
This selective, annotated bibliography compiles documents made available by the U.S. Government to housewives during the first four decades of the 20th Century. Many of the publications aided the housewives in growing, preserving, and serving food to their families in the most nutritious and cost-effective manner. Other documents helped them in making important larger purchasing decisions, such as how to decide which winter coats or blankets to buy, all the while considering their family budget. This annotated bibliography presents a segment of America’s social history during the years known as the Progressive Era, the Great Depression, and World War I. The publications listed can all be found in the Federal Documents Collection in the Walter B. Davis Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Headings:

Government Publications—Evaluation

Government Publications—Bibliography

Library School—Theses—University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Women's literature—Bibliography
PUBLICATIONS DISSEMINATED
BY THE U. S. GOVERNMENT
DURING THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY
FOR THE AMERICAN HOUSEWIFE:
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

by
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Introduction

When men first landed at Jamestown in May of 1607, they not only had to build a fort with huts in which to live, they also had to raise domestic animals and vegetable gardens to survive. Jamestown came very close to complete failure because the men did not know how to accomplish these goals. They were sent by the Virginia Company of London to find gold and silver. Theirs was to be a voyage to earn great riches for the businessmen of England, not a voyage to grow food and keep house.

These early settlers were largely self-important gentlemen who did not know much about manual labor. During their first winter, many colonists died due to diseases such as typhoid fever and dysentery. They waited too late in the season to plant crops and the Indians killed much of their livestock. They, like most of us today, had taken for granted that their needs for food, clean water, and shelter would be met. Jamestown eventually survived, but before they could make their cash crop of tobacco a success, they had to master the chore of cultivating food crops for survival. Their survival needs had to be met before they could successfully accomplish anything else.

Personal needs have always been the top priority before anything else could be accomplished. Females have most often been responsible for meeting the nutrition and hygiene needs of home, and this female has been the wife and mother of a household. As one young boy expressed it, “home is ‘the place where mother is.’ ” (Streightoft 6) In
this paper I would like to focus on the first four decades of the twentieth century, as the American homemaker continued to move forward from the Industrial Revolution. Even though this industrial revolution may have brought new technologies to the household (such as improved cookstoves), homemakers also had to deal with the extra challenges brought about by World War I and the Great Depression. They saw changes, both positive and negative.

In the early twentieth century, many viewed the industrialization and urbanization as the primary reason for changes in the family. The paternal authority and influence coming from extended family members (such as grandparents) were disappearing as employment away from the family farm or business increased. As men moved more often out into public industry, the industry and commerce arena became the male-dominated sphere and the work and child-rearing duties in the home became more female dominated.

In the past, the pounding and grinding of grains (such as corn, wheat, or rye) for breads was a duty traditionally performed by sons and husbands. With the creation of flour mills, that was a task the men no longer had to perform. However, the chores of preparing the dough and baking that had been carried out by the wife still needed to be completed by the wife. Also, even though textile mills took away much of the need for making yarn and spinning it into cloth, it did not take away the need for the wife’s traditional task of making the pattern and sewing the cloth. With much of the industrial progress in the nineteenth century that aided the citizens of the United States, it did not touch as often on the tasks traditionally performed by the women.
In the "Family", Steven Mintz wrote that as divisions in the home grew, so did the American divorce rate, going from 8% in 1900 to 11% in 1916. (222) As the changes occurred, more of the household duties began to fall squarely on the shoulders of the mother, or any other female head of the household.

Mintz also wrote in Domestic Revolutions that away from urban life, women seldom worked outside the home, and this fact could especially be viewed in coal mining communities. In spite of child labor laws, young sons followed their fathers into employment in the mines as soon as they were physically able. This practice was necessary to keep the mining family at or above subsistence level living. Therefore, the women devoted their energies to tasks at home, such as gardening, preserving food, cooking, raising livestock, creating handicrafts for manufacturers, and taking in boarders or laundry. (103)

However, in the larger cities, poorer women often needed to obtain jobs outside the home, commonly taking jobs as domestic help by cooking and cleaning for other families. They also worked in commercial laundries, cleaned office buildings at night, and waited on tables in restaurants, sometimes working from 8:00am until 8:00pm at night, six or seven days a week.

For the families that lived in these cities, diseases from industrial work often took a toll on the husbands and fathers who worked in these industries. In an area of New York City known as the Middle West Side, in “the cases of tuberculosis, pneumonia, work-accidents, and industrial disease, we find that these causes were responsible for fully 60 per cent of the total number of dead or disabled wage-earners.” (Anthony 28)
Because of the poor health and short work life of many of these men, it was necessary for women to work outside the home for much of their lives.

Throughout all working-class families, employment was unstable, disabling accidents occurred, infant mortality rates were high, and orphanhood and widowhood were very common occurrences. Nutrition and hygiene were very important for the family's survival, and the homemaker was most likely the one to oversee these needs.

How were they to accomplish this goal when so many family incomes were insufficient? As families grew, and incomes often did not, more food had to be purchased. This food often was obtained only at the sacrifice of a good home, decent clothing, and those few little comforts that the U. S. Bureau of Labor called “sundries”. Family debt would increase, making it almost impossible to put away savings. Yet, being able to save money was not necessarily proof that the standard of living had improved, because often saving money was accomplished by sacrificing health and proper comfort. “Food is probably the first point where most people economize, and yet food is often the one object of outlay that can least wisely be limited, as the health may be seriously impaired by this curtailment.” (Streightoft 23-25)

The family and home were considered the fundamental basis of society through which the rest of society progresses. (Winchell 29) So what did the mother do as the one overseeing this fundamental family and home? How was she viewed as a part of society?

