing, mainly according to the styles of their tribes, then gradually adopting more European styles. Professional men also wore distinct clothing that reflected what they did, for example, doctors, lawyers, bankers, and shopkeepers often wore clothing that made it easy to distinguish their occupations. Often, simple alterations to the basic suit or additions of colored aprons, or the removal of frock coats were telltale signs of a man's occupations.

As men took to sport and leisure activities such as hunting, tennis, and bicycling, different clothing was required. Newer sports such as cycling and tennis demanded distinct garments to accommodate movement and make the wearer comfortable, and the United States took the lead as far as innovation in styles that were often then adopted by English and European men. A more leisurely style of dress took hold in the United States and in many ways defines and differentiates U.S. men from European men. There was a more relaxed and casual feel to suits that became popular in this period. For instance, the tuxedo is a rather less structured formal evening suit when compared to similar dressy suits for men worn in England.

The United States can also be credited with developing the first properly fitting ready-to-wear suits. This was in part because, during the Civil War, there was a need for mass manufacture of uniforms for soldiers, and so tailors created patterns based on military uniforms and concentrated on fit and finish to produce suits that could be worn by all men. Considered the democratization of dress, this meant that all men could at least look the part of successful businessmen, no matter their income. Tailors created packages of a detailed pattern, cut fabric pieces, buttons, facing, padding, thread, interlining and all that was needed to create the suit, and then passed the package

The "Tux"

The tuxedo suit was first introduced to New York society in 1886 at the Tuxedo Park Club, a social club in the tony neighborhood of Tuxedo Park in New York state. The suit is a version of a smoking jacket without tails, with a loose and comfortable fit suitable for dinners. It has become known as a North American suit and is still commonly worn by men for special occasions, including weddings and formal parties. Also known as "black tie," this suit is made up of a hip-length black jacket with silk fabric trim on the lapels, black trousers with silk trim along the outside seam, a vest or cummerbund, a white tucked shirt with turned-back cuffs and cuff links, a black bow tie, black socks, and patent-leather shoes. The suit is a uniquely American design reflecting the more casual and relaxed nature of U.S. society of the nineteenth century, compared to the rigid social hierarchies that existed in Europe and Britain.

along to a seamstress who simply assembled the garment. The patterns were consistent in shape or style and size. The discerning eye could tell the Savile Row suit from the one off the rack, but there was certain sameness to men's fashion at the end of the century, dark, and staid. Men could purchase suits ready made from Brooks Brothers (1818), Sears Roebuck, and G. W. Peabody's.

Perhaps the only challenge to the somber style of men's dress, minor as it was, came in the 1870s with the Aesthetic Movement, popularized in the United States by Oscar Wilde as he toured the country dressing the part. Aesthetes encouraged men to be more sensitive to the artist and to elevate culture and art so more people could understand and appreciate it. For men's dress, this meant a rejection of anything too tailored or structured and the adoption of softer fabrics, such as velvet. These fabrics were made into Norfolk jackets, with large soft collars and loose neckties, combined with knee breeches (which at this time were usually reserved for young boys) and flat wide-brimmed hats. This outfit was meant to be worn in beautiful colors as a departure from the black and brown commonly worn by men of the day. For the most part, this attempt to get men dressing in a more animated fashion was mocked and rarely followed by men of industry. It was a look cultivated mainly by artists and writers. Although the Aesthetic Movement was not widely accepted in the United States, it reflected important idealogical differences between the sensitive artist and the men in the rough and tumble word of business.

As more men began attending colleges and universities, and the with the advent of a more youthful culture, newer and more relaxed styles of dress were adopted. A whole new market emerged geared to young men in the late nineteenth century, with more sports and leisurewear being adapted for day wear, replacing more structured suits with soft sweaters and loose jackets and trousers. This was a glimpse of what was to come in the twentieth century. This Ivy League look was included a three-piece suit of trousers, vest, and jacket combined with a shirt and tie. It was a clean and tidy look that has remained stylish for men into the twenty-first century with modern designers like Ralph Lauren inspired by the fashion of the late nineteenth century.

Men had a variety of garments to choose from: A number of suit styles were appropriate, depending on the occasion. Daytime wear was divided into the frock coat, morning coat, and lounge coats, for example, and could be either single or double breasted. Trousers, waistcoats, shirts, and ties came with some variety for daytime as well. In the evening, there was the tuxedo, as well as the tail coat, waistcoat, trousers, and white shirts. The U.S. lounge suit began to overtake the stiff frock coat in the late 1800s when it was worn by more and more gentlemen who found it less stuffy and more comfortable. Outdoor garments included the top frock coat, ankle-length coat, and Inverness cape. Hats and hair

were also worn in a couple of different ways, with many men wearing the fedora, top hat, or homburg. Sporting activities demanded different types of hats. Men in the United States were considerably less concerned with the status associated with the Savile Row suit, and it dovetailed with the U.S. ideal of democracy for most men, no matter their class, to be able to dress well in the ready-made suit. In contrast with England, it was not frowned upon for men to buy off the rack. In England, rigid class division remained extremely important and was largely expressed by the clothes men wore. This was not the case for most U.S. men, though the wealthiest still took great pride in their English tailored suits.

CLOTHING IN DETAIL

Fabrics

Men's suits were made from wool of different kinds, both fine and rough, depending on the suit design, the money a man had to spend, and the occasion for which the suit was intended. As with women's dress, there was etiquette to be followed, and different fabrics were acceptable for certain occasions. Lamb's wool was often combined with cashmere, and worsteds were mixed with other colors, adding slight flecks of red or blue to dark base fabrics. Wool was sometimes patterned in different -colored plaids. Wool melton was a thicker, more durable cloth that was used for suiting. Gray, blue, and black were the most common suit colors, but there was some detail added by using slightly patterned fabrics with woven pinhead checks or small squares, and tiny dots, perhaps of black on very dark brown background, making it nearly invisible unless studied closely. The suiting fabrics came in different weights from light to heavy to accommodate the seasons when the suits would be worn as well as the design of the suit. Lining fabrics could be more interesting and included cotton, cashmere, and silk fabrics in either subtle or colorful designs. By the 1890s, men also wore corduroy suits of drab or brown. A man's clothing was often dictated by his career, and so cotton was available for working men's clothing as it was easy to launder and very durable, especially when made in a twill weave. Jean fabrics were used for trousers and were gray mixed with the white warp thread. A street conductor's suit could be made of wool flannel in a medium weight. Trousers were often striped with gray base fabric and black fine stripes. Waistcoats were made of either wool, cotton cloth, or cashmere fabric. Barbers and dentists wore white duck cloth, reinforced with black-and-white striped cuffs and collars. Cooks wore white drill fabric, and waiters wore black sateen jackets. Both wore heavy white cotton aprons at work. Men also wore leather clothing, and not only if they were cowboys. Leather was used as lining or outside fabric for coats and was often made of sheepskin.

Undergarments and Nightclothes

Men's undergarments were nowhere near as complicated or constricting as those worn by women, but there were several styles that became increasingly common in this period. Cotton or wool in winter were knitted for men's drawers, often long to the ankle and buttoned closed in front. Undershirts were worn on the top half of the body. Made of knitted wool or silk, undershirts buttoned in the front, had long sleeves, and were hip length. Undergarment combinations were worn by both men and women. They combined the undershirt and drawers in one piece, buttoning up front and with long sleeves. These were ankle length for men. The corset was largely a women's foundation garment, but there were instances where they were also advertised for men, implying that they were bought and used to a certain extent, though they are rarely seen in museum collections or discussed in contemporary literature. The male corset was a stiffened band of fabric worn around the chest and extending to the waistband of the trousers to which it was attached, giving a lean contour. It was probably more often worn with evening dress. Men's nightclothes before the 1890s were long loose cotton or wool nightshirts, buttoned in the front with small stand collars and long sleeves. This was being replaced by silk and wool pajamas made up of two pieces including a loose shirt and drawstring trousers, much like men's pajamas today.

Shirts and Collars

By the 1860s, any signs of frilliness had disappeared, which then continued throughout the Gilded Age. Shirts were very plain and mostly made of heavily starched white cotton to maintain a stiff appearance. Studs were the only decoration on most day-to-day shirts. The white shirt was worn by businessmen, but some solid colored shirts were worn, usually reserved for those who were more creative, like the artist or intellectual. By the 1890s, men's shirts were made in striped fabric, say in blue or pink, but they always had detachable white collars.

Collars and cuffs were particularly stiff and most often detachable. They came in many different styles, such as the plain stand collar, the wing-tipped collar, and the plain turned-down style popular with men's shirts today. Formal occasions called for men to wear the single and winged (stand) collars. For the fashionable younger man of the 1870s and 1880s, these collar styles were not as high as in previous fashions for men, where the collar tips touched the cheeks, though older men continued with the very high collar. The height of the formal collar was raised again in the 1890s and could be about three inches high. The collar was folded over for less formal daily use.

Men also wore the dickey as part of their outfit. This was a false shirt front that covered only the chest, without arms or back. It was made to look like the man was wearing an entire shirt, creating the illusion of a shirt peeking out from underneath the waistcoat and suit jacket. The shirt front may have had tucks to add interest, but always had a detachable collar. Men wore flannel underwear under the dickey.

Ties

Men of all classes wore long ties around their shirt collars, closely tied to the neck. These ties were made of various types of cloth, such as wool and silk. They were offered in different lengths and widths, and men tied them in different styles of knots. The Aesthetic Movement called for men to wear flimsy silk ties that drooped from the neck, but for many men with less artistic inclinations the tie style was stiffer and more formal. By the beginning of the Gilded Age, the fashionable trend for ties in England was the ascot, which is still worn today. An ascot is a silk scarf, wide and floppy, tied in the center front of the shirt in a short knot and puffed out slightly. The silk fabric could be in a variety of colors and patterns and was often the only flash of color in a man's entire outfit. In the 1890s, men also wore the much smaller and stiffer bow tie (also worn by women), which is still an option for men today. The bow tie was a small, perfectly symmetrical tie extending out the sides of the center of the neckline by only a couple of inches. Bow ties are still commonly worn with tuxedos for men's formal dress today.

Another style of tie seen after the 1850s remained popular, especially in men's riding costumes. It was called the "stock tie," and was made of cotton or silk, usually black or white in color. It was clipped on at the back of the neck. In the 1870s, the front tied in a reefer knot with the ends falling freely. The knot was always held with a tie pin to hold the arrangement in place. Longer neckties were worn with a variety of knots and were narrower and longer pieces of fabric held together and attached to the shirt with a tie stud. The straight ties were knotted in several ways, and the manner of knotting indicated to some extent one's sophistication. The tie studs could be very plain and utilitarian, or they might be decorative and elaborate gems in fancy settings.

Coats

By 1875, men wore padding on their shoulders. This was known as the "American shoulder" style and was worn not only in the United States but also sometimes in Europe. Men wore double-breasted or single-breasted coats, depending on the decade and type of coat. In the 1870s and 1880s, the fitted, long-sleeved, knee-length frock coat for daytime

Two well-dressed men in tweed suits with narrow-legged trousers and single-breasted jackets. Each is sporting the moustache and hair styles popular at the close of the nineteenth century. (Library of Congress)

had a waist seam joining the upper bodice and lower skirt sections. It was often only buttoned to the waist. The frock coat worn for morning and the day coat had slight differences. The morning coat opened slightly lower and showed off more of the shirt worn underneath. Many of the frock coats had decorative velvet or silk trim on the lapels, or *revers*. This particular detail was adopted by the more relaxed tuxedo style jacket introduced in the United States in the 1880s with its continuous roll collar. This suit jacket was a dressy version of the less fitted sack suit jacket and was acceptable attire for dinners. Dress tails—where the front of the jacket is cut away at the waist and angles around the back to the knees forming what look like two tails hanging from the waist—became popular formal attire in the eighties. These were most often made in black wool and were trimmed with velvet or silk lapels.

Jackets often replaced coats, especially in the less formal United States. The loose sack-style jackets were comfortable and worn for leisure, often in lighter colors. In the eighties, the Norfolk jacket was a single-breasted style that went to mid-thigh. It had a high collar and box pleats falling at the center back from a waistband that covered only the back of the jacket. The suit was made of tweed, so it had a much more casual look. The jacket had patch pockets with flaps on each hip and the left breast. Norfolk suits were popular for men, but boys and women also adopted the look in the last part of the century. They were worn for sports like cycling and shooting. For other leisure activities, men wore the double-breasted blazer, which was cut straight across the hips and had a higher neckline showing just the tie. This was often combined with lighted-colored trousers and could be worn in a few colors aside from the dark and somber blues and black. Sometimes this casual jacket was even worn in crimson red.

Waistcoats and Sweaters

The beautiful brocade waistcoats of the eighteenth century were long forgotten by the end of the nineteenth century. By 1850, decorative waistcoats were no longer part of the daily suits worn by men, and by the 1870s suits and waistcoats usually matched the trousers. With higher-closing coats, some men opted for not wearing the waistcoat at all. Although

waistcoats were plain, there were a few different choices of fabric for different occasion. Men could wear, for example, plaids, tweeds, and stripes for less formal waistcoats before the 1890s. Black or white waistcoats were worn for formal occasions, and these were usually double breasted. In the late century, many men wore their coats open, so the waistcoat became more important, as it was more visible. It was then made in fancier fabrics.

Sweaters were introduced in the last decade of the 1800s and were knitted-wool, crew-necked, comfortable garments, mostly reserved for holidays and informal sporting days. The polo-necked sweater was introduced in 1894. These new garments provided men with comfortable clothing that allowed easier movement and warmth. The sweater has only increased in popularity since its introduction and is a staple of most men's wardrobes.

Trousers

By the Gilded Age, men were wearing trousers, a unique U.S. invention that required no braces (suspenders). To negate the need for suspenders, trousers came to have had adjustable buckles in the center of the back waistband, so that men could loosen or tighten their waistbands as they wished. The waistband eventually acquired belt loops that eventually held a beltwhich became commonly worn by gentlemen. Trousers generally were narrow in the leg (especially for evening wear) and varied in length from the ankle to over the instep. The casual look of the young college student saw looser styles of trousers that went along with the more relaxed look of the suit. But there were really very few variations in trouser styles worn in the last part of the nineteenth century. Men wore knee-length breeches for sports like tennis and golf. Trousers for evening matched the jacket or frock coat and had similar trim on the outside seam, either black silk ribbon of about a half inch width, or braid. In the 1890s, some men wore the Zouave trouser (named for the Algerian soldiers who fought for France earlier in the nineteenth century) with wide hips and tight ankles. Also in the 1890s, the trouser press was invented, which made creases down the front and back of the trouser leg. Having the crease on the trouser leg was from then on seen as a symbol that they were recently cleaned and pressed, something men aspired to.

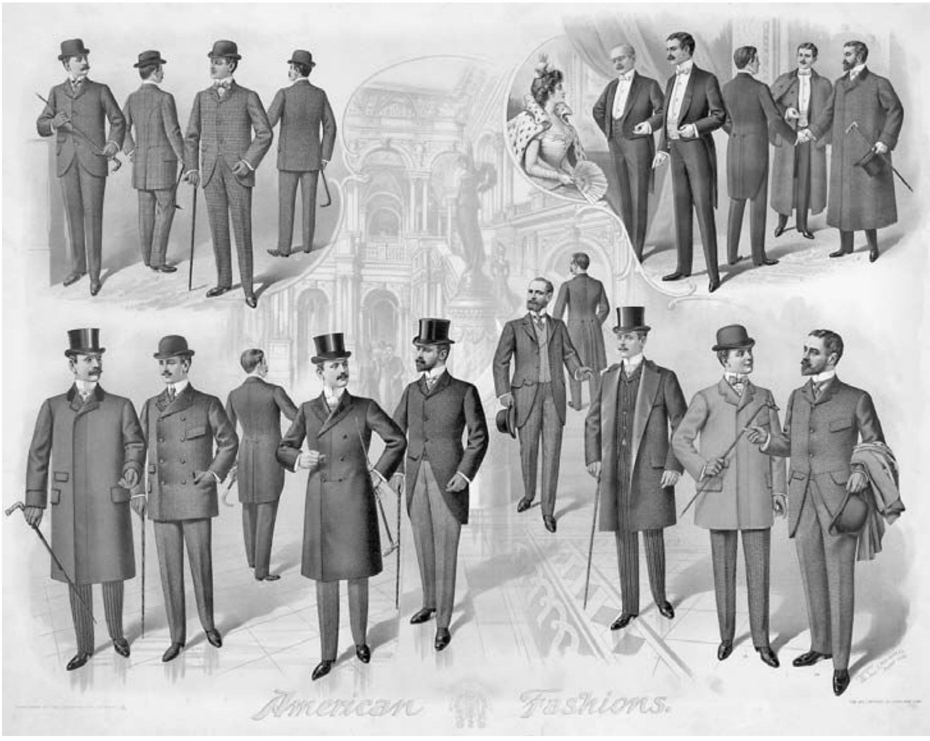
Hair Styles and Facial Hair

Men wore their hair short, except for the few who followed the Aesthetic Movement who wore longer, less kempt hairstyles. In the seventies, the center part was more popular, but, after that time, men wore the side part more frequently. Side whiskers were popular, as were mustaches, on otherwise clean shaven faces. Men also wore a full beard and mustache. For facial hair, almost anything was acceptable and often

depended on the profession and standing within the community. There were many choices of styles and combinations of mustaches and beards, which ranged from quite full, natural, and bushy beards to thin mustaches that were very shaped and precise. The Kaiser mustache, named for Kaiser Wilhelm II, for example, was a full mustache that had waxed tips, creating stiffness, that could be manipulated to curve upwards. Men could wear a squared beard, a pointed beard, a beard with no mustache, or a mustache with no beard. Some men were completely clean shaven, like the Gibson man created by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson, who also created a Gibson Girl. The Gibson man's hair was slicked back with a center part, and he was clean shaven.

