THE SOURCE AND PROMOTION OF A FASHION TREND

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THE ORIGIN AND PROMOTION
OF A FASHION TREND

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Trends are so fast moving and so related to the current factors involved in a season, that it is necessary to look at them against the fashion background of their life span, and also to see them at any one particular time within a season with all the interrelating elements affecting them at that time. Trends continually fluctuate in acceptance and alter in detail as they adjust to all the other related elements of fashion, so that at no time is there a static set of conditions permanently fixing a trend. For example, each of the major trends of the spring 1947 has undergone an unsettled, continual come-and-go, up-and-down feeling of acceptance to consumers and the trade alike. Each new dressmaker showing has brought out disrupting influences. The change from fall to spring has brought us nearer to the purposefulness of the new styles and has helped to focus selection on a few certain trends that most nearly meet the feel that women want this year.

The trend in dresses keynotes the trends in all other kinds of women's apparel. If skirts are to be long, and the new length has not been determined, coats will be tem-
porarily short for awhile until manufacturers know just how long to make the major investment coats. If the preference dresses are to be one-piece, the coats will probably be long. If the dresses are two-piece, the coats might be shorter or part of an ensemble. If skirts are long, the shoulders will probably be narrower for top and bottom balance. However, this balance is not the primary consideration in guiding women's taste. If hips are to be rounded and waists unbelted and small, the corset manufacturers will build garments to nip in the waist and round out the hip. If women reject the hicky look and insist upon straight hips, the garments will have to follow this form. If women accept the stretched-out torso line, the hats, hair styles, hem-lines, heels, and coats will fall in line. The use of jewelry at the neckline will depend on the kind of construction at the neck. The high "covered-up" look for daytime is favored at present that drapes a little at the throat. Some other form of jewelry may become important if necklaces have no place this year. The rainwear manufacturers want to know whether to "dress-up" their styles or produce strictly utilitarian garments. Should they be belted or straight? Set-in or dolman sleeves? Raincoats only, or coats for both rain and shine? This is determined by a systematic check on customer acceptance. The colors, too, are beginning to settle into
acceptance channels. Black is the most controversial color, with a temporary decline in popularity in some sections and a favorite in others. Beige and sand colors of last fall will undergo a new evaluation for next fall.

When women consumers voice their selections they will have indicated to the fashion arbiters just what lines, textures, and colors in clothes that combine to give them the look they want. Their feel, or mood, is the most elusive thing in the fashion world and is the thing that makes the fashion business a day-to-day gamble. Fashions are deep-rooted in emotions and the emotions react to environmental conditions.

Experienced fashion editors have sensed the mood of the times and have selected from the spring 1947 offerings a silhouette that is slim, long, form-revealing and elegant, to suit the particular kind of attractiveness that fashion-conscious women desire. However, this high-fashion silhouette is only for tall, pencil-slim women, and its complete acceptance by all women is not yet assured. There is a definite trend toward individualism in dress. More thought and attention is given to appropriate dress than to imitative dress. Amos Parrish promoted this idea in the January 1947 fashion clinic with his slogan "Choose the Look that Looks like You." There must be enough trends to suit all types of women. The full-skirt trend, the big
sleeve interests, and the always-present basic clothes may find their place, and their design will adjust to consumer acceptance. The basic clothes, or as they are sometimes called - the classics - are the tailored dress, tailored suit, and coat, that have been in fashion for years. This year there is a definite trend toward soft lines in dress, so that even the tailored clothes have a softness with little dressmaker touches on pockets and in details of the construction.

The innovation of new trends in clothes each season against the constant of basic clothes is the structure of fashion. In other words, the clothes we wear year in and year out plus the clothes we wear only for the time they are in fashion fulfill our clothing wants. The quality of design in the consistently accepted tailored clothes is fundamental to American taste. As American taste changes the basic clothes adjust to it, but still keep their original function. There have been periods in recent years when tailored clothes were unimportant as high fashion clothes, and other periods when they have been promoted through high fashion channels. In other words, some seasons are more "tailored" than others.

This study attempts to show the value of a fundamental style to the trade, and to show how the style has perpe-
Tuated because of its value to American women. The changes that have occurred through the years in this dress are slight, but change is inevitable. The values revealed by the study of this style are presented here merely as they are recognized by the writer, not as principles that could be used as a formula or criterion for judging all design that has lasting qualities.

Tailored clothes are not worn because they are regarded as having good design, but rather that they serve a much needed purpose in American wardrobes. It is interesting to note that the fashion industry with its tremendous resources and effect on national economy is set up to produce new fashions three times a year, when the biggest selling clothes - the bread and butter clothes - are the tailored or basic clothes that can be produced each year with slight seasonal variations. We seem to require prestige clothes - or high fashion - which are exclusive only as long as they remain new. Another paradox is the condition this year: after the government limitation orders were lifted, designers used quantities of fabrics and countless varieties in cut and draping, producing a large variety of silhouettes with an effect of roominess and ample fabric. In addition to the release of fabrics, the end of the war brought a release of military regulations. After a short period of frivolity, the trend in
clothes, as indicated by the selections of fashion-conscious women, seems to be toward the soft, dressed-up, svelt look - a look of controlled elegance - with a figure-molding silhouette and a long, slim skirt. Both of these indications are opposite to the effect one would expect of release from war-time restrictions. The forces in fashion come from life itself.

The original purpose of this study was to trace a fashion trend from its origin, through the promotion and production, to its final appearance in the form we see it. It was suspected at first that trends from high-fashion origin fulfilled the wardrobe needs of women each year, but it was discovered that the most staple dress in the wardrobe was the shirt-waist dress. It is also the most staple item to retail dress shops. This dress seldom comes in through regular trend-launching channels, but instead into the ready-to-wear, or production level, and has existed similar to its present form for sixteen years. The study was then directed so that the mechanics of launching a trend would not only answer the first question of how trends originated and were promoted, but also how each one of the fashion agencies utilize a staple style. The benefit to the fashion agencies is not directly pointed out in each case, but the primary concern of each agency is clearly stated and the value of a staple product is inferred.
CHAPTER II

THE MECHANICS OF LAUNCHING A TREND

It is necessary to see the fashion world as a whole in order to establish the significance of one important style of dress that has had a long-time acceptance. Each of the agencies functioning in the fashion business has been directly concerned with the phenomenal success of the fashion for tailored clothes. The reasons are complex and elusive, but some of the factors involved are set forth in the following study.

The yearly phenomenon of women's fashions has an origin based on regularly-scheduled events that go on year after year in much the same way. The fashion world is well-established and well-regulated by customs and practices. Events are timed far enough ahead so that each of the many agencies involved can meet its production deadline in order for the merchandise to be on the market for peak customer demands.

New York Seasonal Shows

Women's demands for clothes are most directly influenced by the seasons of the year. The major showings of new fashions are fall and spring. Mid-season and special showings for travel and resort clothes come in between. Fall ready-to-wear fashions are shown to the trade
in May, June, and July and start coming out in retail shops in late July and August. Spring fashions are launched in October and November and are seen in the shops in late February and March.

The dressmaker collections are shown after the ready-to-wear showings. Their fall collections are in August and spring collections are in February. These dates coincide with the Paris showings. Ready-to-wear models are shown three and four months in advance of the season to allow for production time.

