

The Best-Dressed Doll

by Nicki Burley

There is one thing that every doll longs for most of all. If Jane Austen had written about them, she might have said, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single doll in possession of a good dress must be in want of a hundred more." Collectors know how true it is. They can be demanding creatures, and for their owners there is nothing like the thrill of opening a trunk full of outfits, savoring the tiny details one at a time. Every time a doll gets a new dress, she radiates a satisfied glow. When the dolls are happy, everyone's happy!

Though there is never enough time or fabric for every doll in the cabinet to have the new dresses longed for, there is one kind of doll that always seems to have a vast and stunning wardrobe. Fashionably ready for any occasion, it seems she gets new dresses in mere moments, to the envy of all the other dolls. Who could this marvel be? Is she a breathtaking Jumeau? A delicate French fashion? The glamorous movie star, Gene, or the style leader, Barbie? Surprisingly, she is just the humble, versatile paper doll. Whether a fairytale princess or a smiling little girl, the vision of an artist or the drawing of a child, she is always as well-dressed as she is beloved.



This is an early postcard image of the Dennison factory, which opened in 1897 and was the largest employer in Framingham, Massachusetts through most of the twentieth century. (Glenda Kitto)



The New York Dennison store was all decked out for the Christmas holiday in 1913 with crepe paper streamers and cases full of paper novelties. (Glenda Kitto)



A Little History — “How many hours of fun for so little trouble and expense!”¹

Paper dolls have a long and happy history as playthings for summer afternoons and rainy days. One of the oldest and simplest types is cut from a single long sheet of accordion-pleated paper. When opened, a whole line of dancing dolls magically appears, connected at their hands. In the eighteenth century, fancy paper jumping jacks known as *pantins* were all the rage among wealthy adults in France, and not long after this, paper dolls as we know them began to appear: printed, hand-colored figures with several changes of costumes.

Typical of early toys, the educational value of these figures was as important as their play value. Through most of history, childhood was a very short period in one’s life. It was seen as training for adulthood, rather than a chance to play and explore. Wealthy boys, for instance, might leave for boarding school by age seven and finish at a university in their early teens; wealthy girls were educated at home in the social graces and were often married before they turned twenty. According to Edith Flack Ackley, the *Journal der Moden* advertised an English paper doll with six dresses and headdresses in 1791, stating, “...It is properly a toy for little girls, but it is so pleasing and tasteful that mothers and grown women will likely also want to play with it, the more since good or bad taste in dress or coiffure can be observed and, so to speak, studied.”² In this way, paper dolls could serve the same function as fashion illustrations, replacing the older and more expensive tradition of fashion mannequin dolls shipped around the world from France for seamstresses to copy for their clients. Most likely, however, the dolls were just enjoyed, despite the advertisement’s lofty claims.

Dennison published craft booklets showing how to make elaborate costumes like these Little Bo Peep outfits, which won first prize at a 1922 contest in New Jersey. (Glenda Kitto)

This dark-haired early doll wears a lavender tissue paper dress, decorated with tissue bows, a scrap paper rose, and lace edging cut from a doily. (Glenda Kitto/ Agnes Sura)

Early dolls could also be bought with ready-made dresses. The dark green dress and hat are certainly professionally made and the others may also have been. (Agnes Sura)



As paper, originally produced from cotton and linen fibers, became more cheaply produced from wood pulp through the nineteenth century, more households could afford subscriptions to magazines such as *Godey's Lady's Book* or *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Most middle-class households also took a newspaper. To interest subscribers, the publications included paper dolls by binding them into the issues or offering them as mail-in premiums. Children with vivid imaginations also spent many hours searching through their parents' old magazines, cutting out figures and whole rooms to create families, elaborate households, and streets of well-stocked shops. The families were extremely well-dressed and wealthy, of course, since nothing they owned cost any more than the time it took to cut them from a page. Since the printed figures were already dressed, finding new outfits actually meant cutting another picture. Little girls happily ignored the fact that "Margaret May in her dancing dress" did not look quite exactly like "Margaret May in her dressing gown," and stored them all together in the same envelope.

Those without a stack of old magazines at home, ready to cut, did not need to despair, though. So long as there were bits of paper, scissors, and paste on hand, they could easily make a paper doll and her entire wardrobe. The first American book which explained how to make paper dolls at home was *Paper Dolls and How to Make Them*, written in 1856 by an anonymous mother. Its hand-drawn dolls — a bit awkward, with very long necks — and dresses were meant to be used as

patterns for a child's own efforts. Advertisements again stressed how educational the book was, not just for developing fashion sense, but also for learning to draw and keep oneself amused. Busy hands were happy hands, and there were many more idle hours to fill in the past than we have now, especially on homebound snowy winter evenings. The *New York Evangelist Review* advised, "... every little girl can learn the art, and in learning it, will have a perpetual field for the exercise of taste and ingenuity...The author has displayed great tact in giving the descriptions, and a genial loving desire to promote the happiness of children — a trait which we place among the highest virtues, in anybody." ³

