Foreword
Relatively few people know or use the full official title of the North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service. To most people it is just Extension or Extension Service and when the word, Cooperative, is added it is sometimes confused with farm business cooperatives.

Why then is “Cooperative” used in its title? National legislation which established this program provided funds to states on a matching basis and provided a staff to work with state staffs for getting work underway. In turn, most states, North Dakota included, provided funds to county or local groups for establishing and conducting the work. Thus, it is a cooperative effort between these three levels of government and “Cooperative” is used in its name. Just the short name, Extension, will be mostly used in this writing.

What is the purpose of the North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service? Its primary purpose is educational in the areas of agriculture production and marketing, home economics and family living. It is closely associated with the North Dakota State University Experiment Stations and the Colleges of Agriculture, Engineering and Home Economics. Extension works with them in releasing and promoting the use of practices, materials and information found to be helpful in increasing production and marketing efficiency and the enjoyment of family and community living.

How does it function or perform its work? Extension’s overall philosophy is to help others to help themselves through all available educational means. Personal contacts, community meetings, demonstrations, circular letters, newspapers, radio and TV media, locally organized 4-H, Extension Homemakers, livestock and crop improvement clubs and associations and other methods all are used.

Currently each county has a county Extension office staffed with at least one professionally trained person and an office secretary. Some counties have several professionally trained people and secretary help as determined by county size, population and cooperative budget. County personnel are responsible for day-to-day operations, long term program planning, organization and servicing of cooperating clubs and associations and scheduling of specialist help necessary to carry out their programs. State and district or area personnel are responsible for staffing, training, budgeting, coordinating and providing updated subject matter assistance.

Written history is supposed to be the factual review of past events, happenings and actions but it is often not possible to sift out an absolutely unbiased record. The viewpoint of the recorder in deciding what to include and what to omit greatly influences the reader’s interpretation. This North Dakota Extension story will not be able to accommodate many details and some readers may feel slighted. In one sense there are two Extension Services in North Dakota. One is the official paid staff of state and county Extension personnel and it is not difficult to review records and compile a resume for their work.

The other is the unofficial or unpaid lay staff composed of thousands of volunteer men, women, boys, girls, business interest, service clubs, news media and others who have and continue to cooperate in promoting, sponsoring, leading and carrying out programs of the Extension Service. Numbers of these volunteers are so great that it is neither possible nor practical to include many of them in this narrative. All participants know the parts they have played and can relate to them accordingly.

Several attempts have been made to interest someone in compiling a history of the North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service. None have been successful. Extension honorary professional fraternity, Epsilon Sigma Phi, appointed a history committee in 1938. Its members were Extension Editor, W.C. Palmer; Assistant County Agent Leader, E.G. Patieck; State Club Leader, H.E. Billings; and State Home Demonstration Leader, Grace DeLong. DeLong and Billings each prepared short reviews of their respective departments but no further work was done by that committee.

County Agent Leader, N.D. Gorman, undertook writing of an Extension history in the early 1940’s. Mr. Gorman had been on Extension’s staff since May 16, 1919 and more than anyone else, was responsible for recruiting, training and staffing the North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service. He used his own records and Extension annual reports as references and compiled about 250 pages of double spaced, typewritten material. He submitted his material for review to Dr. William C. Hunter, NDAC History Department Head. Dr. Hunter told him that without a bibliography it could not be classed as an authentic Extension history. Gorman explained that much of his writing was based on his own records and reports with unnumbered pages and that exact reference listings were impossible. Dr. Hunter, a precise historian himself, did not change his evaluation of Gorman’s writings and Gorman gave up any further work on it.

Epsilon Sigma Phi appointed a new history committee during the 1970’s with Cass County Urban 4-H Agent Jack Westra as chairman. Other members of that committee included Extension Editor, J.J. Feight; Extension Agronomist, Lars Jensen; Traill County Home Economist, Anne Green; and Extension District Supervisor, Stanley Bale. That committee renewed efforts to secure a writer and explored possibilities for offering a scholarship to a NDSU history major student. All efforts were unsuccessful and that futility led to a committee member’s undertaking.

1In 1987 the name of the organization was changed to NDSU Extension Service.
No attempt is being made to proclaim this writing to be a complete authentic history of the North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service. Instead, it is a narrative of the purpose, organization and philosophy of Extension and examples of how it was performed in North Dakota and its impact on people of that state.

