

LOVE WILL NEVER BE RATIONED:  
WORLD WAR II BRIDAL APPAREL

Ashley Hasty

Dr. Laurel Wilson, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Wedding gowns have elicited unequalled excitement through costume history. Little girls dream of their wedding days while recreating the fairytale marriage of Cinderella and Prince Charming using Barbie and Ken dolls. Wedding gowns are often the most treasured garments in a woman's wardrobe and are rarely given or thrown away. Even in times of economic disparity, the wedding dress was often a woman's "best dress."

This study investigates factors influencing choice of bridal apparel during World War II. Little systematic research has been done in this area. A description of these factors is postured through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This review identifies these works and discusses their significance. The themes that follow directly correspond to the four objectives of this study, painting a picture of the environment in which our study unfolds.

The results section of this study identifies four themes that articulate the dynamics influencing wedding apparel during the Second World War. The four themes identified are social, logistical, rational, and sentimental. The social dynamic consists of advice provided through perceived market authorities. Logistical challenges consisted of difficulties arising from the physical locations and transportation of people and goods directly related to the wedding ceremony. Social and logistical concerns contributed to rational considerations, which are described as personal inclinations to make concessions regarding wedding attire. Sentimental considerations arise from the thoughts and emotions of a bride toward her wedding apparel.