

# TRAINING YOUR EYES

By Gail Doemland

To start learning and be able to recognize whether a garment and/or item belongs in the Model 'A' Era, one must begin by training your eyes. There are certain characteristics that help identify if an article is or is not of our era. If these basic characteristics are acknowledged and the eyes are trained to look for these basic characteristics, your shopping experience should become less frustrating, more enjoyable, and without realizing it, you will become more knowledgeable about the Model 'A' Era Fashions with each experience.

Before you can start training your eyes, you will need to have dated documentation on the Fashions of the Model A Era. The *Fashion Guidelines* and the *A Book of Fashion Facts* should be your primary resource manuals to begin this effort. These are both easily accessible and obtainable through MAFCA.

Training of any kind requires determination, patience, repetition, and practice to become successful. There's no difference when the training applies to learning the Fashions of the Model A Era. These same factors play a vital role. Everyone's purpose for learning Era Fashions is different, but developing a plan based on your purpose will lead to success in recognizing the Fashions of the Model A Era. First, ask yourself this question: ***For what purpose do I want to learn about Model A Era Fashions?*** Your answer will assist you in developing your plan and indicate how precise your knowledge must be and the level of research and effort you must put forth. To help clarify this point; if your purpose is to obtain an outfit to wear at an Annual Banquet or at a Chapter's outing, you have the option of deciding to wear gloves, carry a purse, wear a Hat, style your hair, or substitute look-like items or mix 'n match years. If your purpose is to be an entrant into Fashion Judging, these items are no longer optional but are required for Fashion Judging. Your ensemble must be complete, correct and precise for the Category, Year, Class and Division, you as the entrant has selected.

For completing your plan, select a Category (Original, Reproduction, Model A Era Image), Class (Woman, Man, Junior, Children) and a division (Daytime, Formal, Active Sports, Specialty). Then make of a list of all items necessary to complete your ensemble ***based on your purpose***. Two plan examples are shown below.

**Purpose:** *To wear on a Tour* \_\_\_\_\_

**Category:** *Model A Era Image* \_\_\_\_\_

**Yr/Cls/Div:** *1930 Women's Daytime*

**Major Garment:** *Daytime dress*

**Headgear:** *Hat*

**Coordinated Apparel:**

**OuterGarment:** *Marten fur scarf*

**UnderGarment:** *none*

**Accessories:** *Beads*

**Footgear:**

**Shoes:** *MaryJane*

**Stockings:** *Pantvhose*

**Purpose:** *To enter judging* \_\_\_\_\_

**Category:** *Original* \_\_\_\_\_

**Yr/Cls/Div:** *1930 Women's Evening*

**Major Garment:** *Evening dress*

**Headgear:** *Hair Styled w/adornment*

**Coordinated Apparel:**

**OuterGarment:** *Evening Wrap and  
Gloves (correct length)*

**UnderGarment:** *Slip, panties*

**Accessories:** *Necklace, Earrings,  
braclet, watch, purse, compact, hankie,*

**Footgear:**

**Shoes:** *Evening shoes*

**Stockings:** *Silk hose w/ round*

Your garment and all articles must be all original, correct and precise for completing an entire 1930 Women's evening ensemble.

Commence looking up the first item on your list in your resource manuals and ask yourself this question - What identifies this item belongs to the Model A Era? What characteristics indicate this belongs to the Model A Era? When you obtain your answer, you basically have trained your eyes to focus on specific identifiable characteristics of an item being of the Model A Era. Repeat this process for each item on your list. Make sure you are able to answer the question for each item with confidence before moving on to the next.

Although learning never stops, you need to put your training to a test by going shopping, or at least 'window' shopping. Exposure to Vintage Fashions is very important to help build your self-confidence and measure the success of your knowledge obtained through training your eyes. This may be easier for some than others depending on the number of Antique Shops and Vintage Fashion Shows in your area but try to visit as many and as often, as possible to test your knowledge and training. Take your list with you and look specifically for these needed items. If and once you find an item on your list, ask yourself: Is this of the Model A Era? Does the item have the identifiable characteristics noted during training? If it does, you have verified your training and learned. All that remains is the decision whether or not to purchase. If the item does not have the characteristics noted during training, or you're not sure, go back to researching and training your eyes again.

