

# HOME ECONOMICS AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

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## RESEARCH TOPIC

Given a photograph of African American home economic students at a table with an assumed date of the late 1940s.

## QUESTION

What was the experience of Black women in home economics programs during the early 20th century like?



Photograph: menu planning and table service set up by members of the home economic department at UD around the late 1940s. Anna King (on the far left), Father Charles Collins in the center back, and Sister Raphael (second from right.)

## RACISM AND SEXISM

African American women in higher education in both public and private universities have been excluded and marginalized more than any other demographic. Many saw higher education as a path for success.

## FIVE STRENGTHS

African American women in higher ed had to form strengths to overcome racism and sexism by forming:

- \* Strong kinship bonds
- \* Strong work orientation
- \* Strong achievement orientation
- \* Flexible family roles
- \* Strong religious orientation

## TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

African American women were less likely to become full-time homemakers because families relied on them as a source of income. Tuskegee Institute started offering dietetics in 1936, in the dietetics program men outnumbered women. Tuskegee expanded their curriculum and offered a “traditional white feminized” curriculum and led to an increase in African American women enrollment.



FIRST ROW: A. King, M. Kohler, T. Kelble, K. Dahms, E. Lowry, M. Kessen.  
SECOND ROW: M. Monty, M. Reinhard, S. Hummert, C. Frank, C. McKenzie, P. Hagan.  
THIRD ROW: I. Klopf, L. Kappeler, J. White, M. Hayden.

Photograph: home economics club from the 1948 Daytonian yearbook. Anna King in the front row, far left.

## UD HOME ECONOMICS

In 1944, the course added “menu planning and table service” where students were responsible for hosting 8–12 guests and serve a meal on a budget in Russian, English, or Compromise style. The home economic program achieved praise from those who attended luncheons and/or dinners.

## HONOR SOCIETY

There was the option to join the Home Economics Club, Upsilon Delta Chi, that had various projects throughout the year like Christmas parties and local home economic conventions.