

Infants and Toddlers Fashions of the Model A Era

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Era Fashion Committee

You don't read much about infant and toddler clothes of the Model A Era. It is almost impossible to find originals unless they have been preserved and passed down through families. Such is the case in my family. In most families clothes were handed down, especially during the Depression years of the Model A Era, and worn until they were threadbare. My mother was an only child so her clothes were not handed down to siblings or cousins as she had no female cousins. I am so lucky to have two of my mother's infant dresses, one toddler dress, and the coverlet that was hand embroidered for her crib. My mother wore these infant dresses in 1928 and the toddler dress in 1930.



Sarah Langston is wearing Anne's mothers' toddler dress at The Shade Tree A MAFCA SE Divisional Meet June 2003.



This is the coverlet that was on Anne's mothers' crib. It is in great shape for being 77 years old. The Little Bo Beep crib coverlet is embroidered in blues, pinks, yellows, and shades of brown.



Sarah is holding a doll dressed in another of Anne's mothers' infant dresses. The doll's dress is nainsook and is embroidered with a pink chain stitch and has many embroidered pink flowers. The neckline, sleeves, and hemline have some fagoting with handmade lace.

The toddler dress (above left) is organdy with hand smocking along the bodice and the back of the dress. The dress has many pink embroidered flowers and fagoting running down the dress and making two circles around the dress one about six inches from the hem and another one about three inches from the hem. This dress was handmade in Puerto Rico in 1930 and brought to the United States by Aunt Hilda (Anne's great aunt) who was a Deaconess in the Episcopal Church and on a mission at the time.

When I was lucky enough to get a granddaughter (Neely Kate Leverett) who lives near, I knew she would have to wear her great grandmother's dress. Neely Kate did with her Mimi (me) for a vintage fashion show that our Model A Club, "The Shade Tree A's," hosted at the Augusta Mall in June 2005.



Anne Neely-Beck with her granddaughter Neely Kate Leverett at Shade Tree A fashion show Augusta (GA) Mall, June 2005



Neely Kate is wearing her great grandmother's dress made of nainsook with small tucks along the bodice and hand embroidered stitching along the neckline and the hemline. The dress also has many hand embroidered flowers in white, pink, and blue. The edge of the hemline and sleeves is finished off with handmade lace. This dress was made by Catherine Riehl, Neely Kate's great-grandmother's mother.

Infant and toddler clothes did not change much during the Model A era. In one of my vintage 1929 *Needlecraft* magazine I found an article on planning babies' wardrobe, *Layette 221*. Nainsook (a fine, lightweight, usually of combed cotton) is stated as the best fabric for little dresses. Suggestion for the nightgown includes flannel, cashmere, or muslin. When making a kimono it is suggested that flannelette is the most practical but making one for "best" could be made of crepe de Chine, lined with cashmere for warmth and daintily embroidered.

Layette 221 – pictured at right

Baby Layettes have not changed that much over the years. Cotton knit has replaced nainsook and cotton but there are many items similar to these layette items that are available today at fine department stores and boutiques. They could be worn by baby for fun fashions while riding around in the Model A.

If you would like to dress your child or grandchild for fashion judging, there are some vintage patterns available and by searching vintage magazines, you can find many knitting patterns for booties, snow suits, and sweaters.

My mother and I knitted a pair of booties from a 1929 *Needlecraft* magazine pattern. My mother did the knitting and I sewed them together and added the ribbon. It would be easy to recreated dresses for infants and toddlers.

This is a quote from a June 1930 *Needlecraft* magazine: "straight lines, fullness from the neck to the hem and short or long sleeves, set in or kimono-that describes almost any little girls' dresses if she is anywhere from two to eight years old, and it is true of best dresses as of everyday dresses." Most seamstresses today could make a dress like this without a pattern, add some hand embroidery or smocking and you would have a reproduction worth judging.

The baby's layette in one size only, consists of a dress, with bishop sleeves, girtrude petticoat with or without gathered ruffle, nightgown, kimono that is perforated for short anques, and a bib. To complete the layette, three silk-and-wool shoulder-bands, three all-wool binders, three pairs of silk-and-wool hose, and thirty-six bird's-eye diapers should be added.

Layette 221

Baby's Layette

EXQUISITE handmade clothes that every mother wants for her darling babe, made at a saving readily recognized.

