
Crookston residents didn’t appreciate the song, “How High’s the Water, Mama?” in 1950, and the flooding was no joke. In the April-May edition of the Northwest School News, it was stated, “The Red River Valley area has been visited by the most disastrous floods in more than 50 years. The damage from the floods of the Red River of the North and its tributaries will run into stupendous figures, the total amount of which cannot be determined for some time.” Farm land had from three to ten feet of water standing, and there was no possible way it could all be drained in time for full-season crops.

**During the flood of 1950, “We took a boat up to where we were met to be taken to campus. Then on campus, we took a boat to the Kiehle building to work.”**

Dormitory facilities on the campus offered temporary facilities for area evacuees, and 63 persons were housed in Stephens Hall. “The greatest damage to the farm land came from the duration of the flood (four to seven weeks), which delayed, and in many instances, prevented the seeding of crops,” it was stated in the paper. Even land that wasn’t flooded by overflow waters was kept wet because of frequent rains. Seeding in the heavy soil areas of the upper Red River Valley ran from three to five weeks behind schedule.

The 1950 floods did not occur entirely because of the precipitation which fell during the winter of 1949-50 and the spring of 1950. Since 1939, lakes, marshes and natural reservoirs had been filling and were filled to overflowing in 1949. The School News called for “coordinated action” between agencies working for water conservation and drainage. In 1949, the Northwest School and Station began a study of water run-off. Much more study and information was needed, the School News writers stated.

Agriculture and the Northwest School and Station were always in close contact. The School held a welding clinic and more than 275 attended. A Soil Improvement Forum brought more than 375 farmers, and 1,000 attended the Crops and Soils Day. A Women’s Camp was held on campus annually for years. In 1950, 111 women attended from 11 counties in northwestern Minnesota, and from two counties in North Dakota. Topics of general interest to farm women were discussed at the camp, which was held from June 12 to June 15.

C.G. Selvig, who was superintendent from 1910 to 1927, wrote a history of the Northwest School and Station. The book was titled “A Tale of Two Valleys” and dealt with his life in the Root River Valley in southern Minnesota and in the Red River Valley. The artwork was done by Harold Grandy, a 1915 graduate who became a commercial artist in Detroit. Thorval Tunheim, class of 1916, was a former newspaper editor and he was employed to do the editing for the book. The book was well-received by area residents, and was for sale during various campus events. That same year Selvig, whose first wife had died some years earlier, married Mabel Sewall, who had taught at the School from 1912 through 1917.

**Members of the school’s crops judging team, with coach Olaf Soine (top right), 1955.**