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PRESENT TRENDS IN HOME SEWING¹By RUTH O'BRIEN, *Textile Chemist in Charge*, and MAUDE CAMPBELL, *Assistant Specialist in Clothing, Textiles and Clothing Division, Bureau of Home Economics*.

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The practices of home makers in regard to home sewing are obviously in process of change, although there are no data available which show conclusively the tendencies which may be developing. The subject is of such economic importance that it is forcing itself upon the attention of many different groups. Not only those industrial organizations which deal directly with the production and sale of fabrics and clothing but also those firms which handle notions, patterns, domestic sewing machines, and other commodities connected with home sewing have a direct interest in the matter. In some instances attempts are being made to stimulate either home sewing or the purchase of ready-made garments, but often these are promoted with little knowledge of the forces which are favoring or inhibiting them.

It is unfortunate that data are not available showing the consumption of textile yardage by home makers. A recent study (8)² made by the bureau of business research, Harvard University, gives indicative but not conclusive figures. The report gives the record of sales from 10 department stores for the period from 1911 to 1925, inclusive. The total sales of ready-to-wear merchandise in these stores correspond closely with the total sales of yard goods until 1920. During the years 1921 to 1925, inclusive, there was an upward trend in the sales of ready-to-wear garments, whereas the sales of piece goods showed a marked downward inclination. Sales of cotton piece goods increased rapidly from 1911 to 1920. From

¹ Acknowledgment is hereby made to the State clothing specialists and other extension leaders; members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs; college, university, and high school teachers; and individuals who helped to gather the data in this survey. So many of these persons assumed that lack of space makes it impossible to publish their names.

² Reference is made by their numbers to "Literature cited," p. 12.

1921 through 1925 there was a marked downward trend. Sales of silks and velvets increased through 1920 almost as rapidly as the sales of cotton. There was a similar decline in 1921, but the trend from 1921 through 1925 was generally upward. On the other hand, sales of woolen and worsted piece goods increased through 1920, but not so markedly as did the sales of cotton. From 1921 to 1925, inclusive, they decreased but more gradually than in the case of cotton.

PREVIOUS STUDIES OF HOME SEWING

The first study on record which definitely attempted to report the amount of home sewing being done was made during 1912 to 1914 by Leeds (10), who questioned 60 families living in Pennsylvania. Fifteen of these families made no clothing in the home, 50 bought all or most of their clothing ready-made, all bought more than half ready-made, and over one-half of the families reported that they made more than "a few" garments at home (10, p. 51). The garments mentioned as being made at home most frequently were dresses, shirt waists, petticoats, skirts, hats, and night robes. The clothing made to order was usually women's hats and men's suits, and half a dozen women had tailor-made dresses.

In 1919 a survey was made by the office of cooperative extension work of the United States Department of Agriculture (11), covering about 10,000 representative farm homes in rural regions of the 33 Northern and Western States. Of the 9,724 who answered the question concerning home sewing, 86 per cent of those in the eastern portion of the area studied, 94 per cent in the central, and 95 per cent in the western portion reported that they were doing their own sewing. This merely gives the number who did some of their own sewing; it does not indicate the number making most or all of their clothing: The lower proportion doing home sewing in the eastern section, where presumably shopping centers were more accessible, is interesting.

Results of a study of 1,400 families living in 10 counties of Illinois were summarized by Wilkerson (12) in 1920. It showed that 20 per cent of the women made all their clothing except tailored suits and coats; 8.6 per cent did not sew; 15.4 per cent made shirts for their husbands; 65.4 per cent made dresses or underwear; and 68.7 per cent of those having children made children's clothing.

In 1922 Brown (5) made an investigation regarding clothing habits. Reports were received from about 60 married graduates of home-economics courses, 82 per cent of whom had children. They were living in 18 States. One-third of these women made practically all their children's clothing, even knitted garments; 43 per cent made pajamas and underwear for their husbands; and 31 per cent made shirts for the husbands. Six per cent of these women made none of their own clothes; over three-fourths made their own underwear and at least some of their dresses. Two of them made all of their clothes, even their hats. Fifty per cent professed to enjoy making clothing.

Andrews (3) summarizes these studies of Wilkerson and Brown and also gives the results of questioning 30 women home-economics teachers. During the preceding two years some of these teachers had made summer hats, thin silk and cotton waists, cloth (?), silk, and wash dresses, and underwear. A larger percentage had made underwear than had made any of the other garments named.

The studies of Ward, Wilkerson, and Leeds are cited by Harap (7) in his summary of the objectives involved in the teaching of construction and care of clothing.

In 1923 and 1924 the extension committee of the textile section of the American Home Economics Association under the chairmanship of Tucker (1) made a survey of 4,138 families, most of whom lived on farms and in villages in 16 States.

A similar study reported by Amery (2) in 1925 at the annual meeting of the American Home Economics Association and later published by Hastie and Gorton (3) was made by the education section of that association. The object of this study was to determine what place clothing construction should have in the school curriculum. Answers to questionnaires were received according to Amery from 2,989 city families in New York, Nebraska, Delaware, and Indiana, and from 1,450 rural families in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, New York, and Texas. While this survey shows that little sewing was being done in the city homes considered, Hastie and Gorton (3, p. 131) state that "92 per cent of the city women consider it important that girls should know how to construct garments" and "17 per cent of the city women made more clothing in the home than they did three years ago." Of the women living in rural sections, 95 per cent considered that girls should know how to sew, and 65 per cent of these women were doing more sewing than they did three years previously.

