

A HISTORY OF SWIMWEAR REFLECTING SOME SOCIOLOGICAL  
AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES

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Faculty of the Department of Home Economics  
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Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by  
Terrie Ellen Rust

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This research is dedicated to my husband, \_\_\_\_\_, for his patience and understanding. I give special thanks to

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Bathing costumes hold a unique place in the history of American costume. This specialized garment predates the age of sports costume which arrived during the last half of the nineteenth century. Bathing gowns and later bathing dresses became more important until their functional counterpart, the swimming suit, achieved a permanent place among clothing worn by twentieth-century women. (72:3) The prescribed limitations of women's role in any period have been determined and affected by many social factors. The evolution of the bathing suit to the swimming suit was not only dependent upon the changes in the American way of life but also reflected certain sociological and technological factors. The introduction of new textiles and textile processes, the use of leisure time, economic conditions, and women's participation in outdoor sports were just a few of the influences on the design and development of men's and women's swimwear. The acceptance or rejection of public nudity as reflected in swimwear styles was an indicator of the acceptance of nudity in other types of garments. The popularity of outdoor sports increased the need for sports clothing. Since swimming was a sport open to everyone, the varied costumes worn hold an important position in costume history.

## PROBLEM

The effects of sociological and technological changes on general costume have been investigated. The effects of such changes, however, have not been researched in relation to the development of swimwear. Bathing and swimming suit styles have reflected attitudes toward male-female relationships, the status of women, and public nudity. Technological developments in fibers and fabrics improved the appearance, wear, and practicality of swimming suits. Reductions in working hours and the development of labor-saving devices for the home created leisure time. Swimming became a popular leisure time activity. Beauty pageants utilized the bathing suit as a means of exploiting the female form. The entrance of women as active participants in swimming necessitated a practical costume. It is the intent of the writer to arrange swimsuit styles chronologically and to relate some sociological and technological factors to the changes in the styles of the suits.

### Delimitations

An extensive review of competitive swimming and swimwear worn for competitive swimming was not included, but the incidents involving Adeline Trapp, Annette Kellerman, Ethelda Bleibtrey, and Gertrude Ederle were considered relevant for this study. Only those swimwear designers who had a special effect on the industry were included. Swimwear styles designed for special physical conditions were not included.

Definition of Terms

1. Bathing - the act of immersing all or part of the body in the water for cleansing, therapeutic, recreational, or religious purposes. (72:5)

2. Bathing beauties - the name given to the girls entered in the first beauty pageants who were judged wearing the bathing suits of the day. (3:80)

3. Bathing suit - a costume worn for bathing purposes.

4. Bikini - a brief two-piece swimming suit named after the site of an atomic bomb test. (9:79)

5. Decolletage - the line of a woman's low-cut garment or the neck and shoulders of a person wearing such a garment. (129)

6. Kini - a bathing suit that looks like a one-piece suit from the front, but looks like a two-piece suit from the back.

7. Lastex - a trade name for an elastic yarn suitable for either knitting or weaving. (50:207)

8. Maillot - often abbreviated mio, it is a tight-fitting, one-piece swimsuit. (96:218)

9. Swimming - a term derived from the old English "swimmin" which denotes the self propulsion of the body through water. (83:893)

## Chapter 2

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This research utilized the historical method. The origins of swimming and bathing and the varied costumes worn were traced from antiquity to 1977. Books, magazines, and newspaper articles were reviewed for information on bathing suit styles, designers of swimsuits, beauty pageants, and patterns for swimsuits. The writer also reviewed laws which affected bathing, swimming, and swimwear; the history of bathing and swimming; and statistical data on swimming, swimming pools, and swimming suits. The writer utilized a televised program which traced the evolution of bathing suits made from commercial patterns.

The personal collection of costumes, books and related materials owned by Laura Leach of San Mateo, California, was reviewed to provide the writer with a first-hand look at bathing suit styles, colors, fabrics, and bathing accessories. A personal interview with Mrs. Leach was also conducted.

Letters were written to Catalina, Cole of California, and Jantzen, Incorporated, requesting information related to their swimwear designs, designers, and the history of their companies. Statistical information was requested on the number of swimsuits sold. The writer also asked permission to visit the companies. These manufacturers (frequently referred to as the "big three") were selected because they were the most well-known in the industry, and

because they were located geographically close to the writer. The writer visited Jantzen at their main office in Portland, Oregon.

The writer wrote to the Miss America Pageant and the Miss Universe Pageant, United States Committee, for information regarding the origins and standards of swimsuit competition in their pageants. A letter was written to the National Swimming Pool Institute for data on the numbers of swimming pools in the United States from the 1940's to the present time. The three major pattern manufacturers, Butterick Fashion Marketing Company, The McCall Pattern Company, and Simplicity Pattern Company, Incorporated, were written requesting information on their swimsuit styles and the designers of their swimwear. The writer also wrote to Fairchild Publications, publishers of Women's Wear Daily, requesting historical information on swimwear.

The materials collected by the writer were scanned for sociological and technological implications relevant to changes in the styles of bathing and swimming suits. Swimsuit styles were arranged chronologically and the sociological and technological implications affecting those styles were included.

## Chapter 3

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The development of styles of bathing and swimming suits as they were affected by sociological and technological changes is important as an indicator for other types of clothing, and for the status of men and women in our society. Payne remarked that the bathing costume of women was symbolic of the change in the status of the female in American society; it was one of the first feminine assertions indicating the break with tradition regarding concealment of the body and garments appropriate for varied activities. (93:518) Flügel advanced the theory of the shifting erogenous zones, whereby the focal point shifts from one area to another, revealing some parts and concealing others. This theory revealed that through constant shifting, exposure of almost every part of the human anatomy has at some time in fashion history been regarded as indecent or immoral. (78:37) At no time before in history has both the leg and breast been exposed as in the modern swimsuit.

The development of swimming as a sport for both men and women necessitated a functional costume. Feats of serious swimmers aided in streamlining the swimming suit. Technological advances in fabric development brought about closer-fitting garments which were practical for swimming.

## Antiquity to 1800

Swimming was not, at first, viewed as a sport or a health-giving exercise, but as a life saver and basic tactic of warfare. Man swam to take his foes by surprise, to make his escape from man or beast, or to save himself from drowning. The technique of swimming imitated animal movements. Swimmers thrashed the water with hands, arms, and legs. Soon the exhilaration of swimming was recognized and it was adopted as a healthy pastime. Later man's competitive spirit led him to develop the activity as a sport. (25:343)

Hieroglyphics, ancient Assyrian scriptures, Greek legends and Roman documents, as well as the Bible, testify to the early existence of swimming. (25:344) Swimming races were not featured in the programs of the Ancient Olympic Games. Sports swimming was not, however, unknown to the Greeks. (90:3) Romans regarded swimming as part of their education. Swimming was also looked upon as superb physical training for warriors. The sedentary citizens of Rome turned to the baths as a place for exercise and culture. Bathing and swimming originally combined to fulfill the functions of cleansing and exercise for physical well-being. They later provided the secondary functions of recreation and social intercourse. (72:4) There was also swimming in the sea during the summer and heated bathing pools overlooking the sea. (10:221) Many luxurious villas had outdoor heated swimming pools and always hot baths in the villa itself. The excavation of one such villa built around the 4<sup>th</sup> Century A. D. on the island of Sicily unearthed a mosaic in a family gymnasium. The mosaic depicted women clothed in two-piece suits. (21:inside back cover)





Figure 1. Roman Girl In Two-Piece Suit,  
From Mosaics In Sicily, 400 A. D. (77:40)

In the early Middle Ages, the Moors in Spain constructed hundreds of baths. Most of the baths were destroyed when the Christians conquered Spain (around 1236). Turkish baths were popular in Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Unlike the Roman baths, these baths were crowded with prostitutes and gamblers. Men, women, youths, maidens, nuns, and monks all bathed together in the nude. An outraged church and state began passing laws against communal bathing which eventually led to the end of the public baths. At issue in the church was the morality of mixed bathing, not of bathing in general. (121:7) For the majority

of people in Europe without baths, a stream for swimming took care of the need for some rudimentary form of cleanliness in summer. No care was taken in regard to cleanliness in winter. (121:9)

During the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nakedness was regarded as sin. Nakedness and bathing were considered to be synonymous. Therefore, the art of bathing almost perished in a period when the arts and intellectual pursuits attained great heights. (121:9) In addition, it was believed that outdoor bathing helped spread the epidemics. Common people shunned all outdoor bathing and swimming, although members of the nobility did not. They felt that swimming was not only a military necessity but that its skill and art were part of a true gentleman. (25:349) Body odors were masked with heady perfumes and dirt was covered with a thick veneer of paints and powders. The introduction of linen underwear decreased the necessity of bathing, offering the body protection against the lint residue of the outer clothing. (121:9)

The first books on swimming appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These books gave instructions on swimming and viewed swimming as a valuable skill. Few women actively engaged in swimming prior to the seventeenth century. The activity seemed to have been almost exclusively for men.

As many cultural traits were transmitted to the New World via England, so was the introduction of water activities. The early colonists brought with them a limited knowledge of swimming but did not have the leisure to cultivate the skill. In New England, the

Puritan religious and social beliefs were as restrictive as the lack of leisure time. (72:6) The early colonists did their bathing in a hole in some creek, pond, or river.

The person who had the greatest influence on the attitude of the people toward sports, and particularly swimming, was Benjamin Franklin. His treatise on the art of swimming appeared in articles which were repeated long after his death in 1790. The fact that Franklin at one time had been a teacher of swimming together with his treatise added dignity to the sport. (64:86) In his argument of the sport he said: "The exercise of swimming is one of the most healthful and agreeable in the world." (52:370) Franklin also praised it because it led to cleanliness, to personal safety in the water, and the opportunity of heroic benevolence in saving lives in peril of drowning. (64:180) His useful hints for learning to swim were accepted as practical and adequate, and even as late as 1839 no other method was considered as safe and efficient as his method. (64:86)

Throughout the colonies baths were established where people could bathe or swim. They were established in every city of any importance. Some of them were spacious enough to cover four thousand feet, and were divided to separate the sexes. These were in turn partitioned into compartments, some of which were designed for those who swam, or wanted to learn the art; others were for those who desired to enjoy only the luxury and pleasure of either lying or sitting in a bath. (64:87).

After the Middle Ages, bathing achieved new popularity as a medicinal treatment for both men and women. In seventeenth-century England, certain medical men held that bathing in fresh water had healing properties. Spas were developed to effect such "cures". By the mid-eighteenth century this practice had spread to include sea water bathing. (72:5) In America, mineral springs were frequented by such notables as George and Martha Washington. Men and women wore heavy cotton garments in the spas which camouflaged the body. Such garments were extremely hampering in open water, and for a long time both men and women preferred nudity when bathing in the seas or rivers. (39:259) The sexes were always separated, but "spies" were a problem, and the subject of much ribaldry until the practice of bathing naked came to an end. (39:260) Men, with exceptions, continued to bathe naked until the eighteen-seventies. Women began to provide themselves with clothing for bathing towards the end of the eighteenth century.

Nude sea bathing was less startling than it might seem because of the bathing machines. Most machines were provided with umbrella-like awnings that extended out over the water and made it possible for the bather to descend into the water without being seen. (78:146) Bathing machines made their entry in the mid-eighteenth century. Most bathing machines consisted of a box-like structure on wheels which was horse drawn. The bather climbed inside at the water's edge and undressed as a man on horseback towed the machine into the sea. After the horse and rider retreated, the bather would open the door at the sea end and descend into the water. When he was ready to return, the bather would signal (often using flags) and the horseman would

draw the machine back to shore. As time elapsed, bathing machines became more elegant and roomy. (63:58)

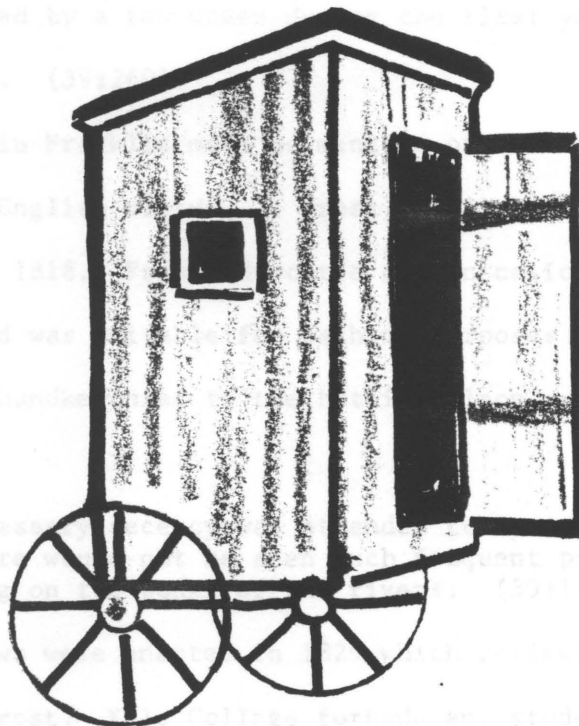


Figure 2. A Bathing Machine, 1800's

#### 1800 to 1900

The introduction of bathing machines into America popularized sea bathing. Many people went to summer resorts where swimming was viewed as a healthful recreation. Few women ventured into the open ocean during the early nineteenth century. They were generally afraid to brave the force of the ocean waves with only a female companion, since prevailing attitudes regarding the proper behavior of a lady

prevented them from being accompanied by a man. (72:8) In many places through the mid-eighteen-hundreds, women wore a linen or flannel chemise-style dress. The dress had long sleeves and no shaping, and was secured at the waist with a belt. (72:14) Nudity was still braved by a few women during the first years of the nineteenth century. (39:260)

Benjamin Franklin made no mention of swimming costumes in his writings. An English writer, J. Frost, published The Art of Swimming in New York in 1818. Frost advocated a thin calico suit which cost very little and was suitable for bathing purposes since it could be conveyed in a handkerchief to the bathing place. (54:90) Frost remarked:

If necessary decency was attended to by using bathing suits, there would not be seen such frequent prohibitions of swimming on the banks of the rivers. (59:15)(?)

Two laws were enacted in 1829 which reflected the "decency" expressed by Frost. Yale College forbade any student from undressing himself for swimming in any place exposed to public view. Worcester, Massachusetts, prohibited any person from exposing himself in swimming or bathing from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sundown in any part of the Blackstone Canal within the limits of said town, or in view of a dwelling house or street or highway. (64:89)

The first swimming school in America was established in Boston in 1827 by a well-known German-American, Francis Lieber. The teaching was modeled after the Jahn system practiced in many German cities. Lieber was a great influence in making swimming universally recognized as an important and respectable sport when conducted in

the proper manner. With the success of this swimming school, others were established where gymnasiums were already organized. (64:92)

The eighteen-fifties saw the introduction of the first costume designed exclusively for bathing. The dress was unquestionably modest with full-length sleeves and ankle-length pantalettes covered by a twin-layered ruffled skirt. Accessories included a wide-brimmed straw hat, bathing shoes of canvas, and black stockings. It was not unusual that twelve yards of material were required to construct this garment. (60:197)

A change to slightly more practical bathing dresses for women took place in the eighteen-sixties. Some of the dresses were made with trousers extending to the ankles which were covered by a long skirt, and were worn with a blouse tunic. Also popular was a body and trousers cut-in-one to secure perfect liberty of action without exposing the figure. (39:264) These suits were made in dark colors because they camouflaged the body when wet. The bathing costume did not evolve gradually into the swim suit, nor was there an abrupt replacement of one garment for the other. (72:24) Swimming was beginning to be distinguished from bathing as early as the eighteen-sixties, but it took another sixty years before the swimming suit fully replaced the bathing costume.

In the eighteen-seventies the few descriptions of swimming suits were limited to a sentence or two buried within long columns of fine print describing popular bathing apparel. Efforts to develop practical swimming suits remained isolated because feminine swimming was not generally accepted. The descriptions of American swimming



Figure 3. Women's Bathing Costume,  
1850 (Courtesy Cole of California)



suits, however brief, offered evidence that the pastime was growing in popularity with women. (72:24) By the eighteen-seventies, the custom of taking vacations was fairly well established among office workers. One-day outings for women had been important as early as 1855, and had been made easier with railroad travel. Seaside homes were opened on the popular beaches for working women to enjoy their time off from work. (80)

During the late eighteen-sixties, articles first appeared urging women to learn to swim. The construction of large bath houses in major cities during the 'seventies made this possible. The baths offered alternate days for ladies. (56:24) In 1878, swimming and swimming classes were advocated in certain medical circulars. The classes became popular and necessitated some kind of a costume less elaborate than the fashionable mode. The majority of women, however, continued to wear the typical bathing costume, patterned after the fashions of the day.

