

July 13-

### Bathing Suit Season- History of Bathing Suit in Wilmot

Can you imagine swimming in full-coverage dress? Neck, arms and legs entirely covered? Well, in Victorian times if you wanted to cool off in fashion, that is what would have been worn.

Let's start off with swimming attire **from c.1900**.

Pictured here are cousin Mary Livingston, Edna "Teddy" Livingston, unknown and cousin Barbara Doering swimming at Blue Lake in Michigan. Note the life preservers. By the end of the 19th century people were flocking to beaches. The awkward full-coverage Victorian bathing costumes were becoming burdensome. A need for a new style bathing suits that retained modesty but was free enough to allow the young woman to engage in swimming transitioned into this style. Notice you can see exposed arms and the option for bare legs.



### Bathing suits in the 1920s

By the early 1920s women's bathing suits were reduced to a one-piece garment. By the mid-1920s Vogue magazine was telling its readers that *"the newest thing for the sea is a jersey bathing suit as near a maillot as the unwritten law will permit."* Pictured here is Laura Louise Livingston floating on the left wearing a jersey knit bathing suit while on vacation to the Salt Spring Lake in Utah. Notice the men also have a similar one-piece bathing suit.



### **The 1930s**

By the 1930s, vacations and holidays were not just for the wealthy. As more and more travelers hit the beach the demand for suits grew. New types of fabric were emerging on the market as an alternate to the wool suits which were incredibly heavy and sagged when wet. The designs were also beginning to change with straps, drawstring backs and belts. Men's suits were still one-piece.



### **The 1940s**

Wartime production during World War II required vast amounts of cotton, silk, nylon, wool, leather, and rubber. To comply with the regulations, swimsuit manufacturers produced two-piece suits with bare midribs. The fabric shortage continued for some time after the end of the war. Men's suits were also reduced to just the bottoms. In 1946, the modern bikini was introduced.