first classroom building, the Home Economics Building, was for “domestic science.” There was the James J. Hill Building for classes and the new administration building, named in honor of David L. Kiehle, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Regent and University professor. Four buildings were formally dedicated on December 5, 1912 – Owen, Kiehle, Robertson and Hill. James J. Hill was present for the dedication and attended a “farm style” dinner after the ceremony.

Hill wrote in the 1913 NWSA annual, “Every institution engaged in giving instruction in modern farm methods is not only contributing to the advancement of an industry which must always be the foundation of national prosperity and stability, but it is a guidepost pointing the way to what must and will be, for a majority of the young people of our country, the happiest and, if rightly followed, the most successful occupation.”

At the dedication ceremonies, Hill told Superintendent Selvig, “Come to see me at my office, and I’ll give this school a building or provide a fund for some unmet need.” Selvig thanked him and noted he had a long memory. Said Hill, “That’s all right young man; remember it.” Selvig did, but shortly after their meeting, the railroad magnate died. Wrote the young superintendent, “He left a legacy for northwestern Minnesota even if fate intervened in regard to that promised building.”

Capable agricultural research personnel were just coming on the national scene. Attracting these agriculturally trained men and their families to an undeveloped section of soggy sod in northwestern Minnesota was a major challenge for superintendents. Providing family type housing on the scene rather quickly brought capable research personnel in soils, agronomy, and livestock, establishing the earliest outstate interdisciplinary agricultural research and extension team in the State of Minnesota.

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.

The Experiment Station Influence

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 un-