Hats

Hats were worn regularly by men in the Gilded Age. There were so many styles available at the time that it was a matter of taste which hat a gentleman decided to wear. The hat choice also depended on the man's occupation, as many jobs required a specific design of hat to satisfy the



Men posed wearing fall and winter business and theater fashions with overcoats and hats, against a backdrop of an interior view of the recently opened Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building, 1899. (Library of Congress)

requirements of the job. Hats came in stiff styles and in *crushers*. The latter were well formed and not at all flimsy like a cap, but were soft enough to be folded or crushed and stored and then sprang back into shape easily. Hats could be made of many materials, including felt, silk plush, tweed, and leather. They were available in black, brown, dark gray, light gray, fawn, white, and golden brown. Some hats were trimmed with silk ribbon or cord band and lined in satin fabric. Accessories available for hats included hat boxes, cords to attach the hat to a buttonhole on a coat, and brushes to remove dirt and debris. The styles of hat in this period were mostly continuations of those worn in previous periods. Men wore silk top hats for formal daytime in white or gray, and in black for evening. Opera hats were in the top hat style but folded neatly so they could be easily stored during the performance under the seats. The rounded felt bowler, or Derby hat, was worn from the 1860s and had a stiff crown and narrow brim rolled at the sides. The homburg was a stiff felt hat with a dent from front to back and turned-up, rolled brim. It was a variation on the fedora, which remained popular well into the twentieth century. The deerstalker hat was made of soft tweed fabric and had the earflaps tied on top of the head. This is most recognizable as the hat worn by Sherlock Holmes in the stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

In the 1890s, the trilby was popular with its dented crown and softer and wider brim with no binding. The straw boater, a wide flat crown and flat brim with a ribbon to decorate it, was worn by men, women, and children.

Men also wore various styles of hats for sporting and leisure activities. For example, soft fabric caps with ear flaps were worn for swimming, and riding hats were worn for horseback riding. By the 1890s, baseball-style hats were already widely available, known as engineer caps, with a visor in the front.

Men in various occupations wore hats of a specific design. The cowboy hat was rounded in the crown with a wide brim, or a sombrero style before the Stetson was introduced and became the quintessential hat for the rugged cowboy. For colder weather, men wore hats of different styles with short visors, made of warm fabrics. Firemen wore a navy blue flat-crown hat with a small visor, and train conductors wore hard, flat-visor caps, labeled with their occupation across the front.

Shoes and Socks

The styles of boots and shoes for men depended on the season as well as the occasion, and there were many styles to choose from. Some were fashionable, and some were more utilitarian. Certain occupations required a particular style of boot or shoe. Shoes for summer and indoors were more fashionable and often made of patent leather in either the slip-on style or oxford style. For formal occasions in the nineties,

men also wore thin-soled pumps with soft kid leather uppers cut low on the foot and grosgrain ribbon on toes. They also wore thin-soled soft leather elastic-sided boots. Toe-shape styles varied, with the long squared toes of the 1880s yielding to the pointed toes of the 1890s, for both evening and daytime. Ankle boots with elastic sides, still worn by men today, were popular through the last half of the century. Other ankle-boot styles of the 1880s had canvas fabric of fawn, white, or light gray on the upper part of the leg and then a darker-colored leather on the foot. These often buttoned up the inside of the leg. Wool and felt long boots could be tied up the front or pulled on like those worn by cowboys. For water resistance, men wore rubber overshoes to cover and protect their patent-leather shoes. For snowy days in winter, snow boots or "*snow excluders*" were worn to keep the snow away from the feet. These ankle boots had rubber outside and warm wool lining. Canvas gaiters were not shoes, exactly, but were worn over the shoes to protected them by covering most of the top of the shoe as well as partway up the leg. These were strapped under the instep and buttoned up the inside of the leg.

House slippers of silk plush were embroidered with elaborate decorations and worn for lounging at home. These were styled in both the open backed slip-on style or closed at the heels. For sports, shoes were beginning to be specialized. By the end of the century, men could purchase canvas or leather tennis shoes with rubber soles. The canvas was even sometimes made of a checkered pattern, but they were mostly white and had rubber soles. Steel-spiked running shoes were also available. For bicycling, men wore ankle-length, soft balmoral shoes that tied up and had a very flat and flexible sole.

Socks were usually black cotton, wool, cashmere, or silk knitted to fit tightly tight around the leg to mid-calf. Some required sock suspenders that wrapped around under the knee with a piece of cord and a clasp the held the top of the socks up. Once sock designs evolved and the ribbed top was common, sock suspenders were no longer needed. Socks were usually very plain, but could have stripes in different colors. Socks of a longer length were used for athletics, bicycling, and hunting, especially when worn under knee breeches.

Accessories

Men had many more accessories than they do today. It was expected that a gentleman would carry a cane or walking stick even if he did not need it to help him walk. These were decorated sticks with handles in various metals and bone or ivory carved in elaborate designs. He also wore gloves along with his hat and monocle or pince-nez (early glasses that covered both eyes, but had no arms resting on the ears). Pocket

watches were worn tucked into a special fob pocket and held on a metal chain. Watches were made of gold or of less-precious metals, depending on the wealth of the man, and many different styles existed for men to choose from. Men wore scarf pins and tie pins as well as cuff links. These varied in their elaborateness and decoration, but were common accessories brought about by necessity. They could be made fashionable and valuable by adding precious stones or using from precious metals. They could also be elaborately etched with intricate designs.

Fake Beards from Mail Order Catalogs

In 1895, men were able to buy full beards and mustaches from mail-order catalogs. These false beards were bunches of hair mounted on wires (ventilated or not, on open mesh). They could be full beards with side whiskers and mustaches in one piece, or a gentleman could order a separate mustache, goatee, and side whiskers in dark or medium shades of brown.

Braces, or suspenders, were re-designed late in the century, crossing at the back, adjustable at the front, and so on, but the belt was slowly replacing them. Especially in the United States, men were dispensing with suspenders altogether toward the end of the 1800s. Suspenders often were attached by two buttons on each hip to the trouser waistband and two buttons on the center back of the trousers, or they were looped through openings in the drawers and attached back on the brace itself.

RURAL MEN, AMERICAN INDIAN MEN, COWBOYS, AND PROSPECTORS

The man's man of the Wild West was purely a U.S. innovation. There was nothing about these men that harkened back to the old world of Europe. Mythology developed as stories of the characters filtered eastward and caught the imaginations of a more rigid and etiquette-driven society. Characters like Wyatt Earp and the story of the shootout at the OK Corral in Tombstone, Arizona, in 1881 made legends out of men who were brave enough to venture west. The mythology surrounding the men of the West often overshadows the facts and likely precludes us from ever knowing what they were really like, romanticized as they were for their exploits. Jesse James, among the most famous characters of the West, was a train robber. But the United States fell in love with the stories of men of the Wild West, or at least their ideas of those men. It was not only cowboys who populated the western portion of the country, but there were of course Indians, scouts, prospectors, and farmers all trying to survive. These men, though different in many ways, dressed similarly, and, perhaps more importantly, distinctly different from urban men in the East. They all faced the same types of challenges of climate, outdoor rugged work, and availability of goods. The West was a man's world, populated by ex-soldiers after the Civil War, ex-slaves, fugitives from the law, and anyone else seeking work in the Texas cattle industry. Although Native Americans were first to occupy the lands increasingly

being settled by whites in the last half of the nineteenth century, they had much to teach those who ventured westward about how to survive the harsh climate and terrain. American Indian styles were often adopted and adapted to suit the tastes and needs of the new settlers. Cowboys and prospectors adopted some of the hide clothing worn by Indian men. In the southern plains, cowboys adopted the dress of the original Spanish cattle drovers and then changed some of the details to suit them and distinguish themselves from the Spanish. There is also some exchange of clothing styles from Indian to cowboy, with hide outerwear (tailored in a European way) in particular being adopted. Some of the best known Western scouts of the 1860s and 1870s, such as William F. Cody, "Wild Bill" Hickok, and "Texas Jack" Omohundro, wore the buckskin clothing of the plains area. This included fringed leather coats, trousers, and often Indian applications of shells, fur, or beads and embroidery, accompanied by cowboy boots, hats, and rifles or pistols tucked in their holsters and waistbands. Though Hickok died in 1876, his fame lived on thanks to the Wild West shows. From 1883 through 1916, "Buffalo Bill" Cody was traveling the world with his fantastical Wild West show, featuring stereotypes of scouts like himself, cowboys, and Indians. The fringes he is photographed in were not often worn by cowboys, but the fact was that these men were as much showmen as they were real-life Western scouts, and the unrealistic garb they portrayed on stage became synonymous with the symbolic West.

Much of the information on cowboy dress comes from photographs, paintings, and written accounts of easterners who traveled into the Wild West and wrote about it for newspapers and magazines back east.According to Laurel Wilson (1993), the clothing worn in the shows and in paintings did not really show what cowboys actually wore.

There were two distinct cowboy outfits, one with a Spanish influence and one that was more American (white). Most U.S. cowboys owned clothing in the style of the authentic cowboy, but rarely wore these styles, and perhaps only wore these outfits for photographs or special occasions.

In mid-century Missouri, the crowds of eager frontiersmen made for an eclectic mixture of European dress and Native American dress. Utah, another great cattle ranching state, was home to some notorious cowboys such as Butch Cassidy (George LeRoy Parker) and Matt Warner, who drove cattle for a living but also stole (rustled) cattle and continued his criminal spree with robbery, becoming infamous for the great Castle Gate payroll robbery of 1897.

Mid-nineteenth century Missouri was a launching place for thousands of eager emigrants eager to move westward with visions of great wealth, land, and gold in their heads. California and the Pacific Coast were the ultimate destinations for these hopeful travelers, and striking it rich was the goal. Great adventure was to be had, and mixtures of races and

professions (traders, trappers, thieves, cowboys, doctors, stagecoach drivers, shopkeepers, bankers, saloon owners, and so on) made for exciting and dynamic places for meeting and doing business, where Native Americans, Europeans, easterners and westerners learned about their future challenges and bought supplies for their journeys west. Supplies they all needed included clothing to survive the climate and conditions. Clearly a cloth suit would not do. Tourists eager to see what the fuss was about, but not willing to undertake the journey themselves, stopped in Missouri to see the sights, and they often wrote about their observations (e.g., Zane Grey and Owen Wister) or drew/painted their impressions (e.g., Frederick S. Remington and Charles Marion Russell). They glorified the situation, however, presenting the men in their peak physical form. It was important at the time to portray raw male strength. These men were presented as the ultimate males, embodying stamina and heroism.

Most of the people in Western towns, in fact, did not look all that different from their counterparts in the East. A teacher, banker, lawman, or merchant wore similar fashions to those back east, and as the century closed, access to fashion was becoming increasingly easy. With expanded railway systems and mail-order catalogs, goods could be easily shipped to the West. Living in settled towns, however, was different from living off the land, and rural farmers, ranchers, and others had to dress for their occupations just as they did back east. Their dress was considerably more pragmatic and less fashionable by necessity. Even in the Wild West, being up on the latest fashions was considered a mark of being civilized, and people considered frontier dress a mark of low social status or crudeness. For some occasions and certain people, buckskin frontier shirts with embroidered bibs were considered dressy or special, and were made by Western tailors for performers, tourists, or traders. A pullover woven shirt had a front bib with buttons only part of the way down the front. It was sometimes decorated with silk embroidery on the bib, collar, and shoulders. Though the influence is clearly from the American Indian shirts of the Seminole tribe, the tailoring and decorations, as well as the technology and patterns used to construct such a garment, clearly show that it is not a native American shirt, but one adapted by the white cowboys. They did give a Western look, however, and so were popular in photographs and tales of the West. Indian men wore cloth pullover shirts, as well, especially once trade with whites became commonplace. Other elements of Indian clothing included buckskin trousers and shirts, as well as jackets and moccasins.

The sheriff and other lawmen of the towns were only distinguishable from other men by their badges and guns. The quintessential star sheriff's badge is still the mark associated with the Western lawman and is part of any kit of Western garb worn by today's children or available in the tourist shops of Arizona. Later in the century, some men did wear

the dress styles of their counterparts back East, donning navy blue or black wool three-piece suits. If they did not wear those, however, they were more likely to wear boots with spurs, California trousers, pullover shirt, waistcoat, and large hat.

There is probably no other segment of nineteenth-century society more romanticized than the cowboy. Dime novels portrayed cowboys as heroes, and young boys tried to imitate them in the way they dressed, as well as with their toy guns and games. A cowboy's life was one of hard work and long hours of riding horses, roping cattle, branding, and fixing fences, all in the worst of climates; cold in the winter and stifling in the summer. They were made into heroes in the minds of Easterners and children who never saw them in reality, but read of them and saw the Western stage shows. In reality, it is thought that many of the cowboys behave like thugs, letting off steam from all the hard work, and they were known to terrorize townspeople by getting drunk and shooting off their guns before leaving. Often, cowboys would end their herding in a particular town where they would then take a needed break, much to the horror of the townsfolk who were relieved to see them ride off on their horses. The rough terrain and harsh weather they endured is perhaps responsible for the heroic image of the cowboy. Ranching and herding was originally the work of Spanish, Mexican, and Moroccan men, who developed the western United States with giant land-grant ranches and enormous herds of cows, developing a profitable business. These men were known as "*vaquero*s," and their dress and culture was quickly adopted by U.S. cowboys, who modeled themselves after these originals. The Stetson hat, a large white cowboy hat, sometimes with colored band, was perhaps modeled on the vaquero hat, but was in fact manufactured in Philadelphia, and was not a western innovation at all. The hats protected cowboys from the harsh sun and kept them dry in the rain. These hats are still proudly worn by Texans and others.

While the cowboys were enamored with the culture of the vaquero, miners and prospectors in California were less influenced by their traditions and style of dress. Prospectors wore simple woolen pullover shirts, tall sturdy boots, cotton or wool trousers, and suspenders to hold them up. Some eventually adopted the Spanish styles and colors with red and silver embellishments, or leather leggings or chaps, worn over trousers to protect them from rough brush. San Francisco was one of the new urban centers in the West, and clothing for prospectors was manufactured there. The city was a main source of supply for leather, clothing, and tools.

The U.S. cowboy's clothing was casual, durable, and meant to last. U.S. cowboys wore clothing that was originally worn by the Spanish cow herders in the south. The chaps, distinct boots, spurs, bandanna (an accessory commonly worn by all working men in the nineteenth century), holster with revolver, and long-sleeved shirts are commonly

Cowboy on horseback wearing chaps, a cowboy hat, a dark colored shirt, and a bandana around his neck, 1888. (Library of Congress)

thought to be the garb of cowboys. In the twentieth century, this basic garb was embellished and made much more elaborate for Western movies and in novels. Real cowboys, in fact, rarely needed chaps, though their purpose was to protect the legs from thorns, brush, and the horns of cattle. They were originally worn by Mexican and Spanish cattle herders with their shotgun chaps, or *chaparejos*. Chaps were worn over jeans or California trousers and are made of leather, pulled in at the waist by a belt and opened along the legs. The leather was meant to protect a cowboy's legs from brush, rattlesnake bites, and the harsh winds of the plains. The hats and sashes worn by the vaqueros were different from those worn by the U.S. cowboys, with the Spanish version of the hat having a wider brim and decorations and the sash made out of colored fabric. This style may have been worn early on by the U.S. cowboy, but it was abandoned by the century's end. The quintessential bandanna, tied around the neck, was worn by the U.S. cowboy, but not by the vaqueros. This kerchief was often pulled over the mouth and nose to protect against the dust stirred up by cattle.

