

A D V E R T I S I N G
T O T H E
A M E R I C A N W O M A N
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P R E F A C E

Following the Civil War, advances in industrial technology, new processes for manufacturing, and improved channels of distribution for raw materials and manufactured goods all contributed to the emergence of a second industrial revolution in America. As the variety and output of manufactured products rapidly increased, businesses began to seek ways of expanding their market share from local and regional niches to a national scale. Key to the success of this objective was the creation of a mass market of consumers, a broad base of customers who would be persuaded of a need or desire for the mass-produced goods pouring from mills and factories coast to coast. From this goal of a mass market evolved the kernels for marketing strategies that eventually included product research and development, creation of line extensions, brand management, competitive analysis, and sales promotion.

The first step in a marketing strategy was to identify and understand who the customers were and how to target them. Nineteenth-century manufacturers, distributors, and retailers (all overwhelmingly male) had only to look to their own homes for answers. Their mothers, wives, and daughters were unquestionably the consumers in their households, even if not necessarily the end users. A number of sources have suggested that as much as 85 percent of all manufactured consumer goods were purchased by women. The Curtis Publishing Company advised marketers in a 1915 ad that the American woman's purchasing power extended far beyond "groceries and gowns"; the wise marketer would know that: "Woman today is admittedly a powerful force in the purchase, not only of automobiles but also of tires, self-starters and other equipment, of the family insurance, of building materials, of men's clothing and underwear, and of many other products which used to be considered outside her sphere."¹ Several generations after the Curtis ad, a 1998 survey by Haggar Clothing Company indicated that "89 percent of all men's clothing purchased from department stores is chosen by women."² Hence, across the entire twentieth century, the target for a considerable majority of manufacturers of consumer products was the American woman.

This is not to say that men were disregarded by marketers as potential consumers or as significant influences in purchases made for the home, although that debate is an old one. For instance, in her 1929 book *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, Christine Frederick maintained that "The American male himself often testifies that he labors in order that his wife and children should enjoy luxury and comfort. He seems to enjoy himself most at earning, while content to leave the pleasure of spending to his women...Such a condition puts buying power into women's hands on a tremendously broad scale,—so broad indeed that in a research made by Dr. H. L. Hollingworth of Columbia University, the only item that men bought entirely by themselves, without consultation with women, was their own collars! The purchase of not another article of apparel was free from the cooperative purchasing influence of women."³ Still, those marketers with vested interests in targeting male consumers often had views contrary to the "hoary assertion"

that American women made “85 percent of all consumer buying,” as *Fortune* avowed in 1956. For example, “surveys for women’s magazines suggest that women buy more than 60% of men’s shirts and an even larger percentage of men’s ties, robes, socks, and underwear. Men’s magazine surveys, however, tell a somewhat different story.”⁴ No doubt the considerable advertising revenue that was lost by men’s periodicals was a significant factor in the skew in their findings. Yet, the evidence would seem to indicate that mass marketers such as Procter & Gamble and General Foods did not recognize or attach much significance to the man’s influence in home operations. Issues of *Fortune* and *Esquire* stretching back to their beginnings in the 1930s show a noticeable dearth of ads for cleaning and cooking products, kitchen appliances, and other consumer items for the running of a household. On the other hand, there are volumes of ads in women’s magazines for men’s clothing and underwear, men’s grooming products, and men’s recreation goods and services. Even business services such as insurance, personal finances, and travel were widely advertised in women’s publications. In these categories of goods and services, “men dominate here, but much of their spending is in behalf of women,” admitted *Fortune*, affirming what marketers had asserted all along.⁵

Once the machinery of mass production was rolling, manufacturers and retailers had to get the message out to the consumer, and that meant communication in the available mass media. Prior to the emergence of commercial radio in the 1920s and television in the 1940s, the options for marketers were the many forms of print: signs, flyers, direct mail, newspapers and particularly magazines. In 1960, former advertising executive Helen Woodward published *The Lady Persuaders*, in which she examined the history and influence of women’s magazines on the whole of American society. To Woodward, “women’s magazines with their millions of readers played a major part” in the fact that by the end of the 1950s women controlled “seventy percent of the wealth of the country” and “ruled the roost” at home. She wrote: “To the uninitiated, a woman’s magazine may seem merely a powdery bit of fluff. No notion could be more unreal or deceptive. That is just the style in which the magazines express themselves, for if the top layer seems fluffy, the underlying base is solid and powerful. These publications involve a giant business investment, and have an overwhelming influence on American life.”⁶

