

# Short Subjects

## Vintage Sewing

*An on-line resource provides vintage sewing information and reference material.*



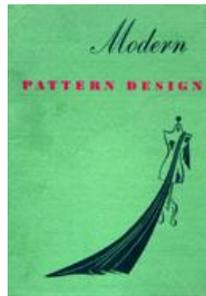
[VintageSewing.info](http://VintageSewing.info) is the publishing site of the Vintage Sewing Reference Library, Inc. a nonprofit public benefit corporation that publishes public domain vintage sewing, fashion, and lifestyle books and images, rescuing primary source reference material from obscurity to freely share. The site especially targets “recreationists” and costumers so they can make design and construction choices from knowledge, not ignorance.

The founder started the site when she acquired the sewing library of her great-grandmother, who supported herself in the second half of her life using the sewing skills she learned from correspondence courses and books now published on the site. Material runs from pre-1900s through the late 1950s.

New material from the community is solicited for inclusion, and the community is encourage to vote on pending material to add next. The main page shows the top-five list of candidates for addition, and content currently being coded. Individuals can also sign up for the site to receive notification when new material is added.

The site can be browsed by decade, or by categories such as: dressmaking, textbooks, sewing courses, pattern design, tailoring, glovemaking, millinery, and laundry/dry cleaning. It can also be searched by keywords using the Google-powered custom search engine.

VintageSewing.info contains a wealth of information, from period construction techniques, to descriptions of vintage equipment, to reproductions of entire books, such as the 253 page *Modern Pattern Design* written in 1942 by Harriet Pepin. Deborah



Parker Wong used the straight skirt culotte pattern and instructions from this book for her Neo-Edwardian Aviatrix costume, which she describes in an article in this issue.

The range and depth of material available on this site makes it a must-use resource for historical costumers, as well as those who just want to learn more about the classic sewing techniques. As a non-profit, they must obtain at least one third of their operating budget from a “broad base of public support.” Costumers can support this valuable resource by making a donation on-line. Donation more than \$20 receive written acknowledgement and their annual report.

## 19th-Century Paper Dolls

*Beautiful paper doll designs from the 19th-century are featured on this web site*

Paper dolls have always held a fascination. Not just a children's toy, paper dolls also serve a serious purpose to communicate new fashions and designs. A new web site, [19<sup>th</sup> Century Paper Dolls](http://19thCenturyPaperDolls.com), provides a wealth of information.



The web site includes a section on designs from specific decades, from 1830 to 1890, and sections covering various topics related to the subject, such as “Anebellum”, “Antique”, “Books”, “Civil War”, “Film”, and “Gilded Age”. The eras and topics are covered as blog entries in which the author discusses different aspects and shows illustrations, often from vintage sources.

A section on “Philosophy.” The current topic, “To cut or not to cut?,” discusses the author's philosophy on the purpose of

vintage paper dolls, and the pros and cons of cutting them out. A final section includes a links to other resources related to paper dolls, collecting, and 19<sup>th</sup> century fashion.

19<sup>th</sup> Century Paper Dolls is an excellent resource for costumers, and provides ample illustrations of this age-old art.

## Members Fabric Discount

*Joann Fabrics offers discount card for members of sewing/craft organizations.*



members of sewing and craft organizations a discount card good for 10% off total in-store purchases. To receive the discount, fill out the form on the [VIP & Non-Profit Discount Card](#) page of their web site. Select the VIP Discount Card option.

The discount card should arrive by mail in 4-6 weeks. Once it does, activate it at any Joann store by presenting proof of membership together with a state-issued Photo ID.

Joann Fabrics preferred customer coupons are normally good for 40% off a single non-sale item. However, many fabrics and other items in their stores are already marked down, so the coupons cannot be used on those items. This VIP Discount Card is good on both regular and sale priced items.

## The Great San Francisco Dickens Christmas Fair

*This classic Victorian holiday event has been going strong for forty years.*

For many costumers in the San Francisco Bay Area, the holiday season would not be complete without a pilgrimage to *The Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party*. The event returns to the San Francisco Cow Palace Exhibition Halls again this year.



The event was created in 1970 by Ron and Phyllis Patterson, and is now produced by Kevin and Leslie Patterson, and Red Barn Productions, continuing the family tradition. It seeks to reproduce a slice of Charles Dickens' London, including shops, eating establishments, and entertainment.

