The Northwest pageants were used to emphasize the progress made with new farm practices and new ideas that provided assistance to the farmwife as she struggled to be a mother, a partner, and a community leader. The assistance of A.J. Kittleson, who was the district 4-H club leader, and later of H.H. Pflughoefl, and of county agents really made the pageant idea successful. The organization, practice, and production were great experience for those who participated. Fun and learning took place. Lifelong friends were developed.

While this kind of approach was very much needed in those early days, the radio, television, hi-fi, and you name it, are an entirely different form of entertainment today, and it just may well be that a sing-along may not be appreciated at the 75th annual educational seminars of the Winter Shows.

A regional musical effort of long-time duration was the formation of a group called the Northwest Singers. This group evolved in 1918 when a number of small choral groups from the 12-county area gathered for a couple hours of practice in the afternoon to prepare a choral concert for the evening. This unit became quite famous, and at peak there were over 200 singers who met annually to sing the famous Farm Crop Shows ballad and more formal and classical music for the enjoyment of those who attended the shows. The Crookston municipal band, the Fertile orchestra, the Northwest School musical groups, among others, provided music for many events. Many barbershop groups performed individually or as part of the Northwest Singers program. A rather active group was the Ross Brothers quartet, including Ferd, Henry, Otto and August Ross, from the Fisher area. The Ross Brothers traveled by sleigh from Fisher to Crookston to perform. A Ross quartet also sang with the Northwest Singers. Ferd Ross will be remembered as the father of Walter Ross, who lives in the Fisher area. The Northwest Singers continued for many years under the leadership of a number of people. The longest, most influential leader was T.W. Thorson of the Crookston Public Schools. The last time this group assembled with about 120 singers was at the dedication of the new arena and facilities built in 1961. T.W. Thorson conducted this choral group and they received a standing ovation. It was a moment when the human family of the Valley seemed to speak and hear a language dear to the hearts of all.

An enriching and continuing source of educational leadership for the Winter Shows, beginning in the 20's and lasting until 1960's, was provided by agricultural development agents for the railroads. John Haw, Paul Wagner, A.J. Dexter and Tony Meisen provided a great deal of leg work and frontline leadership. Through the years they were able to assist with getting special train schedules for the Winter Shows, with bringing in topnotch agricultural speakers, with arranging for sleeping cars on sidings, with helping entertain VIP guests, and providing technical leadership in the conduct of the Crop Show and the livestock shows. These men were the front-line, technical advisors for pioneer farmers who purchased railroad land. Of course, other farmers benefited too.

To summarize, the Winter Shows started out as the first organized adult education activity for the pioneer farm families in the Red River Basin. The women's programs, seminars, lectures, demonstrations, crops show, youth activities, livestock show and sale, the poultry and pet show, the farm service show, and added special events have changed with the changing methods and life styles of making a living in the Red River Basin. People still come 40,000 strong for fellowship, for learning and for fun in the middle of a long winter.