For historians, the naming in 395 C.E. of two consuls, or emperors—one for the Eastern and one for the Western parts of Europe—marks the end of the Roman Empire. As the Western empire gradually fell under barbarian control, the empire in the East (its capital in Constantinople) flourished. Dress in Byzantium was an amalgam of Roman and Eastern styles. From the East came elaborate ornaments, decorative motifs, and textiles—especially those of silk. The result was extensive use of embroidery, appliqué, precious stones, or woven designs added to the long or short tunics and some of the draped outer garments characteristic of Roman dress.

As the major cultural center, these styles of the Byzantine court influenced all the courts of Western Europe from about 400 to 900 C.E. It was not until after the tenth century that a European economic recovery began, making Byzantine influences somewhat less important.

Dress in the Early Middle Ages

The period from 400 to 900 C.E. in Western Europe is known as the Dark Ages. As the name implies, the picture of cultural developments over this period is somewhat obscure. Clear images of dress are few. Apparently dress in Europe combined Roman forms with those of the barbarians. Men wore long or short tunics with a sort of trousers that were gaitered (wrapped close to the leg) with strips of cloth or leather. Women wore an under tunic and an outer tunic covered by a cape, or mantle. Married women covered their hair with a veil. Among royalty and the upper classes, Byzantine influences were most evident in the use of silk fabrics, manufactured in Byzantium and imported, and in ornamental bands that trimmed sleeves, necklines, hemlines, and other areas of tunics.
The basics of dress remained fairly constant in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Middle Ages for both men and women. Next to his body a man typically wore *braies*, an undergarment similar to underpants, and a shirt. A woman wore a loose-fitting undergarment called a chemise. Undergarments were made of linen. Outer garments for both men and women consisted of an under tunic and an outer tunic. These were most likely made of wool. For important occasions, royalty might wear silk. Men of higher status who did not need to be physically active wore longer tunics. The under tunic often was of a contrasting color or fabric and showed at the hem, the neckline, and the end of the sleeves. Art shows both solid and figured fabrics, although solid colors predominate.

Twelfth-Century Changes in Dress

By the twelfth century, artistic and literary evidence indicates that significant changes in political, economic, technological, and social life had begun to affect clothing. After the Roman government of Europe broke down, local rulers administered smaller or larger areas. Charlemagne (768-814), one of the kings of a Germanic tribe called the Franks, came to exercise significant power over much of Western Europe and was crowned emperor by the pope in Rome in 800 C.E. This empire did not long survive Charlemagne.

A feudal society developed in which local lords granted land (fiefs) to subjects who, in turn, provided loyalty, payment, and military support to the lord. These lords or kings built castles where large numbers of people lived and worked. Such centers provided a stage for the display of status, which was often expressed through dress.

As the European economy prospered and courts expanded, the Christian church served as a unifying force with its central authority, the pope, in Rome and local bishops in important cities and towns. When the pope called on the many feudal lords and their soldiers to liberate the Holy Lands from the Muslims, who had taken control of that region, thousands responded. Their reasons for joining the Crusades ranged from genuine religious fervor to opportunities for looting and pillaging. The impact on dress was significant. The crusaders, who continued their warfare for almost 200 years, brought back new fabrics, design motifs, and clothing styles that were adapted for European dress. At the same time, civilian dress incorporated elements of military dress.

While the Crusades increased trade and communication with the Middle East, European traders were rekindling trade with the Far East as well. Marco Polo (c. 1254-1324) wrote of his adventures as a trader in a book that helped to encourage commerce with the Far East.

In decline over the post-Roman period, urban centers once again became the hubs of production and trade after the feudal period. Technological advances in the production of textiles such as water-powered fulling (finishing) of wool, a horizontal loom at which the worker could sit and use foot treadles and a shuttle, and a spinning wheel that replaced the hand spindle all served to increase the capacity of the growing textile industry. Craftsmen formed guilds that set standards and pay rates. Trade opportunities expanded, and wealth extended beyond the courts and royalty to this newly affluent merchant class.

