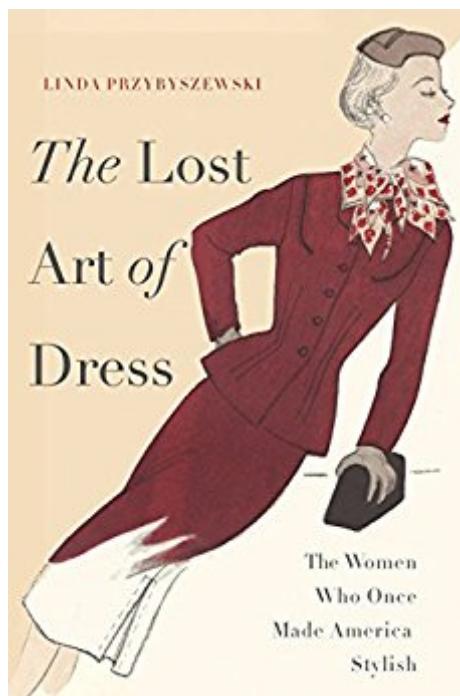


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# The Lost Art Of Dress: The Women Who Once Made America Stylish



## **Synopsis**

A history of the women who taught Americans how to dress in the first half of the 20th century; and whose lessons we'd do well to remember today.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I really enjoyed The Lost Art of Dress. It answered lots of questions I had about clothes from the turn of the century until the 1980's. (turn of the century meaning the last one, not the most recent one. I'm of the age where when I say "10 years ago" I mean the 1990's) A reviewer apparently had a very distasteful home ec experience in the 50's and I believe this may have colored her opinion of this book. The discussions on skirt lengths, working women, economic issues, poverty and dress and social upheaval and dress were fascinating to me. My mother always sewed and had beautiful clothes so I was excited to learn more about this subject. There is much discussion in the world of appropriateness of clothing and much wailing and gnashing of teeth in regards to the young people and their sartorial choices. This book talks about the worries that people in the past had about clothing and about the inherent sexism in the clothing regulations of the past. I believe the author may sit on the more conservative side. She had a bit of a tsk tsk tone when writing about our

beloved younger generation but I think she tried to restrain herself the best she could :-) Seriously, this book does make you think ( or rethink) what you might have put on today. A quick note: this is not a picture book. There are some pictures and some illustrations but there aren't many. This didn't bother me personally because 1) I am easily distracted by pictures of clothes and 2) it provided a lot of information and written description. There are plenty of picture books available and of course the internet but I enjoyed actually reading about our clothing history. Another note: The Lost Art of Dress is about clothing and its history in the United States and is about clothing for women and girls.

I really enjoyed this book. For about the past year, I have been trying to really step up how I present myself to the world. I have always cared about dress, but lost my way a little as people around me started showing up to work in jeans and t-shirts. If I would wear a dress to work, I'd get asked "why are you so dressed up?" As I hit 45, I realized that the art of dressing was becoming more and more important to not only deal with my changing body, but also to accentuate my experience, maturity, and absolute comfort in my own skin. I've been reading a lot of books on style lately (Lessons from Madame Chic is great, as is Style Statement) to really understand how to put my best self forward and be an example for what style looks like and why it's important. This book provides wonderful insight into how America was once one of the best-dressed places on earth (hard to believe!), and how it all started with the "dress doctors," women who had science degrees but couldn't teach in the field. They established the Home Economics programs we used to have and taught the art and science behind dressing, among other topics. As that generation aged and passed away, and social and political changes influenced fashion, the dress doctors' influence faded and then disappeared. The history lesson was invaluable to understanding how we went from best-dressed nation to the butt of jokes. As an oil painter, the section of the book on the art principles that guided the dress doctors was fascinating and spot-on! It made me understand why I cringe when I see certain colors on certain people or the JCrew madness of mixing multiple prints. Where does the eye go?

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