Follow the Dotted Line

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Patterns That

Follow the Dotted Line

WHEN Priscilla Grigg, H. Ec. Jr., returned to Iowa State from a year in Germany as an exchange student, she tucked in her suitcase a magazine publication. Folded inside the magazine, "DIR UND MIR," which is similar to the American McCalls, is a pattern sheet, 24 inches by 32 inches.

On one side are markings for 96 pattern pieces, enough to make 14 different garments. Almost more confusing than a maze of Morse code messages, the pattern sheet resembles a topographical map. Included are dresses, a coat, suit, blouse, skirt and a maternity jacket. The reverse side contains a matching ensemble of vest, jacket and pleated skirt.

Although the German women have access to American patterns, many still use this type of pattern sheet. The pattern to be used is traced from the large sheet to material with carbon paper and a tracing wheel. A special system of dots, dashes or other figures is used to make the lines for each different pattern. For example, --.--.-- would be the code for one garment, while --.---- might be the code for another.

Each pattern piece has a number. When choosing a piece to transfer from the sheet you look first for the number and then follow the coded line. Suddenly you may find yourself at the edge of the paper where an arrow is placed to designate the addition of several more centimeters to the end of the pattern. A meter stick is sure to come in handy here.

Similar to our familiar patterns, the pattern sheet includes a picture of the garment below the directions for cutting out the material, suggested materials and the notions to add the finishing touches.