

Betty Crocker was an Extension Agent

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Though we have long been told Betty Crocker was a fictional character and her photograph and signature formulated from a variety of women, there was a real woman behind the Betty Crocker moniker. She was an Extension Agent before she went to work for General Mills.

This is one of the pieces of information the Montana Affiliate shared when they submitted their state association history to be archived on the on the NEAFCS website.

As detailed in the Montana Affiliate history, in 1917, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Extension Service selected Janette Kelly as Home Demonstration Agent in Stillwater County. Her role was to share the results of government-sponsored home economics research from Wheat Basin to Park City. By 1921, Kelly had been hired by Minneapolis's Washburn Crosby Company, now known as General Mills, and set to work [establishing the company's first test kitchens](#).

Betty Crocker

When consumers subsequently flooded the company with baking questions, a signature was created to personalize responses from Kelly and what would grow to be her staff of 50 women. The chosen name honored retired company director William G. Crocker. The first name Betty was selected simply because it sounded friendliest. So, with the stroke of a pen, Janette Kelly became Betty Crocker. There's a [complete history of Betty Crocker](#) on the General Mills website.

Thanks to Marsha A. Goetting and the other members from Montana for submitting this fun bit of Montana Association history with us! For their complete history, visit to the [Historical Archives](#) on the NEAFCS website.

The archives can be found under the "About Us" tab, select the "Affiliate Histories" links. There you will find 22 state / Affiliate Association histories posted. If your state has not submitted a history yet, you are encouraged to do so. You never know what interesting facts you may uncover!