

Basic Detail Report



Title Dress

Date about 1893

Primary Maker Mary Ann Patten

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Medium Machine-stitched and hand-stitched silk and cotton, with metal hooks and eyes and boning

Description Three-part dress consisting of a skirt, bodice, and removable neck insert to convert the dress from day to evening wear. It is made of rust-colored silk faille, and rust and cream-colored silk brocade. The bodice is fashioned of the floral-patterned brocade at center front, center back, and sleeves. The sides of the bodice are made of the faille fabric. In front, the seams between the brocade and faille are covered with a machine-embroidered lace. A V-shaped panel inserted in the center front is constructed of rust-colored satin overlaid with embroidered net. A similar panel is stitched at center back. The bodice opens in the lining layer at center front with hooks and eyes; the V-shaped panel closes over this and hooks on the proper left side. A short ruffle of the embroidered net surrounds the neckline. The sleeves are slightly puffed at the shoulder, and taper to a narrow wrist. Three groups of three narrow horizontal tucks decorate the sleeve above the elbow. The bodice is lined with a cotton fabric printed with narrow stripes in white, blue, and green. The seams are pressed open and the edges are bound with plain-woven silk tape. Every seam is boned. A petersham attached at the center back waist buckles in front; it would have alleviated stress on the bodice seams. The petersham is stamped with the dressmaker's name in gold: "Madame Varney/ Hartford, Conn." A separate insert fills in the neckline to convert the dress for daywear. It is fashioned with a high neck of cream-colored satin covered with the embroidered net. The yoke is made of rust-colored satin (which appears to actually be wide ribbon, as it is

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only 3 5/8 inches between selvages), overlaid with rows of the same floral-embroidered lace that appears on the bodice front. The edges are bound with twill-woven silk tape. The insert is lined with white cotton, and closes with hooks and eyes at center front; the neckband closes at center back. Ties of twill-woven cotton tape extend from the bottom of the insert, which would be used to fasten the insert around the upper torso of the wearer. The skirt is made of the rust-colored silk faille. It is smooth in front, being fitted with darts. Fullness is concentrated at center back, where there are several layers of accordian-type pleats on either side of the opening. The narrow waistband closes with a hook and eye. The skirt is fully lined with plain white cotton. The hem is lined on the inside with a 6-inch pinked ruffle of red/brown shot silk over a narrow edging of brown velvet.

Dimensions Bodice (length x width from shoulder seam to shoulder seam): 17 1/2 x 15in. (44.5 x 38.1cm)