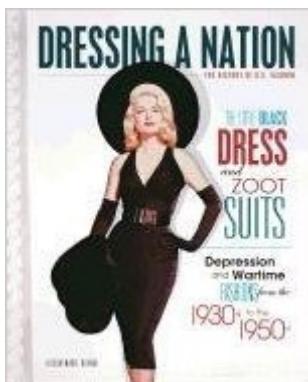


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# The Little Black Dress And Zoot Suits: Depression And Wartime Fashions From The 1930s To The 1950s (Dressing A Nation: The History Of U.S. Fashion)



## **Synopsis**

This book covers the clothing, accessories, and fashions of American men and women during the years of the Great Depression, World War II (1939-1945), and the post war boom years of the 1950s. This title explains how fashions of the mid-twentieth century reflected U.S. society of that era.

## **Book Information**

Series: Dressing a Nation: The History of U.S. Fashion

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## **Customer Reviews**

Born in Rochester, Minnesota, Alison Behnke had the good fortune to live in Rome, Italy, for three years while in grade school. Not only did this move expand her horizons enormously and introduce her to one of the world's best and most beautiful cities, but it provided her with a wealth of writing material. Even before her Roman holiday, however, she knew that she wanted to be an author--a desire which, according to her parents, she first voiced around age six. Good teachers, avid reading, and a children's librarian for a mother all fed the fire. She went on to take a degree in English with a focus on Creative Writing, and at present count she has written more than thirty books. Behnke live in Minneapolis, and when she's neither reading nor writing, she spends her time on pursuits including photography, travel, and striving to make the perfect espresso.

This has got to be the world's most expensive book. It comes in a mere 64 pages, the writing is on a par with secondary school level composition, and the author has produced such other expert tomes

as "Italy in Pictures" and "Does a ten Gallon Hat Really Hold Ten Gallons". Even the photos are hackneyed. Anyone really wishing to understand anything about American clothing is advised to go elsewhere. Anywhere else. A total rip-off

Excellent

When this book popped up on NetGalley from Lerner, I was all over it. 40s fashion is usually how I like to dress when dressing fancy, simply because the styles were geared towards a more curvaceous body (which is what I have). Plus they had some awesome hair. So now there's a book that highlights all of the great moments in war time fashion? Yes, please! This isn't a book with a plot; it's just something that's nice and informational about the clothing and general style of the era. From the hair to the clothes, accessories and shoes, for both men and women, LITTLE BLACK DRESS does a great job of highlighting the best parts of the fashion. Not to mention I got introduced to some awesome designers whose designs I might just have to take to a seamstress because, well, I want some of these dresses, quite frankly. I only had a couple of complaints. One, I wish Behnke would have mentioned Betty Page, whose style had a huge influence on the culture of the time, along with the hair style known as the victory roll. It was a very popular wartime style that takes some practice to manage. I didn't see either of these mentioned and I felt the book could have even better if they'd been added. Also, someone got a little liberal with some of the photos and using Photoshop. I liked most of the photography. Looking at old pictures always draws me in but some of them were wildly colored with backgrounds that weren't flattering to the part of the image that they were trying to make pop. I think a more subtle background with a simple 3D effect in the foreground would have been more than enough to highlight the fashion in those particular photos. (This is in the NetGalley digital advanced copy edition.) Other than that, loved it and I want to buy it for my collection. It's a good book to have for reference (for costumes, for instance, or, if you're like me, for actual dressing) and it's just something nice to look at. It'd make a great coffee table book. One thing LITTLE BLACK DRESS really proved is that the styles that emerged in these three decades really made a lasting impression on culture as a whole. There's a level of class there that isn't seen too much today and now so many designs fall back on those older ones for inspiration, although they take it to levels now that demean the original class of the style. In a world where trash is class and the less you wear means the sexier you are, it's wonderful seeing images in a time where glamour really shown. Where sex appeal wasn't just in the type of body you had but in how you held yourself, in a time where clothes were made for bodies, not the other way around. Seriously, I loved

this book and if you're into the same kind of fashion I am, you'll love it too.

Perhaps you've looked through a photo album and chuckled a bit when you saw how your parents or grandparents dressed many years ago. Fashion is constantly evolving from decade to decade and even year to year trends can be radically different. Looking back into the fashion history of the United States can be a fascinating venture and statement on the times. The 1920s, dubbed the "Jazz Age and Roaring Twenties," was an exciting time to be alive. Daring styles reflected this era, but the flamboyant fashions would quickly be a thing of the past when the New York stock market crashed in 1929. Fashions quickly became more simplistic and practical. In the 1930s frugal was in and was reflected not only in the styles, but also the fabric. Man-made fabrics such as rayon started to come on the scene as women had less expendable income. Women began to sew and knit more of their clothing and companies such as Sears "provided an innovative money-saving solution by selling semi-made clothes." People began to become more aware of fashion when magazines such as Vogue began to let them know what the "in" fashions were and what everyone was wearing. In this book you'll swing thorough the decades getting a glimpse of everything from leisure wear to the infamous bikini that emerged in the 1950s. Haute couture of "high dressmaking" or "high sewing," burst on the scene in the 1930s and was heavily influenced by the art of its day. Elsa Schiaparelli, Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel, and Christian Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, Clare Potter, and Elizabeth Hawes were just a few of the designers who influenced American fashion. Fabric rationing, prior to and during wartime, had been lifted and allowed people to become more expressive with their choice of clothing. You'll read many interesting ways that haute couture filtered down to styles that your grandparents may have worn, including the wedding dress that Grandma may have said yes to. Similarly to your look at women's everyday wear and haute couture, this book will take you on a fascinating whirlwind tour of men's clothing, hairstyles and accessories (hats, jewelry, scarves, footwear, etc.), and the designers, photographers, and models who made fashion come alive. Do you know what twin sets and ducktails are? You will by the time you finish this book! This whirlwind tour of the fashions of yesteryear will fascinate readers of all ages. Simply browsing the book and seeing men showing off their zoot suits and seeing a Horst P. Horst photograph told me that I'd be in for a real treat. The primary audience, the teen or young adult, will also enjoy reading about the evolution of American fashion. There are many opportunities for students to use this book as a stepping stone for a school report. This work is very well written and researched and fun to read. The text is generously illustrated with impressive photographs and has numerous informative sidebars. One, for example, discusses the impact of Television on fashion and in particular the

impact stars such as Lucille Ball and Donna Reed had on hairstyles. Historical vignettes about everyone from film stars to British royalty are woven seamlessly into these pages. In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, a timeline (1931 to 1959) source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book, film, and website resources to explore. Free educational resources can be downloaded on the publisher's website. This book courtesy of the publisher.

(thank you netgalley :D) I KNEW I'd love this book, but I LOVED THIS BOOK. I'm a total historical fashion junkie. I devour old vogue patterns, and have gotten light-headed over finding boxes of old patterns at garage sales. There was nothing to not like about this book except that I wanted MORE. The pics were fun, the info was good, but not overwhelming. It covered everything from hairstyles, to everyday clothes, to the really, really, fun stuff. I love how the information on the clothing was integrated into the history of the time periods, and it NEVER felt like a history book. I loved the organization, and the highlighted quotes. WAY. FUN. BOOK. Also - I'm buying this for my neice, and even though I've read it, I'm going to buy one for me, because I must HOLD it.

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