Cowboy boots were essentially work boots with rounded toes and high tops, manufactured in Texas, Kansas, and San Francisco. The heels were

high and the toes narrowed in order to fit into saddle stirrups. By the 1880s, the boots now associated with cowboys, with the decorative wavy stitching, were adopted. On the heels of the boots, cowboys wore a spur, or metal disc, that stuck out and was used to nudge the horse's ribs in an effort to get it to move. Often, however, the sound of the spur was enough to make the horses move: There was a fashion of attaching a chain under the heels of the boots, and the combination of spurs, chains, and hard high heels created a distinctive sound while walking on the boardwalks of the town or on the sandy landscape of the plains. Spurs came in many different designs, with more or less ornate spur designs, and in larger and smaller sizes. Cowboys could buy these by the dozen from catalog companies, and they were offered in Texas patterns and California patterns. Some were made of solid brass while others were of steel plate or with silver inlay and nickel ornaments. The jingling spurs announced the cowboy long before he arrived. Close to the turn of the century, the cowboys had adopted the clothing that had already been promoted in the Western shows as the true garb of the working cow herder. Their style became more distinctive and widely worn, setting them apart from other Westerners.

Within the ranks of the cowboys, which distinguished the top hands from others, dress was a signifier. Top hands wore fancier clothing, with appliqués on their brightly colored shirts. Men wore their trousers tucked into their high boots. Shirts were usually pullover style with chest pockets and had removable collars, just as other men's shirts did at the time. The shirts, available in colors and stripes, continued to have a bib, either laced up or buttoned at the front, and they were even available from the mail-order catalogs in silk fabrics. Over the shirts, men wore vests to keep warm.These vests also provided pockets (either two hip pockets, with an additional one perhaps on the left breast) to keep necessities, like tobacco, close at hand. The vests were made of either leather or woolen fabrics, and the dressy versions were made of patterned fabrics and had similarly patterned linings. These may have only been worn for dressy occasions. The vests generally were hip length and single breasted with either a low or shallow V-neck, sometimes with lapels and sometimes not, and they buttoned up the front. Men's long overcoats were weather-proofed cotton pommel slickers in yellow. These kept the rain off the shoulders, keeping the body dry. They were extremely popular with cowboys, but few others adopted these styles of coats. California pants preceded the adoption of the jeans designed by Levi Strauss, which did not catch on in the actual West until the 1920s, when cowboys began to wear them. California trousers were very plain, slightly flared pants made of a number of different fabrics, including medium-weight twill, cavalry, duck, jean, denim, worsted wool, gabardine, and serge, and they were often plain but sometimes patterned with herringbone, stripes, or checks. The pant had a five-button fly closure at the center front, vertical

pockets on each hip, and two slash pockets on the rear. The waistband was split at the center back with a back cinch belt to adjust the waist measurement. The front and back also had extra buttons on the waistband to accommodate the suspenders. The hemline was slightly shorter in the front than in the back, and there was a slight flare or boot cut at the ankles. Cowboys often reinforced the seat of the pants to withstand the friction of long hours of horseback riding. Levi's jeans were first adopted by farmers, miners, and mechanics. The jeans had copper rivets to reinforce the edges of seams and pockets. They were perfect for rough work in the water, fields, and mountains of mining territories. Advertisements for Levi's claim they were worn by cowboys near the end of the nineteenth century, roughly during the last decade. Levi style jeans, however, are probably the most important U.S. fashion invention ever, and have become, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the most popular item in almost every person's wardrobe. Western men wore gauntlet gloves, available in mail-order catalogs and made of leather with fringes and decorations on the backs of the hands. These were used to protect hands and wrists. To complete the look, late nineteenth century cowboys wore mustaches and often wore their hair extremely long and flowing loosely in the back under the hat, much like the North American Indian men.

To outline all the different types of North American Indian dress would be an undertaking too large for this volume, but along with some details outlined previously on the Western American Indian dress, it is interesting to look at the dress of the Seminole, Creek (Muskogean), and Cherokee peoples of the eastern and southeastern United States. American Indian men in the eastern United States were accustomed to frequent contact with white people, and some clearly adopted the clothing styles of the typical Gilded Age men: black trousers, waistcoat, and jacket with white shirt and black tie. The traditional clothing of the people, however, consisted of seven basic elements. The plain shirt was a pullover woven shirt with a placket and three or four buttons from the neckline down. The cotton shirt was not at all fitted and hung from gathers at the shoulders straight to the knees and was also gathered at the shirt's cuffs, creating a wide, flowing sleeve. The long shirt, a coat of sorts, was made of any number of fabrics, including wool, cotton, buckskin, or chintz, and was made in a number of patterns, including paisley, florals, gingham, calico, or stripes, stripes being more fashionable in the 1890s. The long shirt opened at the front and had quite complicated design features, including ruffles, beading, diagonal seams, a wide collar, and sometimes a decorated cape attached at the shoulders. The sleeves were long and decorated with beading and appliqué. Over the coat men often wore a sash over one shoulder, crossing the body and resting on the opposite hip with tassels hanging down the leg. Men also wore leggings, either of fabric (cotton or wool) or buckskin. The

Portrait of Billy Bowlegs, a Seminole, wearing typical clothing and accessories, ca. 1895. (Library of Congress)

cloth leggings were held up with garters that were tied around the leg. The leggings covered the lower leg from the ankle to the knees and were decorated in various patterns such as zigzags and other geometric designs, especially on the edging. The seam for the leggings was often on the front of the leg and was usually edged with trimming. Moccasins of red or brown tanned leather were worn as footwear. These moccasins were usually ankle length, of soft leather made from one single piece that was wrapped around the foot and sewn along the top. The rest of the hide was tied from the instep and then around the ankle with sinew or string. These were rarely decorated or beaded, but there are examples in museums showing geometric patterns made of beads. Men wore jewelry and headwear, including necklaces, or gorgets, that were composed of metal crescents in graduated sizes starting with the largest at the top, tied around the neck, and then smaller and smaller crescents attached to the top piece. The turban, which was the headwear of choice, was made of a large piece of fabric, perhaps a shawl, that was folded diagonally into a strip then wrapped around the head over and over again, leaving the top of the head exposed and the ends tucked in so they sometimes hung down one side of the head. These were made of cotton, wool, or silk with examples still in museum collections today. The turban was sometimes then covered with silver bands, and for special occasions men would add black ostrich plumes to the headgear.

CLOTHING FOR SPORTS AND LEISURE

Participation in sports of all kinds was heavily encouraged for men and boys, and competition was emphasized for men, unlike for women. Bicycling was becoming increasingly popular in the United States in the Gilded Age, but men also participated in horse riding, tennis, sailing, driving (in the later Gilded Age) golf, swimming, hiking, skating, baseball, and football. For each of the sports, different clothing was required. In general, however, any sporting activity required much more casual and comfortable clothing than the suits men regularly wore for their everyday business activities. Trousers were looser in the legs for tennis; gloves were required for driving; knickerbockers were worn for golf or baseball. Each sport developed its own set of clothing based on the activity, and

men often had several different uniforms to wear depending on the activity of the day. Sweaters became essential sportswear for men and were worn for a number of different games, each developing, over time, a certain style distinguishable to that sport. Tennis sweaters and cycling sweaters differed in neckline styles and colors. Hats were often prescribed by sports, and baseball or football headgear were distinctive, the baseball cap with a hard visor or bill in the front, and football headgear more protective of the head. Specialized shoe designs were also important for particular sports, with cleats being added to the soles of shoes to allow men to grip the ground when they ran, or canvas-topped tie-up shoes (now known as "tennis shoes" or "sneakers") that had rubber bottoms that were worn for sailing or playing tennis. The most important thing about sport clothing from the Gilded Age is how it crept from being solely used for actual sport to being worn for everyday casual clothing. Sweaters were adopted, and looser trousers were worn by men when they were not dressed up in a suit. On weekends, men often wore the same clothes they wore for a certain activity to also relax and enjoy some free time. The casual trend in men's clothing was only the beginning of what has, in the twenty-first century, become a preferred way of dressing for many men who rarely put on a suit.

MEN'S WEDDING ATTIRE

For a wedding or formal celebration, men usually wore their best black or dark suit. Men in the middle and upper classes often had new suits made for the occasion of their wedding, but men with less money to spend on their appearance sometimes bought a new suit, or, more often, used the clothing they already owned. Laborers and working men wore a dark suit jacket, plain and in relatively poor quality fabric (though the best they could afford), sometimes ill-fitting, paired with trousers and a shirt, a waistcoat, and tie. The wedding suit was topped off with a hat of any variety of fashionable styles available. None of the clothing was particularly fashionable, but was the Sunday best.

Middle- and upper-class men, who had the money to spend on new clothing, did so for their weddings as well as other formal occasions. The white wedding, in which the bride wore a white formal wedding gown, required men to dress in a particular suit, and the better the tailoring and fit and quality of fabric, the more successful and well-off the gentleman appeared. There was little variation in men's wedding attire through the last decades of the nineteenth century, although the cut of the clothing and etiquette for weddings at certain times of day dictated the choices of suit-jacket styles. Once afternoon weddings became popular after the 1860s, the style of suit was open to change, just because of the time of day. In the 1870s and 1880s, men often wore a knee-length morning coat with the front cut away from the waist to the backs of the

knees, making an early version what is now referred to as "*tails*." This was not a new style, and it had been particularly popular early in the nineteenth century as the full-skirted and elaborate coat of the eighteenth century shrank and became less ornate. The wedding coat was dark blue or black and was worn with lighter-colored trousers in gray and paired with a white waistcoat or vest. Men also wore white kid gloves and a fashionable top hat. After 1890, men started to wear the black frock coat with gray trousers, a white shirt, a light or dark waistcoat, and a light or dark tie, along with the gloves and hat. The cutaway style reappeared before the end of the century and is still adopted by grooms, even in the early twenty-first century.

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CHAPTER 10

Children's Fashions

OVERVIEW

Children in the Gilded Age were finally able to dress more freely than in previous centuries, and children's clothing became an entire market directed only at them. They were no longer dressed only as miniature adults, wearing clothing that made it impossible for them to act as children. This was a reflection of new, less strict child-rearing tactics that encouraged mothers to allow their children to play and explore. New techniques for educating children and the formalization of schooling for all U.S. children also helped create the youth-market segment that required clothing and other consumer goods directed at children. In a time when marketing was taking off as a profession and consumerism was becoming a way of life thanks to mass manufacturing, providing goods for children was part of achieving the ideal life so many mothers wanted. They saw in the magazines and shops what looked to be the perfect life, and mothers bought what they needed to achieve that life.

Child rearing, like everything else in the Gilded Age, was changing. It was moving away from the strict Puritan stance and was being replaced by new and dramatically different views of children. Now, children were considered inherently good. Mothers in the United States, especially middle- and upper-class women, were encouraged to lavish affection on their children. With the country's newfound wealth and opportunities opening in mining, manufacturing, construction, railways, and away from the family farm, children's roles and those of their families changed

as well. Fathers were not as inclined, in the city environment, to train their boys in their fathers' professions, because for many, these jobs were too difficult for children to understand and required greater maturity than manual labor. Men working in the stock market and trade or land speculation were not in a position to teach their children the business at a young age, whereas certain farm work and chores could easily be taught to young children. At the same time, men who worked in factories in the cities often had their sons working alongside, as child labor was acceptable in the Gilded Age. Farmers trained their sons (and daughters) to work the land and manage crops and animals, work that could begin at very tender ages for both genders. Life for these children differed greatly from the lives of children from families with substantial resources. The working children were not educated, labored long days and long weeks and were paid badly for their efforts. In this period, changes were brewing to reduce the dangers to children and the long hours they worked, but it was still a difficult life for poor children.

By contrast, the new urban middle- and upper-class father was away at work all day, so he was removed from the family to a large extent. The mother was left to care for and raise the children. Wealthy children, however, led lives of leisure and were educated rather than forced to labor. They were not responsible for bringing in family income, and, in addition, their their roles may have changed according to the child-rearing practices of the time. Psychologists, educators, and others advised parents to be more affectionate to their children if they hoped to shape their children into upstanding and powerful adults. There was to be less emphasis on corporal punishment, which was actively discouraged. Discipline was to be enforced in a more gentle manner, with kisses, hugs, and plenty of attention. Children were encouraged to run, leap, and enjoy unrestrained play and fun. Understandably, the toy industry really took off at this time. Parents bought their children many toys, such as wooden animals, the newly invented tricycle, rocking horses, lead figurines, steel train sets, dolls, and toy soldiers. The toy industry boomed in the last 20 years of the nineteenth century. In the 1860s, Milton Bradley created and marketed toys aimed at teaching children through play. These were often used as rewards for good behavior. Consumption was encouraged in every facet of life in the Gilded Age. Buying for one's children was no exception. More goods were available, and more goods were consumed. Child-sized cutlery and dishes and cups were introduced at this time, so there evolved an entirely different set of dishes and furniture such as highchairs, cribs, and tables just for youngsters. And again, children also wore clothing that was designed specifically for them.

To many of the older generations, however, children of this era were considerably less well behaved than children had been in stricter times. Boys especially were encouraged to be curious, touching things they shouldn't and running wild, much to the dismay of the older generation.

Girls, however, were still expected to be quiet and interested in feminine pursuits, including taking care of their dolls.

Young girls of the wealthy and middle classes no longer wore dresses that were exact replicas of their mothers' clothing. Rather, they wore versions of their mother's dresses, made of similar fabrics, though often made more appealingly childish with additional frills and shorter skirt lengths. Generally, infants of both sexes wore long white dresses until they reached the toddler stage, when they were dressed in shorter dresses; both sexes had long hair, so it was nearly impossible to judge the gender of the child. Boys wore dresses until between the ages of three and five years old, and older in some cases. American versions of British private school outfits like the Eton suit and the Norfolk suit or the Buster Brown suit were popular with boys older than five. By the time a boy went to school, he was dressing in breeches and a

Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and his family, ca. 1880s. Photo shows multiple generations of a family wearing different styles of dress appropriate to their ages. (Snark/Art Resource, NY)

matching jacket. Schoolgirls were wearing much the same type of dress as before, only slightly longer in the hem. Adolescent girls wore longer dresses, and they picked up on some of the predominant trends, such as bustles or large shoulder puffs. Boys of this age wore suits, but now they wore long trousers instead of short pants or breeches. As the children grew up, they adopted more of their parents' styles. By the time a young woman was presented for her coming out season, she wore décolleté and short sleeves, plus the bustle when it was popular in the eighties, or the huge puffed sleeves in the nineties. Young men were finally allowed to wear formal evening suits once they reached adulthood.

The family's wealth directly affected what children wore and showed their social standing within the community. Children's clothing styles evolved from the late 1870s to the turn of the century, sometimes following the fashions of the parents, but more often styles were developed for children that were quite distinct from what was worn by adults. Reformers were calling for children to be dressed more comfortably, but girls were still corseted from birth, first in belly bands and then in stays throughout their childhood, even in the 1890s, when catalogs sold modified corsets, called "waists," for children as young as two years. It was a

School children and teachers measuring and sketching at a stone building in Washington, D.C., ca. 1899. This shows the children dressed mainly in white with boater hats and the teachers in day clothes consisting of full long skirts and shirtwaists. (Library of Congress)

hard fight for reformers, as mothers had so long been accustomed to corseting and only saw benefits to it. Mothers were urged to dress their children well, and buying clothing (which was increasingly ready made) was a sign of love. Children were especially well dressed on Sunday, wearing their finest clothing to church. New parents proudly showered their babies with beautiful attire, showing off their ability to consume available goods to the benefit of their children.