Although the legacy of these magazines extends back to when the first issue of *Ladies’ Magazine* was published in 1828, these periodicals began to be a significant vehicle of communication for marketers only in the 1880s and especially the 1890s. Magazines initially resisted the advertiser with what Richard Ohmann called their “aristocratic scruples,” despite the temptation of huge revenues that were possible even in those early days of advertising. The turning point seemed to be the economic panic of 1893 when fiercely competitive publishers reacted to one another with a newly devised “formula of elegant simplicity”: “identify a large audience that is not hereditarily affluent or elite, but that is getting on well enough, and that has cultural aspirations; give it what it wants; build a huge circulation; sell lots of advertising space at rates based on that circulation; sell the magazine at a price *below* the cost of production, and make your profits on ads.”⁷ Circulation numbers of popular magazines soared from 18 million in 1890

to 64 million in 1905, which translated into about four different monthly magazines in each household.⁸ Such a reach to this enormous audience of consumers was highly beneficial to manufacturers and distributors in their efforts to get their marketing messages out and to create a mass market. Marketers put their messages where the customers were. For example, based on the Haggar menswear survey cited above, the company included advertising in *Elle* and *Cosmopolitan* as part of its marketing strategy. A 1997 ad for Hearst Magazines showed readership of its titles for men at 22 million, but readership of its titles for women and the home were well over four times that at 98 million.⁹ By the end of the twentieth century, the “Seven Sisters” alone (*Better Homes & Gardens*, *Family Circle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *McCall’s*, *Redbook*, *Woman’s Day*) reached almost 34 million consumers,¹⁰ and these were but a few titles from a list of forty-eight hundred magazine titles.¹¹ “Readers will buy more stuff from a magazine they love to read,” concluded an *Advertising Age* editor in 1998.¹²

Moreover, marketers knew only too well that their ad messages were not the sole force in creating and driving a mass market. From the macrocosms of urbanization and immigration, war and peace, legislative and judicial decisions, or political elections to the microcosms of home, family, or interpersonal relationships, manufacturers and distributors tried to predict and react to the innumerable variables at play in the American consumer market. Even at the end of the twentieth century, with all the sophisticated methods of measuring the consumer’s response to advertising, there was doubt about its effectiveness. In a 1998 editorial, *Advertising Age* admitted: “most [marketers] do not know whether those advertising dollars are well spent—that is, if they actually increase sales and profit or help develop lasting brand equity.”¹³ There also were notable failures despite powerhouse brand names and huge advertising budgets. For instance, confectionery giant M&M/Mars shelved its energy bar Vo2Max even though the projected market potential for the energy bar industry was a tempting \$250 million.¹⁴ Similarly, Miller Brewing Company thought it had the right product, the right marketing, and the right advertising message for its Miller Lite beer, only to suffer a 2.6 percent decline in sales volume.¹⁵ Probably the most telling disappointment was the highly visible and popular milk moustache ads that for years children had pinned up in their rooms and office workers stapled to bulletin boards; by the end of 1998 milk consumption had declined by 5 percent.¹⁶

Still, there were enough success stories and experiences for marketers to continue to have some degree of faith in advertising. Sometimes all the marketing elements came together perfectly and a business thrived as a result. It is beyond the scope of this book to evaluate the sales success of the ads featured here. The ads are representative of the kinds of goods and services that were marketed to the American woman consumer, and more important, they represent the marketing messages about those products and about the consumers of a given period of time.

An in-depth examination of advertising as an accurate reflection of social reality across the decades also is beyond the scope of this book. Certainly the manufacture and promotion of a great many products contributed to social change, and a number of those changes are noted in this study. For instance, prior to the mid-1920s, smoking for women was an

absolute social taboo, even outlawed in some places; however, after only a few years of aggressive advertising by the tobacco industry, millions of women became hooked on cigarettes and the social taboo became merely a bad habit. Some social realities were conspicuously absent in advertising, such as depictions of the poorer working classes and, prior to the 1970s, of ethnics who were not stereotyped. "People did not usually want ads to reflect themselves, their immediate social relationships, or their broader society exactly," wrote history professor Roland Marchand.¹⁷ Instead, marketers tried to reflect in their ads what they thought were the aspirations of an ever increasing mass market of consumers. Advertisers had a greater vested interest in reflecting people's needs, desires, and anxieties than in depicting their actual circumstances and behavior. Similarly, throughout the twentieth century, the stereotypical middle-class, usually white, "Happy Homemaker" was never far from the ad man's concept of the target customer in the American mass market. This is not to say that the biases of marketers resulted in ads devoid of social realities. To the contrary, ads provide glimpses of an enormous array of past social conditions. For instance, images in ads of uniformed gas station attendants happily cleaning auto windshields reflected a common sight seen by all classes of society once upon a bygone time.

