Stitching Solutions: The Bureau of Home Economics as a Fashion Influencer

Julia Ezzo

Introduction

When starting a research project in fashion studies, you might first turn to the library's fine arts section, specifically the Library of Congress call number ranges NK4700–4890 or NK8800–9505.5, or the TT490–695 range covering clothing manufacture, dressmaking, and tailoring. The government documents section is likely the last place you'd consider, as fashion and government rarely intersect. However, for research on fashion and textiles from the 1920s to the early 1960s, the government documents collection is a treasure trove, thanks to publications from the Bureau of Home Economics. While renowned for its work on recipes and nutrition research—particularly during the food shortages of the Great Depression and World War II rationing—the Bureau of Home Economics concerned itself not only with what you put *in* your body but also what you put *on* your body.

A Very Brief History of the Bureau of Home Economics

The Bureau of Home Economics (later renamed the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics on February 13, 1943),[1] established within the Department of Agriculture on July 1, 1923, aimed to support research at experiment stations nationwide, address practical household challenges, and promote the use of American agricultural products in domestic settings.[2] Although federal support for home economics predated 1923—most notably through the Morrill Act of 1862,[3] which established land-grant colleges, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914,[4] which funded agricultural extension stations—the Bureau's creation marked a shift toward more intensive, centralized research and broader dissemination of findings.[5] Secretary of Agriculture Henry C. Wallace recognized the significance of household challenges, advocating for federal support to address them. At the Home Economics Association's annual convention in August 1922, the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, speaking on behalf of Wallace, announced plans to establish "an independent Bureau" led by "a woman of executive ability, scientific training, and broad and sympathetic understanding of what is needed to make such a bureau helpful to the women of this land" to advance home economics research and collaborate with extension stations to share knowledge widely.[6]

Upon its establishment, the Bureau of Home Economics, true to the Secretary of Agriculture's commitment, stood out within the Department of Agriculture as the only division led by a woman—Dr. Louise Stanley, who had a Ph.D. in Chemistry.[7] It also employed numerous women in roles such as chemists, economists, statisticians, and physicists.[8] Reflecting the broad scope of home economics, the Bureau was organized into three research divisions: Food and Nutrition, Economics, and Textiles and Clothing.[9] The Textiles and Clothing Division was further subdivided into two sections: the Textile Maintenance and Utilization Section and the Clothing Design Section. The Textile Maintenance and Utilization Section was comprised of the Chemical Aspects Unit, which studied the effects of chemicals like starch and detergents on textiles, and the Physical Aspects Unit, which tested the properties of domestically produced textiles.[10] The Clothing Design Section designed and tested practical clothing patterns for everyday use.[11] "It's aim is to promote efficiency in 'Women's Biggest Job' by furnishing for homemaking the same kind of help that the various government departments now offer to agriculture, industry, and commerce,"[12] and it accomplished this through its research and publications, while also the influencing American fashion by promoting specific fabrics, standardizing clothing sizes, and innovating clothing construction techniques.

Community Voices, Community Outreach

The Bureau engaged directly with the American public, receiving frequent letters from homemakers regarding their everyday

problems.[13] Bureau staff also conducted targeted surveys to assess their skills and identify their most pressing concerns. These surveys yielded valuable data, including the skill levels of female homemakers, the average number of garments produced (approximately nine),[14] the family members for whom these garments were made,[15] the types of garments crafted (e.g., hats, house dresses, coats),[16] the fabrics selected, the motivations behind home sewing,[17] and what are the greatest difficulties they face when sewing—such as fitting and "choosing becoming and practical designs."[18] Through the letters they received and by analyzing survey results, the Bureau could effectively prioritize resources and tailor its efforts to address the most critical needs reported by the public.

The Bureau of Home Economics disseminated its research and recommendations through diverse channels, including published reports, leaflets, bulletins, newspaper and magazine articles, and radio programs[19] such as *Aunt Sammy's "Housekeepers' Chat."*[20] Their publications were written for different audiences: farmers' bulletins were written for the average homemaker to understand and distributed for free through local congressional offices or by writing to the Department of Agriculture. The technical bulletins were published as Department of Agriculture bulletins and meant for home economics workers, rather than homemakers.[21]

The Bureau also collaborated closely with sewing clubs, extension stations, and home demonstration agents to share practical knowledge. "Home demonstration work, a Nation-wide system of home-making education, is carried on by the United States Department of Agriculture and the State colleges of agriculture. The local representative of this system is the home demonstration agent." These college-educated women with degrees in home economics brought the "latest scientific information" to rural women "in such form that they can readily apply it in practical daily life." Funding for these demonstration agents was provided by the federal government thanks to the Smith-Lever Act, as well as state and county governments.[22] Through its collaborative work and outreach, the Bureau of Home Economics strove to spread its research as broadly as possible.