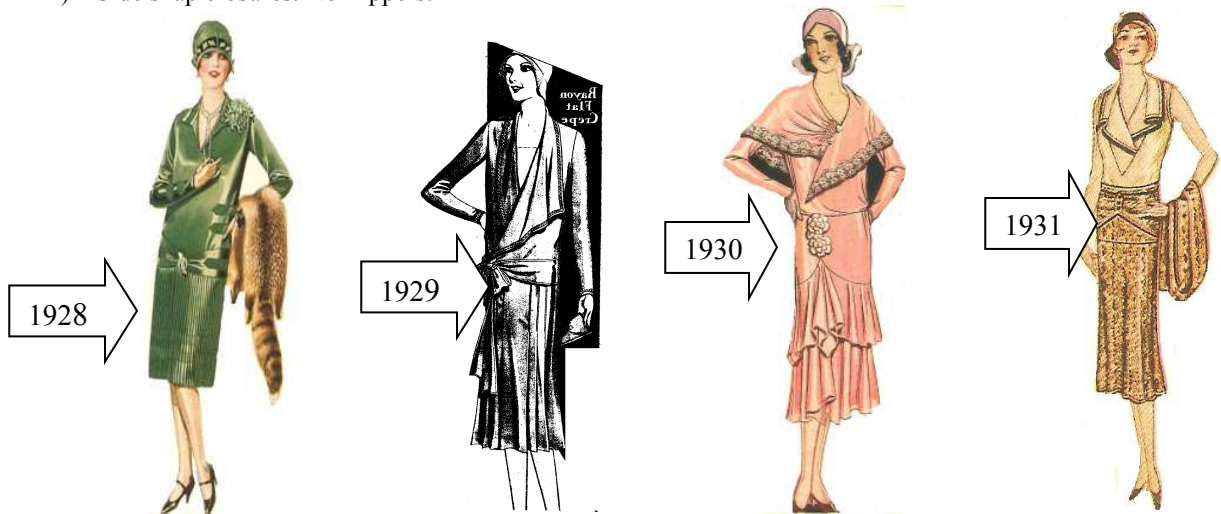
Not every garment and/or article of our era may have distinguishing characteristics or the specific identifying characteristics you noted during your training. This does not mean they are not of our era, it just means more in depth research is required to identify and prove they are.

After you have accomplished one plan and goal, you can enhance your original plan by adding more articles to your list for correctness and completing the ensemble or create a new plan for another purpose. To obtain the most knowledge of Model A Era Fashions through "Training Your Eyes", always commence with a plan for entering judging. This will require more effort in reaching the correctness and fulfilling the requirements for a completing an entire Model A Era ensemble, but you will unknowingly obtained knowledge of our fashions through the process.

