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## EC66-438 Fashion and Dress 1867

Gerda Petersen

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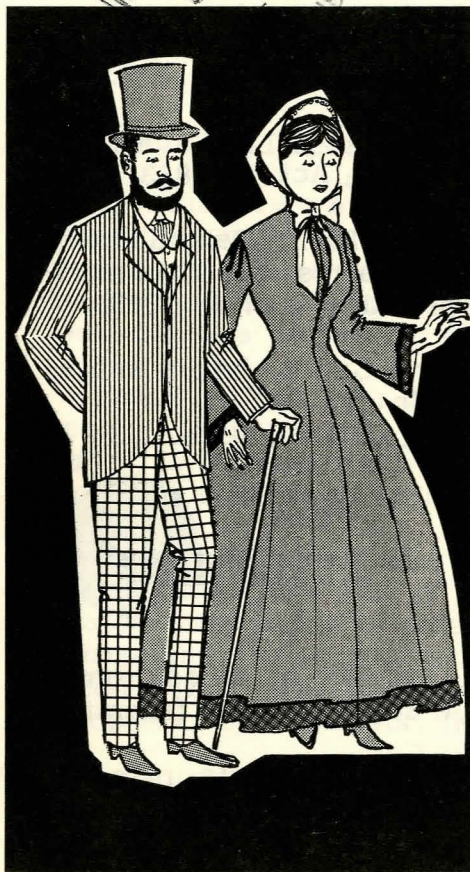
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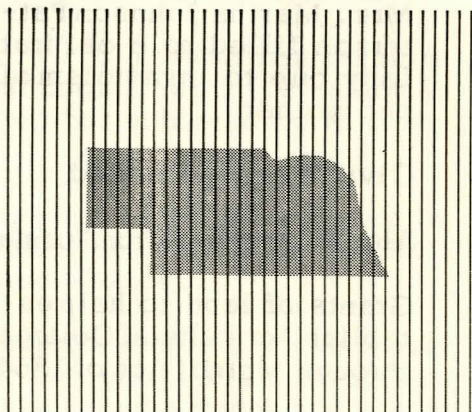
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# Fashion and Dress

# 1867



EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING  
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN J. L. ADAMS, DIRECTOR

## 1867 in

### NEBRASKA

Nebraska - became a state on March 1

Population estimated at 50,000

Governor, David Butler

First Lady, Mrs. Lydia Story Butler

Secretary of State, Thomas Kennard

Auditor, John Gillespie

Westward settlements formed a line from Columbus to Fairbury

Homestead Land available through Act of 1863

Union Pacific Railroad being built across the state (completed in Utah in 1869)

First Capitol begun in Lincoln

## 1867 in UNITED STATES

President - Andrew Johnson

Mrs. Martha Johnson Patterson filled role of First Lady due to invalidism of her mother

Civil War was ended

Alaska purchased from Russia

Grants of land to help establish Agricultural College through Morrill Act of 1864

Famous people: Horace Greeley, Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, Richard Mansfield

## 1867 ELSEWHERE

Dominion of Canada formed a self-governing federation

Queen Victoria ruled in England

Napoleon III and his Empress Eugenie reigned in France

Garibaldi assisted in uniting Italy in 1859

Famous people in England: Dickens, Tennyson, R. L. Stephenson, Gilbert and Sullivan; in France: Emile Zola, Sarah Bernhardt, Louis Pasteur, Renoir.



# Fashion and Dress, 1867

By Gerda Petersen  
Extension Specialist in Clothing  
Textiles and Design

The spirit of a people lives in its history!

## Fashion and the Times

Costumes worn in any historical period tell us much about the people of that time. Whether a country is at war or at peace will be reflected in its fashions. Times of poverty and times of plenty leave their mark. Political strife, too, affects a people and the clothing they wear.

