HOMEMAKERS' PROBLEMS IN THE USE OF GOOD DESIGN IN
DECORATING AND FURNISHING THE HOME

by

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HOMEMAKERS' PROBLEMS IN THE USE OF GOOD DESIGN IN DECORATING AND FURNISHING THE HOME

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem that I have undertaken is to survey, by questionnaire, Oregon homemakers enrolled in Home Extension units in an attempt to determine their awareness of a need for further guidance in learning to understand, appreciate, and use good design in the furnishings of their homes.

"Good design," as defined by the Design Committee, (31, p. 1) "must be in scale, be usable, be straightforward, be well integrated, and create a definite mood."

Purpose of the Survey

It is the purpose of the author to show that discrimination and enjoyment of art and design can be a part of one's living; that it is possible to create a desire for an understanding and appreciation of design; that to be able to recognize good design will result in a more satisfying environment; that it is necessary to reinterpret our aim in decorating in terms of the transitional period in which we are living.

Thus in attempting to determine the difficulties and problems of the homemaker in the furnishing and decorating
of her home, this research may prove beneficial in providing essential information in the areas most needed for the development of more satisfactory family living.

**Subjects Employed in the Survey**

The questionnaire was sent to the Benton County Extension Unit program planners' committee, consisting of seventeen homemakers, for pre-testing. It was also sent to twelve selected County Extension Agents (Home Economics) for evaluating. After the evaluating and pre-testing groups returned the questionnaire it was revised before being sent to 580 Home Extension unit leaders in thirty counties.

**Limitations of the Survey**

Distribution of the questionnaire was limited to Oregon Home Economics Extension Unit leaders. The author felt that a greater return of the questionnaire could be expected from leaders, rather than members at random from each community; also that the need and thinking of the group members would be better reflected in the data furnished by leaders. Lists of names and addresses of leaders are more readily available. Then too, these participating Home Extension unit leaders represent a cross-section of Oregon homemakers in thirty counties in Oregon with organized Home Economics Extension Units.
directly supervised by the County Extension Agents (Home Economics).

Since these data represent a cross-section of Oregon homemakers, the author believes that the data obtained furnish reliable information in the field of good design in home furnishings, for the Extension Home Furnishing Specialist, State Leader, State Agents, and County Extension Agents (Home Economics) in planning information helpful to the homemaker.
A Philosophy of Life

"All knowledge is lost which ends in knowing, for every truth we know is a candle given us to work by. Gain all the knowledge you can and then use it for the highest purpose." -- John Ruskin

How aptly this describes the life work of the homemaker whose knowledge and experience direct to a large extent her family's way of life. She not only has to furnish rooms for dining, sleeping, and sitting but for living. These rooms want to be beautiful; rooms to love, to be proud of; rooms with the accent on living.

The house then is the focal point from which all home life evolves. It should be designed and planned specifically for the people living there, for a house at its best is a home. In his book, "When Democracy Builds," Frank Lloyd Wright has written that "all architectural values are human values or not valuable. Human values are always life giving never life taking." (41, p. 60)

T. H. Robesjohn Gibbing (22, p. 286) has said, "A house should be an extension, an outward fulfillment of the inner feelings of the inhabitant."

It is important that a house, if it is to be a real home, be carefully planned around the requirements of the family. Each room, whether it be a living room, recreation room, or study, should exhibit a sense of being lived in,
used, and enjoyed. There should be a pleasing relationship of parts within each room and each room in turn related to
the house as a whole. While the home should be a personal
home it does not want to reflect the self-conscious effort
of the housewife but the character of all the family
members.

"The new American house," says Dorothy Shaver
(37, p. 102), "is a multi-purpose house which encourages
rather than stifles the rich variety of today's social
pattern." The homemaker today not only has greater freedom
but also a greater responsibility to her home, her family,
and its privacy. "A balanced life begins at home. At last
our houses are turning from exhibitionism and extreme ex­
troversion toward the encouragement of the inner life."
(30, p. 128) A present day concept of the importance of
the house was also expressed by John Burroughs in 1886,
one builds with modesty and simplicity, and with due
regard to the fitness of things, his house will always be
a wound, an object of offense upon the fair face of the
landscape." (6, p. 239)

Thought is being given today, by designers and
builders, to what individuals want from a house, physic­
ally, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Also more
families are choosing furniture they like, colors they
like, accessories they like, and they are putting them
together to suit their own likes and needs. Marian Davis
Gillies says, "It is time for an awakening of individualism
in interior design. We must modify our houses and their
interiors to accommodate our activities." (16, p. 12) She
goes on to say, "You are more important than your house or
furniture, chairs, tables, and decorating detail should
conform to your comfort and convenience. You should not
conform to them." (16, p. 3)

"Our American civilization," says Frank Lloyd Wright,
"is only a way of life. Our culture would consist of means
of making that way of life beautiful. Either we die with­
out a culture of our own or we live by moving forward into
a more beautiful concordant life than we now have." (13, p. 88)

"Culture begins at home. It is the way we live, the
way we make that way of life beautiful. Culture is beauty,
thought and creativity brought home; it is what we do with
our leisure; it is what we do when we don't have to do any­
thing. Culture is personal and individual or it is noth­
ing. It is each man expanding to his full growth becoming
all he is capable of; it is what he brings home by himself,
to himself every day of his life." (7, p. 87)

The homemaker, as an individual, is a cultured person.
Her culture is influenced by the pleasure and actual
experiences she has had in planning projects and fixing her home for the enjoyment of her family. The wider the range of new experiences she has had the more cultivated she becomes. She learns by doing and in so doing is a wiser person, better qualified to use her own judgment. In all this she is not alone, her personal, exploratory, dissenting activities are but a part of a larger evolution.

The interests of the homemaker need not be costly to be cultural. The objects she collects to add beauty and charm to her home need not be collectors' items, rare and expensive. Beauty is too often confused with cost. For the discriminating homemaker, through experience and observation, can learn the art of spending—of getting the most of what is needed for the sum she has to spend. To be a purposeful shopper she needs to be an informed one; one who has shopped until she knows all the possibilities that the market has to offer; one who knows as much about what she is rejecting as what she is choosing; one who does not resort to buying by impulse or to buying merely for an emotional release from depression. The basic reason why impulse or emotional buying is not sound is that it means she is not really thinking about how the items will integrate with what she already has in her home.

