

# 1860's Child's Petticoat in Crochet

by: Brandy Foersch

In an effort to keep Charlotte warmer during winter events, I decided to try my hand at a Tunisian crochet petticoat. Having never done any long hook crochet before I chose a simple, unshaped project!

My Inspiration:



Child's 1860s Wool Petticoat from The Boston Museum of Fine Arts

**Learning the Stitch:** The museum description states that this petticoat is made with the “tricot stitch.” I did a general search of Tunisian crochet stitches, until I found a visual match. In modern terms, the stitch I used is called simple stitch.

## Tools and Materials:

- Tunisian Crochet Hook, size J
- Crochet Hook, size J
- 4+ skeins Patons DK, cream
- 1 skein Patons DK, in each contrast color

**Note:** *The original piece uses 5 contrast colors, but in the interest of saving money, I opted to*

*use a single contrast color.*

**Determining Panel Dimensions:** Charlotte wears a 2T. Her 1860s petticoat has an 11 inch skirt, so I decided to work: 2 (20-ish inch x 10 inch) skirt panels

For toddler (boy or girl) sizes, 40-ish inches of skirt width is plenty. Determine length by measuring your cotton petticoat and subtracting one inch.

For bigger girls, 60-ish inches of skirt width is plenty. 2 (30-ish inch x desired length) skirt panels.

## **Making Panels**

**Note:** *Although this pattern suggests the use of a Tunisian Hook in size J, I only had a size G available at the time I was making this project.*

*The larger size hook opens the stitch and gauge nicely and helps manage “curl” which is a challenge in Tunisian crochet.*

*Blocking is another solution for “curl,” so use whatever hook you want and allow dimensions to determine the stitch count for your individual creation.*

Using main color, ch 101.

**Foundation Row:** Fwd Pass: Begin working in second ch from hook. Insert hook in the single loop in the back of the chain stitch, yo, draw a loop onto hook. Repeat for each ch across. (100 loops) Return Pass: Ch 1, yo, draw through 2 loops. Repeat for each stitch across. (100 stitches)

**All Other Rows:** Fwd Pass: Insert hook in the vertical bar of the previous stitch row, yo, draw a loop onto hook. Repeat for each stitch across. (100 loops) Return Pass: Ch 1, yo, draw through 2 loops. Repeat for each stitch across. (100 stitches)



### My Color Rows

Using a single contrast color, work rows from the bottom up.

**Rows 1-3:** main color

**Row 4:** contrast color

**Rows 5-6:** main color

**Rows 7-8:** contrast color

**Row 9:** main color

**Rows 10-12:** contrast color

**Row 13:** main color

**Row 14-15:** contrast color

**Row 16-17:** main color

**Row 18:** contrast color

**Remaining Rows:** main color

### Original Color Rows

Using five contrast colors, work rows from the bottom up.

**Row 1-2:** cream

**Row 3-4:** purple

**Row 5:** black

**Row 6:** yellow  
**Row 7:** black  
**Row 8:** light blue  
**Row 9:** black  
**Row 10:** cream  
**Row 11:** red  
**Row 12:** cream  
**Row 13:** black  
**Row 14:** light blue  
**Row 15:** black  
**Row 16:** yellow  
**Row 17:** black  
**Row 18-19:** purple  
**Remaining Rows:** cream

## Shell Boarder

Working with main color yarn and regular hook, sl st into first stitch on the bottom right of the skirt panel. 5dc in second chain from hook, sc in fourth chain from hook (shell stitch). Repeat across.

*If you find that you that you require half of a shell stitch at the end of your row, 3 dc in final stitch and tie off and weave in tail.*

If you used a half shell at the end of the first panel, begin your second panel with a half shell. Sl st into first stitch on the bottom right of the second skirt panel. Ch3, 2 dc, in first stitch from hook, sc in third chain from hook (half shell stitch) Shell across as usual. Tie off and weave in tail.

## Making the Waistband

1 (approx. 1 inch x 19) waistband

Subtract 2-4 inches from waist measurement, to compensate for how much it will stretch. The larger the waistband the more play it will have.

### Making Waistband:

Working in main color, ch 71.

**Foundation Row:** Fwd Pass: Begin working in second ch from hook. Insert hook in the single loop in the back of the chain stitch, yo, draw a loop onto hook. Repeat for each ch across. (70

loops) Return Pass: Ch 1, yo, draw through 2 loops. Repeat for each stitch across. (70 stitches)

**All Other Rows:** Fwd Pass: Insert hook in the vertical bar of the previous stitch row, yo, draw a loop onto hook. Repeat for each stitch across. (70 loops) Return Pass: Ch 1, yo, draw through 2 loops. Repeat for each stitch across. (70 stitches)

Four rows is all that is needed for a toddler sized piece, but I suggest six rows (approx. 1 1/2 inches) for a girls sizes.