The Butterick Pattern Service, a pattern manufacturer, offered the home sewer a bathing suit pattern in the eighteen-seventies. (Many women undoubtedly made their own bathing costumes prior to this, but the patterns were not commercial ones.) The suit was called "Mary Ann's Bathing Suit". Serge or flannel were the recommended fabrics. (71)

By the middle 1880's women's bathing costumes consisted of what was apparently a one-piece garment, reaching from the knees to the throat, and with very short sleeves. The top of the suit was sometimes decollete about as much as the evening dress of the period,

and the trouser-leg had risen to within several inches above the knee. The majority of bathers added a knee-length skirt. Black with white trim was the most common color used for bathing dresses, although navy blue and white was worn. Ecru, maroon, gray, and olive were not yet desirable colors for the bathing dress (72:22), but were used extensively as trim. In the 'seventies, 'eighties, and 'nineties people had become so accustomed to seeing women with narrow waists that these were considered necessary even in bathing costumes. (79:146) "Rustless" corsets were designed for this purpose. (78:146) Stockings and lightweight canvas or fabric shoes were always worn. There would have been no point in wearing this much clothing when bathing from a bathing machine, but the French had invented the bathing chalet. Women dressed in the chalet and then walked down to the beach. This meant they were completely visible to men's glances. America of the late nineteenth century was a religious America, and the religious sanction for the status quo demanded that conservative clothing styles be worn. (59:105) Men and women teachers in the 1880's were forbidden to wear a bathing costume in public at any time. (103)

A letter written in the early 1890's told of an editorial regarding bathing suits which appeared in a society paper:

It seems that bathing suits are respectable enough when dry, but when wet, lead to a riot of personal license between the sexes which leaves nothing to the imagination that could be left in open day. (28:212)

The editor felt that the yards of fabric comprising the bathing suit did not offer enough coverage of the female form. Some experts on



Figure 4. Corset Worn Under  
Bathing Costume in 1877  
(79:178)

clothing believed that men originally imposed certain types of clothing on women to hobble and restrict them, to keep them in servitude. (113:36) Any changes in clothing which attempted to free women were severely frowned upon by men. (38:193)

In the eighteen-nineties bathing dresses were similar, but caps or bare heads were more usual than hats. The "bathing house suit" had a shorter skirt with bloomers (which at this time were often called knickerbockers) barely showing and with the natural waist tightly drawn in. Some daring women of the day discarded their skirts to allow for more freedom of movement in the water. The fabrics used

were wool serge, flannel, or alpaca in dark blue or black. They were trimmed with white or colored braids. Polka dots and stripes were occasionally seen. Colors such as red, green, white, and gray were utilized by the wealthy, who had their suits professionally made.



Figure 5. Women Bathers, 1889 (117:55) (?)



Figure 6. The "Bathing House Suit",  
1890 (Courtesy Cole of California)

During this same period, knitted cotton tights were sometimes worn in place of knickerbockers. When tights were used they were completely concealed by a one-piece, knee-length bathing dress. The use of the more streamlined bathing tights was another step toward more functional bathing attire. (72:22) Despite these improvements, most women continued to wear stockings, usually black, when they bathed or swam in public. The dictates of fashion and standards of modesty continued to conflict with practical considerations. (72:23)

Throughout the remainder of the century, working women rented certain swimming accoutrements. Before 1900, most women did not own their own bathing suits. Bathing, popular as it was, did not seem to warrant the purchase of a personal suit. Swimming garments could be rented from concessions on the beach, and were often still wet from the previous user. The suits had other minor drawbacks: the indigo dye from the bathing suits bled, turning the water a deep blue color. (80)

An article from a popular lady's magazine in 1883 exemplifies the position held towards women and fashion during this period:

We will not for any moment suppose that any reader of this paper wishes to mingle in society for the sake of showing her clothes. We will rather assume that we are all saturated with the Emersonian maxim that 'society exists for the sake of a little good conversation'; and that we simply wish to be suitably and becomingly clothed upon any occasion where we may be expected to converse or be conversed to. (58:193)

During the latter part of the eighteen-hundreds, men's bathing attire consisted of either of two styles. The first had a trouser which extended to the knee, and a top with a round neck and



Figure 7. Bathing Dresses Worn With Bathing Tights, 1893 (57:53)

short sleeves. The suit was often trimmed with braid. The second style was a one-piece suit which looked much like men's long underwear, with short sleeves. Stripes were the vogue for this type of suit.

Two factors at this time affected the physical aspect of swimming and the swimming or bathing costume. The first was the reports of sightings of sea serpents off the East Coast of the United States. Great as was the fear of the sea serpents, the fear of sunburn was apparently greater. (37:11) This fear of sunburn was one reason why many people continued to keep themselves swathed while on the beach. Sun-bathing enjoyed a very brief popularity about this time, but it was described as not being a "pretty" fashion. (80)

Leisure-class women had a strict code of behavior to follow when bathing at beaches during this period. At least one male escort was required for every two ladies on the beach. Prevailing attitudes prevented women from venturing out on their own, especially since the beaches were considered hazardous for women.

Commercial patterns, too, were popular for bathing dresses. The Delineator in 1898 listed several versions by the Butterick Pattern Service. Desired features included a sailor-collar, pleats, and separate, as well as attached, pantaloons. Most styles required considerably less fabric than those forty years before. An average woman's bathing dress used only six to eight yards of material.

In the late eighteen-eighties and 'nineties, occasional advertisements for knitted bathing jerseys were appearing in bathing suit catalogs. These jerseys were form-fitting tunics that were





Figure 8. Bathers Reading About Sightings Of Sea Serpents Off The Eastern Coastline, 1890's (37:11)

mid-thigh in length with high necks and cap sleeves. Underneath this garment women wore trunks that extended to the knee. To complete this outfit the feminine reader was encouraged to buy a knitted skull cap. (72L24)(?)

Throughout the nineteenth century, bathing costume followed an impelling course toward becoming more functional. By the turn of the century many women knew how to swim, but the majority were still bathers. Thus bathing suits continued in use through the first quarter of the twentieth century. (72:23)

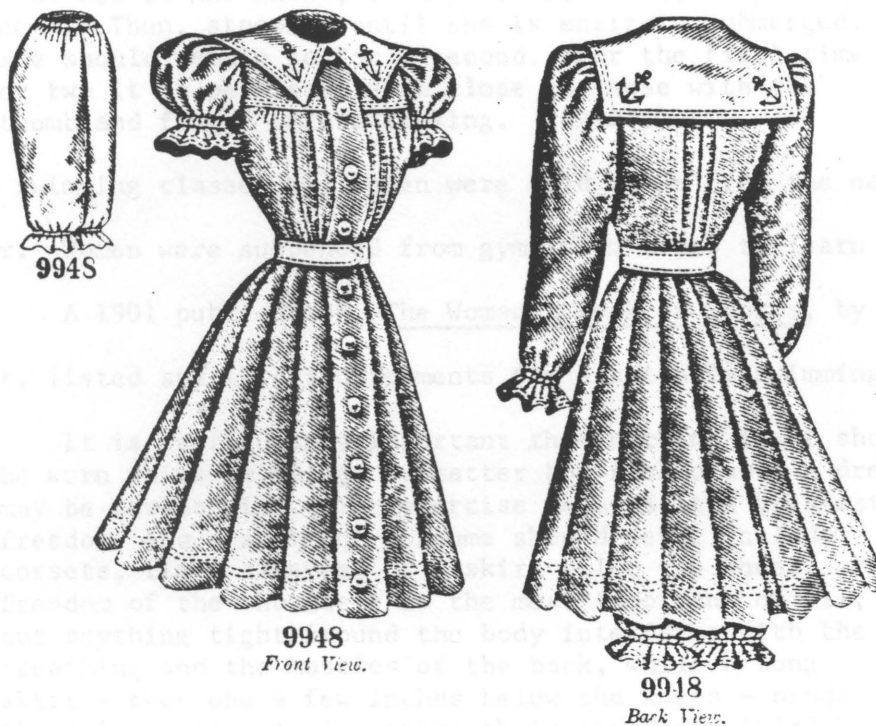


Figure 9. Lady's Bathing Costume Available through the Butterick Pattern Service, 1898 (Butterick Archives)

1900 to 1920

The prejudices against men and women going into the surf together had completely disappeared by the turn of the century. (6:318) This factor, as well as the fact that most public beaches had life-lines for swimmers to hold onto, encouraged more women to participate in water activities. The propriety of swimming for women seemed more at issue than the proper costume. Traditionally a lady might only dip and wade. Women were not expected to be athletic. In 1904, the magazine Outing capitulated, deciding that if women had to swim they should at least know how:

The beginner should first enter the water gradually, wade out to her knees, to her waist, and finally to her neck. Then, stooping until she is entirely submerged, she should remain so for a second. For the first time or two it is permissible to close the nose with the thumb and finger before sinking. (82:275)

Some swimming classes for women were held miles from the nearest water. Women were suspended from gymnasium ropes to learn the strokes.

A 1901 publication, The Woman's Book of Sports, by J. Parmly Paret, listed specific requirements for a suitable swimming costume:

It is particularly important that nothing tight should be worn while swimming, no matter how fashionable a dress may be for bathing. The exercise requires the greatest freedom, and a swimming costume should never include corsets, tight sleeves, or a skirt below the knees. The freedom of the shoulders is the most important of all, but anything tight around the body interferes with the breathing and the muscles of the back, while a long skirt - even one a few inches below the knees - binds the legs constantly in making their strokes. (92:74)

The above costume description illustrates the growing dichotomy between bathing dress and swimming dress and between fashionable styles and functional styles. (72:25)



Figure 10. Bathers Holding onto Guidelines and Each Other in the Surf, 1898 (Provided by L. Leach)

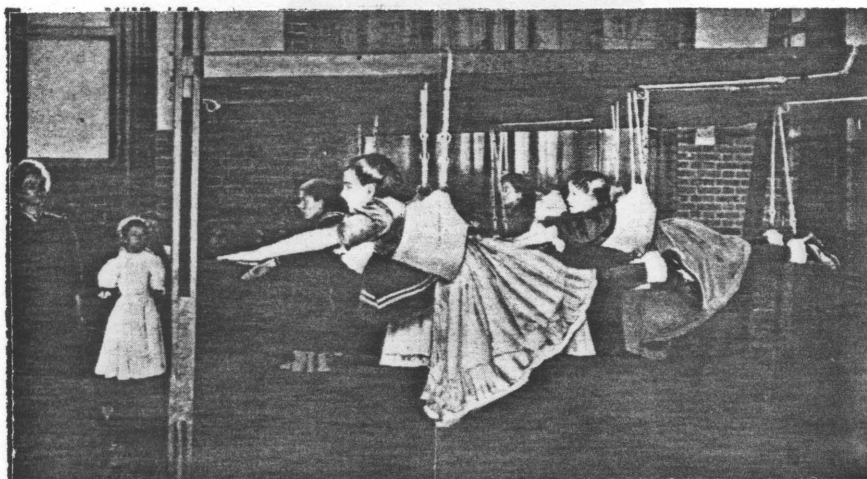


Figure 11. Women Students Learning to Swim, Suspended from Hoists, 1900's (Provided by L. Leach)



Figure 12. Costume Recommended  
For Swimming, 1901 (92:74)

Beach bathing or swimming was not a popular form of amusement for Sears Roebuck and Company customers in 1905 and 1906. Salt water

was inaccessible to the greater portion of the population who lived inland; inexpensive automobiles, vacations, and good roads were yet to come. Private swimming pools were rare and public pools were even rarer. While boys might swim in the creeks and men in the lakes or rivers, women seldom swam. Sears' catalog, because of the lack of demand for bathing suits for women, listed only two models in 1905.

The catalog description of one is as follows:

Ladies' Bathing Suit, with attached bloomers. Has large sailor collar trimmed with two rows white cord and one row of braid. Sleeves trimmed to correspond. Detachable skirt, waistband trimmed with rows of cord and a row of braid, trimmed around the bottom to correspond. Colors, black or navy blue with white trimmings. Price: \$2.98. (32:393)

On many American beaches, bathers were arrested if they appeared on the beach in their bloomers, without the skirt. In spite of the fact that these costumes covered their bodies far more completely than men's bathing suits covered theirs, the law continued to rule and thousands of arrests were made every season. (66:64)

Most bathing suits were dress-like in design. Silk suits, in colors other than black or navy blue, were making their appearance. (130:349) Cotton suits were also popular, in addition to the wool serge or flannel and alpaca suits being worn. Black or white stockings were still considered a necessary part of the costume. (79:175) One of the most popular styles of this period was the sailor dress, the style of the famous Peter Thomson being carried out in the bathing suit. (111:24)

Gentlemen continued to display themselves in suits that had been good enough for their grandfathers. The 1906 Sears Roebuck and

Company catalog lists:

Our One-Piece Best Cotton Bathing Suit ... made like a union suit (buttons over shoulder). It is like an ordinary shirt and knee-pants, but all in one piece, made in solid colors and fancy stripes.... Price 65¢. (32:395)

There was also listed a two-piece suit available in black or navy blue which resembled the suit worn since the late eighteen-hundreds.

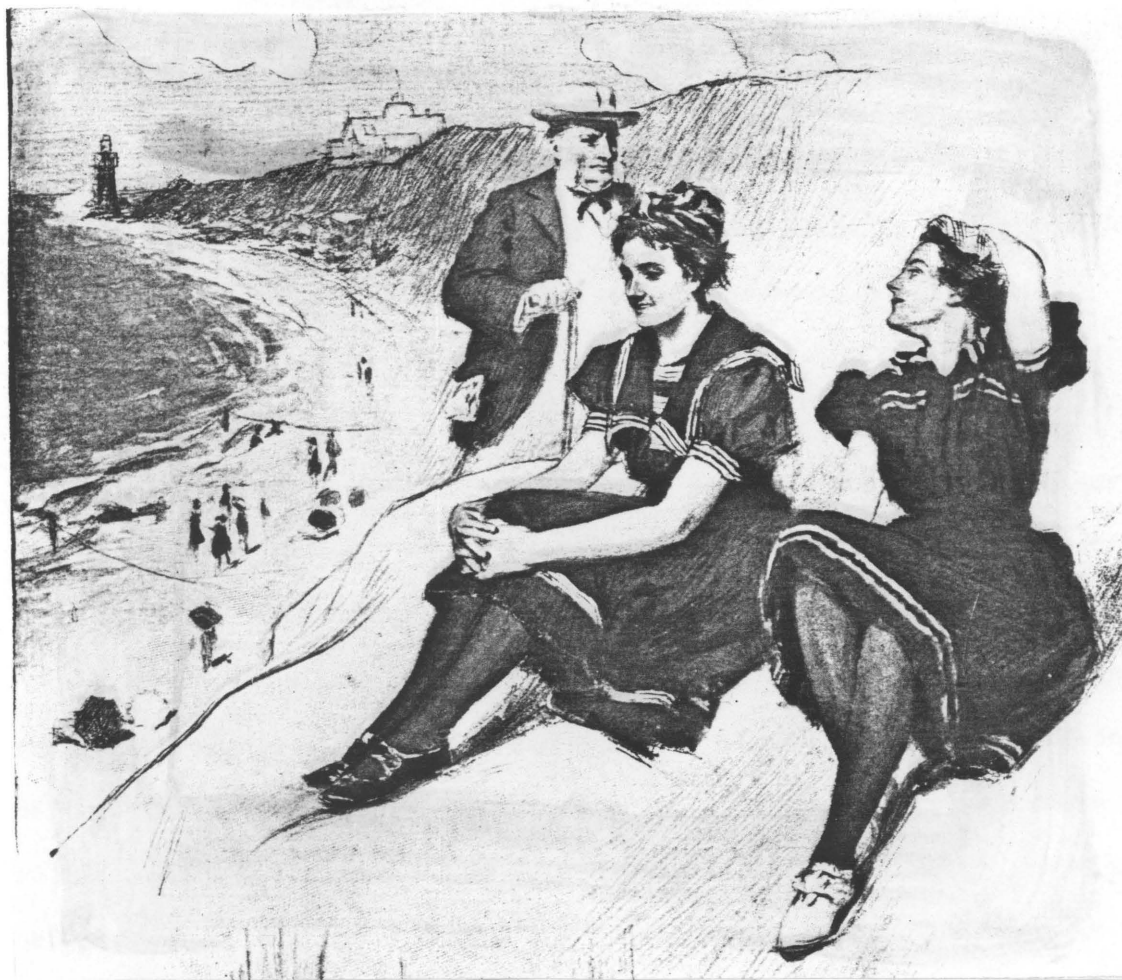


Figure 13. Sailor-Style Bathing Suits, 1901 (122:73)

A strong impetus was given the development of the swimming suit with the entrance of women into swimming as a competitive sport.

