

# Fashions From Yesteryear

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Child's Apron: Circa 1900

Size: 10 years old.

The McCall Pattern Company published this pattern. It was originally described as "Child's Apron with high or low neck and with or without collar and sleeves." Minimal directions. Pattern dates circa 1900.

Suggested fabrics: Lawn, poplin, nainsook, linene, galatea cloth, and chambray. The colors were white, light blue, pink, tan, natural, navy blue, cadet blue, and scarlet.

Materials required: 4 Yds. 36" fabric.



The Victorian Sunbonnet was also called the "Kiss me Quick" sunbonnet or the Martha Washington sunbonnet.

## Vintage Clothing c. 1800-1930

In 1800, American Independence was only 25 years old. Our nation's capital was moved from Philadelphia to Washington and money from many countries circulated through America. Eighty percent of the American population were farmers. From the early 1800's until 1830, Americans wove more cloth in their homes than in their industrial mills. Their daily clothing was fashioned for necessity, not fashion. The durable fabrics were made to last harsh winters in the north and warm sweltering months in the south. Footwear was stitched to thick leather soles for comfortable walking on dusty, rocky trails.

The Old Meeting House –Vintage Clothing Collection

Women wore simple clothes – long sturdy dresses with bonnets or small close fitting caps. Men wore simple suits with knee breeches and long coats and tall hats. Only wealthy plantation families copied the regal styles of Europe.

The decade of the 1820's saw the formation of the Democratic and National Republic parties; Boston streets were lit with gas and coffee became the most popular American drink. Americans gathered around the piano and sang in the evenings.

In the 1830's Abner Doubleday laid out the first baseball field and the first baseball game was played in Cooperstown New York. Late in this decade Americans suffered economic depression resulting in closed businesses and banks.

By mid century in 1850, the American population reached 23,000,000- of which 3.2 million were slaves. The sates were brewing over slavery and the first oil well was drilled in Pennsylvania. During the decade of the American Civil War, shaves were 6 cents, haircuts were 12 cents, shampoos were 25 cents and mink muffs were advertised at \$12.00 in the New York Times.

In 1870, Americans moved into the second Industrial Revolution. Public telephones were installed, the first zoo was established in Philadelphia; Tennis was introduced and Football uniforms were first worn. Between 1870 and 1889- there were 87,000 of rail laid, Andrew Carnegie opened his first public library and canned meats and fruits began to appear in stores.

Between 1890 and 1899- 60% of stocks listed on the American Stock Exchange were railroad stocks, 23,000 children worked in the factories of the 13 southern states, garment workers went on strike in protest of sweatshop conditions, Ellis Island became the receiving station for immigrants and new York City became America's "Great Melting Pot" of immigrants from around the world.

The early 1900's were prosperous in Europe and in America. There were no major wars fought during this time. Queen Victoria had died in 1901 and the Edwardian Age began with the reign of her son, Edward VII. The Wright brothers achieved their first flight in 1903 and naval arms dominated the military and political fronts.

The Edwardian Era was a short-lived time of great elegance in fashion. Paris dressmakers influenced women's wardrobe and London dictated menswear. Women's fashions were ornamental with beads, feathers and fur and children were dressed in frilly roomy tunic styles with tie collars and bows.

A little boy's " Sunday Best" included sailor suits and hats with the flowing streamers and the velvet "Lord Fauntleroy" suits of elegance. Little boys still wore frock-like dresses with knee length breeches tucked up to the knee in summer and long stockings worn underneath in winter.

Natural fibers were used for cloth making: linen, cotton wool and silk. The wool was largely used for suits and undergarments. The straw boater hats appeared in the 1900's and children wore straw hats and sailor hats with chinstraps.

**The clothing on display at the Old Meeting House reflects these trends. Many of the garments were generously donated from the earlier generation of the *Ross Karlson family*- here in town. Early American implements and literary pieces from the Charles Brewer family [Wilbraham circa 1835-1850] are also displayed.**