

# AMERICAN BRIDES

INSPIRATION AND INGENUITY





Bridal attire came into its own during the nineteenth century. In 1840, Queen Victoria's wedding took the world by storm. Newspapers and periodicals published the details of her wedding, with many of the articles focused on her lavish white Honiton lace gown. Many wedding traditions established in the nineteenth century are still followed today.

Mainstream fashion informed the styles of Victorian bridal gowns. French fashion illustrations spread around the globe, and American magazines often adapted French images to suit the taste of their readers. Rather than wearing their best dress, many brides chose to purchase or to have a white wedding gown made for their special day. To accommodate the demand for wedding dresses, American department stores created in-house bridal salons.



*1844*

Wedding gown of cream silk satin with fan pleated yoke on fitted bodice and a full gathered skirt.

Courtesy of Steven Porterfield

1874



1878



1880



1878



*1993*



*1878*





*1912*

Wedding gown of ivory silk satin trimmed with Chantilly lace with a draped bodice and beaded corsage, draped panel skirt with lace inset, long train attached at waist.

Gift of Mrs. Margaret Baker  
From the Estate of Mrs. Tom Braniff.  
Texas Fashion Collection  
University of North Texas

*1920*

Wedding gown of off-white net and machine embroidered lace and piping on bodice, peplum, and full ankle skirt.

Courtesy of  
Neiman Marcus  
Texas Fashion Collection  
University of North Texas



*1925*

Wedding gown of cream silk satin with fan pleated yoke on fitted bodice and a full gathered skirt.

Courtesy of  
Steven Porterfield





*1912*



*1934*

Wedding gown of ivory silk satin with v-neckline midriff of ruched satin in a large diamond pattern, and full-length bias-cut skirt and train.

Anonymous Donor  
Texas Fashion Collection  
University of North Texas



1936

Designed by Edward Molyneux

Wedding gown of candlelight silk satin, consisting of sleeveless underdress with braided trim, over which is a full-length lace tunic and train.

Worn by Bertha Marie Masur of Monroe, Louisiana.

Courtesy of  
Steven Porterfield

Gift of Mrs. Jacqueline Masur McElhaney  
Texas Fashion Collection University of North  
Texas

2011



2007

1994



2011



Designed by Winn Morton

Made in New York by Jon Rager of Michael-Jon Costumes

Inspired by Princess Diana's wedding gown, was described by the bride as her "dream wedding gown."

Courtesy of Martha Wyly Miller

*1982*



### American Brides: Inspiration and Ingenuity

By the early 1960s, breaking with tradition was the order of the day. American youth began to voice their opinions and to throw off the yoke of their parents' wishes about many things, especially in what they chose to wear. The mini-dress symbolized freedom for women to make their own choices in life and to go against convention. The 1970s flourished with homemade, prairie-style dresses that represented a bride's individual personality.

Today's American bride is free to express her personal taste with a desire for high fashion, Hollywood-style glamour, or to draw inspiration from a royal wedding. Brides may wear a symbolic family heirloom, combined with current fashion trends and themes. While the white wedding gown remains the popular choice for brides today, there are many new wedding customs to contemplate in the twenty-first century.



*2009*

Designed by Matthew Earnest  
Worn by Allison V. Smith,  
granddaughter of Stanley  
Marcus, at her wedding to Barry  
Whistler in August 2009.

Courtesy of Allison V. Smith

*1972*

Worn by Karen Erxleben.  
Gift of Karen Erxleben Weiner  
Texas Fashion Collection  
University of North Texas

Courtesy of Allison V. Smith



*1974*

Gift of Myra Walker  
Texas Fashion Collection  
University of North Texas  
Courtesy of  
Steven Porterfield

*1972*

Gift of Nancy Walkup  
Texas Fashion Collection  
University of North Texas  
Courtesy of  
Steven Porterfield

*1977*

Courtesy of Janelle McCabe



# AMERICAN BRIDES

INSPIRATION & INGENUITY