Anatole France, a philosopher and writer of the 19th century, believed this. He said he would choose a fashion magazine to learn of the people if it were possible to view the world about one hundred years after his death.

". . . it is not a novel which I would pick in this library of the future, nor a work on history . . . I would take simply a fashion magazine in order to see how women will dress themselves a century after my death. And their fantasies would tell me more about future humanity than all the philosophers, the novelists, the preachers or the scientists."

What influenced fashions in 1867? American fashions were influenced by France and England since a fashion is always created by a country that has achieved world prominence.

The assassination of President Lincoln, followed by the leadership of President Johnson and the end of the Civil War, affected trends in the United States.

The Homestead Act encouraged people to move westward to obtain a home of their own on the Prairie frontier. Cattlemen came north from Texas. These things and others affected the type of clothing worn in Nebraska in 1867.

A fashion is introduced by the upper classes and is gradually accepted by the rest of the people.

The Empress Eugenie of France and Queen Victoria and her daughter-in-law, Princess Alexandria of England, introduced fashions in 1867. The beautiful (Spanish by birth) Eugenie, assisted by her designer, Charles Worth, rose to great heights of magnificence in dress. Worth had indisputable taste and set fashion by designing for court ladies. When Empress Eugenie donned the crinoline, its use became universal.

In England the death of Prince Albert (1861), the beloved consort of Queen Victoria, greatly affected the dress of that nation. The extreme somberness of the queen's costume helped prevent in England the extravagances of dress common in France. Victorian modesty expressed itself in the many petticoats. Modesty reigned supreme, when women were even supposed to be devoid of feet - not to mention legs.

## **The Crinoline**

Before 1850 fashionable clothes were both designed and made in Europe. The crinoline influence was seen as far west as the prairie frontier.

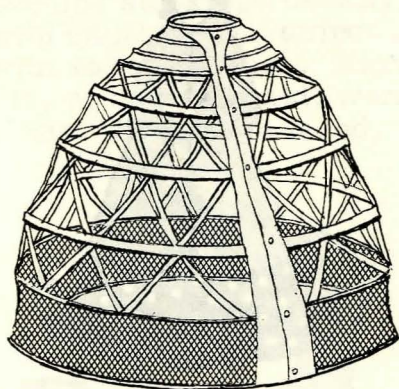
Costume has an outstanding line in every period of history. The fashion line of the mid-19th century was the crinoline.

The word crinoline was derived from the word "crin" meaning horsehair.

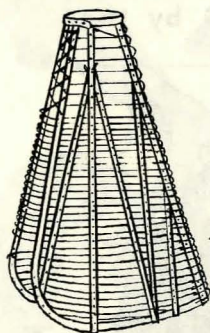
The early crinoline was a stiff, unpliant material 6 to 15 inches wide, which was fastened around the lower edge of the underside of the skirt to keep it sufficiently propped out. The width of the skirt varied from four to five yards. Sometimes there were entire petticoats in crinoline. Some, who didn't completely accept the fashion, wore flounced and stiffened petticoats of coarse muslin. Thus skirts were often very heavy.



## CRINOLINES



1863



1868

Another type of crinoline was made using a framework of bamboo, whale bone or metal hoops suspended from tapes and increasing in width toward the hem. This gave the person a "tea cozy" silhouette. The steel constructed crinoline was a triumph of this machine age. A correct hoop consisted of four narrow steels, each covered with tape and run into the muslin or calico petticoat. One nearest the waist usually measured one and three-fourths yards and at the lower edge of the skirt two and one-half yards. These steels, with the exception of the top hoop, were not allowed to meet in front but a space of one-fourth yard was allowed. Later other hoops were devised in various ways.

## Fashions of 1867

Mr. Worth, designer for Empress Eugenie, decided in 1866-1867 the crinoline was becoming absurd. Enormous amounts of fabric gathered across the front deformed the figure, and 12 great pleats, 6 in the front and 6 in back, by which the skirt was attached, stiffened the feminine silhouette and robbed it of any charm. So the crinoline was modified.

