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## EC1164 The Spirit of the Home

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK  
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
U. of N. Agr. College & U.S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating  
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln



#### THE SPIRIT OF THE HOME

"Nor need we wealth or splendor,  
Wide halls or lordly domes,  
The good, the true, the tender,  
These make the wealth of Homes."

-Washington Irving



## THE SPIRIT OF THE HOME

It is the wish of every true homemaker to make her home a happy, comfortable place for her family. Every homemaker realizes that she has a big responsibility before her and she sometimes becomes discouraged and thinks, "Oh, well, what is the use, we do not have enough money to buy all these things." But is money necessary to develop a home that is happy, does it take money to do the little things that make the family remember, years afterwards, the pleasant times they had in the home? After the children grow up, do they remember so much the wall paper, the chairs, and the rugs or do they remember the pleasant Sunday evenings at home, or the picnics the family had in the backyard, or when the family read a book aloud?

What does a well furnished farm home mean? By itself, nothing, but it means much to the family living in it; for it is the human relationships that determine its value. It is a place where characters are built, where sweet family memories are formed and the place one always goes in times of stress, and a place to celebrate family victories.

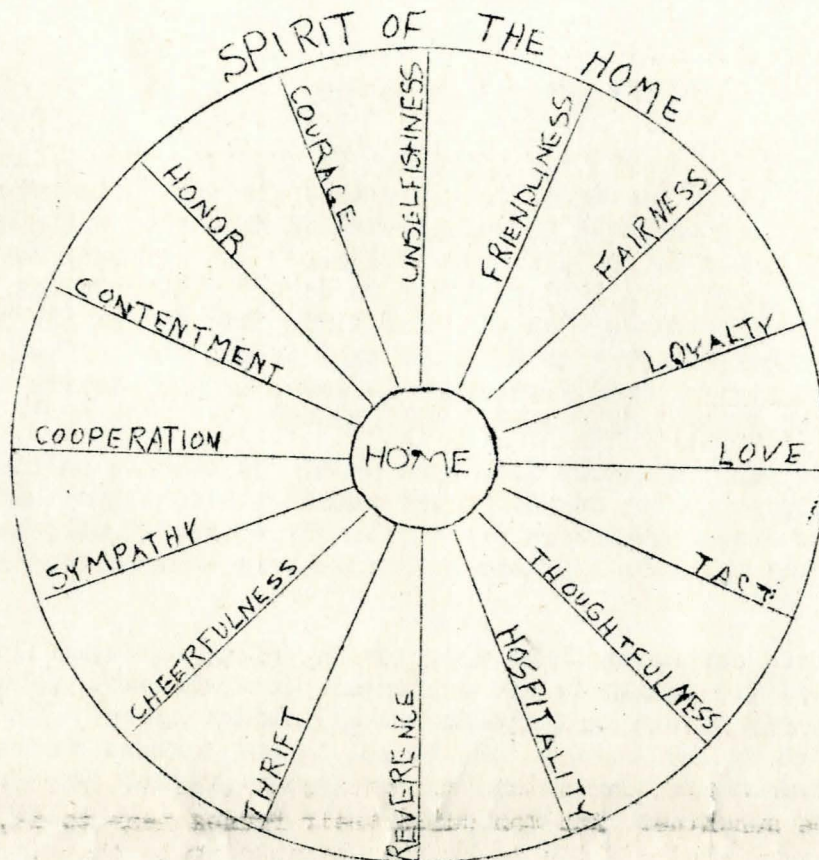
What good are expensive furniture, lovely walls, hardwood floors and all that goes with them if the family is not contented, if each member is not allowed to live his or her best and is not an influence on all future lives? The most humble home may be a place where the members love to go, it may express supreme hospitality to neighbors and friends, and the members of the family cherish the thought of home, and love to return to it at the end of a day.

What makes the difference between a home that is the spiritual center of the family, the citadel of quietness, in which the individual can develop himself to the fullest capacity; and a home that is a mere shell to hold furniture and pictures, a place to go to eat or sleep, a home that holds no friendships, nor memory of happiness? Someone has said it is the individuals living together harmoniously which makes the difference. Their attitude, and personalities make the spirit of the home.

