

Introduction

“All we wore were hand-me-downs and old clothes.”

Emma (born 1925, Auckland, New Zealand)¹



Figure 0.1: German little girl in red skirt, *Spirit of Hamburg*, 1948, Video, Kronos Media, Hamburg, Germany.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qpu-zqDbnN0>

Valerie [Maier](#), a young seamstress born in 1922, was desperate for fabric to make herself a new dress in war torn Germany during the Second World War. She lived in Fürstenfeldbruck, a town in Bavaria that was so small that it did not even have a clothing store. It would not have mattered anyway since as the war progressed, all stores were either empty or bombed out. It was impossible to find fabric so Valerie often used unrationed or unexpected textiles to sew up dresses for herself and Ingrid, her sister, seven years younger. Ingrid described a rather risky action Valerie took to find fabric: “In the last year, 1944 - 45, there was a store that sold material

¹ Emma (born 1925, Auckland, New Zealand) in conversation with the author at the *Northern California Bay Area War Brides* lunch, August 11, 2014

and among other things, they sold the German flags. My sister bought quite a few of the flags and cut out the insignia, she made dresses out of them.” Desecrating the German flag was a criminal offense. Ingrid was afraid of the consequences of wearing a dress made from the German flag. “I remember once I was walking from the place that I worked at the time and I saw, a block away, there was a woman with a red dress. I guess at that time the color was not really worn. And my friend said ‘Oh, look at that! There is someone wearing a red dress!’ And I knew it was my sister, but I did not say anything.” Ingrid was too afraid of the possible stigma of revealing her relationship to the woman in the problematic red dress.

Recently, another story about clothing made from a German flag appeared in the Canadian newspaper, *National Post*. Thom Cholowski, a Second World War historian, bought a red skirt, similar to the dress made for Ingrid, on the auction site eBay. The online seller had purchased the skirt from a collector who bought it from the original wearer. The skirt was made by a German woman for her daughter from a Third Reich banner at the end of the war.

Cholowski explained why the flag was used as dress material in the *National Post* article:

The war ended in Europe May 8, 1945, but the struggle for survival for millions of people didn’t stop there. [...] So you made do with what you had. And in this case, the Nazis had been defeated, this flag was useless, but fabric was still good ².

The *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* videotaped Cholowski appealing to the public to help him find the now grown German girl. She was purported to live in Manitoba or Saskatchewan, Canada. Cholowski expressed his emotions about the symbolism of the skirt in the video:

It tells a story that is not covered by the history books. You can read about all the major battles but it’s the stories of the individuals. This is the story of displaced people. And especially the story of those on the losing side, [which] does not really get told. And what drew me to it, is to take a symbol of oppression, hatred and violence and to turn it into a

² National Post, "Searching for the Girl Who Wore This Dress Made out of a Nazi Banner after WWII Ended," (Toronto, Ontario), 2016, November 7, <https://nationalpost.com/news/world/searching-for-the-girl-who-wore-this-dress-made-out-of-a-nazi-banner-after-wwii-ended#comments-area>.

thing of joy and hope is very compelling.³



Figure 0.2: *Searching for the Girl who Wore this Dress Made out of a Nazi Banner after the Second World War*, February 7, 2016, Postmedia News, Canada. Courtesy of *National Post*.

Cholowski searched the internet for clues about the origin of the skirt. He discovered a post-war film showing life in Hamburg, Germany in which he was amazed to see a little girl wearing a skirt very similar to the one he owned. “It is virtually impossible to definitively confirm that this is indeed the same dress currently in my possession, however it is positive proof that Nazi flags were repurposed into clothing after the Second World War.”⁴

Ingrid’s red dress and the little girl’s red skirt are examples of the stories that clothing can tell. As Cholowski said in the video, these stories are not in history books but are the personal narratives of the interplay of wartime and civilian life.

The past, the present and sometimes even the future can be interpreted by analyzing the clothing of an era. Dominique Veillon, in *Fashion Under the Occupation*, stated: “Fashion is an expression of every aspect of life; it is a way of existing and behaving, and is, in fact, an observation point from which to view the political, economic and cultural environment of an historical period.”⁵ The silhouette, color, line, fabric and construction of clothing holds clues

³ Jonathan Charlton, "What's the Story Behind This Dress Made out of a Nazi Banner?," *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* (Canada), February 28, 2018, <https://youtu.be/ZJlma4-83ak>.