Even for the family member that spent time away from home everyday at another job, the mother was considered the one to keep the home as a "retreat from the busy world." The home was to be uncluttered and clean, and meals were to be tasty and nutritious. Sociologists believed fathers were to be a part of this duty as well, showing
the children the importance of both fathers and mothers in the care of home and children. However, since men were usually away during the day working a paying job, the major portion of these tasks fell on the mother (whether she worked outside the home or not). She was told she could "serve her country best in the guidance of the youth in her home" if she kept herself young in body and spirit. She was to keep herself active in church and clubs, because outside contacts provided a way to maintain social consciousness. These outside interests gave her an outlet to contribute to the progress of mankind, as well as provide her family with a way to link with the outside world and its daily changes. (Winchell 31-32)

The Great Depression of the 1930s challenged the family in major ways, and families of all classes were affected by the economic demands that fell on them. “In 1933, the average family income had dropped to $1,500, 40 per cent less than the 1929 average of $2,300. (Bryson 310) For this reason, employment for married women outside the home increased during the 1930s, with their generally taking low-status and low-paying jobs. Even with the refusal of many government agencies, schools, and libraries to employ them, the employment of married women continued to rise throughout the Depression years. Young boys took more jobs assisting as store clerks or performing janitorial tasks. Young girls also occasionally took paying jobs, but they tended to stay home and help with domestic chores, especially if the mother worked outside the home. Because of the increase in economic instability, these young girls were needed at home to tend to the household labor that had intensified with the maintaining of vegetable gardens, preservation of the produce by canning and drying, and the patching and remaking of old clothes.
In 1906 the Fifty-ninth congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act making it illegal to misbrand food, drugs, medicines, and liquors, because “dishonest practices prevented men, women, and children from having proper vitality.” (Comish 150) A few years earlier, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the United States federal government began to play a larger role in helping the mother reach these goals by guiding her as she tended to her home and children. In the 1894 Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture, W. O. Atwater, PhD, professor of Chemistry at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, reported on the importance of nutrients in food and how they should be used to give the necessary fuel for work. He wrote that “A man’s nourishment is not the only factor of his producing power, but it is an important one.” (357) He continued to explain that when a mother goes to the market, she is not just buying potatoes and meat, she is also buying “certain nutritive substances in the food.” She and her husband will need these nutrients to repair their bodies and give them strength for their daily toil. The children will need these same nutrients for the healthy growth of their bodies.

In this same report, Atwater wrote that most all the research on this subject had been done by private concerns. For this reason, during the next fiscal year, Congress would appropriate money to gather together as much of this information as possible. They also appropriated another sum of money ($10,000) for “investigations on the nutritive value of human foods, with a few to determine ways in which the dietaries of
our people might be made more wholesome and economical.” (387) It had been
determined that many of the poor did not utilize nutrition dollars wisely due to ignorance,
therefore, the government would now try to help them in their purchasing decisions by
giving them the best information possible.

One of the ways the government made known this information was by providing
either low-cost or free pamphlets and booklets to help housewives in their daily task of
preparing and cooking nutritious meals. Later, they would also help them conserve
money and energy by producing pamphlets to aid them in the decisions of how to most
economically and efficiently sew, mend, and purchase important items for their family
and home.

Particularly for the low-income families, these booklets proved to be a great help
by showing ways to frugally care for family members in the most efficient way possible.
During World War I there was an extra effort by the government to call upon its citizens
to recognize the problems endured by much of the world, such as problems in heating
homes and serving simple, truly nutritious meals. Homemakers were one of the major
groups asked to help in their conservation of fuel and certain foods.

For example, in 1917, the Government Printing Office published a booklet
entitled War Service in the Home. By explaining the importance of using less of certain
foods and wasting none, the homemaker was encouraged to do her part for her country.
In one section there is a heading, "Your Country's Call", followed by these instructions:
"You would give your life for your country. You would scorn an American whose
patriotism ended with waving flags, cheering the troops and standing up when the band
plays. You want to serve your country." (12)
Following is a methodology and a selected annotated bibliography, giving a quick view into the United States government's efforts to help the country and the world through the home. Finding out how many homemakers actually had access to this information offers work for another project. In the meantime, though, these documents offer more detailed insight into the life of the home and the homemaker.
Methodology

In researching information about the housewife and life of the family during the early twentieth century, I started in the Reference Reading Room of Davis Library and browsed the shelves in areas I believed would offer me the needed information. I focused on American History and social history. In the various reference books selected, I searched the indexes and table of contents looking for entries concerning family, nutrition, and housewives.

I chose to begin with the year 1900, because I wanted a clear and solid starting point. I also wanted to include the decade of the 1910s, because in 1914 (the year that the United States entered World War I) the U. S. Government created the U. S. Food Administration that distributed additional brochures through this war-time agency on how to conserve certain foods. Specific foods, such as wheat and sugar, were particularly needed by European citizens and American soldiers serving there during this time. The 1920s was a time of prosperity for much of America, and an increased number of different foods were available due to improved interstate commerce. Housewives particularly benefited from suggestions on how to prepare these new and different foods. Finally, I wanted to include the years of the Great Depression in the 1930s, since housewives were struggling more than ever in trying to provide nutrition for their families with less money.
I explored the online catalog for books and journals written between 1900 and 1939, because I think reading primary sources can offer an insight into how people were thinking and going about their daily routine. When I found a book of interest, I would browse the general area in the stacks to see what other books and journals were available that had been classified with the same Library of Congress letters and numbers.

