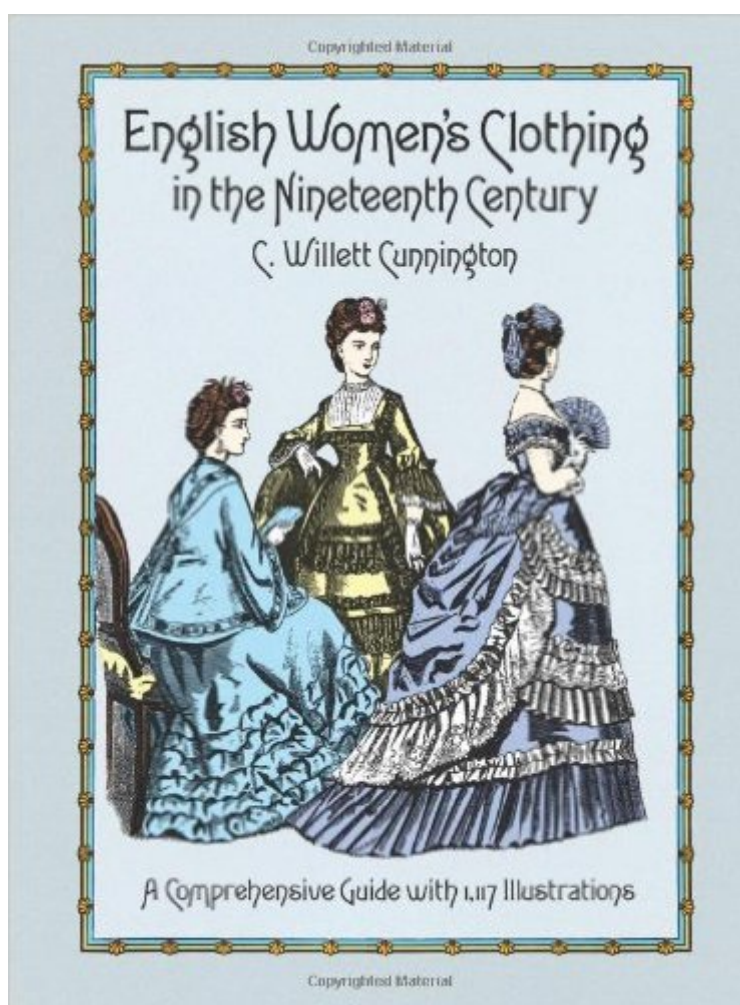


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# English Women's Clothing In The Nineteenth Century: A Comprehensive Guide With 1,117 Illustrations (Dover Fashion And Costumes)



## Synopsis

The nineteenth century was a period of continuous change for women's clothing in England. The growing prosperity of the merchant class meant an ever-larger number of women for whom "dress" was a principal function in life, while the increasing availability of lower-priced ready-made garments enabled women of moderate means to purchase the fashions of the day. In addition, the development of the railways spurred the spread of new goods, while the removal of the tax on papers in 1854 produced an abundance of fashion magazines at cheap prices, bringing news of the latest styles to the multitudes. The magnificent array of ladies' fashions that characterized the century are on display in this remarkably complete decade-by-decade overview. Drawing almost exclusively on contemporary sources — fashion magazines, newspapers, rare period photographs, memoirs, Victorian novels, periodicals, and other publications, as well as firsthand observation of actual garments — the author describes and explains the couture that evolved in response to changing social conditions, technological innovations, and cultural developments. Over 1,100 line and tone drawings and photographs depict hundreds of outfits ranging from lovely morning dresses and starkly attractive riding outfits to elegant carriage costumes, opulent evening dresses, and exquisite bridal gowns. Full-page plates also depict period millinery, footwear, underclothing, and other apparel, while three useful glossaries provide descriptions of materials, definitions of technical terms, and more. Museum curators, vintage clothes collectors, and fashion historians will find this carefully researched and well-written book an indispensable tool for dating, identifying, and authenticating vintage clothing. Not only are styles described and illustrated in detail for each year; all the small details of construction by which specimens can be dated are given wherever possible. Moreover, designers, illustrators, and fashion enthusiasts will be delighted by the superbly detailed illustrations, which painstakingly document the fashionable finery of the Victorian era.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is an excellent reference for those who wish to study the fashion of English women's clothing in the nineteenth-century. Sumptuously illustrated, it also has helpful commentary about the clothing's details, including information about what influenced the design, materials used, the situation in which the garment would have been worn, and what type of person would have worn the garment. It is a wonderful reference for the costume designer or student of fashion. This is one of the most useful books for nineteenth-century fashion I have found.

