

WILLIAM C. BIERRUM
EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN KITCHEN

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EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN KITCHEN

Architecture 447 - Thesis

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Fall, 1959

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to the following for their help in the construction of this paper:

Mrs. Janet Bierrum, Typist

Miss Jane Cornish, Director of Appliances and Home Care,
Good Housekeeping Institute

Miss Margaret Davidson, Homemaking Editor, Ladies' Home Journal

Mr. Verne Dusenberry, Associate Professor, Department of English, Montana State College

Mr. L. S. Goode, Editorial Information, Better Homes and Gardens

Mr. William J. Ketcham, Kitchen Planner, Hotpoint Corporation

Mrs. Evelyn McCormick, Associate Professor of Home Economics, Montana State College

Mrs. Mae True, Home Management Specialist, Montana State College

Mr. Laurence Wray, Editor, Electrical Merchandising Week

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INTRODUCTION

I have chosen for the topic of my thesis, "Evolution of the American Kitchen." The kitchen is an integral part of American family life, and many activities are centered around it. Has the kitchen really taken on a completely new face, or has it retained much of its original character? Have past-day family traditions become non-existent due to the mechanization of modern-day kitchens? Has the kitchen lost its "cozy" atmosphere?

This paper is intended, for the most part, to be a historical account of a function closely associated with architecture and is confined to the kitchen of the American home.

The periods of the kitchen in relation to our American culture fall into three general categories:

- 1) Colonial
- 2) Post-Colonial - 1918
- 3) 1918 - 1960.

This span of time has seen America grow from a primarily agrarian state into a strong industrial nation.

The tremendous growth has affected everything from the candle to the skyscraper; however, those things associated with everyday human activity have been affected more directly. Among these is the kitchen which has changed more than any room in the home; and, along with it, the American way of life.

Appliances which make up the mechanical aspect of the kitchen have been through a transformation period and are continually being "improved".

The fourth period -- a period of speculation -- concerns the kitchen of the future which takes us further into the ever-changing world of tomorrow.

I. THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The kitchen in the farm and town houses of the colonies was the most cheerful, homelike, and picturesque room. The craftsmen of that day had few tools. Those they had were simple and crude; however, the homes they put together were well-built with plain, uncluttered walls of wood paneling, simple rafters with exposed construction, small windows, and simple furniture. The kitchen portrayed a character of warmth with a glowing hearth that spread light and welcome and made the simple room a home.¹

Some Dutch houses adapted what was known in the South as the "slave kitchen", a detached part of the main house where the cooking was done for the Negro house and farm servants.² Mount Vernon, the estate of George Washington, had this arrangement.

Orientation of these early kitchens was given careful consideration. As a fire was always burning in the kitchen, its logical placement was on the north side; the other rooms in the house were placed in the more favorable positions to capture the warmth of the sun.³

In the kitchen, the fireplace predominated. The chimneys and fireplaces were enormous in size. Quite often the forelogs and backlogs for

¹Alice Morse Earle, Home Life in Colonial Days (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1906), p. 52.

²Ibid., p. 54.

³Albert F. Bemis and John Burchard, 2nd, The Evolving House, Vol. I (Cambridge, Mass.: The Technology Press, 1933), p. 264.

the fire were dragged in by a horse. Some families resorted to a hand-sled which was always available for bringing in the wood. For most fireplaces of that era, an allowance of thirty to sixty cords of wood per year was not unusual.⁴ Large chimneys were a necessity. The only safe method of construction was from wood daubed with clay.⁵

It must have been a wonderful sight to see these fireplaces piled high with logs, roaring and snapping and giving forth a bone-warming heat. Its glow was cast over the modest interiors giving the home an unequaled elegance. One can understand why the fireplace was a necessity, not only from the standpoint of utility but also for its psychological effect in helping the settlers to forget their homesickness and loneliness.

The wood chimneys of the early settlers, which often caught on fire, were soon replaced by large stone chimneys, built with projecting inner ledges. A bar, called the lug pole, rested on this ledge about six or eight feet from the floor. This pole was first made of green wood; but the wood soon dried out, caught fire and broke, sometimes causing fatal accidents. These wood bars were soon replaced with iron rods. Large iron hooks were attached to the rod from which were suspended pots and kettles at varying lengths. The successor to the lug pole was a Yankee invention called the "swinging crane" which appeared a century after the first settlement. This proved to be a helpful and convenient substitute.⁶

⁴Ibid., p. 270.

⁵Sherman L. Whipple and T. F. Waters, Puritan Homes (Ipswich Historical Society, 1929), p. 23.

⁶Earle, pp. 52-53.

Included in the inventory of one Matthew Whipple were several pairs of andirons used to support logs of varying lengths; within reach of the fireplace were bellows and tongs, the firepan for carrying hot coals, and the firefork for use about the hearth. Three brass pots that weighed sixty-eight pounds each, a copper pot that weighed forty pounds, a copper baking pan, a great brass pan, spits for roasts, iron dripping pans to catch the juices, gridirons and frying pans, a trivet (three-legged support for hot pots or pans), an iron peel or shovel for the brick oven, and the invaluable warming pan were common appliances around the heart of the house.⁷

On the mantel over the fireplace and across the top of the room were long poles from which hung strings of peppers, dried apples, and rings of dried pumpkin. In the most honored place above the mantel, the old Queen's-arm or fowling-piece rested with dignity.⁸ The array of vegetables and fruits made a colorful bouquet which offset the lack of "ornamentation".

An accompaniment of the fireplace in the Eighteenth Century was the "roasting-oven" or Dutch oven. This was a box-like arrangement open on one side which was placed toward the fire when in use. A door in the back of the oven could be opened for convenience in basting, etc.⁹

Another aid in the roasting of morsels was the turnspit dog --

⁷Whipple and Waters, pp. 23-24.

⁸Earle, p. 56.

⁹Earle, pp. 65-66.

a carry-over from the European way of life. This little, low, bow-legged creature was trained to run in a revolving cylinder and keep the roast revolving before the fire.¹⁰

As for other articles which graced the Colonial kitchen, almost every great house had a court cupboard, a Bible-box, several chairs, a table and some forms (now called "stools"). An oak cradle stood in the corner by the fire to keep the baby warm. A dresser which contained the pewter and earthenware, plate, spoon, and knife racks was also found.¹¹ Another furnishing, much like a closet, was the "turn-up" bedstead. This was a strong frame filled with a network of rope which was fastened to the wall at the head of the bed by hinges. By day, the frame with its bed was hooked up to the wall and covered with homespun curtains or with doors; by night the foot of the bed rested on two legs. This provided the sleeping place for the head of the household, chosen because the kitchen was the warmest room in the house.¹²

One of the last additions to the household furnishings was the kitchen clock. This clock was run by the counter-weight principle, and many were remodeled in the early part of the 18th Century, as noted in the Boston News Letter of October 6, 1707:¹³

¹⁰Earle, p. 65.

¹¹R.T.H. Halsey and Elizabeth Tower, The Homes of Our Ancestors (Garden City, Long Island: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1925), p. 12.

¹²Earle, p. 55.

¹³Halsey and Tower, p. 14.

This is to give Notice to all Gentlemen and others that there is lately arrived in Boston from London by way of Pennsylvania a Clock Maker. If any person or persons hath any occasion for New Clocks; or, to have old Ones turn'd into Pendulums, or anything in making or mending: Let them repair to the South Side of the Town-House in Boston, where they may have them done at reasonable rates.

Per James Batterson

Toward the middle of the 18th Century some thought was beginning to be directed more earnestly toward the development of stoves. The Pennsylvania Germans were the first to use stoves. These stoves came in various shapes and sizes, but a type often seen in houses and churches was of sheet metal, box-shaped with three sides indoors and the fourth on the outside of the house. In order to tend the fire in such a stove, it was necessary for the operator to go outdoors and open the door for deposit of fuel. Benjamin Franklin no doubt gained a bit of knowledge from these early-day contraptions and put it to use when he developed the "New Pennsylvania Fireplace" of 1742. Both coal and wood could be used in this invention which was somewhat like the heating apparatus now known as the Franklin stove or heater.¹⁴

¹⁴ Earle, p. 69

II. PERIOD FROM 1776-1918

The architect became a definite factor in the American community by the beginning of the Revolution. He took his part in the building of homes for the "better classes".

