

## A Study of the Historical Change of American Sportswear - Focusing on Women's Sportswear -

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to explicate the contemporary concept of the term 'sportswear' by studying the history of sportswear tradition in America where sportswear was first established and developed. American sportswear originated from some functional clothes made for specific sports during the 19th century. Early in 20th century, there occurred many significant events in America while Americans were undergoing two successive world wars. First of all, due to the wars, women's role in labor force became so significant that their social status was enhanced remarkably. With economy growing every decade, the amount of leisure time for American people substantially increased and, therefore they could develop their leisure activity culture. All these changes made Americans demand the need for comfortable and functional clothes suitable for their changed way of life. In response to this demand, the sportswear tradition became mature due to the contribution by many creative All-American designers, most of whom have made their active contributions since 1970s. Now the sportswear, which used to be designed for specific sports, developed into casual wear in general with its extended definition. The contemporary concept of sportswear is no longer limited to those clothes for specific sports. Sportswear has now become more like a casual activity wear which all classes of people can enjoy in their life. Since the concept and scope of sportswear is extended to a great degree today, we need a new professional term to correctly express the extended nature of these contemporary clothes.*

*Key words : American sportswear, leisure activity culture, functional clothes, casual wear<sup>1)</sup>.*

### 1. Introduction

As the concept of 'well-being' is becoming a focal point in modern life and fitness and exercise are getting popular among people, sports look is becoming an important trend in fashion. Some years ago, one of the fashion icons for

New Yorkers used to be sneakers. The look of wearing suits and sneakers caught on quickly among fashion leaders in Korea, and in some years after the spread of this fashion the fashion of wearing gymnastic suits as well as the sneaker fashion is getting popular on the streets. The popularity of sportswear is emerging as a world-wide trend in fashion.

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<sup>1</sup> Casual wear is defined as an informal look of pants with shirts and sport jackets in dictionaries. Sportswear is, on the other hand, a term for clothing worn for sport activities. This term was popularized in the 1920s and 1930s for casual wear when people were participating in spectator sports. Since the late 1960s, the concept of sportswear has changed and sportswear is now considered a day fashion based on the original concept of sports clothing.

For the past 20 years, sportswear has achieved a phenomenal development and it has become an important fashion trend since the mid 1980's in Korea. Lee, H-J (1994) defined sportswear as the clothes that people wear while they are engaged in sporting activities as their hobby or leisure activity<sup>2</sup>). She also mentioned that it also refers to those costumes that are worn by the spectators of sports and any costumes with sporty looks. Her definition is basically identical to the definitions that were made in America during the 1920s and 1930s.

The purpose of this paper is to review the historical change of sportswear tradition in America, a fashion leader in the world, where the term 'sportswear' was first established and developed. By doing so, we aim to understand how the concept of sportswear has changed and attempt to explicate its modern meanings.

In order to study how sportswear has been established and developed in connection with many other factors in American society, we reviewed the previous literature on the topics of its developing factors and the history of its development and presented sets of sportswear pictures that reveal the characteristics of each period.

## II. The Development Factors behind Women's Sportswear in America

American sportswear is not just a series of style or a cultural history but more an object of study that reflects her national characteristics and it itself is a history of American industry. American sportswear is a new creation that has transcended French *couture*<sup>3</sup>). From 1850s to the present, the fundamental factors that have chan-

ged the style with which Americans wear clothes can be found in social and cultural factors such as the increased leisure time and the demand for sports style more than in the design and technical factors.

We will discuss below a range of factors that have contributed to the establishment and development of sportswear and how each factor has influenced its development, focusing on women's sportswear.

### 1. Development of Sports

Recently in the past century, sports was one of the most significant influence factors upon the establishment and development of American history<sup>4</sup>). It was in the 19th century that sports began to make a remarkable development with baseball, croquet, swimming, football, skating, bicycling and golf getting popular. Since 1880, women have begun to actively participate in sports. Earlier at that time, their participation used to be limited to the games such as croquet and tennis that were played in a specific place. With the advent of bicycles, women were liberated from being limited to playing in specific places. This change was reflected in fashion. Women's calf was exposed as their skirts got shorter. Bloomer and Flapping Culottes that appeared in the 1850s were popularly worn by women(Fig. 1). After that, there occurred a change in tennis courts and beaches. When Suzanne Lenglen appeared in the tennis court wearing a skirt whose length reached up to the middle of the calf in 1920, people were shocked<sup>5</sup>). The knitted swimming wear worn by Annette Kellerman prompted the simplification of swimming wear(Fig. 2), (Fig. 3).

