

Doll Clothes of Yore

Original, Historical Designs for 18" Dolls

Victorian Era - Circa : 1870- 1890



'Johanna Spyri' Dress

History

Who is Johanna Spyri?

Johanna Spyri was a Swiss author whose books were published during the 1870's and 1880's. Although she wrote many books, she is most well known as the author of the famous children's story, 'Heidi'. Johanna set her stories in the Swiss Alps where she spent her childhood.

The story 'Heidi' is well-loved by children of all ages. It had been translated from its original German many times. It has also been adapted into about 20 film and drama productions, including one starring child actress, Shirley Temple.

Fashion

This dress dates from the early 1880's. It is in the classic 'bustle' style, so popular at the time. Dresses like this would have been worn over a bustle, or 'tournure' and several petticoats. However, some dresses were also taped and wired with steel to give them a more prominent shape.

The Victorian sense of propriety was so high during this period that the word 'bustle' was actually thought coarse. Most Victorians preferred the word 'Tournure' which is French for the same thing.

The bustle first arrived in 1869, but was popular from 1870-1875 and from 1883-1889. The prominent, square bustle as we know it today was only popular from 1884-1886. The bustle style in the 1870's is known as the 'soft bustle' shape because was not as prominent and often had a train. The bustle style in the 1880's is called the 'hard bustle' shape because of its crisp, straight lines.