The best way to illustrate these qualities is to put them down in the form of a cart wheel. The hub being the Home, the spokes the qualities that hold this home together and the tire the spirit that makes the home move around and travel along. In thinking of these qualities, think of all the members of the family and what is best for their development and then think of how this home can be an asset to the community.

Since these are desirable qualities for a home, how are we to be sure our homes have them? A good way to test whether or not the home does manifest these qualities is to take a quality and work out how the members react to it. If the members of the family react favorably, then we may feel that the "spoke in our wheel" is strong.





Some situations arising in family life that show cooperation

1. Each member taking a share of the work and responsibilities
2. If one member is unable to do all his work, other members offer to help.
3. All members discussing together the personal needs of each individual so that each can be served fairly
4. All making their plans to conform with the plans of the others as nearly as possible.
5. When one member of the family is being corrected, the others do not enter into the discussion
6. When one parent is correcting a child the other parent keeping silent. Silence seems best for a child dislikes to have both parents correcting him at the same time.
7. If one parent disagrees with the other in the correction, do not disagree in front of the child. Talk it over privately later.
8. Parents planning with the children for their entertainment.
9. Parents assisting children to entertain their friends.
10. Children helping parents to entertain visitors
11. All members of the family taking an interest in what each other are doing. Scoffing often makes a child silent and this does not develop a talent.

Can you add any other situations to this list?



A similar list might be made of each quality. One of the problems we may have is to interest the rest of the family in trying to develop these qualities. Perhaps one way to do this is to have a family party, all of them even the baby in the high chair, sitting around the dining room table. There the family discuss together what kind of a family they want to be, how they want the neighbors to feel toward them, how they may make other people like to come to their house, What fun such a party is and how that family will try to make their home a wonderful place, each member knowing his part and sharing his responsibility. This may be different for one member may not want to do his share, but just remember to keep on trying.

Bruce Barton expressed this thought in the following taken from the April 1928, MCCALL'S magazine.

"There are Two Seas"

"There are two seas in Palestine. One is fresh, and fish are in it, Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it, and stretch out their thirsty roots to sip of its healing waters.

"Along its shores the children play, as children played when He was there. He loved it. He could look across its silver surface when He spoke His parables. And on a rolling plain not far away He fed five thousand people.

"The river Jordan makes this sea with sparkling water from the hills. So it laughs in the sunshine. And men build their houses near to it, and birds their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there.

"The river Jordan flows on south into another sea.

"Here is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travellers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs heavy above its waters, and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink.

"What makes this mighty difference in these neighbor seas?

"Not the river Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. Not the soil in which they lie; not the country round about.

"This is the difference. The Sea of Galilee receives but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on in equal measure.

"The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously.

"It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps.

"The Sea of Galilee gives and lives. This other sea gives nothing. It is named The Dead.

"There are two kinds of people in the world. There are two seas in Palestine!"



The following are a few letters written by project leaders which express their ideas on the Spirit of the Home.

"The Spirit of the Home", the subject is so broad that one scarcely knows where to begin. In mentioning the word "Spirit" one brings to mind something supernatural, something that is present yet invisible. One may enter a home where the furnishings are most elegant and the colorings are a picture of harmony but where upon meeting the members of the household, the surroundings become unbearable. On the other hand the same home may be taken with different occupants and the beauty of the rooms only serve to strengthen the "spirit" of welcome and good cheer.

"One may, again, enter a home where the housewife for some very good reason probably has had to neglect her duties somewhat and where everything at first looks topsy-turvy. After a few moments spent in this home, however, the "spirit" of happiness is so prevalent that one forgets the "house" in thinking of the "home". As before we may take the same home with a different hostess, who begins immediately to make apologies for this and for that which brings to our eyes things that we otherwise might not see, so that we see nothing but the "house."