I also used the Cornell University website called the Home Economics Archive Research, Tradition, Health (HEARTH) which offered an electronic collection of books and journals written about Home Economic concerns from 1820 to 1979. This site allows the user to select items either by title, author, or date of publication. I found it most useful to browse the collection by year. I discovered, however, that most all the titles I found of interest were also located either in the stacks of Davis Library or in storage. Therefore, I took advantage of the opportunity I had to study the actual physical book.

The annotated bibliography, which consists primarily of small pamphlets, has been compiled as a reference guide for a variety of U. S. Government documents that were issued for the housewife during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Most of the documents listed are concerned with the task of serving a family the most nutritious meals at the most efficient cost. However, during my search through indexes exploring terms concerning dietary needs of the family, I also came across documents distributed to aid in the purchase of blankets and other household necessities. Because of their importance to the family, these items have been included as well. Even though I have tried to include a variety of documents, they all have one characteristic in common.
Each of these publications would have particularly been of value to the family of limited monetary funds.

The search began by exploring *Cumulative Title Index to United States Public Documents 1789-1976*, by using terms such as nutrition, meals, and dietary. I discovered a few titles and necessary call numbers. Then I went to *Cumulative Subject Index to the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications 1900-1971*, which aided me in determining which were the best search terms to use and which government agencies published the majority of relevant documents.

From there I moved to the *Catalogue of United States Public Documents* which provided me with the Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) call numbers that matched the titles. (SuDoc call numbers that were developed by the U.S. Government for classification and location of their publications.) The only way to locate the documents on the shelves was to have the SuDoc numbers in hand. Within these catalogs I utilized the indexes and searched through the catalogs themselves, month by month, familiarizing myself with pertinent SuDoc numbers and writing down the titles and numbers of the ones that seemed the most significant. My search did not involve federal document databases, because they do not include documents published during this time period.

After relevant SuDoc numbers had been decided upon and year perimeters set, I explored extensively the areas in the collection where these call numbers were shelved. I also selected specific items that I had discovered listed in the indexes and *Catalogue of United States Public Documents*. I eliminated several items written on subjects already
covered in others. I attempted to include about the same number of documents in every
decade, but expanded the 1910s coverage due to the additional items published by the
U. S. Food Administration.
A 1.9:142

W. O. Atwater writes about the importance of eating a wide assortment of foods. Various food values, such as carbohydrates, proteins, minerals, and vitamins, are discussed at great length to describe the purpose of each. The composition of different foods in regards to the energy they give the body is clearly set out in a detailed chart. (p. 29) There is information on cooking, serving, and digestion. One section is devoted to the dangers of having a diet too heavy in one type of food and not including enough of others, thus not giving the body all it needs.

When discussing commercially-prepared breakfast cereals, Atwater addresses the issue in which advertisers make claims about these foods for which “there is no ground.” He writes, “The advertisements, which often claim nutritive values that are fictitious, do not give any suggestion of the high price of the nutrients in the prepared foods as compared with that of the same amounts in the ordinary products, nor do purchasers
generally realize how expensive those prepared foods are.” (p.43) This problem leads to “errors in food economy” and the needless use of expensive foods by housewives who do not understand the “simple principles of nutrition.” (p. 44)

This booklet includes a table of contents, five tables, and two charts for easy reference.

A 1.9:255

W. R. Beattie writes that a well-kept garden will yield several times more in a bountiful supply of vegetables than general farm crops, because there will be no transportation to cause damage. Also, vegetables and fruits grown in a home garden or orchard do not come in contact with other products and are less likely to become infected in any way. Beattie also states, “In many cases, the principal interest in the garden is manifested by the women of the household and much of the necessary care is given by them.” (p. 5)

In this booklet the homemaker learns about seed beds, starting plants early in a cold frame, and various tools to make the work involved in gardening easier. There are sections describing various vegetables and the best way to plant and care for them (such as how far apart the rows should be and how much water is needed).

This booklet includes a table showing aspects of various vegetables as to what time of year to plant, how long before harvest, and how far apart to plant when cultivating by hand or using a horse and plow. There are also 34 illustrations and a table of contents.

A 1.9:332

This bulletin discusses the various types of nuts available and the fact that nuts are high in protein and fats. There are sections describing the processing of nuts into the various nut butters, pastes, preserves, flours, and meals.

Several paragraphs are written concerning the diabetic, stating that nut products are often recommended as foods for “diabetics and others from whose diet starch and sugar are excluded, or at least materially reduced.” (p. 18)

There is a table of contents and one chart comparing the composition of nuts and nut products (such as peanut butter and chestnut flour) with other foods (including wheat flour and meat).


A 1.9:128

C. F. Langworthy states, “Perhaps no article of diet of animal origin is more commonly eaten in all countries or served in a greater variety of ways than eggs.” (p.7) The booklet continues with a variety of suggestions on how to serve eggs, either cooked or raw. There are suggestions for “soft” or “hard” cooked, fried or boiled. They are discussed as addition to custards, cakes, and icing. Langworthy also mentions that they are a great substitute for meat.
There is a section devoted to the storage and preserving of eggs. There is even a section about how to market eggs, though most of this booklet is written about cooking and serving. Included is a table of contents and a chart comparing the cost and food values (protein, fat, and carbohydrates) of various types of eggs, such as hen, duck, and turkey.