The upper wires were removed. The fullness in the upper skirt was removed and the skirt gored to fit the figure, giving a more tapering effect. The skirt was pleated or gathered at the back as previously, folds

taking a more graceful contour over the crinoline from waist to ground. The gored skirts were also approved as an economy measure. The 16 to 17 yards of material required for a dress was now reduced to 10 to 12 yards.

The voluminous skirts and snug fitting bodices were often trimmed with velvet ribbon. Jet beads were applied to the garment or used in a fringe. Ruffles and laces added elegance to dresses of this period.



### FASHION FEATURES INFLUENCED by the CRINOLINE

The fullness of the sleeve changed with the hoop and the crinoline. The fullness was now at the bottom of the sleeve instead of the top. The opensleeve, sometimes called the pagoda, flared widely below the elbow. This also brought in the fashionable undersleeve.

Recognizing the fact that feet and legs would inevitably be exposed, shoemakers gave thought to aesthetics when they designed footwear, and stockings took on new gaiety. Petticoats began to be revealed and became more colorful and provocative. Dresses were equipped with mechanical devices to raise and lower the skirt. This was effective on wet streets and also showed off the petticoat to good advantage.





Colored stockings came in with colored silk petticoats. Evening stockings usually matched the gown. Stockings with bright colored stripes running around the leg were worn with some costumes. High heeled shoes or boots made of kid, or cloth and kid, were worn for most dress-up occasions. Some were laced, some were buttoned.



Until the second half of the century a single wooden last in a given size served to shape either right or left shoe. Each size had two widths, slim and wide, being produced by shell or padding placed over the last.



Chignon

"pork pie" hat



"Empress" hat

The head looked small in relation to the large crinoline. The hair was parted in Madonna style and drawn into a large bun or cluster of curls at the back of the neck. This was usually held in place by a coarse net. Later the chignon grew larger and was placed higher on the head. Hot irons were used for waving the hair.

Several styles of hats were popular. The "pork pie," a little round hat with a low crown, showed the English influence. The "Empress" hat was a small coquettish, tilted, plumed hat that was revived again in 1931 as the Eugenie hat. The tiny shepherdess hat tilted over one eye.



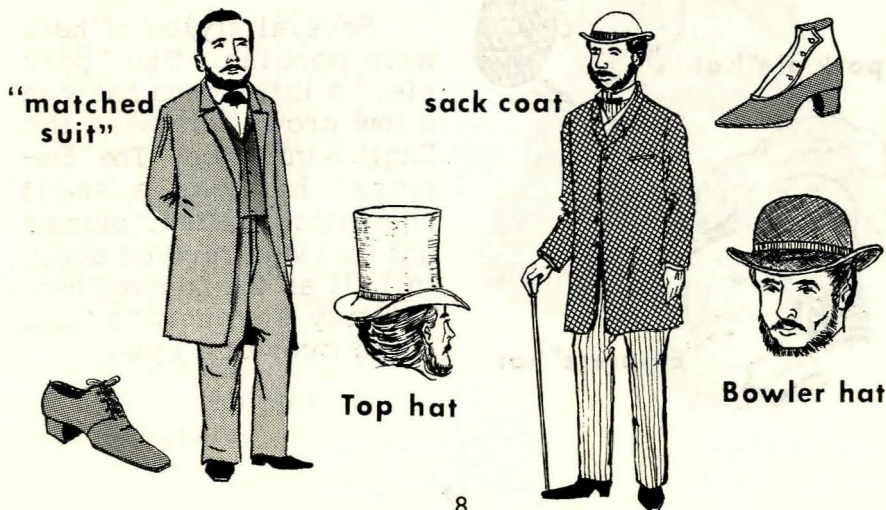
The most common wrap worn with the crinoline was the shawl, square in shape but folded into a triangle with a point hanging down the back. The polonaise, a long overgarment fitting the waist behind as closely as a military jacket, was also worn. It was usually black silk. Colors worn under it might be emerald green, violet, or dull red.