In the Victorian era, German companies produced sheets of lithographed, embossed paper pictures which could be cut apart and used to decorate crafts like Valentines, Christmas decorations, or the popular scrapbook albums kept by ladies, so these images were often called "scrap." Most of these were printed on lightweight paper, but complete sets of heads and limbs, printed on heavier card, were sold for making doll figures. While making paper dolls at home was a popular craft, professionally dressed dolls could also be purchased in shops or at fairs. Some are more like figures than dolls and are permanently dressed in elaborately ruffled tissue paper gowns built onto a cardstock foundation cut in the shape of the dress. These types often seem to be the handiwork of an adult or professional. Other dolls, given actual cardstock bodies, were made into typical paper dolls with many changes of clothing.

DENNISON'S Crêpe Paper for the Children

EVERY child is attracted to the bright colors of Dennison's Crêpe and Tissue Paper, and no material lends itself so naturally to the making of Doll's Dresses.

With a blunt scissors and one of the outfits described below, happiness, contentment and quiet are assured in the household.



DENNISON'S CRÊPE AND TISSUE PAPER DOLL OUTFIT

Put up in an attractive box covered with Holly Paper, with transparent top.

Size, 14½x8. Price, 25 cents.

Contents: Assorted colors of Crêpe Paper, assorted colors of Tissue Paper, Gold and Silver Stars, Paper Lace, Jointed Dolls, Crêpe Paper Ribbon and Book of Instructions.

COMPLETE OUTFITS

Contain everything necessary for making flowers, dressing and making dolls, and decorative articles generally.

Price, 75 cents each.



In 1905, outfit No. 8 was sold in special boxes with a cut-out top and transparent film which displayed the contents; the box was available in white year-round and in a holly print for Christmas gifts. (Glenda Kitto)

Few of these fragile boxes for No. 8 are found now, as the top became brittle and discolored with age. Inside reveals the untouched contents of No. 8, showing jointed German dolls tied into place with a ribbon band. Tantalizing supplies included rolls of crepe paper, crepe ribbons and edging, Dresden trim and paper lace. (Agnes Sura)

a staple item for many years. These were originally imported from England, as were the tissue and crepe papers for which they became so well-known. By 1897, however, the company had moved to a factory facility in Framingham, Massachusetts, where it became the city's largest employer until merging with Avery in 1990. In the early 1900s, it was considered a model company, greatly admired for its "progressive company culture... establishing a kindergarten on site for employees' children, a health center, and a shareholder program for [its] workers."⁶ Dennison products were found everywhere. Anyone raised

in American public schools can recall Dennison's holiday decorations on classroom bulletin boards, crepe paper streamers at the dances, and shiny gummed stars stuck to ones very best schoolwork.

Paper dolls probably first appeared in 1890 with "The Uses of Tissue Paper," which was part Dennison catalog and part instruction booklet. The unjointed dolls were composed of brightly colored embossed heads and limbs imported from Littauer and Bauer in Germany, and assembled either at home or by Dennison onto die-cut bodies. Another early catalog called

Another catalog with set No. 8 shows Dressed Doll Sets, available with two sizes of dolls. The dolls came with three dresses and three hats, and sold for thirty-five or fifty cents. (Glenda Kitto)

Dennison's Doll Outfit No. 8

This outfit is a new combination of dolls and material for dressing. Every little mother will be delighted with it. The dolls have pretty faces and jointed arms and legs. The material will make all sorts of pretty dresses, hats, etc., and there are patterns and directions to tell how. The outfit is complete, put up in a handsome box with transparent cover. A beautiful gift for any child, and one which never fails to please.



Size, 1 1/2 x 8 inches

Contents: Assorted Colors Crêpe Paper. Assorted Colors Tissue Paper. Gold and Silver Stars. Paper Lace. Crêpe Paper Ribbon. Two Jointed Dolls, Crêpe Paper Dollies and Patterns and Directions for Making Hats and Dresses.

PRICE, 25 CENTS EACH

Dennison's Dressed Doll Sets

A Word to Little Dressmakers

These sets of dresses with the dainty hats to match are made up in the latest fascinating styles, in the prettiest colors and newest materials in Crêpe and Tissue Paper. They make a good beginning for the Doll's wardrobe and will also be found to be very helpful as models to copy.

Set No. 17

Consists of 1 Jointed Doll, 7 ins. high. 3 Dresses and 3 Hats. Price, 35 cents.

Set No. 16

Consists of 1 Jointed Doll, 9 ins. high. 3 Dresses and 3 Hats. Price, 50 cents.

