Combine Day was held to demonstrate new machinery at the Northwest Experiment Station in 1940.

E.C. Miller, former staff member remembered, “Even in 1954 when I arrived, Tom’s travel (and ours) to St. Paul was a well organized overnight train trip. Leaving Crookston in the early evening, the train which stopped at almost every town, arrived in Minneapolis around seven a.m., just right to start the day’s work.”

During the summer when school was out, one janitor, Wilbur Parkin, took care of all the buildings on the campus. He also mowed all the lawns on an early version of the “riding mower”. This mower had three reels which had been sharpened so many times that they were very thin.

Lawrence Ristau, chief maintenance man, had invented a machine to handle the reels while being sharpened. A rock, or corn cob, not only made the blade dull, but bent the thin remains. The mower was in the shop frequently.

Pure seed became a more important issue for all farmers. Students at the Northwest School had many pure seed projects during this era. These helped demonstrate what the new varieties and seed selection could do.

45th Anniversary Celebrated

The Northwest Station celebrated its 45th anniversary June, 1940. Pioneer farmers and businessmen, instrumental in the founding of the Experiment Station in 1895, were given special recognition. The first station Superintendent, T. A. Hoverstad of St. Paul, was on hand to take part.

The War Years

The theme of the 1941 Winter Shows events was “World Affairs.” Topics included “What happened in Norway—The Nazi threat” and “Will the South American Republics Go Nazi or Go with the United States?”

An interesting World War II development involving the Northwest School was the school for glider training started June 12, 1942. Raymond S. Dunham, agronomist, taught meteorology to the students, W.R. Peterson, engineer, gave a refresher course in navigation, and Robert Reynolds of Minneapolis, a senior student in aeronautical engineering at the University of Minnesota, taught aircraft identification. Stephens Hall was the designated dormitory for the flight group who took their meals at the school dining room.

T. A. Hoverstad died in March, 1943, at the age of 75. During that year, the annual alumni reunion was postponed until homecoming because of the gasoline and labor shortage caused by the war.

In 1945 the unimaginable happened. For the first time in 35 years, Winter Shows activities were canceled. The wartime action was taken to conform to the denial of a permit from the National Committee on Conventions and Meetings in Washington, D.C. It was denied because the Winter Shows did not “contribute directly to the war effort.”

Victory came in Europe that spring and T. M. McCall ordered the campus flag to half-mast in honor of the fallen Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the 14 Northwest School boys who had given their lives in the conflict.