The Beginnings of Fashion

Though the precise origins of fashion change in dress are still debated by costume historians, it is generally agreed that the phenomenon of a large number of people accepting a style for a relatively short period of time began during the Middle Ages. The aforementioned social and economic changes established the necessary conditions for fashion. Textile manufacturing advances provided the raw materials needed for increased production and consumption of clothing. The courts provided a stage for display of fashions. Social stratification was becoming less rigid, making it possible for one social class to imitate another.
Increased trade and travel spread information about styles from one area to another. Evidence of the international spread of information about style change can be found in developments in the arts. Architectural styles changed radically after circa 1150 when buildings in the Romanesque style gave way throughout Europe to the newer Gothic forms. Both used carvings as ornamentation and to tell biblical stories. These, along with the images portrayed in stained-glass windows, have served as a major source for information about dress. Manuscript illumination also began to show more lay figures dressed in contemporary costume.

These statues and drawings of the twelfth century show alterations in fit that clearly resulted from changes in the cut of clothes. Instead of being loose tunics, garments followed the lines of the body closely from shoulder to below the waist where a fuller skirt was sewn to the upper bodice. Sleeve styles varied. Some outer tunic sleeves were shorter in order to show more of the under tunic sleeve. Some were wide, and some were so elongated that they had to be knotted to keep from dragging on the ground.

French writers of the period called elaborate versions of these fitted styles *bliauts*. The garment is described as being made of expensive silk fabrics. Its appearance indicates that the fabric was probably manipulated using bias (diagonal pieces with greater stretch) insets to assure a close fit and that elaborate pleats were used in the skirt. Clearly advances were being made in clothing construction.

*Chainse*, another French term, seems to refer to a pleated garment that was probably made from lightweight linen and may have been worn alone as a sort of housedress by women (Goddard 1927). Some versions of these garments seem to have closed by lacing, which allowed a closer fit.

**Dress in the Middle Ages: 1200-1400**

With the increased variety of dressing styles, terminology for items of clothing in these early periods grows more complicated and confusing. Names for garments often come directly from French. Frequently English-speaking costume historians adopt these French terms. This is especially evident when costume historians write about medieval styles of the thirteenth century and after. From this time on, the under tunic was usually called a *cote*; the outer tunic, a *surcote*, a word that has gained English usage.

The layering remained the same as in earlier centuries and undergarments did not change radically, but the cut and fit of outer garments has started to alter with greater frequency. Also, a number of new outdoor garments appeared. These included the *garnache*, “a long cloak with capelike sleeves,” the *herigaut or gardecorps*, “a cloak with long, wide sleeves having a slit below the shoulder through which the arm could be slipped,” and the chaperon, “a hood cut and sewn to a chape” [cape] (Tortora and Eubank 1998).

The influence of important individuals on style is evident. The reign (1226-1270) of the pious King Louis IX of France coincided with a turn toward looser fitting, more modest, and less ostentatious dress.

Around the middle of the fourteenth century, a wider range of types of dress appeared. At the same time, dress for men and women started to diverge, length of skirt being a major difference. Men of all classes now wore short skirts. One important short-skirted garment was the *cotehardie*. The exact features of this garment seem to have varied from country to country, and it was probably a variant of the surcoat. The Cunningtons, writing about English costume, define the term as a garment with a front-buttoned, low-waisted, fitted bodice with fitted sleeves that ended at the elbow in front and had a hanging flap at the back, with the bodice attaching to a short skirt (1952).

Under this garment, men wore a garment variously called a pourpoint, *gipon*, or doublet. In commenting on problems of terminology, Newton observes, "It is doubtful whether at any one time the exact differences between an aketon, a pourpoint, a
doublet, a courtpiece, and a jupon were absolutely defined. In France the cotehardie comes into this category, and in England, from the early 1360s, the paltok" (1980). Probably adopted for civilian wear from a padded military garment, the pourpoint (later more likely to be called a doublet) attached to hose with laces that had sharp metal tips known as "points."

This combination might be worn alone or under an outer garment. Hose were worn either with shoes or boots or had leather soles and required no shoes. Shoes often had very long, pointed toes and were called poulaines or crackowes, which may testify to a possible origin in Poland. Upper-class men wore the most extreme of these styles and thereby showed that they did not need to do any hard labor.