Absolutely the best resource for women's clothing in the 19th century. Includes photos and line drawings of actual clothes (all B&W in this edition, unfortunately). Most importantly, gives details on every aspect of clothing- from fabrics, trims, shoes, under garments to hats, fans, and coats year-by-year. Also lists changes in each year's fashions. A must-have for those interested in Regency and/or Victorian eras, especially! It's my costume Bible!

Cunnington's year-by-year survey of fashionable English women's costume in the 19th century is replete with detail. The only flaw is the absence of color photographs, hampering the historian or recreationist who is attempting to ascertain the exact hue of "Solferino" or "Isabella". In addition, if you need a general reference for 19th century costume, or are interested in the attire of persons of the lower orders, you will have to look elsewhere.

This thick, oversized paperback, profusely illustrated, is the cheapest and most comprehensive of the currently available 19th century clothing references. Black and white line drawings and photographs (for the latter part of the century) illustrate fashionable woman's attire. In many cases, details of construction are also given. The accompanying text includes an overview for each decade and minute description, year by year, of hairstyle, fabric, accessories, as well as the costumes themselves. Abundant quotation from original sources. Glossary of terms. Weaknesses (1) no attention is paid to middle and lower class woman's clothing, but this is an all too common fault. (2)

No color plates, a real loss for a period when women's clothing achieved such distinctive, not to say, garish hues. Overall, this is a lot of book for the money, a good first reference for this period.

While this book was originally published in the 1930's, it has stood the test of time to become a definitive reference on the subject of 19th-century women's fashion, from the beginning of the Napoleonic/Regency era right into the early years of the Edwardian period. The text is exhaustive, delving into the smallest details (which can sometimes be the most important) of every feature of feminine costume from year to year, and features extensive sidebars on such things as underclothes and headgear. Since I run a website devoted to glove fashion and history, I particularly appreciated the attention given to gloves (which were so much a key - indeed, mandatory - accessory of women's clothing throughout the century that women would often even go to bed wearing gloves!). The hundreds of illustrations are a mix of first-class original work and authentic period illustrations. Since this is a reprint, there are no color illustrations (which are mentioned in the text), but this is a minor flaw. Anyone who has any interest at all in 19th-century women's clothing needs to make this book a basic part of their reference library.

This book covers costume by detailing each decade of the nineteenth century. You'll see examples of dresses, hats, fichus, mantles (jackets), trimmings, and undergarments. If you need very specific detailing of undergarments or sewing techniques, this book is general in nature and doesn't always give examples of every part of a woman's attire for each decade. Some decades emphasize particular parts of a woman's dress. But, in each decade, you'll see examples of the silhouette and popular dress styles. You can also find the contemporary price of yardage or accessories like stockings or gloves. In short, this is a handy reference, particularly when you have a quick question or if you want to see the difference in style from the 1840's versus the 1860's. It's great for me as a historical romance writer because I can quickly get a sense of the costume and layers of the garments. My only issue is that there is not enough detail about the intricacies of women's undergarments in the nineteenth century. There are illustrations of bustles and crinolines and corsets, but during the Victorian period, there were so many layers to women's underclothes that it can be confusing as a writer to remember all of the details. So, I would say that this book is a terrific place to start historical research because it explains each type of garment rather than just shows pictures or illustrations as some historical costume books do. But, if you need to research a particular undergarment or accessory, you may wish to supplement this book with other resources to get the finer details.

Being a docent for Virginia City, NV, we dress anywhere from 1859 to early 1900's and also wear western cowboy. I prefer to make my own costumes and this book gives me lots of ideas. I want to make sure that my outfits are authentic and this book helped me a lot.

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