

A STUDY OF FASHIONS IN OKLAHOMA AS PORTRAYED
THROUGH COSTUMES OF GOVERNORS' WIVES

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By

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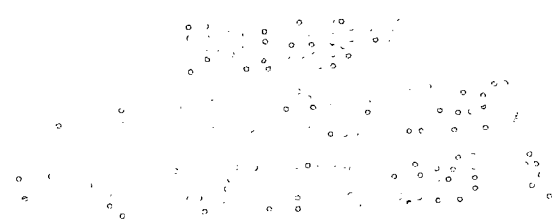
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PREFACE

Students of historic costume realize that very little is being recorded about the age in which we live for future generations. It is recognized that much can be learned of the social, political, religious and economic conditions which surround and influence people by a study of their festive occasions and the costumes which they wear.

Since all inaugural balls of Oklahoma occurred in an average lifetime there are today many people living who have attended one or all of the inaugural celebrations and it has been possible through personal interviews, letters and pictures to collect information which will not be available at a later period.

While all inaugural ceremonies are gala affairs with everyone dressed in his or her best, it is the one time in four years that people from all walks of life in the state make their appearance at a single gathering and mingle together. For this reason it was decided that a study of the inaugural balls might best suggest general trends in silhouettes and offer a representative picture of Oklahoma costumes.

For the many courtesies which have been extended to me in the preparation of this thesis sincere acknowledgment is made to the fashion editors of Ladies' Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, Delineator, Vogue, Harper's Bazaar and Woman's Home Companion for consent to photostat their fashion illustrations; to the staffs of Oklahoma Agricultural

and Mechanical College Library, Stillwater; The Oklahoma Historical Society, and The Carnegie Libraries of Oklahoma City for skilled aid courteously rendered; to the following Oklahoma women who contributed their pictures, sketches, and not infrequently pieces of material of their inaugural ball gowns: Mrs. J. B. A. Robertson, Mrs. Henry S. Johnston, Mrs. M. E. Trapp, Mrs. Olive Robertson Hilles, Mrs. E. W. Marland, Mrs. James E. Berry, and Lorena Cruce Morris; to the following newspapers for permission to use clippings from their newspaper files: The Guthrie Leader, The Daily Oklahoman, and The Tulsa Daily World; to Mr. James W. Moffitt, Secretary of Oklahoma Historical Society, and to Mrs. Czarina Conlan, Curator of the museum for use of articles from the museum.

For the careful supervision of this thesis by Miss Sara T. Murray I am extremely grateful.

H. T. B.

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CHAPTER I

THE HASKELL INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

On November 16, 1907 Guthrie was host to the greatest crowd of people that, up to that time, had ever assembled in Oklahoma. It was "statehood day," the day to which the people of Oklahoma Territory had looked forward for more than seventeen years. At ten-thirty in the morning the new governor took the oath of office, and gave his inaugural address and Oklahoma formally entered upon statehood.

The city of Guthrie made great preparation to receive her guests. A barbecue was planned to be given at the city park to feed the hungry multitude. For this some twenty beeves were provided and vast stores of bread and pickles purchased. Long tables of rough boards were erected under the trees of the park, trenches were dug and the night before a small army of cooks prepared the barbecue.

Very early in the morning the crowds began to arrive. Every railroad ran special trains and each of these was loaded to capacity with eager, excited, cheering humanity. As these trains pulled in to the stations and discharged their human cargoes, the streets became thronged with people. The trains, however, brought but a small part of the people who came to Guthrie on that historic day. From the forks of the creek, from remote towns and hamlets, from humble farm houses for many miles in every

direction came people in wagons, buggies, and carriages. On horseback, on foot, by every means of travel known at that time, men, women and children came pouring into Guthrie to join in the celebration. Crying babies, eager, excited children, tired-faced farm women, rough bearded pioneers, well dressed business men, and fashionably attired society matrons, all helped to make up the crowd that thronged the streets of the capitol city.

The national guard had been ordered out and their uniforms and shouldered guns as the various companies marched through the streets lent a military touch to the assemblage.

About 10:30 in the morning the people assembled before the Carnegie Library and Charles N. Haskell, standing on the upper steps of that building publicly took the oath of office after which he delivered his inaugural address.¹

Among the ceremonies was a symbolical marriage representing the union of Oklahoma and Indian Territory. A beautiful Indian girl in the costume of her people represented Indian Territory and C. G. Jones of Oklahoma City, dressed as a cowboy personified Oklahoma.²

¹ Edward E. Dale and Jesse Lee Rader, Readings in Oklahoma History, p. 726.

² L. P. Thompson, The Daily Oklahoman's Outline of Oklahoma History.

All afternoon the vast milling crowd swarmed through the streets, talking, laughing, visiting with friends, apparently having the time of its life. As evening drew on, however, the exodus began. Goodbyes were said and men and women and children climbed into farm wagons and carriages and turned toward home. Throngs of people filled the outgoing trains riding on the steps of the coaches, hanging on any place that promised a foothold. The enthusiasm to go seemed quite as strong as had been the enthusiasm of a few hours earlier to come.³

The evening was given over to a state ball, at once brilliant and resplendent. The perfumed air was radiant with happiness. Every face was expressive of joy and softened laughter filled the great ballroom. Brilliantly lighted by myriads of electric globes half hidden in encircling vines, the hall scene was one of movement and beauty filled with gaily gowned women and conventionally garbed men.

From the entrance stairs the building was elaborately decorated with vines and flowers. All the stairs were entwined with vines, and the ballroom had a lacy wall covering of southern smilax interspersed with crossed palm leaves. Against the background of palms and tall chrysanthemums the governor, his wife and daughters and members of the receiving party stood.

³

Edward E. Dale and Jesse Lee Rader, Op. cit., p. 727.

Two thousand people attended the ball and offered congratulations to the governor and other prominent officials in attendance. Representatives from every section of the state were present.

At 10:05 P. M. the grand march began, led by Governor and Mrs. Haskell followed by three hundred and sixty-two couples in line. The clock was turned back and dancing continued merrily. In addition to the superb buffet supper served by caterer Ritzhaupt, punch and wafers were served in the ballroom.⁴

The ladies of the official circle were handsomely gowned. Mrs. Haskell wore an imported Parisian robe of white crepe de chine entraine with low neck and elbow sleeves embroidered in pastel shades with lace medallions set in. Bands of lace made the circular flounce around the lower part of the skirt which extended into the train. Her ornaments were diamonds.⁵ (Plate I)

Miss Lucy Haskell, eldest daughter of Governor Haskell was charming in a frock of yellow net over crepe de chine with an armful of big yellow "mums".

Miss Frances Haskell, second daughter, beautiful and vivacious, was gowned in white net, gold spangled, trimmed with roses of pink panne velvet. Her costume was the most striking in the ballroom.⁶

⁴ The Guthrie Daily Leader, November 18, 1907

⁵ Letter - Mrs. C. N. Haskell, March 6, 1938

⁶ The Guthrie Daily Leader, November 18, 1907

PLATE I

Gown worn by Mrs. C. N. Haskell at Oklahoma's first inaugural ball made of crepe de chine embroidered in pastel shades with lace medalions set in with bands of lace above the hem.

Photograph, courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society
Museum



Miss Jane Haskell, the school girl daughter, had on a blue net frock, lace trimmed over a blue silk slip.⁷

The French influence was especially reflected in the ballroom in the tone and beauty of colorings of the costumes. Taupes, lovely smoky tones, purples, yellows, browns, and peacock were the hues particularly used and with these were combined trimmings of hand embroidery beaded design and fringe.⁸ (Plate II) A gown whose color showed this influence attired Mrs. Jesse Dunne. It was a turquoise blue crepe de chine, the collar of the bodice being of heavy blue lace gold threaded with touches of black, and the skirt having insertions of the blue lace and black velvet panels.⁹

Another gown so typical of this influence was worn by Mrs. J. B. Turner. Hers was of white crepe de chine embroidered in black.¹⁰

Adhering closely to the prevailing fashion were the gowns of Mrs. Robert L. Owens in cream chantilly lace, built over yellow taffeta, cut low at the neck and with a demi train and Mrs. James S. Davenport in pink radium silk profusely trimmed with real lace with a high collar of transparent chiffon and lace.¹¹

7

Letter - Mrs. C. N. Haskell, March 6, 1938

8

Katherine M. Lester, Historic Costume, p. 216

9

The Guthrie Daily Leader, November 18, 1907

10

Ibid.

11

Ibid.

PLATE II

A. Figure upper left shows costume of Copenhagen blue silk and Irish crochet lace suitable for any formal occasion

B. Figure at right shows reception gown of black chiffon cloth, trimmed with heavy black lace.

C. Figure in center shows prune cloth gown trimmed with striped velvet. Skirt draped to the side to show underskirt of velvet.

Courtesy of Good Housekeeping.



Gowns were long, clinging and diaphanous.¹² Skirts had a flat, plain look over the hips. One of the principal points noted in the new "bell-shaped" gored skirts was that they fell from the hip line easily and gracefully, and were neither fitted too closely right at the hips nor at the line just below, thus assuring a flattering swing to the bottom of the skirt.¹⁵ (Plate III)

✓ Mrs. Leo Bennett, the handsome Muskogee woman who took the bride's part of the symbolic marriage in the morning, looked regal in a white lace princess with magnificent diamond ornaments, carrying a big cluster of yellow chrysanthemums.¹⁴ Her all over lace princess of Greek key design was long sleeved and had a high neck, the skirt having a demi train. The brooch worn at the throat was platinum of exquisite design, leaf shaped, studded with fifty-five small diamonds surrounding five large diamonds.¹⁵ ✓

Other women attired in gowns cut along princess lines were Mrs. James A. Menefee in pompadour silk of white and rose colorings with bell skirt and draped bell sleeves, Mrs. Peter Hanraty in lavender crepe de chine over the same shade silk, Miss Hanraty in white lans-down over white taffeta, Mrs. S. W. Hayes in a satin

¹²

Katherine M. Lester, Op. cit., p. 217

¹³

Ladies Home Journal, November 1907, Vol. 24, p. 153.

¹⁴

The Guthrie Daily Leader, November 18, 1907

¹⁵

Letter - Mrs. Leo Bennett, March 25, 1938

PLATE III

A. Costume left - Simplicity marks this costume for evening wear, which is made of gray-blue satin with yoke and undersleeves of lace. Satin embroidered in soft Japanese colors forms the girdle and band trimming.

B. Costume right - shows dainty evening gown with slightly Empire back made of dotted tulle lace in a delicate ecru. Broad bands of lace insertion carry out the soft lines of the waist and give to the skirt the new and graceful draped effect.

Courtesy - Ladies Home Journal



stripe Parisian crepe de chine over old rose taffeta and chiffon, Miss Kate Barnard in a simple gown of white silk softly shirred and Mrs. Charles L. Daugherty in an Alice blue lace trimmed with rows of blue lace and silver passamenterie.¹⁶

The richness and value of many of the costumes and much of the jewelry may appear remarkable beside the territorial people they adorned but it should be remembered that many of these people who attended the inaugural ball had been in Indian Territory only two or three years, having come from older states bringing their wealth and tradition with them. In spite of the fact that Oklahoma was the newest state the first inaugural ball surpassed many of its older sister states in gorgeous costumes and elegant appointments.

It is worthy of note that, although during the day people from every walk of life appeared in all types of costumes, in the evening no inaugural ball could have given evidence of greater beauty, sophistication and wealth than did the first inaugural ball of Oklahoma.

¹⁶

The Guthrie Daily Leader, November 18, 1907

CHAPTER II

THE CRUCE INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

On January 9, 1911 Lee Cruce became Governor of Oklahoma at noon. In the presence of an immense throng the second chief magistrate of the new state took the oath of office, administered on his mother's Bible. This event was followed by a reception at the Lee Huckins Hotel in Oklahoma City from two to four in the afternoon¹, Oklahoma City having become the state capitol late in 1910.

The day's activities culminated in the great social event, the inaugural ball, held at the auditorium. The ball was preceded by a reception of unusual brilliance held between the hours of eight and ten o'clock in the evening, in the parlor of the Lee Huckins Hotel.² Governor Lee Cruce and his daughter, Lorena, headed the receiving line.

The inaugural ball was the scene of the greatest gathering of social and military life the state had ever known. Unlike most balls of such a nature it was not an invitation affair. Governor Cruce preferred not to issue individual invitations but extended a general invitation through the newspapers to every Oklahoman to be present. A great many of the prominent people of the state were there.

