

Keeping Warm and in Style

By Patti Jones

(Taken from Woman's World Magazine, Dec. 1931)

Fur coats and pieces have been a "girl's best friend" when it comes to style and practicality during the Model A era. Whether you're on a night on the town or riding in the rumble seat, furs have been overwhelming a trend in women's fashions. The selection of color is emphasized as to the wearer's use of fur and was considered equally important to clothing materials.



Browns and blacks lead the list of the most popular colors. With browns, there is an array of various colors to match and complement the wearer's attire. Mink is starting to become more prominent over fox. Other furs being introduced in browns are seal and muskrat. Pelts of seals are now being dyed a "logwood brown" that is currently the rage. With a Hudson seal pelt, it is often dyed black on top showing a brown color underneath. This gives the entire coat a brownish cast. Beaver is another fur, in that it can be dyed in various colors of brown. This year, Persian lamb has made a comeback in popular colors of black and platinum.

Many coats are trimmed with contrasting color, texture and depth; using another fur other than the main body of the coat. Seal coats are frequently trimmed with mink or ermine, and later dyed in various brown tones. Persian lamb coats are trimmed with silver fox dyed in various colors. It was noted that leopard or ocelot were discouraged as being too conspicuous to wear. The old faithful raccoon coat is still considered one of the favorites because of its highly rated wearing quality.

Following the general trend of fashions, fur coats are now being made increasing the width above the waistline, but close fitting at the hips. Collars and sleeves are seeing a trend to complement the new styles. Collars are varied in type, but the most popular are collars that stand up on the shoulders and at the back of the neck. The previous style was drooped over the "arms eye". Sleeves set the style for many coats, and the dolman sleeve is the most popular. Other styles are muff sleeves and leg o' mutton sleeve. The raglan sleeve is used more for sporty fur coats. The length of the fur coat is also very important. Coats are worn longer in 1931 than in the past, giving the wearer a more slandering affect. This year, a number of lengths have been introduced...classified as three quarter lengths, these fall anywhere from the hips to just below the knees.

The cost of any fur coat depends on the quality of the skins, the amount of labor required for detailing the coat, and the demand of the particular fur. The least expensive coats are made from muskrat. When purchasing a fur coat at a swap meet or antique store, first look at if there are any breaks in the skins....if its brittle, DON'T BUY IT!! This indicates that the skin has lost its oils and will continue to break. Note, if you see a break between the skins, this is caused by the silk thread that sewed the skins together rotting. A furrier can repair it, but the cost may override your decision to buy it. Please remember not to store any furs in plastic bags. They're a natural fiber and need to breathe. My suggestion would be an old 100% cotton sheet or pillowcase or in an acid free box. (Too bad I don't practice what I preach!)