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Everyday Fashions Of The Thirties As Pictured In Sears Catalogs (Dover Fashion And Costumes)



Synopsis

For thousands of women across America, hard hit when the frivolity of the twenties ended so resoundingly with the Crash of '29, the pages of the Sears catalog became an essential resource in maintaining a wardrobe. An ambitious marketing operation, it could not afford to take chances on haute couture; its fashions were geared as closely as possible to the prevailing tastes of the American people. For this historically accurate sampling of authentic 1930s fashion, Stella Blum, former Curator of the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, selected for reproduction 133 representative pages from rare Sears catalogs of the period (fall and spring catalog for each year from 1930 to 1939). Hundreds of illustrations record what men, women, and children were actually wearing in the 1930s when, as a copyline from the Fall 1930 catalog proclaimed: "Thrift is the spirit of the day. Reckless spending is a thing of the past." You'll see here how simpler women's fashion designs — of more traditional, affordable material — recaptured the feminine form with a more natural waistline and lower hemlines than seen in the twenties. For evening wear, longer dresses replaced flamboyant beaded short gowns while cloche hats, another twenties trademark, were replaced by berets, pillboxes, and turbans. The seriousness of the accessories and dresses endorsed by such Hollywood legends as Loretta Young, Claudette Colbert, and Fay Wray. For historians of costume, nostalgia buffs and casual browsers, these pages afford a rare picture of how the average American really dressed during the thirties. It is an essential resource for study of the clothing of an important era which designers cannot afford to be without.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I own four books in this 'Searies' (Twenties, Thirties, Forties, Fifties) and I cannot recommend them highly enough. They are jam-packed with a great mix of pictures in good proportion which show the morphing of fashions over the decade(s). Dominant are women's clothing (formal, casual, dresses, hats, coats, shoes, with some undergarments, sportswear, nightwear, swimwear). Then there are smatterings of accessories (handbags, watches, gloves, powder compacts, belts, jewelry). Also some menswear and a small amount of childrenswear. All clothing is being worn. All pictures are black and white and have a certain (pleasant) level of graininess. What you get are the original pictures, prices and descriptions from the catalogs. There is only a very small amount of introductory material (just a one page 'Publisher's Note' for the Thirties). Changes over the series: The transition from drawings (all very good and realistic) to photos occurs in the Thirties. The variety of accessories appearing in the Twenties is largely reduced by the later decades (Fifties almost exclusively clothing and hats with some shoes). There's only one problem with these catalogs...you can't order the contents!

I have to agree with the other reviewers. Modern fashion tends to look "dumbed down". I've owned this book for some time and refer to it often. Not to copy, necessarily; but to find inspiration. There are clothes available that still look "classic". Many of the original Sears pictures were in color but are reproduced here in b&w. Many of the reproductions have an overly fuzzy look. I suppose that's why the book is only \$15 instead of 2 or 3 times as much. The Schiffer Sears series has sharp color images but you pay twice as much. You could buy the original Sears catalogs on eBay (I have a few) for even more. Your choice. This book will give you a good overview of the fashion changes during the decade and you can take it from there. Also of note are the accessories. A New Deal/FDR watch! A Buck Rogers watch! This isn't camp, either, but back in the days when this was serious stuff. Highly recommended!

This book gives a good look at what the Sears catalog offered in the way of women's fashions in the thirties. Merchandise is grouped by year and then by women's, men's etc. Descriptions are text from the catalog and in some cases give what fabric was used, original catalog prices are also included. Accessories such as shoes, hats and jewelry are also pictured. A great resource for stage costumes. If you are a good seamstress, today's patterns can be modified to create styles similar to those of

the thirties.

As a 1930's enthusiast I became interested in this book after reading the reviews. They all seemed to indicate a well sampled view of 1930's fashion in general, of men, women and children, so obviously I was eager to purchase the book. When I finally got it I was disappointed to see that this book did not provide fashions of the general 1930's populace, but rather concentrated mainly on women's fashions. There were only a few pages dedicated to men's clothes and I was especially surprised to see how much the book lacked in portraying men's suits. So as for for portraying a good view of what people wore in the 1930's I'd say the book was inadequate. If you're into learning mainly about 1930's women's fashion, then go ahead and purchase this, but if you are really interested in a more detailed portrayal of what the whole population in general wore in those times then you are better off buying a vintage Sears catalog on ebay.

I am very pleased with this book!! It gives the complete "picture" as well as the year on the proper wear of the clothing from that period, i.e., dress, coat, shoes, hats etc; even accessories like jewelery. The photographs are wonderful. It will be so much fun learning how to wear and collect vintage clothing!! I will buy the rest of the series!!!!!!

If you want a comprehensive book that immerses you in the world of fashion from the thirties, this is the one. It is authentic and beautifully laid out and depicts numerous costume items from the thirties, though mostly focusing on women. The pictures depict everything from dresses to shoes, hats to gloves; the women's hairstyles, makeup, undergarments, and overall looks give the reader the most authentic possible view of fashion and the aesthetic ideals of the time. The catalogue also shows the prices and features descriptions that include fabric and color. There are some pictures of men's and children's fashions. This book is thorough and unbelievably beautiful. The whole series of Sears catalogue fashions by decade is amazing. I recommend them all!

Wonderful book, gives an authentic overview of the way people dressed in the 1930's. They sure were a lot more stylish back then, just shows how classy an era the 30's was. When I go swing dancing I know what kind of clothes to look for this book has been helpful to me in dressing in that style. Recommended and just plain fun to look through.

This is a great book, full of wonderful illustrations of period clothes. I'm looking for fashion details to

inspire my own wardrobe and there's a treasure trove to be found in this book. Great source for costume events too.

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