

THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Vol. LI

July, 1964

No. 3

50 YEARS OF THE VISITOR

Clifford L. Nelson, Dept. of
Agricultural Education

That we might learn from the past and apply to the future is the theme of this issue of *The Visitor* that marks 50 years of service to agricultural education in Minnesota.

The Visitor is a publication of the University of Minnesota that began in January 1914. The late A. V. Storm was the first editor of *The Visitor*. Through these pages can be traced the history and development of agricultural education in the state of Minnesota. During the first five years of publication *The Visitor* served the needs of industrial education which included vocational agriculture, home economics and manual training.

In 1918 the present leaflet size of *The Visitor* was adopted so they could be more easily filed and stored. The earliest issues touched upon questions of education, philosophy of vocational education and community service. A regular feature for the first five years was the "Traveler" column which presented ideas and practices observed by members of the faculty during their travels over the state. News items often were contributed by teachers in the field who told of successful methods and practices from their own experiences.

Miscellaneous items of agriculture, vocational or educational interest were included in all of the earliest issues. These issues also urged teachers to make use of lantern slides and steropticons for instructional purposes. Lists of available video aids were a regular feature.

The content pattern found in the multitude of publications presently available to agriculture instructors is clearly seen in the early *Visitors*. As other sources developed for agricultural information (farm magazines, government bulletins, *Minnesota Ag Man*) *The Visitor* slowly developed into its

current content pattern. After 1918 *The Visitor* concerned itself more with professional techniques, philosophy of education and teacher improvement. This tradition has carried down to the present day. Articles from former students, active agriculture teachers, members of the teacher training staff and experts from related fields have been printed.

The progressiveness of agricultural education is clearly pointed out by the innovations suggested and carried out in the pages of *The Visitor*. One to six week refresher courses were offered by the department of agricultural education for in-service agriculture teachers. Cadet training for prospective teachers was first advocated in the April, 1916 issue. *The Visitor* staff felt that the experience the cadets gained from actual contact with trained teachers and rural communities would be invaluable information of good teaching procedures.

As early as 1920, then state supervisor B. M. Gile, stated, "with better education and a larger vision of the almost limitless possibilities of farming as a business, they will make of the farm a comfortable home as well as a place of business." The same issue reminds teachers that, "The end purpose of vocational agriculture is the development of the boy. The subject matter must function beyond vocational value, and vocational agriculture must mean more than just providing skills that may be cashed at the bank window." (Vol. VII, No. 6, February 1920).

The early philosophy of *The Visitor* carries over to today. This philosophy was well summed up by Dr. A. M. Field in his "Sermonette to Agriculture Teachers" in the October 1933 issue:

"Teachers of agriculture might well place emphasis on the phases of farming that are essential to making the farm a home,

THE VISITOR

Published quarterly during the calendar year in January, April, July, and October by the Department of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota, St. Paul 1, Minnesota.

Second Class Postage Paid at St. Paul, Minn.

THE STAFF

HARRY KITTS GORDON SWANSON
R. PAUL MARVIN STANLEY NELSON
MILO J. PETERSON, *Editor*

a satisfying place in which to live a life. Social attitudes of adults are frequently the expression of the experience they had as boys. Good character traits are not ordinarily acquired through lessons or lectures on the 'abundant life', but are developed through character building activities . . . The teacher must not lose sight of *the boy*. Theodore Roosevelt once said, 'If you are going to do any thing permanent for the average man, you must begin before he is a man. Success lies in working with the boy.' After all, the boy, . . . his ideals, attitudes, character interests and life habits . . . This is the important product of the master teacher."

The Traveler

(Vol. I, No. 2, February 1914)

The Traveler always grows enthusiastically optimistic when he finds a superintendent and his agricultural instructor working together like brothers. He knows the cause is safe in that locality because team work is the characteristic of broad-minded men and such men soon convince board, business men, and farmers. There are many such teams in Minnesota and should be more.

One of the best school greenhouses that it has been the fortune of the Traveler to see, is a feature of the new school building at Fosston. It is of ample size, well-arranged, and adjacent to the laboratory of the Agricultural Department. We need more such greenhouses in connection with the agricultural work.

Editorial

(Vol. II, No. 2, October 1914)

Agriculture is so diversified in different parts of the State that a uniform and rigid course of study for all high schools is not desirable. However, the variation found in the schools is much greater than the diversity of agricultural interest warrants. The factors causing these variations are not always entitled to the amount of influence in determining the course that they are allowed to exert.

For example: There is much evidence to show that certain high school courses are one-sided because the teacher chanced to take special work in a certain subject during his college course, even though such emphasis as he places upon that subject is not warranted either by local or general agricultural conditions. Superintendents and agricultural instructors should endeavor to formulate well-balanced courses for the high schools in which they are employed.

New Standard for High School Teachers

(Vol. II, No. 9, May 1915)

The new professional requirements for high school teachers as prescribed by the State Superintendent of Education in accordance with an act of the legislature of 1913, will become effective for all high school teachers entering upon their work after August, 1915.