Dennison's Gold and Silver Stars

For trimming Doll's dresses. Envelope containing 600 Stars in strips. Price, 10 cents per envelope.



Set No. 16 Size, 10 x 8 ins.

Dennison's Gold and Silver Paper

In sheets, size 20 x 24 ins. Price, 3 cents per sheet

Dennison's Rolls of Assorted Crêpe Paper

10 selected colors for dresses. Price, 10 cents per roll

“Art and Decoration in Tissue Paper,” is tantalizingly full of elaborately dressed paper figures which could be purchased ready-made for 10 cents to a dollar. They are covered with as many frills, ruchings, ribbons and bows as any real 1890s lady, but the booklet also featured instructions to create these outfits at home using the 130 colors of Dennison tissue paper, assuming one was skilled enough to make them. Pre-dressed dolls were no longer listed for sale after 1905, though completed outfits were occasionally available in kits.

Most commonly associated with Dennison are the “activated” dolls made from German parts, assembled with eyelets at their shoulders and hips so the limbs would move. Several sizes of children, babies, and ladies were available. Collectors have sometimes referred to the stately lady dolls by the names of famous Edwardian actresses, but catalogs simply called them “Prima Donnas” and “Ballet Dancers.” Occasionally, doll parts were used in other ways which look odd to us now, like the 1905 “Prima Donna” doll dressed as a ruffled lampshade screen.

Catalogs were originally the main source of instructions for crafts made with Dennison products, but eventually there were specialized booklets for every kind of project imaginable. In the large cities, beautifully decorated stores featured entire craft departments complete with classes. Early advertisements insisted that practically anything in the home could be made with their crepe papers: lampshades, curtains, woven baskets, bouquets of flowers, doll clothes, Halloween costumes, and all kinds of party decorations, to name just a few. There were even instructions for decorating cars and trucks as parade floats.

In a stroke of marketing genius, the company soon united their tissue papers and dolls into inexpensive children’s craft kits. It was the best of both worlds; the only limit was one’s own imagination: dolls ready to play with, and all the supplies to make their costumes, for just 25 cents to a dollar. The lower priced “Nursery Outfit” included parts for four dolls, six sheets of tissue paper, and two sheets of embossed silver paper, paper stars and paper lace, and even a ready-made



These homemade dresses were made with tissue papers from the early kits, which contained directions to replicate the complicated clothing worn by little girls at the turn of the century. (Laurie McGill)

Dennison's
Doll Trunk Outfit No. 20



Contains the latest novelties in stylish hats and gowns; made from Dennison paper.

Contents: 1 Jointed Doll, 3 Dresses, 3 Hats, 1 Parasol, 2 Miniature Rolls Crepe Paper, 6 Sheets Imported Tissue, size, 15 x 10 ins., assorted colors, Lace Paper, Gold and Silver Stars.

PRICE, \$1.00 EACH

Dennison's
Christmas Trees
FIREPROOF

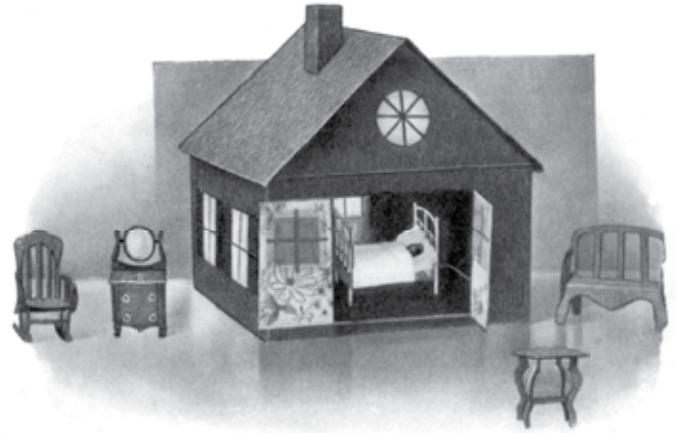
No. 21. Height 27 ins.; greatest width 20 ins. Made in 19 sections consisting of 1 base, 3 sections for trunk of tree, and 15 branches.

How to put together: Insert the branches in the holes punched in trunk, place the smaller branches at the top. Price, \$1.50 each.

No. 19 TREE, with ornaments. Price, \$2.50 each.



Dennison's
Doll House Outfit No. 18



AN IDEAL GIFT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Contents: 1 Substantial Crepe Paper House with windows, blinds, doors, and chimney. Also a Set of Furniture consisting of bed, chairs, table, bureau, pictures, rugs. 2 Jointed Dolls. 4 Small Rolls Crepe Paper, Tissue Paper, Lace and Stars.

Directions for putting together: The house is made in four parts and easily put together. Join the main parts at the back, then insert the inside roof; place the green blinds through the openings for windows—the blinds hold same in place. Put the roof in position, the tabs on the under sides are slipped in place between the outer and inner frame of the house. The house is completed by slipping the chimney into place. The furniture is easily set up and can be arranged to suit the housekeeper.

