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THE ICHABOD CRANE OF 1937

ROBERT P. MARVIN*

A gravel road leaves the highway sixteen miles east of Brainerd, Minnesota, and winds through the woods to School District 22, the scene of experiences I will never forget.

The school house is a typical one-room rural school, built at least sixty years ago on a two-acre plot set aside by the early settlers. The building is white, with three windows on each side and a cloak hall at one end. Up on the roof, above the cloak hall, is the usual big bell with the ringing rope hanging in the back of the classroom. The building is heated by a large jacketed wood stove in the center of the room. The front of the classroom has a raised section in the floor where the teacher's desk stands and a bench for the classes that come forward for recitation. Since this school has students of all eight grades, some seats are small, some are medium, and some are large. Of course not all students find desks that are properly fitted to them. If the student is too small, perhaps a cigar box or an old geography book under his feet will help keep his legs from dangling all day. There are always some students that are too large for the largest desks but still haven't gleaned enough from the institution to pass the state board examinations.

The conveniences are very meager. The stove burns wood that must be brought in from the cloak hall at quite frequent intervals during the bitter cold winter months. The water is carried in a bucket from the pump in the yard to a large crock with a spigot. The toilet problem is solved by a typical rural privy in each corner of the back lot—a wonderful opportunity for the student to get away from the eagle eye of the teacher for a period of time which is difficult to control by rules.

This was the setting for my first real position—a position I say, because a mere job could never be so complicated or involved. I had completed one year in a High School Teacher Training Department and was nineteen years old, so naturally felt very capable. I soon learned my limitations, however. After some discussion with the school board members, they agreed to hire me for a salary of \$60 per month regardless of the fact that two women—former rural

school teachers themselves—thought a man would not have the proper touch for their young children who were beginners. I had a contract and all was set for the opening of school.

September 7th came—the first day of school. I had already visited the school to check the books and be sure everything was in order. I was up early to make certain that I would be at school before any of the pupils. I was living with my parents about six miles away and commuted on horseback. School was to start at nine o'clock so I was there at seven-thirty, but not before the first student. One of the first grade students was already waiting on the steps. It was his first day in school and of course a very important day in his life. He had a large green lunch box which almost touched the ground as he walked. His clothes were all new, purchased especially for school. The overalls were just like Dad's, with a high bib and pliers pocket on the leg. These things were all pointed out to me very soon after our first meeting.

I began to do the necessary chores such as filling the water jar, straightening desks, writing assignments on the board, and so on. Soon I noticed that the time was already three minutes past eight-thirty, and I had not pulled the rope on the large bell for the warning to the neighborhood that classes were to start in thirty more minutes. I started to ring it when at least four pupils asked if they might do it for me.

Nine o'clock and the last bell rang. The students all found seats, the older ones showing the beginners where to sit. The cold realization of what it meant to be a school teacher crept over me. It seemed to me that it was unfair to be alone and pitted against twenty-two, even if they were younger and, in some cases, smaller than I.

I had prepared a schedule of classes, study periods, and recesses. My training had given me some help in this, but the task should not be regarded as small. Imagine if you can that each of the eight grades has a minimum of five different subjects. This makes forty classes a day. When the six hour school day is divided into forty classes, the class period will be only nine minutes. If you have a student in class for five nine-minute periods out of a school day, what will he do the rest of the day? I could tell you some of the things they did before I learned

* Mr. Marvin is the teacher of agriculture at Hastings, Minn. The story is a term paper presented as a student in Rhetoric 51, exposition. Univ. of Minn. (Editor.)

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THE STAFF

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that much work must be clearly set up if any semblance of discipline is to exist. I am not sure if I can tell you even after I had taught for two years how this schedule can possibly be worked out, but it was.

The experiences I had during the two years were numerous and varied. One in particular involved the same first grade student that was waiting for me on the step the first day of school and a little girl in the same class.

They were playing a game with numbers, which was a race on the blackboard, giving the answers to addition combinations as they progressed. Jack knew the combinations more readily than Helen, but the excitement of competition would cause him to be more concerned with Helen's column than his own. He had gone half way up his column and was watching Helen's progress as she plodded on to a winning finish. Jack, still too excited to go on, lost his temper, began to cry and threw down the pointer, uttering swear words in a combination I had never heard before. Something had to be done so I told him his language was too terrible for him to be with the other children and that he would remain in the hall until he felt he could talk decent enough to come back. After an hour in the hall, Jack returned with tears gone except for the dirty smudges. At my desk he said, "Mr. Marvin, I think I can talk decent enough to come back in the room now."

That evening, as I swept the floor and took care of the many janitorial duties, Jack's mother called on me. She was not pleasant and wondered why her Jack was not decent enough to be in the classroom and had to spend all day in the hall. It seems when Jack related the incident to his mother he had forgotten that it was his language and not the boy that was not suited to the classroom. When the swearing was mentioned, a blush reddened the face of the proud mother, and the accusing fingers pointed toward Jack's father.

