

THE SALE OF USED CLOTHING IN AMES, IOWA

by

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INTRODUCTION

Used clothing is one source of clothing for family consumption. Acquisition of used clothing could increase a family's clothing consumption without purchase of new clothing. Used garments may enter the family inventory as a gift, exchange or purchase. Before a consumer survey could be planned to interview families about kinds and quantities of used clothing they purchased, information was needed about sales of used clothing. This investigation examines the sale of used clothing.

The most direct way to obtain information appeared to be from observations of various sales of used clothing and interviews with the chairmen of these sales. Effort was made to interview the chairmen of all organization sponsored sales that occurred in Ames between September 1, 1961, and August 31, 1962.

This pilot study was made to describe the situation, the size and component parts of a local used clothing market, and to develop a questionnaire. This study suggests aspects of used clothing sales that should be examined in more detail.

Review of Literature

A search of publications in which Home Economics research normally appears failed to disclose any research

on used clothing sales in the United States from 1952 to 1961. The Journal of Home Economics, lists of completed theses and dissertations, and reports of research at land grant institutions and federal agencies were examined. However, several articles about used clothing sold in the United States appeared in popular magazines.

A sale sponsored by the Parent-Teachers Association of Bronxville, New York, was described in Good Housekeeping. The PTA received 25 per cent and the consigner received 75 per cent of the selling price. "Prices are based on one-third of the original cost with varying amounts deducted for age, wear, etc." A \$50.00 dress was priced at \$15.00; if not sold within a month the price was reduced one-third. Garments not claimed after six weeks belonged to the PTA; all proceeds from their sale went to the organization. Two or three times a year a half-price sale was held. If not sold in the half-price sale the garments were given to charity.¹

A news story in Women's Wear Daily told of a store in Philadelphia that sold used maternity clothing. The owner of the store sent letters to women suggesting they "convert their old maternity clothes into cash." All used clothing

¹Raising money with a used clothing exchange. Good Housekeeping. Vol. 150, No. 2: 116. February, 1960.

was in good condition and clean. Prices ranged from \$3.50 to \$50.00.¹

The second hand market for high fashion clothing was discussed in a Saturday Evening Post² article in 1956 and in a Good Housekeeping³ article in 1959. Both articles gave the names of designers whose garments were sold in second hand dress shops. The Saturday Evening Post article was more complete. These items were reported to show no signs of wear, because they were discarded after a few wearings by entertainers or society women.⁴ The selling price was set by the owner of the shop, who received 40 per cent of the selling price. A Dior cocktail dress and coat, originally priced at \$700.00, sold for \$100.00;⁵ a Mainbocher suit priced \$225.00 when new was sold for \$50.00.⁴ The consignment agreement usually specified that a garment was reduced 20 per cent after 30 days. After 90 days it was either

¹Business developed for used maternities. *Women's Wear Daily*. Vol. 104, No. 60: 35. March 27, 1962.

²Hartzell Spence. She sells glamour secondhand. *Saturday Evening Post*. Vol. 229, No. 13: 32-33, 148-149. September 29, 1956.

³How about those famous fashions at bargain prices. *Good Housekeeping*. Vol. 149, No. 4: 190-191. October, 1959.

⁴Spence, op. cit., p. 32.

⁵Ibid., p. 33.

marked down to any amount necessary to dispose of it or returned to the owner.¹ In one New York shop the garments were marked down to from \$5.00 to \$10.00 after 60 days on the rack. If not sold 30 days later, the garment was given to charity or returned. When the store first opened in 1953 the owner did not have a city used clothing license. She obtained one after television publicity brought the shop to the attention of New York city officials.²

The federal personal income tax law allowed an individual to deduct the value of clothing donated by him to a charitable organization. Deductions for contributions to churches and temples, Salvation Army, and veterans' organizations are allowable deductions; contributions to social clubs are not allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.

A letter was sent to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue Service to learn what criteria the government used to judge the value of donated garments. Mr. Lester W. Utter,³ Chief, Individual Income Tax Branch, replied. His letter, quoted by permission, follows:

¹How about those famous fashions at bargain prices, p. 191.

²Spence, op. cit., p. 148.

³Utter, Lester W., Washington 25, D. C. Contribution of clothing allowable as personal income tax deduction. Private communication. April 5, 1962.

Section 1.170-1 of the Income Tax Regulations provides, in part, that if a contribution is made in property other than money, the amount of the deduction is determined by the fair market value of the property at the time of the contribution. The fair market value is the price at which the property would change hands between a willing buyer and a willing seller, neither being under any compulsion to buy or sell and both having reasonable knowledge of relevant facts. Any deduction for a charitable contribution must be substantiated, when required by the district director, by a statement from the organization to which the contribution was made indicating whether the organization is a domestic organization, the name and address of the contributor, the amount of the contribution, and the date of its actual payment, and by such other information as the district director may deem necessary.

The Internal Revenue Service is unable to approve any privately issued guide for the valuation of clothing given to charitable organizations.

Reasons for Undertaking this Study

There were four reasons for undertaking a pilot study of used clothing sales at this time:

1. To describe the situation as it existed by examining all types of sales and auctions. The writer did not explore any one type of sale in detail, but rather described all types of sales in Ames from September 1, 1961, through August 31, 1962.
2. To develop a questionnaire to be used for this study and future studies of this nature. A proposal for North Central regional research entitled,

Factors Associated with Family Acquisition, Use and Disposal of Clothing, is intended to examine

"...the process of acquisition, use and disposal of clothing by family members and to identify associations which exist between this process and such factors as...market conditions..."¹ Information about different types of used clothing sales is needed before a survey can be made to determine the importance of used clothing in family clothing consumption.

3. To provide information about used clothing sales to help home economists plan clothing budgets for low income families. At the present time little information is available to social or welfare workers on the availability of used clothing.
4. To learn if receipts from used clothing sales are large enough to influence retail sale of clothing. This information could be helpful in explaining fluctuations in retail sales of new clothing.

¹Winakor, T. G. Factors associated with family acquisition, use and disposal of clothing. Regional research proposal, Textiles and Clothing Department, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa. Mimeo. report. ca. 1961.

Procedure

Because much basic information was needed before questionnaires could be developed and chairmen of sales could be interviewed, unstructured observations of used clothing sales preceded all other work on this study. The writer visited sales and observed the types of clothing sold, the physical organization and activities. She talked to her friends, neighbors, and faculty members of Iowa State University about sales of used clothing with which they were acquainted. Faculty members of the Textiles and Clothing Department of Iowa State University were questioned to learn if any was a member of an organization that would soon be having a sale of used clothing.

One faculty member said that her sorority alumnae group would be having a sale in two weeks, and arranged for the writer to observe the sale. Both the preparation on a Friday night and the sale on a Saturday morning were observed and a detailed description written for later reference. The writer observed other sales without the sponsors being aware of the reason for her visit, so far as she knew.

Every effort was made to be unbiased in reporting observations and to make them in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. To be less obvious the writer usually dressed for a sale in neutral colors. Her garments were not new, but

were threadbare or faded. A head scarf was worn rather than a hat. However, some of the clothesline sales were held in middle class neighborhoods of new ranch type homes. Old clothing would have been conspicuous in these surroundings so the type of clothing normally worn for shopping in the downtown Ames area was worn.

Notes were taken during each sale. These notes were very brief, consisting of key words and prices jotted down in a small notebook which fitted into the palm of the hand. Immediately after the writer left the sale more detailed notes were made. These notes, more complete than the first notes made at the sale, were made in a car, on a bus or while walking down the sidewalk. The objective was to get as much information as possible recorded while it was still fresh in the writer's mind. Both sets of notes were typed up in a complete narrative form as soon as possible following the suggestions by Selltiz et al.¹

A list of sororities and fraternities was compiled from the November, 1961, Ames Telephone Directory² and checked

¹Claire Selltiz, Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch, and Stuart W. Cook. Research methods in social relations. Revised one-volume edition. New York, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1961. p. 211.

²Northwestern Bell Telephone Company. Telephone directory. Ames, Iowa, Author. 1961.

against the Iowa State Student Directory¹ listing of sororities and fraternities. The president of each group was contacted by telephone to learn if it sponsored a used clothing auction or sale, and if there was a local alumni group; the name and address of the president of the alumni group was also obtained in this call. The alumni president was then contacted either by telephone or post card (sample is shown in the Appendix). Arrangements were made to interview the president of any fraternity or sorority organization, either active or alumni, that had held or planned to hold a sale in Ames between September 1, 1961, and August 31, 1962.

From the classified pages of the Ames Telephone Directory a list was made of all churches in Ames. The minister or church secretary was contacted by telephone to learn whether any group in that church sponsored used clothing sales and the name of the person who had been in charge of its most recent sale. Each chairman was then contacted by telephone and a time set for a personal interview. An effort was made to find out if there were any churches in Ames that were not listed in the telephone directory.

The Ames Chamber of Commerce maintains a list of organizations of a social, fraternal and philanthropic nature.

¹Iowa State University of Science and Technology. Student directory. Ames, Iowa, Author. 1961.

A copy of this list was obtained. The name of the president of each organization, his address and telephone number were given on the list. The president of each listed organization was contacted by telephone. If the organization sponsored used clothing sales the name of the chairman of the most recent sale was obtained. Each chairman was contacted by telephone and arrangements made for a personal interview.

Every effort was made to learn about all sales sponsored by such organizations. However, when the presidents of organizations were contacted by telephone one woman reported that her organization did not have used clothing sales. About three months later her organization advertised in the local evening paper a sale of used clothing to be held the following Saturday.

The local office managers of the two railroads, four storage and moving companies, express company and post office were contacted. No unclaimed merchandise was sold in Ames from these sources.

Nearly every person who was contacted during this research volunteered information about two used clothing sales that had been held in Ames for several years on a regular schedule. One sale was held for three days a week, the other for two days a month. The first sale was difficult to locate. After repeated inquiries the name and address of this sale was obtained from a former customer. The

location of the semi-monthly sale was more generally known. The managers of these sales were contacted and interviews arranged.

