

A Study on Women's Underwear in the 1920s Using Real Materials

Sang-Rye Lee* · Laura Crow**

Associate Professor, Dept. of Fashion Design, College of Design, TongMyong University of IT*
Professor, Head of Design, Dept. of Dramatic Arts, University of Connecticut**

ABSTRACT

The present study is an analysis of the design of women's underwear in the 1920s, using underwear in the Historical Costume and Textile Collection at the University of Connecticut in the United States. The examined materials were owned by Mrs. Miriam Smolenz of New York, and include three brassieres, seven "teddies," one pair of cami-knickers, one full slip and one peignoir. These articles were all in good condition. In this study, we examined the materials, took extensive measurements, and analyzed the designs relative to the underwear culture of New England in the 1920s. The design of women's underwear in the 1920s is easier, simpler and more elegant than the equivalent of today. The use of natural materials gives an elegance to the garments and soft feeling. The function of underwear in those days was about covering the body and emphasizing the woman's natural silhouette rather than correcting the body shape.

Key Words : *women's underwear, brassiere, teddie, cami-knickers, full slip, peignoir.*

I . Introduction

The paper proposes to explore the design of women's underwear in the 1920s.

Underwear generally defines clothes worn under outer garments as a barrier between those clothes and the skin. This definition is different according to the time period and point of view. Tracing back in history, primitive dress was merely a piece of cloth with no distinction between inner and outer garments.¹⁾

The modern concept of underwear was established during the early years of the 20th century. However, there are not many extant garments from the early 20th

century even in Western countries since they were constructed of frail materials. Many of the remaining pieces are parts of ensembles with the other articles scattered around the world. Therefore, much of the relevant research is dependent on illustrations. Particularly in Korea, Western dress styles including those in the early 20th century have been studied mainly through literature because the extant items are extremely limited and are not available for actual measuring. This particular study was able to analyze of the design of women's underwear in the 1920s using existing underwear in the costume collection at the University of Connecticut in the United States. The examined materials were the possessions of Ms. Miriam Smolenz, a New Yorker, and her lingerie wardrobe included three brassieres, seven sets of teddies, one set of cami-knickers, one full slip and one

Sang-Rye Lee, E-mail: sangr@tit.ac.kr

This Work was supported by Tongmyong University of Information Technology Research Program of 2004.

peignoir. These articles were all in good condition. Mrs. Thomas Jacoby, the niece of the donor, donated these articles to the University of Connecticut in 2002. For the purposes of this study, the articles have been labeled as they were by the donors.

In this study, we presented the real materials as well as their measurements, and analyzed their designs to review the actual underwear culture of New England in the 1920s. The results of this study are expected to be used as research in the history of dress styles, as well as

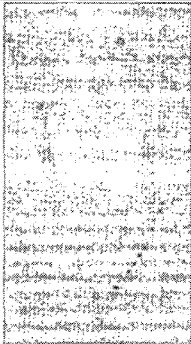
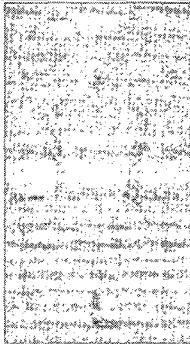
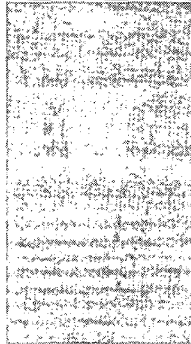
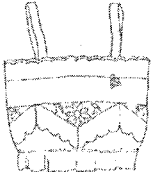
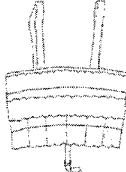
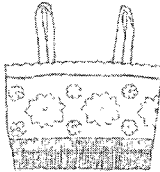
in developing new designs. In addition, we have examined contemporary terms related to Western underwear.

The outcomes of this study will contribute to studies on the history of dress styles.

2. Analysis of the measurements of underwear in the 1920s

1. Brassiere

<table 1> 1920s Brassiere

| Item | B1 | B2 | B3 |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Photo |  |  |  |
| Flat |  |  |  |
| Color | Ivory, Lining: Apricot | Ivory, pink | Ivory Lining: Apricot |
| Fabric | lace, silk chameuse Lining, twill tape | lace, silk twill tape | lace, silk chameuse Lining, twill tape |
| Length | C.F.:13, C.B.: 11 3/4 | 8 1/2 | C.F.: 11 1/2 C.B.: 10 3/8 |
| Bust circumference | 34 | 34 | 36 |
| Waist circumference | 28 1/2 | 31 | 31 3/4 |
| Bust | 16 1/2 | 17 | 17 1/4 |
| Waist | 13 1/2 | 14 3/4 | 15 |
| Strap Width-Length | 1- 14 1/4 | 7/8-16 | 7/8- 13 1/2 |
| Manufacture | Gossard | Bien Jalie | Gossard |
| Trimming & Characteristic | 1. straight, shapeless, long 2. no darts 3. elastic waistband 4. 11 hook & eye fastener 5. short elastic belt in center front | 1. straight, shapeless, long 2. 5 darts in front 3. side seam dart 4. 8 hook fastening 5. short elastic belt in center front | 1. straight, shapeless, long 2. no darts 3. elastic waistband 4. 11 hook & eye fastener 5. flower patterned lace |

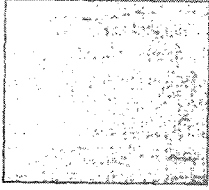
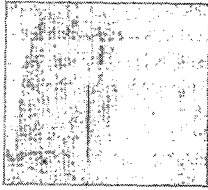
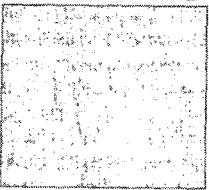
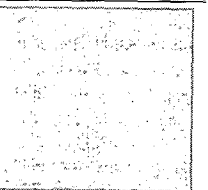
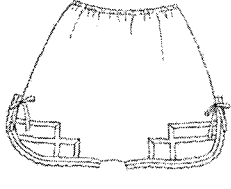
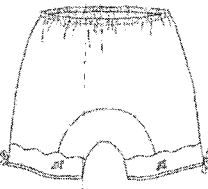
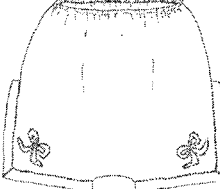
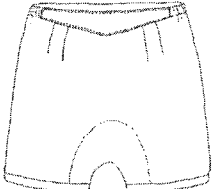
* measurement ... in inches