So much emphasis, in the past, has been put on the technical aspects of getting your money's worth intrinsically, that too often, not enough has been said about the
intangibles that affect over-all buying success. The first requirement for successful spending of money is to develop a sense of the over-all ensemble; to buy only that which contributes and builds up the whole. An object or furnishing can be evaluated only in terms of its relationship to the other objects or furnishings with which it is to be used. The homemaker needs to be aware of such intangibles as beauty, appropriateness, the relationship of one form to another; she needs to be conscious of pattern—when to use it and when not to use it; she has to develop a sense for materials—to be aware of when a material is properly used. The intrinsic value of an object does not count until after the relationship of that object to other objects is right.

In judging a good buy the homemaker then should ask herself these questions: Is it useful and adaptable in my home? Is it well constructed of good materials? Is it reasonable in price? (18, p. 126)

**Attitude and Appreciation in Art**

"To understand art one must learn its real meaning, what there is in it, and how it is put together."

(33, p. 5)

Training in art appreciation has been neglected in this country. Just as the eye must be trained to understand color, so it must be trained to understand and
appreciate good line and design. "A study of the Arts must be on a firm foundation to meet the broader understanding that the future will require." (42, p. vii)

Sybil Emerson, in her book, Design--A Creative Approach, stresses the importance of studying design through experience rather than through the formal academic approach and terminology. Many and varied experiences can be gained with inexpensive, everyday materials and media, so that it is possible to understand and accept, as a part of one's own experience, the basic physical and psychological truths underlying all necessary design. No one design experience exists alone. The necessity of integrating design in all areas of living is part of our present day concept, one that is not always easily understood.

"Experience is the answer to the question of how to learn design," writes Italo L. de Francisco, consultant editor--Laurel Publishers. "The person with an inquiring mind and a vivid imagination may have his reward by following the road that leads to freedom and creation through the experimental method." (10, p. ix)

From experience and only after it is one better qualified to evaluate and judge good design. "The average person has little confidence in his own judgment and taste. Consumers made aware of good design will command commodities of a higher aesthetic quality." (8, p. 159)
A problem often confronting the homemaker, in her role as artist and consumer, is to try to understand why and from what motives her preferences arise.

Dr. Robert Eichler, psychologist and analyst, as consultant for Lightolier, Incorporated, New York lamp manufacturer, was asked to look into the question of home decorating experiences of the housewife. He found that a housewife trying to make up her mind "must make decisions or compromises and settle in her own mind—who am I?" Dr. Eichler said that three basic human drives fight for domination of the subconscious when a woman makes a decision about home furnishings and decorating.

These are the ego drive, which involves "the concept of one who is and wants to be;" the pleasure drive involving "an urge for self-gratification and unhampered emotional expression;" and the group drive, or "desire to be identified with others as an individual of good taste."

This theory of Dr. Eichler's may help to explain why many a homemaker may know what she likes but cannot always explain her reasons; why some are satisfied to act, think, and live like their friends or neighbors, and others fail to consider design qualities and its usefulness to them in their furnishings and decoration.

It is commonly accepted that Americans want not only utility, but beauty and harmony in their surroundings.
"The true joys of life are not material but come from a contented mind and an enrichment of the spirit to which only the Arts can abundantly contribute." (42, p. xi)

There is no set of rules that can be prescribed to ensure the creation of beauty and individuality in the home. For what is beauty? Fitness and comfort can be ensured by exercising care and common sense. But how to ensure beauty, which is so intangible and elusive, which can neither be defined or even recognized with assurance. For what one person calls beautiful another calls un-beautiful—there seems to be no fixed standards. Beauty is a quality too subtle for definition. Like electricity, we can experience it, but we cannot tell what it is. However, it is true that the conditions under which the principles and elements of design appear are fairly constant. Therefore, if the homemaker can cause these conditions to be present in her home she can be sure that beauty in some degree, at least, will be present.

Most of the contributions on simplicity in home furnishing during the past forty years have had for their text William Morris' (1834-96, poet, artist, and socialist writer) admonition to have in your house only what you know to be useful and what you believe to be beautiful. The precept is perfect, yet it is hard to live up to. To analyze what is useful and beautiful demands thoughtful consideration—for ideas of what is beautiful vary.
Discarding things known to be useless is often painful.

Therefore the person who is interested in economy as well as beauty should learn to recognize good design.

Success in home decoration depends chiefly upon two qualities. First, it requires knowledge and pertinent information. Second, it requires good taste. Without knowledge one cannot create well and without good taste knowledge will not be put to its best use. For good taste in the field of art may be defined as the application of the principles and elements of design to problems in life where appearance as well as utility is a consideration.

Good taste and discriminating judgment are molded to a very large extent by environment—by the objects surrounding the individual. So it is that the family taste is trained by the objects surrounding the family and selected by the homemaker. The homemaker then who has the knowledge is the one who can make resourceful use of it. The more interest and experience she has in exercising good judgment and selection in her home furnishings, the more creative she is likely to become in bringing beauty and harmony into her home.

"American taste," says Frances Taylor Heard, home furnishing editor for House Beautiful, "has an unmistakable flavor....we like everything—we borrow from everywhere.... Since America is, socially, a melting pot, and almost every
community and every family is a mixture of nationality strains, how can our taste help but be a mixture too--blended by ourselves." (23, p. 140)

Knowledge and Understanding of Design

"The terms design and composition, through constant usage have been employed to describe the selection and arrangement of lines, forms and color which make up the plan of a work of art and which are utilized to arouse emotional reaction in the beholder." (15, p. 3)

Design is the selecting and arranging of materials with two aims: order and beauty. One man uses an ordinary piece of canvas and some paints and people cross continents to see his pictures; another man starts out with the same materials and the result is worthless daub. What is the difference? It is just the difference in the qualities of order and beauty. Design is the art of inventing and combining lines, shapes, colors, and textures to form a composition.

Edward Wormley has been working in his chosen field of home furnishing design for twenty-five years. He is a native of Illinois and has been named one of America's most copied designers. Beauty and utility are the two phases he incorporates into every design.

"Design begins as soon as any relationships are
organized, thus excluding the fallacy of the term applied design. Design, being the fundamental plan, inherent in materials chosen, cannot be applied as if it were an external thing." (10, p. 3)

Richard Neutra believes that "the art of design is the art of living and cannot be replaced by science and technology." (32, p. 381) Through experience, the homemaker can learn to appreciate design—for design is a language, a means of expression—as for example, in the selection of a rug she includes practical and expressive as well as purely aesthetic considerations.