Cooking was still done over the open fire in rooms known as "summer kitchens". The fireplace continued to have the big brick oven that was usually fired twice a week, and all the baking was done at one time. A hot fire would be made in the oven; and then, when the bricks were thoroughly heated, the coals would be scraped out with a big iron scraper. The coals were then dumped into the fireplace. At this time, the roasts, fowls, pies, and bread were shoved into the evenly heated oven. The early iron stoves which came out around 1845 were severely criticized for baking things only on one side.¹⁵

The family of this period was a closely knit group. Each member had special jobs, and many tasks required the whole family. Amusement was simple, including spinning and quilting bees for the women, horseshoe pitching for the men, and taffy pulling for the youngsters.¹⁶

When evening reading was desired, the individual would select a coal from the fireplace with tongs, hold it against a candle

¹⁵David L. Cohn, The Good Old Days (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1940), p. 401.

¹⁶Bemis and Burchard, I, p. 298.

(usually home-made) and blow. Some people who owned camphor lamps were a bit more fortunate. It wasn't until 1822 in Boston that gas was adopted for lighting purposes.¹⁷

America left the Georgian Period and entered into a period of expansion (1820 - 1865). This period grew more and more hectic as constant verbal battles developed between the North and South. The period was also one of wealth and elegance as expressed by one of the Greek revival periods. This period of leisure and elegance was retained in the South until the Civil War, and was perhaps the only such period this nation has even known or will ever know again.

A strong contrast resulted from the Southern slave-owning agrarian way of life and the straining for culture in the industrialized North. The greatest influence upon the American home resulted from the North. The South still had the kitchen detached from the main house, which was presided over by an old mammy who, without recipes and under the direction of the mistress, produced delectable dishes.¹⁸

The South had achieved its objectives, while the North was still pondering its next goal. This period of tremendous growth in the North predominated for nearly a half-century.

Coal became the most sought-after fuel, and the coal grate for a time was more popular than the wood fireplace. In 1836, a wood stove, called "airtight", was patented; and by 1853 heating

¹⁷Cohn, p. 402.

¹⁸Bemis and Burchard, I, pp. 301-303.

stoves were quite common. Bricking up of fireplaces had begun. Next came furnaces, and, as a result, central heating. Consequently, the chimney became less important in the design of the home.¹⁹

Strides were being made in communication and transportation, and factories were rapidly being built, particularly in New England.

Westward expansion had been underway for some time. A Kansas dug-out where the pioneer was setting up house-keeping might be described as follows. The dug-out was one room which averaged 14' x 16' on the inside. The ceiling was about eight feet at the center and seven feet at the sides. A heavy sod roof with a blanket of hay and earth covered the sod-walled structure. The floor was at a depth of two to three feet below the ground level. The roof was made up of six or eight pairs of rafters on which boards were nailed. Round sticks and corn stalks were placed between the boards to act as chinking. The interior was similar to the following plan.²⁰

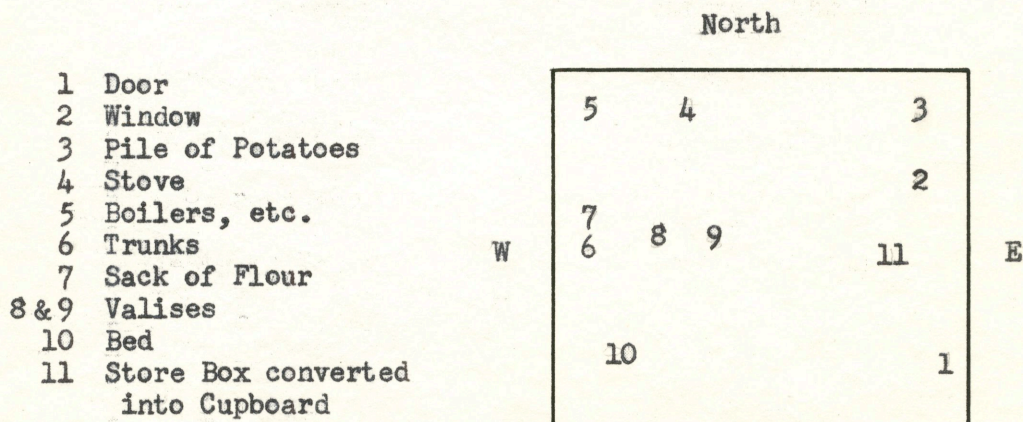


Figure 1

¹⁹Bemis and Burchard, I, pp. 301-303.

²⁰Howard Ruede, Sod-House Days (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 142.

A claim staker's inventory was as follows:²¹

Stove		
Tin Wash Boiler	6 Forks and Knives, 12 Spoons	\$2.35
2 Iron Pots	Lamp and Chimney	.75
Tea Kettle	Bucket	.25
2 Spiders	Salt	.10
3 Griddles	Rice	.25
3 Bread Pans	1/2 dozen China Plates	.85
2 Tin Plates	2 Bowls	.24
Steamer	2 Store Boxes	1.00
Coffee Pot	Sugar	.25
Coal Oil Can	Soap	.25
Gridiron	Coffee	.35
4 Tin Cups	Coal Oil	.20
Wash Basin	100# Flour	3.00
Pepper Box	1# Butter	.15
2# Nails		

Total Cost - \$25.40

Total Cost - \$9.99

The kitchen in the home of 1885 was affected by many processes and inventions. A process of manufacturing aluminum ware saved a lot of scrubbing and scouring. The invention of the ice refrigerator in 1890 saved on the monthly food bill. Gas had become a common fuel in the city, and electricity was making its appearance. Stoves using the energy of these conveniences were becoming popular. Scientific minded individuals were kept busy inventing all types of labor-saving devices, such as power mixers and grinders.²²

Canned and packaged foods were welcomed by the housewife as real time-savers. These methods of preservation proved to be economical, as well as convenient.

The carpet sweepers were being replaced by vacuum cleaners which

²¹Ibid.

²²Bemis and Burchard, I, p. 303.

came into existence at the turn of the century. New flooring materials, such as linoleum, were introduced; these materials required much less upkeep.²³

Lighting by gas was the accepted method until 1878 when Thomas Edison invented the carbon filament, and the electric light was created. This invention was further improved when the tungsten filament appeared. Electric lighting was beginning to be universal. The supply of water to the house continued to be governed by the kitchen pump.²⁴

The stoves of 1905 were described as quite ugly and difficult to maintain. These stoves were designed according to the wishes of the homemaker who demanded that her stove be ornamented. As usual, she got what she wanted but paid for it in the form of labor -- polishing not only the black surfaces, but also the nickel-plated ornaments that splotched the surfaces.²⁵

Fuels were abundant; wood, coal, coke, gas, kerosene, and gasoline were available for use in stoves. The main disadvantages of wood, coal, and coke were that they were heavy to handle and left residues of ashes which had to be removed by hand. Kerosene stoves smoked and gave off an unpleasant odor; in addition, they were quite dangerous. Gasoline, too, was unpredictable. The one stove that proved to be satisfactory was the gas type. This stove operated cleanly and easily; however, the number produced was limited due to the scarcity of artificial gas.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Cohn, p. 412.

When the day began, the average housewife of 1905 had the task of preparing meals over the constant heat of the cookstove. This, in turn, necessitated an endless cycle of carrying fuel to the stove and carrying the ashes away. When the cooking was completed, the stove was allowed to cool and was then cleaned and polished.²⁶

One of the most successful methods of keeping food is by cooling. The earliest facility for cooling was found in the "sweetly flowing" spring; however, this proved impossible for many families, as there were few or no springs in some areas. Ice factories began a thriving business; but the area they served was limited. The old-fashioned ice-box was used by those families to whom either natural or artificial ice was available. This proved to be somewhat inconvenient, because its use involved frequent moppings of the floor where the ice-man had dragged the cake of ice. In addition, the housewife was forever emptying the bucket into which the ice had melted. In 1905, the household refrigerator appealed to the aesthetic eye of the housewife. It was ornately carved from solid ash and given an antique finish. Solid bronze trimmings adorned the carved box which was said to have "most perfect insulation". The price of such a luxury which could use either natural or artificial ice was \$13.80.²⁷

This portion of the paper gives a limited view of yesterday's kitchen. What was produced through the use of these elaborate conveniences? In Grandmother's day, food was to eat, not to study.

