Summer practicums were established procedures by 1912. The theory was, students would attend school for six months and pursue a "practicum," or as it was later known, a "home project," at home or on the farm for the other six months of the year.

Following the advice of University President George E. Vincent, that there be "no blind alleys in our schools," the Northwest School offered a fourth-year advanced course, which focused totally on academic studies.

A central heating plant was constructed in 1913, and by 1914 construction was begun on a second boys' dormitory. In addition to Superintendent Selvig, there were 15 faculty members employed at the school by 1914. Selvig noted, "I sought the best teachers and Station staff members procurable. Most of them were young, but they were well prepared. They grew in stature with the years. To them is due full credit. The work was hard. During the early years salaries were low."

School activities continued to expand. Music, public speaking, debating, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Activities, athletics and other activities were added. For six months, the school was "home" to the young students, and attempts were made to provide enjoyable and broadening experiences for them.

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An early scene at the experiment station.

The experiment station made its influence known in the area. An annual visiting day at the station became popular with farmers and their families. Research was done concerning black stem rust of wheat, alfalfa growing and livestock production. According to Selvig, the 1860 census reported 1,932 head of cattle in Valley counties. By 1910, the number stood at 337,587. Selvig was awed by the Valley soil and the agricultural potential. "What a heritage," he pronounced. "Do you know the potent powers of this soil and the wonders it can perform?"

The Farmers' Week events continued to gain support, but it was decided that attendance would be facilitated by moving the programs to the city. Winter weather was unpredictable, and it was necessary to go from the campus to Crookston in horse-drawn conveyances. Crookston's Grand Opera House was secured for the meetings, but soon crowds strained that building's capacity. Moves began to acquire a building that could accommodate the "Red River Valley Farm Crops Show," as it came to be called.

The Red River Valley Livestock Association was organized and incorporated. Shares were sold for $10 to obtain funds for constructing a building for $15,000. The building was to house farm crops exhibits and to have a livestock judging room, as well as provide quarters for livestock in the basement area. The first building was ready for the 1919 show. In 1920, Annex A was added, and Annex B was ready for the 1921 shows. According to Selvig, there were more than 2,600 stockholders of the Red River Valley Livestock Association.

So, on all fronts, growth took place. The 1916-17 school year showed an enrollment of 160 students in the regular three-year program. Added to that were 47 enrollees for the junior shortcourse, 145 for the summer training for rural teachers, and 1,824 for the farmers' short course. In one year, more than 2,000 persons had—in one way or another—been served by the Northwest School of Agriculture.

An early view of Kiehle Building.