

*S. Folsom*  
*Hoop Skirt.*

*N<sup>o</sup> 4897.*

*Patented Dec. 17. 1846*

Fig. 2.

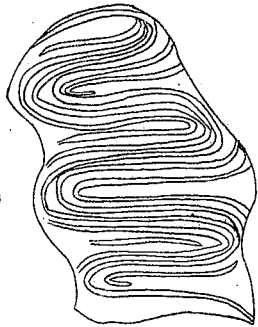


Fig. 5.

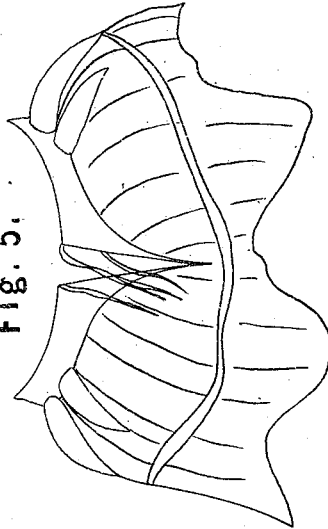


Fig. 1.

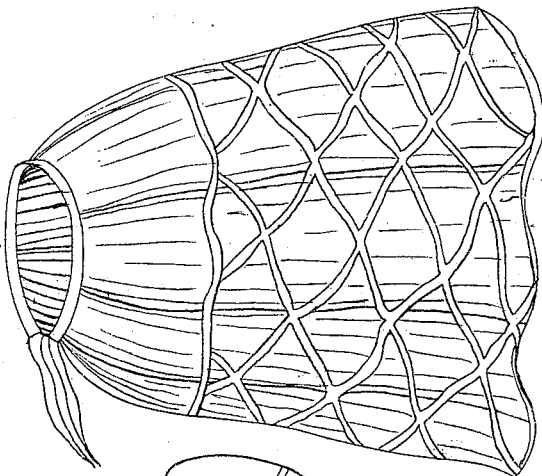


Fig. 3.

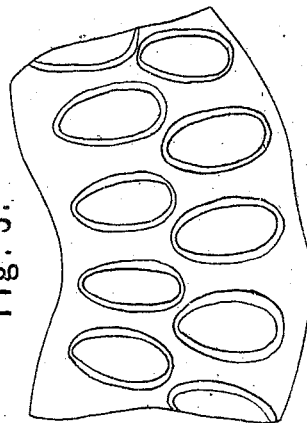


Fig. 4.

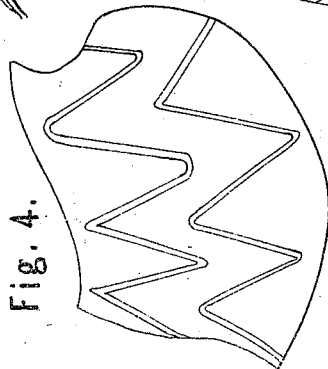
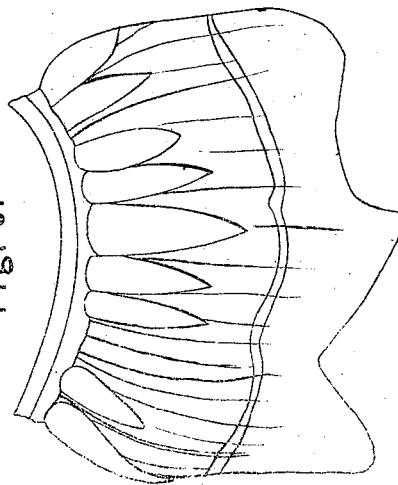


Fig. 6.



# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

SEWALL FOLSOM, OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT.

## LADY'S SKIRT.

Specification of Letters Patent No. 4,897, dated December 17, 1846.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, SEWALL FOLSOM, of Bridgeport, county of Fairfield, and State of Connecticut, have invented a new and  
5 Improved Method of Making Ladies' Self-Adjusting Skirts; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the mode herein described of constructing and using my self-adjusting  
10 skirts, reference being had to the annexed drawings, making a part of this specification.

The nature of my invention consists in arranging and combining certain cords and  
15 other materials in such a way as to form a spring or elasticity of the skirt, to such a degree as will allow it to yield to pressure, and readjust itself after it has been displaced by pressure, or in any manner.