The New York Dress Institute, the promotional tool of the I.L.G.W.U. \(^{(1)}\) established "Press Week" in 1941. Twice a year, in January and June (or July), about one hundred twenty-five editors are invited to New York to see the ready-to-wear collections that have been scheduled for this week. They are provided photographs of models and mimeographed copy prepared for publication, and they are the guests of the Institute. The New York Dress Institute was created to promote New York as the fashion center of the world. It retains J. Walter Thompson agency to direct this large-scale advertising and promotion campaign.

The manufacturers of high-priced ready-to-wear announce their showings to the trade and show their models by

\(^{1}\)International Ladies Garment Workers' Union
appointment or by invitation. The showrooms of the middle- and low-priced ready-to-wear are open to visiting buyers on announced dates. Buyers and store executives come to New York (or other garment centers) from all over the United States to attend these showings and other showings of luxury goods and accessories related to women's apparel. New York resident offices maintained by large department stores throughout the country stage clinics during the buying seasons to introduce trends and advise their home buyers on what to buy and promote.

There are mid-season collections shown for special buying such as sports clothes, resort and travel apparel, and rainwear. Other minor showings are follow-ups for in-between seasons.

Everybody looks to Amos Parrish in New York as the dictator of fashion. For three months in advance of the fall and spring shows, he covers the nation with a network of scouts recording everything about women in order to determine what appeals to them at the moment. These statistics are compiled and predictions made. Amos Parrish sounds out the feel of the nation and then gives it motivation with a master hand at showmanship. "His semi-annual clinics are perhaps the most expensive shows in all of spendthrift New York." (2) Store representatives pay $425

to attend. He tells buyers and executives what trends to buy, how to promote them, and provides amended data to these predictions for the next six months.

Designers' Collections

Preparation for the fall and winter collections starts from three to six months in advance of the shows. Fashion originators work under a cloud of secrecy and anxiety under rigid guard from design piracy. They scour museums, fashion resorts, fabric stocks, theaters, and any other possible inspirational source in search of something new, always with the thought: "what are women going to want to wear and when are they going to want to wear it."(3)

"When, is called in the trade, 'timing', and is of great importance to designers who set the trends."(4)

Designers' collections are the creations of custom dressmakers for a retail clientele or top-flight wholesale designers for the ready-to-wear industry. As stated in the preceding paragraph, the ready-to-wear collections precede the dressmaker collections. Out-of-town manufacturers either show their collections in New York showrooms or in their own city. Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cleveland, Dallas, Kansas City,

4Ibid.
The Twin Cities, Atlanta, and Portland, Oregon, are manufacturing centers of women's apparel. Firms in these cities show their lines at the regular fall and spring seasons unless their product is designed for an off-season; for instance, play clothes that show in September for southern winter resort wear.

The influence of Paris models on the American clothes is evident.

Powerful as the influence of Paris is on American clothes (and no one questions that), only a few thousand of all those millions of clothes sold in this country are actual French models. The rest are American made, almost entirely New York made. (There are markets in other cities, and recently California has put in her oar, but New York produces the major proportion.)

Custom Dressmakers

The so-called best-dressed American women have their clothes made by the custom dressmakers. They are the American counterpart of the Paris Haute Couture. Until the war, these fashionable women went to Paris for their clothes, along with the aristocrats of South America, Asia, and European countries. Some dressmakers have their own salons like Hattie Carnegie, Valentina, Henri Bendel, and Falkenstein; others are established in salons of exclusive

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5Best-Dressed Women - and Why. Vogue. p 87 Feb 1, 1938
upper Fifth Avenue specialty shops - Fira Benenson at Bonwit Teller; Ethel Frankau, Leslie Morris and Mark Mooring at Bergdorf Goodman; Sophie at Saks Fifth Avenue; and Muriel King at Stein and Blaine; to mention a few. They show their semi-annual collections first to the press then to their own clientele. After the initial showing, the mannequins parade the models every afternoon until replaced by new models.

When the best-dressed women appear at fashionable spots such as the Ritz, the Colony, Belmont, Meadowbrook, Miami Beach, or the opening nights at the opera and theaters, wearing their "originals," they are the targets for scouts from top-flight wholesale designers, manufacturers, and stylists of retail dress salons. Designers adapt features from them into their lines, and merchandisers view them as forecast indications. Very often the stamp of approval of a socialite or an exclusive social group on a style innovation is all that is needed to establish its success.

Wholesale Designers

Top-flight wholesale designers, such as Hattie Carnegie, Nettie Rosenstein, Philip Mangone, Maurice Rentner, Norman Norell, Anthony Blotta, Jessie Franklin Turner, Clare Potter, Joseph Halpert, Jo Copeland, Eisenberg, Claire
McCardell, Adele Simpson, Louise Barnes Gallagher, and many others equally as important, either own their own business or are retained by a manufacturer of better dresses. Buyers order in quantity from the models shown in their collections and their products are the prestige merchandise in the dress salons where they are sold.

Fashion Forecasting

All efforts to forecast fashions are attempts to interpret the "feel" of the nation in the light of factors that influence the character and direction of fashion movements. With all the fashionwise authorities who analyze, select, and edit the styles, none can be sure which trends will "click" and which will die out. "A woman will not accept a trend unless it will do something for her." Her idea of what she wants to look like or how she wants to express herself changes with the times. These changing attitudes are intricately related to her environment.

Numerous fashion forecast agencies gather statistical data on customer acceptance of current trends. Economic and political events are weighed for a possible effect on buying and a change in attitude. Amos Parrish, mentioned in a previous paragraph, operates the most extensive fashion

Interview: Miss Kemeno, assistant to Fashion Coordinator. Meier and Frank Co. Portland, Oregon
service and is probably the most reliable because he predicts with a very high percentage of accuracy. There are several independent organizations which sell a complete weekly service to one store in each city. Tobe' Fashion Service in New York, and a special staff of the buying office of Felix Lilienthal & Co., are two organizations of this kind. Resident offices of department stores issue market reports and a few of them get out a fashion-survey weekly or monthly. All fashion forecast services keep a keen eye on the sources for new things.

Large department stores use a staff of their own to find out what is appealing to customers at a given time and what fashion leaders are doing. They use this information to guide their buying and promotion, and to advise their customers. A person versed on up-to-the-minute fashion news is called a "stylist." She or her staff go to the resorts and important fashion spots and take fashion counts of everything that is worn by "well-dressed" women. They also note anything that is new, and what important people are doing and wearing.

Top-flight designers also scout in the same way and use the forecast information available to the trade. Experienced and clever designers often sense the coming thing. Their intuition can be confirmed by statistical
reports from agencies or from their own scouts.

Women's Wear Daily is a trade paper that publishes everything that is related to the fashion industry. Each agency in the fashion business can, with experience, single out the items that concern him and prognos from the symptoms he has learned to recognize.

Vogue Merchandising Service issues an advance edition of Vogue magazine to retailers and manufacturers each month. The Advance Retail Trade Edition comes out ahead of the one sent to regular subscribers and contains added information on merchandising and Vogue's confidential report on the thing important for that month. For instance, the March 15, 1947 Retail Trade Edition contains Vogue's comments to the trade about the American Made-to-Order Collections and announces what will follow in the April 1 issue.