⁴ Thom Cholowski, email communication with the author, November 27, 2019

⁵ Dominique Veillon, *Fashion under the Occupation*, trans. Miriam Kochan (Oxford New York: Berg, 1995), vii.

about the owner and the time in which it was worn. Wartime clothing can reveal cultural norms and represent themes of politics, scientific discovery, gender identity, creativity, hope, art, and sometimes dishonesty.

Starting my Search

My interest in the Second World War, and ultimately the research that became this book, was inspired by the contents of a large cardboard box containing the photos my father had taken while serving in the 1270th Engineer Combat Battalion in Europe.⁶ His souvenirs of five years in the military. He started the war as a bugler in the 161th Field Artillery Band and after three years was accepted in a flight training program. When the program was cancelled, Joe was reassigned as an intelligence officer in the 1270th and sailed off to England in October of 1944.

I spent many hours sorting the photos in the box, trying to put them in chronological order following the battalion's itinerary that I was fortunate to receive from the United States (USA) National Archives. One photo of a group of civilians standing on a flagstone patio dressed in classic British sartorial garb and another larger group outside a church, maybe a wedding photo, grabbed my attention. Joe was in the wedding photo, tall and handsome in his dress uniform. I was sure these photos told a story; one I wished I had asked my father before he died. Like most men of his generation, Joe rarely spoke about the five years he had spent in the military during the war. As children, we had seen the photos but did not know to ask more questions, and now it was too late.

Through careful searching, I found three photos of Joe with two of the people pictured in the smaller group. They looked like they were having fun, joking and eating ice cream while it was snowing. My guess was that the photos were taken while he was stationed in Weston-super-

⁶ For further information about the battalion, visit website: <https://www.1270thengineercombatbattalion.com>

Mare (W-s-M), Somerset, United Kingdom (UK). I remember my mother saying that he liked the people he met there.

In the wedding photo, Joe stands next to another soldier who has his arm around the waist of a pretty young woman dressed in a suit. She wears a large corsage pinned to her lapel. From her dress and their posture, I assumed she was the bride. They are surrounded by a group of men, women and children, dressed in winter coats, suits and hats, standing outside of a church.

Thanks to the internet, it was easy to contact the W-s-M historian and ask if they could possibly help me locate the people in the photo. Their answer was not hopeful; 65 years had passed and much had changed, but they would try. Holy Trinity Church on Atlantic Road, W-s-M, still standing, was easily identified as the location for the wedding photo. One half hour later, I received a second communication. Through luck or fate, the historian's husband had glanced at the computer screen and recognized his former riding instructor: Kath Eastlake. She is the woman on the left, standing by her brother and sister, all three still living in W-s-M in the same house where the photo was taken.



Figure 0.3: Kath, Roger, Sophie, Mrs. and Mr. Eastlake: Christmas Lunch - Weston-super-Mar, UK, December 25, 1944, Courtesy Turner family.

I wrote to Kath hoping she would remember my father, the young American soldier who had been stationed for six months in her village. I was thrilled to receive a letter back. The following is an excerpt:

Dear Nan,

What a wonderful surprise to see the notice in our local newspaper wishing to contact the family who invited your father Joe to Christmas lunch. This was with three or four other USA servicemen who were stationed at the Cairo Hotel in town, about 5 miles from the countryside where our farmhouse lies. It was the Christmas before the big invasion of Europe and my mother came up with the idea of inviting four or five USA soldiers stationed in Weston-super-Mare for Christmas lunch. She did not quite know how to go about it, but eventually telephoned the commanding officer at the Cairo or his second in command. I can remember to this day, she said, much to the embarrassment of my sister and I, "Would four or five of your nice soldiers like to accept our invitation to Christmas lunch?" In reply, he said, "They are all nice, M'am."

We made open house to any of the five men who came and I remember what a cold, dreadful winter it was. If they passed by the farmhouse at any time they often stepped in and warmed themselves by our enormous open fire which went all day long.⁷

Kath Eastlake and I exchanged several letters, from which came an invitation to come visit W-s-M. I started to plan my first research trip to Europe, which would include attending the 65th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, several days in Paris and a visit to W-s-M.



Figure 0.4: Robert (Bob) J. Miller and Peggy Pearce Wedding photo, Holy Trinity Church, W-s-M, UK, March 5, 1945, Courtesy Turner family.

