

1937

We Become Independent Homemakers

Ruth Sawin
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker>



Part of the [Home Economics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sawin, Ruth (1937) "We Become Independent Homemakers," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 17 : No. 5 , Article 3.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol17/iss5/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *The Iowa Homemaker* by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

We Become Independent Homemakers

by Ruth Sawin



Boldly inquiring into the more personal affairs of Iowa State Home Economics students, the Homemaker distributed a questionnaire to 120 women. Purpose was to determine what this representative group believed to be the practical value of their home economics training, their enjoyment or financial returns from it. The results are significant.

HOME ECONOMICS means something more to women students at Iowa State College than a technical, scientific course to take for four college years. They sincerely say that they have come to appreciate homemaking as an art.

Even the freshmen, enrolled for only 7 weeks, stated that their courses had given them enjoyment and a greater appreciation of homemaking.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections: What do you do for yourself? What do you do for your family? What do you do with your time? How has home economics training brought financial returns? And how has your home economics brought you enjoyment?

Women in five different groups answered the questionnaire. A surprisingly slight difference was found in the answers. Freshmen in dormitories, upperclassmen in dormitories, women in cooperative dormitories, sorority women, and town girls all showed that they are independent and well able to do things for themselves and their families.

For themselves, 97 out of 120 women choose fabrics for their own clothes. The rest indicated that they assist in the selection. Only 77 of them make their own clothes but the other 43 assist in it. Designing of their own formals, suits and dresses is done by 55 of 120 women. Thirty-three of these women designed clothes before they had taken college courses in it. After their Textiles and Clothing courses, 29 changed their methods.

Over 75 percent do their own laundering and ironing, but over 25 percent do not particularly enjoy it, nor have

they changed to different methods since college.

Planning the color scheme and furnishings for their rooms is the hobby of 106 women. Only 10 of them have not changed to better methods since college.

Although 20 women do not enjoy it, 109 shampoo their own hair instead of relying on beauty parlors. Individuality shows itself in 97 of them who experiment with hair styles suited to their personalities. One hundred and ten women manicure their own nails and enjoy it.

Finances, that all-important part of college, are handled through checking accounts in their own names by 93 women. It brings them satisfaction and a greater feeling of independence and self-reliance. An allowance direct from the parents is the method of handling funds devised by the other women. Even before college the majority of them handled some money independently and since college have learned to do it more wisely.

Under the heading "What do you do for your family," the answers to the questions revealed that while they are at home in the summer, over half of the 120 women assist or have complete charge of various household tasks.

Town girls indicated the least amount of work at home, this probably due to the fact that they are always at home and in the summer their enthusiasm wanes instead of growing.

Nearly half of the group plan menus regularly and are sometimes in complete charge. The remainder assist occasionally. Over half of the women actually prepare meals or assist in their preparation. Coinciding with this, 66 shop for family groceries. Forty reported that as a result of college training they had been able to buy more economically.

Washing dishes, popularized as a disagreeable task, does not seem that way at all to 69 of the 94 women who did it regularly at home. No new methods for washing dishes had been adopted from college, however. They must have had thorough instruction before.

The house cleaning problem is tackled

by 94 women, and again 69 of them relish the opportunity of getting into an old smock and going to it.

Family laundering and ironing is assisted by 54 women, but only about 13 of them have complete charge.

One-third of the women assist in planning the family budget, and they intimated that the college training has enabled them to help in keeping the ledger on the blue side.

Where there are younger children, 50 of the women care for them, and 32 of them make clothes for younger children.

"What do you do with your time?" The third group of questions revealed interesting and diversified hobbies. Applied art hobbies are pastimes for 57 women. Trade magazines such as "Printer's Ink" and others are read by 65. National women's magazines are enjoyed by more—91 women.

Knitting, that ever popular indoor sport, keeps 63 women occupied in their spare time. Over two-thirds of the question-answers enjoy getting out into the kitchen and doing a bit of frivolous cooking just for fun.

Collecting glassware, silverware, and linens, possibly for their homes-to-be, interests some of the girls. An unusual hobby of repairing electrical equipment is both fun and practical to several women.

Old standby hobbies such as needlework, crocheting, making clothes, and reclaiming old home furnishings are dear to the hearts of many Iowa State home economists.

Several enterprising journalists have already turned their home economics training into financial gain by writing articles for national women's magazines. Another undergraduate has done commercial designing and made metal work. Several women have worked as waitress in summer resorts for both financial gain and personal experience.

In the minority there were two women questioned who stated that they had found no enjoyment in home economics and one of them cryptically stated, "it's only brought me grief!"