A Review of Progress

The Iowa Homemaker

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A Review Of Progress

BEHIND the bright future planned for the Division of Home Economics at Iowa State is an eventful past.

A pioneer in the home economics movement was Mrs. Mary B. Welch, who founded the program called Domestic Economy at Iowa State in 1872. Her course consisted of housekeeping lectures to juniors. The lectures were held in Old Main, the first building on the campus. Because there were no laboratories, the women received practical experience by a rotation service of 2½ hours daily in the dining room, kitchen, bakery or laundry of the college buildings.

From these humble beginnings the Division of Home Economics has become the largest one in the country. All departments of the Division now offer work toward the master of science degree and the Department of Foods and Nutrition carries students to the doctor's level.

Teaching and research done in the Division have resulted in recipe files, manuals, textbooks, miscellaneous books and approximately 250 papers reporting completed research work. The textbooks are used at Iowa State and throughout the United States and Canada. Faculty members have held important offices in home economics professional organizations and have served on many state and national committees. Many are actively engaged in war work.

In the fall of 1914, Dean P. Mabel Nelson became the fourth dean of the Division of Home Economics. Dean Nelson, who came to Iowa State in 1923, is the former head of the Department of Foods and Nutrition. As the new dean of the Division of Home Economics, Dr. Nelson is acutely aware of the strain of the present times and is anxious to give her students the kind of training which will help them learn how to live in the challenging years ahead.

Plans are being made for the expansion of the well-equipped laboratories and classrooms of the present Home Economics Building.

A FAR cry from this—but still foremost in its field—was the kitchen provided in Old Main in 1886. Probably the first laboratory of its kind equipped by any college, it was 12 by 15 feet in size and had one window. Meal planning and institution management originated in that laboratory where freshman women prepared part of the noon meal which was served in the dining hall to students and faculty members.

Widespread interest in home economics education for high school students encouraged the training of home economics teachers which began in 1900. At that time rooms in North Hall, sewing rooms, dining rooms, a kitchen laboratory and an instructor's office in Margaret Hall were used for the home economics courses.

By 1911 the department had grown to such proportions that it required a building of its own. This new building, the west wing of the present Home Economics Building, was a fireproof steel structure finished in red pressed brick which was later replaced by a veneer of white granite. On the first floor were offices, classrooms and clothing laboratories. The second floor consisted of food and art laboratories, two dining rooms and a reception room.

Along with the new building came a new head of the department, Miss Catherine MacKay. When the Department became a Division in 1913, Miss MacKay was appointed dean and she retained that position until her death in 1921. In 1918 there was an enrollment of 321 students and a staff of seven instructors. Most of the staff members had attended cooking schools and some had a liberal arts education.

DURING Dean MacKay's administration the first of the practice houses, now known as home management houses, was started. Located in downtown Ames, it was home for a nine-day period to each student. The women went back and forth to the campus for classes. Under the leadership of Dean MacKay the home economics enrollment increased to 679 students and 108 faculty members.

Miss Anna Richardson followed Miss MacKay as the second dean of Home Economics and the Division continued to grow in enrollment and building facilities. Plans were made for the present building, which was built of white stone to fit in with other buildings on the campus.

In 1924, the nursery school was opened. After being housed in a temporary frame building the first year, it was moved into its present building.

Miss Genevieve Fisher, who had been a member of the Home Economics Education faculty from 1914 to 1919, returned to the Division as dean following Miss Richardson's period of service. Development of strong coordination between resident teaching, research and extension work was one of the phases of steady growth under Dean Fisher's administration.

THE work of the Division was organized into eight technical departments by 1930: Applied Art, Child Development, Foods and Nutrition, Institution Management, Textiles and Clothing, Home Management, Home Economics Education and Household Equipment. Four of the six home management houses had been purchased by the Division by 1930.

From the turn of the century to World War I, all graduates of the Division of Home Economics were prepared for teaching by student teaching in the Ames Public Schools. In 1919 the first rural training center was started and now there are student teaching centers in four other Iowa towns.

The Department of Women's Physical Education was incorporated into the Division of Home Economics in 1915. At the opening of winter quarter, 1941, it moved into its modern-equipped building. This department serves young women of the college through scheduled classes and a successful intramural sports program.

Chapters in two national home economics honor societies, Omicron Nu and Phi Upsilon Omicron, were established in 1913 and 1926, respectively. A chapter of Delta Phi Delta, national professional applied art society, was installed at Iowa State in 1928.