RESULTS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In 1925 and 1926 the division of textiles and clothing of the Bureau of Home Economics cooperated with Tucker in a reorganization and redistribution of her questionnaire. A special effort was made to obtain information concerning urban families, since at that time these had not been approached by any other investigator. Reports were received from 32 States and the District of Columbia, a wider area than had been previously covered in a clothing survey.

Table 1 shows how the general data obtained in this study compare with the results obtained by Tucker and by Hastie and Gorton. All percentages in this table are calculated on the basis of the total number of reports summarized. The size of the cities from which reports were received in the Hastie-Gorton survey are not given, but 2,099 came from South Bend, Ind., a city of over 70,000, according to the United States census of 1920. Only 123 reports of the Tucker survey came from cities with over 5,000 population; 1,116 of the women reporting lived in villages and 2,882 lived on farms. A few did not give the size of their community.

The answers which the Bureau of Home Economics received from cities of over 5,000 have been grouped together. Of these women who reported, 197 lived in towns of 5,000 to 10,000 and 551 lived in cities of 10,000 or over. Of the rural group 668 lived on farms and 427 lived in towns of under 5,000. The results do not give the total amount of home sewing done, but only list some of the different kinds of garments made at home and the percentage of women making each kind.

TABLE 1.—Proportion of women making certain garments for women and for girls over 14 years of age, and for children, as reported by Tucker (1), by Hastie and Gorton (2), and as found by the Bureau of Home Economics

	Tucker	Hastie and Gorton		Bureau of Home Economics		
	Rural and village	Rural	City	All communities ¹	Rural and village	Cities over 5,000
Total number of answers.....	4,338	1,450	2,888	1,992	1,996	348
Garments for women and for girls over 14 years of age:						
	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
House dresses.....	26.9	54	14	26.9	27.1	73.9
Summer wash dresses.....	34.9	78	18	32.1	36.3	78.9
Silk dresses.....	46.8	50	27	46.9	51.5	62.4
Wool dresses.....	23.3	21	56	38.2	33.5	34.3
Skirts.....	25.5	48	11	24.1	28.2	29.7
Blouses.....	42.5	55	21	41.2	43.5	36.9
Aprons.....	77.5	91	23	80.4	88.9	72.9
Coats.....	15.1	8	8	18.4	17.3	21.8
Hats.....	32.8	19	17	25.9	23.8	28.9
Slips.....		24	21	18.4	20.2	23.4
Petticoats.....		27	19	28.8	24.7	22.5
Chemises.....	12.8	58	13	46.9	48.9	48.3
Blouses.....		28	20	23.9	19.3	21.1
Nightgowns.....		11	21	18.9	26.3	34.3
Garments for children:						
Cotton dresses.....	34.9	52	16	34.3	40.9	37.9
Wool dresses.....	30.7	52	13	27.3	33.3	30.1
Cotton suits.....	23.1	23	4	17.1	20.4	13.5
Wool suits.....	26.3	15	8	11.9	14.9	8.8
Skirts or blouses.....		23	7	17.1	22.3	11.1
Coats.....	46.9	21	6	28.3	37.8	18.4
Hats.....	17.8	13	13	14.8	17.3	13.3
Sleeping garments.....		53	16	38.8	43.8	31.3
Drawers or bloomers.....	12.9			14.7	41.0	37.4
Petticoats.....	12.9		19	11.2	35.3	38.8
Slips.....				21.0	28.4	23.4

¹ 128 did not give size of community.
² Grouped as "Undergarments."

³ Undergarments and sleeping garments.

The general results from rural and village families in regard to garments made for adults are close in all three surveys, the greatest variation in any two groups being slightly more than 22 per cent for skirts and blouses. It would, therefore, appear that the rural and village families studied by the Bureau of Home Economics were representative and that the factors influencing the home sewing being done by them were typical of present conditions.

The great differences between rural and city families of the Hastie-Gorton survey and also between the city groups of that survey and those of the Bureau of Home Economics survey may be due to the fact that 70 per cent of the city answers of the Hastie-Gorton report came from one city.

The least difference found for any one garment by the different surveys was for silk dresses, which was 15.6 per cent. The variation in wool dresses was 21.3 per cent.

It is difficult to interpret the differences reported in the amount of children's clothing made, since the percentage of families having children and the number of children in each was not determined in all the surveys. Tucker reports the average number of children per family investigated as 2.9 and the average number in the family as 4.02. Hastie and Gorton give no data on the subject. The percentage of families not having children 14 years of age and younger studied in the Bureau of Home Economics survey is given in Table 3, and the size of the families studied is given in Table 5.

The results of the bureau survey, which was made by the questionnaire method, are given in Tables 2 to 9. Blanks were sent to high-school, college, and university teachers, to presidents of women's clubs, and to extension leaders for distribution. The data are compared, whenever possible, with the results obtained by Tucker, since this study was made in cooperation with her and as a continuation of her survey. With the exception of Table 5, which is arranged according to the number of persons in the family, all the tables are arranged according to the size of the community in which the family lived and according to the income which the family received. The size of the community was not stated in 138 reports, and 505 failed to give the income.