Sports and recreation serve to satisfy our fundamental desire to liberate ourselves from our everyday routines in our work places and

<sup>2</sup> *Mut (Fancy)*, (August 1985), 92.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Martin, *All American: A sportswear Tradition* (New York: F. L. T., 1985), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Marilyn J. Horn and Louis M. Gurel, *The Second Skin*, 3rd ed. (New Jersey: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1996), 130.

<sup>5</sup> Marilyn J. Horn and Louis M. Gurel, *Op. cit.*, 113.



〈Fig. 1〉 Bloomer Suit. (*All American : A Sportswear Tradition*, p. 60)



〈Fig. 2〉 Annette Kellerman. (*Fashion The Century of The Designer*, p. 68)



〈Fig. 3〉 Suzanne Lenglen's Swimming Wears. (*Sportsfashion*, p. 26)

offices. They provide us with a version of functionalism in fashion in that we want to wear comfortable clothes while engaged in active sporting games or in recreation activities<sup>6)</sup>. In this way, women have changed the way they wear clothes by taking part in sports and demanded sportswear as functional clothes suitable for their physical activities. Furthermore, sportswear became to simplify general clothes and developed into one of the daily wear modes, giving an influence even on evening wear<sup>7)</sup>.

Sports played a better role of reminding American people of the spirit of rule observance and cooperation than any other entertainments and contributed to enhancing their moral standard. With sports being one of the most important daily cultures for them, the clothes they wear for sporting activities became more important than any other clothes in their life.

Now sports have become a symbol of health for American people. Now they enjoy wearing sweaters and tennis shoes without even playing tennis and jogging shoes are for everyone. While the culture of physical activities was not readily accepted during the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the culture of admiring sports and fitness has now blossomed. In America, as for individuals, sports mean the increase of health and fitness, the benefit of longevity, getting away from stress, and the improved work conditions, and as for the community, it means a national pride with the restoration of the Olympic games. Teams of college sports, school sports and professional sports have taught people a sense of unity as well as a sense of competition. Thus, sports is a unique mechanism in which people feel a sense of unity among individuals and groups and is becoming a mirror of American life.

## 2. Popularity of Leisure Activities

After World War I and World War II, Americans were able to have more free time by

<sup>6)</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 12.

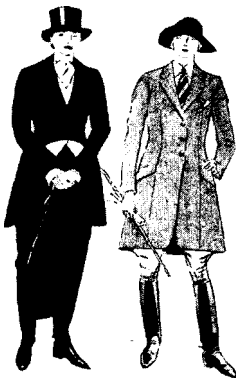
<sup>7)</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 34.

working five days a week and 8 hours a day. The scholars of the 1950s such as David Reisman pointed out leisure, recreation and spectatorship as important characteristics of American society<sup>8</sup>. John Tunis said that there were no citizens in the history of the world who could enjoy more free time than American people<sup>9</sup>.

As he said, leisure has become leisure mass for American people, but not just for some specific leisure class. This kind of leisure made a decisive contribution in determining the quantity and quality of American life in the 1950s. In particular, as people moved to the suburban areas, they got away from the couture tradition and began to change the way they dressed themselves. As a result, they were able to enjoy an increased variety of clothes and the popularity of a particular fashion became important. Sportswear, the leisure wear for Americans, has now become casual activity clothes for everyone (Fig. 4)~(Fig. 6).

### 3. The Development of Ready-to-Wear Clothes

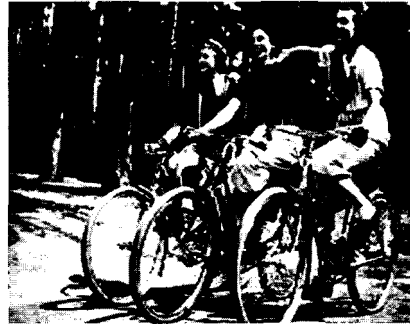
The ready-to-wear clothes industry in America originated from shirtswaist blouses that were produced in 1890(Fig. 7)<sup>10</sup>. Even before the production of these clothes, there were produced some other ready-to-wear clothes such as the



〈Fig. 4〉 Horse Riding. (*Sportswear in Vogue*, p. 29)



〈Fig. 5〉 Ski. (*Sportswear in Vogue*, p. 31)



〈Fig. 6〉 Bicycle. (*Sportswear in Vogue*, p. 41)



〈Fig. 7〉 Shirtswaist. (*Fashion from Concept to Consumer*, p. 10)

ready-to-wear pants and shirts for sailors in the 1800's and the ready-to-wear clothes for gold

<sup>8</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 17.

explorers in 1840, but these clothes were only for men.