For the children of the poor, the finery of middle- and upper-class children was a sharp contrast to the plain styles or rags they wore. Ragamuffins were often portrayed in books, such as those of Mark Twain, or in paintings, such as those of Winslow Homer. Children of the working class and the poor wore ragged, skimpy, frayed garments—trousers with holes; cut-off, short, and plain blouse-type shirts without collars or decoration. These clothes were torn and dirty and represented no particular style in fashion, but were mainly practical protection from the elements. They were all that could be afforded and provided nothing more than a basic, simple covering for the body. If these boys had shoes, they were worn-out boots, often ill fitting and utilitarian.

There were many different types of dresses and suits for girls and boys in the Gilded Age. It is impossible to provide a complete list of every detailed design and combination of designs. What is covered here constitutes an overview and gives a good idea of the clothing worn by the children of the day.

EDUCATING YOUNG CHILDREN

In the upper classes, the education of the young had been left to the mother or to a governess who came to the family to teach the basics to the girls. The boys were sent off to schools where they were kept away from the riffraff and met only children of the same kind as they were, reinforcing their standing and getting an education not only in the academic sense but also in how to behave socially in order to fit into one's station in life. Urban children in the United States were introduced to standardized schooling in the form of kindergarten in the 1860s and1870s, where at around age five children's learning was to be directed by an adult, and children's play was more directly associated with learning the three *R*s (reading, writing, and arithmetic). Women (rarely men) were usually the schoolteachers. They encouraged children to be self-motivated and self-controlled and to aspire to the modern characteristics needed to succeed in the cut-throat world of business and industry that was their destiny. For many boys and girls, attending kindergarten was the first exposure they would have to other children aside from their own siblings. At roughly the same ages and developmental stages, kindergartners were seen as engaging in an important aspect of early education—socialization.

Older boys of the wealthy attended boarding schools, a British tradition adopted by the United States. At boarding school, boys were shielded from the lower classes, and they were protected from learning the vices that plagued those less fortunate. Upper-class girls were insulated from the profane aspects of the outside world by being kept close to home and educated in domestic duties. Girls were taught how to, sew, embroider, and run a household. They were taught about issues of maternity (how to raise children), so they would be ready to marry when an appropriate male should come along. Though few were arranged in marriage, there were certainly few choices of husband appropriate for upper-class girls, or even wealthy middle-class girls. When their daughters reached marriageable age, often in the teen years, families often looked abroad for girls to be married off to a titled European man, which was meant to help improve the family's station in society.

DRESSING CHILDREN

Dressing children, for the middle class, had always been the domain of the mother, who provided all garments, which she hand sewed for each child. With the advent of mass produced, ready-to-wear clothing, and the increasing difficulty in finding good fabric and notions (buttons, thread, and so on), buying ready-made clothing became increasingly more appealing. Ready-made clothing was said to be of better quality than hand-sewn clothing, and this meant that the burden felt by mothers to sew their children's clothes was lifted. Mothers could purchase the clothing children needed, plus all the things they simply desired in order to make their precious little ones most attractive. Dresses were worn by both boys and girls, with small differences to help distinguish the gender of the child.

Boys' Clothing: Aged Five and Up

For most of the period, boys wore the Eton suit or the Little Lord Fauntleroy suits for special occasions, such as a communion ceremony, thereby lifting the tone of the event with these upper-class affectations from the old country. Eton suits were based on the suits worn by British students who attended the prestigious Eton College, a private boarding school where princes and aristocrats are educated. These suits were dark, three-piece suits with short, single-breasted jackets and waistcoats ending just below the waist, and very large, starched white collars worn with thin ties. The trousers were straight and very plain, with button-fly closures and made in a pinstriped fabric, ending above the top of the shoes. Boys wore a top hat or straw boater as the actual uniform. Even boys who never set foot in boarding school popularly wore the straw boater, especially in the United States. Boys were said to loathe the suit for the

discomfort of the jacket and ties, especially when they had comfortable play clothes they would have rather worn all the time. American boys also wore the U.S.-designed tunic style Buster Brown suit, which had a distinctly less stuffy appeal than the English upper-crust Eton suit. It was based on a United States comic-strip character of the same name. The Buster Brown was a hip-length, double-breasted jacket tunic that was belted at the hips and worn with knee-length trousers. The shirts were made with wide detachable collars, as all collars in this time were, and around the neck boys wore a big floppy bow hanging down the front of the tunic. The suit was worn with a straw hat, and the hairstyle that was worn with this look included bangs or a *fringe* on the forehead. The boy wore Buster Brown boots or strap shoes that were said to be good for small developing feet.

The Fauntleroy suit was worn in England and the United States alike. A British American author is credited for originating the look. Though Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849–1924) was born in Manchester, Great Britain, she is claimed as an American author, as she immigrated to the United States at 16 years. She is the author of the children's classic novels *The Secret Garden* and *The Little Princess*, as well as the run-away hit book *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, published in 1886. Cedric, the novel's main character, is sweet but at the same time manly. He is growing up in the United States when he hears he will become an English earl once he is of age and after his uncle dies. He travels to England, where his claim to the title is being challenged, and throughout his adventures he notices the differences between his life in the United States and the life of English aristocracy.

The suit worn by Cedric and illustrated so clearly in the novel is what sets this particular narrative apart from other children's stories of the time. The suit was a black velvet jacket and breeches, sometimes worn with a large white lace collar and white lace cuffs, elaborately ruffled blouse with a big, lacy collar covering much of the jacket, and black ankle- or calf-length leather boots. The hair was worn in long ringlets. The suits were worn well into the 1920s, though there is debate about exactly how popular they were, especially with the boys. The suit in the book was inspired by and partly based on the blue velvet suit worn by the boy in Gainsborough's 1770 painting of *The Blue Boy*, which in turn was based on a seventeenth-century Van Dyck portrait of Charles II.

According to Burnett's own accounts, she based the looks of the character on her own son, whom she dressed in velvet and lace in a picturesque, rather effeminate manner. The suit was popular in the United States in part because of the desire of the upper classes to emulate British aristocracy and all the trappings of etiquette and manners from the old country that were thought to be so sophisticated. The power of Great Britain in the world at this time was admired by many in North America, and it was thought that the British knew best in

matters of taste. The Fauntleroy suit was worn by young boys who had just grown out of frilly dresses, before they graduated to the more masculine suits of men, such as the Norfolk or sailor styles. Boys moved into breeches once they were too old for dresses. This rite of passage was referred to as "breeching," often thought a sad occasion for mothers who were losing their babies to the rough and tumble world of manhood. The Little Lord Fauntleroy suit was often worn with a broad-brimmed sailor hat or a soft velvet hat, and the jacket was tied with a large black ribbon at the waist.

Much as mothers loved the Fauntleroy suit, the little boys appear to have hated it for its sissiness, and they were embarrassed to wear it. However, mothers decided what boys would wear, and so there was little choice for them in this matter. As time wore on, the Little Lord Fauntleroy name became increasingly associated with the effeminate. Eventually, by the 1920s, boys no longer wore the suit. The novel is rarely read these days, never mind any mother even thinking of dressing their precious young son in such garb. The suit enjoyed several decades of use, however, making it somewhat of a fashion phenomenon in a time when children's clothing was moving away from versions of adult clothing to styles designed specifically for the young.

Most ready-made suits for older boys were based on the sailor suits and Norfolk suits of men. Often the styles were mixed and matched, with details of both styles being worn together. This was done, perhaps, by making a tweed sailor-style suit or by giving an otherwise Norfolk-style suit a sailor-style collar. Boys trousers in the 1890s were different from the breeches and long trousers of earlier decades, in that they had front creases created by the trouser press, a new invention used for both men's and boy's trousers. Knitted sweaters also became popular at this time, and boys were allowed to wear these comfortable garments that allowed them to move their arms freely so they could play more actively. Sweaters were also appreciated by mothers, who found they were cheap to make, easy to fit, and were washable, allowing boys to save good clothes for special occasions.

Boy in a sailor outfit in 1896. (Library of Congress)

Boys also wore kilt suits between the ages of two and six. These were designed in a range of styles, but were always worn with a pleated skirt. Jackets ranged in design from

the Zouave jacket, or bolero jacket, a sailor or middy blouse, to a braid-trimmed velvet blouse jacket.

Both boys and girls wore versions of reefer jackets and sailor suits. The sailor suit was inspired by the uniforms worn by British navy men. Sailor suits were popular for children after the Prince of Wales had his portrait painted in a sailor suit in the mid-nineteenth century. The style became universally popular in the 1870s, and boys wore it until age twelve or thirteen. The suit was usually made of natural linen with blue facing and white braid, and later white with navy braid. The middy blouses, which were either pullover style or buttoned up the front, were loose fitting and had long, loose sleeves gathered at the wrists. The collar was wide and flat down the back and came to a narrow V in the front which was filled with a darker-colored dickie. Bows were tied around the neck under the collar and were generally in dark colors. Trousers buttoned on both sides of the center front and were belted at the waist with the button flap, trimmed with white piping. Trousers could be long or short, but the short trousers were not tied at the knees. Sometimes they were trimmed at the bottom with buttons to match the front fall closure at the waist. The girls' version had skirts in the kilt style instead of trousers.

The reefer coat was a double-breasted navy blue wool coat with a straight cut and straight sleeves, similar to the one worn by British sailors. The coat had a flat fall collar, and a double row of buttons. The reefer suit was sometimes worn instead of the sailor suit, and the jacket style in a lighter fabric was worn instead of the middy blouse, but it was still warm as a winter suit.

During the nineteenth century, boys in the United States were introduced to sturdy overalls (coveralls) that could be worn for play. They resembled the overalls of today's children in design. Boys could get dirty without worrying about their mothers' reactions, as the dirt did not ruin the overalls in the same way it would a nice set of clothing. Overalls were made of denim of many different colors and the twill weave of denim made it extra strong and durable for rough-and tumble-boys to play in. The style incorporated trousers and suspenders in such a way that the trousers were held up by the shoulder straps and attached at the front of the chest with metal loops over buttons attached to a bib. There was no restricting waistband, and this made movement very easy and comfortable.

Rural boys' clothing changed very little from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end, with farmer boys wearing loose-fitting white or colored collarless shirts, tattered trousers with side-button closures, and a straw hat or billed cap, wool bandanna, and gaiters. The clothing was utilitarian for the everyday work that the boys were expected to perform on the farm. For Sunday, boys did have a good set of clothes that was at least not in tatters, and they wore these only for a couple of

hours each week. They removed them quickly so as not to ruin them. Rural boys, as well as poorer city boys, across the county wore this simple outfit. Native born, immigrant, and ex-slave children all wore the same thing. Some boys also wore a waist-length vest with buttons down the center front and a deep V-neck. This could be made of any kind of material, including wool, silk, and leather. They wore trousers that were long to the ankles, often rolled up to protect the bottoms. Boys in rural areas either went barefoot or wore heavy oxfords, tie-up boots, riding boots, or possibly cowboy boots. Hats were necessary, especially for those boys working outside. They wore utilitarian, but not necessarily attractive, country straw hats, or soft caps, cowboy hats, and Derby hats.

Children from families with little or no money were very badly dressed, in stark contrast to the beautifully adorned children of the wealthy and middle class. The poor ragamuffins and orphaned children were most often dressed in torn brown dirty rags and often were shoeless. The literary character Tom Sawyer, described by Mark Twain, was very comfortable in his rags and exceedingly uncomfortable when forced to wear more refined clothing. He found the suits restricting, itchy, and hot, and he could not wait to get out of the clothes and back into his own. Thus, clothing styles were symbolic of the vast differences between the rich and poor in the Gilded Age.

Working-class urban boys wore corduroy trousers like their factory-worker fathers, and they often worked alongside their fathers in the factories. Horatio Alger's novels, directed at young boys, encouraged them to strive for more than they presently had and suggested that young boys could make their own futures brighter with a combination of hard work and striving for respectability, in part through their personal presentation and adornment. Often, Alger's heroes leave their own families in pursuit of the elusive success they are told is out there waiting for them. They meet with unscrupulous bosses and kindly women in the course of their adventures and ultimately succeed in the cut-throat world. They are, however, moral and upstanding in their own successful lives, in great contrast to the villains (in the characters of their bosses) and liars who have all the money and lord it over the boy. The Horatio Alger boys lead exemplary, wealthy, and successful lives, having assimilated to the new middle-class system and grown out of their rags and into the beautifully tailored clothing of gentleman. In the books, the changes in the clothing styles, and the realization that in order to succeed one must pay attention to appearance, signify the change in the fortunes of the boy. He leaves his family in plain work clothes and at the end understands what he needs to wear to fit in the society he aspires to, and he dresses accordingly.

Boys were also seduced by the dime novels that spun yarns of Wild West cowboys, train robbers, and adventurers. The West was a man's world, and boys craved the image of those heroes they read about. As

children began to wield some power and say in the clothing they wore, clothing was made to accommodate their desires. Far into the twentieth century, cowboy clothing was popular with young urban boys who wished to make believe they were like their heroes, and small versions of the California trousers, cotton shirts, and cowboy hats and boots were made.

For sports and leisure activities, boys wore special outfits in the same way their parents did. Bathing costumes were like their fathers' costumes, with high-necked pullover short-sleeved shirts with piping at the neck and sleeves, worn over knee-length short pants of the same fabric and with the same trim as the shirt. The baseball uniform had become popular since the inception of professional baseball in 1869. The trousers, like breeches or knickers, were held up with a belt, and they were quite loose in the leg, then gathered under the knee. Baseball uniforms were made of striped fabric or solid colors, and they were worn with a buttoned shirt that had a small collar made of different-colored fabric. They wore soft baseball caps with stiff visors, but, unlike today's rounded crowns, these were square in the crown with straight vertical sides. In the 1890s, boys were introduced to jodhpurs with the very wide thigh and tight lower leg, often used for horseback riding. They were also prone to wearing knitted turtleneck sweaters with their breeches or trousers, especially when riding a bicycle. These were sometimes called bike sweaters, and they quickly became popular with boys because they were warm and comfortable for playing or doing sports such as golf, football, or hiking, as well as cycling. They were made in dark colors that could match other garments, such as navy blue, tan, and black.

Girl's Clothing

Young girls and boys looked alike until they were much more mature, both wearing dresses and sailor suits with long hair and similar hats. But once they grew a little older and the boys started to wear more masculine suits, little girls started to dress in fashions similar to those of their mothers. These were not exact replicas of their mothers' dresses, but were modified to suit a younger child, thus distinguishing her clothes from her mother's. Still, girls wore dresses that followed the main features of fashionable women's clothing. For the most part, dresses were shorter in the skirt length and were adorned slightly differently, but they still had bustles, fitted corsets, and smooth bodices. In the late 1870s and early 1880s the focus moved toward the hips. When the large bustle returned for women, girls' skirts were also accented at the rear again. In the 1890s, girls' dresses moved in the direction of comfort, with more interest around the shoulders and neckline, and this was a dramatic departure from their mothers' clothing.

In the late 1870s and early 1880s, the silhouette of the girl's formal dress followed the predominant fashions of the older women, so the bustle was worn in the first phase of the 1870s, then dropped in favor of the princess dress and slimmer lines, and then picked up again in 1885 when the bustle was very large, until 1889, when it was once again reduced in favor of simple back pleating to accent the area. There was a brief fad for diagonal or asymmetrical designs on dresses with front closures, for example buttoning boys jackets from one hip to the opposite shoulder. With the natural form of the cuirass bodice, girls wore dresses to their knees and bodices were straight like the pencil form their mothers' took. The sleeves, when present, were fitted to the arm and decorated at the cuffs with lace trimming. The skirts emphasized the back, or the bustle, so to speak, with huge bows sitting at hip level, sometimes drawing in the skirts separating the long bodice portion of the dress and the short ruffled skirt. The emphasis on decorating the backs of the dresses was womanly, but the dresses were certainly not like the adult version, in that the decorations were minimal, more suitable for young girls, and the short skirt length meant that there were no trains on the skirts, which was a notable departure from the adult styles. Daughters did not wear the same heavy fabrics as their mothers, and they were dressed in lighter silks and satins, although they wore the same colors as their mothers.

Girls' dresses often combined several styles and in the eighties they may have worn, for example, a sailor middy top with the sailor collar and dark bow and trimming on the cuffs, combined with the accordion pleated skirt extending out from under a very wide, draped swag overskirt horizontally gathered from the hips to the knees, tying the legs close together. These eclectic outfits went right along with the trend in all kinds of design for borrowing from different eras and mixing and matching styles.