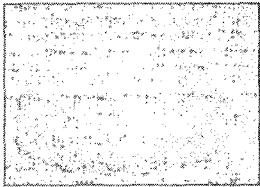
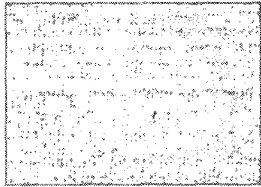
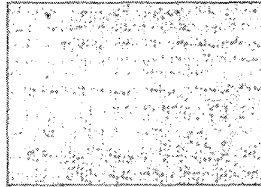
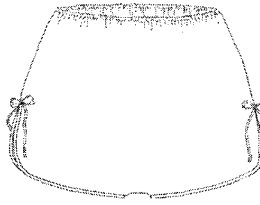
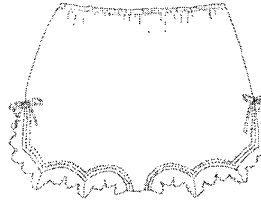
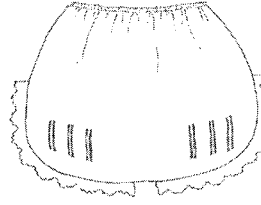
* Bust circumference and waist circumference were measured with the brassieres unhooked, and width was measured with the brassieres hooked.

2. Teddy Sets

1) Pants

<table 2> 1920s Pants

| Item | TP1 | TP2 | TP3 | TP4 |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Photo |  |  |  |  |
| Flat |  |  |  |  |
| Color | pink, ivory lace | peach, ivory lace | pink | peach, pink |
| Fabric | Silk chiffon | Silk crepe de chine | Silk charmeuse | Silk crepe de chine |
| Length | 20 | 21 3/8 | 22 1/4 | 20 1/4 |
| Waist Circumference | 26 | 35 1/2 | 29 1/2 | 36 |
| Hip Circumference | 53 | 54 | 48 3/4 | 50 |
| Crotch Length | 19 | 15 | 19-21(back) | 17 |
| Crotch Width | 1 3/4 | 4 1/2 | 4 3/4 | 4 |
| Crotch Seam line | Straight | Curve | Straight | Curve |
| Thigh Width | 12 3/4 | 11 | 11 | 10 1/2 |
| Side Slits | 9 1/2 | X | 11 | X |
| Manufacture | U.S.A. | U.S.A. | U.S.A. | U.S.A. |
| Trimming & Characteristic | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lace insert at a front 2. no seam in front 3. flower patterned lace | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no seam in front 2. Crotch Lining 3. hand lace(lose & leaf pattern), piping | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The back crotch length is longer than the front 2. no seam in front 3. eyelet holes, ribbon decorations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front waist Yoke 2. 4 Tucks in Front 3. no seam in front 4. Crotch Lining |

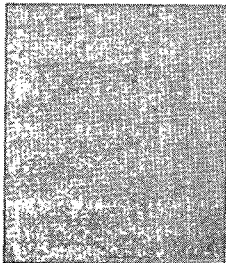
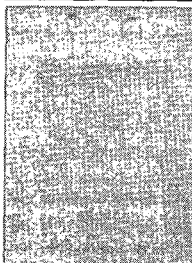
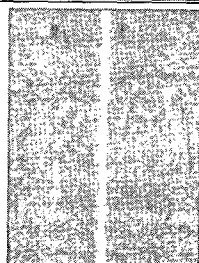
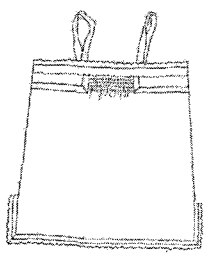
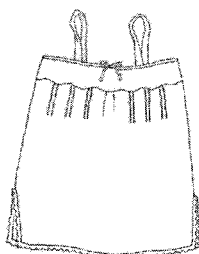
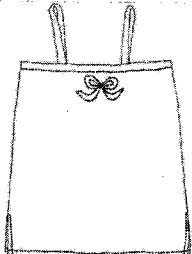
| Item | TP5 | TP6 | TP7 |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| Photo |  |  |  |
| Flat |  |  |  |
| Color | pink | apricot, ivory lace | apricot, ivory lace |
| Fabric | Silk crepe de chine | Silk | Silk charmeuse |
| Length | 20 1/4 | 23 1/2 | 21 1/2 |
| Waist Circumference | 42 | 36 | 27 |
| Hip Circumference | 58 | 54 | 54 |
| Crotch Length | 20 | 22 | 19 1/2 |
| Crotch Width | 2 3/4 | 2 3/4 | 2 3/4 |
| Crotch Seam line | Straight | Straight | Slightly Straight |
| Thigh Width | 13 1/2 | 12 1/8 | 10 1/2 |
| Side Slits | 8 | 5 1/2 | 9 |
| Manufacture | U.S.A. | U.S.A. | U.S.A. |
| Trimming & Characteristic | 1. piping & ribbon decorations 2. no seam in front | 1. hand knit lace, eyelet holes, ribbon decorations 2. vandyked edge | 1. pin tuck decorations 2. no seam in front 3. hand knit lace |

