

required to take a machine home, with monthly payments due thereafter. Competitors soon followed suit and by the turn of the century the machines were found in nearly every American home. Sewing machines, by increasing both production and efficiency, afforded many women leisure time, a previously unknown commodity. Middle and upper class women, in particular, used this new found freedom for activities such as fancy needlework. This led to the enormous popularity of pattern books, instructional literature, and periodicals.

Periodicals, *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Peterson's Magazine* among the most popular, reported the fashion trends of both America and Europe to their subscribers. These publications provided the patterns and instructions necessary for women to make fashionable garments and ornaments of dress according to seasonal trends. Sewing machines, coupled with the availability of readymade fabric, enabled women to not only keep up with fashion but also have the time to ornament their dress with fancywork. "Work Department" articles supplied an endless array of fancywork designs using wools, cottons, silks, and chenille. Materials to make these items were most frequently purchased from millinery stores in urban areas. The more economical needle-worker sought out wholesale yarns from manufacturers' overstocks, or as Lydia Marie Child recommended in *The Frugal Housewife*, "buy your woollen yarn in quantities from some one in the country whom you can trust. The thread stores make profits upon it, of course." The variety of available materials and patterns helped popularize fancy work in the nineteenth century. Some of the most frequently published patterns for the ornament of dress were for shawls, purses, slippers, and gentlemen's caps which were crocheted, knitted, or netted.

Shawls were especially popular in the nineteenth century. Because women's jackets could not accommodate the fashionably large circumference of their skirts, shawls became a necessity for warmth in the cold months. Imported cashmere shawls, which only the wealthy could afford, were the most luxurious — those from France were the softest and had the most vibrant colors, while those from India featured finely woven, intricate patterns. Shawls were so popular that the expensive ones inspired a domestic market in cheaper imitations more affordable to those of moderate means. Crochet and hand knit shawl patterns also emerged in periodicals and instructional literature. Despite varying costs and styles, shawls were subject to specific guidelines of use. In May of 1860 *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* suggested that black and white shawls suited all dress colors, whereas scarlet "should be worn with black, brown, or any undecided color." Blue was to be worn with dark brown or black. The way to wear shawls also had a specific etiquette. While it was acceptable for women living in colder climates to wrap the shawl tightly across the chest, those in warmer climates were advised to drape it over the shoulders — a look