Fashion Magazines

Fashion magazines edit and spotlight the trends from the Paris and American collections. News about the trends appear in all the ready-to-wear magazines simultaneously. Readers of the mail order catalogues, women's magazines, and high fashion magazines all are informed about the new
styles at the same time.

By far the most important force in establishing a trend are the high fashion magazines. Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and Town and Country are the fashion leaders. The personnel of dress shops have to be informed of the content of these magazines. A saleswoman of a dress shop in Eugene (7) reported that many times customers will ask for dresses they have seen in Vogue or Harper's Bazaar. The store is obliged to have them in stock in order to keep the confidence of their customers. Some department store dress salons have copies of these magazines on display, and open to pages showing dresses that are in their stock. The fact that the magazine shows it and the store stocks it, combine to convince the customer that the dress is right and that the store is right.

Specialty Shops

Shops that stock only women's apparel are called specialty shops in the trade. Only very exclusive specialty shops who sell to the best-dressed, well-to-do women stock high fashion entirely. Stores of this type are: Bergdorf Goodman, Bonwit Teller, Hattie Carnegie, Jay-Thorpe.

7The Bu-Tik! 1080 Willamette St. Eugene, Oregon
Milgrim, and Saks Fifth Avenue, all of New York; Neiman-Marcus of Dallas, and I. Magnin of California. High fashion is the exclusive, new, advanced, and exciting phase of women's apparel and represents the prestige class of the fashion world. The degree of prestige of a dress shop or salon is known by the amount and attention given to high fashion. The clientele is necessarily limited by the fact that only a small percentage of women in any area have the means or the occasion to wear the advanced styles. The price of the new things is based on exclusiveness which is over and above costs of workmanship and materials. Wrong guesses on the part of buyers result in mark-downs and clearance sales to close out the garments that are out-of-date at the end of the season. These dress shops have to be fashionwise to stay solvent.

Dorothy Shaver, president of Lord and Taylor, says: "The greatest single influence on American fashions is a few smart retail shops - we edit the fashions for American women."(8) The same situation is true in smaller cities with the exclusive shops and dress salons of department stores that stock merchandise selected for their prestige clientele. Women depend on these stores and shops to sanction the trends and tell them how to wear them.

Department Stores

Department stores show only a small percentage of high fashion merchandise and it is confined to especially arranged salons decorated in character with the merchandise. They are shown mainly for their prestige value and to condition customers for the coming seasons.

The accepted fashions form the bulk of the merchandise in department stores. These are styles that have proved customer acceptance and are backed by departmental sales records. Each new season will bring in details from the current trends but the character of the accepted type in apparel is what the public is accustomed to. High fashions one season may result in accepted fashions later on; however, they are slow in reaching the volume stage.

Most people do not separate the high fashions from the accepted fashions in their own minds. They do not realize that there will always be a larger percentage of "basic clothes" than any other type, and that their own clothes, if fundamentally well-designed and appropriate for their needs, will last through several seasons. Last February, 1947, Meier and Frank's sales promotional department illustrated, in a newspaper ad, pleated skirts as the new trend. At that time narrow skirts were the accepted fashion. Excited women telephoned in all the next day
wanting to know what they were going to do with their narrow skirts now that full skirts were "in."

Fashion Promotion

Each agency involved in selling women's apparel supports some kind of promotional device to sell his products on a fashion basis. These devices include salon decor, floor display, window display, newspaper and magazine advertising space, publicity stunts to attract news reporters, public relations activities that call attention to the firm, fashion shows, the activities of the stylist, and numerous other mediums for advertising such as bill boards, folders sent with the monthly statements and brochures. Each promotion campaign is planned and coordinated either by the local staff, an advertising agency, or a staff serving an affiliated group of stores or manufacturers. Promotion devices are used that are in character with the prestige of the product.

Drummed into all of us, young and old, is the unrelenting urge to look attractive. . . . drummed in by that fine American invention, "Fashion Promotion," under which nomenclature go all those appeals to the public with fashion as their underlying purpose. So loud and insistent is its voice, we can't escape it.(9)

9 Best-Dressed Women - and Why. Vogue. p 153 Feb 1, 1938
Mass Production

Aside from the top-flight designers mentioned in a previous paragraph, there are countless manufacturing firms all over the nation producing every classification and price range of garment. Most firms maintain designers to fashion their lines. Some firms are owned and operated by their designer.

Three-fourths of women's ready-to-wear made in the United States come from New York's Seventh Avenue garment district. Chicago is second in garment production. St. Louis ranks high in production of misses garments. Los Angeles ranks first in the production of leisure clothes and sports wear.

Price zones range roughly into high-priced dresses, from $70 on up to about $500 retail; medium-priced dresses, from $25 to $40, on up to $60 retail; and low-priced dresses, from $5 to $20 or $30 retail. These prices are only relative, and are considerably advanced over prices of normal times. Manufacturers specialize in certain classifications and price zones of garments and their products bear a distinctive look peculiar to the firm, which is recognizable to experienced buyers and customers. Classifications are: sports clothes, leisure clothes, coats and suits, street dresses, afternoon dresses, dinner
dresses, tailored clothes, evening clothes, misses garments, and children's garments. Wholesale designers must make "sellers" for a predetermined wholesale price. They design for the "public" rather than for "individuals."

The following are some of the means by which designs reach the mass-production manufacturer and indirectly us, the consumer:

Manufacturers send shoppers around the country to pick up what the trade calls "hot-selling" dresses, which are copied or adapted. Any dress that is spotted as a good selling number will be copied within two or three weeks after it first appears in the shops. Scouts from manufacturing firms also sketch the fashion items which appear in windows of the upper Fifth Avenue exclusive dress shops and exclusive shops in other large cities.

Some manufacturers have sales girls in large stores on their payrolls. They report dresses that are "selling." In this instance, the girl lets her boss know and the dress is bought and copied. "If it is early enough in the season they reproduce the dress like the original. If it is late in the season, they adapt different features and combine them with features from other successful dresses." (10)

Fashion clipping services furnish the trade with dress advertisements from newspapers all over the country. A fashion note service describes in detail the latest sleeves, necklines, et cetera, from Hollywood, Paris, and points between. Manufacturers buy sketches from model makers and free-lance designers who have combed these sources.

There are always copies of Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Women's Wear Daily, and several French magazines in the design workrooms.

There are showings in large cities by model-renting agents who bring originals from the dressmakers in Paris. Clients pay $150 to attend and may rent models over night to be copied or adapted. Sometimes sketches and fabric swatches are furnished with the admittance fee.

Retail buyers who bring models back from Paris will turn them over to their firm to be rented out to local manufacturers for copying before they are shown in their own dress salons.

Some of the larger manufacturing firms used to send their designers to Paris before World War II to buy two or three models and carry back many ideas in their heads. More and more of them are now going only as far as New York. From each single model many adaptations are made; perhaps just one detail from the original would be used on each adaptation.
There is no design protection of any kind in the United States. Any model can be copied in whole or in part. The better dresses suffer most from copying because their value is principally based on their exclusiveness. As soon as a copy is discovered, the price is marked down or the model is taken out of the collection and the firm loses. There is practically no original designing in the wholesale lines.

