

## Casual Fashions Of The Model A Era

By Sharon Pelikan

During the Model A era, people dressed much more formally than today. Ladies always wore a dress, hat, gloves, hose, jewelry, and appropriate shoes when leaving the house. Men often wore a three piece suit completed with a hat. More casual clothing was slow to come about. How did these fashion changes happen then? There were a number of things that occurred during the years 1928-1931 that influenced these changes.

With the advent of all women's colleges, women began competing in active sports. Prior to this only men participated in competitive sports. With the crash of the stock market people could no longer afford expensive clothing. Clothes that could be laundered at home were needed. Another change was the automobile. Families could now get out into the country for outdoor activities such as camping. It was also more common for women to be working in factories.

More casual clothing for both men and women were now needed. Manufacturers scrambled to meet these needs. Washable fabrics and ready to wear clothing was common in catalogs of the era. Designers began to use men's fashion ideas when creating women's outdoor clothing.

The idea of ladies wearing pants, or trousers as they were then called, was not accepted very readily. Clothes had always been gender specific. Society had strict rules and trousers were defined as for men. Knickers were the first casual item of clothing that was acceptable for both sexes to wear. These were shorter pants often worn with cotton long sleeve shirts and ties. This was true for women as well as men. The catalogs from the era show women wearing cloche style hats, and men wearing the paneled newsboy style hats with knickers.



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