

HOME ECONOMICS

Defense Fashions

Beltsville Becomes the Paris of America-at-Work as Agriculture Experts Design for Factory and Farm

By EMILY C. DAVIS

TAKE a good look at the name, Beltsville, because American women—millions of them—will soon be wearing Beltsville-created fashions when they do defense work in factories and farms.

The Paris of America-at-Work—that's Beltsville—a scientific Paris.

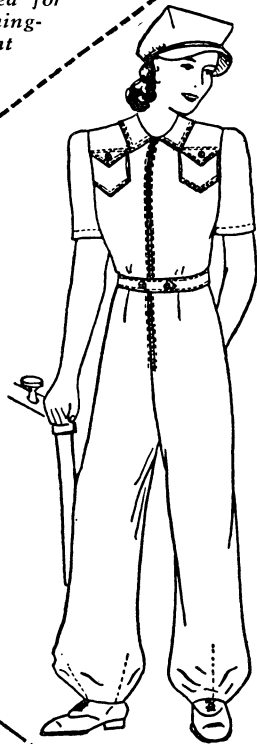
From a neat brick office, in the midst of broad fields of an Agricultural Experiment Station, are beginning to ap-

pear the government's scientifically designed working styles.

Designs have been originated for one-piece slacks, jumpers, visored caps for the girl in industry.

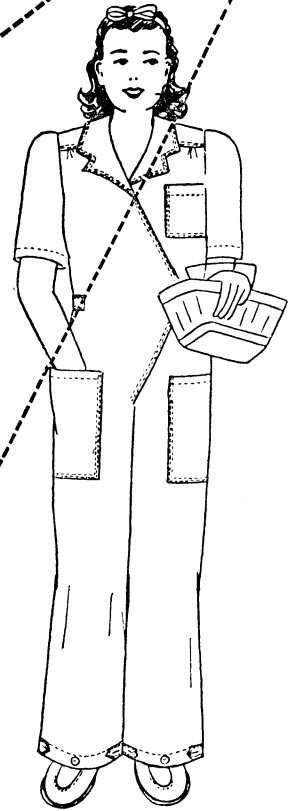
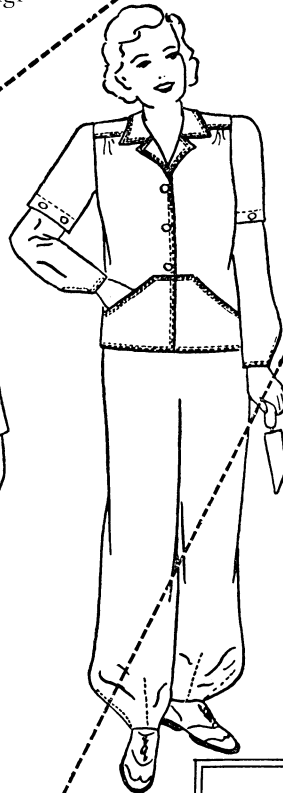
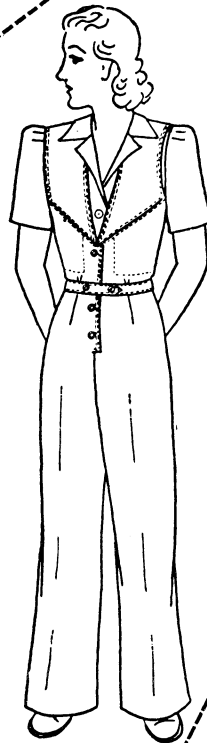
DEFENSE MODES

Superimposed on the Chinese hat pattern are sketches of other clothes created for efficiency and becomingness by government clothes experts at Beltsville. Left, two factory outfits; a mechanic's suit



with visored cap and a jumper slack suit.

Right, for farm wear, a field suit for heavy work made with detachable sleeves and loose hanging jacket, and the Coverette outfit, sketched in the Department of Agriculture's first published circular on new defense work styles.



Directions

To introduce a novel Chinese-style work hat of the 1941 defense fashions, here is a pattern of two segments. Duplicated seven times, they make a circle. To make the hat, cut two circles of goods about 21 inches in diameter. Pinning them together, measure the circle into 14 pie segments, using the pattern, and placing one segment line on the straight of the goods. Cut out two segments. Stitch through the dividing lines of the remaining segments and seam the pie together, forming a broad cone with 12 triangular casings into which cardboard triangles may be placed for stiffening. To hold the cardboard in place, attach enameled snap fasteners near the rim of each segment. Inside, fasten tie strings, half an inch wide, at the peak of the crown and about three inches on each side.

