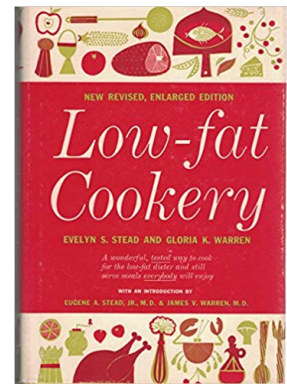


Dr. Stead's Wife, Evelyn, Was an Innovator Also by Reginald Carter

Dr. Stead and I would talk about a variety of things when I visited him and his wife Evelyn at their lake home in Bullock, NC. I don't recall how we got on the subject of money, but he said, "I never made much money doctoring. Mrs. Stead is the money maker in our family." This puzzled me since I knew that Mrs. Stead had been a stay-at-home mother and wife for most of their marriage. He continued saying, "She coauthored a cookbook that became a best seller, went through several editions and was even translated into other languages." I learned later that Mrs. Stead had invested the money she earned from royalties in the stock market. Since they were frugal spenders, the money accumulated over time.



We have several different editions of the cookbook in our collection of items donated to the PA History Society by the Stead family. The book coauthored by Evelyn Stead and Gloria Warren is titled *Low-Fat Cookery* and was published in 1956 by the McGraw-Hill Book Company. In addition to the cookbooks, we also have a scrapbook that contains newspaper clippings, photographs, advertisements and other related items about the cookbook. Collectively, they tell an intriguing story about a cardiologist and his wife working together to prevent heart disease.



Mrs. Gloria Warren (left) and Mrs. Stead in Kitchen

About a year before the cookbook was published, Dr. Stead and his Duke colleague, Dr. James Warren, approached their wives about "devising a new way of cooking that would satisfy the entire family and at the same time drastically reduce the fat content of meals." Mrs. Stead, a former copy editor, and Mrs. Warren, a former dietician, took up the challenge. Using their kitchens as a laboratory and their families as guinea pigs, they formulated enough recipes to be published by McGraw-Hill in November 1956. Drs. Stead and Warren wrote in the cookbook's introduction that "Many doctors believe that the large fat intake in the average American diet plays an important role in hardening of the arteries and that persons of normal weight should derive less of their calories from fat." They believed that "lifelong changes in cooking and eating habits are needed ... and a philosophy of cooking must be evolved which offers the same variety of tasty dishes to which we are accustomed."

Being the first cookbook of its kind, McGraw-Hill's marketing department went into full swing with an article ready for publication in the *Ladies' Home Journal* in January 1957. Book reviews (all positive) and advertisements were published in a variety of publications including popular magazines, trade magazines and newspapers. The cookbook was even advertised in the *Journal of the American Medical*

Association (JAMA). In addition, Mrs. Stead was invited to cook recipes and promote the book on several local TV stations. According to a bulletin board poster, Mrs. Stead was a guest speaker at a seminar titled "Low Fat Cookery Clinic" held in Charlotte, NC on May 18, 1961. The seminar was "For heart patients, their wives, husbands, mothers, aunts, grandmothers, daughters – and anyone else who is interested in learning about low-fat, low-calorie cooking and eating." The poster noted that "Evelyn Stead is co-author of this well-known cook book which is now recognized as the classic in its field. She has had eighteen years of practical experience at keeping happily and healthy fed a family that likes to eat. Her husband is a well-known physician and heart specialist at Duke." Recipes from the book were to be demonstrated and Mrs. Stead was scheduled to appear at 1:00 PM on the Betty Feezer Show, WBTV, Charlotte, NC. Feezer's show was one of the top rated TV cooking shows at the time.



Mrs. Stead (left) with Hostess Cordelia Kelly on What's Cooking WFMY-TV Greensboro, NC April 11, 1961

By December 1958, the cookbook had sold 40,000 copies and Mrs. Stead and Warren were asked to create an additional 90 new recipes for a second edition, published in 1959. In 1961, the Warrens moved from Duke University to Ohio State University where Dr. Warren took over as chair of Medicine. Afterwards, it became difficult to work on additional editions of the book. Even so, the cookbook remained best seller for McGraw-Hill for many years. Used copies of the cookbook are still available on the internet.

Resources include (1) Nelson, Norman. Duke Wives Publish New Book. Duke Hospital Intercom (newspaper) December 1956;1(2):5-6 and (2) Stead Family Scrap Book Photographs and Bulletin Board Poster.