A local hotel had an unrented store in the hotel building where used clothing sales were frequently held. The hotel manager was interviewed to obtain names of the chairmen of these sales. An Ames city official and the society editor of the only Ames newspaper, the Ames Daily Tribune,¹ were interviewed to learn of other organizations which sold or gave used clothing to indigent families.

The president of one fraternity alumni group, when contacted to learn if his organization held sales, asked if the study was to include clothesline sales. When told that it would, he gave the caller the names of two women who had sponsored clothesline sales. The women were contacted by telephone and both were willing to be interviewed. At another clothesline sale, located through a newspaper advertisement, the family name was on the mailbox. Later this woman was contacted. She was not only willing to be interviewed, but also gave the writer the name of another woman who had recently held a sale in another part of the city.

To learn of sales sponsored by different types of

¹Ames Daily Tribune. Vol. 95, No. 53 - Vol. 96, No. 52. September 1, 1961 - August 31, 1962.

organizations the classified advertising sections of the Ames Daily Tribune and of the university student newspaper, the Iowa State Daily,¹ were read. The files of the past issues of both newspapers from September 1, 1961, to August 31, 1962, were checked to see if there were any sales advertised by an Ames organization which had not been discovered using other means.

Preparation of questionnaires

A list was prepared of information that the observer hoped to learn from this study. After attending several sales, she developed the questionnaires to be used to interview the chairmen of sales.

In order to learn which garments sold more easily and which items were hardest to sell, the chairmen were to be asked to rate garments according to demand for them at the respective sales. The names of the different items of clothing for the infant, boy, girl, man and woman were typed on three by five inch cards. On each card was the name of the garment, the person that would wear it, that is, man, woman or child, and any other necessary information to clarify the exact type garment that was to be rated. For example, "women's coats, full length, 3/4 length; for

¹Iowa State Daily. Vol. 91, No. 1 - Vol. 91, No. 159. September 8, 1961 - August 16, 1962.

spring, fall and winter" was listed on one card. There were 51 cards to be sorted even though many groups, for example, dresses, were not broken down into exact kinds. Maternity dresses, formal and sport dresses were on one card; in this way the number of cards to be sorted was limited somewhat (see Appendix).

A rating scale of four degrees of ease of selling was developed. The four categories were "usually sell very well," "usually sell fairly well," "sells," and "hard to sell items." In addition, a fifth class, "not enough items at sale to know if they do sell well," was found to be especially useful for the sales where the amount of clothing offered was limited. Most women who sorted the cards appeared to understand the different categories; only one woman had to ask repeated questions about this scale. Each category of this scale was typed on a manila envelope using capital letters of a typewriter with the large, bulletin size type. Originally these statements were centered on three and a half by nine inch size envelopes. This proved to be awkward because the women would stack the cards on the envelopes, covering the identifying words, as they sorted them. After two interviews new envelopes were prepared with the categories typed on the left side of the envelope. Thus the cards could be placed on the envelopes without covering the classifications.

There were four different types of interviews conducted for this study. All the interviews were made by the writer, assuring uniformity in interviewing methods. Two different questionnaires (see Appendix) were used. The first questionnaire was used for interviewing the presidents of the sororities and alumnae groups, the second for interviewing the chairmen of the various organization sales. The sorority sales, active and alumnae, were usually smaller and were held less frequently and with less regularity than the sales sponsored by other women's organizations. Therefore it was decided to investigate these sales in less detail, using a shorter form of questionnaire.

In the original plan of study, city, school and welfare officials were to be interviewed. However, this was not done because it was believed that necessary information had been provided by an interview with a city official.

In the third type of interview no questionnaire was used. The women who had held clothesline sales, the hotel manager, the society editor and the managers of the two continuing sales were interviewed without using a formal series of questions. It was believed that in this way the persons interviewed would not be restricted in their answers. General questions were asked, encouraging casual discussion of the topic by the interviewee. Notes were taken during these discussions. None of those interviewed

by this method appeared to be disturbed by the note taking. Later these unstructured interviews were typed, almost verbatim, for future reference.¹

A list of questions was prepared for use in interviewing retail clothing merchants, shoe repairmen and managers of dry cleaning shops to learn if they donated any unsalable merchandise to any used clothing sales.

Interviews

After introducing herself, the interviewer briefly explained the reason for the interview, its confidential nature, and the proposed use of the results.

A relaxed atmosphere was desired, so the interviewer tried never to seem hurried. The questions from the interview schedule were read aloud by the interviewer who then wrote the verbal response on the form. Some of the questions, for example, numbers 21, 22, 32 and 34 on the long forms, were of the open type (see Appendix). All comments made by the person being interviewed were noted on the questionnaire. The space allowed on the front for these comments was often insufficient so the back of the three page questionnaire was used for any additional comments. The questionnaire was fastened to a clipboard, giving the

¹Selltiz, op. cit., p. 267.

interviewer a place to write without needing a table. The same interviewing procedure was followed for both types of questionnaires except that the ranking cards were not sorted by those women who answered the shorter form.

When the interviewee sorted the cards onto envelopes, a space was needed to put the envelopes. Most frequently the sofa was used; on several occasions the dining room table or other table was used. The envelopes were always placed so the one marked "very easy to sell" was nearest the person doing the sorting. Ranging from the easiest to the hardest to sell, the order was always the same. As the envelopes were placed on the sofa or table an explanation of the meaning of the classifications on the envelopes was given. During the sorting any questions about the meaning of the cards or the envelopes were answered by the interviewer and noted on the questionnaire. Other comments made during this time were also noted on the back of the questionnaire. When the person finished sorting them, the cards were put into the envelopes. These envelopes were placed in the card folder and tied with the folder string to keep the cards in the proper envelopes.

Although the ranking of cards was question number 24, 10 questions from the end of the questionnaire, it was shifted to be the last question of the interview. It was hard to re-establish the question and answer give-and-take

when the ranking of the cards was not at the end of the interview.

The interview was then finished. The interviewer entered the ranking of the cards on a summary sheet immediately after leaving the interview. The cards were shuffled and put into the folder before being used in the next interview.

The time to administer the short schedule varied from five to 15 minutes for an interview. The duration of the interview using the long form varied from 15 minutes to one and one half hours. Answers to open end questions and the comments made by the interviewee while sorting the ranking cards accounted for the wide time range.

CLASSIFICATION OF SALES

After observation and interviews, sales of used clothing in Ames were classified in the following manner:

- I. Sales sponsored by nonprofit organizations
 - A. Occasional sales
 - (1) Church
 - (2) Active groups of sororities and fraternities
 - (3) Social, fraternal and service organizations
 - B. Continuing operations
 - (1) Women's club
- II. Sales for mutual profit of donor and seller-agent
 - A. Occasional
 - B. Continuing
- III. Sales for individual profit
 - A. Occasional
 - (1) Individual or group of individuals
 - (2) Organization
 - B. Continuing

Sales sponsored by nonprofit organizations included all sales for which the garments were given or donated to the church, sorority, fraternity, club or other organization by the members and friends of that organization, to be sold at public sale with all profits from that sale to be given to the organization.

The sales for mutual profit of donor and seller or

agent included those sales and auctions where the seller-agent retained a percentage of the sale price with the balance paid to the person who owned the clothing. At a sale for individual profit, all profits from the sale went to the person who owned and sold the clothing.

An "occasional" sale was one held one to four times a year by a particular organization or group. The garments were available for sale only on those days. After each sale unsold garments were returned to the owners or disposed of in other ways, but not usually saved for the next sale. An occasional sale occupied space that was used by other sales or for other purposes when a specific sale was not being held.

A "continuing" sale was held at least one day a month and unsold clothing kept from one sale day to another. The clothing was available for sale on racks and was not stored away between sales. A continuing sale occupied space that was not used for other purposes.

One type of sale not included in this study was that held annually in connection with the local Campus Community Chest drive. As explained by all those sorority and fraternity presidents whose organizations participate in this type of activity, this sale was for fun. The money went to a worthy cause, but the most important thing about the sale or auction was for everyone to have a good time. Most of

those interviewed said the things donated for sale at this time were either out of style, very ugly, very worn or there was some other factor that made the garment extremely undesirable.

At the time of this study there was no regular or full time auction within the city of Ames. There was an auction located just outside the city limits which sold chiefly used furniture and appliances. Occasionally there was some clothing sold. The writer went to two of these auctions. No clothing was sold the first night and only one box of clothing was sold the second night. These were cotton dresses, size 16, most of them new but some used. There was an undisclosed number of dresses in the box, which sold for 75 cents. No bid was received on the individual dresses, only for the entire box.

Used clothing was collected by the Salvation Army from Des Moines, Iowa, for resale either in Des Moines or for shipment to other cities. Churches in Ames collected clothing for sale and also for both domestic and foreign missions. A church sponsored children's home in Ames was frequently the recipient of used clothing collected in churches, on the university campus, and donated by Ames merchants.

Description of Sales

All classifications of sales had some common characteristics. These similarities will be discussed, followed by the description of characteristics of each different type of sale.

General characteristics

Size Sales were classified into two groups after observation of several sales of used clothing: small and large. A "small" sale had the following characteristics:

1. The rack space was less than 10 feet long or if longer all available hanging space was not used at the start of the sale.
2. There were less than five tables with no table completely filled at the start of the sale.
3. The sale was held in a small room, under 25 feet square, or in a larger room that was more than half empty.
4. The sale workers consisted of no more than six women including selling force and cashiers.

A "large" sale met the following requirements:

1. Over 10 feet of rack space would be filled with hanging garments at the start of the sale.
2. There were more than five tables and at least four

of them were completely filled at the start of the sale.

3. The sale was held in a large room, over 25 feet square, which appeared to be more than half full.
4. The sale workers consisted of seven or more women including selling force and cashiers.

Only three church sales were observed, two large and one small, using the above criteria. Of the two sorority alumnae sales observed, both were small. Clothesline sales ranged from very small to large in size, depending usually upon how many women were sponsoring the sale. Many sales were held in the fall of 1961 before observations of sales started; therefore it was impossible to classify them as to size in this study.