LAY ONE FOLD ON STRAIGHT OF THE GOODS





Surplice slacks, Chinese hats, utility aprons and showerproofs for the lass who milks cows and raises tomatoes have been invented.

Streamlined housedresses in prospect.

In June, in Chicago, a parade of models exhibited the first of the government's work fashion creations before the expertly critical American Home Economics Association. But that is only a beginning, for the defense fashion designers have scarcely launched into possibilities of women's work outfits based on shorts and culottes or divided skirts, and conventional length skirts. First styles emanating from Beltsville are mainly slack garments.

"Lots of kinds of work clothing, not definite uniforms, are needed for women in the United States," says Miss Clarice L. Scott, who is creating the country's first functional fashions for farm women.

Her co-worker, Miss Margaret Smith, is specializing in designing a variety of clothes for industrial jobs.

Girls of the sewing staff of the research laboratory are credited with contributing good ideas. They have their say when fashion designers Scott and Smith try on a "brain child" and parade it for staff approval.

America's workaday Paris is, in terms of government organization, the Clothing and Textile Division of the Bureau of Home Economics. And the Bureau of Home Economics, in turn, is a branch of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

There are too many climates and too many kinds of jobs in our big country

for a few chosen uniforms to solve America's what-to-wear-to-work problem, Miss Scott explained in an interview. Some jobs require girls to sit all day, others to stand. Making parachutes, some girls work on hands and knees.

The government's idea is to evolve as many types of work garments as possible, and leave it to factories and individuals to fit the new working styles to their needs.

Pattern manufacturers have already begun arranging with the department to receive sample garments from which they can prepare paper patterns. Probably ready for sale this month will be a paper pattern for Miss Scott's invention of a Coverette for farm women to wear at work. Mail order houses and manufacturers are inquiring about the new styles, with a view to ready-mades.

The government's work style designers expect eventually to write a bulletin so that home dressmakers, too, can make the styles.

Meanwhile, an information circular has already been produced for public distribution by the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., with sketches and directions for making some of the garments. The hope is that the scientifically designed work styles will be as widely useful as possible. Dressing for efficiency and comfort can aid America's defense efforts, say Miss Scott and Miss Smith.

As samples of what women may find suitable for factory work, Miss Scott displayed two models.

BELTSVILLE STYLES

The girl at the left is wearing a Chinese hat designed for farm and garden but equally good for sun bathers. Her suit is suitable for fruit picking or other reaching jobs; detachable sleeves will protect from briars. The outfit in the center is for America's girl mechanics. At the right is sunbonnet Sue, 1941 version. The new Coverette suit is of green and white seersucker, easy to slip into hurriedly.

"This one-piece suit," she said, holding up a pink and white striped cotton outfit, "has slacks with a loose fit at the ankle, so that the worker has plenty of leg room and the trouser cuff will not hang loose to drag into grease or catch on machinery. Slide fasteners provide quick dressing aids, at side and neck."

This factory outfit, suitable for the girl mechanic, has a hip pocket like a man's overalls, and two pockets in the blouse front are made with a little pleat so that they expand like a grocery bag, to hold small articles. All of these pockets, Miss Scott pointed out, snap securely.

Pockets, as Miss Scott and Miss Smith set our work fashions, will be part of almost every feminine work outfit. Working on an industrial job, a girl may want to have her handkerchief, compact, change purse, or other possessions handy. In some factory jobs, pockets are useful for tools. On the farm, pockets hold clothes pins, seed packets, trowel, to name just a few items.

"We have tried," said Miss Scott, "to arrange all pockets (*Turn to page 44*)

EUGENICS

Suggests an Imaginative NMA —Mothers Administration

Deficit of Children in Responsible Households Termed Menace to Foundations of National Life

AN IMAGINATIVE NMA—National Mothers Administration—to lead America's working mothers toward better employment status, was suggested by Dr. Frank Lorimer, professor of population studies of American University.

Dr. Lorimer, speaking before the American Eugenics Society in New York, declared that there is a deficit of births in families which plan their affairs with a high sense of responsibility. He outlined ways by which the United States might ease the financial worries for young couples who fear to have children because they know that the added expense must mean a lower standard of living.

Declaring that the deficit of children in responsible households "menaces the foundations of our national life," Dr. Lorimer suggested remedies:

1. Increase opportunities for gainful employment compatible with motherhood.
2. Develop measures which will relax some of the pressures which now tend to force married women to seek gainful employment.

