

Vintage fashions displayed

Monday, January 28, 1980

(O3B)

Story: KATHY PARRISH
Photos: DAVY FRANK

of shop owner Mrs. William Rust Pierce.

"She was that kind of woman," For the first time this month, the public will get a chance to see what kind of woman Mrs. Wilson was fashionwise.

Vintage designer clothes worn by her during a 50-year period are on display through February in the ballroom of Meadow Brook Hall, where the widow of John Dodge lived with her second husband Alfred Wilson.

Some of the 30 outfits have been seen by small groups over the past five years. They will return to storage after

the public showing while Meadow Brook Hall researches how best to preserve the fragile collection.

ALTHOUGH SOME of the styles would be fashionable today, it would be hard to duplicate the Wilson collection. Many of the dresses are made of imported materials no longer available.

"Even the best designers couldn't get that fabric today," said Peg McGarry, Meadow Brook Hall's associate director of public relations.

Walton Pierce's Mrs. Huntington said Mrs. Wilson had a "great love of materials."

"Mother's taste appealed to her and mother knew her taste. She often picked up materials especially for Mrs. Wilson when she went on shopping trips."

One pure silk black velvet without a label was among several Mrs. Huntington identified as being from her store.

She said the style could be worn today, but the fabric is no longer available. "You can't get pure silk black velvet anymore," said Mrs. Huntington, who added "you can just feel" the difference in the fabric.

After shopping in New York and Europe for years, Mrs. Wilson started buying at Walton Pierce in 1934.

She occasionally purchased a ready-to-wear dress that caught her eye, but most of her clothes — suits, dresses, even furs — were purchased at the shop especially for the upcoming season.

A figure of her five-foot, two-inch frame, which the designers relied on in addition to three fittings, is now owned by the Detroit Historical Society.

"Mrs. Wilson liked very simple things," recalled Mrs. Huntington. She said the owner of Meadow Brook Hall was a conservative dresser who never bought sleeveless clothes from Walton Pierce.



In a 1921 photo taken in Paris, Matilda Dodge Wilson is shown in one of the few sleeveless gowns she owned.

"She always had at least three-quarter sleeves or long sleeves."

Her taste in colors was also conservative, with a special liking for lavender and pink.

"She liked softer colors, not high shades," Mrs. Huntington said.

Many of the fashions have covered buttons and slips built into them. Mrs. Wilson always stopped in the lingerie department of Walton Pierce on her visits there, Mrs. Huntington said.

"She loved pretty things." A quiet person, if she didn't like a fabric or design she would just shake her head no.

"She was very easy to work with," said Mrs. Huntington. "One of the easiest we ever had."

The gowns, which include her lavender engagement dress and the 1929 gold dress she wore at the Meadow Brook Hall housewarming party, can be seen at no extra charge to all guests touring Meadow Brook Hall.



One of the earliest dresses on display is this 1919 white party dress with a tunic skirt of embroidered lace. It is worn by Rosemary Beggs of Troy.



Mrs. Wilson wore many hats and Jay Arnold of Rochester shows off one of them.



One of Mrs. Wilson's beaded tiaras is worn by Merita Stormzand of Avon Township.

fashion calendar

Monday, Jan. 28
Jacobson's — Lorene Green, noted graphologist and columnist, will be in the store's stationery department to do free handwriting analysis from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Alfred's Restaurant — Fashions from Somerset Mall shops are modeled informally from noon to 2 p.m. daily. Schedule for the week is as follows: Monday, Bonwit Teller; Tuesday, Lingerie; Wednesday, Don Thomas Sportshaus; Thursday, Bonwit Teller; Friday, Ann Taylor; and Saturday, Roberts Furs.

Tuesday, Jan. 29
Cooper's Arms — Designer fashions from Janet Varner of Rochester are modeled informally from noon to 1:30 p.m. Tuesdays through May in the Cooper's Arms Restaurant, 306 Main St. in downtown Rochester. Sak's Fifth Avenue — Estee Lauder

representative Beverly Dowan presents cosmetic and skin care information with a preview of spring 1980 cosmetic colors. Program includes lunch from noon to 12:50 p.m. provided by the Magic Pan Creperie. Location is the Saks Fifth Avenue entrance to the Somerset Mall. There is a \$1 charge.

