

THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

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TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE MAKE PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

This entire issue of the VISITOR is devoted to a brief story of the activities, the experience and professional contributions of several teachers of agriculture who have won advanced degrees during the last year. Space does not permit a complete account of the achievement of each teacher. They all realize the value of continued study as a basis for professional growth in their chosen work as teachers and leaders for rural youth.

Benjamin F. Dunn

Many great Americans were born in log houses. Such was also the boyhood experience of Benjamin F. Dunn who was born and lived for a time in a log dwelling on an 80-acre farm near Maple Lake, Minnesota. This sturdy, ambitious farm-reared boy attended the Maple Lake High School from which he graduated as valedictorian in 1913. During his senior year, he served as school librarian, editor of the school annual, captain and manager of the basketball team and laboratory assistant in science. After graduation from high school, he enrolled for a combination stenographic and bookkeeping course at the Minnesota Business College in Minneapolis. While there, Mr. Dunn was elected vice-president of the commercial class and exchange editor for the college magazine. His first commercial venture was that of storekeeper and bookkeeper at the University Farm dining hall in 1914 during the summer school session for rural school teachers. He says that this was probably the turning point in his life for it was *then* that he became aware of the opportunities on the College of Agriculture Campus and the latent possibilities in himself. He registered in the College of Agriculture that fall. In his sophomore year, he served as class president. It was while holding this office that Mr. Dunn presented Dean E. M. Freeman with a one-gallon gasoline can which has since become the traditional "Little Red Oil Can" that is presented each year to an outstanding student or faculty member at University Farm.

Mr. Dunn's college work was interrupted for a few years because of his enlistment in the United States Army. He was in the Minnesota Field Artillery and

spent four months on the Mexican border in 1916-17 with his regiment. He also served thirteen months in France and five in Germany with Battery B of the 151st Field Artillery of the Rainbow division. During a 14-day furlough in the spring of 1919, he visited places of interest in Belgium, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, Luxemburg, and Germany. In May, 1919, he was discharged from the army with a rank of Battery Supply Sergeant.

Mr. Dunn returned to the College of Agriculture and proceeded to work his way through until graduation. However, he was again interrupted for a period of six months during which he served as training officer with the Vocational Rehabilitation division for retraining disabled soldiers. He graduated from the University of Minnesota in June, 1921. His interest in horticulture prompted him to return to the University for graduate work that fall. On July 1, 1922, he joined the Rochester High School faculty as a teacher of agriculture and still holds that position. He has attended several summer school sessions, accumulating information and credits for his Master's degree which he received in December, 1939.

Ben Dunn has been active in numerous organizations. He is a member of the Methodist church, vice-president and member of the executive board of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society, member and past president of the Rochester Education Association, member and past president of the Minnesota Vocational Agriculture Instructors Association, member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, and member and incorporating president of the Minnesota Fruit Growers Association. His enviable record also includes membership in Phi Delta Kappa, Minnesota Academy of Science, Masonic Lodge and the Eastern Star.

Horticulture is one of Mr. Dunn's pet interests. He has cooperated with the Horticulture division of the University of Minnesota and other experiment stations in testing and tasting strawberry and raspberry varieties. In 1940, orchard land was purchased near Rochester and partially planted with 1100 young apple

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trees of the choicest commercial varieties suitable to local conditions. All the trees were raised and grafted by Mr. Dunn. He realizes that this is a big venture but hopes that it is the beginning of an interesting activity that will develop into a profitable commercial enterprise as well as a practical demonstration of value to others who are interested in the possibilities of fruit growing in the Rochester area. Those who know Ben have confidence that the venture will meet with a high degree of success.

Felix A. Nylund

Felix A. Nylund was born at Ely in northeastern Minnesota on June 17, 1907. At an early age in his life, his parents moved to Wautauga, South Dakota, where they homesteaded a farm. Here Mr. Nylund received his initial farming experience. His parents moved back to Ely just prior to the completion of his eighth grade education. That same year, the family moved to Virginia, Minnesota, where Felix entered high school. He studied vocational agriculture in the high school and spent his summer vacations working on the school farm which was operated by the school district and managed by the agriculture instructor and his advanced students. After graduating from high school in 1924, Mr. Nylund enrolled in the Virginia Junior College for the pre-agriculture curriculum. In 1927, he entered the College of Agriculture at the University of Minnesota from which he graduated in March, 1930. While in college, Mr. Nylund was a member of Alpha Zeta, Phi Delta Kappa, Block & Bridle and the Agricultural Education Club.

