

Basic Detail Report

Title Maternity Dress

Date about 1800

Medium Hand-stitched block-printed cotton, lined with plain-woven linen

Description Woman's day dress of cotton fabric, block-printed with scattered roses in dark pink, purple, and white on a blue background. The dress has a high waist and low, rounded neckline, with a drawstring closure at center front. The long, tight sleeves are typical of the 1790s when this dress was originally made. It was altered to update the style in the early nineteenth century by piecing the current skirt top to allow for a higher waistline (the right skirt panel on the back shows fold lines from former small pleats). The length of the waist is 2 1/2 inches under the arm. The lining of the bodice is the length of the original 1790s waist, with the new, shorter, bodice constructed over it. The front flaps of the linen bodice lining have been lengthened so that they overlap and pin over the bosom, rather than meet at the center. High-style fashion in the early 19th century would have called for a flat skirt front, but this is gathered on a drawstring to create fullness--perhaps the preference of the wearer, or to accommodate pregnancy. The back of the skirt is knife-pleated, with the majority of fullness concentrated at the center back. The back of the bodice is seamed in a "V" shape; the armhole is deep, creating a fairly narrow back (7 1/2 inches wide). The bodice fabric is pieced under the arms.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (overall length): 56 5/8in. (143.8cm) Hem (circumference): 84in. (213.4cm) Bodice (length): 3 1/2in. (8.9cm)