Reputation Customers referred to some sales as "good" sales. A used clothing sale, like a retail store, establishes a reputation in a community over a period of time. In many of the interviews the sale chairmen said that customers told them that they always tried to attend this particular sale because they knew it was a "good" sale. These usually were the sales that reported the largest cash receipts. The chairmen of sales that were relatively small in dollar volume did not mention that they had regular customers, but this question was not specifically asked on

the questionnaire.

A "good" sale seemed to be characterized by clothing reasonably priced and of good quality, with a large selection of clean, ironed clothing. It was reported, and observed at some sales, that there was a group of women waiting to get into such "good" sales 30 minutes to an hour before the sale was scheduled to start. This was true regardless of the season of the year. In subfreezing winter weather or on a hot summer day the crowd seemed to be there when the sale was known to be a good one. Chairmen of smaller sales did not report the people waiting for the sale to open. This was also verified by observations.

Many intangibles contributed to the reputation of a sale. If the sale was sponsored by a group of business women, mostly unmarried, the clothing that was for sale was mostly suits, tailored dresses, sweaters, blouses and skirts. There were few items for men, children or infants. It appeared that customers preferred a sale that offered a selection of garments for all members of the family. A sale sponsored by a large church in an upper middle class neighborhood usually had a wide range of sizes of good quality garments for children of all ages as well as for adults. Again the customers seemed aware of this. A church in an older, less well maintained neighborhood had fewer customers, apparently because it did not have the quality

nor the quantity of garments offered at a larger sale.

Customers The groups of customers gathered outside sales observed for this study could be described as friendly people waiting for a pleasant event. Often there seemed to be old friends and relatives meeting in the crowd. There was much talking as the people tried to make the waiting more interesting. When the sale workers arrived the waiting customers greeted them in a friendly manner.

The atmosphere changed abruptly when the doors were opened. All talking ceased. Each person hurried to the section where the clothing that interested him or her was displayed. For example, one woman went to the rack where children's dresses were displayed. She quickly looked at each dress, took those that apparently looked to her like "good buys" and rolled them into a roll and tucked the roll under her left arm. Each garment that was considered a possible purchase was treated in this manner, rolled and half hidden under the left arm. She then moved to the blouse or shirt section, made her tentative selections, rolled them and continued on to the next section. All the women customers were doing this: the quick inspection, roll, tuck, and move on to the next group. After about 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the size of the sale, the women had been to each section and they then each went to a quiet spot, preferably near a window or light, where she took the

garments one by one from under her arm and examined them carefully. The women checked seams, hems, looked for rips, tear, holes, faded colors or other signs of wear. Some garments did not pass this test. Many garments were in extremely worn condition, yet perhaps because of low price or great need these garments were sometimes purchased. The clothing that was taken to the quiet corner was either left there, for the workers to re-sort later, or it was taken to the cashier where payment was made.

About 20 minutes after a large sale opened a line had formed at the cashier's check-out table. The women customers then began to talk. This first rush lasted from 20 minutes to one to two hours, depending on the size of sale. Only a few people came throughout the rest of the announced sale hours until about an hour before closing time. At this time there was usually another rush and the same process of the women customers searching, rolling, tucking the garments under arms and retiring to inspect carefully what they had chosen. There were a few women in the second rush who had been there when the sale first opened. There were also newcomers. The chairman interviewed thought that the women who came in this second rush may have been to another rummage sale they thought would be "better" and so went to it first. Some customers may have come back the second time because they believed that to clear out merchandise the

prices would be cut in preparation for this second rush.

Sales that did not have "good" reputations appeared not to have the first nor second rush. There was a steady trickle of a few women throughout the sale hours, and this was reflected in the relatively low cash receipts.

All the chairmen interviewed referred to the customers at used clothing sales as "those people." In conversations the writer held with friends, neighbors and merchants they also used the phrase "those people" in the same reference.

The chairmen always mentioned that odds and ends or knick-knacks usually sold very well. Several women thought that "those people" liked to indulge themselves by impulse buying and these items could usually be purchased for less than 15 cents. Other chairmen thought that the customers did not like to go to a sale and not buy something. The observer purchased several items at sales. The cashier was always located by the door, and it was embarrassing to leave without buying. Therefore a small, inexpensive item was usually purchased at each sale. These included glass tumblers, bracelets, earrings, plastic trays, and one cotton dress.

The observer happened to leave the semi-monthly women's club sale at the same time that an elderly woman was leaving and walking in the same direction. They talked about the sale. The woman explained that she lived only two blocks

away and came to every sale for it gave her something to do and "sometimes you can find really nice things."

Customers observed at sales were usually older women or women who had several small children with them. There were a few men at the evening sales and at sales held on Saturdays.

Occasionally members of the organization which was sponsoring the sale purchased items. This was usually before the sale opened to the public, but always after the article was priced. One organization which had a continuing sale would not sell any item to a member until the article had been on sale for one day. Any antique that was donated to the sale was priced by a professional appraiser. A club member could then purchase the antique.

Clothing sources Apparently most of those who attend rummage sales believe that the items on sale are clothing discarded by the family and friends of members of the group sponsoring the sale. In some cases this was not true. Much clothing comes from members but one church sale in the spring also included left over or unsold clothing from an earlier sale sponsored by the sorority of a church member. This was learned, not from the chairman of the church sale, but from the chairman of the alumnae sorority sale. It is therefore possible that this could have happened on other occasions and with other groups, without

the sale chairman knowing of it.

The managers of Ames retail clothing and shoe stores, dry cleaners and shoe repair shops were interviewed to learn if any merchants sold or donated unsalable clothing or shoes to any Ames used clothing sales.

The interviewer had seven questions typed on a four by six inch card (see Appendix). Separate cards were made for all the retail stores in Ames, listing name of store, address and type of merchandise sold. The writer asked the questions and wrote each manager's answers on the proper card. The interview took from two to five minutes.

To the question "Within the last year, September 1, 1961, to August 31, 1962, has your store given any clothing (shoes) to any Ames group or organization for them to sell or give away?" the answers are shown in Table 1.

These garments and shoes were given to churches for resale or for overseas relief, to both Ames and Des Moines charities. None of the managers knew whether they had sold any merchandise for resale in Ames. Three managers reported that a man came to Ames from a large city out of state two times a year to buy for resale any unsold merchandise at a very low, unstated price. All three people said that they gave the garments to their churches rather than sell at such a low price.

Of the eleven merchants donating clothing to churches

Table 1. Number of Ames merchants who gave clothing to used clothing sales

Type of store	Number of merchants	
	Number asked	Number who said yes
Children's clothing	3	1
Department store	4	1
Dry cleaner	9	1
Men's clothing	7	3
Shoe repair	3	1
Shoe store	5	1
Variety store	3	1
Women's clothing	6	2
Total number of firms	40	11

or charities only four were members of those churches, or were in any way affiliated with the charities. Denominational lines were not observed in giving away these items.

The type of merchandise given away by retail merchants could be divided into three groups: new garments damaged in some way, making them unreturnable to the factory; merchandise returned by customers that had proven unsatisfactory; and sun faded or soiled items. Shoe repair shops and dry cleaners donated merchandise unclaimed for more than one to two years. One dry cleaner donated any articles damaged in

cleaning, after payment had been made to the owner.

One shoe repairman who gave shoes to be sent by his church to an overseas mission said that he never gave away shoes that were in a poor condition. He did not think the money should be spent on freight for shoes that would injure the wearers' feet. It was his opinion that many things were given to a charity when the item was so worn it should be destroyed. He demonstrated his argument with a pair of shoes from the waste box. These shoes appeared to be in better condition than many seen by the writer at rummage sales. These shoes had deep holes inside the sole that were not readily seen. He said such shoes would harm any feet that wore them. One shoe retailer said he never gave shoes away because shoes should be fitted to the wearer's feet. Only these two men referred to the necessity of thinking of the welfare of the person who was to wear the garments donated.

A retailer who gave unsold garments to a used clothing sale would forgo the possibility of selling it to a firm specializing in this type of merchandise. The goods had been purchased and paid for and would therefore constitute a deduction from his gross income.

When an individual gave clothing to one of these sales he might have claimed it as a charitable deduction from his personal income tax. However, all chairmen replied in

answer to specific question that they had not been asked for receipts for clothing donated for sale. It is possible that donors of clothing had claimed it as deductions from personal income tax but because the District Director of Internal Revenue had not asked that the deductions be substantiated, the sale chairmen had not been asked for receipts. Only by further research could it be determined if donors of clothing to such organization sales were claiming this as deductions from their income tax.

All chairmen interviewed reported that the sale committee made arrangements for the clothing to be called for if the donor could not bring it to a central spot. Usually it was collected over a period of a week before the sale with most of the garments being brought in one or two days before the sale.

The quantity of clothing at sales varied widely. Because this study was concerned with describing what actually occurred in Ames from September 1, 1961, to August 31, 1962, every effort was made not to interfere with the activity at a sale. Therefore the observer did not count the numbers of garments at the sales attended because she did not wish to be conspicuous. However at one sale the garments on a single, fifty foot rack were counted the morning of the second day of the sale by a church member. This rack held women's coats, suits, dresses and skirts, a total of 480

garments.

Display Methods of displaying used clothing were consistent regardless of size or type of sale. Coats, suits, trousers, skirts, jackets, dresses and blouses were placed on hangers which were hung on racks. The type of rack varied from conventional chrome plated garment racks to sections of iron pipe suspended from the ceiling by chains or wire.

At one church sale shoes were displayed on unfinished wooden racks. Usually shoes, purses, hats, and all other items that could not be hung conveniently were placed on tables, which ranged in size from card tables to ping-pong tables. Sometimes tables were placed so that customers could encircle them. At other times they were side by side or, in the case of long, narrow tables, end to end. Tables were also used to channel flow of customer traffic, and often to close off a doorway that was not to be used during the sale. The women workers stood behind the tables and used them as display counters.