The *houppelande* was another important garment that appeared about 1360. Made in either thigh or mid-calf length or long, it was fitted over the shoulders, then fell in deep, tubular folds and was belted at the waist. Sleeves could be quite elaborate, sometimes long and full and gathered in at the wrist or widening at the end and falling to the floor. Fur trim was common.

Although women were wearing *houppelandes* by the end of the fourteenth century, they were more common in the fifteenth century. Other styles for women included close-fitting gowns, sometimes with either sleeved or sleeveless surcotes. Certain garments were visual statements of status. French queens and princesses wore surcotes cut low at the neck, with enormous armhole openings through which a fitted gown could be seen, and a hip-length stiffened panel with a row of jeweled brooches down the front. A full skirt was attached to the panel.

The imposition of sumptuary laws (limits placed on spending for luxury goods) on dress indicate that the elite classes feared that the lower classes were attempting to usurp their status symbols. Fashionable dress had become affordable to more people, and legislators attempted to restrict by rank the types of fur used, the types and quantities of fabric, kinds of trimmings, and even the length of the points of shoes. These laws were not obeyed and rarely enforced.

During the fifteenth century, styles continually evolved. Men's doublets grew shorter and hose longer, looking much like modern tights. A new construction feature, the codpiece-a pouch of fabric closed with laces- allowed room for the genitals. *Houppelandes* underwent some changes in style and construction, becoming more elaborate in trimming and sleeve construction. A short, broad-shouldered garment, sometimes called a jacket, had an attached skirt that flared out from the waist.

Women wore *houppelandes* and fitted gowns. One style appears so often in art that it has become almost a stereotype for modern illustrators who want to show medieval princesses. This gown had fitted sleeves, a deep V-neck with a modesty piece filling in the V, a slightly high waistline with a wide belt, and a long, trained skirt. Another style seen in Northern European art is a loose-fitting gown with close-fitting sleeves, a round neckline, and fullness falling from gathers at the center front. Some sources call this gown a roc.

**Accessories**

In the earlier centuries, medieval head coverings were relatively simple: veils that covered their hair for adult women and hoods or small caps like modern baby bonnets, called coifs, that tied under the chin for men. By the fifteenth century, upper-class men and women were wearing many fanciful styles. Men's hoods were wrapped turbanlike around the head, sometimes made with wide, padded brims. The prevalence of turbans may reflect contacts with the Orient. Hats with high crowns and with small brims resembled a loaf of sugar and were called sugar loaf hats. Adult women's hair was still covered, but coverings were often of decorative net fabrics, padded rolls, or tall, flat or pointed, structures. Lightweight, sheer veils were often attached.

Other accessories included purses, belts, and jewelry. Belts were often a mark of status, being highly ornamented and jeweled.

**Dress in the Italian Renaissance: 1400-1600**

In Italy circa 1400, scholars turned to the literature and philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome as a source of ideas about their world. Historians examining this period assigned the name "Renaissance" (French for "rebirth") to this time when a new focus on humanism contrasted with the medieval emphasis on spirituality.
These ideas spread from Italy to Northern Europe, influencing scholars and creative artists. The artists created realistic portraits and scenes of daily life and showed clear views of dress even to the point of showing where the seams were located. They faithfully depicted the lush velvets, satins, and brocades worn by their sitters.

Royalty wore the most lavish garments, but the well-to-do merchant classes could easily imitate court styles. Intermarriage among the rulers of European countries provided one means of spreading fashions from one country to another as royal brides and grooms dressed themselves and their retinues in the latest styles from their home country.

By the sixteenth century, the recently developed printing press was turning out books that purported to show clothing styles in different parts of the world. Such books, which are of some use to costume historians, require careful evaluation because many of the styles depicted are imaginary and contain both realistic and inaccurate representations.

Predominant Styles
Styles worn in Italy in the early fifteenth century showed some similarities to those of Northern Europe in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. At the same time, with the proximity of Italy to the Middle East, Asian influences are evident in fabrics with Eastern design motifs, in clothing showing some similarities to Turkish robes, and in headwear in turbanlike forms. Part of the differences in styles came from the Italian failure to adopt northern styles such as the extreme pointed-toed shoes and the V-necked, high-waisted women's gown. Silhouettes of women's gowns were wider than those in the north. Necklines were low. Bodices were attached to gathered skirts. Many gowns and men's doublets or jackets were made of figured velvets, brocades, and damasks produced by skilled Italian weavers. Small puffs of fabric of contrasting color were pulled through the elbow, armhole, and some seam lines.

