

Basic Detail Report

Title Stays

Date about 1785

Primary Maker Unknown

Medium Hand-stitched cotton, linen and leather, with wood strips for boning

Description Brown cotton stays, with a scalloped bottom edge, and a pointed center front, originally made in the 1780s. The front top and underarm edges were cut lower in the early 19th century to accomodate the fashionably low neckline and high waistline. They have been altered also with an insertion of brown twill-woven cotton at center front to make them broader at the bust. The stays are constructed in ten separate panels, which are then whipstitched together. The seams between the center back panels and third side panels are covered with a thin strip of white leather. This leather also binds the upper and lower edges of the stays. Each panel is stitched with white thread in vertical or slightly diagonal rows to form casings for the boning. The stays close at center back with a spiral lacing; a strip of white leather is laced through the holes on each side to reinforce the holes and edges to keep them from fraying. The original lining of the stays is a coarsely woven plain linen. This has been overlaid with a newer lining of plain cotton, which is roughly stitched in place with coarse thread. There are three torn remnants of coarse fabric stitched to the lining of the center front panel.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (length x width across top edge): 13 1/4 x 32in.
(33.7 x 81.3cm)