In all sales observed, clothing was sorted by type. Clothing for men was hung in one section, clothing for women in another. Children's clothing, both boys' and girls' garments, was usually displayed together in the same area. Women's dresses, blouses, suits, and coats were displayed in groups sorted as to garment type. Clothing for men and

children was also sorted and displayed by garment type.

Labeling Each garment offered for sale was usually marked or labeled with a rectangular tag of paper one or two inches wide by two or three inches long. This label was pinned to a sleeve, collar or, less commonly, to the shoulder area of the garment and was marked with the price and sometimes the size of the article. If priced individually, shoes were marked on the soles. Hats were occasionally marked with a paper price tag pinned to the ribbon band or veil.

The workers frequently placed a large price sign on the rack or table instead of marking each item with a price ticket. This was the most common method of indicating prices of shoes, purses and hats. Often there was no price sign either on the table or on the displayed items.

At none of the sales attended was an attempt made to state fiber content or other descriptive material on the label. Some garments have a woven size label fastened into a seam. Donors infrequently marked garments with size before sending the items to be sold. Information about the garment was seldom available to the person doing the marking.

Pricing and price cutting According to the women interviewed, pricing the garments was the most difficult part of the sale. Several sales chairmen stated that women

do not volunteer for this work. Because the chairman usually had had experience with other sales, she was "stuck with the job." Those with experience gained from earlier sales helped to train others for the next sale. When the women were asked what criteria they used to price the sale garments, each of them said "experience" or words to that effect. After working at sales for many years they believed that they knew what customers would pay for different garments. As one woman said, "Someone who has done a lot of it gets along better than someone who tries to follow a recipe."

One woman interviewed said that infrequently a donor would put the original price on a garment sent to the sale, to help the worker price it for resale. According to this woman, resale price could be based on original cost only to a certain extent because there is a limit to how much people will pay for used garments. For example, she said there is a five dollar limit on wool coats. The amount of wear still in a coat seems to be more important to the prospective purchaser than the original cost.

The way different women price garments is illustrated by the following example. Three sales whose chairmen were interviewed had each received three different women's suits that were all of the same, nationally advertised brand. These suits, known for their classic style, usually retail

for over 100 dollars. The only one of these three suits that the writer saw was noticeably out of date both in fabric and style. It was of medium blue color with streaks of gray, apparently from gas fading. There were two women doing all the marking for this sale. Neither wanted to price this suit. Two other women workers entered the discussion which centered on the fact that although it was in poor condition it was a famous brand name suit. Finally the suit was marked \$2.50, which two of the women considered a ridiculously low price for that brand of suit. They expressed their disapproval, but the price was not changed. Several hours after the sale started the suit was still unsold. It was then marked down to 75 cents. It sold about 30 minutes later. At another sale the same brand of suit was also priced at \$2.50 and did not sell. It was taken home by the owner to be brought back for the next sale. The woman interviewed described it as being in "lovely" condition, so they would not cut the price. A third suit, with the same brand label, was sold for \$7.50 at a third sale. The woman in charge of this sale said that from the worn condition of the suit it was obvious, to her, that it was just the label that was important to the customer. The chairman said that no label was worth \$7.50 when the garment was so badly worn. These three sales were held within a four month period in downtown Ames. Two of the sales were

held in the same location.

The casual way prices were determined at one sale was shown by the following example. The sale was a small one, held regularly but not continuously. The observer could find only one item that was marked. When a woman customer asked the price of a dress the worker asked the chairman of the sale, "How much for this?" The chairman answered, "Well, she bought those other things, so what do you think, 35 cents?" Worker and customer agreed that was a fair price.

All sale chairmen interviewed agreed that if a garment was obviously out-of-date it would not sell at any price. There were, however, three uses for the garments mentioned by the women in answering another question which concerned the fabric rather than the style. One nonfashion use of used garments was as a source of fabric to be used in make-overs. The fabric in one very full skirted dress was sold to make doll clothes. No chairman said that garments were sold to be made over for children; however the questionnaire did not specifically ask this. In most cases chairmen did not know the purposes for which garments were purchased.

A second use of old garments mentioned in the interviews was for making rugs. Men's neckties in the old wide style were said to be almost impossible to sell. At one sale they were given away, but at another all the old ties

were purchased by one man to make rugs.

Woolen garments are often purchased for rug making. Some women said that they believed it was wrong to sell a warm winter coat to someone who would cut it up into a rug when the same coat would keep someone else warm. A woman in this group would not have priced a woolen garment low enough so a person could afford to use it in a rug. Some other women stated that the reason the coat was purchased was unimportant so long as it was sold and the organization received the money. A woman in this second group would have priced the garment low enough to sell it for any purpose.

One of the groups that held continuing sales believed that the way to deal with this problem was to put all woolen garments that had been damaged by moths into large corrugated paper boxes. Each box, usually about two feet square and 18 to 20 inches high, was filled with these damaged woolen garments. The price of the box and contents was 25 to 50 cents, depending on the size of the box and the number of garments it contained. A customer was not permitted to buy one or two garments from the box, but had to buy all of the items in the box, as is. He was always told what was wrong with the merchandise. The sale chairman believed that these damaged garments would not be used as clothing. At this low price, rug makers would use these garments rather than buy "good" ones.

The third use for garments was for rags. Theatre owners, garage mechanics and painters were mentioned as customers who purchased used clothing by the pound to be used as cleaning rags. Only four sale chairmen said they sold clothing for this purpose. The price ranged from five to ten cents a pound, weighed after buttons, zippers and belts were removed.

Policies on price cutting seemed to depend on whether the sale was a continuing or an occasional operation. At a continuing sale, held every week or every other week, workers would cut prices only before the sale began. Their policy was never to cut a price when a customer requested it, to avoid constant bargaining. If an item was not sold one day, there would be another opportunity soon to sell it.

At a sale that was held for only one or two days a year there would not be another opportunity to sell an item until the next year. A sale held in a church basement or in a store downtown must close at a certain time. All items must be removed from the salesroom. Unsold merchandise must be boxed and stored or given away. Therefore to avoid as much of this work as possible prices were cut the last hour or before the last day of the sale. Many groups sponsored sales primarily to obtain money for some philanthropic work. Thus if during the sale a customer expressed interest in a garment but indicated that the price was too high, the

worker would usually cut or "adjust" the price if she thought the customer really needed the garment and could not pay the asked price.

The women interviewed indicated that the customers knew when prices would be cut so they would come back the last day or last hours of the sale.

Ranking of clothing by ease of sale Each chairman of an occasional sale was asked to base her ranking of clothing according to ease of sale on the most recent sale she had supervised. Chairmen of regularly operating sales based their rankings on how clothing had sold over the years of sale operation.

Each class of ease of selling was given a number.

- 1 - "Usually sell very well"
- 2 - "Usually sell fairly well"
- 3 - "Sells"
- 4 - "Hard to sell items"
- 5 - "Not enough items at sale to know if they do sell well."

Infants' clothing was consistently ranked easy to sell. Of the clothing rated by 25 sale chairmen, over half of a total of 175 cards were placed in class 1. In seven cases the chairmen ranked all seven infants' items as class 1. In a fifth case six items were ranked class 1; the seventh item was classified 5. Of these seven sales one was a church

sale, five were other organizations, and two were clothesline sales. One chairman of a social organization sale ranked all infants' clothing as 5, because the members had no small children.

Cards for boys' clothing did not show any one classification as being most frequently chosen, but classes 1 and 2 accounted for over half of the cards sorted. Almost one-sixth of the cards were in the fifth category, "not enough items at sale to know if they do sell well," partly because one clothesline sale had no clothing for boys.

For girls' clothing a total of 275 cards were sorted. Ninety-three were rated as being easy to sell, group 1. One woman who sponsored a clothesline sale rated all girls' clothing as group 5 because among the 15 neighbors with 20 children who brought clothing to sell, only two of the children were girls.

Men's clothing was rated, on the whole, as being harder to sell than other groups. Thirteen women of the 25 gave no ratings of group 1 to the 10 items of men's clothing. One woman classified all men's garments as group 4, "Hard to sell items."

Women's clothing, 13 items, did not seem to be ranked with any uniformity by the 25, except that there were 12 rankings of 5 from one clothesline sale.

An examination of the averages of the rankings by the

Table 2. Classification of garments as to ease of sale

Clothing group	Number of items in group to be sorted	Total number of cards sorted by sale chairmen	Classifications				
			1	2	3	4	5
Infants	7	175	101	24	14	12	24
Boys	10	250	71	68	42	26	43
Girls	11	275	93	69	58	20	35
Men	10	250	28	66	56	53	47
Women	13	325	62	83	90	52	38
Total		1275	355	310	260	163	187

individual chairmen, to try to discover whether size of sale or gross receipts was related to the way cards were sorted, showed no pattern. If there was a relationship of the volume of the sale to the ease of selling different groups of clothing, this study was unable to discover it.

Differences in ranking could be partly accounted for in the fact that each woman said winter clothing did not sell in summer sales. A comparison was made between the ranking of infants' blankets and children's and adults' coats at sales held from April through August versus sales held from September through March. The results were not conclusive, possibly because on the cards coats were not separated into

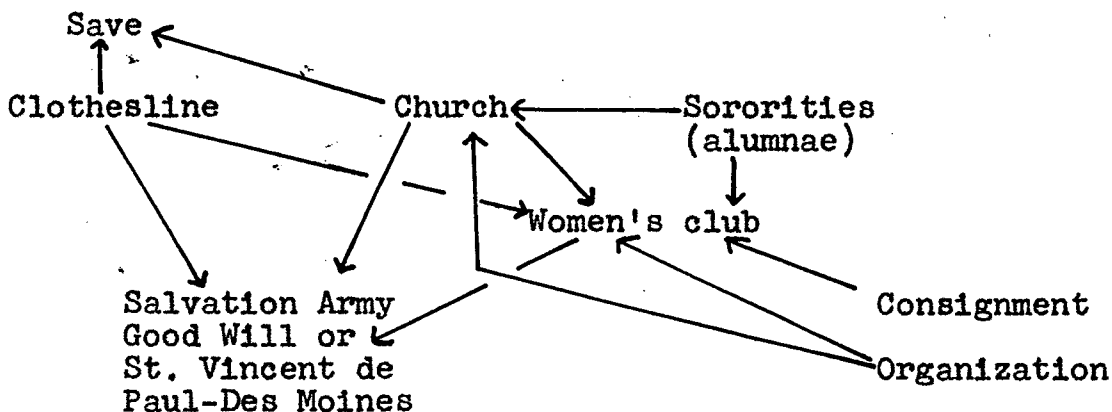
spring, fall and winter coats. All coats for each group were on one card (see Appendix). Further research would be necessary before the statement that winter clothing is hard to sell in summer can be accepted.