20 To enable those skilled in such matters to make and use my invention I will proceed to describe the construction and operation, that is, the character and mode of using my self adjusting skirts. I provide of cotton,  
25 ton, linen, or any common or known cloth or material a skirt, and upon this, articles of such a light, pliant character may be placed, as will cause the skirt to preserve its stiffness, and resist the pressure of the  
30 dress, worn upon or over it, and besides this, to have a sufficiency of elasticity or spring, to cause it to adjust itself after the removal of any ordinary pressure that may have been placed upon it. My invention I have found  
35 to prevent many difficulties, and afford every necessary requisite; I make a piping by inserting a cord into a strip of cloth, or by inserting in this way any kind of suitable springy material, as whalebone, cane, hair,  
40 or hair roping, india rubber, leather, bristles, flax, hemp, or cotton cordage, or metallic springs, such as used for main spring of watches being preferable; this piping consists of a piece of cloth wrapped around  
45 and inclosing the spring materials, any of the above named, and then sewing the enveloping cloth to the skirt in any other direction (by crossing or not) than horizontal, except at the bottom of the skirt where  
50 it must run horizontally around the skirt. I then commence one near this last named and in a circular spiral line carry it up toward the top of the skirt, and at an opposite point another in direct reversal of this,  
55 thus forming a spiral reversed or crossed

set of cords, either with or without the cover, or piping sewed on to the surface of the skirt. By this it will be apparent that one of these crosses over the other, and forms an equal amount of spring, all around,  
60 so broken up and crossed, as to form, by the action of the cords one upon the other and upon the skirt, a certainty to spring back, after removing any pressure that may have been placed upon it in ordinary  
65 use. A skirt of this style will be seen at Figure I.

Fig. II, shows another method of breaking up the horizontal line of springs to produce a like result; and Figs. III, IV,  
70 still others. Either of these, or any other way of forming lines in cordage (or like material,) that do not run directly horizontal, but arranged by crossing, in the shapes of diamonds, circles, serpentine or  
75 pointed angular or spiral forms, so as to break up the surface of horizontal regularity and form a spring, and my invention consists in this application of elastic materials in such a way as to cause a sufficient spring to adjust themselves when in  
80 use.

I also further improve the skirt by the addition of a bodice, similar to that of the outside dress, and a padded bustle  
85 back and hips all in combination with the skirts as herein described, the same to be used or not as taste shall dictate; this combination will be better understood by reference to Figs. V, VI, of which the first is  
90 a view of the front, and shows the bodice; and the last the bustle or back.

I will remark, in explanation that it is one of the oldest and most common ways of making petticoat skirts, to introduce, or  
95 draw in, as it is termed, at discretionary intervals, as a part of the filling, cotton, or other cordage, in the process of weaving; the same, when made up into skirts so arranged as to run horizontally around the  
100 skirt. This is done to stiffen the skirt, and make it set out the dress. I am also aware that a patent has been granted for the combination of sisal or manila hemp with cotton or other substance, the sisal or manila  
105 being introduced in an untwisted or slightly twisted state, and for this claiming the quality of a spring, and this is woven or drawn in in the common way of using cords of cotton, in the weaving, as appears by the  
110

patent and the manufactured article. The experience of years, and very much of practical experiment has shown to the inventor of the "self adjusting skirt," that this  
5 method of attempting to effect spring is fallacious, but that if a set of horizontal springs or stiffeners are to be used, hard twisted cords of any kind are much the best, and the best known method of using  
10 them, (before my invention, herein described) was by taking a cord, of hard twisted materials and gathering it up within a sufficient quantity of the cloth of the skirt to cover it, sew through the gathered  
15 up cloth of the skirt to cause it to be tight upon the cord; in this way I have used cords passed horizontally around the skirt; cord of any size not exceeding half an inch may be used for this purpose, but cords used in  
20 this way will cause the skirt to kink, that is to bag in some places and swell in others, frequently taking the dress with it, in its

zig-zag or serpentine course of changes of position.

Having thus fully described my invention, I do not claim the introduction of any substance by weaving; nor do I claim the catching up of cords by sewing them into the cloth of the skirt, but

What I do claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is—

The method of applying the spring materials to the cloth of the skirt, by giving them the spiral, diamond, or circular, or angular, or other curve and irregular forms, so as to break up the plain horizontal lines by connecting them with other lines or not, as herein more fully described for the purpose of forming self adjusting skirts.

SEWALL FOLSOM.

Witnesses:

J. L. KINGSLEY,  
THOMAS PAYNE.