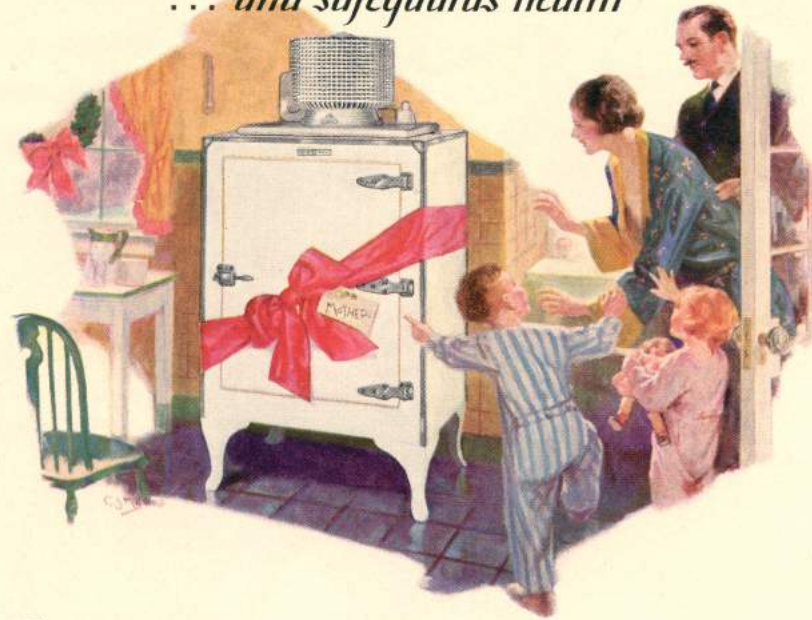


The gift that simplifies housekeeping
... and safeguards health



IF you could wrap lighter house-tasks in a nice little box and close them with a not-to-be-opened-till-Christmas seal, wouldn't you like to send them to some one you know?

Well, you can come pretty close to doing just that. A General Electric Refrigerator is one sure way of making life easier for the woman who runs the house.

It cuts marketing trips, it simplifies menu-planning, it gives new ease and variety to cooking. It keeps foods healthfully fresh.

And now that you've decided on an electric refrigerator, consider especially this new-day General Electric. It is radically different from all others—really "years ahead" in design. It is so completely automatic that it never even needs oiling. All its machinery is safely sealed in an air-tight steel casing, on the top, away from floor dirt.

These revolutionary refrigerators are developed, produced and guaranteed by General Electric... a strong assurance of their truly superior quality. Write for Booklet B-12.

GENERAL  ELECTRIC Refrigerator

"Makes it Safe to be Hungry"

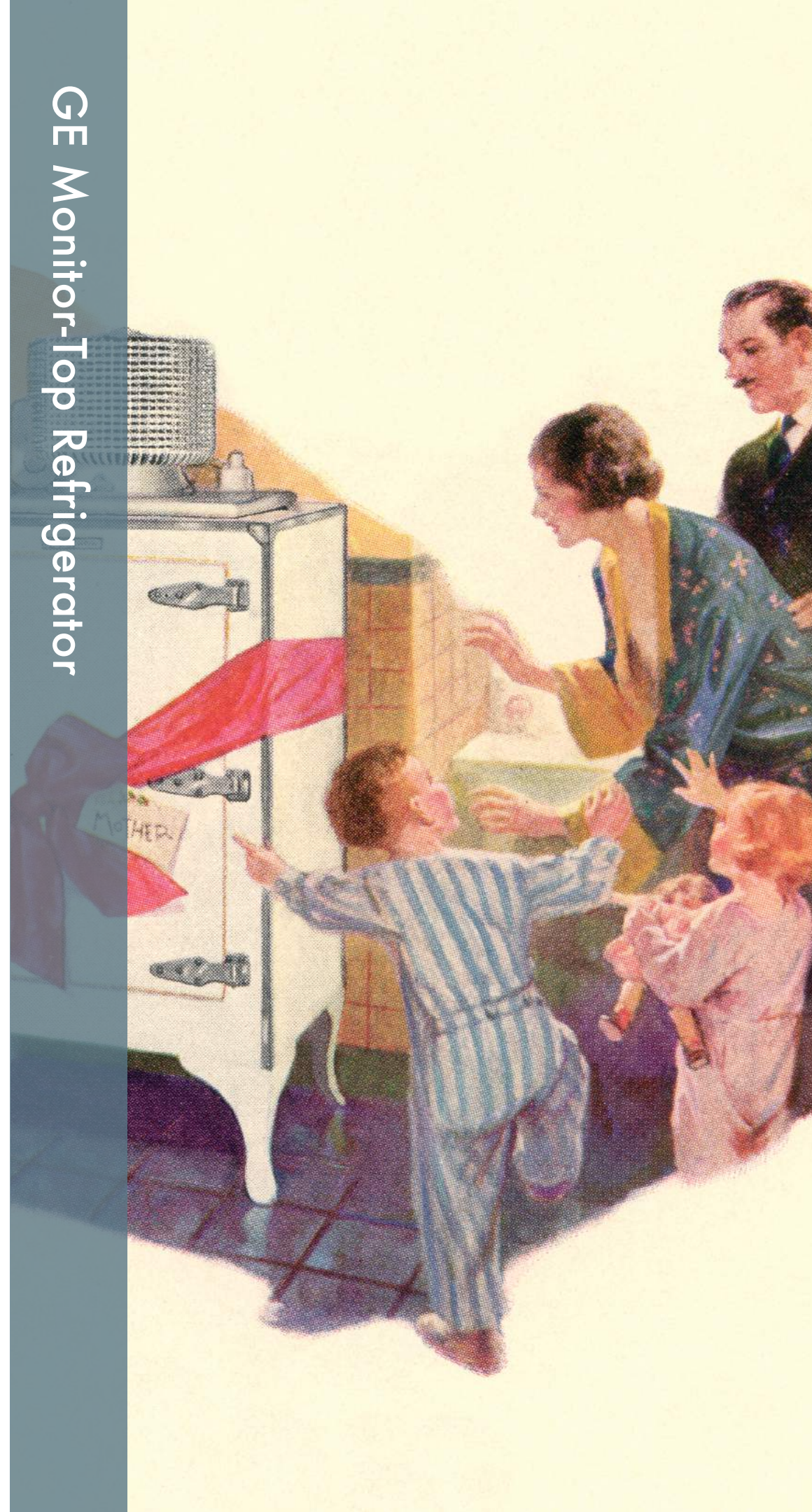
ELECTRIC REFRIGERATION DEPARTMENT · OF GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY · HANNA BUILDING · CLEVELAND, OHIO