A 1.9:295

C. F. Langworthy begins by writing of the importance of the various root vegetable in the human diet. “Of the starchy group, the common potato is by far the most important as regards both its nutritive value and the extent of its cultivation.” (p. 5) The sweet potato is the second most important in the United States.

The issue of whether potatoes are poisonous is addressed, telling the reader that under normal circumstances the potato is a nutritious food. The only concern with poison could possibly come from a very old potato or one that has turned green from too much exposure to light. In speaking about diabetes, Parloa states that she does not talk about this disease or other conditions of ill health in which starchy vegetables are not allowed, because that is an issue that pertains to the medical field, not dietetics.

There are tips on how to cook potatoes, turnips, parsnips, carrots, and other root vegetables. There is a table for a quick glance at nutrition values of each, four illustrations, and a table of contents.

The author presents a short history of fruit in the diet of the American, taking the reader from the first inhabitants’ (Indians’) practice of gathering the wild-growing fruit to one of gathering fruit that is cultivated. Langworthy further writes that even though fruits are often prized for their pleasant flavor, they are often thought of as a food accessory. However, on the average they make up approximately 4% of the average American diet.

This bulletin includes a lot of statistics that may not be of interest to every homemaker, but there is information concerning the food values of various fruits. There are also several helpful tables where at a quick glance the homemaker can view helpful information, such as what type of fruits offer which qualities (carbohydrates, protein, energy, fat) per cost of 10 cents per pound.

Included is a table of contents and one illustration.


This brochure was published for both farmers and consumers. There is a lot of information on soil and ideal climate needed for the successful growth of this “edible root”. There is information on how to preserve by canning or drying, but no detailed instructions. There is a table of contents, several charts for easy reference and 14 simple recipes, including one pie.
Maria Parloa writes that fruits have dietetic value and should be used both fresh and cooked. They are rich in minerals and can aid in the digestive process if not eaten in excess. Farmers are especially encouraged to cultivate fruits that can be grown successfully in their localities, because their diet is more like to be restricted in variety due to their distance from town and markets. “Wives and daughter on the farms should find pleasure in serving these fruits in the most healthful and tempting form.” (p. 3)

There are sections written on various fruits that preserve well and information on the different utensils and supplies needed. The dangers of mold and the importance of sterilization of canned fruits and preserves are discussed.

There is a table of contents, five illustrations, and numerous recipes for jams, jellies, and juice.

This purpose of this booklet is to offer an idea of the composition of various vegetables with the relation to food value. There are many suggestions on how to cook vegetables as well as exact recipes. Maria Parloa states that “every recipe has been carefully tested, and it is only fair to the writer and to the cook that they shall be followed accurately the first time they are used.” (p.5)
The various types of vegetables, such as tubers, roots, cereals, and green vegetables are discussed as to the nutritious role they play in a family’s daily diet. A homemaker can learn how to include starches, proteins, and various vitamins throughout the day. There is also a section explaining how “careless paring” can remove too much of the good part of the vegetable, and great care should be taken when peeling.

This booklet includes a table of contents.

1910s


O. H. Benson begins by explaining how the practice of canning preserves food and how quickly food left in their natural state begin the growth of mold or bacteria. The booklet explains the steps involved in one-period canning, how to prepare for the process, and how to handle and seal the containers. There are detailed recipes on how to can not only fruit and vegetables but also meats and meat stews. The various canning supplies and equipment needed are detailed. There is also a section explaining the fact that there are laws to be followed if home-canned goods are to be sold locally or shipped to another state, and an address is given from where this information can be obtained.

This bulletin offers several tables for quick reference, many photographs, a table of contents, and an index.
The purpose of this bulletin is to discuss the use of the word “bouillon” in the marketing of meat-flavored cubes that use this name. The true food value of such products are generally misunderstood by the homemaker, because the term “bouillon” is actually defined as a broth prepared from meat. Commercially prepared bullion cubes “have a certain value as a flavoring medium and as a stimulating and appetizing drink,” but they are not nutritious. (p. 1)

There are several tables showing the salt, water, and nutritious value of cubes and of extracts from actual meat or bone. There is also a comparison made of vegetable soup made with bouillon cubes and soup prepared from a broth made from soaking a bone (with meat) in the water. The homemaker can conclude after reading this short brochure that, “Homemade meat and vegetable soup contains much more food and is therefore much cheaper than the bouillons or soups prepared from commercial cubes, extracts, or juices.” (p. 7)
quantities. The issues of spoilage and sterilization are addressed. There is a portion devoted to the best needed conditions of the various fresh fruits and vegetables for the most delicious and nutritious canned ones.

There are various recipes for preserves, jellies, fruit butters, and juices. There is a table of contents, a few tables for quick reference, photographs, and an index.


This bulletin offers instructions on how to build and use a fireless cooker. A fireless cooker is built by placing a kettle inside a metal container (such as a bucket), which is then placed inside larger container (a wooden box is most often used), and a good insulating or packing material is stuffed in the space between the metal container and the walls of the box. A hinged lid is installed to maintain the heat inside.

