

WHEN THE GIRLS CAME OUT TO PLAY

The Birth of American Sportswear



Patricia Campbell Warner

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Over time, however, the practicality and versatility of such clothing led to sociable acceptance, laying the building blocks for the emergence of the now ubiquitous yet distinctly American style known as sportswear. The participation of women in athletic pursuits previously reserved for men began with the relatively genteel sports of croquet and tennis. Behind this advancement was an evergrowing interest in sports and exercise that was further nurtured by the establishment of universities of advanced schooling for ladies. Patricia Warner shows how this profound cultural shift, which did not reach fruition until Globe War II, originated through the previous hundred years with the gradual growth of socially acceptable physical activity for ladies. With the founding of women's colleges, these "ladylike" games had been supplemented by more energetic activities and competitive team sports activities, from gymnastics to swimming to basketball. Whereas such popular attire as corsets, petticoats, hats, and gloves could possibly be worn while playing outdoor lawn games, more strenuous athletic endeavors needed less physically restrictive clothing. At first, Warner highlights, women literally experienced nothing to use for these activities. However, change came only steadily, as women's schools, shielded from general public scrutiny and prying man eyes, permitted the adoption of looser, convenient clothing for physical education. A number of these new clothes featured trousers, garments regarded as taboo for females, though they often times remained concealed beneath voluminous skirts. A study of the evolution of American women's clothing, *When the Girls Came Out to Play* traces the history of modern sportswear as a general style that broke straight down traditional gender roles. Although we take it for granted, Warner observes, this is the first period in the history of the globe that such universality offers existed in clothes, and it offers lasted now for well over half of a century -- alone a marvel, taking into consideration the speed of fashion change in an era of instant communications and images.



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Women and sports Interesting book about the history of how women's trend changed because they began playing individual and team sports. Ultimately the "fashions" created for playing sports became part of everyday use for women -- hence, the name "sports clothing" mounted on the casual fashions that dominate daytime dressing today. A great book on the annals of Dynamic Sport in america I teach a course about Active Sport Style at the style Institute of Technology. This book is filled with important history about the development of sportswear in the usa as we understand it today. Campbell Warner combines various gender/cultural/social/historical/fashion/sports scholarship from people like Susan Cahn to textile historians like herself, furthermore to great primary sources from locations like Harper's Bazaar and Harper's Weekly. Excellent Scholarship I used this book as a major source for my thesis paper to earn a Bachelor's in History. Fashion Design students must go through this books, especially if they want to become sportswear designers. It really is an excellent resource for anyone thinking about women's studies - especially in past due nineteenth and early twentieth-century America. The beginnings of which revolve around the participation of women in active sports, video games and gym activities in the 19th Century.



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