The princess dress, with its long, uninterrupted vertical lines, was worn by girls in the early eighties, and it varied little in the decade. There was a narrowing to a slimmer silhouette in the middle of the decade. The princess dress fastened down the front or back and had a pleated, flared skirt, or layers of lace. Sleeves of all kinds were worn with the girl's princess dress—they could be short and puffed, or long and fitted. Soft muslin dresses in colored prints were made into short princess dresses with high necks and frilled trim at the neck and cuffs. The princess seams were accentuated with small ruffles inserted from the shoulders to the hem, which was also trimmed with a wider ruffle.

In 1885, girls experienced the revival of the bustle, just as their mothers did. Little girls' dresses were slightly less ornate, and the bustle was not a cage for girls as it was for women. Instead, it was made with draped fabric pulled to the back with great swathes of material creating the look of a heavy back interest with sashes tied into giant bows. The skirts were still short for young girls, and they grew longer as the little girls matured.

By a girl's teenage years, her skirt went halfway down the calf, and by the time she was a grown women, her skirts were full length. The bodice was designed with fitted sleeves, and girls continued to wear the requisite corset. Girls as young as four years old wore these fancy dresses, but they were knee length at that age and had a lower, looser waist. The dress for young girl used between three and six yards of fabric compared to her mother's 13 yards. The girl's age also dictated the small differences in design. Small girls had very low, loose-fitting waists and looser bodices, and by age seven to twelve the dress was more tailored and made of more mature-looking fabrics, similar to adult women's dresses. Thirteen- to sixteen-year-old girls wore essentially the same dress as a grown woman, but in slightly shorter lengths and perhaps with less ornate decoration and slightly plainer fabrics. In the late eighties, tailoring and adaptations of boy's clothes were used for girls. Whereas women had adopted the Norfolk jacket already, it was also made for children, and girls wore the double-breasted, cuffed, and belted jacket over pleated skirts.

Dresses in the 1890s were looser and more comfortable for leisure or play. The yoked dresses were high necked, the skirts fell freely from under the yoke, and the dresses had long sleeves. Sometimes the yoke was decorated with fussy embroidery, and sometimes it was left plain and the skirt was decorated instead. The loose-yoked styles, covered with pinafores, had large puffed sleeves. These were more practical and finally allowed girls easier movement in the torso, so they were much more comfortable and less cumbersome. Sometimes these dresses were belted. It was a style well-suited to young girls and came to denote girlishness and innocence. This style of dress was easy to make at home, as it involved little or no fitting or tailoring and mothers were able to sew many of these dresses for their daughters in cottons, plaids, and stripes. For the girls in the middle and upper classes, these were, however, strictly worn for leisure and play time. For formal visiting, churchgoing, and other celebrations, girls were still dressed in corseted dresses reflecting the styles of their mothers.

Outerwear for girls over the age of five was designed to accommodate the style of clothing worn underneath. The coats had room for bustles from the late 1870s to the early 1880s. The lowered waist princess dresses were covered with coats with the same kind of low waist and had low bustle accents falling below the waist at the hips. In the later 1880s, when there was a return to back fullness, coats were flared or pleated to accommodate. Capes were sometimes worn over the coat and tied at the neck with a large ribbon bow. Featuring fitted shoulders, these capes fell to the waist and were often in the same fabric as the coat in a stripe or plain wool. Mackintosh coats were water resistant. In the 1890s, girls wore double-breasted reefer jackets, but they were styled with very large leg-of-mutton sleeves and wide collars. The boys' reefer coat did not have the puffed sleeves.

For girls, bathing costumes looked much like the ones their mothers wore. The outfit was comprised of bloomer-type trousers and a short-sleeved, V-neck or squared neckline overdress that was belted around the waist, then covered with a beach robe made of ruffled flannel. Bathing costumes were often decorated with nautical-themed braid or embroidery. Often the bathing suits were made of red, white, or navy blue fabrics. The robe was essentially a long cape tied at the neck with a rope and trimmed with ruffles to match the whole costume.

Girls from the rural areas, immigrants, ex-slaves, and those with little money for stylish clothes wore sleeveless low-necked jumpers that were straight in the bodice and had a gathered skirt sewn to the natural waist. Girls had to wear a blouse under the dress, which was made of basic cotton or linen and had no collar. Girls in the core of the urban centers often wore this type of dress, made of darker subdued colors like gray or brown and with no decoration added at all. Girls also wore long-sleeved, drop-waist dresses made in printed fabrics such as stripes. These were not prettily wrapped with large silk ribbons and impressive bows at the back, but were pared-down versions of fashionable girl's dresses at the time. Sleeves may have had small puffs at the shoulders near the end of the 1880s, and often girls covered their dresses with simple aprons or shawls. They wore sunbonnets with stiffened brims and sometimes with neck ruffles in the back that tied under the chin. Otherwise the plain straw hat was worn with the hair long and wavy down the back.

Infant Clothing

Infants were all dressed alike with little distinction between the sexes. Baby gowns were full and sometimes princess cut, but the design remained largely unchanged from 1860s. There was little information provided in the clothing to distinguish a baby as male or female. Unlike modern babies who are often dressed in pink or blue, babies in this era were not distinguished in this way. There was little change in babies' gowns from about 1830 except in color, detailing, and applied design. Infants were dressed in white linen or cotton muslin tucked-front panel gowns, with wide necklines, small capped sleeves, and exceedingly long lengths, like those worn for christening ceremonies today. Babies were kept very warm because they were thought to be so fragile. There were layers and layers of clothing, including the fine-weave linen shirt, open at the back, a long day flannel, a lightweight long cotton petticoat, and a fitted wrap-around bodice. These were all topped with a day gown that was as long as 36 inches. Garments were sometimes quilted by hand or machine to hold down the pleats of the flannel petticoat. Quilting was also a means to stiffen the infant corset fabric. The infant boy's gown was cut slightly straighter at the waist and had no sloped waistline as

the girl's gown tended to have. Boys' gowns were also slightly less decorated and had perhaps fewer tucks in the skirts.

In the 1870s, infant underwear was made of wool, with a flannel chemise or vest against the skin. Wool was heavily promoted by reformers as the most healthy and hygienic fabric for underwear. Babies also wore tiny corsets around their torsos, which eventually turned into less constrictive belly bands that secured the dressing for the healing umbilical cord. The corded corset and cotton drawers were buttoned together. Over top of this, infants wore a flannel petticoat of heavy jersey and one or more cotton petticoat trimmed with Swiss embroidery. The corset was a garment that mothers thought was healthy, both for themselves and their babies, in that it was meant to hold the chest and stomach firmly and supportively as the child grew. Corsets were condemned by reformers, who tried mightily to convince mothers that the garments were not at all good for babies, but the ingrained ideas mothers had about corseting proved difficult to break and the practice continued well into the 1890s. Mothers, after all, had been taught all the virtues of wearing corsets and firmly believed them to be healthy. This was the last vestige of the old swaddling practice, in which babies were tightly wrapped from shoulder to toes in bandages. In the nineties, infants wore looser garments called "waists," which were designed to be more flexible and were not heavily boned but rather made of stiffened cotton that would not constrict the internal organs as much. A waist still provided back support, satisfied the industry's need to sell goods, and satisfied reformers' demands as well. Mothers were not forced to abandon the idea of torso support for their little ones, but babies were no longer as tightly bound. These were worn by boys to the age of four and girls to the age of twelve, when they began wearing instead the same style of corset as their mothers. When dresses for small children were loose and flowing, such as the smock or yoke dress, there was no style need for tight corseting. Eventually, corsets for babies and toddlers were done away with altogether.

The baby, of course, had to wear diapers. These were made of cotton or linen sold in 10-yard lengths. They could then be cut to the proper length at home. Widths ranged from 18 inches to 24 inches, and they were pinned at the waist as all diapers were until the advent of disposable diapers in the twentieth century. By the end of the 1890s, the invention of the rubber diaper cover was saving fine clothing from baby soiling and meant that boys could safely wear trousers at a younger age, before toilet training.

Babies wore cloaks and carrying capes when taken out for airing. These were two-tiered garments in a dark red or blue wool, constructed in a half circle with another tier of fabric attached to the bottom, perhaps in quilted silk, with the same quilted-silk fabric as a collar. The bottom of the cape was sometimes decorated with a fringe. Children were also dressed in tiny pelisses that were quilted for warmth or lined with fur.

Infants' cloaks or wrappers had large cape collars trimmed with lace and eyelet and ending at the wrists. These were made of piqué in summer, or flannel and cashmere in the winter, and may have had scalloping along the edges, or rows of embroidery. The capes fitted the shoulders and neck and then fell free to the hem. An infant cape could be fastened around the neck with a large ribbon threaded through the neckline and then tied in a large bow with long ends hanging loose. Capes were shirred and smocked, as this was the style in the 1890s. The collars sometimes had ribbon inserts in rows, laced into openings around the outside. Bonnets were tall, with ruffled brims and silk ribbon bows added to the top. Infants also wore long, knitted sacque-type jackets that tied at the neckline and had long sleeves. The bonnets had ruffles at the back hanging down the nape of the neck and were tied under the chin with wide silk ribbon bows, the long ends hanging freely down the front of the body. They wore white or black button shoes, wool booties, or tie-up slippers, and wool socks or stockings.

Headwear for infants in the late 1870s was often referred to as a hood, but was really a soft cap that tied under the chin and covered the whole head with a small ruffle. This was a fitted bonnet that was only sparsely decorated and not nearly as tall as it would become in the next fifteen years. It may have had elaborate embroidery, but did not feature the large bows and accoutrements of the later bonnets. As the child got older, the hood became a bonnet with a more stiffly finished brim around the face and perhaps more decoration on the crown.

In the 1890s, infants were dressed in long white wool or cotton skirts made of flannel or cambric. These skirts were very long and were either plain, perhaps with a few tucks, or elaborately decorated with lace and Hamburg insertions at the bottom. Some hems were uneven or scalloped, then embroidered in colored silk threads, sometimes in two layers at the hem. The skirt was attached to a very wide waistband that acted more as a sleeveless bodice. The 32-inch skirt was gathered evenly at the waistband and was full and long. Over the skirt, the infant wore a robe or dress with plain sleeves and often great insertions of lace and ruffles, with large bows at the waist. The necklines varied in design but were often yoked, with high collars or lace collars and embroidered cuffs. Depending on the amount of money the mothers had to spend on their babies' clothing, the dresses were more or less elaborately decorated. Other fundamental garments worn by infants included bibs much like the bibs worn by babies today, in the same design, made of finer lace-trimmed cottons and linens, though some were water-resistant oiled cloth. Day and night slips were part of the infants' wardrobe, as were wool shirts, pinning skirts, and flannel bands. Infants were kept warm and wrapped in flannel embroidered shawls and blankets. They wore wool booties on their feet. Women also knitted or crocheted wool socks and booties and woolen hoods for infants, but, in the nineties, infants

also wore fine silk decorated hoods similar to their mother's fancy hoods, with ribbons and ruffles around the face.

Toddler Clothing

From the 1880s on, toddlers were dressed in clothing designed just for them. The yoke dress was loose and comfortable, and often toddlers wore white serge, piqué, or cotton print pinafores over their dresses. The pinafore was essentially an apron as long as the skirt of the dress. The bib covered the front of the bodice, but the back of the bodice was open. The pinafore had a square or rounded neckline and had large straps over the shoulders that were sometimes trimmed with lace edging, and it was tied or buttoned at the back. In the 1890s and into the twentieth century, the straps of the pinafore extended over the top of the puffed sleeves of the dress worn underneath, resting on top of the puff of the gathered leg-of-mutton sleeve.

In the 1880s, toddlers girls wore many styles of dresses. Some were very fancy and formal with lots of trimming, and some were simple A-line styles. Girls sometimes wore jumper-style dresses with blouses underneath. The A-line dress had some shaping in the waist or had a bloused low-waisted bodice with a short pleated skirt. Often toddler dresses had short puffed sleeves and lace trim at the neckline and sleeves.

In the 1890s, toddler boys and girls wore dresses with yokes trimmed with lace and loaded with needlework, and skirts started from gathers under the yoke in a wide loose-fitting style, with little decoration on the skirt. Toddler boys also wore kilts and matching reefer jackets with heavily lace-trimmed collars, sailor suits with skirts instead of breeches or trousers, pleated frocks with belted waist bringing in the ample fabric falling from the neckline to the hem. With the new rubber diaper covers, toddler boys were increasingly dressed in overalls or Brownie suits, with the long trousers and front bib with thin shoulder straps. This was a perfect garment for little boys to be able to learn to walk and move more easily in play. It was not worn for special occasions and was reserved for play and perhaps work.

Kate Greenaway's Designs for Children

Kate Greenaway (1846–1901) was a British illustrator who depicted children in simple verses published in many different books that became bestsellers. She would first produce a simple watercolor painting that was then lithographed in the new technology of the photolithograph. Greenaway's signature children were all depicted in dresses, too young to be in trousers yet, in an eighteenth-century style. The reason these illustrations are important to nineteenth-century fashion are the smocks worn over the frocks (dresses). Liberty of London, a British department store that opened its doors in 1875, adapted the fashions of the Greenaway illustrations for children's wear. These "smock-frocks" fit with the Aesthetic Movement philosophy popular with certain mothers, and during the 1880s and 1890s they particularly enjoyed dressing their daughters in Greenaway style in the 1880s and 1890s with beautiful dresses featuring decorative embroidered yokes.

Pinafores and Aprons

Girls commonly wore crisp muslin aprons over their frocks. Some were shorter than the skirt but covered the bodice front and most of the front of the skirt. The wide shoulder straps and bibs were trimmed with lace ruffles that were sometimes ironed flat. A dressier apron was longer and covered the whole skirt of the dress beneath it. It was made of linen or white piqué, and could be belted with a fancy buckle, large bow, or metal clip. Aprons also were worn in the half style, from the waist down, but with no shoulder strap and no bib. These were often tear-drop shaped and trimmed with lace and embroidered or decorated with buttons and braid. Aprons also often had useful pockets on the front. Young boys wore smock-style aprons with had very high necks and sleeves that covered most of the dress except for the very bottom of the skirt.

Girls' pinafores followed the eighties princess style and had pleats and ruffles at the arms and shoulders, following the long parallel lines from the shoulders to the hem. They were made of checked gingham, striped cambric, and white nainsook. Pinafores were tied at the back with wide ribbons formed into large bows gathering the extra fabric added to the back of the skirt.

Fabrics

Children's clothing was made from many different types of fabrics over the decade encompassing the Gilded Age. The material chosen depended on the season, the sex of the wear, and the purpose of the clothing. In winter, children were dressed in wool flannel, velvet, cotton, and the clothing was trimmed with braid and velvet or satin ribbons. Summer fabrics were lighter, usually of cotton in many different weaves, such as muslin or piqué, and in a variety of patterns, such as checks and stripes. Fabrics for girls' dresses were often combined, as well, as with their mothers' dresses. Where a skirt and part of the bodice would be made of wool, there was often a part of the dress that was made of a different fabric, such as a velvet collar, or as an insert into the center front of the garment, then highlighted by using a fabric belt of the same fabric or adorning the cuffs in the same accent fabric. As with the Little Lord Fauntleroy suit, trims were usually of different fabrics in either lighter or darker fabrics. A sailor suit may, for example, have a darker body and white sailor style collar hanging half way down the back with the same fabric trimming the bottoms of the sleeves.

In the 1880s, colors were quite dark, and black, red, dark blue, and green were commonly combined into one fabric for a girl's dress. These dark colors were sometimes offset with white lace trims in the necks and sleeves. A large separate lace collar was sometimes worn over the shoulders and falling low down the bodice.

Boys wore suits of wool tweeds, checks, plaids, and solid-wool fabrics. Blouses were made of cotton or linen and collars were stiffly starched.

Outerwear was made of camel hair, brocade, velvet, patterned silk, silk, and piqué. Often the capes and cloaks were lined with quilted silk, trimmed with fur, lace, and fringe, and decorated with ribbons.

Footwear

Girls and boys wore calf-length boots, no matter if they were wearing dresses or breeches. Girls also wore the Mary Jane style shoe with a flat heel and a strap across the top of the foot that buckled on the outside of the foot. Girls also wore ankle boots with elastic inserts on the side. Boots were made of leather, patent leather, canvas, or dark-colored wool such as dark gray, and they were worn with a variety of stocking styles and colors, including black. Older girls wore shoes with higher heels, and these were simple pumps, the heel being about 1.5 inches high. Girls adopted white slippers with long tongue flaps similar to those of the eighteenth century. These had little ties across the top of the foot. Dressy shoes were slippers with roman ties up the leg (in ribbon) or button straps that did up the length of the boot to mid-calf. Some styles had a series of bows along the top of the shoe. Boots were sometimes made without the tongue insert on the top of the foot and up the front of the leg, so the laces or ribbons criss-crossed up the lower leg showing the stockings underneath with a bow at the top. Boots were also tied up in the front with tongues, and much like boots today would be, often the older boots were left untied at the tops with the laces wrapped around the ankle and tied up in a small knot or bow.