Ready-to-wear clothes for women appeared in 1859. The starting point of the ready-to-wear clothes industry for women was in 1890 when, with the appearance of Gibson Girl, women's demand for shirtwaist blouses and skirts increased and these clothes became the main items for the industry. Shirtwaist blouses played a bridge role for women between the traditional daily clothes and the functional clothes. With the images of the clothes produced by machines getting popular, these clothes set an image of transcending the differences in social class and ethnicity and proved that ready-to-wear clothes can be manufactured and sold for numerous people<sup>11</sup>. The development of the ready-to-wear industry contributed to creating a fresh image of America and set a foundation for the development of the industry that produces casual and active clothes.

The early industry of shirtwaist blouses started in the Low East Side of New York, but it moved to the 7th Avenue area during the periods of World War I and World War II where many fire-proof buildings were concentrated at that time because of the fire incident in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in November, 1911. Since then, the industry could start again in a new environment with the definition of ready-to-wear clothes extended<sup>12</sup>.

In this way, American ready-to-wear industry could make a big stride without any direct loss or setback, while the fashion industry in France had to take a critical blow during World War II. As a result, in the 1950's, the fashion industry became one of the most important industries in America. Simply put, the history of American ready-to-wear industry is the history of sportswear production. By adopting ready-to-wear clothes as one of the important industry items, the sportswear industry was able to develop itself

into a mass production industry of clothes instead of settling for the production of tailored clothes.

#### 4. Movement of Women's Liberation

One of the most important changes in the history of mankind is probably the improvement of women's right. The movement of women's liberation in America in the 19th century started earlier than in other countries. In 1848, with the Seneca Falls Convention established in New York State, the improvement of women's right became prevalent. For the first time, the formal declaration of women's right was made and this change was reflected in women's fashion. The most representative incident occurred when Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818-1894) appeared in the London exhibition of industries and arts, wearing a wide Harlem-look baggy trouser with its length reaching the ankle and with a frill decoration at the end of the ham line in combination with a dress with a loose belt. Her look represented a feminist look<sup>13</sup>.

Starting in New York State in 1897 and in fifteen other states in 1918, the right to vote was granted to women. This situational change made women more active and more women participated in outdoor sports such as tennis, skating, boating and bicycling. As a result, sportswear saw a major development.

The issues of equal rights between men and women and how to improve women's rights started to emerge during the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. We can find three important causes for this change. First, early in the 19th century, the clothes-manufacturing machines were first introduced and as a result women's labor moved from homes to factories. Female workers on payroll could raise their voice about their financial right, leading the reform movement in their working conditions. Second, as Reform movement, Socialist movement, and

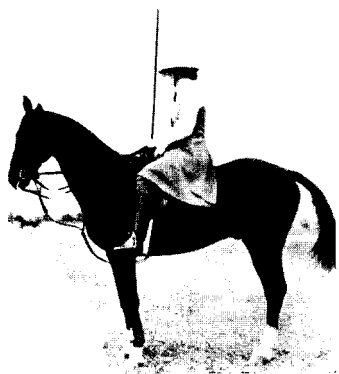
<sup>11</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Madge Garland, *The Changing Form of Fashion* (New York : Praeger pub.,1970), 19.

Social Welfare movement in Europe became known to America after the 1810s, there occurred *The Second Great Awakening*<sup>14)</sup> after the 1820's and many women took part in the social and moral reform movements. Third, due to the speeches and enlightenment efforts by female reformists, women became conscious of the issue of how to improve their rights<sup>15)</sup>.

Due to these reasons, the trend of women's wear adopting the characteristics of men's wear got accelerated and such a radical social change like a war made this trend more accelerated. Two world wars resulted in sharply increasing the job opportunities for women and the traditional division of labor between husband and wife was rearranged so that they became more of a colleague. This change provided a background behind the appearance of companion clothes for husband and wife that looked good on both of them, and the sportswear clothes like polo shirts and rain coats became a popular fashion both for men and women<sup>16)</sup> (Fig. 8), (Fig. 9). In the 1960's, women's voices through their fashion became more resonant and strong and as the younger generation was leading a fashion chan-



〈Fig. 8〉 Polo Shirts. (*Sportswear in Vogue*, p. 13)



〈Fig. 9〉 Rain Coat. (*All American: A Sports-wear Tradition*, p. 53)

ge, there was little clear distinction between men's wear and women's wear. Today, young men and women like similar clothes in schools, in their work places, in clubs, in markets and outside their homes in order to behave like friends for one another. Modern women's wear is more comfortable and reasonable than ever and their clothes have changed into active sportswear.