This decorative idea became a feature of men's styles all over Europe in the early years of the 1500s. The exterior fabric was slashed and puffs of contrasting color pulled through the slits to make elaborate decorations. The silhouette for men grew wide and full.

Italians styles remained somewhat different from those of the north until the later 1500s when Spain, France, and Austria came to dominate the Italian city-states. By the sixteenth century, international events helped to move Spanish styles to the center of the fashion stage. Christopher Columbus's voyage to America in 1492 made Spain, which had financed the trip, rich. When Charles V became not only king of Spain but also ruler of the Low Countries and what has become Germany, Spanish influences spread throughout Europe. Dark, rich textiles were made into women's garments with fairly rigid, hourglass-shaped silhouettes. A stiff, hooplike structure held out skirts. Handsome black-on-white embroideries ornamented collars and undergarments. By the latter years of the century, the conservative, narrower, more rigid lines of Spanish origin also predominated for men.

Portraits and inventories of clothing provide an excellent picture of the dress of the colorful monarchs of England, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, as well as that of the rulers of France and Spain. The evolution of men's shoulder shapes from broad at the beginning of the century to narrower, and of women's skirts from inverted cone shapes to barrel-like forms (called farthingales) is clear evidence of fashion as an integral part of dress. Narrow white frills at the neck grew wider, rounder, and still wider to become huge, stiff, starched, lace ruffs, which in the sixteenth century eventually subsided into wide, flat collars.

Dress in the Baroque and Rococo Period: 1600-1700
The styles in the fine arts from about the end of the sixteenth century to the first several decades of the eighteenth century is called baroque. Elements characteristic of baroque styles include extensive ornamentation, curved forms, and freely flowing lines, all in relatively large scale. The dress of the period clearly reflected these tendencies. Those who could afford to wear fashionable dress did so. The courts remained the most important stage on which to display opulent clothing. It has been said that Louis XIV (king of France from 1643 to 1715) used fashionable dress as a political tool, keeping his courtiers so busy
following court etiquette and style that they had neither the funds nor the time to plot against him.

Clothing also played a political role in England. The royalist supporters of the King opposed the Puritan faction. The Puritans wanted to reform the Church of England and stress a simpler, more moralistic, and less lavish lifestyle. The resulting civil war led to the defeat and execution of King Charles I, after which a Commonwealth replaced the monarchy for about eighteen years. The Puritans dressed in more somber styles with little ornamentation. Their "Roundheads" nickname came from the short hairstyles they adopted. Portraits, inventories, and other written records show that although the Puritans stressed simplicity, their clothing followed fashionable lines. Among the affluent Puritans, high-quality, expensive fabrics were in use.

The Pilgrims who settled in Massachusetts in 1620 were Puritans. The dress styles of the American colonists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lagged behind those of Europe, but were otherwise the same. Only the trappers and explorers appear to have adapted some of the more practical elements of Native American dress such as moccasins; almost nothing made its way back across the Atlantic. Native Americans were depicted by portrait painters in garb usually containing European elements, whereas the dress of early American colonists is virtually indistinguishable from dress in Europe.

By contrast, trade with the Far East had a significant impact on fashion. These influences can be seen in the fabrics imported from India, China, and Japan and in some specific garments. The vest adopted by Charles II of England is one example of Eastern influences. The prototype of the vest may have been Persian men's coats (Kuchta 1990).

When the English monarchy was restored, Charles II (son of the executed Charles I) returned from exile in France under the protection of Louis XIV, and Puritan dress modifications were eclipsed by French influences and the court once again became the arbiter of style. One noteworthy item of dress adopted by King Charles II was the vest, the forerunner of what became a virtual uniform for men in the eighteenth century and later: the three-piece suit. Its seventeenth-century style consisted of knee-length breeches, a long, buttoned vest that reached just below the knee and covered the breeches, and a jacket of the same length over this.

