

Basic Detail Report

Title Dress

Date about 1855-1860

Primary Maker Unknown

Medium Hand-stitched silk and cotton, with wool twill tape, silk fringe, metal hooks and eyes, and unidentified boning (probably baleen)

Description Brown silk day dress, with horizontal white and black stripes. The dress has a long, narrow, V-neck opening (it would have been worn over a chemisette), which makes it more convenient for nursing. (White stains on the bodice lining indicate that the owner was, indeed, nursing.) The fabric of the bodice is pleated at the slightly dipped center front and fanned out over the shoulders. This drapery effect of the bodice is edged with brown silk fringe. The bodice has been altered so that the left front of the bodice overlaps the right front edge at the waist. The bell sleeves are also trimmed with the brown silk fringe. The neckline, armscye seams, and waistline edge are piped. The bodice is lined with brown twill-woven cotton, and the sleeves are lined at the top with brown glazed cotton, and in the bell area with brown silk. The bodice lining is separate from the front drapery; it closes with hooks and eyes. It was originally boned in the front darts and side seams, but only one piece of boning remains in the right side seam. Puncture marks indicate that the silk bodice fabric was closed over the lining with a brooch. The skirt is cartridge-pleated into the waistline. There is an inseam pocket on the right side. The skirt is fully lined with brown glazed cotton, and edged along the bottom with brown twill-woven wool

Basic Detail Report

tape. The bodice lining shows that the dress originally had a high, round neck. It has been folded back and basted to create the V-front, possibly by the original owner to adapt it for nursing. There also appears to have been a section of the skirt which was removed, as the gauging of the left front is looser than the right. The effect of these various alterations, especially the overlapping of the bodice waist edge, is awkward.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (center back length x width across shoulders):

60 x 16in. (152.4 x 40.6cm) Hem (circumference): 134in. (340.4cm)