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NINETEENTH CENTURY FASHION PLATE
COLLECTION, 1836-1876
2 linear inches (61 plates)

ACQUISITION: The plates were donated by Henry Miller Madden.

ACCESS: The collection is open for research.

PROCESSED BY: Diana Bustamante, 1998. Revised by Monica Fusich, 2006.

History

Fashion plates were originally a way of illustrating current dress styles for consumers, dressmakers, and merchants. They were published in women's magazines such as *La Belle Assemblée*, *Journal des Modes*, and the *Magasin des Demoiselles*. These periodicals were mostly weeklies that also included fiction and household hints along with the fashion plates. Since France was considered the center of fashion, both British and American periodicals contracted with French journals to republish their plates. Originally, the plates were engraved and hand colored with watercolors until the 1880s when color printing and chromolithographing became stylish. Fashion plates were popular until the 1920s when photography became the norm for fashion reporting.

A good source for more information about fashion plates and styles is *Survey of Historic Costume* by Phyllis Tortorra and Keith Eubank (New York: Fairchild, 1989, 3rd edition). This textbook was used to establish the time periods of the collection. Another useful source is Vyvyan Holland's *Hand Coloured Fashion Plates 1770 to 1899* which contains information on runs of fashion periodicals as well as information on fashion plate artists.

Scope and Content Note

The Nineteenth Century Fashion Plate collections measures 2 linear inches and dates from 1836 to 1876. The collection is arranged in four series: Directoire and Empire Period (1790-1820), Romantic Period (1820-1850), Crinoline Period (1850-1869) and Bustle Period (1870-1890). The fashion plates were collected by former University Librarian, Henry Miller Madden and come from several French, English and German periodicals.

The **Directoire and Empire Period** series (undated) consists of one fashion plate. The woman is in evening dress, wearing a gown open in front to reveal a decorated underskirt. The sleeves have a single puff at the shoulder with the rest of the sleeve fitted to the arm. Her hair is worn up and in coils, imitating ancient Greek styles. She is adorned with a crown-like hair ornament, necklace and earrings. The man is in the military costume of a Hussar, one of Napoleon's light cavalry units. This uniform is characterized by a cylindrical hat crowned with a feather, a jacket with heavy braiding, and a coat worn on the left shoulder.

The **Romantic Period** series (1836-1841 and undated) contains twenty-six fashion plates from the journals *Petit Courier des Dames*, which was one of the longest running fashion publications and *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur, Musik, Mode und Geselliges Leben*. The Viennese artist for all of the engravings in the last title is the artist Andreas Geiger. The silhouette for women during this time is characterized by a waistline moving down from under the bust to several inches above the natural waist, fuller skirts with a multitude of petticoats to add volume, and a wide variety of sleeve types. Hair was worn parted in the middle, with the back arranged in a knot, and side curls beside the face. Men wore tight fitting trousers or pantaloons, coats nipped at the waist and top hats. It was customary for the trousers, waistcoat, and coat to be different colors or patterns.

Scope and Content Note (cont.)

This series is strong in showing the later style of women's clothing during the Romantic Period as most of the plates are dated from the late 1830s to mid 1840s. The shape of the sleeves became less full and finally narrowed, and several women are wearing the sleeve en bouffant style which is alternating pieces of tight and puffy material. While the sleeves were collapsing, the skirts were lengthening, resulting in a "droopier" appearance.

A noteworthy feature of this series is that a majority of the fashion plates during this era include depictions of men and boys in day, evening, and sporting outfits. The men are wearing three piece suits consisting of a frock or tail coat, waistcoat, and tightly fitted trousers or pantaloons. A top hat was used both in the day and evening and some men are carrying bicorne hats with two points. The men are wearing either a stock or cravat around their neck and many are carrying canes. All of the men are sporting facial hair, either beards or mustaches and sideburns. Note that the style for adolescents is exactly like that for the men.

The **Crinoline Period** series (1861 and undated) contains eight fashion plates from the journals *Moniteur des Modes* and *Le Moniteur des Dames et des Demoiselles*. All of these images are signed by two important fashion plate artists: Heloise Leloir and Jules David. More details about these two artists are found in the finding aid for the Little Bower Fashion Plate Collection. The silhouette for women during this era was a narrow waist, very full skirt, and fitted bodice with sleeve seams set low on the shoulders. The cage crinoline was a major innovation and very popular for women because it was able to provide volume without the heaviness of the multiple petticoats used during the Romantic Period. Coal dyes were invented during this period and new and more vivid colors became available, which can be seen in several of the fashion plates in this series. These images provide examples of engageantes or removable undersleeves as well as sleeve styles such as the pagoda and closed sleeve. The fashion plate featuring four women in evening dress is a good example of standard evening wear with heart shaped, low-cut necklines with a bertha trim, fitted waist, and extremely full and elaborately decorated skirts. Bonnets are still being worn, but small hats are becoming popular during this era. Half of the images in this series include young girls who are wearing a shorter version of the adult dress.