"Taste and individuality are the intangible essentials; functionalism, the practical; and pure design the aesthetic." (42, p. 732) "An object of utility also has possibilities of expressiveness. A chair for instance may be comfortable to sit in. It may also, through its proportions and materials speak of comfort and elegance or informality or some other specific quality." (10, p. 3)

The homemaker’s problem, then, to repeat, is to try to understand why she prefers one object or one plan over another. Surely that object or plan, which she prefers, best carries out its purpose so far as her own problem is concerned. It matters not whether her purpose be utilitarian or an expression of feeling or both. "It is rather the bringing together of all elements which serve the
proposed end, whether that end is the painting of a picture, making a craft article or simply a grouping of objects." (10, p. 3)

An object of good design should look as if it was neither too large nor too small, too light nor too heavy, in relation to its surroundings. It should be easily used for its intended purpose and look as if its achievement required little effort. It should not look complete if a part of it is removed neither should it be allowed to loose its beauty by adding extra parts. Finally, a good design must create some feeling or mood.

Although products of design may vary from one civilization to another the elements and principles never change. "Fashion does change, and we are the better for it, but its backbone--the integrity of good line and composition--remain constant.... Too often, under the spell of immediate visual appeal, we buy without thorough examination of the basics (principles and elements) and take the chance of ending up as fantastically as those we call unfashionable. That is why we seek furniture (and other furnishings) tastewise and valuewise." (11, p. 106)

From a long association of ideas, lines suggest certain qualities of strength, movement, stability, aspiration, repose et cetera. A vertical line suggests heighth; a horizontal line, a feeling of repose; diagonal lines
might express security, motion, animation; lines of this kind suggest a bracing against an opposite force—often used to bring about emphasis.

Curves lines are infinite in their possible variations with fine shades of feeling as strong or weak, sensitive or expressive. (15, p. 5)

The human eye has a way of fixing itself on a line and traveling along it to the end. It is only diverted by strong counter attractions, like other lines crossing or by forms looming up nearby. Many lines in all directions are confusing. For example, a room will be more restful if the rug runs parallel with the wall, or a large piece of furniture can be used in a small room by the same application.

Frank Lloyd Wright (12) calls the horizontal line the "line of domesticity." "Vertical lines," he continues, "connote dignity and aspiration, as in spires of a cathedral. Crooked lines are suggestive of activity, even conflict, but curved lines have always been recognized as soft and voluptuous and tender. We are now seeing an increased use of curved line in modern design."

To be able to appreciate, understand and evaluate design the homemaker, in her role of decorator, must strive to increase her knowledge of line, form, color, and texture. These are the four basics that embody all the
principles and elements of design. As her appreciation and understanding of design increase through observation and study so should her ability to evaluate good design increase through her everyday experiences.

"Just as practice in observation is one of the best ways of gaining color confidence, so practice in diagnosing form for function is the best method of developing appreciation of line and form." (16, p. 32) "Line is the edge of form. The edge of form is that which shows us the shape or movement of the form itself." (5, p. 98) For example, consider a chair, the form is the chair but it is the edge which shows us whether the chair is for the living room, dining room or patio. "Pattern may be an integral part of form. It may create a texture and a series of movements which contrast with the form of the object itself." (10, p. 88) Textiles often depend for their interest on repetition of shapes in an applied pattern...the "intervening spaces and the variety in repetition are as important as the (pattern) unit itself." (10, p. 90) The eye seeks pattern as a relief from plain surfaces and plain surfaces as a relief from pattern. Pattern is action; therefore contrasts are powerful and should be used with restraint.

Lines may also determine the boundaries of shape, mass, surface, and form. The character of solid matter is
determined by the nature or direction of the enclosing line. This is true also of color and even of materials which are used in designs for all objects around us.

Proportion is a matter of comparative size and shape and a matter of spacing. The homemaker's problem is to secure pleasing proportions in her home. To be able to do this she needs to understand proportion or the division of space of a grouping or a single object, such as a piece of furniture; she needs to train her eye to recognize pleasing proportions. For instance, exact divisions of space offer less stimulation to the eye than divisions and relationships which are just varied enough not to be exact but still seem to be related.

The Greek artists were the first to master these relationships. They realized that the most pleasing rectangles were those in which the length could not be evenly divided by the width. They established what is known as the Greek law of proportion: the sum of two parts creates a whole that bears the same relationship to the larger part that the larger part bears to the smaller. Translated into mathematical terms this rule leads to the following proportions: two to three, three to five, five to eight and so on.

Individual pieces not only need to be attractive in size and shape but they need to be harmonious in relation to one another—that is in scale with one another.
Such objects scaled to their surroundings help produce an effect of spaciousness; and such objects developed to serve efficiently the purpose for which they are intended are pleasing to the eye.

"Decoration is essentially the art of handling space. Space (in a room) is simply that area that is left after doors, windows, fireplace and the like are deducted. It is the space against which is placed that upright piano, that dresser, that sofa. It is that space called background that must be treated with paint, wallpaper, or other material." (15, p. 11)

The value of space for decorative purposes was clearly understood from the earliest times by the Chinese, Tao-Tzu, a pre-Confucian philosopher, who back in 604 B.C. recorded that, "Doors and windows are cut in order to make a house. The utility of the house depends upon the empty spaces." (15, p. 11)

**Space Is Not Emptiness**

For beauty, for significance, it's space We need; and since we have no space today In which to frame the act, the word, the face Of beauty, its no longer beautiful.

A tree's significant when it's alone, Standing against the sky's wide open face; A sail, spark-white upon the space of sea, Can pin a whole horizon into place.

Encompassed by the dark, a candle flowers, Creating space around it as it towers, Giving the room a shape, a form, a name; Significance is born within the frame.

-- Anne Morrow Lindbergh
For the first time in history, the homemaker has an unlimited choice in colors. "Moreover never in design history has color been more important.... As surface detail has been smoothed away, as pattern and ornate forms have gradually been banished, leaving only sleek planes, color has become a more vital factor." (16, p. 13)

With experience and observation the homemaker can increase her familiarity with modern color usage. Everyone enjoys color, and the homemaker who chooses a pleasing color scheme, not only brings beauty and distinction to her home but creates a more restful and happy environment for her family. Her choice of colors must be right in hue, value, and intensity. This should not present too difficult a problem for if she will let herself go she will instinctively feel color.

According to physiologists, a mixture of any color is acceptable to the human eye as long as the colors mixed have the same intensity—"For left to itself, uninhibited by rules, the human eye makes the right choice instinctively, unerringly tends to solve the mystery of what goes with what." (27, p. 135)

There is no such thing as a new color. All colors have always existed but there is a new look in color today, characterized by new combinations of color. One color by itself may be pleasant, but it has very little impact or excitement until it is seen in combination with another.
The proportion, the arrangement, the value of other colors used are important also if the color combination is to be beautiful.

