

Man’s Vest with Removable Chest Pads

UNDERTAKING THE MAKING
LACMA Costume and Textiles Pattern Project

Man’s Vest with Removable Chest Pads
England, c. 1840
Vest: silk satin with supplementary weft-float patterning; pads: cotton twill with cotton wadding
Purchased with funds provided by Suzanne A. Saperstein and Michael and Ellen Michelson, with additional funding from the Costume Council, the Edgerton Foundation, Gail and Gerald Oppenheimer, Maureen H. Shapiro, Grace Tsao, and Lenore and Richard Wayne
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By design, the beige, white, and blue stripes in this vest point diagonally from the shoulder to the center front, fostering an illusion of a broad chest narrowing into a tapered waist. In reality, removable padding created the fashionable “barrel” chest. To achieve the silhouette, the vest fronts were constructed with open spaces between the outer silk satin with weft-float patterned striped fabric and the cotton twill lining. Variable thicknesses of padding, made of cotton-fiber wadding that was hand-stitched onto a cotton twill backing, could be inserted into the chest area through an opening at the lower front armhole. The padding was secured in place with a small button on the padding

backing, which attached to a button hole in the lining. This machine-sewn vest exemplified the popular hourglass silhouette popular for both men and women of the 1840s.

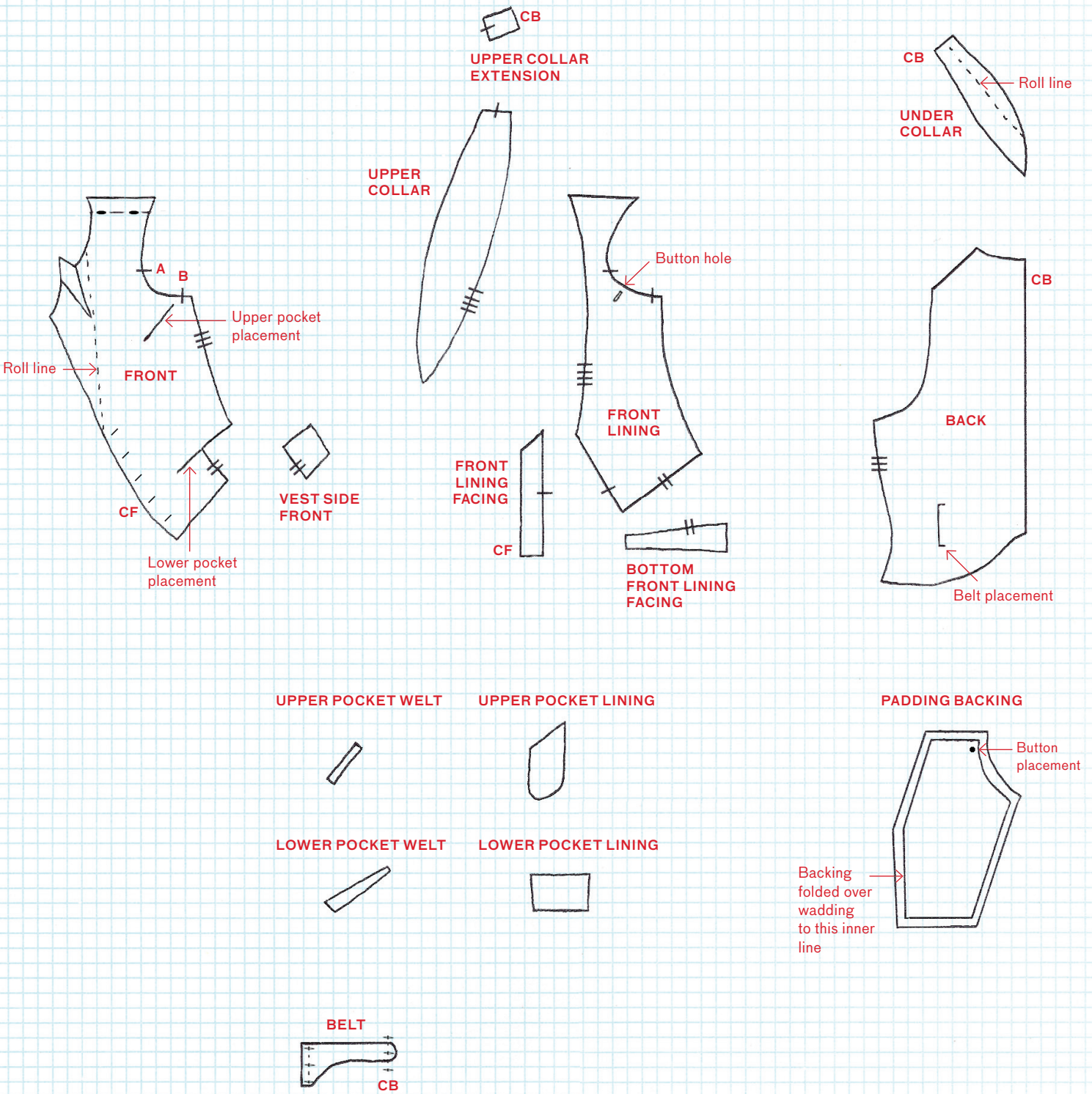
NOTES:

1. Fabric grain follows vertical lines of the graph paper.
2. Pattern pieces are drawn without seam allowance.
3. The center front closes with five 3⁄8-inch-diameter self-covered buttons with five 5⁄8-inch-long buttonholes.
4. One 4 1⁄4-inch-long opening at each lower front armhole between points **A** and **B** access removable chest padding between the silk satin with weft-float patterned striped fabric and the cotton twill lining. The padding is made with a backing of cotton twill onto which three layers of cotton-fiber wadding are basted together; each layer of wadding is stacked and progressively cut a 1⁄2 inch smaller around, with the largest layer closest to the backing and the smallest layer on top. A button at the top of the chest padding attaches it to the lining with a button hole.

5. The vest has one pocket at the upper-proper-left chest and two lower pockets are at each side of the waist. All three pockets are finished with a single-welt pocket opening. All pocket linings are of cotton twill.
6. The vest has been pieced together at each lower side front, center-back collar, and bottom front lining.
7. The back of the vest is composed of cotton twill with a belt attached at each lower side back for fit.



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Key:
□ = 1:1 inch
CF = Center Front
CB = Center Back

