Learning to Sew : Extension Circular 4-01-2

Allegra E. Wilkens

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LEARNING TO SEW

Prepared for Nebraska clothing club girls.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE EXTENSION SERVICE AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING.

W. H. BROKAW, DIRECTOR, LINCOLN
WHAT FUN IT IS to sew! Every girl likes pretty dresses. Every girl likes to know that she looks neat, clean, and attractive. Wouldn't you like to be able to make attractive dresses and undergarments for yourself? In the Learning to Sew club you will learn that to be attractive a 4-H club girl develops a good posture, has a clean body, hair, and teeth, and well-cared-for hands and nails. She keeps her clothing clean and in repair. She wears clothes that are becoming to her in color and style and that are suited to the occasion.

The Learning to Sew project is planned to give help to the girl who is starting or has done very little sewing. It is planned to help you develop skill in dainty hand sewing and machine stitching. Through this project you should develop good sewing habits while making useful articles. The directions for making each article should be followed carefully because each is planned to teach certain stitches or seams or problems which you will use in sewing throughout your life and by the time you have finished all the clothing projects you will have quite a complete course in sewing.

When you have completed the Learning to Sew Club you will have made and equipped a workbox and completed an outfit for use in the kitchen. Try to select harmonizing colors for all the articles in the outfit, and plan the whole outfit before making the first article.

Articles to be made: (Minimum requirements for each member in Learning to Sew Club—1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 below.)

1. Make and equip a workbox with the tools necessary for good sewing, including (1) a pin cushion and (2) a needle case.
2. Make a hand towel.
3. Make (1) a pot holder and (2) darn one pair of stockings for exhibit.
4. Make a kitchen apron, OR
5. Make a simple house dress (for older girls).

Things every member of this club will try to do:

1. Complete the five problems in this project, keeping in mind that the colors in all articles should harmonize and be becoming to you.
2. Learn how to use a sewing machine.
3. Study materials, stitches and methods used in each article. (Make a portfolio of stitches and other processes you learn.)
4. Care for your clothing and keep stockings and shoes in repair.
5. Keep a record in your clothing record book of all articles made and the cost of each.
6. Keep a record of repair work including darning.

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1 Acknowledgment is given to Miss G. Carolyn Ruby, Assistant Professor of Clothing, University of Nebraska, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for this publication.
7. Judge or score articles when completed.
8. Give one or more demonstrations.
9. Exhibit articles made (be sure they are labeled).
10. Attend club meetings (100 per cent if possible).
11. Finish your work by filing a final report and story.

Problem I: The Work Box, Pin Cushion, and Needle Case

THE WORK BOX

A GOOD WAY to start your sewing club is by making a sewing box for yourself. There are so many attractive sewing boxes or baskets that it will be interesting to see how many nice ones can be made by your club. Look through magazines for suggestions and ask your leader to tell you about work boxes or baskets she has seen. Many kinds of boxes and cans which make splendid sewing boxes are available, such as cigar boxes, cheese boxes, and homemade boxes of wood, tin cans such as marshmallow cans, candy boxes, three-pound coffee cans, cake boxes, cardboard boxes such as stationery boxes, and various kinds of baskets. These may be painted or lacquered on the outside and lined with gay print, cretonne, or plain material, depending on the outside decoration.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOX

Space and order are valuable in a useful work box. Some girls make thread holders at the side of their box or basket by tacking ribbon or tape flat against the lining. The tape measure may be folded, bound with a rubber band, and slipped under the spools of thread. The scissors may be held in place on the lid by ribbon or tape drawn flat and tacked firmly in place. Can you think of any other conveniences that will help to make your work box neat and orderly?

LEARNING TO SEW

TOOLS NEEDED

Good tools are as necessary to a clothing club girl as they are to a mechanic or carpenter. Your tools should include:

Work box
Thimble
Needles
Pins
Sharp shears or scissors
Pin cushion
Sewing thread
Darning cotton
Tape measure
Needle case
Measuring gauge

Fig. 2.—Tools for good sewing.

Work Box.—Use a sturdy box large enough to hold all your sewing tools. This should be arranged and kept orderly and complete throughout the club year.

Thimble.—A thimble is worn on the third finger of the hand which holds the needle. It is used to protect the finger and to help in pushing the needle through the cloth. It should be large enough to slip on easily and yet not come off with every motion of the hand. The thimble may be made from celluloid or any metal except brass. Why?

If you are not used to wearing a thimble, it may seem awkward at first, but with practice much neater and swifter sewing may be done with the use of the thimble. Experts always wear them.

Needles.—You will need needles of various sizes for your work this year. The assorted needles, 5 to 10 sharps, provide a good variety. Always use the finest needle possible if you would do your best work.

Needle Case.—A few needles may be kept in the needle case, which is easier to find and handle than the paper case in which you buy them. Directions for making a needle-case are given on page 10. This piece of sewing-box equipment also makes a nice gift.

Thread.—A fine needle requires fine thread. You will need numbers 60 to 70 cotton. Thread should match the fabric in weight and color. Thread is made of cotton, mercerized cotton, silk, or linen. Cotton thread is numbered from 8 to 200, according to coarseness. Mercerized silk and linen threads are available in only a few sizes.

Tape Measure.—The tape measure should be firm so it will not stretch. Metal ends keep the tape measure from fraying and make it easier to handle. The inches should be numbered on both sides, beginning at opposite ends. Why?
Pins.—Select fine smooth pins with sharp points that will not leave dark spots in the cloth when removed. Test them carefully before buying. Pins are used to hold patterns in place while cutting, to hold parts of cloth together while basting, to hold material in place while fitting, and to try out the effect of bits of trimming. A finished garment or article never needs a pin. A good pin for use in dress making is short and slender and has a very sharp point. A blunt pointed pin which may make a hole in the material by breaking the thread should not be used.

Pin Cushion.—Some pins are kept in a pin cushion in the sewing box. This cushion may be a small one that can be easily used or pinned on while you work. This is much more convenient than using pins from a box or paper. The covering on the pin cushion may be made of silk or wool and it may be stuffed with wool so the pins will not rust. You will make one as part of the equipment for your sewing box. Perhaps you will like it so well that you will make others as gifts for friends or relatives.

Shears and Scissors.—Good shears have sharp cutting edges and are over 6 inches long. The handles are so arranged as to distribute the strain in cutting. Scissors are not over six inches long and are used for cutting short lengths. Good scissors will have sharp points for snipping threads or corners.

Notebook and Pencil.—Other useful articles to have in your work box are a small note book and pencil. Many times you wish to write down directions and measurements. How much time a handy note book and pencil may save!

POINTERS WHICH MAKE GOOD SEWING EASY

Holding Your Sewing.—Handle the article on which you are sewing as little as possible to prevent wrinkling it as this makes your work more difficult. Hold the bulk of the material next to you. Use your pin cushion. Its use eliminates the dangerous habit of putting pins in your mouth. Have all your sewing equipment and materials near you when you sit down to sew. Always practice new stitches, or seams on a small piece of cloth before doing them on a garment.

Basting.—Basting saves time and helps to get good results. The basting is used as a guide for stitching. Remove all basting threads when stitching is finished.

General Appearance.—The wrong side of your work should be as neatly finished as the right side.

THE PIN CUSHION

The pin cushion should be your best friend when sewing. Just think of the amount of time it will save you. With the pin cushion pinned to you and the pins in the cushion, you will not have to look around for pins when...
you need them; nor will you lose as many as you would if you had no
definite place for them.

The pin cushion should be made of inconspicuous plain dark color, be-
because the pins will show up better. If the material is figured, you will
find that the pin heads against the figures confuse you, and it will be more
difficult to get the pins. If the color is light and the pins light, you may
have to look a while before you see the pins.

**Material needed:**
- Almost any firmly woven material of plain color.
- For the filling wool ravelings, wool, wool clippings, sawdust or curled
  hair.
- A piece of cardboard or buckram.
- Embroidery floss.

