“Retain youthful looks.”

Electric stove ad, Northern States Power Company, 1938

When Thomas Edison first wired a home in 1882, he envisioned that electricity would reduce the need for household labor by powering both lights and motors.

Although electrified homes became more common in urban areas in the early 1900s, the big push to electrify homes—targeted at women—didn’t come until after WWI.

Electric appliances were initially advertised as time-saving, but studies showed that electricity had little effect on the time women spent on housework.

I went door-to-door in Cloquet with a persolator and a flat toaster. I’d serve toast and coffee as a demonstration, and the customer could hire the package on contract and pay through their monthly electric bill.

A “domestic servant” to Wisconsin Power and Light, 1930s.

Anjorin woman, COURTESY WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ENYER and again, amidst the current talk of Iow kernel, comes up a notion dear to the housewife—practical savings in the home; the camera in a house is a treasure. For housekeeping is the most important branch.

The Premeco range was accuracy through wise expenditure. A little time with it every day accomplishes more and wastes less.

The housewife with a Premeco has leisure for her children, her husband, her amusements, and her friends. And her house is cleanliness itself.

The “jewel of a pudding is in the oven.” The Premeco is willing to tell itself as much as what it can show you. It can do. If you can’t visit us, we will arrange for the demonstration in your own house. Moderate prices. Convenient terms.

The Premeco company, 1300 S. Platte, Denver, Colorado.

Advertising, St. Paul Pioneer Press, December 12, 1920

Any woman who saw the electric bath which lights the interior of the big gas range displayed at the St. Paul Gas Light Co., the sight which the ultimate would come. The bride may serve her beloved favorite breakfast, pancakes, without abashing herself from his side or filling her sitting room with smoke if someone gives her the new electric griddle. If he prefers toast, she can have a toaster which automatically turns the slices, saving her from scorching finger tips. Electricity seems to be woman’s particular servant, for aside from all the devices by which it saves her labor, there is a set, comprising hair dryers, curlers, and wavers guaranteed to help her be beautiful to Edison, a suffragist.

St. Paul Pioneer Press, December 12, 1943"