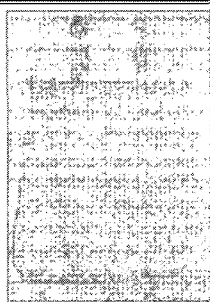
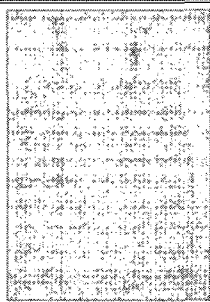
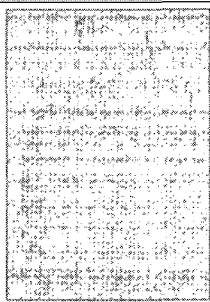
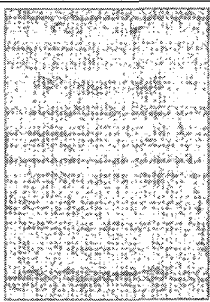
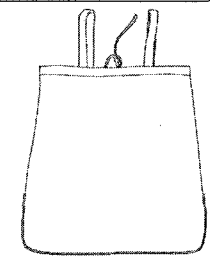
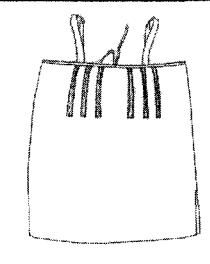
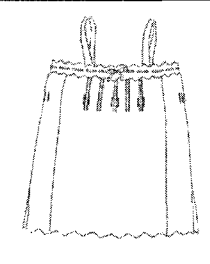
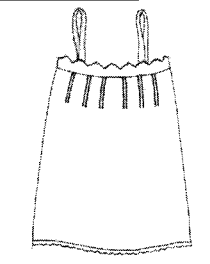
* measurement ... in inches

* Waist circumference could not be measured precisely because the elastic cord became slack. Thus, it was measured as it was.

2) Camisoles

<table 3> 1920s Camisoles

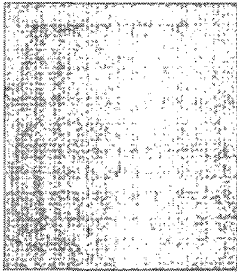
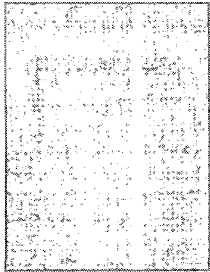
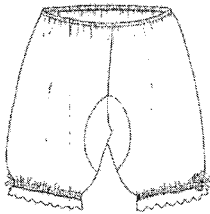
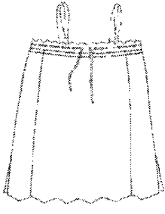
| Item | TC1 | TC2 | TC3 |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| Photo |  |  |  |
| Flat |  |  |  |
| Color | pink, ivory | peach, ivory lace | Pale pink |
| Fabric | Silk chiffon | Silk crepe de chine | Silk charmeuse |
| Length | 21 3/4 | 25 1/2 | 19 3/4 |
| Bust | 40 | 37 | 39 1/2 |
| Hemline Width | 22 1/2 | 23 | 23 3/4 |
| Strap Width-Length | 5/8-15 | 5/8-15 1/2 | 15 1/2 |
| Side Slits | 6 | 7 1/4 | 7 |
| Manufacture | U.S.A. | U.S.A. | U.S.A. |
| Trimming & Characteristic | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lace insert at a front 2. Shirring in front 3. no seam in front 4. flower patterned lace | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. pin tucks, tuck in front 2. no seam in front 3. handmade lace (flower pattern) decorations 4. Drawstring above bust | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. eyelet holes, ribbon decorations 2. no seam in front |

| Item | TC4 | TC5 | TC6 | TC7 |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Photo |  |  |  |  |
| Flat |  |  |  |  |
| Color | pink | pink | apricot, ivory lace | apricot, ivory lace |
| Fabric | Silk crepe de chine | Silk crepe de chine | silk | Silk charmeuse |
| Length | 23 1/2 | 23 | 21 3/4 | 23 1/2 |
| Bust | 38 1/2 | 36 | 40 | 34 |
| Hemline Width | 24 | 22 1/4 | 24 | 25 |
| Strap Width-Length | 7/8-16 | 5/8-15 | 7/8- 15 3/4 | 7/8-15 |
| Side Slits | 8 1/4 | 8 | 6 1/2 | X |
| Manufacture | U.S.A. | U.S.A. | U.S.A. | U.S.A. |
| Trimming & Characteristic | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drawstring above bust 2. no seam in front 3. piping in hem line | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. piping, pin tuck decorations 2. Drawstring above bust 3. no seam in front | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. hand knit lace , ribbon decorations 2. pin tucks, button hole decorations 3. no seam in front 4. vandyked edge | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. hand knit lace decorations 2. 12 pin tucks in front 3. no seam in front |

* measurement ... in inches

3. Cami Knickers

<table 4> 1920s Cami Knickers

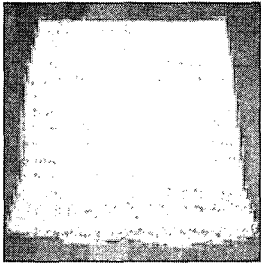
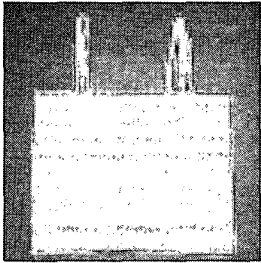
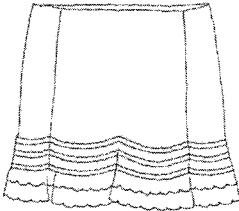
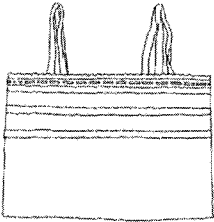
| Item | CKk | CKc |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Photo |  |  |
| Flat |  |  |
| Color | apricot, ivory lace | apricot, ivory lace |
| Fabric | silk | silk |
| Length | 29 3/4 | 26 1/2 |
| Bust | X | 37 1/2 |
| Waist | 44 | X |
| Hip | 48 | Hem Line Width 22 3/8 |
| Crotch Length | B:18 F:15 | X |
| Thigh Width | 14 (9) | X |
| Strap Width-Length | X | 7/8-16 1/4 |
| Side Slits | X | |
| Manufacture | U.S.A. | U.S.A. |
| Trimming & Characteristic | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. handmade lace, ribbon decorations 2. no side seams 3. The back crotch length is longer than the front 4. Crotch Lining | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. handmade lace, eye hole, 2. Drawstring above the bust 3. no seam in front 4. vandyked edge |

* measurement ... in inches

* Waist circumference could not be measured precisely because the elastic cord became slack. Thus, it was measured as it was.