**Stitches to be made in this problem:**
- Making a knot.
- Running stitch.
- Catch stitch.

**DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING THE PIN CUSHION**

**Cutting the Pattern.**—Make a pattern by cutting two circles of card-
board \(\frac{2}{3}\) inches in diameter, one for each half of the pin cushion. Cut
a paper pattern 4 inches in diameter. Mark the center. Use this pattern in
cutting the material you have selected for the cushion. You will need two
pieces. Mark the center plainly on the right side.

**Gathering a Circular Piece.**—Gather each of these pieces \(\frac{1}{4}\) inch from
the edge, using the running stitch. To do this thread your needle by cli-
pping the thread squarely across. It will then slip into the eye easily. This
will avoid wetting the thread and twisting it between the fingers. Next
make a knot.

**The Knot.**—To make a knot, place the end of the thread over the
cushion of the forefinger of the left hand holding it down with the thumb
while bringing it around the end of the finger and crossing it over the
end of the thread. Push the thumb down over the crossed threads and
twist knot twice. Pull the knot down with the second finger and the
thumb. This makes an ordinary knot. If you need a large knot give the
thread a number of twists to make the knot the required size.

**The Running Stitch.**—Begin with

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RUNNING STITCH
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| FIG. 7.—Running stitch. |

This stitch is used for sewing seams where there is little strain as for gathering,
shirring, and tucking (Figure 7).

**Stuffing with Appropriate Material.**—Draw up the gathering string a
little and put the filling of wool ravelings, clippings, or sawdust inside
packing them evenly; then slip the card board inside. Tighten up the draw
string and fasten it firmly. Finish the other half in the same way.

**Sewing the Top and Bottom Together.**—Sew the two halves together
with the catch stitch using a harmonizing color of embroidery floss.

**Catch Stitch.**—The catch stitch is used for decoration. Often it is used
to hold down the unturned edge of a hem that does not ravel. You will
use it to join two finished edges. Work from left to right. Carefully
hiding the knot bring the needle out
and take a small stitch from right
to left on the upper line far enough
ahead to give the proper slant. Then
take a stitch from right to left on
the lower line far enough ahead
to give the same slant. Continue this
stitch the necessary distance. Try to keep the stitches the same in (1)
size, (2) distance apart and (3) slant (Figure 8).

**Placing the Division Thread Through the Center.**—Make the cushion
more firm by taking stitches over the edge of the cushion and through the
center as illustrated, using the same kind of embroidery floss as for the
catch stitch.

**Judging.**—The club motto is “To Make the Best Better.” Being critical
of the work you have done and discovering how improvement can be made
are two ways of living up to this motto. The “judging” or “scoring” of
each piece of work is very important. Judging helps a girl to improve
her work. Each girl is to score her own work as well as take her part in
the club judging. This sets a high standard of workmanship and selection
and is in keeping with the 4-H motto. Your leader will help you with
club judging.

When all club members have completed their pin cushions judge them
to select the best. Score the pin cushion on the following points:
- Do the pins push in easily?
- Does the cardboard keep pins from getting lost?
- Is the color combination pleasing?
- Are the shape and size suitable?
- Is the workmanship carefully done?
- Is the catch stitch correctly done with even stitches?

**Record Book.**—Enter the cost, name of materials used and number of
cushions you have made.

**Exhibit.**—When your pin cushion is finished attach neatly to the
bottom, a label of tape on which is neatly printed or typed your name,
address and the name of your club. It will then be ready for exhibit.
THE NEEDLE CASE

A needle case filled with various sizes and kinds of needles is not only convenient, but an aid to good work. Therefore, one of the first articles to be made by a clothing club girl is a needle case.

If you expect to get best results from your sewing work, you should use the right size needle and the right size thread for the material you are working on. Make sure you are always using the correct size needle and thread.

The needle case should add interest to your sewing box. It might be made of some bright color like orange, red, or yellow. If you make the needle case of a bright color, you will have no trouble finding it when you open your sewing box.

Materials Needed.—Any firm material for the cover; flannel or some woolen material for the leaves; two snaps size 00; one skein of embroidery floss.

Stitches to be Learned:
- Even basting
- Blanket stitch
- Back stitch
- Sewing on snaps
- Hemming stitch

DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING

The Cover.—Make a pattern 4½ inches by 6½ inches for the cover. Pin it securely to the material you have selected for the needle case being careful to have it lie straight on the threads and cut with long even strokes. Hem it on all four sides with ½-inch hems. To do this turn a ⅛-inch turn and then a ¼-inch turn to cover up the raw edges. Baste into place with even basting stitch. Use a measuring gauge to make it even.

To make a measuring gauge take a piece of tough cardboard about 6 inches long and 2 inches wide. Use your tape measure or ruler and mark carefully the depth you wish the hem to be and slash with a sharp scissors as in Figure 10.

Basting Stitch.—“Basting” is the stitch used to hold two or more pieces of cloth together until they are permanently joined. Begin with a knot on the right side and sew from right to left. There are several kinds of basting (Figure 11.)

Even Basting.—The stitches and spaces are even and are from one-fourth to one inch long. Even basting is used when very careful basting is required. (See No. 1, Figure 11.)

Uneven Basting.—The stitches are long with short spaces between; the upper stitch is one to two inches long and the under stitch one-fourth to one inch in length. Uneven basting is used where there is little danger of the material slipping (Figure 11.)

Dressmaker’s Basting.—A long stitch on the upper side followed by two short stitches. This is stronger than uneven basting.

Diagonal Basting.—Uneven basting is made with long diagonal stitches on the right side standing up from right to left and with short vertical stitches on the wrong side. It is used in tailoring for basting linings to outer garments (Figure 11.). Practice making each of these kinds:

- 1. Even basting
- 2. Uneven basting
- 3. Dressmakers’ basting
- 4. Diagonal basting

Making the Hem.—Straighten the edge of the material by drawing a thread and cutting along the line. Make a turn one-eighth inch wide and crease. Make a second turn one-fourth inch in width and fasten down with a basting stitch.

Hemming Stitch.—Hemming is a stitch used a great deal in finished raw edges. Hold the wrong side of the material next to you as the hem is turned down to the wrong side. Hem neatly all around the edges with small hemming stitches. Press.

Making the Leaves.—The pincushion requires two leaves. Make paper pattern for the leaves 4 inches by 6 inches for the larger leaf and another one 3½ inches by 5½ inches. Measure accurately. Lay the patterns on the flannel or other material you have chosen for the leaves watching the thread of the material. Pin securely and cut with long even strokes of the scissors. Make one-fourth inch turns on all sides of both leaves. Use your measuring gauge (Figure 10). Only one turn is required as the turn is to be held in place with blanket stitches. Baste into place with uneven basting. The leaves are now ready for the blanket stitching. Use embroidery floss in a harmonizing color.
Blanket Stitch.—Work from left to right, holding the edge of the cloth toward you. To begin the stitch, take two or three running stitches from the edge up into the cloth. Hold the thread under the thumb of the left hand and insert the needle directly above the last running stitch at right angles to the edge or line of decoration. Bring the needle through the loop. Insert the needle the desired distance away from the last stitch and proceed as before (Figures 13 and 14). When a new thread is necessary, end the old one on the wrong side with two stitches and begin the new thread as before, inserting the needle through the loop of the last stitch. The blanket stitch has a single purl and the buttonhole stitch has a double purl.

When both leaves have been blanket-stitched on all sides they are ready to be placed in the cover.

Fastening Leaves and Cover with Back Stitch.—Fold the leaves and the cover in the middle crosswise. The smallest leaf should be on top. Fasten the three pieces through the center with the back stitch. Embroidery floss like that used for blanket stitching may be used for the back stitching.

Back Stitch.—Hold material as for the running stitch (See Figure 7). Take one small running stitch bringing the needle through to the right side of the cloth at a distance three times the length of the desired stitch and take a stitch half way back to the last stitch on the right side (Figure 15).

Fastening the Needle Case.—Sew on two size 00 snaps each about % inch from the top and the bottom. Mark the position with pins using your tape measure to get them exactly the same distance from the top or bottom.