"I wonder sometimes when we enter a home where everyone and everything seems comfortable and peaceful, where the little girls are little ladies and the boys are fine, well trained fellows, if it might not be that the "spirit" or memory of a dear grandma, gone but not forgotten, or of a sturdy veteran grandpa, who has gone to join the ranks of his old comrades, may not be invisibly present and influential in the home. If such might be the case, it seems that we can not try too hard to make the "spirit" of our home one that lasts not only during our own life but lives even after we are gone.

"Lord, may my home be far removed from strife and din,  
And let my friends oft find the way to enter in,  
And give peace, trust and happiness to all within!"

-Mrs. J. W.  
Fillmore County

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"Home should mean the dearest spot on earth to each of us. It is our earthly haven - where we seek rest, relaxation, recreation, and contentment.

"The greatest factor in making our four square walls a real home is love - love for each other, love for our fellow man, love of the beautiful and love for our Creator and all His teachings.

"When health is ours, too, happiness is sure to be there. With these three the greatest institution on earth is founded and steadily develops into a veritable stronghold of character building and industry.

"The true spirit seems such a subtle thing. One can not define it. Neither can he feel it. Rather he senses it. It takes broad-minded, level-headed steering to combat modern influences and guide the developing minds and souls of our sons and daughters to the better goals of life. Home is where this training takes place-- where all good precepts are taught and lived. With so much to condemn in this jazz age of temptations parents should make unceasing efforts to create an atmosphere of blessed content, a place where all the children love to gather and mingle with the family.

"The farm home offers so many attractions to our growing boys and girls. They can have unlimited interests in their surroundings, and living close to nature surely brings them closer to God.



"True it is that we live a day at a time. Yet, looking backwards home means to us all the good influences that entered into our childhood life and that have stayed with us to help us win our battles in later life.

"In all true homes, too, there are the two little bears, namely, bear and forbear. Without them the home goes away. With them the home builds on a solid foundation and remember, even in the humble home the true spirit often manifests itself more strongly than in the gilded mansion."

Mrs. M \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_

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"You have asked me to write about the Spirit of the Home. We have been learning many things which make our homes attractive and pleasing to the family. I think the attractiveness of our homes is not confined to our house and its furnishings but the finer things are love, cheerfulness, sympathy, forbearance, gentleness, and the homely virtues which express the true home spirit.

"Many homes are not congenial and lack love and friendliness. From such homes the children are apt to go away for amusements and friends. If mother and father have a spirit of cooperation and radiate cheerfulness and kindness toward each other and have a hearty welcome for their friends and are sincere in forming friendships, then the children are certain to want to bring their friends into their homes.

"I think we should encourage our children to bring their friends into our homes and not refuse when they ask to bring their friends unless we have good reasons which if explained kindly and sincerely will not hurt their feelings. As soon as we can we should plan to carry out our promises and plan with them for their good times.

"I think it means more to them than we realize many times and if they can't bring their friends they will go elsewhere for entertainment.

"I want my home to be used and not so well kept the family do not feel at ease. Often I feel too tired to help my boy make candy, pop corn balls, or ice cream, but I am glad to have him at home doing something like that instead of being away, I don't know where. So I try to please him and if he wants to bring company I try to make the best of it and I find I can do just a little extra to please him and I have always gotten thru and been happier for having done it.

"The same way with my two girls, they have always brought their friends into our home, and while I know it makes extra planning and work, I want them to feel that home is the place to entertain their friends. I think that homemaking is the biggest job any woman can have but if my children and husband love their home and their characters are kept pure and honorable so that they will be respected, I feel that I shall not have lived in vain as a homemaker."

Mrs. J \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_

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Lancaster County

"We will all agree that the home atmosphere is largely influenced by such forces as the general health of the family, education, occupations, home equipment, religious training and many more that could be mentioned.



"The forces which interest us most as homemakers are those under our control or at least those forces that may feel our influence. Am I making it too strong when I say that the spirit of the mother is largely the spirit of the home? Just as the spirit of the teacher is in the school room?