Disposition of unsold clothing All of the chairmen of sales interviewed said that some clothing was left over at the end of sales. There seemed to be a pattern of disposal for these unsold garments.

The alumnae sorority presidents who were interviewed said their left-overs were given to the women's club sale or to church sales. Six churches gave their unsold garments to the Ames women's club sale, the Salvation Army, Good Will or St. Vincent de Paul in Des Moines, Iowa. One church kept the unsold items for the next sale.

The four women interviewed who held clothesline sales also had unsold clothing after the sales were finished. One woman gave these garments to the women's club sale, one gave unsold clothing to a relative, one woman kept all unsold garments for the next sale and the fourth woman kept part and gave part to the Salvation Army. The continuing consignment sale gave unsold items to the women's club sale. The women's club sale gave its unsold merchandise to the Salvation Army. It was therefore possible for a garment to be placed on sale at more than one rummage sale in the community. The following diagram illustrates the flow of used

garments from one type of sale to another.



Thus the flow of disposed unsold clothing was from the smaller, personal contact sale to larger, more impersonal sale or out of the community.

Sales sponsored by nonprofit organization

Occasional sales

Church Of the 31 churches in Ames, seven held used clothing sales between September 1, 1961, and August 31, 1962. Church sales of used clothing were usually called "rummage sales." Occasionally the chairman tried a different name to arouse interest. "Trash and treasure" and "ABC," or attic, basement and closet, were two such names used in Ames in 1961-62. Sales of this type were sponsored only by the women of the church although the money made from the sales usually benefited the entire church.

The purpose of the sales seemed to be the raising of

money rather than the disposal of clothing. The amount of clothing on hand appeared to have little or nothing to do with whether a sale would or would not be held. No church sale chairman interviewed mentioned the clothing being available as the reason for the sale. Money was raised to pay for church building or for a special church need. One minister, when contacted to learn if his church sponsored such a sale, said his congregation no longer had sales because the church debt was paid. A woman who had been in charge of the most recent sale held by her church said that the members were planning to build a new church soon; therefore they would continue to have annual rummage sales. Members of another local church had decided to discontinue their sales. Then they learned of the special need of an overseas mission, so they held a sale in the spring as usual. In every interview the chairman of the sale told of the purpose of the sales even though that question was not asked. The use of the money made from the sale was usually mentioned as the reason for the sale.

A total of 12 sales was held by seven churches in Ames between September 1, 1961, and August 31, 1962. Two churches had been holding sales regularly for between six and ten years, five for more than 15 years. The chairman of sales at one of these churches reported that her group had been having sales for more than 30 years.

Three sales were held once a year; three were held two times a year, in the spring and fall. The church that had been having its sales the longest, over 30 years, also had them most frequently, four times a year.

All but one church held its sales on Fridays and Saturdays. One church regularly held its sales on Wednesday and Thursday. Three churches had evening sales. The chairmen of these said that they scheduled sales during the evening hours so the men could accompany their wives shopping.

The earliest opening hour was 7:30 a.m. and the latest closing hour was 9:00 p.m. One church, which held a spring and fall sale every year, stated the church name, two dates, a Friday and a Saturday, and the phrase "sale closes 3 p.m. Saturday," in the advertisements for both sales. When it was decided to run the spring sale for two weekends the same advertisement was again run. Most of the people interviewed said that there were people waiting to buy before the sale opened for business, and the most business was done in the first two hours. It would be difficult for a customer to know when the sale would start from the incomplete hours stated in this advertisement.

Six of the churches advertised their 11 sales in the Ames Daily Tribune; one sale by the seventh church was not so advertised. Three sales were advertised for three days,

three sales for two days. The insertion of the advertisement was usually two days in advance of the sale. One chairman of a sale said that it was important not to advertise a sale too far in advance because this would confuse prospective customers. Two churches advertised sales in the Iowa State Daily, a student newspaper for the university, in addition to their other advertisement.

One church used the free Radio Station KASI program called "Swap Shop" in addition to the newspapers. This program was broadcast daily, five times a week at 11:00 to 11:15 and 11:20 to 11:45 a.m. The two programs were separated by five minutes of local news and music. An individual could advertise any item priced under 50 dollars. An organization having a rummage sale was not restricted to this 50 dollar limit. To place the advertisement the person telephoned the Ames station on the day on which the announcement was to be broadcast.

Three churches placed homemade posters in store windows in both the campus and downtown business districts. One church used duplicated "flyers" delivered to Pammel Court, the university married student housing area, by four college boys. The college students were members of the church; therefore they were unpaid for this work.

Only one woman stated that the sale was announced in the regular Sunday church bulletin at her church. However

the writer knows of at least one other church where a sale was announced in the church bulletin that the sale chairman did not mention when interviewed.

Church rummage sales were held in the church basements. Usually there was a paper or cardboard sign advertising the sale posted on an outside door. Sometimes there were signs inside the building directing customers to the sale. One church had a sign on every outside door to direct customers to one particular door and inside the designated door more signs directed them to the basement stairs. At some sales there were no signs, inside or out, making it difficult for people unacquainted with the building to locate the sale.

The size and physical arrangements of basement rooms varied considerably. The rooms ranged in size from approximately 15 by 25 feet for a small room to 40 by 60 feet for a large one. Some rooms were well lighted, while others were dimly lighted. At one sale the lighting was not sufficient for the observer to distinguish brown, black, dark green and navy blue. This made it very difficult to tell the cleanliness or state of repair of the clothing.

The number of workers varied from about four, at a small sale, to over twenty, at a larger sale. All were unpaid volunteers. At one spring sale there were over 60 women involved in the work before and during the sale. For a week before this sale 20 women marked prices on sale

clothing. Forty women, working in two hour shifts, sold for the two days of the sale.

All of the workers at either large or small sales were available during sale hours to answer questions. Most of the sales had women assigned to certain areas as sales clerks. The number of sales clerks varied with the size of the sale. Two to six women were assigned as cashiers and these women sometimes wrapped the merchandise also. However, garments were frequently left unwrapped. New and used sacks were used as wrapping. Muffin tins were usually used as change boxes. Sometimes a portable adding machine was used to total the individual purchases but more commonly one woman listed and totaled the prices without using a machine.

Active sorority and fraternity Active sorority

group sales followed no set pattern. Some were of the non-profit organization type, others were sales for individual profit. In 1961 one sorority held an auction at which the first five dollars that each girl made from the sale of her clothing went to the house fund and the rest of the money went to the girl. Another sorority had a sale at which all the money went to the individual girls with nothing going to the house organization.

The sales of used clothing sponsored by active sorority groups were called "auctions" or "senior sales." The sales and auctions were held after hours so all the members were

able to attend. In an auction the garment was sold to the highest bidder. The auctions were held at various times of the year, because they were usually held to raise money for some large item for the sorority house; for example, to purchase an intercommunication system. Thus the need for the money rather than the clothing on hand dictated when the auctions were held. At an auction, one or two persons collected the money as the items were sold. None of the garments were wrapped after they were sold since the sale was held in the sorority house for sorority members only.

Social, fraternal and service Sales by other women's organizations, sorority alumnae groups, women's auxiliary groups of male organizations and service groups were very similar to those sales held by church groups, with the exception that this type of sale was held in an unrented store or on the front porch of a member's home rather than in the church basement.

Those organizations holding sales during the year studied had been holding sales in Ames from two to 15 years. Advertising methods used, time of year, day of the week and sale hours were all very similar to church sales. These sales were usually similar in size to small church sales.

If the sale was held in an unrented store the workers set up the garment racks and tables the night before the sale day. They would do all the work of sorting and marking

each garment with the price at this time.

Usually these organizations used larger signs on the outside doors and windows than those used by churches to identify their sales. The name of the organization sponsoring the sale was usually in the largest print, with the sale hours and date of sale in letters almost as large. The signs were posted the day before the sale or on Friday night, if the sale was to be held on Saturday morning.

Continuing sales

Women's club A local women's club sponsored a sale of used clothing every other Saturday afternoon the year around. Almost 30 years ago members of the organization held their first rummage sale. It was so successful that they established a continuing operation.

Before a sale day the telephone number of the Telephone Chairman of the sale was listed in the society column of the local evening paper. Anyone who had clothing for the sale called this number and within the next two days a man picked up the clothing. This was the only advertising used. Most residents of Ames that the writer talked with were aware of the sale, without formal advertisements in the newspaper or on the radio. Most people contacted about the sales that their own groups were sponsoring would tell the writer about this sale. Everyone interviewed in connection with this sale seemed proud of the work that the women were doing.

People connected with the sale and other Ames residents expressed the opinion that since Ames had no welfare department that this sale filled a need.

For 20 years the sale was held in the same location in a city building. One year after the sale was moved, switchboard girls at the city building were still receiving calls inquiring about the time and location of the sale.

The new location was an old house. The second floor was not used except for storage because the floors were unsafe. There was less room to display the merchandise than in the former location, but this disadvantage was partially overcome by the large amount of free parking available to the customers. The house was painted a fresh light green and a space heater installed when the club moved in. In winter the room with the heater was too warm and the rest of the house was rather cold until the customers arrived. In the summer the house was extremely hot. A large 20 inch window fan and smaller fans in the rooms did little toward making the place more comfortable. But summer or winter, in 90 degree or freezing weather, there were usually more than 30 people waiting to get into the sale before the door opened. This sale had many regular customers. They hurriedly scanned the racks to see if there was anything "new" that had been brought in since the last time they were there.