Always in the use of color in home decorating the background color (ceilings, walls, or floors) comprises the largest area. Other colors are subordinate to it for no color scheme would work without the background color being part of it.

"The best way to become sensitive to color is to search for color combinations everywhere. Make a collection from magazines, clippings of color groupings, which please you. Collect samples of color as it is found in nature. Try to find in natural objects as many different colors as you can and your eyes will be opened to many things." (10, p. 63)

Colors have a psychological effect, as we all know. They stimulate emotions just as line and form do. While reaction to specific colors varies with the individual, in general, certain hues seem quieter and more subdued; others are more intense and dynamic; while still others are cheerful and exciting.

Once the homemaker becomes conscious of colors and their effects she will find her life enriched and broadened. She will know how to bring beauty into her
home. She can follow the advice given by Venita Seeley, "Decorate your interiors in the colors you enjoy today and when it is time for them to be done over you will have fresh new color ideas." (36, p. 59)

The term texture need not be limited to the compactness or looseness, the smoothness or roughness of surfaces, but may apply equally to the decorative details in a textile or wall paper, the ordered arrangement of pictures on the wall of a room, or the number of divisions in the window or door.

"One becomes conscious of the differences in surfaces through the sense of touch or by the way the light plays over them. This surface quality, known as texture, is a part of all objects." (15, p. 13)

And so it is that today the homemaker, more than ever before, has still another quality she must explore and experience. There is great pleasure, as well as experience, "to be found in noting textures everywhere around us: the softness of mosses, the smoothness of a weatherworn stone, the grainy feel of sand, shiny glass, rough plaster (in our houses), nubby textiles; the contrast of a rug with polished wood furniture." (10, p. 65)

Sometimes effects in texture are achieved through contrast. "Through contrast of rough against smooth, of shiny against dull, warm against cold and so on. It is
not always necessary to have different stuffs to achieve effects. Textures, unlike colors, are not so much subjected to change and hold our interest for a long time." (14, p. 80)

Textural effects may also be created by pattern, as stripes in a fabric. The difference between pattern and texture is not always easy to determine. While the homemaker may be able to determine by sight the colors, design and textures of the fabrics which appeal to her she will need to know more about the construction and the price of the textile fabric in order to select those which will be suitable, durable, practical. For textures cannot be grouped according to their cost.

The importance of understanding textures is emphasized to such an extent today that without it decoration would be meaningless and beauty impossible; it gives a surface unevenness; it possesses emotional values, due to the association of ideas.

Realistically, furnishing a house involves two operations: (1) selection of furniture, fabrics and accessories, (2) arrangement of these elements in the room. Both require understanding of function and form. But realism is not enough to make a home beautiful and expressive of the individuals who live there. The home needs decoration. "Decorating is the art of combining colors,
textures, fabrics, flowers and works of art with materials such as paper, glass, wood, and electric bulbs into harmonious unity." (14, p. 14)

The modern room should look as though all parts of the room—the background, the furniture and the arrangements—"were conceived and developed as a unit." (16, p. 33) The placing of a picture and the arrangement of furniture must be done with consideration for the wall space in which the picture hangs and for the area as well as the purpose of the room in which the furniture is placed. For if the character of a room is to be derived from its purpose it should be furnished accordingly. Each room should be built around a focal point of interest and should exhibit a sense of being lived in, used, and enjoyed.

The homemaker, then if she wants to develop not only a beautiful room but a comfortable and restful room for her family living, will have to be able to appreciate and understand line movement, the value and intensity of the color plan, the proportion, rhythm and balance of forms and space, and the texture plan. Before applying this knowledge she will have to understand the significance of balance.

It is not always necessary to have a symmetrical balance of furnishings and objects in a room or to use the same amount of different colors. A pleasant relationship can often be achieved through the use of a large area of
one color of intermediate value and intensity with a small area of another darker or more intense color for contrast. By the same application, a large piece of furniture on one side of a room might be balanced by a smaller object which provides a brighter, stronger accent. The important factor to be remembered is that there be a pleasing relationship of parts to each other and to the room as a whole.

"The charm of the 20th Century interior is its flexibility. Freedom of expression is the goal and everything is possible if it fulfills the requirements of use and harmony." (42, p. 732)

To achieve charm and beauty in the home the basic elements of design must be combined into a unified whole. Unity in the home can be accomplished by use of repetition and dominance. Repetition achieves unity through physical likeness and repeated expression, while dominance achieves unity through the creation of a center of interest.

The center of interest in a room is developed by emphasizing certain elements such as converging lines, color accents, size, masses of light and dark, contrasts of plain and patterned surfaces. While this method provides for the use of variations in each element it is also necessary to avoid confusion by use of too great a variety. In consequence, one kind of line, as well as form, color and texture should dominate and the variations of these
elements used in lesser amounts. The effect that the center of interest expresses must harmonize with the overall effect of the entire room.

"Consistency is a virtue that applies to decorating as well as to anything else in life. It is often not so important what we do but that we are consistent in doing it, for it is always fatal to try to do too many things at one time or in one place." (l4, p. 64)

Application of Design in the Home

"Only when art is indigenous, the work of a particular time according to the nature and the character of the people of that time, is it for all time." (l3, p. 88)

"Every period in history has created its own setting for its own furniture and in so doing has left a document of its civilization." (l4, p. 50) Frank Lloyd Wright has this to say, "....but civilization is only a way of life. The way of making that way of life a beautiful way of life is what we call culture." (12, p. 371)

America is in the process of creating her own culture that promises to be more than simply the sum of its cultural parts. "The level of today's living is on a scale undreamed of by even the social dreamers of yesterday. We are achieving a comfort and beauty, a significance and personal meaning, that the people of no other civiliza-
tion has enjoyed so widely or so well." (35, p. 65)

And so today Americans are living in a transitional period which in reality is a blend of the best of the old and the best of the new. Each is used for the value it offers in terms of human environment. This new period is neither compromising nor mediocre but is filled with vitality and vigorous purpose. It is the age of the beautiful and practical; it offers a new challenge to designers to make useful things more beautiful without sacrificing usefulness. There is neither an insistence on being uncomfortable for the sake of being modern, nor a reluctance to use the new when it contributes greater dimensions to everyday living. (2, p. 214)

This new age of enrichment, of expansion and assimilation of many cultures, that is manifesting itself in our lives today, is immensely significant. "It is," in Mathew Arnold's words, "the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said (and done) in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit." (2, p. 130)

Now, more than ever before, artists, designers, and craftsmen are devoting more time to refining the proportion, line, color and finish of home furnishings. The insistence of the consumer on simplicity and clean lines, as well as utility and ease of maintenance, is causing designers to modernize even traditional furniture. "It
is a reflection of our maturity that we now feel free enough to make changes in all period design according to our contemporary needs and tastes." (28, p. 120) By combining what was good in the past with what at present would seem to have lasting merit, the designers are developing a style truly in keeping with American tradition. Thus while the furnishings and accessories of the home do not conform to any previous style, they do reflect the wide range of interests and enthusiasms of American families.