Sewing on Snaps.—Sew with several over and over stitches taken in each hole on the edge of the fastener. Carry the thread from one hole to the next under the snap (Figure 16).

Judging.—When all needle cases have been completed, judge them for appropriate materials, attractive colors, and workmanship. These questions may help you to know just what to look for:

**Materials**
- Is the cover material firm?
- Is it suitable in color?
- Is the material in the leaves suitable for holding needles?
- Are the snaps suitable in size?
- Is the thread of suitable weight and color?

**Workmanship**
- Is the hemming neatly done?
- Are blanket stitches even?
- Are snaps firmly sewed in place?
- Are all pieces carefully cut?

**Appearance**
- Is the needle case neat and attractive?
- Is it clean?

**Record Book**.—Make your entry of costs and materials in your record book. In case you make more than one needle case credit yourself by entering the number made.

**Exhibit**.—Your needle case will make a nice exhibit. If you have been careful with it, you may wish to enter it at your club or county fair. It should be labeled with a tape on which is printed or typed your name, address, the name of your club.

**Problem II: The Kitchen Hand Towel**

It will add interest and fun to your work in the kitchen if you have a hand towel all of your own. While personal hand towels are quite a necessity for each girl when working in the kitchen, they may also furnish an opportunity to add a bit of beauty and ornament. There is more pleasure in handling an attractive well-made towel than just a machine-hemmed piece of cloth.

This will be a good time to plan the color scheme for your entire kitchen outfit. Be sure the colors are becoming to you. The towel is to be made by hand.

**Suggested Materials.**—Kitchen hand towels are usually made from cotton crash, linen crash, union crash or huck toweling which may be either cotton or linen.

The average length of a hand towel varies from % of a yard to % yards depending upon the width of the material. Pleasing proportions for
a towel are from 1\(\frac{1}{3}\) to 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) as long as it is wide. The depth of the hem will depend upon its length and width.

**SELECTING LINEN**

When you are selecting your towel at the store ask the clerk to show you both linen and cotton toweling. Feel of both of them, notice the difference in the appearance, then compare the prices. Some of the advantages of the linen towel you will come to know through experience. It is well, however, to have them in mind when deciding whether it pays to buy linen or cotton towels.

**Characteristics of Linen.**—Linen is of vegetable origin and is obtained from the flax plant. It is the fiber found near the outer surface of the stem of the flax plant. It is more expensive than cotton and therefore is not used so extensively. The linen fibers are long, smooth and lustrous when spun into thread. Linen thread is very straight and smooth, and when broken has pointed ends. It burns more slowly than cotton and the ends stand erect and compact while those of cotton spread out in every direction.

Cotton is often woven with linen and sold as all linen. It is difficult to detect a small amount of cotton except with a microscope. Ink leaves a round outline on linen and is absorbed very quickly; on cotton it leaves an irregular outline and is absorbed less readily. Our grandmothers used to test linen by moistening the finger and holding it under the towel. If the moisture came through quickly the material was linen. Nowadays this test does not hold, for cotton material may be treated to absorb moisture quickly. After the cotton is laundered it is not so much like linen.

Sometimes linen and cotton are mixed in toweling when it is made. These are called "union" towels. Telling cotton from linen is quite difficult because there are so many ways to make cotton look and act like linen before it is washed. Many people tell the difference by the feeling. This can only be gained through practice. It would be an excellent plan to have a collection of cotton and linen fabrics to handle. Try to learn the difference in feeling with the eyes closed. Other tests may also be tried. Excursions to stores may be interesting. Clerks are usually glad to show club members household linens.

**Advantages of Linen:**
- It is strong and durable.
- It is easier to launder, because it gives up the soil and stains more easily than cotton.
- Has more luster and so has a better appearance.
- Stays white better and does not turn yellow so fast with age as the cotton.
- Absorbs the moisture more quickly, so makes better towels for wiping one's hands or the dishes.
- Is cool and has a leathery feel.
- Is smooth and glossy when laundered.

**Disadvantages of Linen.**—There are a few disadvantages in linen:
- Linen wrinkles more easily than cotton.
- It feels cooler against the body.
- Linen is much more expensive than cotton.
- Does not take dye well.
- Fades quickly in both sun and water.

**STEPS IN CONSTRUCTION**

**Stitches to be Used in Making the Towel:**
- Even basting.
- Overhanding.
- Hemming.
- Decorative stitches.
- Cross stitch.
- Outline stitch.
- Chain stitch.

**Cross stitch.**
- This stitch is used to join two finished edges such as two selvages or in joining lace to a hem. It is also used to close the ends of bands and hems. It is sometimes called "over sewing." Work from right to left. On the wrong side the stitches should be even, close

**Steps to be Followed:**
- Straighten edge of material by drawing a thread if necessary and cut along this line.
- The hem may be from 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) inch to 1 inch wide depending on the size of the towel and your individual taste.
- Make 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) inch turn using your gauge and a warm iron to crease accurately.
- Make the second turn the desired width in the same way.
- Use pins at various intervals placing them at right angles to the hem.
- Baste into place with even basting stitch.
- Finish with plain hemming stitch (Figure 12).
- Overhand the ends.

**Overhand Stitch.**—This stitch is used to join two finished edges such as two selvages or in joining lace to a hem. It is also used to close the ends of bands and hems. It is sometimes called "over sewing." Work from right to left. On the wrong side the stitches should be even, close

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**Fig. 18.—Overhanding.**

**Fig. 19.—Decorative stitches;** A, feather stitch; B, chain stitch; C, outline stitch; D, cross stitch.
together, and very shallow. They should slant on the wrong side. On the right side (or inside) they should be parallel to each other, close together, and tiny (Figure 18).

Choosing the Design.—Dainty designs look best on dainty material; heavier and coarser designs on the coarser materials. Kitchen hand towels are made for service and require a simple, medium heavy design. Initials, monograms, and borders make good designs for a towel.

Placing the Design.—Place the design to give a restful appearance. When placed too near the hem it gives a crowded appearance, if too far from the hem it will seem lost and will seem to have no relationship to the hem. The size of design and its location should be in good proportion to the size of the towel, the width of the hem, and the size and color of any border stripe. The color of the embroidery floss should be harmonious with any colors woven in the cloth. Use no knots in the embroidery but begin with tiny running stitches. The wrong side should look as neat as the right side.

DECORATIVE HAND STITCHES

Feather Stitch.—The feather stitch is a variation of the blanket stitch. The feather stitches are made alternately, first on the right and then on the left. To make a feather stitch from right to left place the thread in a loop toward the left. Hold the thread under the thumb. Insert the needle letting the point pass over the thread loop. Alternate the directions of the stitches. This may be varied by making two or more stitches on each side of the line each time before working on the opposite side (Figure 19-A).

Chain Stitch.—The chain stitch is worked toward you. Bring the needle up at the end of the line, let the thread hang naturally or hold it in place with the left thumb. Put the needle back where the thread comes out and bring it out a short distance in advance and over the thread which thus is held down in the form of a loop. Every stitch is made in the same way, one end of it coming out through the preceding stitch and the other end held down by the next stitch (Figure 19-B).

Outline Stitch.—Work exactly on the line of the design. Hold cloth over the left forefinger. Begin with two small running stitches down, then work back over this with outline stitch. For outline stitch work away from body keeping the thread down under the thumb and to the right of the needle. Put the needle through the material ⅛ to 3/16 of an inch beyond the point where it went through last and bring it out where the thread came through. Continue in this manner (Figure 19-C). This stitch is used in outlining shapes in embroidery and for line decoration.

Cross Stitch.—Cross stitch is simply one stitch crossed over another, the two occupying a perfect square, crossing it diagonally from corner to corner. The stitches must always be crossed in the same way and worked in the same direction in order to prevent an uneven surface (Figure 19-D). If the threads of the material are difficult to follow, cross stitch canvas may be basted on the material and the design worked over and through both canvas and material, after which the threads of the canvas may be drawn out. Also cross stitch designs for stamping with a hot iron may be used.

Folding, Laundering, and Pressing.—When the towel is finished fold in thirds lengthwise and again through the center. If the towel is soiled wash it and iron carefully.