### III. The Historical Development of Women's Sportswear

We made a comprehensive review of the previous literature and looked up the dictionaries to analyze the historical development of women's sportswear in America and decided to divide the history into four periods-the establishment period, the first developing period, the second developing period and the maturing period. In the following section, we will discuss the details of historical development of women's sportswear during each period.

<sup>14</sup> This religious movement was known as the Second Great Awakening late in the 18th century in America. It started in New England and spreaded into other areas. Missionaries travelled to many places and preached a religious message, asking people to reform themselves. This movement gave a different impact on different areas, and in particular, the western areas of New York State were most significantly influenced.

<sup>15</sup> Min-Hee Lee, "A Review of Women's Movement for their Voting Right 1865-1877" (Master's thesis., Ehwa Women's University, 1990), 87.

<sup>16</sup> Karlyne Anspach, *The Why of Fashion* (The Iowa State Univ Press, 1967), 327.

### 1. The Establishment Period (1850~1919)

The 19th century was the time the early modern society began to be formed and the citizen's fashion culture began to emerge due to the establishment of the ready-to-wear industry in America. The Citizen's Revolution and the Industrial Revolution that started from the 18th century provided a turning point in politics, economics and culture. Women began to raise their voice for their rights as the industries got modernized and the spirit of democracy became widespread<sup>17</sup>). During this period, all the sporting games that are now played in the modern period were introduced. Before sports emerged, people had no sense of functional clothes suitable for specific activities like sports. Previously, a dress for women used to mean a symbol for her position and it was usually decorated with more cloths, laces, ribbons and frills. The very first functional clothes were considered as the walking costume which was worn while riding a horse late in 1860<sup>18</sup>) (Fig. 10). Late in the 1800s, the high class women enjoyed such sports as croquet, tennis, golf and horseback riding, but they were content to wear their daily clothes.

However, as sports became more popular, it influenced daily clothes. One representative example was Amelia Jenks Bloomer's bloomer. This bloomer was seen on the streets and in the parks here and there and it was recorded as the very first sportswear in America<sup>19</sup>). This bloomer was originally designed to ride bicycles of which the mass production was possible at that time and it was also worn for other sporting activities such as gymnastics, basketball, swimming and mountain climbing. Wearing pants was also allowed in horseback riding as in



〈Fig. 10〉 Walking Costume. (*Fairchild Dictionary of Fashion*, p. 453)

bicycling since women wanted to move their legs freely. Early in the 20th century, women hid their legs by wearing side-saddle skirts with the pleats of the original skirts gathered on the side, but since there was a danger of their falling from the horses, they began to wear pants like men<sup>20</sup>) (Fig. 11). As a similar example, women started wearing jodhpurs<sup>21</sup>).

Sports emphasized the functional and comfor-



〈Fig. 11〉 Saddle Skirt. (*All American: A Sportswear Tradition*, p. 32)

<sup>17</sup> Mi-Jung Kim, "A Study of Pants Fashion - Focusing on the Period from 1978 to 1987" (Master's thesis, Ehwa Women's University, 1987), 67.

<sup>18</sup> Adler France-Michele, *Sportswear* (New York : Avon Books, 1980), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Adler France-Michele, *Op. cit.*, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Charlie Lee-Potter, *Sportswear in Vogue* (New York: Abbeville press, 1984), 8-9.

<sup>21</sup> A pants where the hip is large and spacious and the part from the knee to the ankle is narrowing down.

table aspect of sportswear rather than gender difference, promoting the replacement of the high quality delicate cloths used in women's wear by those durable cloths for the tailoring of men's wear. This predicted the appearance of the uni-sex mode. Tennis was one of the most popular sports for women at that time and they used to wear the jackets, skirts and blouses that were not very different from their daily clothes (Fig. 12). Golf was another sport which women enjoyed playing and they used to wear long skirts, simple design shirts, brown-colored ankle boots, black hoods with fretwork design, and narrow-brimmed hats that went well with tweed capes.

Swimming was not yet a familiar sport for women, and they were content to play around the edge of a pool or a beach. At that time, women used to wear a corset inside their bathing dress in the beach and a wool suit and overskirt that were not supposed to get wet. For this reason, swimming seemed to be considered as irritating and dangerous by women. A few women who enjoyed swimming began to wear a bloomer as their swimming wear, but they still had to wear a dress and a 18-inch corset inside it (Fig. 13). However, the swimming fashion that used to look uncomfortable took a major turn

when Annette Kellerman participated in a diving contest, wearing a tight knitted swimming wear. Women wore breeches and knickers for horse-back riding as ski wear and as for skating they just wore their daily clothes.<sup>22</sup>(Fig. 14)

