

# Doll Clothes of Yore

Original, Historical Designs for 18" Dolls

## Colonial Era: Circa 1750-1795



### The 'Montagu' Dress

#### *History*

#### Who was Elizabeth Montagu?

Elizabeth Montagu was a woman who lived in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Britain. She was the wife of Edward Montagu, the Earl of Sandwich. They had one son, who only lived a year. After her son's death, Elizabeth became very devout and dedicated her life to the arts and relief of the poor.

Elizabeth helped to found the group 'Bluestockings', a gathering of affluent women who patronized many authors. Elizabeth herself contributed to several books and published an essay on the works of Shakespeare. She left a legacy as a shrewd businesswoman, social reformer, and a gracious hostess.

#### *Fashion*

During the Colonial, or Georgian period, women's fashion was mostly in three different styles. The '*robe à la française*' was the French style, also known as a 'sacque-back'. The '*robe à la anglaise*' style is the English style, which is a simpler and more fitted bodice. This dress is in the '*robe à la française*' style.

In the '*robe à la française*' style, the back of the gown is left loose and arranged into several box pleats, often called 'Watteau' pleats after a popular artist. These pleats flow all the way down the dress and often train onto the floor. The '*robe à la française*' was worn open over a stomacher and petticoat.

#### What is a 'Stomacher'?

A stomacher was a decorated, triangular piece of fabric that was separate from a dress in the Colonial period. Stomachers were often pinned onto the stays, over which the dress would be fastened. A stomacher would often be quilted or boned and was usually highly decorated.