

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING EXTENSION

SEWING MACHINE PROJECT

By

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1937

SEWING MACHINE PROJECT REPORT

In November 1936 a circular letter was sent to all home demonstration agents in the state explaining the value of sewing machine schools and how to organize them. (Copy in Exhibit Section). Almost at once, forty-eight schools were requested from twenty-three counties. Since that time a good many more requests have come in. Nearly every county in which a school has been held has asked that more schools be held there as soon as possible. In traveling over the state I have found a tremendous interest in this type of work. The women of the state are realizing the need of it and the great value that it is to them.

Below are a few remarks given voluntarily by women at the sewing machine schools:

"I am better pleased with my machine since it has been cleaned and adjusted than ever before. Mr. Bass was very helpful in putting my machine in good order."

(Signed) Mrs. Betty Carter
Occoquan, Va.

Mrs. Carter's machine was 39 years old.

"I have learned things about my machine that I never knew before and therefore like it better than I did when it was new."

(Signed) Mrs. Joseph E. Jeannette
Route 4, Box 4, Norfolk, Va.

Mrs. Jeannette's machine was 18 years old.

"My machine runs easier and sews better than ever since being cleaned and adjusted by a man who knows what he is doing."

(Signed) Mrs. Ella Gallup
Route 4, Box 199,
Norfolk, Va.

The sewing machine school project was handled by Mr. J. J. Bass, Jr., a full-time extension specialist, who devoted the majority of his time to home water supply, drainage, irrigation and farm structures work.

The specialist spent 31 days in the field holding sewing machine schools. In each county the schools were held in cooperation with the Home Demonstration Agent. In one county there was no home agent so the county agricultural agent organized the schools and assisted in holding them. Close cooperation was maintained at all times with the sewing machine companies throughout the entire state.

One all day session was necessary for each clinic. All clinics started about 9:00 o'clock in the morning and lasted until about 5:00 o'clock or often later. It is impossible to properly adjust a dirty machine, consequently the morning was spent in thoroughly cleaning all machines. The afternoon was spent in lectures, reassembling the machines and adjustments. Every machine was tested by the specialist and adjusted to make a perfect stitch before it was allowed to leave the clinic.

Oil, brushes, screwdrivers, and pans necessary in cleaning the machines were furnished the ladies by the specialist. Machine oil, needles and a few small parts for standard make machines were carried by the specialist and sold to any one wishing to purchase same at store price, which the specialist had to pay for them.

OBJECT:

To teach women how to clean, adjust and care for their sewing machines. We found that a large per centage of the machines which were not sewing good, some even that had not been in use for years, only needed cleaning

and adjusting. I found that very few women know the adjustments on their machines and teaching them that alone means a great asset to them. No attempt was made to teach sewing or the use of attachments, but rather to get the machines in perfect condition for sewing and to get the women "Sewing at Home Minded". It is impossible for our home demonstration agents to teach sewing successfully unless their club members' sewing machines are in good condition.

RESULTS:

Through excellent cooperation and many hours of hard work from the home demonstration agents 31 very successful clinics were held. The attitude of the women toward the work could not have been better. It must be said that not a single district agent, home economist specialist or other extension specialist attended a single clinic. All of the results of the work cannot be stated in this report, nor can the value of the work be stated in dollars and cents. One must get out and talk with those women who attended a clinic if they wish to know how this project is in demand and the good that it does.

The writer wishes to thank Miss Maude E. Wallace, State Agent, as well as each home agent where a clinic was held for their cooperation and hard labor in making our clinics the most successful that have ever been held in this state.

The following table shows the number of each make of sewing machine represented at the schools:

Singer	197
Minnesota	26
Standard	11
White	8
Wheeler & Wilson	7
New Home	7
Domestic	7
Franklin	5
Davis	5
Free	4
Challenge	4
Spotless	4
Majestic	3
New Companion	3
New Belvidere	3
Cleveland	2
Steinway	2
Damascus	2

One each: New Elmore, New Domestic, Drafts Gem, Manhattan, Oriole, Alvah, Maryland, Tuxedo, Demorest, Honeymoon, Helpmate, Joli, Arlington, Economy, Household, Duplex, Peerless, Robinson, Arrow, Keystone, Florence, Bruce, Remington, New Ideal, Burdick, Richmond, Newport, Favorite, Western Electric, Farm & Home, Sterling, Floradora, Edgemore, Strawbridge Clothier.

