

# Doll Clothes of Yore

Original, Historical Designs for 18" Dolls

## Colonial Era - Circa: 1750-1795



### 'Margaret Kemble Gage' Dress

#### *History*

#### **Who was Margaret Kemble Gage?**

Margaret Kemble was born in the British colony of New Jersey to a well-to-do businessman. In 1759 she married the future General Thomas Gage, Commander of the British army during the American Revolution. Gage was also Governor of Massachusetts from 1774 to 1775. During the Revolution, she was strongly suspected of spying for the Patriots against her husband. Although there is only circumstantial evidence, Margaret is believed to have supplied Doctor Joseph Warren with the information about Gage's raid of Lexington and Concord, leading to the famous ride of Paul Revere.

Whether these rumors are true or not, General Gage sent his wife to England shortly after the failed raid. While there is no evidence that he knew about her suspected spying, most modern historians are fairly certain that she was working in favor of the Americans.

#### *Fashion*

During the Colonial period, it was common for well-to-do women to wear very elegant clothing on a regular basis. This dress is in the 'Robe a la Francaise' or French style. This style arranges the back fabric into wide pleats that fall from the back neckline of the dress to form a train.

During this period, all clothing had to be completely sewn by hand, since the first functional sewing machine was not invented until 1846. Thus, skirts and decorations such as ruffles, lace and ruching were usually pleated by hand. This dress reflects that style in the pleated trim used.

A lady's dress during the Colonial period did not close in the back or at the side. Instead, a dress would close in the front by attaching to a Stomacher, a stiffened, triangular piece of fabric. A dress would close with hooks, buttons, or by tying ribbons into bows.