GARMENTS MADE AT HOME

In Tables 2, 3, and 4 are shown the percentage of women who stated that they made the garments named for women and for children. In Tables 2 and 3, the percentages are based on the total number of reports summarized from each community and each income group. The percentages in Table 4 are calculated on the basis of the number of families having children 14 years of age and younger. The figures given under "Women not answering this question" in these three tables include those who may not sew, and those who did not answer the question as directed or who may have left it blank through carelessness.

TABLE 2.—Proportion of women making certain garments for women and for girls over 14 years of age, classified by size of community and by income groups

	Average number in family		Percentage of women making—																																				
	No.	No.	Reports summarized		Women not answering this question		House dresses		Summer wash dresses		Silk dresses		Wool dresses		Skirts		Blouses		Aprons		Coats		Blas		Slips		Petticoats		Chemises		Bloomers		Nightgowns		Kimonos				
			Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent				
Summary of all reports.....	8,011	1,981	8,790	982	1,895	936	2,841	45	2,696	435	4,211	9,78	6,826	9,85	9,011	9,778	9,903	9																					
Size of community:																																							
Rural.....	4.0	693	4,138	1,185	6,895	5,031	8,48	6,46	6,868	6,27	9,34	4,80	6,86	5,12	2,75	6,87	2,81	2																					
Under 5,000.....	3.7	427	7,584	965	2,92	5,62	7,47	5,42	5,86	1,26	7,32	1,81	4,61	5,53	8,64	5,84	2,85	1																					
5,000 to 10,000.....	3.8	597	8,678	6,80	1,88	4,34	8,38	5,88	5,77	1,22	3,31	8,78	1,86	2,43	6,55	2,77	4,47	7																					
Over 10,000.....	3.5	857	8,472	8,78	4,81	3,31	9,48	7,58	9,71	1,21	3,26	1,71	1,83	2,46	1,58	1,72	5,83	7																					
Not given.....	8.3	329	28	4,38	6,87	1,46	2,32	1,58	2,52	6,82	2,37	7,28	9,67	6,36	9,55	6,62	3,88	4																					
Income:																																							
Under \$1,000.....	2.7	151	8,636	7,85	4,53	8,53	6,48	3,41	6,85	4,28	5,35	1,78	1,62	2,46	4,78	6,88	7	44																					
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	3.0	479	4,532	1,84	8,62	8,53	9,48	1,44	1,85	7,27	2,55	9,78	9,53	7,48	9,97	9,84	4,32	8																					
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	3.7	387	4,738	6,86	4,86	6,83	8,48	3,48	9,85	6,78	1,25	9,86	8,64	2,78	8,64	5,85	7,81	7																					
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	4.0	165	7,281	6,83	5,84	5,38	9,36	4,42	5,78	9,10	5,27	1,78	8,52	2,46	6,55	8,77	5,83	3																					
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	4.1	111	11,723	8,77	4,83	9,54	6,36	9,41	4,71	1,80	6,20	7,78	2,46	1,28	6,54	6,73	8,48	6																					
\$5,000 or over.....	4.4	189	8,273	4,73	7,37	8,86	8,34	9,28	5,77	5,12	7,34	1,73	7,84	8,43	2,48	9,79	5,45	1																					
Not given.....	4.2	865	12,975	6,78	8,51	5,52	5,42	8,36	3,73	4,80	6,26	1,73	2,84	1,45	2,68	6,74	1,44	7																					

From the summary in Table 2 it is seen that 80 per cent or more of the women made house dresses, summer wash dresses, aprons, and nightgowns. In general more of the women living in the smaller communities than of those in the larger places made these garments. The exceptions were the number of women making kimonos, chemises, and silk dresses. The percentage that made silk dresses varies only slightly in any community. Many more in all community groups

made house dresses and summer wash dresses than made silk dresses and wool dresses. As many made silk dresses as made wool dresses, except in the rural communities and in the case of those who did not report the size of the community.

In the classification by income groups the largest percentages of women making most of the garments are in the \$2,000 to \$2,999 group, the only exception being those of the women making house dresses, nightgowns, bloomers, coats, and aprons. The highest percentage making the first three of these garments is in the "Under \$1,000" group. Apparently size of family is not an influencing factor in this grouping. However, Table 5 shows that as the size of family increases a larger percentage of women made more kinds of garments. Therefore, if the size of family were a constant factor in Table 2, the percentages in the higher income groups might tend to be even lower. The data in Table 2 show that in general a larger percentage of those in the lowest income group than those in the highest income group made the garments.

