

Doll Clothes of Yore

Original, Historical Designs for 18" Dolls

American Civil War Period: Circa 1840-1870



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'Southern Belle' Dress

History

What was a 'Southern Belle'?

A 'Southern Belle' was a high class lady usually born the daughter of a plantation owner. Southern belles have had the reputation of being self-serving and flirtatious. In reality, they were known to be gracious, refined and educated ladies. Many Southern ladies did not support the treatment of slaves on plantations. There are many instances where a lady educated the slaves of her family in secret, and there are other accounts of how a 'Southern Belle' smuggled a slave into the hands of the abolitionists who got them to safety and freedom.

Fashion

This dress is a good example of what a woman in the 1850's would have worn to a ball or other grand occasion.

What is a 'Bertha'?

A 'Bertha' in the 1850's was a type of collar that stretched around a lady's shoulders. It was acceptable for a lady's shoulders to be exposed in evening dresses, and this collar was a way of accentuating that style. The style of this collar originated in the 1830's.