Designers, too, in their constant search for new materials and new uses of existing ones are bringing out the intrinsic beauty of material by letting it speak for itself. They are discovering the dormant beauty in even the humblest materials; they are eliminating much of the unnecessary and meaningless ornamentation in an effort to bring out the true expression of the material itself.

Not only is the artist and designer recognizing that wood in itself is beautiful; that stone has plenty of character; and similarly metal, glass, brick and any other material in its natural state, but the general public is becoming conscious of all these trends and wholeheartedly accepting them in many other commodities as well as in furniture.

The consumer no longer is satisfied with imitations but wants materials represented in their natural form.
Never before in any other country has the consumer been so powerful. Particularly is this true in the field of furniture manufacturing where remarkable progress has been made in the designing of medium priced furniture. Jens Risom, Danish designer and furniture manufacturer, has this to say, "that people (today) are increasingly more design-conscious and also more quality-conscious in the selection of home furnishings." (25, p. 1) This fact, undoubtedly has had influence on the market for "The consumer (today) can buy beautiful things at prices which a decade ago would have cost up to 100 per cent more for comparable appearance." (17, p. 167) Fifteen years ago, much of the middle and low priced furniture was pretentiously ornate. Within the past ten years this situation has changed considerably. For today even volume manufacturers who sell to department stores in carload lots are turning out furniture as beautiful in design as one could ask for and priced in the middle brackets. These reasonably priced pieces have many of the fine details and the same mannerly approach to function that used to be found in high priced furniture. (40, p. 168)

The homemaker may have to read, study or maybe ask a decorator, architect or some other qualified person for help in the selection of good furniture at a price she can afford to pay, but it can be done. She need "never to use the bad excuse that (she) can't afford good design in home furnishings. Good design and good value exist at all
price levels." (25, p. 1)

Good design in furniture is defined by Jens Risom "as a combination of many things -- function, grace, comfort, craftsmanship and appearance. If one is missing the result can't be good." (25, p. 1)

One of the intangibles not mentioned in this definition is the significance of organic design. This is probably because it is a part of all other factors involved. "Each part relates to the whole as the whole relates to each part, producing a happy combination of unity and variety. This is what Frank Lloyd Wright calls organic design." (12, p. 276)

Jens Risom's concept of good design could readily be applied to the whole area of furnishing and decorating for after all everything counts. Frank Lloyd Wright is only one of many who stresses the importance of integration of one object or furnishing with another and all of them with the house; who also stresses the significance of proper color-coordination and contrast, good space and scale relationships and a sense of the worth and value of each object if the house is to be a home of harmony, peace, and serenity.

The homemaker today with the wide choice of furnishings from which to choose needs to give herself more freedom in expression and feeling in the selections she makes.
for her home. If the objects she buys are to reflect her
and the family's taste their home must first be theirs in
every way. Then the objects of their free personal choice
will find the proper background in their home. "Whether
people are conscious of it or not, they actually derive
countenance and sustenance from the atmosphere of the
things they live in and with. They are rooted in them
just as a plant is in the soil in which it is planted."
(12, p. 341)

From all these implications it is only logical that
the aim in decorating the home today is to create back­
ground appropriate to the life of today. It is obvious
that, in general, the complexity and strain of modern life
makes emphasis of the quality of repose desirable in the
home. A room need not be bare in order to be restful or
crowded with ornament to be cheerful. If the homemaker
decorates with simplicity and restraint her efforts to
some extent, at least, will be successful.

For the homemaker who asks herself this question,
"How can I recognize good design in the home and its
furnishings?" the following criterion could help in solving
her problem.

1. Its design should be agreeably fitted to its
purpose. If it is a structure it should fit its environ­
ment. If it is a furnishing it should perform effectively
and simply.
2. Its material should be honestly and appropriately used with some indication that their nature and capacity have been understood, appreciated and made the most of—not made to imitate something or complicated beyond their true nature.

3. It should take advantage of our numerous technologies (if they pertain) which can be harnessed today to make things perform better, wear longer, require less upkeep.

4. It should have no unnecessary ornament which is tacked on as an afterthought to the basic design. It may have ornament but it must be integral ornament—ornament that is a necessary part of the design to enhance its beauty and not detract from its simplicity.

5. It may be reminiscent of our past, but it might be a modified, simplified, almost impressionistic version of the original. If we do use the past it should be because of its usefulness, not because it is an "authentic copy."

6. It may be modern but it should be an American version of modern.

7. It should have the appeal of the familiar. While we Americans like the new, we want the new to have some familiar link with what we already have.

8. It should combine beauty and utility, for in the best American design they are indivisible.

The author would like to conclude with these two
quotations from Frank Lloyd Wright because they describe so adequately the ideal goal of family living toward which Americans are striving today.

"In America," Frank Lloyd Wright reminds us again and again, "each man has a peculiar inalienable right to live in his own house in his own way. He is a pioneer in every right sense of the word. His home, his environment may face forward, may portray his character, tastes and ideas, if he has any—and every man has some somewhere about him.....For there is a new integrity in America, alive and working with new means, working for freedom and beauty—yours and mine and our childrens." (12, p. 236) ".....this is the American opportunity.....A higher ideal of unity, a higher and more intimate working out of the expressions of one's life in one's environment." (12, p. 363)
PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING SURVEY

Permission for the Survey

In order to carry on this survey the author had to obtain the permission of Miss Frances Clinton, State Leader of Home Economics Extension, Oregon State College, Corvallis, Oregon, and that of the State Agents responsible for county supervision, Miss Esther Taskerud, Miss Murle Scales, Miss Betty Sedgwick, and Miss Evelyn Funk.