Mr. Nylund's practice teaching was done under the direction of Dr. Victor Nylin of Hopkins and W. G. Weigand of Austin. His first teaching assignment started at Hinckley in Pine County in 1930. Mr. Nylund completed his assignment successfully and left a year later for

a position in rural St. Louis County where a new agricultural education program for the rural people of that County was being inaugurated. Mr. Nylund opened new departments and conducted agricultural classes at both the Cherry and Forbes high schools and during that year organized the first agricultural evening school for adult farmers ever conducted in rural St. Louis County. Mr. Nylund, who can speak Finnish fluently, taught these classes almost entirely in the Finnish language for the benefit of the sixty old-stock Finnish farmers who regularly attended his classes.

Because of the outstanding work which Mr. Nylund did with the Cherry farmers that year, he was chosen to head an adult evening school program which was designed to assist farmers throughout the County to plan their farming activities. The next four and one-half years Mr. Nylund devoted to this big task. During that period while working out of Virginia, he conducted 29 different evening school classes in 18 communities. In March, 1937, Mr. Nylund was appointed to the position of agricultural supervisor with the St. Louis county rural schools.

During all these years, Mr. Nylund did not neglect his professional studies. He attended summer school at regular intervals and in December, 1939, he was granted an instructorship in the Agricultural Education Department at the University of Minnesota. He was given a six-months leave of absence from his supervisory duties in rural St. Louis county and during that interval completed his Master of Science requirements at the University. He received his Master's degree in June, 1940. His special study and research problem was entitled "Occupational Distribution of the Young Men Who Studied Vocational Agriculture in the St. Louis County, Minnesota, Rural Schools During the Period Beginning September, 1931, and Ending July, 1939."

In June, 1940, Mr. Nylund again resumed with new vigor and enthusiasm his supervisory duties with the St. Louis county rural schools.

Charles M. Painter

One spring day in 1905 Charles M. Painter experienced his first contacts with agriculture when his impatient cries broke the tranquil silence of the sod shanty on the Painter Nebraska homestead. The next eight years were rather unsettled with considerable moving about while his father combined school teaching with farming.

In the spring of 1913, Charlie's father

bought a farm in Tripp County, South Dakota, which became the permanent family home. A year after completing the eighth grade young Painter entered the School of Agriculture at Brookings, South Dakota. Four years later he enrolled as a freshman at the South Dakota State College of Agriculture from which he graduated in 1928.

His experiences during those four years of college disclose many interesting variations. His work to defray expenses included numerous odd jobs—clerking in a bookstore, being general “funky” in a storage garage and washing laboratory equipment. He broadened his agricultural experience by working on a farm in southern Wisconsin one summer. Extra curricular interests were centered around athletics, speech and news-writing. He was a member of Alpha Zeta and Phi Delta Kappa honorary fraternities. Mr. Painter’s teaching experience has been consistent with his desire for variation. He first taught Vocational Agriculture and coached basketball at Lane, South Dakota. He later spent four years teaching Vocational Agriculture at Kenmore, North Dakota. From the northwestern wheatlands of North Dakota, he took up the problems of South Dakota ranches in a new department at Lemmon. He found the country rich in ranch tradition and Indian lore, but much depleted in material wealth by drouth and grasshoppers. In 1926 he taught at Lennox, South Dakota. At present, he is teaching at Belle Plaine, Minnesota, where he organized a new department in 1938.

Mr. Painter has promoted activity in F.F.A. among the boys in the departments in which he has taught. He has brought about the organization of two new chapters and has been a scoutmaster and 4-H Club leader.

Mr. Painter started his graduate work at the University of Minnesota two years after completing his college work, but conditions in the Dakotas made it necessary to postpone plans for a higher degree. In 1937, he continued his graduate study and received a Master of Science degree in June, 1940. His graduate problem, “A Study of Seventy-four Out-of-School Farm Boys from Sixteen to Twenty-six in the Area of Belle Plaine, Minnesota,” was designed as one of several approaches to a farm placement program for rural youth.

Ralph O. Bille

Ralph O. Bille spent his boyhood days on a farm near St. Paul, Minnesota. This early period of his life instilled in

him a love of nature and rural life. After graduation from Mechanic Arts High School, he enrolled in the College of Agriculture, University of Minnesota. Enlistment in the Aviation Corps and service overseas terminated his pursuit of knowledge for a time. On his return to civilian life, he worked as a mechanical draftsman for a year while trying to orientate himself. His interest in rural life, however, again led him to the College of Agriculture where he completed his undergraduate work in 1922.

In addition to his interest in Agriculture, Mr. Bille has always had an interest in things of a mechanical nature; therefore, it was only natural for him to secure an Industrial Arts teaching certificate as soon as possible. Mr. Bille organized a farm mechanics course in his first school and has had classes in mechanics of some kind ever since. His wide experience and training has especially fitted him for putting on a well-rounded course in mechanics for farm boys.

Mr. Bille’s teaching career was almost terminated by a venture into the construction field that at the time left him only a fund of experience, which since, however, has proved to be of considerable value. The year 1927 saw him again enter the teaching profession in which he has remained to the present time.