PRICE, \$1.00 EACH

During the holidays, Dennison offered special paper toys including a paper doll trunk set, Christmas tree, and dollhouse. Whether due to play or short production, these are all very rare today. (Glenda Kitto)

dress, while the "Complete Outfit" had thirty-six sheets of tissue as well as cut petal shapes and fine wire to make paper flowers. It is intriguing to wonder if any paper dolls were dressed in flower costumes. Dolls in these kits were the unjointed embossed types, meant to be pasted onto body forms. Extra dolls could also be purchased to supplement kits like the "Kindergarten Outfit," which included songs and games for the home or classroom. The earliest kits included only tissue papers, not crepe, and some had real ribbon rather than paper.

The first major change to these popular kits occurred in 1896, with the "Little Mother's Outfit of Crepe and Tissue Paper." It included jointed dolls, tissue and crepe papers, dress trimmings, and a new instruction booklet called the *Little Mother's Fashion Book*. The jointed dolls in these kits had the embossed German heads and limbs, now attached with metal eyelets. A 1902 catalog listed jointed dolls as a "new patented style," offered separately from the packaged heads and limbs which had been sold as replacement parts for the Nursery and Kindergarten Outfits. Actually, the patent for these dolls dates back to 1880, but it was not issued to either Dennison or McLaughlin, who both sold jointed dolls. Instead, these companies leased the patent and continued to use it for many years.⁷ Ladies, babies, American Indian dolls, boys and girls could be purchased separately, but the kits always included two little girls. In later years, Dennison only sold child dolls.

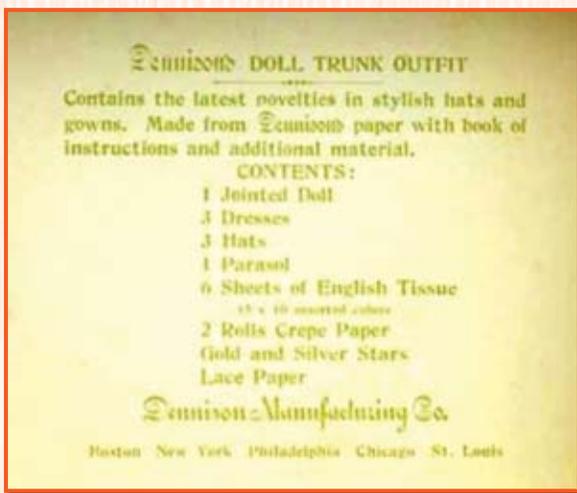
During the early 1900s, the company also sold marvelous and now very rare paper toys for the holidays, such as a Christmas tree, dollhouse, Indian tepee, and a paper doll trunk set. Inside the trunk was a doll with several professionally assembled dresses, hats, and a parasol. What makes the trunk most interesting, however, is that beneath these treasures was all the same paper and trimmings found in the paper doll kits, so the doll's little owner could continue creating a lavish wardrobe.

Though artwork on the box tops and in the instruction booklets was updated occasionally, the same set continued to be sold for over a decade. Dennison's confidently stated that this kit was "the most practical outfit ever produced, as it is not beyond the little children and is entirely satisfactory to the older ones."⁸ In the 1905 catalog, the kit got a new name: "Dennison's Crepe and Tissue Paper Doll Outfit." An innovative box top with a cut-out displayed two tied-in dolls and trimmings through a transparent paper window; it was available in white or a pretty holly print for Christmas gifts and sold for 25 cents. The boxes were so fragile that few of these have survived. By 1909 the set was simply titled "Doll Outfit No. 8," and in 1913 it was again given a new cover and renumbered 31.

The instruction booklet in set 31, with line art illustrations, was called *Dennison's Fashions for Dolls*. Just as in previous sets, children created fashionable dresses by gluing crepe paper slips to two-sided white paper foundations, then added ruffles, bows, and other details. In the past, well-to-do people



Constructed of cardboard, the trunk exterior resembles a real wooden doll's trunk of the early 1900s. The interior of the trunk set states that it included several ready-made dresses, hats, and a parasol with the doll, but also included kit materials so the child could make more outfits. (Laurie McGill)



A peek inside the trunk reveals the doll, wearing a striped and ruffled dress, her hats, and her red parasol. Her other dresses can be glimpsed through the cutouts in the top layer. (Agnes Sura)

required many changes of clothing each day. The booklet's instructions reveal this by explaining how to make everything from a "walking suit" and "high waisted frock" to "a dainty tub dress,"⁹ which in real dresses meant that it could be washed. Of the two frothy party dresses, one is made of paper lace and the other is a fantasy, studded with gilt paper stars. Suggested trimmings include paper lace insertions, crepe rosettes, and paper ribbon laced through layers of gathered crepe. Though offered in just thirty colors and some patterns, heavily textured crepe paper had many advantages over tissue. Most importantly, its strength made it easier to handle. It could be used for special effects like puffs and gathers and cut edges gently stretched to make ruffles. Before the 1930s, crepe paper was also colorfast. By 1919, tissue paper was no longer included in the paper doll kits.

