

Deco Collector: Vintage Patterns

By Jim Linz

Can't find the perfect outfit for the Preservation Ball or other special occasion? Why not make your own? When I was growing up, my mother made most of her own and my sister's clothes. I was spared. Instead, I got my brother's hand-me-downs.

I remember frequent Saturday shopping trips to Woodies, Hechts, Kann's and Lansburgh's where I would wait impatiently while my mother and sister sorted through huge pattern books by McCall, Vogue, Butterick, and others. I even remember when G Street Fabrics was actually located on G Street.



L to R: Pattern Nos. 1884, 1862, and 1844

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L to R: Pattern Nos. 1865 (blouse), 1859 (skirt), and 1840 (dress).

My mother was still shopping at G Street Fabrics, although now at the Chantilly location, and making her own dresses when she was 85. But she was no longer buying patterns. Instead she would use patterns purchased in the 1940s and 1950s and "update" them. In a sense, she had become a pattern collector. When my mother died, her pattern "collection" was tossed. I now realize that patterns, like virtually everything else from the past, are indeed collectible, albeit to a fairly limited group of collectors.

I frequently see boxes of vintage patterns at major flea markets like Renningers, Metrolina, and the Brimfield shows. They are generally tucked away under tables or some out-of-the-way place and draw little attention.

A quick check of Ebay reveals about 400 Butterick patterns listed, including many from the 1920s-1940s. Similar numbers of Vogue and McCall patterns are also listed. Vintage patterns are an affordable collectible, with Ebay prices typically ranging from \$5 to \$20.

A good way to choose the perfect outfit is to leisurely review vintage fashion magazines like *Delineator*. Every month, *Delineator* pictured the latest Butterick patterns. In a February 1928 article that also featured the latest Spring fashions from Paris designers such as Vionnet, Lelong, Lanvin, Louiseboulanger, and Chanel, *Delineator* showed Butterick's latest Spring

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designs.

Shown on these pages are some of the featured Butterick designs for Spring 1928 together with their pattern numbers. Happy hunting!



L: 1872
R: 1848



L: 1888
R: 1889



Upper left: 1854
Upper right: 1892
Bottom: 1866

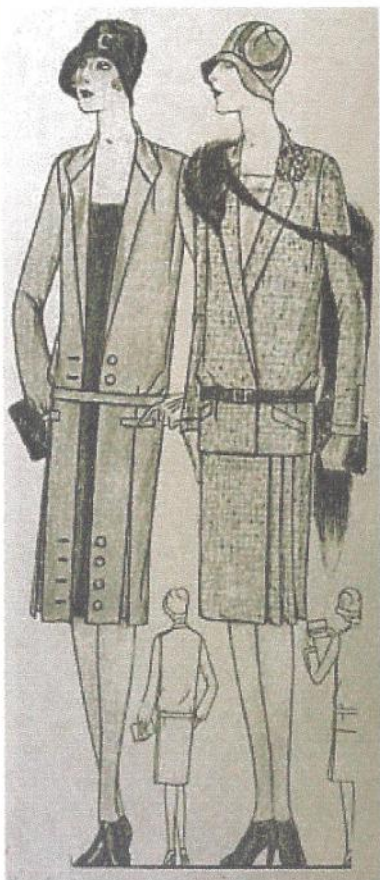


Above: 1882

Right: 1832

Below left: 1896

Below right: Jacket 1887, Skirt 1875



Below left: Blouse 1873,
skirt 1859
Below right: 1900



Right: 1860



1881

1864

1881