The Puritans were not the only seventeenth-century group to deviate from contemporary styles. The conservative nature of Spanish society was probably responsible for the preservation of older styles and a slower adoption of new ones. The wide-skirted farthingale of the sixteenth century disappeared in the rest of Europe in the early seventeenth century. Spanish upper-class women adopted this style in the mid-1600s. The Spanish guardinfante (literally, "infant guard") consisted of an oval farthingale, very wide from side to side, worn with a bodice that extended far below the waistline to cover the top of the skirt. As Reade noted, "Since exertion was difficult for anyone wearing it, the vogue emphasized social distinctions" (1951). Spanish men continued wearing the ruff and trunk hose longer than men elsewhere in Europe. By the eighteenth century, the Spanish dressed in mainstream fashion.

How individuals acquired clothing differed depending on social status. Less affluent families bought used clothing or produced their own clothing, mostly by having women of the family make the clothes. Those sufficiently affluent hired professional tailors. Although most professional tailors were men, women did the fine hand and ornamental sewing. In 1675, responding to a petition from a group of French women seamstresses that they be allowed to make women's clothes, Louis XIV permitted the formation of a guild of women tailors. Over time, using female dressmakers to make women's clothes and male tailors to make men's suits became customary.

Some economists consider the economic changes that took place in England in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a consumer revolution. Consumer interest in less costly imported cottons from India led businesses to stimulate demand for fashionable goods in order to increase their profits. To accomplish this, they needed to provide information about current fashions to potential customers. Engraved, sometimes hand-colored, pictures of the latest fashions were sold. Dolls dressed in
As the demand for fashionable goods grew, more fibers, yarns, and fabrics were needed. Such requirements helped to fuel the industrial revolution and its mechanization of production. Consumer demand for cotton led to increased settlement in the colonies of the New World and to the use of slaves to cultivate and harvest the fiber. As supplies of cotton increased, invention of the cotton gin met the need to process more fiber. Inventors improved machines for spinning and weaving. Mass production of fabric made inexpensive fabrics available. As a result, by the end of the eighteenth century, following fashion was possible for all but the very poor and slaves.

The name “rococo” has been assigned to the subtle changes in the art and dress styles of the period from about 1720 to 1770. Rococo styles are characterized by smaller scale but still curvilinear lines; more delicate ornamentation; and Asian, Gothic, and floral motifs. After 1770, the arts and architecture experienced a classical revival. These neoclassical influences came into clothing styles gradually and were accepted as the prevailing mode only toward the close of the century.

The three-piece suit became the predominant component of men's clothing. Throughout the eighteenth century, men wore knee breeches, a vest, and an outer coat. When coat, vest, and breeches were made of the same fabric, the outfit was called a “ditto suit.” The length of the vest, and the cut of both the vest and coat, varied over time. Early in the century, coats and vests were wide and full. When the coat was buttoned, it hid the vest. By midcentury, the coat was slimmer. So was the vest, which also shortened. The coat no longer buttoned shut, but remained open and the vest and breeches were visible. For formal wear, coats and vests were elaborately embroidered or made of very decorative fabric. A frock coat was looser and shorter than coats for more formal occasions. Early in the century, frock coats were worn in the country, but gradually they were also deemed proper for more formal wear.

The silhouettes and the ornate woven, embroidered, or printed designs of the fabrics from which upper-class women's dresses were made in the 1700s reflected the curvilinear forms of baroque and rococo arts. The shape of skirts changed gradually. After the early eighteenth century, when loose, full sacque gowns were popular, the silhouette altered and bodices fitted the front of the body closely. Necklines were low, square, or round. In back some dresses were fitted, while others had full pleats at center back that opened into a loose, flowing skirt. Costume historians of the nineteenth century called this style a "Watteau back" after Jean-Antoine Watteau, an eighteenth-century artist, who frequently painted women in this style of dress. Skirts were held out by supporting hoops (called paniers in France) that were first cone-shaped, then dome-shaped, next narrow from front to back and wide from side-to-side. By the period from 1740 to 1760, skirts were enormously wide (as much as 2 ¾ yards). Double doors helped to accommodate the passage of women in these panier-supported dresses, and small tables often had raised edges to prevent objects from being swept from them by a passing skirt. After the 1760s, paniers were replaced by cushions or pads worn at the hip, and the fullness of skirts moved toward the back.