¹

The Oklahoma Leader (weekly), January 12, 1911

²

Lerona R. Morris, Oklahoma Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow, p. 528

Governor Cruce and daughter, Miss Lorena Cruce, led the grand march at the ball. Ex-Governor and Mrs. C. N. Haskell were immediately behind them, and the state officials took their places in the line of march according to their rank.³ An exquisite array of beautiful costumes produced an effect of beauty and color on the dancing floor that was both rich and brilliant. Society was in full dress.⁴

Miss Cruce in describing her gown writes: "I was only fifteen years old at my father's inaugural ball. My dress was white silk marquisette over a silk slip with a deep lace bertha, a fold of white satin at the hem, and a white satin sash that tied with a large bow at the back. I wore my hair in three big curls tied at my neck with a white satin bow."⁵

Many of our state women were attired that night in velvets and satin brocades which were the mode of the winter. The richness of the fabrics and the heavy embroideries of the costumes made one wonder what Dame Fashion had in store for future inaugural balls for it seemed their magnificence could not be surpassed.⁶

³ The Daily Oklahoman, January 10, 1911

⁴ The Oklahoma Leader (weekly) January 12, 1911

⁵ Letter- Lorena Cruce Norris - April 29, 1938

⁶ The Ladies' Home Journal, January 1911, Vol. 28, p. 132

What was formerly found only in the courts of kings and queens adorned the guests of the second inaugural ball of Oklahoma.

In all probability, much of this richness was the outcome of Russian influence, for it was quite true that those velvets and satin brocades of elaborate design and beautiful coloring had always been worn by wealthy Russians.⁷

The Russian influence was seen in the gown of Mrs. Cook whose exquisite toilette was of rose-colored lace partially covered with steel beads and trimmed with bands of sable and some very rich lace.⁸

Mrs. Ed. F. Johns of Chickasha wore a magnificent gown of white satin brocade embroidered in pink roses. Her bodice was trimmed in an applied design of gold cord and lace.

Some of the other gowns long to be remembered were those of Mrs. Burk who was becomingly attired in pink brocade satin, (similar to Plate IV lower left) Mrs. Geissler in a striking imported gown of cerise velvet, Mrs. C.G. Jones in a rich toilette of garnet velvet trimmed with lace, and Mrs. Fulton lovely in a claret brocaded satin.⁹

⁷ Good Housekeeping, January 1911, Vol. 52, p. 81

⁸ The Guthrie Daily Leader, January 10, 1911

⁹ Ibid.

There were many varieties of beads worn that season. Beads from tiny steel ones no larger than pin heads colored in every shade imaginable to pearls, adorned the gowns in Paris and New York.¹⁰ And beads played a very important part in the trimming of gowns at this inaugural ball.

Looking across the ballroom Mrs. Frank Westfall of Sapulpa, a cousin of the governor, was seen attired in a youthful gown of black beaded chiffon over black satin. Not far away was Mrs. Harbour fashionably gowned in black velvet and chiffon, heavily trimmed with jet. An enchanting creation worn by Mrs. Classen was of white embroidered chiffon trimmed with touches of lavender velvet and pearls. She wore a pearl gray feather boa about her shoulders. Another very striking gown was the crystal beaded pink tulle worn by Mrs. Menefee.¹¹

A picture gown of white dotted net embroidered with ribbon flowers and trimmed with handsome Venetian lace, built over duchesse satin was worn by Mrs. Haskell. Another lovely white gown of hand run lace, with which she wore a picturesque white plume covered hat, attired Mrs. Lee. Mrs. Turner accentuated her brunette loveliness with an old rose marquissette handsomely embroidered

¹⁰
The Ladies Home Journal, January 1911, Vol. 28,
p. 132

¹¹
The Oklahoma Leader (weekly) January 12, 1911

in self color and trimmed with duchesse lace on the bodice.¹²

Skirts cleared the floor all around, for trains had gone out of fashion, save for weddings. These simple trainless affairs were of adorable combinations of goods: chiffon, heavy Venetian lace, and fur. Colors were soft although brilliant in tone. Soft, curious, gray coral tints were seen, as well as many new colors on the deep purple, red magenta order, which lie between claret and wisteria. On the whole women looked very feminine that season. It seemed that these shirred chiffon fineries, creamy lace and net creations vied with the velvets and brocades for first place.¹³

(Plate IV)

As a compliment to Miss Cruce who was her father's official hostess that evening a very large number of women dressed in white, which gave an unusually youthful note to the occasion.

Both Governor Lee Cruce and Ex-Governor C. B. Haskell wore black Prince Albert coats, instead of full dress suits;¹⁴ the Prince Albert coat being the standard style for men of middle age or past on formal occasions at that time.

¹²

The Guthrie Daily Leader, January 10, 1911

¹³

The Ladies Home Journal, January 1911, Vol. 28, p. 132

¹⁴

The Oklahoma Leader (weekly) January 12, 1911

PLATE IV

Figure lower left shows the newest evening gown in a modified empire of soft satin in anemone blue. The skirt is finished with a fold, and has a short pointed train. The tunic, of almost the same shade as the skirt, opens at the side, where it is fastened with a blue and silver cord and long blue silk tassels with silver threads. The material for the tunic is changeable marquisette, shot with pink, and embroidered in an open running pattern with floss the color of the underdress, and silver thread. All around is a border embroidered with silver thread, blue crystal beads, and blue pearls. The straight sleeves are double, the undersleeves being made of white marquisette embroidered entirely in silver and silver beads, and edged with silver bead fringe. The upper sleeve is a little shorter and embroidered like the panels on the waist; it is edged with blue pearl and crystal fringe. An exquisite pink rose is at the left side of the belt in front, and another is on the skirt. Courtesy of Good Housekeeping.

Figure lower right shows the fichu of arrangement which has of late come into vogue. It is pale blue chiffon, made up over pale blue China silk. The rather scant skirt has a full overdress of the chiffon caught in at the bottom and higher up on the skirt by ruches of chiffon. The skirt clears the floor all around. The waist is of cream lace draped with a fichu of the blue chiffon, and a blue satin girdle. Courtesy of Good Housekeeping.

Figure upper center shows a dainty and modest gown made of violet figured lawn. It has a gathered waist and short puff sleeves, with the skirt tucked to simulate three sections, the simple lines making a foundation especially suited for the fringe of long-stemmed artificial violets which forms the trimming. The quaint cap, made of fine lawn with a deep frill at the back, and embroidered and trimmed with bunches of violets adds a picturesque note to the costume. Courtesy of Ladies' Home Journal



Officers of the national guard and officers of the governor and the ex-governor's staffs were in full dress uniforms, thus adding a distinctive touch of splendor from the masculine portion of the group.¹⁵

Four years of statehood had marked many changes in those assembled at the second inaugural celebration. The assurance which comes with accomplishment was reflected in the faces and manners of the people. Statehood was no longer an untried dream. It had become a reality. The knowledge that a great future lay ahead for the young state permeated the atmosphere.

¹⁵

The Guthrie Daily Leader, January 10, 1911

CHAPTER III

THE WILLIAMS INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Robert L. Williams became governor of Oklahoma Monday, January 11, 1915. Standing grave and dignified, in the midst of an animated assemblage at the Overholster Theater at noon, in round, firm, sonorous voice, he pledged himself to fulfill the exalted obligation imposed upon him by the people, and instantly was arrayed in the invisible robes of this state's executive authority. The new governor's right hand, that had been lifted high during his affirmation of fidelity to the people's welfare dropped to his side and as he stepped toward the chair he had been occupying a band struck up a gay, martial air, converting it quickly into "Dixie".¹

The great audience burst into roaring applause. Kerchiefs waved like a billowing, white capped sea and thousands of hands beat upon each other in patriotic, exulting frenzy. Hundreds of throats emptied themselves of long imprisoned enthusiasm. Solemnity was banished for the nonce. There was tumult.²

From three until five that afternoon a steady stream of callers filed through the ballroom of the Lee Huckins Hotel to welcome the new governor. No

¹ The Daily Oklahoman, January 12, 1915

² Ibid.

fewer than 1500 persons were introduced to the receiving line. Next to Governor Williams stood Miss Lois Jarrell of Durant, the governor's guest of honor. Miss Jarrell was an exceedingly pretty young girl having dark brown hair and eyes. She was simply dressed in a gown of delicate pink accordian pleated crepe de chine and carried pink roses.³

Other women making up the receiving line were Mrs. W. E. Utterback who wore a gown of pale blue with overdress of white lace carrying pink roses and Mrs. Hogan whose costume was cut on classic Moyen Age lines, being of white satin, having musquetaire sleeves of tulle, and a cluster of small satin ribbon flowers on one shoulder.⁴

Brilliant success marked every feature of the ball held in the auditorium to celebrate the inauguration of the new governor. Never before had there been so altogether interesting and representative gathering of the people of this state. Hundreds of men and women, prominent in social, commercial and official life were present to do honor to the new chief executive and to grace an occasion that had never been rivaled in the social history of Oklahoma City.⁵

³

The Guthrie Daily Leader, January 12, 1915

⁴Ibid.⁵

The Daily Oklahoman, January 12, 1915

The auditorium was handsomely decorated with flags and bunting and southern smilax. Festoons of white and red draped from girder to girder, and hundreds of small red, white and blue pennants fluttered from the ceiling. Underneath, quantities of smilax hung its green foliage, radiating in garlands from the center of the ceiling. The balconies were draped with bunting and flags, overlaid with smilax, and the stage was decorated with flags, ferns and palms. The music was furnished by a large orchestra stationed on the stage.⁶

Receiving the guests were ladies of the reception committee who were in charge of the hospitalities at the reception held during the afternoon.⁷

The arrival of Governor Williams and his suite was heralded with applause and the line for the grand march was immediately formed.⁸

First came Governor Williams and Miss Lois Jarrell, Ex-Governor Lee Cruce and Miss Lorena Cruce, Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. M. E. Trapp, Miss Adah Bennett and escort, members of the staff and guests to the number of five hundred. In addition to the dancers several hundred spectators were seated around the large hall and the balconies were entirely filled.⁹

6

Ibid.

7

Ibid.

8

The Guthrie Leader, January 12, 1915

9

Ibid.

Miss Jarrell was charmingly gowned in a girlish frock of white lace, trimmed in pink velvet. She carried an armful of long stemmed American Beauty roses.¹⁰

Miss Cruce never looked so charming as she did that evening. In describing the gown she wore when her father was retiring she writes: "My dress was a coral rose velvet and chiffon. The waist was a straight jacket of velvet almost to my hips. The skirt had five rows of chiffon ruffles edged with bands of the velvet. A long square separate train of velvet fell from the shoulders." She carried an armful of Killarney roses.¹¹

Miss Adah Bennett, who had acted as the official hostess for Governor Cruce during his administration was most becomingly attired in a gown of pink chiffon gracefully draped over satin.¹²

Other handsome gowns noticed were those of Mrs. Matthew J. Kane who wore white net over satin, the hem of the tunic being bordered with ermine; Mrs. M. E. Trapp's of pink taffeta, the tunic finished in petal-like form and a long separate train of taffeta, edged with a frill of lace; Mrs. Harriett Dunn Bentley's black Spanish lace over gold satin; Miss Besse Hudson's

10

Ibid.

11

Letter - Lorena Cruce Norris, April 29, 1938

12

The Guthrie Leader, January 12, 1915

pink accordian pleated satin with Moyen Age overdress of black chiffon, embroidered in pastel colors; Miss Florence Furman in graduated shades of yellow from pale lemon to deep orange trimmed with gold lace; Mrs. Elmer L. Fulton in black satin with corsage of white lace; Mrs. Chas. B. Ames's gown of white brocaded crepe, trimmed with lace and bands of skunk; Mrs. Joseph Huckins Jr's gray crepe de chine with an overdress of gray chiffon brocaded with velvet with sleeves of white tulle trimmed with jet and a single poinsetta blossom on the corsage, and Mrs. William Mee's gown of primrose yellow accordian pleated chiffon with overdress of white lace.¹³

There was a complete change that year in the silhouette.¹⁴ While the gowns of the two previous inaugural balls showed French and Russian influence, the gowns of the Williams' inaugural ball showed the influence of the Moyen Age. The most radical change in the silhouette was in the skirt; certainly the difference between the clinging, close fitting skirt of the past and the flaring full circular model of the new season struck the eye at the first glance.¹⁵ (Plate V) Full skirts having eclipsed the torturous skirt women were once more permitted to move with ease and grace.¹⁶ (Plate VI)

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The Guthrie Daily Leader, January 12, 1915

¹⁴

The Ladies Home Journal, January 1915, Vol. 32, p.101

¹⁵

Good Housekeeping, January 1915, Vol. 60, p. 201

¹⁶

The Ladies Home Journal, January 1915, Vol. 32, p.101

PLATE V

A. Left figure shows full plaited underskirt over which the full lace tunic is draped. The surplice bodice of the silk is finished with long sleeves of the lace, and with collar and cuffs of fur.