In 2011 I was working on my master's degree in Textiles and Clothing and had started developing a topic based on clothing use during the Second World War. Dominique Veillon's book *Fashion Under the Occupation*, originally published in French as *La Mode Sous l'Occupation*, was one of the first of many books that I read.⁸ I contacted Mme. Veillon in Paris,

⁷ Excerpt from letter received by author from British family who befriended her father during the Second World War. (Eastlake is a fictitious name). July 2010.

⁸ Veillon, *Fashion under the Occupation*.

to see if she might meet with me to discuss my research. She generously agreed and kindly put up with my French, acquired when I lived in Paris from 1978-81 working in the fashion industry. Mme. Veillon influenced my decision to focus my research on the struggles of average people from a range of countries and economic status dealing with clothing scarcity.

During the second part of the trip, in London, I happened upon a formal remembrance celebration for British veterans who had participated in D-Day. A rather sizable group of men in their 80s in uniform, chests ablaze with metals, were assembled at The Cenotaph, the UK's official national war memorial.⁹ Their wives waited on the sidelines. Before the procession started, several women told me their stories of hardships and accomplishments while making-do during the war. This was the first of many opportunities I had to talk to people about their wartime experience.



Figure 0.5: World War Two Memorial Ceremony, The Cenotaph Memorial, London, 2011. Courtesy Nan Turner.

In W-s-M I stayed at the old stone farmhouse where my father had been invited for Christmas lunch in 1944. I got to know Kath, her sister, Sophie and sister-in-law, Sarah and

⁹ Helen Mavin, "What Is the Cenotaph?," Imperial War Museum, updated May 31, 2018, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-is-the-cenotaph>.

recorded their comments about life during the Second World War and their experience of clothing rationing.

They had been very friendly with Joe while he was stationed in their town but knew nothing about the wedding he had been in. Still eager to find the identity of the wedding couple, I made an appointment with the town registrar to see the marriage certificate. I was allowed a glimpse of the original signatures in the 1945 civil registry book. There was my father's familiar handwriting, confirming my hunch that he was the best man. The couple's names were Bob J. Miller and Peggy Pearce. I wondered what had become of them and if I could find them or who had attended the wedding.

Later that summer, back in California, I started to search for more women who had firsthand experience of clothing scarcity during the Second World War. It became apparent that the USA, due to its vast resources and late entry into the war, suffered fewer clothing shortages. Therefore, I needed to interview women from a wide variety of countries. The *Spirit of 45* celebration in San Jose gave me the opportunity to connect with an organization that would provide many of my future interviews.¹⁰ The *World War II War Brides Association* had a booth at the event manned by the daughter of an Australian war bride. I realized that Peggy Pearce, a war bride, might be a member of the national group. The war baby (the name for children of war brides) told me that I could post my search for Peggy Pearce on the war bride web site and she invited me to attend the groups' monthly lunch meeting. I have attended many lunches over the past years and three annual reunions. I am indebted to the association for providing the opportunity to meet and interview many of the members who generously shared their stories of living through years of rationing, deprivation, and austerity during the Second World War.

¹⁰ "Keep the Spirit of 1946 Alive!," <http://www.spiritof45.org/home0.aspx>.

Methodology

This multi-method research project is qualitative in nature and based in grounded theory, a social science methodology that builds upon gathering and analyzing data.¹¹ The information collected came from in-depth interviews, surveys, diaries, historical references, period newspapers and magazines. Over 50 interviews of women, and a few men enrich the story of Second World War scarcity and deprivation. Some interviews lasted up to two hours and were formally taped and transcribed. Other material came from notes taken during lunch meetings and national reunions of the *War Brides Association*. Diaries, newspapers, magazines, film clips, government resources and in-depth content analysis of historical documents filled in interviewees' memories of life more than seventy years ago. These primary and secondary resources contribute to the authenticity of *Clothing Goes to War*.

Primary Resources - Interviews

I elicited my parents' American, Austrian, British and Japanese friends to tell me of their wartime experiences. Colleagues put me in contact with women from Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and the UK. A breakfast event at the Davis, California chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) provided an opportunity to meet a French war bride who I met with many times. A film debut of a documentary about life in a Japanese-American internment camp provided the opportunity to interview the filmmaker.

The research revealed that women from a cross section of social classes and nationalities experienced similar hardships and deprivation during the war, proving that money or position rarely resolve scarcity. All were forced to find creative solutions when stores were empty. Therefore, the comparison of creative methods used to deal with austerity and clothing shortages

¹¹ Glenn A. Bowen, "Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5 (2006).

is the focus of the research. The results of some of the interviews are documented below. Others are entwined in the following chapters. The interviewees were asked if they preferred to reveal their identity or remain anonymous and their wishes have been taken into account.