Accessories included handkerchiefs, fans, gloves (various lengths) and parasols trimmed with ruffles and lace. Popular types of jewelry included gold lockets, shell cameos, and crosses worn on black ribbons.

## MEN'S FASHIONS

Less emphasis was given to men's clothing. This was a time of industrial progress and more attention was paid to business than to clothes.

The 1860's saw the appearance of the "matched suit" for men. This suit consisted of coat, waistcoat or vest, and trousers. Lapels became narrower. The Prince Albert coat, a double breasted frock coat with silk faced lapels and closed shirt front, was an English contribution to fashion. The sack coat or jacket (body and skirt of coat cut in one piece or without a waist seam) was worn for informal occasions. Top hats, bowlers (hard felt) and beaver hats were common.





# Nebraska Fashions of 1867

These fashions for men and women, which were worn in eastern cities in the United States, also influenced the type of dress worn in Nebraska.

Nebraska pioneers brought trunks of clothing with them from the east. Clothing and other supplies were brought by river boat from St. Louis to the towns of Brownville and Nebraska City.

A certain genteel element was found in Nebraska towns. Some even had Brussels carpets in their homes. The ladies dressed in silks and fine woolen skirts. In town, those who wanted to keep fully abreast of styles, wore hoop skirts and bustles.

In limited circles Godey's Ladies Book was reflected in clothes with flounces, tucks, pleats, a profusion of rosettes, jet beads and other ornaments. Some men wore plain dark coats; a few tall silk "stovepipe" hats. However, these elegances were few and more often both men and women dressed plainly.

Pioneer women found little time for vanity. Their hair soon bleached and complexions faded under merciless wind and sun. Delicate hands roughened from daily chores. A gay bonnet or bright purse (even if made of ticking) for Sunday use did much to maintain her morale and remind her that all the niceties of her former home were not lost.



Fashion found its way to the prairie home, as Molly Dorsey Sanford relates in her diary:

"Grandpa thinks it is a sin for us to wear hoops, but we think to be out of the world and out of fashion is a little too hard so we persist in style. When the boughten ones give out, we substitute small grapevines." He said one day: "Mary, you cannot hope to enter heaven with those hoops."



## **CLOTHING and TEXTILE INDUSTRY**

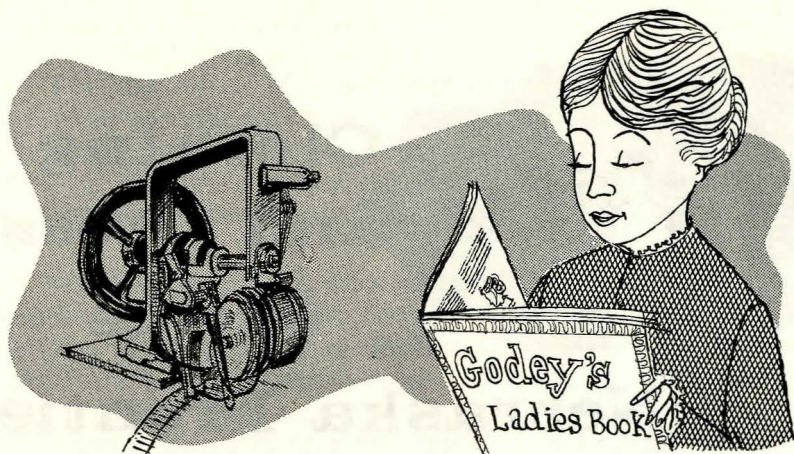
The general store carried calico, muslin, ticking and other cotton and woolen goods, needles and thread, as well as other things needed in the home. The retailer made one trip per year to the city to replenish his supply of merchandise. By the end of the Civil War better service and greater variety were demanded and stores expanded.