B. Right figure shows a full skirt, finished in scallops which are outlined by a contrasting material; above this is a high girdle of the skirt material, topped by a blouse of chiffon. The sleeves are long and full, finishing in a frill held by a band of the material.

Courtesy of Good Housekeeping



PLATE VI

A. Left figure shows rich brocaded satin in obus gray, with poppy designs, forming the trailing skirt of the graceful dress in three pieces and slightly gathered extending also into the surpliced pointed sections of the draped bodice. Delicately transparent is the chiffon yoke in a warm rose, with pointed sleeve openings covering without concealing the upper arm, and edged with large smoke-pear beads. From the yoke falls the rippling cape, diminishing to a point just above the hem with a dull silver tassel.

B Right figure escapes extreme formality by the length and width of its Japanese sleeves, made enchanting by its delicate coral-pink chiffon overdress is hung over a three-piece white satin skirt. Garlands of tiny flat marquisette flowers like embroidery are appluqued to the waist, and larger ones weight the waywardness of the plaited overskirt. Atop of the white satin girdle a band of sable squirrel gives its dark tone of contrast.

Courtesy of Ladies' Home Journal



There was no daintier, prettier style for silken fabrics, flouncing and lace than the skirt ruffled from waist to hem, and the witchery of it was quite as potent in that day as when such skirts were worn by our grandmothers, in which they tread the stately minuet. Sheer cottons such as marquisette, voile, net, point de'esprit and soft silks were materials most favored for evening.¹⁷ Simple designs as well as materials, ornaments consisting chiefly of sprays of artificial rosebuds and close fitting girdles were being worn on many formal occasions. The "airiness" of those dainty frocks was certainly enough to captivate the hearts of youth and femininity.¹⁸ (Plate VII)

In direct contrast were seen materials and trimmings of gold and silver thread embroidery, rich and heavy, as well as exquisite filmy laces. Women who longed for individuality and self-expression in dress readily found it that season. Even she who secretly hankered after the bizarre was able to gratify her heart's desire without being beyond the pale of good taste.¹⁹

On account of the European War patriotism ran high and much was said about American fashions for American women. To the average woman "American fashions" suggested gowns designed by American dressmakers and developed

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Good Housekeeping, January 1915

¹⁸

The Ladies Home Journal, January 1915

¹⁹

Ibid.

PLATE VII

A. Left figure shows gown in floral pattern that is so decorative that a scalloped edge is sufficient trimming for the full skirt. The high girdle over which the bodice falls is an excellent feature.

B. Center figure shows a full ruffled skirt in which the ruffles mount in tiers to the waist-line, where a girdle connects them with the simple corsage outlined in roses, a garland of the flowers serving as a substitute for sleeves.

C. Right figure shows silk gown in which a ruche of net finishes the circular skirt, matching the ruche which serves as a collar for the little bodice. The new raised waist-line is a feature of the bodice, on which bows of the net serve as fasteners.

Courtesy of Good Housekeeping



in fabrics of American manufacture. But what we actually were shown as American fashions were modifications of French designs made up either in French, English, German or American fabrics, and in 1915 the results were not encouraging. But there was in our midst a real American fashion developed by the women of America from fabrics of American growth and manufacture, and that was the fashion of wearing dresses made from cotton materials.²⁰

For anything relating to clothes to become a fashion it had to be adopted by women who were leaders in the world of society and fashion. It was not the gown shown in the salon of the French couturier which set the fashion, but the adoption by women of prominence all over the country. Hence the right to speak of it as fashion.²¹

✓In the early autumn there was held in Washington, District of Columbia, the National Cotton Fashion show, the object of which was to create interest among American women in American made dress fabrics. Heretofore Attention had always been given to foreign made materials and designs. Paris was always consulted before styles were decided upon; in a word, "what does Paris say?" was the momentous question. America wanted to cut loose from the apron strings of Paris, and not only decide for

20

Good Housekeeping, January 1915, Vol. 60, p. 85

21

Ibid.

herself, but design and make the fabrics as well. We were fortunate that cotton was our greatest asset with which to meet the emergency.²²

Everywhere one heard about the "made in the United States" movement. Fashion fetes had promoted it, some of the large shops had special exhibits of goods, each article bearing the label, "made in the U. S. A."; in short, it was becoming the commercial slogan of the country. It was as though this nation, suddenly relieved of its swaddling clothes had quite as suddenly and as characteristically declared itself capable of looking after its own interests. Many of the most beautiful fabrics for the season included silk as well as cottons, and the loveliest of laces, were being made right here in the United States.²³

The development of this fashion has been interesting and truly American. Before the advent of the European War no one dreamed of wearing cotton dresses during the months of sleet and snow--except, perhaps, in the home. But the great war brought about an entirely new situation, and a truly alarming one for the cotton-growing states of the South. To export the raw cotton to foreign ports was out of the question. A new crop had just been

²² The Ladies Home Journal, January 1915, Vol. 32, p. 104

²³ Ibid.

garnered; what was to be done with it? Who was to buy it? Cotton lying idle in warehouses yielded no revenue. How could America be coaxed into using up the unusually heavy supply of cotton on hand?²⁴

When Governor Williams was inaugurated the economic situation was very bad. The war in Europe had been raging six months and it hadn't yet been determined what its effect upon America would be. The New York stock exchange had closed down, and, in Oklahoma due to over-production, there was an embargo upon exports.²⁵

While the men were trying to sell cotton by the bale women of the South attempted the more stupendous undertaking of making a fashion.

"If women all over the country could be influenced to wear cotton dresses the manufacturers would have to buy the cotton to supply the demands for materials," they argued, and rightly. "We must make it the fashion." And why not? There was nothing irrational in wearing costumes made from cotton fabrics during the winter months. Nor was there any lowering of the esthetic viewpoint, for the cotton goods had all the beauty and artistic values of their counterparts in silk and wool.

²⁴

Good Housekeeping, January 1915, Vol. 60, p. 85

²⁵

Edward Everett Dale and Jesse Lee Rader, Readings in Oklahoma History, p. 751

The only stumbling block was custom, and fashion can always step over that barrier.²⁶

The first steps toward winning the favor of that fickle jade were taken by the women of the South, living in Washington. Their fashion show of costumes made from cotton fabrics proved conclusively that frocks for the evening could be made from cotton stuffs quite as successfully as from wool and silk. Wives of foreign ambassadors were showing their interest by wearing frocks of muslin. And now everywhere, east and west, north and south, women of means and social standing were wearing cotton dresses, for the fashion may be said to have been finally launched when the wife of one of the foremost bankers in New York City appeared at the premiere of the Metropolitan Opera House in an effective evening gown made entirely of a cotton fabric and manufactured by an American firm on American soil.²⁷

No less loyal were the women of Oklahoma at the Williams' inaugural ball for many of them appeared in beautiful cotton lace and net dresses.

Among the thinner cotton fabrics, all the old time favorites enjoyed a revival that season, and in the modes

26

Good Housekeeping, January 1915, Vol. 60, p. 85

27

Ibid.

of long ago were worn full skirts frilled and ruffled, shirred and tucked, and completed by little bodices decorously finished with fichus and frills. In a word, the girl of early 1915 looked just as much like her great-ancestress of 1830 as dress and fabric could make her.²⁸

28

Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROBERTSON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

On January 14, 1919 the inauguration of James Brooks Ayres Robertson as fourth governor of the state of Oklahoma took place.¹

The inaugural itinerary began with a parade from North Broadway at 10:30 in the morning in which 1500 members of the Oklahoma National Guard took part. A military band of 101 pieces, the largest assembled in Oklahoma City, headed the procession.²

A military escort preceded the officials in the parade with units of the second, third, and fourth regiments of Oklahoma National Guard taking part.³

The oath of office was administered at noon at a joint session of the senate and house of representatives by Chief Justice Sharp in the house chamber at the state house. Because actual construction of the state capitol was not begun until July 25, 1914⁴ this was the first time a governor had been sworn into office in the state building.

¹ Daily Oklahoman, January 15, 1919

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Governor and Mrs. Robertson gave a reception to the public in the state room of the Capitol from four to six in the afternoon in which all state officials and their wives took part.⁵

The inaugural ball on the legislative floor at the state house concluded the day with Governor and Mrs. Robertson heading the grand march.⁶

The committee in charge of the inaugural ball was composed of General H. W. Pentecost, C. B. Ames, Frank B. Burford, Wm. A. Brooks, and J. A. Brown.⁷

Commenting on the inaugural ball the next morning, Edith Johnson gives a very vivid picture of probably one of the most unique balls ever held at a governor's inauguration and this through no fault of those in charge. Miss Johnson, in describing it, says that it was the most remarkable and certainly the most memorable social occasion in the history of Oklahoma - the lightless ball given to celebrate the inauguration of Governor J. B. A. Robertson at the state house.

At exactly nine-thirty, when all the state officials and dignitaries were going "over the top" of the grand

5

Ibid.

6

Ibid.

7

Ibid.

stairway leading to the fourth floor, all lights were shut off.⁸

The most remarkable thing about the occurrence was the poise and cheerfulness of hundreds of men and women who moved right on just as though nothing at all had happened.⁹

In a moment, a few men began to strike matches which flashed like fire-flies on a dark nite. Then a flash-light in one of the balconies was produced which relieved the dense darkness in the corridors and rotunda until somebody, finding a lone candle stuck it in one of the beautiful bronze pedestals with their cluster lights that refused to burn.¹⁰

The band deprived of its dance scores, played old familiar tunes and the guests danced about in the dusk.¹¹

The women on the stairway settled there as comfortably as they could, taking handkerchiefs and spreading them on the steps as a protection to their delicate gowns before sitting down.¹²

Those who arrived after the lights had failed danced in their tall hats, some of them in their overcoats.¹³

⁸
Myrna Wilcox, Some Pioneer Statesmen of Oklahoma, p. 29.

⁹
Daily Oklahoman, January 15, 1919

¹⁰
Ibid.

¹¹
Ibid.

¹²
Ibid.

¹³
Ibid.

At eleven o'clock everyone was still waiting for the lights when Captain N. C. Jewett announced that there was no prospect of more lights and that those who wished might go home. At eleven thirty-five when a third of the guests had gone home, the lights suddenly flashed on and those remaining enjoyed the beauty that had been arranged with so much care by the ball committee.¹⁴

The rotunda on the fourth floor presented a scene of surpassing beauty. Glistening white Corinthian columns rose in majesty to the roof. In four niches intended to partially enclose pieces of statuary that were to be placed in them later, there were banked palms, ferns and American Beauty roses arranged in white wicker baskets. The grand stairway by which the grand march approached this rotunda was lined with palms.¹⁵

The reception rooms on both sides were adorned with enormous baskets of American Beauty and sunburst roses. Punch and refreshments were ready for serving all guests at the entrance to the house of representatives.¹⁶

It had been arranged to have an orchestra play for dancing, but due to the dislocation of arrangements

14

Ibid.

15

Ibid.

16

Ibid.

during the darkness, the orchestra did not try to play and the band furnished all the music for the dancers on second, third and fourth floors.¹⁷

Never before in the history of the state had so many interesting persons been brought together. Never before had so many beautiful costumes been assembled in one group.¹⁸

It was nice to be able to wear an evening gown once more without feeling apologetic, especially now that there were so many lovely styles in such glistening silks, luxurious brocades and glittering gold and silver tissues.¹⁹

The materials were all important that season, as not much trimming was used; brocades in pale yellows, pinks, blues, emerald greens, and bright corals were popular, with a bit of tulle that had just a little glitter somewhere at the neck.²⁰

Mrs. Robertson, Oklahoma's first lady, wore a magnificent costume of gold and black brocade in bold leaf design, handsomely trimmed in jet, décollete with a court train.²¹ (Plate VIII), (Plate IX)

17

Ibid.

18

Ibid.

19

Ladies Home Journal, January 1919, Vol. 36, p. 123

20

Good Housekeeping, January 1919, Vol. 68, p. 57

21

Letter - Mrs. J. B. A. Robertson, February 7, 1938

PLATE VIII

Front view of inaugural ball gown worn by
Mrs. J. B. A. Robertson



PLATE IX

Back view of inaugural ball gown worn by
Mrs. J. B. A. Robertson.



Mrs. Joseph H. Butler of Vanita, sister-in-law of Governor Robertson was attired in silver cloth and rose taffeta, embellished with rosebuds.²²

Other interesting celebrants attired in these new materials were Mrs. E. H. Gipson, wife of the adjutant-general, who wore a combination of American beauty and purple tulle over pink satin, with insets of cloth of gold on the bodice, Mrs. Summers Hardy, wife of the chief justice of the supreme court, in a turquoise blue taffeta with silver trimmings, Mrs. Maurine Samuels in silver cloth with an overdress of ceil blue tulle and corsage of lilies of the valley, Mrs. Bart B. Howard of Joplin, Missouri, in silver cloth costume with overdress of rose tulle, Mrs. E. Fleming L'Engle of Joplin in black satin gown with silver overdress,²³ and Mrs. M. E. Trapp, wife of the lieutenant-governor wore a French costume of black satin with an overskirt of gold lace and a gold flower on the shoulder. Her ankle length skirt showed gold satin slippers.²⁴ (Plate X)

✓After the signing of the Armistice in November 1918, the world looked for a return to normalcy in dress as well as in affairs.²⁵ ✓

²²

Daily Oklahoman, January 15, 1919

²³

Ibid.

