OUTH is a time for optimism. The next four years swept quickly by. They were filled with new activities and new ventures that brought me into the full flow of life’s stream. I was young, my physical vigor left little to be desired. I could work fourteen hours daily and feel no fatigue that a good night’s rest did not dissipate. Life was good. Opportunities for advancement lay at every side. No one faced the future with greater hopes. I was realizing what it meant to be born in this glorious land of freedom.

Many of my colleagues in the field of education wondered why I would take time out to attend the University. I was short with them. I wanted an even chance to move forward and the training on a University level was necessary.

2.

I had already earned a considerable number of University credits at summer sessions in subjects requiring laboratory work I could not very well pursue by myself. I was encouraged by several University professors to present myself for examinations in certain introductory, or general courses, which they felt my studies and experience qualified me to attempt. I passed these examinations and thereby secured University credits.

I recall especially two of these examinations, in Psychology and Rhetoric. I spent nearly a day writing on the former subject which was based upon Dr. William James' Psychology. The questions were prepared by Dr. Norman Wilde, head of the University's Psychology department, and Dr. David F. Swenson, associate professor. I appreciated Dr. Wilde’s comments on my examination paper which I felt rewarded me for the years I had devoted to this study.

Professor Maria Sanford, head of the Rhetoric department, was kind in her comments, also. She wrote she hoped I would enroll in one of the advanced courses and said she would be pleased to have me in one of her own classes.

Because I was older that the average student and was a teacher myself, I appreciated my professors at the University to the fullest degree. They contributed much to me. Especially do I feel grateful to George F. James, Albert W. Rankin, Willis M. West, Richard Burton and Franklin L. McVey.

3.

During the year the College of Education was formally organized and I became a member of its first graduating class. Secretary of War, William H. Taft, was the University’s commencement speaker. When the members of the class marched to the platform it was seen there were four large and husky men, three of whom had already been successful school superintendents. Due no doubt to the fact this was the new College’s first class, there was a burst of applause. Secretary Taft, I noted, turned smilingly to President Northrop, his former teacher at Yale, and whispered to him. Northrop’s face indicated pleasure and pride.

Years later I met Chief Justice Taft in the ante-room adjoining the House of Representatives’ chamber in the national Capitol, when I was a member of Congress.
He was showing members a large sketch of the proposed Supreme Court building. I asked him if he remembered the commencement address he gave at the University of Minnesota in 1907. He did and paid an earnest tribute to his former teacher, President Northrop. I then asked him if he recalled the four men who received diplomas as graduates of the College of Education and said I was one of them. He chuckled a bit and then informed me he recalled telling President Northrop that judging by the physical size of the members of the class the new College had started out well.

4.

There was ever before my wife and me the matter of living expenses. On July 5, 1907 our second daughter was born. She, too, was a beautiful baby girl whom we named Margaret Elizabeth. To help out our budget I accepted an appointment as instructor at the summer teachers’ training school held at the University. I was associated with Dr. J. S. Young of Mankato Normal School in teaching civics and we, two, formed a team that continued during four summer sessions there.

Mid-year the superintendency at Red Wing, Minnesota, became open and I was urged by friends to seek the position. I had my doubts about doing this as there were already more than 100 applicants, but I went to Red Wing, conferred with the Board and learned within a few days that three persons, including myself, survived the first screening.

A committee of the Board was authorized to confer with the state high school inspector, George B. Aiton whose judgment would be accepted by the Board. They conferred with him and he telephoned me what happened. He had informed the Committee to take Selvig’s name off the list to permit him to complete his University course, stating this would be the best for him. Aiton’s home was near the campus, I went there and thanked him for his decision.

I felt he was right. In view of what happened later, Aiton’s decision now appears as a direct intervention of fate in my behalf. John Silvernale, one of my closest friends, was elected. His service there won him promotion to one of the largest school systems in Michigan where he remained until he reached retirement age.

5.

In April, 1907, I was invited to interview the school authorities at Glencoe, Minnesota, 50 miles west of Minneapolis. I went there and found two Boards in charge. One was the Stevens Seminary Board. If elected I would be designated principal of Stevens Seminary and receive my salary from the Stevens Seminary trustees. The local Board of Education would then elect me as city superintendent of schools.