In planning baby's wardrobe, No. 221, it is well to carry out a color-scheme, either blue or pink, in pale shades. Nainsook is best for the little dresses and girtrude petticoat with ruffle. The plain girtrude of flannel or cashmere, is dainty with hem and side seams finished with feather-stitching, and comfortable, low round neckline, outlined with tiny spray of embroidered flowers. The nightgown with drawstring at lower edge to keep from kicking and throwing the feet about too much at night, can be made of flannel, cashmere or muslin. For the kimono, flannelette is most practical. Make one with buttonholed edge and embroidery; one with feather-stitching around entire edge, and one for "best" of crepe de Chine, lined with cashmere for warmth, and daintily embroidered. The ascot shows French elegance in fine cashmere lined with crepe de Chine or China silk. Flannel, flannelette and crepe de Chine are also appropriate. The novel French bib is made of fine pique.

A crib-cover and pillow-slip of handkerchief-linen over pink or blue China silk, with dainty embroidery, and a full silk crepe coat and hat, embroidered in small floral pattern, and trimmed with baby Irish lace, are emphasized accessories.

All patterns, 15 cents each. Address Needlecraft Magazine, Augusta, Maine

A Triad of Sweaters and a Shoulder-Wrap

For the Littlest People

BY PEARL BRUMBACH



A Warm Shoulder-Wrap for Baby

With No. 3 needles knit the cuff to correspond with the first.

For the Collar—Pick up 40 stitches along the seven inches knitted even, using No. 3½ needles, and knit in seed-stitch for two inches; bind off. Thread baby-ribbon over 2 stitches and under 2, at base of collar. Sew up only the cuffs.

Roundel Sweater

FOR the sturdy little open-front sweater, which any small man or maiden who has attained the age of one year will delight in wearing, two balls or three ounces of three-fold Saxony or two-fold silk and wool are needed. Using No. 3½ needles cast on

71 stitches for the back. Knit plain, back and forth, for 20 rows, which will give you 10 ridges or ribs. For the body of the sweater knit in pattern as follows: 1. With wrong side toward you, knit 5, part 1. 2. Knit, ending with knit 5. Repeat these 2 rows until the back measures seven and three-fourths inches from the bottom. Bind off 3 stitches on each side for armholes; then knit 2 stitches together at each end of neck, every other row, three times. On the 30 stitches remaining knit in pattern until the armhole measures three and one-fourth inches; on next row knit 21, bind off 17, for the neck, and knit the remaining 21 stitches, on which start the shoulder, leaving the first set of stitches on any convenient holder until wanted for the other side.

Decrease 1 stitch every 30 row, at each edge, twice; knit 4 rows even, then increase 1 stitch every 20 row, 4 times, and cast on 4 stitches toward the neck. On the 20 stitches which you now have on the needle continue to work in pattern until the armhole measures eight inches from beginning at the back; then increase 1 stitch every 20 row, at the armhole, 3 times, and on the next row cast on 3 stitches at once, thus shaping the front of armhole to correspond with the back. This gives 55 stitches, on which knit remainder of front to match the back, ending with the border in plain knitting; bind off. Using the first set of stitches, knit the other side of front to correspond.

For the Sleeve—About the armhole, between the decreasing of the back and increasing of the front, pick up 41 stitches using No. 3½ needles, and knit in pattern, as directed after one ridge or 2 rows, pick up the 1st of the increases or decrease at each end of needle, doing this on the 30 row, on the 5th row pick up on the 7th row, the 3d; then on 9th row cast on 3 stitches at each end of needle, making 55 stitches in all; knit in pattern for 30 inches then decrease for the cuff in 30 stitches. With No. 3 needles knit 2 and 1 row for one and one-half inches and bind off.

For the Band at Each Side of Front—Using No. 3 needles pick up 70 stitches and knit 10 rows—5 ridges—plain binding off on the 10th row.

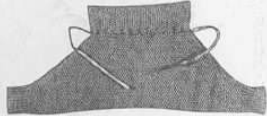
For the Collar—Pick up 10 stitches around the neck, not including the front bands, and with No. 3½ needles knit 10 ridges, binding off on 20th row.