Innovating Children's Clothing: Practicality, Craftsmanship, Health, and Safety

Before the 20th century, fashion favored style over practicality, often at the expense of comfort and functionality. Petticoats—worn by women and children of both sexes—corsets, hooks, and heavy layers of fabric complicated daily life, particularly for young children. Responding to numerous letters from American women seeking simpler clothing options, the Bureau of Home Economics' Pattern Design Section developed child-friendly garments that promoted self-dressing. Impractical fasteners like hooks, snaps, and easily tangled bows were replaced with large, easy-to-grip buttons suited for small hands. The designers also introduced innovative styles such as rompers, sundresses, and sunsuits, prioritizing ease of movement. These patterns were developed through evidence-based research, a core mission of the Bureau, and tested in collaboration with Washington, D.C. orphanages to ensure children could independently manage the garments.[23]

These innovative designs not only enabled children to dress themselves independently but also promoted free play through their comfortable, spacious construction, accommodating a wide range of activities.[24] The Bureau's clothing designers urged clothing manufacturers and home sewers alike to prioritize quality craftsmanship in children's clothing. After evaluating various construction techniques, they advised that "stitching needs to be close and well-adjusted and reinforcements...for places likely to be strained" and "seams and finishes should be narrow, flat, smooth, and pliable."[25] This focus on durability ensured garments could withstand frequent washing and the rough wear of active, often messy play, enhancing their practicality for everyday use.

Building on this emphasis on durable, comfortable clothing, the Bureau incorporated scientific research to prioritize children's health. Studies showing that exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays prevents and treats rickets—a condition most often caused by a vitamin D deficiency—inspired the creation of the sunsuit, designed to expose sufficient skin to sunlight.[26] The Bureau also favored cotton for its softness and breathability, minimizing irritation to children's sensitive skin.[27] These health-conscious designs ensured garments supported both physical well-being and practical use.

To further protect young wearers, the Bureau addressed safety by recommending brightly colored textiles to enhance children's visibility to motorists during outdoor activities.[28] For infants not yet walking and less at risk from traffic, the Bureau recommended softer hues: "Light blue, pink, green and yellow are suitable, depending on the baby's coloring. As a rule, prints are not so attractive as plain tints, but if desired, there are available small allover designs suited to a baby's size."[29] These recommendations guided parents and manufacturers in selecting safe, aesthetically appealing, age-appropriate fabrics, complementing the Bureau's focus on practicality and health.

Focus on Women's Wear: Form and Function

The period spanning the 1920s to the 1950s marked a dynamic evolution in women's fashion, driven by social, economic, and cultural transformations. The 1920s introduced the liberated