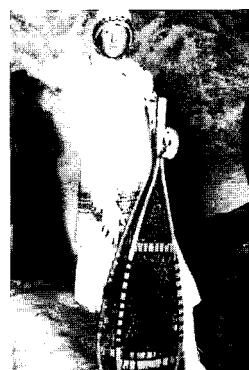
As we have reviewed so far, there occurred several changes in women's daily fashion as they actively participated in sports and outdoor activities, but still the clothes they wore for sports were not much different from their daily clothes. However, this was the period when the concept of wearing a particular sportswear for the sports games we know very well such as tennis, swimming and bicycling was establi-



〈Fig. 13〉 Swimming Wear. (*All American: A Sports-wear Tradition*, p. 48)



〈Fig. 12〉 Tennis Wear. (*All American: A Sports-wear Tradition*, vis. 12)



〈Fig. 14〉 Ski Suit. (*All American: A Sports-wear Tradition*, vis. 14)

<sup>22</sup> This was originally called knickerbockers. This was a loosely fitting and spacious gathering pants with a cuff at the end of the ham line worn by men in the 1960s.



shed<sup>23)</sup>.

## 2. The First Developing Period (1920~1939)

This was the period when people began to have more free time and increased leisure and sports opportunities after World War I. America was able to accumulate much wealth during the war and they could reduce the working days and hours. With the remarkable development of the automobile industry and the electric and mechanic industries supported by the financial policies of the government, the economy made an ever rising progress and the G.N.P. reached seven hundred million dollars in 1931 and nine hundred million dollars in 1939. Accordingly, the demand for labor sharply increased<sup>24)</sup>. Due to the economic boom, the field of sports also met a golden period.

The most notable thing that occurred during this period was that the spectatorship of watching sports games was established in addition to the culture of participating directly in sporting games. Besides, a new variety of sports appeared. In the 1920s there appeared exercising and squash, Punch bag, track and field, water skiing, fencing, and mountain climbing appeared in the 1930s. There were a variety of developments in sportswear. The most notable development was the emergence of spectator sportswear in the definition of the apparel. These clothes meant the ones that were suitable for watching sports and there were sweaters, skirts, blouses, pants and shorts. The origin of these clothes came from active sportswear for sporting activities, but they began to develop into general sportswear as they were accepted by the public to be suitable for leisure activities in general<sup>25)</sup>.

Another notable development was the increase of leisure time and the popularity of cars. These changes made it possible for people to

enjoy sports in distant places and contributed to making golf popular. In the case of golf wear for men, a particular design wear was not essential in this sport and those who play golf to socialize demanded some kind of fancy clothes that they could wear all day. These clothes were kickers and shirts. In 1919, sweaters first appeared on the golf courses and this was a forefront example of introducing casual wears as a main flow of fashion<sup>26)</sup>(Fig. 15). As for the golf wear for women, they were in dispute over the choice of one-piece or two-piece(Fig. 16). In the 1930s, one-piece dresses were introduced in tennis and



〈Fig. 15〉 Tennis Shirt. (*All American: A Sportswear Tradition*, vis. 11)



〈Fig. 16〉 Golf Dress. (*All American: A Sportswear Tradition*, vis. 20)

<sup>23</sup> Charlotte Mankey Calasibetta, *Fairchild Dictionary of Fashion*, 2nd-ed (New York: Fairchild, 1988), 545.

<sup>24</sup> Myoung-Kun Choo, *The History of American Economy* (Seoul: Parkyoung Publishing Co., 1983), 145.

<sup>25</sup> Charlotte Mankey Calasibetta, *Op. cit.*, 45.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 61.

women began to wear one-piece dresses. Shorts were not allowed for women on the golf courses even until the 1950s(Fig. 17).

During this period, tennis was a very popular sport for women and played a significant role in liberating women. The girl-look fashion of short-haired Suzanne Lenglen wearing a sleeveless cardigan with Jean Patou's letters on it and a wide belt on her head attracted a sensational response. There occurred more changes in the 1930s. Women's back was exposed. Another change was that Fearly Whittingstall appeared on the court without wearing stockings and Alice Marble wore shorts in the Wimbledon games in 1933<sup>27)</sup>.

Skiing was not a popular sport before the 1930s, but as the Winter Olympic games were held at Lake Placid in 1931, Americans' interest in skiing increased. Since skiing required a more thrilling training, the regulation of clothes was less strict than in other sports and the overall silhouette was long and slender(Fig. 19).

