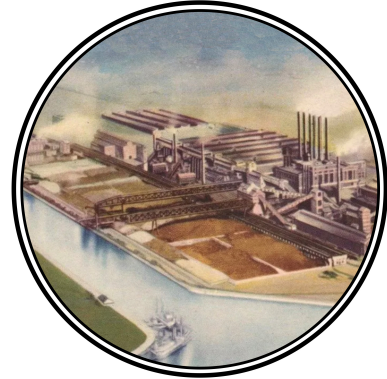


Looking One's Loveliest in 1928

A Pictorial Summary of Model 'A' Fashions

By Jill Barrett, Santa Clara Valley Chapter, California

It was in 1928 that Henry Ford's River Rouge Complex in Dearborn Michigan, an auto plant begun in 1917, was completed as the largest factory in the world. In 1928 the United States were still consumed by Prohibition and the Roaring 20's. Fats Domino, Lefty Frizzell, Maya Angelou, Rosemary Clooney, Elias James Corey, Dick York, Bob Crane, Jimmy Dean, Dick Van Patton, and Ralph Waite are some that have one thing in common. Only one was an American chemist Nobel Prize laureate but they all were born in 1928. And on that note, 1928 was the first year of our Model A era.



Anne Rittenhouse, fashion contributor for McCall's Magazine, wrote in 1928, "Not a knee was to be seen." She also wrote, there was a new trend of practicality. Every woman could wear the same dress at home, to work and to then to the store. One costume for the day was sufficient. Another trend for women's fashion in 1928 was the open season for all fabrics between two Januarys. Cedar chests were now used for interior furnishings.

In 1928, waistlines were right at the widest part of hipline. New belts livened up old frocks. Designers used simple straight lines. The hem line was straight with flares and pleats that allowed the skirt to open with the movement of a woman's knee brought on by new dance demands.

A vivacious evening and afternoon tea dress was preferred to a sedate one. A wider variety of colors were accepted. Women's clothes were now referred to as romantic and acquiescently Victorian similar to the feminine gowns in the late 1880's when Queen Victoria lived. There were no plain surfaces on a dress in 1928. Dresses had ruffles, full skirts, a flare below the knee and uneven hemlines. In 1928 there were flounces, jabots, pleating, decorative girdles, odd seams, flying scarfs, floating sleeves, raglan shoulders, and hip yokes that were features to attract attention and prove change from the last season.

Necklines were softened with lace using its old sway over the neck opening. The decorative neckline went hand-in-hand with the flowing, straight skirt. Coats in the summer were not only for comfort but often as a decoration. Coats were not meant to hide the dress but slyly reveal it. Well fitted shoulders were a necessity. The slim arm was as important as the slim ankle. Muscles were taboo. Stringy tendons were abhorred. Women went to great lengths to look just right.



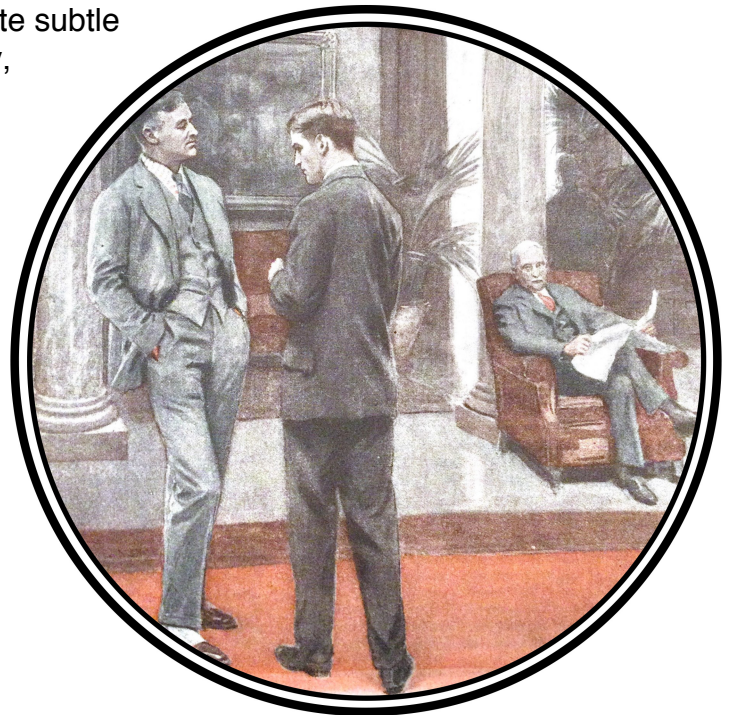
Women's fabric colors in 1928 were bright and vivacious. Fabrics in garden colors let in brilliancy. With bright colors available, black and white, dark blue and mist gray were running mates. For more information about colors in the Model A era, check out *The Color of Fashions in Your Model A World* written by MAFCA member Peggy Gill. Her research and color descriptions will steer you in the right direction to recreate that perfect ensemble.

In young girls fashions, there was the allure of the new smocking which simplified fitting with straight under-arm seams. Another great trend was hand stitchery with effectively placed dainty flowerets made from French knots.



Men's clothing was like women's fashions, proper etiquette and correct attire was the norm. Wool was the primary fiber although other fibers were woven in to create subtle patterns. Popular colors included blue, gray, blue and black. In warm climates, lightweight suits were worn without vests.

The year 1928 offered many clothing options, and the beginning of the Model A era. Be sure to read the following articles for each year in this series, Looking Your Loveliest in 1929, 1930 and 1931, to see what a difference a year makes.



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