

THE DISCOVERY

A field of flowers. A second chance.

A restoration story by Adrienne Hiebert



THE DRESS ENSEMBLE

Some dresses make you stop and look, this one made me do just that and wonder how on earth I was going to save it.

The flowers caught my eye first. Then the lovely navy outer layer, gathered at the shoulders and tied at the waist, as though it had somewhere rather nice to go—with a splendid hat of course.

And then I looked under the arms. Oh dear.

A PAPER TRAIL

A clue in a paper envelope.



I suspect this outfit may have been home sewn as there is no label present, which is not uncommon in a garment of this age. A paper pattern is one possibility, as shown in the image. I rather like imagining the fabric being chosen, and the excitement in its construction.

This was a beautiful example of late 1930's - early 1940s fashion made from a lovely soft rayon crepe material which is quite fragile—never mind the 80+ years it has survived. There were problems with the dress that had to be addressed if it was ever to be worn again and I felt like I was up for the challenge.

Simplicity 3640, c.1941; envelope copyright 1940. Image: Vintagepatterns2sew, Etsy.

Image source / Pattern date reference. Historical comparison only; exact pattern unconfirmed.

AT THE WORKTABLE

The answer was hiding inside.



THE DAMAGE



THE REMNANTS



THE WORKTABLE

The fabric beneath both sleeves had shattered, leaving large holes. There was nothing sound enough to hold a simple mend. But I wasn't ready to give up, this dress was just too wonderful to ignore.

I carefully removed the damaged fabric, then sewed strips from the garment's own seam allowances together. Piece by little piece, those remnants became enough material to rebuild both underarm areas.

It took patience, thinking and stitching. Those little scraps were earning their keep. Other seams needed mending as well but for its estimated age, the rest of the outfit was in relatively good condition.

BACK TO LIFE

Still a beautiful dress despite the damage.



THE FLORAL DRESS



THE REPAIRED SLEEVE

Now this rayon crepe outfit is wearable again, with the care a fabulous vintage garment deserves. Its repairs now belong to its story.

I like to think I save garments like these from the landfill as I know most second-hand stores would be quick to throw it out. Repair gave it another path: existing fabric kept useful, tiny remnants put to work, a lovely outfit ready to be enjoyed again.

This dress can now be purchased and enjoyed at www.luckypennyvintage.com

Have you rescued a vintage treasure?
Tell me what you couldn't leave behind!