This vessel is to be used to continue cooking a food after it has already been started on a higher heat. This manner of cooking saves fuel by utilizing various insulations (and maybe a hot stone between the kettle and metal container) instead of continuously providing quick energy. “The great convenience of the fireless cooker is that it saves time, for foods cooked in it do not require watching and may be left to themselves while the cook is occupied with other duties, or the family is away from the home, without danger from fires or overcooking the food.” (p. 4)

There are tips and recipes here on how to cook breakfast cereals, meats, soups, vegetables and puddings. There are several illustrations and photographs, as well as a table of contents.
This bulletin was written to re-introduce the American housewife to the practice of drying fruits and vegetables as it was done by their grandmothers. It is mentioned that food conservation by drying is common in Europe, and that dried food “may continue to be shipped abroad in considerable quantities to supplement the concentrated food diet of the men in the trenches” (p. 3) [NOTE: This brochure was published in July 1917, three months after the United States entered into World War I.]

The homemaker is told that drying foods should not take the place of canning where proper equipment and storage facilities are available. However, dried foods can be compacted and may be utilized and stored efficiently by the homemaker who lives in town and lacks the space of a rural homemaker.

There are separate sections for various fruits and vegetables concerning preparation and drying time and methods for each. This booklet contains many photographs and a table of contents.

The purpose of this bulletin is to stress to the homemaker that rolled oats, when ground through a small hand mill may easily be used to make sweets and breads. Homemakers are encouraged to use various grains in baking to save wheat for the soldiers and citizens of Europe during this time of war.
Oat flour is more granular than wheat, so it is recommended that it be mixed with a finer flour (such as rice or potato flour) for the best results. Nine recipes utilizing oat flour for breads, cookies, and cakes are included.

Y 3.F73/4:113

This bulletin stresses the need to find new foods because of the “war situation”. Information is giving describing how there is a lot of oil and protein in soy beans, but unlike other legumes, there is no starch. Oil is pressed from the soy beans when making flour, so that it can be used almost in the exact same way as wheat flour. However, a certain amount of fat remains, so the housekeeper is encouraged to reduce or completely leave out the oils that are normally added in the recipes calling for wheat flour. There are five recipes for breads and four recipes to make meat-substitute dishes.

Y 3.F73/4:4

This pamphlet offers a short study of the five basic food groups and the importance each plays in the growth and good health of our bodies. It also stresses that even though sugar may make some foods taste better, it is not as necessary as the other
groups for good health. There is also a paragraph to support the use of cereal grains other than wheat, encouraging the homemaker to prepare cornbread or oatmeal pudding, because “the Government asks us to save wheat to send abroad to our soldiers and the Allies.” (p.2)

Y 3.F73/4:7

The emphasis here is on the importance of children having the right foods because of the rapidness of their growth. A variety of foods is suggested, but not too much meat or fish. (The variety of fruits and vegetable is suggested not only for the vitamins but to prevent constipation). However, milk is considered the most important and a quart a day is recommended. Sweets like raisins and simple puddings are encouraged over candy. Extra tips and six menus are offered as a way to introduce more milk into a child’s daily intake of food.

Y 3.F73/4:19

This bulletin starts off by giving a short history of the use of hominy in the earliest years of our country. The housewife is told that the first settlers learned from the Indians about the importance of this corn, how they removed the hulls from the dry grain, and then pounded it with a mortar and pestle. This “cracked corn they called by the Indian name “hominy.” (p. 1)
There is a section describing three types of hominy, coarse or pearl hominy, fine hominy or hominy grits, and lye hominy. Each description suggests uses for which they are all best suited. Ten recipes for breads and sweet fruit and hominy mixtures are also given.

Y 3.F73/4:8

This brochure emphasises foods other than meat that give ample protein for less cost to the family. The foods mentioned here are cheese, milk, eggs, beans, peas, cereals, and nuts. Special prominence is given to cottage cheese, because it can easily be made from warm sour milk, either skim or whole. When reporting about protein, the housewife is told that cottage cheese “is richer in this material than meat.” (p.1)

There are four recipes given that utilize milk, cheese, and beans.

Y 3.F73/4:13

This pamphlet gives short and concise instructions on how to build a fireless cooker. The fireless cooker saves fuel in the winter, keeps the kitchen more comfortable in the summer, and it can be made for “less than a dollar.” Plus, the homemaker can leave home and attend to other duties while cooking using the fireless method. First, the food is cooked as hot as possible on a regular stove, then placed in a fireless cooker to
continue the process without added fuel. “The walls of the fireless cooker keep the heat in just as the walls of a good refrigerator keep the heat out.” (p. 1)

There are tips on how to cook various foods such as cereals, meats, or dried vegetables. There is a detailed recipe for Creole stew and one illustration.

Y 3.F73/4:11

This pamphlet stresses the importance of milk in the diet of children. The mother is told to note how there are always sick children in areas where milk is scarce. She is told not to economize by cutting back on milk because the nutrition in milk helps to fight disease. “Save on other things if you must, but not on milk, your child’s best food.”(p.1)

There is a section that discusses the amount of lime and other salts found in milk and their importance for developing strong bones and teeth. There are sections on the other nutrients in milk and specifications on how to store it. There is a recipe for cornstarch pudding (with sugar and vanilla) and instructions on the various ways to make a creamy white sauce.

Y 3.F73/4:10

Potatoes are emphasized because of their value as a fuel. “They furnish starch which burns in your muscles to let you work, much as the gasoline burns in an automobile engine to make the car go.” (p.1)
There are several recipes for serving potatoes as well as tips on how to simply boil them for the best flavor. It is recommended to always cook the potato before peeling, no matter how it is to be served, to retain more flavor and more nutrients. There are tips on how to substitute mashed cooked potatoes for a portion of the milk and flour used in cakes, how to use them in bread, and how to serve them as a main dish. There are also three detailed recipes.