²⁴

Letter - Mrs. M. E. Trapp, June 25, 1937

²⁵

Katherine M. Lester, Historic Costume, p. 227

PLATE X

Mrs. M. E. Trapp, wife of Lieutenant Governor
Trapp, in her inaugural ball gown.

Courtesy of Mrs. M. E. Trapp, Oklahoma City



There was a stir in the fashion world of 1919 which we had not felt since the beginning of the war. We again had the comfortable feeling that we could wear pretty clothes, and that they could be new. And new they were, as the Paris designers, whom we had sadly missed, again "felt" inspiration. Yet this did not mean a vital change in the general outline of the fashions.²⁶

America, of course, had been wearing evening clothes right along, but the bodice had been made higher or had high backs with only a modest opening in front. This was all changed by 1919. The bodice was low both in back and front, and the gown was either sleeveless or had very small sleeves. There was a tendency to fit the bodice in.²⁷ (Plate XI)

The more youthful type of evening gown had a tight bodice as sleeveless as it could be, with the skirt drawn in toward the hem.²⁸ (Plate XII)

A very pretty bodiced dress was worn by Mrs. Walter M. Harrison. Her skirt of yellow satin was trained, attached to a yellow satin bodice trimmed with pearl bands. The costume was completed with a Juliet cap of pearls.²⁹

²⁶

Good Housekeeping, January 1919, Vol. 68, p. 54

²⁷

Ibid, p. 128

²⁸

Ladies Home Journal, January 1919, Vol. 36, p. 92

²⁹

Guthrie Daily Leader, January 15, 1919

PLATE XI

Left - Far more elaborate than for four years are new French evening gowns as shown in this of blue satin, sleeveless, with slip of silver lace.

Right - shows one of the loveliest of Paris gowns, black lace over black satin, filmy black tulle for sleeves and topping bodice.



PLATE XII

A. Left figure shows that latest French evening gowns are much longer and likely to be trained. The model is white and silver satin and lace.

B. Left figure shows sleeveless and very low necked evening gown in turquoise satin and silver embroidery.

Courtesy of Good Housekeeping



Mrs. E. B. Howard, wife of congressman elect Howard was handsomely gowned in cloth of gold shining through black net. Her tight bodice was embroidered in sapphire colored spangles.³⁰

Miss Olive Robertson, youthful daughter of the new governor, wore a girlish costume of white lace and chiffon and carried a bouquet of pink roses.³¹ (Plate XIII)

Mrs. W. R. Samuels was gowned in a white georgette crepe with a beaded bodice. She carried a bouquet of lilies of the valley and sweet peas.³²

Mrs. Joe S. Morris, wife of the secretary of state, wore yellow satin with touches of turquoise blue on the bodice and a corsage of pink roses.³³

The skirts were invariably draped, but the drapery was not clumsy or full. Often the evening gowns were short in front and had trains.³⁴ (Plate XIV)

Mrs. J. M. Aydelotte's gown of black satin beaded in turquoise and black was fashionably draped. Her lavalriere was of diamonds.³⁵

30

Ibid.

31

Ibid.

32

Ibid.

33

Ibid.

34

Good Housekeeping, January 1919, Vol. 68, p. 66

35

Guthrie Daily Leader, January 15, 1919

PLATE XIII

Olive Robertson, daughter of Oklahoma's fourth
governor in her inaugural ball gown

Courtesy of Mrs. David Hilles, Stillwater, Oklahoma



PLATE XIV

A. Left - Less formal frock of beige crepe de chine with white silk muslin yoke and triple scalloped skirt.

B. Center - This evening gown has skirt of blue tulle over silver and blue satin; waist, girdle, and odd double train are of turquoise blue satin.

C. Right - Striking embroideries were featured at the French openings, and evening gowns cut very low and often sleeveless as shown in this silver embroidered satin and black brocade with two long trains.

Courtesy of Good Housekeeping



SEP 29 1938

Another smartly draped gown of pussy-willow taffeta was worn by Mrs. G. B. Parker.³⁶

Two very important women whose dresses had draped skirts were the sisters of Governor Robertson, Miss Meda of Cincinnati in taupe georgette beaded with steel and Miss Alice of Boston in henna georgette trimmed in self color beads.³⁷

Many of the new frocks showed a tunic draped over the narrow skirt to give the appearance of great fullness. This tunic was usually rather long as the waistline was long rather than short.³⁸

Mrs. John Fletcher Sharp's black charmeuse was veiled with a tunic of black tulle, embroidered in blue, purple, and green sequins.³⁹

Another outstanding dress having a tunic was the black satin with tunic of net embroidered in blue, purple and green sequins worn by Mrs. M. L. Turner. Her jewelry was a diamond necklace and bracelet.⁴⁰

Despite the semi-darkness the beautiful gowns in brocades, plain satins, and gold tissues that were low cut and trained sparkled in the ballroom.

36

The Guthrie Daily Leader, January 15, 1919

37

Ibid.

38

Good Housekeeping, January 1919, Vol. 68, p. 58

39

The Guthrie Daily Leader, January 15, 1919

40

Ibid.

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Since this was the first inaugural ball held in the state capitol many men and women, who seldom hied themselves from their comfortable firesides, accepted their invitations to the ball and thereby joined their presence with official society and the dancing set.

CHAPTER V

THE WALTON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

John Calloway Walton was inducted into office as the fifth governor of Oklahoma shortly after noon Monday, January 8, 1923, after repeating the oath of office as read by John T. Johnson, acting chief justice of the supreme court, in firm, measured tones, while the flickering calcium lights of a half dozen motion picture machines beat in his face.¹

Governor Walton entered the lower house chamber shortly after twelve o'clock to a fan-flare of military music, closely attended by Major Orvel Johnson, Brigadier General Charles N. Barrett, Commander of the National Guard and the retiring governor, J. B. A. Robertson. Walking with steady step to the rostrum he spoke to "Buck" Garrett, former sheriff of Carter County, neatly attired in a salt and pepper business suit, wearing a white doe-skin vest nattily slashed with scarlet at the edges.²

Buck Garrett rubbed elbows with Major Gordon Lillie (Pawnee Bill) who was dressed in his "native" costume. Indian war bonnets and gorgeous-hued blankets mingled

¹ The Daily Oklahoman, January 9, 1923

² Ibid.

with silk hats and other habiliments of statecraft; farmers' wives with babes in arm held even place with society matrons and their sisters of wealth.³

✓ In the 5000 campaign speeches made by Governor Walton he had said "when I am elected governor, there will not be any inaugural ball, and there will not be a "tea dansant". I am going to give an old-fashioned square dance and barbecue; it will be a party for all the people, and I want you all to come!"⁴ ✓

One of the greatest crowds ever assembled in Oklahoma stood by to see him make good the first of his campaign pledges.⁵

The festivities started with a parade beginning at the capitol building and ending at the fair grounds where the barbecue waited. The parade to an '89er might have seemed a pageant of progress, marking the transition of the state from a land of cowboys and Indians to a great commonwealth of fashionables. Out of the past rode Zack Mulhall, marshal of the parade, booted and spurred and topped with a sweeping sombrero, who led the multitude of paraders and spectators to the barbecue. Streaming endlessly through the fifteen serving units,

3

Ibid.

4

Ibid.

5

Ibid.

rich men, poor men, women with sealskin coats and diamonds, farm wives and children swelled the total fed to 60,000.⁶

✓"No, this was not a high-brow occasion," was the way a worker summed it up as a woman, with fingers shining with diamonds and with expensive clothes and furs accepted the plate of barbecued beef, pickles, onion, and buns.⁷ ✓

Fully 20,000 persons met and shook hands Tuesday afternoon with Governor and Mrs. J. C. Walton and the other state officials during the informal reception held in the automobile building at the state fair grounds.⁸

Entering the building at 3:30 o'clock Governor and Mrs. Walton were greeted by the other state officials and immediately took their places at the head of the group which formed itself into a line. Next to the governor and his wife stood Ex-Governor and Mrs. J. B. A. Robertson. At the head of the receiving line with Governor and Mrs. Walton stood John E. O'Neil, who introduced each person to the new governor and his wife.⁹

Governor Walton was dressed in a plain business suit and Mrs. Walton in a neat street suit. There was no

⁶
Ibid.

⁷
Ibid.

⁸
Ibid.

⁹
Ibid.

affectation of pomp displayed by any member of the receiving line.¹⁰

On Wednesday, January 10, the occasion that ended the three-day festivities, which had ushered J. C. Walton into office, was the inaugural ball.¹¹

Workers in overalls and the elite in costly furs and dress suits mingled in dancing throngs at the brilliantly lighted state capitol building. Elderly square dancers contrasted with younger couples who whirled in modern steps to old rhythms.¹²

Many state officials were to be observed, coatless and hatless, swinging their partners through the mazes of the minuet. Among them were Frank Carter, new member of state corporation commission, John A. Whitehurst, president of the state board of agriculture, and John T. Johnson acting chief justice of the supreme court.¹³

National guard staff officers and private soldiers in military costume paraded together with girls dressed in red and white silk riding costumes. Indians wearing showy head dresses danced with capitol stenographers, a slow step which they taught each girl with whom they danced.¹⁴

10

Ibid.

11

Ibid.

12

Ibid.

13

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1923

14

Ibid.

State Representative, A. L. Davis of Chickasha, hugging his fiddle close under his chin, occupied the center of the stage, the first floor in the center of the building, above which the rotunda rises five floors. Grouped about him as he played "Turkey in the Straw" over and over again gathered debutantes as well as cowboys. They halted to listen and remained to dance.¹⁵

Several bands were placed on the various floors of the building. Separate dance centers formed around each, on the various floors in the corridors, in offices, in the stately senate chamber and in the halls of the house of representatives.¹⁶

Indian women of the Arapaho, Creek, and Osage tribes were there. Mingled with them were pioneer women, ineffaceably marked with the signs of times through which they struggled, and society leaders, wives of oil magnates, and daughters of old time cowmen.¹⁷

Picturesque characters of early days lent color to the crowds thronging the capitol building for the inaugural ball but they did not detract from the elegance of the gowns of the women of the official families and many other women who were there. Mrs. Walton was not without her inaugural ball gown even if Governor Walton did wear a business suit of navy blue.¹⁸

15

Ibid.

16

Ibid.

17

Ibid.

18

Tulsa Daily World, January 11, 1923

Satin had returned to favor that season and was found in the formal frocks of the jeune fille the same as in the stately formal gowns worn by their elders.¹⁹

Mrs. Walton's gown was a stately one of white satin with a court train. The long waist with bateau neckline rested upon the hips. It was heavily beaded with crystal beads in large floral designs. The skirt was ankle length with graceful draping on the sides that extended into a train, showing silver cloth slippers.²⁰ (Plate XV)

No less lovely was the gown worn by Mrs. J. B. A. Robertson made of white satin lavishly beaded and studded with sequins and brilliants, girdled with twisted silver ribbon.²¹

Every season has some outstanding feature, and that of 1923 will probably be set down as the year of contrasts.²² Not only did our inaugural celebration show contrast to those of the four previous inaugural celebrations but in fashions as well. Monotones were no longer in vogue, and one found vivid touches of embroidery and contrasting bits of color on nearly all the

19

Ladies Home Journal, January 1923, Vol. 40, p. 60

20

Tulsa Daily World, January 11, 1923

21

Ibid.

22

Good Housekeeping, January 1923, Vol. 76, p. 44

PLATE XV

Mrs. J. C. Walton in her inaugural ball gown

Courtesy of Mrs. E. W. Marland



one-color frocks. Then there was a whole new fashion of two-color or two-fabric frocks.²³

Evening frocks had a bodice and skirt of different colors and often of different fabrics. (Plate XVI B) A favorite combination was velvet and satin or velvet and crepe.²⁴ Mrs. Kennerley had on a frock of this type in that it had a white velvet bodice beaded in crystal and, in striking contrast, a black satin skirt beaded in jet. Another was the black velvet dress with long draped skirt that had a bodice of figured metal brocade worn by Mrs. Nichols.²⁵

It had been many years since fur had been used so lavishly as it was in the winter months of 1923. Dresses of the filmiest chiffon carried bands of fur with charming effect.²⁶ Mrs. Charles N. Barrett's gown showed this combination in an ankle length dress with a skirt of three flounces of lace fashioned with a long waist of beige satin banded together with a fur girdle of kolinsky.²⁷

In fabrics, metal cloths and metal brocades had no rival, and even when the frock was of lace or chiffon

23

Ibid.