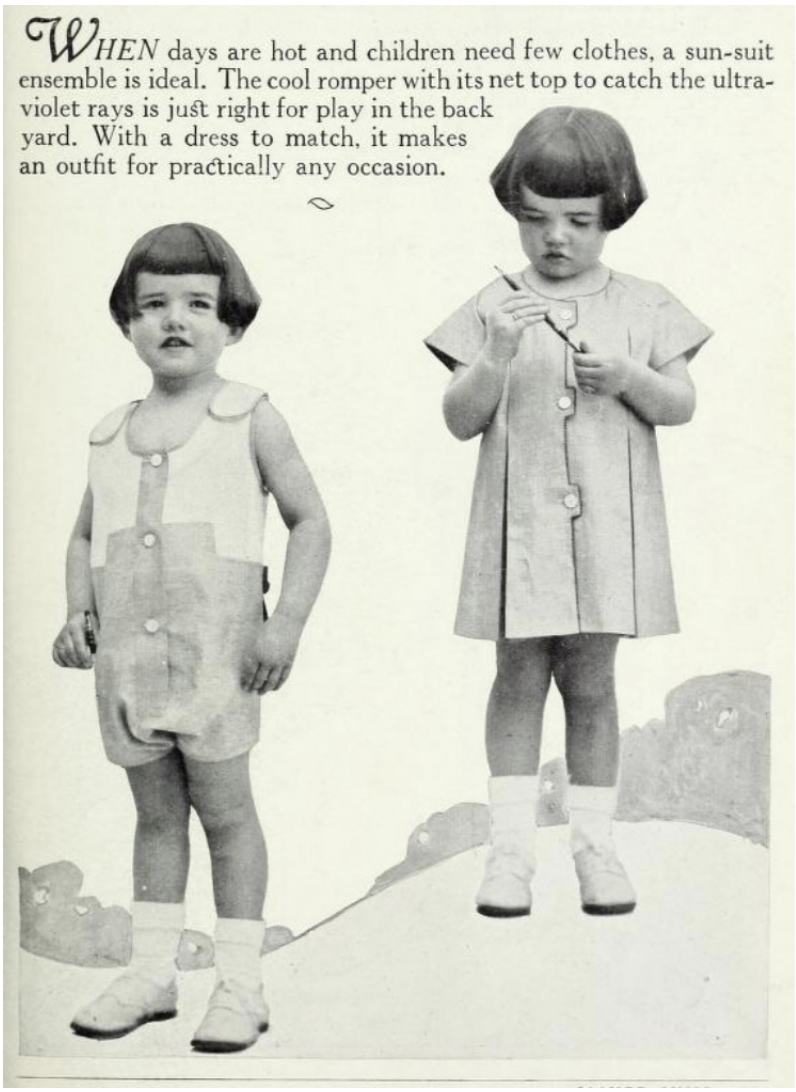


Figure 1. Illustration of a sunsuit, designed to maximize sunlight exposure for health benefits.

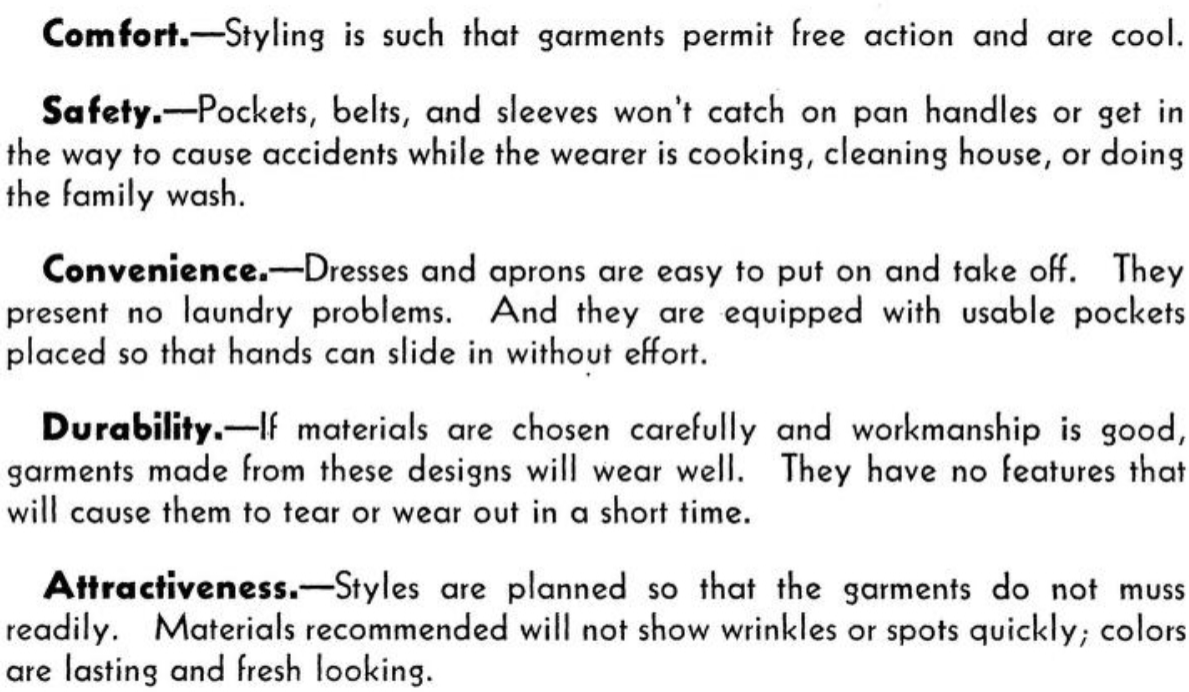
flapper aesthetic, with loose silhouettes, shorter hemlines, and lightweight fabrics that prioritized mobility and reflected post-World War I emancipation, throwing off the Victorian-era shackles of voluminous petticoats, multiple layers of restrictive fabric, and sweeping floor-length skirts, often weighed down by elaborate bustles. The 1930s, shaped by the Great Depression, shifted toward practical yet elegant designs, emphasizing tailored dresses and defined waists for both functionality and femininity. By the 1940s, World War II rationing led to utilitarian styles, with simpler cuts and durable materials, while the post-war 1950s embraced full skirts and cinched waists, celebrating a return to domesticity and prosperity. The Bureau of Home Economics played a pivotal role in this evolution, particularly for homemakers, by developing garment designs that balanced practicality for household tasks with aesthetic appeal. Through detailed guidelines on fit, materials, and construction, the Bureau empowered women to select or create clothing that was functional, flattering, and aligned with contemporary style trends, thereby supporting their dual roles as efficient homemakers and confident individuals.