The percentage of women making a certain number of the garments named are given in Table 3, which is based on the 1,981 reports used for Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 3.—Proportion of women, classified by size of community and by income groups, making garments for women, for girls over 14 years of age, and for children

	Average number in family	Reports received	Percentage of women making garments for women and for girls over 14				Percentage of women making children's garments				
			Women not answering	1 to 3 kinds	4 to 10 kinds	11 to 15 kinds	Women not answering	Families with no children under 15	1 to 4 kinds	5 to 8 kinds	9 to 12 kinds
				Per cent	Per cent	Per cent			Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Summary of all reports...	4.0	Number 1,981	Per cent 8.9	Per cent 23.5	Per cent 36.4	Per cent 43.9	Per cent 53.9	Per cent 49.1	Per cent 33.9	Per cent 26.7	Per cent 12.3
Size of community:											
Rural.....	4.5	968	9.1	9.1	36.2	45.1	66.1	37.6	35.3	27.1	17.6
Under 1,000.....	3.7	427	7.5	11.9	34.2	48.5	54.5	53.4	33.1	18.4	12.9
1,000 to 10,000.....	3.9	197	8.6	18.3	36.6	37.6	51.7	45.7	37.3	30.3	35.6
Over 10,000.....	3.5	351	9.4	18.6	33.8	35.8	43.7	60.3	32.9	15.9	7.3
Not given.....	4.3	198	19.2	11.6	34.8	29.6	48.8	52.3	8.7	13.8	9.4
Income:											
Under \$1,000.....	3.7	151	8.6	11.9	41.9	38.4	48.3	43.7	34.6	34.8	12.6
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	3.6	473	8.5	10.6	35.9	45.8	56.6	48.8	32.9	30.6	15.4
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	3.7	367	5.7	10.6	31.2	52.4	56.8	55.2	32.6	31.9	14.4
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	4.0	396	7.2	17.9	38.9	35.8	51.3	47.7	34.6	36.1	8.7
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	4.1	111	11.7	18.6	31.5	39.7	38.7	49.6	35.3	33.8	4.8
\$5,000 or over.....	4.4	158	9.5	24.1	38.1	33.6	37.7	57.9	38.4	15.9	6.3
Not given.....	4.3	308	13.9	12.9	46.9	32.3	57.9	49.7	32.6	18.6	11.3

The largest percentage of women making garments for women and girls made 11 to 15 kinds, and over one-third made 6 to 10 kinds. In other words over 75 per cent of the women were making 8 or more kinds of garments. The largest percentage making children's garments made 5 to 8 kinds, while the percentages making 1 to 4 kinds and those making 9 to 12 kinds are practically equal. Approximately half of the families had no children under 15 years of age, which probably accounts for the small percentages of women making chil-

dren's garments. However, many of the women made garments for children when there were no children in the family.

As the size of the community increases the percentage of women making from 1 to 5 kinds of garments for women and for girls over 14 years of age increases. The largest percentages of women making the most different kinds of garments for women and girls were in the rural districts and the small towns. The size of the community seems to have little or no effect on the percentage making from 6 to 10 kinds of garments but causes the greatest variation in the groups making 1 to 5 kinds.

In the classification by income the percentage of women making 1 to 5 kinds of garments for women and for girls over 14 years old increases with the income. Approximately half of the women in the \$1,000 to \$1,999 and the \$2,000 to \$2,999 groups made 11 to 15 kinds. Throughout all the income groups there was least variation in the percentages making 6 to 10 kinds.

In all groups the percentage of women making children's clothes decreases as the size of the community increases. Classified by income groups the number answering in most cases is too small to afford any definite comparisons.

In Table 4 is given the percentage of women having children under 15 years of age and younger who made the children's garments named in the questionnaire.

TABLE 4.—Proportion of women making garments for children under 15 years of age, classified by size of community and by income groups, and based on the number of families having children under 15 years of age

	Number of families with children	Women not answering this question	Percentage of women making garments—												
			Bumpers	Coatlin dresses	Wool dresses	Coatlin suits	Wool suits	Shirts	Coats	Hats	Night garments	Drawers or bloomers	Petticoats	Slips	
Summary of all reports	1,008	Per cent 19.3	Per cent 26.1	Per cent 26.9	Per cent 49.3	Per cent 30.5	Per cent 31.5	Per cent 36.3	Per cent 42.0	Per cent 25.6	Per cent 58.9	Per cent 60.7	Per cent 34.2	Per cent 55.0	
Size of community:															
Rural	417	32.9	27.6	61.3	34.4	33.8	27.1	38.4	43.8	27.0	56.7	57.4	37.4	55.0	
Under 5,000	386	27.9	25.7	64.3	36.5	31.2	19.1	38.3	43.2	27.1	54.7	57.2	37.3	55.3	
5,000 to 10,000	307	21.9	35.5	53.3	39.0	32.7	15.9	37.1	38.3	38.5	58.8	54.9	36.6	46.7	
10,000 to 25,000	219	22.8	35.6	58.9	42.0	35.6	18.7	18.4	38.4	38.9	58.9	58.1	33.6	50.7	
Over 25,000	98	45.3	30.2	38.4	32.3	39.7	13.1	18.2	24.3	35.9	43.4	34.8	28.8		
Not given															
Income:															
Under \$1,000	85	17.4	35.2	58.5	36.0	36.0	26.0	36.2	41.2	21.2	72.9	61.4	50.4	47.1	
\$1,000 to \$1,999	342	14.4	48.4	55.7	57.5	36.8	26.8	34.4	31.3	39.8	58.8	58.9	39.8	55.4	
\$2,000 to \$2,999	359	12.7	48.5	64.9	48.8	45.3	29.5	34.4	44.4	32.8	58.8	58.8	39.8	55.3	
\$3,000 to \$3,999	302	14.7	42.2	63.7	46.6	34.3	29.5	33.5	38.5	38.7	58.7	58.7	34.7	51.0	
\$4,000 to \$4,999	36	28.4	14.3	48.4	38.9	17.9	14.3	18.3	23.0	17.5	48.7	48.7	38.8	45.4	
\$5,000 to \$9,999	12	28.0	38.0	55.2	44.4	28.1	12.0	12.0	12.0	28.0	58.7	61.0	48.0	47.2	
\$10,000 or over	23	28.0	36.2	52.1	48.0	32.0	17.0	12.0	14.7	36.0	52.7	61.7	41.7	46.0	
Not given															

