Station and School Superintendent T. M. McCall retired in 1956, and at the 50th anniversary of the Northwest School of Agriculture, McCall presented a resume of the school during the anniversary program on June 30, 1956. Many of his recollections seemed worth noting, and excerpts from his speech follow.

Agitation for a School of Agriculture was started during the administration of T.A. Hoverstad, the first superintendent of the Northwest Experiment Station . . . Mr. Hoverstad told me that his agitation for the School of Agriculture at Crookston did not meet with the approval of the University administration, and that such a school would be an unwanted child in the University inasmuch as the administration considered the Central School (at St. Paul) adequate for all state needs. Under the leadership of Senator A.D. Stephens, a leading banker in the city of Crookston and a member of the Legislature, a small appropriation was secured from the Legislature to establish a School of Agriculture at Crookston. Funds were raised locally, also, to assist in the first year's operation of the school. The School was established and Professor William Robertson, a member of the staff of the Central School of Agriculture at St. Paul, was appointed the first superintendent. School opened its doors for students during the fall of 1906, with a school building—now the Home Economics building, a shop building, a farmhouse, horse and dairy barns, and a sheep shed. Girls were housed in the farmhouse with the superintendent and his family; the boys were given dormitory space on the third floor of the new school building . . . The main part of the Superintendent's residence was built in 1907, which released the farmhouse for the housing of girls in its entirety.

The school opened in October 1906 with 31 students in attendance. The enrollment for the second year reached a total of 41; the third year 103; and from that point on, the attendance was never less than 100. The 200 mark was reached in 1914-15, and with a few minor exceptions remained above that figure until the 300 enrollment figure was attained in 1928-29. The enrollment figure reached a 400 mark in 1937-38, and from that time until the present, the enrollment has been around 400 or more with the exception of two years where the enrollment went to 385 and to 395. The peak enrollment at the school occurred in the year 1938-39 at which time a large number of special students under the National Youth Administration program were given specialized training for one year. The special students were girls from the White Earth and Red Lake Indian Reservations that were given special work in home economics and business training. Their registration brought the enrollment up to 479 . . .

During the early days of the School, board, room, lights and laundry cost per student amounted to $15 per month. Students and parents admitted that this was cheaper than the folks could live at home. A case in point occurred in 1914 when a member of our staff was stopped on the highway and asked by a highway worker, a man of some 40 years, what it cost to live at the school. When told . . . he said, "I will come up and enroll this fall because it is cheaper than I can live elsewhere." And the man did enroll and attend classes for the entire school year . . .

The early problem with campus roads was to get out of the mud. The soil water table was quite near the surface, and as a result, wagons—and later trucks and busses—were easily mired down on the campus drive . . . Gravel and cinders hauled on the roadway simply disappeared. C. G. Selvig carried on an intensive campaign to secure paving for the campus drives. Due to the fact that there was no paving on any of the drives on the St. Paul campus and only a very little paving on the main University Campus at that time, Mr. Selvig ran into considerable resistance. He was persistent, however, and carried on quite a picture campaign in which pictures of the deep-rutted roads, cars and busses mired down on the campus drives were sent to, then, President L. D. Coffman at the University . . . Finally paving became a reality in the late 1920's. President Coffman remarked at the time that paving was completed that he was sorry we got the paving because he knew that he would never know again "when it rained in Crookston."

The School relied on horse and buggy and horse-drawn bus transportation through the early years until the first bus was put into service in 1918. For transportation to and from Crookston, the faculty were given the privilege of driving their own farm team hitched to a two-seated spring wagon. When the roads were open, the same vehicle was winterized by putting runners on the axles, instead of wheels, as soon as the snow fell in the fall . . . Students came to spend the entire term with us; each student was provided with a large trunk and a number of suitcases.

Up until 1910, it appears that one instructor was engaged for each of the major departments in both agriculture and academic subjects . . . In 1911, a number of new staff members were employed, including myself . . . In the early years, we were called upon to do a lot of Extension work in the counties of the Red River Valley. This activity required considerable expenditure of time for the amount of time actually spent in the Extension work. Due to poor transportation connections by train, it was necessary for us to spend two nights in order to attend a day meeting at Climax which is some 20 miles from the Experiment Station. To attend a meeting in Oklee or towns on the Soo-Line required changing trains twice and two nights at Erskine . . .