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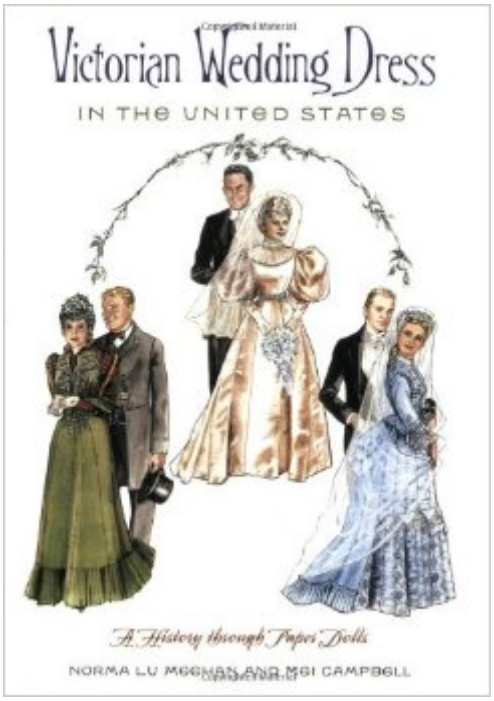
Victorian Wedding Dress In The United States: A History Through Paper Dolls



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Synopsis

The American obsession with weddings and wedding gowns is evident at least as early as 1850, when the March issue of Godeyâ ™s Ladyâ ™s Book included a colored plate in its feature on bridal dress. Yet brides who feed the nationâ ™s current obsession to the tune of more than $160 billion annually may be astonished to learn how much things have changed. Fashion illustrator Norma Lu Meehan and costume curator Mei Campbell draw upon collections at the Northern Indiana Center for History and the Museum of Texas Tech University to illuminate the evolution of wedding dress in the United States from 1859 to 1899. This exquisitely illustrated work situates the white wedding dress and current perceptions of tradition within a surprisingly varied and colorful history.FROM THE BOOKWhen Americans think of Victorian wedding dress . . . we recall antique photographs and tintypes, possibly family heirlooms or those weâ ™ve seen in museums. Though these images, like the gowns on these pages, certainly do not reflect the breadth of American cultural custom and practice, even in that era, they do reveal how much of mainstream Americaâ ”particularly a rising middle classâ ”saw itself and how it aspired to be seen. We can begin to understand how an increasingly affluent America became smitten with a British queen and with a fashion phenomenon that over the next century would become an economic and cultural force beyond imagining.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When engrossed in wedding preparations, today’s brides may find comfort in knowing they are not

bound by the customs of Victorian times, and have the freedom to select the best fashion features from that era. Back then, the circumstances of the bride often dictated the necessity to wear a gown of color that could be worn at future social engagements, rather than an elaborate, expensive gown of white.Fashion illustrator and author, Norma Lu Meehan, and costume curator, Mei Campbell, have produced an appealing publication of wedding styles as they were popularized in the United States during the Victorian era. The paper doll book, Victorian Wedding Dress in the United States: A History Through Paper Dolls, complements a series on fashion history published by Texas Tech University Press.In addition to the detailed and colorful paper doll illustrations, there are meticulous descriptions of each gown, often including a journalistic report of the wearer of the gown, the location of the wedding, and perhaps information on the family background. The gowns are drawn from the collections at the Northern Indiana Center for History and the Museum of Texas Tech University. Meehan and Campbell also provide a lengthy bibliography and an enlightening glossary that may be useful for a bride of 2010 who wishes to include a bit of ruching on her wedding dress.by Diana Nolanfor Story Circle Book Reviewsreviewing books by, for, and about women

"Victorian Wedding Dress in the United States: A History Through Paper Dolls" is a lovely set of authentically reconstructed wedding dresses and paper dolls to fit them on from 1850 to the turn of the century. A detailed history of the once white Victorian wedding dress is included, with surprising variations on the theme in the American examples shown. "Victorian Wedding Dress in the United States" is an elegant paper doll history that will delight those with an interest in fashion, the evolution of the American wedding dress, and paper doll book collectors.

High quality paper dolls.These are well-researched and colorful and bright. They are such a pleasure to look at and cut The paper dolls are a really wonderful way to help kids really visualize historyI have made permanent paper doll stands from railings available from places like Home Depot or Lowes). If you have access to a table saw you can cut a groove into the top of the rounded part of the railing. I have found that 2" to 2-1/2" in length is good. Stain & varnish if you like. These really help to keep the dolls standing up & makes actual play more fun for children.

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