All of these representations of the American dream live today in surviving copies of retail catalogs, in preserved sales promotion materials, and in volumes and volumes of magazine ads. It is primarily the empirical evidence of ads from magazines that is represented in this book. With huge numbers of magazines having been published over the decades, substantial quantities have survived intact. For the most part, ads reproduced in this study have been taken from two categories of periodicals, those targeting "Mrs. Consumer" and those targeting the advertisers themselves. The greatest assortment of consumer ads were provided by mainstream women's magazines such as *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCall's*, and *Woman's Home Companion*, and mass circulation titles such as *Life*, *Collier's*, *American*, and *Saturday Evening Post*. Many researchers today might be unfamiliar with some of the mainstream publications that were the most popular of their time. For instance, the *Munsey* had the highest mass circulation of all monthly magazines at the end of the nineteenth century,¹⁸ and as such, the volume of its advertising pages was more extensive for that period than that of competing magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* or *Life*, whose titles remain household names today. As for ads that targeted marketers, most are from the better known business and trade publications such as *Printers' Ink*, *Advertising Age*, *Adweek*, and *Fortune*.

The extensive availability of these resources as well as their manageable reproduction for the format and production of this book have been determining factors in their use here. Still, as most students and practitioners of marketing and advertising know, ad campaigns crossed the full range of mass media and were easily adapted from one format to the other. The marketing message remained the same; only the presentation may have varied. This is especially important in understanding the methodology of this study. The fact that magazine ads are the primary media used to support and illustrate the thesis is not to imply that other media were less significant. Depending upon the target consumer, of course, manufacturers and distributors may have concentrated their advertising efforts in media exclusive of

magazines. Makers of preschool toys, for instance, would be far more likely to reach their end users with lively TV spots placed during cartoon shows than in any form of print, and purchasers (moms) would more likely respond to a direct mail discount coupon for those toys than to a product or image ad in a magazine. However, in the overall view of the history of the American mass market, magazine ads are an excellent documentation of what products were mass produced in a particular era, and especially how marketers communicated their messages about their products, brands, and company images.

The reader should consider one other point about the methodology of this book. For those ads that are included here, original sources are not cited in the chapter notes because, except in a few instances where details were specifically relevant, ads are reproduced in their entirety and are dated in the captions. Hence, where excerpts from the ad copy might be quoted in the text, both the date and the entire text of the ad are provided in the illustration. Where the content of ads is quoted but the ads are not completely reproduced, the sources are then noted. This methodology has been necessary because of the condition of most of the several hundred ads that were selected for this study. The great majority is from a private collection of about twenty thousand tearsheets in which, although the ads were dated, the original sources were not specified. It also should be noted that for collectors of advertising materials, ironically, sources of origin are not usually relevant. Collectors who seek ads from famous illustrators such as Norman Rockwell or Maxfield Parrish, or ads with specific themes such as Santas or trains, or ads by certain marketers such as Coca-Cola or Ivory seldom care in which periodicals the ads appeared. To economize storage space, collectors and dealers tend to dismantle magazines, retaining only the ads and noting the dates in the margins.

These ads serve as the foundation for this examination of what and how marketers advertised to the American woman. They provide a broad look at the evolution of the mass production of goods and the methods and techniques that have been used to get messages to the consumer about products, brands, and corporate images. They give us a glimpse of the life styles and aspirations of Americans in the twentieth century. In celebrity testimonial versions they show us the personalities whom society regarded as noteworthy. They are a tangible history of the American century and the American dream.

—Chapter 3

H O M E , H E A R T H A N D H O U S E K E E P I N G

Marketing new ideas and new ways of homemaking

- The evolution of consumerism and technology in the kitchen
- Easing the labor of laundry and housework
- Cooking, canned goods and processed foods.
- Consumption and housecleaning

American women of all classes historically have shared one particular common denominator: cooking. Prior to the second quarter of the nineteenth century when mass-produced cast iron and steel stoves were more available nationwide, cooking was a labor-intensive chore done on an open fire in a fireplace. Wood or coal had to be hauled into the house, and ashes removed daily. Worse was the limited variety of food that could be cooked by this method. Kettles of stews or soups were easy enough, but the art of banking fires over Dutch ovens or piles of bricks or stones for baking took considerable experience. Likewise, choosing the types of wood that burned hotter or longer and then arranging the fuels for consistent fires required great skill. Even when successful, though, early American cooking was regarded with disdain both at home and abroad. English novelist Frederick Marryat wrote in the early nineteenth century that there were “plenty of good things for the table in America; but ‘God sends meat, and the devil sends cooks.’”¹

Figure 3-1. Selling for as little as five dollars—freight paid—the freestanding cast iron stove provided greater control and versatility in cooking than did the open hearth. Majestic ad 1900, Magee ad 1901.

