

Want to dress in Era fashion?

Sewing with the MAFCA patterns
by Trudy Vestal

If you have considered wearing era clothes for club events you might want to consider sewing them or having an outfit made. MAFCA has preserved a private collection of more than 300 patterns from our era. To preserve these patterns, which are quite fragile, copies were painstakingly made and put on a disk. The project was undertaken by Helen Christensen and the Santa Clara Valley Chapter and took more than two years to complete. Now finished, you can order copies of the patterns by visiting the MAFCA website at mafca.com. The pattern book can also be ordered through the ad in the *Restorer* magazine.

When a pattern is ordered, a paper copy is made and sent to you. The patterns are sold at a reasonable price for just enough to cover the cost. Though not for the novice, these patterns will enable you to replicate the fashions of yesteryear. Once you've mastered the language of the instructions from eighty five years ago you should be able to make a garment that is right out of the past. When you place your order ask about the instructions. Not all patterns have good instructions so leave those that don't for the expert seamstress. The patterns come in whatever size was in the collection, most likely you will need to make adjustments for fit.

My sewing skills are just a bit better than novice, but not much. My concern was making the necessary adjustments for size. For this reason I chose to have a couple dresses made by a professional seamstress. After receiving the finished product I've decided to tackle the next one on my own. However, my selection will be made carefully to match my sewing skills.

The dress pictured in this article is one that I had made. I think it is one of the more simple to make. All the seams are straight and the instructions are understandable. The fabric I chose is polyester chiffon in a pattern and color similar to what might have been available during the era. In reviewing catalogs and magazines of our era you'll find quite a variety of color and patterns available during the years of the Model A. This fabric I bought for \$1.00 a yard and used 4 ½ yards, not a big gamble. The pattern is a Butterick pattern from January 1928. It was featured in the *Delineator* magazine, a popular magazine from the era. Most of the ladies magazines of our era featured patterns that could be bought directly from the magazine company, see the illustration for an example of this information. The Butterick Pattern Company was later bought by Simplicity. Patterns of our era are sized in two ways, either by age or bust, such as 12-18 years, for the younger set, and adult sizes from 32-52

An interesting part of this pattern is the instructions for making the flower. This is the only part of the dress I made, which was not difficult. It consists of 28 strips of material, sewn together.

To complete this outfit all you need is a hat, jewelry, shoes and a purse.