On September 5, 1909, Adeline Trapp wore a one-piece knitted swimming suit when she became the first woman to swim across the East River in New York through the treacherous waters of Hell Gate. Both the swimming suit and the event were part of a campaign devised by Wilbert Longfellow, of the United States Volunteer Corps, to encourage women to learn to swim. Longfellow ordered Adeline to wear a one-piece suit, but she found it impossible to locate one from American manufacturers. Adeline finally had a friend obtain one for her from England. This was the suit, in knitted, gray cotton, which she wore when she swam Hell Gate. (72:26)

The real turn of the century in bathing fashions came with the one-piece suit which originated in Australia and was popularized in the United States by the Australian swimming champion Annette Kellerman in 1910. As a young girl, Annette Kellerman took up the vigorous exercise of swimming as a means of curing a health condition with her legs. She later became proficient enough to instruct others and enter competitions. (22:317) When she arrived in the United States, she had earned quite a reputation for herself as a swimmer. Her vigorous swimming required a swimming costume which allowed for maximum freedom of the limbs while in the water. On one occasion, Annette went down to a beach in Boston and began to remove her clothing. After removing her stockings, she was arrested for indecent exposure. The judge told her she had to cover herself completely. For this reason, she donned a one-piece suit of knitted jersey with a colorful sash and bandana scarf added. According to press reports, this suit proved to be a greater shocker than any suit which had succeeded it. (111:24) On





Figure 14. Men's One-Piece Union Suit, 1900's



Figure 15. Mark Twain In A Bathing Suit, 1908 (94:43)

her first appearance at the beach in this outfit, Annette was arrested. Brought before the same judge she said, "You told me I had to be covered from head to toe, and I am!" The case was dismissed. (80)



Figure 16. Annette Kellerman In Her "Shocking" One-Piece Bathing Suit, 1910 (76:79)

Although the swimming suit worn by Annette Kellerman was the first major step in emancipating women from clothing which hampered their movements, most women did not wear it. Instead most

women retained their traditional suits. The reason for this was because the one-piece suit worn by Annette clung to the body, requiring the wearer to have a good figure. Women could camouflage their figures in the traditional style suits. (80) This was also the first time the feminine form had been revealed to such a degree, and the moral climate of this period prohibited this type of "display". Even though Annette Kellerman's swimming costume did not become a popular style, her ideas regarding swimming for women were very successful. In a 1915 magazine article she wrote:

There are two reasons why I urge swimming for girls, and, indeed, not for girls only, but for women of all ages as well: the first is because it is pleasurable; the second because it is beneficial.

So far as the pleasurable side of swimming is concerned, anyone who has played upon the beach knows the fascination of getting back to Nature and splashing about in the water.

Now I want to tell of the physical benefit of swimming for girls. Practically every muscle of the body is exercised in a healthy and pleasant manner.

The arm movements round out the breast, the shoulders and the neck. Furthermore, the movement of the arms is practically the same as that used by the doctors in artificial respiration, and so swimming expands the lungs, strengthens the heart and improves its actions.

The leg movement rounds out the hips and makes the ankles slender. It also strengthens the muscles of the stomach and the membranes which surround and protect the vital organs.

Another beneficial effect of swimming is seen in the improved complexion and texture of the skin. The exercise increases the circulation of the blood and opens the pores; the water sweeping over the body carries away the impurities and cleanses the skin thoroughly. (69:10)

In 1911, knickerbockers under the skirt had been abandoned in favor of shorts, which usually protruded three or four inches below

the skirt and ended just above the knee. The sleeve, which in 1908 had reached the elbow, had almost disappeared. (79:175) Bathing costumes still followed the main lines of contemporary dress, with high or low necklines and shoulder cap sleeves. Form-fitting knitted wool jersey bathing suits had gained in popularity. (130:359)

In the summer of 1913, The McCall Book of Fashions previewed several bathing suit patterns for misses and children. Fabrics recommended to be used included sateen, serge or silk, in flowered designs as well as dark or pastel solids. Also recommended was rubberized bathing fabric, to keep the garment from clinging to the figure when wet. The fiber content of this special fabric is not known, but it did prevent the suit from clinging to the wearer's body. (95) The book stated that "women of conservative taste rarely choose any color but black or navy blue." (McCall Archives)

The decade from 1910 to 1920 was a crucial period in the history of swimming and its proper costume. Popular attitudes were changing in favor of the woman who swam, but there was a cultural lag between public opinion and public policies. The American Red Cross, which began its water safety program in 1914, taught women to swim but did not admit women as Life Saving Corps members until 1920. (72:26)

In 1913, a woman doctor affiliated with the Rush Medical College of Chicago was arrested for wearing what the police considered an immodest bathing suit. The doctor had asked the beach matron if she thought there would be any objection to her bathing in bloomers. The matron said she did not think so. After entering the water several

times, the manager of the beach informed the doctor that she would have to wear a skirt. Finding the skirt extremely hazardous to swimming, the doctor discarded it at the water's edge. She was immediately ordered to put her skirt back on by the life guard, who said, "If you have not decency enough to wear a skirt, get out of the water." When she would not do as he said, the life guard sent for a policeman, who arrested the doctor as she exited the water. She was booked on a charge of disorderly conduct. The case was tried the next day and the court held: first, that a person could not be held for violating rules which did not exist in writing; and, second, the doctor's suit, made of heavy wool material, consisting of bloomers, canvas shoes and stockings, was far more decent than those worn by men. (1:11) On an Atlantic City beach that same year, a mob assaulted a woman because she appeared in a short bathing suit. (32:395) Women were not the only ones arrested for bathing suit violations. In June 1914, a prominent real estate man was arrested for wearing a sleeveless bathing suit. (82:331) Only two years later, in 1916, the sleeveless bathing suit top for men appeared.

An interesting development stressed in the second decade of the century was the provision for special recreational facilities. The absence of natural bodies of water, lakes, streams, and beaches was compensated for by the steady growth of swimming pools. (35:11) After 1910 most of the city recreation developments included swimming pools. (35:187) These new pools provided recreation for those who had not previously participated in water sports. This in turn, increased the demand for suitable swimwear.

In 1915, Jantzen Knitting Mills introduced the knitted rib stitch to swimwear. (It was first produced on the same machine that knitted cuffs for sweaters . . . and fitted with the snug elasticity of cuffs.) The two-piece suit was sleeveless and had a deep-V or scooped neckline. The suit was black with orange stripes and weighed only eight pounds when wet. Matching stockings provocatively bared dimpled knees. Most knitted swimming suits were either one-piece or two-piece; the trunks were attached or separate, but they always extended a few inches below the brief skirt. It was this type of swimming costume which evolved into the garment that dominated the fashion pages of the mid-1920's. (72:28)



Figure 17. Jantzen Knitting Mills' Rib-Knit Suit, 1915 (32:399)

Chic women's magazines were reluctant to admit that a utilitarian bathing costume existed. In 1917, Vogue acknowledged three styles of bathing costumes. The most popular style was the one which had been worn since the nineteenth century, with black and navy blue being the favored colors. (72:26) The second style acknowledged was the chemise suit. The third style was the sleeveless knitted jersey suit, which was described as being intended for the woman who "swims expertly". (72:27) Although many women's swimming suits were considered sleeveless, some were built up under the arm as a concession to the demands of modesty, since most women had not yet begun to shave their underarms. (72:28) (The safety razor had been marketed as early as 1903, but most men continued to use their straight edge for another ten years. (68:516) Only in the 'teens, when the safety razor was gaining in popularity, did it become a part of most households, and only then did women begin to use it.)

Bathing beach regulations adopted in New Orleans in 1917 provide a glimpse of the accepted beach attire:

General- no all-white or flesh-colored suits permitted, or suits that expose the chest lower than a line drawn on a level with the arm pits.

Ladies- blouse and bloomer suits may be worn with or without stockings, provided the blouse has quarter-arm sleeves or closefitting arm holes, and provided bloomers are full and not shorter than four inches above the knee. Jersey knit suits may be worn, with or without stockings, provided the suit has a skirt or skirt effect, with quarter-arm sleeves or closefitting armholes and trunks not shorter than four inches above the knee, and the bottom of the



Figure 18. Bathing Costumes Worn By Mack Sennett's  
Motion-Picture Bathing Girls In A 1916 Film (101:80)





Figure 19. Butterick Pattern Service's "Sleeveless" Suit For Women, 1919 (Butterick Archives)

skirt must not be shorter than two inches above the bottom of trunks.

Men- Men's suits must have skirt or skirt effect, or shirt worn outside of trunks, except when flannel knee pants with belt and flyfront are used. Trunks must not be shorter than four inches above the knee, and the skirt or shirt must not be shorter than two inches above the bottom of trunks. (15:537)

These regulations later became the accepted rules on many American beaches. However, in 1919, Olympic swimmer Ethelda Bleibtrey was cited for "nude" swimming on a Manhattan (New York) beach; she had removed her stockings before going for a swim. (56:35)

Changes in bathing accessories had also occurred during this period. Rubber bathing shoes were being worn as well as high-laced canvas or fabric boots. Bathing caps of checked cotton, which were rubberized on the inside, and red rubber caps were popular. During and after World War I, colored rubber caps began to be worn, most of them ornamented with different-colored rubber flowers. (79:176)

These first rubber caps were hot and did not keep the hair very dry. (95)

In 1917, the lack of workers in war plants and other occupational areas led to the mass hiring of women to fill positions left empty by the men who joined the armed forces. With this broader participation in the economic life of the community went the successful assertion of equality in almost every phase of social activity. It was dramatized once again by the younger generation's post-war revolt against conventional mores, but had a much more substantial basis in permanent changes in customs and manners. These



Figure 20. Newspaper Photograph Showing The Ways People Enjoyed Their Leisure Time, 1919 (Provided by L. Leach)

changes were manifest in women's fashions, increasing participation in athletics, and many other forms of outdoor activity. (46:308)

The First World War hastened the trend toward new moral standards. Adolescent precocity regarding sex characterized the era. (132:312) About this time, a Hollywood producer, Mack Sennett, conceived the idea of photographing professional beauties and musical-comedy actresses in form-fitting swimming suits for publicity. (51:54) These form-fitting suits aroused wild howls of moral indignation and the future of the country was held to be at stake. Mack Sennett also incorporated women wearing these suits into his comedy films as early as 1916. (101:80) Such suits, though, were worn only by motion picture bathing girls.

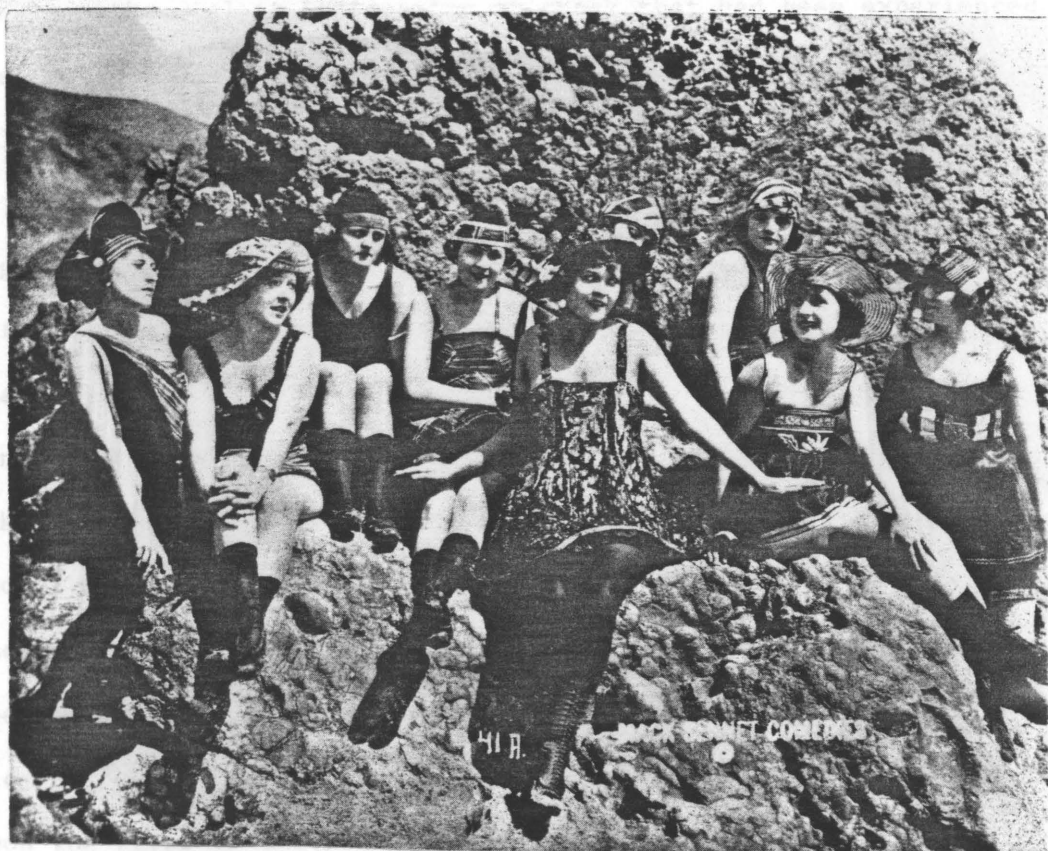


Figure 21. Mack Sennett's Bathing Beauties, 1920's (51:64)

1920 to 1930

A general desire to shake off the restraints of puritanism and to upset the long-standing conventions of decorum prevailed during the nineteen-twenties. This desire had begun in the 'teens, with close dancing, modern art, and a newfound freedom brought by the war. (5:134)

Protestantism, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, continued to demand modesty in dress, as did the Puritan religions which dominated the middle and lower classes in the United States. Until the nineteen-twenties in the Western world, the exposure of women's legs to the knees was considered to be the height of immodesty. Suddenly this taboo was lifted and women's legs came into view without creating the violent indignation or shock that had been experienced in the past, although many people wanted laws making the shorter skirts illegal. (76:76)

The greatest impact upon society in the 'twenties was sex. Sigmund Freud, whose first book on psychoanalysis gained popularity after World War I, accorded sex was the central and pervasive force that moved mankind. Freud stated that the first requirement of good mental health was to have an uninhibited sex life. (3:99) Movie-maker Cecil B. DeMille concluded that Americans were interested in two things: money and sex. He displayed his views on the screen and had great success at the box office. He was imitated by many and soon sex became a part of the American trinity. (32:396) A popular riddle of the "flapper" era provides an example of the effect of sex upon the lives of the young:

"Why do the debutantes wear their hair pulled down over their ears?" The ribald answer was, "So that they will have something left to show their husbands after they are married!" (76:76)

The second factor influencing society in the 'twenties was the effect of women's growing independence of the drudgeries of house-keeping. The expansive single-residence home of an earlier day yielded to the compact apartment dwelling, making less claim upon the housekeeper's time and energy.

Women were learning how to make lighter work of the preparation of meals. Sales of canned foods were growing, the number of delicatessen stores had increased three times as fast as the population during the decade 1910-1920, the output of bakeries increased by sixty-percent during the decade 1914-1924. Much of what had once been housework was now either moving out of the home entirely or being simplified by machinery. The use of commercial laundries, for instance, increased by fifty-seven percent between 1914 and 1924. Electric washing machines and electric irons were coming to the aid of those who still did their washing at home. The housewife was learning to telephone her shopping orders, to get her clothes ready-made and spare herself the rigors of dressmaking, to buy a vacuum cleaner, and to emulate the lovely carefree girls in magazine advertisements. (3:96)

All of these meant more leisure time for women, and this was reflected in their increased activities outside the home. (132:11)

The third factor influencing society in the 'twenties was the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution in August of 1920, which gave women the right to vote. This act consolidated women's position as man's equal. (3:96)

Research has determined that during periods in which women sought to put themselves on an equal footing with men, the feminine mode in dress changed swiftly. (65:215) Miss Louise Rosine, a Los Angeles novelist, emboldened by her newly-won right to vote, tried rolling

down her stockings at an Atlantic City beach, and was promptly jailed. (86:29)

A new American institution caught the public eye during the summer of 1921 -- the bathing beauty. In the winter of 1921, Harry Finley, an Atlantic City, New Jersey newspaperman, attended a meeting of Circulation Managers who were seeking ways to increase the circulation of their respective newspapers. The group decided to run a Popularity Contest in each of the various cities to select the most popular young lady. The winner would be awarded a vacation in Atlantic City. All of those winners were then entered in the National Beauty tournament which was held on September 8, 1921 in Atlantic City. (This date was chosen as a ploy to keep tourists around for an extra week after Labor Day.) (112:99) The winner of the Bathing Revue was to be called "Miss America". The girls were judged for beauty in form and face, wearing the bathing suits of the day. "For the time being the censor ban on bare knees and skin-tight bathing suits was suspended," wrote an astonished reporter, "and thousands of spectators gasped as they applauded the girls." (3:80) The winner, however, wore an old-style, full-skirted black bathing suit, which bared only her knees; the others were less conventional.

