

"We Thought it Would be That Easy" But It Took a Year to Launch Homemaker

THE girl with long pigtailed wrapped around her head thrust a handful of typewritten sheets toward the tall, dignified girl who always wore white collars and who was just entering the door of the "Ag" office.

"Tell me Gwen Watts, why the home economics students of this college shouldn't have a magazine of their own. Here I have copy enough for a whole issue of the "Ag" and the editor tells me that we can have only two pages at the most."

"Well, tell me, Bess Storm, why we don't get busy and start such a magazine while we are in school. There is no reason why it shouldn't prosper and grow just as the "Ag" and the "Engineer" have. They must have been started when those divisions were small and I am sure that the home economics division is able to support its own publication."

Thus, in the old "Ag" office in Agriculture Hall, now occupied by the Soils Department, was born the idea of a home economics magazine for homemakers. The girls discussed the problem at length and with tremendous enthusiasm so by the time they crunched across the campus as the campanile rang out through the crisp air of the winter night, definite plans had been made for seeing the proper people and informing them that we were about to launch a new publication!

We thought it would be as easy as that!!

But it wasn't.

Conferences were held with Mr. F. W. Beckman, then head of the Journalism Department and now editor of the *Farmers Wife* and with the late Catherine J. MacKay, dean of home economics. They endorsed the proposition with the same enthusiasm shown by the students and urged us to write a letter to Dr. R. A. Pearson, the president of Iowa State, stating our plans and asking for criticism.

This we did and I have before me as I write the very kindly letter of criticism in which he raised more questions regarding the proposed venture than we had supposed possible to be raised concerning the publication of all the magazines in existence. Can enough high grade material be provided for such a publication? Is this period of high prices of printing materials favorable? Will advertisers patronize its columns adequately? How are the affairs of such a publication to be managed?

Fortunately for us, Mr. Beckman was

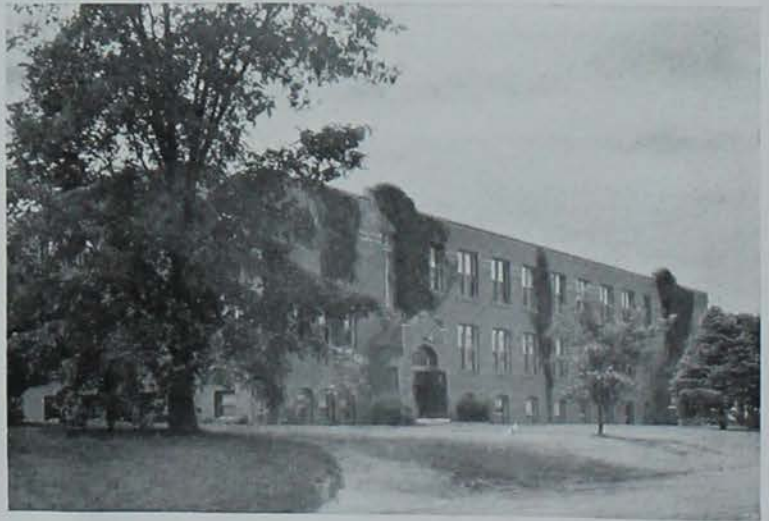
able to answer all these questions satisfactorily. By the time school closed in June of 1920 it was definitely understood that with the opening of college in the fall, a publication board would be created to study the need for such a magazine, the establishment of subscription and advertising rates, and the policies of the magazine and the election of the editorial and business staffs.

Sometime after school opened in the fall the publication board was created: Dean MacKay, Mr. Beckman, Miss Florence Bussey, Miss Beth Crowley and Miss Lillian Shaben. In due time they decided that the name of the magazine should be "The Iowa Homemaker" (Homemaker not to be hyphenated but one word), that the first issue should contain sixteen pages, these pages to be 9 by 12 inches and that Elizabeth (Bess) Storm, Jessie McCorkindale and Eloise Parsons should have the honor of serving as the first editor, business manager and circulation manager, respectively.

Through another winter students and faculty advisors spent every spare minute perfecting plans for the Iowa Homemaker. While the editorial staff was confronted with the momentous task of choosing exactly the right material for the first issue, the business staff found selling advertising space in a "dream" magazine not as easy as one could hope.

Jessie McCorkindale Kerekes remembers yet the shock she suffered when one Ames business man told her that he had decided not to take the ad he had promised because he had been discussing the advertising rates with members of the Chamber of Commerce and had concluded that they were too high. Fortunately, other business firms thought it was a good advertising medium and bought all the space available in the first issue.

The circulation staff canvassed the faculty and students for subscriptions and then solicited every home in Ames. Miss Hazel McKibben, who served on the first circulation staff



This Was Home Economics Hall Then

The Home Economic Club had loaned the Board \$500 to use in promoting the magazine. So with the money and editorial and business staffs in order, work began in earnest. The board decided that the first issue of the new magazine should not go to press until at least 50 paid subscriptions were duly filed and every inch of the available advertising space had been sold. Everyone was sure that this could be accomplished by February.

says she rang more than 100 doorbells herself.

The alumnae were reached through a letter which contained a small four page prospectus setting forth the aims of the proposed magazine and inviting subscriptions at \$1.50 a year, \$2.50 for two years and \$3.50 for three years.

The editor wrote or rather rewrote this prospectus seven times before Mr. Beckman would approve it—just one of the handicaps of the circulation de-

By Bess Ferguson

The first editor of the Iowa Homemaker never lost interest in her protegee.

