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JAnE Gibson
Iowa State College

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Checkerboard

By Jane Gibson, H. Ec. 4

Summer

I WAS ONE of the 47 home economics seniors from as many different states and foreign countries who spent a month together this summer on the Danforth Summer Fellowship. We stayed the first two weeks in St. Louis, Mo., visiting various businesses associated with home economics. The last two weeks were spent at Camp Miniwanca, on the shores of Lake Michigan.

Since 1936 the Ralston Purina Company has offered the fellowship to give young women about to be graduated an insight into the business world and help in adjustment to jobs after graduation. A similar program for the agricultural students of each state has been offered for an even longer period of time.

Checkerboard Symbol

The checkerboard, symbol of the Ralston Purina Company, holds a new and special meaning after the month. In the early days of the company, William Danforth wanted a symbol that would be easily recognized yet be symbolic of the spirit of the company. As he traveled up and down the Missis-

sippi River selling the feeds that he had mixed in his St. Louis levee sales house, he came to know a large family in one of the towns. The mother periodically purchased bolts of bright checkerboard fabric and made identically-styled garments for the entire stair-stepped group. This checkerboard was easily recognized, and applied to the four-square philosophy of Mr. Danforth—stand tall, think tall, smile tall, live tall, representing the physical, mental, social and religious aspects of one's life, which have to be in balance for a successful life experience.

Our group had a month of close association with truly outstanding girls from all over the nation and foreign countries. The theme song of the "Danny Girls," which rang out often as we went from place to place, puts into words much of the spirit of the Fellowship. Throughout the busy schedule of touring and learning, each day the realization of the tremendous opportunity being offered to us became more deeply interwoven into the group. The challenge to live up to our individual capabilities became clearer.

There are many tangible experiences that can be recounted on paper to share with you the activities of our group.

Representatives Elected

Selection is made in the spring of the Home Ec. senior to represent our school and our state. At the same time a home economics sophomore is selected to attend the camp session only. Both are enriching experiences, which give you insights never to be gotten in any other way.

Danforth Daddy

Our "Danforth Daddy" was Mr. Earl A. Sindecuse, who developed and has been in charge of the program since its founding. "O. K. girls, follow me," he would say each time we embarked upon another unknown adventure. Sindy kept the plans for the day a secret until the time came for them to actually take place. He was to us a source of never-ceasing enthusiasm. He was the only man who could keep a secret, escort 47 girls at a time, and remain calm and cool when the unsuspected occurred.

The first two days of the Fellowship, starting July 15, were spent at the Purina Research farm at Gray Summit, Missouri, 43 miles southwest of St. Louis. Here Purina carries out a thorough testing program on their Chows before they are offered for sale to the customers. Better than twelve thousand visitors now come each year to the Purina Research Farm to look over the feeding experiments and management practices that are conducted on all kinds of commercial livestock and poultry.

Throughout the following days in St. Louis, we were taken all over the Ralston Purina Company headquarters and shown many sides of the business. Research laboratories are maintained where extensive chemical studies on new products are conducted.

But there were many visits to other business places in home economics. Early one morning we went to the wholesale fruit auction, where buyers came to purchase for the wholesale houses. The babble of the auctioneer and bidding lasted about an hour. When we arrived at the large city produce market, fresh fruits had already come from the auction. We learned that part of the produce comes from the auction sales and part from direct purchase by wholesalers.

Danny Girls

During recreation times the Danny girls saw the lighter side of St. Louis. One night we went out to the ball park to watch the St. Louis Cardinals take on the Chicago Cubs in a National League game. The peanut salesman must have been delighted with the sale of 47 bags of peanuts that evening. We attended the St. Louis Municipal Opera twice for performances of "Fanny" and "Li'll Abner." Each summer a series of outstanding musicals is presented on the outdoor stage of the opera. We also went to the St. Louis zoo, third largest in the United States and the city Art Museum.

One day we visited Stix, Baer & Fuller Department store and heard from members of their staff about careers in fashions, home furnishings and restaurant management. We toured the facilities of the store and shops at the close. That same

day we visited Welek's Fabrics, from which many of us regularly order fabrics for clothing projects.

The next day we spent at the Barnes Hospital, the medical center begun in 1892 which now has 935 bed capacity, one of the largest US private centers. From the very beginning it was established for the sick and injured without distinction of creed. The center cooperates with the Washington U Medical School, having the medical students administer to the ward patients as part of their study. Separate hospitals are set up for eye, ear, nose, throat; maternity; skin and cancer; psychiatry; and children's care. Extensive rehabilitation facilities are available for physical medicine, to help with the psychological aspect of healing the sick.

Miniwanca

At the Gardner Advertising Agency we learned something of the complexity of advertising. We saw a demonstration of a television commercial from the first idea to final filming, the whole process of which requires 4 months, 6 weeks of which go into the filming process. Another day we saw soaps and detergents made at the Proctor and Gamble plant in St. Louis.

On Aug. 1 we packed our things and left St. Louis for camp. Seven

hundred girls of high school and college age attended our session; practically all of the states, Canada, and various foreign countries were represented in the enrollment. The noted leadership from the faculty members was truly inspiring.

The daily schedule at Miniwanca is designed to challenge all those in attendance for their very best at all times. The camp came alive at 6:30 in the morning. Flag raising, limbering up exercises and a dip in the lake followed in rapid succession. After breakfast came clean up for daily inspection. Classes filled the remainder of the morning. An air of friendly informality prevailed in the log cabin class rooms as lecture-discussions were carried on.

Afternoon Tournaments

In the afternoon tournaments and organized games are carried on among the organized living groups with keen competition in the air. Free time for cool dips in Lake Michigan was also included. After dinner each evening we as a camp gathered for vespers, sometimes on a high dune overlooking the lake.

Again, throughout all these wonderful activities, was interwoven a deeply-inspiring and ever-growing realization of the capacity of the individual and a challenge to attain that of which one is capable.



William H. Danforth, founder of the Ralston Purina Company, points to his plaque which represents the four-square philosophy of his checkboard symbol.