Image: General Electric Refrigerator Magazine Advertisement, 1928
Photomechanical print on paper, courtesy of MiSci (Museum of Innovation and Science)



Object: **Monitor-Top Refrigerator General Electric**, Schenectady, New York c. 1930, steel with enamel finish, Albany Institute of History & Art, gift of the estate of Ruth and William Streets, 2003.56

GE Monitor-Top Refrigerator



The Capital Region in 50 Objects

GE Monitor-Top Refrigerator

When the General Electric Company in Schenectady, New York, debuted its Monitor-Top refrigerator in 1927, mechanical refrigeration was a luxury. For centuries, people preserved and stored their food – especially dairy products – in cellars, outdoor window boxes, or even in springhouses, where running water from a stream trickled under or between shelved pans and crocks. Before the Civil War, food preservation was done with salting, spicing, smoking, pickling and drying. But as cities grew, so did the distance between the consumer and the source of the food. With innovations in storage, ice could be cut from lakes and rivers and shipped across the state and nation. Industries developed to store, transport, and distribute natural ice with less waste. By 1909 there were more than 2,000 commercial ice production facilities, first making ice mechanically and then creating mechanical refrigeration appliances.

By the early twentieth century, most people used iceboxes for their perishable foods. The ice, which was stored in a top compartment, was frequently replaced and the melted water drained from the bottom of the box. As cities grew, sources of ice became polluted and companies began the search for affordable, mechanical, refrigeration to preserve foods. The predecessor to the Monitor-Top, the Dumbbell, was released in 1910 and sold for \$1,000. In comparison, the Monitor-Top cost between \$200 and \$300 and had a very low service cost. Air circulated through coils inside the appliance to prevent dust from gathering, and the machinery was permanently oiled.

The Monitor-Top was also an innovation in food safety for the average family. The refrigerator was built as one airtight unit that made the appliance quiet and protected the food inside from unwanted bacteria and decay. The name Monitor-Top derives from the refrigerator's resemblance to the turret on the Civil War battle ship, the USS Monitor. Located along the Erie Canal, near the Mohawk River, roads, and turnpikes, General Electric took advantage of their geographical location to ship their products at a very low cost. Advertised as affordable, safe, and well built, the Monitor-Top was America's best selling refrigerator for ten years.

Vocabulary

Advertisement – something (such as a short film or a written notice) that is shown or presented to the public to help sell a product or to make an announcement

Consumer – a person who buys goods and services

Innovation – the act or process of introducing new ideas, devices, or methods

Luxury – a condition or situation of great comfort, ease, and wealth

Manufacture – the process of making products especially with machines in factories

Production – the process of making or growing something for sale or use

Refrigeration – to make or keep cold or cool; to freeze or chill (as food) for preservation

GE Monitor-Top Refrigerator

Name _____ Date _____

Directions

Use the depiction of the object, image, and corresponding text to answer the following questions.

1. What is the name of the object? _____

2. When and where was the object made? _____

3. How did the object get its name? _____

4. Who did GE think would purchase the Monitor-Top? _____

5. Why did GE locate its manufacturing plant in Schenectady, New York?

6. What is the image? _____

7. How did General Electric use advertising to entice people to purchase their products?

8. Name two ways the advertisement states the refrigerator improves lives of Americans:

a. _____ b. _____

9. According to the advertisement, in what ways is this model superior to its competitors?

a. _____ b. _____

10. How did the GE Monitor-Top refrigerator make home refrigeration more accessible?

a. _____ b. _____