



From Rags to Riches: A History of Girls' Clothing in America

Leslie Sills

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A history of girls' clothing may not seem the liveliest of topics, but the sparkling design of Sills' overview makes this a pleasure to page through. Sills skips through centuries of American history, describing what girls wore and how the outfits reflected what was happening at the time. For instance, in colonial days, when girls were considered miniature women, stays in their clothing kept them straight and tall. By the mid-nineteenth century, as women's rights became an issue, bloomers appeared. A marvelous collection of paintings and photographs show off the apparel. Some of the most interesting are the earliest paintings of girls who look like adults. The illustrations are placed on brightly coloured pages, and their placement gives the feel of a scrapbook. They capture the times, and though minorities are represented, there are no pictures of girls in slavery and only a few of girls at work. A terrific roundup of resources, including lists of Web sites, museums, and media, makes it easy for kids to learn more.

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