Judging.—Score your hand towel on the following points:

1. Is the material suitable for a kitchen hand towel?
2. Was the edge of the hem straightened correctly?
3. Is the towel well proportioned?
4. Does the hem have a pleasing width?
5. Are the hem ends neatly overhanded?
6. Are the colors a pleasing harmony?
7. Do knots show?
8. Is the towel clean and well pressed?

Record Book.—Make the entry for all items of the towel in your record book.

Exhibit.—Label your towel neatly with your name, address and the name of your club. Sew the label neatly on the edge of the hem on the wrong side.

Problem III: The Sewing Machine—Keeping Neat

THE SEWING MACHINE AND HOW TO USE IT

Every girl who wishes to make her own clothes of course will want to learn how to use the sewing machine. Machine stitching makes a strong seam much more quickly than can be made by hand. One who
uses a sewing machine should at least know what the parts of the machine are, what these parts do, and how to take care of the machine. Can you tell what each part shown in Figure 20 does?

Each girl should learn to do the following things correctly so she can do them quickly and easily.

- How to sit while sewing.
- How to treadle smoothly.
- How to thread a machine.
- How to regulate the length of the stitch.
- How to remove work from the machine.
- How to adjust the tension. Ask your mother to help you with this.
- How the stitch is formed on the machine.
- How to stitch a given distance from the edge.
- How to turn a square corner.
- How to oil the machine.

**How to Sit While Sewing.**—Did you stand while threading your machine, and do you expect to stand while sewing? Of course not! But how should you sit while sewing? A few simple directions are:

- Sit well back in your chair.
- Keep the back erect, leaning slightly forward.
- Have the feet flat on the floor or on the treadle of the sewing machine.
- Sit with the light coming over the left shoulder.

**Practice Treadling, Guiding the Material and Winding the Bobbin.**—If you have never sewed on a machine, you will first need to practice treadling until you can make your feet work just the right way to keep the wheel turning evenly and in the right direction.

Before threading the machine, place your feet on the treadle, the right foot slightly in advance of the left foot. Turn the hand wheel and notice how the toe of the right foot goes down as the heel of the left foot goes up and vice versa. Turn the wheel with your hand until you get the feel of the treadle motion in your feet, then practice treadling until you can keep the hand wheel going smoothly in the right direction.

**Threading the Machine.**—How long does it take you to thread a sewing machine? Time yourself and see how long it actually takes. Try to shorten this time.

**Removing Work from the Machine.**—To remove work from the machine see that the “take-up” lever is at its highest point. When the take-up is in this position the presser foot is raised and the work can easily be removed. Take the material from the machine by pulling it straight back away from you. Have the thread long enough to prevent pulling through the needle when you start to sew the next seam. Pull both threads back over the thread cutter, hold the threads with both hands and cut with a quick downward motion. Removing the work from the machine is a good individual demonstration.

**Learning to Stitch.**—Place a piece of striped or checked material under the needle by turning the hand wheel. Let the presser foot down on the material, and practice guiding it as you treadle so that the needle will follow a stripe or go where you wish it to. Some girls like to practice on paper. Take a plate or a saucer, lay it on a piece of plain paper and draw around it. Then put in many diameters. With the machine still unthreaded, try stitching around the circle and across the diameters. This will help you (1) to follow curves, (2) to turn corners, and (3) to follow straight lines. You can see how accurate your stitching is by holding the paper up to the light. Keep trying until you can make a good circle.

Now let us try stitching without lines. There are two things to learn to do in stitching: (1) how to stitch away from the edge and (2) to stitch near a folded edge, as in a hem. Take a piece of plain paper and fold it lengthwise. Place the paper under the presser foot and stitch near the edge. You will use the inner toe of the presser foot as a guide to stitch. Now open your paper. Perhaps your first attempt will show two wavy lines. Practice until you get two straight lines. Next fold a hem in the paper. Place under the presser foot and stitch as near the edge as possible. When stitching shows two parallel lines of perforations, you are ready to use a threaded machine.

**Turning a Corner.**—You may also like to practice turning a corner. Fold hems on two adjoining sides of a paper. Stitch through four thicknesses to the corner, leave the needle in the paper raising the presser foot to swing the paper into place, lower presser foot and stitch in the opposite direction. If the unfolded paper shows a perfect “cross roads” of parallel perforations, you are ready to work on cloth with the needle threaded.
Even grown people find these suggestions helpful in learning to do beautifully straight stitching. Make a sample of your best machine stitching.

**Score Your Machine Stitching:**

- Is the line of stitching straight?
- Are the stitches of suitable length for the material?
- Is the tension in good adjustment both top and bottom?

**The Stitch.**—Now that you can make straight rows of stitches see if they are too long, too short or just right. For general sewing on cotton there should be about 12 to 14 stitches per inch. Practice lengthening and shortening the stitch until you can adjust the length of stitch easily.

**Tension.**—Another important thing in stitches is tension. Tension is the *tightness or looseness* of the stitch. If the tension is just right, the lock of the stitch will be in the center of the cloth (Figure 24-A). If the tension is too tight, the thread may lie along the upper side of the cloth in almost a straight line (24-B). If the upper tension is too loose the thread may lie in almost a straight line on the lower side of the cloth (24-C).

Have your mother or your leader show you how the upper tension may be adjusted or look in the direction book of the machine to see how it is done. It is seldom necessary to change the lower tension.

**To Test the Tension.**—An easy way to know if the tension is in good adjustment for making correct stitching is to make this test. You may use this test after learning how to stitch.

1. Double a piece of material with which you expect to work so that you have a square or rectangular piece of material of double thickness.
2. Sew diagonally across this piece of material for two or more inches.
3. Catch the stitch with the fingers and thumb of one hand about half an inch from the fingers and thumb of the other hand and pull evenly on both threads until you hear a snap (Figure 25). Stop pulling immediately.

If the lower thread is broken and the upper one is not the lower tension is tighter (Figure 24-C). If the upper thread is broken and the lower one not, the upper tension is tighter (Figure 24-B). Both are examples of imperfect stitch. If both threads break at exactly the same time it indicates a perfect stitch (Figure 24-A).

Adjusting the tension to secure a perfect stitch is known as balancing the stitch. It should *always* be done with the upper tension. When the lower thread breaks when tested, the lower thread is tighter and the upper thread should be tightened until it corresponds to the lower. If the upper thread breaks, the upper tension should be loosened until it corresponds to the lower tension.

**Oiling the Machine.**—A machine should be thoroughly cleaned and well oiled if it is to do good work. Directions for oiling come with every machine. Follow these directions carefully. A good time to oil a machine is when you finish sewing on it, then the oil will have time to run down through the machine and will be all ready the next time you wish to use it. If you oil the machine just before you start to sew you are almost certain to get oil on your sewing. A good habit is to always wipe the machine carefully with a cloth before starting to sew.

**Making a Holder**

For your first machine work you are to make a holder. The holder you make in this lesson is the kind University girls use in their cooking classes. This holder is a very convenient one, as it has rounded corners that cannot fall into things and the fingers may be slipped inside the cover so they will not get burned when handling hot dishes. The holder consists of a removable cover and a pad. The cover can easily be removed and laundered while the pad will need only occasional laundering.

**Stitches and Problems:**

Use and care of the sewing machine.
- Stitching on the machine.
- Making a pattern.
- Machine hem.
- Quilting the pad.
- The plain seam.
- Overcasting.

**Materials Needed.**—Many materials are suitable for a holder. It may match your apron or dress or be made of some other plain or patterned material. Indian head, poplin, percale, cambric, and linen are some of the suitable materials.

For the pad two or three thicknesses of outing or canton flannel or one thickness of padding cloth may be used. The binding may be blanket stitched around the edge with embroidery cotton.
The Pad Pattern.—For the pad take an oblong of paper 5½ inches long by 4½ inches wide. Measure accurately with your ruler or tape measure. Fold through the center crosswise and again lengthwise. Mark the corners A, B, C, and D, having point C at the double fold and A at the four open corners. Draw a line connecting A and C. Measure off on a line AC 2¼ inches; mark this line Y. Draw a curved line from D to B, falling through Y. Cut on the curved line.