Real change finally occurred in 1916 with the introduction of three new dolls for set 33. The instruction booklet noted that "The dolls are real children, some blonde, some brunette, so that all preferences may be suited. The colorings are subdued and lifelike..."¹⁰ However, it was not just the soft artistic coloring that made these dolls drastically different from their cousins. For the first time, they were also proudly American, not German. To a nation horrified by World War I, it was both patriotic and moral to embrace American-made goods, though in the past German products had enjoyed a high reputation. Even children's toys were subject to the strong anti-German sentiment which lasted through World War II in many parts of the country. In response, Dennison's rosy-cheeked new paper dolls — a jointed baby, little girl, and older girl, 6 to 9-1/2 inches tall — were a picture of the American

Here is an example of the jointed dolls included in the kits before 1916. The imported heads and limbs were manufactured on heavy paper by L & B in Germany, then assembled onto bodies by the Dennison company. (Evelyn Duncan)



From the personal collection of EK Duncan



In 1913, No. 8 was updated and renumbered 31. Instruction booklet illustrations reflected style changes in little girls' clothing. (Glenda Kitto)

spirit, playful and strong. The kit included two little girls and a baby, that was dressed either in blue or pink. The larger girl doll was available in the less expensive envelope set, number 34. All three dolls could also be purchased separately. A 1919 edition of set 33 no longer mentioned Berlin on its cover and proudly called the dolls “a wonderful improvement over the ones that for so many years have come from the other side. They are American in face and dress and true reproductions of our own children.”¹¹

The materials in kit 33 were also different than earlier sets. The instruction booklet was updated with photographs rather than drawings, and the simplified clothing revealed how fashion had changed since the war. All the paper goodies were still there — “white lace, gold and silver stars and paper, buttons, [and] flower petals”¹²— previously the main focus of dressmaking. Now, however, the kit also included a 17 x 20 inch piece of crepe paper, printed with two-sided outfits ready to cut, similar to modern paper doll booklets. These were meant to be pasted onto the included dress forms just like homemade dresses, but the results were no longer unique

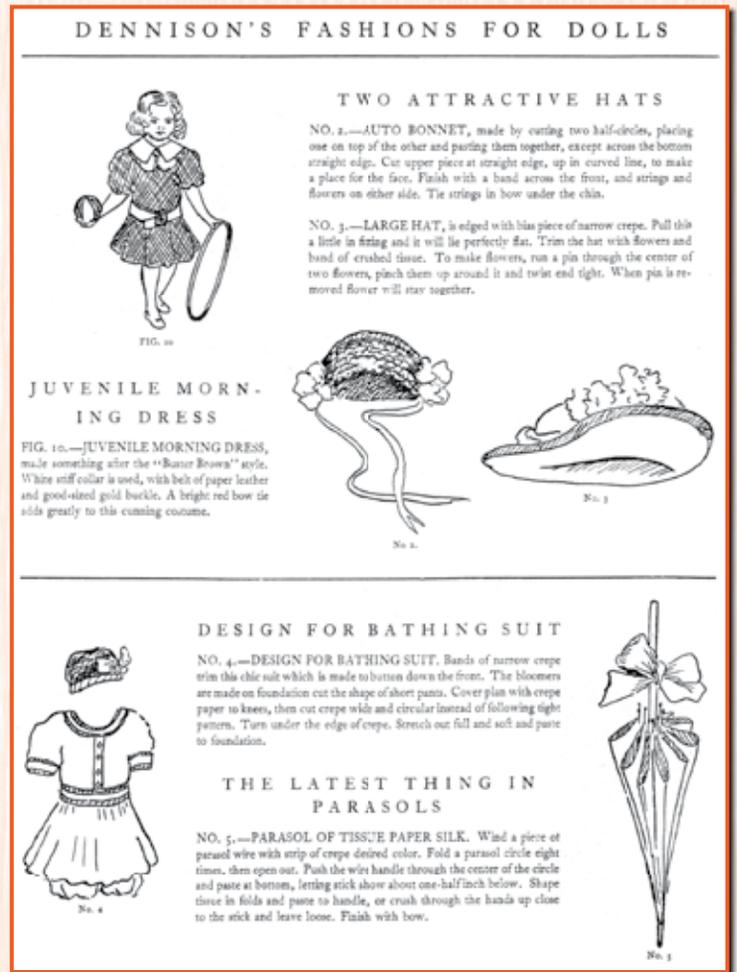
to the child. Dennison excitedly proclaimed that the expanded kit, a “distinctly new idea,” would appeal to all ages, from “tiny people”¹³ who could make the printed dresses to older children who preferred their own designs. For the first time, the emphasis was on a rapidly finished product, rather than on the creative process: “The designs for dresses and hats match each other, so that complete little costumes may be quickly made and ones which are very smart and up-to-date.”¹⁴ It is interesting to note how these small changes in children’s toys echoed larger ones in the modern world, which was rapidly inventing improvements like automobiles, airplanes, jazz music, and moving pictures. For adults and children alike, it became increasingly important to have the latest thing. “New” meant youth, vitality, and excitement. Even paper dolls needed to keep up.

