Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

LATE VICTORIAN/EDWARDIAN CLOTHING H92

Flannel Underskirt

This would have been worn under a dress or skirt, and was probably made for a teenage girl to wear in winter. Flannel was a good choice of material for making winter garments because it was so warm, sometimes two would be worn if it was really cold. Items like this were not really affected by fashion as they were worn under clothes.



Underskirt with a Broderie Anglaise Border

Like the flannel underskirt, this would have been worn by a teenage girl, but in spring and summer. We think it was made between 1911 and 1914. The pretty pattern on the skirt is a type of embroidery called broderie anglaise. The technique involves piercing a pattern of round or oval holes in the material, which is usually cotton. Young girls' clothing style was generally influenced by womens' fashion. New trends in the Edwardian period encouraged the wearing of lighter and less elaborate dresses. This meant that children also wore less elaborate clothes, which made it easier for them to move around and to play.



Child's Dress

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, there were two different trends in women's and childrens' fashion. Firstly clothes that could be worn outside for activities like tennis or skating, made from heavier fabrics; secondly clothes that could be worn at home which were more elaborate, but probably less practical. This dress is made of lightweight plain cotton with simple embroidery and was probably worn in the summer at home. The collar and cuffs would have been hand embroidered, which would have taken quite a long time.



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Child's Coatdress

This dress dates from 1900-1905 and was probably for a little girl, although a boy could have worn it as there were few differences between young boys and girls' clothes in the Edwardian period. Generally the coatdress had deep embroidered hems and yokes. A yoke is another word for a large collar, like the one on this coatdress. A girl would have worn the coatdress over a dress or skirt, while a boy would have worn it with knee length breeches, another word for trousers.



Baby's Nightdress (1900-1910)

In the Victorian era, the interest in dressing babies and children became fashionable. With their increasing wealth, middle class families could afford to spend more money on their babies. Babies' dresses changed very little in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Typically they were long and decorated with frills and embroidery. It might seem unusual for the dress to be so long, but it was designed to keep the baby's feet warm. A baby might have worn a dress like this for their christening. This one dates between 1900-1910.



Green, Black and White Shawl

This delicate shawl is made from silk and probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century. Five-foot (about 1.5 metres) square shawls with fringing were popular and fashionable at the time. They were folded corner-to-corner in a triangular shape and worn loosely around the shoulders and tied at the waist.