Majestic *Malleable Iron and Steel Ranges*

The illustrations above show 3 malleable iron ranges—each having two extensions water heater—the extra depth giving double heating surface, hence, double capacity. This water heater forms the left-hand lining of all water front.

Does not interfere with oven or distract from the fire box. Heats water for baths, kitchen and entire house while the range is baking, boiling, broiling, boiling and boiling.

This range is made of Malleable Iron and Steel. It does not burn up, gives you the expense and annoyance of ever adding fuel, saves air tight and asbestos lined, hence, does the work in half the time, and with half the fuel. A full turn of the anti-drawer, depth goes, with the crank, cuts off the dead coal and ash, allows the air to circulate, it is safe, it is a health or there, and without the aid of violent expelling. Other improvements, originated by us, also aid in making the cooking perfect and preserving the economy of usage of the operator.

Majestic Ranges Are made to fit every condition—with reservoirs, with water fronts, in consideration for coal or gas, and for hotels and institutions—and at prices consistent with quality.

Book Free. "A Model Kitchen" tells how the kitchen, water supply and fire should be arranged to get best results from any range. Invaluable to those intending to build; tells all about malleable iron and Majestic Ranges. Shall we send it?

Majestic Manufacturing Company
New York Salesroom, 45 CLIFF STREET
2025 Morgan Street, ST. LOUIS, MO.

MAGEE *GRAND RANGE* **A HAPPY UNION**

COAL SAVER. **A PERFECT BAKER**

CIRCULARS FREE

MAGEE FURNACE COMPANY
MAKERS OF THE
FAIRY MAGEE HEATERS AND RANGES
32-38 UNION ST. BOSTON.

Awarded Gold Medal Paris Exposition, 1900

The cook who engages her genius with the cooking ability of the **MAGEE** knows cooking bliss. She's happy. For the **MAGEE** reinforces her skill. Built to out cook all other cookers.

50 YEARS THE LEADER

Echoing Marryat's assessment of American cuisine, Count de Volney wrote in 1804: "In the morning at breakfast they deluge their stomachs with a quart of hot water, impregnated with tea, or so slightly with coffee that it is more colored water; and they swallow, almost without chewing, hot bread, half baked, toast soaked in butter, cheese of the fattest kind, slices of salt or hung beef, ham, etc....at dinner they have boiled pastes under the name of puddings, and their sauces, even for roast beef, are melted butter; their turnips and potatoes swim in hog's lard, butter, or fat; under the name of pie or pumpkin, their pastry is nothing but a greasy paste, never sufficiently baked."²

New Appliances in the Kitchen

The mass production of the freestanding cast iron stove in the 1830s made greater control and versatility in cooking possible. Still, the work was as laborious and time-consuming as on the open hearth, if not more so. "The stove...augured the death of one-pot cooking or, rather, of one-dish meals—and, in so doing, probably increased the amount of time women spent in preparing foodstuffs," wrote Ruth Cowan in *More Work for Mother*. "The diet of average Americans may well have been more varied during the nineteenth century, but in the process women's activities became less varied as their cooking chores became more complex."³ Just as the colonial housewife had to know how to build and bank open-hearth fires for cooking, the nineteenth-century housewife had to know how to regulate the dampers of her stove and how to position cookware in and around the firebox to simmer, boil, and bake simultaneously.

In addition, the affordability and availability of mass-produced cast iron stoves made it possible for families even on remote farms and in poor city tenements to have reliable kitchen stoves. Many models sold for as little as five dollars, freight paid. (Figure 3-1.)

For all its benefits, the cast iron stove required constant maintenance. Unintended fires cooled or went out. Coal or wood still had to be hauled in and ashes had to be hauled out. In addition, blacking had to be applied weekly to prevent rusting—an exceptional chore for those women who had chosen a stove model with all-over high relief or open fretwork ornamentation.

Another problem with cast iron stoves was inflexibility. During the summer, stoves were not usually kept burning. That meant either eating cold meals or suffering from the heat to build a fire. The solution came easily enough with oil- and gas-burning stoves. (Figure 3-2.) In a 1909 ad for the New Perfection Cook-Stove, the next great leap in cooking convenience is illustrated:

A "Home Comfort" Stove
Have you solved the "Home Comfort" problem for this coming summer?
Are you planning to put the coal range out of commission?
Will you do the family boiling, stewing and frying in a sane and restful manner over a stove that *does not overheat the kitchen*?
You can do all this with the
NEW PERFECTION
Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove
The "New Perfection" is different from all other oil stoves. It has a substantial CABINET TOP like the modern coal range, with a commodious shelf for warming plates and keeping food hot after cooked—also drop shelves on which the coffee pot or teapot may be placed after removing from burner—every convenience, even to bars for holding towels.