There occurred two important changes in swimming. One was that women's legs were exposed without wearing stockings, and the other was that women actually went into water(Fig. 18). Flapper<sup>28)</sup> appeared at this time and beauty contests were held and the contestants marched all



〈Fig. 17〉 Tennis Dress. (*All American: A Sportswear Tradition*, vis. 23)

<sup>27</sup> Charlie Lee-Potter, *Op. cit.*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> In the 1920s, some women with flat breast and hip had a thick makeup with the bobbed hair style, wearing a short skirt. This boyish look was called Flapper look. This look became popular in America due to Paris designer Jean Paton.



〈Fig. 18〉 Swimming Wear. (*Changing Style in Fashion*, p.171)



〈Fig. 19〉 Ski Wear. (*All American: A Sportswear Tradition*, vis. 44)

over America wearing swimming wears. There were a variety of swimming wear from silk to knit and the kind of design that exposed the body was popular.

Thus, during the first developing period, both men's and women's sportswear underwent some major changes. Particularly, women's sportswear escaped from the conventional clothes and developed into a style that was close to a modern style. Due to these changes, the All-American sportswear tradition began to form its root.

One of the contributors to establishing the All-American sportswear tradition was a role of college stores. Lord & Taylor started selling the

clothes made of gaberdine and flannel to female students as well as to male students. These clothes became very popular among other people outside the campus. Brooks Brothers, well-known for its men's fashion, proposed sweaters to the public and attracted their popularity<sup>29</sup>. Levis and a.k.a in the west produced active sportswear from blue jeans to the swimming and skiing wear. It took significant contributions by such actresses as Greta Garbo and Katherine Hepburn to make these clothes popular<sup>30</sup>.

The most important development was the emergence of All-American designers such as Claire McCardell, Vera Maxwell, Joset Walker, Dorothy Cox and Clare Potter. These female designers were commuting to big cities living in the suburban areas amid an economic boom of America and designed their clothes for the women who were living a similar life. They built a foundation for the All-American sportswear tradition in fashion.

### 3. The Second Developing Period (1940~1969)

In the 1940s, All-American sportswear designs began to make strides. This was the period when America had to go through another world war after World War I ended and sportswear could settle down as American clothes due to their experience of another war. Paris was under the rule of Germany and had to see her role as a supplier of fashion designs decreased. This gave a golden opportunity to America so that she could be an independent fashion leader. American clothing culture was controlled to be practical in order to conserve resources. The concept of 'security' was added to women's wear and their clothes became far more practical because they themselves worked in their work places instead of men. Pants which used to be worn by women only while playing sports were enjoyed widely by them and therefore they de-

manded the designers who could design simple and inexpensive clothes<sup>31</sup>. Pants such as overalls, blue jeans and jodhpurs were worn and jump suits were designed as a work uniform. Shirts-waist dresses, which established the ready-to-wear production, were modified to be a work uniform for factory workers(Fig. 20). These clothes have developed into evening separates as a unique American fashion in the modern world.

In the 1950's, Americans were able to enjoy the most free time than any other citizens in the world, encountering the age of leisure. Free time meant a new quality of life for them. People continued to move to suburban areas and liberated themselves from the traditional couture culture from Europe<sup>32</sup>. Women had to take their children to school, took care of the gardens and shuffled the snow at home. Therefore, they needed the clothes of artificial fabrics that were easy to wash and look after. They often went to a large shopping center for shopping. It was televisions that provided them with much convenience. The quick influx of information from televisions made a home fashion popular. All these changes demanded informal casual clothes that were suitable for the suburban life style(Fig. 21).

All-American sportswear designers also emerged during this period, such as Bonnie Cashin,



〈Fig. 20〉 Shirts-waist. (90 years of Fashion, p.14)

<sup>29</sup> Charlie Lee-Potter, *Op. cit.*, 39.

<sup>30</sup> Maggie Pexton Murray, *Changing Style in Fashion* (New York: Fairchild Pub. Co, 1989), 107.

<sup>31</sup> Maggie Pexton Murray, *Op. cit.*, 108.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 36.

Rudi Gernreich, Claire McCadell, and Bonnie Cashin introduced a fashion of wearing several light clothes instead of wearing one heavy costume. Rudi Gernreich began to be known to the public by popularizing the maillot<sup>33</sup> swimming wear during the 1950s. He demonstrated a very distinct style with a geometrical tailoring technique, daring graphics and a contradictory but interesting combination of colors. Claire McCadell, in her collection, introduced tights that used to be worn by professional dancers. This became the origin of panty stockings, laying a foundation for the popularity of leotard that was called as 'Bitney look' in the middle of the 1950s, tights and tweed jumpers(Fig. 22)<sup>34</sup>.