"A well-designed, well-made house dress can give a real lift to homemaking jobs. A poorly designed dress or apron, on the other hand—one that restricts when you reach or bend, that twists or gets in your way as you stoop or climb—can be as fatiguing as a poorly planned kitchen," stated a 1952 Farmers' Bulletin. Dresses and aprons were designed by the Bureau with styles and features that were functional for every day household tasks, while also being "attractive, simple to make, and quickly and easily ironed."[30] This dual focus on practicality and style encouraged women to evaluate ready-made garments and sewing patterns based on critical features, including sleeves, blouse backs, skirts, waistbands, pockets, necklines, fastenings, materials, and craftsmanship.[31]

The Bureau emphasized innovative design solutions to popular dress styles to enhance functionality. For example, wrap-around dresses, popular for their stylish silhouette, often posed challenges due to the need for constant readjustment during tasks. To address this, the Bureau encouraged women to select a faux wrap-around style with concealed buttons at the waist, ensuring a secure closure and reducing wardrobe malfunctions.[32] Such adaptations highlight the integration of user-centered design principles to balance fashionable appearance with practical needs. Additionally, the Bureau provided tailored recommendations based on body type to optimize fit and visual appeal.

> For example, on a stout figure a set-in sleeve is better than the raglan or the kimono style. With the latter type, ugly wrinkles which can not be fitted out are likely to appear under the arm. On the slender, square-shouldered person, however, these sleeves cause fewer fitting difficulties.[33]

The guidelines also promoted vertical lines in patterns and pleats for their slenderizing effect, as opposed to horizontal lines, which could visually widen the figure.[34] Attention to garment proportions—such as the ratio of waistbands and belts to skirts and tops—was recommended to minimize emphasis on perceived problem areas, such as the stomach or hips. Complementary



Comfort.—Styling is such that garments permit free action and are cool.

Safety.—Pockets, belts, and sleeves won't catch on pan handles or get in the way to cause accidents while the wearer is cooking, cleaning house, or doing the family wash.

Convenience.—Dresses and aprons are easy to put on and take off. They present no laundry problems. And they are equipped with usable pockets placed so that hands can slide in without effort.

Durability.—If materials are chosen carefully and workmanship is good, garments made from these designs will wear well. They have no features that will cause them to tear or wear out in a short time.

Attractiveness.—Styles are planned so that the garments do not muss readily. Materials recommended will not show wrinkles or spots quickly; colors are lasting and fresh looking.

Figure 2. List of five features (comfort, safety, convenience, durability, and attractiveness) that the recommended apron and dress designs have.

shoe styles and heel heights were also suggested to "look smartly dressed."[35]

These recommendations reflect a nuanced understanding of practical and aesthetic considerations in garment design, aligning with broader principles of functional clothing. By addressing both the physical demands of homemaking tasks and the desire for flattering attire, the Bureau's guidelines helped promote the stylistic transformation of these eras.

Evolution of Standardized Sizing: Addressing Fit Challenges through Comprehensive Measurement Studies

A 1927 Bureau of Home Economics sewing survey identified fit as the primary challenge for women.[36] This issue stemmed from manufacturers relying on "ideal" measurements based on the average build from a small sample of individual. These measurements were scaled proportionally to create size ranges, despite human bodies not scaling uniformly. Moreover, the sample size was too limited to represent group averages accurately.[37] Inspired by a World War I survey that measured seventeen body parts of 100,000 male soldiers for clothing sizes,[38] the Bureau conducted measurement studies on women[39] and children.[40] These studies aimed to guide clothing and pattern manufacturers toward standardized sizing, addressing the inconsistency where sizes varied significantly between manufacturers, frustrating consumers.[41]

To address these challenges, the Bureau expanded its efforts to include comprehensive measurement studies for both children and women. From February 1937 to June 1939,[42] the Bureau measured thirty-six attributes of 147,088 children aged four to seventeen across fifteen states and Washington, D.C. Of these, 133,807 measurements (69,661 boys and 64,146 girls) were deemed valid.[43] Based on these findings, the Bureau of Home Economics recommended a sizing system for children based on height and hip measurements, rather than age, proposing twelve regular sizes for girls and twelve for boys.[44] This shift to height- and hip-based sizing aimed to reduce consumer frustration by ensuring better-fitting clothes for children.