From the summary it will be noted that a larger percentage of women made night garments than made any other garment. It is also shown that 42 per cent made coats and 25 per cent made hats for their children. In this group a much higher percentage (19.3) of the women than in Table 2 (8.9) failed to answer the question.

Fewer women in the cities than in the rural districts were making the children's garments. In general the percentage making each garment decreases as the size of the community increases.

Classified by income, the highest percentage making each garment, except coats, is found either in the \$1,000 to \$1,999 group or in the \$2,000 to \$2,999 group. The latter group has a larger number of the high percentages.

RELATION OF HOME SEWING TO SIZE OF FAMILY

Table 5 gives the number of women making the garments listed in Tables 2 and 4 for women and children, classified according to the size of the family, together with the number making the five garments for men listed in the questionnaire, namely, coats, shirts, trousers, pajamas, and bathrobes. There were a few families having more than nine members, but the number was too small for comparison.

TABLE 5.—Relation between size of family and number of different garments made at home for men, women, and children.

	Number of families	Women not answering this question	Percentage of women making—			
			1 to 8 kinds	9 to 16 kinds	17 to 24 kinds	25 to 32 kinds
Summary of all reports.....	1,926	Per cent 8.5	Per cent 24.4	Per cent 41.1	Per cent 21.5	Per cent 6.1
Number of persons in family:						
1.....	101	10.9	24.7	21.5	3.9	9.9
2.....	741	3.4	23.9	42.7	2.5	9.9
3.....	426	7.9	25.9	43.9	15.9	4.5
4.....	144	5.9	22.5	49.9	28.1	7.4
5.....	262	8.5	26.3	49.1	25.9	7.6
6.....	173	2.9	13.3	34.1	28.7	11.9
7 to 9.....	145	4.2	12.1	29.7	49.9	13.9

From the summary in Table 5 it is seen that nearly 70 per cent of the women were making 9 or more kinds of garments. As the size of the family increases the percentage making 17 to 24 and 25 to 32 kinds of garments increases, while the percentage making 1 to 8 and 9 to 16 kinds decreases. In other words, the more members there were in the family, the more kinds of garments were made at home.

In the data collected from this survey it was also found that 22.2 per cent of the women were making shirts, 23.2 per cent were making pajamas, and 35.6 per cent were making one or more kinds of garments for men. Tucker reported that 36.8 per cent of the women were making shirts and 25.8 per cent were making pajamas for their husbands or adult boys.

REASONS FOR MAKING GARMENTS AT HOME

The percentage of women who sewed because of some of the reasons suggested in the questionnaire are given in Table 6. The percentages are based on the number of women in each group who answered this question.

TABLE 6.—Reasons for making garments at home given by women, classified by size of community and by income groups

	Women answering this question	Good stores for ready-made garments inaccessible	Better materials in homemade garments	Lower cost of homemade garments	Homemade garments more nearly meet individual needs
Summary of all answers.....	Number 1,587	Per cent 7.8	Per cent 75.4	Per cent 90.2	Per cent 84.6
Size of community:					
Rural.....	572	13.7	78.4	93.3	80.8
Under 5,000.....	380	8.9	79.8	98.2	84.2
5,000 to 10,000.....	173	1.7	73.8	87.7	85.8
Over 10,000.....	487	2.5	79.9	93.4	81.6
Not given.....	86	7.9	62.8	91.8	81.0
Income:					
Under \$1,000.....	126	18.9	73.7	94.4	47.6
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	415	4.5	77.8	91.8	82.5
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	368	9.4	80.9	91.5	84.3
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	178	4.5	78.1	91.6	87.2
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	87	3.1	78.2	86.5	81.5
\$5,000 or over.....	145	5.5	62.9	73.7	82.7
Not given.....	373	8.9	71.8	90.4	47.9

In the summary it is shown that 90.2 per cent of all the women answering the question sewed because of lower cost and that 75.4 per cent of them sewed because of better materials in homemade garments.

The greatest variation is in the percentage of women, classified by size of community, answering on "Good stores for ready-made garments inaccessible." In the rural sections 13.7 per cent gave this reason, as compared with 1.7 per cent in cities from 5,000 to 10,000 and 2.5 per cent in cities over 10,000. There is only a slight variation in the percentages given under the reasons "Better materials in homemade garments" and "Lower cost of homemade garments." Those in rural communities were apparently not so much concerned about suiting individual needs as were those in the cities. This reason seems to gain in importance as the size of the community increases.