New dolls appeared on the scene in sets 36 and 37, introduced in 1930. Now the dolls were also named; the family included little Bobby, his sister Betty, and their older sister Eleanor. The new instruction booklet, *Let's Play Dolls*, was illustrated with Art Deco-style drawings reminiscent of the



Two party dresses were included in No. 31, including this star costume for a fancy dress ball, which was a popular children's entertainment. (Glenda Kitto)

era's classic children's books. In friendly style, children are invited to imagine events for their paper dolls, such as a fancy dress party. Crepe paper costumes would have been familiar to children in the 1930s through Dennison party booklets. Costumes for people were sewn onto white muslin foundation slips, similar to the white paper slips beneath crepe paper doll outfits. Evidently dolls had their parties, too, as it explained, "Almost every doll at some time or other will be invited to a masquerade or Halloween party — and what an array of costumes there'll be — goblins, witches, fairies, gypsies, with each little doll trying to guess who's who!"¹⁵ The booklet suggests that "Eleanor will make a bewitching Bo-Peep," then briefly explains how to make her illustrated costume. Similarly, "Betty will flit around as a butterfly in yellow and brown, and Bobbie [sic] will have the time of his life dressed as a clown."¹⁶ Other outfits in the booklet include new play wear and a party dress for little Betty. A less-expensive envelope set containing just one doll with printed dresses also appeared during these years and was sometimes offered in magazines; called Nancy, she was actually the Betty doll.



Along with dresses for every occasion, No. 31 addressed such up-to-date dolly needs as an Automobile Bonnet, to keep her hair tidy when driving in an open car. (Glenda Kitto)

There is more emphasis on imaginative play in this set, and the paper dolls lead a very merry, carefree life, but the cheerful tone and bright colors belie its era. Though America sank deep into the Depression in the 1930s, its entertainments aimed to keep spirits high. Vaudeville, slapstick comedy, gospel music, and Hollywood glamour encouraged Americans to shed their cares for awhile and "keep on the sunny side"¹⁷ through the bad times. Even color choices were an important way for Americans to rally their spirits, as seen in the soft happy pastel shades of Depression-era quilts and glassware. It only makes sense that dolls should live from one jolly party to another.

The last line of kits appeared in the 1950s, but the "Design-a-Doll" series was nothing like before. The traditional crepe paper supplies had disappeared, replaced by pre-cut costumes for children to color. Some of the new dolls were children, but there were also fashionable older girls, reflecting the popularity of teen fashion dolls. While fun and quick to make, the dresses did not require any imagination to assemble, and one kit called "TV Playhouse" makes it seem little girls might even have been watching TV while they colored. By this time,



Cheerful new American-made dolls appeared in set No. 33 in a reaction against imported German goods during World War I. (Nicki Burley)

paper dolls had become an activity to occupy a few stray moments, rather than a complex ongoing project. The exciting magic of Dennison's early kits was gone. Once upon a time, opening a box full of colorful crepe, paper lace, and shiny stars was like opening a box of possibilities. However, crafting elaborate homemade dresses was really the occupation of a slower time, before modern conveniences. Similar to the spirit of the 1920s, young families were interested in all things progressive. Booklets of ready-to-cut brightly colored paper doll families and movie stars prevailed over the kits which required greater dexterity and patience.

For as long as they lasted, Dennison paper doll kits were the best of their kind in encouraging imaginative play. Other companies sold similar kits, like Milton Bradley's Tru-Life Paper Dolls, but their very specific methods for constructing the outfits led to dresses which were predictably similar to each other. Dennison kits offered comparatively limited instruction, with the booklets often giving just a few hints about papers, colors, and techniques for each dress. With so much left



Simpler styles were reflected in the homemade crepe paper dresses made for these dolls. (Laurie McGill)

PLAY DRESSES

Middy Suit

A "middy" costume is just the thing for little dolls to play in. It is easy to make too, so small mothers will be glad it is correct. For the skirt, take a piece of blue crepe paper the length of the form from waist line to knee and twice as wide. Plait this evenly and paste to the form. Use a second form for the blouse, covering it plain with white crepe and trimming it with blue bands and collar. The anchor emblem may be painted on or a star may be used. The hat is tam-o'-shanter style with a ribbon and rosette for trimming.





