Costumes were produced during the first few years of the project, starting with robes for a choral group at Milwaukee State Teachers College and costumes for a junior high operetta. Over time the costumes became more elaborate and intricate.

The project organized a community pageant of “Costumes through the Ages” which was seen by 60,000 Milwaukee area spectators. Orders were received from the University of Wisconsin Theatre Department, community players, Milwaukee and suburban schools, and institutions from other cities.
The costume unit was organized by Ruth Schoewe (Laux), shown modeling. The unit was operated in a semi-autonomous way. Each costume was unique and all designing was done within the unit.
The costume designers often consulted Milwaukee Public Library reference materials and periodicals to insure that their period pieces were authentic.
Workers made costumes for a pageant showing 5,000 years in the history of dress. At each event audience members from tax-supported institutions were encouraged to order WPA products. Here, designer Merritt Waltermire models a costume.
The fabric for WPA costumes was usually supplied by the school or theatre group. Materials for a large costume order for the Omro (Wis.) historic pageant were supplied by Hollywood studios filming the event.
Workers made not only the costumes, but accessories, including shoes, boots, sandals, headdresses, hats, gloves, jewelry and bags.
Costumes made by the project are still in use in area high schools. These dance outfits are from Bay View High School in Milwaukee.
See Mary Kellogg Rice, *Useful Work for Unskilled Women: A Unique Milwaukee WPA Project* (Milwaukee County Historical Society, 2003) for references and photo credits.