The experiences and problems involved in education have interested me enough to want to remain in this field. Now, eleven years later, after a war interruption and a GI bill, I find myself graduating from the University

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This issue of the Visitor completes Volume XXXV. For thirty-five years the Visitor has found its way to the desk of every agriculture teacher in Minnesota. In addition, the mailing list includes leaders in education and agriculture in the United States and many foreign countries. This is the last issue prepared under the direction of the present editor. Thanks and sincere appreciation is extended to all the co-workers who have so faithfully cooperated in maintaining the continuous publication of the Visitor throughout the critical years of the development of the program in Agricultural Education.

of Minnesota as a teacher of vocational agriculture.

STUDY THE STUDENT—A PRE-REQUISITE FOR GOOD TEACHING

CARL A. ZIEBARTH*

Since the work of the teacher is directing the learning activities of the student, it is of prime importance to learn and understand the forces that play upon his life. Heredity and environment are the instrumental factors involved in the development of an individual. When a teacher becomes associated with a boy in a student-teacher relationship, the teacher becomes part of the boy's environment; a very important part because he is in a position to influence a large portion of the boy's actions and reactions through this association.

The student is the focal center from the teacher standpoint. The student's activities in turn revolve through a series of experiences which will better enable him to make a living and live a satisfying life. The process is accumulative. The rate and extent of progress is governed by the abilities with which he was born—the hereditary factors, and the medium in which they are suspended—the environmental factors.

By the time the Vocational Ag. Teacher comes in contact with the boy, he will have had some fourteen or more years start on the road through life. The important thing to determine is how far he has traveled during those fourteen years. Where is he now? What speed can he travel?

Below is a list of some of the questions that need to be answered as a beginning for the teacher for the continuation of the learning activities of the student.

What are his parents like?

How far did they go in school?

Have they advanced through self-education?

* Mr. Ziebarth is a senior in Ag. Ed., University of Minnesota. This is a copy of a class report in methods of teaching. (Editor.)

Are they friendly and cooperative?
 Are they healthy, are they happy?
 How do they treat their children?
 What community activities do they take part in?
 What organizations do they belong to?
 What is their standard of living?
 What farming practices do they follow?
 Does he have brothers and sisters?
 How many?
 What are their ages?
 Do they work together?
 Do they get along well together?
 What are the boy's plans for the future?
 Does he want to farm?
 Does he have some other occupation in mind?
 Does he have the potential ability to succeed in that work?
 What opportunities does he have in getting started?
 What will hinder his getting started?
 What are his needs?
 What are his interests?
 What is his mental ability?
 His I. Q.?
 Is he a good thinker?
 Can he sense problems?
 Can he solve those problems in a logical manner?
 What things can he accomplish better than others?
 What are his farm experiences?
 What has he done?
 What can he do?
 What does he like to do?
 What are his personal traits?
 Is he neat, is he prompt?
 Does he show leadership ability?
 Does he show initiative?
 Is he ambitious and cooperative?
 What are his hobbies?
 How does he use his leisure time?
 What sports interest him?
 What are his avocational achievements?
 Activities participated in
 Honors received
 What work or vocational experiences other than farming has he had?
 Has he had any unusual experiences?
 Tragedies such as:
 Broken home due to divorce, separation, or death of a parent.
 Fires, tornados.
 Serious accident in the home or on the farm.
 What is his condition of health?
 Has he had any serious diseases?
 General physical defect?
 Is he self conscious about some physical defect?
 What makes him act as he does at the moment?
 Does he feel up to par?
 Stomachache, toothache, headache?
 Is he worried about something?
 Did he have a quarrel at home?

Has something fortunate happened to him?
 Has he fallen in love?
 Did he eat breakfast before coming to school?
 Did he get enough sleep?
 Does he have to work too hard?

The answers to some of these questions will be relatively simple to find through data already recorded. Records of physical examinations, educational and psychological tests, and activities and positions of leadership held are usually available in the community and the school. Interviews with his other teachers and sponsors of outside activities in which he has taken part are also helpful in getting information about the boy.

Observations by the teacher are very important to discover why and how a boy acts. Some of the things that cause an upset in the boy, things that make him act differently at times, the teacher will have to learn to sense. If help can be given in some of these problems, it must be done in a tactful manner, or if he is conscious of the fact, he will not be offended. Frequent visits to the boy's farm are most desirable to become acquainted with Mother, Dad, the rest of the children, and everything about the farm. Mother knows more about her son than anyone else on earth. She alone shares the boy's choicest secrets, dreams, and ambitions. She will confide in the teacher only if she trusts him, if she believes it will be for the good of her son, and if she knows that information will get no farther. The teacher's aim must be solely for the good of the boy; he must be sincere.