Clinics held - 31

Total of 334 machines

Average per clinic - 10-11

The following table shows the counties in which clinics were held, the agent, number of machines and total attendance.

<u>County</u>	<u>Agent</u>	<u>No. of Clinics</u>	<u>Machines</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Accomac	Miss Nora Miller	5	52	72
Norfolk	Miss Exie Lassetter	4	50	85
King and Queen and King Wm.	Miss Janette Clifton	5	42	58
Prince William	Miss Sarah Thomas	3	34	48
Nottoway	Miss Katherine Lambert	3	23	35
Chesterfield	Miss Margaret Rawlinson	2	25	40
Charlotte	H. E. McSwain	2	27	34
Louisa	Miss Alice Webb	2	24	60
Prince Edward	Miss Emma Henry	1	12	16
Appomattox	Miss Ella Smith	1	14	20
Mecklenburg	Miss Elephare Hood	1	12	15
Giles	Miss Catherine Perry	1	11	18
Albemarle	Mrs. Bessie Miller	1	8	10
Totals		31	334	511

Summary of Sewing Machine Clinics:

31 clinics in 16 counties.

334 sewing machines cleaned, adjusted and put in
proper sewing condition.

10 - 11 machines per school.

52 different makes of machines.

6% less than 10 years old.

38% - 10 to 20 years old.

34% - 20 - 30 years old.

14% - 30 - 40 years old.

5% - 40 - 60 years old.

3% - over 60 years old.

100% in proper running condition and making a perfect
stitch at end of schools.

OUTLOOK:

There is a bright outlook for this project now, next year or any other time that the Extension Division can put a man on it for as much time as it will require. If encouraged at all it will require the full time of a specialist and I believe it is worthy of the full time of an expert in the work. It is felt that this project can do more good, save the women more in cash value, and make the women Extension Service-minded more than any other one project. Statements to this effect were made by a number of women worked with this year. We do not have to wait to see the value of the work -- this is shown right at

the clinic the day the work is done. This year machines were brought in that were 40 - 50 years old and had not made a stitch for 15 - 20 years. When these machines left the clinic they were running good and making a perfect stitch. Such work as this gives the people a great confidence in Extension work and a great enthusiasm for our sewing machine clinics.



Sewing Machine Clinic held at Deepwater in
Norfolk County, March 3, 1937.



Newspaper clippings from county papers in regard
to Sewing Machine Clinics.

**Sewing Machine Clinics
In WPA Sewing Rooms**

(Conducted By Agricultural Engineering Department V. P. I.)

Mr. Jennings Bass from the Agricultural Engineering Department V. P. I., Blacksburg, Va., a sewing machine specialist, conducted in Charlotte county this week two Sewing Machine Clinics or Schools. The object being to teach women how to clean, adjust and care for their sewing machines.

On Tuesday, February 23, 1937, at the Keysville WPA Sewing Room, 13 ladies with Mr. Bass' aid and instructions overhauled their machines. Wednesday, February 24, 12 ladies in the Saxe WPA Sewing Room received the same instructions.

Ladies working in the WPA Sewing Rooms were given this course in their Home Making Hour. The other public spirited ladies were glad to cooperate with the WPA Sewing Rooms and avail themselves of this opportunity.

