

The History Of Underclothes (Dover Fashion And Costumes)



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Synopsis

"... thoroughness and most impressive scholarship ... much entertaining detail and ... pleasant humour." — The Times Literary Supplement (London)

Underwear — practical garments with a utilitarian function or body coverings that serve an erotic purpose? As this fascinating and intelligently written study shows, the role played by underclothing over the last several centuries has been a varied one. In a well-documented, profusely illustrated volume combining impressive scholarship with an entertaining, often humorous style, two distinguished clothing historians consider undergarments worn by the English over the past 600 years. Beginning with the Middle Ages, the authors cover centuries of clothing history, including the Tudor period, the Restoration, the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and the twentieth century up to the eve of World War II. Drawing on extensive research, the Cunningtons illuminate the role and function of underwear: it protected the wearer against the elements, supported costume shapes, served as an erotic stimulus, symbolized class distinctions, and fulfilled other social, sanitary, and economic functions. Enhancing the detailed, comprehensive text are more than 100 period illustrations and photographs depicting a laced-up bodice of the twelfth century, embroidered linen drawers of the sixteenth century, a hooped petticoat support in bentwood (c. 1750), footed long drawers (1795), nineteenth-century bustles, early nineteenth-century corsets for men, "Frillies for the Tiny Lady" (1939), and much more. A bibliography, appendix, and index complete a valuable reference work that will appeal to costume historians, sociologists, and other readers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Had bought a paperback addition and was very disappointed: all the photographs and pictures are only black and white. Some photographs are so dark that one can barely see what is on the picture. The text was disappointing as well, not much of explanation about any of the garments featured. I had returned the book.

This is an excellent resource for everything but the outermost layer for men and women in a multitude of eras. I am a historical costumer and I found this book to be very helpful as I strive for accuracy. The pictures and diagrams are very helpful as well but are not always on the same page so remember the figure numbers. One caveat: if you're not familiar with historical sewing terms this will be a difficult read.

Nice overview. I have enjoyed looking at it.

Very interesting, good read. Laid out in an organized manner by time period.

the book was well written It just was not what I truly was looking for.

This is a good book but not quite what I expected. There was a lot of history on the undergarments and less on how to design the pieces. Given what is available in this department it's a well constructed book demonstrating the history of vintage undergarments.

A fascinating look under the skirts, so to speak... this book gives you a good idea of how our ancestors dressed from the inside out; it makes you appreciate the simplicity of our modern wardrobe, and sympathize with past generations. The fashion dictates of the past also help relativize the fashion dictates of present.

The detail in this book is remarkable and includes both men's and women's underwear from medieval through the early 20th century. The illustrations are marvelous and plenty, giving the reader excellent visuals. I loved the Elizabethan picture of bum rolls which were used to round out the skirts of sixteenth century gowns like a bustle (pg 51). A definite must for history buffs!

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