The Customer

It has been pointed out in the preceding paragraphs that all the effort of designing and selling fashions is aimed at the customer.

An interesting study suggested by associate editor of *Vogue*, Angeline Dougherty, is the tracing of what happens to lives of women to cause a need and desire for certain specific new fashions. It is from the lives of the American women that our fashions stem, whether the source of detail comes from Paris, historic costume, or from the creative mind of a clever designer. All agencies in the fashion business, from the Paris-New York fashion creators, to the retail shops, have their collective eye on the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the American women that can be served with fashion merchandise to their mutual benefit.
It would be important to note here the general pattern of women's lives in America that is indigenous to this country; also the elements of our society that affect our needs in clothing. However, the subject is too complex and would comprise a study in itself. Women's lives could be analyzed from so many points of view; for instance, they could be classified according to income, social status, education, marital status, occupation, geographical location, size and type of community, racial types, temperament, intelligence and aptitudes, and so on, all of which manifest themselves in clothing needs and preferences.

It would be difficult to determine what classification would affect our dress the most. The woman who goes to business and the woman who stays at home concern us most in this area. While this is not a distinct division in the occupation of women, it does imply that women who work and are tied down to scheduled business hours buy most of their clothes to wear to work. The other women have free time in the morning to shop or participate in active sports, and in the afternoon for social affairs, or to prepare for more elaborate evening affairs. It is the woman who stays at home that has occasion to dress up during the day. It is the woman with free time that wears the afternoon dress. The working girl is more apt to dress
up her business dress with accessories for an after-work social engagement.

The varied activities engaged in by women that require definite types of clothes are by no means the deciding factor when it comes to a choice of what to wear. What one chooses to wear is deep rooted in emotion and in one’s reaction to his environment. "Although the purpose of clothing is primarily determined by environmental conditions, its form is determined by man’s own characteristics, and especially by his mental traits." (11)

The retail stores do know what types of customers they serve and what types of clothes are worn for all occasions. The policies and experience of these stores are about the most reliable source for studying women’s types and needs for various income levels. Elinor Pierce, buyer of coats for Lord and Taylor, classifies her customers according to five types:

1. The ultra-chic woman who desires simple but extremely smart clothes.

2. The woman who likes dramatic clothes and the extremities of fashion.

3. The woman who avoids too individual and fashionable things, prefers to be undated. She usually stands for quality. So often this group are people who are too busy to give much thought

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to clothes and are playing safe, or people who have small budgets and know classic clothes are always good.

4. The woman who likes flamboyant clothes. This is the type of person who likes a little larger fur collar than average, who likes trimmings and ornaments. They all give her a feeling of opulence.

5. The largest group is the average woman who wants becoming, wearable clothes in good taste.(12) Other variations in customer clientele are noted in the type of retail store itself:

1. The chain dress shops. They cater to the young twenty-dollar-a-week stenographer. She wants a new dress often, one which she can buy in her lunch hour for about $6.95, and it must be different from the last one.

2. The exclusive specialty shops. They cater to women of wealth who read the fashion magazines, patronize cafes, and travel to the fashionable resorts. Here the main appeal is to fashion rightness. With such shops quality is assumed. Fashion must be both right and exclusive.

3. Small exclusive specialty shops. They cater to the same group as their larger neighboring shops, and carry similar merchandise. Their major appeal is in their personal service.

4. Large popular-priced department stores. They

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generally cater to the woman who expects good value at a price. Value has to be the dominating element.

5. Large department stores catering to more well-to-do customers. Here quality and fashion newness are more important than price.

6. Small popular-priced specialty shops. Their appeal is generally to customers wanting "snappy" young clothes at a popular price, but with more personal service than the chain dress shop provides.

7. Mail order houses. They serve the rural communities and small towns that do not have shops with clothes adequate for their needs. (13)

Stores in smaller cities follow the same types but may serve different income levels and the specific tastes of local customers.

Dresses are manufactured and sold in definite classifications familiar to the customers. These classifications have evolved out of the wardrobe requirements of American women.

Dresses classified in commercial pattern books are an indication of the national needs in clothing. Vogue Pattern Book classifies clothes as follows:

1. Soft Dresses - Jacket Dresses for daytime and after dark

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2. Tailored Dresses - Jacket Dresses - Jumpers
   for city or country life ... dependable items

3. Suit Dresses - Suits - Coats - Ensembles
   designed for city streets and rural lanes ... important major-investment items.

4. Blouses - Jackets - Skirts
   smart interchanging blouses and skirts make a
   wardrobe seem unlimited for daytime and evening
   ... combine separate jacket with skirts, add a
   tailored or dressy blouse.

5. Work and Play

6. Couturier
   designed for individuality and smartness

7. Evening - Bridal
   for outstanding gala occasions

8. Accessories

9. Lingerie

10. Children

11. Maternity(14)
   All other pattern companies show the same type of
   dresses arranged differently in the books.

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14Vogue Pattern Book. Spring 1947
CHAPTER III

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The shirt-waist dress was chosen for study because it is the largest selling dress in the history of ready-to-wear. Its source and promotion were explored with the object of discovering: who started it, when it started, where it started, why it started, and its subsequent development and decline. The source materials used for the research were: fashion magazines,\(^\text{15}\) trade journals,\(^\text{16}\) and letters of inquiry\(^\text{17}\). This dress has become a nationally accepted fashion and is worn by women of every social level and age group, is sold in every price zone, and can be worn for every occasion. In addition to the practical qualities of the style, there seems to be an urge toward its use as a common costume. The reasons for the phenomenal success of one style of dress over a period


\(^\text{17}\)Appendix A
of sixteen years were explored. The following excerpt reveals a psychological motive behind women's acceptance of a single style of dress: "Two important psychological factors cause a similarity in the clothes of a nation: the first is that fashion is based on imitation, and second, that social acceptance of one's dress is the major consideration." (18)

The shirt-waist dress is a tailored dress for both daytime and sports wear. The bodice is adapted from a man's shirt, with center-front closing, a yoke, and a collar. The sleeves are either long with a shirt cuff, or are short. The waistline is belted or has a sewn-in belt. The skirt is usually gored or straight with kick pleats front and back. The dress has no definite pattern but is any variation of a tailored bodice with any type of skirt that fits smoothly over the hips having fullness released below the hipline. The effect is a blouse and skirt silhouette.

Shirt-waist type dresses that button all the way down the front, double breasted models, or two-piece dresses with tuck-in blouse and skirt, are not included in this study although they are also called shirt-waist dresses.

18Harms, Ernst. The psychology of clothes. The American Journal of Sociology. 64:239-250 Sept. 1938
CHAPTER IV

ORIGIN AND PROMOTION OF
THE SHIRT-WAIST DRESS

The shirt-waist dress originated in function long before a recognizable style known as a shirt-waist dress appeared. In order to trace the source of this dress it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the need for a dress that could be worn any time of day and for any occasion where a street-length dress was appropriate.

The style of shirt-waist dress that finally developed by 1931 was the culmination of two factors, (1) the various attempts of designers to create apparel to satisfy the growing need for an all-day dress and, (2) the adaptation of features from active sports clothes into a dress to fulfill this need. In other words, the style of the sports clothes, which were functionally designed, was extended to day-time apparel and a basic dress for all occasions was the result. The "basic" dress was not promoted as such until 1932.