United Kingdom

Ellen Miller Coile (born 1930, British) moved to the USA with her American military officer husband whom she met during an international folk dance session in London soon after the war. She and her sister, along with their entire school, had been evacuated from London during the war but unfortunately were sent to Ipswich, a port town in Suffolk on the East Coast, which became very dangerous when bombers started flying over from Germany. Her parents tried their best to get the authorities to move the children from this hazardous location, but it was nine months before they were successful in relocating them to a safer situation in Wales.

Ellen grew up in poverty outside of London. She described her childhood and meagre wardrobe, “We lived in a working-class neighborhood (blue-collar in America). We were poor but proud, honest, hard-working, and clean (a patch or darn was nothing to be ashamed of, but a hole meant you were lazy).”¹² She described her school uniform as “mufti,” a slang term referring to civilian clothing or “civvies” worn by someone who had dressed in a uniform for a long period of time. Ellen usually dressed in her school uniform, changing when she got home so the clothing would not get dirty or worn. It had to last. She explained that a child in her poverty level socio-economic class usually owned a minimal wardrobe often composed of hand me downs from older siblings. She described the following formula:

- 1 article of clothing being worn
- 1 article of clothing in case of emergency
- 1 article of clothing in the laundry

¹² Ellen Miller Coile, *Under Two Flags: A Memoir* (Bloomington, Indiana: iUniverse, 2017), 10.

3 articles of clothing of each type¹³

Many women of limited means only owned three shirts, three dresses, and three skirts and a man only the clothing they had on and one other 'better' or Sunday outfit. Others owned less. Elizabeth, in the answer to a survey question about rationing in England, revealed how limited her family wardrobe was:

All clothing was strictly rationed. My mother was an ingenious dressmaker. I remember shorts made from my father's worn-out trousers, and an itchy dressing-gown she made for my birthday out of rough grey stuff which was all she could find. Shoes were very difficult and my brown lace-ups became painfully tight as I grew. It was a disaster when my sister's shoes were stolen at school. I have the impression my mother wore the same check tweed skirt for the duration of the war."¹⁴

Kath Eastlake, during my visit to W-s-M, was the first to mention the issue of underwear. She reported that they had to make their own underclothes and, with elastic unavailable, ties were sewn on in its place.¹⁵

Margaret (born 1931, British) was eight years old when the war broke out. She was evacuated to Canada and did not see her family again for five years. On her return, she had developed a liking for wearing trousers, a habit her mother could never get used to and never approved of. She told me that she felt that she has never had a home since being evacuated from her family at such a young age and for such a long period of time.¹⁶

France

¹³ Ellen Coile (born 1930, Sunderland, County Durham; resident 1932-1951 in Ilford, Essex, UK, England) in discussion with the author

¹⁴ Elizabeth (born pre-war, UK) answer to questionnaire circulated in the UK.

¹⁵ Kath (born 1927, Weston-super-Mare, UK) in discussion with the author, June 11, 2010

¹⁶ Margaret (born 1930, UK) in discussion with the author, 2011



Figure 0.6: Natasha, Wedding in a borrowed gown, 1947. Paris, France. Courtesy Natasha.

Natasha (born 1926, Russian), a young woman living in Paris, was set up on a date with an American Army officer soon after the war ended. For her husband-to-be, it was love at first sight, he told me when he saw his bride-to-be dressed in a print spring dress and stylish red and white shoes. The shoes, impossible to obtain in Paris during the war years, had been sent by a friend living in the USA. For their wedding, just a few months later, Natasha wore a white wedding dress, given to her by a friend of her mother. Looking at a photo of the dress made of Battenberg lace – a style popular in the 1920s – it is clear that it probably came from an earlier era. Her sister wore the same dress when she married Natasha's husband's brother ten years later in the USA. When I asked what had happened to the dress in hopes that I could see it, the answer was that it had just fallen apart after the two weddings. This was additional proof that it was probably already an old dress when Natasha wore it in 1947.

