

UNDERSTANDING MODEL A ERA PATTERN SIZING

By Jeanie Adair

What a treasure and resource we have with the new *Model A Era Fashion Pattern Catalog* that has been published by MAFCA. (Check out the MAFCA STORE on the web site if you haven't seen it.)

I thought some comparison of the sizing of patterns was in order. You might think you are a size 14, so you pick up an era pattern that has "Size 14" clearly marked on it. You take the pieces out of the envelope and right away notice they look rather small. You're very observant!

So let's analyze the situation a bit. Looking in the old catalogs can be confusing with the different women's size charts listed. To complicate things further, different companies had different standards. Or maybe the problem was the lack of standard sizing from one company to another. Here are examples from a 1931 *National Bellas Hess* catalog:

JUNIORS

SIZE	13	15	17	19
BUST	31	33	35	37

MISSES

SIZE	14	16	18	20
BUST	32	34	36	38

WOMENS

BUST	36	38	40	42	44	46
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STOUT WOMENS

BUST	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55
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These do not compare with sizing we are familiar with today as Juniors, Misses and Women's sizes in our stores, catalogs and patterns. We have more standardization today than they did during the Model A era. (Of course we all know sizes do still vary a little from one manufacturer to another.)



Do not let today's sizing influence you when thinking in terms of era pattern sizes. They just are not the same!

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This McCall's era pattern clearly states it's a size 18, however when checking the corresponding measurements on the back of the pattern envelope it shows that size 18 has a bust measurement of 36. (See the chart below.) This would be a Misses' size, meaning for the young miss. You will note the pattern does say "Ladies' & Misses" on the front.

MATERIAL REQUIRED	Size	18	19	20	24
View A—With Cap Sleeves					
12 Inch Material (Without seam)		4½	4½	4½	4½
15 " " " " " " " " " " " "		2½	4½	4½	4½
19 " " " " " " " " " " " "		3½	3½	4	4
Binding		4½	4½	4½	5
1½ 35 Inch Material		¾	¾	¾	¾
View B—Without Sleeves					
12 Inch Material (Without seam)		2½	4½	4½	4½
15 " " " " " " " " " " " "		3½	4½	4½	4½
19 " " " " " " " " " " " "		3½	2½	4	4
Corresponding Measurements	Bust	32	34	36	38

McCall's era pattern 6512, size 18.



This Excella pattern is marked size 20 with the corresponding measurements chart listing that as a bust size of 38 and hips 41. Note the chart also says "Years" for the size. The era catalogs also used 'years' for sizing. This is another inconsistency with pattern sizing.

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Sometimes the bust size was the pattern size. Check out the following chart from McCall's pattern 4867. Note it lists sizes 16 and 18, but also 36, 38, 40 and 42 with corresponding bust measurements.

CORRESPONDING MEASUREMENTS				
3-inch hem allowed				
Sizes	Bust	*Hip	Finished length from back of neck, about	Width at lower edge, about
16	34	37	42	1 1/4
18	35 1/2	39	43 1/2	1 1/4
36	36	39	45	1 3/8
38	38	41	45	1 3/8
40	40	43 1/2	45	1 3/8
42	42	46	45 1/2	1 1/2



Here are two examples of patterns where the bust size is the pattern size.



Are you confused yet??? Be careful and study the pattern envelope thoroughly before purchasing a pattern. Compare the era size charts to figure out what your closest era size will be. Keep in mind you may need to make some adjustments to the pattern so it will fit you. By researching the sizing issues of era patterns I think we can consider the "Junior" and "Misses" sizes are for the younger ladies and "Women's" and "Stout Women's" sizes would be for the more mature figured ladies. Enjoy the hunt as we learn more about the fashions of our Model A era.