

DELINEATOR GIRLS

By Leslie Clarkson

In an Antique Store in Marysville, California, I chanced upon a copy of a poster called A Century of Delineator Girls. It is hermetically sealed, with a second light on the back to reveal the text that was applied to the back of the item. How pleased I was to see in succinct manner, the evolution of women's fashions from 1804 to 1904. As a reenactor and enthusiast of all things historical, I have found it a rare treasure to find such a fine 'delineator'. And, I have seen nothing on line to compare although there is an extensive trove of all things inspired by this poster. It does compare with the Silhouette page that we have been passing around for the last five years, but in detail and with the approval of Ebenezer Butterick!

The First young lady is from 1804, sporting a huge poke bonnet, a gauzature greek styled smock and a light drape upon her pale, dainty shoulders. Granted, these are fashionable young ladies, and not reflecting casual or regional dress. **In the second rendering, the formidable year of 1814**, the Poke and Smock are considerably heavier, although still of greek style and the hem is still too long to walk in, being still held up with her little hand. She also has resorted to a heavy Pelerine. Note, 1814 was the year without a summer, when Krakatoa blew up and buried Mary Shelley in with Lord Byron, inspiring Frankenstein and killing several fashionable women caught unawares. Many great stories there! Remember the little bisque doll so very popular of the time, **Frozen Charlotte!**

The third young Miss from 1824, although still quite 'Jane Austin' with her empire waist, has affected almost a Spoon Bonnet, a reasonable flounce instead of a tripping hem, heavy shawl, Pelerine and stout fabric. She is as clever as any survivor. The fourth rendering approaches our selective desires. **The year 1834 is represented by a young lady of the Age of Exploration**. She is without headwear and so implying an indoor event. Her waist is back to the Natural Waist, Dropped Shoulders, full and manageable skirts (many), heavy material and dark flounces all meeting at a point at the small of her back. Her fan hopefully indicates that she is not freezing to death, which is always a good thing but something that our society is not very familiar with. Note, we as a society try to emulate dress from a time which was much cooler if not a small ice age, depending upon whom you ask. Let us not forget the great need for furs of the highest quality which in effect created the Age of Exploration.

The fifth Miss is the year 1844, our own favorite. She is very influenced by the mills of Lowell, MA, and Somersworth, NH without herself being a worker at said Mills. These young ladies are the very pinnacle of fashion in New York and Boston and their influences would only be felt much later in our own capital of California. Even though we were not yet in a State of Union this rendering reflects again the brave wandering youth, albeit weighted down considerably with the notorious twenty petticoats. She prefers a wagon to a horse because her skirts would cripple a horse. Her hat is a simple halo-type Bonnet, her dress a drop-shoulder round dress. a small flounce is at the hem and the material is implied as a print, the matching pelerine also slightly flounced. A heavy Robosho (shawl) completes her necessities. In the desired age that we are portraying, the material was a technological marvel and the patterning of a dress was a far second to the complex multi-colored prints being produced at the Lowell Mills and other mills throughout the east coast. These fabrics were designed by women, printed by women and sewn by hand by women. Congratulations, we had arrived.

Simple as the dress was made, the fabric was a technological marvel of multi-colored stripes, flowers, corals, feathers and birds, preferably in the same pattern. We have even seen evidence of the scientific marvels represented on dresses, such as elephants and amoebas! Say that in Chartruese, Madder and Cochineal! But Stay, chemical dyes have yet to be invented (the first from 1856) therefore all the stripes and flowers must be rendered with natural dyes which will fade and bleed soon to create soft neutrals after the initial rich hues of a new garment. Of course, the ladies may choose to never wash their dress which would preserve the colors for perhaps a year depending on rainfall. Fixatives for dyes were soon to follow, which meant you could again wash the dress, yeah. Chemical dyes were fast on the heels of better mordant (fixatives) and the complex natural colors were replaced or included with gaudy 'gilded' primaries. Excuse me, ick.

Those extant dresses that you may have seen are natural dyes and new-science fixatives, a slim and rare time indeed. Still, an extant dress of our era will show complex multi-colored prints, often including the reliable 'tiny dots' produced by brass tacks often imbedded in the print block drum to produce a very little depth or shading. The images seldom reflect open fields (chintz). More common are flat design and very controlled images of nature, controlled nature as Darwin would prefer. Flowers within stripes, birds within medallions, and geographics were popular. Urns, drapes, chintzes and ribbons were elements popular with the colonials and somewhat de'regure, as are primary colors.