Figure 3-2. The next great leap in cooking convenience was the on/off stove switch. Oil and gas ranges reduced the labor of cooking by eliminating the need to haul coal or wood, build and maintain fires, and remove ashes. Ad 1909.

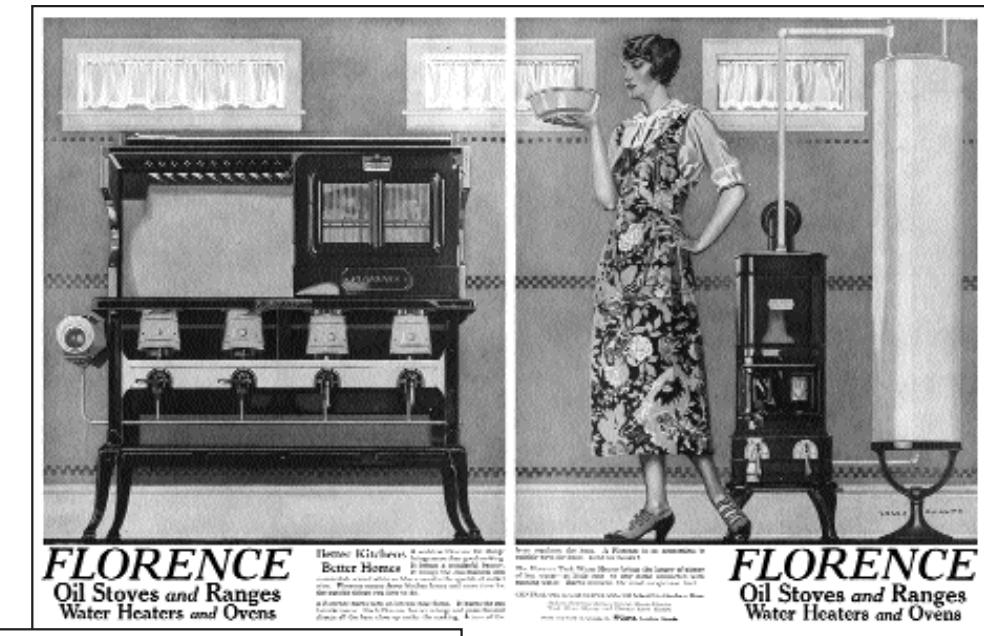


Figure 3-3. Although electric ranges were widely advertised before World War I, the limited availability and high cost of electricity prior to the 1930s deterred sales. GE ad 1915, Florence ad 1923.

the on/off switch, providing a cookfire instantly, anytime. Ironically, the convenient, clean-burning gas/oil stove was not new to the twentieth century. It had been demonstrated at industrial expositions in the 1850s, and advertised extensively throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Yet, of fifteen pages listing cookstoves in the massive Sears catalog of 1902, only eight models were for oil or gas; all others were wood- or coal-burning stoves. In his book on household technology, Daniel Cohen cited two reasons for consumers' resistance to the gas/oil stove for so long. Wood and coal were much cheaper fuels than gas or oil; in addition, the manufacturers of oil/gas stoves did not understand the psychology of the human experience with food. "People who had grown up with food cooked with wood or coal fuel felt that gas-cooked food somehow 'tasted different,' or they worried obscurely that the food would not be properly cooked and would therefore be unhealthful."⁴ Eventually, persistent advertising helped the message get through to the masses, and depending on where one lived, oil- or gas-burning ranges were the best choice available even long after the first electric ranges were made.

Although electric ranges were widely advertised as early as the 1910s, electricity was unavailable to huge sections of the country until the late 1930s when the New Deal Rural Electrification program was implemented. (Figure 3-3.) As Christine Frederick wrote in her 1913 book *The New Housekeeping*: "I am enthusiastic in favor of electric equipment, but from observation I have found it is, as yet, too expensive to supplant hand power in the operations of devices in the home. It is also true that while city dwellers have come to believe in the prevalence of the electric button, electricity is in use by only a fraction of our population."⁵

For decades, gas and oil range manufacturers continued to drive home the comparative cost issue in their advertising. Oil was "the most inexpensive fuel," a 1924 Florence oil range ad stated succinctly. A list of electric appliances sold by the New York Edison Company in 1925, with the cost of operation per hour, included:

vacuum cleaner	1c
washing machine	2c
sewing machine	1/2c
stove	5c
toaster	3c
waffle iron	5c ⁶

