

Hoover Dresses

By Patti Jones

(Taken from Needlecraft, July 1931)

Hoover dresses were quite popular during our Model A era. The term “Hoover Dresses” was a carryover from WWI, when everyone in the country was trying to conserve on resources.

Each neighborhood had their community gardens, where a family would have its own plot. We would grow all sorts of vegetables there because food was so scarce—everything that was normally available was now used for the war effort. There were food rations and everything “Hooverized” in order to save materials of all kinds. We even wore “Hoover dresses”, which minimized the use of material. It was sort of an apron that had two front flaps, one that fit and buttoned behind the other. And you could switch the flaps, so it became two dresses in one! This way, after wearing the first flap out front, it would become soiled, and the next day you would wear the other flap out front.”

In my years of collecting fashions, I have never been fortunate to be able to find a “Hoover” dress. From the quote above, it sounds like they were well used and didn’t survive because of their constant multiuse. Below are 3 styles available from Needlecraft Magazine that cost \$1.00. Imagine having 2 dress in one and only costing \$1.00.

- (A) Made of tan linen and blue self-tone woven gingham.
- (B) Made of tan linen and brown self-tone woven gingham.
- (C) Made of tan linen and green self-tone woven gingham. Like the other two, they came with the embroidery pattern on the fabric and you had to do the embroidery “Needlecraft”.