Between July 1939 and June 1940, a similar study measured fifty-eight attributes of 14,968 white women spanning seven states and Washington, D.C.[45] Participants, all aged eighteen or older, included both native and non-native white women, primarily from urban areas. Measurements from twenty-four non-white women were collected but excluded[46] due to the study's focus on a narrowly defined "average American woman," reflecting the era's limited approach to racial diversity. Ultimately, data from 10,042 women were analyzed,[47] though the sample was skewed toward younger women, with only sixty participants aged seventy or older.[48] This focus on the "average American woman" omitted measurements from approximately four million non-white women.[49]

In 1958, the National Bureau of Standards (now NIST) utilized data from prior studies to establish Commercial Standard

(CS) 215-58. Adoption of these standards by manufacturers was voluntary, resulting in inconsistent application, though major retailers like Sears and Montgomery Ward initially adopted them. Over time, shifts in body shapes, evolving fashion trends, and the rise of vanity sizing—where manufacturers adjusted sizes to flatter consumers—rendered the standards obsolete, leading to their withdrawal on January 20, 1983.[50]

Stretching the Informed Consumer's Budget

To promote effective household financial management, the Bureau of Home Economics issued comprehensive guidance emphasizing the development of detailed and tailored household budgets. Rather than prescribing fixed expenditure percentages for specific categories such as clothing, the Bureau advocated for a flexible, needs-based approach to budgeting. This approach encouraged homemakers to craft budgets that reflect the unique financial circumstances and requirements of their families.[51] For the clothing category, the Bureau provided specific recommendations to ensure thorough accounting. Homemakers were advised to consider including

> a separate record for each member of the family, covering all materials, trimmings, paid labor, ready-made garments, accessories such as hair nets and pins, dry cleaning, pressing, and repairing. Such items as small findings, thread, and cleaning materials, which can not be divided among individual members of the family, are listed under a general clothing record.[52]

This granular approach aimed to enable precise tracking of all household expenditures.

Beyond the traditional family household, a significant and growing demographic in early twentieth-century America—working women, particularly those earning minimum wages—faced unique challenges in managing limited incomes while maintaining a professional appearance. These unmarried women resided in diverse living arrangements, including rented rooms, shared residences with other working women (commonly termed "housekeeping groups" due to shared domestic responsibilities), or with family members.[53] Their clothing decisions required careful consideration of seasonality, hygiene (maintaining sufficient garments to allow regular laundering), and social appropriateness to align with occupational and societal expectations.[54] To address these needs, the Bureau of Home Economics issued targeted, budget-conscious guidelines tailored to the financial constraints of working women. These guidelines provided detailed recommendations, including the optimal number of garments across categories such as outerwear, undergarments, footwear, accessories, and maintenance requirements. Additionally, the Bureau outlined the expected lifespan of these items before replacement; recommended fabrics, features, and styles to prioritize for durability and suitability; and provided estimated annual costs for each clothing category.[55] This comprehensive approach aimed to empower working women to make informed, economical choices while upholding professional and social standards.

The Bureau of Home Economics emphasized the value of comparative data in budget development, noting that "it is useful...to know what others are doing and to get information on standards."[56] To provide such benchmarks, the Bureau conducted comprehensive studies on clothing expenditures across American populations, segmented into five geographic regions, and the type of locale: farm, urban, or village setting.[57] These studies analyzed key variables, including household size, average expenditure on specific garment types for each family member, and distinctions between rural and urban households. The surveyed populations were exclusively "native white families," with a notable exception in the Southeast, where data was also collected from African American families.[58]

In 1925, Louise Stanley, the inaugural Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, underscored the critical need for informed clothing purchases, stating, "more money is spent uselessly on clothing than on foods, hence the importance of the economic aspect of the question. The housewife needs information in regard to fabrics in order to purchase wisely."[59] Recognizing this, the Bureau of Home Economics extended its mission beyond budgeting advice to empower Americans to maximize value while maintaining an aesthetically pleasing and functional wardrobe. To achieve this, the Bureau published comprehensive shopping guides focusing on key clothing categories, including ready-made dresses,[60] cloth coats,[61] hosiery,[62] and men's suits.[63] These guides provided detailed, practical advice to enhance consumer decision-making. They emphasized evaluating fabric quality through characteristics such as weave structure, identifying textiles best suited for specific garments, and scrutinizing construction details, such as seam integrity and the presence of seam allowances for alterations. Additionally, the guides addressed technical aspects of garment production, such as whether the fabric was cut with or against the grain, which impacts durability and fit. Beyond functionality, the Bureau emphasized selecting styles that balanced contemporary fashion with flattery to the wearer's body type, ensuring both aesthetic appeal and practicality. Through these resources, the Bureau equipped consumers with the knowledge to make economical, high-quality clothing choices.

