

Basic Detail Report



Title Dress

Date 1815-1820, with later alteration

Primary Maker Eltruda Hale

Medium Hand-stitched silk, with cotton cord

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Description This day dress is made of black silk crepe with a scattered woven

floral motif; the hem edge is woven with a five-inch border pattern of flowers.

The border is woven along one selvage edge; therefore, the fabric in the skirt is

cut of a single length of fabric on the crosswise grain rather than the lengthwise

grain as is usual. The waistline is high (3 3/4 inches long at the side, under the

armhole), and the neck is wide and square. The sleeves are long and narrow,

with short oversleeves that are puffed and made of black sarsnet (a lightweight

plain-woven silk). The neckline edge, armscye, shoulder piecing, oversleeve

cuffs, side seams and side back seams are all piped. Old stitch lines in the bodice

indicate that it was lengthened in about 1825 or so, in order to update the

fashion of the dress. The piping in the seams was added at that time, also, and

possibly the center back bodice panel, which is made of a different figured silk

crepe of a lighter color. The center back opening of the dress is thirteen inches

long. There are currently no closing mechanisms on the dress, but it probably

once had hooks and eyes. The skirt is full in the back, being pleated closely for a

width of nine inches across the center back at the waistline. The bodice is also

gathered at the center back. The skirt is perfectly smooth across the front and

sides of the body; the bodice is very slightly gathered at center front. The dress is

lined with black silk like that used on the oversleeves in the sleeves, and on the

sides of the bodice. Raw edges of the lining fabric in the bodice suggest that the

front of the bodice was also lined originally.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (length x width across center, including sleeve

width): 50 x 21in. (127 x 53.3cm) Hem (circumference): 86 1/2in. (219.7cm)