

Basic Detail Report



Title Dress

Date 1880-1885

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Primary Maker Charlotte Lee

Medium Machine-stitched and hand-stitched silk/cotton and silk, jet and non-ferrous metal buttons, unidentified boning, glass (?) beads, and wool hem tape.

Description Woman's day dress, consisting of a polonaise (or overdress) and skirt, made of black leno-weave cotton/silk fabric. The polonaise has a high, round neckline finished with a narrow band collar. The center front opening fastens with thirteen faceted jet ball buttons. Black machine-made lace trims the bodice around the neck, continuing down in a V-shape to the center front of the chest. The shoulders are slightly dropped, and the long, smooth sleeves are cut with an upper and lower seam to achieve a curved shape. The sleeves are open along the seam on the outside of the wrist, where they are decorated with a layered bunch of black lace; the lace continues around the inside of the wrist opening. The skirt of the polonaise, which is also edged with the lace, is pleated up and caught at the center front and at the hips, so that it drapes around the front of the body. The center back length of the skirt drapery is also pleated up into the seam. A tail extending from the back of the bodice is edged with lace and covers the top of the center back skirt drapery. The skirt of the polonaise is unlined, except for one narrow panel down the proper right side. The bodice is lined with finely ribbed black silk. It is fitted with two long darts on either side of the front and with six seamed panels across the back. All seams and darts were originally boned, except for the two curved seams on either side of the center back (all of the boning but that at the center back seam has been removed). A dark brown satin ribbon petersham is stitched inside the waistline to keep the

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bodice fitted tight to the body and ease strain on the seams. The skirt is pleated

across the front, but the pleats are tacked down so that the skirt remains

smooth. The fullness of pleats at the center back are released a few inches down

from the waistband. Two rows of lace gathered and stitched in a scalloped

design are additionall ornamented with beaded medallions. Below the lower

row of lace, the pleated skirt panels are cut in a chevron and edged with lace.

Two beaded medallions are mounted on the points that are formed by this

construction. Decorative ball buttons matching those used onthe bodice are

stitched down the left side of the skirt. Two flounces of narrowly pleated self

fabric trim the bottom of the skirt. The fullness of the back of the skirt is

gathered horizontally and stitched to a tape in the skirt lining at the level of the

back of the knees. The bottom edge of the skirt is finished with wool hem tape.

The skirt is lined with glazed black twill-woven cotton.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (polonaise center back length x width across

shoulders): 57 x 17 1/4in. (144.8 x 43.8cm)