4. Full Slip Sets

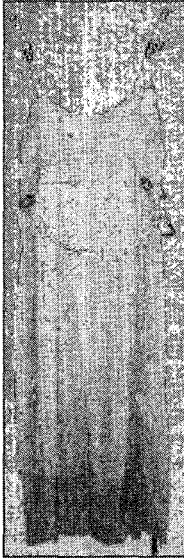

<table 5> 1920s Full Slip Sets

| Item | FSs | FSt |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Photo |  |  |
| Flat |  |  |
| Color | ivory | ivory |
| Fabric | silk | silk |
| Length | 26 3/4 | 11 1/4 |
| Bust | X | 31 1/2 |
| Waist | 55 | 32 |
| Hip | 60 HemlineWidth 43 1/2 | X |
| Strap Width-Length | X | 3/8- 12 |
| Side Slits | X | X |
| Manufacture | U.S.A. | U.S.A. |
| Trimming & Characteristic | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no side seam 2. Lace insert. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. straight, flat 2. one side seam 3. Lace insert. 4. flower pattern in strap |

* measurement ... in inches

5. Peignoir

<table 6> 1920s Peignoir

| Item | Peignoir | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Photo & Flat |  |  |
| Color | Apricot pink | |
| Fabric | Silk chiffon satin strap | |
| Length | 35 1/4 | |
| Bust | 34 | |
| Hemline Width | 37 | |
| Strap Width-Length | 7/8-16 | |
| Side Slits in bust line | 6 1/2 | |
| Manufacture | ? | |
| Trimming & Characteristic | 1. all hand stich 2.straight silhouette 3.Snap fastening | |

* measurement ... in inches

III. Characteristics of underwear design in the 1920s

From 1910 to 1920 we saw a return to the natural figure of women. The new figure and the new stance required very little corseting. A soft girdle was designed of knitted elastic tricot, and the waistline was high, allowing the fabric to drape down from the high waist,

loosely covering the hips. A bandeau or camisole held the breasts flat and the abdomen was thrust forward producing the "boyish form" or "debutante slouch". Lingerie became very simple, of sheer batiste or handkerchief linen with just a bit of lace until 1918 when crepe de chine and jersey took over for underwear.²⁾

The trend continued until the mid-1920s and this period is called "The Flapper Age." Characteristics of this

period were no bosom and no waistline, with outer garments showing a boyish sheath silhouette.

1. Brassiere

Throughout the century, the brassiere, a most essential piece of lingerie, has been known variously as the bandeau, the bust extender, the bust shaper, and the bust bodice. The term brassiere, or its informal shortening, the bra, was first introduced in the 1920s. Just as its name changed through the decades, so too did the purpose of the garment. Brassieres lifted, enlarged, supported, confined, flattened, revealed, and modestly covered woman's breasts throughout the decades, making them the most important element in a Western woman's wardrobe.³⁾

The three articles from the wardrobe of Ms. Smolenz are in very good condition. For B1 and B3, which have elastic cord in the waist, we could not measure their waist circumference precisely because the elastic cord had become slack. However, the entire silhouette has a straight, sheath-like fit, and when they are spread out, they are almost flat. The wearer's exact body size is unknown but the bust size of the bras is 33-34 1/2 inches, which is regarded as 'the standard size'⁴⁾ in the 1920s. As for length, only B2 reaches around the waist, and B1 and B3 are longer than waist length. The center front length is longer than the center back length. They are light, soft, simple and flat rather than correcting the body line.

As for color, all the three pieces are ivory but because the bust area is underlaid with apricot pink from inside, the overall tone is close to pink.

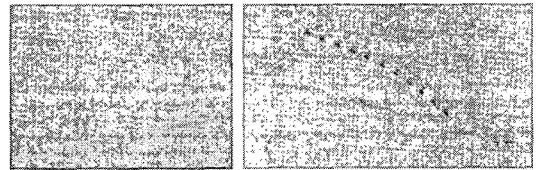
The main material is silk lace. In addition, charmeuse was used for lining and satin was used for the straps.

B1 is made of two patterns of lace. It's bust is underlaid with lining, and its bottom has net lace. The waist has elastic cord inside, while the opening is reinforced with cotton twill tape, and there are 11 hook and eye

closures. (Fig.1,2)

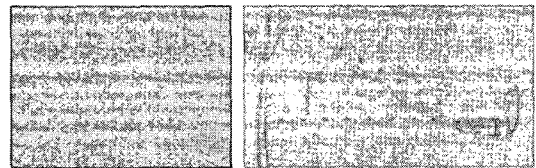
B2 uses two types of lace, making the fly closure of lace and pink silk satin alternately. In the front are five darts and also side seam darts, but, as a whole, it is flat. The opening is the same as that of B1 and its length is short, having 8 hook and eye closures. (Fig.3,4)

B3 attaches a yoke of handmade net lace to the bodice with a flower patterned lace, and its hem line is decorated with thin lace. The bust is lined and blind stitched along the top edge. The waist has an elastic cord inside and its opening is the same as that of B1. (Fig.5,6)



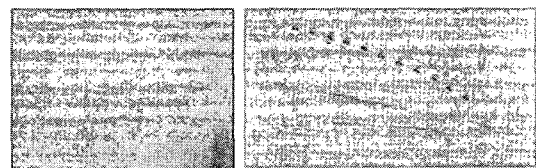
<Fig. 1> Brassier 1:
Detail 1

<Fig. 2> Brassier 1: Detail 2



<Fig. 3> Brassier 2:
Detail 1

<Fig. 4> Brassier 2: Detail 2



<Fig. 5> Brassier 3:
Detail 1

<Fig. 6> Brassier 3: Detail 2

B1 and B3 were produced by Gossard, and product numbers are found inside the products.

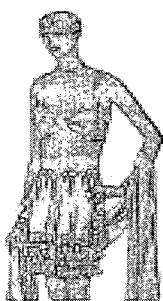
The Gossard Company⁵⁾ was founded in the city of Chicago in 1901. By the 1930s, the Gossard company ceased to be an American subsidiary and became a

British company. B2 was produced by Bien Jolie. All of the three articles were made in the United States.