The one-piece suit became overnight the orthodox wear for bathing beauties, although taffetas and sateens remained good enough for sea-going bathers for the next couple of seasons. (3:80) The tight bathing suits brought joy to the hearts of rotogravure editors and proprietors of beach resorts. With the aid of photographers, the female form became the "handmaiden" of commerce. (6:288) Advertisers

found that a photograph of a bathing beauty was helpful in selling anything from automobiles to mucilage. (32:398)

Voices of protest were raised, but little attention was paid to them. The Baptist Church denounced bathing beauty contests as evil things tending to "lower true and genuine respect for womanhood." The National Council of Catholic Women agreed, condemning the beauty shows as "an exploitation of feminine pulchritude." (32:397) In a



Figure 22. Contestants In The First Miss America Pageant, 1921 (101:80) Miss America 1921 Is Second From The Left



resolution adopted in 1924, the Young Women's Christian Association charged that the Atlantic City bathing parade exposed the young women participants to serious perils. "The notoriety is unsettling. The shocking costumes which such contests encourage certainly call for protests from organizations in the girls' welfare," the letter stated. (125:252)

One-piece suits did not gain respectability for general wear overnight. In 1922, bathers in one-piece knitted suits, with shoulder straps and short legs, were arrested on a Chicago beach which was patrolled by policewomen who measured the armholes and necklines. (56:35) The knitted swimming suit which achieved dominance over the bathing suit in the 'twenties was similar to its earlier version except for two features: 1) the armhole and the neckline were lower; and, 2) the buttons on the shoulder straps were eliminated. Most bathing suits, in the first part of the decade, were still accompanied by stockings. Instructions on a 1921 McCall Pattern Company bathing suit pattern reminded women to..."wear dark stockings. It is unseemly and unhealthy to bare your limbs." (71)

Bathing beach regulations regarding swimming and bathing costume had changed quite a bit from those in the previous decade. Bridgeport, Connecticut, held that there were "no regulations on suits. We find the public fairly sane on this matter. However, we do not consider underclothes as bathing suits." Newport, Rhode Island, regulations stated, "As to bathing costumes, the policy of the management has been to allow the good taste of its patrons to govern this subject." (17:569) It was stated that most of the objectionable

attire was worn by women. Men's costumes were not varied, but consisted of the ordinary bathing jersey, and the customary blue trunks, supported by a belt. (17:570) Atlantic City, New Jersey, adopted an ordinance which prevented bathers from walking on the public sidewalks, streets, or highways near the boardwalk wearing only a bathing suit or garment. A garment worn over the suit which extended from the shoulders to the knees was required. This ordinance also applied to those bathers using public transportation. (17:570) The ordinance was adopted to prevent the bathing suit or garment from being seen out of its suitable surroundings. Generally, under law, both men and women were permitted a degree of nudity which would be regarded as indecent exposure on the city streets. (76:177)

The social and industrial upheaval which had occurred during the prior twenty-five years caused a phenomenal growth in the interest of leisure. The hours of labor had decreased to the extent that twenty hours of leisure were added to each worker's week. (30:1) This factor, as well as women's lessened housekeeping responsibilities, provided the opportunity for increased outdoor activities. Public recreation was coming of age. An increasing number of cities were establishing recreation commissions, boards, and departments; cities were spending money for playgrounds, community centers, and swimming pools. (30:2)

Swimming gained popularity because it was an activity fully open to both sexes and all classes of people. (44:356) One did not even need to own a swimming suit to participate, for there were concessionaires who rented suits.



Figure 23. Girls Wearing Old-Style  
Bathing Suits In 1922 (101:81)

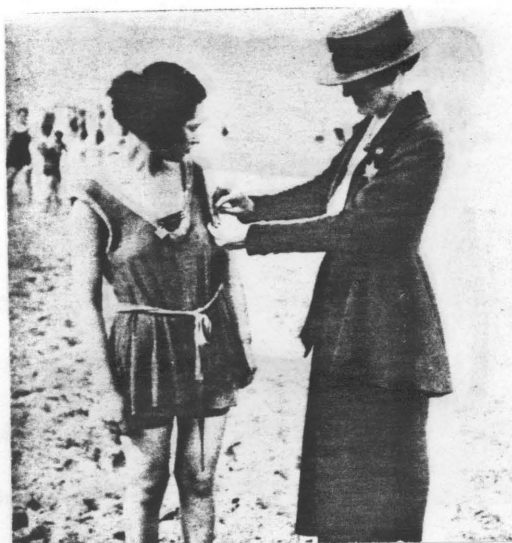


Figure 24. Plainclothes  
Policewoman Measuring The  
Armhole And Neckline Of A  
Bather's Suit, 1920's (67:  
165)

The spread of leisure to the lower and middle class groups had the effect of intensifying the importance of fashion in their lives. Not only did people have more time to think about fashion, but leisure provided the opportunity to wear fashionable clothes. Leisure time often led to boredom and a search for amusement and novelty, both of which found direct outlets in fashion change. (65:210)

Bathing dresses had almost disappeared by 1923, with the widespread acceptance of its functional counterpart. The term "bathing suit" no longer referred to a special type of costume but became interchangeable with the term "swimming suit". (72:32) A 1923 advertisement for a swimming suit, however, continued to dissociate the two:

No! No! Not a bathing suit! No! The Wil Wite is a swimming suit. The difference is great - very great. A bathing suit is something in which to "Sun" oneself and wear on the beach. A swimming suit is a garment made expressly for those who swim. It is free from frills and furbelows. It follows the form with the same sincerity that a neat silk stocking clings to a trim ankle. It fits when dry or wet...it is a real swimming suit. (61:5)

By 1923, all of America were learning to swim, and a girl could bare her arms and a good portion of her legs without risking gossip. Jantzen Knitting Mills introduced a suit which "changed bathing to swimming" as Jantzen advertised it. The swimming suit style was designed for women, but was equally popular for men, too. The styles were practically interchangeable. There were some horrified comments, however, because the man's suit was cut lower and it was possible to spy an expanse of hairy chest! (Jantzen Archives) The tassel cap proved to be a popular accessory.

Until this time, swimsuits had been rather shapeless, with no bust or waist definition. The suit introduced in 1925 by Manchester Knitting Mills (changed in 1941 to Cole of California), which was designed by Fred Cole, lowered the back of the swimsuit eight inches, and defined the bust and waist. This suit also made news in the fashion world by replacing the subdued blacks, browns and grays of past seasons with bright colors and bold stripes. Floral prints were also popular. Most suits were belted at the waist or just below. Jackets or capes designed to "cover-up" the suit became the necessary accessory when off the beach.

For men, the vogue was the one-piece suit which had a short skirt and deep armholes. These suits often had narrow straps to keep



Figure 25. Jantzen Suits That "Changed Bathing To Swimming", 1923 (Jantzen Archives)

the front and back from gaping. Brilliant colors such as purple, yellow, or scarlet were popular. Often the skirt and trunks were contrasting colors. Stripes of every variety and shade as well as orange and black combinations were favorites. (107:421) Men's

clothing was becoming "freer", and was a symbol of the revolt against the conformity imposed on men by the daily routine of business.



Figure 26. Ladies' Swimming Suit Designed By Fred Cole, 1925 (Courtesy Cole of California)

In 1926 a nineteen-year-old girl became the first woman to swim the English Channel. Gertrude Ederle, an American, donned a two-piece swimming suit, consisting of brassiere and shorts that bared her midriff. Her brief costume was chosen for athletic reasons. Gertrude needed freedom of movement for her limbs. (16:55) (It would be almost fifteen years before this style would achieve popularity.) Gertrude's swim provided the world with an unforgettable example of fortitude and stamina; but more than that, her feat was a great advertisement for feminine swimming. (34:14)

The 1926 Butterick Pattern Service swimming suit patterns for women recommended heavy wool jersey as the most practical fabric. The belief, prevalent for many years, was that a wool suit was needed for warmth. (72:31) Men's swimming suit styles were also offered. One pattern included the shorter leg pants with a tank top. The McCall Pattern Company offered a "Charleston" flapper-style suit, with sequin and bead embroidery. (71) It is doubtful that this suit was intended for wear in the water.

A new style emerged during this period called the "dressmaker" suit, which was tighter and more revealing than most suits, but had frills. These suits copied evening dresses, but were shorter. (99:70) The popular fabrics were jersey and silk. (16:57) Once women achieved comfort and freedom in their swimming suits, they decided the suits needed style and glamour. Patterned knits and velour were introduced. Jewelry was a popular fashion accessory, even on the beach. (33:288)





Figure 27. Ladies' Bathing Suit And Beach Robe Styles Available From The Butterick Pattern Service, 1926 (Butterick Archives)



Figure 28. Dressmaker Style Bathing Suit 1929 (Provided by L. Leach)

Although women were accepted in athletics and had achieved a wider role in public life, white, untanned skin was still the ideal in the 'twenties. Sunproof creams, beach coats and beach umbrellas were familiar sights on most beaches. (72:30)

Men were getting braver in their swimming suit styles. By 1928, a "legless" suit had been introduced. This one-piece skirted suit had legs so short that it gave the impression that the bather was wearing only a shirt. (107:423) The rotogravure pages of the newspapers reflected the profusion of striped swimming suits and striped beach robes for men popular at the most fashionable beaches.

The social and psychological climate of the nineteen-twenties was a time of "ballyhoo and whoopee", overlying a stratum

of moral disorientation and cynicism, especially among the young. This was a time when all the inherited modes of love, social intercourse, public decorum, dress and speech were under assault. (119:80)

The general acceptance of sport as part of every woman's daily life, and subsequent changes in her wardrobe soon accustomed the eye to an exposure of the female form which would have been unthinkable in the first decade of the century. (55:122) This, in turn, had a lasting effect on many categories of dress. (65:211)

#### 1930 to 1940

The packed beaches of the nineteen-twenties and 'thirties were demonstrative of the changes in attitude that had taken place in regard to swimming since those nineteenth-century days when mixed public bathing was first daringly condoned. The bathing dress of women was symbolic of a revolutionary change in the status of the female in American society. The bathing costume was one of the first feminine assertions indicating the eventual break with tradition regarding concealment of the body and the evolution of garments appropriate for varied activities. (93:161) Nothing more clearly demonstrated that the age of Victoria had come to an end. This outward and visible change was a symbol of a deeper revolution in standards, ideals, health and physique. (35:29)

The diminishing coverage of the swimming suit was related to the changing attitude toward sun exposure. For years women had protected their skin to prevent any unladylike healthy appearance. The modern cult of sun-bathing originated in Switzerland where Dr.

Charles Rollier effected cures in the treatment of tuberculosis and other diseases by subjecting his patients to beneficial doses of the sun's rays. (76:77) If exposure of the skin to sunlight was the way to health, then obviously the greater the portion of skin exposed the better. (77:242) There were lotions to help the sunworshiper acquire a rich, even tan, and eventually creams for the impatient who wished an instant tan. (72:30)

Soon the overskirt of the bathing costume was reduced to almost nothing; the armholes were enlarged and the décolletage was deepened. Swimming suit manufacturers created backless suits, some plunging a scandalous nineteen inches. These suits were, however, no more backless than the evening dresses of the same period. (72:30) The backless evening dresses were designed to provide women a means of showing off their tans. (79:152) Halter neck suits and suits with cut-out sections which bared portions of the midriff were also introduced.

Some objections to the new swimming attire were voiced. The Toledo, Ohio, Council of Catholic Women protested the indecencies flaunted by scanty and suggestive dress worn at public and semi-public places for water sports and recreation. Part of the protest read:

One of the greatest evils that beset the youth of today is the indecent dress of women and girls who frequent public bathing beaches and club swimming pools. Bathing beauty contests, swimming exhibitions, participated in by both men and women are nothing short of an insult to those who try to maintain standards of Christian life and truth. (43:592)

Protests such as this influenced some but the majority of people continued to pursue the fashion.



Figure 29. Backless Swimming Suits, 1935 (27)

The Great Depression forced leisure hours upon millions of people. During 1931 and 1932, when factories and business offices were short of work, general reductions in working hours were common. Part of the intent was to "spread the work" and partly to appease workers whose pay had to be reduced. The result was that millions of people found themselves with free Saturdays during part of the year, if not the entire year. (4:118) Perhaps no change that took place during this decade more sharply altered the weekly routine of millions of men and women. The long, slow trend toward shorter work periods and longer play periods had been sharply accelerated. (4:119)

The government instituted the New Deal Recreation Program directed toward putting unemployed men to work. Their effort made motor parkways, public bathing beaches, playgrounds, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and swimming pools available. A total of 805 new swimming pools were built nationwide. (24:43) According to the 1935 Year Book of National Recreation the number of public bathing beaches, public golf courses, ice skating arenas, and swimming pools in 2204 communities had doubled since 1925. (4:119) Thus the Depression and the New Deal began the trend away from spectator sport toward participant sport. The recorded attendance at public bathing beaches and municipal pools in the nineteen-thirties was almost equalled to the estimated annual attendance at all spectator sports. Also, such figures did not take into account the throngs of swimmers of whom no record could be kept. (44:355)

The movies, the spread of participant sports, the cult of sun-bathing, and bathing beauty contests, all played a part in stripping down the bathing suits of 1935 to a minimum of fabric. (32:399) The maillot, borrowed from the Riviera, was the first slinky swimming suit. It was skintight and cut very low in back. (16:57) Men's bathing suits became so streamlined that a reporter referred to them as "glorified supporters". (107:425) Trunks in 1935 were of solid color knitted wool with a white belt and side stripes. Bathing suit tops began to disappear, popularizing the use of beach robes and shirts. In many parts of the country, men were not allowed on beaches without wearing a shirt. In Atlantic City, cries of "We'll have no gorillas on our beaches!" could be heard. General emphasis shifted from female

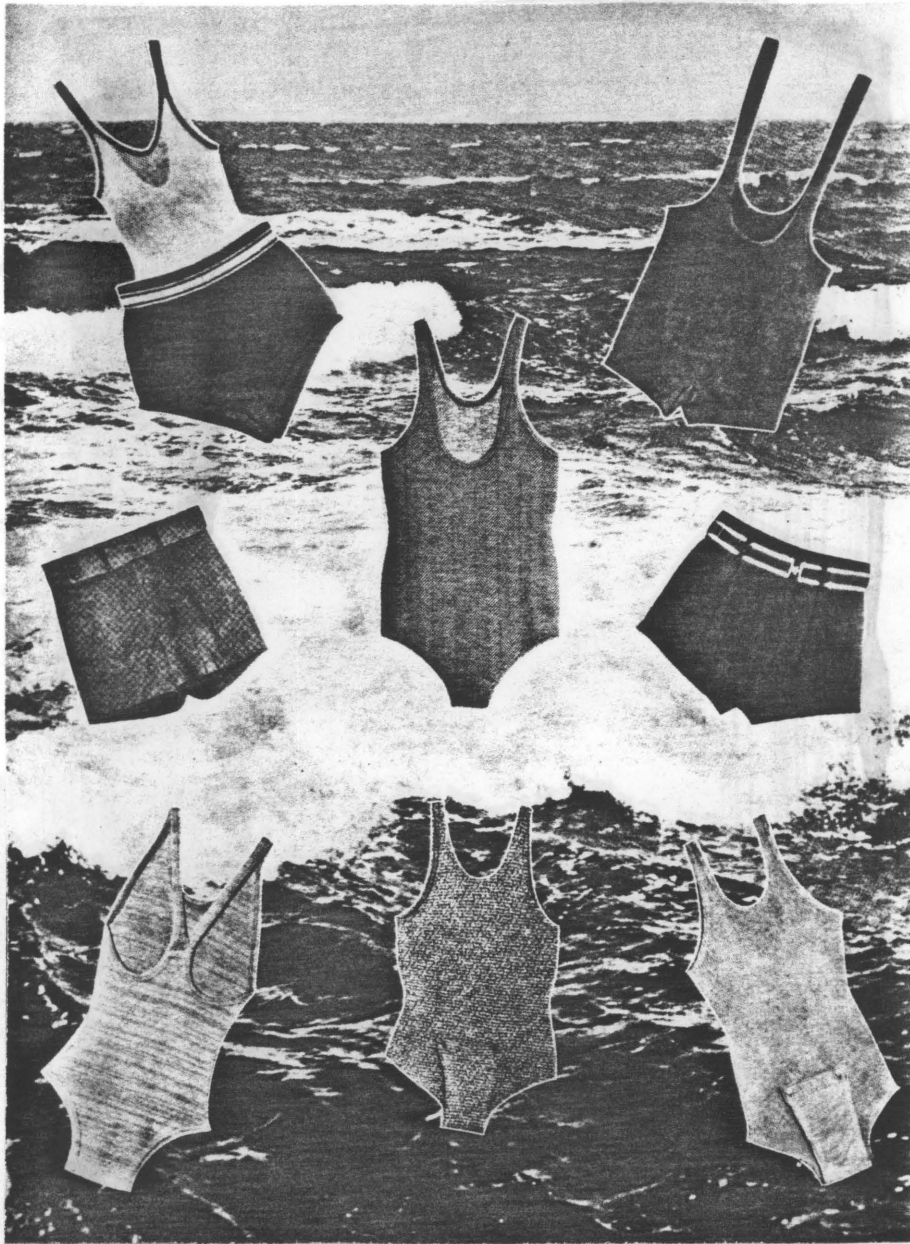


Figure 30. Popular Men's Bathing Suit Styles, 1930's  
(107:425)

Figure 32. Men's Bathing Suits  
Upper Detailing, 1930's  
Trunks, 1930's

attire to male covering with the male modesty campaign started in Atlantic City. The campaign spread to several other localities.