Added together, operating an electric home could be an expensive undertaking, so it was hardly surprising that many Americans were wary of electricity, despite the labor-saving advantages. In their Middletown study, Robert and Helen Lynd noted that though 99 percent of the homes in their survey were wired for electricity, two-thirds cooked with gas and most of the rest used coal and other fuels, but only "a very few electricity."⁷⁷

Stoves such as the Florence Oil Range also were meant to be beautiful pieces of furniture—styled with cabriole legs, painted in color enamels, and accented with the sparkle of contrast metal trims. But with all the open spaces beneath and around the burners, cleaning the stove remained a considerable task. In the 1930s the redesigned New Perfection Range minimized the cleaning chore with a cabinet style that enclosed all the components of the stove. (Figure 3-4.) Airborne grease particles and drips or splatters from cooking could easily be cleaned off the smooth, flat surfaces of porcelain enamel. By the 1940s, this concept of the enclosed range became the production model for both gas and electric ranges. With minor design enhancements over the decades, the closed box style has remained the standard ever since.

The next technological advancement in the all-purpose cookfire came with the microwave oven. (Figure 3-5.) Speed was the benefit of this new type of electric cookfire. Although developed at the end of World War II, due to the cost and size of early models only about ten thousand microwaves were sold in the United States through the 1960s, mostly to restaurants and airlines.⁸ By the 1970s, manufacturers had solved the size and cost problems of microwave ovens and began mass-marketing efforts. However, sales were not brisk due to a number of reasons: microwaves needed specialized cookware, consumers had to learn new methods of preparing food for microwaving, and numerous public safety warnings kept circulating. Amana chairman Alex Meyer recalled: "The housewife didn't understand it. It was too technical for her. She didn't understand that we were stirring these molecules 2,450 times per second. She didn't understand that the friction of the molecules was the source of the heat. There are no flames. There is no calrod heater...it was a little scary."⁹



If all this were not enough to deter sales, early ads for microwaves depicted a product that looked disturbingly like a

**"my NEW PERFECTION
OIL RANGE does everything
in the cook book perfectly"**

Perfection White Range No. 4600 Series

...and does it at Lower Cost

WITH KEROSENE

For the woman who prefers kerosene to making a real art of cooking, consider Perfection Oil Ranges, with the High-Heat Liner. Other advantages found in no other stove—gasoline or kerosene—such as a quick heating coil and a pot-to-pot heat transfer system for perfect even cooking.

Thousands of women who could have had any stove they wanted prefer the Perfection Oil Range. Like the last step toward having a comfortable, up-to-date kitchen now. Replace your old stove with a kerosene or a gasoline Perfection.

You can have either combination of materials, gasoline or kerosene. Other Perfection High-Heat Oil Stoves offer you a great variety of sizes. 14-page Perfection catalog at discount price sent you, or send the coupon below for PERRIN illustrated booklet.

DEPARTMENT OF PERFECTION STOVES

The World of Quality

Figure 3-4. The closed-cabinet style of later stoves minimized the chore of cleaning components, which on earlier models were exposed to airborne grease particles and splatters from cooking. New Perfection ad 1938. General Electric ad 1948.



Figure 3-5. The first microwave ads depicted the hi-tech computerized look of the ovens that inhibited many consumers. Radarange ad 1976.

computer. By the 1980s, though, people were comfortable enough with so much push-button technology in the home that ads could show the Happy Homemaker at ease using her new microwave. Instead of devoting so much ad space to techno-ese copy—as was necessary with earlier versions—advertisers focused on the product’s benefits in everyday language. Additionally, the microwave especially suited the fast-paced life style of many American women of the 1970s and 1980s who used the microwave to quickly heat leftovers, frozen foods, soups, beverages, and snacks.

As electricity became more widely available after World War I, manufacturers of electric appliances found ways of broadening their product lines by making the home cookfire more specialized. Implements for cooking specific foods evolved from stone, ceramic, and cast iron gadgets for the fireplace or stove into customized appliances. Simple toasted bread no longer had to be prepared on a skewer by hand and tended every second to prevent scorching. Instead, a miraculous new electric contraption held the slice of bread near a heated coil to toast it any way desired. Indeed, by the late teens, the electrified cookfire could be contained in specialized devices to brew coffee, bake waffles, or grill a beefsteak, all without ever going near a stove. (Figure 3-6.) The eager consumption of such appliances, the Lynds observed in their Middletown study, led to an average increase of 25 percent in kilowatt hours of electricity used between 1920 and 1924.¹⁰

Not all food had to be cooked. From the earliest times, hunters and gatherers knew that certain fruits, vegetables, roots, and other assorted plants were edible raw. They also knew that such foodstuffs went bad, and if consumed when spoiled could result in illness or death. Some food preservation



Figure 3-6. By the end of World War I, manufacturers broadened their product lines with a wide variety of specialized kitchen appliances. Universal ad 1917, General Electric ad 1919.