He has taught agriculture and industrial arts in Pillager, International Falls, Swanville, and Granite Falls. He is now in his tenth year at Granite Falls. Throughout the years, Mr. Bille has been active in 4-H Club and Boy Scout work. Other interests are design and construction of scenery for class plays, stamp collecting and amateur photography.

Mr. Bille, in an effort to keep abreast of the times, has frequently attended summer sessions at the University of Minnesota. In his graduate work, he majored in Agricultural Education and chose Animal Husbandry as his minor field. Being interested in facilities for agricultural instruction and in plans and construction of buildings, he selected for his research topic, “Plans and Equipment for Agricultural Rooms.” Attending summer school in 1940, Mr. Bille received his Master of Science degree at the close of the first session.

Henry M. Wilson

In December, 1939, Henry M. Wilson completed the requirements for his Master of Science degree at the University of Minnesota. Mr. Wilson was born at Stillwater, Minnesota, where he spent his boyhood and received his early education. Although a town boy, he re-

ceived liberal farm training during summer vacations working for farmers and helping in the care of the family's two cows, chickens and garden. He graduated from the Stillwater High School in 1917. After a semester at the S.L.A. College and two months in the regular army S.A.T.C. on the Minneapolis Campus of the University of Minnesota, he followed his natural interests and entered the College of Agriculture where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1922 with a major in Agricultural education. While at the University, Mr. Wilson was a member of Alpha Zeta, Phi Delta Kappa and Delta Upsilon fraternities and was active in several campus organizations at University Farm.

After graduation, he pursued a varied career which covered such full-time occupations as inspector of certified seed potatoes and other farm products, teacher of science at Cokato, Stillwater and Crookston, insurance and real estate agent at Stillwater, A.A.A. clerk, county 4-H Club leader and part-time worker as Boy Scout executive and camp director. In 1934, he happily entered his most satisfactory profession, that of teacher of vocational agriculture. Since then, he has taught a year and one-half at Cromwell and five years at Forest Lake where he is now located. Mr. Wilson is very active in community affairs. He is a member and past officer of the Presbyterian church, an active member of the American Legion, a member of the Lion's Club at Stillwater, a member of the Business Men's Association and is rounding out his twelfth year as scoutmaster.

During the time he has been teaching science and agriculture, Mr. Wilson has attended summer school and Saturday classes at Minnesota and North Dakota universities. As a special problem in completing the work for his Master's degree, he made a study of the problems of soil erosion and its control. In cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service, he mapped five different types of farms in his present community and worked out suggestions for improving them. As a result of his study of soil erosion, Mr. Wilson has developed a number of usable techniques for teaching erosion control.

Milo J. Peterson

Another Minnesota farm boy who is making a valuable contribution to Agricultural Education is Milo J. Peterson who has recently been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Cornell University. Dr. Peterson was reared on a farm near Waconia in Carver county, Minnesota, where his boyhood ex-

periences served as a background for his interest and studies in rural education and rural life. He attended the Waconia High School from which he graduated in 1928. Dr. Peterson worked on his father's farm for two years following graduation and then entered the University of Minnesota. During his undergraduate work in the College of Agriculture, he was active in campus activities as is shown by the fact that he was a member of the All-University Council, Union Board of Governors, several professional clubs, Alpha Zeta, Phi Delta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi and Farm House Fraternity of which he was a charter member.

In the year following graduation from college, Dr. Peterson worked in the Indian Service at Cass Lake, Minnesota, and with the adult education program in Ramsey County, Minnesota. In April, 1934, he accepted a position as agriculture instructor at Bertha, Minnesota, which he held until 1936. While teaching agriculture, he conducted a program including all phases of the work, but was especially interested in improving the supervised farming programs of the all-day students.

Dr. Peterson attended a summer session at the University of Minnesota in 1935 and matriculated at Cornell University in July, 1936. He held an assistantship in the Department of Rural Education during the three years he was at Cornell. In 1937, he received the degree of Master of Science. His thesis topic was "How Do Teachers of Agriculture in Minnesota Use their Professional Time?" His Doctor's thesis was entitled "Factors Influencing the Success or Failure of a Selected Number of Supervised Farming Programs." He now holds the position of Assistant Agricultural Economist at Clemson Agriculture College, Clemson, South Carolina. Congratulations, Dr. Peterson, and good luck.

The VISITOR is happy to extend hearty congratulations to these men. They are all good teachers and good community leaders. Perhaps no more fitting tribute can be given than to quote a verse from Dr. A. V. Storm's favorite poem, "A Rose to the Living" by Nixon Waterman.

"A rose to the living is more
Than sumptous wreaths to the dead:
In filling love's infinite store,
A rose to the living is more,
If graciously given before
The hungering spirit has fled.
A rose to the living is more
Than sumptous wreaths to the dead."

Many of our teachers received their early professional inspiration and training under Dr. Storm's directions.