The focus here is the versatility of rice. There is a section reporting how rice is usually cooked in the South, because Southern people “use more rice than the other people of the United States” and “have many good methods of cooking it.” (p. 1) There is a section describing how to cook rice in a double-boiler so that less of the food value is lost, and how to cook it in skim milk instead of water to even add to the food value.

There are recipes given which combine rice with meat or vegetables, and those for desserts and breads.


This brochure offers tips on how to save fuel using a regular cook stove, whether fueled with wood, coal, gas, or oil. The housewife is told, “Money saved on fuel can well be spent on better foods to cook, and if you cut down your use of fuel, you can help make the supply go around.” (p. 1) There are instructions on the various dampers found on a
wood or coal stove and the importance of the air that circulates through them. There are sections on how to make the fire and then how to manage it.

For the gas or oil stove emphasis is placed on how to save energy. The housewife is encouraged to bake several dishes at a time in the oven and not to light the oven for just one dish. She is also told to try to bake all the bread at once that will be served for the next several days.

Y 3.F73/4:1

This pamphlet promotes starting every day with a good breakfast. A mixture of fruit and grains are recommended, especially prunes, raisins, and ripe bananas, along with corn-meal mush, oatmeal, and hominy. These fruits added to the hot cereal just before removing from the stove not only give additional food value, they also prevent the need for so much sugar for flavor.

The housewife is also told how much more nutrition is available for the money from these cooked grains than “ready-to-eat” breakfast foods, explaining that packages of these foods can cost eight or ten times more than hot grains.

Tips are given on how to best cook these grains for the best texture and taste. The use of milk is encouraged at breakfast (particularly for children), noting that “a quart of whole milk gives as much nourishment as one pound of lean meat.” (p. 3)
This brochure explains the Household Conservation Policy during the summer of 1918 to meet the “sugar situation.” It begins by justifying that because of submarine sinkings, loss of beet-sugar land, and factories in battle areas, the use of sugar is being restricted. “Purchases are not to be more than 2 pounds at a time, in villages and cities, or in the country 5 pounds. Sugar for canning is permitted in addition to this allowance. . . REMEMBER---The success of this program rests on the honor and cooperation of the householders.” (p. 1)

Honey is suggested for use in fruit beverages, and molasses and corn syrup are recommended to sweetened desserts. Less sugar is encouraged for use in the canning of fruits and vegetables (a little aids in the preservation process). There is also a section with tips on how to cut down on sugar through all meals and snacks during a regular day.

The importance of eating vegetables is encouraged, even in winter. “Doctors say that the tired-out feeling at the end of the winter—‘spring fever’—often comes from a lack of fruits and vegetables in the winter diet.” (p. 1) Further explanation is given concerning salts or the other “mineral matter” that vegetables contain. Salts other than table salt, such as iron and lime, are needed for the body to work smoothly, and these salts are found in vegetables. Children especially need them to build strong bodies.
There are two detailed recipes as well as tips on how to cook dried vegetables, canned vegetables, and fresh winter vegetables such as cabbage, turnips, and potatoes.

Y 3.F73/2:W21

The booklet emphasizes to the homemaker the important job of conserving food. Even though it is important for every American to stay fed and strong, they are asked to conserve what is not absolutely needed. They are asked to save and ration especially when it comes to wheat, meat, fats, sugar, and milk. “All the blood, all the heroism, all the money and munitions in the world will not win this war UNLESS OUR ALLIES AND THE ARMIES BEHIND THEM ARE FED.” (p. 4)

This brochure offers a chart of all the foods that families should use sparingly, such as beef, pork, sugar, bacon, butter, candy, and white bread. Suggested substitutes are written along side these items. Recipes are not offered here, just rationalization for the efforts for which the government is asking.

Y 3.F73/2:W56/3

This brochure is written to explain to the homemaker why it is important for all Americans to cut back on their consumption of wheat. She is encouraged to give the service that is needed, and is told, “That service now is until the next harvest for you to share your wheat with you comrades across the sea—for you who can afford it to give your whole share to them.” (p.1)
Details are given about the citizens in countries such as England, France, and Italy who are no longer able to import wheat as once was the practice, and the fact that bread has in the past been one of their chief sources of nutrition. There is a list of various cereals and cereal substitutes that can be used to replace the wheat normally used in the American home. There are three charts making measuring for substitution easier and six detailed recipes.

1920s


The authors state to the homemaker that even though she surely wants a cut of meat that would be most desirable for her family, she also must choose one that is “consistent with the contents of her pocketbook” (p. 2). Tender cuts are mentioned, but more space is dedicated to how to cook the less-tender cuts (less expensive). There is also one recipe for beef croquettes, which utilizes leftover cooked ground beef. Slower cooking and additional moisture, such as that from simply adding a little water, are emphasized to make the less tender cuts more appetizing.
This pamphlet stresses the versatility of eggs and how they may use alone or in breads, cakes, sauces, desserts, or served with a variety of meats. The authors emphasize how eggs are very high in food value, and that in no matter how they are prepared or served, that “are a good source of efficient protein and some of the minerals and vitamins needed for building the body and keeping it healthy.” (p.2) There are several recipes given for breakfast, soufflés, sauces, and desserts.

This pamphlet offers the housewife suggestions on how to serve lamb as well as noting the most economical cuts to purchase. There are recipes for sauces, stuffings, and gravies to accompany the lamb as well as two detailed recipes for lamb itself. Using a meat thermometer is recommended to determined doneness.