(109:27) Regulations listed in 1937 indexed where and where-not a man had to wear a shirt.

About this time, Jantzen Knitting Mills made a man's suit with a detachable top. A zipper held it to the trunks, but if a swimmer wanted, he could detach it. (98:48) The word "zipper" itself was a name created by the B. F. Goodrich Company in 1922 for its slide closure (which had been developed in cooperation with the man who invented the original "clasp locker" in 1893). (107:526) Zippers had not as yet been successfully introduced into men's clothing. Buttons were cheaper, and union leaders created issues about training workers to install them. (107:525) The zipper which was in this suit by Jantzen was truly a trend-setter in the men's-wear industry.



Figure 32. Man's Suit With Zipper Detaching Top And Trunks, 1930's (107:426)

**For Men Only**

Few restrictions exist to-day for women bathers on American beaches, but men must watch their step, or, rather, their shirts, when bathing or sunning in certain localities. This index shows where to wear or not to wear shirts with trunks:

<i>Top</i>	<i>Topless</i>
Atlantic City	Baltimore
Birmingham	Columbus, Ohio
El Paso	Detroit
Evansville, Ind.	Oklahoma City
Minneapolis	Portland, Ore.
St. Paul	New York
St. Louis	Seattle
Springfield, Mass.	Malibu, Calif.
Syracuse, N. Y.	Long Beach, Calif.
Toledo	Washington
Galveston	Virginia Beach
	Southampton, L. I.
	Great Lakes
	Miami and
	Palm Beach

Figure 31. Posted Regulations Specifying On Which Beaches Men Could Or Could Not Go Topless, 1937 (109:27)



Brassiers and shorts which bared the midriff were making their appearance in 1936. The Butterick Pattern Service offered a pattern for a suit which also included a wrap-around skirt. Florals and polka dots were as popular as the solid colors. Velour, in rich colors, was the desirable fabric but wool jersey was still being worn.

Rubber found a definite use in swimming suits with the introduction in the mid-thirties of Lastex - a yarn made with a core of rubber wrapped by a thread of another fiber. (72:31) Lastex provided woven fabrics with a degree of elasticity, giving the wearer a sag-free, wrinkle-free suit.

In 1936, Margit Fellegi joined forces with Fred Cole at Manchester Knitting Mills. She introduced chrysalis shirring which softened the skirtless suit, beach accessories such as a skirt over a swimsuit for a sundress look, and the strapless suit. Margit also developed a new process, capable of shirring such fabrics as cotton print or velvet with Lastex thread. (Cole Archives)

Having exhausted the novelty effects of knitted swim suits, the decorative possibilities of woven fabrics were explored. Swimming suits of woven fabrics were made with flared skirts, ruffles, and frills. (72:31) Since the beginning of the nineteen-twenties, costumes for swimming had been basically dictated by the need for freedom of movement, and lightness and comfort, sometimes to the exclusion of elegance. (23:411) The dressmaker suit retained its popularity throughout the decade, with satin and taffeta being the favorite fabrics in the late 'thirties. Rayon, a man-made fiber, was being blended with other fibers and used in swimsuits. Playsuits were

being worn in the place of swimsuits in many areas as they could be worn in or out of the water without rebuke.

Mrs. Bert Schnurer manufactured and designed bathing suits from the 1900's through the 'thirties. Her main objective had been to urge women to reveal their good points rather than conceal them. Her career began when her husband's petticoat firm added a line of mohair bathing suits. She began designing suits; her first was of taffeta with numerous ruffles all around it. The business grew. She designed (on orders from retail stores) all the beach attire for Alice Roosevelt's trousseau when she married Nicholas Longworth in 1906. She also designed the black velvet bathing dresses worn by Mrs. Oscar Hammerstein. With the advent of wool jersey as a fabric, Mrs. Schnurer utilized the simple and revealing qualities of the fabric to create a suit with bows on the shoulders and cut to the waist in back. (62:96)

Mrs. Schnurer created the cretonne beach coats popular in the 'twenties. She was one of the first to introduce the overall for beach wear and to use lastex as a fabric for bathing suits. In 1931, she introduced the combination of a bra-top and pants with a good expanse of bare midriff in between, but found it so rash a novelty that even her own models shrank from putting it on. (62:96)

In 1935, Mrs. Schnurer copied a suit which she saw on the Riviera and introduced it in America. The suit was made of loosely woven black silk net, with three "accents" of black satin, strategically placed, two above the waist and one below. When the suit was displayed in a Fifth Avenue (New York) store window, it



Figure 33. Dressmaker Style Bathing Suits, 1939 (Jantzen Archives)

attracted such crowds that sidewalk traffic was obstructed and two policemen had to be called. The black net suit (to which a lining was later added) became known as the fish-net bathing suit. (62:96)

Rose Marie Reid began designing and manufacturing swimsuits for women in 1937. She designed suits with built-in bras, a "stay-down leg" (made possible by a crotch of novel design), a special back band cut on the bias which eliminated gaping, and "tummy-control"

panels, all patented features. Later she persuaded the mills to make a water-resistant elastic material of rubber and acetate that retained the lines of the design. (117:166) Mrs. Reid's designs brought high fashion into bathing suits, a feature generally lacking until she came into the field.

1940 to 1960

At the beginning of the nineteen-forties women were continuing to wear several of the popular styles of the 'thirties: the dress-maker suit, the maillot, and one- and two-piece suits. The bare midriff look had begun to extend itself to the maillot. Bustline femininity was being emphasized for the first time and the maillot gained true acceptance with the introduction of the chrysalis drape. Laton taffeta, a new fabric, was introduced for use in women's suits. The short skating skirt was a popular feature for one-piece suits.

The entrance of the United States into World War II caused the nation to cut back on unnecessary uses of materials. Since rubber was needed for the war effort, elasticized yarn production was curtailed. (111:25) Fabric shortages encouraged the trend toward simpler, scantier styles. Government restrictions halted the production of zippers and metal fastenings. (126/256) These factors profoundly affected the swimwear industry. The influence of the war upon the styling of swimsuits could be viewed in the stars, stripes, and chevrons trimming them. Margit Fellegi's contribution to war-time swimwear was called the Swoon suit. It was a two-piece suit which laced up the sides of the trunk, featured a tie bra, and was

*Colo  
material  
sheet*

constructed entirely without rubber. The most popular color for this suit was parachute white.

Soldiers, lacking the companionship of women during the war, substituted pin-ups. The men plastered the doors of their lockers, the walls of their Quonset huts, even the insides of their helmet liners with girlie pictures. (126:122) One of the most famous pin-ups was Betty Grable in a one-piece bathing suit.

The bra and pants began to overtake the one-piece suit in popularity in the mid-forties. The bra was shrinking and becoming tighter and the skirt covered the pants. Occasionally the skirt was pleated. (16:57) The tie back was a popular feature on both one- and two-piece suits. Polka dots and flowered prints were favorites.

Men's suits continued to consist of the basic shorts without a top. Many styles were belted, and solid colors were the most fashionable, although some prints and checks were available. The fabrics used for these suits were wool and cotton.

Almost all United States beaches had given up trying to regulate bathing suits. (16:57) The New York City Council, however, was still trying in 1942. Their new ordinance stated:

It shall be unlawful for any person over the age of twelve to appear on any street in the city, unless such street is within 200 feet of the boundary of a public bathing beach and boardwalk, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks, dressed in bathing or swimming attire or in a halter, shorts, sun suit, play suit, or attire of like nature, without wearing a wrap or covering which shall conceal that portion of the wearer's body extending from the shoulders to a point midway between the hips and the knees. (14:70)



Figure 34. Women's Flowered Swimming Suit With Skating Skirt, 1943 (Jantzen Archives)

The Miss America Bathing Beauty Pageant winner ceased to be called a "bathing beauty" in 1945, when the pageant began giving scholarships. The pageant was no longer exclusively a body show, although swimsuit competition was retained. (97:40)

The briefest form of the two-piece bathing suit was worn for the first time by a French model named Micheline Bernardini at a fashion show on July 5, 1946, in Paris. The fashion show was held at a swimming pool which decided to open its first post-war season with something special in the way of publicity. (9:79) The suit consisted of two bits of fabric: the slimmest of bras and a kind of G-string. The summer of 1946 was a special time because the first



Figure 35. Men's Cotton Checked Swimming  
Shorts With Belt, 1940's (107:427)

announced atomic bomb was set off. (The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs of 1945 were not advertised in advance.) After it was disclosed that the bomb would be tested on the twenty-fifth of July, rumors were circulated that this bomb was going to be a superbomb very likely to get out of control and start a massive chain reaction which would destroy the earth. "End-of-the-world" parties were held. "Bikini" became the "in" word when it was revealed that the test would take place in the lagoon of a hitherto unknown Pacific coral reef called Bikini atoll. The "end-of-the-world" parties became "bikini" parties and the value of promoting a "bikini" costume was quickly devised by the public relations men handling the opening of the swimming pool. (9:79) The Bikini swimsuit stunned a great many people, including sportswear designers. Many wondered how so little material could conceal so much. Men returning from World War II occupational forces delighted in telling of the "shocking" style. (6:255)

The Bikini bathing suit, as it was first introduced in Europe, was not accepted by American women. Bikinis were not fully accepted on American beaches until the 1960's. The American version, even so, required more fabric to be wearable. (130:424) The reason women in the United States hesitated in wearing the Bikini suit in the 1940's and 1950's could be traced to the Puritan morality, and to the diversity of moral codes in American families of mixed backgrounds. (6:255) American designers were determined to have their women wear more clothing on the beach than was being shown in Europe. (75:44)



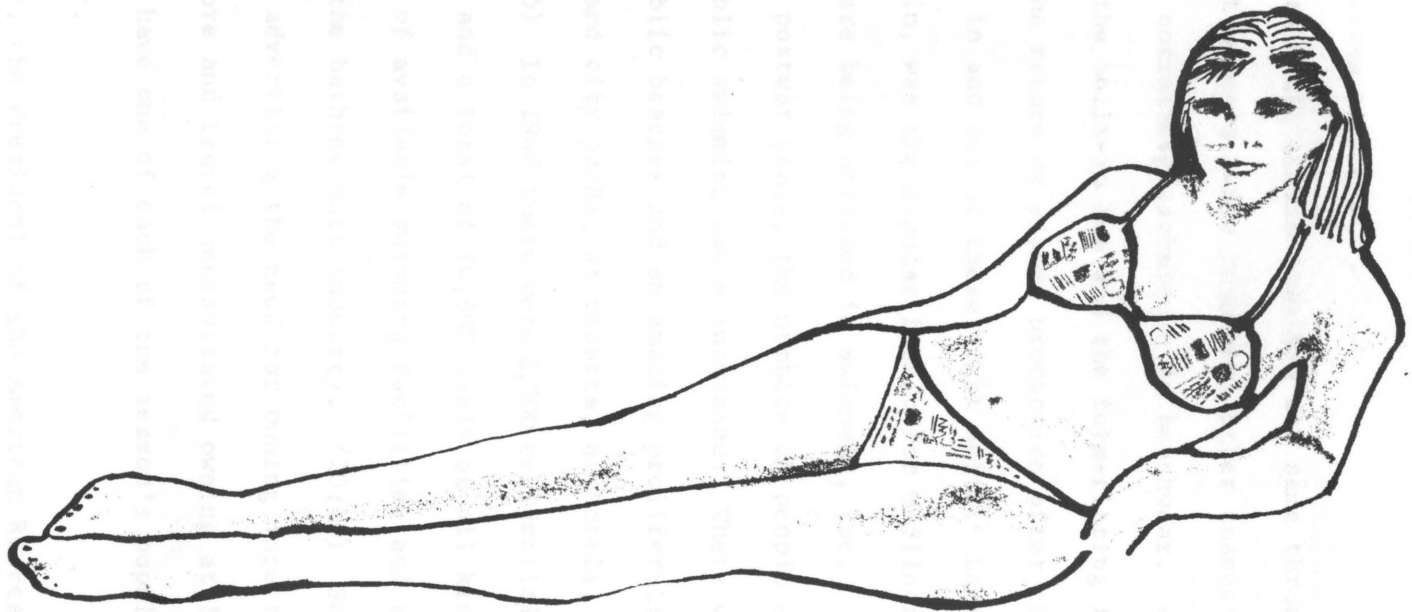


Figure 36. Model Micheline Bernardini In Bikini Bathing Suit She Modeled In 1946 (9:78)

Playsuits continued to be popular. Maillots and two-piece suits were worn by the serious swimmers.

Men's swimsuit styles remained the same throughout the rest of the decade, but women's suits underwent other changes. The strapless top introduced corsetiere techniques in beachwear. Wiring and boning made possible the built-in bra and the form-fitting foundation for proper fit. The return of zipper production after the war provided a closure to get in and out of these tight suits. Lastex, also in production again, was the popular fabric for maillots. Cotton and wool fabrics were being utilized in swimwear, too.

In the postwar years, the numbers of people who frequented beaches and public swimming pools increased. There was also an increase in public beaches and an amazing proliferation of swimming pools in town and city parks, at resorts, at hotels, and in suburban yards. (44:355) In 1948 there were 2,500 residential pools in the United States, and a total of 10,800 pools of all kinds. The increased number of available swimming facilities and swimmers resulted in a boom for the bathing suit industry. (20:18) Swimwear manufacturers were advertising the need for owning more than one swimsuit. Increased leisure and travel necessitated owning at least two suits. A woman had to have one of each of the season's popular styles to be considered chic.

In 1949, the President of the American Recreation Society commented:

In my forty years of park work, the Battle of the swimming suit looms up as the most impressive and sustained conflict between conservative attitudes and placating effort by park administration to satisfy public

demands. Public swimming pools were originally walled about to save passers-by the embarrassment of seeing bathers. Those walls also afforded women bathers protection from curious observers. But even with such protections, the suits we furnished had an apron fringe at the bottom for men and baggy bloomers and knee-length skirts for women. Our ordinances required the skirt to extend within "four inches of the patella" because conservative public opinion demanded it! As counter-demand, any benefit from the sport and enjoyment of it required freedom of movement in the water. A glance at today's beaches tells which contention won. (26:76)

The strapless bathing suit for women was the look in 1950. Not only did this style emphasize the bustline, but it provided an opportunity for unhampered tanning, for there were no shoulder straps with which to bother. Men's styles had a new appearance, too. The belt was removed from the bathing shorts and replaced by elastic, either smooth or gathered at the waist. The tailored shorts with extended waistlines and zippered flies continued in use through the first part of the decade.

