

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Women's three-piece display bathing costume

Date

early 20th Century

Primary Maker

Jantzen

Medium

Cotton

Dimensions

Overall: 720 x 300 mm

Name

Swimsuit

History

The Princess suit of the 1900s and 1910s consisted of a short skirted dress worn over matching bloomers, often worn with stockings, lace up boots and a fabric bathing cap. The shorter sleeves and button-up back created a more modern look. This, together with their wider availability through clothing and department stores, encouraged their popularity. Though the knee length skirt allowed greater freedom of movement in the water, the design's fitted waistband and seams were still restrictive. Jantzen did not begin producing its knitted costumes until the late 1910s, missing the era of the Princess suit. This suggests that the company either reproduced a light cotton version of the Princess design, or applied their 1920s fabric logo to an earlier garment. It was not uncommon for items of swimwear to be made for theatrical or promotional purposes such as fashion parades and window displays. These garments followed the cut of traditional swimwear designs, but were made from lighter fabrics such as cotton as they were not intended for getting wet.