THE "LEONARD"
CLEANABLE
IS A PERFECT
REFRIGERATOR

EIGHT WALLS, MOBILE FLORS, AIR
TIGHT LOOKS, METALLIC ICE RACK—
PRESERVES FOOD BEST WITH LEAST
ICE—ANTIQUE ASH—GREAT VARIETY
—ABOVE STILE, 25x17x41, 85.50—WITH
FAT FREIGHT—CATALOGUE FREE,
GRAND RAPIDS REFRIGERATOR CO.
10 TO 20 OTTAWA STREET
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

1895

50 PAGE BOOK ABOUT FREE REDUCING THE ICE BILL FREE

BOHM
SIPHON **Refrigerators**

(GUARANTEED)

We invite you to see our free book that tells all about the Bohm Siphon Refrigerators and how our patented Siphon ventilation system maintains temperature of 35° to 45° against outside of 30° to 40° degrees and preserves delicate fruits, vegetables, tasting salts, etc., in perfect condition. Also, our new Bohm Siphon System. Bohm Siphon Systems guaranteed by us exclusively.

Sent Freight Prepaid
(RETURNABLE)

WRITE FOR THE
VALUABLE BOOK

WHITE ENAMEL REFRIGERATOR COMPANY
Dept. 12, St. Paul, Minn.

We have extra sizes and build to order for cars, steamships, boats, etc.

1904

Don't put ice in your drinking water

The picture shows a better way. Have cold water always on tap which even the children can take in the "built-in" water cooler of the

**Automatic
Refrigerator**

This cooler is of one piece cast iron, lined with white porcelain—cooled by same ice that cools the food. Absolutely refrigerator water from odors or impurities. The Automatic Refrigerator cuts ice bills in half with its eight heat-resisting walls—it's drain never clogs—its automatic air circulation prevents flavor mingling. See the Automatic at your dealer's—if he hasn't it, send his name and we'll see you are supplied. Get our free catalog.

Illinois Refrigerator Company
140 Wall Street, Morrison, Illinois

1914

ALASKA
CORK-INSULATED REFRIGERATOR

Fresher foods!

Let the
"Cork-Wall Window" show you why

OF COURSE you will demand accurate insulation when you keep a refrigerator. You will make no claim of having spoiled foods and high ice bills.

You will take special pleasure in looking for the "Cork-Wall Window". Will you do so? I assure that you will find proof of unique cork insulation.

Ask me about the Alaska Cork Wall Window. It is giving efficient and insulation. Your price will be low. It is the best and most durable. These prices will be kept as low as possible.

You will find the "Cork Wall Window" on the sides, as follows: for the Alaska, 15¢; for the Alaska, 25¢; for the Alaska, 35¢.

You will be impressed too, with the small dimensions and low initial cost, due altogether to the Alaska being the ordinary.

What will this do? It keeps over six months! There are eggs, and meat, for very small and for very prices. If you do not know an Alaska dealer in your town write to me.

ILLINOIS MANUFACTURING COMPANY
Dept. B.R., 140 Wall Street, Morrison, Ill.

1926

Figure 3-7. The kitchen icebox remained a common form of home refrigeration well into the 1940s.

was eventually made possible by salt packing, smoking, sun baking, or, in wintertime, storing in the cold.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, controlled refrigeration was a luxury of the wealthy. Great homes such as Thomas Jefferson's Monticello had ice-houses or ice cellars used to store huge slabs of ice harvested from rivers and lakes frozen in winter. During the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century industrial inventors began to experiment with mechanical refrigerating machines, and dozens of prototypes were patented. By the 1880s, industrial refrigerators were widely in use by breweries, meat packers, railroads, and transoceanic ships. At the same time, commercial icehouses used the huge refrigerating machines to mass produce ice year round. This made possible the affordable home icebox, which was to remain a common form of home refrigeration well into the 1940s. (Figure 3-7.)

The technology for an electric compression motor small enough to outfit a domestic refrigerator was not developed until 1914. Even a decade later, the home electric refrigerator was still only in its developmental stages.

1927



Thousands Are Alive Today . . .

*Success in 1948 Also
First "Refrigerator" Cabin!!*

Now Comes *"Today's Cold-making Marvel!"* *The Silver
Sister Intercooler with Boiling Padoxoplate*

With a new Kelvinator refrigerator, you'll have the best-looking refrigerator in your home. And with its unique "Silver Sister" intercooler, it will be the most efficient refrigerator ever made. The Kelvinator "Silver Sister" is the first refrigerator to feature a built-in intercooler.