My readers may well ask about the situation at Glencoe. Stevens Seminary received a fairly large grant of land from the state to compensate Glencoe for withdrawal of the site of the State Agricultural College, previously voted to be located at Glencoe, to St. Paul. This land was placed in hands of three trustees appointed by the County Commissioners of McLeod County in which Glencoe was located. These trustees did an outstanding job of withholding sale of the land until values increased thus building up a fair-sized fund.

Income from this fund was sufficient when I became principal to pay both the high school principal’s salary and mine. M. A. Thoeney served as treasurer for many years and much credit is due him for his highly efficient efforts in building up the fund. When I was at Glencoe the other two Seminary Trustees were Dr. J. H. Dorsey and F. R. Allen.
Stevens Seminary (Glencoe high school) had attained high rank under my predecessors, E. E. McIntire and H. C. Hess, both known as outstanding educators. In August our family now mustering four took up our abode in what proved to be a most hospitable and friendly city.

6.

The school was excellently organized. It had an outstanding library which was used by the citizens as well as by the high school students. The science laboratories were superbly equipped. I had informed the trustees I wished to work towards my Master’s degree at the University during my first year at Glencoe.

I had already begun on a project in Educational Measurements under Dr. J. B. Miner of the Psychology Department and in Seminar Courses with Dean James and Professor Rankin. It would be necessary for me to attend University classes each Saturday and, in addition, devote my spare time to study. Instead of objecting, as well they might, all heartily approved the plan. In fact, as I learned later from Mr. Allen, who became an intimate and well-loved friend, they were proud of my decision.

So school moved in its regular routine and I labored away on the University work. The course with Dr. Miner included conducting local school tests in which were applied Dr. Thorndike’s Educational measurements. There were questionnaires, tables, computations, mean square deviations, Pearson’s coefficient of correlation, emotion intensity, emotion deviation, action intensity, action deviation, thought quickness, motion quickness, accuracy, suggestibility, good judgment and many more problems to be studied or measured. To me it was the opening of a new world. Dr. Miner was a member of a group seeking new methods of school tests and I was on the firing line in his corps.

Every Saturday morning I took the six o’clock train for Minneapolis and returned on the evening train at nine. There was very little time to spend happily at home with my beloved wife and children. Walking was the main recreation. Evenings were in the main spent in study. It seemed as if I could never escape the daily grind but I was interested in every phase. The desire for advancement was too strong to resist.

Shortly after New Year’s I was informed by Dean James to begin to consider the subject of my Master’s thesis. I selected, “National Aid to Education” because I felt then as I do now that educational opportunities should be equalized over the entire nation.

The thesis was completed and typed by myself on my Oliver typewriter. I submitted it with fear and trembling, I recall, but I had done my best. I have no record of the date when Graduate College Dean H. T. Eddy informed me the thesis had been approved. I was directed to have a new copy typed and bound in accordance with the regulations. It was then placed (and interred) in the University library.

The work in two other departments progressed favorably and my name was included in the list awarded M.A. degrees in 1908.

7.

I did not altogether neglect the community in which we lived and the opportunity of getting acquainted with its people. I found Frank R. Allen, attorney, a graduate of Amherst College, to be a very congenial person. We took long walks together. He would come to our home and say, “Time to stretch your legs a bit, Mr. Selvig,” and off we would go. He was president of Glencoe Library Board and I soon found myself its secretary. We set ourselves the task of cataloguing the books. I had learned to do this at Harmony. Mrs. Allen and his sister Delia became my wife’s fast friends.
G. K. Gilbert, president of the Bank of Glencoe, was a distinguished citizen who had served 43 years continuously as a member of the Board of Education. He was "G. K." to all the citizens. We often met at the school house. The school was his hobby. His views were conservative but he was always willing to listen to new ideas and plans. He never commented at once but after deliberation at our next meeting he would give his views. We became close friends.

