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The Evolution of Home Economics at Iowa State V.
The "Dinky"

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The Evolution of Home Economics at Iowa State

V. The “Dinky”

By RUTH ELAINE WILSON

The “Dinky”. The depot was what is now the college bookstore and post office. It was then in its prime, a really pretty building with a long covered train shed on its right side.

By running Sundays students will be invited them selves with churches of Ames and Ames citizens will be permitted to attend our services.

Arguments in favor of the railroad:

(1) Students average one trip a week to Ames; that is 300 in six days or 50 a day. Will not the time saved in making the trip increase the number who make the trip from 50 to 60 daily?

(2) Under the bus system five members of the faculty live in Ames. Two more would move had they means of getting back and forth.

(3) The ladies will have calls to make on faculty and citizens of Ames, say a week. These calls must be returned. This will make 34 trips.

The Pioneers were dismissed after their presentation and shortly informed that the solution of the problem and the thesis problem solved. Two weeks later they were awarded the coveted sheepskins.

It was not until some time later that the Pioneers learned that their seed had been cast on fertile soil. Professors Stanton, Budd and Attorney Stevens had organized a company to put in a railroad between Ames and the college. J. L. Stevens was president of the corporation. Ties and rails were purchased and the work began. It is said that the ties were not all that might have been wished. They were good cedar, but holes were rotted in at the ends. The company discussed them from all angles. And Professor Budd decided that the holes would last longer than the ties. They were finally accepted, however, and the work went on. On July 9, 1891, the “dinky” itself pulled out behind a train of two cars, square and boxlike, which carried 200 passengers to the load. The engine was an old second-hand steam locomotive once used on the old belt line railroad in Des Moines, running from the downtown district to Hyland Park. This was the “dinky”—the result of the Pioneer thesis, a steam engine and not the electric car on which they had figured.

But it was a success. Besides hauling all the freight between the college and Ames—a trunk would go for 10 cents, it made four trips daily with the fourth ward children, taking them to Ames to school and back. Old “Hank” Wilkinson, the engineer and the best natured old soul in the world, enjoyed this part of his work especially, and loaded and unloaded the little Knapps, and MacKays and Boardshairs and the rest of the small fry, who appreciate fry now, every school day during the lifetime of the “dinky”, without a casualty. And financially the “dinky” far exceeded the expectations of the Pioneers. The year before it was absorbed into the electric railroad from Des Moines it cleared $10,000.