Women in Sports - 1925-1929

The dominating influence on women's clothes ever since
the turn of the century has been the sports mode. The bicycle, the motor, golf, tennis, swimming, and yachting have attracted more and more women and have been responsible for emancipating them from the cumbersome clothing of the periods prior to 1900. The very nature of sports requires specially designed clothing. Up to the present time, any radical innovation of color or brevity in clothing has come into fashion first in sports clothes.

During the late '20's, women's wardrobes consisted of two types of apparel, (1) functionally designed clothes for active sports, and (2) the ready-to-wear adaptations of Paris-dictated fashions for all other occasions. Sports clothes were a distinct and separate part of the mode. There was very little individuality in any of the clothes of this period; all the dresses both summer and winter were similar except for fabric and trim. Blouses hung over the skirt and were belted around the hip or hung straight. One-piece dresses were belted or banded around the hip. Necklines were large and predominately collarless. Skirts were extremely short, just covering the knee cap.

The increased activity of women in business and travel created a preference for the functional sports clothes to be worn for all day. The golf dress of 1926 was the garment that served all purposes; it was a long-sleeved jumper with
a pleated skirt. Since the sports were active only in the warm weather months, the sports clothes and day-time sports apparel were designed for the spring and summer seasons and were made of washable fabrics. Sports clothes were predominantly warm-weather apparel until 1933 when they became popular in all fabrics for all occasions. There were always a few adaptations of sports styles in the fall and winter collections.

There was no name for this all-day dress of 1926 to 1930. It could be recognized by its function but not by its style. Although it had been called a sports frock, or referred to as a dress for daytime needs, fashion editors were trying to identify it. Vogue, in 1928, called it a "runabout" dress. Harper's Bazaar called it a "morning dress" in 1929. In 1930 it was promoted by ready-to-wear manufacturers and fashion editors as the "spectator sports" frock, or the "spectator frock." In 1933 this type of dress became known as the "casual" sports dress. This dress made in washable fabric has always been a "golf" dress, as well as a day-time dress, regardless of the style changes that have occurred since 1926.

Women's position in society as it is today, in competition with men in business and sports, might be directly traceable to the period between 1925 and 1929, when women strove in every way to surpass men in physical achievements.
and bid for equality with them on a social basis.

Specialization in Manufacture of Sports Clothes - 1929

The most significant contribution to the origin and subsequent development of the shirt-waist dress was the specialization that took place in the American ready-to-wear industry. Due to the exacting requirements of sports clothes, their manufacture was left to firms who specialized in their design. This situation had been evolving for at least five years, but became an established policy in the fall of 1929. Best and Company of New York was one of the first stores to specialize in quality sports apparel. Jane Regny was the first Paris dressmaker to specialize in sports clothes; others soon followed.

Designers in the ready-to-wear industry created sports wear of simple and functional design, and produced types of garments for all the occasions requiring comfortable clothes. These garments were promoted for resort and town wear, as well as for golf and spectator sports. The needs of American women were studied by manufacturers of sports clothes, and designs in clothing were created to fulfill these needs. The serviceable clothes of the English sportswoman were a strong influence on American styles. American manufacturers bought models from the British
market and copied or adapted them.

Women accepted the repetition in styles of sports clothes, whereas they objected to a replica of an afternoon dress, a street dress, or an evening dress. This fact, that a single style could be produced in volume that only varied in grading and fabric, was a boon to the American ready-to-wear industry. The fact that a comfortable dress existed that could be worn all day with no misgivings about its quality and appropriateness, was a boon to women.

The most radical change in styles of dress since World War I occurred in the fall of 1929, simultaneous with the market crash. There was an entirely new order of values in an altered country that had suffered great losses so suddenly. This year marked the end of the era of the short-legged boyish figure. The spring of 1930 brought in the slim long-legged figure. The first attempts at achieving this figure were to lower the hemline and raise the waistline. Women’s clothes became softer, more feminine and individual.

The Tuck-In Blouse – 1930

The most important factor that determined the style of the shirt-waist dress was the return of the tuck-in
blouse in 1930. The original shirt-waist was a product of the ready-to-wear industry from about 1900 to 1915, during the Gibson Girl era, but dropped out of fashion when waistlines went down to the hipline in the '20's. The beltline placed at the natural waistline did not gain permanent acceptance until the fall of 1929. When the waistline was raised, it was possible to wear a tuck-in blouse with a skirt that hung from a waist-band. Heretofore, blouses hung over the skirt, and skirts hung from a bodice or a band around the hips.

The roomy feel of a shirt-type tuck-in blouse with a fitted skirt that let in fullness below the hips was the origin of the feel for the shirt-waist dress. The combination of a blouse and skirt that had been seamed together at the waistline allowed the same freedom of movement and unrestricted utility, and the same silhouette, that was affected by a separate blouse and skirt. Just as soon as shirts and skirts were combined into a one-piece dress the designs were as numerous as the variations in sports blouses and tailored skirts and as versatile in their use. The upper part of the dress was adapted and designed for the movements of the upper torso, and to be attractive to the neck, shoulders, and bosom. The lower part was designed to be satisfactory for walking, sitting, and standing. The two functionally designed units were combined
with a seam and belt that complemented the fashion-dictated slender waistline. It was in the spring of 1931 that the first dress of this type was called a shirt-waist dress.

The Effect of the Depression on Dress - 1931-1933

The versatility of the shirt-waist dress is a direct result of its use during the depression years. The dress as we wear it today, is an outgrowth of the depression. Every industry and product had to prove its worth to survive. People became more efficient as competition for jobs became keener. Anything that had a redeeming quality was developed to its fullest capacity along utilitarian lines.

It became necessary for women to make a few dresses do for all purposes. Quality and utility were essential. Women learned to vary their wardrobes by interchanging blouses, skirts, and jackets. Also to make one dress appear different by a change in accessories, which they learned to plan with the ensemble. This was the real beginning of the American trick of dressing up or dressing down a basic dress to make it appropriate for any occasion.

The shirt-waist dress developed into a basic dress and was promoted as such in 1932. Social life during the
depression became more informal and the demands for dress were simplified. It was more important to be well-groomed and neatly attired than to have beauty and be dressed in the height of fashion. The trend was to dress down; it was considered bad taste to dress up. Everyday clothes became one's best clothes and the "Sunday dress" went out of fashion. A coat and dress were more economical than a suit. Thus, the shirt-waist dress, by 1932, developed into a year-around all-purpose dress to wear under a coat.

The American buyers searched every dressmaking establishment in Paris for simple, practical clothes that were wearable and sellable. This pressed the French couture for models that would meet the demands of the American trade. Consequently, tailored clothes adapted from our sports clothes were introduced into high fashion in 1933 by the Paris dressmakers, along with the usual promotion of high fashion apparel. The American-made shirt-waist dress was widely promoted this same year. The style was made up in every type of fabric and promoted for every occasion including afternoon and, with a long skirt, for evening.