For summer, girls wore tiny, flat, brightly colored slippers made of fabric or leather, and in cooler months the boots were dependable footwear. It was generally the younger girls who wore boots and as girls got older they opted for slippers with stockings. Young girls wore knee socks and short socks with embroidered tops and Mary Janes tied with big bows on top of the foot.

Boys wore boots and stockings with breeches. The stockings were sometime striped or plain colored, and boots were sometimes covered in gaiters, especially for riding the bicycle. Boys' boots were made of leather, canvas, or a combination of both. Boys wore oxford shoes, as well, with the lace-up or buttoned closure on top of the foot and sometimes with elastic inserts at the sides. Kilt suits were sometimes paired with with patterned stockings or argyle socks and worn with dress slippers decorated with rosettes.

Boys wore ties with their suits. These were often soft in the younger years and formed a soft bow at the neck. They were made of silk and were most often black but sometimes red or patterned in colors.

This young girl is wearing a dress with the accent on her knees, which would have been similar to her mother's style of dress, only in a shorter skirt length. The peplum on her bodice adds to the bustle effect of the dress, tailored to a young girl. (Library of Congress)

Hair and Hats

In the 1870s, girls wore their hair long and loose down the back, with the front only tied up on top of the head with a large ribbon bow or held back with a ribbon band. Starched cotton and linen bonnets covered the hair and tied under the chin. Older girls wore small hats tilted over their foreheads, with flat crowns and brims that were decorated with ribbon and feathers. Their hair hung loose to the back, sometimes in ringlets.

In the 1880s, girls wore their hair long but had bangs (fringes) of either perfectly straight hair as long as the eyebrows, or curled bangs that puffed out slightly from the forehead. Girls also wore their hair pulled up in the front and then rolled in long sausage rolls held in a large bow at the top of the head.

Boys wore leather billed caps. Sailor hats were popular with both sexes. In the 1880s, children wore their sailor hats with rolled brims instead of the flat brim, but still with flat crowns and ribbons around the crown.

Accessories

Like their mothers, girls carried pretty parasols, and they spent hours decorating them. Boys carried fancy walking sticks designed for their height and also wore binocular cases across one shoulder crossing over their bodies to rest on one hip. Girls and boys both wore belts either to gather in the skirts or hold up trousers, but for both sexes it was not unusual to have a small pouch hanging from the belt that held small but valuable items.

Swimming Costume

For swimming, smaller children and toddlers wore a swimming dress with no sleeves, in the princess style, with no break in the design at the waist. The dress buttoned down the front.

Older girls wore similar swimming costumes to those of their mothers. These were knee-length trousers pulled in at the knees, and blouses that were belted at the waist, buttoned down the front, and had small puffed

sleeves. The trimming was minimal on these garments—perhaps some lace along the edges.

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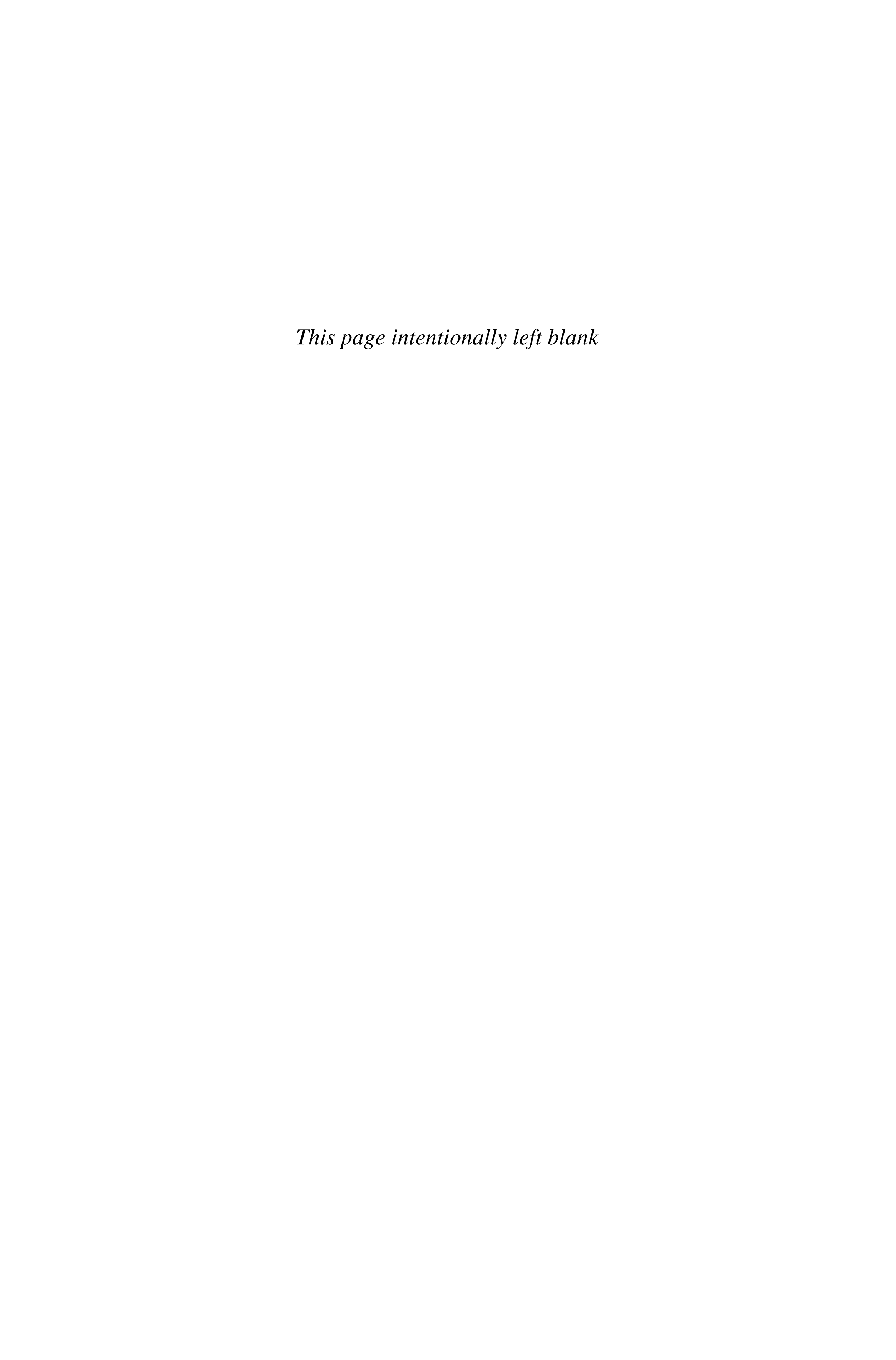

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Glossary: The Gilded Age

acid dyes: A class of dyes used primarily for protein and nylon fibers.

alpaca: A long, fine, natural protein hair fiber obtained from the domesticated South American alpaca, a member of the camel family; a wool variant.

angora: A goat native to Turkey from which the natural protein fiber, mohair, is obtained; a wool variant.

animal fiber: A general term for natural protein fiber of animal origin, such as wool (sheep) or silk (silkworm).

armscye: The part of the shirt or sleeved jacket where the top of the sleeve is sewn or attached.

barathea: A twill variation with a broken rib weave on one face and a pebbly texture on the other.

bast fibers: Woody fibers from the stems of plants such as flax, jute, and hemp.

basque: A bodice with a short skirt or peplum falling from the natural waistline either in one piece with the bodice, or added to the waistline and hanging to the hips or sometimes lower, adding a layer to the skirts.

batik: A resist print in which wax is drawn or blocked onto a fabric before dyeing.

batiste: Cloth of fine, sheer, plain weave made of combed or carded long, staple fibers.

bertha: A large collar, often made from lace and resembling a cape.

bias: An invisible diagonal line at a 45° angle to the grain of a fabric. Cutting fabric on the bias gives more flexibility or drape to the material.

bleaching: The basic finishing process to whiten untreated fabrics (called gray goods or greige goods).

bleeding: A fault in which dye runs from one pattern area into another.

blend: (a) Yarn of two or more staple fiber types spun together (b) fabric containing blended yarns in the warp and filling directions.

blouse: A dress bodice with a loose, comfortable fit. In 1890, blouses were worn with large leg-of-mutton sleeves.

bobbin lace: Single-element construction, originally handmade on a pillow with numerous threads.

bodice: The general term for the close-fitted top part of a woman's dress, or it may refer to a separate garment worn with a skirt. It was worn over the stays or corset, sometimes with detachable sleeves. The bodice also describes the upper part of a one-piece gown.

braid: Flat or round, woven or plaited fabric used for trimming.

breeches: (also upper stocks): Men's and boys' short (usually knee-length) pants. The style of these changed drastically from period to period and were either close-fitted hose to very elaborately puffed, slashed, and structured.

broadcloth: Tightly woven, lustrous cotton fabric in a plain weave with a fine crosswise rib, or wool fabric with a close twill weave, brushed and sheared to give a uniform, slightly felted, smooth appearance. Originally describes a finely woven wool cloth used for better grades of clothing. At 29 inches wide, it was broader than most woven fabrics of the early American Colonial era.

brocade: Jacquard-woven fabric with a supplementary warp and/or filling which creates an all-over design: Background is satin or twill weave.

broche Silk or velvet fabric with figures on the face made from satin.

burlap: Single-ply plain woven jute fabric.

busk A piece of broad flat metal, or bone that slid into the center front of the dress bodice to provide stiffness and structure.

bustle: Emphasis placed on the rear top end of the skirt, achieved in different periods by different methods, including the wire or wood cage, stuffed pads tied around the waist, or with multiple layers of fabrics pulled to the back and tied securely in flounces.

calendering: Standard finishing process in which cloth is pressed heavily and/or repeatedly under steel rollers to produce a polished surface. A process also used to emboss fabrics.

calico: Basic woven cotton cloth, ranging from rough to fine and from plain white to ornately decorated prints.

cambric: Delicate linen fabric or cheaper cotton version used to dress lining.

camel hair: Natural protein fiber obtained from the undercoat of the Asiatic camel.

camisole: A loose-fitting jacket, such as a morning jacket.

capote: Hooded cloak or loose mantle worn long with a hood.

carded yarn: Yarn spun from a carded sliver of fibers.

carding process: Used for all natural fibers, in which they are separated and brought into general alignment prior to spinning.

carrick: A base outerwear cape worn with one or more shoulder capes.

cashmere: A fine, natural protein fiber obtained from the undercoat of the Himalayan Kashmir goat.

cassock: Long, front-buttoning gowns worn by various clergy.

cellulose: Organic fibrous substance found in all vegetation that is the basic constituent of both natural and manufactured fabrics, such as cotton, linen, jute, and rayon.

chamois leather: Soft leather used for riding breeches and other durable but soft garments.

chatelaine: A chain attached to a belt to hold a collection of small articles included thimbles, scissors, needle cases, scent cases, fans, ball tablets, toothpick cases, keys, and watches.

chemise: An undershirt made of linen, cotton, or silk worn as underwear.

chemisette: An underbodice with no sleeves worn under the gown as part of the many layers of underwear.

cheviot: Coarse heavy twill fabric.

chiffon: Sheer fabric, usually made of silk.

chinoiserie: Objects made in Europe in imitation of Chinese styles.

chignon: A large hairpiece attached to the natural hair to create coils, braids, and emphasis at the back of the head.

chintz: A plain woven fabric, usually of cotton calico, printed with colorful, lively patterns, usually flowers.

circular: A flared cape cut from a circle of fabric.

cloak: An outer garment with a loose fit and no sleeves.

clocks: Embroidery applied to the instep and legs of a lady's stockings, either in the same color or contrasting with the stocking color.

cloth count: *See* thread count.

cloth: General term used for any pliable material, whether woven, knitted, felted, knotted, or extruded.

coiffure: A hairstyle or headdress; the way in which the hair is dressed.

color: A hue, as contrasted with white, black, or gray.

colorfast: Dye or print applied to fabric so that the fabric will resist color fading either from ultraviolet light or cleaning.

combinations: A joining of two or more elements of underwear, such as drawers and chemise, into one piece.

combing: The process of making carded fibers parallel and removing impurities and short fibers before spinning.

corsage: The term for "bodice" used by the fashion press of the Gilded Age.

cotton: Natural vegetable fiber from the cotton plant grown in the southern United States, Egypt, Russia, and China.

couturiers: High-fashion designers from Paris, such as Charles Worth.

cravat: Scarf or band of fabric worn around the neck as a tie.

crease: A line in a fabric caused by a fold.

crepe (crape): An over-twisted yarn that then twists back on itself to create small loops that, when woven into fabric, create an uneven, matte surface texture and fabric with slight stretch. Often used in tailored women's clothing.

crewel: Hand embroidery originating in Kashmir where loosely twisted yarn is stitched onto cotton fabric.

crinoline: A stiff fabric of horsehair, cotton, and/or linen worn under the skirt to create great volume.

crusher: Soft-crowned men's hat with a stiff brim that could be crushed when not being worn and that sprang back to form after being crushed.

cuirass: A lined and boned bodice that was very close fitting and sometimes long waisted, popular in the 1880s.

damask: Reversible woven fabric with contrasting warp-face and filling-face, often woven in distinct patterns of flowers or animals.

denim: Warp-faced twill fabric made of yarn-dyed cotton cloth, usually with a dyed warp and a contrasting white or natural-colored filling.

density: The measure of the set of a cloth—the total number of ends and picks.

deshabille: A type of undress for both men and women, such as a dressing gown with often quite extravagant decoration worn among the upper classes in the eighteenth century.

direct printing: General term for a process in which color is applied directly onto the fabric.

discharge printing: Process in which pattern is obtained by bleaching portions of already dyed cloth. It may be left white or dyed another color.

dolman: Ladies outerwear wrap with tailored shoulders and collar. The sides often decorated as though a sleeve were present, even though no sleeves were incorporated into the design. Arms were kept close to the woman's body, often impeding movement.

double cloth: Compound cloth based on two sets each of warp or filling yarns held together at regular intervals by a warp or filling thread passing from one fabric to the other.

drab: A grayish brown color.

drape: A folded arrangement of fabric used to add volume and decorate a gown.

drilling: Cotton or linen twill fabric of all colors used for lining bodices, making underwear, and as pocket lining.

duster: An outerwear piece worn to protect the gown from dust, or, a removable washable layer of the hem of the skirt that dragged along the ground protecting the skirt from dust and dirt.

dye house: Facility where greige goods are dyed or printed.

dyeing: The process of applying color to fiber, yarn or fabric with natural or synthetic coloring agents. See also: cross, jig, package, piece, skein, solution, space, stock, top, union, and yarn dyeing.

Egyptian cotton: Fine grade of cotton known for its long staple fibers that create a smooth cotton fabric.

elasticity: ability of a stretched material to recover its original size and shape.

embossed velvet: velvet fabric with the pile cut out of certain areas to create a decorative design.

embroidery: basic cloth embellished with ornamental needlework.

Empire dress: Essentially a tube with one drawstring at a round neck and another at a high waistline. The neckline was low, the sleeves short, and the waistline high, located just under the bust. Skirts were very narrow, and because of this comparatively form fitting silhouette, a reduction of underpinnings was necessary.

fabric: general term for any woven, knitted, knotted, felted, or otherwise constructed material made from fibers or yarns. Cloth, carpet, and matting are all defined as fabric.

fabric width: crosswise measurement of cloth.

face: the side on which a fabric is finished.

faille: Soft ribbed silk fabric.

fading: color loss due to light, pollutants, cleaning, etc.

fiber: the basic element of yarn and cloth. Any tough, hair-like substance, natural or manufactured, that can be spun or thrown to form yarn, or felted or otherwise joined into a fabric.

fichu: a small piece of fabric that covered the shoulders.

filament fiber: of indefinite length, either natural (silk) or manufactured. Silk filament is the actual thread of a silkworm's cocoon; manufactured filaments are produced by forcing a solution through a spinneret.

filling yarn: (or weft or woof) in weaving, the crosswise yarn or yarns that interlace at right angles with the lengthwise warp.

finish: any treatment given to a fiber, yarn or fabric to alter its original or greige goods state.

flannel: most often cotton or wool made into a medium weight plain or twill fabric with surface nap.

float: portion of warp or filling yarns covering two or more adjacent yarns to form a design or satin surface.

folds: draping as produced when fabric is pleated or gathered secured at each end to keep folds in place.

foulard: Thin, soft and washable silk with printed colors or black and white used for dressmaking.