The sale did not accept checks nor charge accounts, but did have lay-a-ways. An item of 50 cents or more, usually 50 cents to two dollars, could be paid for over a period of time. A 10 cent deposit was required, with payments as the person could afford to make them. There was no formal contract, and when the garment was fully paid for the person took it home. No one had ever asked to take the garment before the final payment was made. However, most of the sales were for cash.

There were women workers in each of the five small rooms, to help answer questions or to measure a dress. Because few items were sized the workers carried a tape measure and measured a dress or skirt for the customer upon request. There was a small doorless closet where customers tried on garments.

Each time the observer was present, there seemed to be more clothing than there was room for. The rooms were extremely small, six feet by 10 feet being about average, and the racks took up so much space there was little room for the customers. The Telephone Chairman reported that there had been pickups of clothing for the sale made at not only club members' homes but also those of some of the sale's customers. Perhaps because of this the clothing at this sale varied so widely that it was impossible to make a general statement about its condition. Some garments were

clean and ironed, others were caked with mud. Some garments were in excellent repair but others were not. One fur coat was just a shell of fur with no lining, interlining or buttons. None of the woolen garments offered for sale had holes from moth damage. Damaged garments were sold by the box, not as separate garments. Although clothing was collected throughout the year, winter garments were placed out for sale only in the fall and winter months. Out of season merchandise was stored on the second floor of the house.

Clothing was usually put into paper sacks when it was sold. Both new and used sacks were used. There was an old adding machine, hand operated, to total any large purchases. The money was sorted into a muffin tin for making change.

Sales sponsored for mutual profit
of donor and seller-agent

Occasional sales There were no sales of this type observed in Ames at the time of this study.

Continuing sales Until early 1962 there was in Ames a used clothing shop which was a commission or consignment operation, specializing in clothing for children. It went out of business and the writer could learn of no other sale of this type in the town. People could bring used garments that were in fairly good condition to the shop. When these garments were sold the former owner would receive 70 per cent of the sale price, with the privately operated shop

retaining a 30 per cent commission.

The shop was open three days a week, keeping approximately regular retail store hours. The shop did little advertising. A two inch box advertisement was inserted in the local evening newspaper only for two or three nights before a new season began.

The shop was in the basement of a large two story frame house located in an older residential neighborhood about six blocks from the main shopping area of Ames. The neighborhood appeared to be well maintained. The entrance to the shop was at the side of the house, down steep stairs into the salesroom hung with dark green burlap curtains. The curtains were also used to screen off the salesroom from the rest of the basement. There were two rooms of clothing, with the better garments in one room and those not as good in the other. The owner was the only sales person.

A card file, which the writer did not see, was maintained, listing the source of each garment, its condition and original price. The owner was careful, she stated, never to sell a garment to a person who lived in the same school district as did the person who was selling the garment.

There was a fairly complete selection of garments for children, but very little infants' clothing and few garments for adults. The shop specialized in children's clothing,

so the customers were usually there for children's clothing and would not be interested in clothing for infants or adults. The owner said that she had expected to have a large volume of business in infants' clothing from the college married students, but that this had not developed. The clothing was usually priced at one half original cost. This was relatively high when compared to prices charged by other used clothing sales. This might partly explain the lack of business from college students. Also, they might have exchanged clothing with each other informally.

The garments in the "better" room were of much better quality than those offered at many of the church and other rummage sales. However, the prices were in most instances as much as 10 to 20 times as high as those charged at other sales. It seemed to the store owner that those persons who buy used clothing want it to be priced very low. More information about the customers' viewpoint on this matter could be learned from a consumer survey.

The reason stated for discontinuing this sale was a general decrease in business. The owner believed that it was the radio "Swap Shop" and clothesline sales that had caused fewer people to buy from her.

During one interview in Ames, the type of sale held by the Parent Teachers Association in Bronxville, New York,

was discussed by one woman.¹ The sale was a continuing operation which accepted clothing from PTA members. The PTA retained 25 per cent of the selling price and returned 75 per cent to the seller-donor. The woman interviewed in Ames had attended a sale of this type in Illinois. She was interested in starting such a sale in Ames. She said that she had proposed it as a money making project at her local PTA meeting but it was not accepted. She believed it was the existence of the women's club sale, the individual clothesline sales and the radio exchange program that caused the women to be uninterested in her plan.

Another sale that divided the profits between seller and owner was described by two women interviewed who had sold and purchased items at Air Force base "Thrift Shops." The shops they described were located overseas, one in England and the other in North Africa. In a shop of this type the base welfare fund received 15 per cent of the selling price, the owner 85 per cent. They said such shops are also in operation at some Air Force bases in this country. Both civilian and military employees of the base make purchases but ordinarily only military personnel may sell items at the shop. Both women expressed a wish for a shop of this

¹Raising money with a used clothing exchange. Good Housekeeping. Vol. 150, No. 2: 116. February, 1960.

type in Ames. Each of these women had held a clothesline sale in Ames.

Sales sponsored for individual profit

Occasional sales

Individuals or group of individuals Clothes-

line sales are sales held by an individual or a group of individuals for their own profit. Four women who had held clothesline sales were interviewed, and none of them had held such sales in any other town. They agreed that it was "accepted" here, but they were not sure that they would do it in another town, under other conditions. One woman said that in her home town "people thought you were destitute if you had a sale of your used clothing."

Six sales were observed. This was only a small proportion of the clothesline sales held in Ames. More information would be needed before any generalizations about number of sales or volume of business of these sales can be made.

A clothesline sale was seldom called that in the newspaper advertisement even though in conversation with friends or during interviews these sales were always referred to as clothesline sales. In the advertisements they were called rummage sales or no name was given. One difficulty in studying these sales arises from trying to determine from newspaper advertisements which are clothesline

sales and which are sales of just one or two items. Sometimes the advertisement listed a few items and then stated "also many other items." Some sales were called rummage sales but appeared to be clothesline sales because the addresses given in the advertisements were those of houses in residential neighborhoods. The directions to such sales usually read "use side door."

Sales were sponsored by from one to as many as 12 women, each bringing clothing from her family. Sometimes friends and neighbors, knowing of the sale, would take their used garments to the sale even though they were not sponsoring it. The women who sponsored the sale paid for the advertisement in the newspaper and acted as sales clerks at the sale. Among reasons for clothesline sales were available clothing, limited storage space and the desire to convert wardrobes to all wash-and-wear type garments. Some clothesline sales were held to dispose of excess clothing before the family moved out of state. This appeared to be a frequent occurrence in Ames where the population is fairly mobile because the chief employers include Iowa State University and the headquarters of the state highway commission.

The newspaper advertisements were usually inserted two days before the sale. The free radio advertisement was broadcast the day or days of the sale. The women

interviewed had held from one to four sales. Two had held their sales in the spring and fall, one had held only one sale in the spring and the fourth had her only sale in the late summer. All agreed that spring or fall was the best time of the year for sales. The sales observed were all in the spring; however, there were advertisements in the newspaper throughout the year. From the incomplete research done in this study on this type of sale it was difficult to state the time of day or day of the week that the majority of such sales were held. Sales were held in old houses and in new houses that were in older sections of Ames as well as in new subdivisions.

There was seldom a sign on the house for advertising unless the sale was in the basement. The sales were held in the basement, on the front porch, in the garage or in the back yard of the home of one of the women who sponsored the sale. The garments were usually on hangers hung on clothes-line which had been fastened to supporting pillars, hence the name for this type of sale. Card tables were used for small items not suitable for hanging.

There were usually two women who acted as sales clerks, although sometimes there was only one. An advantage of several women pooling their used clothing for one sale was that the women could take turns selling. A second advantage to the larger sale was the greater selection offered the

customer. When more clothing was available there seemed to be more customers. When more than one family's clothing was offered the garments were labeled with tickets marked with the initials of the women who owned the item and the price. These tickets, usually small pieces of paper approximately two inches square, were removed when the items were sold. At the end of the sale the tickets from each woman's garments were totaled, and the money divided according to these totals.

All the sales observed and two of the women interviewed used a muffin tin as a cash register. One woman used a cigar box, the other used a pound coffee tin. The tin can was used because the lid made a noise when it was removed. This woman wanted to be able to hear when anyone opened the money can. The garments, if packaged at all, were usually sacked in used grocery sacks when sold.

The clothing at these sales ranged from nearly new to severely worn garments. The original quality appeared to differ greatly, as did the amount of repair needed before the garments could be worn. At the six sales observed, all the clothing and the sizes offered differed greatly from one sale to another. There was not as much variety when clothing from only one family was for sale as there was when several families cooperated.

All but one woman said that they enjoyed having the

sales and would have another sale when they had more garments to sell. The husbands were not interviewed and the women were not asked, but three said that their husbands hated the idea of the sale, so they tried to schedule sales when their husbands were out of town. The fourth woman was a widow. One of the reasons given for the husbands' dislike of the sale was the number of people who try to buy before the sale hours.

There were usually no women waiting to get into a clothesline sale but they used other tactics to try to be the first customer. All women interviewed said that they had at least one woman customer the night before the sale or early (before 7:00 a.m.) the sale day. In one subdivision there had been several sales in the past year. One of the women interviewed stated that she had received a telephone call asking if the caller could come to the sale the night before it opened, because she was to be out of town the next day. The name of the woman having the sale was not in the newspaper advertisement, only her address. It was later learned that a family in the same block whose name started with B had been called earlier and asked the name of the family on their block that was having a sale the next day. In the Ames telephone directory this was the second telephone listed with an address in the same block as the family having the sale. The woman who sponsored the

sale checked with the family whose name was listed first in the telephone directory. They had not been home the evening before, so did not know if there had been any telephone calls. They had received telephone calls on other occasions when other women in the block had held sales. The other women interviewed in other sections of Ames reported a woman had called the night before the sale. They did not know how she could have known their names, because the names were not listed in the newspaper advertisements.