Hints of the classical revival in the arts could be seen in the dress of small girls, who wore high-waisted, slender white muslin dresses reminiscent of Greek Doric chitons. Women, too, began to wear white muslin dresses and moved away gradually from the full-skirted silhouette, but the adoption of styles closely modeled on Greek and Roman women's dresses came only after the French Revolution (1789-1795).

The French Revolution and the Empire Style

Costume is said to reflect the zeitgeist, or "spirit of the age," and fashions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are frequently cited to illustrate this point. Political developments in France were to a considerable extent inspired by the examples of the ancient Greek and Roman republics. As previously noted, classical influences were already evident in architecture, and the fine and decorative arts. By the last decade of the eighteenth century, they permeated women's dress as well.

Because the marble statues of antiquity had been bleached white over time, it was believed that the Greeks and Romans had worn white garments. The high-waisted styles of Hellenic Greek Doric chitons served as the model for slender, white muslin dresses with high waistlines. Fashionable women wore classically inspired sandals. Men cut their hair in "Titus style" (named after a Roman emperor). Women dressed their hair à la Greque. Although specific details changed year-by-year, the high-waisted dresses were the basis of a fashionable silhouette that was to persist for more than two decades.

Dress in the Nineteenth Century

Many cultural forces contributed to the stylistic changes of the nineteenth century. These included the industrial revolution, the French Revolution, changes in women's roles, changes in the political climate, the expansion of the United States, and artistic movements.

The industrial revolution produced not only technological but also social and economic changes that affected dress. The ability to produce textiles rapidly and less expensively facilitated participation in fashion. As industrialization brought more women into
the workforce, giving them less time to make clothing for their families, by the end of the century, some garments were being mass-produced. Rural workers who migrated to urban areas needed different kinds of clothes.

As the United States expanded, it gradually took on a more important role in the Western world as a producer of raw materials and manufacturer of goods. Technological innovations and refinements made in the United States such as the patenting and distribution of the first commercially successful sewing machine, the development of the sized-paper pattern, and the invention of machines that could cut multiple pattern pieces contributed to the growth of mass fashion. Immigration brought skilled workers to work in the mass production of clothing, and immigrant consumers expanded the market for inexpensive ready-to-wear.

Although ready-to-wear fashion came later to Europe than to the United States, Europe remained the center of innovation in fashions. British tailoring set the international standard for menswear. And the beginnings of the haute couture in Paris at midcentury confirmed the preeminent place of Paris in women's fashion.

Charles Worth is considered to have been the father of the haute couture. He first came to public notice around 1860 when the French empress Eugénie began wearing clothes he had designed. His atelier was soon known around the world, and women from Queen Victoria to Parisian courtesans were dressed by Worth. Worth was instrumental in founding an organization of French couturiers, the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne, in 1868 that regulated the French high-fashion industry.

Political events on both sides of the Atlantic also influenced dress. For example, the restoration of the French monarchy spawned a host of fashions named after earlier royals and the Italian revolutionary leader Giuseppe Garibaldi inspired women to wear red blouses like those of his soldiers.

The nineteenth-century movement of Europe and America toward more egalitarian societies contributed to an overall revolution in men's dress. The lavishly decorated eighteenth-century suits with knee breeches worn by the nobility were, henceforth, replaced by dark, trousered, three-piece suits. The skill of its tailoring and quality of the fabric in these suits attested to the status of the wearer.

Through its ornamentation and obvious cost, women's clothing had to bear the burden of attesting to the wealth and social standing of the family. Thorsten Veblen (1857-1929) recognized this role for women in his classic study, *Theory of the Leisure Classes*. He noted that upper-class women's clothing showed that their husbands or fathers could afford to spend lavishly on elaborate clothing (conspicuous consumption) and, furthermore, these women could not do any menial labor when encumbered by such dresses (conspicuous leisure) (Veblen 1936).

