Paper Dolls

Paper dolls were first printed in the United States during the early 19th century. They were a popular pastime for children during this time period. The first doll activity was called: The History and Adventures of Little Henry published by J. Belcher of Boston in 1812.

Make your own Paper Doll

Read about the outfits below and the people who wore them. Then help make these outfits come to life. Cut out the different figures and outfits. Match the outfit to the figure. Fold the tabs of the outfit over the figure and play. After making your paper doll, visit the Alabama Voices Gallery at the Museum of Alabama to see historic clothing in person.

This dress belonged to Mary Ann Howard, who was a wealthy planter’s daughter. It was worn in 1852 on a visit to Castle Gardens, New York to hear famous singer Jenny Lind. Mary Ann was born in 1837 and died in 1864.

Tennent Lomax, born into a wealthy South Carolina family, moved to Alabama in 1841. He practiced law in Eufaula, and organized a company of troops to fight in the Mexican War. Upon his return from war, he owned and edited a newspaper in Columbus, Georgia. He returned to Alabama in 1857, taking up life as a planter near Montgomery and serving as captain of the True Blues militia company. During the Civil War, he advanced to the rank of colonel in the 3rd Ala. Infantry. His death while leading his troops in battle in 1862 made him a war hero.

Hugh Bagley, from Alabama City, Alabama served as a private in the Quartermaster Corps in the U.S. Army during World War I. Bagley worked in the furnaces at Ironaton in Talladega County before the war. His file in the Gold Star Files of the Alabama Department of Archives and History contains little information about his wartime record except that he served in France. He died from disease, probably in the 1918 influenza epidemic, at age 21 on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918.

Madera Spencer, former society columnist for the Montgomery Advertiser donated this dress to the Department of Archives and History. It was created for her by Kelle Thompson, who was a nationally known
designer in Mobile. This 1978 photo captures Spencer on the runway modeling the dress.

Mary Ann Howard - 1952
Hugh Bagley - U.S. Army 1914