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Sarah Jane Downing


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#311458 in Books imusti 2010-03-23 2010-03-23Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 .33 x .1 x 5.851, .32
#File Name: 074780767164 pagesShire | File size: 55.Mb

Sarah Jane Downing : Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen (Shire Library) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen (Shire Library):

81 of 81 people found the following review helpful. Definitely mixedBy Ann WOne does not expect comprehensive detail in one of the Shire albums, but one does expect what is there to be accurate. This book has absolutely wonderful illustrations (some, unfortunately, uncredited), but the text is mixed. Seems to have been written in a hurry, and without adequate verification. For example, Ms. Downing writes of men's fashion, "it was the 'battle between broadcloth and silk' as Balzac had termed it in 1798." Since Balzac was born in 1799, he clearly was looking back when he wrote this, rather than writing it in 1798! And, however much the Austen family wishes that the Rice portrait (p. 11) is Jane herself, that is extremely unlikely. A teen-aged Jane, even a fashion forward one, would not have

dressed like that in 1792-93. The portrait is almost certainly someone of the next generation. The price of the volume is low, so it's worth buying for the pictures alone, but please do further research before accepting what is in the text. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is a great little book to have as historical reference if you ...

By Miz Nina
This is a great little book to have as historical reference if you are interested in the era. It succinctly ties in the historical events (such as the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars) which had an impact on radically changing fashion between 1775, the year of Jane Austen's birth, and the early 1800's. The book is also filled with pictures, taken from a wide variety of sources, which illustrate the author's points. For the Jane Austen fan, there are specific ties between the points made and quotes from Austen's books. Four stars, though, because this is a LITTLE book: more a booklet, actually. Only 63 pages and about 6 inches tall.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great costuming resource

By Solitaire
I picked up *Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen* for the sake of getting a free shipment. I participate in English Country Dancing in my county, and once a year my husband and I go to the big Jane Austen ball. I've taken my share of fashion courses in college, including *History of Costume*, so I wasn't expecting a lot of new information, but this little gem of a book is surprisingly informative with bits of info that I'd never heard previously. For instance the light colored, close fitting trousers that men wore were meant to allude to the nude legs of male antique Greco-Roman statues being unearthed at the time. A lot of good reference illustrations in contemporary cartoons as well as reproductions of paintings and engravings, some familiar, some not so much. As I make our attire for the balls, the more information I have on what is authentic, including colors, fabrics, et al, the better our Austen inspired costumes come off at the events. I know I only gave this book four stars, but only because I wish that the book had been longer with more of the same good info. I read it cover to cover in about an hour. However I do believe it's worth the money for anyone with an appreciation of the Regency or an interest in researching authentic clothing of the period.

The broader Regency period 1795-1820 stands alone as an incredible moment in fashion history unlike anything that went before or after. It was the most naked period since Ancient Greece and before the 1960s, and for the first time England became a fashion influence, especially for menswear, and became the toast of Paris. With the ancient regime deposed, court dress became secondary and the season by season flux of fashion as we know it came into being, aided and abetted by the proliferation of new ladies' magazines. Such an age of revolution and innovation inspired a flood of fashions taking influence from everything including the newly discovered treasures of the ancient world, to radical new ideas like democracy. It was an era of contradiction immortalized by Jane Austen, who adeptly used the newfound diversity of fashion to enliven her characters, Wickham's military splendor, Mr. Darcy's understated elegance, and Miss Tilney's romantic fixation with white muslin.