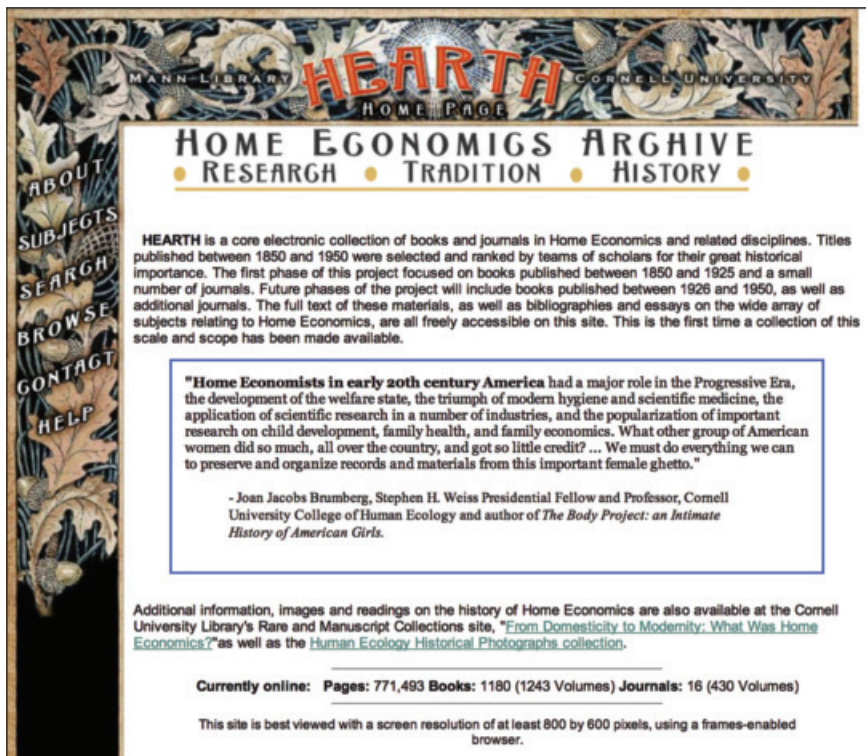




What Did They Do and How Did They Do It?

Mary Kircher Roddy looks at Cornell University's HEARTH website; a great way to add context to your family history writing

YOU'VE BEEN RESEARCHING YOUR ANCESTORS FOR YEARS. You've got the census records and death certificates, maybe even a birth certificate or two. You have the marriage record, and if you're lucky, perhaps a picture to mark that occasion. Now it's finally time to stop researching and write it up. Oh, yeah, that...



development, housekeeping, etiquette and consumer studies. Currently there are over 1200 books and 400 volumes of 16 different periodicals.

You can browse texts by year. How about from 1855 — *The Young Housekeeper's Friend, or, A guide to Domestic Economy and Comfort*. My great-great grandmother was married just a few years after this was published. Do you suppose this might have been a book that taught her to keep a proper home? She might have taken the author's advice to clean her pots and kettles often with fine sand and to lay stiff brown paper or clean pieces of old straw carpeting upon the pot closet shelves to keep everything neat and tidy.

You can browse texts by letter. How about G — *Games for the Playground, Home, School and Gymnasium* (1911). Maybe your grandfather played some of these games in school. Or perhaps after thumbing through this, you might be inspired start a rousing game of *The Minister's Cat* at your next family get-together.

As the title "home economics" would imply, the site is concerned more with the domestic arena than with traditionally male-dominated domains, but there are items of interest to the manly side. *The Happy Family* from 1906 has an entire chapter devoted to the business of being a father.

In addition to books there are a couple of popular periodicals your ancestor might have subscribed to,

Writing something that your family will want to read, however, entails more than just a list of names, dates and locations. Perk it up with a little social history! The day-to-day details of life in the 19th or early 20th centuries. What did people eat and how did they prepare it? What did they wear? How did they furnish their homes? What did they think about politics and gender roles? All sorts of ways to keep your story flowing and give your reader a chance to appreciate the similarities and differences between themselves and their forbears.

One website that will help you with many of these specifics is Cornell University's HEARTH website, <http://hearth.library.cornell.edu>. HEARTH stands for Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History. It is a collection of full texts of books and journals published between roughly 1850 and 1950 addressing such home economic topics as child

including **Good Housekeeping** and **Harper's Bazaar**. You can pick a date and read the exact issue Grandma might have read when she finally got the baby to sleep and had a few minutes to herself. I remember my father loved the combination of chocolate and orange. Maybe his mother discovered the recipe for the Chocolate and Orange Royal Mystery cake in the November 1921 **Good Housekeeping** and started a family tradition.

When you find a book or two that are of particular interest to you, the site allows you to put the reference into a "bookbag", which will help you to create a bibliography. You can email the results to yourself or your research collaborators.

The books are easy to navigate. Each result will generally lead you to the title page, copyright statement and the table of contents and/or index. You can leaf through the book page by page or use a

The Core Historical Literature of Agriculture (CHLA) is a companion site from Cornell University, <http://chla.library.cornell.edu>. Navigate the site the same way. Over a million pages.

Some sample texts:

- The Propagation of Hardy Trees and Shrubs (1927)
- Harvesting and Storing Garden Fruit (1947)
- Culture of the Grape (1867)
- Successful Farming: How to Farm for Profit, the Latest Methods (1900)
- Bees and Honey, or, The Management of an Apiary for Pleasure and Profit (1892)

If your ancestors were farmers or even just gardeners, odds are they had one or more of these volumes in their personal libraries.

dropdown menu to get to a specific page. While you cannot print or download an entire book at once, you are welcome to print any of the texts one page at a time.

The HEARTH website can help you to fill in the gaps in your ancestors' lives and paint a word picture for your readers of what their world was like. And you might learn a new skill yourself. As for me, I'm off

to the grocery store for chocolate and oranges to bake a cake!

MARY has a certificate in Genealogy and Family History from the University of Washington. She likens genealogy research to the logic of a Sudoku puzzle with a big, juicy payoff at the end. Her previous article, *Sailing In Their Wake*, appeared in the May/June 2013 issue of *Family Chronicle*.

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