

Reading Questions for Cowan articles and Goldstein article

STS.038 Class Discussion: Wednesday, October 25, 2006

- 1) Why did the electric refrigerator succeed and the gas one fail?
- 2) In this case, what was the relationship between markets, consumer choice, and manufacturing? Who decides what gets manufactured?
- 3) Why study the history of failed inventions at all?
- 4) How does what Cowan calls the “sociological analysis” of industrialization’s effect on the family differ from her historical evidence? Does this difference matter?
- 5) What effect *did* industrialization have on the home, according to Cowan? And what effect did it have on women in particular?
- 6) How did *ideas* about women and housework change in the early 20th century?
- 7) What was the role of advertising in these changes?
- 8) How did home economists connect producers and consumers? And how does recognizing this connection help us study history, and the history of energy in particular?
- 9) Does the Goldstein analysis of Home Economics fit into the approach to the History of Technology described by Cowan?
- 10) What role did gender play in the evolution of the electric grid?