Cooperating County Extension Agents (Home Economics)

Each County Extension Office was contacted for names and addresses of unit leaders. Each County Extension Agent (Home Economics) at the same time was given an explanation of the survey to be taken and twelve were selected to cooperate in the evaluating of the pre-test questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was made up of a variety of questions designed to bring out facts pertaining to the homemaker’s knowledge of the meaning of good design in home furnishings and decoration; to her design experiences in the home; to buying habits she most commonly practiced and to the sources of her purchases. Opportunity was also given the homemaker to indicate her appreciation of good
design in home furnishings and decoration; her need for additional knowledge and assistance in the application of good design in the furnishing and decoration of her home. The following explanation of the questionnaire illustrates these points.

Questions one and two designate the size of community and county of resident.

Parts three and four deal with informal and formal educational background.

Question five establishes status of income.

Questions six and seven investigate economic practices to determine the role of planning in furnishing and decorating the home.

Question eight includes pertinent experiences in furnishing and decorating the home.

Question nine by use of essay question attempts to ascertain which experiences presented difficulties and why.

Question ten lists various topics relating to homemaking activities with multiple choice answers in an effort to check the degree of understanding.

Question eleven is an attempt to determine whether or not the homemaker feels a need of assistance in the problems of decorating and furnishing her home.

Question eleven A tries to ascertain what means the homemaker would use to solve her problem.
Question eleven B lists some of the popular magazines available to the homemaker to determine the extent of her reading habits in the area of home furnishing and decoration.

Question twelve is concerned with the degree of interest of the homemaker in further study, with adult groups, on topics dealing with furnishing and decorating the home. By indicating the degree of interest, such information should be of value to the State and County Extension agents in Home Economics working with units of homemakers.

Conducting the Survey

Upon completion of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested and re-evaluated before being sent out for the survey proper. Five hundred and eighty homemakers were sent the questionnaire and asked to return it within ten days if possible.

When seventy-four per cent had been returned (by the end of two weeks) the results were tabulated, tabled by percentages in relation to the Home Economics training of the homemaker and analyzed in order that conclusions could be drawn.
RESULTS

The results and interpretations of data are based on two significant factors. First, the homemakers of the sampling population are members of Home Extension units and second, they are the leaders of their respective units for the current year.

The majority of the answers, the author believes, are based on personal experience and opinions but some of the answers may reflect group opinions.

The percentages in the following tables will not always total 100 per cent because of the "no answer" element. The author did not interpret these omissions as negative replies because with most questions there was an opportunity to accept or reject.

By designating the county in which the participating homemaker lives, the questionnaire might at a later date be divided into groups according to geographical areas, such as eastern, western, and southern Oregon, in an effort to locate problems most pertinent to a given area. This would be more applicable in the field of Home Extension than in teaching and classroom work.

Question four was designed to give the distribution of participating homemakers according to educational background and training in Home Economics and including four divisions. In analyzing the data for this question it was
apparent that only the matter of home economics training was important to the study. It did not matter whether it was obtained in high school or college. Therefore, the author and advisors decided to simplify the description and designate only two groups -- those with home economics training and those without.

For the benefit of those persons in the Home Extension field, who might like to use the findings of the questionnaire more broadly, a column showing total results is included in the tables. Those persons interested in high school and college home economics training can interpret results of the teaching curriculum accordingly.

The sampling shows that the largest percentage of homemakers (45 per cent) were high school graduates with home economics training and that over half of the total number of homemakers (62 per cent) were trained in Home Economics.

It is logical then to assume that it is at the high school level that the Home Economics curriculum should introduce those areas in home furnishing and decoration which present problems to the homemaker.

In order to describe the sampling population more adequately the author felt that the type of community and approximate family income needed to be included in the questionnaire.
TABLE I

Participating Homemakers by Home Economics Education and Type of Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Community</th>
<th>Home Economics</th>
<th>No Home Economics</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Farm</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Non-Farm</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Town</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Urban</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As far as leaders of Home Extension units are concerned Table I indicates that the largest percentage live in the rural areas.

In asking the participant to designate the number of years she had been a homemaker, the author hoped to be able to deduct the predominant group of unit leaders. The data disclosed that 41 per cent have been homemakers from 10 to 20 years; 24 per cent from 20 to 30 years; 16 per cent from 30 to 40 years and 6 per cent from 40 to 50 years. The one group that is significant, from the standpoint of future participation and program planning in Home Extension, is the young married group from 1 to 7 years which totaled 8 per cent. Another 4 per cent could be added to this group to take in all those in the first ten years of marriage. This young married group is an important group to reach and it is logical to assume from this small
percentage that Home Extension needs to stimulate their interest and participation.

Table II indicates the approximate family income. It does not necessarily take into account the amount of home produced foods and goods. It more likely reflects only the amount of cash income.

**TABLE II**

Participating Homemakers by Home Economics Education and Family Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income</th>
<th>Home Economics %</th>
<th>No Home Economics %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. $3000 &amp; under</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. $3000 - $5000</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. $5000 - $7500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. $7500 &amp; over</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The implications from Table III would indicate that the family income being spent for home furnishings and decoration is done so according to a plan. This plan is not always a long time plan but at least indicates planned expenditures. Also indicated is the fact that these homemakers, as consumers, are shopping for "wanted goods." There is still doubt, however, in their minds that they can buy "good design" at reasonable prices and an uncertain attitude toward the meaning of good design. This is an area in which more information needs to be developed.
for the benefit of the consumer.

TABLE III

Buying Practices of Participating Homemakers as Related to Home Economics Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buying Practices</th>
<th>Home Economics Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Home Economics Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Plan ahead</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Long-time plan</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Impulse buying</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Good design at reasonable price</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Shop for what is wanted</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In interpreting Table IV the total percentage will exceed 100 per cent because many of the participants shopped in more than one area. They were given the privilege of checking more than one shopping area.

According to Table III and comments given under question nine the author found that most of the participating homemakers shop until they find what they want within the price they can afford to pay. This fact would indicate a reason why these homemakers are investigating more than one shopping area.
Even though many of these participating homemakers have had a wide variety of experiences, neither that factor nor the frequency of occurrence of an experience indicates the extent to which that experience might present a problem. For example, experience C, Table V — planning a color scheme. It has been checked by 92 per cent of the participants as an experience but it also, as you will note in Table VIII, is not thoroughly understood by a large percentage and again in Table XI has been requested by over 50 per cent of the participants as a subject for further study.

Of course there is always the possibility too that routine life experiences in home furnishing and decoration may have produced a feeling of self confidence on the homemaker of skills and information which may or may not be well founded. Therefore, the author feels that the homemakers' experiences and problems growing out of experiences
TABLE V

Home Experiences of Participating Homemakers as Related to Home Economics Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Experiences</th>
<th>Home Economics</th>
<th>No Home Economics</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Painting a room</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Selection of rug</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Planning color scheme</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Buying accessories</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Making curtains and draperies</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Selecting curtains and draperies</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Making slipcovers or upholstering furniture</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Selection of furniture</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Rearrangement of furniture</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

could be the bases of further investigation by those persons planning home furnishing information helpful to homemakers.

In addition to checking the experiences of most concern (Table VI) the participating homemaker was asked to give her reason or reasons for encountering difficulty. The author found two predominant questions posed by the homemakers in purchasing furniture, rugs, fabrics and accessories. (1) How can I know it will last? (2) How can I be sure it is not just a fad? The instability of
fashion makes it a poor criterion for the homemaker to use in solving a decorative problem. The answer to both questions can be found in this simple criterion: if the chair, table, fabric or accessory is functional, good in design and suited to the environment it will last.

The average homemaker may have little confidence in her own judgment and taste even though she knows that she likes one thing and does not like another. Once she understands the principles of good construction and good design
she will have a basis for demanding goods of a higher quality and construction.

Table VI also shows that "planning a color scheme" was another very evident problem to the participant. Twenty-six per cent of these homemakers had difficulty in applying knowledge of color to their own homes. The author would question the method of procedure in instruction whether it be high school, college or adult education. Could it indicate that poor communication existed between teacher and learner--in that the theory of art elements and principles of everyday problems were not readily adaptable to the specific homes of these leaders? Could it mean that those persons giving instruction in the fundamentals of color and color usage, for instance, have not related color experiences closely to the instruction? Such instruction should provide an opportunity for association of ideas and an easier transfer of knowledge or adaptability of it to the problem in home decoration and furnishing. The old axiom still prevails "we learn best by doing."

One other significant problem of the homemaker merits attention -- the arrangement of furnishings to create an attractive room. The predominant problem stems from the basic structure or architecture of the room; doors, windows and available space. In attacking this problem the answer could come only from an understanding of balance,
rhythm, scale, proportion, color, texture. This can best be learned through observation, supervised experiences, and associations with past experiences.

TABLE VII

Home Experiences of Least Concern to Participating Homemakers as Related to Home Economics Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Experiences of Least Concern</th>
<th>Home Economics %</th>
<th>No Home Economics %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Painting a room</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Selection of large rug</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Planning color scheme</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Buying accessories</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Making curtains and draperies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Selecting curtains and draperies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Making slipcovers or upholstering furniture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Selection of furniture</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Rearrangement of furniture</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In analyzing the data of Table VII those experiences that were predominately skill in nature presented the least difficulty. In other words, once a color scheme was worked out the problem of painting was relatively easy.

In the case of furniture arrangement trial and error or trial and success prevailed. It was an easy matter
usually to move furniture if one arrangement was not satisfactory.

The basic value of Table VIII (see page 48) lies in the fact that those persons interested in planning programs and curricula of further study for homemakers and future homemakers can readily discern areas in which homemakers need a more thorough understanding of the principles of good design.

In order to contribute fully to the whole structure of family living the homemaker needs to provide an environment that is not only comfortable and suitable to her family's needs but also one that adds beauty and charm to the home. If she doesn't understand the basic principles of good design in furnishing and decorating she will have difficulty in accomplishing her goal.

In an attempt to get a better description of the homemaker, her home furnishing and decoration problems and her procedure in solving those problems, in question eleven she was asked whether or not she wanted assistance in solving her problems. Ninety-four per cent answered "yes." The author also wished to determine where homemakers sought assistance as there might be some question as to whether or not they were consulting valid sources. (See Table IX, page 49) Table IX is quite self explanatory. However, one fact is certainly still indisputably true that a diagram
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Problems</th>
<th>Home Economics %</th>
<th>No Home Economics %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Use of color</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Buying furniture</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Choosing a rug</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Fabric selection</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Furniture arrangement</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Recognize good design</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Create attractive rooms</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Selecting home furnishings</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. Selecting home</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Wall and ceiling</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>K. Arrangement of accessories</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Effective lighting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52</td>
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TABLE IX

Source of Assistance Used by Participating Homemakers as Related to Home Economics Education

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>A. Library books</td>
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<td>B. County Extension agent</td>
<td>78</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Friend</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Homemaking teacher</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Interior decorator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Decoration consultant</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Local sales person</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Magazine pictures</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or pictorial illustration carries the balance of power over space-consuming verbal description.

The only magazine listed of any significance in addition to those in Table X (see page 50) was "Household." One of the homemakers made this comment, "I have used ideas from nearly all the magazines at some time or other--some small, others quite important." If illustrations of home furnishing and decoration ideas play such an important role in the decisions of the homemaker the author feels that it would be worth while to spend time helping the homemaker evaluate the ideas found in magazine and newspaper illustrations in terms of her problem in her home.
### TABLE X
Magazines Consulted by Participating Homemakers as Related to Home Economics Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazines</th>
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<th>No Home Economics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. American Home</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Sunset</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Better Homes and Gardens</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>D. Good Housekeeping</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>E. House Beautiful</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. House and Garden</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Living for Young Homemakers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. McCall's</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Ladies Home Journal</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Oregon Farmer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Farm Journal</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table XI, page 51, is a definite indication of the interest of participating homemakers in further study of good design in home furnishings and decoration. It should serve as a reliable guide to those persons planning and presenting information helpful to adult groups.

While considerable information is available for homemakers, through Home Extension, they have not used it as widely as possible. This could be a challenge to Home Extension not only to give the homemaker opportunity to
<table>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Slip covers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>B. Reupholstering</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>C. Window treatment</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>D. Selection of fabrics</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>E. Use of color</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>F. Create attractive rooms</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Effective lighting</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Painting-papering</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. Wall decoration, pic. hang.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Construction, shelves etc</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. Decorative accessories</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Picture selection, framing</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
increase her knowledge of design principles but to help her apply that knowledge to her own home.
CONCLUSIONS

The ultimate purpose of this survey was to establish, if possible, those areas in which good design in home furnishing and decoration presented difficulty to the homemaker and to discern the awareness in the homemaker of the significance of the use of good design in her daily life.

Through the cooperation of this selected group of Oregon homemakers the results of the survey have been most gratifying. Not only have the homemakers indicated their awareness of the existence of problems but their willingness to have assistance in working the problems out.