Sew up the side-seams and sleeves in the usual way and make four little buttoned loops at regular intervals down the front band, sewing on pearl buttons to match. Perhaps it should be noted that in picking up the stitches for the front bands and sleeves, there is but 1 stitch picked up for each ridge.

"Baby Bell" Sweater

MATERIALS required are two one-and-one-half ounce balls of three-fold Saxony, or two-fold silk and wool, as preferred, with one pair each of No. 3 and No. 3½ needles.

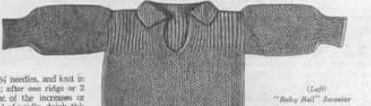
Using No. 3 needles cast on 70 stitches for the back. Knit 1 and part 1 (single rib) for two and a quarter inches. Then with No. 3½ needles knit in seed-stitch pattern as follows: 1. Knit 1, part 1, ending with part 1. 2. Part 1, knit 1, ending with knit 1. Repeat these 2 rows until the sweater measures seven and one-half inches from the bottom; change to No. 2 needles and knit the yoke in the same rib as the border, that is, knit 1, part 1, 1, and repeat throughout.



Baby's Shoulder-Wrap

When the yoke measures two and three-fourths inches knit 27 stitches (on the rib), bind off 10 stitches for back of neck, and knit remaining 27 stitches, on which continue the shoulder and front of yoke, leaving the first 27 stitches on a separate needle or stitch-holder. Knit one inch in the rib without increasing for the shoulder, then cast on 10 stitches and knit the front of yoke to match the back—two and three-fourths inches. Now take the first set of stitches and knit the other side exactly as directed to this point, then knit across, putting all the stitches on one needle—74 stitches in all. Change to No. 3½ needles, knit the front of sweater in seed-stitch, to correspond with the back, finishing

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Collar "Baby Bell" Sweater



(Right) "Baby Bell" Sweater

HOW we grow-up do enjoy making dainty things for the wee ones—all the more if they give comfort as well as prettiness, as the little garments pictured surely do. Every one of them is so simple and easy to make that it is finished in an incredibly short time; the rest of us will find it hard to resist the temptation to begin another. Even though we may not have a "little fairy" in our own home—or at least this one—there could never be a more charming gift to the small ones or, since, as the case may be, of a friend's household, and if the sewerly chances be to a couple one—why, at least that makes for two-fold joy, all around!

The covering sweaters illustrated are of different style, one of them a slip-on, another with open front, while the third has right-shoulder, and for extra measure we have a dainty shoulder-wrap for the very littlest person, at good-looking and comfy as possible. The sizes throughout are from six months to one year, and while pink or blue may be chosen for the small garments, which are suitable for either a daughter or son, the work is started at the cuff. Using No. 3 needles, cast on 26 stitches and knit 1, part 1 for two inches.

Baby's Shoulder-Wrap

TWO balls of three-fold Saxony or two-fold silk and wool, as preferred, with a yard of baby-ribbed matching the color of the little wrap are needed. The work is started at the cuff. Using No. 3 needles, cast on 26 stitches and knit 1, part 1 for two inches.

With No. 3½ needles work the seed-stitch pattern, remembering each row must be started with the same stitch which ended the preceding row, that is, having an even number of stitches you would knit 1, part 1 throughout, and returning, part and knit, alternately, thus making the "beads." If there were an uneven number of stitches the row ending with knit 1, you would start with knit 1, going back. Beginning with the 25 row of seed-stitch, increase 1 stitch at each end of needle every other row until you have 50 stitches in all; knit seven inches even, or without further increase, then decrease 1 stitch at beginning and end of every row until you have again 26 stitches on the needle.



Baby's Shoulder-Wrap



Baby's Shoulder-Wrap



A Wardrobe for a Tiny Miss

STYLES FOR FALL AND WINTER WEAR

By Elizabeth Thankful Bailey

WITH everyone so busy this season of the year with plans for fall and winter wardrobes, even the babies are beginning to sit up and take notice. There is no end to the array of materials this fall that seem especially suitable for wear by small children.

Right now my hobby is clothing for little girls who are two or "going on three" years old, for there just never was a time when cottons, fine shers, woollens, linens, rayons and silks were so well adapted for children's dresses.

During the summer we have had a revival of musline-dotted Swiss and fine dimity—and now we are finding English prints, percale, cotton broadcloths, gingham and piqués in adorable colorings and designs especially suitable for fall.