²⁶Cohn, pp. 412-413.

²⁷Cohn, pp. 407-8.

She was primarily concerned with keeping a well-supplied table. She had progressed since her own grandmother's day, and now could afford to chuckle at such dishes as Potted Swan, Ox-Cheek Pye, or the Great Cake, the icing for which called for the "whites of twenty-four eggs, a pound of refined sugar, and two hours of constant beating." However, her "receipts", as they were called, were still quite inaccurate in their measurements. Some of the directions called for a "handful", or a "fistfull", or "teacup", or a "coffee cup", or a "wineglass", or a "tumbler", or just "take some".²⁸

²⁸Caroline B. King, "A Century of American Cookery," Vol. CI, No. 3, The Country Gentleman, March, 1931, pp. 125-26.

III. PERIOD FROM 1918-1960

By the turn of the century, homemakers were talking in terms of the "model kitchen". Reference was made to this kitchen, making it almost inexcusable for an architect or builder to erect a house containing an inconvenient time-and-labor-consuming kitchen. The plan on the following page (Figure 2) is an example of this "model kitchen". It is 8'-10" x 16'-0" in size. Two pantries separate the kitchen from the dining room. The placement of the various appliances, etc., seems to have a definite purpose. The stove is placed between the two windows, the oven is placed on the left above the open burners thus protecting them from the window; the open gas plates are placed away from the other window to avoid any direct breeze. The position of the table is under the window in order that it may be conveniently served from the stove. If a hot-water boiler is used, it should be placed out of the way in a corner, allowing enough room behind the boiler for cleaning. An insulating jacket of canvas or felt is recommended to prevent radiation loss. The sink with drainboards is against an inside wall in direct relation to the pantry. A sliding window above the sink allows the passage of dishes from the kitchen to storage in the pantry. Two closets are easily accessible from the kitchen, one to store the cleaning implements and the other the pots and pans. The service pantry is intended to supply the dining room and also to store perishable and temporary food supplies

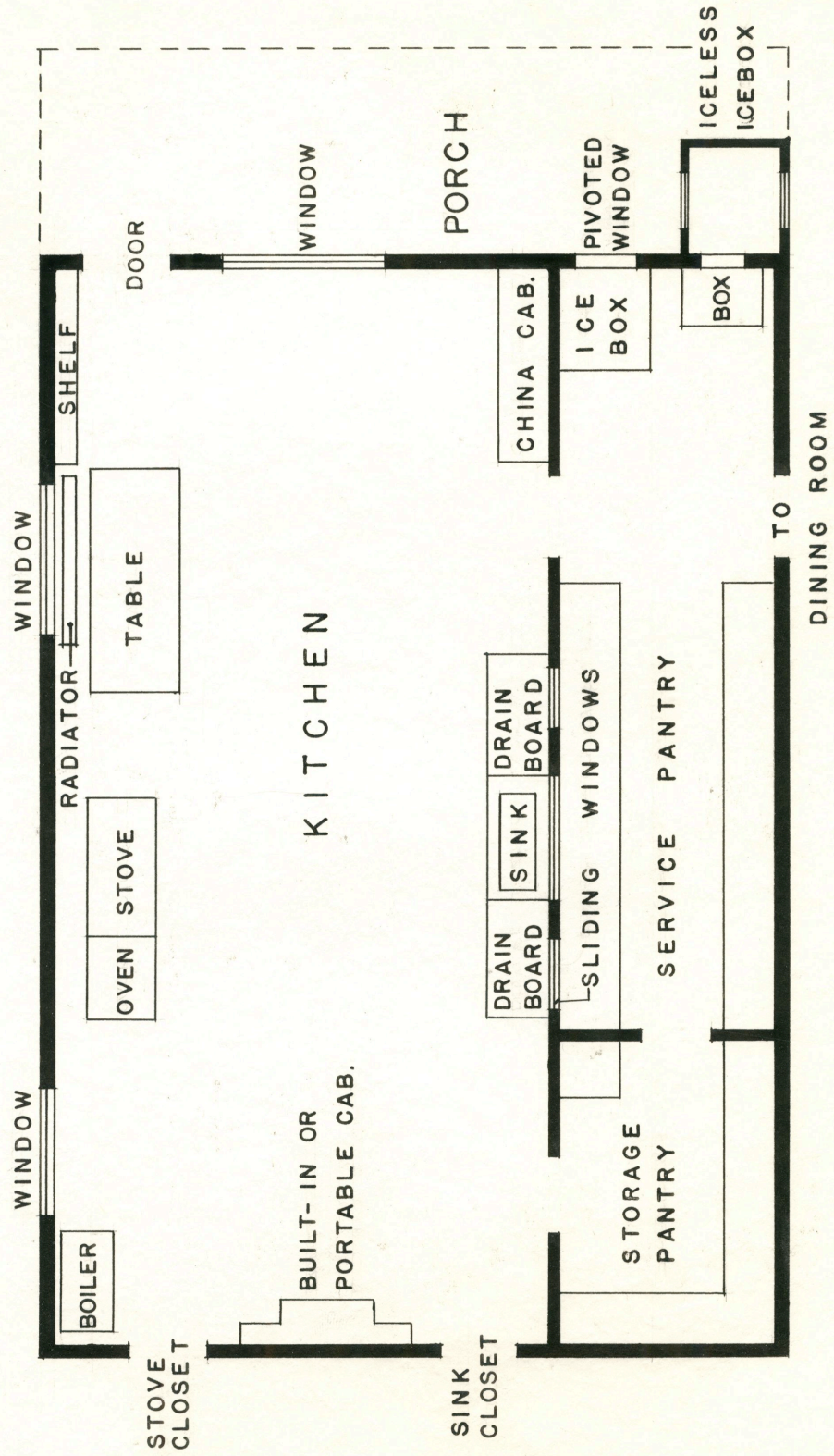


Fig. 2 - "Model Kitchen"

1918

which are not kept in the refrigerator. In the left-hand corner is the refrigerator which has an outside door on the kitchen porch for the receiving of ice. In this manner, the iceman need not enter the house.²⁹

The box-like device built upon the outside of the house and opening into the service pantry is an iceless icebox. It consists of two thicknesses of wood with an air space between. Fresh air is admitted and dust is kept out by ventilators covered with cheesecloth. This box is used for storage of food which may be subjected to outside temperatures if ice is not available. Food might also be stored in the box during the seasons when ice is not needed.

Another home-made device used to keep food quite successfully in the South was the evaporator refrigerator. This device used a simple wooden frame covered with wire screening. The frame had a covering of canton flannel, burlap, Indian-head cloth, or linen crash made to fit, admitting very little air. Wicks of the same material were tacked on the top and each side of the cover; these wicks extended over the sides into a pan of water sitting on top of the frame. The water was taken up by the wicks and carried along the sides of the cooler by capillary action. Evaporation then took place, drawing the heat from the inside and lowering the temperature. Tests made with this refrigerator have recorded temperatures of 50° F.³⁰

²⁹C.W. Taber, The Business of the Household (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1918), pp. 250-255.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 255-56.

A new power refrigerator attachment, operated by an electric motor or gas engine, could be added to almost any refrigerator. This attachment was located in a separate room or directly on the refrigerator. With this device, a temperature of 45° F. or lower could be reached. The initial cost was quite high; however, the savings on ice and food for a large family would in time justify the expenditure.³¹

The storage pantry was used to store goods purchased in bulk which were not for immediate consumption. The cook used this pantry as her source of supplies, while the service pantry served the needs of the dining room.³²

After the First World War, further awareness of kitchen planning developed. Articles and books began to appear on the subject. Ten years before, the average kitchen was the most neglected and poorly equipped room in the home. Now efficient arrangement of the working center was the primary consideration in planning kitchens. Even architects, contractors, and manufacturers were being influenced by the new idea of making the kitchen convenient and beautiful.³³

This was also the period when the roomy kitchen was giving way to the specialized kitchenette. This change was due to the lack of domestic workers and to a period of high rent. More thought and study were put into space usage, and ready-made cabinets were appearing.

³¹Ibid., p. 256.

³²Ibid., p. 258.

³³ George Boynton Child, The Efficient Kitchen (New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1925), p. 229.

