

# Ruth B. Comstock

*November 17, 1903 — January 11, 1978*

Mrs. Ruth B. Comstock, professor emeritus and extension specialist in interior design, was a member of the faculty of the Department of Housing and Design of the New York State College of Home Economics (now the College of Human Ecology) for twenty-eight years. Prior to her university appointment she served for five years as a county home demonstration agent in Yates County and as an agent-at-large for four years.

Professor Comstock was born in Springwater, New York, and attended the State Teachers College in Geneseo. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from the New York State College of Home Economics and completed her graduate work in 1942 at Cornell University and at the Teachers College, Columbia University. To enrich her professional background, she took additional graduate work at the New School for Social Research in New York City and at New York University.

In her extension teaching Mrs. Comstock was sensitive to the needs and capabilities of homemakers. Through her expertise in the area of interior design and her unusual gifts as a teacher, she helped homemakers use their skills to create attractive, comfortable, and efficient homes. Her teaching was especially important during the Depression and wartime years when money and material resources were limited. The participatory teaching methods she used gave homemakers pride and satisfaction in their achievements.

Perfection in her own work was evident in all of Mrs. Comstock's teaching and writing. She was the author of numerous Cornell extension bulletins and leaflets that were distinguished by her knowledge and by the clarity of her writing.

Among her writings on home furnishings, the chair seating series is well known. The bulletin "Cane Seats for Chairs" has been the best seller in extension bulletins during the past few years. Even after retirement and prior to her death she constantly revised and kept the bulletins current.

In 1952 Epsilon Sigma Phi awarded Mrs. Comstock a certificate for excellence in written material. In 1956 her bulletin "How to Make Curtains and Draperies" received an award from the American Association of Agricultural College Editors.

She served as chief of the Cornell chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi. She was a former national chairman of the home furnishings extension specialists and was a member of the American Home Economics Association.

For many years Mrs. Comstock was a member of the Women's Advisory Committee of the New York State Fair. She was also superintendent of the State Cooperative Extension home economics exhibits at the state fair. In 1962 she served as chairman of the state fair's Women's Day program.

Upon her retirement in November, 1964, Mrs. Comstock assumed a three-year teaching assignment at the Ranch House College in Salisbury, Rhodesia. After her return to her home in Penn Yan, New York, she was Active in volunteer teaching; in the meals-on-wheels project of the Methodist Church; and in other community activities. She was also a member of the hospital board of the Soldiers and Sailors Hospital. She traveled widely, Visiting Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Hawaii, Spain, Morocco, Mexico, and Canada.

Mrs. Comstock was devoted to her family, loyal and helpful to her many friends and colleagues.

She was the widow of the late Herbert G. Comstock and the mother of Alan B. Comstock of Penn Yan, New York, and of Mrs. Stuart (Ann) Crandall of Greensboro, North Carolina.

*Ruby M. Loper, Hazel E. Reed, Clark E. Garner*