The authors state in the first paragraph that “roast lamb is one of the best meats for slicing cold” and can be utilized as a left-over in many appetizing hot dishes. Later, the concept of “hot dishes” is stressed again by explaining that, “Whatever way lamb is cooked, if it is to be served hot, it should be piping hot on hot plates, because the fat hardens as soon as it begins to cool.” (p. 1)
A 1.35:45

The authors report that with modern refrigeration methods, it is possible to eat fresh pork meat, not just the cured varieties, during all seasons. General tips are given as far as the fat that is part of the pork and moisture that is needed for the most tender dishes. Emphasis is placed on thorough cooking in case the pork contains the trichina parasite, which can cause illness if not destroyed. The housewife is told that heating to the well-done stage will erase all traces of this parasite.

There are thirteen recipes here, including several for accompanying dishes such as stuffings and various cooked fruits.

A 1.35:26

Maude Campbell stresses the importance of the simple dress for a little girl. Too much elaborate trim can detract from the child and maybe even make her feel self-conscious and not as comfortable. Also, if a dress is free of frills, the child can begin dressing herself at an earlier age, enabling her to care for herself and becoming more independent. Even though exact pattern designs are not given, suggestions for sewing are provided for easier creation and more suitable playtime, such as a ragland sleeve for easier movement and arm and leg bands of cloth instead of elastic for less binding. Wide hems are recommended so that the length can be extended as the child grows, thus increasing the life of the garment.
Mary Davis writes here of the importance of direct sunlight on a growing child and how the proper clothes make it easier for the child to play outside if he does not get “tangled up in a dress and petticoat every time he starts to creep” (p. 2). This leaflet does not offer a pattern from which to make rompers, but simply describes the convenience of such clothing for children from infant to eight years of age. Davis emphasizes the importance of plain design and material in a romper by stating that odd closings, bows, and ruffles do not belong on this play suit. Age and various stages of toilet training are considered to determine which type of leg and crotch closings are best.


“The removal of stains is a necessary feature of the laundering and general care of clothing and other household textiles.” (p. 1) The authors stress the importance of removing the stain while it is still fresh in order to prevent the clothing from being ruined.

Various stain removers are discussed in relation to the stains in which they best remove, such as hot water for fruit stains and soap for grease. The type of garment material is to be considered when choosing the stain remover, because cotton and linen can be destroyed by strong acids. Wool and silk are even more delicate and can be ruined by hot water.
There are separate sections that discuss some of the most common stains, such as chocolate, fruit juice, butter, and candle wax. There are also 3 photographs and a table of contents.

A 1.35:24

Ruth O’Brien writes about the importance of sunbaths for the health of children to keep them well and for the “many sick children to help make them well.” (p.1) The homemaker is told that the health-giving ultra-violet rays do not pass through glass, so sunbaths are to either take place outdoors or in front of an open window. However, it is suggested that a physician be consulted for length of exposure, because treatments lasting too long are not recommended. The sun suits shown in this pamphlet (designs for both boys and girls), are recommended for such activities, and one small pattern and several materials are suggested for long wear and easy washing.

A 1.35:42

Rowena Schmidt instructs mothers on the importance of starting their children early with good eating habits. Helping them to “develop the habit of eating the right foods is the foundation of good nutrition.” (p. 2) It is best to slowly introduce new foods to young children, allowing them to clear their plates of one or two familiar foods before serving a new one. This way they don’t become so overwhelmed.
It is also good to serve meals at regular, well-space intervals to establish sound eating patterns. It’s important for adults at the table to set a good example by practicing the same such habits. Encouraging a young child to feed himself is recommended, and the joy of his accomplishment can encourage him to continue with healthy habits.

There are seven photographs and a list of simple tips to make mealtime with children more enjoyable and successful.


The authors write, “The reindeer herds of Alaska, introduced by Government agencies to supply food for the natives, have now developed until their keeping is looked upon as the most practical agricultural industry of Alaska.” (p. 1) They also write that because of improvement in refrigeration and transportation standards, the meat is being more generally distributed, and “housewives are asking for information as to its use.”

In this pamphlet there is information concerning the various cuts of reindeer and how to decide which cut is the most desirable, because the reindeer is different in size and shape from the more common meats, such as beef cattle or lamb. There are sixteen recipes for cooking and serving reindeer, including several for accompanying fruit or other stuffings.
1930s


Parsnips are not often grown commercially, but this pamphlet reports that they are grown in local markets and home gardens. “Few garden crops give greater response to good soil, ample moisture, and good culture than does the parsnip.” (p.1)

There is information given on the various types of parsnips, finest type of soil, quantity of fertilizer (manure is recommended), and cultivation. There is also a section explaining that the best way to store parsnips is in some type of cold storage, such as a root cellar. If cold storage is not available, they may even be left in the ground until spring. The homemaker is warned not to confuse the parsnip with a related wild plant called the water hemlock (also known as the wild parsnip), for this wild plant is poisonous.


The authors begin by telling the housewife that because of the drought of the previous year there is less meat to be found at the market, and what is there lacks the fat necessary for a more flavorful piece of meat. The cook is encouraged to cook at lower temperatures after browning to prevent tough servings.
“Savory seasonings add zest to many a homely dish at little cost.” (p. 1) Several seasonings for meat are recommended, such as sage, parsley, celery seed, thyme, pepper, horseradish, garlic, and curry.

There is a table of contents, two photographs, and many recipes, including those for soup, beef roasts, and a variety of organ meats.