Most of the style effects for little girls going on three are straight and full and gathered into yoke, shoulder or neck. From sleeveless dresses during the summer, the little dresses now show both long and short sleeves. The new feature which has interested me most is that of fagoted yokes. After a long absence, fagoting appeared last summer on many of the lingerie blouses and dresses, and it now bids fair to be one of the most popular effects on little girls' clothing. It is especially pleasing when used on dresses of printed cottons. The yokes for these are generally made of narrow bias folds of the same or contrasting material, held in shape by fagoting stitches.

Work for Skilful Fingers

One needs skilful fingers for this sort of thing, and for tiny dresses the folds should be very narrow. Bias tape with the turned edges folded together is very satisfactory, and is available in a wide range of colors.

In using a material plain in color or one of open weave in which it is not possible to find a bias tape exactly matching in color or quality, folds of the same material are used.

Cut a pattern for the whole yoke in one piece, using heavy paper, and allowing for hems or other finish at the back. Bias the folds to the pattern, leaving a small space between each two rows. The

hinting should follow the shape of the yoke. If seams have been allowed on the yoke pattern, indicate the seam width on the pattern with a pencil line and keep the outer folds even with these lines. In busting the folds to the yoke, place the edge with the single fold at the top in each row. No pattern is necessary for the simple style shown at the top of the page.

Description of the Stitch

The fagoting stitch is best done with a twisted thread of silk or cotton, heavy enough to give a decorative effect. Some of the new, tightly twisted cotton threads are excellent for this purpose. The stitch is similar to the catch-stitch except that the needle is passed from underneath through the single or double folded edge, keeping the thread at the left in making each stitch, thus forming a crossing of the thread close to the fold. The fagoting stitches should end where the hem turns.

The ends of the folds may be turned under and overhanded down or they may be cut even with the edge of the hem and the edges bound, in which case tiny buttons and thread loops would be used for fastening. The full lower portion of the dress is gathered along the upper edge, which has been folded back, and after the gathers are adjusted, it is joined to the yoke with fagoting.

Of far more importance than the number and variety of dresses in her winter wardrobe is the choice of the wee girl's winter coat. The distinguishing characteristic of the new coats is that they are very soft and pliable as to material and construction. The materials favored are broadcloths, the tricet and basket weaves, soft twills and tweeds.

In style the coats are very plain indeed, and often have raglan sleeves. Cape effects are found on some, a copy after grown-up styles. Most of these little coats are lined with silk or crepe and occasionally are interlined with soft flannel.

The ensemble idea is so strong that bonnets or hats are often made of the same material as the coat. A little close hat will be as warm as a bonnet and in addition will have much more class.



Patterns, 15c each, postpaid, may be secured from Woman's World, 4223 W. Lake St., Chicago

WOMAN'S WORLD

Sweater and shoulder wrap pattern from 1931 Needlecraft magazine. These also could be knitted with wool yarn for fashion judging.

Woman World Magazine 1930 article shows how to make the fagot stitch that was so popular at the time.

If you would like to dress your child or grandchild in fun fashion while riding around in the Model A then I suggested you look at *Feltman Brothers* dresses. They are available at most better department stores and boutiques. They are made of fine cotton with hand embroidery and smocking and look like they could have come right from the Model A era.

Boys' Fashions

Alas, I have not covered boys' fashions. I have five grandsons but I could never convince them to have that vintage look while riding with their grandparents in the Model A. In 2003 our club hosted a divisional Meet and we had a fashion show. Joni Morgan was our guest hostess and she provided us with an outfit for a little boy to wear and naturally none of my boys would wear it but one member's grandson did and it was the hit of the show.



Pictured at right:

Trey Langston is wearing a broadcloth outfit loaned to The Shade Tree A's by Joni Morgan. He modeled this at the 2003 MAFCA Southeastern Divisional Meet hosted by the Shade Tree A's in Augusta, GA.

If you are lucky enough to have some children's vintage clothes, take good care of them. I wash mine in a product called *Linen Wash* and store them rolled in acid-free tissue paper. I want to be able to pass these vintage clothes along to a few more generations.

Let us get our children and grandchildren involved with the Model A's and the era fashions so we can preserve the past for the future.

Anne Neely-Beck
Era Fashion Committee

