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Home Economics Evolution from Tents

Rosemae Johnson
Iowa State College

Peggy Schenk
Iowa State College

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HOME economics is not yet four decades old, but home training of women, birthday when homes were tents, and it passed from teacher to pupil in the most exclusive of schools. The students were as many as the daughters in a family; the counselor, instructor, and dean of girls were all one—the mother.

Orientation courses were given at a kindergarten age. A cross-stitch sampler was applied art, and a thinly-peeled potato contributed to someone's nutrition, while an excess of proctor marks meant, not the loss of a week-end privilege, but an assortment of slipper strokes where they did the most good.

More advanced instruction came when ancient egos, economists and Scabbard-and-Blade men were successful enough to free their daughters and wive from menial tasks and to hire maidservants. Now as someone has said, before that time or since, "Man must eat—and eat well." So little potential cooks went to school, the better to find their ways to wealthy gourmets' hearts and purses.

The servants' schools were no less difficult and disciplined than were the strictest homes, yet they represented the peak of domestic tutelage until the nineteenth century. As late as 1872 Mrs. Mary B. Welch, gracious and capable wife of the college president, was asked to formulate a homemaking course for women. Devoted to her task, she traveled widely, gleaning from other schools methods of teaching for Iowa State. It was during these investigations that the cultured lady amazed Londoners by attending the plebian Kensington School.

Now the curriculum included science. For four years lectures to junior girls, given in the two basement rooms of Old Main, comprised the entire course. Then an experimental kitchen was provided, and with it came new lectures in house furnishings, care of sick and children, management of help, clothing and domestic chemistry.

In 1879 the sophomores were washing and ironing two afternoons a week. Soon they were learning to operate those new contraptions, Wheeler, Wilson and Singer sewing machines. An experienced dressmaker was teaching the art of cutting and fitting dresses. By now girls were so crowded in the earliest quarters that the department was moved to South Hall, then south of the Campanile.

Each of the department's professors gave it new strength. Miss Emma P. Ewing, nationally famous for helping southern women learn to cook after the slaves were freed, lengthened the term of home education from two to four years. She also instituted the post graduate course, gaining for home economics the first recognition of its appropriateness for post graduate work. Two women received degrees of Master of Domestic Economy in 1886.

The department under Miss Mary Sabin, 1900-1903, consisted of a straight general and domestic science course. Miss Sabin had at her disposal three assistants and six classrooms and laboratories. It was in 1904 that the first women graduated from the college .

(Turn to page 14)
Let a Centerpiece of Flowers or Fruit Make Your Table Sparkle

A HOSTESS is known by the table she sets and at this time of year particularly, decorations are needed to brighten up and to enhance the winter dinner table.

Many times a clever centerpiece or fresh flowers add the necessary sparkle to meals that temperamental and jaded appetites need.

For a centerpiece that is refreshing and fragrant, try a low, large bowl of several narcissus bulbs burst into full bloom. The bowl may be shiny, dull dark blue or black to contrast properly with the delicate green and white of the plants and white table linen.

A gay assortment of fruit or colorful vegetables will invite favorable comment from all members of your table. Wooden bowls set off the colors used in the arrangement and add a natural touch. Copper and silver furnish the brightness and the neutral tone for many color schemes and can be used very successfully with highly colored fruits and vegetables.

For a table long enough to carry two arrangements two low cream or copper bowls may be heaped high with delicious fruit and vegetables, with a pineapple topping one, which is surrounded by apples, a cluster of bananas, yellow tomatoes, and a green avocado, and a cluster of green grapes on the other, born by red-violet onions and various reds and oranges worked in to give the warm color.

For more sophisticated dinners, can practice teachers made their treks to Story County schools. Beat egg whites slightly, and add cream of tartar and salt. Continue to beat until stiff. Sift sugar and flour each five times, and sift and fold carefully into beaten egg whites using whisk, first the sugar and then the flour. Add flavoring. Bake in angel tin for one hour in slow oven. (325° F.) Invert on cake cooler until cold.

Spread with seven minute frosting and decorate with candy hearts on sides and top, and that chubby little cupid doll.

Cupid Angel Cake

12 egg whites
1/3 c. granulated sugar
1 t. cream of tartar
1 t. flavoring

Add 1/4 c. sugar, and salt to milk. When lukewarm, add dissolved yeast, egg white, and flour. Knead. Roll one-fourth inch thick, cut strips three-fourths inch wide, and braid.

No menu for Valentine's Day would be complete without strawberries—those delicious frozen ones you can purchase at your grocers. Make sure they're firm.

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For more sophisticated dinners, centered on the newly hailed science, other departments are: Applied Art, Child Development, Foods and Nutrition, Household Equipment, Home Management, Institution Management, Physical Education, Textiles and Clothing and Home Economics Education.

The beautiful and well equipped building which now houses the division was erected in 1936. It is staffed by 13 professors, 19 associate and assistant professors, 18 instructors and five graduate assistants.

Enrolled in the division for the fall quarter of 1935 were 190 students. But changing giddy freshmen into skilled senior technicians is not the only activity of modern home economics. Although at the turn of the century every land-grant college in the North and West boasted a department for the newly hailed science, other forces were at work for the improvement of homemaking.

Cooking and sewing classes of the Y. W. C. A. and of churches, the Kitchen Garden Movement, the scientific exhibits and congresses of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, the National Home Economics Association, the food demonstrations of the Rumford Kitchen, the studies and publications of the United States Department of Agriculture and the leadership of Mrs. Ellen H. Richards in the Lake Placid Conference all helped to bring realization that the home, as the basic and one of the most important influences in the nation's life, is deserving of all the enthusiasm, energy and artistry woman can give it.