In general these requirements are graduation from a standard college, and professional preparation equivalent to fifteen semester-hours credit, which shall include three semester-hours credit in special method and three in practice teaching. Interpreted in the case of the agricultural instructor the requirements in substance are:

1. A bachelor's degree in agriculture from a standard college accredited by the State Superintendent of Education.
2. Special study from the high school teacher's view-point, in two or more subjects covering three semester-hours credit (special method of agricultural teaching).
3. Practice teaching and observation in agriculture covering three semester-hours credit.
4. Additional professional work equivalent to nine semester-hours credit.

News Notes

(Vol. VI, No. 1, September 1918)

New Richland now has enough students who have signified a desire to take the work to open the Smith-Hughes course.

V. E. Nylin, who graduated from the University of Minnesota, College of Agriculture, in 1918, is the agricultural instructor at Lake City.

Points Worth Remembering

(Vol. VII, No. 1, September 1919)

The public school is wrongly organized when its main object is to fit for college. It should benefit the many rather than the few.—Phillips

Salaries and Service

(Vol. VIII, No. 2, October 1920)

The lazy indifferent type of agricultural instructor will reveal himself more quickly, perhaps, than any other member of the teaching staff. He should see something to do, straightway set out to do it, and stay by it until it is satisfactorily finished. There is plenty of work to keep the most active man busy throughout the year. He must be more than a text-book teacher. The possibilities of using illustrative material, making field trips, setting up actual situations in the learning process are unlimited. He must be an organizer, developer, and booster of community affairs. He is expected to lead, not follow.

Reading Abilities

(Vol. XIII, No. 6, February 1926)

Practically all the teachers of agriculture in the Minnesota high schools have given mental ability tests and reading tests to the students enrolled for instruction in agriculture. Each teacher is urged to make the results from these tests the basis for a careful study of the needs of each student. Perhaps the best opportunity a teacher has to give individual help in reading difficulties is during the study period.

Students of relatively high mental ability usually make better use of the study period

than do the students who are less gifted. The problem of the teacher is to arouse an appreciation on the part of the less gifted students of the desirability of putting forth extra effort in improving their rate of reading and in their ability of extracting meaning from the printed page. As an aid in stimulating activity on the part of the students to improve in reading speed and comprehension the teacher should put on frequent reading tests and these tests should be followed by a careful diagnosis of the apparent difficulties of the students.

Judging Contests

(Vol. XV, No. 7, March 1928)

Judging contests are effective for the purpose of motivating the judging activities of the boys. The contest idea may become undesirable if it is allowed to degenerate to the point where it becomes an end in itself. Membership on the livestock judging team is incidental to the main purpose of teaching judging. It is urged that each teacher makes an effort to keep the livestock judging contest free from the usual undesirable features which so often develop in connection with competitive school activities.

Reclaiming the 98 Per Cent

(Vol. XVI, No. 6, February 1929)

What are the 98 per cent doing today? Those that are attempting to do anything are trying to do a little of everything, except that none of them has entered any of the professions. They could not enter a profession because they did not graduate from a college or university. What is to become of that 98 per cent? Some of them have, no doubt, entered some gainful occupation, but the great majority have been turned loose on the world unprepared to meet life's problems in a way calculated to build up a better civilization. Someone must look after that group. That must be done by the educators of the country or someone else responsible for a better humanity. Many of them could be brought back into school on a part-time system, where they could work a part of the time and go to school a part of the time; complete their academic education and at the same time be trained to do something with their hands that would yield an income

DR. KELLER APPOINTED DEAN



Dr. Robert J. Keller has been appointed to succeed the late Walter W. Cook as Dean of the College of Education at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Keller assumes his new office with a rich background of experience in higher education in Minnesota. Dean Keller

was born and raised on a farm and has kept contact with agriculture. A recent statement that "I would probably have trouble operating some of the modern machinery and equipment" suggests that he is well aware of the rapid advances in technology and mechanization in agriculture.

Dean Keller has exercised a leadership role in planning for higher education facilities in Minnesota, particularly junior colleges and has served as a member of the committee which selected Marshall as the site of the new state college in Southwestern Minnesota. He has worked closely with the Minnesota Legislative Interim Commission on Higher Education and is the author of a number of publications dealing with problems, plans and future of higher education. He has also been active in accreditation work.

Certainly he appears to be admirably qualified for the challenging position he now holds.

The Visitor congratulates Dr. Keller on his appointment and extends its best wishes for his continued success in the future.

IN MEMORIAM

The Visitor is sad to announce the passing of one of Minnesota's pioneer agricultural educators. Dr. Victor E. Nylin died in Madison, Wisconsin on May 6, 1964 of a heart attack.

Between his graduation from the University of Minnesota in 1918 until 1938 Dr. Nylin taught at Lake City, Lamberton, Bloomington and Hopkins, Minnesota. During his last 16 years in Minnesota Dr. Nylin served part-time as a member of the agricultural education staff and one of the editors of *The Visitor*. He was one of the founders and early leaders of the Minnesota Vocational Agriculture Instructors Association. Those who knew him will remember him as a kindly man, keen of mind, sound of judgment and dedicated to agricultural education.

From 1938 until the time of his death Dr. Nylin served as chairman of the Department of Agriculture at the Wisconsin State College and Institute of Technology at Platteville, Wisconsin. His sudden and unexpected passing marks the departure of one of the great philosophers and teachers from our ranks.

The Visitor joins with his multitude of friends in paying tribute to his memory.