

VICTORIAN UNDERWEAR

The Victorian Period ran from 1837 to 1901. And while fashions changed, what people wore under them remained pretty much the same. For men it consisted mainly of drawers, both long and short variety made of calico, cotton, linen and different weights of worsted and china silk. Under-vests made of merino or flannel were worn for extra warmth and were probably the forerunners of tee-shirt. Combinations or 'Union Suits' were a one piece garment worn by both sexes.

MEN'S FORM FITTING UNION SUITS.

SIZES: Give breast measure over vest close up under arms, and your height and weight.

A rational garment for men. Try our Union Suits for ease and comfort and you will wonder why you did not wear them before. Our Men's Union or Combination Suits fit. They are carefully and scientifically proportioned. We offer for your consideration only those suits that will fit, and we warrant them to be satisfactory in every particular.



80 Cents for \$1.00 Men's Winter Weight Cotton Union Suits.

No. 16R6000 Men's Silver Gray Heavy Cotton Union Suits. Slightly fleeced on the inside, making them very soft and pleasant to the skin. Button down front. A special value at this low price. Finished neck and pearl buttons. Sizes, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44. State breast, height and weight in your order.

Price, per dozen, \$9.60; per suit.....80c

No. 16R6001 Men's Fine Union Suits, knitted from fine cotton yarn, same quality as the above, but in ecru color. Sizes, breast 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44. State height, weight and breast measure in order.

Price, each.....\$0.80
Per dozen..... 9.60

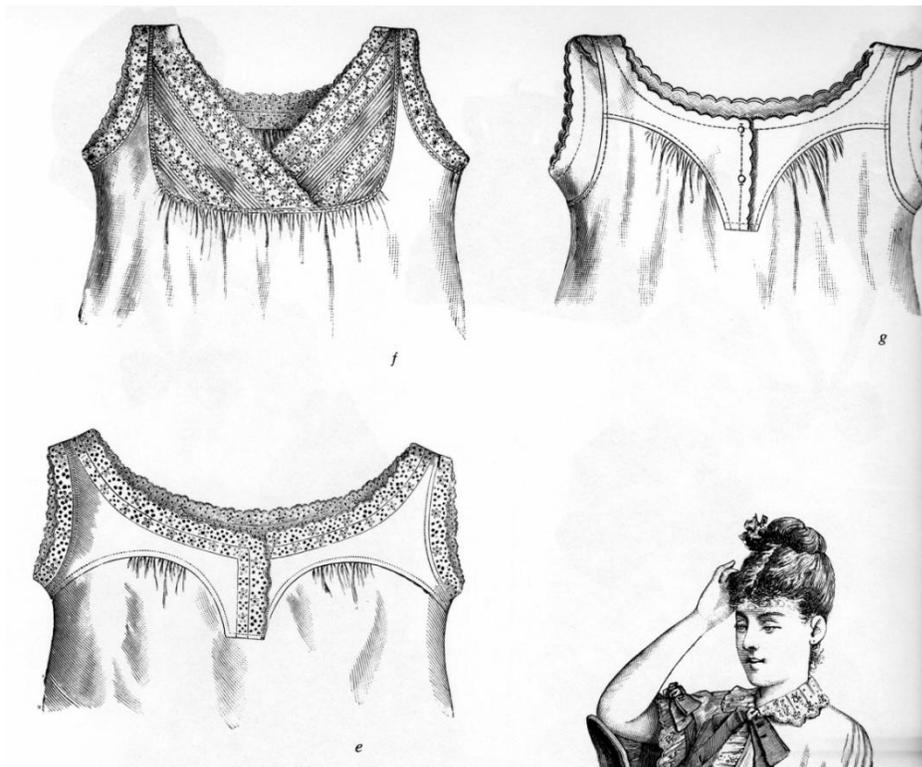
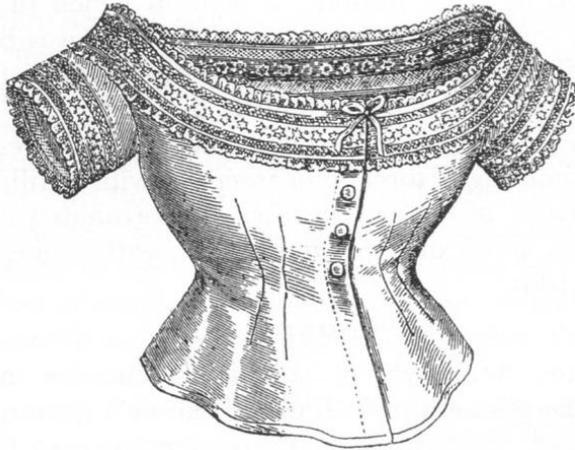
If by mail, postage extra, each, 24 cents.