More of those having the lowest income sewed because of lower cost of homemade garments than did those having the highest income, there being a difference of 20.7 per cent. More (11.7 per cent) of those having the lowest income sewed because of better materials than did those having the highest income. The group with an income from \$2,000 to \$2,999 seemed to be most interested in satisfying individual needs and in having better materials.

Studies by Baker (4) and Glanton (5) attempted to evaluate the savings realized and the time spent in home sewing. They showed that the amount saved depended upon the kind and quality of the garment made.

It is to be regretted that the questionnaire did not ask how many sewed because they enjoy it. This reason was volunteered by many women and indicates that not all are sewing entirely because of economic reasons. Other reasons volunteered were: Homemade clothing is made better and wears better; it fits better; the style, design, and color combinations are more attractive; and the garments have more individuality.

In the Tucker survey three questions were asked in regard to why sewing was done at home. More than 80 per cent found it an economy, over 50 per cent sewed because they enjoyed it, and more than 50 per cent said they were able to have clothes that pleased them better than ready-made garments. These percentages are based on the total number of reports summarized. Other reasons corresponding to those given in the bureau questionnaire were volunteered.

DIFFICULTIES WITH HOME SEWING

A summary of the answers to the queries on difficulties in home sewing is given in Table 7. Only the women who answered the question are counted. The first four difficulties might be classified under "selection" and the last four under "construction." In most cases several difficulties were checked by each person answering.

TABLE 7.—Difficulties in home sewing given by women, classified by size of community and by income groups

	Women answering this question	Choosing becoming materials	Choosing becoming and practical designs	Choosing satisfactory patterns	Regulating good values in materials	Using patterns	Altering patterns	Fitting	Finishing
Summary of all answers.	Number 1,368	Per cent 34.9	Per cent 27.5	Per cent 23.6	Per cent 19.3	Per cent 10.2	Per cent 24.4	Per cent 31.1	Per cent 22.1
Size of community:									
Rural.....	452	37.6	38.7	35.7	25.9	13.7	34.8	35.5	25.4
Under 5,000.....	312	35.8	38.9	35.3	17.3	8.7	32.4	32.1	17.3
5,000 to 10,000.....	146	31.2	35.3	32.6	18.5	5.2	27.4	34.9	24.7
Over 10,000.....	398	18.2	18.9	18.8	18.7	8.6	38.3	35.9	21.8
Not given.....	62	15.9	14.1	23.7	13.7	11.1	33.3	33.3	33.7
Income:									
Under \$1,000.....	69	45.5	44.4	39.4	22.2	13.1	32.2	39.3	27.3
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	335	27.8	31.7	23.4	25.4	12.4	27.2	33.5	23.9
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	390	26.6	29.3	24.3	19.4	10.3	26.4	32.4	25.4
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	181	18.3	26.5	23.4	21.3	7.9	33.9	37.1	24.3
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	82	14.3	13.3	22.9	22.2	13.3	29.3	29.9	23.9
\$5,000 or over.....	136	12.9	18.7	17.4	13.9	3.7	28.4	25.9	17.4
Not given.....	292	21.3	26.9	22.4	13.7	8.9	25.3	27.9	17.1

According to the summary figures in Table 7, the most outstanding difficulty of all was fitting, and the next greatest problem was that of choosing becoming and practical designs. The difficulty which was found the least number of times was using patterns.

In general, as the size of the community increases, the percentage of women having difficulties with selection becomes smaller. The percentages of those having difficulties with construction do not vary greatly.

Classified by income groups, the percentages of women having difficulties with selection in general become smaller as the income increases, and the percentages having construction difficulties vary only slightly and not in a decreasing order. Some of the most outstanding percentages are those in the "Under \$1,000" group. Of these, 45.5 per cent had difficulty choosing becoming materials, 44.4 per cent had difficulty in choosing becoming and practical designs, and 38.4 per cent found it difficult to choose satisfactory patterns.

The next highest percentage shown in Table 7 is the 37.1 per cent in the \$3,000 to \$3,999 group who reported difficulty in fitting.

The Tucker survey reported the following difficulties, the percentages being based on the total number of schedules summarized.

Difficulty reported:	Per cent
Altering patterns.....	52.2
Choosing becoming designs.....	51.1
Fitting.....	39.3
Choosing satisfactory patterns.....	49.3
Choosing suitable materials.....	48.4
Finishing.....	45.0
Using patterns.....	35.3
Cutting.....	19.9
Preparing material for cutting.....	7.4

In the Tucker survey, when asked for other difficulties, 136 women named "fitting sleeves," and 23 said that the most trouble they had was in fitting. This reaffirms the statement that fitting is one of the outstanding difficulties women have in home sewing.

SEWING MACHINES OWNED AND ATTACHMENTS USED

The percentage of women who owned sewing machines and the proportion who used attachments are given in Table 8. In some cases the kind of power used was not given; in others it was stated that the machine was operated by both foot and motor power. Because many of the women not owning a sewing machine said they used certain attachments, the percentages using attachments are based on the total number of reports summarized in each group. The percentage of women who said they did not own a sewing machine can be obtained by subtracting the sum of the percentage owning a machine and the percentage of those not answering from 100.

