

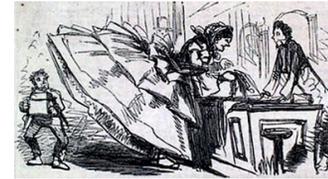
Until the early 19th century, a corset and linen chemise was all the underwear a woman thought necessary or even desirable. It wasn't until the turn of the century, when the use of very light fabrics became popular, that women even considered wearing underpants as a necessity for added warmth. When the crinoline was introduced toward the middle of the century, its tendency to fly up at inopportune moments created yet another need for underpants.



Queen Victoria's standards of propriety were so stringent that she soon ensured that the fashion for underpants would become a staple article of clothing in every woman's wardrobe.

Pantalettes, an adaptation of men's pantaloons, were the earliest style of underpants used by women. They were also called drawers because they were composed of two separate leg sections that were tied on at the waist with drawstrings. Early on, these were considered a fashion accessory and were decorated with frills and lace and allowed to hang several inches below the hemline. By the middle of the century, drawers were connected at the waist, though the crotch was still left open. The loose style of the garment, however, accommodated the opening and afforded a degree of modesty.

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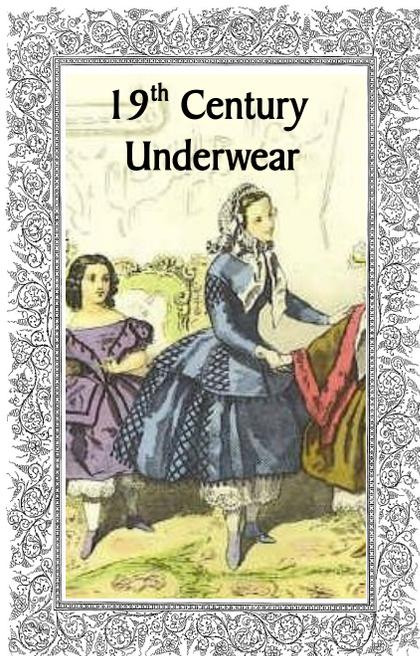
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By the 1870's, drawers became and "unmentionable" part of a woman's wardrobe. It was no longer appropriate to show off ones undergarments so they were shortened to just below the knee. Despite this, many women still took pains to embellish their drawers with frills and lace much to the chagrin of those who thought it a waste of materials.

Remarkable Women to Learn About:
Dolly Madison, Queen Victoria, Jane Austen, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Blackwell, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Louisa May Alcott



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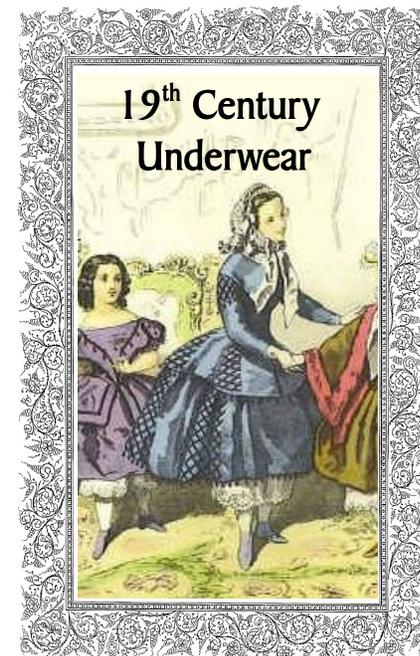


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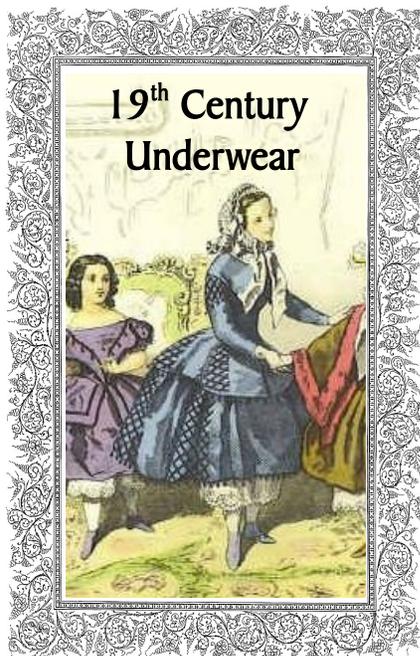


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