

Basic Detail Report



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Title Wedding Dress

Date 1888

Primary Maker Nellie Bunce

Medium Machine-stitched and hand-stitched silk and cotton, with unidentified boning, and brass hooks and eyes

Description Woman's wedding dress of cream-colored silk satin and silk brocade consisting of a bodice (a) and a skirt (b). The bodice is made of the satin, which is woven with a large-scale design of floral sprigs. The bodice has a wide V-neckline, both front and back. The center front opening laces closed with a silk tape. Hooks and eyes provide further stability at the top of the closing. Also, a drawstring encircles the inside of the neckline. The bodice fabric is folded in a manner suggesting a shawl collar from the shoulders to the center front at the bustline. The sleeves end just below the elbow; they are gathered into the shoulder, but are otherwise tightly fitted. They are cut with a curve at the elbow, and the opening is edged with a double fold of satin. The bodice front is fitted with two long darts on either side, while the back is cut with six pieces to achieve a close fit. The bodice is lined with plain-woven silk, and every dart and seam is boned. The seam allowances are finished with an overcast stitch. A petersham fastens around the waist to reduce strain on seams. The trained skirt is made of the satin, with drapery of the brocade in the back; it was originally draped in the front with cream-colored tulle, which is now brittle and shredded.

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The skirt is smooth across the front and hips, and is tightly cartridge-pleated across the back. Two knotted lengths of brocade hook onto thread-covered loops on the back of the bodice. A box-pleated net ruffle is stitched around the bottom of the skirt over a knife-pleated satin ruffle. There are casings inside the back of the skirt which would have originally held strips of cane; elastic strips at the ends of the casings would have hooked together to pull the fullness of the skirt to the back and thus kept the front of the skirt smooth. The train of the skirt has a ruffle (or "balyeuse") of pleated stiff cotton and lace inside the bottom edge. The skirt is lined along the front lower section with cream-colored, fine wool/cotton cut on the bias. Stiff cotton lines other areas of the skirt. The two separate, very full puffed sleeves that came with this accession are incorrectly identified as being part of this dress.

Dimensions Bodice (length x width across shoulders): 20 7/8 x 15 1/2in. (53 x 39.4 cm) Skirt (center front length): 42in. (106.7cm) Other (waist circumference): 23in. (58.4cm)