

Vintage clothing exhibit at KM Historical Museum

The Kings Mountain History Museum is putting on its finest for a Vintage Clothing and Accessories, 1880-1950 exhibit.

The 1950s are symbolized with a deep brown taffeta dress Fran Sincox wore to a dance at Davidson College. From the 1930s and 1940s a long burgundy velvet dress shows off the glamorous styles popularized by Hollywood.

The Roaring 20s are represented with dresses made for dancing. An ecru-colored dress with lace overlay features hand embroidered buttons that appear in motion when the wearer takes to the dance floor.

According to the exhibit, fashion of that decade reflected a post-World War I celebration of youth and life. Women won the right to vote, prohibition meant the opening of private clubs and jazz was a favorite. By 1925, women were wearing short, simply constructed flapper dresses which exposed the knees. "Flapper" described young women sporting bobbed hair and obsessed with dancing the Charleston, clad in short skirts, rolled down stockings and T-bar shoes.

Traveling back a few years, a 1912 white dress of lawn cloth and white embroidered lace is emblematic of the Edwardian era. During this period, America, England and most of western Europe were prospering.

The more provincial period from 1880 to 1900 is reflected in the mourning clothes which are part of the exhibit. A black wool and lace short coat, silk over linen lining shoulder cape and two silk hats, one with a ruffled band, are good examples of how people of this era formalized their grief.

Influenced by England's Queen Victoria who went into deep mourning after the death of her husband King Albert, custom demanded widows wear black for three years. Even jewelry, parasols, hats, shoes and handkerchiefs were black. For three years, these women only left home for church or to visit close relatives. By the third year, a widow could wear gray, purple and white. She was then allowed to entertain close friends and attend social events during the day.

Widowers, however, were only required to wear black to the funeral. Following his wife's burial, the man would wear a black armband for some time.

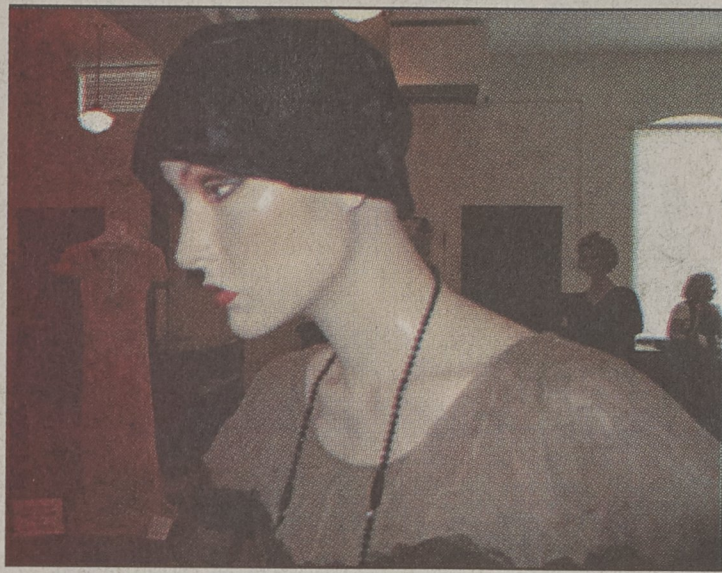
No wardrobe nor exhibit would be complete without accessories and this one is no exception. White, leather high top shoes, a black broad brimmed hat with ostrich feather plume, wood, paper and bamboo fans and an alligator purse complete with dangling feet are just some of the accouterments.

The exhibit includes 15 dresses and one men's suit.

"It's a big period of time to cover. There are quite a bit of dramatic changes in the clothing, hats and shoes," said Mickey Crowell, museum coordinator.

Vintage clothing is the museum's largest collection of items; however, preserving those textiles is costly. Ordinary cardboard boxes and plastic bags will destroy the delicate fibers. Instead, acid free containers must be used. One dress box can cost \$35.

To raise funds to preserve the clothing collection, the museum is holding a ladies



This dress epitomizes the Roaring 20s, a decade which celebrated youth and life. It is one of 15 dresses making up the Vintage Clothing and Accessories exhibit at the Kings Mountain History Museum.

luncheon May 15 at 12:30 p.m. Sara LeCount, collections manager for the York County Culture and Heritage Commission, will speak on caring for heirloom textiles.

The lunch will be \$20. Seating is limited. For reservations, call 704-739-1019. Ladies are encouraged to wear their spring hat and gloves.

The exhibit is free and runs through June 11. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. The museum is also open on the second and fourth Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. during exhibits.



The hand embroidered buttons on this flapper dress appeared to be in motion as the wearer danced the Charleston.

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