According to brassiere illustrations in the late 1920s, the long design as in (Fig.7) was shortened as in (Fig.8) during the late 1920s. Thus, although the exact year of manufacturing and wearing is unknown, Ms. Smolenz's lingerie wardrobe is presumed to have been made in the early 1920s.



<Fig. 7> Brassier
(1920s)



<Fig. 8> Brassier
(1927)

It has been difficult to explain the composition of clothes, based only on illustrations, without sufficient extant garments from the early 1920s. Ms. Smolenz's lingerie wardrobe suggests that bras in that age were characterized by an easy fit without emphasizing the women's body. There was a straight and simple silhouette, with the use of natural materials emphasizing elegance and womanliness. This created a flatness that was different from contemporary cubic design. These characteristics are contrasted with today's concepts of the brassiere with a good fit resulting from the development of new materials and cutting technology. The various unconventional colors and designs are used for enhancing underlying exposure or even functioning as an outer garment. The functionality and sexual beauty of the bra is in its ability to follow the body contours.

2. Teddy Sets

Teddy sets are included in the list of donated articles.

These are defined as "straight-cut garments of the 1920s, that combine a chemise with short slip, or long vest with panties. A wide strap is attached to the front and back at the hem thus making separate openings for each leg⁶⁾. In Cunnington's *The History Of Underclothes*,⁷⁾ the teddy is not included in the underwear of the United Kingdom until 1939. Moreover, it is not mentioned in underwear related books in the 1920s. This raises a question on the name of the articles. The "teddy" was a name unique to the garments as slang in the United States based on President Teddy Roosevelt.

1) Teddy Sets : Pants

The length of the pants is 20-23 1/2 inches, which reaches around the knee although different depending on lace trimming. The articles are generally in very good condition. It is difficult to compare the precise waist circumference because of the deterioration of the elastic cord inside the waist. They show a straight silhouette although they might appear more flared when worn on a female with quite curved hips. TP2 and TP4 have legs, the lining is attached to the crotch. (Fig. 10,13) The others have a strap that opens between the legs for convenience and, in one of them, the opening is as long as half of the full length.

Their colors, although somewhat faded away, are pink, ivory, peach, apricot, etc., bearing a pink tone in general. Many of the garments of the 1920s were gossamer and lace that revealed a slight hint of what was beneath the outer shell. It was provocative to appear to be wearing nothing underneath, so the undergarments attempted to duplicate skin tones. These colors are also most common in contemporary pants, and are particularly popular under white or light colored clothing where a panty-line is not attractive.

More examination would be required for an in-depth study of this but, generally speaking, it is interesting that women's taste and preference for flesh-toned undergar-

ments has not changed much with the exception of the popularity of black, that was first thought to be a scandalous color. Although many unprecedented colors have been used in women's pants since the 1920s, there are always the classic beige or pinkish toned flesh colors available even today.

In the 1920s they manufactured the undergarments out of many different kinds of silk and lace such as chiffon, crepe de chine, satin and charmeuse. TP2, TP6, TP7, etc. were decorated with hand knit lace. (Fig. 10,15,16)

As for the sewing method, only TP6 has side seams. The other six have a princess-line cut on the back bodice without a side seam. (Fig.14) Because the material is silk, flat felled seams and French seams were used. TP6 does not have a sewing line on the crotch, suggesting that the material folded along the crotch line before cutting. (Fig.15)

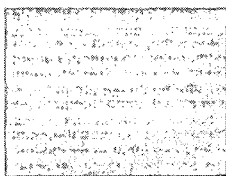
The shape of the crotch is straight line in all except TP2 and TP4 that have legs, and the breadth of the crotch ranges between 1 3/4-4 3/4 inches. Hip circumference is 48 3/4-58. Thus, the breadth of the crotch would not affect the fit much. Hip circumference varies according to the fabric used, but it is always extremely generous.

In TP3, the back is longer than the front allowing for a full posterior, and in TP4, the hip is dropped from a waist yolk where the hip fullness is pulled into four tucks to fit into the size of the yolk. (Fig.12)

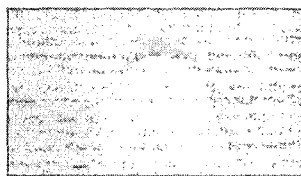
The most frequently used details include pin-tucking, bound eyelet holes(Fig.11, 15), piping(Fig.10,14), ribbon patterns, and hand knit lace. And the lace was inserted in the fabric of (Fig.9) These products were made in the United States, but their manufacturers are not always marked.

Ms. Smolenz's lingerie includes a pair of tap pants from the 1930s. While underpants from the 1920s have a straighter silhouette, this has a distinct A-line silhouette and much shorter length (15 3/4 inches). This suggests that the silhouette of underwear changes according to the fashion of outer garments. In addition, the tap pants from the 1930s emphasize the drape of the material using a bias cut.

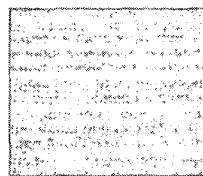
One question raised here is about size. The waist circumference of the teddy set pants is 48 3/4-58 inches or 54 inches on the average, taking the slackness of the elastic cord into account. The size of the brassieres is 33-34 1/2 inches, the ideal size in the 1920s. The ideal-