There was a growing interest in American-made products, not only the manufactured product, but the raw materials. Cotton comprises eighty-two per cent of the textile fiber produced in the United States. The popular-
ity of the shirt-waist dress and other sports clothes did much to develop the use of cotton. It was during the depression years that Sanforizing, Everfast dye process, spot-resisting, tear-resisting, and all other processing to meet utilitarian requirements, were developed. Cotton is a washable fabric and sports clothes require laundering, so that improvements in cotton fabrics were aimed at the requirements of the sports garments.

Cotton was promoted through high fashion channels from 1932 to 1939, and a variety of weaves and colors were created for evening and summer day-time clothes. Much of the promotion coordination was due to the efforts of the Cotton Textile Institute.

In 1934, manufacturers of shirt-waist frocks were promoted through advertisements sponsored by cotton fabric converters, and by the Sanforized process of Controlled Shrinkage,19 and Everfast Fabrics. Du Pont20 also promoted manufacturers of shirt-waist type dresses made exclusively of their rayon fabrics. The shirt-waist style of dress appeared in nearly every advertisement sponsored by a fabric company. Until 1935, (with one or two exceptions) all manufacturers of shirt-waist dresses were

19 Manufactured by: Cluet, Peabody and Co., Inc., New York
20 D. I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co., Inc., Wilmington, Delaware
advertised by a sponsor; however, by 1933, many dress manufacturers were advertising independently.

Women in Business - 1933-on

Out of the age of specialisation a new kind of girl appeared, called a Career Girl. Her standards placed skill before beauty; and grooming superseded fashionable clothes. Her appearance was a part of her job, so that her clothes had to be right for business. The girl on a salary accomplished the well-dressed effect that women with nothing else to do spend their lives achieving. The career girl has had a definite influence on the American mode of dress. The dress to wear to business must be well-tailored and a perfect fit, and it usually has a neat, white collar. It cannot be conspicuous in any current fashion details but must impart a look of distinction and authority. The dress is an auxiliary to a business personality. By changing accessories, the business dress can be dressed up for after-office-hour social engagements in town or it is appropriate for country week ends with simpler accessories. The shirt-waist dress in quality woolens, silks, or rayons, has fulfilled the needs of the business girl.
Aftermath of the Depression - 1933-1940

The aftermath of the depression revealed a quantity of improved products. Modern developments in automobiles, household appliances, radio, commercial aviation, photography, architecture and interior decoration took place in the '30's. The tempo of life increased with new speeds and comforts in travel and communication. The development of work-saving appliances in homes and improved home designing shortened housework time and released women's time for activities outside the home. The need for clothes with a universal acceptance that were versatile and comfortable was evident. Since 1931, the shirt-waist dress has become more and more popular as its design and quality have been perfected.

Acceptance of Native Talent in Dress Design - 1935

Prior to 1935 there was prejudice against both native designing talent and talent from garment centers outside of New York. New York City had been the center of the ready-to-wear industry and its designers had adapted British or French designs for the American market. Buyers of better dresses were skeptical of anything that did not bear a New York label.
Then in 1935 something happened: the famous Saga of the Shirt Stud Dress. The heroine of this saga was a St. Louis girl called Grace Ashley who ran a custom-blouse business. For one of her customers she designed a blouse that she fastened with men's shirt studs instead of buttons. The customer was pleased, and soon she hit on the idea of making a sports dress fastened in the same manner. Finally a buyer for Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney heard of the dress and ordered a few wholesale. Before long news of it reached a buyer at Neiman-Marcus, who was sceptical of a dress with a St. Louis label, but who nevertheless ordered six. We were not greatly impressed, but they sold. For over a year we continued to order at a rate of a dozen at a time until we finally realized we were merely temporizing with the dress. We thereupon ordered one hundred at a time; then two hundred, and for several months in a row three hundred. This is decidedly unusual for a dress retailing at $19.75. The lesson it taught us and department store buyers was that a good thing can develop anywhere in the U. S. Today we should immediately recognize its value and not despise it simply because it originated outside New York. This difference in attitude had immediate repercussions: it opened the doors to talent all over the country and has aided in the development of the California industry, which is flourishing today. (21)

The Shirt Stud dress was a shirt-waist dress with shirt studs used instead of buttons. This dress was widely copied and advertisements of copies appeared in Vogue and Harper's Bazaar in 1936 and succeeding years. By 1936, manufacturers of sports and casual clothes were advertising independent of sponsors in these high fashion magazines. The shirt-waist dress was the staple of the ready-to-wear industry, consequently most of the advertisements of casual sports clothes manufactured in both New York and outside

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New York, were the shirt-waist type of dress.

Shirt-waist dresses gained their greatest promotion in 1938. Models of this style were shown in every dress fabric and were designed for every occasion; particularly for afternoon and cocktail dresses in silk fabrics and silver cloth. Long-skirted models, with collars and sleeves, were shown for evening. In fact, the entire season's offerings in clothes were predominately shirt-waist in effect. The dirndl skirt, introduced in 1937, was established by the next spring. The shirt-waist dress then appeared with a dirndl skirt.

Copywriters were calling it a "classic" by 1935. Any garment that has gained an established acceptance over a long period of time is termed a "classic". Other classics in women's apparel are the tailored suit, cardigan and pull-over sweater, saddle oxfords, six-gored skirts, and berets - to mention a few.

Unif@rms - 1939-1945

The ready-to-wear industry was directly affected by the out-break of the war in 1939 and by the United States' entry in 1941. Fabrics were curtailed and the cut of garments was limited by the government order L-85 that went
into effect April 6, 1942. The design of the shirt-waist dress could be cut within the limitations of L-85, so that the basic pattern of this dress was used with variations in self-trim, collars, (or collarless), or ornamental buttons for a large percentage of dresses produced during the war.

The uniforms for the auxiliary forces of the armed services (the WAC's, WAVE's, SPAR, Marines, and Army and Navy nurses) were designed by New York and Paris dress-makers. Their design was adapted from the men's uniforms and consisted of a coat, shirt and a six-gored skirt. Some of the liberty uniforms, and summer uniforms of the nurses, were either a shirt-waist dress or a tailored shirt and a six-gored skirt.

By the end of the war in 1945 the reaction against anything with a military look caused a decline in the popularity of the severely man-tailored clothes. However, the same basic dresses were made to look more feminine in the 1946 spring offerings by the addition of dressmaker details, softer trim, and gayer colors.

There has been a decline in the popularity of this style of dress this year (1947), partly because of the reaction against its association with military uniforms and partly because of the promotion for "dress-up" and more feminine clothes.
CHAPTER V

ILLUSTRATIONS

Certain features of shirt-waist dresses show the influence of high fashion trends. Other details of the construction are more staple and change slowly as the silhouette changes. In other words, there is a slowly-evolving silhouette that shirt-waist dresses undergo that is basic to the design. High fashion details often become the accepted fashion the following season and are incorporated into the basic style.

The illustrations on the following pages show, as nearly as possible, the basic features of the dress and their gradual change in construction from year-to-year. As an example, the skirt length and fullness evolved from a long, slim skirt in 1930 to a short full skirt in 1940. The blouse construction changed gradually from a narrow to a broad-shouldered silhouette, and from a bloused bodice to a very form-following line at the waist, during the same period. The pocket position changed from below the bust to a position above, or on, the fullest part of the bust. The open-throated collar evolved from small lapel flaps in 1930 to wide revers in 1940, and to a wide collar-back in 1941. In 1942, the notchless lapel was revived,
and the lower edge of the collar was cut horizontal to accent a broad-shoulder line. The yoke of the blouse has also undergone changes that were not so fundamental to the basic style of the dress.