"The mother with executive ability who speaks in a pleasing tone, and gets results without the aid of threats, bribery, or fear is indeed an enviable creature. Her children have learned to make their decisions for action on the basis of right doing. Instead of friction and disorder we see the result in development of power and character. To keep machinery of the home working smoothly is her task. Courtesy is as good a lubricant as may be found. Courtesy develops respect, forbearance and congeniality.

"The courageous parent is always an inspiration to the entire family. Her teaching is always of an affirmative nature and creates a happy attitude of mind rather than a feeling of dull repression. Thru encouragement the lessons of accuracy and ability are developed to the highest extent.

"Confidence is one of the fundamentals in a successful home. Confidence among all members of the family. Confidence cultivates truth. If mother is told all the blunders at home and school, what an opportunity for corrective teaching.

"All questions truthfully answered are so satisfying that the children constantly return for more of mother's lessons.

"Last but not least is the love in the home. This is God's natural gift. It does not need to be developed like management, courtesy, courage, and confidence. Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

Love of God and man fills in everywhere and makes each feel that her home is the best place in the world. The attractiveness of our home, its cleanliness, and harmony of colors are very important, but without mother, father, and the children all in perfect harmony, they are like a well set stage with poor actors. "It takes a heap of livin' in a house to make it home."

R. E. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Webster County

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"We all have at some time entered homes which instantly made us feel at home, homes which welcomed us with charm and repose, and were livable as well as beautiful. We can not help comparing such homes with others which are uninteresting and wonder what makes the difference.

"It need not be costly furnishings or striking effects, but instead well chosen and suitable furniture. Only those things had been purchased which are appropriate for the rooms and for the needs of the occupants. Half of the charm of a room depends on color. Harmonious color schemes had been planned. Not necessarily dull quiet colors. Too many of us dare not give full expression to our love of color. Every room needs some bright colors but in small amounts as in cushions, vases, and lamps. These small accessories give to a room that quality of usefulness and shows the taste and personality of the owner.



Music has the power to comfort and help us when nothing else will. We should turn from our work at some time each day and give a little time to music. It would become an inspiration to us and make us happier. There can not be too much music.

"There is nothing as good as a wholesome home life. Here is where we find true happiness and content. The home atmosphere is important. True affection and good sense help to make a home. Homes are what we make them. Trivial disagreements should be passed over lightly and forgotten. We should show appreciation of each member of the family. No substitute has ever been found for home training. The influence of the school is also of importance but all parents should start training a child in manners at an early age. Then he will never suffer embarrassment or humiliation that are sure to come to one who has missed such an education. They should respect the possessions of all members of the family, not helping themselves to one another's belongings merely because they happen to live in the same house. Children acquire naturally the habit of courtesy if so instructed.

"A couple starting a new home should begin with direct honesty with each other and maintain this thru all the years to come. No mother who declares that her child is a year or two younger than he really is, to avoid paying carfare can expect truth telling and honesty from the child. A home is the most worth while thing in the world if we make it what it ought to be. It will be a happy home if we insist that the members of it must never do anything to make it otherwise."

Mrs. E. C. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Phelps County

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"When starting the work of a home maker we often think as soon as we have four walls around us, and our furniture in its place, that our home is complete, but it is just the beginning. It takes many years in which to build a home, whereas a house can be built in a few months.

"The spirit of the home is one of the main things in making the home a place where every member of the family is willing to do his part. Some think this would be an easy task to accomplish if we had all the money that we needed and a modern home in which to stay but there are so many such homes among the unhappy ones.

"It does not take a home that makes you think of money every where you look, to make a happy home. How much more willing the children are to spend the evenings at home, if they can enjoy the things that their home contains. It is so hard to be contented if they hear nothing but "don't" all the time. They are bound to seek amusement some place else for they feel that they are not wanted at home.

"Father and mother are the main "home builders" so it is up to them not to let themselves become gloomy minded and pessimistic so as to spoil the innocent childhood and the youth of the young folks. We should keep up for the sake of our children for their minds are so easily impressed by the actions of those around them. If mother wears a smile, and enjoys their work and play, it is so much easier for the to smile and be happy.