In the sixth rendering on this poster, we see a southern belle in all of her effects. This is the **year 1854** and although Cotton was King, she is probably wearing silk. She wears the crown of a princess therefore she must be at an indoor souree. Flounces at the exposed shoulders and five rich flounces on her skirt make her an absolute wedding-cake of a young lady. We, as a society, will use this form for our fancy balls and we see versions in photographs most Antebellum. She could very well be hiding small blackamores under that skirt. Whereas the 1844 lady may make it to St. Louis, the 1854 lady will be kept at home. 1844 uses endless petticoats, 1854 is floating on multiple hoops. 1844 will jump from a wagon, 1854 will watch from the balcony. 1844 is printed cotton or linen, 1854 is pastel solid silks and taffetas. This is a reflection of the 'swing effect' of fashion: one days norms are tomorrow's taboos. If these dresses appear similar it is because we have forgotten that style manifests societal norms that change with the season and sometimes with the time of day.

In the seventh rendering, the Lady from 1864 has found a pleasant compromise. 'The war' is almost over and not forgotten. The 1864 Miss reflects humility by using multiple fabrics on her round dress. Her shoulders are bare and she has a Fascinator in her simple center-part hair, but the sheen of her ball-gown is quieted with many ribboned hems. The top dress is almost a jacket, falling just below her knees. She holds a fan and sports 3/4 length pagoda sleeves. For this we might wish to construct a Post-War outfit, it is fetching, humble and subtle.

The post-war dress that I saw on display at the Smithsonian Institute in 1978 was a round dress made of many different printed cotton fabrics dyed over with black. As each color showed through the effect was very complex and subtle, reflecting a garment made from scraps and dyed in tears. Excellent. This was displayed with pictures of villages dying all of their clothes in vats, black. The dye sets heavily in all seams, patches and darning and the varying prints give a certain lacy effect. The dress was repleat with patches, pieces, hems and repairs before the black dye was applied over prints, plaids and plain fabrics. This form of garment was an easy to conceive technique common for

several years until the cotton industry recovered from the ruins of the war. Curiously enough, the skirt was voluminous and the bodice still had the indentation of corsetry.

Unfortunetaly, **1874** was another year of war. Expansionism was rampant and the Native American Wars were in full swing. The Railroads were conducting the unbridled slaughter of all buffalo in order to break the well established Nations of America and we know that they did accomplish this end. The **Fashionable Miss of 1874** is well aware of the exciting **Manifest Destiny's** inevitable accomplishments. Now she has a bustle, an umbrella and a bare head obviously in an outdoor setting. She probably lost her hat or pawned it along the way. She is ready to mount anything, preferably a Wells Fargo Wagon for a few weeks to find her place in the New West. Her sleeves are Coach, her gloves are on, Her hair is the most hideous Gibson version of Hat-hair you might find on a gentleman whom had not taken his top-hat off for a week. Here are the Bustles necessary to survive a torturous ride across the plains. At least she had plenty of lower-back support and a ready pillow. Whether her dignity was left intact we have yet to find out. Bustles indicate Coach, not either wagon, horse nor train, but that fine time betwixt walking and railing across the plains.

Miss 1884 is a bit more sedate, easily. She is wearing a walking dress with gored skirts and far less fabric. She has a sewing machine, and prefers to sew trim and copy fetching patterns. She appears to be trimmed in leather, since that is the cheapest durable fabric available in the age of cowboy. The multiple materials are contrasting, and a heavy drape seperates her jacket from her skirt. I will assume the drape is for fashion's sake, having not seen that particular feature in any photographs. Prints (calico, ect.) are possibly not fashionable enough for her, solid wools and linens were far more common. Now Butterick's Patterns have become commonly in use they appear to be selling fabric for consumption's sake. She is very charming, in a 'Knick' sort of way. Most unfortunetaly, unless there is a call for Gilded Age Victoriana her attire is inappropriate for our purposes, as are most bustles.

