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Letters from Sumatra and Alaska

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Letters from

Sumatra and Alaska

Two Iowa State graduates have used their home economics training in the North and Far East

FROM Sumatra and Alaska come reports of two Iowa State graduates, Elizabeth Roost Schoene, '39, and Henrietta Hohberger Sogaard, '35, who write letters describing the intricacies of homemaking and food preparation in their new lands.

From the Far East Mrs. Schoene writes, "Sumatra is the largest island in the Indies and has the mildest climate. It is humid here at noon, yet we sleep under blankets at night. The scenery is gorgeous. The Bataks, our most different natives, are very brazen, ugly in disposition and appearance. The women still file their teeth to the bone.

"Our Japanese house servants are mild and as quick as lightning. They plan a medicine cabinet from a plank I couldn't use for a hot pad. In the villages the Chinese interest me most. You could imagine them as coolies but they run all the shops. American canned goods are on sale for three times the price at home. Also English, Australian and Dutch products are on the shelves.

"Hodge-podge baskets of native vegetables, gunnies of rice or beans strown on the floor, smoked ducks' feet, an aged duck or turkey, a basket of 60 year old eggs dangling from the rafters of the ceiling, become familiar sights. Best of all is a dirty sly looking Chink behind a rickety counter anxiously fingering his accounting beads with one intention—to outsmart you!

"Since we learned enough Malay, I took a common baboe and have trained her to be a cook. Although she can neither read nor write she prepares a crock of brown beans (made with native Gaela Java from a tree which when melted tastes like molasses) that would make a Bostoner globe-trot!

"Besides our favorite American dishes she appeases her hunger with Nasi Gaering (fried rice and bits of meat and chopped vegetables) or a Balne (fried home made noodles, chicken and native vegetables). Somehow she learned to make Chinese chop suey (pronounce sye) that is our favorite.

"The Rice Toffels here are a Sunday noon festivity and the older people take pride in presenting the unusual. Sixteen of us were seated at a long table recently set with forty-two bowls of spiced vegetables to say nothing of the rice curried chicken, tenderloin steaks from Limboe, barbecued pork on bamboo sticks, which seven Japanese boys were passing.

"My home economics training has proved useful to the nth degree—everything from thinking of our dietary standards to advising pregnant American women how many calcium pills should be taken. We have an excellent surgeon and free hospital care but neither he nor the nurse believes in diet. I teach swimming and last but not least Budget the Balance."

"Will you have a cup of coffee?" begins Mrs. Sogaard. "If you drink your coffee black or with sugar only you will not realize that you are in Juneau, Alaska. But if you like cream in your coffee, you may be disappointed at having to use evaporated milk in place of cream. Of course, if you want to pay 60 cents a pint you may have it.

"Juneau is the capital city of Alaska. It is a progressive little city of 7,000 people, the largest population center of the territory. I have been told that food prices are lower in Juneau than in cities farther south due to greater competition. Thus, it is evident that factors enter into the food prices other than the item of freight as is the common supposition.

"Freight rates are high and peculiar in that the rate depends upon whether the freight company makes the most by weight or bulk. Hence, cereals are high because they are bulky. The manager of a local chain store told me that Alaskans could not buy foodstuffs at the same wholesale prices as in the states. I suppose the old idea of Alaska with its gold mines still holds that Alaskans are wealthy!

"We in Southeastern Alaska are fortunate in having fresh vegetables all the year around. Frozen fruits and vegetables are also available at 20 cents per pound package.

"Alaskans seem to serve the same menus as the people in the United States. You soon learn to accept the higher food prices as a part of the higher cost of living there."

Mademoiselle and Vogue Fashions at Tilden's

The military influence is strongly felt in the new spring styles. Nautical themes are important. Covert, and Cavalry twill will be seen on campus and in city clothes. Tilden's in cooperation with stylists of national repute interprets the mode in terms of what is wearable and offers most value to the junior miss on a budget.

TILDEN'S
Collegiate Headquarters
Downtown

March, 1941