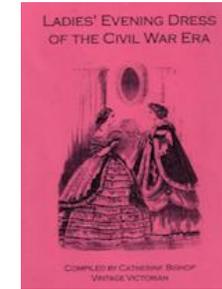
Although not required, may costumers enjoy putting on their finest Dickens era costumes to attend the fair. To help attendees get in the spirit they offer advice on "[Building Your Character](#)" and "[Language Guidelines](#)."

The *Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Holiday Party* run for four weekends, including the Friday after Thanksgiving, from Friday, November 26<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 19, from 11am to 7pm. Visit their [web site](#) for more information, including activities, hours, and prices.

## Vintage Dress Series for Costume Designers

*A series of books provide details on recreating all aspects of vintage dress, from undergarments to accessories.*

The *Vintage Dress Series* books compiled by Catherine Bishop of *Vintage Victorian* are a fashion history resource for vintage dancers, re-enactors, Victorian enthusiasts, actors, and costume designers.



The books offer numerous image of vintage styles, gathered from many period magazines and books. They show the wide range of styles worn in any given period. Where available, the original text describing colors and trim selections has also been included with each illustration. Accessories, jewelry, hairstyles, and fashion forecasts are also covered for a complete picture of the time.

Titles in the series include:

- [Ladies' Evening Dress of the Civil War Era](#)
- [Hairstyles and Headdresses of the Civil War Era](#)
- [Day Dress of the 1890s](#)
- [Ladies' Evening Dress of the 1890s as seen in Harper's Bazar](#)
- [Turn of the Century Fashions: 1899-1905](#)
- [Hairstyles and Headdresses of the Victorian, Edwardian, and Ragtime Eras](#)

For more information, visit their [web site](#).

## Parting Shot

Along with her “*First Day Dress*” article, Lisa Ashton sent a description and photo of her latest Victorian outfit: a whimsical historical interpretation that is just too good not to share. Here it is!

My most recent Victorian outfit is an 1890’s blouse with puffed sleeves and a skirt with hand-made ruffles and [ruches](#), built as a humorous hunting costume. (Obviously, wearing a corset on the outside makes it a fantasy costume!) It contrasts the image of Victorian ladies as dainty, swooning creatures who always carry a lace handkerchief, with modern folks who must have special outfits for each of our pursuits. The outfit is mostly historically accurate and uses many authentic embellishment techniques on the blouse and skirt. I love this costume because it is where my real life and my fantasy life collide — I am a hunter in real life every autumn.

I first had the idea for the corset while preparing to teach a corset workshop for my local costuming guild. The pattern for the class was the *Victorian Ladies Underwear Silverado* corset, available from [Laughing Moon](#), a reliable late Victorian corset, that works well with many types of Victorian outfits. I felt that I should do myself first to demonstrate the techniques step-by-step, so I used a pattern developed by a close friend to make an underbust corset out of blaze orange fabric.



After my corset was made, there seemed only one way to wear it — over camouflage fabric. I used a nice woodland pattern in cotton from Walmart, when they still had a Fabric Department. The hunting vest is a pattern for a late Victorian bed jacket, which I modified to be a vest, and created the hunting pocket for the back, where we stash our small game. With my new embroidery machine, I added pictures of the many animals I hunt and see in the

woods. I had to dye the lace for the vest blaze orange, but it came out great.

The blouse is a commercial “historical” blouse pattern, only it buttoned up the back. I made it a few times for performance costumes, but I got tired of having to ask for help to get it buttoned. It’s tailored properly, and it’s easy to modify the sleeves: if I want to be historically authentic, I make a two-part sleeve, for most costume purposes, I patterned a one-piece sleeve that is faster to make. I re-patterned it for a front closure—much easier to dress, and I use my gorgeous buttons that I collect. I have an embroidery machine now, so I also monogram most of my blouses in the upper left. Although the detail is hard to see, the dart and seam lines are also covered with orange ribbon, and embroidered with little leaves.

You can barely see the vertical lines of gathered ruffles on the skirt; they are serged at the edges and left a bit rough for texture. The orange circles at the hem are hand-sewn fabric flowers made with a Victorian ruching technique and then tacked together and sewn in a spiral fashion to create the “flower”. The leftover ones were used on the hat.

I am holding a blaze orange lace-edged handkerchief, my dyed utility belt has TP, cartridges, flashlight, squirrel caller, cord and other necessities. The shotgun is made of a stock, painted PVC pipe and Velcro.