Play Dress

A cunning little dress is here illustrated for the baby doll. It is of pink crepe paper pasted on to the form plain, then cut out. If the checked effect is desired mark off the checks with a piece of crayon. In doing this care must be taken to keep the checks straight up and down and across. A little edge of white lace trims the neck and sleeves and a belt finishes the dress.

Dresses made from materials in Outfit No. 33

Photographs illustrating the booklet for No. 33 showed the trend toward simplified play clothing for children -- not so many ruffles and not such fancy fabrics as in previous decades. (Nicki Burley)

Dennison's DOLLS

SOLD SEPARATELY

The new dolls are a wonderful improvement over the ones that for so many years have come from the other side. They are American in face and dress and true reproductions of our own children. There are three distinct styles,—the baby doll (6 in. high), the little girl (7½ in. high) and the older girl (9½ in. high). Each style is made in both light and dark complexions. They are printed in soft, lifelike colors, are partially dressed and have jointed arms and legs.

Prices

No. 1	Baby	\$.05	each
No. 2	Little girl06	"
No. 3	Older girl07	"



Also available separately, the new dolls were considered "a wonderful improvement over the ones that for so many years have come from the other side," with their distinctly American look. (Nicki Burley)

A 1922 catalog showed models of dresses which could be made using the crepe papers and trims included in set No. 33 and No.34, which was a less expensive version sold in a paper envelope. (Glenda Kitto)

FASHIONS FOR LITTLE GIRL PAPER DOLL

Crepe paper with which to copy these styles is included in both Dennison's Paper Doll Outfits, No. 33 and No. 34. The trimmings will be found in Outfit No. 33 only.



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Printed crepe paper dresses, shown here surrounding a homemade red and green dress, were the other innovation in set No. 33. (Nicki Burley)

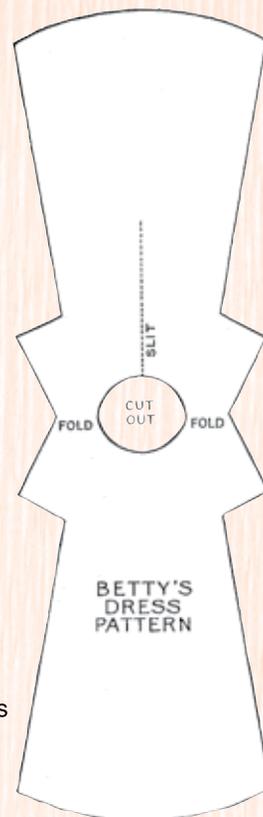
This is an uncut dress and hat from set No. 33, in fashionable and brilliant colors. Printed dresses were meant to be glued to white paper forms, just like homemade dresses. (Nicki Burley)



New dolls appeared in 1930's set No. 36, with the addition of big sister Eleanor, little sister Betty, and a little brother named Bobby. (Glenda Kitto)



Eleanor, Betty, and Bobby modeling their brightly colored printed crepe paper outfits from No. 36. (Laurie McGill)



Betty's dress pattern shows the simplified lines of children's clothing in the Depression Era. (Glenda Kitto)



Outfits created at a recent junior project day using Betty's pattern show the unlimited variety of styles possible with one simple design. (Nicki Burley)

These homemade pastel crepe dresses show how streamlined and simple children's clothing had become by the Depression years. (Laurie McGill)



to the child's imagination, no two outfits were ever quite alike, and this was their great success. The allure of paper toys is that so little is required to make so much; nearly anything is possible with just scissors and paste. Dennison paper doll kits encouraged generations of little girls to dream up designs as unique as themselves, with one idea for a dress leading so easily to another. What a marvelous way to while away even the longest summer afternoon.

With special thanks to Glenda Kitto, Agnes Sura, Evelyn Duncan, and Laurie McGill, from whom I have gleaned so much.

Print out scans of Dennison dolls for your own crafts here: www.ekduncan.com/2010/08/antique-paper-doll-collecting-always.html

Read the 1856 edition of *Paper Dolls and How to Make Them*. A Book for Little Girls here: www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/pub/PDF/C-HW007Randolph.pdf

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7. Mary Young, *20th Century Paper Dolls: Identification and Values* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 2006), 76.
- 8, 9. Dennison's Manufacturing Company, *Dennison's Fashions for Dolls*, vol. I, (Framingham, MA: Dennison Manufacturing Co., 1913).

Almost every doll at some time or other is invited to a masquerade or Halloween party—and what an array of costumes there'll be—goblins, witches, fairies, gypsies, with each little doll trying to guess who's who!