## Blocking



- Run work under cool water to soak.
- Roll in a towel to absorb excess water.
- Stretch and pin to a blocking mat if you have one, or the rug. A blocking mat has measurements on it. If you are working on the rug, measuring along the way to make sure the panel is evenly stretched.

## Seaming Petticoat Panels



Lay skirt panels side by side. Whip stitch row by row from the bottom to top. Leave an 3-5 inch opening at the top of the second panel seam.

Three inches is plenty for toddler sizes. Four-Five inches is recommend for girls sizes. The larger the difference between hip and waist measurements the more ease space is required.

### **Attaching Waistband**





### **Determine Gathering Stitch Count**

Petticoat Stitch Count Around (200) divided by Waistband Stitch Count (70)

It's not perfectly exact, but I worked in every third stitch around the skirt waistband.

### **Seaming Petticoat to Waistband**

Work with petticoat right side out. Place waistband upside down, right side facing petticoat.

Slip yarn into far right of waistband. Insert hook into first stitch of waistband, then petticoat. Slip stitch together, pulling snugly.

Insert hook into second stitch of waistband, then in third stitch from the last waistband stitch. Slip stitch together, pulling snugly. Repeat across. Tie off and weave in ends.

### **Closure Options**



I sewed a button to one end and made a chain stitch bar tack on the back of the waistband to loop around the button.

A tie closure, is a great option! If unlike me, you didn't make your waistband a bit too long:)

Another period solution that is less know among modern crafters, and works splendidly for toddler sizes, is securing woolen petticoats, hand stitched or otherwise, to the body petticoat with several buttons around the waistline. Then a closure is not strictly necessary, because the woolen petticoat hangs from the foundation layer.

### **The Finished Piece**





### What Would I do Differently?

- Work with the correct hook size... haha. Hook, size G, made denser fabric than I would prefer and even blocked it wanted to curl.
- Make the petticoat a few inches longer! I imagined that it needed to be shorter than the petticoat beneath. Not the case, it still will not brush the legs. It just needs to be a few inches shorter than the gown that goes over it.
- Not use a crocheted waistband! A stretchy waistband is a nightmare. I will be removing it and replacing it with a fabric waistband. I also intend to lengthen the skirt a bit with a few inches of fabric. It will be a nice trim waistband that stays in place when I'm through with it...lol.



**Update: March 15, 2022**

I finally stopped at the local quilt shop to get a reproduction fat quarter so I could remake the waist of the petticoat. We like it much better now :)



### Tip From An Experienced Historical Tunisian Crocheter

To prevent curling, you can use the wave stitch. Wave stitch is a reverse TC, done by working in the back bars rather than the front bars. You can see this mentioned in the petticoat pattern below. Tip, from author and designer Polly Steenhagen.

And just for fun, here is another petticoat in crochet that was published in Peterson's in 1863.

#### LITTLE GIRL'S UNDER PETTICOAT IN CROCHET.

BY MRS. JANE WEAVER.



**MATERIALS.**— $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of white double Berlin wool;  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of scarlet ditto; a long Alliance crochet needle.

A nice warm petticoat of this description is indeed a comfortable garment for little girls to wear under their crinolines, over the usual flannel petticoat, and mothers will do well to employ their leisure time in making a little article like this for their children, to protect, in a slight degree, their little legs from exposure to cold. The stitch that it may be done in may be left, to a certain extent, to the taste of the worker; but we will give the full description of the petticoat from which our illustration was made, which was very pretty and comfortable-looking. For a child from six to seven years of age, the garment should be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yard wide and 13 inches long. The ground-work is in *Gobelín* stitch, and the borders, of which there are three, are in *Wave* stitch. Illustrations of these two stitches were given last year. In white wool, a chain of 210 stitches should be made, and on this a row of ordinary double crochet worked. Then commence the

*Wave* stitch, and work 7 double rows, then 3 double rows of *Gobelín* stitch, 5 double rows in *Wave* stitch, 3 in *Gobelín* stitch, 3 in *Wave* stitch, 37 in *Gobelín* stitch—so finishing the petticoat. Care must be taken to keep the work straight at the edges by always inserting the needle through the last loop in each row. The garment is joined behind, leaving an opening for the placket-hole, which should be worked round with double crochet. The small border at the edge in scarlet wool is done in the following manner:—1 double crochet, \* 3 long, 1 double in the first of these long, 1 treble in the same long, 1 double in the two following stitches of foundation; now repeat from \*. A treble needleful of red wool should be run in the first row of *Wave* stitch, just below the *Gobelín* stitch, to give the three stripes seen in the illustration. The top of the petticoat is pleated and put into a band, which should be done in tightly-worked double crochet. The garment is pleated up to the desired size, and secured by a row of tightly-worked double crochet, always inserting the needle through

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