24

Ibid.

25

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1923

26

Good Housekeeping, January 1923, Vol. 76, p. 45

27

Ibid.

one was apt to catch a gleam of silver or gold in the trimming or underslip. (Plate XVI A) Sometimes the dress was of silver lace with an underslip of bright colored velvet with a color showing prettily through the open, glittering mesh. In Paris, elderly women, particularly were wearing silver low-cut corsages of black or silver over underdress of silver lace, which veiled the shoulder most effectively.²⁸ Adhering closely to this Parisian fashion were the gowns of Mrs. Orvel Johnson in blue lace over a silver slip and Mrs. W. J. Coree in a deep rose lace over gold.²⁹ Varying a little was the frock of silver lace over a rose colored slip with pink roses at the hip worn by Mrs. C. G. Jameson.³⁰

Another whim of fashion was the beading of its velvet evening gowns (Plate XVI C) - the favorite combination was a gray beige velvet of wonderful softness with tiny, crystal tubes, but the colors varied. A frock of amber velvet was beaded with topaz, emerald green was beaded with silver and black was beaded with opaque crystal.³¹ Mrs. Chauncey wore an imported gown of black velvet, effectively trimmed with pearls and bead embroidery. Her lovely gown was fashioned with a very low

²⁸

Good Housekeeping, January 1923, Vol. 76, p. 45

²⁹

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1923

³⁰

Ibid.

³¹

Good Housekeeping, January 1923, Vol. 76, p. 45

PLATE XVI

A Left - Martial et Armond sound the draped note with delightful skill in a frock of pink chiffon velvet embroidered with crystal beads.

B. Center - Poiret successfully interprets the bouffant in terms of beaver-trimmed black velvet and gold lace.

C. Right - For the sleeveless straight silhouette Jean Paton uses black velvet with sprays of embroidery in crystal and pearl. A rope of jet drops from the right shoulder, is caught up to form the girdle, and hangs in a long tassel below the border of black fox.

Courtesy of Ladies' Home Journal



waist line having for its chief decoration a large medallion of beads placed across the front of the waist line from which hung a gracefully draped ankle length skirt.³²

The four previous inaugural balls had shown Parisian, Russian or Moyen Age inspiration in their gowns. In 1923 the classic Grecian influence predominated in the gowns on the ballroom floor. Sleeves, if any, were generously wide and flowing in unhampered Grecian lines.

The low waist lines were not welcomed as heartily as they might have been but after learning the trick of adjusting their belts around their hips women were pleased with their new waistlines. Variety was gained in several different ways. One could have a wider sash, and tie it Grecian fashion at the center front, or wear a whole jeweled or beaded belt, or bands of ribbon.

In spite of the fact that the inaugural ball gowns showed the Grecian influence the western feeling was felt more in this group of celebrants than in any of the earlier balls.

32

The Daily Oklahoman, January 1923

CHAPTER VI

JOHNSTON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Henry S. Johnston, Perry lawyer, became Henry S. Johnston, seventh governor of Oklahoma, a few minutes after noon Monday, January 10, 1927 when Fred P. Branson, newly elected chief justice of the supreme court, finished reading the oath of office to him, and other elected state officers.¹

A crowd estimated at more than ten thousand persons was gathered in the capitol plaza and on the front steps, where both houses of the legislature had met, and where loud speakers and radio apparatus sent the proceedings to the vast audience for the first time at an inaugural ceremony in Oklahoma.²

The inaugural ceremonies followed a parade from downtown, which was led by bands from Oklahoma University, the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and other state institutions, in which Johnston and other state officials were given places of honor.³

The afternoon following the inaugural ceremonies was devoted to preparations for the general reception to the public to be held in the Blue Room adjoining the executive chambers, with Governor and Mrs. Johnston,

¹ Tulsa Daily World, January 11, 1927

² The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

³ Ibid.

Ex-Governor and Mrs. Trapp and other state officials and their wives in the receiving line. All citizens of the state were invited to attend the reception and the inaugural ball which immediately followed.⁴

There was a grand march, but only a fringe of the people who wedged into the building and were in the packed struggling mass were able to see Governor and Mrs. Johnston as they headed the march from the second floor to the fourth floor of the building.⁵

The crowd was generally what was expected. There were full dress suits, there were tuxedos, there were business suits, and even boots and spurs. Dresses ranged from the plainest street dresses to gorgeous, flamboyant evening gowns.⁶

The inaugural ball was colorful and gay with society women from all points in the state dressed in their best, paying homage to Oklahoma's first lady.⁷

Striking gowns of black contrasted ones of brilliant red and various pastel shades. Not a single rainbow hue but found a place in styles kaleidoscopic pattern. Reds from lipstick to burgundy including the rust and coral tones; greens from the deep bright jungle shade to the

⁴

Ibid.

⁵

Tulsa Daily World, January 11, 1927

⁶

Ibid.

⁷

Ibid.

lighter and still brighter water green; blues from the baby shade through the brilliant royal hue, to the more somber navy; browns in the live, golden tones on through to the beiges in all their wide variety added their color note to the brilliant pictures.⁸

All eyes were centered on Mrs. Johnston.⁹ Her dress was of dull Roman gold colored beads and sequins on a filmy silk net over self-color satin with a short and uneven hemline at that time prevailing, and short as it was weighed two and one half pounds. The shoulder scarf was flame georgette with gold and silver embroidery; the slippers, gold brocade.¹⁰ (Plate XVII) (17)

Another interesting figure was Mrs. Martin E. Trapp who wore a French costume of gold embroidered black gros grain silk with bodice of bands of green, blue and gold. Her corsage was of cerise ostrich feathers.¹¹

The evening frocks were never more youthful looking than in 1927. They were of chiffon, of glittering lame', of velvet brocade, of soft crepe satin, or of fine lace.¹² Midwinter fashion for 1927 was a fashion that made much of fabric combinations.¹³ Velvet was extremely smart

8

Ibid.

9

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

10

Letter - Mrs. Henry L. Johnston, February 3, 1938

11

Letter - Mrs. M. E. Trapp, June 21, 1937

12

Good Housekeeping, January 1927, Vol. 84, p. 115

13

Ladies Home Journal, January 1927, Vol. 44, p. 83

PLATE XVII

Mrs. Henry S. Johnston, wife of Oklahoma's
seventh governor, in her inaugural ball gown

Courtesy of Mrs. Henry S. Johnston, Perry, Oklahoma



whether plain, chiffon, "speckled trout", velvet woven on mousseline, or combined with satin.¹⁴ Millinery velvet and crepella had been linked together for some time and continued to be emphasized strongly. Among other popular combinations were crepe and satin, velvet or velveteen with crepe de chine, satin with georgette or chiffon.

A lace and georgette version of this season was worn by Mrs. Edwin Dabney. The lace that formed the skirt, two shoulder yokes and corsage flower was a flesh shade and the silk of the slightly blousing bodice matched it exactly. The narrow sash emphasizing the low waist line was repeated in the edges of the yokes.¹⁵

Another costume adhering to this fashion of combinations of materials was a beautiful French import of cergate with a lace overskirt worn by Mrs. Fletcher Riley. Hand-made French flowers defined the waistline.¹⁶

Among the many interesting gowns of rich combinations of material noted at the ball was a heavy white crepe combined with white cut velvet in rose design worn by Mrs. Samuel M. Gloyd; deep ivory cut velvet, attached to a hand-made lace yoke with rhinestone buckle defining the waist line worn by Mrs. Mable Bassett; orchid crepe combined with black lace and embroidered in seed pearls

¹⁴

Woman's Home Companion, January 1927, Vol. 54, p. 61

¹⁵

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

¹⁶

Ibid.

and brightly colored beads worn by Mrs. William Casper Kite, and a black satin combined with ecru georgette and lace fashioned with a long close fitting waist and a sheered full skirt worn by Mrs. Victor S. Purdy.¹⁷

It had been sixteen years since beads had been used so lavishly for trimming as they were that winter season. Not only were fabrics lavishly decorated with beads but quantities of jewelry were worn with evening clothes.¹⁸ Bracelets, ear rings, shoulder pins and strands of pearls added to the sparkle and glitter of the dresses, capes, and scarfs.¹⁹ (Plate XVIII)

A beaded formal of the season was seen on Mrs. William L. Eagleton of Tulsa who attended the ball gowned in a French hand-made gown of green chiffon heavily encrusted with beads. Her gown was on simple lines draped to the left side where a cluster of silver grapes was worn.²⁰

Mrs. J. L. Landrum was attractive in beige crepe de chine, trimmed with irridescent beads. It was semi-draped and had a crushed girdle of the same material. Her jewelry was of the period of 1812 - earrings of pearls and rubies, and necklace and bracelet of gold,

17

Ibid.

18

Good Housekeeping, January 1927, Vol. 84, p. 115

19

Womans Home Companion, January 1927, Vol. 54, p. 61

20

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

PLATE XVIII

A Figure extreme left uses shirring in semi-circular effect on an evening tunic blouse, typical of odd shirrings. The dress illustrates the emphatic mode for white satin evening frocks.

B. Figure center left shows four sections of sunburst plaits in dress of silver cloth with rhinestone belt.

C. Figure center right shows the popularity of the bolero in conjunction with the tiered skirt made of black lace with matching scarf. It shows the up-in-the front movement

D Figure extreme right again shows popularity of bolero and tiered skirt cut in deep scallops both front and back.

Courtesy of Ladies' Home Journal



Vionnet

Chanel

Chanel

carved and inlaid with enamel and jet. Her scarf of lace and ostrich feathers lent a striking effect.²¹

Mrs. A. J. Bond wore a lovely evening frock made of sheerest coral chiffon and trimmed with embedded rhinestones. The back of the blouse was doubled, the outer one ending in a deep bow sash that tied in front. The skirt was knee length cut circular with much fullness.²² Silver spangles glittered on the Nile green crepe satin worn by Mrs. K. J. McMahon.²³

Mrs. W. J. Holloway of Hugo, was a striking figure in apricot georgette beaded in seed pearls and tiny crystals. Her gown was cut on straight lines with panel effect over self-tone slip, the neckline being broken with a strand of pearls.²⁴ Another variety of a beaded gown was the black velvet combined with shell pink chiffon studded with rhinestones worn by Mrs. Kirby Fitzpatrick.²⁵

Other costumes long to be remembered were those of Mrs. George Chase Lewis of black chantilly lace over black satin whose jewelry was an old Russian necklace of

21

Ibid.

22

Ibid.

23

Ibid.

24

Ibid.

25

Ibid.

green malachite with a ring to match and of Mrs. E. F. Lester of black velvet fashioned on straight lines with rhinestone buckle as its only trimming and a necklace of three strands of pearls.²⁶

✓ The women at the Johnston inaugural ball appeared unusually youthful due no doubt to the gay colors and short skirts of their costumes. The same slenderness that had prevailed in the mode for seasons past still remained with us, and the silhouette, if smart had to be slim and youthful. An effect of ease and blousiness was almost imperative in the upper part of the formal frock of 1927. The bloused effect above the hips was in some gowns very slight, or in others quite full on the youthful, slender figure. A soft blouse above the girdle was secured through the use of an underwaist lining. Sashes became more and more important, girdles being employed, often worked into the construction of the dress some way. Soft fullness was the feature of many of the newest evening frocks and especially in the draped-on-the-side trimmings. ✓ Many evening frocks had a huge bow to top their skirt draperies.²⁷ (Plate XIX)

Black velvet, that favorite of the season for evening, made Miss Oklahoma Cargill's simple yet sophisticated

²⁶

Ibid.

²⁷

Good Housekeeping, January 1927, Vol. 84, p. 56

PLATE XIX

A. Figure upper left shows evening dress of ivory lacy over ivory silk crepe with silk crepe sash.

B. Figure upper right shows evening gown of coral chiffon in bolero effect, combined with creamy, antique lace. The flower exactly matches the dress.

C. Lower left shows evening gown of navy lace with a deep scalloped yoke, lace banded sash and tie of navy chiffon.

D. Lower right shows evening gown of black chiffon and the jabots of black lace.

Courtesy of Ladies' Home Journal



gown with side drapery²⁸, while Miss Anne Chase's formal evening dress was extremely youthful fashioned with a new square neckline, an interesting side draped skirt, and an uneven hemline that was extremely fashionable at this time.²⁹

Skirt hems strove for variety. Sometimes they were a bit longer at the sides and back than in the front. Often an apron drapery was pointed and fell below the regular hem.³⁰

A gown that showed slight irregularity of its hem exaggerated by the upward arrangement of its many tiny tulle ruffles was worn by Mrs. Ray McEachern. Her silver lame' foundation shone through the mauve tulle of the entire frock.³¹

A charmingly youthful and appealing chiffon of soft blue with shaded flowers at shoulder and waistline adorned Mrs. J. W. Clark. Her gathered lace skirt flounce draped up at the side and a straight foundation skirt of blue chiffon was seen beneath.³² Another inaugural ball gown of unusually good lines for this period

28

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

29

Ibid.