At the same time, some women were beginning to question the roles assigned to them in nineteenth-century society. After the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne of England in 1837, the ideal Victorian matron was wife and mother of a large family who ran the household smoothly, supervised the servants, and led a sedate, scandal-free life. The example set by abolitionists working to free the slaves at the time of the American Civil War led some women to state that they, too, were held in a type of bondage. Some women active in the women's suffrage movement believed that women's clothing was a severe handicap to freedom of movement and physical activity. Attempts to reform dress and establish more rational styles for women such as the Bloomer costume were not especially successful at first. The Bloomer costume (named after women's-rights author and lecturer Amelia Bloomer, one of its more visible proponents) consisted of a shorter version of the full-skirted dress of the 1840s worn over a pair of full trousers gathered in to fit tightly at the ankle. The style was based on the dress worn by women in European health sanitariums (Foote 1980). Though abandoned by suffragettes after a few years, photographs show that the style was adopted by some American women settlers for the westward trek and the rigors of pioneer life. Variations of the style also showed up in gymnastics classes for young women, evidence of increased importance given to women's health and fitness.
By the 1890s, women were participating actively in many sports. Bicycling was especially popular and special dress, including bloomer suits called rationals and split skirts, had been adopted.

Throughout history, connections between the fine arts and dress can be found. In the nineteenth century, the pre-Raphaelites and participants in the aesthetic movement made conscious efforts to apply their philosophies to dress. In rejecting contemporary art forms, the pre-Raphaelites drew their inspiration from the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The artists painted women in idealized costumes from these earlier periods, and women of the group began to wear styles based on the paintings while rejecting the tight corseting and wide skirts of the 1840s and 1850s. In the 1880s and 1890s, the ideas of the small pre-Raphaelite group inspired followers of the more popular aesthetic movement. Women wore no corsets, few or no petticoats, and large leg-of-mutton sleeves. Oscar Wilde, British writer, lectured about aestheticism in a softly-fitted velvet jacket and knee breeches worn with a wide, soft collar and loose necktie. While this costume was worn in protest, the protest was against the aesthetics of the time and not against the inconvenient and unhealthy aspects of dress to which feminists and health reformers objected.

Means of spreading information about current styles expanded. Magazines for women incorporated hand-colored, engraved fashion plates, making it possible for women of all socioeconomic levels to see styles from Paris and keep abreast of current fashion each month. Full-sized paper patterns were bound into some magazines in the late 1800s. The invention of photography in the 1840s provided another way of spreading style information.

**Silhouette and Style Changes**

The nineteenth century was marked by increasingly rapid style changes. Costume historians recognize this by dividing the century into a number of relatively short fashion periods that cover ten to twenty years. These periods were characterized by an incremental evolution of fashions year-by-year that eventually added up to a distinct new style.

The more somber styles worn by men throughout the 1800s showed only relatively subtle changes. One can see parallels in the cut of men's suits and the silhouette of women's dresses. When women's sleeves were large, men's tended to be enlarged; when women's waists were narrow, tailors made men's jackets with nipped-in waistlines. But it was in women's clothing that the more pronounced changes in style were evident.

The Empire period (1790-1820) is named after Napoleon Bonaparte, the first Emperor of France. For women, the high-waisted, relatively narrow silhouette first seen in the late 1700s continued to be the predominant line throughout this period. In fashion terminology, this high waistline placement is still known as an "empire waist."

The expanded trade with the Far East and the military campaigns of Napoleon in Egypt fueled fashions with Asian links. Imported cashmere shawls were all the rage. Napoleon tried to ban the importation of these shawls in order to protect the French textile industry. Soon European mills were copying them. The output of the mills in the town of Paisley, Scotland, was so prodigious that the shawls became known as paisley shawls.

Year by year, subtle changes appeared in the Empire styles until the high waistline had moved lower, approaching the anatomical waist, the skirt had flared out, and sleeves had grown larger, eventually becoming enormous. By the 1820s, that line was distinctive enough for costume historians to see this as a new period that they named after the art and literary movements of the same time: the Romantic period (1820-1850).

Differences in style between the late Romantic and the later Crinoline period (1850-1870) were subtle. In some costume histories, the period from circa 1838 to 1870 is known as the early Victorian period, Victoria having acceded to the British throne in 1837. The most distinctive aspect of the silhouette of this period was the increasing width of the skirt, the return of the waistline to its natural anatomical position, and a dropped shoulder line. Until the invention of the cage crinoline, or hoopskirt, in the mid-1800s, skirts were held out by heavy layers of starched petticoats that were often reinforced with fabric stiffened with horsehair (crin is French for "horsehair," and lin, "linen," hence the name of the fabric: crinoline). The originator of the nineteenth-century hoopskirt is unknown. The basic structure was a series of horizontal hoops of whalebone or steel of gradually increasing size that were fastened to vertical tapes. Far lighter than the many layers of petticoats, the hoop was an immediate success.