The receipts of sales held by the women interviewed were moderate, varying from \$15.00 to \$45.00 at a single sale, but were greater than the receipts of one church sale and one other organization sale. This might indicate that the total volume of clothesline sales could have a great influence on the total used clothing sales volume in Ames. Further investigation of these sales is recommended.

When interviewed, the women who sponsored the clothesline neighborhood sales were not asked if they were aware that a sale of this type was illegal in Ames. A city ordinance exempts sales from having a license and being regulated by city council if sales or auctions are limited to personal things of an individual and are held for only

one day in each calendar year.¹ A sale sponsored by a group of individuals or any sale that was held for more than one day was therefore illegal. A city official expressed the opinion that this was an ordinance that was not enforceable. It was used only to restrict regularly operating sales which disturbed the peace and quiet of a neighborhood. It was doubtful if many of the ladies who have held clothesline sales realized that they were breaking the law.

A senior sale was held by one sorority in the spring, when the graduating girls no longer needed clothing that was appropriate for campus wear. This sale was advertised by signs on the house bulletin board and announcements were made at dinner and house meetings. This sale was usually held in the basement or general lounge of the house, or in

¹Ames City Council. Municipal code of Ames. Chapter 66. Title 1, Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 15, Subparagraph c. Ames, Iowa, Author. 1956.

Chapter 66-1.1 Auction Sale. "Auction sale" shall mean the offering for sale or selling of new or used personal property to the highest bidder or offering for sale or selling of personal property at a high price and then offering the same at successive lower prices until a buyer is secured. (Ord. 823, 1.1)

Chapter 66-15 (c) "Auction sales by individuals of their own personal property, not subject to renewal, nor contemplated to last more than one day or to occur more often than once in a calendar year and when such auction sales are made with or without the service of a licensed auctioneer. Ord. 823, 15, Ames, Iowa

the room of each girl who was selling her clothing. This sale lasted for a week. The price was set by the owner of the garment. Each girl collected the money for her own garments as they were sold. Most of the customers were sorority members or friends of members.

The clothing sold usually consisted of the garments of the active sorority girls living in the house at the time of the sale. Sometimes any garments left by former members and not claimed within a reasonable length of time were also included in the sale. The money from the sale of these garments was deposited in the house fund.

Sales by sorority alumnae groups were similar to other organization sales and therefore are included in the description of other organization sales. Fraternities in Ames reported no sales or only sales associated with the Campus Chest.

Organization Only one organization in Ames, so far as was known, held used clothing sales for the benefit of the individual club members, rather than the organization. The club held two sales a year in the garage of one of the members. Advertisements in the newspaper and on the radio stated that the organization was sponsoring the sale. The individual members received the money for their own garments that were sold. Each woman priced her own garments. The sales were much the same as any other

clothesline or garage sale except that the club ostensibly sponsored them.

Continuing sales There were no sales of this type observed in Ames at the time of this study.

ESTIMATE OF SALES VOLUME

The total receipts from sales of used clothing reported by the various types of sales held by organizations, including continuing sales, in the year September 1, 1961, to August 31, 1962, in Ames were \$8,186.00. Considering the low prices of used clothing relative to new clothing, this figure of over \$8,000.00 represents a large number of used garments. This did not include the receipts of individuals from clothesline sales. The average receipts per clothesline sale reported by the four women interviewed was from \$21.00 to \$27.00.

For an estimate of total used clothing sales volume in a given geographic area, a count of the number of clothesline sales from the number of advertisements in the classified section of the local newspapers and of advertisements of sales on radio or television exchange programs should be made. Interviews of a random sample of persons sponsoring such sales would give a more satisfactory estimate of the average receipts from these sales. Average receipts multiplied by number of sales could give an estimate of total receipts from this type of sale. This estimate, added to the area total receipts of organization sales, could then be used as an estimate of receipts from used clothing sales in the area. No attempt was made to estimate the total

receipts of clothesline sales, because of limited information gained from this study of that type of sale.

Present methods of keeping records at sales do not include the number of garments sold. It is impossible at this time to estimate the number of used garments sold in Ames without further research. It would be necessary to develop a method of counting the garments without disturbing the sale activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Changes in Procedure

The following changes in procedure are recommended as a result of this study:

1. Although most of the used clothing sales were held in the fall or spring, it would be preferable to start a study of this type in September because there were more sales in the fall. The first sale observed for this research was in March, 1962.
2. It may be that more accurate information was obtained when the sale chairman was interviewed soon after the sale. Therefore it is recommended that interviews be arranged as soon after the sale as possible. Some of the sales reported had been held as much as eight months before the interview.

Sometimes various factors might cause a chairman to over- or underestimate the net profit from her organization's sale. The writer attended a sale that appeared to be the smallest church sale that she had observed. The next week a Textile and Clothing graduate student who was a member of that church, knowing of the study, reported that the chairman had told her that the sale had total receipts of \$15.00. Later, when the chairman was

interviewed, she reported cash receipts of \$40.00. There had been less than a month between the two reports.

3. A file of the entire classified section of each local daily paper would make readily available information about all advertised sales being held in the area. When advertisements only for sales of the type currently under investigation are clipped and filed it is necessary to go to the files maintained by the newspapers to learn other information that may be desired as the study progresses. For example: after a study of church sales, the investigator may want to compare the number of church sales to the number of sales sponsored by social organizations during the same period.

A continuing file of classified sections maintained over a long period of time would also make trends in sales available for study. In the past there may have been a shift of clothesline sales from the married student university housing to other sections of Ames.

4. Investigation of the growth of the local radio show, "Swap Shop," and a thorough study of the growth of the clothesline sales is recommended because there appears to be a positive relationship.

A negative relationship may exist between the radio program's growth and the number of used clothing sales sponsored by organizations.

Changes in Questionnaire

The following changes in the questionnaire are recommended as a result of this study:

1. The ranking of clothing as to ease of selling should be moved to the last place on the questionnaire, to avoid interrupting the interview before all the formal questions have been asked.

Two of the cards used in ranking the clothing according to ease of selling should be changed. Most of the women who sorted the cards commented that there should be more than one card for shoes and more than one card for dresses because there were so many different kinds of shoes and dresses and not all were equally easy to sell. For example, shoes would be on at least four cards for each age and sex group: canvas shoes, leather shoes, winter boots and house slippers. Dresses would be on six cards: formal, maternity, afternoon, sport and house dresses. Dresses larger than size 38 or 40 should be ranked as a separate class because the women frequently mentioned that large

dresses sold better than small sized dresses. These classes of dresses could be further broken down into winter and summer, spring and fall, or tailored and feminine.

Ties for both men and boys could be on one card, since 19 of 25 women rated them the same, for ease of selling.

2. Specific questions which should be added to the questionnaire are:

Were workers paid or volunteers?

How many workers were there at each sale?

How many hours did they work?

On what day or days of the week was the most recent sale held?

What were the hours of the most recent sale?

Were any arrangements made to have donated garments cleaned, pressed or repaired?

These questions were not asked specifically, but frequently this information was volunteered. When they were not included in the interview, the newspaper classified advertisement for the sale usually provided answers about day and time. This would be a check on the accuracy of the interview, if the newspaper advertisement were compared with the chairman's answer.

All women interviewed said that clothing would

sell more easily if clean and ironed or pressed. The questionnaire used did not ask if arrangements were made to press garments that were wrinkled. The few women who were asked this question said that some of the donors pressed the garments they gave but that no general arrangements were made by the sale committee. If pressing makes garments sell better, perhaps future investigators can learn how many managers try to increase their cash receipts by performing this service before the sale. If all garments at a sale were clean and ironed this might also affect the ranking of the cards as to ease of selling. For example, at one sale two white shirts of the same size were priced at 15 cents and 25 cents, respectively. The clean, ironed shirt was priced higher than the clean but unironed shirt. The 15 cent shirt was less worn and appeared to be a better quality of material than the more expensive shirt. When the observer checked about 15 minutes later the ironed shirt had been sold, while the unironed shirt was still unsold.

The effect of the advent of coin operated dry cleaning equipment in the community on the condition of donated garments might also be investigated. One woman interviewed said that her

organization had considered using this method to clean the dresses donated for sale but was not convinced that the garments would sell for a higher price if they were clean.

SUMMARY

Used clothing is one source of clothing for family consumption. Acquisition of used clothing as a gift, exchange or purchase could increase a family's clothing consumption without purchase of new clothing. There had apparently been no research on sales of used clothing, although articles in popular magazines described sales of used high fashion clothing. Information was needed about sales of used clothing before a consumer survey could be planned.

This pilot study was made to describe used clothing sales in Ames, Iowa, from September 1, 1961, through August 31, 1962. Reasons for undertaking this study were: to describe the existing used clothing market, to develop a questionnaire for use in interviewing sale chairmen, and to provide a foundation for further research on the effect of used clothing sales on consumers and retailers.

The first step was to make unstructured observations of sales. The second step consisted of interviews with sale chairmen, a city official and the owner of a consignment shop. Classified sections of the local daily papers were checked to locate sales. Presidents of social, fraternal and service organizations were contacted to learn of any sales sponsored by their groups.

Used clothing sales were classified in two ways:

according to the nature of sponsoring organization and according to whether they were continuing or occasional sales. All the sales in Ames, so far as is known, were sponsored only by women, either working alone, or in organized or informal groups. Organized groups included women from churches, sorority alumnae and service, social or philanthropic organizations.

The reason for used clothing sales was the need of the organization for money, not clothing being available. Among reasons for holding clothesline sales were available clothing, limited storage space and the desire to convert wardrobes to all wash-and-wear type garments. Some clothesline sales were held because the family was moving out of state and did not want to move old clothing. This appeared to be a frequent occurrence in Ames where the population is fairly mobile, where the chief employers include Iowa State University and the headquarters of the state highway commission.