Women with children might be given preference in teaching appointments, he said, and school administrators might well consider psychological value for the children of this type of teacher. Dr. Lorimer also suggested that school administrators reduce hours of service for teachers, so as to divide the teaching load and strain on individual teachers.

"Similar developments would be possible," he added, "in many other fields—under the leadership of an imaginative NMA, or National Mothers Administration."

To encourage larger families, he also suggested increasing tax rates, especially in middle income brackets, to finance an adequate social program soundly. About one-fourth of this tax, he said, should be cancelled for each dependent child, up to income levels at which an additional child does not substantially reduce the level of family living.

Just as earlier Americans took the radical step of making public education available to all, now public provisions for mothers and children should, so far as possible, be for all families, Dr. Lorimer advised. All children should have the advantage of the school lunch program, he said, citing an example. This would raise the nutritional level of the nation, and increase food consumption.

To help in stabilizing economic conditions for families when war ends, and to avoid the unguided building boom after the first world war, which over-shot the market demand and helped bring about the 1929 depression, Dr. Lorimer warned that post-war housing should be developed on a logical basis. The United States, he foresees, will ultimately be called upon to provide materials for rebuilding Europe's wreckage, and the tremendous need will spur industry to high production. Home building will then be likely to increase.

In this post-war housing situation, Dr. Lorimer recommended reducing labor costs by paying workers on a fair yearly basis, and formation of new industrial unions, if the old craft unions will not cooperate.

He also recommended subsidies for groups justifying them, such as the Swedish system of reducing monthly rents in proportion to the number of children in the family.

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so that the wearer can put her hands into them without effort. That sounds lazy. But we want to leave workers free to use their energy for work."

To go with the factory work suit, a pink and white visored cap has been designed. Accidents have been known to occur when a girl's hair caught in revolving machines, and safety is one basic idea back of all the government's new clothes. Dusts of various sorts are another reason for wearing caps in some factory jobs.

As scientific features of the pink and white cap, Miss Scott pointed out stitching which stiffens the visor without need for starch, and ease with which the band around the back unbuttons, allowing the cap to flatten out for laundering.

Important fashion feature of the visored cap is height provided toward the front. That is to accommodate delicate curls and pompadours without crushing.

A second style for industry already completed is a jumper slack suit. As originally made by Miss Smith, this suit is an attractive blue, with blue and white striped underblouse. Jumper advantages are these: A worker can vary the blouse, using long or short sleeves for cold or warm weather. And a factory might like the idea of using different colored blouses as a badge of different types of workers.

Curiously enough, America's farm wives and daughters have never before had sets of work clothes designed for their especial needs for efficiency plus becomingness. Not until Miss Scott tackled the problem. Miss Scott did not have to visit farms to study farm women at work. She came from a midwestern farm herself.

First of all, she has designed what she calls a Coverette, a basic work suit likely to be useful for milking, feeding chickens, working the garden. The first Coverette to take a public bow is of green and white seersucker.

Miss Scott explained its important features: Easy to put on and take off, even in sticky weather. Pockets, of course—three roomy patch pockets. Trouser legs which can swing loose for coolness or be buttoned, if work requires, into a neat cuff. Plenty of fullness at the knee is provided, even when trousers are cuffed in.

A farm woman dons a Coverette by stepping into the trousers, putting her arms through the short and roomy sleeves and pulling back the ties attached to the surplice waist. She ties one bow—or fastens the strings with a button or snap—and, as Miss Scott puts it, "she is ready to go."

A low rolling collar, a feature of the Coverette, was particularly mentioned by Miss Scott. It is a becoming sort of collar, and if there is any one thing that Scott and Smith designers are emphatic about, it is that women's work clothes should be becoming. An outfit of soft green seersucker has been banished to the laboratory closet, because nice as it looks on the hanger the collar isn't becoming. The public will never see that one.

One home economist who visited a war factory confirmed the designers' opinion that ugly work clothes are bad defense psychology. She found girls wearing men's style overalls, and she reported that if it made a visitor so depressed to look at them it must be bad also for morale of the workers.

For farm millinery, Miss Scott got an idea from her Midwestern childhood, when some farm women wore slat bonnets. She can recall her own problems in milking, when she had to protect her hair from the cow's tail and keep a hat from being brushed off, and when she needed a hat or bonnet for sun. No wonder slat sunbonnets were worn for many a day. They stayed put and had other good features.