Both 1874 and 1884 examples imply a liberal use of paper patterning and advanced shoulder treatments. Ladies of 1840 to 1864 are not yet blessed with either scythed sleeves nor sewing machines, in general. We are crafts-ladies that sew our own without patterns. Our local seamstresses might assist, but generally we know the fashions we learned after church. We are more inclined to twelve-yard Round-Dresses and home-spun Aprons than patterned jackets and drapery.

1894 and 1904 renderings are likewise charming, repleat with trims and big hats and completely unacceptable for our purposes. Curiosly, a drop-shoulder is seen again by 1902 as well as a hem that is so long she must hold it up to pambulate. At this late date her Pigeon-fronted unfitting dress is most likely observed in the seat of an electric automobile and she appears to be attempting to adhere to pure gravity while being spirited away by a tremendous hat. Curioser and curioser. Emily Dickenson would be proud but please save this outfit for your next trip to another museum.

Consider, if you are a seasoned lady and wish to wear Jane Austin era garb or a gynormous poke bonnet, you would be 30 years out of date but we could work with that. You would have some explaining to do, but 1814 was a hard year and we could eventually forgive you. However, In order to create cohesion and historically correct pictures for our parade of tourists, we emphatically request that our ladies adhere to our parameters. Simply, Natural Fabrics and Dyes, volumnes of skirt, drop-

shoulders, humble bravery. We celebrate the advent of prints on linen and cotton. We celebrate being able to trade for thread and fabric instead of having to spin and weave our own. Quiet, busy craftswomen always present as smart, mindful and sober character. You will eventually find that simple, well-fitted, natural-waist frocks are the most flattering (when worn with a corset). If one were to outfit herself in the pinnacle of gilded era finery she might find herself invisible, for she does not yet exist.

Finally, to be remembered, the SchoolMaster of Sacramento City had a contest once a year where a young lady was awarded for her efforts to produce 'the most economical frock'. We were frugal and efficient characters. We were the survivors and you can't do that in silk. Fancy your Balls, loan me a horse and 'spare me a path' to Sacramento City, thank you.

The Framed Poster

Butterick's Delineator Girls. This poster was procured by Lesley Clarkson at an antique store on D street in Marysville in September of 2015. The poster is of ten fashion women from 1804 to 1904, measuring 7 inches tall by 33 inches long. The pamphlet on the back has the same measurements and that text is herein copied. Although verbatim, the formatting is different (as each sentence originally forms a paragraph) and the (sic abbreviations) are far from modern standards. I have tried to copy it as true as is feasible. There is also a picture of the Butterick Building on the Pamphlet, but I will not attempt to copy or restore that image as it does not relate to Sacramento City. This item is framed and professionally sealed but the material that it is printed on is not acid-free and it has suffered considerable water-damage. I will attempt to copy and restore the poster for use in the Costume Closet of the Sacramento Living History Center. Copying through the glass will prove a chore, and if anyone has experience with this sort of thing then please let me know. I am not interested in breaking the seal, if at all possible. It is a treasure to share, in arrested decay.

Script on Back of sealed poster:

THE FIRST PAPER PATTERN

To a woman belongs the credit of the idea of the modern paper patten. This is how it came about: Ebenezer Butterick, a merchant tailor living in a small Massachusetts town, was one day in 1863 engaged in cutting out a pattern for a pair of short trousers for his small son. They were cut from very heavy manila paper- almost as heavy as cardboard - for that is the sort of pattern a man's tailor uses. His wife showed him how women would appreciate ready-cut-out patterns, not only for their children's garments, but for their own. Ebenezer Butterick was a wise man. He worked out his wife's idea. He made a fortune and gave his name to an industry which has made "Butterick" a household word wherever women and children wear the garments of Christendom. He soon found that cardboard patterns were never made to travel - they don't lend themselves easily to folding. A lighter-weight paper was tried at first, and a little later the tissue-paper pattern made its first appearance. And now you can buy a Butterick ready-cut-out pattern for anything made of cloth, from a wedding-gown to a pincushion.

