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Cannin' Demon Am Comin'

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Iowa State College

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Girls’ 4-H Clubs

Campus Boys Organize

The 4-H boys on the campus have organized to form a club similar to that of the girls. About fifty former club members attended the meeting at which officers were chosen and plans formulated for a program. One interesting feature which the boys’ club plans to sponsor is a radio program.

It is the plan of the two clubs to hold joint meetings of a social nature once each quarter so that the 4-H’ers on the campus may become acquainted and receive inspiration from each other. The clubs also plan during registration winter quarter to obtain a definite list of the 4-H club members on the campus.

Iowa Is a Healthy State

Iowa still maintains its reputation of being a healthy place in which to live when the two 4-H club health champions, Martha Ann Issacs of Johnson county and Kenneth Seely of Ashton won second in their respective contests. Both missed championship honors by a very narrow margin.

The two Iowa health champions were chosen last August at the State Fair. The scores in the National Health Contest this year were said to be the highest ever made. Martha Ann’s score was one half point below the winner, who is a Nebraska girl, and Kenneth Seely came within a tenth of a point of the victor’s score.

Martha Ann Issacs was named second in the state contest, but as Clarice Torkelson, Story county, was ineligible to represent the state because of a previous trip to the International, Martha Ann represented Iowa. She is a junior at the University of Iowa, and the first college girl to represent Iowa in a health contest.

Mrs. Brucklacher Writes

One of Iowa’s outstanding 4-H girls and a former student at Iowa State College, Esther Sietmann Brucklacher, is a home demonstration agent in West Virginia. Mrs. Brucklacher, formerly of Marshall County, was president of the Iowa 4-H Girls Organization in 1927 and was also representative to the National Club Camp at Washington, D. C. that same year. She was formerly editor of this page in the Homemaker besides being very active in the Campus 4-H Club.

For two summers Mrs. Brucklacher visited club camps throughout the middle west as a representative of the Successful Farming magazine.

The article on this page was written by Mrs. Brucklacher and gives Iowa 4-H girls an idea of the work in the mountains of West Virginia, and some of the conditions with which extension workers come in contact.

Did you know that on a rainy day you should cook fudge two degrees higher than usual and if testing in cold water, cook as long as possible, still having a soft ball in cold water?

Cannin’ Demon Am Comin’ ...

By Esther Sietmann Brucklacher

"Dat cannin’ demon am comin’ this even’. You all better come to de church.” From house to house along the gray row of dwellings at the foot of a mountain the word passed along. When evenin’ (called afternoon in the middle west) came, the colored women sauntered to their colored church with baskets of vegetables from their back yard gardens and waited for the “demon” to appear. No pagan offering to evil spirits, this! I was the “cannin’ demon.” One of them had seen the word “demonstration” in my title abbreviated to “demon,” hence the origin of “demon.” The women had brought their vegetables to learn the marvelous process whereby food could be preserved without vinegar or “cannin’ acid.” When the shining jars of tomatoes and peaches were taken from the hot water bath, the meeting closed with many “Oh’s!” and “Ahs!” and another day in the mountains of southern West Virginia came to a close.

After a long journey over mountain trails and coaxing the diver around rocks while I drove in creek beds, I found myself back in a hollow between mountains where some of the natives had never seen a train.

Over a hundred people, some of whom followed a creek many miles to see my demonstration, watched curiously while a big outdoor fire was built, and a kettle set over the fire on a bed of rocks. Dear old “Aunt Jane” who was “aunt” to everyone, and would have shared her last bit with me, left her huge old spinning wheel to idle for the day. And there was Preacher Jim, who was the spiritual advisor of the hollow and could preach “most powerful.” Men on horseback, curious children, shy of the strangers who had come to the district, and several dozen women smoking corn cob pipes filled with home grown tobacco, all watched every movement of my magic.

When the food had been “rimin’ a rollin’ bille” for sufficient length of time I removed it from the hot water bath and someone said, “Do you all know how to grit?” I did not fear a crude joke of some sort I did not answer definitely. I was soon relieved to see the “grittin’” was a process of taking partly soft corn and grinding it on a homemade grater. The grater is a piece of metal punctured with spikes to make a rough surface. This is raised off the board to which it is attached, by two cleats. The grated corn is mixed with a little milk and lemon to make grit bread which is really delicious.

There is much that I have learned among the mountains of southern West Virginia. It might be called a “philosophy of cheerfulness.” One can not go into the humble homes in the mountain sections of West Virginia without learning that hospitality and good cheer are more important than the superficial luxuries which are not worth our struggle.

Instead of feeling angry when the jelly she was making would not jell, one Spanish woman thickened it up with flour like grey, and was happy with it. Crude home economies, but symbolic of a philosophy we might all strive to achieve!