Hope Greenberg holds an MA in History from the University of Vermont. She studies historic clothing, as well as recreating and wearing it, focusing on the evolution of fashion as well as the language that describes it. She has presented on the topic of Fashion in Jane Austen’s World for JASNA-VT, history and literature courses, libraries, and other groups. She is currently an Information Technology Specialist at the University of Vermont where she provides advanced consulting for faculty on integrating teaching and technology, online and hybrid course design, and digitally mediated humanities research.

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Miss Tilney’s white gown confirms her elegance, Mr. Bingley’s blue coat hints of the dandy, and as for Miss Steele’s pink ribands…! Austen’s descriptions of her character’s clothing are sparingly, yet tellingly, applied, while her letters address fashion in a more practical way. What did Jane Austen and her contemporaries wear? Though our visual understanding of period clothing is often shaped by films, increased access to extant gowns and fashion plates lets us explore the historical reality. Those interested in the “felt life” of history can now create and wear reasonably accurate reproductions, allowing us to experience not only what history looks like, but what it feels like. Or, to put it another way, we can now answer such burning questions as: Can one really dance comfortably in a corset?