The summary shows that practically 90 per cent of all reporting had sewing machines and that 13 per cent of all reporting operated their machines by motor power. Practically 40 per cent did not answer the question on attachments. The hemmer and the ruffler were used more than any other attachments. The braider was used the least of the four attachments listed in the table. All others were mentioned by so few that it seemed inadvisable to tabulate them.

The percentage of women owning sewing machines decreases as the size of the community increases. The percentage having foot-power machines decreases and the percentage having motor-power machines increases with the increased size of the community. The highest percentage (25.4) having motor-power machines lived in communities of from 5,000 to 10,000 population.

More than one-third of all community groups failed to answer the question concerning the use of attachments. This may signify that a large number of these women did not use them. The percentage using the attachments named is slightly higher in the rural communities and in communities under 5,000 than in the two larger community groups.

TABLE 8.—Sewing machines owned and attachments used by women, classified by size of community and by income groups

	Reports	Women not answering this question	Women sewing—		
			Foot, hand, and motor-power sewing machines	Foot-power sewing machines	Motor-power sewing machines
Summary of all reports.....	Number 1,063	Per cent 1.8	Per cent 89.9	Per cent 35.3	Per cent 13.9
Size of community:					
Rural.....	668	1.3	82.7	37.2	1.0
Under 5,000.....	427	1.4	89.3	77.5	34.8
5,000 to 10,000.....	197	2.9	86.3	63.4	28.4
Over 10,000.....	233	1.1	85.6	65.3	21.4
Not given.....	238	2.8	87.6	68.1	25.3
Income:					
Under \$1,000.....	151	2.6	82.6	37.4	3.0
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	473	1.2	85.2	35.1	4.8
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	387	1.5	86.9	39.3	13.3
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	193	1.9	89.7	39.1	29.0
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	111	1.8	87.7	66.6	27.9
Over \$5,000.....	138	0.8	81.3	66.3	26.8
Not given.....	355	1.9	84.1	64.4	18.1

	Women not answering this question	Women using—					
		No attachments	All attachments	Buffer	Tucker	Blender	Hammer
Summary of all reports.....	Per cent 39.8	Per cent 12.8	Per cent 2.4	Per cent 28.5	Per cent 11.3	Per cent 6.8	Per cent 11.4
Size of community:							
Rural.....	36.4	19.4	5.1	31.9	18.4	7.6	34.3
Under 5,000.....	24.9	18.4	4.8	33.0	28.9	7.2	34.2
5,000 to 10,000.....	36.9	18.2	6.1	25.4	17.7	6.1	34.0
Over 10,000.....	37.4	15.0	4.3	36.1	23.9	6.3	33.1
Not given.....	64.4	8.7	5.8	33.8	7.2	3.9	14.8
Income:							
Under \$1,000.....	36.4	9.9	2.6	34.4	17.9	6.8	36.1
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	33.9	13.9	4.8	32.7	23.2	8.9	34.2
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	31.9	13.9	6.2	31.5	28.9	6.3	37.9
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	32.3	16.9	1.5	34.3	28.7	6.1	40.4
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	26.1	16.2	11.7	36.8	26.1	5.4	34.3
Over \$5,000.....	41.9	16.1	3.1	39.7	17.8	8.3	32.4
Not given.....	66.4	8.3	1.2	36.6	11.7	3.0	21.8

Beginning with the group having an income of \$1,000 to \$1,999, the percentage owning sewing machines increases with the size of the income. The percentage using motor power increases steadily with the increase of the income, and the percentage of those using foot-power machines decreases with the increase in income.

The question on attachments was not answered by 26 per cent or more of all income groups. The highest percentages reporting that they used none are found in the three highest income groups. The highest percentage reporting use of all attachments is in the \$4,000 to \$4,999 group. However, this group has the least number of women answering, and the result may not, therefore, be conclusive. The highest percentage in any group reporting the use of an attachment is the 40.4 per cent in the \$3,000 to \$3,999 group using the hammer.

From these figures, it seems that a large part of the labor-and-time-saving equipment of the sewing machines is unproductive and that training and encouragement in the use of attachments would greatly increase efficiency in home sewing. Ninety-five per cent of the 9,560 families surveyed by Ward (11), 97.2 per cent of those reported by Tucker (1), and 98 per cent of the rural families and 92 per cent of the city families surveyed by Hastie and Gorton (9) had sewing machines in their homes.

REASONS FOR PURCHASING GARMENTS READY-MADE

The reasons given for buying clothes ready-made are summarized in Table 9. Only the women who answered the question are included in these percentages. In most reports more than one reason was checked.

TABLE 9.—Reasons for purchasing garments ready-made given by women, classified by size of community and by income groups

	Women answering this question	Better style and design in ready-made garments	Ready-made garments save time and energy	Unable to make clothes at home
Summary of all answers.....	Number 1,473	Per cent 68.4	Per cent 73	Per cent 25.9
Size of community:				
Rural.....	653	66.1	67.3	26.8
Under 2,000.....	334	74.4	68.4	28.5
2,000 to 10,000.....	153	73.3	71.3	23.3
Over 10,000.....	653	66.6	67.2	22.6
Not given.....	13	61.6	66.7	18.1
Income:				
Under \$1,000.....	89	63.7	66.4	23.6
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	342	68.3	68.6	26.9
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	315	66.1	74.3	23.7
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	368	73.9	81.2	26.6
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	96	71.7	74.7	25.3
\$5,000 or over.....	341	71.6	80.1	18.9
Not given.....	327	65.7	68.6	26.3

According to the summary figures, a large percentage of the women bought garments ready made to save time and energy and to get better style and design. The factor having the least influence was "Unable to make clothes at home." Other reasons volunteered are: Difficult to fit self, poor health, not skilled with silk and wool, get full effect with ready-mades, better tailoring, difficult to get yard goods and trimmings, and unable to get a good dressmaker.