The hoopskirt itself went through numerous transitions, being first round, and then gradually swinging its fullest areas to the back. As the back fullness increased, the front flattened, and by 1870, the bustle had taken over as the preferred shape.

The silhouette of the Bustle period (1870-1890) might be divided into three distinct phases. In the first phase (1869-1877) the fullness at the back of the dress was supported by a bustle. Bustles were structures equipped with some device to hold skirts out in the back. The skirt shape was flat in front with a full, draped fall of fabric and ornamentation down the back. Most sleeves were three-quarters length or longer and were set in at the shoulder instead of being dropped below the shoulder on the arm, as in the Crinoline period. Bodices were tightly fitted. In the second phase (1878-1883), the bustle itself disappeared, garments were fitted closely from neck to hip in what was called a cuiress bodice, below which the skirt remained tight at the front. The decoration of the skirt dropped to below the hips in back. Many skirts had long, ornamental trains. In the third phase (1883-
1890), the bustle structure returned with a vengeance, looking like a shelf at the back of the dress. Dresses had high, tightly fitted collars and very close-fitted bodices.

By the final decade of the nineteenth century, the back fullness of the Bustle period had diminished to a few pleats. The silhouette was hourglass-shaped, with enormous leg-of-mutton sleeves balancing a full, cone-shaped skirt that was wide at the bottom. The ubiquitous high-standing collar remained, however.

Bibliography


*Mediterranean Dress*


*Mediterranean Dress*


*Mediterranean Dress*


**Nineteenth-Century Dress**


Was this page useful?  

√ Yes  

× No
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dolce &amp; Gabbana Brand History</td>
<td>Simona Segre Reinach</td>
<td>37K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia: History of Dress</td>
<td>Raisa Kirsanova</td>
<td>31K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient World: History of Dress</td>
<td>Phyllis Tortora</td>
<td>28K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Dress in Central America and Mexico</td>
<td>Margot Blum Schevill</td>
<td>23K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliqué</td>
<td>Nan H. Mutnick</td>
<td>23K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**fashion history Categories**

Alphabetical Index of Fashion and Clothing History
Body Fashions
Clothing Around the World
Clothing Closures and Embellishments
Clothing Types and Styles
Fabrics and Fibers
Fashion Accessories
Fashion and Clothing Industry
Fashion History and Eras

---

© 2006-2019 LoveToKnow, Corp., except where otherwise noted. All Rights Reserved.
Latin American Fashion. Europe and America: History of Dress (400-1900 C.E.) Religion and Dress. Native Guamanian Natives, Peru c.1913. Contemporary Andean Indigenous Clothing. Traditional Andean dress in the early twenty-first century is a mixture of pre-Hispanic and Spanish colonial styles. Dress still indicates ethnicity, and in Peru use of the chullu (knitted hat with earflaps) by males and montera (Spanish flat-brimmed hat) by females denotes indigenous identity, with variations in the hats indicating the wearer's community. In Bolivia and Ecuador, a variety of hats indicate ethnicity and among three Ecuadorian groups (the Saraguros, Cofanes, and Otavalo), and one Bolivian (the Tarabucos), one ethnic marker for males Chapter 29: Modernism in Europe and America, 1900-1945 Modernism is the movement in Western art that began in the late 19th century and that deliberately rejected the styles of the past; emphasizing instead innovation and experimentation in order to create artworks that better reflected modern society. The impressionists were seen as the forerunners of modernism. Worldwide upheaval — two world wars, Russian Revolution and rise of Communism, imperialist expansion of European powers around globe, Great Depression, Holocaust, atomic bomb — led to the idea that traditional modes of expression were History of Europe: history of European peoples and cultures from and even their dress 18 food crops developed in the Americas. History of Western fashion. The history of Western fashion is the story of the changing fashions in clothing for men and women History of fashion by early medieval European dress; America's best history timeline, the 1900's. America's best history, from sea to shining sea United States history timeline, 1900-1909, between $350-$400 million in damages were sustained.