The Cover Pattern.—The cover pattern is made in the same way except that it is larger. To make the cover take an oblong 6½ inches long and 5½ inches wide. Fold lengthwise; then fold crosswise. Mark the corners A, B, C, D, as you did for the pad. Draw a diagonal line connecting points A and C. Now measure 3 inches on this line from point C and locate point Y. Draw a curved line from D to B, passing through point Y. Cut on this curved line. This will be the pattern for the back of the cover. As the front is opened and is to be bound or hemmed you will need to cut it just a little differently.

For the front of the holder, use the pattern you have cut for the back and cut ¼ in. below the crosswise fold. This will allow plenty extra material for finishing either with a hem or with binding. You will need to cut two of these pieces. You now have three pieces to your pattern: (1) the pad pattern, which is a little smaller than the cover; (2) the back of the cover, and (3) one-half of the front cover.

Making the Pad.—To make the pad, pin the pattern carefully on the material which you have selected and cut with long even strokes. If you use outing flannel or other material of the same weight you will need two or three pieces cut like the pad pattern depending on the weight of the flannel. Next baste the pieces together with even or uneven basting (Figure 11).

Quilting the Pad.—A good way to make a pad firm is to quilt it. This would give practice in using the sewing machine. Here are some designs for quilting the pad (Figure 28). It will be fun to try these designs on the pad.

Finishing the Pad.—An easy way to finish the edge would be to blanket stitch it (Figure 13). Trim edges off neatly before beginning the blanket stitch. Use embroidery cotton in harmonizing color. A nicely made pad would also make a good hot dish pad.

Making the Cover.—There are three pieces for the cover. They are two front pieces and the back. Make the front of the cover first. Take the two front pieces cut from pattern C. These may be finished either with a hem or bound with bias tape.

To hem turn a fold one-eighth inch deep along the straight edge then fold again one-eighth inch deep. Baste in position and it is ready for hemming. You may hem either by hand or stitch on the machine. Both pieces should be finished alike.

Now you are ready to put the back and front together. Lay right sides together carefully, baste around the edge with even basting stitch and stitch three-eighths inch from edge. This makes a plain seam.

Plain Seam.—A plain seam is made by sewing two edges of cloth together. It is one which you will use often in your sewing. A plain seam is made with the stitching and raw edges both on the wrong side. It is most often pressed open so it is very flat but in the holder the edges will come together when it is turned to the right side so it will not be necessary to press it open. A good slogan for Clothing Club girls is "Press every seam as soon as it is finished," and we press this one with both edges together. There are various ways to finish a plain seam and as you will use it often in your sewing you will want to know about it.

Variations of Plain Seam.—A plain seam may be notched or pinked, it may be overcast, turned under and stitched, or it may be bound. The kind of material and the place a seam is used determines the finish to use. Study the picture below. The notched seam is used when the material is firm and the edges are wide (Figure 30.A). If a narrow seam is desired...
and the material frays easily, the edge should be overcast (Figure 30-B). When the seam is wide another satisfactory finish is made by turning under the edge of the seam one-fourth to three-eighths inch, keeping the seam loose from the material and stitch one-eighth inch inside the fold (Figure 30-C). A plain seam may be pressed open and both edges bound with bias tape or ribbon (Figure 30-D).

Examine your dresses and see if you can find each of these seams. To show how to make these different finishes would make a good individual demonstration. Let us make an overcast seam on the cover of the holder.

**Overcasting.** — Before overcasting, trim the edges of the seam evenly. Hold the cloth over the first finger of the left hand. Conceal the knot between two thicknesses of cloth. The needle should point toward the left shoulder; pass it through from the under to the upper side, making a slanting stitch. Keep stitches uniform, not drawn tight and farther apart than they are deep (Figure 31).

![Figure 31.—Overcasting.](image)

Usually overcasting is done after seams are pressed open in one thickness (Figure 30-B). We wish this one to be flat between the top and bottom coverings. When a seam is not pressed open it is well to overcast the edges together (Figure 32). Both methods are known as “overcast seams.”

**Pressing.** — Careful pressing makes much difference in the way your sewing will look when it is finished. Try to form the habit of pressing every seam as soon as it is finished. Pressing makes the work lie flat and then it is so much easier to do the next step. Press the pad well when it is finished. Press the cover first on the wrong side then on the right side. Use a moderately hot iron. Place the pad inside the cover and the holder is ready for use. The holder is now completed and ready for scoring.

![Figure 32.—Edges overcast together.](image)

**Judging.** — Score your holder by testing it with the following questions:

**The Cover.** — Is the material firm, and easily laundered and attractive in color and pattern? Is the size correct and has the pattern been carefully followed? Is the front opening carefully finished with hem or bias tape? Is the seam well made with stitching straight? Is the overcasting even and straight? Are all ends of thread tied and neatly clipped? Is it carefully pressed?

**The Pad.** — Is the padding heavy enough to prevent burning?

Is the quilting well done with straight stitching and well adjusted tension?

Are the thread ends clipped?

Is the edge of the pad finished neatly?

**Keeping a 4-H Girl’s Clothes Trig and Trim**

To learn how to take care of clothing so you will always look your best is one of the best habits any girl can have. Once you get in the habit of caring for your clothes you will do it without thinking and as a result you will be more attractive, you will be happier and your clothes will wear longer. One aim of the Learning to Sew club is to form good habits in the care of your clothes.

Every girl should have a clothes closet in her room in which to keep all of her clothes neat and orderly. In case your room has no closet a simple one can be constructed of two orange crates or built with a few boards.

Here are ten things every girl will want to do:

- Arrange a place for your clothes.
- Assemble hangers, clothes brush, shoe trees, shoe horn and a shoe polishing outfit.
- Hang up your dresses, blouses and coats on hangers as soon as you take them off.
- Air clothes before putting them away.
- Keep clothes clean, brushed and pressed.
- Mend rips and tears as soon as they appear.
- Wash hose daily. Darn holes in stockings and strengthen worn place promptly.
- Keep buttons and fasteners securely sewed on.
- Clean and polish shoes often. Use shoe trees, shoe horn, and shoe rack, box, or bag so shoes will keep their shape.
- Keep hats free from dust and store them where they will not be bent or crushed.

**Keeping Stockings in Repair**

In keeping stockings in good repair two things are required. They are washing and mending.

**Washing Stockings.** — If stockings are carefully washed every time they are worn they will last longer. To wash stockings, make a good suds by dissolving soap flakes in hot water then adding cold water until the mixture is lukewarm. Turn stockings wrong side out and squeeze gently in the suds. Press out the moisture. Do not wring or twist. Repeat in a second suds. Then rinse in at least three clean lukewarm rinses. Hang on a hanger. Do not pin to line as clothes pins often catch threads making a run. In case stockings have “runs,” holes, or weak places, they should be mended before washing.
Mending Stockings.—No girl looks attractive or well groomed with a hole in her stocking. Your stockings will last longer if you take care of them. Stockings are best looking as they are. So if a hole appears it should be darned to look as nearly like the original as possible. A good plan is to darn the weak places before the hole appears.

Materials Needed.—A pair of worn stockings and darning cotton.

The Stocking Darn.—Darning is the replacing of worn or torn threads with a weaving stitch. The darning cotton should match the thread of the stocking in both color and size. Use a long eyed needle that is not too coarse.

Preparation of the Hole.—Place darners inside the stocking; trim away the ragged edges around the hole. On the right side of the stocking about one-half inch from the hole, run a thread of contrasting color in a diamond shape (Figure 33). This outlines the darn and the finished darn is diamond shaped which prevents the strain from coming in any one row of loops in the stocking.