In the classification by communities it is shown that a large percentage bought ready-made garments for better style and design and to save time and energy. The variation is greater on the latter reason, and the percentage giving this answer increases with the size of the community. A few more women in the rural communities than in the cities reported that they were unable to make their clothing.

As the income increases a larger percentage buy because of better style and design and also because ready-made garments save time and energy. More women in the low-income groups than in the high-income groups buy because they were unable to make garments.

The Tucker survey reports that 56.6 per cent of the women bought ready-made garments because of less trouble, 50.4 per cent because of greater satisfaction, 36.5 per cent because they found it an economy, and 12.7 per cent because they did not know how to sew. In this survey a question was also asked regarding the difficulties women have in buying clothing. Of the total number of replies summarized, 49.2 per cent reported difficulty in choosing suitable styles, 43.9 per cent in choosing suitable and becoming materials, 42.4 per cent in choosing durable materials, 40.1 per cent in choosing becoming colors, 39.5 per cent in choosing good designs, and 29.4 per cent in recognizing good values. In addition to these difficulties 351 of the 4,138 women said they could not find good materials at a reasonable price, 226 reported that they could not find styles for the stout person, and 158 said they had trouble in getting fitted. A few others reported that they had trouble in obtaining good design and material at moderate prices, in judging fast colors, and in finding cheap material that would look well and launder well.

In the bureau survey, 76.1 per cent of all women reporting said that they remade garments for men, women, or children. Ten per cent more of those living in the rural communities than of those living in the city remade garments (rural, 81.1 per cent; city, 71 per cent), and practically 10 per cent more of those with an income of under \$1,000 (80.8 per cent) than of those with an income of \$5,000 or over (71.8 per cent) reconstructed garments.

Tucker found that 52 per cent of the total number reporting reconstructed garments for children, 51.8 per cent for themselves, and 3 per cent for their husbands.

CONCLUSIONS

A large percentage of the women reached by this survey were still making many garments for women and children. More than two-thirds of the women stated that they were making nine or more of the kinds of garments for men, women, and children listed in this survey. More of those living in the smaller communities than of those living in the larger communities made these garments. A larger percentage of those having a low income than of those having larger incomes made the garments named; however, the highest percentages appeared in the majority of cases in the \$2,000 to \$2,999 income group.

The more persons there were in the families studied, the more different kinds of garments were being made in the home.

Fitting was one of the greatest difficulties which the women said they encountered in making garments. Others which were nearly as troublesome were altering patterns and the choosing of becoming materials, satisfactory patterns, and becoming and practical designs.

A high percentage of women owned sewing machines, but only a low percentage used all of the attachments. The hemmer was used the most, but less than one-third of the women took advantage of that attachment.

A large percentage of the women stated that they reconstructed clothing for some member of the family.

The reasons given for buying ready-made garments were to save time and energy, to get better style and design, and to get greater

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MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATION NO. 4

WASHINGTON, D. C.

SEPTEMBER, 1927

PRESENT TRENDS IN HOME SEWING¹

By RUTH O'BRIEN, *Textile Chemist in Charge*, and MAUDE CAMPBELL, *Assistant Specialist in Clothing, Textiles and Clothing Division, Bureau of Home Economics*.

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The practices of home makers in regard to home sewing are obviously in process of change, although there are no data available which show conclusively the tendencies which may be developing. The subject is of such economic importance that it is forcing itself upon the attention of many different groups. Not only those industrial organizations which deal directly with the production and sale of fabrics and clothing but also those firms which handle notions, patterns, domestic sewing machines, and other commodities connected with home sewing have a direct interest in the matter. In some instances attempts are being made to stimulate either home sewing or the purchase of ready-made garments, but often these are promoted with little knowledge of the forces which are favoring or inhibiting them.

It is unfortunate that data are not available showing the consumption of textile yardage by home makers. A recent study (8)² made by the bureau of business research, Harvard University, gives indicative but not conclusive figures. The report gives the record of sales from 10 department stores for the period from 1911 to 1925, inclusive. The total sales of ready-to-wear merchandise in these stores correspond closely with the total sales of yard goods until 1920. During the years 1921 to 1925, inclusive, there was an upward trend in the sales of ready-to-wear garments, whereas the sales of piece goods showed a marked downward inclination. Sales of cotton piece goods increased rapidly from 1911 to 1920. From

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MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATION NO. 4

WASHINGTON, D. C.

SEPTEMBER, 1927

PRESENT TRENDS IN HOME SEWING¹

By RUTH O'BRIEN, *Textile Chemist in Charge*, and MAUDE CAMPBELL, *Assistant Specialist in Clothing, Textiles and Clothing Division, Bureau of Home Economics*.

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