Some attempts were made at introducing a textile industry in Nebraska. Mrs. R. W. Furnas raised silkworms at Brownville and made articles to show at fairs to encourage others. This effort was soon abandoned. The Kearney cotton mills, using Texas cotton, ran 10 years but at a loss.

Sheep were raised by some pioneer families. Washing, carding, spinning and knitting of wool garments were carried out in the home.

Ready-made clothing had its beginning in the United States between 1825-1830. So-called manufactured clothing was provided by dealers who purchased fabrics, cut them up and arranged for women to do the sewing. All garments were sewed by hand in the homes until the development of the sewing machine. Then women were brought to a central place for sewing.

The sewing machine was patented by Elias Howe in 1846 and the improved model patented by Isaac Merrit Singer in 1851. Few sewing machines were found in Nebraska homes in 1867. Women sewed by hand for their own families or if wealth permitted it, employed dressmakers or seamstresses.



Godey's Ladies Book of 1866 says the new sewing machine gives the mother of families leisure for mental culture beyond the material and the finite. The wearing needle work is now done by machine. "This help gives the intelligent, delicate lady time for improvement of health and mind, and thus our home becomes better and happier, life is prolonged and comfort increased by the sewing machine."

Pomeroy's Democrat of 1871 said: "The sewing machine has done more than the piano to happyize our homes and following this has come the Butterick pattern."

Before the paper pattern only intricate diagrams which required the practiced hand of the skilled to work and cut were available. Most people made their own. In 1863 Ebenezer Butterick, a tailor and shirtmaker by trade, assisted by his wife, Ellen, marketed a set of shirt patterns.

These patterns, cut from a stiff paper, were an immediate success and the demand so great that the Buttericks set up a manufacturing plant the next year. As a boon to mothers a child's suit, called a Garibaldi, was designed. This was made on tissue paper for easier mailing. These sold so well that by 1869 the Buttericks were publishing their own fashion book, the Metropolitan (later named the Delineator.)

The July 1871 Home Journal commented: "They should be ranked with the benefactors of mankind, this firm that has worked out the problem of clothes."



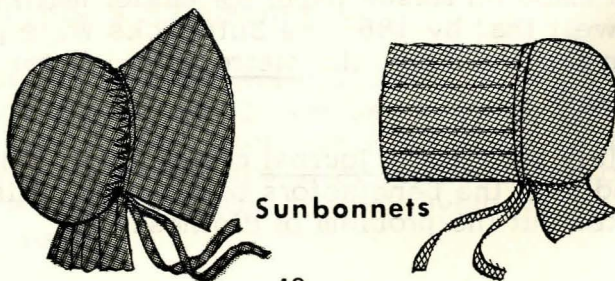


# Clothing and Dress on the Nebraska Frontier

In the prairie home on the frontier, families were obliged to devise their own clothes without benefit of patterns and machines. They brought some clothing with them. One pioneer said: "After we had been here a short time we carried our whole wardrobe on our backs and our feet stuck out," (Sod House Frontier).

Sunbonnets came to symbolize the women of the frontier. Many managed to save a "one best dress." The Sod House Frontier tells: "The Belle of the evening dance in Blue Springs in 1859 was fortunate enough to have a silk dress, although it didn't match well with her sunbonnet and cowhide shoes."

Church services found many women with calico bonnets, long "sweepers" made of linsey-woolsey. (A coarse cloth made of linen & wool or cotton & wool). The style of dress generally meant a snug-fitting bodice with long sleeves, high neck and a long, full skirt. Some had ruffles for trim. Aprons might be dark calico for home wear or a starched white cotton for Sunday. Calico was a year-round fabric, costing five cents to eight and a third cents per yard. Grain and flour sacks furnished a source of fabric that had many uses.