Another major beauty contest held its first competition in 1952. One of the largest of the private ventures, the Miss Universe Contest was born of a commercial wrangle between Miss America 1951, Yolanda Betbeze, and a Miss America pageant sponsor. The sponsor, Catalina, Incorporated, had stipulated that the final winner was to make her appearance around the country wearing the company's swimsuits. Yolanda balked at the idea, arguing that she was an opera singer and not a bathing suit model. (6:288) Catalina withdrew its sponsorship of the Miss America Pageant and created the competing Miss Universe Pageant. (112:99)

The Butterick Pattern Service offered a pattern for a one-piece halter top swimsuit for women in 1953, and recommended wool

jersey as the fabric to be used. Swimsuit styles for women remained constant throughout the decade, with faille and taffeta the desired fabrics because of their draping qualities and elegant appearance. Manufacturers were moving from solid colors towards geometric designs, florals, and checks. Suits with wrap-around skirts were "in", and allowed the wearer the coverage and style needed off the beach. Men's styles also remained constant except for the addition of the matching beach shirt. The shirt was always the same fabric as the shorts and created a "total" look in beach fashions.

Elizabeth Stewart began to design bathing suits during this period for the women consumers with less-than-perfect figures. Her designs included styles for women with problem waistlines and stomachs. (81:32)

In the mid-fifties, certain dress designers, including Christian Dior and Givenchy, joined with sportswear manufacturers to dress up the bathing suit business. (50:74) They utilized exotic fabrics such as lace, satin, and velvet, and specially treated them to make them sun- and seaworthy. The designers transformed slim sheaths, bouffant petticoats, and tunics into thigh-length suits. (42:92) Swimsuit fashion thus created a beautiful feminine diversion. Good fashions influence moods, states of mind, and patterns of behavior. The creation of a great couturier subtly alters the character of its wearer - feminizing, idealizing, heightening her entire person. This rare power of styles was nowhere more evident than in the case of the woman's bathing suit. (18:107)



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Figure 37. Ladies' Shirred Halter Top Swimming Suit From The Butterick Pattern Service, 1953 (Butterick Archives)

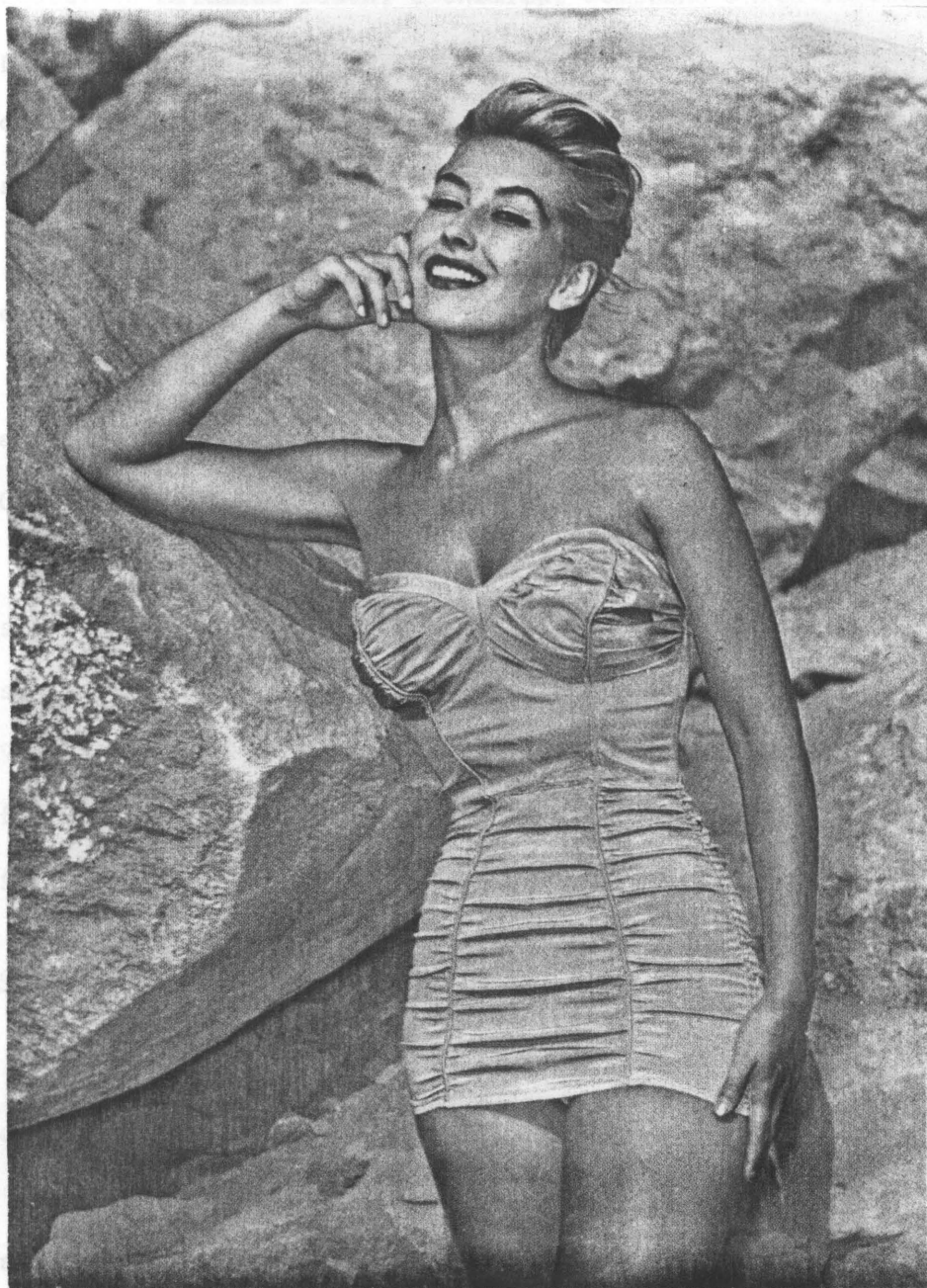


Figure 38. Woman's Strapless Bathing  
Suit In Laton Taffeta, 1955 (Gantner)

Paper bathing suits were introduced in the 'fifties. The paper contained melamine resin, a chemical compound which increased the paper's strength five times over untreated paper. The suits sold for about fifty cents and were intended to be distributed through dispensing machines. (91:95) Paper bathing suits never really caught on and they disappeared from the market as quickly as they had appeared.

Swimming continued to increase in popularity throughout the 'fifties. By 1960 the number of residential swimming pools totaled 171,000, a 6,744 percent increase from 1948. The total number of public and residential pools had grown to 254,200, a 2,253 percent increase. (116:6) Increases in leisure time and income were responsible for the extraordinary development of participant sports. In a 1958 survey conducted of the economic boom, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia noted that real and discretionary incomes had risen forty-percent since the end of the war. (24:48)

#### 1960 to 1977

At the opening of the 1960's there were almost 300,000 swimming pools supplementing the opportunities to swim on ocean fronts, lakes, and rivers. While it was impossible to more than guess at the total number of swimmers, the total was estimated at thirty-three million. (44:355) The American interest in sports was the result of a number of impersonal factors: immigration, industrialization, urbanization, increased leisure time and income, and commercial promotion. (24:4) The increasing degree of informality in social

behavior was caused by the changes in the economic factors which brought an improved standard of living to the middle and lower classes. (65:140)



Figure 39. Men's Bathing Shorts With Matching Beach Shirt, 1950's (Jantzen Archives)

In 1960, California became the first state to submit a general plan to develop and conserve recreation land for the future. In 1962, the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, which



had been established by Congress to evaluate the recreation needs of Americans by the year 2000, reported that swimming was the most popular of all sport activities. (24:50)

The increases in leisure time, income, and swimming pools encouraged the consumer to purchase several swimsuits. Other influences were longer vacations, ease of travel to resorts, and war and post-war babies reaching the age of maximum swimsuit buying. One out of four suits was purchased by a teenager, and teenagers averaged three or more suits a year. (50:70)

Women's swimsuit styles that had been popular in the latter part of the 'fifties continued to be worn in the early 'sixties. Knitted fabrics and bright colors were still the favorites, although Hawaiian print fabrics were popularized with the entrance of Hawaii as our fiftieth state in 1959. Women were demanding more of a "fashion look" in their swimwear. American women were moving toward the acceptance of the bikini. (127:30) "Hip-huggers" and "hip-riders" which offered fuller pants hugging the hips and wider bras, were the most popular two-piece styles. (115:82)

Men's suits reached a minimum of fabric in the 'sixties with the masculine version of the bikini. Snug-fitting wool knit was used, which outlined every detail of the masculine form. Wrap-around bikinis in cotton were also popular. Tighter-fitting trunks could be seen in other styles, such as the new "Hawaiian length" for men introduced in 1960. The popularity of surfing in the mid-sixties made fashionable looser styles for men. The surfer-trunks were in bold, vivid colors and prints. (107:429)

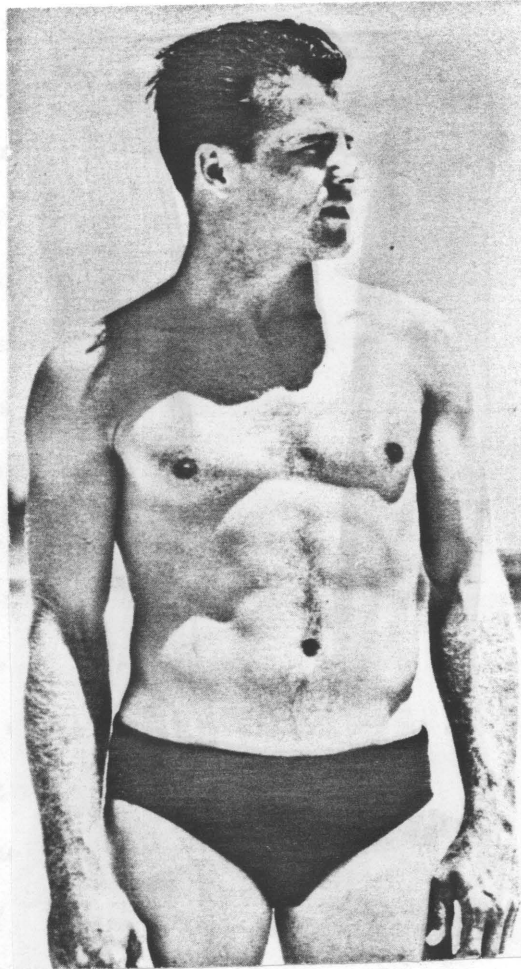


Figure 40. Men's Bikini Swimsuit,  
1960's (Jantzen Archives)

The question of permissible nudity in public became a much-publicized issue in 1964 with the introduction of the topless bathing suit for women. No other bathing suit since the one worn by Annette Kellerman in 1910 created such a controversy. Women were arrested and draping, men had their shirts torn to reveal their chests in the public eye. The bikini gained full acceptance in the middle and late 1960s. product of designer Rudi Gernreich, was never intended to be taken seriously, but he was pressured into manufacturing it by potential customers. (2:56) In defense of the suit Gernreich said: "Women

have been exposing their bosoms all through history. Now, all of a sudden, it's a big deal." (11:75) Topless fashion was at its most distracting during Crete's Minoan period around 1600 B. C., and come-backs in the courts of Europe occurred through the eighteenth century. (102:188) Gernreich knew that sunbathers were dropping the upper portions of their suits when they were alone on their patios and yachts. He sensed that a change in sexual attitudes was occurring but did not think that nudism was imminent. (19:179) Topless bathing suits were banned in France and Greece. The Soviet Union denounced the suits as an indication of "capitalist decay". (113:35) The United States arrested women if they appeared in public in the suits. The majority of people, however, were not as shocked as it would have appeared. Many women felt that those who did appear publicly in a topless swimsuit were performing a service. By seeing what other women looked like wearing a topless suit, they were saved the embarrassment of finding out for themselves. (13:138)

The topless suit enjoyed a brief notoriety. Women were not quite ready for that much body exposure. They continued to wear the suits that had some expanse of fabric to them: the two-piece, the maillot, and the sheath. In 1965, the swimsuit industry met the challenge of revealing areas of skin with the help of cut-outs, fabrics that looked like they were part of the wearer, and fishnet draping. (Men had worn fishnet tops to their suits in the 'thirties.) The bikini gained full acceptance in the middle and late 'sixties.

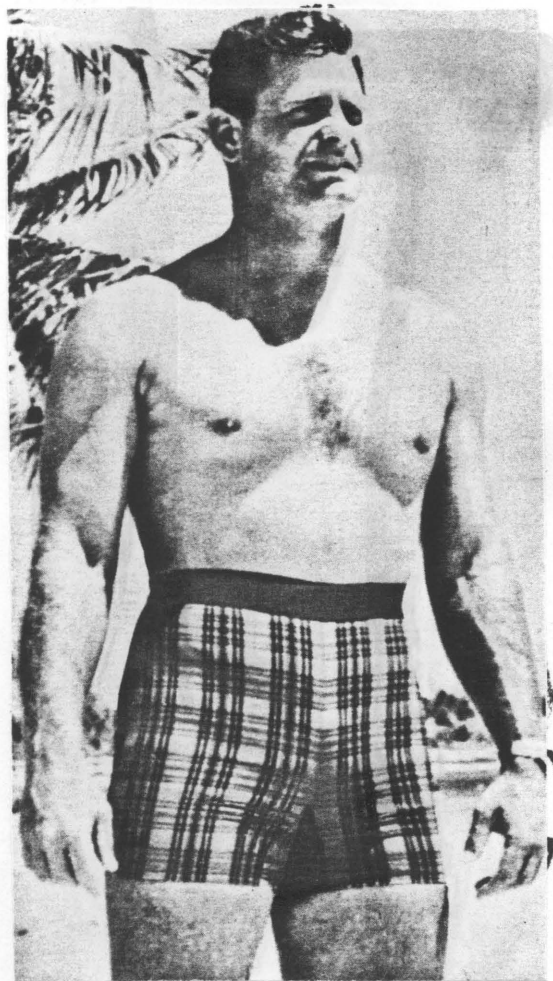


Figure 41. Men's Hawaiian Length Swimshorts, 1960 (Jantzen Archives)

In the 1960's, Dutch-born Henrika Marcella Marie Kilsdonk, better known as Miss Rikki, theorized that a bathing suit, while providing protection, should free the body as much as possible and allow the bather to move naturally. Starting with the maillot, she created nude-look suits by cutting out geometric shapes. She scooped out backs, sculpted circles or squares or asymmetrical slashes into the sides or around the shoulders. She eliminated middles to make bikinis.

Miss Rikki was best known for her radical "backini", an almost backless suit. (131:32)

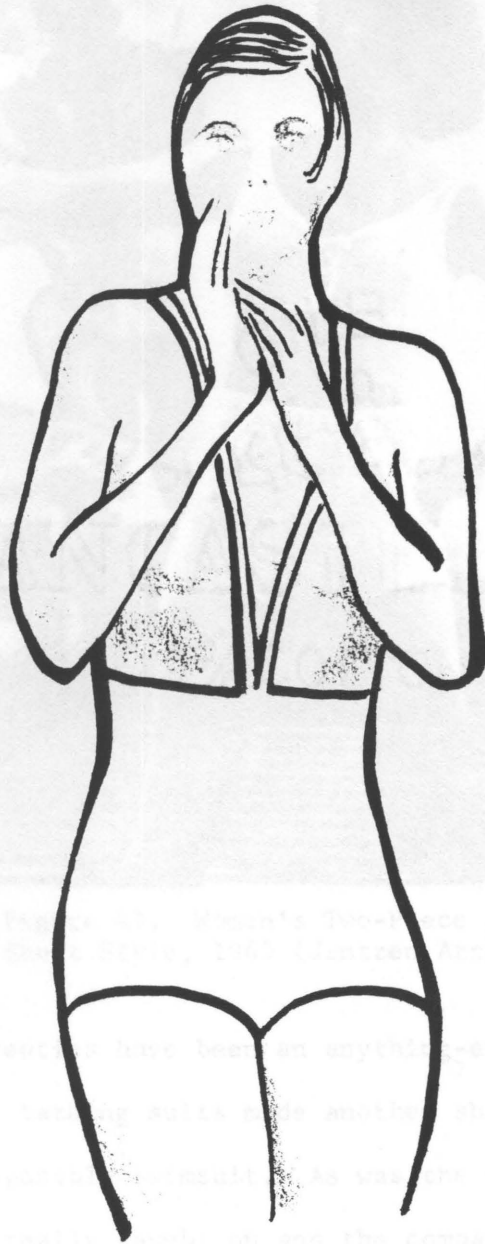


Figure 42. Women's Topless Bathing Suit, 1964



Figure 43. Women's Two-Piece Swim  
Short Style, 1965 (Jantzen Archives)

The 'seventies have been an anything-everything decade for swimwear. Paper bathing suits made another showing when Levi Strauss introduced a disposable swimsuit. As was the case in the 'fifties, the style never really caught on and the company abandoned the idea. (47:14) In 1970, any suit for men, from tank to bikini, was correct as long as it was a knit. (107:430)

In 1974, a new suit for women emerged from the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, called the String. Brazil's puritanical military regime had prosecuted a girl who wore a topless suit, and permanently prohibited mammary nudity. The girls of Rio de Janeiro retaliated with the string bathing suit. The suit itself was derived from an ancient Indian loin cloth and consisted of two miniscule triangles of cloth joined by a cord over either hip, baring a large portion of the derriere. (123:54) It was a suit designed for the few women with perfect figures who wanted the least amount of body coverage they could get. American designers redesigned the string for American women by adding a few more inches of cloth.