Austria

Adina (born 1929, Austria) told me that, before the war, ready-made clothing was for the

poor.¹⁷ Her family employed a tailor and a dressmaker to make their clothing. When the Germans invaded, fabric for new clothing became very scarce and means had to be found to create new resources. The solution was to take apart dresses or suits that were no longer in style and to have the tailor make a something new. A new custom fit garment would be created based on the customer's measurements. Adina's family seamstress spent a lot of time in the home sewing new clothing for the family. She was a fussy eater. This became a problem for the seamstress since food, as well as fabric, was scarce and difficult to acquire. The family cook, who was the seamstress's sister, made her an omelet using some of the family's eggs while she was in the home sewing. The family considered this a theft when they found out and immediately fired when the seamstress. Scarcity of both fabric and food were serious issues; taking someone else's food, even two eggs, was considered stealing.

Italy

Marie (born 1929, Italy) was interviewed for my research by her son. She lived on the outskirts of Rome during the war and would often drive a horse cart to town to sell produce to earn a little extra money for the family. She later became a seamstress and ran a custom dress-making business in the family apartment in Rome. The war years were very difficult, and the family faced a great deal of scarcity of food and necessities. She recounted an example of repurposing clothing to extend its use. Marie did not have the advantage that Adina had in Austria of using outdated clothing to make new styles. For Marie, old worn-out clothes were all they had. An old coat, worn for so many years that the fabric was starting to wear out, would be carefully taken apart at the seams and put together again with the interior face of the fabric to the exterior. This example would require a considerable amount of time and work for fabric that was

¹⁷ Adina (born 1929, Linz, Austria) in discussion with author, 2016.

already worn, an illustration of the value placed on scarce commodities of fabric and clothing that required time and care to prolong their service life.¹⁸

Germany

Two women, one a member of Hitler's youth, and the other, a concentration camp survivor, wrote biographies and were also interviewed about their war experience. Both accounts, although theoretically from opposite ends of the social spectrum, were of extreme deprivation and suffering experienced during the war.

Ursula Mahlendorf's account of growing up in Germany, *The Shame of Survival: Working Through a Nazi Childhood*, afforded me several insights into the economic and psychological factors related to the struggle to find adequate dress during an era of extreme hardship and vacillating social status. Ursula's life in Germany, since the age of ten an active participant in Hitler Youth, imploded when the lower Silesia region where the family lived was returned to Poland after the Second World War. Ursula and her family were forced to flee the Russian military and relocate to a refugee camp near Bremen, Germany. Her Hitler Youth uniform, which had solved the issues of clothing shortage and had been a symbol of honor and hope for a better future, became a source of shame when Germany was defeated.¹⁹

Marion Blumenthal Lazan's biography, *Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story*, recounts the horrible experience of her Jewish family who missed the opportunity to flee Germany when their booked passage on an ocean liner from Holland to the USA was delayed.²⁰ When Germany invaded the Netherlands, the family was trapped. They were first interned at a

¹⁸ Marie (born 1929, Rome, Italy) recorded in conversation with her son, 2014.

¹⁹ Ursula Mahlendorf, *The Shame of Survival: Working through a Nazi Childhood* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 21.

²⁰ Marion Blumenthal Lazan and Lila Perl, *Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story* (NYC: Avon Books, 1996), <http://www.fourperfectpebbles.com/>.

refugee camp in the Netherlands and later deported to Bergen-Belsen.²¹ Marion's story includes details of the extreme difficulty of finding clothing for survival against the brutal elements and inhumane conditions. Her apparel was composed of the few articles she wore. At night she slept in all her clothes for warmth. In the morning: "All she had to do was to put her arms through the sleeves of the tattered coat that she had used as an extra covering under the coarse, thin blanket the camp provided."²²

United States

The USA experienced the least amount of scarcity and restriction of clothing. Some women I interviewed were not even aware of any rationing besides gasoline for automobiles. Although the least affected, the information obtained from American women in personal interviews reinforced several themes of the research and led to further evaluation. Eileen (born 1924, California) was the first to mention the issue of underwear in the USA. Eileen reported that she had to make her own underwear and, with elastic unavailable, fabric ties were sewn on at the waist.²³ The shortage was due to the embargo of natural rubber after Japan attacked Malaysia in 1941 and restrictions were placed on civilian use of all forms of rubber.

Additional stories of creative solutions to rationing and shortages of textiles and clothing are included in the following chapters:

Chapter 1 – Rationale for Rationing

Rationing was an inevitable consequence of shortages and scarcity in many countries.²⁴ The imperative to outfit the troops forced governments to control distribution of essential

²¹ Westerbork is a Nazi transit camp for refugees in the northeast Netherlands. Bergen Belsen, is the camp where Ann Frank died of typhus, a disease spread by lice that was epidemic there.