Sunbonnets

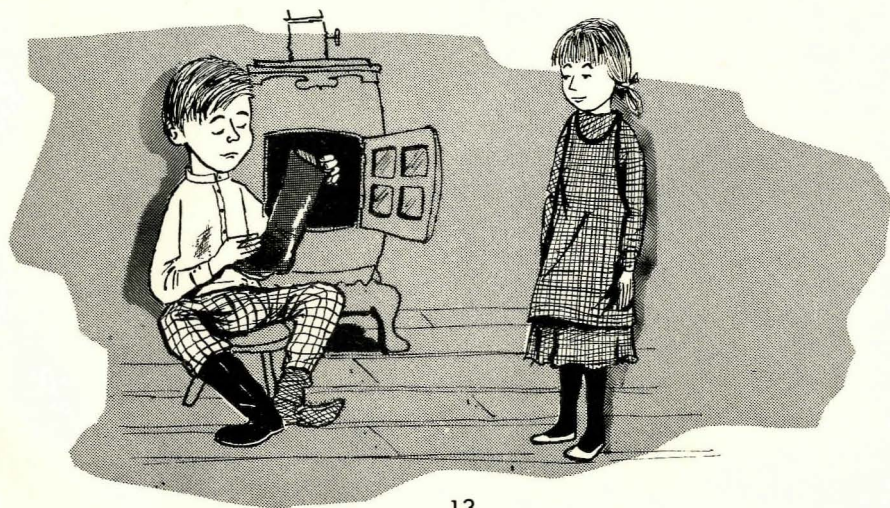
For the men, blue army overcoats from the Civil War furnished warmth for some years. Army blankets were made into overcoats, trousers and shirts (later made into undershirts). Coarse, heavy cotton trousers of duck and denim were also worn with shirts of hickory, blue or checkered.

Families fortunate enough to have their own sheep made garments of homespun for men and linsey-woolsey for women. This homespun cloth was usually dyed brown with walnut or other natural dyes. A suit of homespun could last a year. Men and boys' hats were made from badger and coon. Straw hats were made from braided corn husks.

Boots were purchased one to two sizes too big to allow for shrinkage when wet. Many wore moccasins because they were cheaper to buy. They could be made of elk skin, cloth or sheep skin.

Shoes were sometimes made by tacking leather uppers to wooden soles. Children clad in these shoes clacked across bare cottonwood floors of houses and schools like a troop of cavalry. Many went barefoot. They carried their shoes (to save shoe leather) to the place of meeting, then sat down and put on shoes and stockings.

In the absence of socks, rags and gunny sacks were sometimes wrapped around the feet. Boots were blacked with soot off the inside of the stove lid.





Hunters and frontiersmen wore buckskin attire. Cattle-men who came up from Texas wore riding boots with heels to prevent the rider's foot from slipping out of the stirrups. The heel also helped to brace the foot against the ground when roping animals.

Men who rode the range have always worn their clothes for comfort and practicality which, coupled with the Spanish and Indian influence, led to a picturesque, durable costume.

"The costume of a period, even its male costume, is a mirror of the soul" says Laver in his book Taste & Fashion. And so we view the costumes of early Nebraskans from a distance of 100 years. We can appreciate their courage and their ingenuity, their striving to maintain some remnant of fashion and beauty in the face of loneliness and hardship.

"I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,

I woke and found that life was duty."

--Embroidered Motto in Museum at  
Brownville

### Suggested Reading

"The Sod House Frontier" by Everett Dick, Ph.D. - Johnson Publishing Co., Lincoln, Nebr., 1954.

"Mollie" - Mollie Dorsey Sanford - University of Nebraska Press 1959, Lincoln, Nebr.

"O Pioneers" by Willa S. Cather - Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston & New York 1913.

"History of Costume" by Blanche Payne 1965. Harper & Row, Publishers, New York.

"Historic Costume for the Stage" by Lucy Barton, Walter H. Baker Co., Boston, Mass., 1935.