

Basic Detail Report

Title Dress

Date about 1887

Primary Maker Elizabeth Gay Sisson

Medium Machine-stitched and hand-stitched silk and cotton, with machine-made linen (probably) lace, brass hooks and eyes, and unidentified boning (possibly horn or plastic)

Description Woman's evening dress of silk brocade, with a large-scale pattern of leaves in burgundy, golden tan, and cream, on a pale gray background, with a skirt overlaid with woven silk lace. The center front bodice opening, which fastens with hooks and eyes, leads to a V-shaped neckline. The bodice is closely fitted, with two long darts on either side of the opening; the back is cut in six sections. All seams and darts are boned. The central four sections of the bodice back are cut one with the skirt, in the eighteenth-century manner of dress construction. The sleeves are three-quarter-length, and end with a burgundy silk ruffle under a turned-back "cuff" with piped edges, The inside edge of the sleeve opening is trimmed with machine-made imitation Brussels lace. The effect of the sleeve decoration is like an eighteenth-century engageante. The trained skirt is made of burgundy satin, covered across the front and sides with machine-woven silk lace with a pattern of stripes and the wildflower, Queen Anne's lace. Five burgundy silk satin ribbons, 2 1/2 inches wide, drape like streamers from the waist to the hem, ending in self-fringe and a bow. The back of the skirt, as previously stated, is cut continuously with the bodice and the panels are tacked

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to the back of the burgundy satin skirt. The skirt waistband fastens at the center back with a large hook and eye. The bottom edge of the skirt is finished with a narrow self-fabric ruffle. The center back seam of the upper skirt is inserted with pleated burgundy fabric, so that it puffs up like a bustle. A stiff cotton ruffle trimmed with lace, or "balyeuse," is stitched to the inside edge of the hem. The dress bodice is lined with plain-woven white cotton. The seams are finished by turning the raw edges of the fashion fabric and lining in towards each other and top stitching them together. The skirt is lined with glazed brown cotton. A panel of stiff white cotton additionally lines the center back of the skirt.

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

79 x 16 1/4in. (200.7 x 41.3cm) Other (waist circumference): 26 1/2in. (67.3cm)