

Basic Detail Report

Title Dress

Date about 1881

Primary Maker Elizabeth Gay Sisson

Medium Machine-stitched and hand-stitched silk velvet, silk satin, cotton, and wool, with steel and shell buttons, brass hooks and eyes, unidentified boning, and wool hem tape

Description Woman's day dress, consisting of a polonaise (.a) and a skirt (.b).

The polonaise is made of a deep burgundy voided velvet with a closely packed pattern of stylized flowers. The open-front polonaise is double-pointed at the center front waistline, with the side and back panels hanging straight over the skirt. The center back of the polonaise skirt is pulled up in standing folds, creating a bustle effect. The neckline is high and round, with a 1 1/8-inch-wide band collar. The polonaise opens at center front, and fastens with fourteen (six now missing) buttons over hooks and eyes. The cut steel buttons are inset with a shell cameo of a classical head. The narrow sleeves are cut with an upper and lower seam like a coat sleeve and are plain. White cotton woven with sateen, twill, and narrow pink stripes lines the polonaise bodice; the skirt panels are lined with burgundy silk. All but the curved back seams are boned. The corners on the skirt panels have drapery weights covered in silk. A petersham stitched at the waistline reduces strain on the seams. The raw edges of the seam are finished by turning the fabrics to the inside and whipping them together. The skirt is made of lightly ribbed burgundy silk. The skirt front and sides are

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stitched in layered box pleats, which are tacked at points along their length to keep them crisply controlled. These pleats are set into flat panels below the waistband. The center back of the skirt is deeply knife-pleated into the waistband and allowed to hang with the fullness released. The bottom of the skirt's back panel is trimmed with three tiers of pleated self-fabric ruffles. The skirt closes at center back with a large hook and eye on the waistband. The lining is plain, white cotton, with an extra layer of stiff cotton and bias-cut burgundy wool around the bottom. The bottom edge is bound with wool tape.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (polonaise center back length x width across shoulders): 53 1/2 x 14 3/4in. (135.9 x 37.5cm) Skirt (center front length): 41 1/4in. (104.8cm) Skirt (center back length): 42in. (106.7cm) Skirt (waist circumference): 28in. (71.1cm) Hem (circumference): 90 1/2in. (229.9cm)