"The old slat bonnet," said Miss Scott, "had slips of cardboard stuck into casings around the head and there was a limp tail of goods hanging down to the shoulders. The cards could be taken out to launder the bonnet, and no starch was needed. The tail was a good sun protector, but hot.

"I thought we might put the cardboard slats in the top only and run them the opposite way, and we might shorten the flap so that it protects the neck without swathing it."

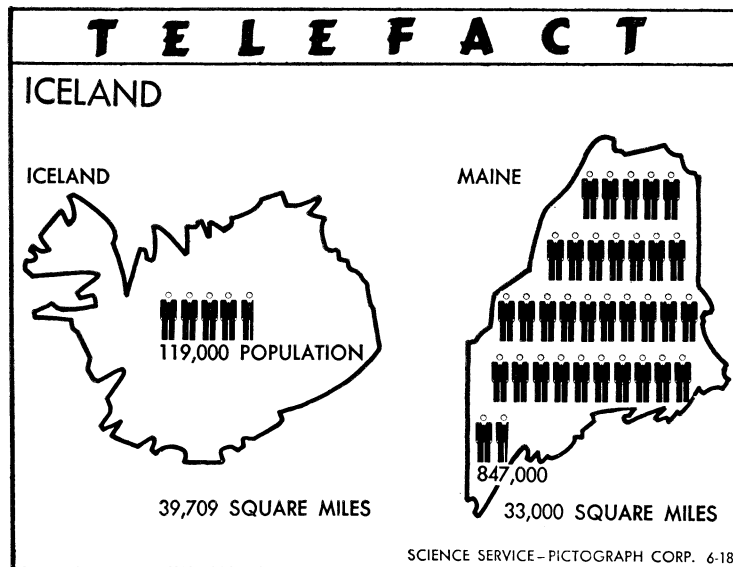
The 1941 sunbonnet flattens into a T for laundering. It can be folded neatly and tucked into a pocket when not wanted.

Even more striking is a Chinese hat for farming.

A second farm suit for heavy work, designed in blue slacks with a jacket that hangs outside, emphasizes coolness and comfort. The loose jacket makes reaching easy in apple picking or hanging clothes. Detachable long sleeves are a handy accessory. They are for berry picking, or other scratchy jobs, or to protect the arms from sun or cold.

Even shower-proofs for farm workers have been thought of. Using a water-repellent cotton fabric, of which several are on the market, the government's clothing experts have evolved a soft dark green suit which has a number of attachments.

Basic unit of this shower-proof garb is a cover-all apron skirt useful for wash day and many other farm and home jobs. Water rolls off and the fabric does not stain. The apron is designed with princess fit and buttons down the front. A jacket of the green goods provides protection for outdoor chores in bad weather. A hood that might be snapped to the suit is another handy item.



Even leggings go with this cotton water-repellent outfit, as designed by Miss Scott. Remembering how she had seen many a farmer's wife wrap a long denim apron around her skirt and stockings to work in dewy grass or in vines that stain—such as tomatoes—Miss Scott evolved shaped leggings of the green cotton goods. You step in and pull up front slide fasteners, and the leggings stay put, for, explained Miss Scott, elastic under

the shoes and above the calf of the leg holds them in place.

A housedress with butterfly shoulders is nearly ready for its debut. Easy to make and easy to wear and launder, the government's style designers are aiming to produce housedress designs that the average home sewer can make—and make well—in a day.

Beltsville has just begun to influence American fashions. Watch it!

Science News Letter, July 19, 1941

GEOGRAPHY

With Iceland U. S. Assumes Care of First Known Geyser

IN TAKING over protection of Iceland "for duration," the United States assumes temporary custody of more than an advanced outpost against Nazi aggression. This government also acquires responsibility for the original or type specimen of all the geysers in the world—of which this country already possesses in its own right by far the mightiest and most, in Yellowstone National Park.

When the earliest settlers in Iceland, more than a thousand years ago, first explored the interior of their new home, they found in the midst of a barren plain an awesome hot spring that at irregular intervals hurled a column of seething water more than a hundred feet into the air. They called this the "geysir," which means the gusher.

Near the Great Geysir are a number of lesser geysirs, as well as a huge non-erupting steam spring that keeps making flopping, slopping noises. These sug-

gested the name "strokr," which is Icelandic for "churn." The word "geysir," modified to "geyser," has been accepted as the name for the similar periodic hot springs in the Yellowstone region, as well as in New Zealand, which is the home of the only other important geyser group in the world. About 1914 the Great Geysir stopped eruption, but it resumed activity in 1935. (*Turn page*)

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