

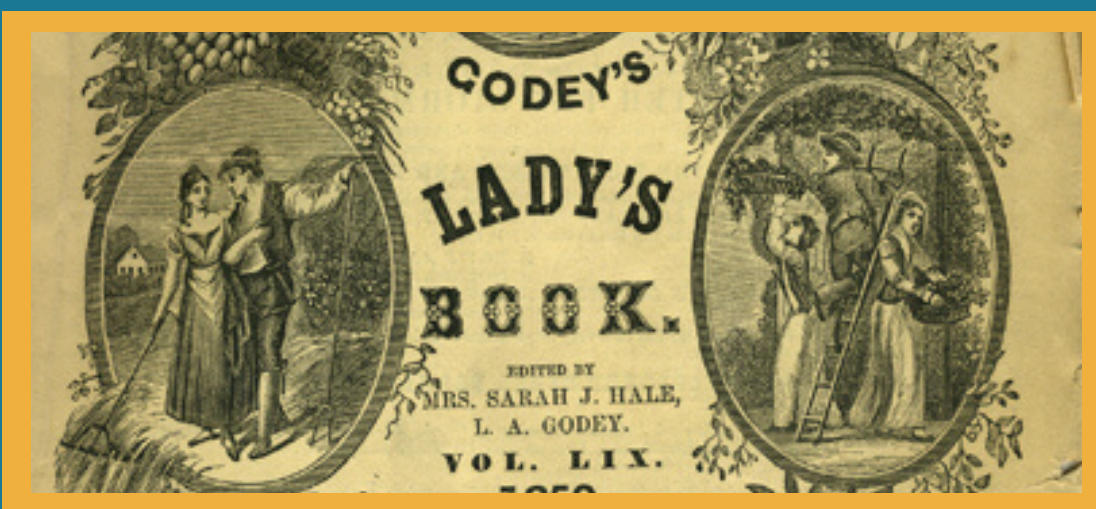
# Corsets & Crinolines

Fashion, as we know it, emerged with etiquette books, fashion plates, and magazines such as **Godey's Lady Book**, published from 1830 to 1878. The periodical was the most widely circulated publication during the Civil War. Each issue included articles, poetry, sheet music, and hand-tinted **fashion plates** or engravings of women's clothing.



Women's wear became a point of great cultural importance and showed the way in which women used fashion to express, conceal, rebel and protest. Undergarments were important because they created a desired shape or **silhouette**.

During the mid to late 1880s, middle and upper class women were not expected to work or perform manual labor, aside from managing their husband's household. There was little need for mobility and garments reflected this through several layers of petticoats, laced corsets, corset covers, bloomers, crinoline cages and bustles.



The desirable **hourglass silhouette** was identified by a large bust, small waist, and wide hips. This look was accomplished by wearing a tightly laced corset with up to 12 layers of cotton petticoats. With the invention of **crinoline** in 1856, skirts took on a more voluminous look. Crinolines were constructed of stiff horsehair or steel and were worn underneath a skirt.



In 1864 the **bustle**, a padded undergarment that attached at the waist, emerged and replaced crinoline hoops. The preferred dress shape became flat at the front and sides, with a slimmer skirt and longer train. Bustles were wire structures tied around the waist, which thrust the skirt outward, to be covered by fabric drapes and folds. The long train created a "shelf-like" look, with less material in the skirt, and became known as the **natural form** from the 1870s to the 1890s.

With the emergence of the **Rational Dress Society** in 1881, a campaign started for women to wear more practical, comfortable and healthful garments. This movement also became the basis for the broader campaign which earned women the right to vote.





# Busts & Bustles

Women's garments of the 1890s had simpler flowing lines, at least for the bottom of the female form. The disappearance of the bustle meant that the drapery of skirts became free of complicated overlays and had straighter lines, but not necessarily less material. This change shifted the focus from the skirt toward the **leg-of-mutton sleeves**. These sleeves were puffed at the top and gradually diminished into a tight-fitted cuff. The effect of the large sleeves with the flared **A-line skirt**, which made the waist appear even smaller created an S-bend silhouette.



This ideal was personified by the **Gibson Girl**, an image created by Charles Dana Gibson in 1890. She was tall, with a narrow waist, and wore a shirtwaist shirt and a long skirt, which both emphasized her small waist. **Lithographs and woodcuts** in magazines carried her image across America. Feminists approved the Gibson Girl as a model of the "**new woman**" and dress reformers endorsed her clothes as liberating. Corset makers liked her because she still needed the small gathered waist.

The concept of the "new woman" emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century. As women became more involved in the public sphere and began attending college, they also moved toward greater financial independence and professional roles. Subsequently, clothing had to reflect the need for less restriction and more mobility as women participated in new leisure activities and entered areas of society.

