

Helpful hints for housewives from 1885

Back in the days when there was no such thing as a "Lifestyle" section in Bloomington newspapers, female readers were not catered to very much by mostly male editors. Occasionally (presumably on a "slow" news day) there would appear in the paper tidbits of domestic interest sandwiched in between news items.

Take for example the Dec. 9, 1885, edition of the Bloomington *Republican Progress*. It contains a 9-inch column of helpful hints for housewives under the headline "Some



Looking back

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Things Worth Knowing." Some of them are quaint, while others no longer apply today.

In case "caster" bottles got dirty, they were to be cleaned with shot.

The appearance of the female readers' hair could be greatly enhanced by being washed in cold sage tea. (The latter suggestion must have been particularly unpleasant in the winter in houses heated with potbellied stoves.

Doctors today would shudder at the column's suggestion for burns. It says in the *Progress* that the sufferer should apply a paste of flour and water. That remedy was supposed to "give relief."

Some of the items called for in the helpful hints can be found in house-

holds today traveling under other names. Try this one. "When cooking beans, add one-half teaspoonful of saleratus." (The latter is a leavening agent such as bicarbonate of soda.)

Whatever would today's manufacturer of beauty products say about the *Progress*' recommendation regarding hair and facial care. "Water in which borax has been dissolved is good for the hair, and also to whiten the face and hands."

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