These cabinets were made of wood or enameled steel. The dining room disappeared and became a small appendage of the kitchen, called the "breakfast alcove" or "Pullman-nook". The outdoor breakfast porch was a restful place in which to enjoy a meal in beautiful surroundings. Back yards were being designed along with the house.³⁴

Labor-saving electric appliances for the home took the place of household workers around 1924. These appliances were recognized as a paying investment which enabled the housekeeper to overcome the burden of housework and, in turn, have a shorter work week. The following list of appliances includes those which were quite well perfected at this time:³⁵

- Electric Iron
- Small Electrical Appliances -- Percolator, Toaster, etc.
- Electric Washing Machine
- Electric Vacuum Cleaner
- Electric Waffle Iron
- Electric Fireless Cooker
- Electric Fan
- Electric Radiator
- Electric Dishwashing Machine
- Electric Ironing Machine
- Electric Refrigerator

The kitchen of the 1930's was regulated according to the size of the house. This was the Depression Period, and the Government was doing most of the building. Houses were small, as they would require less material and consequently cost less to build. The kitchen of the "bungalow" was similar to the one of the 1920's. A small, closed space served both as the kitchen and dining room, and a sterile appearance

³⁴Ibid., p. 230.

³⁵Ibid., p. 236.

resulted from the gleaming white walls, fixtures, and cabinets. A new method of starching the kitchen wall was developed which enabled the housewife to clean the paint semiannually with little effort and without marring its appearance. After the paint was dry, a thin solution of starch was applied to the walls. During the year, the dirt settled in the starch and was then removed by washing off the starch with warm water. The starch treatment was again applied and protected the walls until the next cleaning.³⁶

In 1932 the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership released a series of volumes entitled Household Management and Kitchens. Problems concerned with kitchens that needed improvement in planning, construction, arrangement, equipment, ventilation, lighting and sanitation were covered. Considerable time was spent in locating the kitchen. Such questions as the following were asked. "Is the kitchen conveniently located in relation to the dining area, rest center, children's play space, front entrance, telephone, laundry, and washroom? Is equipment arranged to save steps in preparing, cooking, serving and cleaning up after meals? Is the location and storage of small equipment and supplies accessible from the work center? Are the heights of the work surfaces proper to minimize stooping and stretching? Is there toe room under all equipment at which the worker must stand? Is there a convenient place for delivery of groceries and supplies? Is there provision for carrying off fumes from gas range and oven, if gas is used? Is there

³⁶Ibid., p. 239.

a convenient sanitary arrangement for garbage disposal? Is the kitchen well lighted and ventilated?"³⁷

These questions were asked to initiate thinking on the part of the home owner about his way of life and how he might improve it.

This period was the beginning of a revolution in the technical aspects of kitchen design. More and varied materials began to appear. Around 1936 industry began to manufacture kitchen equipment on a large scale. Personnel specially trained to integrate equipment manufactured by the large corporations was supplied by the gas and electrical companies. The "streamlined" kitchen was the result.³⁸

During the early 1940's, the Second World War interrupted the manufacture of stoves and refrigerators. Little was done in regard to the kitchen during the War, but the pre-war study was the starting point for much research after the war. Companies such as Boeing were spending huge sums in their post-war programs. Designers of bombers were retained to think up new ideas which might affect the whole household. The unit core was one of these ideas. It included a total kitchen and bath, thus eliminating the need for "on the job construction". To my knowledge, these prefabricated units are still under study.

The kitchen of the late 1940's and early 1950's varied little

³⁷John M. Gries and James Ford, Household Management and Kitchens, Vol. IX (Washington, D. C.: National Capital Press, Inc., 1932), pp. 14-15.

³⁸Glenn H. Beyer, "The Cornell Kitchen" (Cornell University, 1952), p. 9.

in appearance from the pre-war one; however, appliances were available in colors as well as in white to match the decor of the room. New "gadgets" were being perfected and added to kitchen appliances.

Gradually, the kitchen has opened up. It is no longer confined within four walls but has become a more integral part of the other rooms in the house. This spacious feeling reminds us of the Colonial kitchen. Has a complete cycle of kitchen design taken place? Other characteristics of the modern-day kitchen make us more aware of the resemblance. The fireplace is making a comeback, not only from the living room side, but it now opens into many of the newer kitchens. The open barbeque is very popular; cooking over the open fire within the home is the most elegant method of preparing the meal. The space relationship has made one room from the kitchen, dining room, and living room with the activities overlapping. This characteristic was surely evident in our early American ancestor's home.

Family life has changed, too; but the kitchen is still the center of activity within the home.

IV. SPECULATION

Every period has a "kitchen of tomorrow". What will be the characteristics of the kitchen that succeeds our present-day one?

From some of the leading appliance manufacturers come a few hints. Some of these ideas have actually been under study and were recently displayed at the First American National Exhibition in Moscow. This kitchen included a centrally located planning center at which the lady of the house would sit in a specially designed contour chair. A closed-circuit TV set is located in the middle of the planning center from which the operator can view any room in the house; she can even "screen" visitors at the front door. The kitchen will have a meal planner which, when the proper button is pressed, produces an appropriate menu for the specific occasion. In order to determine if the menu can be prepared, another button is pushed, and an up-to-the-minute inventory of food on hand appears. The refrigerator is lowered automatically to a convenient level, and the food to complete the menu may be easily reached by the housewife. Vegetables are prepared automatically by setting the dial on the preparer unit to "peeled," "pared," "diced," etc. Wastes are disposed of automatically.

If the homemaker wishes to make a cake, she simply lowers the mixing unit to the specific bowl, adds the ingredients, selects the proper action, and the cake is mixed. After the mixing process, the

utensils are electronically cleaned. An electronic oven bakes the cake in three minutes.

Cans are opened automatically, and ice comes from a dispenser in any form you wish -- cubed or crushed.

If the homemaker becomes tired of the color and light of the kitchen, a button on the control center is pushed and this is remedied.

A semi-circular cooking surface surrounds the control center which quickly heats the food in a container to the right temperature. Both the container and the cooking surface remain cool; therefore, the cooking surface can be used as a dining surface. The cooking odors are eliminated by the electronic purifying system.

A self-propelled cart guides the china and silver to the table. After the meal, the cart returns and carries the dishes to the dishwasher where it cleans them.

If the floors are soiled, a mobile floor cleaner pops out and scurries about, first vacuuming and then scrubbing and rinsing the floor. After it is finished, the cleaner returns to its niche, empties the waste, and waits to be called again.

This "kitchen of tomorrow" might seem fantastic to us now as our kitchens might have seemed to our great-grandmothers had they been proposed. According to Whirlpool Corporation, however, it's the "coming thing".

CONCLUSION

In this modern day, a close family relationship is in constant conflict with outside pressures. How often does the family get together for an evening of singing around the fireplace or gather in the kitchen for a taffy-pull?

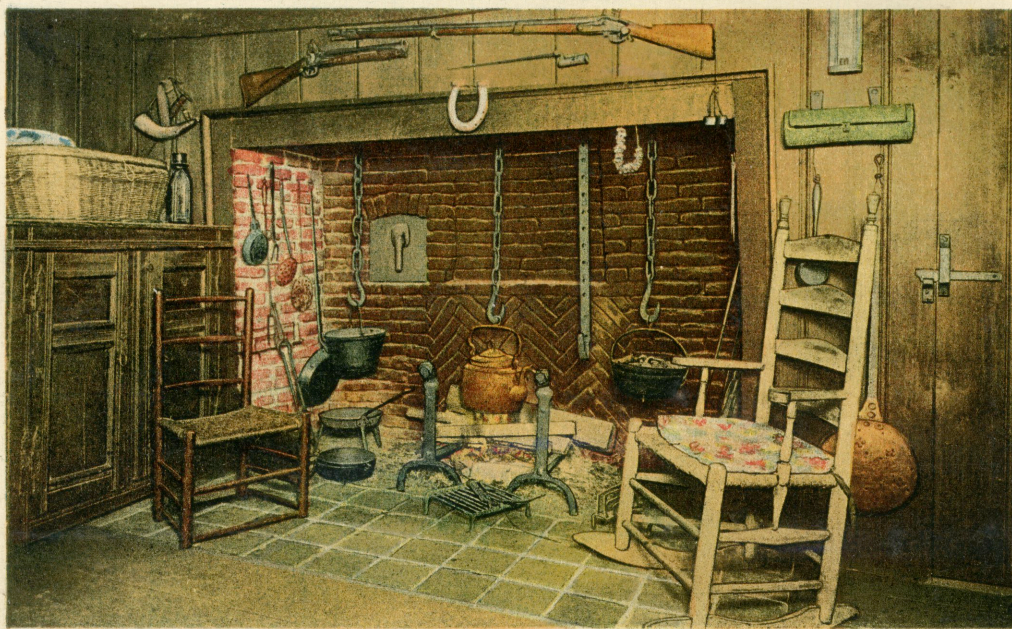
Today's efficient, mechanized kitchen is devoid of a cozy, intimate feeling. Efficiency experts have emphasized time and motion studies, labor-saving devices, etc., but they fail to recognize the family's psychological needs. When these are neglected, the kitchen loses its importance as the core of family living and becomes as mechanized and impersonal as a factory. I realize, of course, that conveniences and organization are important considerations, but I do not feel they should dominate the planning.