An inventory list of a gentleman's 'linens' from August of 1830 consists of:

23 dayshifts, 5 nightshirts, 9 nightcaps, 2 pairs of flannel drawers, 4 pairs of calico drawers, 2 pairs thin drawers, 2 pairs thick drawers.

Other accoutrements included 'braces' or what we call suspenders were used to hold up a gentleman's drawers and trousers. And men did wear a form of corset to keep a tapered waist

Women of the age did not travel so lightly. The primary under garment was the chemise or smock sometimes called a shift. Usually made of cotton or linen it was knee length, straight with a square or round neck opening. Sleeves were short with a gusset in the armpit. A few had longer sleeves. About 1840 the camisole appeared. It was made of cotton and shaped to the waist with gores and was worn to cover the corset.



Women's drawers did not come into fashion as a standard under garment until 1806. They were made similar to the men's version with tubular legs gathered into a waist band drawn together by back lacing. They were severely plain, made of flannel, calico, cotton, merino and lamb's wool and fell to nearly the ankle. By the 1860's, they had risen to just below the knee and were decorated with tucks and lace.



74. (above) PETTICOAT WITH BRODERIE ANGLAISE BORDER; (below) W
DRAWERS, c. 1860-70

When it came to petticoats, between 4 to 6 were worn according to the season in the periods 1840-1856. By the 1860's the crinoline or 'cage petticoat' was added to the mix. And no dress or gown sat well without one. Whalebone was discarded for watch spring with a day crinoline having as many as nine steel hoops and one for evening as many as eighteen. Eventually the crinoline gave way to the bustle which appeared about 1868.