FROM WHERE WE ARE TO WHERE WE OUGHT TO BE*

ORVILLE PAWELK, WATERTOWN, MINN.

My story begins in September 1944. The place is the Watertown High School with six boys participating in a dairy herd testing program. These six boys started testing milk and keeping records and at the end of the first complete year they found that the average butterfat production per cow was 260 pounds. Some of the cows were culled, balanced rations were fed, and at the end of the second year the average for the same herds was 310 pounds of butterfat, and after the third year it increased to 316 pounds.

I wish to add that every boy taking Agriculture tests his home herd—not only these six boys. I am using these six boys and their herds as an example because their work was carried over a period of years to serve as a basis to judge results.

Now, returning to our dairy herd testing program, we can easily compare ourselves, as farm boys, to this same process of test-

* This is the speech prepared by Orville Pawelk, as a senior in high school, for the State F. F. A. Public Speaking contest. (Editor.)

ing, culling, receiving better rations—in taking ourselves from “where we are to where we ought to be.” It is true that we have a long way to go, it being the same with those six herds, but some day we hope to reach that pinnacle—“where we ought to be.”

We, as Future Farmers of America, will in a different sense be tested in our interests, in our aptitudes, and in our abilities in agriculture. We'll be fed balanced rations through our work experience in our associations within our work, we will be culled of those impurities which might deviate us from the road to success and along with our good American breeding turn out to be respectable leaders among our fellow men; and in the end be good American farmers with an average of Americanism comparable to what these six herds will be when they get to “where they ought to be.”

What constitutes our testing program? What are our balanced rations? What will be culled from our lives? Let us carefully consider these points.

We, as young farm boys, are more or less an untested group such as those cows were three years ago. It is true that many of us have passed certain tests while others are just beginning.

You may ask—how are we tested, and in what manner are we tested? We are tested in various ways. Number one, we have our tests in leadership. We are from time to time called upon to be leaders in our field of agriculture and also among our classmates in school. We either pass the test and progress in the leadership field or fall by the wayside. Number two, we are tested by our work in the agricultural classroom, in our work in the other classes. The results: this being near the end of school, you can answer that better than I. Number three, we are tested in our farm practice work. What are we doing in this field? Are we working toward advanced F.F.A. degrees and accomplishments or are we farming with one pig, one rooster, or one calf? Are we building up an enterprise in farming so that someday we can step into farming without first having to build up this enterprise? This alone is a fine test.

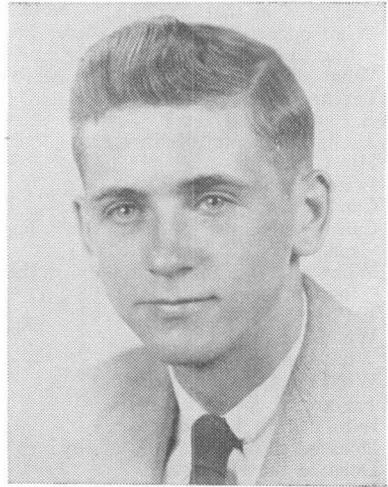
Number four, our Chapter program of work is a test. How well have we passed this test? Have we set up a program and have we followed it through or are we just “riding” along. There are numerous other tests which we must take. Let us not fail and be culled as were many of the cows in those six herds—let us pass and go on to greater achievements.

Our balanced rations in life are those ideas, ideals, those opinions and characteristics which we pick up along the way and which we put into operation so that we necessarily produce more, and our production average as leaders, as members and as part-takers in the F. F. A. Organization, the

Farm Bureau, in our school, home, and church becomes greater.

Balanced Rations! We obtain these rations through our wholesome associations with others, from our advisers, from our other instructors, from our mothers and fathers. Boys, let us digest these rations and go on to greater heights such as these dairy herds have been doing the past three years.

Culling, as mentioned before, is taking those undesirable methods of work, undesirable ideas or opinions, and undesirable characteristics from ourselves. Our guidance from our instructors, from our parents, advisers, and our other wholesome associations will tend to be our master when culling is to be done.



Orville Pawelk

Fellows, can you not see us being taken from “where we are to where we ought to be?” Future Farmers, make every effort to meet the tests, absorb your balanced rations, subject yourselves to the culling process, and I am sure that we all can and will make the great transition that Dr. Field, Head of the Department of Agricultural Education at the University of Minnesota, refers to when he speaks of “taking the farm boy from where he is to where he ought to be,” for as Doctor Field also says, we must “make a living, and live a satisfying life.” To do that we must not only take ourselves, as boys, from where we are to where we wish to be, but we must also take our cows, pigs, pastures—in fact, the whole farm with all its enterprises and activities from where it is to where we would like to have it as future farmers. If every boy in the community will do that we will be taking the entire community from where it is to where it ought to be and Dr. Field’s philosophy and cherished dream will come true.