I firmly believe the main objective in designing kitchens should be the regaining of the warm, homey atmosphere of our early American kitchens. If we return to a kitchen with some of the characteristics of our ancestor's, we are not denying change but rather yielding to change by enhancing the life of the American family.

PICTORIAL EVOLUTION OF THE KITCHEN



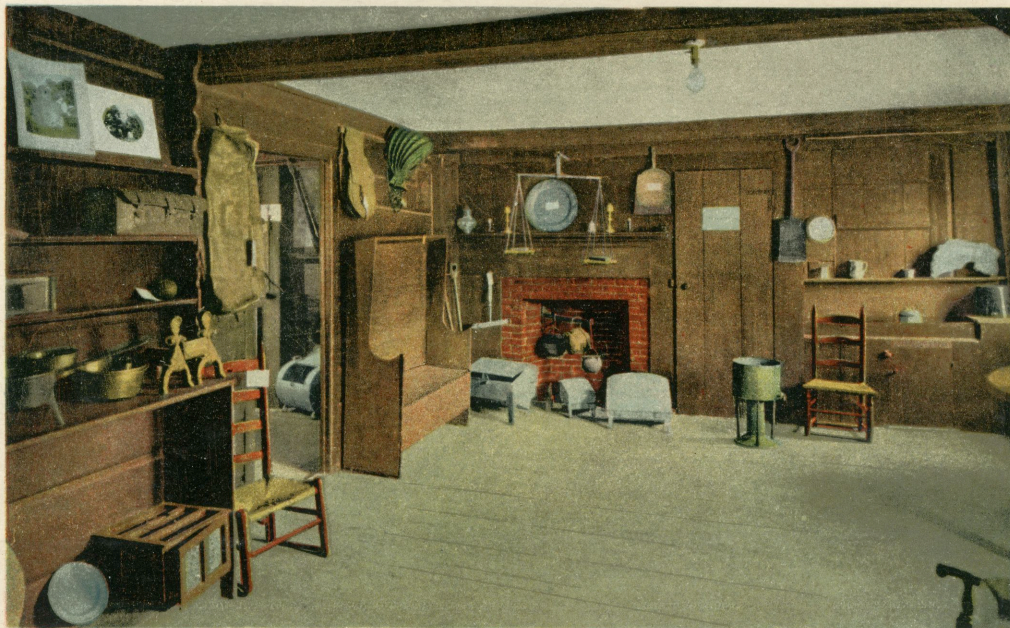
Fig. 3 - The Center of the Home



Y9289 THE OLD KITCHEN IN "THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES", SALEM, MASS.

COPYRIGHT C. O. EMMERTON

Fig. 4



6157 HANCOCK-CLARKE HOUSE, LEXINGTON, MASS.

COPR. DETROIT PHOTOGRAPHIC CO.

