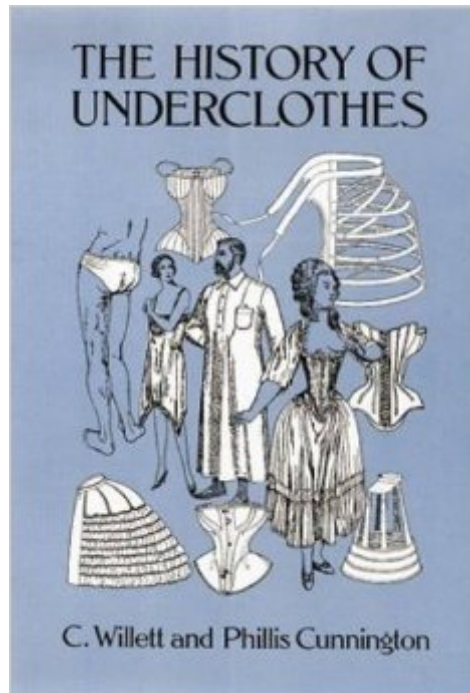


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# The History Of Underclothes (Dover Fashion And Costumes)



## 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

unfortunately this is the only book by C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington easily available in America. This book is a terrific and cheap resource for those interested in an aspect of historical costume often ignored. It doesn't include construction methods, but it is otherwise a perfect resource for the professional or reenactment costumer. It covers the Middle Ages through 1939 with black and white photos of garments and illustrations from primary sources.

An interesting treatise on an interesting topic - underclothes. As a writer of historical romances, I need to know what is under the heroine's clothes, should the hero get around to removing them. This book has helped in my search for answers to that important question. The illustrations are excellent and it is quite fascinating to realize how much we do (and don't) know about what our ancestors wore and why. However, this book does seem to spend a lot of time on men's underwear (yes it's important, but not as much as the ladies'), and also covers such a large time period that inevitably some discussions are very brief (no pun intended). This book will become part of my reference library - not a stand-alone source, but complementary to my other volumes on clothing.

Thanks to Dover reprints, the Cunningtons' books on costume are becoming available again. And what a benefit this is! The best thing about a Cunnington book is that you know the scholarship is sound. No guessing here, no looking at a costume from 1815 and extrapolating to the whole nineteenth century.... This book focuses mostly on the 18th through early 20th centuries (in Europe), with black and white drawing and photos. A wonderful resource for anyone with an interest in costume, history, or theatre, and a MUST for any writer of historical fiction.

I think this book could have been more in-depth and would have benefitted from more illustrations, but it's a good starting source for reenactors, fashion historians, and people writing about various historical periods. Amazing and interesting overview of what's under there and down there through the ages.

not only were the authors too ambitious (trying to cover way too many centuries in too few pages), but the fact that it was originally published in 1951 is glaringly apparent -- ridiculous psychological reasons are ascribed to purely practical phenomena. there is insufficient discussion of the

illustrations, and too few illustrations to illuminate the discussions!

This is an excellent sourcebook for research. What did they wear under their clothes throughout history? Note: 'Underclothes' in this book means the garments that lay beneath, say, a doublet or a coat (we call them 'jackets' now). Photos of the actual items, or contemporary depictions are in the text. My only criticism, and it is not enough to make me remove a star, is that this is a facsimile reissue of an older book, and the text and some of the photos are dark or difficult to read/see. I would recommend this for anyone researching historical costumes.

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.

It seems somewhat unbecoming of a lady to order a book on undergarments but I gotta say, hubba-hubba! Seriously, the explanation of underwear through the ages is just fascinating! For instance, right from the get to, it was a shock to find out that underpants were created to protect clothes from the owner, not the other way round. People only recently (relatively speaking) began bathing routinely since it was always considered a risky undertaking when we did not understand where illness came from. Add to that the notion that we needed to emphasize our external sexual attributes for pairing purposes and this becomes quite a compelling work. Thank you, Mr. Cunnington. Good work!

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