

economists offered, increasingly relegating them to creating recipes and dress patterns rather than mediating on behalf of the consumer.

Other, larger cultural changes altered the public face of home economics in the 1960s and 1970s, including the feminist movement and debates about name and image within the home economics community. Home economists may be less visible today, but we have absorbed many of their lessons about consumption, efficiency, and sanitation. Ultimately, Goldstein believes, we have fully embraced their ideals, even as their public roles have almost wholly disappeared.

Vintage Wisconsin Gardens: A History of Home Gardening, by Lee Somerville. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011. xx, 178 pp. Illustrations (many in color), appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Jill Nussel is a lecturer in history at Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne. Her research and writing have focused on using ethnic cookbooks to gain a fuller understanding of ethnic communities.

There are days when I envy presidential historians who research the lives of men who are well documented and well archived. The rest of us who research the everyday lives of everyday people are usually compelled to extract usable histories from unconventional sources and an uneven core of evidence. Lee Somerville discovered that truth while working on her master's thesis in landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin. The result is her delightful and informative book, *Vintage Wisconsin Gardens: A History of Home Gardening*.

At the beginning of her research, she found that many of the nation's prestigious open spaces and the landscapes of fabulous mansions were, in fact, well documented, but what Somerville wanted to know was how "regular folks" in Wisconsin conceived of and interacted with their outdoor space. As a result, she set about collecting and extracting everything she could on Wisconsin vernacular gardens of the nineteenth century. She defines vernacular as that which emphasizes the intimate relationships between everyday objects and culture—the area that reflects the real occupants of a home (xv).

With armloads of documents from the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society, what Somerville discovered is that Wisconsinites' relationship to their outdoor space evolved over time and location. As white settlers began to move into Wisconsin Territory, they viewed the land as something to tame and exploit; women settlers tended to think about the areas around their homes as an extension of their idea of domestic tranquility. Early outdoor space was usually more utili-

tarian, featuring native trees and shrubs near the house and a chicken coop, large shed, and vegetable garden at the rear. As families either moved to the cities or their homes were absorbed by the cities, they added driveways and did away with the chicken coop in favor of a garage. In the nineteenth century, families built fences around their homes to keep grazing stock from invading the house. A century later, those fences have become the backdrop for climbing plants. Nineteenth-century outdoor space did not include much grassy area because mowing was an arduous chore that men would not want to do after a long day in the fields, but by the 1960s, families preferred more green lawn as technology made it easier to mow it.

Somerville demonstrates that people's relationship to their outdoor space is a reflection of the history of Wisconsin and of the nation as a whole. For instance, urban Wisconsinites largely gave up vegetable gardening at the beginning of the twentieth century, but, like most Americans, they returned to growing vegetables during World War II. Also, as old homesteads were subdivided and homes became closer to one another, gardeners who had previously preferred lower plants so they could talk over the fence now favored vines to be used as screens for privacy.

Probably because the summer months are so short, the people of Wisconsin cherish their outdoor space and their relationship to natural things. Somerville lets us hear the voices of hardy Wisconsin women as they envision their space, challenge their environment, and conceptualize their lives. The result is that the people of the past help us to enjoy our outdoor space today so much more. *Vintage Wisconsin Gardens* is filled with all sorts of imagery—drawings, paintings, photography, and even needlepoint—to give contemporary observers clear insight into Wisconsinites' outdoor domestic space. The book is valuable for any gardener of the heartland who wants to know what nineteenth-century women planted, how they laid out their gardens, or just what they considered to be beautiful. This book is a must for every vintage gardener.

Always Put in a Recipe and Other Tips for Living from Iowa's Best-Known Homemaker, by Evelyn Birkby. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012. xvi, 203 pp. Illustrations, recipes. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Abby Stephens is a Ph.D. candidate in American studies at Purdue University. She is working on a dissertation on twentieth-century rural women.

Much has been written about changes in twentieth-century agriculture, but scholars and writers have only recently turned their attention