The editor of the local weekly paper was F. A. J. Tudhope, born in England. He was interested in the schools. He drew his own cartoons. Without fail in late August he would draw a picture of a doleful boy carrying his books to school, captioned, "School on Monday. Don't I know it?" In June, the same lad but now with his face wreathed in smiles, happy and free as a lark, for "School's out!" The editor always wanted school news and helped in keeping the public informed.

There were many other outstanding citizens who became devoted friends. The school "professor" was called upon to deliver an address each year at the annual dinner meeting of the local Commercial Club. They were called "banquets" in those days. In my first address on "Guilds and Guides," I traced development of business groups.

The next year it was "Practical Education." The name was a misnomer but its subject matter is still pertinent. The editor published it in full and gave it editorial endorsement based, he informed me, on the reaction of the community. This heartened me, no end, and encouraged me to move ahead. The Trustees of the Seminary Board assured me of their continued support.

I greatly desired that the Glencoe Schools introduce courses in manual training, home economics and agriculture. I often broached the subject at Board meetings and was listened to with respect if not with great interest in the beginning. My address on "Practical Education" before 200 of the citizens who attended the Commercial Club dinner seemed to have aroused interest and created a favorable opinion in the community which was reflected by the Board of Education.

Glencoe should not lag. At least five members of the Board appeared receptive but Mr. Gilbert was not convinced at first. He sought information as to need of classroom space, kitchen, wood work-shop, and costs. His was intelligent opposition. He delayed definite commitment.

This went on until early in 1908. I recommended introducing sewing 80 minutes a week for the seventh and eighth grade girls. The teachers would use the Margaret Blair manuals. Mr. Gilbert spoke up, "What will the boys in those grades do when the girls are attending the sewing class?" I replied, "Mr. Gilbert, the boys in those two grades need to improve their penmanship and spelling. I propose to teach those classes myself."

Instantly, Mr. Gilbert moved that lessons in sewing be introduced for the girls. He explained, with a twinkle in his eye, that he offered the motion, principally because he wanted the "professor" to give those boys a few greatly needed lessons in penmanship and spelling.

This is the true story of how the new departments, like the head of the camel that was thrust under the tent, came into being. The initial decision had now been made. It probably would have come in less dramatic manner, anyway, because the other Board members were favorable, and had been so, for several months. I also felt Mr. Gilbert did not wish to let me down.
Then Comes The City

9.

The kitchen for the class in cooking, and a room for the classes in sewing were ready when school opened the next fall (1908). Miss Rankin was engaged as home economics teacher. A well equipped carpentry shop for the manual training department was provided and Arthur D. Bailey, a skilled pattern-maker from St. Paul was engaged as teacher. He did excellent work. He and Mr. Gilbert were soon close friends. He met Mr. Gilbert's exacting standards which required perfection in execution. A pattern-maker had to be an expert in wood work. Mr. Gilbert thought well of the lessons the boys learned of keeping tools in perfect state, of learning mechanical drawing and of interpreting drawings in actual construction. He became a frequent visitor in the school shop.

The third new course was agriculture. A few schools in the state had already established this course. I urged it and urged it. The two other new departments became popular. The citizens of Glencoe manifested their approval and encouraged me to continue to press for the addition of agriculture. Finally I was authorized to seek a teacher for the agricultural department. There was no one available at Minnesota College of Agriculture.

The Board authorized me to go to Iowa State College, Ames, and there I interviewed William F. Schnaidt who was a member of the senior class. He came from a farm, had taken a well-rounded college course, and was interested in the position. He was elected. He proved to be very efficient both as an instructor and as an organizer. He began his work at Glencoe at the close of the college year.

10.

Now comes another phase which had important repercussions all over the state. There was much interest in the legislature regarding agricultural education. Speaker Lawrence H. Johnson, a Minneapolis business man, secured approval of the House of Representatives of the State Legislature for his bill providing for a system of County Agricultural Schools, based on the county schools established in Wisconsin.

At this time Minnesota University had its School of Agriculture, established in 1888 and located at the College of Agriculture, St. Paul. A similar school was established at Crookston in 1905. There was strong support for these two special schools. Opposition was voiced against the County Schools which would create a parallel system of schools in the state.*

A small group of school superintendents circularized the state in favor of granting special state aid ($2,500.00 a year) to ten high schools maintaining industrial, home economics and agricultural departments. I was a member of that committee. We urged the enactment of the bill which was introduced by Senator Frank E. Putnam, Blue Earth, on January 28, 1909. The following letter sent out by the committee gives the reasons for supporting the Putnam Bill.