## FOCUS ON YOLO COUNTY WOMEN

Lydia Lawhead was a teacher in Michigan and Illinois before moving to Woodland in 1878. Lydia taught at the Prairie School, near Merritt Station, for over five years before teaching at Hesperian College for twenty years. She then helped to found Woodland High School. Lawhead was civically engaged and was involved in many of the local social clubs. She also served as president of the Northern California District of the California Federation of Women's Clubs and was vice president of the State Federation. Lawhead also served as part of Woodland's chapter of the Yolo County Equal Suffrage League and championed women's causes in Yolo County.



LYDIA LAWHEAD  
1857-1928

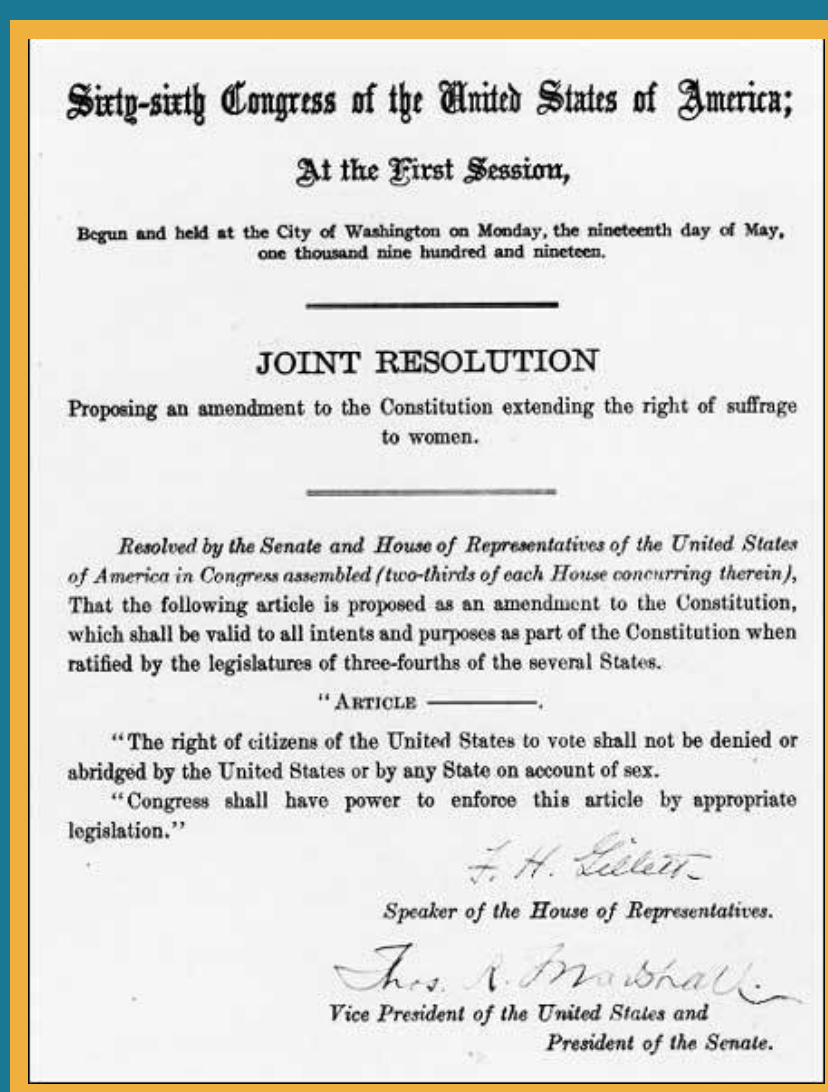
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# Style & Suffrage

The 1848 **Seneca Falls Convention** in New York was the first of many gatherings dedicated to advancing women's rights. Over the next fifty years women organized meetings, rallies, lectures, petitions and parades to support equality. In 1866 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and abolitionists founded the **American Equal Rights Association (AERA)**, which aimed to secure "equal rights to all American citizens, especially the right of suffrage, irrespective of race, color, or sex." But in 1869 alliances were fragile, as groups began to fracture amid discussion of the 15th Amendment, which would grant African American men the right to vote, but not women.



In 1890, two organizations were created to help pass a constitutional amendment. The **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)** was formed under the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt and undertook grassroots campaigns in individual states, while also lobbying in Washington D.C. Under the leadership of Alice Paul, a second and more militant organization, called the **National Women's Party (NWP)** was created.

Between 1878, when the **19th amendment** was first introduced in Congress, and 1920, when it was ratified, suffragettes led protests, hunger strikes and were sometimes jailed. To publicize their cause, suffragettes made buttons, pennants and post cards with their **signature purple (loyalty), white (purity) and gold (hope) colors**. To avoid the stereotypical image of the strong-minded woman in masculine clothes created by newspaper cartoonists, the suffragettes resolved to present a fashionable, feminine image. To contrast men's black suits, women wore white to stand out.