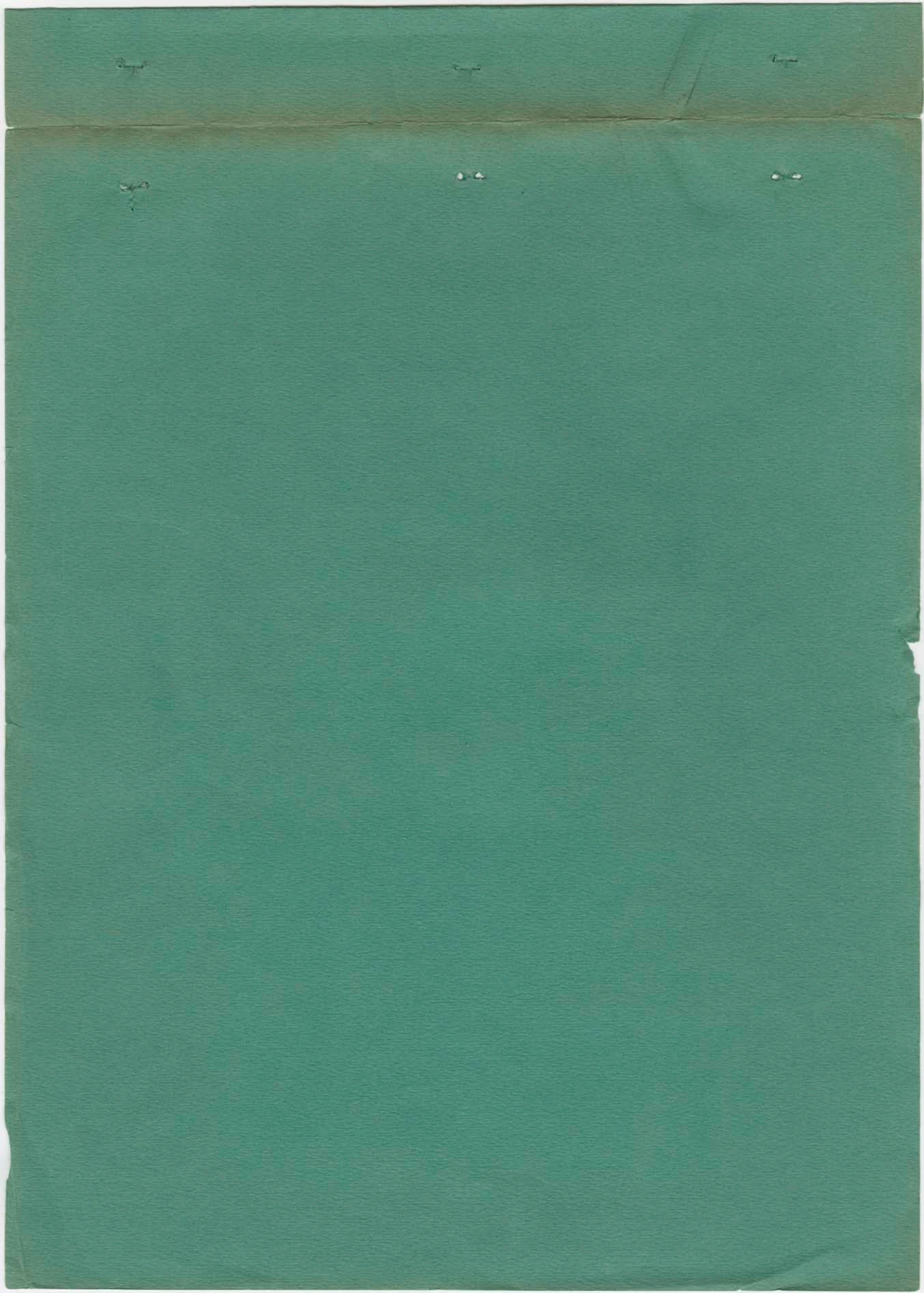
Mrs. Elma F. McNeny, Supervisor of Yomen's Projects and Mr. Horace E. McSwain, County Agent, were instrumental in securing from V. P. I. this specialist and the clinic for Charlotte county.

M. Five sewing machine schools were held in Accomack County, March 9-12. J. J. Bass, Jr., of the Agricultural Engineering Department, V. P. I., Blacksburg, was in charge. The home demonstration chairman or leader acted as hostess at each meeting. Fifty-

two machines were cleaned and put in working order.

The results of this piece of work lead us to believe that there is no such thing as a worn-out sewing machine. Instruction bulletins were distributed at the meetings and the people getting the benefit of the school have valuable information to share with their neighbors.

Meetings were held at Greenbackville, Cashville, Pungoteague, Quinby and Chincoteague. The latter was a demonstration meeting. The home demonstration organization hopes to repeat this project next year.



Another copy of this report filed in

"Sewing Machine School - 1937" folder

D-2 - Farm Home Equipment
~~#~~ Sewing Machine Project.