French cambric: finer quality of cambric with a silky hand and appearance.

frieze: Thick woolen cloth with a nap on only one side.

fringe: a leather piece left to hang from the outside of an Indian skin dress; corded or braided tassels attached to skirts, bodices or sleeves of gowns as decoration.

froufrou: decorative trimmings, such as lace and ruffles applied to dresses.

garters: Before the invention of elastic, garters were generally silk bands tied around the leg to hold up hose. Worn by both men and women, though rarely visible under dresses.

gaiters: protective covering worn over the shoes and ankles, joined at the sides, made of heavy canvas or felt.

galloon: narrow ribbon used to trim and bind dresses, hats, shoes and furniture.

gauze: openly constructed, transparent cloth of any fiber.

Gilet corsage: a woman's garment made in imitation of a man's waistcoat—front-buttoning jackets with short basques that extended below the waistline could be softened by wearing underneath a chemisette, usually in white muslin or cambric with frills showing at the neckline and cuffs.

gingham: checked cloth made of yarn-dyed cotton or linen and woven in a geometric pattern.

gore: a wedge-shaped piece of fabric used to make skirts or bodices wider by inserting it at one end.

grain: fabric with the warp threads (lengthwise) and the filling/weft threads (crosswise) crossing at perfectly right angles. If the angle is not 90 degrees, the fabric with not drape properly and will be very difficult to cut and sew.

gray goods: (or greige goods) fabric in a raw state from the loom before it is finished, dyed, or bleached.

grosgrain: Heavy, corded ribbon or cloth. Also, firm close-woven fabric with a heavy cord inserted in the warp direction, allowing it to keep its shape when manipulated to create the fullness of skirts.

hair fibers: animal fibers that lack the crimp and resilience of wool, such as rabbit hair and fur fibers.

hand: the tactile quality of fabric; crisp, soft, stiff, etc.

hand-spun yarn: yarn spun by hand on a spinning wheel.

handwoven fabric: cloth woven on a hand- or foot-powered loom, or woven by hand without a loom.

harness: rectangular frames where heddles hold warp yarns. The harnesses move up and down to open the shed, allowing for the warp yarn to be inserted in predetermined patterns to create different types of weaves.

heddles: needle-like wires on a loom, through which the warp yarns are threaded. They are mounted in the harness, which is raised and lowered during weaving.

homespun: originally, a plain-woven, fabric from hand-spun yarns; currently, a machine-woven fabric with irregular yarns to simulate the original textures.

houndstooth: variation of a twill weave, with a broken check pattern, used for men's suits.

hue: color, shade, or tint of a color.

indigo: natural vegetable dye from the indigo plant used to color fabric deep blue or purple.

interlining: a layer of stiff fabric held between the outer, often more decorative fabric and the lining.

jabot: filling of lace on the front of a lady's bodice.

jacket bodice: developed during the 1840s as an alternative style for day wear. It had a loose, straight fit that was more masculine than the traditional fitted bodice.

jacquard: fabric produced on a jacquard loom that uses a punched-card system to raise and lower single heddles to create intricate patterns with complex motifs such as tapestry and brocade.

Japonism: Japanese-inspired styles of art and design, often seen in fabrics used in clothing of the Aesthetic Movement.

jean: sturdy cotton twill fabric (also called denim).

kerchief: A large, square cloth that, when folded diagonally, was worn as a head or neck covering.

kilt pleats folds of fabric sewn flat partway and close together with part of one fold is sewn over another.

knickerbockers: pants gathered or tied at the knee, known as knickers for short in 1860s and 70s.

knit fabric: often stretchy fabric produced by interloping one (or more) continuous yarns.

lace: A decorative trim created by manipulating a fine yarn or thread into a two-dimensional fabric with an open structure, often with floral or geometric patterns.

lacis: (also *filet*) An Italian style of cutwork where a fine piece of netting is embroidered and cut out to form a decorative trim. It is a precursor to lace.

lambswool: First fleece sheared from a young sheep. The previously unclipped fiber ends are tapered, producing a very soft texture.

lappets: Flat lace caps with tapered ends that extended into long tails, also known as "lappets," at the sides. Worn into the 1860s, this headdress was placed far back on the head.

lawn: lightweight, sheer, fine cotton or linen fabric.

leg-of-mutton sleeve: A sleeve that is very full and puffed at the shoulder and tapered and narrow at the wrist. So called because its shape resembles a leg of lamb.

line: long linen fibers that have great luster and strength.

linen: A natural cellulose yarn made from flax fibers, noted for strength, cool hand, and luster; low resilience. Also, fabric woven from linen yarn.

lining: material attached under the principal material of a cloth or piece of clothing to protect the outer fabric and sometimes help give stability and shape to a garment.

lingerie: a term used to refer to women's underwear, such as petticoats, chemises, drawers, corsets, hose, collars, cuffs, garters etc.

livery: comes from the Old French term *livrer*, which indicates the clothing of servants provided by the employer.

llama: South American animal of the camel family whose fleece is produced in a variety of colors (llama lace is a woolen machine lace).

loom: machine that produces woven textiles by interlacing warp and filling yarns at right angles to each other.

lorgnette: a pair of folded opera glasses or eyeglasses with an ornamental handle.

Louis XV heel: the heel of a shoe with a curved outline flaring at the base and sometimes colored.

luster: the gloss or sheen on the surface of a fiber, yarn or fabric.

MacFarlane: an outer coat with capes overtop and slits at the sides for the hands to be able to reach inner pockets.

Madras handkerchief: a large brightly colored cotton or silk handkerchief.

mantle: A loose cloak or wrap, usually sleeveless, but sometimes with a very short sleeve starting at the elbow.

mantelet: a small cloak or mantle.

Mantua: A gown heavily gathered at the back and often open at the front bodice and skirts to reveal a matching or contrasting stomacher and petticoat underneath, originally from the eighteenth century but elements used in the nineteenth century.

matinee: a dressing gown (from the word French "matin," or "morning").

matelasse: raised flower or figured designs on wool or silk base fabric, giving it a quilted look.

mercerization: caustic soda treatment for cotton and linen, which makes the yarn or cloth stronger, and increases luster and dye affinity.

merino: wool used for fine woolen and worsted cloth.

milliner: a hat maker/designer.

mob cap: a simple linen and muslin head covering gathered with a frill around the edges, trimmed with lace, worn by female servants and nurses and by women as they relaxed in the afternoon.

moccasin: Native American soft leather shoes or boots, often fur lined and decorated with intricate quill and beadwork. Worn by native Americans and settlers in the colonies of North America.

modiste: seamstress, needlewoman, or someone who made and repaired dresses.

mohair: processed fiber of the long, silky hair of the Angora goat.

moiré: wavy water-stained effect on ribbed silk created by wetting and crushing the fabric with great pressure.

monk's cloth: basket-woven cotton fabric.

monmouth cap: a knitted cap with a rounded crown and small band. Worn primarily by sailors and soldiers originally, but later widely adopted.

mordant: a metallic salt used to fix dyes.

Mother Hubbard: loosely fitting dress often gathered at chest level and hanging loosely to the hem. Often worn without a corset by working and farm women or women who were pregnant in the privacy of their own homes in the nineteenth century. This dress could be belted to add some respectability to the garment.

motif: a pattern unit, usually repeated.

mull: very soft, thin type of muslin.

muslin: uncombed cotton yarns used in plain woven cloth, often used in ladies' undergarments. The resulting fabric can be fine and sheer or rough and coarse.

nainsook (nansook): striped or plain muslin fabric.

natural fiber: any textile fiber obtained from an animal, vegetable, or mineral source, such as wool, cotton, or asbestos.

Newmarket: a lady's cloak with a long skirt and fitted bodice.

off-grain: finishing fault in which the horizontal structure is not at right angles to the vertical.

oiled silk: waterproofed silk saturated in oil used in the armpits of gowns to prevent perspiration from passing through to the outer part of the bodice.

organdy: plain weave cotton fabric with crisp hand.

organza: similar to organdy, but made of silk, rayon, or nylon.

paletot: a knee-length overcoat with three layered cape collars and slits for arms.

pannier: a word used to describe a bustle or to define a puffed overskirt

pantalettes: women wore long under-drawers, called *pantalettes*, with lace, ruffles or pleats at the edges that showed at the hem of dresses.

pantaloons: very tight-fitting ankle trousers, usually made from knitted jersey.

passimenterie: lace edgings and gimp or braid trimmings or heavy embroidery.

pattern: The arrangement of form, design or decoration in a fabric. Also, a guide for cutting fabric.

peignoir: a dressing gown worn in private.

pelerine: small, round shoulder cape that covered the arms to the elbows.

pelisse: a cape-like garment with arm slits, sometimes made with a hood and worn over dresses.

petticoat: an ankle- or shin-length skirt that tied around the waist or a woman's underskirt, sometimes exposed by an open-fronted robe.

pick: in weaving, a single passage of filling yarn through the warp shed.

piece dying: dyeing of cloth after construction.

pigment: coloring agent for cloth made of powdered coloring agent suspended in liquid binder. Used for printed fabric patterns.

pile weave: such as velvet or terry cloth, where fibers protrude from the surface or ground cloth. either in loops or cut pile. Can be produced with the wire method, which uses round-tipped removable wires to raise loops from the ground fabric for uncut pile, and sharp-edged cut wires to raise and cut fibers for cut pile.

pinafore apron: a type of apron worn by women and girls. It originates from "pin afore," describing how the front bib part of an apron was earlier secured to the chest using pins.

plaid: pattern of unevenly spaced repeating stripes crossing each other at 90° angles. Used in Scottish national dress and often used for fashionable dress in the nineteenth century.

plain weave: simplest method of interlacing warp and weft yarns to make cloth. Each filling (weft) passes alternately under and over the warp yarns to produce a balanced construction. It is strong, inexpensive to produce, and the best ground cloth for printing; the thread count determines the fabric's strength.

plastron: trimming for a dress front made of contrasting material. A piece borrowed from military dress in contrasting color that attached to the front and or back of women's bodice with two rows of buttons.

plissé: another word for pleating.

ply: Asingle strand of yarn. Also, to twist one or more strands of yarn together.

polonaise: a coat-like gown where the skirt fronts are pulled back to reveal the underskirts.

pompadour: a square neckline for a bodice.

poplin: fabric with a fine, corded surface made of silk, wool, or worsted.

postilion: the back of the jacket or basque is extended or tabs are added to the back of the jacket.

pouf: fabric that is puffed into a pillow shape, mainly to decorate skirts.

princess: a long, very close-fitting dress with continuous seams from shoulder to hem with no waist seam.

printing: application of color designs to the surface of cloth.

protein fiber: natural fiber originating from an animal such as a sheep (wool) or silkworm (silk).

quilting: compound fabric construction of two layers of cloth with a layer of padding (batting) between, stitched through all three.

raw silk: fabric where the sericin gum has not been fully removed creating a stiff or tacky hand.

redingote: long coat or polonaise with long basques extending down the front.

repeat: the amount of surface a single pattern covers on a fabric.

resist printing: general term for printing processes in which the motif or the ground is treated with a dye-resistant substance before dyeing the fabric.

reticule: A small bag for keeping necessary objects close at hand. Used instead of pockets.

revers: lapels, cuffs, or basques that are turned back to expose a lining of contrasting color or fabric.

rib: raised ridge running lengthwise, crosswise, or diagonally on a fabric, usually formed by the insertion of a heavy thread, also formed by embossing with rollers.

rib weave: A modification of plain weave in which fine warp ends are closely set and two picks (or one heavier pick) interlace as one. Also, any woven fabric construction with a horizontal rib or cord.

rosettes: ribbons manipulated to form a rose shape attached to skirts, sleeves, bodices, or shoes.

ruching (ruche): gathered or pleated fabric, ribbon, lace, or other decorative materials in long pieces of applied design at the neck, wrists, bonnet, or on the main skirt.

sacque (sack): a loose coat with sleeves; often used to mean a robe or jacket a woman wore at home over nightwear.

sateen: filling-faced satin-weave fabric with horizontal floats.

satin weave: basic weave in which the fabric face is composed almost entirely of warp or filling floats, producing a smooth, lustrous surface.

sealskin cloth: Outer-garment fabric made of mohair and dyed to look like real seal fur.

selvage: reinforced edge along the vertical edge of finished woven or flat knit fabric.

serge: smooth-finished fabric in a balanced twill weave, identical on face and back.

sericulture: raising of silkworms and production of silk.

Shantung silk: dense, plain-woven silk cloth with a slightly irregular surface due to uneven, slubbed filling yarns.

sheer very thin, transparent, or semi-opaque fabric.

shirring: Horizontal gathers used to decorate skirts in the 1880s.

shirting cotton fabric used for collars, cuffs, shirts for both men and women. Often but not always white.

shirtwaist: women's blouse, based loosely on the design for men's dress shirts, with buttons either down the front or back. A good example is the shirt worn by the Gibson Girl of the late nineteenth century.

silk: natural protein fiber produced by the silkworm when it forms its cocoon. The fiber is unwound from the cocoon in a single, full-length, very strong fiber that is used for smooth lustrous fabrics.

silk rep: silk woven with a cord through it giving it texture and thickness, designs sometimes applied.

smock: loose-fitting knee-length over-blouses, worn by the working class for centuries. They were also a practical fashion for children.

smocking: bibs of children's dresses where the fine fabric is gathered in tiny folds and sewn closely and decoratively.

skirt: the part of the gown that falls below the waist.

stays: Another term for corset. A stiff undergarment tied or fastened around the torso to give a desired shape to a costume silhouette.

stripe: narrow section of a fabric differing in color or texture from the adjoining area.

Swiss embroidery: needlework applied to plain white cotton muslin or linen.

Swiss muslin: an open-weave translucent cotton with dots, stripes, or floral patterns.

switches: long hairpieces made from real human hair that were added to a woman's natural hair to created fullness or length.

tabs: loose hanging pieces of square cut fabric of 1–3 inches, used to decorate a gown.

taffeta: crisp, slightly ribbed, lustrous fabric of a plain weave with contrasting-weight filling (heavier) and warp (finer) to create the effect.

tapes narrow pieces of woven cotton or linen used inside gowns to help tie up skirts and hold the flounces of puffy skirts.

teagown: An unboned, comfortable, loose-fitting afternoon gown, often with a Watteau style back that fell in folds from the neck to the hem.

textile: originally, a general term for any woven cloth; now, a general term for any fabric made from fibers or yarns, natural or manufactured made into any fabric structure such as woven, knits, non-woven etc.

thread: a strand of plied and twisted yarn with a smooth finish that is used in sewing and stitching.

tournure: refers to the bustle, clothing, or overall appearance of a person

tulle: fabric of fine silk netting used in bonnets and veils or dress trimmings, in any color and with or without decoration of spots of varying sizes.

tussah: silk produced by uncultivated silkworms that have different diet than those that are cultivated, resulting in brownish raw silk fabric.

tweed: medium-weight, rough woolen fabric, usually twill woven. Named tweeds such as Donegal, Connemara, Harris, and Galashiels are produced in Ireland and Scotland.

twill: basic weave with a diagonally lined surface effect produced by passing filling threads over two or more warp threads, resulting in a regular progression. Denim is a common modern example of a twill weave.

underskirt: the skirt worn beneath the overskirt or arrangement of drapery and flouncing; could also be a petticoat.

vaquero: The original Spanish cow herders and ranchers in California and the southern States who influenced the American cowboys in their work habits and dress.

velvet: soft, thick, warp-pile, napped fabric with a smooth, rich surface. Originally woven in silk, now made with silk, cotton, or synthetic fibers.

velveteen: single-woven weft pile fabric with a dense-cut surface; cotton velvet.

vest: another term used for waistcoat or a simulated waistcoat that is part of the bodice; also a knitted undershirt.

virgin wool: new wool; not reused, reprocessed, or re-spun.

visite: a cloak with a close-fitting back and longer loose end extending down the front.

voile: fine crepe, plain-woven fabric that is sheer with a soft hand.

waist: another word for a blouse or upper part of the garment. An abbreviation for the term "shirtwaist."

waistcoat: Also called a "vest." A front-buttoning, sleeveless garment worn usually by men under a jacket or coat. Occasionally had detachable sleeves.

wale: The rib of a woven fabric in either the horizontal, vertical, or diagonal direction. Also, the vertical rib on the face of a knitted fabric.

warp: lengthwise yarns in a fabric, running vertically through the loom parallel to the selvages.

waterproof fabric: textile made resistant to water absorption by treatment with oils or other substances. Can be wool, silk, or cotton.