There were so many variations of the shirt-waist dress each year that it was difficult to select one model to represent the composite trend, current to a particular season. Each model illustrated shows the basic construction as well as high-fashion influences of a style of shirt-waist dress popular for that season.

**Figure 1 The Golf Dress - 1926**

This was a summer frock for all occasions as well as a golf dress. It was a two-piece dress consisting of a jumper and pleated skirt, made of madras shirting. The model was from Best and Company, New York.

**Figure 2 Sports Ensemble - 1929**

This summer ensemble was worn for golf and all daytime occasions. Sports ensembles were two or three-color combinations and consisted of a jumper, pleated skirt, jacket, scarf, and cloche hat.

**Figure 3 Sports Necklines - 1929**

The necklines illustrated show constructions from which later necklines developed.
Figure 4  Spectator Sports Frock - 1930

This was a day-time dress for town and country. The belt-line was at the top of the hip bone. The pleated skirt was attached to a skirt yoke and the fullness broke below the yoke. (Skirt yokes went out of fashion in 1931.) The lapel flaps were shallow and flat against the dress. The neckline was a narrow V-shape, a line characteristic of the preceding era from 1925-1929. The bodice had bloused-in fullness at the waistline seam. The hem-line was fifteen inches from the floor.

Figure 5  Sports Necklines - 1930

The styles illustrated show the current types of necklines in 1930.

Figure 6  Shirt-waist Frock - 1931

This model was the first one shown in Vogue magazine that was called a "shirt-waist" dress. It is from Best and Company, New York. The fashion figures exaggerated the trend for a long-legged, high-waisted figure; the heads appeared small in proportion to the bodies.

This was a summer day-time and sports dress made of a checked cotton fabric. The rever-type collar seems to have predominated in necklines. The fabric cut on the bias created a self-trim. The silhouette was slender all
the way down, with skirt fullness breaking at the knee or a little above. Front-and-back pleats let in the skirt fullness.

**Figure 7  Shirt-waist Dress - 1932**

Broad shoulders, thin hips, and small waistline were evolving since 1929. Skirts were lengthening. There was a predominance of small shirt-collars with a bow tie. The trend was toward less blouse fullness at the waistline, although there was more fullness than in shirt-waist bodices of today. A few models had patch pockets that were placed low on the blouse, or below the hip bone on the skirt front. Skirt fullness broke about at the knee. This model was from Best and Company, New York.

**Figure 8  Blouse Details - 1932**

The blouses illustrated were popular styles of 1932, and show the low-placed pocket, the sleeveless blouse, and full-bodice silhouette at the waistline.

**Figure 9  Shirt-waist Dress - 1933**

There was a predominance of tucked fronts and bib fronts in bodices this year. A few street dresses had padded shoulders. Yokes were deeper and collars were larger. The bow at the neck was often quite large. Raglan sleeves and saddle shoulders were popular. There was
edge-stitching used as trim to emphasize a tailored look. Belt hangers placed in four positions at the waistline (two in front and two in back) appeared for the first time. Skirts were about eleven inches from the floor. The model was from Best and Company, New York.

**Figure 10 Blouse Details - 1933**

The blouses illustrated show the trend for deep yokes, tucked fronts, large bows, and long-sleeve variations.

**Figure 11 Shirt-waist Dress - 1934**

All short sleeves were cut fuller, - either with an inverted pleat or a flare. Collars were predominantly Peter Pan.

**Figure 13 Shirt Stud Dress - 1935**

This model was designed by Grace Ashley of St. Louis in 1935, and it gained acceptance the same year.

There was still more fullness in the bodice at the waist seam than appears in dresses of today. Collars were smaller and had a bow tie at the throat. The points of the collars were wide apart. There were a few necklines with bands that tied in a bow. There is a predominance of saddle and raglan sleeves. Scarfs at the neck disappeared from fashion this year, and the neck interest was replaced by a white detachable collar. The trend was away from any
part of dress that had to be adjusted.

The trend was toward a gored skirt instead of the straight skirt with kick pleats, although the Shirt Stud dress was made with a straight skirt. Skirts started to shorten in 1935; sports skirts were twelve inches from the floor. Skirt fullness broke lower than in previous years.

**Figure 14 Shirt-waist Dress - 1936**

Saddle stitching was the important innovation this year. Band collars with bow ties were more popular, although Peter Pan and lapel collars predominated. Shoulders were broader and were padded which made the waistlines appear even smaller. Sleeves that were darted into the armseye were launched in the fall of 1936, but did not become popular until the next year. Belts were wider and often an accessory to the dress. Skirts were fuller with gored flares or front-and-back pleats. Skirt fullness still broke below the knee.

**Figure 15 Shirt-waist Dress - 1937**

The shirt-waist dress with darted sleeve and flared skirt was the most important trend of 1937. Collars were smaller. There was a predominance of gored skirts with more fullness than the previous year. Four-seamed bias
skirts were introduced. Shirt-waists were combined with dirndl skirts for a high fashion trend. A few dresses were collarless, as this is the first year of the era of costume jewelry. Searsucker was a popular fabric for summer day-time dresses and sports clothes.

Figure 16 Shirt-waist Dress - 1938

There was an increasing acceptance of open-throated necklines. The lapel collar was more popular than the Peter Pan collar, which was probably due to the vogue for costume jewelry. Pockets were important and breast-pockets were featured. Skirt fullness broke higher, at a point above the knee.

This was the biggest year for shirt-waist promotion. Every dress with a center-front closing, sleeves, and collar was called a shirt-waist dress. The styles ranged from severely tailored types to very soft types with lingerie trim.

Figure 17 Shirt-waist Dress - 1939

All types of shirt-waist dresses appeared this year. A shirt-waist dress that was "different" was a rare dress. A collarless model is shown, although collars were equally popular. Peter Pan collars were small. The "nurse-maid" collar was an innovation. It was a detachable white pique collar, similar to a nurse maid's uniform collar. Skirts
were still shorter and a little fuller than in previous years.

Figure 18 Shirt-waist Dress - 1940

The darted sleeve went out of fashion in the fall of 1940. Shoulders were padded wider. The open-throated lapel collar was predominant. The wide rever lapel was an innovation this year. Most fullness was let into the blouse at the waist by darts. There was practically no fullness in the blouse at the waist-line seam. The skirts were fuller and the fullness broke at a point just below the hip bone; they were shorter.

Figure 19 Shirt-waist Dress - 1941

Wool gabardine became important for sports clothes. Cotton gabardine for summer dresses followed in the spring. Gabardine later became the fabric that was most closely associated with the shirt-waist dress. The three-quarter sleeve was growing in popularity. Skirts in high fashion were pleated in front with inverted box pleats spaced wide apart. The tailoring was more severe with top-stitching on seams and edges.