A 1.35:103

The author explains the various characteristics to be considered when purchasing sheets and pillowcases for the home. Even though not every product has a thorough label, the buyer is told to look for information regarding thread count, tensile strength (breaking strength), weight, and amount of sizing (starch and other products used in manufacturing for a smooth finish). The homemaker is told not to pay attention to phrases such as “extra special”, but to “let the manufacturer know that you appreciate facts on the label.” (p. 1)

There are detailed sections on the various characteristics noted above, as well as federal specifications for cotton bleached pillowcases and sheets. There is also a portion of the pamphlet devoted to explaining how the length of the sheet determines a well-tailored bed.

“When you buy tempting bargains that prove after the first washing to be shoddy merchandise, you are cheating yourself. Also you are helping to undermine conditions for everybody from the farmer who grows the cotton to the people who weave it into
cloth and the men and women who sell it to you as finished sheets. The Government is trying to better these conditions for the good of everybody.” (p.1)


A 1.35:105

Clarice Scott begins by reporting that in the retail stores there are all styles and qualities of dresses available, and it is sometimes difficult to decide which dress, at what cost, made out of what materials, would be best suited for the needs and the pocketbook of the one making the purchase. Homemakers want to choose their dresses wisely, and “the cost of dresses for the womenfolk may be one of the very important items in the total family budget.” (p.1)

There is a section on how to judge the quality of the fabric, and also sections explaining about the various types of fabrics available, such as cottons, silks, wools, and synthetic fabrics. The homemaker is told to look for wide hems (in case after several washing the garment shrinks and the hem needs to be extended), even stitching, and reinforcements. She is encouraged to look for labels to tell about the fibers used to make the dress.


A 1.35:117

Clarice Scot points out that one of the reasons buying a coat can be so difficult that a coat is usually composed of several different materials and is manufactured in such
a way that many of the qualities to be considered are hidden. “Yet a coat usually represents a considerable outlay of money, and it must stand wear in all kinds of weather generally for at least three or four years. “(p. 1)

There is a section focusing on considering the use of the coat (such as business or dressy), when deciding fabric, style, and price. There are sections that describe the various aspects of a coat, such as the lining, interlining, workmanship, pressing, trims, and fastenings. The homemaker is discouraged from purchasing a coat selling at a spectacular low price, because both quality and amount of material are kept down, and “cheap labor is employed and forced to produce volume rather than quality.”(p.5) The pamphlet concludes with a list of points to consider when buying just the right coat.

A 1.35:112

Mabel Stienbarger begins by writing about the various types of rice available and the standard cooking times for each. She explains that brown rice, even though it is higher in food value than white, is not as common on the American market and contains more fat. Increased fat means that it is “more likely to become rancid and infested with insects.” (p. 2) She also states that wild rice, which can be particularly enjoyed in stuffings and along side wild game, is not a true rice but the seed of a grass that grows in marshy areas. Also, rice is a starchy food and supplies the body with energy at low cost.

There are thirteen recipes for rice in the pamphlet, including two dessert recipes.
A 42.2:R24/rev.

The book presents 400 recipes and 90 menus from the radio show known as Housekeeper’s Chats (begun in 1926). Full menus are printed for each meal of the day, as well as special ones for holidays or certain times of the year. The recipes include soups, salads, vegetables, meats, main dishes, and desserts.

There is a chart describing oven temperatures and a chart explaining equivalent measurements. There is also a table of contents and an index.

A 1.35:111

The authors present this pamphlet because of all the many qualities a homemaker must consider when purchasing a blanket. She needs to look for features of durability, such as weight that is heavy enough for the warmth needed (but not so heavy that it is uncomfortable), strength that is resilient enough to withstand multiple washings, and a price that is not so expensive that she cannot buy enough for her family.

There are portions written about the sizes, weights, various fibers, the importance of napping (a finishing process), weave, and the binding at the ends. Even though not all blankets come with a complete label, there is one section that states the different qualities that should appear on the label of a blanket.

The authors report that the soybean has a higher food value than other common table beans. They are richer in protein and fat and can be used to a better advantage than others, because they have about one-and-a-half times the protein and twelve times as much fat. However, the carbohydrate benefit is lower than other table beans. They are also rich in vitamins A and B₁. Flour made from soy beans, though, once the oil is extracted, is low in fat but high in protein and carbohydrates.

There is information given on the varieties of soybeans, how to use the soybean as a green vegetable (either shelled or still in the pod), and also how to cook them as dried beans. Fourteen recipes are provided, as well as a table of contents.


The authors begin by telling homemakers that there are 160 to 215 million pounds of honey produced by bees in America. Even though sugar at this time is used more than honey, this pamphlet’s purpose is to present to the homemaker information about the various types of honey and the functions for which each is most suited.

There are suggested ways to use honey, such as in cooking with fruit, ham, or in custards. It can be used in jellies, preserves, candy, bread, and cookies. There are ten recipes for utilizing honey and two charts showing how to substitute various portions of honey for sugar in either a white cake or a chocolate cake recipe.

A 1.35:66

The authors begin by discussing the growth of the rabbit industry in the United States, stating that these animals are being raised for both food and fur. When reporting about the food value and flavor of domestic rabbit, they say, “All the meat on a domestic rabbit is white and delicately flavored throughout. In food value, the rabbit falls with poultry and other meats as a source of efficient protein.” (p. 2) The housewife is advised that if she is cooking an older rabbit, she needs to cook it slower and longer, just as she would any mature fowl or other less-tender cut of meat.

There are nine recipes provided, including one for a cold, marinated rabbit salad.
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