HOW STYLES ORIGINATE

From Paris the world's great dressmakers are continually writing us of their wonder at our producing in America women's advance fashion designs simultaneously with the Paris designers, and not infrequently ahead of them, so that they have had to follow us. Butterick designers in every fashion capital - New York, Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna - develop the newest ideas of the great modistes. This season's favorite features, as showing the trend of popular preference, are elaborated and appear in next season's earliest offerings. Thus Butterick designs furnish the acknowledged style of the present, while they forecast the tendencies of the future. From the beginning of the Butterick business American women have realized that Butterick designs were representative and correct; and now the women of all civilized countries realize that these patterns reflect that smartness and modishness which combinewith the elegance and refinement of the gentlewoman's garment. Butterick Patterns make it possible for any woman to make the most elaborate toilette or the simplest frock at smaller cost than the modiste could make it for her.

THE SAFETY OF THE BUTTERICK PATTERNS

"YOU CAN'T GO WRONG with the Butterick Pattern" is spoken daily in many languages all over the world. Millions of women select Butterick Patterns because they know them to be accurate and reliable, and because the designs which they represent can be relied upon as being always "good form." Butterick Patterns are the result of exact mathematical grading taken from garments made complete as a dressmaker would make them, and fitted on living models. The directions for cutting them leave no room for error. Any woman who can read can easily and accurately cut the most elaborate garment, *if it's a "Butterick."* It is this element of safety that has helped us to increase the business of the Butterick Company to its present output of more than forty-five millions of patterns yearly. And that means forty-five million garments cut out by women in nearly every country in the world without damaging the material of a single one - where the simple directions are followed.

THE DELINEATOR AND ITS WONDERFUL FAMILY

THE DELINEATOR, now the foremost of the world's magazines for women, was originally published with the single mission of heralding the advent of the tissue-paper pattern. Its foundation was built on utility - the help that it could be to woman in her world of dress. It was a success even from the start in 1872, and has always maintained its supremacy in its special field; but since its expansion and modernizing a few years ago, its family of readers has grown to such an extent as to eclipse the record of every other publication in the world. Competition is keen among the magazines - keener among those for women than among publications that men read. To have attained and retained the largest paid subscription list of any periodical published is a distinction that many publishers have spent millions of dollars for and failed to gain. The Delineator Family includes queens and princesses, farmers' wives and society people. Every walk in woman's life is represented in The Delineator Family, and its members write us from the uttermost parts of the world - letters in thirteen different languages have reached us in a single mail.

THE HOME OF THE DELINEATOR FAMILY

THERE IS QUITE A DIFFERENCE between the building illustrated on the cover of this folder and the little shop where Ebenezer Butterick cut the first paper pattern that was ever made. The voyager now

arriving at New York sees, as he crosses the river, a towering sixteen-story building with a name on it in letters sixty feet high. If she be a woman, even though a foreigner, that name at once makes her feel at home. The name "Butterick." The building is the home of the greatest pattern industry in the world, the home of The Delineator and the seven other magazines published by the Butterick Company. It is the home of a concern which has fifteen thousand agencies scattered throughout nearly every city of the world, besides branch establishments in London and Berlin, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis and San Francisco, Atlanta and Toronto. The Butterick Building has just been completed, and takes the place of eight large separate manufacturing buildings occupied by us formerly, and situated in Brooklyn, Hoboken and New York City. It is the largest building in the world devoted exclusively to one publishing house and its interests.

THE BIGNESS OF THE BUTTERICK BUSINESS

THE BUTTERICK BUILDING cost \$1,405,502.34. The Butterick Company employs 1,896 people in its New York establishment alone. Eighty-six immense printing presses, which cost \$649,971.25, occupy three entire floors. So perfectly is the building constructed that even when all these presses are in operation, a person standing close to them can feel no vibration whatever from the floor, although the roar is so great as to render conversation practically impossible. On these presses are printed eight magazines in four languages - English, French, German and Spanish. They also print more than one hundred million Fashion Sheets every month. During the year 1903, at our New York office alone, we received an average of 29,760 letters every week. We use forty-five tons of paper every working day in the year, and it costs us a little more than one million dollars. The Butterick Building is at Spring, Macdougall and Vandam Streets, New York City, and you are cordially invited to visit it at any time and inspect its many mechanical wonders. It is a little World's Fair in itself so far as a Manufacturers' Building is concerned.

THE BUTTERICK PUBLISHING CO., LTD.