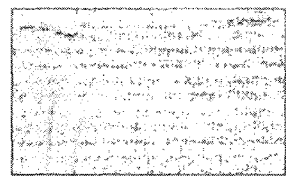
<Fig. 9> Tap pants1: Detail



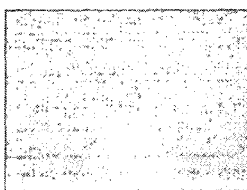
<Fig. 10> Tap pants2: Detail



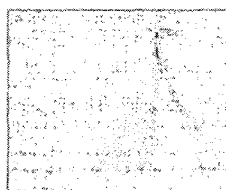
<Fig. 11> Tap pants3: Detail



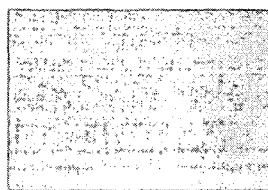
<Fig. 12> Tap pants4: Detail 1



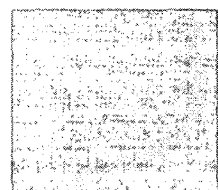
<Fig. 13> Tap pants4: Detail 2



<Fig. 14> Tap pants5: Detail



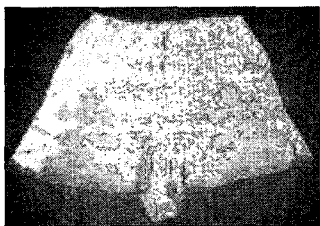
<Fig. 15> Tap pants6: Detail



<Fig. 16> Tap pants7: Detail

ized hip circumference in the 1920s was around 35 inches, but this woman was not the ideal form. It suggests that she had a large lower body compared to the upper body and that her probable 40 inch hips were underneath with plenty of ease build in. In the tap pants in (Fig. 17), the waist circumference is 28 inches and the hip circumference is 50 inches. If considering a slight ease in the waist, the hip size probably graced hips of around 40-42 inches proving that underwear was made with quite a lot of ease at that time.

As with the brassieres described above, the easy fit is a general characteristic of underwear at that time and is in accord with the form of outer garments. Over time, however, pants for the lower body evolved to be fit to the body more rapidly than <Fig.17> Tap pants(1930s) brassieres did. In order to expose womanly beauty, the curved line of the lower body came to be emphasized using pants that were tighter fitting, following the shape of the A-line tap pants mentioned above and, for the upper body, brassieres evolved to fit the bust line over a longer period of time.



<Fig. 17> Tap pants(1930s)

Their differences from today's underwear design is found mostly in the cutting that was mostly rectangular, and that the full length is similar to the crotch length. Thus, rectangular cutting is a characteristic of teddy pants from the 1920s. This is in contrast to today's pants that stick fast to the body and display decorative functions through various forms and colors.

2) Teddy Sets : Camisoles

The camisoles are also in very good condition, but TC6 is partially stained.

The length excluding the straps is 19 3/4-25 1/2 inches. They are relatively long, reaching below the hip, and are designed simply, without much decoration.

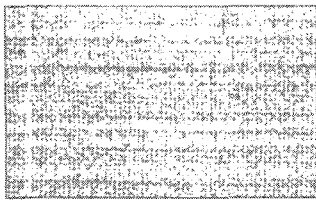
Similar to the question about the pants size, the bust circumference of the camisoles varies between 34-40 inches depending on the design. The size difference of the camisoles from the brassieres, which is 33-34 1/2 inches long, is 1-7 inches, showing a big difference in ease. The difference between the bust circumference and the hem circumference is 2 1/2-8 inches, showing an A-line silhouette with the exception of TC1 and TC3.

Although some have been discolored over around 80 years, the pants and the camisoles, which are of the same set except T4, are identical in color and material. They are mainly in pink tone colors such as peach, apricot, pale pink and ivory and their materials are different types of silk and lace including chiffon, crepe de chine, satin and charmeuse.

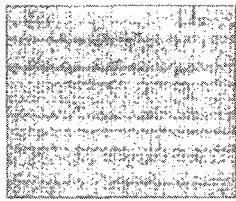
As for sewing methods, all of the seven articles have two seam lines on the back without any at the sides. Princess line seams and some near side-seams exist. In TC1 and TC3, the inset panel is straight from the top to the bottom and is slanted on the side. In the other camisoles, the bottom is slightly broader than the top. Because the material was silk, flat felled seams and French seams were used in sewing. In TC5 and TC6, the hem was daring stitched without lace or piping decoration.

The pants and the camisoles have the same design details in common with each other. TC1 in (Fig. 18) has cut the fabric and has inserted lace motifs in the same way as the pants. TC2, TC4, TC5 and TC6 were designed to use a drawstring to fit the bust. (Fig.19, 21, 22)

TC6 has button holes below the breast presumably for a drawstring although the drawstring is lost. (Fig.22)



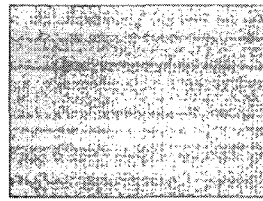
<Fig. 18> TC1: Detail



<Fig. 19> TC2: Detail



<Fig. 20>
TC3: Detail



<Fig. 21> TC5: Detail



<Fig. 22> TC6:
Detail

(Fig. 23), which was extracted from a catalogue published in 1919 by Harrods in the United Kingdom, showed a design similar to Ms. Smolenz's garments. The upper garment is labeled 'chemise' and the lower garment is labeled 'knickers.' (Fig. 24) are chemise and knickers in 1927, which are similar to Ms. Smolenz's items but without the crotch.

(Fig. 25), (Fig. 26) and (Fig. 27) are closed cami-knickers in the 1920s, in which the upper garment is connected to the lower garment. There are two types; one with straight pants and the other with a gathering band in the bottom of the legs (drawers type). Summing up the details presented above, Ms. Smolenz's garments look exactly like these images of cami-knickers printed in British publications. They appear to be the same garments with different names in different countries. In the upper class circles of New England, however, the slang was to call them "Teddies."

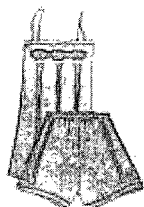
3. Cami-Knickers

In 1917 there appeared the new "underslip," worn over the corset, helped to reduce the number of undergarments; a button and loop can be put at the lowest hem to catch the skirt together in divided skirt fashion. The garment speedily became known as the 'cami-knickers'.⁸⁾ Dawn Cloake,⁹⁾ Catherine Bardeyare¹⁰⁾ are also explained camiknickers as a one-piece undergarment from the early 20th century combining camisole with knickers (the term for women's underpants at the time), and later to be known as "the teddy". In the very beginning phases, the garment was descriptively called a "step-in."