Textile Labeling Standards

The quality of a garment can be assessed through physical examination, but labels provide essential information to guide informed consumer purchasing decisions. The Bureau of Home Economics played a foundational role in shaping textile labeling standards, significantly influencing subsequent regulations by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and other standards organizations.[64] While the Bureau did not directly establish these standards, its researchers developed precise textile definitions and minimum material composition requirements that profoundly shaped industry practices. The Bureau's contributions extended beyond the FTC, informing standards set by organizations such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and influencing clothing manufacturers' practices.[65]

A notable example of the Bureau's impact is its 1939 analysis of fifty-one fabric samples, all labeled as "cotton broadcloth" but exhibiting inconsistent specifications. This study led to a recommendation that cotton broadcloth meet specific criteria: "a minimum weight of three ounces per square yard, a breaking strength of at least fifty-two pounds warp-wise and eighteen pounds filling-wise, and a thread count of at least one hundred warp yarns and approximately fifty filling yarns per inch."[66] These findings were instrumental in the ASTM's adoption of official labeling standards for "bleached cotton broadcloth" in 1941.[67]

Furthermore, the Bureau advocated for clear and informative labeling practices to enhance consumer transparency. It emphasized that labels should specify fiber content in precise percentages, criticizing vague descriptors such as "part wool" or "silk and acetate." Such ambiguous terms, the Bureau argued, were unhelpful, as "part wool" could denote a fabric containing as little as 5 percent wool or nearly entirely wool, without clarifying the composition of the remaining fibers.[68] Through rigorous research and evidence-based recommendations, the Bureau of Home Economics significantly advanced accurate and standardized textile labeling, fostering consumer trust and promoting consistency in manufacturing practices—a legacy that continues to benefit modern consumers.

Textile labels convey critical information beyond mere fiber composition, and the Bureau of Home Economics urged consumers to scrutinize them carefully to make informed purchasing decisions. For example, cotton, prized for its versatility and comfort, is susceptible to shrinkage. The Bureau recommended seeking labels that explicitly indicate preshrunk fabric,[69] with ideally "not only a statement that the fabric has been subjected to a shrinking process, but also the upper limit for residual shrinkage after washing by a specified method."[70] This level of specificity empowered consumers to anticipate a garment's performance post-purchase.

Color fastness, the ability of a fabric to resist fading when exposed to light or washing, was another critical consideration. The Bureau highlighted acorn-shaped labels or labels with the phrase "Nafal tested fast colors" as particularly reliable indicators of quality. As articulated in a 1934 radio broadcast by a Bureau agent, "That's the kind of label that means something, and the pity of it is that more cottons do not carry such labels. The National Association of Finishers of Cotton Fabrics stands behind this label, financing rigorous laboratory tests conducted according to methods established by the National Association of Textile Chemists. This label assures buyers that the fabric is resistant to fading from both light and washing."[71]

Beyond shrinkage and color fastness, the Bureau advised consumers to seek labels indicating additional desirable properties, such as water or moisture repellency, crease and crush resistance, and treatments for fire-proofing, moth protection, and mildew prevention.[72] By promoting awareness of these labeling details, the Bureau equipped consumers with the knowledge to select durable, high-quality textiles suited to their needs.

During economic hardship, however, purchasing new clothing was often impractical. The 1936 Bureau of Home Economics circular, *Clothing Economies*, offered practical strategies for repurposing and revitalizing household fabrics and garments.[73] Simple modifications, such as altering collars, cuffs, hemlines, or necklines, could breathe new life into worn clothing.[74] The Bureau also promoted resourceful Great Depression-era practices, such as crafting "children's clothing made out of salt bags and flour sacks and old partly worn garments."[75] For example, one script notes that "babies' rompers [could be] made from the salvageable parts of a man's shirt and from flour sacks, and a child's play suit from a woman's jersey dress no longer usable as a dress."[76] Even "out-of-style" garments such as coats could be repurposed into practical clothes for children.[77] This ingenuity extended beyond old garments to include unfashionable ones, aligning with the Great Depression motto: "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."[78] The Bureau's guidance empowered Americans to creatively adapt to scarcity.

While the emphasis was on stretching what you had, it was not meant to be at the expense of fashion. Suggested modifications took into account the latest fashion trends, such as adding "taffetas, satins, and ribbed and quilted fabrics in plain, plaid, dots, or stripes are fashionable materials [to add as] collars, jabots, and vests," to freshen up "a plain dresses of tailored silk or wool."[79] "If you have any pieces of flat fur bring them out. Collars, cuffs, bows, and belts of fur are being used on some of the smartest

dresses this year"[80] another piece of advice stated. Opening seams on dresses and skirts and fitting them more closely to the body or adding pleats helped update outdated silhouettes.[81]