Wednesday, Jan. 29
The J. L. Hudson Co. — Kurt Kramer of the Ranier pastry shop creates elegant french pastry during this demonstration scheduled for 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Oakland Mall store.

Thursday, Jan. 31
Sue Gordon Bridal Salon — Ron Lovace will present his bridal collection at the salon at 7 p.m. Limited seating by reservation only. Call 642-1112. Same program at 10 a.m. Saturday and noon on Sunday.

Friday, Feb. 1
Today's Bride — Today's Bride will present a showing of the new designs of Athanassian and Glasgow. Both members of the new design team will make a personal appearance at the showing and will be available for consultation. Join them for a glass of wine at 7 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 3
Somerset Mall — The Sunday concert series will feature the Pastiche Wind Quintet from 2-4 p.m. in the center court. Open to the public at no charge. Sherwin Wine, director of the Center for New Thinking, will conduct a series of four lectures in the mall auditorium at 2:30 p.m. Sundays in February. A fee of \$5 per lecture may be paid at the door. Today's lecture is titled "Friendship — Our New Support System."

a la mode

Where It's At

By JUDY SOLOMON

Bull market

One of the nicest things about Herbie is that he's decorative as well as useful. Officially known as "The Herb Animal" (\$7.95), Herbie is a bull, handmade in Mexico, who grows your choice of edible watercress, chia or other herbs all over his clay body. Once seeded, Herbie will begin to grow within three days. The shape of the plant will last from three to four weeks. In the meantime, you can use his high protein sprouts to enhance the flavor of soups, salads and sandwiches.

Betty's Grocery Store, 877 Hunter Blvd., Birmingham, 644-2323.

Recreational Vehicle

If your kids are too old for regular camp but too young or not yet ready to go out and supplement the family income, don't panic. Susan Klingbeil is an expert on interesting and creative summer opportunities for young people. Depending on their interests, literally hundreds of things are available from computer science to mountaineering, spelunking (exploring caves), flying, waterskiing, snow skiing, study tours and fashion design. Ms. Klingbeil has 30 years of experience in the field and has had personal contact with all the programs she recommends.

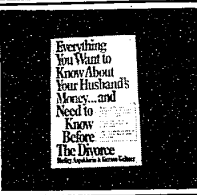
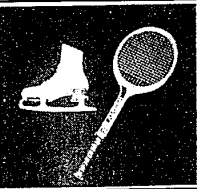
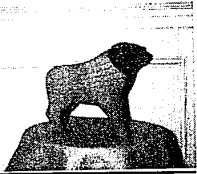
Susan Klingbeil, consultant, 885-5176.

Split decisions

The title might be glib, but the contents are dead serious. "Everything You Want to Know About Your Husband's Money... And Need to Know Before the Divorce" by Shelly Asparkaria and Gerson Geltner (\$10.95) is a complete guide to dealing with the financial side of divorce. Drawing from the expertise of the nation's top CPAs, divorce and trial attorneys and tax specialists, the recently published book gives wives an easy-to-follow, practical program for securing a sound financial future. Actually, the book is recommended for all women, not just those planning to divorce, because it encompasses vital lessons on finance.

Fingertips

On Jan. 10, fashion writer Rustie Shand told you about the current "in" look for fingernails, the French Manicure. Featuring a natural colored nail with China white tips, the look is achieved by using a combination of Orele Natural Touch and Snow White Nail Paints. Levin Beauty Supply sells the necessary nail paints for 99 cents a bottle. Or, if you prefer, you can purchase Orele's French Manicure Kit (\$3.95) which includes the two nail paints, a base coat and a sealer. Levin Beauty Supply, West Bloomfield Plaza, West Bloomfield, 851-7323 or 24695 Coolidge, Oak Park, 547-9659.



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Wiggs Winter Sale

18th Century Mahogany Dining Room at Winter Sale Savings!

Graceful Dining Room is an authentic reproduction of historic Williamsburg-inspired furniture found in museums and private collections. Entire collection features exposed surfaces of the finest Honduras mahogany accented with maple, tulip, curly maple and yew wood, polished to the warm brown of aged brandy. China has 3 glass shelves, interior light...arm chairs also available at sale prices.

- Table, 4 side Chairs and China.....Sale \$2400.
(42" x 64" Table opens to 100". China is 54" x 15" x 80" h.)
- 68" x 20" x 34" h. Huntboard.....Sale \$669.

Wiggs

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