Fig. 5

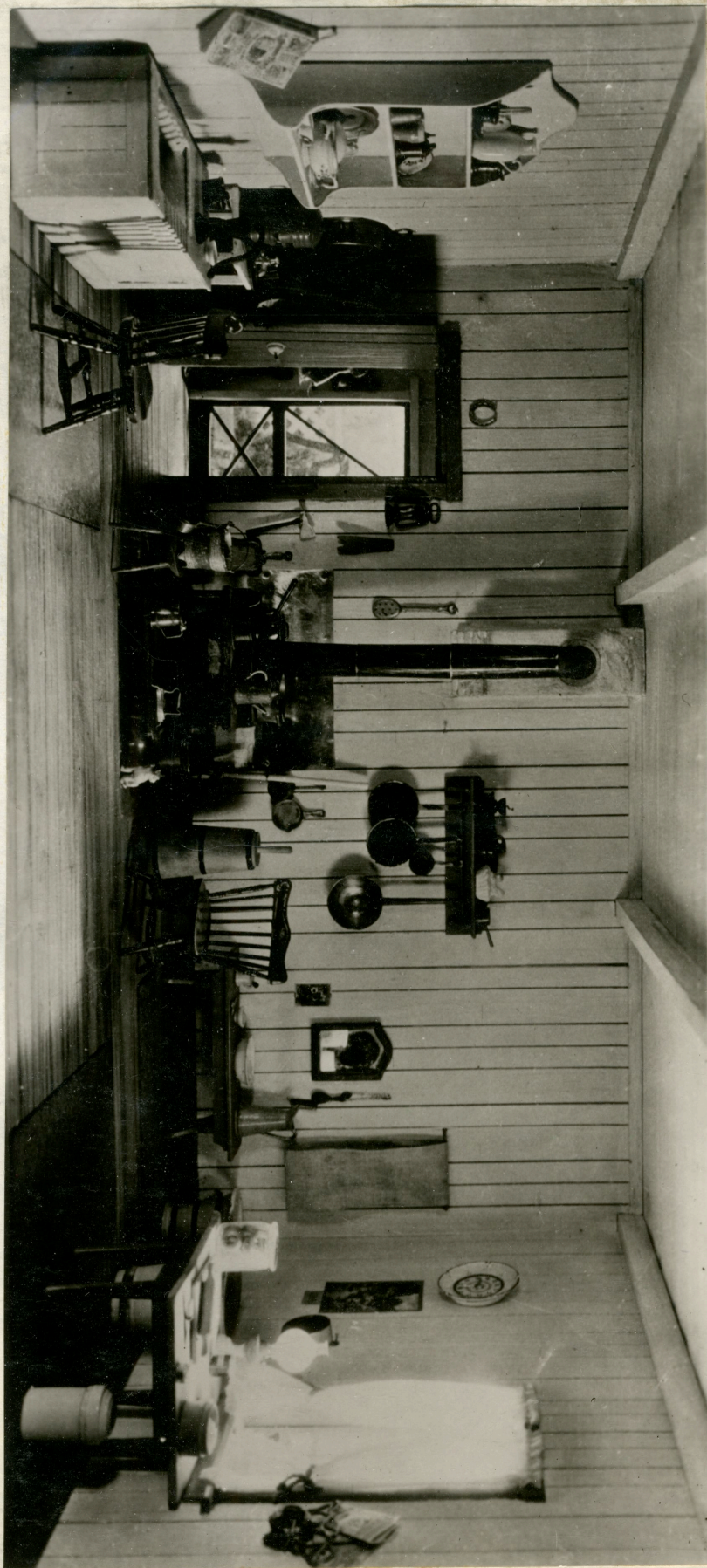


Fig. 6 - Kitchen of 1850



Fig. 7 - Kitchen of 1900

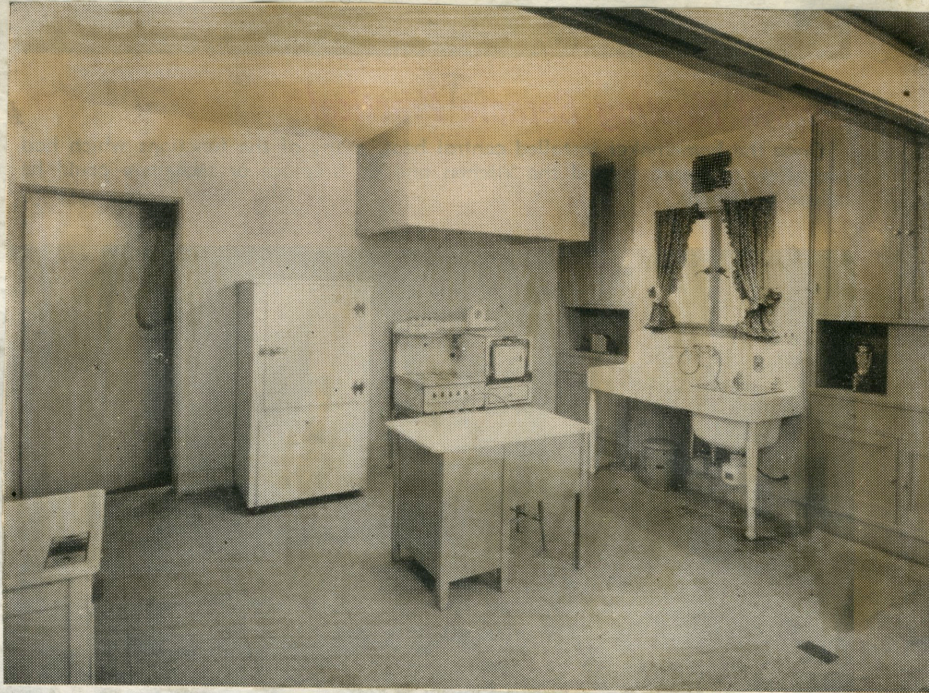
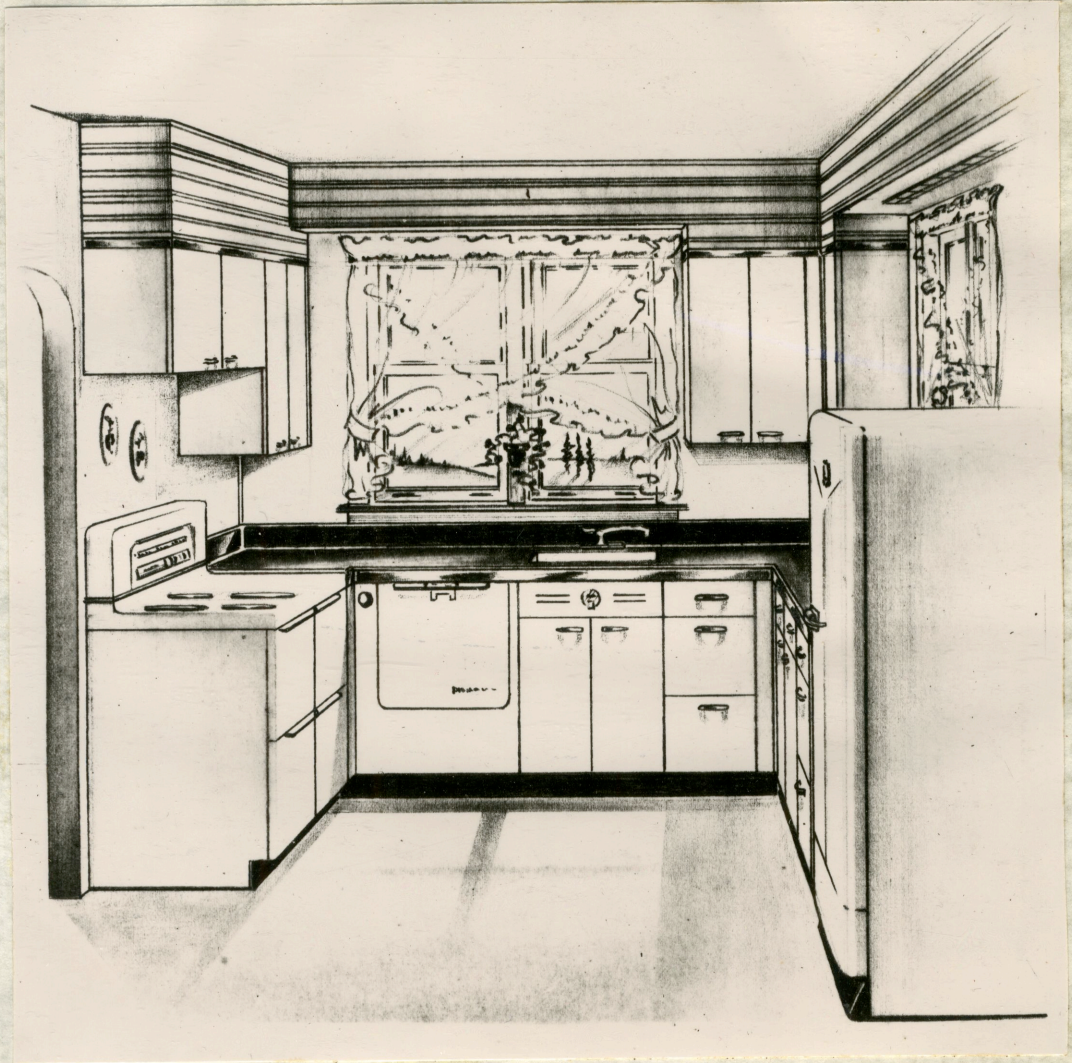


Fig. 8 - Kitchen of 1918 (Sink with Dishwasher)



Fig. 9 - Kitchen of 1928 with Host of Electrical Appliances



- 1 - Dining Area
- 2 - Serving Kitchen, Dining Area, and Living Room
- 3 - Incinerator, Revolving TV, Grill and Built-in Oven
- 4 - Breakfast Bar
- 5 - Range, Bar Island with Planter
- 6 - Built-in Cook-top
- 7 - Refrigerator - Freezer
- 8 - Sit-down Mixing and Planning Center
- 9 - Serving Cart
- 10 - 3-basin Sink with Garbage Disposer
- 11 - Built-in Dishwasher
- 12 - Doorway to Heat Room or Basement
- 13 - Laundry
- 14 - Laundry Sink
- 15 - Patio
- 16 - Snack Bar