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"There are several kinds of home spirit but it seems to me that hospitality and friendliness are quite prominent. A real home is necessary to develop this spirit, one that is not too nice or too strict but a loving generous home. In order to maintain this kind of spirit the people in it shall have to put themselves in a more conspicuous place than the furniture altho I think the home surroundings express the character of the people in it to a certain extent.

"Religion also has a prominent place in developing the home spirit. No one member can develop a home if others do not respond. The housewife can not be responsible for it but if she is shrewd and gives it her every attention, she can bring out the good points in all the members of the family and stamp out those characteristics that are not desired. But she must be on the job every minute of the day or some things are going to develop that she doesn't care about.

"There is no easier way to win the confidence of a child than to give him something for which he is responsible. It may be ever so slight yet to the child's mind it seems large and by working along those lines you can gradually bring out that responsibility without seeming to drive or "nag" the child into it. No two members can be developed in the same way and that is why I think a great part of it falls on the shoulders of the housewife. She being in contact with them more, knows their every whim and desire and is more able to bring out the better things in each one that will make the harmony needed in a home.

"This seems to me a very good place to quote the following: 'Give to the world the best you have and the best will come back to you'".  
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Poetry often expresses our feeling as nothing else can do. The following are some quotations and poems which other project leaders have enjoyed.

#### The Spirit of the Home

"Love should be its foundation  
Mother its cornerstone, the wellspring of joy,  
The comforter in sadness and sorrow  
Father its keystone, its provider, producer, and preserver  
The children, the gift of God, the blessing from on high  
The fireside, the happy gathering place of young and old  
Joint ownership the principle, cooperation the secret of success.  
Each helping and perfecting its pleasure and peace  
Each gladly bearing its burdens and sharing its tasks  
All rival to do the most and the best  
A workshop without limitations, restrictions, or restraint  
A warm nest for the young, the retreat for the aged  
The treasure house of God, song and music in the air, sympathy its tie.  
The school of character and thrift  
The mint where the gold of fidelity and honesty is coined  
The wanderer's aim, the lover's objective, the haven of rest  
The anchor of perfect safety  
Everybody ready to fight to preserve it,  
To defend it with their life blood  
The most cherished, revered and never forgotten spot in time and eternity."



"One ship goes east, another west  
By the selfsame wind that blow  
'Tis the set of the sail, and not  
the gales  
That determines the way they go".

"Like the winds of the sea are the ways  
of Fate  
As we voyage along thru life  
'Tis the set of the soul that decides  
the goal  
And not the calm or the strife."  
-Riddell

"I read within a poet's book  
A word that starred the page  
Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage."

"Yes, that is true, and something more  
You'll find where e'er you roam  
That marble floors and gilded walls  
Can never make a home."

"But every house where Love abides,  
And Friendship is a guest  
Is surely home, and Home-Sweet-Home;  
For there the heart can rest."

-Henry Van Dyke

"You may build four walls of granite  
With a turret and a dome  
But unless you have the spirit there  
You can not have a home.

"To lay the cornerstone of love  
With faith to hold it there  
She mixes in a lot of hope  
And weighs it down with prayer.

"You may build your halls of marble white  
With stairways broad and grand  
But you can not have a perfect home  
Without a mother's hand.

"So that's the true home spirit  
Just like the homing dove  
It leads us back, where'er we stray  
To mother, home and love."

Submitted by - Mrs. D.M. Shaw, Phelps Co.

#### The Spirit of the Home

"Come folks, gather near  
And a story I will tell  
About the days that used to be  
And the present time as well.

"Sally and Sue were sisters, twins,  
The finest I ever knew,  
Sally married a farmer,  
While a banker married Sue.

"Sue, of course, lived in town  
In a wonderful, fine, new home  
With everything that heart could wish,  
Just for the asking, alone.

"She went in for society,  
And she liked to entertain;  
Yet she always was just a little afraid  
That her house could not stand the strain.