Sales were held throughout the year, with the majority in the spring and fall, usually on Fridays and Saturdays. There seemed to be a trend to more sales by individuals, possibly because of free advertising on radio station KASI "Swap Shop" program, which may in turn have been accompanied by a trend to fewer organization sales.

Women pricing the garments believed they knew how much

the customers would pay for different kinds of garments. Prices were usually based on experience gained from past sales, depending partly on degree of wear and condition of garment, or original purchase price. Clothing was obtained at no cost to the organization; therefore these articles were sold at a price to maximize receipts yet minimize the quantity of left-over merchandise. At clothesline sales clothing was priced to sell. Since prices were based on what the customers were willing to pay, the purchaser was really the one who set prices on used clothing in Ames.

There seemed to be a well informed group of customers who attended these sales regularly. Many chairmen reported seeing the same women customers at sales over several years. "Those people" appeared to know which sales offered the most complete selections at the lowest prices. Thus apparently all sales were in competition with all others.

Although many different organizations and individuals held sales of used clothing, the sales had many characteristics in common. Among these were display practices, labeling of garments, pricing, including price cutting, day of the week and time of year when sales were most frequent, type of advertising, methods of wrapping sold garments and handling of receipts.

Most women who worked at used clothing sales and those who held their own clothesline sales enjoyed the work. They

said they experienced a sense of personal satisfaction in turning unused garments into money, enjoyed helping others, and enjoyed the sale itself. They did not like to price the articles, and reported the sorting and arranging of the merchandise before the sale was hard physical labor. All the women interviewed but one said several times during the interviews how much they enjoyed the whole thing. Perhaps this was the reason why the women were willing to discuss the sales so freely.

[Unsold used garments were disposed of according to a definite pattern: from social organization to church to women's club store to Salvation Army or Good Will in Des Moines.] In conversation with friends we learned that as women are discarding used garments they usually have a club, sorority or other organization to which they give the discards in the best condition. The rest of the items go to a second charity of a more impersonal character. Probably the same women who made this type of decision in their own homes were responsible for disposing of unsold garments at used clothing sales. It is therefore to be expected that they would again follow the same pattern of disposal. [Occasionally sale workers separated out garments in good condition to be sent to overseas or to domestic mission fields rather than to be sold in Ames.] Some organizations which did not sell used clothing reported that they collected it for

domestic or overseas missions.

[Of the 12 active sorority groups contacted for this study, each of three houses held one sale within the year.] The 12 sorority alumnae organizations held five sales, sponsored by four groups. Of the 96 social, fraternal and service organizations contacted, 13 held 19 sales in the year of the study. Seven of the 31 Ames churches held 12 sales. This made a total of 39 sales sponsored by organizations contacted in this research.

The total receipts reported by the different types of sales held by organizations in the year September 1, 1961, to August 31, 1962, in Ames was \$8,186.00. This did not include the receipts of individuals from clothesline sales. It is impossible at this time to estimate the receipts from this type of individual sale.

No count of actual number of garments sold was included in this study. A method will have to be developed to count the garments sold without disturbing the sale activities. It was recommended that clothesline sales be studied in detail.

The information gained from this study, while not complete, is believed to provide a basis for a consumer survey which would contribute to a more complete understanding of the used clothing sales in Ames.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire I:

T&C 4-18-62 MM

- Date _____
- Name of person interviewed _____ Title _____
1. What is the name of your organization? _____
 2. What do you call your sales? _____
 3. How many sales did you have this year? _____
 4. Where was your most recent sale held? _____
 5. Would you say your customers were:

members only	mostly members	members and outsiders	mostly outsiders only
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 6. How did you let people know about your last sale? For how many days or times?

Newspapers	Radio	Signs	Posters	Other
------------	-------	-------	---------	-------
 7. _____
 8. Where did you get the clothes that you sold? _____
 9. Did the people bring them in or do you have a way to collect them? _____
 10. _____
 11. Did you give income tax deduction receipts for clothing donated to your sale? Yes No
 12. How did you decide on prices? _____
 13. On your last sale how much did you make from the sale of clothing? \$ _____
 14. Did you have any clothing left over at the end of the sale? Yes No
 15. What did you do with it? _____
 16. Does your group collect clothing for any reason other than for rummage sales? Yes No
 17. If yes, for what reason? _____

Questionnaire II:

T&C 4-18-62 MM

Date: _____

1. What is the name of your organization? _____
2. What do you call your sales? _____
3. About how many years has your organization been having rummage sales?

1	2-5	6-10	11-15	More than 15
---	-----	------	-------	--------------
4. How many of these sales have you had since a year ago this time? _____
5. Within the last year in what months did you hold sales?
(Circle months)

Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June
July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
6. When was your most recent sale? (X month in above list)
7. For how many days did your most recent sale run? _____
8. Any evenings? _____
9. Where was your most recent sale held? _____
10. How did you let people know about your last sale? How many days or times did it run?

Newspapers	Radio	Signs	Posters	Other
D.Ad	Other			_____
11. _____
12. Would you say that in terms of cash receipts of this sale when compared to other sales that you have had this year, that this most recent one did

more business	less business
about the same amount of business as other sales	
13. Who donated the most clothing for you to sell?

Private families	merchants	Others
members	non-members	members non-members
14. Did the people who donated clothing bring it to a central spot? Yes No
15. Did your organization make arrangements to collect it?

Yes	No
-----	----

16. What proportion was collected (brought)
the day of the sale? _____
the day before the sale? _____
a week before the sale? _____
any time throughout the year? _____
17. Did you put everything that you have collected out for
sale at the beginning of the sale?
Yes No _____
18. Do you put out additional items during the sale?
Yes No _____
19. Did you give any income tax deduction receipts for the
clothing donated?
Yes No Asked question _____
20. Did you buy any new items to sell? Yes No
21. Explain: _____

22. How did you decide on prices?

23. Do you keep the same prices throughout the sale?
Yes No
24. What categories of clothing sell best? (Rank order of
cards) Please place these cards into the envelope that
is marked with the phase that best describes the way
the items sell at your sales.
25. Would you say the people that buy at your sales are
members mostly members and mostly outsiders
only members outsiders outsiders only
26. Please estimate the total receipts from clothing in
your last sale. As I said before, this information
will be confidential.
\$ _____
27. Did you have any clothing left over at the end of the
sale? Yes No

- 28. What did you do with it? _____
- 29. Are there any other organizations whose sales cut down on your amount of business?
Yes No
- 30. Who or what are they? _____
- 31. Do you sell used clothing at any other time than the regular sale day (s)?
Yes No
- 32. If yes, please explain. _____
- 33. Do other organizations ever hold sales in your church?
Yes No
- 34. If yes, please explain. _____

Person interviewed - Name _____
Title _____

Questionnaire for Ames Retail Stores,
Dry Cleaners and Shoe Repair Shops:

1. Within the last year, September 1, 1961 to August 31, 1962, has your store given any clothing (shoes) to any Ames group or organization for them to sell or give away?
2. So far as you know have you sold any such merchandise for resale by a group or organization in Ames?
3. What organization (or group)?
4. Approximately when?
5. Are you a member of the organization?
6. Is any member of your family a member?
7. What kind of clothing? Shoes?
8. Remarks

Clothing to be ranked by Chairmen of Sales:

Infant's Clothing

Diapers
 Dresses, shirts, sacque sets, slips, rompers, diaper sets
 Outerwear: blankets, buntings, carriage robes
 Overalls, coveralls
 Shoes, booties
 Sleeping garments: P.J.'s, sleepers, gowns, nightgowns, wrappers, kimonos
 Socks, all lengths

Boy's Clothing

Coats: overcoats, topcoats, trench coats
 Hats, all types
 Jackets, all types shorter than 3/4 length coat
 Shirts, all types of outerwear shirts, not underwear type shirt
 Shoes, canvas and other; boots, rubber and other
 Slacks, pants, trousers, bluejeans
 Suits, matching coat and trousers
 Sweaters, all types, all fabrics
 Ties, all types
 Undergarments: shorts, briefs, shirts

Girl's Clothing

Blouses, shirts
 Coats: full length, 3/4 length; spring, fall and winter
 Dresses, all types
 Hats, all seasons, all types
 Jackets, all types, all fabrics
 Lingerie: slips, petticoats, panties
 Purses, pocketbooks, handbags
 Shoes: canvas shoes, all other shoes; boots, houseslippers
 Skirts, winter and summer
 Suits, jacket and skirt, matched or coordinated
 Sweaters, all types, all fabrics

Men's Clothing

Coats: overcoats, topcoats, trench coats
 Hats, all types
 Jackets, all types shorter than 3/4 length coat
 Shirts, all types of outerwear shirts, not underwear
 type shirt
 Shoes, canvas and other; boots, rubber and other
 Slacks, pants, trousers, bluejeans
 Suits, matching coat and trousers
 Sweaters, all types, all fabrics
 Ties, all types
 Undergarments, shorts, briefs, shirts

Women's Clothing

Blouses, shirts
 Coats: full length, 3/4 length; spring, fall and
 winter
 Dresses, all types
 Gloves and scarves
 Hats, all seasons, all types
 Jackets, all types, all fabrics
 Jewelry
 Lingerie: bras, girdles, slips, petticoats, panties
 Purses, pocketbooks, handbags
 Shoes: canvas shoes, all other shoes, boots,
 houseslippers
 Skirts, winter and summer
 Suits, jacket and skirt, matched or coordinated
 Sweaters, all types, all fabrics

Double post card mailed to presidents of fraternities who did not live in Ames:

Textiles & Clothing
Department
Iowa State University
(Date)

Dear Mr. _____ :

We are doing a study on the used clothing market in Ames during the year September 1, 1961 to August 31, 1962.

Has your alumni group of _____ fraternity held any kind of sale or auction of used clothing in Ames during this period? Please check the appropriate box on the attached card and return it to me. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Research Graduate Assistant

Date _____

We did not have, and are not planning, a used clothing sale in Ames between September 1, 1961 and August 31, 1962.

We had (or will have) a sale of used clothing in _____ on _____.
(town) (date)

Remarks:

Name

Title

Fraternity