The homemakers' interest in furnishing pertinent information is also an indication of the concern they have for creating an environment suitable to their family living. Their desire for further study of good design in home furnishings and decoration offers unlimited opportunity to those persons responsible for instruction in these areas. It is evident from the homemakers' need for a better understanding and appreciation of well designed furnishings that not only adult homemaking education but also high school and college Home Economics education needs to restate the validity of design principles as a criterion in the solution of decorating and furnishing problems. Instructors need to put more emphasis on the application of good design principles to everything the homemaker
makes, selects, combines and uses. For home decoration is a creative activity—a simple practical art, the ideals and goals of which may need to be re-evaluated in the light of present day living.

Good design should be taught as something that has a reason for being. It should be related to specific aspects of home furnishings as well as to the home as a whole. Ample opportunity needs to be provided for the homemaker to have actual experience with designing and trying out design, to discover and enjoy design in her surroundings in order to establish a basis for judgment of good design. Richard Neutra believes, "we are all in need of certain criteria to judge and be judicious, to accept and reject." (32, p. 66)

"What the (homemaker and) family chooses depends on its inherent and acquired understanding of what is good, its financial circumstances, its physical and psychological needs" (31, p. 3) was evidenced by homemakers' comments throughout the survey. Occasionally a homemaker intimated that success in home decoration depended on availability of ample funds. It is important to stress that the mere spending of large sums of money in decorating the home does not automatically make it a livable and pleasant one. Money is not a substitute for good taste; proper knowledge will often secure the best results with minimum expenditure.
A note of encouragement can be taken from homemakers' comments like this: "I am not sure that I would change my home in any way. We are happy in it and we have stayed within our income in buying and furnishing it. It also reflects our personalities, which I feel is important in a home." Another homemaker has this to say, which shows her resourcefulness; "Mine is not the average home, however, as I have six children and have had to make 'do' on our small budget and lots of 'do it yourself' in small snatches of time, I don't know much about color, style and design, but I believe I know what I like, which is my main guide."

In conclusion—many homemakers added to the questionnaire, "Thank you for the interest shown to homemakers."
BIBLIOGRAPHY


### APPENDIX A

#### QUESTIONNAIRE SENT

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**TOTAL** 30 580 431 74

**TOTAL BY COUNTY** 30 29 97
Dear Homemaker:

This questionnaire is to be the basis of a survey I am making of homemakers' problems in the use of good design in home furnishings and decoration. Your answers will be of value not only to your Extension Home Furnishings Specialist but also to your State Leader, State Agents and County Extension Agents in Home Economics in planning information helpful to you.

Your home agent has given me your name so that I might ask you to help me get the information I need. As this form will be treated impersonally, please do not sign your name. I will appreciate your cooperation in checking the questionnaire and returning it by February 24.

I am sure this will take only a few minutes of your time for, being a homemaker myself, I know how busy you are.

Sincerely,
Frances Huber
Oregon State College
Corvallis, Oregon
QUESTIONNAIRE

(Check more than one if it applies)

1. In what county do you live? ________________

2. In what type of community do you live?
   ________________ A. Farm
   ________________ B. Rural-non farm
   ________________ C. Town, village (under 2500)
   ________________ D. Urban (over 2500)

3. How many years have you been a homemaker? ________________

4. Yes No
   __ __  A. Are you a graduate of high school?
   __ __  B. Did you study Home Economics in high school?
   __ __  C. Are you a graduate of a college or university?
   __ __  D. Did you study Home Economics in college?

5. What is your approximate annual family income?
   ________________ A. $3,000 and under
   ________________ B. $3,000 - $5,000
   ________________ C. $5,000 - $7,500
   ________________ D. Over $7,500

6. Yes No
   __ __  A. Do you plan ahead for home decoration and furnishing purchases?
   __ __  B. Do you have a long-time plan for home improvement?
   __ __  C. Do you ever buy furnishings for your home on impulse?
   __ __  D. Do you think good design in home furnishings is available at reasonable price?
   __ __  E. Do you shop until you are sure you have found what you want?
7. Where do you purchase home furnishing items such as furniture, fabrics, lamps, etc?

A. In your local stores?
B. Through mail order house or catalog?
C. Outside your home community?

8. Which of the following experiences have you had in your home?

A. Painting a room or portion of a room
B. Selection of a large rug
C. Planning a color scheme
D. Buying accessories such as lamps, pictures, etc
E. Making curtains or draperies
F. Selecting curtains or draperies
G. Making slipcovers or re-upholstering furniture
H. Selection of a large piece of furniture
I. Rearrangement of furniture in a room

9. A. Which of the experiences checked in No. 8 gave you the most concern?

Write the letter here. State briefly the reason

B. Which of the experiences checked in No. 8 gave you the least concern?

Write the letter here. State briefly the reason

10. Which of the following topics do you feel you understand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A. How to use color in the home
B. How to buy well-made furniture of good design
10. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
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C. How to choose a rug of good construction and design

D. How to select fabrics of suitable color, design and texture for home furnishings

E. How to arrange furniture attractively

F. How to recognize good design

G. How to create attractive rooms

H. How to select furnishings which will be suited to the home as a whole

I. How to select suitable home furnishings within your family income

J. How to select wall and ceiling finishes

K. How to arrange decorative objects such as lamps, pictures, etc. effectively in the home

L. How to plan effective lighting

M. Other, please state ____________

11. Do you feel that you need assistance in working on decoration and furnishing problems in your home?  

A. If so, where would you go for help?

- A. From books at the local library
- B. From a Home Agent or County Extension Agent
- C. From a friend
- D. From a homemaking teacher in the local high school
11. (Continued)

E. From a professional interior decorator
F. From a decoration consultant in a department store
G. From a sales person in a local store
H. From a study of pictures in magazines
I. From what other sources

B. Which of the following magazines do you consult for home furnishing information and ideas?

A. American Home
B. Sunset
C. Better Homes & Gardens
D. Good Housekeeping
E. House Beautiful
F. House & Garden
G. Living
H. McCall's
I. Ladies Home Journal
J. Oregon Farmer
K. Farm Journal
L. Others

12. If you had an opportunity to study good design in home furnishings with an adult study group, such as your Home Extension Unit, which would you select?

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<td>A. Slipcovering furniture</td>
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<td>D. Selection of fabrics for draperies, curtains, slipcovers, etc.</td>
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<td>E. Effective use of color</td>
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<td>F. Creating attractive rooms</td>
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<td>G. Effective home lighting</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. Painting or papering a room</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
12. (Continued)

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<th>Some</th>
<th>None</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Construction of simple furniture, shelves, bookcases, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>K. Decorative accessories and how to buy or make them</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Picture selection and framing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Other, please state</td>
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