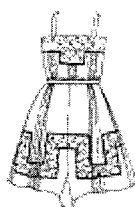
(Fig. 28) is shows camiknickers with a sheath-like fit. The separate camisole has shoulder straps and is worn with knickers in 1926. However, in the second edition of Cunnington's book, A.D. Mansfield & Valerie Mans-



<Fig. 23> chemise & knickers(1919)



<Fig. 24> chemise & knickers (1927)



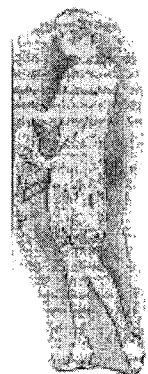
<Fig. 25> closed cami-knickers(1920s)



<Fig. 26> step-in cami-knickers(1925)



<Fig. 27> cami-knickers(1927)



<Fig. 28> camiknickers(1920s)

field labeled (Fig. 28) cami-bockers. Comprised of a camisole and closed directoire knickers, the 'bocker' usually fastened behind with three buttons at the waist. The sideflap was closed with 'poppers (press stude).¹¹⁾

Seeing (Fig. 23)-(Fig. 28), contemporary cami-knickers refer to an all-in-one dress, in which the upper garment is connected to the lower one, but early cami-knickers seem to refer to both the all-in-one type and the two-piece type.

Their material is silk, and the color is apricot pink as well as ivory for the handmade lace and eyelet holes.

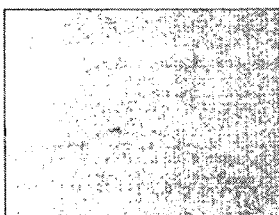
The knickers, among Ms. Smolenz' garments, are of the "drawers" type, so called because they "draw up" at the waist and they are generally longer than the teddies. It is characteristic that the lace of the upper garment has a subtle variation from that of the lower garment

The knickers have a longer crotch length on the back for better mobility. Each leg was cut separately, and since as it was sewn from the center, there is no side seam. This is different from the teddy set pants, where there is no crotch and only the lining is attached (Fig. 29).

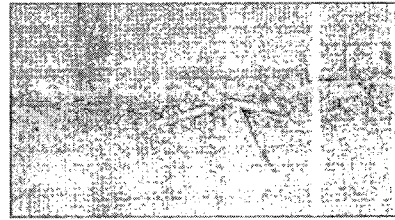
In the camisoles, the bust circumference is different from the hem circumference by 3 3/8 inches but is close to a straight silhouette, when only the bust is fastened. (Fig. 30) has only one side seam on the back.

These products were made in the U.S., but their manufacturers were not marked.

Cami-knicker camisoles are similar to teddy set camisoles in color, material and design, so teddy sets should be considered a sub-category of cami-knickers.



<Fig. 29> CKk Detail



<Fig. 30> CKc Detail

4. Full Slip Sets

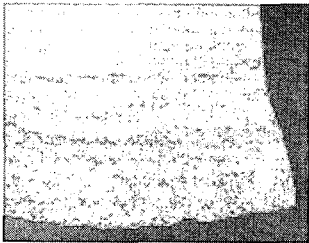
The slip was a lining for a semitransparent dresses in 17th century and a type of corset cover in 18th century. Now, by definition, this is an undergarment worn by women and girls beginning above the bust, usually held in place with shoulder straps and falling down to some position below the crotch level. The length is long or short in relation to the dress worn on top. The current meaning of the word dates from the early 19th century.¹²⁾

The condition of this slip is very good, and the upper garment is short while the skirt is long. It has a straight silhouette, but because the elastic cord inside the waist is lost, the exact waist circumference cannot be measured. The material is silk and the color is all ivory including the lace.

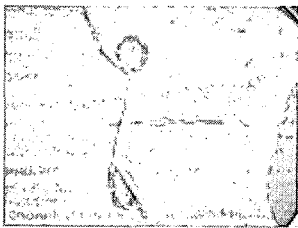
The straps of the top was twofold and printed with a flower pattern. Only one side was sewn with a French seam, and the hem was sewn up using a machine.

The lace on the hem of the skirt was not finished with a seam but the edge was folded under and stitched onto the slip. In addition, there was no side seam but there was a seam along the princess line in the back. Both the tank and the skirt were sewn with flat felled seams and French seams.

At the top of the full slip, the bust circumference is 31 1/2 inches, which is smaller than the bust circumference of the bras. This suggests that Ms. Smolenz might not have worn the full slip over the bra, or else she wore it during a slimmer time in her life.



<Fig. 31> FSt Detail



<Fig. 32> Peignoir Detail

5. Peignoir

According to the fashion dictionary, peignoir is loose wrapper, or loose jacket and skirt worn by woman for informal morning wear from the late 18th century on. In 1840s, styled with bishop sleeves,¹³⁾ the peignoir set is a matching robe and gown set usually made full length. The gown may be made of knit nylon with a robe of sheer nylon.¹⁴⁾

However, Cunningham's *The History Of Underclothes* does not mention peignoir. In Korea, peignoir is defined as 'a dress that is worn when combing or making up, and is decorated with lace or frills, and is a gown type or a cape type.'¹⁵⁾ In the United States today it is often a filmy robe worn over another gown, but it is also a simple gown that is made to be "seen" rather than "slept in."

This particular peignoir is lingerie of a fine and beautiful design that was mostly created with hand sewing. It was partially torn at the side opening as it was made of a delicate chiffon.

The bust circumference was 34inches, and the hem circumference was 74inches. The bust was shirred a lot

but, as a whole, the dress had a straight silhouette with a chiffon in an apricot color and matching lace in an intricate leaf pattern. A fly of chiffon was attached on the front. There is a 6 1/2 inch long opening under the arm and four snaps hang on the opening. The bust has an elastic cord inside, which has become slack, and the side is decorated with strings. French seaming was used in the sewing.

IV. Conclusion

It may not be possible to explain the popular design of women's underwear in the 1920s only using the small number of articles left by Ms. Miriam Smolenz but, using existing illustrations together with the garments, we extracted information on popular design in those days, contrastive to today's underwear design.

A. Design

The 1920s was the age when the design of women's dress had the most boyish silhouette, not emphasizing any of bust, waist and hip. Ms. Miriam Smolenz's lingerie has a straight line silhouette in accordance with the silhouette of the garments of the time, and is of a comfortable style that does not put pressure on any part of the body. The details are also simple and elegant except for the peignoir.