Conclusion

The Bureau of Home Economics, active from 1923 to its dissolution on November 2, 1953, played a transformative role in American fashion by bridging scientific research, consumer needs, and practical design. As women's roles evolved in the 1950s, with greater workforce participation and a shift away from traditional homemaking, the US Department of Agriculture redirected its focus toward broader agricultural priorities, leading to the Bureau's integration into the Agricultural Research Service (ARS).[82] While its functions, such as nutrition and food safety research, continued under ARS, the Bureau's fashion legacy endures through its pioneering contributions to clothing design, standardized sizing, and consumer education. Its innovative patterns for children's and women's garments prioritized practicality, health, and style, empowering homemakers and working women alike to navigate economic challenges with resourcefulness and confidence. The Bureau's rigorous measurement studies laid the groundwork for modern sizing standards, while its advocacy for clear textile labeling shaped industry practices that continue to inform consumer choices today. By equipping Americans with the tools to make informed, economical, and aesthetically pleasing clothing decisions, the Bureau of Home Economics left an indelible mark on fashion history, demonstrating that government research could resonate far beyond the kitchen and into the fabric of everyday life.

Julia Ezzo (julia@msu.edu), Government Information, Packaging, and Political Science Librarian, Michigan State University

Notes

1. Agricultural Research Administration, US Department of Agriculture. *Research Administration Memorandum* No. 5 (Washington D.C., US Government Printing Office, 1943).
2. Betters, Paul V. *The Bureau of Home Economics: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Washington, D.C., The Brookings Institution, 1930), 1, https://archive.org/details/bureauofhomeecon0062bett/page/n7/mode/2up.
3. *Morrill Act,* 7 U.S.C. § 301 et seq. (1862).
4. *Smith-Lever Act,* 7 U.S.C. § 341 et seq. (1914).
5. United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, 1924).
6. Betters, 41.
7. Betters, 65.
8. Betters, 70.
9. Betters, 74-76.
10. Betters, 69.
11. Betters, 70.
12. Stanley, Louise, "Women's Biggest Job: What the Bureau of Home Economics Is Doing to Help Her," *Modern Priscilla,* (August 1925): 23.
13. Stanley, 23.
14. O'Brien, Ruth, and Maude Campbell. *Present Trends in Home Sewing*. Miscellaneous Publication No. 4 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1927), 8, https://archive.org/details/presenttrendsinh04obri/page/n7/mode/2up.
15. O'Brien, *Present Trends*, 6.
16. O'Brien, *Present Trends*, 4.
17. O'Brien, *Present Trends*, 9.
18. O'Brien, *Present Trends*, 10.
19. Betters, 44.
20. United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, Radio Service, and Bureau of Home Economics. *Questions and Answers* [Radio script], (Washington, D.C., United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, 1929), 1, https://archive.org/details/questionsanswer1929unit_2.
21. Stanley, 23.
22. O'Brien, *Present Trends*, 1.
23. Betters, 54-55.
24. Scott, Clarice L., and Margaret Smith. *Fabrics and Designs for Children's Clothes,* Farmers' Bulletin No. 1778 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1937), 4, https://archive.org/details/CAT87204503.
25. Scott, *Fabrics and Designs,* 5.
26. Scott, *Fabrics and Designs,* 3.
27. Scott, *Fabrics and Designs,* 4.
28. Scott, *Fabrics and Designs,* 3.
29. Scott, *Fabrics and Designs,* 11.
30. Scott, Clarice L., *Dresses and Aprons for Work in the Home.* Farmers' Bulletin No. 1963 (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Agriculture, 1952), 2, https://archive.org/details/CAT87205602.
31. Scott, *Dresses and Aprons,* 3-4.

