

1945

Veteran's Wife Assumes Role as College Student and Homemaker

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Veteran's Wife



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WOLF'S



Taking time out from his studies, Dick samples a piece of cake which Elaine has baked after a full day of classes and studying

HOME economics doesn't end with the day's last class period for Mrs. Richard I. Browning. Cooking, laundering, house-cleaning—these just begin at 4 o'clock for the dark-haired wife of a discharged aerial gunner, who is now an aeronautical engineering student at Iowa State.

Elaine and Dick were married three years ago, and a year later Dick was discharged from the navy due to a back injury. They registered at Iowa State together for fall quarter, 1944, she as a freshman and he a transfer student under the Veterans' Rehabilitation Act.

"All my home economics courses seem to help, especially interior house design and household equipment," she says. "Naturally we both realize now, more than ever, the importance of an education, and Dick sometimes studies his chemistry, physics or calculus until after three." Although Elaine has yet to take her first foods courses, she gets practical experience three times a day in the tiny kitchenette of their three room apartment.

When the Brownings came to Ames, they arranged for their first apartment through the off-campus housing service directed by Mrs. Harriet Stange. After five months on a waiting list they moved into a second

Assumes Role

As College Student and Homemaker

apartment. The building, modern and light, is rented to eight ex-G.I.'s and their wives now attending Iowa State. "We feel lucky to be living here," Elaine smiles, "and are planning to stay until 1947, when we'll both receive our diplomas." Dick has a promise for a job waiting for him when he graduates.

Cooperation between the eight wives plays an important part in this building. "Two of the couples had a garden this past summer. At nights different women together canned everything that was cannable. It was my first experience at canning," Elaine laughs, "but now we have tomatoes, beets, relish and more foods stored in our storeroom down in the basement." Each apartment has its own fruit-cellar.

Because of Dick's injury, the Brownings receive a \$28 pension in addition to the usual \$75 per month. "However, if we weren't getting help from both my family and Dick's father, we could never make it," Elaine says. The \$37.50 monthly rent includes fuel, water, gas and laundry privileges. Food bills without luxuries total \$30 or \$35 each month, which would leave no more than \$30 for the couple's other needs.

Neither Dick nor Elaine have outside jobs now, although last year Elaine made corsages for an Ames florist. She helps the same firm now when they need assistance.

When Friday afternoon rolls around Elaine completely drops her role as a college student to attack the laundry and housework. "I try to dust and sweep every other night, but since I have no Friday afternoon classes, I really hustle then." This is her first experience

as family laundress, and she admits she is a novice at ironing men's shirts.

Interested in art, Elaine says that the freshman textiles and clothing course was a big help to her in selecting drapery material and carpets. Planning color schemes is made much more enjoyable because of her course in interior decoration.

A stunning modern birdseye maple tea table and corner bookcase were made by Dick in the woodwork class at Iowa State.

Studying is the number one job in the Browning household. Sometimes Dick's friends come to study at the apartment, where it is always quiet. Then Elaine finds herself studying at the library, or at one of the women's residence halls. "We've only been in one class together, and we never help each other with school work or study together. It seems better to do it alone."

Although Dick doesn't help with the meals or dishes, he and Elaine take turns doing the marketing.

Married life in no way hampers social life, Elaine believes. The Brownings attend almost every college dance, play bridge and drink cokes in the Union Grill, and double with both single and married couples. "We'd rather double with married couples, especially on picnics," she smiled, "otherwise, we find that Dick and I are the ones delegated to make the fire and cook the food."

With surveys indicating that 60 percent of the GI's planing to return to college are married, more and more couples like the Brownings are expected soon to be registering at Iowa State.—*Jean Larson*

Christmas Notes

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