The most notable thing during the 1960s was the fact that casual blue jeans became a world-



〈Fig. 21〉 Casual Separate. (*What We Wore*, p.80)

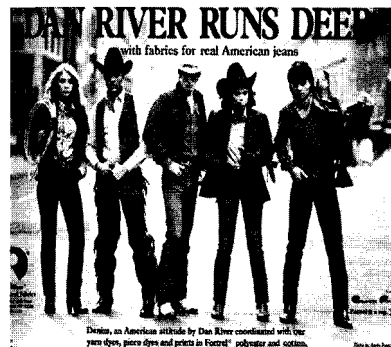


〈Fig. 22〉 Bitney Look. (*90 years of Fashion*, p.49)

wide uniform(Fig. 23). At that time, a big fashion change was led by the baby boom generation after the war. 50% of the American population was below 25 and this young generation formed a large consumer class for a potential growth of the clothing industry of young fashion<sup>35</sup>. This trend continued during the 1970s. One of the most important characteristics of the 1960's was anti-war sentiment and the popularity of anti-fashion with the emergence of hippies who were leading a very liberal life and despised the pursuit of functionalism. Regardless of gender, young people wore wrinkled blue jeans and rejected the habits that used to be accepted as natural so far.

Due to the influence of pop arts and op art, colors and shapes turned daring with more body exposure and the restoration look and the avant-garde look coexisted(Fig. 24). In parallel with this trend, Rudi Gernreich was able to introduce no-bra brassiere and the unprecedented topless swimming wear. Panty stockings replaced girdles and stockings.

With the development of double knit during the 1950s, everything composed of knit belonged to sportswear in the 1960s. For this reason, sweaters became very popular and a voluminous thick-thread woven sweater and leather



〈Fig. 23〉 Jeans. (*Changing Style in Fashion*, p.182)

<sup>33</sup> Women's one piece swimming wear.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 38.

<sup>35</sup> Gini Stephena Frings, *Fashion from Concept to Consumer* (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1987), 25-26.

pants formed a good-looking separate<sup>36</sup>. Late in the 1960s, designers such as Ann Klein, Georgio Sant Angelo and Halston started the real sportswear industry.

Active sports also saw some major developments during the second developing period and the most notable development was found in swimming wear. Swimming wear exploded in the 1940s and the consumption was noticeably increased in the 1950s and the bikini fashion was introduced for the first time. A distinctive change in tennis wear was that a player named Gussie Moran appeared on the court, surprisingly wearing a uniform with ruffles that were not white in color, the traditional color for tennis wear so far.

Unlike drastic changes during the 1920~30s, this period saw gradual developments and the aspect of making the most of female beauty was emphasized.

#### 4. Maturing Period (1970~2000)

From the 1970s to the 1990s, with the appearance of a lot of distinguished sportswear, All-American sportswear tradition became mature. In the 1970s, the young fashion trend of the 1960s and the anti-fashion trend of the 1970s disappeared and the silhouette became smooth. They sought after the non-structural and comfortable styles. The primary reason for this



〈Fig. 24〉 Op Art Shirt. (*Vogue*, 1961)

<sup>36</sup> The upper part and the lower part are separated so that this women's wear can be worn in various combinations.

<sup>37</sup> Charlie Lee-Potter, *Op. cit.*, 81.

change was that those young people who tended to be resistant and aggressive became adults and they matured themselves. Early in the 1970s, due to inflation and oil crisis, how to maintain the standard living style became their main concern<sup>37</sup>. Accordingly, the multi-purpose fashion was emphasized and layered look, loose look and sportive look became popular.

In addition to these changes, individualism (the trend to wear clothes based on an individual's preferences) began to spread widely. During this period, the inspiration for fashion came not just from Paris but also from Rome, Milano and Tokyo. The influence of youth look from the streets was also significant. The demand to follow a fashion from one place decreased naturally and individuals expressed their fashion in a variety of ways, pursuing their personal preferences. Due to this change, sports fashion also became individualistic. Casual T-shirts were changed into a dress style fashion and a combination of separates turned into a suit. The silhouette that used to look stiff earlier changed into a smooth one, displaying its dual character in that it could look casual but dressy at the same time (Fig. 25). The unique styles of active sportswear were easy sources of inspiration for the designs of general sportswear. As jog-



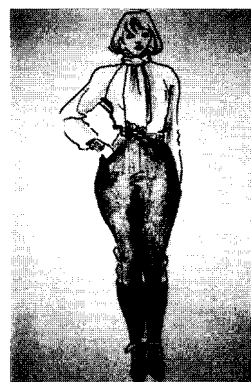
〈Fig. 25〉 Tunic and Pants. (*90 years of Fashion*, p.54)

ging became popular, jogging wears became also popular and jodhpurs, which used to be worn for horseback riding, became a typical sportswear in the middle of 1970s (Fig. 26), (Fig. 27)<sup>38</sup>.