²² Lazan and Perl, *Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story*, 3.

²³ Eileen (born 1927, USA) in discussion with the author, June 2011.

²⁴ William Keith Hancock and Margaret Mary Gowing, *British War Economy* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949), 157.

products, clothing and fabric. The majority of sewing factories were turned over to military production.²⁵ Remaining goods and services were thereafter parceled out to civilians in the most diplomatically possible fashion.

Chapter 2 – Textiles go to War

The role of textiles in the Second World War includes a complex assortment of issues encompassing global shortages, embargos, creativity and chemistry. Widespread reliance on natural fibers, which required specific climates to cultivate, predisposed the scarcity of apparel textiles. Cut off from their suppliers by both embargos and the threat of attack by enemy warships cruising the oceans, creative solutions to relieve scarcity became essential.

Chapter 3 – Gender Defined by Dress

In the years prior to the Second World War, gender and culture strictly defined the clothing people wore. Women rarely dressed in slacks or trousers. Their role in society required a feminine appearance signaled by wearing a skirt or dress. The necessity for all people to fight, on the home front as well as the war front, brought immense changes to the cultural restrictions placed on women's appearance and dress. The Second World War was a decisive moment in the expansion of women's freedom to choose comfort over appearance.

Chapter 4 – Home Front Handicrafts: Creativity Inspired by Restrictions

“Making-do,” marketed as an act of patriotism, required sewing, knitting, repurposing, and mending to save precious textile resources. Women were urged through government propaganda and women's magazines to do their part to make the family wardrobe last for the duration, freeing workers to build equipment needed by the military. Nothing was thrown away as every treasured scrap of fabric was used to make clothing, quilts, patches and eventually

²⁵ Julie Summers, *Fashion on the Ration: Style in the Second World War* (London, UK: Profile Books, 2016), 38.

rag s.²⁶

Chapter 5 – Wartime Weddings

Wartime wedding planning presented special problems for brides-to-be as rationing and scarcity increased the difficulty of finding clothing for the wedding party. Women improvised using curtains, sheets, mosquito netting or any available textile to replace traditional silks and satins. The war intensified the strain of wedding planning as the majority of grooms in the service were beholden to their commanding officer and to the timetable of battle. Orders to ship out reduced preparation time to the minimum.

Chapter 6 – Costumes Go to War

Rationing and clothing scarcity became a topic in some wartime films. Women depicted sewing, mending, borrowing, and repurposing, as well as dialogue centered around the difficulty of obtaining coupons, added authenticity to wartime scenarios. Characters in these films faced hardships similar to the audience and often served as inspirational models of survival, as well as figures of propaganda, to encourage civilians to work together supporting the war effort.

Chapter 7 - Clothing as Commerce: Hoarding, Bartering, and the Black Market

Alternative forms of commerce developed as a means to avoid government enforced regulations and imposed scarcity. Hoarding, a means of stocking up before shortages depleted stores' shelves, increased scarcity. Bartering, a common practice used between friends or acquaintances, allowed people to obtain necessary goods without using limited money or coupons, or when both became worthless. Black markets, on the other hand, although sometimes the only means of obtaining necessities, were illegal methods used to take advantage of shortages and make a profit for the dealer.

²⁶ Ida M. Tarbell, "The Old Sewing Room," *The North America Review* 245 (Spring 1938): 155, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25114967>.

Chapter 8 – What Happened to Make-do and Mend?

As generations followed in the 75 years since the Second World War, habits based on thrift learned during the 1930s and 40s have been replaced with the mentality of a throwaway society. The practices of conservation, sewing, mending, repurposing and an abhorrence of waste, second nature for our parents or grandparents, seem overly time-consuming and obsolete for contemporary busy lifestyles.

Fortunately, the 21st century has seen a renewed interest in do-it-yourself (DIY) projects, crafting and repairing that have many correlations to the creative practices inspired by the hardship and austerity of the Second World War. Much of the current revival is motivated by the goal of limiting fast fashion's negative effects on the environment. Stories of survival during wartime resonate in the twenty-first century for people looking for a way to reduce waste and live a more sustainable existence.

Conclusion

A common thread runs through the experiences of people dealing with shortages and rationing during wartime. People had to use creativity to provide for themselves and their families when all production was prioritized for the military. It did not seem to matter what side the person was on, Allied or Axis. Shortages and austerity was universal and motivated creative solutions. Therefore, the experiences of women dealing with scarcity are organized by commonality, not by country of origin.

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