She's still on the Homemaker—now as a board member to whom one turns for advice. She lives on an acreage just outside Ames. Her husband is Fred Ferguson of the college bulletin office and he's a member of the Agriculturist publication board.

Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson sometimes collaborate on stories which are published in various magazines.

partment.

Despite the effort made by both the editorial and business staffs, the first issue of the Homemaker did not come out in February as we had hoped and planned but very early in April. It was printed by the Ames Tribune Publishing company. Only a very sketchy dummy was made in the Homemaker office and the editor spent several hours with Mr. Largent, patient printer, making up the forms in the print shop, mid thunder and clang of presses.

At last, after many delays and more mistakes, volume one, number one of the Iowa Homemaker was off the press, the coldest rainiest of April days, but the editor didn't notice that as she bumped toward the campus on the street car with the first half dozen issues tucked under her arm. "It isn't raining rain to —" she hummed to herself, as she agreed with fellow passengers that it was a nasty day and hugged her precious package a little closer.

The very first copy was delivered to Dean McKay, the second to Dr. Pearson and the third to Mr. Beckman. In a few days copies were on their way to the more than nine hundred subscribers and the clipping service was returning nice little newspaper notices from all parts of the state.

The Iowa Homemaker was on its way.

The first managers of the Homemaker had problems other than editing and advertising. The matter of office space, and general office equipment had to be considered.

With the publication of the new magazine, the Iowa Agriculturist planned to drop its department of home economics. The boys were generous, however, and offered the continued use of the one drawer in the editor's desk and the use of the typewriter if it were not being used by the "Ag" staff! We were grateful for the smallest favors, since our funds were limited and we were a bit shy about asking for

office space in any other place.

The editor of the "Ag" also offered the use of the cuts owned by them and filed by a fearful and mysterious plan on deep, wide shelves along one side of the office. Again we were grateful but the task of finding what we wanted or guessing what was available was too much for feminine minds so we offered to clean the shelves, organize the cuts and create some kind of an index.

When the date for the cleaning had been set, we tactfully mentioned to the members of the "Ag" staff that we expected to reward ourselves with ice cream and chocolate cake at the end of the evening and if they wished to help—. A dozen or so from both the "Ag" and "Homemaker" staffs turned out that Friday night and made short work of the cuts, also the ice cream and the cake made by Eloise's mother.

Before the appearance of the first issue of the magazine the Homemaker

had outgrown the drawer in the "Ag" editor's desk. The editorial staff discussed this problem at length and all agreed to be on the look out for a stray desk. It was not long until someone discovered some discarded desks in science building. They seemed to belong to the zoology department. The late Prof. J. E. Guthrie was called and after hearing our needs, agreed to loan us one of the old desks, suggesting that it would need some cleaning since it had been used as a dissecting table. We might use it until we could afford a new one. It's still the Homemaker desk.

Memory fails as to the transfer of the desk from Science building to "Ag" hall but it probably came across the campus on the backs of some loyal "boy friends". (In 1920 and '21 student cars were few and far between, believe it or not!) But memory is vivid of the scrubbing and scraping

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Dean MacKay Gave Enthusiastic Encouragement

Made-over Kitchens

by Orinne Conard

"THE most efficient kitchens are rectangular in shape." Such is the decree of the Household Equipment Department at Iowa State College.

All well and good for the fortunate people who are just now building a new house. They can build their kitchen any way they choose, round, square or triangular, as easily as rectangular.

But what can be done about the half-acre kitchen of the old houses which are still being used by people who have not given up the habit of eating three square meals a day? What can be done about these roomy old square or nearly square kitchens?

Many have solved the problem by moving part of the equipment from the one side of the room to the desired clearance distance from the other. Then the vacated part may either be screened off entirely from the rest of the room or a half wall built to shield the back of the equipment.

The second difficulty is to bring about the above dimensions when all four walls are fastened securely to the rest of the house and one cannot readily move them.

Sometimes this part is used as a sewing nook, reading corner or play pen for the small children, so that the housewife does not feel the space is wasted.

The steps saved every day, the real addition to convenience and the pleasure and satisfaction any woman will have with such an arrangement is worth the time and small amount of money required to change it.

Fashion Contest, Want to Try It?

ONE year's employment in the Paris and New York offices of Vogue magazine is offered as first prize in a career contest announced by Edna Woolman Chase, editor-in-chief of Vogue. The contest is open to all college women of the graduating class of 1936 who are interested in the fashion angle of publishing, merchandising or advertising as a career.

"The arts have their *Prix de Rome*. Fashion now has its *Prix de Paris*," said Mrs. Chase in announcing the contest. Vogue's *Prix de Paris* differs from most prize awards in that it offers the winner a definite job with salary attached, as well as an opportunity for the best kind of training—actual experience. She will spend at least six months in Vogue's Paris office, attending the famous open-

ings of the great *salons de couture* and learning at the very source how fashions are created. In the New York office, she will study fashions from the American angle and, through Vogue's trade connections, learn the methods of distributing and merchandising fashion. As second prize, Vogue is offering six months' employment in its New York office.

Easy as That

(Begins on page 6)

necessary to remove the mortal remains of countless numbers of angle worms and bull frogs from the top of that desk. I wonder if even yet, an experienced nose might not detect a faint odor of "Zoo Lab."

The story of the Iowa Homemaker is not complete without special mention of the wholehearted support of Dean MacKay, the generous, patient assistance given by Mr. Beckman to an inexperienced staff, the kindly interest of Blair Converse through the long months of preparation, the Home Economics Club and their financial assistance and Gwendolyn Watts who was never too busy with other campus activities to provide a bolstering word to a sometimes wavering editor.

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