Making the Darn.—Darn the lengthwise way with the ribs of the stockings first, beginning at the lower right hand corner. Use short running stitches turning at the edge of the basted outline. Leave about 1/8 inch thread in a loop at the end to allow for shrinking. When the hole is reached, catch into the edge on the other side, continue running stitches to the line. Repeat until all the warp threads have been filled in. Turn and fill in the woof threads in the same way. When the hole is reached, weave over one thread and under the next until the hole is crossed and then make running stitch to the guide line. Repeat taking up alternate threads until the darn is finished. Remove basting thread and press.

When a thin spot shows in the foot of a stocking a few rows of darning will often reinforce the spot and prevent a hole.

Judging.—Bring the best darn you can to club meeting for practice judging. Compare the darning on the various stockings and select the best, giving reasons why it is best. These questions will help you know what to look for in a good darn:

Does the darning thread match the stocking?
Are the darning threads put in evenly? Are there enough of them?
Do they go back into the stocking far enough to hold the darn?
Is the darn about the same weight as the stocking?
Is the darn practically invisible?
Has the darn been pressed?

Exhibit.—Attach a label, sewing it to both stockings so the pair will stay together. Only one stocking is required to have a darn, but the exhibit must be a pair.

Record Book.—Keep a record of all the darning and mending you do. Tell something you have done in caring for your clothes.

Problem IV: Making an Apron

THE KITCHEN APRON

All 4-H Club Girls are interested in looking as neat and attractive as possible while cooking and helping with other home duties. The purpose of an apron is to protect the dress but it may also be attractive. The most satisfactory aprons are those that cover almost the entire dress, slip on easily, stay securely in place, do not have straps to slide off the shoulders, nor a collar that rides the neck. Often aprons are made of small patterned material that does not show soil readily. An apron should be flat enough to launder and fold easily; have at least one pocket and a good method of fastening.

This problem includes buttons and buttonholes which are a secure fastening. So try to select a pattern which buttons.

The trim may be bias tape used as an edge finish or a facing. Rickrack also makes an appropriate edge finish. You will learn ten things in making the kitchen apron:

Choosing suitable material.
Choosing a pattern suitable for you in design and size.
Preparing the material, straightening the edge, shrinking, pressing.

Using a pattern.

Placing pattern and cutting.

Fitting

Applying bias tape or rickrack.

Putting on a pocket.

Perfecting machine stitching.

Choosing the Materials.—The material should be firm. It should launder easily and should not fade. The color should be becoming to you and should harmonize with the dresses with which you will wear it. Among materials most often used for kitchen aprons are: gingham, print, percale, chambray, unbleached muslin, flour sacks. Read carefully the following paragraphs.

HOW TO KNOW COTTONS

As you will use cotton often in your sewing you will be interested to know about it, so you will be able to detect good and poor qualities easily. Cotton is one of our most valuable textiles. It is of vegetable origin. It is the white downy covering of the seed borne in the bolls of the cotton plant. Cotton thread is made by twisting cotton fibers together to form a hard twisted strand. This thread is woven into cloth. The ends of cotton thread when broken are brush-like or fuzzy and they burn quickly with a bright flame. Cotton is the most commonly used fiber as it enters into nine-tenths of the textile materials of everyday use.

Cotton fabrics have the following characteristics:

Good quality materials are strong and durable.

They are soft and pliable when no sizing or dressing is used. Sizing is a treatment of starch and glue that gives body to a fabric. Sizing disappears in laundering.

Cotton has a fuzzy surface, therefore it soils quickly. Cotton is easily laundered and can be boiled without injury. It takes starch well so can be kept looking fresh.

Acids destroy the fiber.

Cotton takes up dye but not as readily as wool or silk.

Cotton is a good conductor of heat so is valuable for summer wear.

Mercerized cotton cloth has been treated chemically to give the fiber a silky luster. Mercerized cotton is more expensive than ordinary cotton but is stronger and more silky looking and gives very good service. It takes dye more readily than the untreated cotton fiber. Cotton cloth varies according to the weave and finish. Some of the variations of cotton cloth are voiles, organdy, piqué, rep, broadcloth, velveteen, sateen, cheesecloth, net, canton flannel, crepe, gingham, percale. How many cotton materials can you name? A good game for your club meeting would be a cotton identification contest. Have each girl bring samples of cotton. Lay them on a table and number them. Then pass around and see how many you can name correctly. Write the names on a card opposite the number as:

1. 5
2. 6
3. 7
4. 8

Material Needed.—The amount of material needed will depend upon the pattern selected. Your pattern will tell you how much material is required. You may also need tape or rickrack in a harmonizing color for the trimming.

CHOOSING THE PATTERN

The Design.—A good kitchen apron protects the dress both front and back, has a secure method of fastening, does not slip off the shoulders, does not bunch up around the neck, has at least one well placed pocket and is flat enough to iron and fold easily. Look in the fashion magazines and see if you can find a good type apron that has these qualities. Choose a design that is suitable for your needs. Then you are ready to buy your pattern.

The Size.—Patterns that are sold at the stores are called commercial patterns. They are made according to the average proportions of girls of different ages. For this reason they are purchased by ages. A girl who is large or small for her age must make allowance for this and buy according to her size. Select the picture of the garment you wish to make, note the number and purchase the size you require.

Preparing the Material.—Before cutting the material press out wrinkles or creases and straighten the ends either by tearing or by cutting on the line of a drawn thread. Sometimes cotton materials may be straightened by stretching diagonally. If you are to cut on a fold, lay the fold of the goods toward you.

HOW TO USE A PATTERN

Open pattern and identify parts, selecting only those to be used in the garment. Read all the directions carefully.

Testing the Pattern.—Test pattern by pinning pieces together and holding it up to you. Another way to test the pattern is to lay it out on a table with the joining edges together. Then measure each piece according to your measurements. The number of measurements necessary to test a pattern varies. Few measurements need to be taken if the garment is loose and many if the garment is a closely fitted one. Your apron will require length, waist measure, hip measure. If the pattern does not fit when tested it will need to be changed. Later on we will study altering patterns.

Placing the Pattern on Material.—After the material has been straightened, fold it in half lengthwise bringing the two selvages together. Place the front section of the pattern on the material near one end with the cen-
should be used as a guide in basting. Before unpinning the pattern, mark all perforations. Mark the places where notches are with thread or snip out carefully with the point of the scissors so the notch will not show in the seam (Figure 37). Where there is a bias edge, handle it carefully for bias edges stretch easily. The marking may be done with colored thread or pins. On dark materials, white chalk may be used.

For Future Use.—After the garment is cut, fold the pattern carefully and replace in the envelope, with written suggestions for further use.

Basting and Fitting.—After the apron has been cut out, baste it together. Try it on the person who is to wear it. If it is satisfactory, you are ready to make the seams. This problem is one that is to be made on the sewing machine.

Bias tape may be used as a facing or as an edge finishing. These are placed either on the right side or the wrong side. Rickrack or other finishing braids are also good.

**Applying the Bias Binding.**—The steps in putting on bias tape (Figure 38) are:

1. Open bias tape. Often commercial bias tape comes creased through the center with the raw edges also turned in. In case it is not creased down the center fold it and press with a warm iron.
2. Place right side of bias against wrong side of the material having the edges even.
3. Baste one-fourth inch from the edge, or in the crease of the bias tape. Do not stretch the edge. Allow plenty for curved places.
4. Stitch on the machine in the crease of the bias tape.
5. Turn binding to the right side having the edge exactly in the crease.
In marking, decide on the location of the buttonhole and the distance it is to be from the edge of the cloth, and place a pin at this point. With another pin follow along the threads of the cloth and place a second pin just the distance needed for the button. Baste on the thread.

Reinforce the buttonhole with several rows of sewing machine stitching (Figure 41).

Cut from pin to pin inserting a sharp pointed scissors at the first pin. Cut each buttonhole just before it is to be made, because buttonholes ravel if left unfinished. Buttonholes are always made on two or more thicknesses of material (Figure 45).

In making buttonhole stitches it is better not to begin with a knot, but start with a few small stitches that will be covered. Commence at lower right hand side. Work from right to left. Insert the needle at the end of the slit and have it come out the depth that the buttonhole is to be and at right angles to the slit. Having the needle in this position, take the thread from the eye of the needle and throw it under the needle in the direction the work is being done (Figure 42).

