CHAPTER XIII.

THE NORTHWEST SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND EXPERIMENT STATION.

By Superintendent C. G. Selvig.


THE NORTHWEST EXPERIMENT STATION.

Sometime before 1894 Prof. Willet M. Hays, of Minnesota Experiment Station, St. Anthony Park, had made a study regarding the best location for two other experiment farms in Minnesota besides the one at St. Anthony Park. There were two great areas of the State considered in this survey, viz: the Red River Valley and the adjacent parts of the northwest part of the State, and the lighter soils of the great north central timbered section. By consulting the State geological surveys, and doing some traveling, he had formulated a general plan as to where these farms should be located.

There had been some agitation of this question among the citizens of the Red River Valley, resulting in a delegation being sent to urge the establishment of an experiment farm before the Legislative committee to whom a bill had been referred. Favorable action resulted, for at the Legislative session of 1895, $30,000 was appropriated with which to procure equipment, and for the two following years to conduct two sub-experiment farms. They were placed under the direction of the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota.

Several tracts of land were considered for the location of the Northwest Experiment Farm by the Agricultural Committee of the Board of Regents, consisting of Wm. W. Liggett, Chairman; J. S. Pillsbury, S. M. Owen, and W. W. Pendergast, and by Prof. W. M. Hays who had made a study of the northern half of the State. It was finally located by the Board of Regents at Crookston, Polk County, on land donated by the Great Northern Railway, through the generosity and liberal mindedness of President J. J. Hill and Samuel Hill. It was considered that problems to be solved upon this area were the problems of many communities in the Red River Valley, especially the problem of drainage. This reason weighed largely in the minds of the Committee, for the land selected was extremely low, there being higher land on the north, east, south, and southwest. A shallow coulee drained a part of the waters to the northwest. The ditch established later followed this natural outlet. It was regarded as advantageous to have such a tract of land for experimental purposes and for investigational use.

The tract donated to be used for the Northwest Experiment Farm contains 476.61 acres, according to a United States Government survey which was made in 1872. It comprises the north half and southeast quarter of Section 19, Crookston Township. Its southern line is the northern limit of the city of Crookston. The farm buildings were located in the northwest corner of the section, approximately two miles from the center of the city.