This is probably because the American fashions lagged slightly behind the European styles during the period around and after the 1st World War. The easy form plus the straight and simple silhouette falls in line with the design concept of the garments in those days, giving a light and soft feeling. The simple design plays the role of covering the body rather than correcting the body-line, which is the main function of brassieres today.

The details of the teddy sets show the coordination of design between pants and camisoles. The camisoles are

generally A-line and long enough to reach the hip, making a comfortable fit. The bust circumference is much different from the hem circumference, but is close to the straight silhouette that fastens only the bust. As a whole, they have an ampler breadth than contemporary ones.

The pants also have an easy straight silhouette that does not stick to the body. The crotch is rectangular and long, almost as long as the pants, but over time it evolves to stick to the body and be diversified in form.

According to the fashion dictionary, 'Teddy is a straight cut garment of the 1920s combining a chemise with short slip or long vest with panties.' However, it is not mentioned as an underwear name in literature or papers of previous researches until later in the 20th century. This is most likely due to the fact that much of the research has been compiled in the United Kingdom where the term was not so common. The term must have been in common usage during the early 1920s in New England, where the donor resided.

Today's cami-knickers are of the all-in-one type, in which the upper garment is connected to the lower one, but it is believed that cami-knickers originally meant both all-in-one type and the two-piece type. That the donor distinguished cami-knickers from teddy sets might be because the camisoles and the knickers of the cami-knickers are all longer than the teddy sets and the design of the pants is similar to a French drawer. Different from the teddy sets, the pants of the cami-knickers do not have a crotch.

Both the full slip and the peignoir have the same straight silhouette, long enough to cover the knee. Compared to other remains, the peignoir is luxurious and its details are fine.

The size of Ms. Miriam Smolenz's brassiere is assumed to be around the standard size of American women in those days. Considering this, the oversize teddy sets and cami-knickers have plenty of ease in marked contrast with today's fit underwear.

B. Fabric and Details

The main fabric of the underwear was elegant and soft natural silk chiffon, patterned silk and lace. As for the brassieres, patterned silk lace is the main material and, if desired, other kinds of lace were worked into the pattern for additional beauty. Silk chameuse was used for lining, and satin for straps.

In most of the pieces of underwear, the bottom is decorated with net lace or hand knit lace and, in order to cover the simple design, openings, eye holes, button holes, etc. are finished with ornamental snaps or straps. These ornamental elements supplement the line of simple design and emphasize elegance and womanliness.

C. Color

The basic colors of underwear are white and pink with variations such as peach, apricot, pale pink and ivory. The use of such colors might be the wearer's personal taste or a social and cultural restriction. Because these colors are still the most common in underwear, it is hard to say that there have been significant changes in people's taste and preference in color, except for the introduction of black and a series of unconventional colors, the most common of which, is red.

As discussed above, the design of women's underwear in the 1920s is easier, simpler and more elegant than the equivalent of today. The use of natural materials gives a noble and soft feeling. The function of underwear in those days was more about covering the body and emphasizing womanliness than correcting the body shape. For a more in-depth research project, we tried to contact the donor to discover more about the class of Ms. Miriam Smolenz along with other personal details, but the donor was not within reach, which became a *limitation of this study*.

References

- 1) Sang-Rye Lee (1997). The vogue about outwearization of underwear in a tendency to the century-end. *Journal of Korean Society of Costume*, 35, p. 328.
- 2) R. Turner Wilcox (2004). *Five Centuries of American Costume*. Dover pub., p. 160.
- 3) Karen W. Bressler, Karoline Newman, Gillian Proctor (1997). *A century of lingerie*, Chartwell Books, p. 42.
- 4) Catherine Bardey (2001). *Lingerie*, Black dog & Leventhal Pub., p. 182.

<measurement of woman' size>

| | Bust | Waist | Hips |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------|------|
| Present-day American Woman | 37 | 29 | 39 |
| Present-day French Woman | 35.7 | 26.7 | 36.7 |
| Present-day British Woman | 34.7 | 33.7 | 36.7 |
| American Woman 1978 | 34.5 | 26 | 36.5 |
| 1925 survey of American Beauty Queens | 34 | 26 | 35 |

- 5) <http://www.gossard.com>
- 6) Charlotte Mankey Calasibetta (1988). *Fairchild's dictionary of fashion, -2nd Edition*, Fairchild pub., pp. 573-574.
- 7) C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington (1992). *The history of underclothes*, Dover.
- 8) *ibid*, p. 229.
- 9) Dawn Cloake (2000). *Lingerie design on the stand*, B. T. Batsford.
- 10) Catherine Bardey (2001). *op. cit.*
- 11) A. D. Mansfield & Valerie Mansfield (1981). *The history of underclothes by C. Willett & Phillis Cunnington*, Faber & Faber Limited, pp. 158-159.
- 12) Charlotte Mankey Calasibetta (1988). *op. cit.*, p. 525.
- 13) *ibid*, p. 426.
- 14) *ibid*, p. 395.
- 15) Rasara (1992). *The illustrated dictionary of fashion*, Rasara Pub. Co., p. 230.

* Christina Probert (1981). *Lingerie in vogue since 1910*. Abbeville Press.

* Elizabeth Ewing (1978). *Dress and undress: A history of women's underwear*, Drama book specialists.

<Fig. 7> Brassier (1920s). *A century of lingerie*, p. 44.

<Fig. 8> Brassier (1927). *The history of underclothes*, p. 243.

<Fig. 23> Chemise & Knickers (1919). *Dress & undress*, p. 124.

<Fig. 24> Chemise & Knickers (1927). *Lingerie in vogue*, p. 18.

<Fig. 25> Closed Cami-Knickers (1920s). *Dress & undress*, p. 125.

<Fig. 26> Step-in Cami-Knickers (1925). *Dress & undress*, p. 131.

<Fig. 27> Cami-Knickers (1927). *Dress & undress*, p. 131.

<Fig. 28> Cami-Knickers. *The History of Underclothes*, p. 243.