

2005

"HEARTH: Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, and History" Review

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Recommended Citation

Hardesty, Skye, "HEARTH: Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, and History" Review" (2005). *University Library Faculty Publications*. 4.

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Reference Review

Title: HEARTH: Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, and History

Publisher Name: Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University

Publisher Location: Ithaca, NY

Publication Year: Last visited August 2004

Internet URL: <http://hearth.library.cornell.edu/h/hearth/>

Price: Gratis

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HEARTH: Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition, and History is a project by the Albert R. Mann Library at Cornell University to create a core electronic collection of books and journals on home economics and related disciplines from 1850 – 1950. Scholars ranked items for inclusion in this project based on bibliographies developed by project members from the Mann Library. The resulting database is a wide-ranging collection of resources including journal articles, pamphlets, and manuals. Currently *HEARTH* holds 934 books (986 volumes) and 8 journals (218 volumes) totaling 385,208 pages. In addition to the full-text holdings there are essays with accompanying bibliographies in PDF format in the following subjects: applied arts and design; child care, human development and family studies; clothing and textiles; food and nutrition; home management; housekeeping and etiquette; housing, furnishing and home equipment; hygiene; institutional management; retail and consumer studies; teaching and communication.

Browsing the full-text materials available in *HEARTH* can be done by subject, publication year, author and title, journal title, and article author. A list of recent additions to the database is also available for browsing. Several search methods are offered such as keyword, full-text, bibliographic, and Boolean and a straightforward search interface is used. Users can save materials to a “book bag” that can be printed out later. There is an extensive help section available for difficulties encountered in searching the database. The search capabilities in the database are fine, the full-text searching works best. Browsing the collection is easier in some instances. Quality of the image varies wildly from item to item but none of the pages are illegible.

Researchers in women’s studies, family studies, sociology, social history, material culture, history of public health, and other topics relating to the history of everyday life will find the resources available in this collection useful. In addition, the bibliographies accompanying the subject essays are thorough and conveniently in PDF format. Because the essays are not in-depth they would appeal primarily to the undergraduate student or

person with a casual interest in these topics. Augmenting this collection is the Core Historical Literature of Agriculture <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/> and the Human Ecology Historical Photographs <http://he-photos.library.cornell.edu/> both available through the Mann Library. The rarity of the material and the focus of *HEARTH* outweighs its minor flaws and is a welcome resource for this understudied and underappreciated aspect of history.