## *Distinguishing Characteristics*

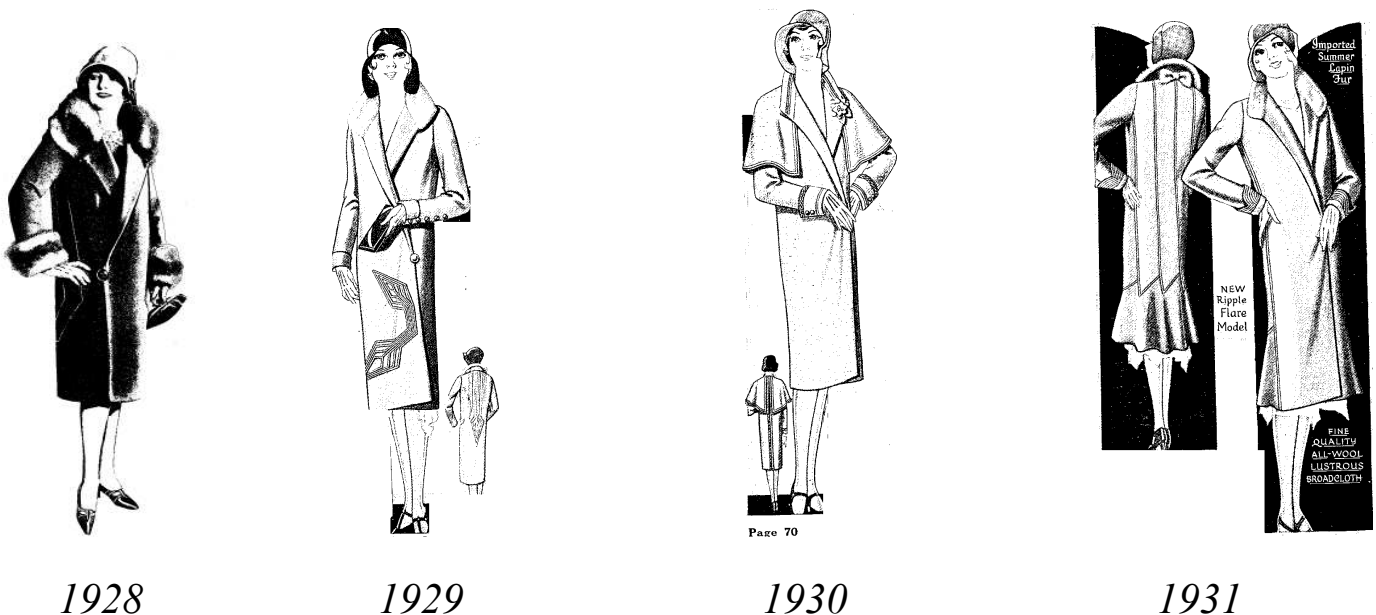
### *Dresses:*

- 1) Style : 1928 & 1929 – straight 1930 & 1931 – slight curvature at waist  
Bust darts, if any, were small approx. 2 or 3 inches at most
- 2) Location of the waistline  
1928: at the widest part of the hipline.  
1929: halfway between the hipline and the natural waist  
1930: at the natural waist but with dropped waistline seam  
1931: at the natural waist with dropped waistline seam
- 3) Unusual and/or multiple seams. Most prominent on 1930 & 1931 dresses.
- 4) Side snap closures. No Zippers.



### *Coats:*

- 1) Side closure – with One button or wrapped to the side
- 2) Unique decorative stitching
- 3) Caplets
- 4) Cuff sleeves
- 5) Style: 1928-1929 Straight 1930-1931 A-Line, belts popular



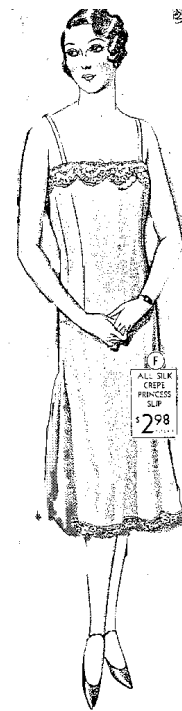
### *Slips:*

- 1) No strap adjustments
- 2) No bust darts
- 3) Style (noted below picture)



1928-29

Style was straight and boxy to match dress style



1930-31

Princess seams with inward curve at waist to accommodate Normal waistline dresses. Diagonal seams were also prominent.

**Hats:**

- 1) Crown fits like a helmet 'around' head, usually to nap of neck.
- 2) Year determined by the location of the front rim of crown. See below.
- 3) Irregular brims. Little to no brim at nap of neck.
- 4) Material: Felt very common and popular. Be Careful of the type of straw and the weave

