

Doll Clothes of Yore

Original, Historical Designs for 18" Dolls

American Civil War Period: Circa 1840-1860



Martha's Wedding Gown

History

Who was Martha Washington?

Martha Washington was the wife of George Washington, the famous general and first President of the United States of America. Martha's first husband, Daniel Custis, died in 1757, and after a short courtship, Martha and George were married in 1759. Martha and George had a solid and loving marriage, and George was never happier than when he could be home at Mt. Vernon with his 'Dearest Patsy'. Martha stood by her husband during the American Revolution, and although she did not want to be First Lady, supported him in his position as the very first President of the United States.

This dress was inspired by a reproduction of Martha Washington's wedding dress. Although the actual dress has not survived, a piece of fabric was found and the reproduction dress is occasionally displayed at Mt. Vernon, the home of Martha Washington.

Fashion

During the colonial period, weddings were very important social occasions. The couple put forward their very best, if they were wealthy, the wedding would be a grand affair indeed. Martha's wedding gown was made from gold damask (a woven fabric), and had a petticoat of white satin. Martha also wore shoes of bright purple with shiny silver sequins.

Like many dresses of the 1750's, this dress is made in the '*robe à la française*' or French style, also known as sacque-back. This style has wide pleats that drop from the back neckline and form a train. These wide pleats are also called 'Watteau' pleats after a famous artist who depicted them.