## FOCUS ON YOLO COUNTY WOMEN

Emily Hoppin pursued higher education in Michigan before marrying Charles R. Hoppin in 1874 and making her way to California. In addition to her management of the Hoppin farm, she was also a dedicated community member. Hoppin was involved in a number of social clubs in Woodland, including the Women's Christian Temperance Union where she worked diligently to support the passage of suffrage for women in California. When Jennette Rankin came to Yolo County in August of 1911 to speak about and campaign for suffrage, Emily Hoppin, Emma C. Laugenour, and Dr. Frances Newton spent four and a half days taking Jennette around the county for her speaking engagements.



EMILY HOPPIN  
1854-1915

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# Fashion & Flappers

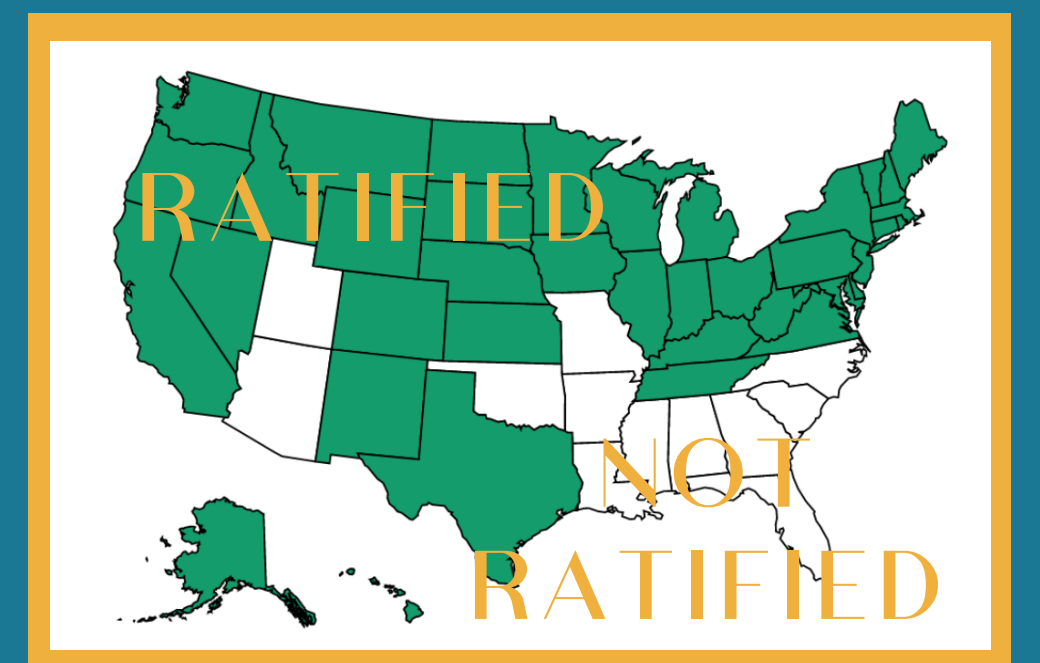
The 1920s saw a dramatic shift in women's garments. The dawn of the new century marked the beginning of a more permissive era. Women wanted clothes that let them move more easily and showed off their legs. Hemlines moved upward and the French designer Paul Piolet deemphasized and dropped the waistline to create a more slender, slim-hipped look. Irene Castle was another important trendsetter who popularized the "boyish" figure and cropped bob hairstyle that became the forerunner of flapper fashions.



With the elimination of the corset came a **simpler silhouette** which discarded what remained of 19th century fashion and allowed the female form to be unobstructed and reveal its true shape. Dress reformers sought to make fashion "rational" and "healthy." After WWI clothing reflected the bright, light and joyful aspects of life, as the **emancipated woman** sought to express her individuality through dress. Women's garments became more varied as women pursued leisure activities requiring sportswear, daywear and evening wear.

The decade kicked off with the passage of the 19th Amendment, and continued with women joining the workforce in increasing numbers, participating actively in the new mass consumer culture, and enjoying more social freedoms driven by urbanization and economic growth. Even with this progress, there was, and still is, a long way to go toward gender equality.

**The Equal Rights Amendment** was introduced to Congress by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman in 1923. The proposed amendment to the Constitution states, "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." In January 2020, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the amendment, but its future remains uncertain.



## FOCUS ON YOLO COUNTY WOMEN

Dorinda Mansfield was born in Kentucky and moved to Yolo County after marrying Edward Mansfield. Dorinda, Edward, and their three sons, Charles, Otis, and Alonzo came to Sacramento by train and settled in Woodland. They made the move to California in search of a better life for their children. Mansfield was an accomplished seamstress, quilter, housemaid, and cook. She worked as a cook for wealthy families, baking for weddings, parties, and became a well-known caterer in the community. Mansfield was also particularly well known for creating a nine-patch quilt, utilizing materials which she collected over the course of thirty years.



DORINDA MANSFIELD  
1870–1953

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