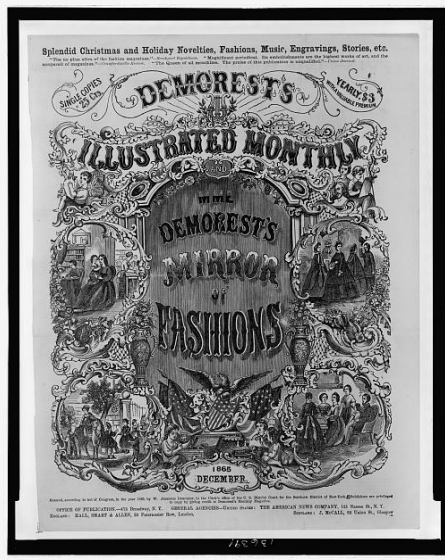




June 2019 Her Story ENewsletter Fashion and Dressmaking

Until the mid-1800s, people were not able to purchase clothing commercially or in sizes to fit them. Maternity clothing would not be commercially available until the early 1900s. Two women who contributed enormously to advances in dressmaking and clothing are Ellen Curtis Demorest and Lena Bryant. Let's learn more about these two groundbreaking fashionistas.



Demorest

Ellen Curtis Demorest is widely credited for being the first woman to create paper patterns for making clothing. She worked in a millinery shop after completing her schooling. Demorest's concept of producing accurate paper patterns for home dressmaking became a reality in 1860, when she opened Madame Demorest's Emporium of Fashions on Broadway in New York City.

At the same time, her husband began publishing Mme. Demorest's Mirror of Fashions which included a pattern stapled to each copy. These patterns were also distributed separately from the magazine. In their best year (1876), three million patterns were sold. A mail order business was also established and Madame Demorest developed complementary products. She employed many women (both black and white) and paid them all equally. It was most unfortunate that she did not patent her ideas and so the business declined, as others (including the familiar name: Butterick) copied the idea of paper patterns for home sewing.

STOUT WOMEN
 Slenderizing Fashions
 THRILLING NEW
Style Book
FREE

Lane Bryant INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

OUTSMART nature!
 Look slimmer, lovelier,
 and smarter! **FREE**
 Style Book shows
 hundreds of fashions in
 your size, all designed
 to slender your figure.

This lovely cotton
 gabardine twill Slack
 Set is \$2.98; the Coat-
 Dress of Printed Spun
 All-Rayon is \$3.98.
 Many others, \$1.98 to
 \$16.95. Also coats,
 suits, hosiery, hats,
 shoes, underwear—
 all at very low prices.
 Style Book sent **FREE**.

Lane Bryant
 DEPT. 32 752 E. MARKET STREET
 INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

LANE BRYANT, Department 32
 752 East Market Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.
 Please mail me free Style Book for stout women.

Name

Address

Town State

If you wish to receive also our Style Book
 for Expectant Mothers, please check here

Lane Bryant

In 1904, dressmaker and seamstress Lena Bryant Malsin's name was misspelled as "Lane" on her bank loan application. Thus, Lane Bryant was born. She wanted money to open a retail clothing store in New York City that would sell clothing reflecting her novel idea: commercially manufactured maternity clothes! Newspapers were unwilling to carry advertisements for maternity clothes, as the newspapers considered them lewd, so Bryant set up a mail order catalog business. Women customers also liked the idea of catalog purchases as it afforded them privacy; no one knew what they bought. By 1950, the Lane Bryant Company was the sixth largest mail order catalog in the U.S. A retail genius, Bryant then observed the dearth of clothing for what at the time were called "stout" women.

Bryant measured 4,500 women who came into her store and gathered data on 200,000 others. With this information, she determined that there were three general body styles of so-called stout women and she designed clothing for each of these types. Today, the Lane Bryant chain of stores is a leader in the fashion industry for the population segment now called full-figured women. Bryant was a philanthropist as well as an entrepreneur and retail giant. She worked with the Red Cross after disasters and gathered clothing for displaced persons after World War II. Bryant was one of the first in her industry to offer employees benefits including profit sharing, pension, disability insurance, as well as life and health insurance.

Ellen Curtis Demorest and Lena Bryant Malsin are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us. Continue to help us tell women's stories!

STAY CONNECTED:

