

Clara's 1620 Pilgrim Dress

A stereotypical Pilgrim girl has a long black dress with a big white collar, wide cuffs on her sleeves, and a white apron. For accessories, she has a huge white bonnet and clunky black shoes with big buckles.

In reality, black was an expensive color, so a real Pilgrim girl from the 1620s would be more likely to wear brown, red, green, yellow, or even blue. The bodice usually matched the skirt, and was worn over a different colored chemise (or undershirt). The bodice typically covered the chemise, showing only the stylish narrow collar and sleeves. Sometimes, a ruff might be added to decorate the neckline. An apron (not necessarily white) was commonly worn to protect the skirt from smudges and spills while working. Although Pilgrims are typically shown wearing huge buckles on their shoes, buckles were not fashionable, and would not have been worn until the late 1600s. In the 1620s, shoes were tied with a ribbon or leather strips.

Clara has a tight-fitting bonnet – also called a coif or biggin – which she would wear to keep her hair clean. She may have worn a floppy felt hat, and would have also worn a wide straw hat over the bonnet in the summer.

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