

Wardrobe reflects an exciting lifetime

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

Tucked away in a fourth floor corner of Meadow Brook Hall, Rochester, is perhaps the most remarkable testimonial to a wealthy past.

There, a cedar chest holds the clothes worn by Matilda Wilson and her family. There, indicators of the life she lead hang, almost waiting to be worn again.

By now a few of the garments have rotted. Others have lost their shape; still others, even in the darkness of their lengthy entombment, have faded.

But others remain, lining racks in beaded, laced, velvet, silk and other variations.

The dollar worth of the collection is hard to determine. According to James Beaudoin, who is currently categorizing and classifying the garments. "She paid good money in her day. But it is very hard to put a price on what they are worth now."

RATHER IT is the beauty and traceable history of the clothes that intrigues, captivates and surprises.

Matilda Wilson's clothing suggests a woman other than the one portrayed in stiff oil paintings. In her hey day, she was avant-garde, ahead of her time, even a trend setter.

"In 1924 before Mr. Dodge (her first husband) died, she wore understated dresses for the period. They were always elaborate but understated," said Beaudoin.

A lavender silk velvet gown from 1919 is one elaboration. Beaded throughout the bodice, the over skirt of the gown is trimmed in natural mink. Beneath is a tighter, unadorned undershirt.

ACCORDING TO Beaudoin that style was THE style of the day.

At that time there was a great deal of interest in the Orient and the overskirt was very popular.

After the death of John Dodge, of the Dodge automotive family, she abandoned her New York designers and turned to Paris for her fashion image.

"She went a little bizarre then. She went to Paris and lived it up," suggested Beaudoin. "It's obvious by her clothes that she was looking for a husband because she was dressed to the teeth. She went to the best avant-garde designer. Most of her clothes from that time are super extreme for any era."

One of the gowns during that time comes from Paris designer Doucet. The gown, said Beaudoin, has caused him confusion.

"It's very high styled. I've given it about six dates because it's so far ahead of it's time it doesn't fit in anywhere. I finally ended up with 1923."

AFTER HER marriage to Alfred Wilson, Mrs. Wilson continued setting a fast fashion pace. By then she had corralled her favorite designer Peggy Hoyt and a few others as personal couturiers.

"Most of her stuff then came from New York. She seemed to

have a few set designers and that was it," said Beaudoin.

It was during her Parisian fling that she discovered Hoyt and it was Hoyt who designed some of her honeymoon trousseau.

"There is a saffron yellow evening gown by Hoyt done after Mrs. Wilson's wedding. She was probably honeymooning then and she was very highstyle."

THE GOWN reflects the flapper era. The waist drops into a swinging skirt, with drapes of fabrics over the bodice. The skirt is caught at the hem with clusters of feathers and beading plays an important role.

And, the closet of Mrs. Wilson continues.

During the 30s she, like others, switched to shoulder pads and box-

ier looks. By the late 40s she returned to Detroit fashion sources and by the 50s and 60s, her wardrobe had become sedate, understated and uncharged.

The collection contains more than Mrs. Wilson's wardrobe. In it are the gowns of Frances Dodge, who like her mother was ahead of her time. Other children's articles,

such as riding hats, small dresses and little boys suit sets, are waiting to be dated by Beaudoin.

Some things are gone, tops to skirts, slips without dresses. But that they are there at all is amazing. A wardrobe spanning 50 years is rare.

There is a saying that clothes don't make a woman. Perhaps they

don't. But the safe keeping of the Wilson wardrobe sheds some interesting, if only hypothesized, light on one of the most exciting lifetimes of an era.

Mrs. Wilson's clothing is being made available for fashion shows at Meadow Brook Hall for a fee. For information, call the hall at 377-3140.



This organdy gown by Hattie Carnegie was made in 1937 for Frances Dodge.



In 1935 Mrs. Wilson wore a white textured crepe day dress matched with gingham and white silk frogs.

Children aid fight against dystrophy

The children who knocked on doors in the Shiawassee and Tuck area collecting money for the Muscular Dystrophy Associations of America reported this week that they had turned in a total of \$67.50.

The 9-to-12 year olds were Tony Nardone, Mike Nardone, Kevin Zizio, Kurt Strickland and Keith Strickland.

The youngsters were at Northland Center with their contributions over the Labor Day weekend to help Detroit meet its \$1 million goal in the national fight against the disease.

new voices

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Buchanan of Farmington Hills, announce the birth of their daughter, Kimberly Ann, born Aug. 7.

The infant's grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Albert Washburn and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Buchanan. Her great grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Wilford Bidwell. All are residents in Farmington Hills.

She has one brother, three year old Steven.

Bible study class starts

Noted women Bible teachers will begin Bible studies that will be of interest to women of all ages beginning Tuesday. The classes will continue each Tuesday evening from 7:15-8:30 p.m. in the Alexander Hamilton Life Building, Farmington Road and Twelve Mile, in Farmington.

The classes are non-denominational. Registration inquiries will be taken by calling 937-2852.

Services scheduled

Kol Nidre services at Beth Abraham Hillel, 5075 W. Maple, West Bloomfield, will be held at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25.

Day-long Yom Kippur services will begin at 8 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 26, with Yizkor scheduled for 11:50 a.m. preceded by a special message on Israel at 11:10 a.m.

The series of Yom Kippur services will conclude at 7:55 p.m.

Rabbi Israel I. Halpern will officiate at all Yom Kippur evening and day-long services and preach during the Kol Nidre and Neilah services.

Cantor Shabtai Ackerman with the synagogue choir led by Associate Cantor Israel Fuchs will chant Kol Nidre, Mussaf and Neilah services.

\$5,000 REWARD

The Michigan Bell Telephone Company will pay a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for acts of sabotage at any or all locations listed below on or about the dates and times specified.

Cutting of 200 jumper wires at the Control Point at 10 Mile Road and Santa Barbara in Southfield on or about September 7, 1974.

Cutting of 50 jumper wires at the Access Point at 23100 Maple Ridge in Southfield on or about September 7, 1974.

Cutting of 50 jumper wires at the "B" box at 20738 Woodburn in Southfield on or about September 7, 1974.

Cutting of 100 jumper wires at the "B" box at 22897 Buttercrest in Southfield on or about September 7, 1974.

The reward is open to employees and members of the general public. Law enforcement officers, however, whose normal duties include the investigation of criminal incidents and the apprehension of suspects, are ineligible for the reward.

Persons offering information may remain anonymous if they wish by identifying themselves only by a code name or number.

Information may be sent in writing to Michigan Bell Telephone Company, Security Department, 105 East Bethune, Detroit, Michigan 48202, or it may be telephoned to the Security Office, Area Code 313, 872-4465. The reward will be paid only after it is claimed and the claimant proves that he gave the information, whether by actual name, code name, or code number. To protect secrecy, the person to whom the reward is to be paid may request that it be paid through a neutral third party.

The Company will be the sole judge and in its discretion shall resolve any dispute or question arising over the reward, including the identity of the person or persons, if any, entitled to share therein, the amount to be paid, and the division of the reward between two or more persons.

This reward remains in effect until midnight, October 31, 1974, unless extended by written notice by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company.



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