1980s was the period when the All-American sportswear tradition became more mature. During this period, the people in their late 20s or 30s comprised a large portion of American population and their life style and preference gave a significant influence upon American fashion. With the continuation of inflation and recession in economy, the people during this period had a tendency to emphasize practicality and functionalism. This trend was also reflected in fashion. People could express their individual preference and separates played a leading role in fashion because they could be practically utili-



〈Fig. 26〉 Jogging Wear. (*Vogue*, 1974)



〈Fig. 27〉 Jodhpur Pants. (*90 years of Fashion*, p.54)

zed to express their sense of fashion.

There was three factors behind the strong establishment of sportswear as an important component of American fashion. First, the awareness of the importance of health, well-being and fitness increased among American people and physical activities including sports became very popular. Second, with the increase of women's participation in the society, their social position was improved and the development of their fashion led to the development of sportswear fashion. Third, as listed in 〈Table I〉, there was a notable contribution by many All-American designers who tried to develop unique American designs. Their contributions gave a direct influence upon the development of sportswear<sup>39</sup>.

〈Table I〉 All-American Designers<sup>40</sup>

First Group (1920-1939)	Second Group (1940-1969)	Third Group (1990-2000)
Claire McCardell	Halston	Norma Kamali
Joset Walker	Stephen Burrow	Donna Karen
Dorothy Cox	Bonnie Cachin	Anne Klein
Vera Maxwell	Rudi Gernich	Louis Dell'olio
Claire Porter	Calvi Klein	Willis Smith
	Jhane Bams	John Weitz
	Ralph Lauren	Anna Sui
		Bessy Johnson

<sup>38</sup> Annalee Gold, *90 Years of Fashion* (New York: Fairchild Pub. Co., 1991), 55.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Martin, *Op. cit.*, 43.

<sup>40</sup> All-American designers that have appeared since the 1930s are classified into three groups by considering when they started their active fashion activities.

In the 1990s, with its extended definition, sportswear became far more mature and planted its root more firmly as a representative All-American fashion. Modern sportswear is now not restricted to the ones worn in tennis courts, horseback riding fields and in swimming pools. Sportswear is now defined as the clothes we can wear as comfortable functional clothes every day regardless of time, place and age, including daywear and evening wear as well (Fig. 28), (Fig. 29). Now, in modern fashion, the clothes whose name has the term 'sports' have become to mean comfortable functional clothes. The scope of clothes covered by the term 'sportswear' has been extended far more than in the past and it is required that we develop a new specialized term that can express this modern apparel in a



〈Fig. 28〉 Evening Separates. (*All American: A Sportswear Tradition* vis. 74)



〈Fig. 29〉 Evening Shirtwaist. (*Changing Style in Fashion*, p.179)

better way.

#### IV. Conclusion

The clothes developed in a society are an important element of its culture that reflects a variety of its factors and its overall characteristics, functioning as a tool that expresses the demands from its members. In this aspect, sportswear has been developed in American society behind the background of active sports culture and participation, the increase of free time and leisure activities due to the tremendous economic power and industrial development, the increase of women's participation in the society and the establishment and development of the ready-to-wear industry.

In order to review the historical development of women's sportswear in America, we have classified its developing stages into four periods. The establishment period was from 1850 to 1919. Sports such as tennis, yacht and hunting appeared during this period. Sportswear was defined as functional clothes people wore to play these sports.

The first developing period was from 1920 to 1939. This period was kind of a turning period in modern fashion after World War One was over. Sportswear was defined as the clothes that they wore to participate in a variety of sports games and the concept of 'Spectator Sportswear' was also added in the definition.

The second developing period was from 1940 to 1969. During this period, after World War II was over, America developed herself as a super power in the world with much wealth. With this tremendous wealth as a background, sportswear was defined as casual style clothes that reflected the casual living style of America.

The maturing period was from 1970 to 2000. This was when the concept of sportswear underwent the most significant changes. Modern sportswear is now not restricted to the ones worn in tennis courts or in swimming pools. Sportswear is now defined as the clothes we can wear as comfortable functional clothes every

day regardless of time, place and age, including daywear and evening wear as well.

Despite the short history, America has seen various efforts and contributions by many designers who have tried to establish her own unique tradition. As the world is becoming more polluted with the destruction of nature, the issue of health and well-being is now in focus and sports for health maintenance has become an important part of life style for all individuals. Sports is expected to be an essential activity that will be popular among all the people in America and it is predicted that sportswear will continue to develop more in the future.

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