Besides the topless suit, Rudi Gernreich designed the thong style suit, which made its appearance in 1974. The thong was a virtual bottomless, unisex bathing suit that consisted of a breast-plate held on by skinny straps around the neck and between the buttocks. The suit was reminiscent of a Japanese Sumo wrestler's costume. Gernreich explained:

It's quite the opposite of the topless suit, which I designed when nudity hadn't arrived. Now nudity has come, but some coverage is still required. (120:75)

Other Gernreich designs included the backless suit which bared a few inches of cleavage, and a suit which bared the sides and back while covering only the front. (36:191) With the introduction of the topless, string, and thong styles of bathing suits, the world may be facing a time when the erogenous zones (theorized by Flügel) stop shifting altogether. With no area of the body taboo, no zone will exist to shift. (113:36)

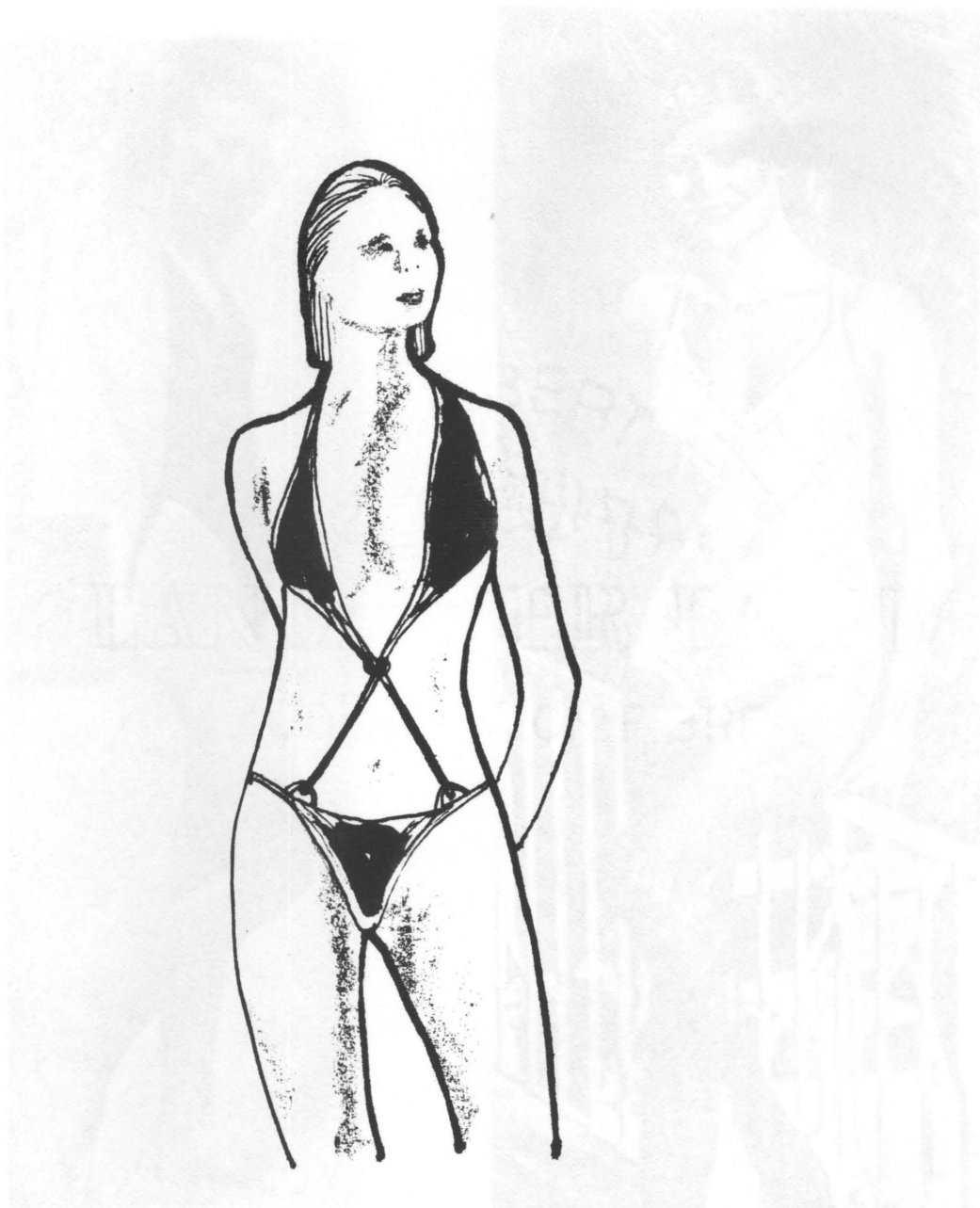


Figure 44. The String  
Bathing Suit Style, 1974

The popularity of "nearly nude" bathing suits and pressures from nudists prompted legislators in California to declare several beaches in the state open to topless and nude sunbathing and





Figure 45. The Thong Style  
Bathing Suit By Rudi Gernreich  
1974 (105:13)



Figure 46. Miss Universe 1975  
In A Swimsuit Worn By Miss  
Universe Contestants (85:back  
cover)

swimming. Persons who take advantage of these beaches are completely free from the possibilities of citations or arrests for indecent exposure which would take place on other state beaches.

The suits worn through the years by Miss America Pageant and Miss Universe Pageant contestants had been modest maillot suits. Strict standards for bathing suits had been set by officials from both pageants. The girls who entered these pageants were supposed to present an image of the truly feminine and modest woman. In 1975, the Miss Universe Pageant contestants had the option of being photographed by members of the press in either one- or two-piece suits. Only a few of the contestants chose to wear the two-piece swimsuits while being photographed.

The growth of swimming pools increased throughout the 'sixties and by 1970 they totaled 982,900, a 287 percent increase from 1960. By 1976, the number of pools totaled 1,530,400. (116:6) Table 1 provides an overview of the growth in the number of swimming pools.

The nineteen-seventies marked an end to conventional masculine and feminine role-playing. This strange sense of who was HE and who was SHE found some of its most stylish expression in swimwear. Not since the 'twenties had the American man shown such a healthy awareness of and respect for his body, and the colorful and sensual beach clothing he wore expressed this view. (107:431)

Swim fashions in 1976 welcomed the return of the one-piece suit. The one-piece was no longer the suit worn only by women who had something to hide (88:100) but was the center of fashion attention. With the novelty of nudity diminishing, flattering alternatives to

the bikini were introduced, such as a tunic suit which flattered the thighs, and unstructured tank suits. The one-piece suit had always enjoyed its greatest popularity on the East Coast, with bikinis as the West Coast favorite. The maillot began to increase its popularity on the West Coast in the mid-seventies, looking to replace the bikini as the most popular style in California. Table 2 illustrates the percent of swimwear business by style classification.

In 1976, a swimsuit called the Savage made its appearance. It was a one-piece satin wrap suit designed by Halston as a sophisticated alternative to the bikini. (128:1) The Savage suit was inspired from Tarzan's loincloth and from Playboy Bunny uniforms. (128:9)

### 1977

Because of the increased leisure time and the popularity of sportswear, swimwear styling has gone beyond merely getting wet. The launching of swimsuit lines by such top fashion designers as Halston, Ralph Lauren, and Gucci has thrust bathing suits into high fashion in 1977. Designer suits are stimulating the swimwear companies as well as the customers. Most women have both the maillot for lounging and showing off, and the two-piece suit for tanning. The maillot's allure comes from new cuts, high on the hip, low in the back, and even strapless. Body-hugging fabrics offer maximum comfort and extraordinary fit. (114:27)

Table 1

Growth of Swimming Pools by Type  
 Classification by Use and Ownership - Totals are Cumulative

	January 1 1948	January 1 1960	January 1 1970	January 1 1976
Hotel, Motel, Apartment	600	32,600	136,300	193,150
Clubs (city, country, health, commercial, cabana and beach, etc.) and neighborhood groups	1,100	16,900	43,450	55,250
Municipal, County, Community and other governmental plus neighborhood and community	4,000	19,300	39,350	46,350
School, College, "Y", Institutional	2,400	10,600	23,100	29,400
Miscellaneous (Armed Forces, commercial, camp, trailer park, health spa, etc.)	200	3,700	26,800	42,750
Residential (Built for private use by not more than two families and their guests)	2,500	171,100	713,900	1,163,500
Total	10,800	254,200	982,900	1,530,400

(130:6)

116

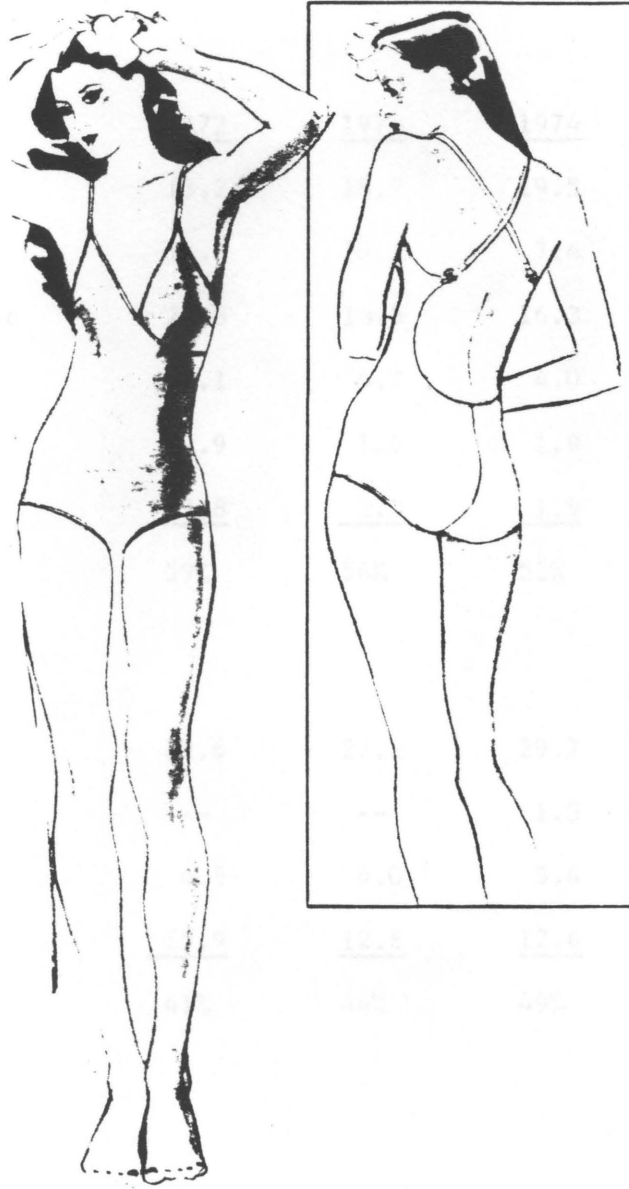


Figure 47. Unstructured Tank Suit From The Butterick Fashion Marketing Company, 1976 (Butterick Archives)

Table 2  
National Average  
Percent of Swimwear Business by Classification

<u>One Piece</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975*</u>
Mio	13.2	18.7	19.5	19.7
Sheath	15.7	10.3	7.4	6.1
Swimdress/Tunic	21.3	18.5	16.3	15.8
Boyleg	5.1	4.7	4.0	2.9
Mastectomy	.9	1.5	1.9	2.4
Kini	<u>2.8</u>	<u>2.3</u>	<u>1.9</u>	<u>1.1</u>
Total	59%	56%	51%	48%
 <u>Two Piece</u>				
Bikini	20.6	27.2	29.7	31.2
String	--	--	1.3	2.7
Hiprider	4.5	4.0	5.4	5.9
Waistrider	<u>15.9</u>	<u>12.8</u>	<u>12.6</u>	<u>12.2</u>
Total	41%	44%	49%	52%

\* Estimated

(Compiled by Jantzen, Incorporated, 1975; Courtesy of Don Montony)



Figure 48. The Savage Style  
Bathing Suit By Halston, 1976  
(87:50)



Figure 49. Designer Swimsuits For 1977 (70:77)



## Chapter 4

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The effects of sociological and technological changes on the development of swimwear have not been researched. The effects of women's participation in outdoor sports, beauty pageants, male-female relationships, increased income and leisure time, and development of new fibers and fabrics contributed to changes in swimwear styles and the popularity of swimming.

The earliest bathing attire appeared to have been no attire at all. Separation of the sexes did not necessitate the use of clothing while bathing or swimming. The use of the bathing machine further delayed the necessity of clothing being worn. Only when men and women began to bathe or swim in the presence of each other did the need arise for appropriate body covering. The earliest garment worn by women for bathing in the United States was a smock or formless chemise. Women's bathing costume began to achieve an identity of its own in the nineteenth century when dresses were designed especially for bathing. These dresses were patterned after the fashions of the day.

Reductions in the amount of fabric used in bathing dresses were the result of innovations in women's undergarments and functional requirements of the sport. Streamlining of the bathing suit was also aided by the actions of certain swimmers, such as Annette Kellerman. Changes in the styles of bathing suits reflected the degree of free

association between men and women acceptable by society. The participation by women in outdoor sports (particularly swimming) caused a breach in the separation of the sexes.

The fashionable bathing dress was finally replaced by the functional swimming suit in the nineteen-twenties. Changes occurring during the 'twenties and 'thirties showed a trend toward diminution in the coverage of the swimming suit. These changes were a direct result of the movies, Mack Sennett's bathing beauties, the initiation of bathing beauty pageants, the increase in recreational facilities such as swimming pools and beaches, and sunbathing. An increasing degree of informality in social behavior, caused by economic factors which brought an improved standard of living to the middle and lower classes was also a factor. Technological advances in fabrics brought about the development of tighter-fitting suits for swimming.

Sunbathing was also a factor in the diminishing coverage of men's suits. The bathing suit top for men in the 'twenties had been reduced in proportions. By the late 'thirties the top was being eliminated altogether. Utilization of the zipper in men's suits made possible the detachable swimsuit top.

Swimming suit styles continued to shrink in proportions with the introduction of the Bikini suit, the topless suit, and the string suit. Swimwear designers such as Mrs. Bert Schnurer, Rudi Gernreich, and Miss Rikki contributed to the relative "undress" of the swimming suit.

Throughout their history, bathing and swimming and the varied costumes worn were the target of restrictions and laws affecting them.

Table 3 provides an overview of the laws affecting bathing, swimming, and swimwear from A. D. 1300 to the 1970's. It can be seen that all through its career, bathing costume merely reflected contemporary restrictions rather than encouraged relaxations.

#### Recommendations

Further studies of swimwear could include competitive swimming and swimwear worn in competition. A study of the swimwear industry and data related to the numbers of suits sold, and the types of suits available could be undertaken. A comparison of regular clothing styles and swimwear styles and the similarities or differences between sociological and technological factors affecting them would be valuable.

Table 3

## Laws Related to Bathing, Swimming, or Swimwear 1300 - 1970's

1300 to 1500	Public baths and bathing were outlawed.
1600 to 1700	Outdoor bathing and swimming were outlawed. Some of the nobility continued to swim outdoors.
1800 to 1900	Teachers were forbidden to wear a bathing costume in public at any time. (1886)  Women and men were forbidden to go into the water together. Men were required to escort ladies on the beaches.
1900 to 1964	Annette Kellerman was arrested for wearing a one-piece, form-fitting swimsuit. (1910)  A woman was arrested for bathing in bloomers; another woman was assaulted by a mob for wearing a short skirted suit. (1913)  A man was arrested for wearing a sleeveless bathing suit. (1914)  Olympic swimmer Ethelda Bleibtrey was cited for nude swimming when she removed her stockings. (1919)  Novelist Louise Rosine was arrested for rolling down her stockings. (1920)  Beaches were patrolled and armholes and necklines were measured for decency. Most beaches felt that the public was showing good taste in their bathing attire and did not need laws to govern them. Atlantic City adopted an ordinance stating people had to be covered from the shoulders to the knees with a garment over their suits when off the beach. (1922)
1970's	Men were cited for going "topless". (1937)  New York City adopted an ordinance requiring bathers to wear full body covering when off the beach. (1942)  Women were arrested for wearing "topless" bathing suits. (1964)  Nude bathing and swimming permitted on certain beaches in California.