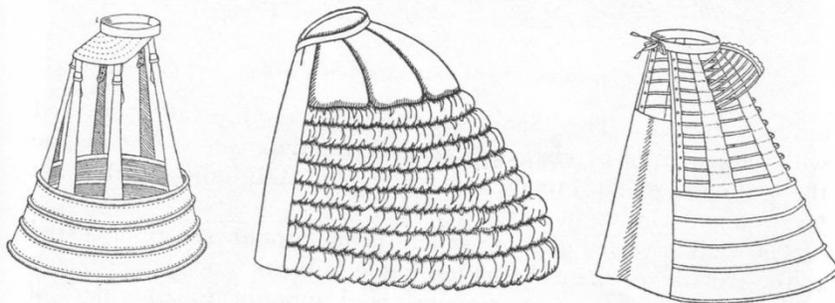
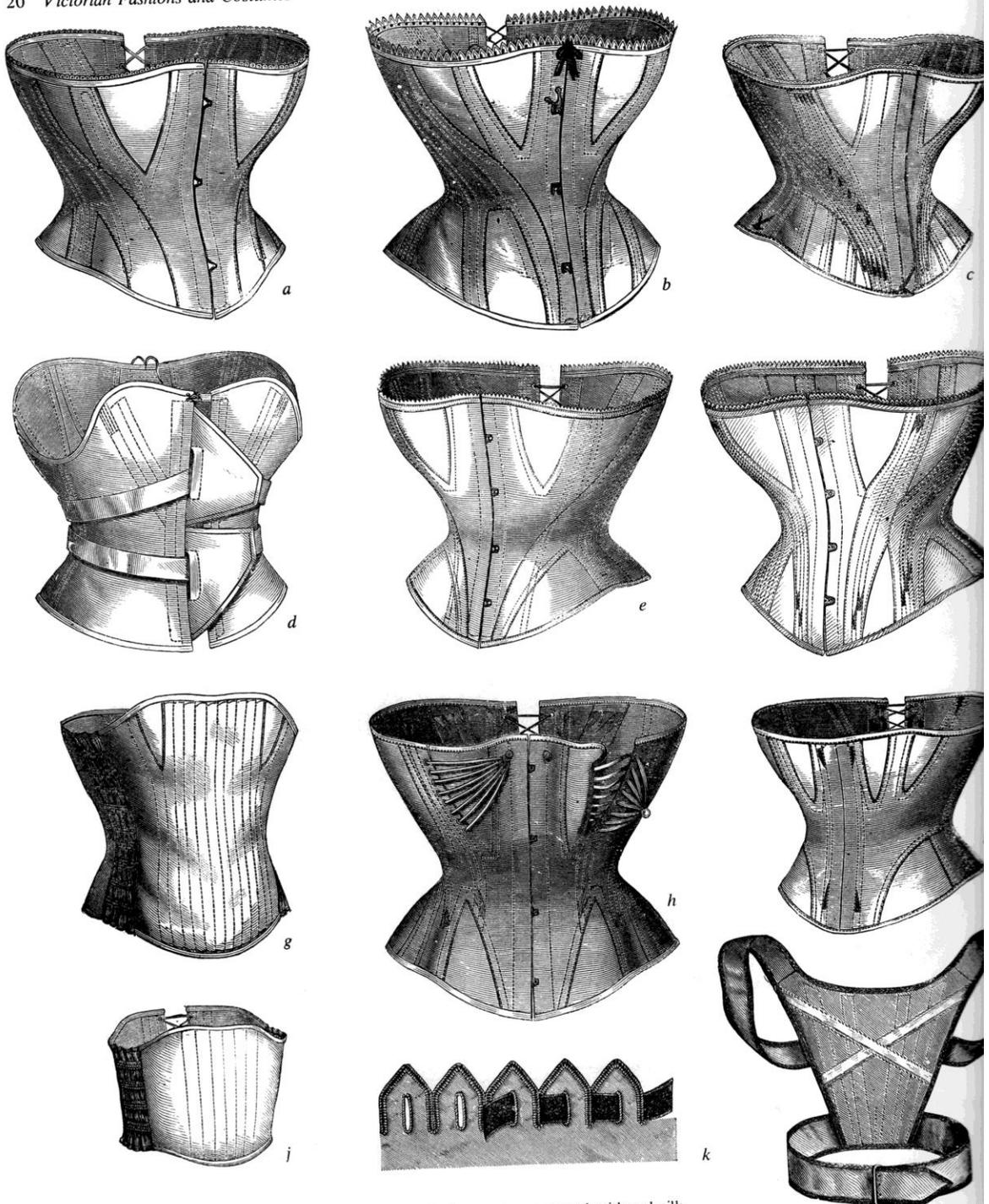


FIG. 72. (Left to right) SCARLET FLANNEL CRINOLINE, 1869; SANSFLECTUM
CRINOLINE, 1863; CRINOLETTE, 1873



CORSETS (10.9.1869, p. 644). The corsets here given may be made of white or gray coutil, satin jean, English leather, black cashmere, or heavy black, white, or colored silk. Silk or cashmere corsets must be lined with jean, and English leather with muslin. On white and colored corsets the seams are generally sewed with thread of white silk.

while black corsets are sewed with red silk.
 Fig. a: short corset of white coutil.
 Fig. b: long corset of white coutil.
 Fig. c: English leather short corset.
 Fig. d: negligé corset.
 Fig. e: short satin jean corset for elderly lady.
 Fig. f: short corset of gray coutil.
 Fig. g: corset for girl from 8 to 10 years old.

Fig. h: long corset of gray coutil with
 Fig. i: corset for girl from 12 to 14 years
 Fig. j: corset for child from 1 to 2 years
 Fig. k: trimming for white coutil long
 Fig. l: shoulder braces for girl from 8 years old.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Victorian Fashions & Costumes from Harpers Bazar 1867-1898 by Stella Blum

The History of Underclothes by C. Willet and Phillis Cunnington

What People Wore by Douglas Gorsline

Internet Sources

Some images from:

1880-1890 Sears Catalog ads

Corset, drawers, chemise, patterns are available from

Laughing Moon Merchantile #100 sizes 6-26

Truly Victorian www.trulyvictorian.com carries early, and late bustle patterns as well as bustle and hoop wire supplies.

Corset supplies www.corsetmaking.com

Farthingales www.farthingalesla.com carries corset stays, buskes etc.