The important trend this year was the fly-front closing and the set-in sleeve without darts. The fly-front closing did not appear in volume until 1945.
ILLUSTRATIONS
Figure 1  The Golf Dress - 1926
Figure 2  Sports Ensemble - 1929
Figure 3  Sports Necklines - 1929
Figure 5  Sports Necklines - 1930
Figure 6  Shirt-waist Frock - 1931
Figure 7  Shirt-waist Dress - 1932
Figure 8  Blouse Details - 1932
Figure 9  Shirt-waist Dress - 1933
Figure 10 Blouse Details - 1933
Figure 11 Shirt-waist Dress - 1934
Figure 12  Blouse Details - 1934
Figure 13  Shirt Stud Dress - 1935
Figure 14  Shirt-waist Dress - 1936
Figure 15  Shirt-waist Dress - 1937
Figure 16  Shirt-waist Dress - 1938
Figure 17  Shirt-waist Dress - 1939
Figure 18  Shirt-waist Dress - 1940
Figure 19  Shirt-waist Dress - 1941
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Courtney, W. B. And they call it peace street. Collier's 118:14-15 Sept. 28, 1946.


APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE
APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE

Form letters were mailed to the following addresses on January 28, 1947.

Addresses | Answered
---|---
Bettina Wilson  
Fashion Editor for Vogue  
420 Lexington Avenue  
New York 17, New York | Yes
Diana Vreeland, Fashion Editor  
Harper's Bazaar  
572 Madison Avenue  
New York 22, New York | Yes
The Fashion Group, Inc.  
Executive Secretary  
30 Rockefeller Plaza, Room 711  
New York 20, New York | Yes
Tobe’ Fashion Service  
Fifth Avenue at 57th Street  
New York, New York | No
Women's Wear  
Fashion Department  
Eight E. 13th Street  
New York 3, New York | Yes
J. Walter Thompson Co.  
Fashion Promotion Dept.  
420 Lexington Avenue  
New York 17, New York | No
Park Fashion Bureau  
180 Madison Avenue  
New York 16, New York | No
Mademoiselle  
Kay Silver, Fashion Editor  
122 East 42nd Street  
New York 17, New York | No
Addressee Answered
Simmons College Yes
Prince School of Retailing
Boston 14, Mass.

Research Bureau for Retail Training Yes
University of Pittsburg
Pittsburg 13, Penn.

New York University Yes
School of Retailing
New York 3, New York

Letters of inquiry were directed to the following addresses for specific information:

Addressee Date Answered
National Retail Dry Goods Assoc. Yes
Personnel Group
225 West 34th Street
New York, New York Jan. 6, 1947

Fashion Coordinator Interview: Feb. 22, 1947
Meier & Frank Co. Feb. 19, 1947
Portland, Oregon

Sales Manager Yes
Scruby-Vandervoort-Barney
St. Louis, Missouri March 10, 1947

H. Stanley Marcus, Vice President Yes
Neiman-Marcus
Dallas, Texas March 10, 1947

Jane Allen
Oregonian
Portland, Oregon March 10, 1947

Grace Ashley
4904 McPherson St. Yes
St. Louis, Missouri March 10, 1947

Fashion Coordinator Answered by: Strauss,
Best & Co.
New York, New York Reich, and Boyer
141 Broadway
New York 6, New York

April 4, 1947
Miss A'leen Runkle  
1031 Mill Street  
Eugene, Oregon  

Dear Miss Runkle:

Mrs. Bettina Wilson has given me your letter regarding fashion information to use toward your Master of Arts degree at Oregon State.

The questions you pose could fill pages of discussion, of course, but I'll do my best with them! Here we go:

A current fashion trend that is characteristic of the attitude of these times: the slender silhouette with natural shoulders and curved hipline (see Vogue's March 1 and the forthcoming April 1 covers).

If I understand your next question correctly: I do think that published material which traces a fashion trend is as authentic a record of that fashion's development, as is the published material itself. Certainly some published material is good and some bad—so some such stories are valid records and some are not. As a case in point, I attach Vogue's March 1 story on skirt-lengths—"How long is a skirt?"—it was carefully edited before publication for the points you mention. It is therefore, a good example of a trend traced well in published material.

As far as your other questions go:

(1) A currently popular trend in which origin and demand were simultaneous—the trend toward high-heeled shoes. As skirts lengthened, the need for higher heels was a "natural."

(2) It is important to know these things about a fashion trend to document its history: who started it—where it started—why it started—and subsequent development and decline.
(3) Women's Wear Daily published at 8 East 13th Street, New York City for $9 a year is read by retailers all over the country for just such information as you want.

(4) We do not release information that is not included in the pages of Vogue.

(5) No, but sometime I believe you would be extremely interested in tracing what happens to lives of women to cause a need and desire for certain specific new fashions.

Good luck on your project!

Sincerely yours,

(Angeline Dougherty)

Angeline Dougherty
Associate Editor
Vogue Merchandising Service
March 18, 1947

MISS A'LEEN RUNKLE
1031 MILL STREET
EUGENE, OREGON

MY DEAR MISS RUNKLE:

It would be difficult to give you the complete information regarding the history of the shirt maker dress without doing a considerable amount of research for which I do not have the time.

It is possible that this style of dress was originated by French shirt makers by the name of David & Boivin around 1925. It is also possible that it was originated by an American manufacturer named William Bloom who first made a shirtwaist dress with removable men's collar studs. It was greatly popularized by Grace Ashley of St. Louis around 1930 whose shirt stud dress became the biggest selling dress in American history and was most widely copied.

I would suggest that you communicate with Best & Co. of New York who may be able to give you further information on this subject.

Most sincerely yours,

(Stanley Marcus)

Stanley Marcus

SM:f
April 1, 1947

Miss A'leen Runkle,
1031 Mill St.,
Eugene, Oregon,

Dear Miss Runkle:

Replying to your letter regarding the article appearing in Fortune Magazine of November 1940, by Mr. Stanley Marcus, Mrs. Grace Ashley is the person referred to and was the creator of the original jewel stud dress.

I am inclosing a couple articles which might give you the information you wish and also reprints of some of our ads appearing in national magazines.

For your information Mrs. Ashley has just been chosen by Group Action Council of St. Louis as an outstanding St. Louis woman of achievement.

Trusting the information given you will help you and wishing you success in your undertaking, we are

Sincerely yours,

Grace Ashley, Inc.

by (Olive Spangler)
Secretary to Grace Ashley
April 16th, 1947.

Dear Miss Runkle,

We are general counsel for Best & Co. Inc. Your letter addressed to "Fashion Coordinator, Best & Co" has been referred to us for reply.

Shirtmaker, as applied to dresses and similar articles of women's and children's apparel, is a trade-mark. It is owned exclusively by Best & Co. Inc. The trade-mark was registered in the United States Patent Office in Class 39, Clothing, on September 7th, 1926, Registration #217606.

The designation of a dress as a "Shirtmaker" dress is an infringement of our client's exclusive rights in the trade-mark "Shirtmaker." Such designation may be applied only to dresses sold by Best & Co. Inc. Best & Co. Inc. has protected, and will continue fully to protect its right in that mark. It will not permit any violations. Its exclusive right thereto has been consistently upheld by the Courts and injunctions have been obtained by Best & Co. Inc. enjoining and restraining others from using it.

It is apparent from your letter that you were unaware of the facts herein stated.

Yours very truly,

(Strauss Reich & Boyer)

Miss A'leen Runkle,
1031 Mill Street,
Eugene, Oregon

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