Watteau pleats: broad box pleats arranged on the back shoulders of the bodice that hang from the neckline to the hem of the skirt, usually worn on unfitted saque (sack) gowns.

weave: structural pattern in which yarns are interlaced to produce fabric.

weaving: process of making a fabric on a loom by interlacing horizontal yarns (weft) at right angles with vertical yarns (warp).

weft: horizontal or crosswise element of a woven cloth.

weighted silk: silk treated with metallic salts to improve the texture for arranging flounces and puffs on a skirt, but also to increase the weight and apparent value of the silk bought by weight, strictly controlled and now virtually obsolete. The silk industry in England suffered in the late 1800s due to women abandoning silks for wools because they thought silk was priced unfairly and that the new weighted silks were not durable. Historic textiles treated with this finish deteriorate quickly and the silk fibers become damaged.

woolen: fuzzy, loosely twisted yarn spun from carded, short wool fibers. Woolen cloths are generally simple weaves and show coarser finishes than worsteds.

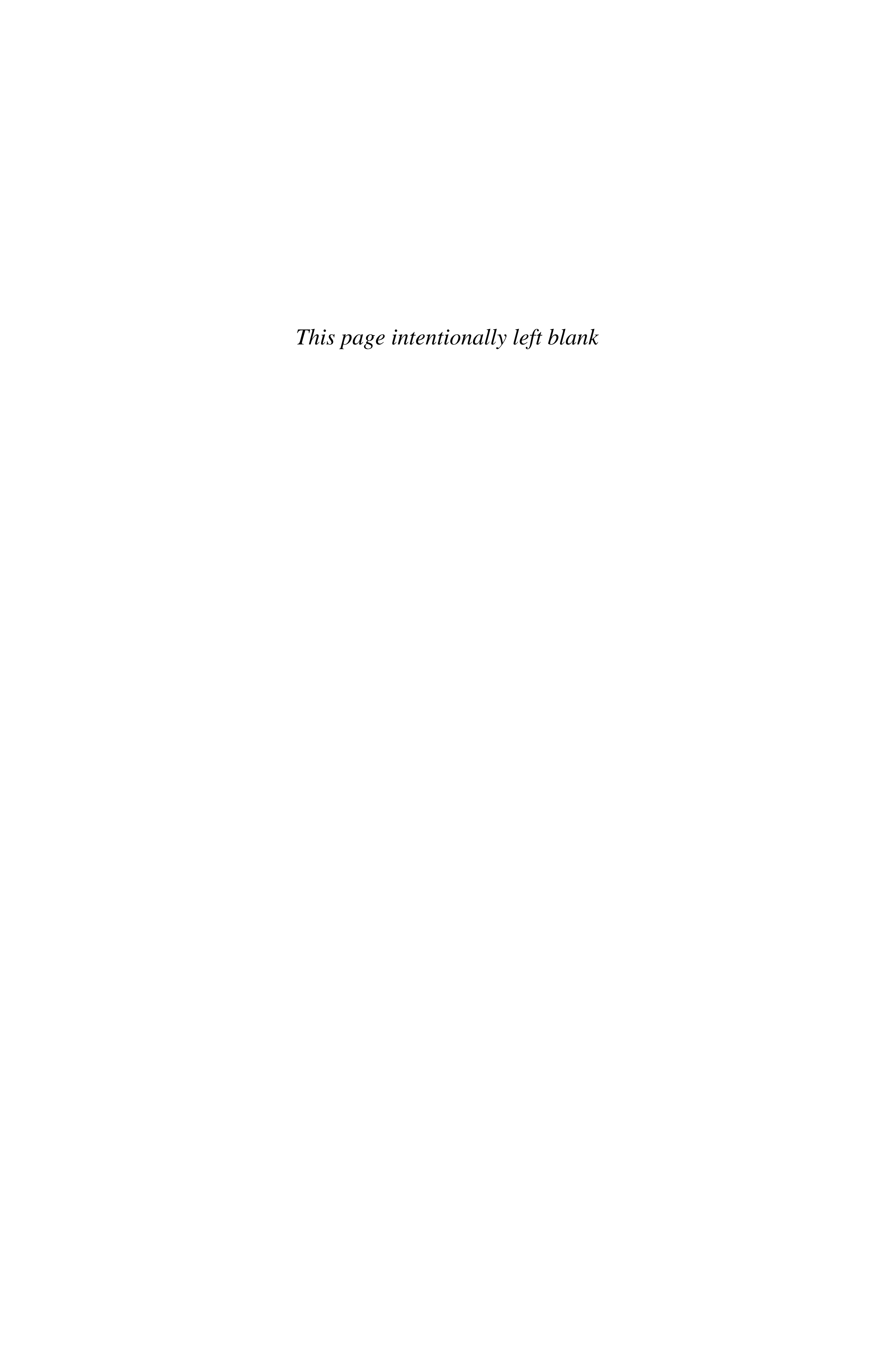
worsted: smooth, compact yarns spun from carded and combed long wool fibers. Worsted cloths are more closely constructed and have smoother finishes than woolens.

wrapper: a one-piece, comfortable housedress.

yarn dyeing: dyeing at the yarn stage of production, as opposed to solution, stock, or piece dyeing.

zephyr: delicate fabrics made into ginghams and other prints that resembled cotton batiste.

zephyr yarns: single and double yarns with smooth, even twist, used for knitting and embroidery.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Resource Guide: The Gilded Age

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MUSEUMS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND USEFUL WEB SITES

Each of the museums in this list has a collection of U.S. historic clothing and/or textiles. There are also thousands of local historical societies and small house museums that portray life in a particular era with everything dating from that period, including clothing. Local communities often have clothing collections that are accessible to the public and can be excellent sources for a costume researcher. The museums listed here regularly mount exhibits showcasing clothing from a variety of different eras in U.S. history. These exhibits often have specific themes and can be excellent resources for detail about clothing history.

Many museums also welcome independent researchers interested in a variety of clothing-related topics. Getting in touch with the curator and making an appointment to see the exciting garments they house can be a fun and rewarding experience and gives the costume researcher much needed visual information not available in books and research articles. Most museums have a set of rules regarding photography, the use of writing tools (pencils are always preferred), and researchers are always asked to wear gloves so as not to transfer oils from the hands to the garments, which can speed up deterioration of the textile. Check with the curator before visiting a collection to make sure of what rules need to be followed.

American Textile History Museum
491 Dutton St.
Lowell, MA 01854-4221
www.athm.org

Atlanta History Center
130 West Paces Ferry Road, NW
Atlanta, GA 30305
http://www.webguide.com/atlhist.html

Birmingham Museum of Art
2000 Eighth Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203-2278
http://www.artsBMA.org

Bronx Museum of the Arts
1040 Grand Concourse #2
Bronx, NY 10456
www.bronxmuseum.org

Coastal Heritage Society
Savannah History Museum
303 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Savannah, GA 31401
http://www.chsgeorgia.org

The Connecticut Historical Society
1 Elizabeth Street
Hartford, CT 06105
http://www.chs.org/

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Costume Institute
1000 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10028
http://www.metmuseum.org

The Design Center
Philadelphia University
4200 Henry Street
Philadelphia, PA
http://www.philau.edu/designcenter

Douglas County Historical Society
1047 Massachusetts Street
Lawrence, KS 66044
http://www.watkinsmuseum.org

El Rancho de las Golondrinas
334 Los Pinos Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505
http://www.golondrinas.org

The FIDM Museum
Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising
919 South Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90015
http://www.fidm.edu

Jefferson County Museum
PO Box 50
Clancy, MT 59634
http://co.jefferson.mt.us

The Goldstein
240 McNeal Hall

1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
http://goldstein.che.umn.edu

Hillwood Art Museum/Long Island University
720 Northern Boulevard
Brookville, NY 11548-1300
http://www.liu.edu/museum

Historic Northampton
46 Bridge Street
Northampton, MA 01060
http://www.historic-northampton.org

Kansas Museum of History
6425 SW Sixth
Topeka, KS 66615
http://www.kshs.org

Kent State University Museum
P.O. Box 5190, Rockwell Hall
Kent, Ohio 44242-0001
http://dept.kent.edu/museum/

Maymont House
1700 Hampton Street
Richmond, VA 23220
http://www.maymont.org

Museum of African American History
14 Beacon St., Suite 719
Boston, MA 02108
www.afroammuseum.org

Museum of the City of New York
Costume Collection
1220 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10029
http://www.mcny.org

Museum of Florida History
RA Gray Bldg., Room G2
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
http://www.dos.state.fl.us/dhr/museum

Museum of the Rockies
Montana State University
600 W. Kagy Boulevard
Bozeman, MT 59717-2730
http://www.museumoftherockies.org

National Scouting Museum
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
Irving, TX 75038
http://www.bsamuseum.org

North Carolina Museum of History Library
4650 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4650
http://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

Northern Indiana Center for History
808 West Washington Street
South Bend, IN 46601
http://www.centerforhistory.org

Ohio State University
Historic Costume Collection
1787 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210-1295
http://costumeosu.edu

Pasadena Museum of History
470 West Walnut Street
Pasadena, CA 91103
http://www.pasadenahistory.org

Putnam County Historical Society and Foundry School Museum
63 Chestnut Street
Cold Spring, NY 10516
http://www.pchs-fsm.org

Schenectady Museum
Stephanie Przybylek
Director of Collections & Exhibitions
15 Nott Terrace Heights
Schenectady, NY 12308
http://www.schenectadymuseum.org

Shippensburg University Fashion Archives
1871 Old Main Drive
Shippensburg, PA 17257-2299
http://www.ship.edu/~fasharch/

Tennessee State Museum
505 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37243-1120
http://www.tnmuseum.org

Wenham Museum
132 Main Street
Wenham, MA 01984
http://www.wenhammuseum.org

Western Reserve Historical Society
10825 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
http://www.wrhs.org

Wild Wonderful King Vintage Museum
P.O. Box 303
Oakhurst, CA 93644
http://kingvintagemuseum.org/

Other Useful Web Resources

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Costume in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. 2008. www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cost/hd_cost.htm.
The Costume Gallery. 2008. www.costumegallery.com.
Nineteenth Century Fashion. 2008. www.angelfire.com/ar3/townevictorian/victorianfashin.html.
The Gentleman's Page, A Practical Guide for the Nineteenth Century American Man—American Men's Attire, 1860–1900. 2008. www.lahacal.org/gentleman/attire.html.
America's Story from America's Library, The Library of Congress. Gilded Age 1878–1889. 2008. www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/gilded.
Costume Society of America. 2008. www.costumesocietyamerica.com.

FILMS

These films and television series, available on DVD or video, offer accurate or reasonably accurate depictions of clothing of the period.

The Age of Innocence (1993). Directed by Martin Scorsese. 139 minutes. Based on the 1920 novel by Edith Wharton about life among the upper classes of New York City in the 1870s.

Bramwell (1995–1998). Various directors. English television series, shown in the United States on PBS, about a wealthy young woman who becomes a doctor and starts her own clinic in a poor part of London in 1895.

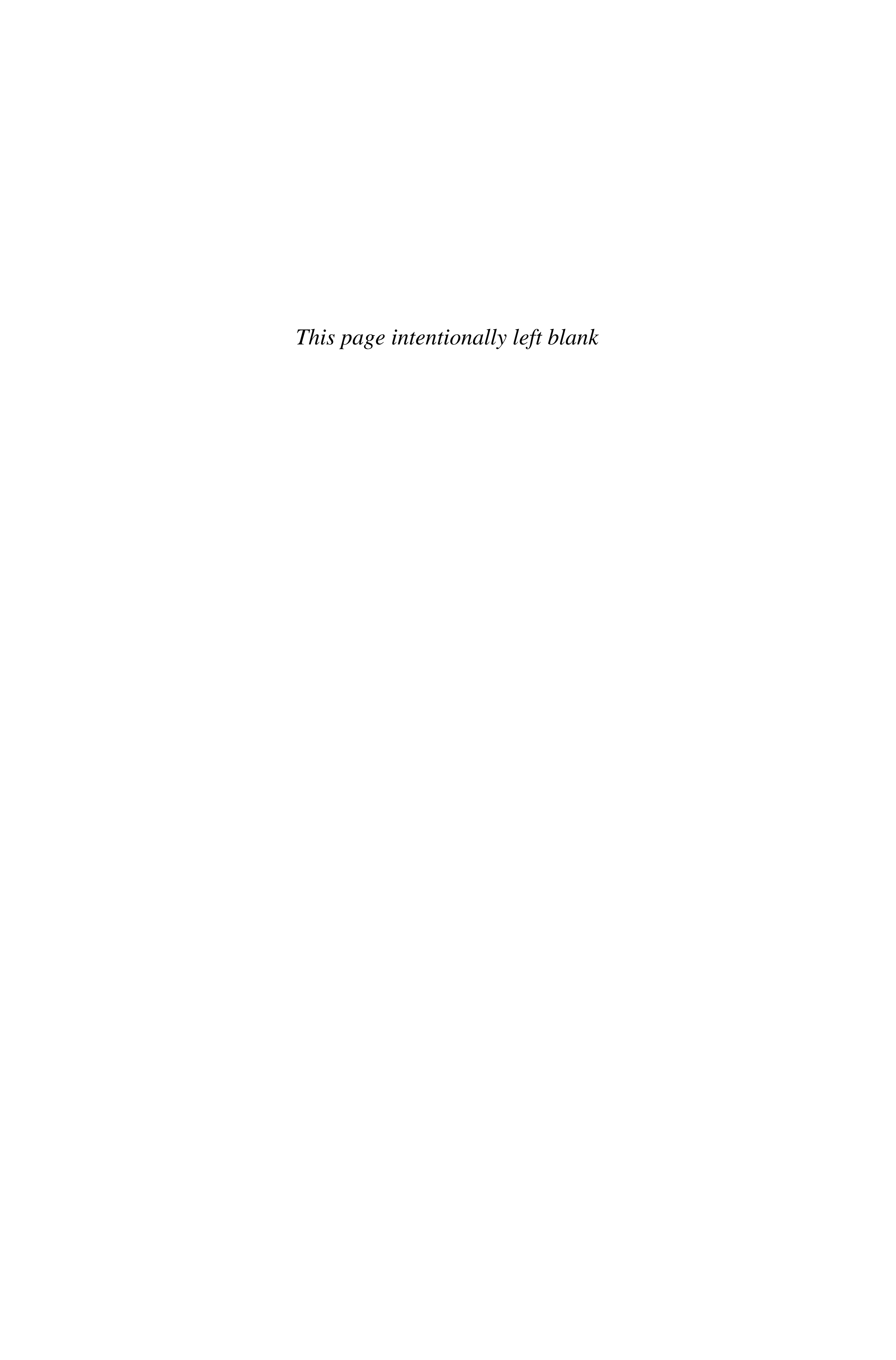
Newsies (1992). Directed by Kenny Ortega. 121 minutes. The story of American newsiesboys in 1899, poor and often runaways or orphans, who were exploited by newspaper owners and organize a strike against the owners.

Portrait of a Lady (1996). Directed by Jane Campion. 144 minutes. Based on the 1881 novel by Henry James depicting upper class Americans and the British, from both old money and new, living and touring in Europe, with a plot to control the main character Isabel Archer, who has inherited a large fortune.

The Wings of a Dove (1997). Directed by Iain Softley. 102 minutes. Based on the Henry James novel about wealth and poverty, kindness and avarice among U.S. and British upper classes in Europe.

About the Author

JILL CONDRA has taught in the area of clothing and textiles history at the University of British Columbia, the University of Prince Edward Island, and the University of Manitoba. Her costume research has been largely based on using material-history models to study clothing in historical context, which has allowed her to conduct research at exciting costume collections around the world. She has also co-written a book on textiles, *Guide to Textiles for Interiors*, 3rd edition, and she is the editor of the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing in World History*. She is presently an independent scholar and editor living in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and Winnipeg, Canada.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