30

Woman's Home Companion, January 1927, Vol. 54, p. 61

31

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

32

Ibid.

made of black crepe marocain with white ermine banded with gold cloth attired Mrs. R. V. Chapman.³³

A skirt that varied a little from the drapery that appeared at front or sides on so many of the season's frocks was the tiered skirt.³⁴ One of the season's smartest innovations was seen in Mrs. Casselman's frock of lipstick red crepe Elizabeth with gold embroidery in Persian effect at neck and waist line. The two-tiered skirt was finely plained, and sash ends of the crepe were fastened to the center of each swirling embroidered motif at back and tied in a knot.³⁵

Stunning in both color and design was Mrs. Dillman's frock of black and white - that favored combination which also subscribed to the cult of tiers. White chiffon made the bodice, with a black motif at front elaborately embroidered while the skirt was of lace, shading from black to white.³⁶

A decoration that had not before made its appearance in any form at an Oklahoma inaugural ball was fringe. "Fringe that had been good for some time in Paris retained its hold and was being used quite lavishly during the 1927 season both in France and America." Sometimes

33

Ibid.

34

Ladies' Home Journal, January 1927, Vol. 44, p. 103

35

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

36

Ibid.

as many as four tiers of silk fringe almost covering the skirt were worn.³⁷

Suave and elegant in the extreme was the blue crepe Roma frock with printed fringe in shades of blue worn by Mrs. N. F. Keith. A fringe edged scarf formed a berth effect in front and fell from her shoulders in the back.³⁸

Mrs. Charles W. Mason's gown was an attractive red canon crepe trimmed with red silk fringe fashioned with an overblouse and a bow of material on the left shoulder. Her slippers matched her dress.³⁹

Another costume showing a Parisian influence was the simple but charming gown of old rose crepe Romaine combined with silk fringe to match worn by Mrs. Mason Rector.⁴⁰

Mrs. Harry Clegorn was attractive and sedate in brocaded velvet with which she wore a lovely shawl of black, woven in gold and finished with deep fringe of black and gold.⁴¹

Neck lines were as varied as the materials, colors, and trimmings. Their lines were of three types, V,

37

Good Housekeeping, January 1927, Vol. 84, p. 115

38

The Daily Oklahoman, January 11, 1927

39

Ibid.

40

Ibid.

41

Ibid.

square or boat.⁴² The range in necklines gave women an opportunity to select the most becoming one for her figure. With the skirt the shortest it had ever been in fashion history--sometimes two inches above the knees a women with a round face and a stout figure needed the lengthening lines of the V neck. The extremely short skirts gave Dame Fashion another point from which to develop a fashion. Heretofore skirt lengths had been from sweeping floor to ankle length for formal wear, having little or no mention made of slippers and hose, but in 1927, "evening slippers were very elaborate with stockings matching them exactly or of neutral flesh color."⁴³ Some of the slippers not already mentioned with description of costumes were the gold ones worn by Mrs. Trapp, orchid worn by Mrs. Kite, silver worn by Mrs. L. Eagleton, beige by Mrs. Landrum, blue by Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Herbert Gibson, and red by Mrs. Mason. Many of our state women had on black satin pumps with huge rhinestone buckles.

⁴²

Ladies Home Journal, January 1927, Vol. 44, p. 83

⁴³

Good Housekeeping, January 1927, Vol. 84, p. 53

CHAPTER VII

THE MURRAY INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

William H. Murray, who struggled up from the cotton patch into the limelight of early Oklahoma statecraft, only to drop into political obscurity and stage a smashing comeback in the 1930 election was inaugurated as the state's ninth governor at noon Monday, January 12, 1931. More than 12,000 persons witnessed the ceremony on the temporary stand at the south entrance of the capitol.¹

His 90-year old father, U. D. T. Murray, a retired minister, administered the oath of office as Murray took the helm of the ship of state from Governor Holloway.²

Simplicity was the keynote of the ceremonies for the pomp of such occasions was supplanted by features that had linked Murray with early tradition and Oklahoma history.³

The inaugural ceremonies began at twelve o'clock noon, with Rev. Forney Hutchinson, Pastor of St. Luke's Methodist church, pronouncing the invocation.⁴

An impressive prayer which tended to link white man and Indian was offered by Chief Millett Hoy Koy Bitty, member of the group of Comanche and Kiowa Indians who

¹ The Daily Oklahoman, January 13, 1931

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

attended the rites. Many Indian braves of Kiowa and Comanche tribes were there garbed in blankets, gaudy headdresses, and many colored beads. The chief's prayer repeated by an interpreter, follows: "God bless our great chief and help him always to be just between all races and all classes of men. Amen."⁵

The Indian prayer was planned as a unique and appropriate feature of the inaugural, Mrs. Murray being a member of the Chickasaw tribe and Murray himself having been closely associated with Indian affairs of Oklahoma.⁶

With the ceremonies ended, Murray delivered his first message, addressed to members of the state senate and house of representatives assembled in joint meeting before the platform on the south steps. Following Governor Murray's address the student band from Central High School, Oklahoma City, played the National anthem.⁷

At three o'clock in the afternoon Governor and Mrs. Murray and the other state officials and their wives received retiring state officers, their families, members of the legislature and citizens, in the blue room at the capitol until five o'clock.⁸

5

Ibid.

6

The Daily Oklahoman, January 13, 1931

7

Ibid.

8

Ibid.

The rotunda of the capitol, especially the wide spaces on the ground, second, and fourth floors, were filled with milling men, women and children throughout the day. The colorful Indian dress of costumed visitors mingled with the fashionable cut of the business men's suits and the overalls and heavy boots of many farmers.⁹

Always a gala event, the inaugural ball opened at the capitol with Colonel Charles W. Daley as master of ceremonies. The grand march led by the new executive and his wife moved from the blue room at nine o'clock followed by former Governor and Mrs. Holloway and following them the Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Robert Burns, members of the supreme court and their wives, members of the criminal court of appeals and their wives, members of the senate and house, elected state officials and the general public.¹⁰

The line marched to the fourth floor and around the rotunda, then back to the lower floors. The Oklahoma City Kiltie band, in costume, furnished the music for the march.¹¹

The governor's eyes fairly sparkled and in his dark business suit he was "one of the people."¹² Mrs. Murray

9

Tulsa Daily World, January 13, 1931

10

Ibid.

11

Ibid.

12

The Daily Oklahoman, January 13, 1931

was the eager lithe one, looking extremely nice in a gown whose material of black lace took the leading place that season in the fashion world. A touch of georgette and blond lace outlined the deep v neckline. Her skirt was a full umbrella one that began at the normal waistline and widened from the hips down touching the floor all around.¹³ (Plate XX) (20)

Mr. and Mrs. Holloway were both in evening attire. Mrs. Holloway's gown was reminiscent of the First Empire. The dead black of her transparent velvet evening gown was relieved by rich cream lace, which draped in collar form in front, and extended into a capelet in back with narrow black velvet ribbon, tied low at the back defining her waistline. The long skirt was made with wide scallops, barely touching the floor in front, and trailing at the back. Mr. Holloway wore a formal cutaway coat and striped trousers with stiff white shirt and collar and a black tie.¹⁴

Miss Jean Murray, the youthful daughter of Oklahoma's new governor, was gowned in a delicately blended print in pink, green, black and grey, made into a simple bodice and billowing skirt. The bodice was held by two tiny straps over each shoulder.¹⁵

13
Ibid.

14
Ibid.

15
Ibid.

PLATE XX

Mrs. William H. Murray in her inaugural ball
gown at Oklahoma's seventh inaugural ball.

Courtesy of Mrs. E. W. Marland, Oklahoma City



Dancing continued until midnight with hundreds of Oklahomans joining in a colorful square dance led by Governor and Mrs. W. H. Murray and the former Governor and Mrs. Holloway while those of the younger generations danced to the tunes of the modern dance.¹⁶

↙ Dancing through the flag bedecked halls of the Capitol were wealthy and poor, officials and laymen all joined in one group. Blue denims rubbed against starched shirt fronts and patent leather crumpled beneath hobnails.¹⁷ ↙

Three bands were on the scene. On the first floor old time fiddlers played lustily with Bill Rogers, city auctioneer, as caller while R. A. Sneed, Secretary of State, and others stepped the old-fashioned square dance.¹⁸ Mrs. Sneed was seen in this group in a frock that stood out on the dance floor because it was so smart. Absolutely simple white satin made the skirt yoke that extended up into the bodice in points and the waist was marked only with a narrow, jeweled buckled belt. Fullness on the sides broke the slim line of her figure.¹⁹

On the second floor a stringed band played for those who cared to dance in any fashion. The costumes on this

¹⁶

Ibid.

¹⁷

Tulsa Daily World, January 13, 1931

¹⁸

The Daily Oklahoman, January 13, 1931

¹⁹

Ibid.

floor portrayed the most marked variety showing both Empire and French Revolution inspiration with which Molyneux had set the whole fashion world agog. There were soft bodices, belted high, and full skirts, shirred or gathered just below the belt or at intervals in the skirt. There were gracious fichus with a rose posed at the top and big drooping collars like those worn in French Revolution days on the many beautiful evening wraps of the guests.²⁰ (Plate XXI)

The 1931 mode was one of self-expression in that it made the woman more important than her clothes. Her figure, her size, her coloring, and her personality were taken into account. The cut mattered only in so far as it affected her appearance as a whole.²¹

✓ Fashion was a personal, rather than an arbitrary thing. There was no "the waist line" because each woman had to find her own. There was no "the silhouette" because wrap-around effects, peplums, tunic lines and suggestions of drapery were called upon to make the most of a woman's good points. (Plate XXII) Smoothly wrapping, spiral drapery, developed through bias cut, was the newest way to handle the material of an evening dress. The movement started at the shoulders and

²⁰

Ibid.

²¹

Vogue, January 15, 1931, Vol. 77, p. 35

PLATE XXI

Figure left shows importance of asymmetrical drapery in a graduated flounce that starts at the shoulder of a brownish red georgette crepe gown but ends by breaking the length of the silhouette.

Figure in center shows a distinguished dress of dark blue satin that has asymmetrical fan-shaped drapery slightly moulding the hips and concentrating the skirt fulness, balanced by a diagonal cut at the sides.

Figure right shows a gown in palest water-green satin that flows into fulness at the point of the asymmetrical V-cut hip yoke. Suppleness is given by a suggestion of drapery and by the soft lines of the bodice.

Courtesy of Vogue



PLATE XXII

Left figure shows the asymmetrical broken silhouette in pale grey satin dress given by a semi-spiral flat flounce. The hip line drapery, the one shoulder bolero scarf, and the petal-slashed skirt are new and important.

Center shows a light-topped evening silhouette emphasized by its slightly flared tunic of white satin and its black satin skirt split evenly all around. Braided satin belts, one black, one white, accent the diamond cut tunic.

Right figure shows gracefully draped skirt with tunic effect in back over a trailing panel. It is split almost to the knees at the sides, bringing the stockings back into prominence.

Courtesy of Vogue



enveloped the woman's whole body, until gradually released just above her knees. This spiral drapery swathed the figure, without binding it, stressing the woman's form and length of limb and giving shapely slimness to her silhouette. There was no "the color" because no color was excluded from the mode as long as it was becoming to the woman who wore it.²² (Plate XXIII) (23)

One of the guests whose frock showed self-expression was Mrs. Wade McAlister in heavy cream colored faille with short tunic cut up into a V-shaped point and edged with a band of grey-beige marten that continued around and down the back. The gradually widening skirt was of overlapping rounded sections.²³

Miss Dovie Jones, a sub-deb, chose a Pompeian red velvet that hugged her hips and flared gracefully to the floor. Her deep point de Venise collar was particularly effective.²⁴

Another very attractive woman was Mrs. Huff in navy blue faille with a short, straight tunic. Above the sectional skirt, narrowing at midway down the skirt length before spreading into the fullness of overlapping petal-shaped panels which were accentuated by petal-shaped ends.²⁵

²²

Voge, January 15, 1931, Vol. 77, p. 35

²³

The Daily Oklahoman, January 13, 1931

²⁴

Ibid.

²⁵

Ibid.

PLATE XXIII

A. Figure at left shows white marocain evening gown with simple bodice and white scalloped flounces put on diagonally. The soft scarf relieves the square neckline.