32. Scott, *Dresses and Aprons,* 6.
33. Campbell, Maude, *Fitting Dresses and Blouses,* Farmers' Bulletin No. 1530 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1927), 3, https://archive.org/details/CAT87209389.
34. United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, Radio Service, *Lines for the Stout and Stylish* [Radio script] (Washington, D.C., Office of Information, January 22, 1932), 1, https://archive.org/details/linesforstoutsty1932unit.
35. *Lines for the Stout*, 2.
36. O'Brien, *Present Trends*, 10.
37. Campbell, 1-2.
38. United States Surgeon-General's Office, *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War,* Vol. 1, ed. Charles Lynch (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1921–1929) 34. http://resource.nlm.nih.gov/14120390RX1.
39. O'Brien, Ruth, and William C. Shelton, *Women's Measurements for Garment and Pattern Construction,* Miscellaneous Publication No. 454 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, Division of Textiles and Clothing; Work Projects Administration, 1941), https://archive.org/details/womensmeasuremen454obri.
40. O'Brien, Ruth, and Meyer A. Girshick, *Children's Body Measurements for Sizing Garments and Patterns: A Proposed Standard System Based on Height and Girth of Hips,* Miscellaneous Publication No. 365 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1939), https://archive.org/details/childrensbodymea365obri.
41. United States Bureau of Home Economics, and National Consumer-Retailer Council (U.S.), *Standard Sizes for Children's Clothes: A Primer for the Consumer and the Trade* (Washington, D.C., US Government Printing Office, 1941), 1, https://archive.org/details/CAT31335931.
42. *Standard Sizes for Children's Clothes*, 5.
43. O'Brien, *Children's Body Measurements*, 1-2.
44. *Standard Sizes for Children's Clothes*, 14.
45. O'Brien, *Women's Measurements*, 1.
46. O'Brien, *Women's Measurements*, 2.
47. O'Brien, *Women's Measurements*, 26.
48. O'Brien, *Women's Measurements*, 31.
49. US Census Bureau, *1940 Census of Population: Characteristics of the Nonwhite Population by Race,* Table 3 (Washington, D.C., US Government Printing Office, 1943), 7, https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1943/dec/population-nonwhite.html.
50. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), "NIST's Role in Apparel Sizing Standards," *NIST Museum*, 2004, Archived at: https://web.archive.org/web/20120126093810/http://museum.nist.gov/exhibits/apparel/vanity.htm.
51. Woodhouse, Chase Going, *Planning and Recording Family Expenditures,* Farmers' Bulletin No. 1553 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1927), 5, https://archive.org/details/CAT87204252.
52. Woodhouse, 3.
53. Weiss, Gertrude S., Marie Waite, Louise Stitt, and Stella Stewart, *Factors to Be Considered in Preparing Minimum-Wage Budgets for Women* (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1938), 2, https://archive.org/details/factorstobeconsi324weis/page/46/mode/2up.
54. Weiss, 18.
55. Weiss, 19-20.
56. Woodhouse, 5.
57. Monroe, Day, *Family Expenditures for Clothing: Five Regions,* Miscellaneous Publication No. 428 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics in cooperation with the Work Projects Administration, 1941), https://archive.org/details/familyexpenditur428monr.
58. Monroe, 7.
59. Stanley, 18.
60. Scott, Clarice L., *Quality Guides in Buying Ready-Made Dresses,* Leaflet No. 105 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1934), https://archive.org/details/qualityguideinbu105scot.
61. Scott, Clarice L., *Quality Guides in Buying Women's Cloth Coats,* Leaflet No. 117 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1936), https://archive.org/details/qualityguidesinb117scot/page/2/mode/2up.
62. Smith, Margaret, *Hosiery for Women: A Buying Guide,* Miscellaneous Publication No. 342 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1939), https://archive.org/details/hosieryforwomenb342smit.
63. Scott, Clarice L., *Buying Men's Suits,* Miscellaneous Publication No. 688 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Human Nutrition and

Home Economics, 1949), https://archive.org/details/buyingmenssuits688scot.

64. Federal Trade Commission, *Annual Report of the Federal Trade Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1940* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1940), 123, https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reports_annual/annual-report-1940/ar1940_0.pdf.
65. Fletcher, Hazel M., and S. Helen Roberts, (1956). *Properties and Serviceability of Selected Household and Clothing Fabrics: Bibliography and Review of Research Findings, 1928-1951,* Agriculture Information Bulletin no. 147 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, 1956), 1, https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/308756/files/aib147.pdf.
66. Fletcher, 22.
67. Fletcher, 23.
68. Morrison, Bess Viemont, *Judging Fabric Quality,* Farmers' Bulletin No. 1831 (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1942), 2, https://archive.org/details/CAT87205435/page/21/mode/2up.
69. Van Deman, Ruth, Morse Salisbury, *Quality Labels on Cotton Dress Goods: A Radio Talk* (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1934), 2, https://archive.org/details/CAT31304398/page/n3/mode/2up.
70. Morrison, 19.
71. Van Deman, 1.
72. Morrison, 21-22.
73. *Clothing Economies*, 1.
74. *Clothing Economies*, 8.
75. United States Bureau of Home Economics, *The Home Economics Program in the United States Department of Agriculture* [Radio script] (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics,1933), 1, https://archive.org/details/bureauofhomeecon1933unit/page/n1/mode/2u.
76. United States Bureau of Home Economics, *The Bureau of Home Economics and the Recovery Program* [Radio script] (Washington, D.C., US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics, 1933, November 23), 1, https://archive.org/details/bureauofhomeecon1933unit/page/n1/mode/2up.
77. *Clothing Economies*, 13.
78. *Gimbels Anniversary Sale* [Advertisement], *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 30, 1942, p. 3.
79. *Clothing Economies*, 8.
80. *Clothing Economies*, 9.
81. *Clothing Economies*, 7.
82. US Department of Agriculture, *Secretary of Agriculture's Memorandum 1320, Supplement 4* (Washington, D.C., US Government Printing Office, November 2, 1953).