**1928**

covers eyebrows  
no hair revealed



**1929**

just above eyebrows  
little hair revealed only  
on the sides



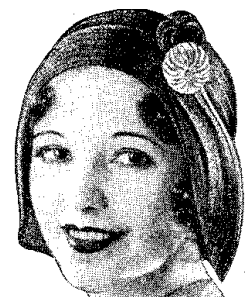
**1930**

middle of forehead  
little hair revealed on  
forehead and sides



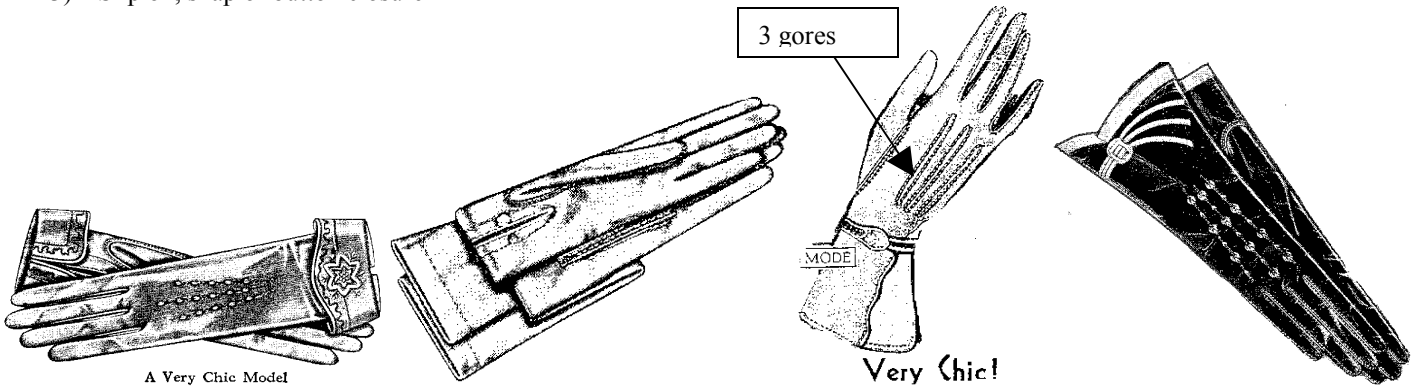
**1931**

at forehead hairline  
some hat styles reveal  
hair on side of head



**Gloves:**

- 1) All gloves must have 3 gores with the exception of Crocheted gloves
- 2) Embroidered and gauntlet cuffs
- 3) Slip on, snap or button closure



**Handbags (Daytime):**

- 1) Vertical or Horizontal back strap
- 2) Swinging coin purse and/or inside pocket with mirror
- 3) Hanging Tab in center front

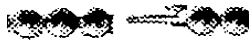


**Jewelry:**

- 1) Type of Clasp
- 2) Pearls or Crystal beads most easiest to find and universal
- 3) Dull metal



Spring Ring



Snap Clasp



Filigree Pierced Case Fish Hook Clasp



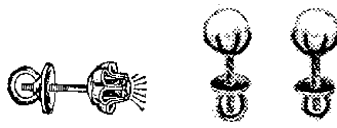
Camouflaged Barrel Screw Clasp

### ***Earrings:***

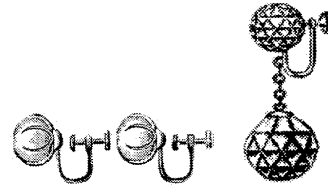
- 1) Pierced and Nonpierced both valid
- 2) Earscrews otherwise known as Screw Back Earrings
- 3) No Clip Back earrings



Pierced  
German Back



Pierced  
Earscrews



Nonpierced Earscrews

### ***Watches:***

- 1) Ribbon Band
- 2) The watch face contained a frame matching the physical shape of the watch.



***Remember:*** *Not every garment and/or article of our era may have distinguishing characteristics or the same specific characteristics I have identified through "Training My Eyes" which are documented in this article.* You, on the other hand, might see different characteristics than I. There is no wrong or right. The point is being able to identify, with confidence, whether a garment or article is of the Model A Era. As a prime example, all watches above are Model A Era watches. When shopping, I would, with confidence, be able to distinguish a watch from our Era, if it has the inside frame on the watch face and a ribbon wristband. On the other hand, if I saw either one of these watches while shopping, I would **not** be able to recognize or distinguish it being of the Model A Era, even though they are.