B. Figure at right shows square neckline that is echoed again and again in its tiny bolero and deep peplum flounce made of soft raspberry lace with bands and bows of matching georgette.

Courtesy of Ladies' Home Journal



Miss Geneva Hickerson's dress had the new wrap around tunic and was made with tightness at the knees and a flare at the hem line.²⁶

An evening dress with molded hip line and bell shaped skirt in pale emerald satin attired Miss Gaynell Burton. Tiny straps held the low décolletage and a graceful scarf that draped her shoulders tied in front.²⁷

A very attractive person, seen in her ink-blue velvet on princess lines accentuated by irregular series of ruffles and shoulder epaulettes which were so typical of evening gowns that winter, was Mrs. H. K. Barnard. Her back décollete was cut wide and square while the front was higher, partly concealed by dark red taffeta carnations.²⁸

Miss Barnard looked charmingly youthful in her raspberry thread lace with capelet bertha, narrow belt, snug fitting hips and flares set into the skirt at the knees.²⁹

On the fourth floor, an orchestra played modern tunes for those who cared to do the round dances.³⁰
There the new trends of fashion in six different types

26

Ibid.

27

Ibid.

28

Ibid.

29

Ibid.

30

Ibid.

were seen. The sub-debs, debutantes, young matrons and older women were able to select the type that was most pleasing to their figures.

The medieval silhouette, in a robe of soft brown velvet caught with an antique belt, of Miss Grace Jarns was seen as she glided with her escort in evening attire across the floor.³¹ Another whose robe presented a medieval silhouette was Miss Joe Teague's sandalwood velvet with silver belt.³²

Miss Jewel Adkin's gown demonstrated its theme from the middle ages in puff topped sleeves with swinging panels from the elbow, and long skirt with widened hemline in heavy cinnamon satin.³³

Another type was seen in the 1830 decollette, with its shoulder drop brought well over the arm.

Miss Betty McClure's exquisite evening gown of rich, heavy satin in pale yellow was cut along these lines.³⁴

Demure dropped shoulders from the romantic 1830's flattered the figures of Miss Bessie Wilson in maise satin, Miss Fanny Peyton in white lame', Miss Almeta Stewart in blue violet chiffon, Miss Mae Harding in

31

Ibid.

32

Ibid.

33

Ibid.

34

Ibid.

carnation red tulle, Miss Anne Tompkins in copper-red satin, Miss Dulce Holder in deep blue lace, Miss Bonnie Skeits in ripe corn satin, Miss Genevieve Key in bud green satin, and Mrs. Key in midnight blue velvet.³⁵

Many who were taking part in the gayeties of the dance of this floor fostered Egyptian themes with rather long supple body lines, and full slashed skirt.

There was an unmistakable Egyptian feeling in Mrs. Walter Walker's dress of semi-sheer lame'. Shades of red blended with the gold threads, and an interesting border served as a hem and as a marking for the high waist line.³⁶

Clinging sheath lines that went with the princess silhouette were worn by Mrs. Robinett. The figured lame' used to make it was composed of dull silver motifs over dark blue ground.³⁷

Another costume that showed Egyptian inspiration was the white lace combined with white satin of Mrs. Albert Bates. Alternating bands of alecon lace and satin moulded the figure on princess lines, widening into a flare below the hips. Her only accessory was her flat diamond necklace.³⁸

35

The Daily Oklahoman, January 13, 1931

36

Ibid.

37

Ibid.

38

Ibid.

The turquoise blue chiffon evening frock of Mrs. Charles Morgan owed its gracefulness and dignity to the simplicity of its lines. The bodice was draped at the side and was held in place by slender shoulder straps of rhinestones. Her skirt was three flounces gathered one onto the other.³⁹

Taken all in all, the collection of gowns at Oklahoma's seventh inaugural ball, despite the height of the depression, was remarkably brilliant both in inspiration and execution and a keynote of individuality in dress was felt throughout the ballroom.

³⁹

Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MARLAND INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Amid fanflare and gala pageantry E. W. Marland at noon Monday, January 15, 1935 became Oklahoma's tenth chief executive in the state's eighth inaugural ceremony.¹

The Governor-Elect, Mrs. Marland and His official staff arrived in the city late Sunday afternoon, just as the inaugural stage was set to the minutest detail.²

At the same time there was pouring into Oklahoma City the thousands eager for the colorful inauguration ceremonies which started at 10:15 in the morning with a procession five miles long to the capitol building.³

Good humored and smiling Governor-Elect Marland swung into the gala spirit and pomp of the inaugural festivities his first day in office.⁴

"I'm yours for the day and I'll do what you want me to," the state's new skipper told his aids as the day began and he kept his word from the beginning of the mammoth parade, through inaugural services, the reception that followed, and the inaugural ball.⁵

¹ The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Questioned about what he would wear in the inaugural parade, when he took the oath of office, and at the inaugural ball, Governor-Elect Marland said he would wear formal clothes during all the occasions.⁶

When the subject of dress was being discussed at Ponca City, Mrs. Bowler Hall of Washington, long time friend of the Marlands and the one who unveiled the Pioneer Woman statue in 1930, suggested jokingly that Marland should wear "Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue."⁷

The governor-elect laughed and said he would wear nothing new. The clothes he wore were those he bought while a congressman in Washington. He did wear something new, however, for Mrs. Marland had bought him a new pair of spats.⁸

✓ Hard on the heels of the report from Ponca City, that Marland would wear formal attire, came alarming word from city clothiers that the silk hat - striped trousers - morning coat shortage in Oklahoma City was acute.⁹

Most clothiers had no silk hats. One downtown store offered one for twenty dollars. The nearest to be

6

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

7

Ibid.

8

Ibid.

9

Ibid.

obtained were in New York City and only air mail could bring them here in time.¹⁰

Not since the time of J. B. A. Robertson had the high hat been worn. C. N. Haskell, first governor, wore a high top hat with a Prince Albert coat but Robertson wore the black morning coat and striped trousers, too.¹¹

Unintimidated by the promise of so much gubernatorial grandeur, Mayor McGee and the city council rode in the inaugural parade "very informally attired."¹²

William H. McFadden, the grand marshal, who wore a semi-military uniform, found that his sash would not stay on.¹³

Governor Marland's six colonels, his personal aids for the day, had a frantic few minutes before parade time. They found that their uniforms required black ties. Only B. S. Graham, reserve corps flier possessed one. The others scurried about borrowing them. Howard B. Drake, the chief aid had to send out at the last minute and buy one.¹⁴

Lieutenant-Governor Berry was seen lifting his derby to his friends as he rode along in the parade.¹⁵

¹⁰

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

¹¹

Ibid.

¹²

Ibid.

¹³

Ibid.

¹⁴

Ibid.

¹⁵

Ibid.

There was only one high silk hat to match Marland's. It was worn by W. J. Holloway, former governor.¹⁶

In the parade through city streets Governor-Elect Marland wore the black silk hat, black morning coat, black vest, dark tie, white shirt, striped trousers, spats and black shoes.¹⁷

Flanked by his gleaming colonels, Marland entered the governor's sanctum at 11:15 where Governor Murray turned over the seal of Oklahoma and had him sign the necessary papers before taking the oath of office.¹⁸

At exactly twelve o'clock noon Governor-Elect Marland marched from this room to the front entrance of the Capitol where with his hand on his father's Bible he took the oath of office.¹⁹

The Bible, on which Marland took the oath was tied with a purple ribbon. Florence Nightingale, the Nurse of the Ages, gave it to Marland's father in the Crimean battlefield.²⁰

After Marland was sworn in and delivered his inaugural speech before one of the biggest crowds ever assembled in front of the capitol, he returned with Mrs. Marland to the executive offices. They went immediately

16

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

17

Ibid.

18

Ibid.

19

Ibid.

20

Ibid.

to the blue room to arrange for the night's reception.²¹

The evening opened with the governor and his wife receiving the legislators and the public for one hour in the blue room.²²

Streams of dignitaries passed the reception line. There were swallowtails, tuxedos and business suits, flowing gowns of satin and silks and plain homey dresses.²³

The day closed with the inaugural ball where Governor and Mrs. Marland led the grand march as thousands of persons crowded into the capitol building for a view of it all.²⁴

For days the state had known that Governor and Mrs. Marland were to lead the grand march but there were so many persons packed into the capitol that few saw it. But the governor in his cutaway, white tie, white vest and black shoes with Mrs. Marland in her white gown, did lead it straight up the sweep of steps to the domed rotunda. Around the marble banisters they marched to the blare of three orchestras and down again.²⁵

Brilliant color and music made a gay crowded ballroom of the huge state capitol. The thousands of guests were dressed in their best to do honor to the new executive family.²⁶

22

Ibid.

23

Ibid.

24

Ibid.

25

Ibid.

26

Ibid.

A touch of untamed Oklahoma was brought to the inaugural merry makers as Indians danced. Their bells jingled and the tom-toms beat out a weird cacophony as their mirrored feathers flashed in the lights of the dazzling rotunda.²⁷

There were two important evening silhouettes that season. One was a slim sheath gained through use of stiff fabric usually taffeta with a neckline high and intricately cut in front, the skirt a full sweep from the tightly fitted bodice to the floor. The other the robe de style was gained through the decolletage, deep front and back, the tunic made of metalasse a front rank fabric at that time.²⁸

—Oklahoma's youthful first lady presented a sheath silhouette in her evening frock of starched lace. Its regal simplicity of ages past consisted of an instep length skirt swirlingly full toward the hem attached to a high necked bodice with tiny puffed sleeves over a taffeta slip. With it she wore a diadem of gardenias and tiny daisies with fine green leaves.²⁹ (Plate XXIV)
(24)

Mrs. James E. Berry, wife of the lieutenant governor, wore a gown of coral chiffon that was as soft and

²⁷

Tulsa Daily World, January 16, 1935

²⁸

The Delineator, December 1934, Vol. 125, p. 17

²⁹

Personal Interview, March 8, 1938

PLATE XXIV

Mrs. Marland, wife of Governor E. W. Marland,
in her inaugural ball gown

Courtesy of Mrs. E. W. Marland



flowing as a Greek chiton. Two orchids marked the deep V of her décolletage and "an intricately swish shoulder cape, that was indeed a fashion subtlety of the new year"³⁰ fell to the hip line. Folds of the material fell from the smooth fitting hips to make a coral ripple of a short train.³¹ (Plate XXV) (25)

Velvet, especially Lyons velvet and chiffons were the important evening fabrics for the robe de style silhouette. Yet taffeta, laces, tulle and lots of paillettes were used in all sorts of ingenious ways.³² Especially good was the new lame' where the metal threads were mixed sedately with the silk ones without definite design³³ while shining gold, splashed in large patterns on chiffon was good.³⁴ (Plate XXVI) (26)

Particularly attractive was Mrs. George Marland in taupe velvet with a matching cape trimmed with a wide circular fur collar. Her sandals and accessories were of gold. Upon removing her cape Mrs. Marland revealed the high yoke and sleeves embroidered in gold. The velvet of her skirt fell into a deep flounce and a short train in the back.³⁵

³⁰ Vogue, January 15, 1935, Vol. 85, p. 24

³¹ Personal Interview, February 20, 1938

³² Harpers Bazaar, January 1935, Vol. 69, p. 37

³³ Vogue, January 1935, Vol. 85, p. 31

³⁴ The Delineator, December 1934, Vol. 125, p. 58

³⁵ The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

PLATE XXV

Mrs. James E. Berry, wife of Lieutenant Governor
Berry, in her inaugural ball gown

Courtesy of Mrs. James E. Berry, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Fidelity Union S&M
LITHO BY MFC CO



PLATE XXVI

Left figure shows a sophisticated gown of geranium-red pure silk crepe with the new beads, the tunic and the new slit skirt

Right figure shows a glamorous top of silver-beaded georgette crepe, a skirt and demure little jacket of black canton crepe.

Courtesy of Woman's Home Companion



Mrs. Bowler Hull, Washington D. C., was wearing a blue black sequins imported model of satin and velvet - an interesting combination of textures and surfaces. The figure molding silhouette with low placed fullness was typical of that seasons fashion. The fullness of her train started low at the center back and then swept out majestically at the hemline. The same full movement was repeated in the short cape of shirred velvet that tied under the chin.³⁶ Mrs. Hull's gown was another example of the "high neck that was so new that midwinter season."³⁷

In a black velvet gown with ermine trim, that the wife of any Athenian statesman might have chosen, was Mrs. Chester Westfall of Ponca City. Princess styled in front, folds of the material in the back draped and gathered in at the waist with more folds opening out to make a short train.³⁸

Mrs. John S. Alcorne, also of Ponca City, had chosen a long sleeved velvet of black with a deep V in the back formed by the velvet that covered her shoulders³⁹ ("for shoulders were covered even in the most formal low cut dresses."⁴⁰) (Plate XXVII) (27) The velvet that

³⁶

Personal Interview with Mrs. Marland, March 8, 1938

³⁷

Harper's Bazaar, December 1934, Vol. 68, p. 57

³⁸

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

³⁹

Ibid.