Board of Education—Gentlemen:

Much interest is being shown by the members of the present legislature in the subject of Agricultural Education. Three general plans are proposed. First—County—L. H. Johnson Bill; Second—Congressional—Stephens Bill; Third—Agricultural—

*The Minneapolis Journal, page 9, February 19, 1909, published a 1500-word article entitled “Teaching Farming in the High Schools.—Minnesota Educators against the Special School in Counties,” by C. G. Selvig, superintendent of schools, Glencoe, Minnesota. It was well received over the state and had part in crystallizing support for the Putnam bill.
ized High Schools—Putnam Bill in the Senate and Mork Bill in the House. (The term "agriculturalized" was commonly used. It proved to be a misnomer. C.G.S.)

The Johnson Bill provides for small County schools parallel with our present system and is thought by some to be dangerous as promoting class lines in society. County schools have been proved expensive and ineffective.

The Congressional Plan provides for the location of an agricultural high school in each congressional district similar to the one at Crookston.

The Putnam Bill provides for agriculturalizing our present high and graded schools in communities where this is desirable, and for consolidating rural schools. It uses the buildings, equipment and teaching force that we already have. It aids places wishing to install manual training, domestic science and school gardens. It provides for special classes for the winter months when necessary. Where a school is not so situated as to carry on the work in agriculture to advantage, it allows for the substitution of elementary work in metallurgy and mining. It leaves the work in charge of the State High School Board where it belongs, and opens the way for the better training of rural teachers through High School Normal Departments established in the same schools.

Out of 66 prominent educators, state superintendents and agricultural college deans and principals, heard from on the subject of agricultural education 11 favored the county plan, 14 the congressional and 41 the agriculturalized high school. The same persons are quite united in saying there is danger in a parallel system of schools.

If you can see your way clear to support this measure kindly send official communication at once direct to your legislators. It is time for school men and school boards to act as a unit if anything is to be accomplished.

Very truly yours,

E. M. PHILLIPS, Albert Lea
E. C. HIGBIE, Canby
C. G. SELVIG, Glencoe
C. H. BARNES, Wells

11.

The Legislature passed this bill in April, 1909. The campaign had succeeded. The Legislature also created another special School of Agriculture at Morris, Minnesota, by accepting the Indian School buildings there from the government and increased the appropriation for the school at Crookston.

Senator Putnam wrote me a letter on April 20, 1909 (which I still have), telling of the fight. He added, "I wish to extend my hearty thanks to you and others for the support you gave me in passing the bill." This letter was followed by one from Senator Burdett Thayer who represented my home county, Fillmore. He said, "I voted for the Putnam Law and against the final passage of the Johnson Bill as amended by the Senate. I did this largely on your recommendation and the opinion of Dr. D. L. Kiehle."

Glencoe High School which already had established the three new departments formally sought to be named as one of the ten schools under the Putnam law. The ten schools named are listed with the name of the superintendent, as follows:

Superintendents E. M. Phillips (Albert Lea), Edgar C. Higbie (Canby), C. E. Young (Wells), John L. Silvernale (Red Wing), W. P. Dyer (Alexandria), A. E. Pickard (Hinckley), A. C. Loomis (Lewiston), A. W. Hargrave (Cokato), A. M. Dunton (McIntosh) and C. G. Selvig (Glencoe).
So we had won that one. Our citizens were delighted. I had made several trips to the capitol in behalf of the bill. I did this on my own, as they say, and decided I would bear the expense personally if the bill was not enacted or, if Glencoe was not named as one of the ten schools. When I mentioned the expense bill at a Board meeting, the Board unanimously voted to reimburse me. The bill was $65.00. Said one, “It is the best investment this Board ever made.”