The fan end is made by taking five or more buttonhole stitches forming a fan. These are kept the same depth as the rest of the buttonholes. The bar end is made by taking two or more long stitches across the end of the buttonhole. Make five or more blanket stitches over these threads. Make stitches toward the buttonholes. Carry the thread through to the wrong side and end it with finishing stitches (Figure 43).

Test for a good buttonhole:
Is straight with thread of material.
Has even stitches.

6. Turn other edge of the bias under one-fourth inch or along crease of the tape.
7. Baste bias down along the edge.
8. Stitch close to the edge with the machine.

This method gives a stitching along the right side. If it is desirable not to have stitching on the right side, it will be necessary to reverse the processes in steps (2) and (5).

Applying the Rickrack.—Turn a fold ¼ to ½ inch deep along the wrong side of the edge that is to be finished. Place right side of the rickrack on the right side of the material so that the lower points of the rickrack fall along on the folded edge. Baste the rickrack through the center. Stitch just above the basting. The stitching will fall a hem’s width or about ½-inch from the fold. Turn rickrack along stitching toward wrong side of the garment, baste, and stitch along the edge. Only one stitching will show on the right side when the edge is finished.

Pockets.—Pockets are not only convenient on an apron but may add trimming. Pockets should correspond in shape and size to the rest of the apron.

Locating the Pocket.—Hold your hand straight down at your side. Bend the fingers at right angles inward. The bottom of the pocket should come where the fingers touch. Mark the place with pins and apply basted pocket being sure it is straight. Finishing the top of the pocket with rickrack or tape, whichever you have chosen, as the trimming for your apron. Make a quarter-inch turn on all sides and baste carefully in place. Stitch around edges. Beginning about an inch from the top, stitch to the top and turn; continue entirely around. Turn at the top and stitch back an inch. This double stitching will reinforce the corners so they will not tear off easily. Stitch directly on the edge. If a double stitching is desired stitch about ¼-inch apart and square across the top. Draw the thread ends through to the wrong side. Tie ends securely and clip.

BUTTONHOLES AND BUTTONS

Buttons and buttonholes may form a part of the decorations of a garment or may be used because they make a strong fastening as for an apron. Consider the following points when making buttonholes: size, marking, reinforcing, cutting, buttonholing, fan end, bar end.

The size of the buttonhole is determined by the size and thickness of the button. The size is usually cut ¼ to ½ of an inch longer than the diameter of the button.
The bars and fan ends are even and well made.
Fits the button.
Thread used harmonizes in color and is of good weight for material.
Is made on double thickness.

**Buttons.**—Buttons are sewed on after the button holes are made in order that the position may be marked accurately. To sew flat buttons mark the place for the button with a pin. Use a heavy single thread. Make a knot in the end of the thread, and take a stitch on the right side at the pin mark. Bring the needle through to right side of button and back through the button and the material to the wrong side. Place a pin under the first thread and make all stitches over this. When enough stitches have been taken to hold the button securely, bring the needle out under the pin. Remove the pin and wind thread around the loose stitches forming the shank. Fasten the thread on the wrong side with a finishing knot. The shank allows the button to button easily and without puckers.

**Reinforcing the Button.**—Buttons are always sewed on two thicknesses of materials. Your apron may be reinforced by sewing a small piece neatly underneath (Figure 45).

**CARE OF APRONS**

After the apron is finished press it well. By being careful of your aprons they may be made to last a long time. Can you add any suggestions about the care of aprons to this list?

- When the apron is laundered use a mild or neutral soap, rinse well and hang it in the shade unless it is made of a white material.
- Keep the buttons sewed on.
- Mend any little hole as soon as it appears. “A stitch in time saves nine.”
- Do not allow the apron to become too soiled before it is laundered because it takes such hard rubbing to get it clean.
- Use holders when lifting hot dishes, do not use your apron.

**FIG. 44.**—Sewing on buttons. 1. Two-eye button showing stitches taken over pin; 2. four-eye button showing stitches taken over pin; 3. crowsfoot method of decoration; 4. the shank.

**FIG. 45.**—Reinforcement for button and buttonhole.

**LEARNING TO SEW**

Judging.—When all aprons are finished bring them to club meeting. Each girl may wear her apron in a club style show. To select the best aprons answer these questions:

- Is the apron becoming?
- Does it fit?
- Will it protect the dress?
- Does the girl wear it well?
- Is it clean and well pressed?
- Also judge the aprons off the girl using the apron score card.

**MATERIAL**

- Is it durable? Easy to launder? Attractive in color and pattern?
- Is it an all over pattern which will not soil easily?

**DESIGN**

- Does it give protection? Is it comfortable to wear? Does it fit? Is it easy to launder?

**TRIMMINGS**

- Are they appropriate for the material and style? Do they harmonize in color?

**WORKMANSHIP**

- Are the seams even? The stitching straight? Buttonholes well made?
- Bias joined correctly and neatly? Pockets stitched securely? Buttons sewed on well?

**Record Book.**—Make all entries of materials and costs in the record book.

**Exhibit.**—Label your apron neatly. Press and fold it carefully for exhibiting at your club, community, or the county fair.

**Problem V: The House Dress**

**WHAT FUN IT will be to make a dress for yourself! Perhaps it will be the first dress you have ever made. To be appropriate for home wear it will need to be simple so that it can be put on and off readily and laundered easily.**

An easy dress for your first one would be a sleeveless or kimono-sleeved one piece dress without a seam or joining at the waist line. In this problem we are to learn how to apply a fitted facing so you will want to consider this point when planning your house dress.

**Things you will learn in making the house dress:**
- How to select the design for a dress.
- How to make a French seam.
- How to make a fitted facing.
- How to cut, join and use bias binding.
- How to measure and mark the hem line of a dress.

**Planning the Dress.**—First you will want to decide on the pattern. This is to be a one-piece sleeveless or kimono-sleeved dress. You may choose a simulated sleeve or add a flared pleated or shaped cap on the shoulder or
at the top of the sleeve. It must make use of a fitted facing either as a finish or as a decoration. Look in the fashion magazines and study the designs; then choose a pattern that is suitable in size and good in design for a good house dress.

**The Material.**—Since house dresses are worn for service and require frequent washings, select a firm material. Cotton is a very suitable material to give good service. Read “How to Know Cottons,” page 28. Among the cotton materials suitable for house dresses are:

- Gingham
- Percale
- Chambray
- Cotton Broadcloth
- Poplin
- Indian Head

**The Color.**—Choose a color that is becoming to you. Choose one that emphasizes your best features. Usually girls with fair, clear skin, light hair and blue eyes will look well in blue or green; girls with dark skin, brown or black hair and dark eyes wear brown, orange, peach, flame or yellow best; while girls with auburn hair look best in tan, brown, dull orange, soft green and violet. There are so many combinations of coloring in skin, eyes and hair that each girl should try the colors near her face to decide which is her best color.

As this is to be a service dress it will be best to choose a color that is not too light, also one that will not fade. Another point for you to decide is whether you will choose an all-over print, a check, a plaid, a stripe, or a plain colored material.

Prints are a good choice for home frocks because they are gay, colorful, and do not show wrinkles or soil so quickly as plain materials.

You will also need to decide whether the trimming is to be of the same or of a contrasting material. As the trimmings should harmonize with the dress material it will be well to purchase them as well as matching thread at the same time. The amount of material you will need will depend upon your size. Patterns are sold either by age or by bust measure. If you are large or small for your age you will have to take this in consideration in selecting the correct size of pattern for yourself. Ask your mother or your leader to help you with this. Usually twice the length from your shoulder to the hem line plus four inches for seam and hem and an allowance for the fitted facing trim if the same material is to be used will be sufficient.

**Testing the Pattern.**—Test or pin-fit the pattern by first pinning the back and front together at the shoulder and underarm seam, then hold it up to you. Be sure to hold the pattern exactly at center front and center back. Check the length allowing for a three inch hem. Make all necessary adjustments in the pattern before cutting. Review “How to Use a Pattern,” page 29.