The Kelvinator "Silver Sister" has the kind of refrigeration that gives you the "modern" refrigerator. It has the kind of efficiency that gives you the "modern" refrigerator. It has the kind of dependability that gives you the "modern" refrigerator.

The Kelvinator "Silver Sister" is a whole new kind of refrigerator. It is a modern marvel. It is a Kelvinator refrigerator.

KELVINATOR

1939

Figure 3-8. During the 1920s and 1930s ads for electric refrigerators emphasized the benefits of health and food safety.

The Truth About Today's Refrigerators !

No woman who reliable sales of electric refrigerators you should make your job easier. For the more time you have to spend with your family, the more time you have to do other things.

► And there's no better way to do other things than to have a refrigerator that does most of the work for you. For instance, when you're in the kitchen, you don't have to stand by the counter top of scrubbed vegetables while they're being washed. When you're doing dishes, you don't have to stand by the sink while the water is running.

► You don't have to stand by the stove while the water boils.

► You don't have to stand by the oven while the dinner is cooking.

► You don't have to stand by the door when you're getting dressed.

► You don't have to stand by the door when you're getting dressed.

For most of us, if we could eliminate just one or two of these responsibilities, it would mean a great deal. And that's what many manufacturers of built-in refrigerators recognize, and that's why the new built-in refrigerators are so popular. They're built right into the kitchen cabinet, so they're as much a part of the kitchen as the rest of the furniture.

► And built-in refrigerators are built to last.

► They're built to last because they're built to last.

► They're built to last because they're built to last.

► They're built to last because they're built to last.

Learn this one off by rote, because the more you know about built-in refrigerators, the more you'll appreciate them.

► Built-in refrigerators are built to last because they're built to last.

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► Built-in refrigerators are built to last because they're built to last.

GENERAL ELECTRIC

1941



1948

Figure 3-9. Advances in refrigeration technology and increased production during the 1940s and 1950s helped reduce the prices of refrigerators. Advertising focused more on quality-of-life benefits rather than food safety.

Leaks were common; refrigerants were toxic or highly flammable; motors, compressors, or thermostats malfunctioned frequently; and the noise was considerable.¹¹ Only in the late 1920s did innovations begin to solve most of these problems, making refrigerators more efficient and affordable on a mass scale.

Electric refrigerator manufacturers then began to aggressively promote their products. In 1923, the industry's advertising expenditures totaled about forty-five thousand dollars and climbed rapidly to almost \$20 million by 1931.¹² During this time, ads for electric refrigerators featured health and food safety at the top of their lists of benefits. (Figure 3-8.) A "priceless treasure chest" was how Kelvinator referred to its 1927 model. First on the checklist of the treasures was health—tacitly guaranteed by the refrigerator's "constant protection of food at a scientifically determined temperature." Likewise, the banner in a 1929 General Electric ad proclaimed that its refrigerator "keeps your food safe." Even at the end of the 1930s, refrigerator manufacturers continued to emphasize health and food safety issues in ads. The header in a 1939 Kelvinator ad declared that "thousands are alive today because in 1914 man first harnessed cold!" As a competitive advantage statement, Kelvinator advised holdout owners of iceboxes that the 1939 Silver Jubilee model had the "cold-making capacity equal to more than half a ton of ice per week." This is not so surprising an argument for advertisers to use, given that more than half of all American homes still used iceboxes in 1940, even though almost 80 percent of all homes had electricity.¹³

As refrigeration technology progressed through the 1940s and 1950s, food safety ceased to be the focus of refrigerator ads. By then the public had been well educated on this point by home economists and advertisers. Enhancement of the quality of life became the objective of later ads. (Figure 3-9.) Larger storage capacity meant greater economy when food shopping, not only in increasing the volume of food that could be purchased but in reducing the number of trips to market. An ad for the 1948 GE Space Maker model compared the storage capacities of a 6- and an 8-cubic-foot space by illustrating piles of food at the base of open refrigerators. Manufacturers also emphasized easy maintenance in their ads. Women welcomed the advent of the frost-free freezer, as announced in the 1948 Admiral ad. The drop in cost of refrigerators was a key selling point in later ads. General Electric noted in its ads of 1941 that current models of its refrigerators cost half as much as those of ten years earlier—"so little that almost every family can afford the best in modern refrigeration."

Figure 3-10. Despite advertising claims, early washing machines saved little time and not much labor, and they frequently damaged clothes. Majestic ad 1904, Gravity Washer ad 1907.