⁴⁰

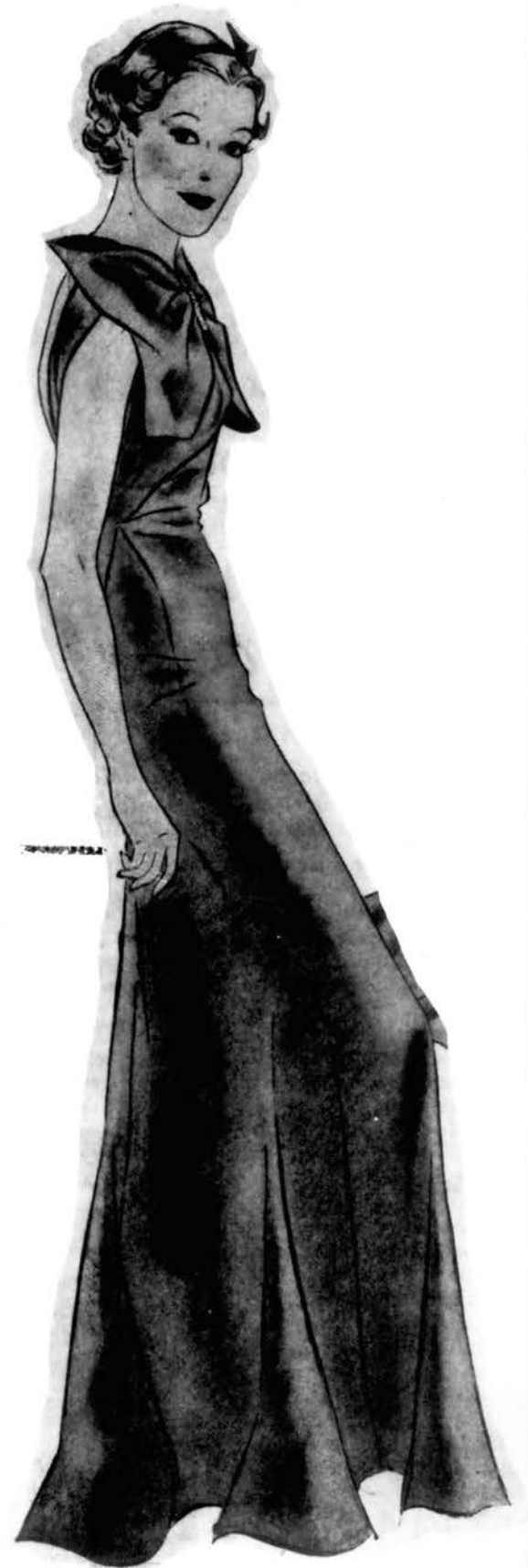
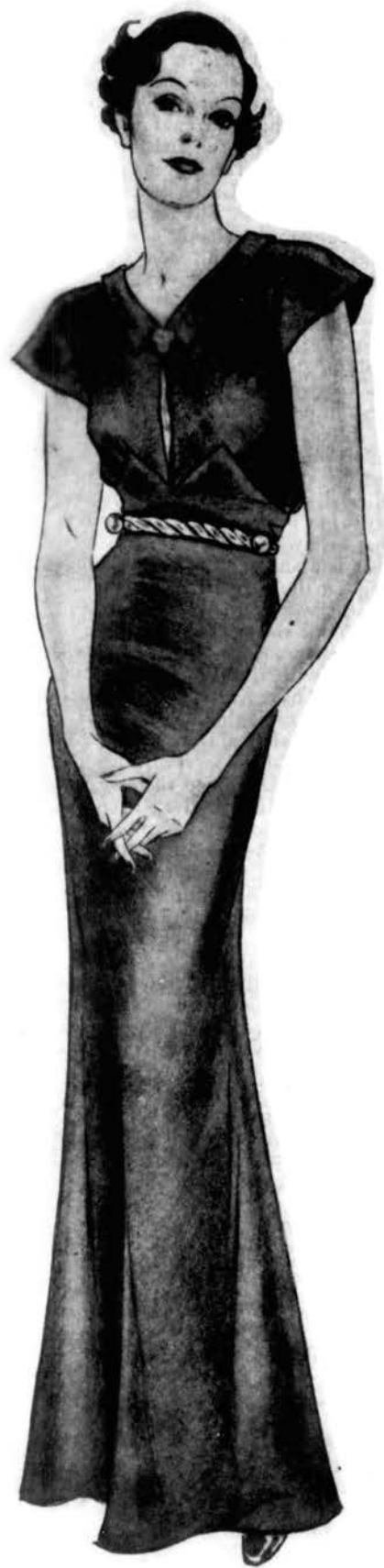
Woman's Home Companion, January 1935, Vol. 61, p. 80

PLATE XXVII

Left figure shows evening dress for a young girl made of soft blue faille.

Right figure shows a jade-green mossy velvet evening dress with the blouse slit open over silver lame' and the belt a silver cord twisted across the front.

Courtesy of Woman's Home Companion



covered her shoulders lost itself in the girdle that crossed in the back and tied in a loose knot at center front. Mrs. Alcorne's evening hat was of black velvet caught at the side with gardenias.⁴¹

Her daughter, Miss Joanne, also was in black velvet with a top of turquoise de lon dres with narrow straps over the shoulders with a pleated neckline high in front and low in the back.⁴²

Others whose silhouettes presented the robe de style were Mrs. Dee Donahoe of Ponca City in brown velvet and Mrs. Creighton Brown Burnham in purple velvet and with a matching beret style evening hat. With them were Mrs. Robert Clark and Mrs. Fred Pickerel, Ponca City, the latter wearing black crepe.⁴³

Crepes and satins were woven into a miricale of fluid softness and shimmering elegance. Their textures were of flawless quality.⁴⁴ (Plate XXVII)

Mrs. Ida Anthony was in gold and white brocade. The imported material of her gown had the sheen of marble and the stiffness of metal. Heavy folds fell from the deep V decolletage into a sweeping train in a grand manner.⁴⁵

41

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

42

Ibid.

43

Ibid.

44

Harper's Bazaar, January 1935, Vol. 69, p. 37

45

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

A glint of gold or silver added new glory to black and white that year;⁴⁶ However, the glitter in the new fabrics was not always gold. Sometimes cellophane was woven into them, shining like bits of mica.⁴⁷

Mrs. Clifton M. Mackey was in a blue and silver tunic with a black skirt. The neckline high in front was knotted halter fashion in the back.⁴⁸

Two of the younger set members enjoying the affair were Miss Phyllis Lyons and Rex Bartlett. The former was wearing a white taffeta with invisible polka dots. A round collar outlined the back decolletage. The latter wore a tuxedo.⁴⁹ Mrs. M. J. Bartlett looked very smart in her black slipper satin, the armholes marked with flowers.⁵⁰ Slipper satin was "the" material in satins.⁵¹ (Plate XXVIII)

Seen with her grandson, Jimmy Phelps, was Mrs. James I. Phelps in a violet dress with a draped neckline.⁵² Nearby was Mrs. N. Bert Smith in a black net

46

Woman's Home Companion, January 1935, Vol. 62, p. 112

47

Delineator, January 1935, Vol. 126, p. 45

48

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

49

Ibid.

50

Ibid.

51

Good Housekeeping, January 1935, Vol. 100, p. 72

52

The Daily Oklahoman, January 16, 1935

PLATE XXVIII

A. Figure extreme left shows waffle pique dress with red straw belt and box pleated edging on hem, armholes and fitted peplum. The square neckline is repeated in back. A bright red chiffon handkerchief is tied to her bracelet which matches her slippers.

B. Figure center standing shows shimmering silk blue moon organdy over a blue moon taffeta slip. The gay-ninety sleeves and the triple tiered skirt contain yards of material. The wrist corsage of purple and yellow pansies is one of the better ideas in floral tributes.

C. Figure center, sitting, shows tailored evening gown in matelasse crepe. With the trim little jacket removed a high in front, low in back neckline of the dress underneath is revealed. Her outout sandals are of silver kid.

D. Figure extreme right shows chalky crepe fabric molded smoothly to the figure with a fascinating ruche of fluffy net that just slips over the head. It can be worn several different ways, but the smartest is close under the chin so that it drops down in back to frame the low-cut decolletage.

Courtesy of Ladies' Home Journal



gown with a billowing bell skirt that had a rippling sea of ruffles. A ruff of the net trimmed the neck of the cape.⁵³

One of the most attractive of the guests was Mrs. Clarence E. Page, a quaint figure in black velvet with Irish lace at the neckline, wide ermine muff and a black velvet polk bonnet faced back with Irish lace. She wore a corsage of gardenias.⁵⁴

Coming from Perry for the event were Mrs. Y. V. Willett and her daughter Ruth Esther. Mrs. Willett wore a gold lace dress fashioned on sport lines. Her daughter wore a white lame' with a cape of geranium red cellophane that had been slit to resemble fringe.⁵⁵

Evening wraps as well as the dresses showed the richness and glitter in their materials. (Plate XXIX) Three co-eds from Oklahoma University with their escorts had on very pretty evening wraps. The first to enter was Miss Anne Anderson. Her white lame' wrap literally covered her from head to foot with a monk's hood that framed her face. Miss Mary Carroll had on an emerald green velvet wrap which matched the velvet girdle on her dress. The cuffs and collars were stiffly stitched.

53

Ibid.

54

Ibid.

55

Ibid.

PLATE XXIX

A. Left figure shows gown in stiff slipper satin. Slim through the waist and hips, this dress flares at shoulders and hemline.

B. Center figure shows one of the smartest evening fashions - the taffeta robe de style.

C. Right figure shows a velvet evening wrap that is new - a cape in tunic length with the blouse back and a face-framing collar.

Courtesy of The Delineator



PLATE XXX

A. Left figure shows a dress with its own evening wrap. The dress of slipper satin has a slit skirt and the flared tunic length wrap is of lame'.

B. Right figure shows a versatile fashion, for each part is worn with other things. The blouse is made of lame' and the skirt of velvet.

Courtesy of The Delineator



The third co-ed, Miss Julia Saunders wore a three-quarter's wrap of black velvet with choir boy collar of white lapin. Beneath her coat could be seen a skirt of white lace shot with gold.⁵⁶

56

Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

Thirty years of fashion in Oklahoma have shown some outstanding changes in women's clothing and events. During these years there took place the biggest war in history, the greatest prosperity, the deepest depression on record, the greatest change in the manner of living due only in part to automobiles and electricity, and the final emancipation of women.

In considering books on history of fashion we are led to believe that styles change little during a period of twenty-five to fifty years. In the thirty years of fashions, occurring at four-year intervals at Oklahoma's inaugural balls, however, we find fashions coming and going in rapid succession.

Contrary to expectation in a state that was only the day before a territory, women appeared at the very first inaugural ball very handsomely gowned in fashionable materials of crepe decchine, lace and net showing the French influence in their colors and lines. These long, clinging diaphanous gowns were replaced at the next inaugural ball by simple trainless affairs in velvets and satin brocades heavily embroidered and beaded.

In 1915 there was a complete change in the silhouette, the most radical change being in the flaring full circular skirts. Out of the perplexing economic conditions here

and the war in Europe grew the American fashion of wearing cotton. Its influence was reflected in the 1915 silhouette which was similar to the one of 1830 when cottons had previously been at their height.

Four years later, in 1919, with economic conditions improved the pendulum of fashion swung toward all important materials replacing the less elegant ones of the previous inaugural ball. The bodices with high backs and modest openings in front became extremely low both in front and back.

In 1923 the classic Grecian line predominated in combinations of fabrics and colors. Trailing trains of 1919 remained fashionable for diplomatic and great state functions.

The fashion of 1927 showed the most drastic change since statehood in its penciled silhouette with skirts rising two inches above the knees and the waist line dropped below the hips.

The unsettled condition of our country was reflected in the gowns of 1931. The mode, that of self-expression, made the woman more important than her gown. Many gowns that year were reminiscent of the periods of the First Empire, the French Revolution, Medieval times, the romantic 1830's and of Egypt each employing a material characteristic of the period from which it gained its inspiration.

With conditions improved in 1935 the fashionable evening silhouettes were confined to the slim sheath gained through use of stiff fabric, usually taffeta, and the robe de style gained through use of soft clinging materials.

Looking back over the illustrations of the typical styles that appeared at these four-year intervals it is obvious that they reflect the fluctuating economic conditions, change and development in the textile industry, growth and increasing importance of American centers of fashion design and the cultural development of our times and our state.

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