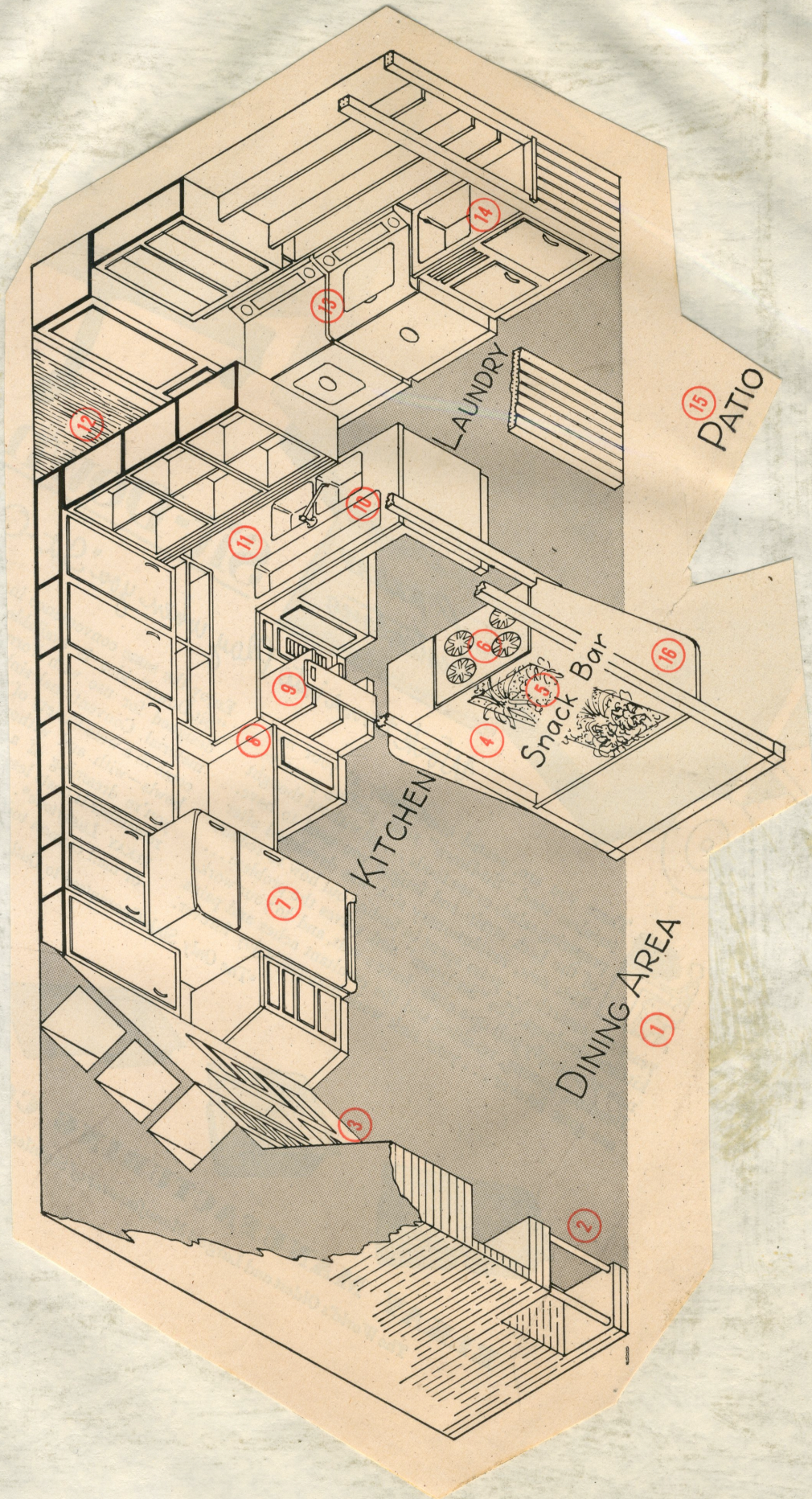


Fig. 11 - Kitchen of 1955

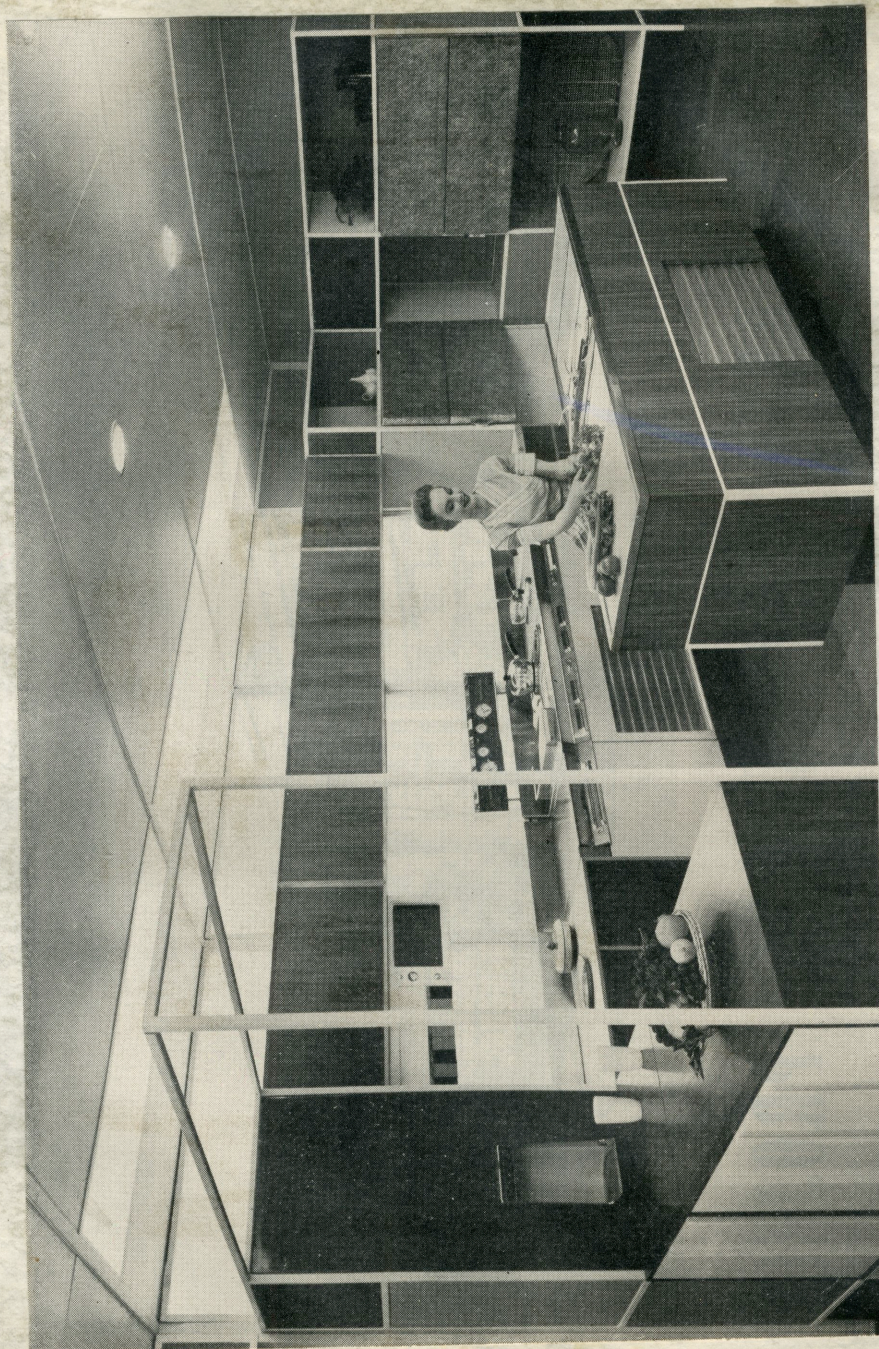


Fig. 12 - Kitchen of 1960



Fig. 13 - Speculative Kitchen

One of the possible color and light
treatments in the "kitchen of tomor-
row". The mobile floor cleaner at
work.



APPENDIX I. CORRESPONDENCE SENT

The following parties received the form letter appearing
on page 37:

- 1) Miss Helen C. Douglass
Information Specialist
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.
- 2) The Borsodis School of Living
Suffern,
New York
- 3) The Majestic Company, Inc.
Huntington,
Indiana
- 4) Mr. John McGrath
General Electric Corporation
743 South Wyoming
Butte, Montana
- 5) Better Homes and Gardens
Des Moines 3,
Iowa
- 6) Ladies' Home Journal
1270 Avenue of the Americas
New York 20, New York
- 7) Good Housekeeping
57th Street at Eighth Avenue
New York 19, New York
- 8) Mr. Larry Wray, Editor
50th Anniversary Issue of Electrical Merchandising
McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Inc.
330 West 42nd Street
New York, New York
- 9) Hotpoint Company
5600 West Taylor Street
Chicago 44, Illinois

1106 South Willson Avenue
Bozeman, Montana
November 14, 1959

Hotpoint Company
5600 West Taylor Street
Chicago 44, Illinois

ATTENTION: Kitchen Planning Department

Gentlemen:

For my undergraduate written thesis in architecture, I have chosen the topic, "Evolution of the American Kitchen." Miss Margaret Davidson, Homemaking Editor for Ladies' Home Journal, suggested that I contact your firm, since Hotpoint, Inc. was one of the "pioneers" in kitchen planning.

There is ample selection of research material for the modern kitchen and for the Colonial kitchen; however, the period between offers only limited sources. Could you supply me with the following:

1. Descriptions and/or illustrations of past-day kitchens.
2. Sources where I might secure additional reference material.

I shall appreciate your early consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

William C. Bierrum

WCB/jtb

APPENDIX II. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
WASHINGTON

November 30, 1959

Mr. William C. Bierrum
1106 South Wilson Avenue
Bozeman, Montana.

Dear Mr. Bierrum:

Your letter asking for sources of information on past-day kitchens has been referred to Mrs. Lenore Sater Thyne who directs the Housing and Household Research Division of the Institute of Home Economics at Beltsville, Md. and has been charge of designing and building our Step-Saving Kitchen and our two recent energy-saving kitchens.

I am sending you copies of the three publications on these three kitchens. There is, as you say, much information on modern kitchens but the energy-saving kitchens designed at Beltsville are based on special research conducted there which may be of help to you.

You might get some help by writing Mrs. Emilie Hall, Editor, New York State College of Home Economics, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. for any photos or other material she may have on some of the early kitchens designed there. The home economists at Cornell were perhaps the first group interested in designing farm kitchens to reduce drudgery. When I was editor there we had a number of pictures of before-and-after kitchens taken as far back as 1910, I believe. Mrs. Hall may still have these.

