

Therese Wood Nevin

June 16, 1899 — May 29, 1995

Therese Wood Nevin was born in Boston, Massachusetts on June 16, 1899. Her parents were Samuel and Elizabeth Wood. Her Canadian-born father and German-born mother, both American citizens, were associated with the Salvation Army; her father was a member of the Executive branch. She grew up with a closely knit family guided by parents whose professional careers focused on problems of human welfare.

Therese attended Russell Sage College for two years and completed her Bachelor's degree at Western Reserve University in 1923. She received her Master's degree from Columbia University in 1939.

Following graduation she worked as a hospital dietitian and later as a high school teacher. She began her career in Cooperative Extension as a Food and Nutrition specialist at the University of Maine in 1928, and she came to Cornell University in 1935 as an Instructor in the Foods and Nutrition Department to work with the 4-H Program in Cooperative Extension. In 1942, she transferred to the Adult Extension Program in Foods and Nutrition.

From the outset she was interested and thoroughly dedicated to the aims and ideals of Cooperative Extension. Specifically, she was interested in good nutrition for the entire family.

Therese, in her professional contacts with New York State families, had the special ability to empathize with their problems, which were compounded by the Great Depression as well as World War II. She recognized the need to help homemakers create well-balanced meals while curtailed by limited income. She also understood and practiced successful money management and was committed to working through problems with a pragmatic approach. Her goal was to find tasteful combinations of foods that would appeal to diverse New York families who had different cultural food preferences, nutritional needs, and limited resources.

An excellent teacher, Therese insisted on teaching the "why's" as well as the "how to's" to Extension leaders. She took advantage of training schools to include the nutritional values of the foods being prepared, to present the best way to retain the optimum amount of nutrients, and to teach the safe handling of food. Her high standards of food preparation set an excellent example for the homemakers with whom she worked.

Her years in Maine gave her a special interest and knowledge of fish cookery which she introduced to the rural homemakers in New York State through a series of lessons.

Therese was an expert in food preservation, an important and necessary skill for homemakers during the Depression and war years. She wrote several bulletins concerning the preservation of fish, meat, poultry, fruit, and vegetables. She directed the making of a color-sound movie on the canning of fruits and vegetables and gave many demonstrations and training schools for leaders throughout the states. Freezing foods was just developing during this period, and Therese included this new method after much experimenting and testing to discover the problems homemakers might encounter. She often conferred with professors in Animal Science, Poultry Science, and other professors in Food and Nutrition to enable her to present the latest research to her audiences.

On sabbatical leave in England in 1950, she worked for the *Farmers Weekly*, demonstrating the canning of meat and poultry to various groups including Women Institutes (similar to county extension groups in the U.S.). She also attended the triennial meeting at the Associated Country Women of the World. The goals of the ACWW were to cultivate international understanding and friendship; to create appreciation of the talents and achievements of the people in all countries; and to study their varied contributions to the culture, beauty, and wealth of one world.

Throughout her professional life and following retirement, she enjoyed travel, going to Brazil, Europe, India, and the Holy Land. She was a splendid ambassador for the college and university.

Therese retired from Cornell in 1964 as Professor Emerita and joined her sister in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, where she was active in the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the local Bible study groups, and the Historical Society.

In 1980 she married Dr. F. Reese Nevin, a long-time friend, and moved to Plattsburg, New York, where her husband was professor at the state college. To a happy late marriage, she shared her intellectual interests in reading, gardening, and traveling. Their joint interest in young people was expressed in various ways. She established a scholarship for students in the biological sciences at SUNY at Plattsburg in honor of her husband.

Therese Wood Nevin died at age 95 on May 29, 1995. Survivors include her husband, a stepson, her sister Laura, and several nieces and nephews. She will be remembered with admiration by her former colleagues and friends.

Mildred Dunn, Nell Mondy, Hazel Reed