A. H. Reed, one of the pioneer citizens of Glencoe, wrote on April 30, 1909. “I noticed by last evening’s Minneapolis Journal that Glencoe has been designated as one of the high schools to receive state aid under the act to encourage special education in agriculture. I not only want to congratulate you, but thank you for helping to bring about this recognition. The Stevens Seminary trustees, the city and school district owe you much for your untiring and successful efforts in this matter.”

The conference on Agricultural Education held at the University, July 29 and 30, 1910, indicated clearly the great advances made in a single year. This conference lasted two whole days and scheduled speakers were President Cyrus Northrop; Governor A. O. Eberhart; State Superintendent C. G. Schulz; Dean of Agricultural College, Albert F. Woods; Professor K. L. Hatch, Director of Agricultural Extension (Madison, Wisconsin); Presidents F. A. Weld (Moorhead Normal) and Waite Shoemaker (St. Cloud Normal); Principal D. D. Mayne; High School Inspector, George B. Aiton; Dean George F. James; Dick Crosby (Washington, D. C.); Professor Albert W. Rankin; George F. Howard of Extension Department (Minnesota Agricultural College) and Superintendents Phillips, Selvig, Dunton and T. A. Erickson, County Superintendent of Douglas county (Alexandria).

This conference exercised a vital influence in the fast-moving progress of the Putnam Act schools.

12.

Agricultural extension work at Glencoe was organized with Mr. Schnaitd in charge. Conferences with the farmers of our community were held. It was decided to hold township meetings where topics of timely interest to the farmers would be presented by experts. The meetings proved very successful. The heads of departments of the Minnesota College of Agriculture spoke at some of the meetings during the winter. I recall particularly, Profs. Green, Boss, Wilson and Haecker.

State Farmers’ Institutes had been held for years in Minnesota and had a very successful record. There now arose a need to supplement the Institute’s service on a year-round basis. The Agricultural Extension Division was created as a part of the Agricultural College, with A. D. Wilson as director.

As the years went on the number of state-aided high school agricultural departments was increased to over one hundred. Following this came County Agricultural Agents jointly financed by county commissioners, the state extension service and the federal department of agriculture. The genesis and development of the farm extension services would make a very interesting story but it’s outside the purview of this tale.

13.

The school work at Glencoe proceeded smoothly and efficiently. We had an excellent staff of teachers. The enrollment grew. I retained my interest in the teaching of history and embraced an opportunity to present my views thereon when Henry Johnson, professor of History, Teachers College, Columbia University published in Teachers College Record in 1908 an article on “History in the Elementary School.”
This article interested me very much and I wrote a review of it which was published in "The Elementary School Teacher" issued by the University of Chicago Press in February, 1909 (p.p. 334-337).

When the review came to Prof. Johnson's attention he wrote me a letter stating that it "has given me greater pleasure than you can know and I want to thank you most sincerely." It happened that I was present at the University of Minnesota commencement exercises when the University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy. I was more proud of him than he could ever know.

During my three years at Glencoe it was my privilege to attend the meetings of the Minnesota Education Association, the School Superintendents' annual spring meetings and the February meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association. Noted speakers included Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus, U.S. Senator Albert J. Beveridge, William J. Bryan, U.S. Senator Robert F. LaFollette and others. These meetings added both richness to life and inspiration for educational work. Their influence lasted throughout the years.

14.

I received a letter dated in July, 1910 from Dean A. F. Woods, head of the Agricultural College, St. Paul, offering me the superintendency of the Crookston School of Agriculture, which was a part of the University. I was under contract with the Stevens Seminary and asked Dean Woods for a brief period for considering his letter. The Trustees of Stevens Seminary were willing to release me. They felt I should accept the Crookston position as it was a definite advancement both in responsibility and salary.

I finally wrote Dean Woods I wished to confer with him. He made it plain to me I had President Northrop's full endorsement and also that of the University's Board of Regents. What was of great weight with me was Dean Woods' assurance that the Board wanted to build up the school there. He pledged his undivided support. I decided to accept the position. My classmate at the University, Edgar C. Higbie, accepted the superintendency of the Morris Agricultural School.

While still at Glencoe we became parents of a lively, husky son whom his mother wished to have the name Conrad George II. We now had a family of three children and it was a happy group.