

Basic Detail Report



Title Dress

Date about 1888

Primary Maker Clara Eglantine Comstock

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Medium Bodice: Machine-stitched and hand-stitched silk and cotton, with glass beads, gutta percha ornaments, silk thread-covered wood (probably) buttons, brass hooks and eyes, non-ferrous metal dress weights, and baleen (probably) boning. Skirt: Machine-stitched and hand-stitched silk, cotton, and wool, with ferrous metal hooks and eyes, ferrous metal strips, and wool tape.

Description Woman's dress of brown silk moire, consisting of a bodice (.a) and skirt (.b). The bodice has a high, round neckline with a standing band collar of brown velvet, 1 1/2 inches high. The center front opening is edged with brown velvet and fastens with nineteen ball-shaped buttons (seven are missing), covered with brown silk thread. The bodice is decorated across the shoulders and down the center front and center back with bronze-colored faceted beads. The beads are laid out in a design with serrated edges, and loops of larger faceted bronze-colored beads are draped from the shoulders. The closely fitted, curved sleeves have a medallion of these beads, also worked with black gutta percha disks, at the back of the wrists. The collar edge and wrist openings of the sleeves are edged on the inside with chartreuse and pink picot-edge ribbons. The lower front edge of the bodice is W-shaped. Two ten-inch-long darts provide fitting for the front of the bodice, while the back is constructed of six pieces to achieve a close fit. The seams of the center back pieces of the bodice are open for about four inches at the bottom; brown velvet is box-pleated under the openings. The lining of the bodice is tan cotton sateen. All of the darts and seams and button stands are boned. The petersham is heavy, white, sateen tape, stamped with the dressmaker's label. A brass hook stitched to the center

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back of the petersham fastens to the skirt. The skirt is box-pleated at center

front, with a panel of brown velvet set into the center. The back of the skirt is

draped with panels of self-fabric, with the ends raveled and tied to create fringe.

The skirt has layers of box pleats to create fullness for the bustle. The skirt has

an underlayer rather than a lining. This layer is constructed of brown cotton, and

it is cartridge-pleated into the center back. Strips of metal are threaded through

casings across the upper back of the skirt, and the ends are tied together with

elastic and cotton tapes to form the bustle. The skirt underlayer is bordered with

brown twill-woven silk and bound with brown wool tape. The same wool tape is

box pleated to create a ruffle around the edge. Notches cut and bound in the

bottom edge of the skirt front allow the wearer to walk without catching the tip

of her shoe in the skirt hem.

Dimensions Bodice (center back length x width across shoulders): 23 1/2 x 13 1

/4in. (59.7 x 33.7cm) Skirt (hem circumference x center back length): 87 x 44in.

(221 x 111.8cm)