"The chairs were not built for  
comfort  
And the rugs showed every mark,  
Lest the sunshine fade the paper  
The shades were drawn 'til dark.

"Sally's home in the country,  
Was not as fine as Sue's,  
The house was old and rambling,  
Not a place that she would choose.

"There were many duties for Sally,  
She worked from morn 'til night,  
But the simple country life,  
Was always her delight.

"Times were often pretty hard  
For crops were poor some years,  
And the things that needed mending  
Would drive most folks to tears.



"Not so, with little Sally,  
She showed a courage fine,  
And mastered many problems,  
Not once, did she repine.

"Instead she joined a project club,  
And learned many things to do  
To make her home attractive  
At small expense, 'tis true.

"Sally's friends came often,  
Thru sunshine and in rain  
The attraction of her hearthstone,  
They never could explain.

"Sue was in her glory,  
As long as things went well,  
But at last a little friend of hers,  
Accidently broke the spell.

"They were playing bridge one evening  
And she had left the room  
When she heard someone saying,  
O, dear, O, dear - such gloom!

"I wish we were out to Sally's  
We'd have real comfort there,  
That's a home that is a home,  
There's none of this "sham" there.

"Sue, of course, was sorely grieved,  
And feeling very blue,  
Next day she went to Sally  
And asked her what to do.

"Sally gave her some good advice,  
In her sweet and gracious way,  
And I'm sure Sue didn't forget it,  
For many and many a day.

"Make of your life a garden,  
Keep it bright with flowers  
Scatter the blossoms of helpfulness  
To while away the hours.

"Uproot the seeds of selfishness,  
Water the seeds of love;  
Cultivate the spirit of happiness  
Which comes from the skies above.

"Open the doors and windows  
Let in the bright sunshine  
Cast out the gloom and darkness,  
Bring in content sublime.

"Then read a story by Edgar Guest  
As told in his little poem,  
It takes a heap o' livin' in a  
house  
To make of it a home."

-Mrs. J. H. Petring,  
Nebraska City, Otoe County

### HOME

"It takes a heap o' livin' in a house to make it home,  
A heap o' sun and shadder, and you sometimes have to roam  
Before you really 'preciate the things you left behind,  
And hunger for 'em somehow, with 'em always on your mind.  
It don't make any difference how rich you git to be,  
How much your chairs and table cost, how great your luxury,  
'Taint home to you, tho it be the palace of a king,  
'Til somehow your soul gits sorta wrapped 'round everything.

"Home ain't a place that gold can buy or get up in a minute;  
Afore it's home there's got t' be a heap o' livin' in it;  
Within the walls there's got t' be some babies born, and then  
Right there ye've got t' bring 'em up t' women good, and men;  
And gradjerly, as time goes on, ye find ye wouldn't part  
With anything they ever used - They've grown into yer heart;  
The old high chairs, the playthings, too, the little shoes they wore  
Ye hoard: an' if ye could, ye'd keep the thumb-marks on the door.



"Ye've got t' weep t' make it home, ye've got t' sit and sigh,  
And watch beside a loved one's bed, an' know that Death is nigh;  
An' in the stillness o' the night t' see Death's angel come,  
An' close the eyes o' her that smiled, an' leave her sweet voice dumb.  
Fer these are scenes that grip the heart an' when yer tears are dried,  
Ye find the home is dearer than it was, an' sanctified;  
An' tuggin' at ye always are the pleasant memories  
O' her that was an' is no more - ye can't escape from these.

"Ye've got t' sing an' dance fer years, ye've got t' romp an' play,  
An' learn t' love the things ye' have by usin' 'em each day;  
Even the roses 'round the porch must blossom year by year  
Afore they 'come apart o' ye suggestin' someone dear  
Who used t' love 'em long ago, an' trained 'em jes' t' run  
The way they do, so's they would get the early mornin' sun;  
Ye've got t' love each brick an' stone from cellar up t' dome;  
It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home."

-Edgar A. Guest

(Arranged by Rizpah Douglass, State Extension Agent, Home Beautification)

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