The **Bustle Period** series (1875-1876 and undated) contains twenty-six fashion plates from the journals *Revue de la Mode* and *Le Moniteur des Dames et des Demoiselles*. Most of the plates are signed by the artists A. Bodry, Bonnard, A. Chaillot, E. Cheffen, Heloise Colin, Laure Colin, Jules David, P. Defernville, E. Preval and E. Thirion. The silhouette of this era was fitted in the front, with a bustle of horsehair or wire that added fullness to the back. The three stages of the bustle are seen in this collection. The first (1870-1878) is created by manipulation of drapery at the back, the second (1879-1883) is the sheath or cuirass bodice with fullness dropped below the hips ending in a trailing skirt, and the third (1884-1890) is the shelf bustle, a large, almost horizontal protrusion. The bodice and the sleeves are fitted. Hair was pulled to the back of the head and arranged in either a bun or in long curls. Hats that were decorated with a variety of flowers and ribbons were popular. The fashion plate of the two women and girls on the ice rink is a good example of sporting attire. The two women are wearing similar outfits

Scope and Content Note (cont.)

except that the length of the green dress is shorter so that the woman can skate. Notice that the girl between them is not wearing a bustle.

Related Collection

Little Bower Fashion Plate Collection

<u>Box no.</u>	<u>Description</u>
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Box 1

Directoire and Empire Period

Woman in evening dress and man in military dress, undated

Romantic Period

Two women in day dresses, 1836

Woman in evening dress, 1836

Two women in day and evening dress, 1837

Two women in evening dress, 1837

Two women in evening and day dresses, 1838

Two men in frock coats, boy in tail coat, 1839

Two men in frock coats, top hats, and walking sticks, 1839

Two women in white and scarlet evening dress, 1841

Two women in day dress with cape and mantlet, 1841

Two women in day dress, one with a cape, 1841

Two women in white and pink evening dress, 1841

Two women in day dress one wearing a fichu-pelerine, 1841

Two women in wedding and evening dress, 1841

Two women in white evening dress garnished with flowers, 1841

Two women in day and evening dress, 1841

Two women in evening dress, one wearing a blue capelet, 1841

Two women in pink and green evening dress, 1841

Three men in evening dress with a tailcoat, frockcoat and overcoat
carrying canes and top hats, 1841

Two men in day frock coats, 1841

Three men in evening dress, one holding a bicorne, [1842]

Woman in day dress, man in tail coat with tricorn hat, man in military
evening outfit, 1842

Four women in evening dress, man in cape and top hat, undated

Two women in evening dress, man in tailcoat and bicorne, undated

Two women in evening dress, one holding an ostrich feather fan,
undated

Three women in day dress, three men in frockcoats, undated

Six women in day dress with bonnets, undated

Four women in day dress, two men in frockcoats, undated

Three women in day dress, one woman in a riding outfit, two men
in frockcoats, undated

Three women in day dress, three men in military costume, hunting
outfit and frockcoat, undated

Three women in day dress, capes and bonnets, two men in
frockcoats, one in tailcoat, undated

Two women in evening dress with arrow hair ornaments, undated

<u>Box no.</u>	<u>Description</u>
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Box 1 (cont.)

Crinoline Period

Two women in day dress, 1861
Four women in evening dress, 1861
Two women in day dress with child, 1861
Two women in day dress (green and black) with child, undated
Two women in day dress (white and brown) with child, undated
Two women in day and evening dress with child, undated
Woman in day dress, girl in Confirmation dress and veil, undated
Two women in day dress with child, undated

Bustle Period

Revue de la Mode

Two women in day dress, 1875
Two women in day dress (lavender and white), 1876
Two women in day dress (white and black), 1876
Two women in day dress (blue), 1876
Two women in day dress (white and blue), 1876
Two women in day dress (black and brown), 1876
Two women in day dress (purple and white), 1876

Le Moniteur des Dames et des Demoiselles

Woman in day dress with two girls in confirmation dress, undated
Woman in wedding gown, woman in day dress, girl, undated
Two women in evening dress, girl, undated
Two women in day dress, undated
Woman in fur trimmed day dress with teenager, undated
Two women in outdoor dress, girl, undated
Two women in day dress and hats, girl, undated
Two women in day dress and hats, teenager, undated
Two women in day dress (blue and brown) and hats, undated
Two women in day dress (green and blue) and hats, undated
Two women in day dress (green and black) and hats, undated
Two women in day dress (plaid and blue) with hats and parasol, undated
Two women in day dress and hats with girl and hoop, undated
Woman in wedding gown, woman in day dress, undated
Two women in day dress (green and blue) and hats and parasol, undated
Two women in day dress (checkered and buff) and hats with child in swing, undated
Two women in day dress (buff and blue) with flowered hats and parasol and child with hoop, undated

<u>Box no.</u>	<u>Description</u>
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Box 1 (cont.)

Bustle Period (cont.)

Le Moniteur des Dames et des Demoiselles (cont.)

Two women in day dress (pink striped and green flowered) with
feathered hats with girl, undated

Two women in day dress (grey and striped) with feathered and beribboned
hats and child with hoop, undated