APPENDIX

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
July 16, 1976

Catalina  
6040 Bandini Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90040

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

To date, I have reviewed all the articles on swimwear and bathing costume that have been published in magazines since 1900, and have read numerous books, including Esquire's Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Men's Fashions by O. E. Schoeffler and William Gale, 1973; and the United States National Museum Bulletin 250, Women's Bathing and Swimming Costume in the United States by Claudia B. Kidwell, 1968.

Unfortunately, these sources have not provided as much information as I would like in the area of swimwear styles and their evolution during this century.

I am interested in the role Catalina has played in providing the swimsuits worn in the Miss America and Miss Universe Pageants. I am also interested in the sales records of swimwear, especially since World War II.

I plan to be in the Los Angeles area during the week of August 23, 1976. If it would be convenient, I would like to visit Catalina, and, on approval, go through your files pertaining to swimwear styles, and receive any information you could provide regarding the number of swimsuits sold, and any other relevant information or figures you feel may be beneficial in the areas of which I specified.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

6040 BANDINI BOULEVARD, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90040, U. S. A.  
MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. BOX 2275, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90051

*Area Code 213*

*726-1262*

*Cable "Catalina"*

*TWX 910-580-3624*

Division of Kayser-Roth Corporation

SWIMWEAR  
SPORTSWEAR

July 20, 1976

Ms. Terrie E. Rust  
3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, CA 94538

Dear Ms. Rust:

You've picked a difficult subject for your thesis, because the evolution of swimwear as a special segment of fashion has not been well documented.

We've received other requests for information, similar to yours, and haven't been able to help.

If you have specific questions regarding Catalina's involvement with the Miss America and Miss Universe pageants I'll be happy to try to answer them.

As a matter of policy, our sales records are never released. The Department of Commerce does compile sales figures annually. These are done on an industry-wide basis, and I believe are further broken down regionally and by style. I'm certain copies of these reports would be available to you, although I don't know how far back they go.

I would also suggest you contact Fairchild Publications, publishers of Women's Wear Daily. They have an excellent research division, and should be able to supply some information. The New York address is 7 East 12th Street, New York 10003.

Although our files would not be open to you, I'd be happy to meet with you while you're in Los Angeles, however our international sales meeting takes place the week of August 23rd, and we will all be in attendance, out of town.

Again, if you'll send me your questions on Miss America/Miss Universe, I'll be happy to get you all the information I can.

Sincerely,

Mimi Walders  
Promotion Coordinator

MW/as

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
July 16, 1976

Cole of California  
2615 Fruitland Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90058

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

To date, I have reviewed all the articles on swimwear and bathing costume that have been published in magazines since 1900, and have read numerous books, including Esquire's Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Men's Fashions by O. E. Schoeffler and William Gale, 1973; and the United States National Museum Bulletin 250, Women's Bathing and Swimming Costume in the United States by Claudia B. Kidwell, 1968.

Unfortunately, these sources have not provided as much information as I would like in the area of swimwear styles and their evolution during this century.

I am also interested in the sales records of swimwear, especially since World War II.

I plan to be in the Los Angeles area during the week of August 23, 1976. If it would be convenient, I would like to visit Cole of California, and, on approval, go through your files pertaining to swimwear styles, and receive any information you could provide regarding the number of swimsuits sold, and any other relevant information or figures you feel may be beneficial in the areas of which I specified.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust



3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
November 14, 1976

Cole of California  
2615 Fruitland Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90058

Gentlemen:

On July 16, 1976, I wrote to you. Having received no reply, and realizing that any number of factors may have been the cause, I am re-submitting my letter to you.

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

To date, I have reviewed all the articles on swimwear and bathing costume that have been published in magazines since 1900, and have read numerous books, including Esquire's Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Men's Fashions by O. E. Schoeffler and William Gale, 1973; and the United States National Museum Bulletin 250, Women's Bathing and Swimming Costume in the United States by Claudia B. Kidwell, 1968.

Unfortunately, these sources have not provided as much information as I would like in the area of swimwear styles and their evolution during this century.

I am also interested in the origination of your company, and how you view the direction that swimwear is taking.

I would appreciate any information you could provide in these areas and any other relevant information or figures you feel may be beneficial.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

# Cole

of California

November 19, 1976

Ms. Terrie E. Rust  
3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538

Dear Ms. Rust:

Thank you for your letter requesting information on Cole of California swimwear.

Enclosed is a copy of our "student packet" which I feel will be of help to you in your project.

Do hope we have been of assistance and thanks again for thinking of Cole.

Best Regards,

Becky Farmer  
Advertising & Publicity

BF:rb

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
July 16, 1976

Jantzen, Incorporated  
P.O. Box 3001  
Portland, Oregon 97208

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

To date I have reviewed all of the articles on swimwear and bathing costume that have been published in magazines since 1900, and have read numerous books, including Esquire's Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Men's Fashions by O. E. Schoeffler and William Gale, 1973; and the United States National Museum Bulletin 250, Women's Bathing and Swimming Costume in the United States by Claudia B. Kidwell, 1968.

Unfortunately, these sources have not provided as much information as I would like in the area of swimwear styles and their evolution during this century.

I am also interested in the sales records of swimwear, especially since World War II.

I plan to be in Oregon during the week of August 16, 1976. If it would be convenient, I would like to visit Jantzen, and, on approval, go through your files pertaining to swimwear styles, and receive any information you could provide regarding the number of swimsuits sold, and any other relevant information or figures you feel may be beneficial.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

# Jantzen

July 27, 1976

Terrie E. Rust  
3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538

Dear Ms. Rust:

Thank you for your letter of July 16, 1976 which has been referred to me for a response.

We have fairly complete material on the evolution of swimwear styles, and we would be happy to make this available to you for your research.

Our information with respect to industry swimwear sales is very limited. Even with respect to Jantzen's sales, we have very little data linking sales with fashion trends. In other words, from our records you would be able to see the evolution of the bikini and other swimsuit styles, but you would not be able to determine the percentage which bikini's or any other style might comprise of our total swimwear sales. We constantly project the sales volume of different swim styles, but these projections are rapidly discarded because we have no need for historical data of this nature.

If you feel we have information which could aid your research, we would be happy to have you visit us.

Yours very truly

Donald L. Smith  
Vice President - Public Relations

lsg

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
July 21, 1976

Miss America Pageant  
c/o Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce  
#10 Central Pier  
Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

I plan to include, as part of my sociological study, the effect that the pageants have had on swimwear. Since the initiation of beauty pageants, swimwear competition has played a major role. I would like to find out how the governing board of the Miss America Pageant sets its standards regarding swimwear. For example, I remember when the suits were required to have a skirt across the front. In my research, I read about the first Miss America Pageant and how one girl wore a "traditional" style suit and the others donned more daring suits. Our first Miss America was the girl in the traditional suit.

What views does the Miss America Pageant hold regarding nudity and modesty?

Originally, Catalina provided the suits for your pageant. Which manufacturer provides them now?

I am interested in the history of your pageant and why competition in swimsuits was introduced.

I would appreciate this and any other relevant information which you feel may be of some help to me in this endeavor.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
August 5, 1976

Miss Universe, Incorporated  
666 5th Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

I plan to include, as part of my sociological study, the effect that the pageants have had on swimwear. Since the initiation of beauty pageants, swimsuit competition has played a major role. I would like to find out how the governing board of the Miss Universe Pageant sets its standards for swimwear. For example, I remember when the suits were required to have a skirt across the front. Also, I believe 1975 was the first year the contestants were allowed to be photographed in two-piece swimsuits, but were allowed only to wear the "traditional" one-piece suit for the pageant competition.

What views does the Miss Universe Pageant hold regarding nudity and modesty?

What swimwear manufacturer provides the suits for your pageant?

I am also interested in the history of your pageant.

I would appreciate this and any other relevant information which you feel may be of some help to me in this endeavor.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
November 14, 1976

Miss Universe, Incorporated  
666 5th Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Gentlemen:

On August 5, 1976, I wrote to you. Having received no reply, and realizing that any number of factors may have been the cause, I am re-submitting my letter to you.

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

I plan to include, as part of my sociological study, the effect that the pageants have had on swimwear. Since the initiation of beauty pageants, swimsuit competition has played a major role. I would like to find out how the governing board of the Miss Universe Pageant sets its standards for swimwear. For example, I remember when the suits were required to have a skirt across the front. Also, I believe 1975 was the first year the contestants were allowed to be photographed in two-piece swimsuits, but were allowed only to wear the "traditional" one-piece suit for the pageant competition.

What views does the Miss Universe Pageant hold regarding nudity and modesty?

What swimwear manufacturer provides the suits for your pageant?

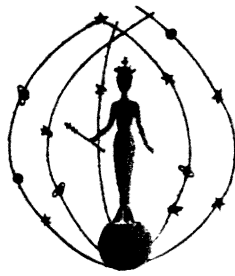
I am also interested in the history of your pageant.

I would appreciate this and any other relevant information which you feel may be of some help to me in this endeavor.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust



MISS UNIVERSE  
*The Mark of Beauty™*

## MISS UNIVERSE, INC.

666 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10019 • (212) 757 - 9396

NOVEMBER 23, 1976

Ms. TERRIE E. RUST  
3662 HOWE COURT  
FREMONT, CA 94538

DEAR Ms. RUST:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RECENT LETTER EXPRESSING AN INTEREST  
IN THE HISTORY OF THE MISS U.S.A. PAGEANT.

ENCLOSED FOR YOUR PERUSAL IS A PACKET OF MATERIALS.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION, CATALINA PROVIDES SWIMSUITS TO  
THE DELEGATES AND ARE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR TELEVISION  
AND COMPETITION STANDARDS. SWIMSUIT COMPETITION IS AN IN-  
TEGRAL PART OF THE COMPETITION.

AGAIN, YOUR KIND LETTER IS APPRECIATED VERY MUCH.

BEST REGARDS.

SINCERELY,

GRIFF O'NEIL  
FIELD DIRECTOR

GO/NN  
ENCLOSURES



3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
November 14, 1976

National Swimming Pool Institute  
2000 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

I have had some problems locating statistical information and need your help. I need to know the number of private and public swimming pools in the United States on several dates. I would like comparisons from the 1920's, 1940's, 1950's, and 1970's. Census information I have reviewed lists pools in National Parks and resorts only.

If you do not have such information, I would appreciate any references you could provide.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
July 21, 1976

The Butterick Fashion Marketing Company  
161 6th Avenue  
New York, New York 10013

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

I plan to include a section of study on home patterns for sewing swimwear. This is where I need your assistance. Any of the following information you can provide would be greatly appreciated:

- 1) When did your company first make a pattern for the home sewer for a bathing or swimming costume? Was it for men, women, or children? Please specify.
- 2) Were any particular events or persons important in the creation of swimwear patterns? (For example, Gertrude Ederle swam the English Channel in one of the first two-piece swimming suits; or after the Bikini Island A-bomb test came the Bikini swimsuit.)
- 3) From which swimwear designers do you get your designs?
- 4) Do you have any pictures, brochures, etc., which show the various swimwear patterns your company has sold over the years?

If there is any other relevant information you feel would be helpful in my study, I would appreciate your sending it along with the above.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

**BUTTERICK  
FASHION  
MARKETING  
COMPANY**

A DIVISION OF AMERICAN CAN COMPANY

114

August 16, 1976

Miss Terrie Rust  
3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538

Dear Miss Rust:

Your graduate school research project dealing with the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear sounds most interesting!

We are enclosing some material that should be just what you are looking for - illustrations of Butterick bathing suit styles from the 1800's through today, and a bibliography of books on fashion history.

If we can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Margie Mellman  
Butterick Archives

enc: fashion illustrations  
pattern envelopes  
bibliography  
BUTTERICK GOES TO THE SMITHSONIAN

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
July 16, 1976

The McCall Pattern Company  
230 Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10017

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

I plan to include a section of study on home patterns for sewing swimwear. This is where I need your assistance. Any of the following information you can provide would be greatly appreciated:

- 1) When did your company first make a pattern for the home sewer for a bathing or swimming costume? Was it for men, women, or children? Please specify.
- 2) Were any particular events or persons important in the creation of swimwear patterns? (For example, Gertrude Ederle swam the English Channel in one of the first two-piece swimming suits; or after the Bikini Island A-bomb test came the Bikini swimsuit.)
- 3) From which swimwear designers do you get your designs?
- 4) Do you have any pictures, brochures, etc., which show the various swimwear patterns your company has sold over the years?

If there is any other relevant information you feel would be helpful in my study, I would appreciate your sending it along with the above.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

# THE McCALL PATTERN COMPANY

230 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 PHONE 212 983-3200

116

July 30, 1976

Ms. Terris E. Rust  
3662 Howe Ct.  
Fremont, CA 94538

Dear Ms. Rust:

Thank you for your recent letter which was forwarded to my attention.

Unfortunately, our records do not go back to the origin of our company. The first swim suit pattern we have record of appears in 1913 for Misses' and Children's sizes.

Our own staff of designers design our patterns for swim wear.

We are enclosing a large bibliography which you may find useful in your research for pictures and historical costume information.

We regret that we do not have brochures featuring the history of our swimwear patterns.

We appreciate your interest in McCall's and wish you success with your study.

Cordially,

Meg Carter  
Consumer Service

MC/hs, Encl.

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
July 16, 1976

Simplicity Pattern Company, Inc.  
200 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York 10016

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

I plan to include a section of study on home patterns for sewing swimwear. This is where I need your assistance. Any of the following information you can provide would be greatly appreciated:

- 1) When did your company first make a pattern for the home sewer for a bathing or swimming costume? Was it for men, women, or children? Please specify.
- 2) Were any particular events or persons important in the creation of swimwear patterns? (For example, Gertrude Ederle swam the English Channel in one of the first two-piece swimming suits; or after the Bikini Island A-bomb test came the Bikini swimsuit.)
- 3) From which swimwear designers do you get your designs?
- 4) Do you have any pictures, brochures, etc., which show the various swimwear patterns your company has sold over the years?

If there is any other relevant information you feel would be helpful in my study, I would appreciate your sending it along with the above.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust

# consumer<sup>118</sup> relations

Simplicity Pattern Co. Inc.

200 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 100

July 20, 1976

Terrie E. Rust  
3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, CA 94538

Dear Ms. Rust:

Thank you for your recent letter.

Unfortunately, we do not have any printed information on your subject. However, we are having a presentation of our beachwear in 1976 as well as our beachwear in the 1940's on the Merv Griffin Show on Wednesday, July 28, 1976. It will appear in the beginning of the show. It might be helpful with your thesis.

We appreciate your taking the time to write to us.

Cordially,

Susan P. Curtis

SPC:erv

3662 Howe Court  
Fremont, California 94538  
August 5, 1976

Fairchild Publications  
7 East 12th Street  
New York, New York 10003

Gentlemen:

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, in Home Economics. I am researching the history of and effects of sociological change on swimwear for my Master's thesis.

To date, I have reviewed all the articles on swimwear and bathing costume that have been published in magazines since 1900, and have read numerous books, including Esquire's Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Men's Fashions by O. E. Schoeffler and William Gale, 1973; and the United States National Museum Bulletin 250, Women's Bathing and Swimming Costume in the United States by Claudia B. Kidwell, 1968.

Unfortunately, these sources have not provided as much information as I would like in the area of swimwear styles and their evolution during this century. I would appreciate any information you could provide in this area and any other relevant material you feel may be beneficial.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Terrie E. Rust



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A History of Swimwear Reflecting Some Sociological and Technological Changes. Terrie Ellen Rust. Master's. San Jose State University, San Jose, California, 1977. Interlibrary loan.

The purpose of this study was to research the effects of sociological and technological changes on the development of swimwear. Bathing and swimming suit styles have reflected attitudes toward male-female relationships, the status of women, and public nudity. Technological developments in fibers and fabrics improved the appearance, wear, and practicality of swimming suits. Reductions in working hours and the development of labor-saving devices created leisure time. Swimming became a popular leisure time activity. Beauty pageants utilized the bathing suit as a means of exploiting the female form. The entrance of women as active participants in swimming necessitated a practical costume. Swimwear designers have contributed to the relative "undress" of the bathing suit. Laws relating to bathing, bathing suits, and swimming were enacted. Reductions in the amount of fabric used in bathing dresses were the result of innovations in women's undergarments, functional requirements of the sport of swimming, sunbathing, and an increasing degree of informality in social behavior.