Eleanor will make a bewitching Bo-peep in her quaint little dress of long ago. The skirt is blue, and the waist and side puffs are made from the gay flowered paper; the girdle is brown, like the ones our great grandmothers wore when they were little girls. Eleanor's hat is blue, to match the dress, and is trimmed with the same little flowers that are on her dress.

Betty will flit around as a butterfly in yellow and brown, and Bobbie will have the time of his life dressed as a clown. His suit is yellow with big brown buttons and around his neck and bottoms of his knickers are ruffles of brown. His hat is made from two pointed pieces of yellow crepe paper pasted together and trimmed with round dots.



An early 1930s instruction booklet offers fancy party costumes for Eleanor, Betty and Bobby, along with suggestions for colors and trimmings. (Glenda Kitto)

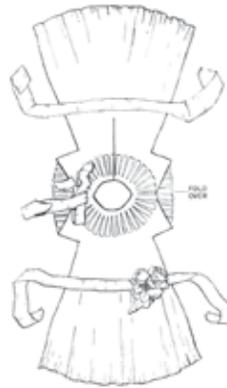
10-14. Dennison's Manufacturing Company, *Dennison's Fashions for Dolls*, Doll Outfit No. 33, (Framingham, MA: Dennison Manufacturing Co., 1919).

15, 16. Dennison's Manufacturing Company, *Let's Play Dolls*, Crepe Paper Doll Outfit 36, (Framingham, MA: Dennison Manufacturing Co., 1930).

17. Ada Blenkhorn. "Keep on the Sunny Side of Life." Keep on the Sunny Side and Blog, accessed April 27, 2014, www.keeponthesunnyside.com/song67.html.



A later edition of the No. 36 instruction booklet features party outfits with a much less elaborate, Art Deco feel. (Glenda Kitto)

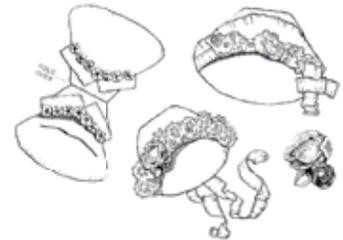


To make the skirt, cut two strips of crepe paper each one two inches wide and six inches long. Gather this into a ruffle, pasting one on the front of the dress and one on the back.

Now for the trimmings. That little strip of white fringed paper can be cut lengthwise, in half, and some of it used as a collar and to trim the sleeves. Remember that the collar is to be pasted on the right side of the dress, but the sleeves will look better if the fringe is pasted on the wrong side so that just a little will peep out beneath the pink. A blue sash with a pink rose, a cute little bow pasted on the shoulder, and Betty's new dress will be ready to wear.

A bonnet would look adorable on Betty, so let's make her a pink and white one to match her new dress. Cover the hat foundation with pink crepe paper and trim it with frills of lace cut from the little round doilies. Paste blue streamers on the back and a pink rose seal on the front.

When Betty is all dressed in her new bonnet and frock we will place her in the little wooden stand, so that every one may see how sweet and pretty she looks.



A diagram shows how dresses are made of a single sheet of paper connected at the shoulders, along with ideas to trim the front and back. Hats are made in a similar way. (Glenda Kitto)



Very often dolls need new dresses, so let's make some from plain crepe paper. There are ever so many ways to trim them, with ruffles, cute little bows, scarfs and sashes, or you can trim one just like the dress you have on. Supposing we start with a frock for Betty—she will look lovely in blue and white, and we can make it like the picture.

Eleanor

Make a foundation of white paper just the way we did for the revised dresses, then pin it to a piece of white crepe paper and cut out. Paste the crepe paper to the foundation across the shoulders, and if you want the dress to be exactly like the picture, cut the sleeves off. Paste narrow strips of blue crepe paper to the sides of the dress for a sash and three diamond shaped pieces down the front. Be sure to slit the dress down the back so it can be slipped over the doll's head. To make a hat, cut out a paper pattern, tracing it from this sheet, and cut out a piece of crepe paper, then paste the sides so it will go over the doll's head.

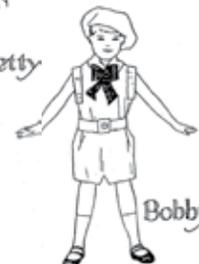
A pale pink dress would be most becoming to Eleanor.

The one pictured has a frill at each side of the skirt. The front and back of the dress are made alike, although the narrow blue scarf worn around the neck ties in the front, the ends fluttering down to the lower edge of her skirt. The pink hat has a frill across the front, and is trimmed in the back with a large bow of blue, the color of her scarf.

Bobbie is a regular boy, and wears a blue suit with a white collar and a black tie. The blue cap matches his suit.



Betty



Bobby

Here are Eleanor, Betty, and Bobby in their everyday outfits, with instructions on how to make Betty's blue and white diamond-trimmed dress. (Glenda Kitto)