Sincerely,

Helen C. Douglass
Helen C. Douglass
Information Specialist

Enclosures:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
CLOTHING AND HOUSING RESEARCH DIVISION
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

DEC 2 1959

Mr. William C. Bierrum
1106 South Wilson Avenue
Bozeman, Montana

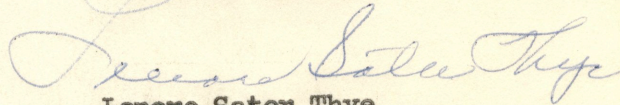
Dear Mr. Bierrum:

Mrs. Helen Douglas has referred to us your letter of November 14, asking for information on early kitchens.

Our work in rural housing has to do with establishing the functional requirements for the house - and hence we haven't had occasion to compile information on the historical development of kitchens. In fact, I have never run across the type of information you are seeking.

We are sorry we are unable to help you.

Sincerely yours,



Lenore Sater Thye
Chief
Housing and Equipment Laboratory

Are you familiar with the "History of American Technology," by John W. Oliver? This book has a number of references for articles and books published during the period you are interested in and might be a good source for reference material.

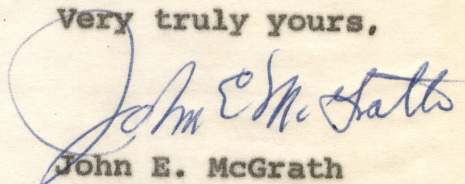
November 16, 1959

Mr. Charles W. Theleen
Manager, Customer Relations
Building 4, Appliance Park
Louisville, Kentucky

Dear Webb:

Attached is a letter from William C. Bierrum, student, Montana State College, Bozeman, Montana. I am unable to fulfill the requests for material in Mr. Bierrum's letter. The thought came to me that you would be able to direct this letter to the source of the information.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John E. McGrath".

John E. McGrath
Manager - Branch

JEM:mct

cc: W.C. Bierrum
R.R. Strachan

BETTER HOMES & GARDENS

M E R E D I T H P U B L I S H I N G C O M P A N Y • D E S M O I N E S 3 , I O W A

August 19, 1959

Wm. C. Bierrum
1106 South Willson
Bozeman, Montana

Dear Mr. Bierrum:

Your letter to Myrna Johnston has been referred to us for answering.

Enclosed are tear sheets from several back issues of Better Homes & Gardens showing old kitchens. You might also be interested in the "Old Food Prints" which were shown in the July 1959 issue of Good Housekeeping magazine, and which may be had for 25¢ for a set of 6 from Good Housekeeping Bulletin Service, 57th St. at 8th Ave., New York 19, New York. These showed some views of old kitchens in the background.

Thank you for your inquiry. If we can be of further service to you, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,

BETTER HOMES & GARDENS

Editorial Information

lsgoode:rb

Ladies' Home

FROM THE OFFICES OF THE

JOURNAL

EDITORIAL WORKSHOP

1270 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
NEW YORK 20, N. Y.
PLAZA 7-1020*Bruce Gould*
Beatrice Blackmar Gould
*Editors*MARGARET DAVIDSON
Homemaking Editor

August 20, 1959

Mr. William C. Bierrum
1106 South Willson
Bozeman
Montana

Dear Mr. Bierrum:

Your undergraduate thesis on American Kitchens should be an interesting one, for in some ways there has been more change in this functional room than in many other parts of the house. The room has changed in a way that reflects social developments of the various times - and today this is as true as it was when the country was very new.

Mr. Brenneman has asked me to answer your letter for it is in this department the work with kitchens is done for the Journal. It is a shame our own files do not have complete information - or at any rate we do not have extra copies of some of the old material we could spare. But we may be able to give you a few sources worth investigating.

Many old histories and prints give clues to the first kitchens in the country. Today some of these have been reproduced in Museums such as those here in New York and in other large cities. Some of the better known old homes have restored old kitchens, or saved them pretty much as they were. These may give a starting point for the development.

About the turn of the century there was an interest in making kitchens better, and magazines of the day carried stories. There were some in the Journal, in Harper's and other publications. These you may locate in the library. (I'll ask if we have reprints in our Philadelphia office and if so will send them separately.)

Some of the old housekeeping books have clues of those early kitchens - such books as the following have some mention of kitchens:

Family Living on \$500 a Year
by Juliet Corson - printed in 1888

Progressive Housekeeping by Catherine Owen
printed in 1889

The Easy Housekeeping Book by Winnifred Fales
printed in 1923

2.

Economics of the Household by Benjamin Andrews
printed in 1925

Management in Daily Living by Ruth L. Bonde
printed in 1944

(This discusses the influence of factors that shaped homes.)

Newer books, of course, you will find easily by consulting the library.

Some of the early companies or organizations following sponsored studies of kitchens and in one way or another influenced changes in them:

General Electric

One of the first commercial companies to plan kitchens.

Hotpoint, Inc.

Another pioneer in kitchen planning.

The Borsodis School of Living, Suffern, New York.

Emphasis was on home production.

Dr. Lillian Gilbraith, an efficiency engineer, gave attention to easy work ways. I suggest you look for early article under her name. Also, Extensions Services of such states as New York, Iowa, Washington, Oregon, Kansas, and Minnesota put much of their emphasis on farm kitchens, but their work influenced others.

Another contact which may prove helpful to you would be

Miss Helen C. Douglass

Information Specialist

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Washington 25, D. C.

We do wish you success with your thesis. If there is any other way we may be of assistance, please do let us know.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Davidson

Margaret Davidson

Homemaking Editor

MD:lp

Good Housekeeping

FIFTY-SEVENTH STREET
AT EIGHTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

THE INSTITUTE, WILLIE MAE ROGERS, DIRECTOR

September 18, 1959

Mr. William C. Bierrum
1106 South Willson
Bozeman, Montana

Dear Mr. Bierrum:

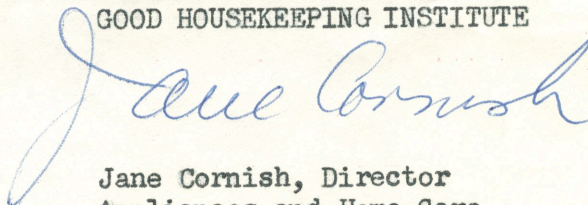
Mr. Sheridan has referred to me for reply your letter requesting information on past-day kitchens.

I am sorry to say we do not have descriptions or illustrations of such kitchens which we could send you. However, one excellent reference for this information would be the 50th anniversary issue of Electrical Merchandising, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Inc., 330 West 42nd Street, New York, N. Y. We would suggest that you write to Larry Wray, the Editor, for a copy of this issue, if possible, and also for some additional reference titles.

Thank you for writing. We hope you will call upon us again if we can be of further service.

Sincerely,

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING INSTITUTE



Jane Cornish, Director
Appliances and Home Care

JC:jm

every Monday the Pros read

merchandising week

November 23, 1959

Mr. William C. Bierrum
1106 South Willson Avenue
Bozeman, Montana

Dear Mr. Bierrum:

In response to your letter of November 14th I am sending you the enclosed copy of our March 1955 issue which contains the only material we have published on the evolution of the American kitchen.

From time to time we have published articles on how the dealer can best sell complete kitchens--but I don't think this is what you are looking for. Aside from the women's and shelter magazines I can think of no other source for this material.

Very truly yours,

Laurence Wray -

Laurence Wray
Editor

LW:HN
enclosure



46

5600 WEST TAYLOR STREET, CHICAGO 44, ILLINOIS
MANSFIELD 6-2000

A DIVISION OF GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY

November 25, 1959

Mr. William C. Bierrum
1106 South Willson Avenue
Bozeman, Montana

Dear Mr. Bierrum:

As per your request of November 14, 1959, we have enclosed all the information we have on past-day kitchens, and hope it will be of some assistance to you in your work.

For further literature on the topic you have chosen, "Evolution of the American Kitchen," we suggest you contact the following:

1. Cornell University
2. University of Illinois Small Homes Council
3. United States Department of Agriculture
Clothing and Housing Research Division
4. United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Research Service
Institute of Home Economics

Very truly yours,


WILLIAM J. KETCHAM
KITCHEN PLANNER

cc

Enclosures



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