**Placing Pattern and Cutting Dress.**—Read the directions given on the guide chart of your pattern carefully. These directions tell:

1. How to place the pattern on the material.
2. How to cut the dress for various widths of material.
3. How to put it together.

Pin the pattern securely watching the thread of the material. Cut notches extending out from the cut edges. Cut with long even strokes of the scissors.

Cut the fitted facings after you have basted the dress together, tried it on, made any necessary adjustments and cut the neckline the shape and size you desire it to be. Remove the bastings, lay the pieces flat and cut pieces for the fitted facings required (Figure 47).

**Basting, Fitting and Sewing.**—Baste side seams with even basting. Plan the size and shape of the neck and check the fit of shoulders. In case the
dress needs fitting use darts (Figure 48-A). Remove bastings and cut fitted facings.

Rebaste after adjustments have been made and finish side seams. In case the material is firm the plain stitched seam which is a flat one may be used (Figure 48-B). If the material frays easily use a French seam (48-C). Press seams as you make them (48-D).

French Seam.—This is used if the edges are raw and the material is thin and frays easily. To make a French seam, place the wrong sides together, pin and baste and stitch a seam 1/8-inch wide. Remove the basting, trim the edge close to the stitching and crease open and flat on the right side at the line of stitching, fold the right sides together, being careful to bring the seam line to the edge of the fold; baste and stitch a seam 3/16-inch from the edge. Remove bastings and press flat on the wrong side. Be sure to trim the seams carefully after the first stitching. This will help to make them narrow and straight. Perhaps you will wish to practice making a French seam before you put one in your dress. Making a French seam makes a good individual demonstration for your club.

Test for a French Seam.—A good French seam should be of a width pleasing and consistent with the material on which it is used. It should be of uniform width. It should be straight. It should be carefully trimmed, the stitching should be straight and even with stitches of good length and tension. Score your French seam.

Press each seam as you make it with a warm iron. This makes sewing easier and will help you to get good results (Figure 48-D).
How to cut bias.
How to join bias.
How to use bias as a (1) facing, as a (2) binding, and as a (3) piping.
Make a small sample of each for your sewing portfolio.

To Cut Bias:
1. Fold material so warp threads lie parallel to filling threads (Figure 51-A).
2. Crease fold being careful not to stretch it out of shape. Mark the line with pencil or tailor's chalk.
3. With ruler held at right angles to this line mark desired width of bias parallel to this line (Figure 51-B). Mark as many pieces as are needed.
4. Cut on ruled lines.

To Join Bias:
1. Each end of the bias strip has a sharp corner and a blunt corner (Figure 51-C).
2. With the right sides together place the sharp corner of one piece to the blunt corner of the second piece so that the edges cross at the point you wish to stitch (about ¼ inch from edge). If figured material is used slip along until the figures match (Figure 51-D).
3. Stitch by machine.
4. Press open and trim off points.

To Use Bias:
1. As a Facing
   Bias used as a facing may be applied to the wrong side or as a decoration to the right side just as in the fitted facings, page 39.
2. As a Binding
   Crease ⅛ to ¼ inch fold on each side. Place right side of bias against wrong side of material having edges even. Baste in the crease, or ¼ inch from the edge. Do not stretch the edge. Allow plenty of fullness for curves (Figure 39). Stitch on machine.
   Turn binding to the right side to the width you desire it to be (this is usually half the width of the bias).

   FIG. 51.—Making and applying bias.

   Turn other edge of bias under ¼ to ¼ inch.
   Baste close to the seam.
   Stitch close to the edge with the machine. This method gives a stitching on the right side as in the applying of bias tape (Figure 51-F). If stitching is desired on wrong side, processes may be reversed as in the applying of bias tape (see page 32). Or it may be hand stitched (51-E).

3. As a Piping
   For finishing an edge with a piping cut bias as for facing or binding.
   Place right side together. Stitch.
   Fold bias to extend the desired width beyond the edge of garment. Baste in place and stitch.
   Turn remaining edge under and hem with blind hemming or small inconspicuous hemming stitches. Press (Figure 52-A).
   This makes an edge finish. Piping may also be set in a seam (52-B).

   Pockets and Belt.—If you use pockets be sure they are well placed and straight. In case your pattern has pockets follow the guide chart carefully. Review "Pockets," page 32.
   Choose whatever type of belt you desire as a finish for the waist line. If the belt is to be made of the dress material cut a piece the length of your waist measure and twice the width desired, allowing for seams. Fold in half lengthwise. Baste and stitch on the machine leaving ends open. Turn, press so seam is exactly at the edge. Overhand ends of belt and sew snaps securely in place or finish with button or buckle.

   Putting in the Hem.—A carefully made hem gives style to any dress. See how well you can do it. As this is a work dress the hem may be put in either by hand or by machine. A 3-inch hem is usually a very desirable depth. Follow these steps in making the hem.
   1. Mark bottom of dress a desired distance from the floor. Use yard stick and mark bottom of dress line with a row of pins placed parallel to the floor (Figure 53-A).
2. Turn hem at line of pins and press with warm iron.
3. Trim hem to even width using card board gauge (Figure 53-B).
4. Turn hem under $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and pin in place, sticking pins at right angles to hem.
5. Baste in place with uneven basting stitch using tiny tucks or gathers to take in any fullness.
6. Hem by hand with small inconspicuous hemming stitches or stitch on the edge by machine.

**Pressing.**—If your dress has become soiled, launder it carefully. In case it is not soiled, moisten it on the wrong side with a damp cloth and press well with a hot iron.

**Judging.**—Hang all the club dresses on hangers and study each one carefully. A well dressed club girl will want her clothing to express “her.” As you look at the dresses do they seem to look like the girls who made them? Have the girls selected materials and colors which are suitable to their personalities as well as for home wear? Has the work been well done?

Use the following score card to help you select the best dresses.

**HOUSE DRESS SCORE CARD**

**Materials, including Trimmings**
- Are materials suitable for a house dress?
- Will they launder well and give good service?
- Do the trimmings harmonize?

**Design and Color**
- Is the design simple and suitable for a work dress?
- Is it becoming to the wearer?
- Are the color combinations pleasing?

**Workmanship**
- Are seams, hems, facings correctly made and of good choice for their use?
- Is the stitching (both hand and machine) of good quality?
- Are thread ends tied, pockets reinforced, and fastenings well placed and secure?
- Does the dress fit?

**General Appearance**
- Is the dress clean?
- Is it well pressed?
- Does it look attractive?

**Record Book.**—Enter all cost items with names and amounts of materials used in the record book.

**Exhibit.**—Label your house dress at the center back of the inside of the hem. Sew neatly and securely.
WANTED—A GIRL

Wanted—a girl who is loyal and true,
With the brain to plan and the will to do;
With spirit loyal that none can doubt,
Who thinks of other folks around about;
A girl whose actions make her mother proud,
Who takes her place in the busy crowd
And plays her part in a splendid way,
No matter if the skies be blue or gray,
A girl who is willing, whose nerve is keen,
Whose thoughts and actions are always clean:
Who works with her head and heart and hands,
A girl whom everyone understands.
I know that always she'll play her part
In lowly hamlet or city mart.
A girl with never a thought of fame,
Who's always trying to play the game.
And out of its clamor and din and whirl,
The world pays tribute to such a girl.

—H. Howard Biggar.

(Dedicated to the 4-H Club Girls of Nebraska.)
WANTED—A GIRL

Wanted—a girl who is loyal and true,
With the brain to plan and the will to do;
With spirit loyal that none can doubt,
Who thinks of other folks around about;
A girl whose actions make her mother proud,
Who takes her place in the busy crowd
And plays her part in a splendid way,
No matter if the skies be blue or gray,
A girl who is willing, whose nerve is keen,
Whose thoughts and actions are always clean:
Who works with her head and heart and hands,
A girl whom everyone understands.
I know that always she'll play her part
In lowly hamlet or city mart.
A girl with never a thought of fame,
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And out of its clamor and din and whirl,
The world pays tribute to such a girl.

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