H.E. Rilling's 1940 "History of 4-H Work in North Dakota" and Grace DeLong's "Brief History of Home Demonstration Work in North Dakota, 1914-1950" have provided much information. County and state annual reports and payrolls have been especially helpful in providing personnel information. Most of all, N.D. Gorman's manuscript has provided information not available from any other source.

Throughout this text words such as "about" and "great" are used when exact figures are not available. It is believed they are reasonably accurate or descriptive terms.

Some personal comments are also included and it is hoped they will not interfere with the interpretation of this report.

Absence of bibliographical references may be questioned but sources of information are broadly stated in the narrative without an exact listing. Some of the old reports from which information was taken do not have numbered pages.

A COUNTY AGENT'S THOUGHTS WRITTEN IN VERSE
FROWN NOT UPON IT FOR IT COULD BE WORSE

THE POETIC EVOLUTION OF A COUNTY AGENT

It is seldom that the attitude and perspective of a county agent may be judged and compared thorough the medium of verse. However, when two different poems are analyzed, written by a former county agent from North Dakota 30 years apart, it is rather interesting to observe the contrasting trend of thought.

The poem entitled "Do You Know Your County Agent" written in 1921 and appearing for the first time the same year on the cover of a magazine known as "The County Agent and Farm Bureau," published by the Lichter Publishing Company of Chicago, represents the early years. This verse reveals the attitude of many of the pioneer county agents. One of wishful thinking and a pleading and prayerful solicitation for understanding and acceptance. A voice crying in the wilderness, beseeching someone "to shake him by the hand," and "let him know and understand."

After 30 years many of the early hopes have been fulfilled as revealed by the poem entitled "A Full Score Years and Ten." "A modest recalling of goals that were won," and "thoughts of near pitfalls, traversed and passed." While the monetary reward is usually somewhat disappointing during the career of a county agent, nevertheless the additional recompense comes from the fact that "we've known the best people" and have been "enhanced by their splendor." A recognition of and an earnest tribute to the good people "who made the path smoother."

It is rather ironical that the evolution in point of view has been so unwittingly portrayed in this manner. The alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, of 30 years service as a county agent.

ANON.
DO YOU KNOW YOUR COUNTY AGENT?

Do you seek your County Agent,
    when you’re troubled, sick and blue,
Do you know that he is anxious
    Just to lend a hand to you?

Do you cheer your County Agent,
    Ever shake him by the hand,
Show you’re thankful for his efforts
    Let him know and understand?

Do you use your County Agent,
    Do you give the man a show,
Does your farm present no problems
    That perplex your neighbors so?

Do you know your County Agent
    And the things that he can do,
Have you seen the demonstrations
    Of the crops your county grew?

Do you tell your County Agent
    When you make a trial test
Of a crop that proves successful
    So that he can tell the rest?

Do you see your County Agent
    When in doubt as what to plant,
Do you guess that he might help you,
    Or convinced he surely can’t?

Do you feel your County Agent
    Cannot do a thing for you?
Why not write him, call or see him
    Just to learn what he can do?

-R.C. Newcomer, 1921
Grant County, ND

A FULL SCORE YEARS AND TEN

We come to the close of careers one by one
    And timidly query “How well have we done?”
The thoughts of near pitfalls we traversed and passed,
    The joys and the sorrows, the mem’rys that last,
The youngs, their elders—both women and men—
    Recall ever fondly a score years and ten.

We think of associates trusted and true,
    Their kindly endeavors were more than a few,
The colleagues who left us mid sorrow and tears—
    Bereaved by their passing in such early years;
The grim silent Reaper had gathered them, when
    We plodded on forward a score years and ten.

We’ve traveled and mingled with old friends and new
    The world’s grandest people, substantial and true;
We’ve learned that the lowly are oft times the great
    Pretenders but foster dissention and hate;
We’ve known the best people where ever we’ve been,
    Enhanced by their splendor a score years and ten.

When backward we’re looking and techniques beguile,
    ’Tis friendships that linger and mem’rys the while,
Reflection on moments of deeds we have done,
    The handshakes, the banter, the worries, the fun.
The time was so fleeting, that just now and then
    We paused to envision a score years and ten.

A boon for the faithful; a bright setting sun,
    A modest recalling of goals that were won,
Appraisal and knowledge of those chosen few
    Who made the path smoother for me and for you,
And others who cheered us again and again
    As we were amassing a score years and ten.

-Ralph C. Newcomer, 1949
Morton County, ND
THE FIRST COUNTY AGENT
When the harvesting is over, and the great bins sag with plenty;
And the silos swell with power, and the lofts are warm with roughage,
And the calves are under cover; then the farmers sit together,
Smoke their pipes before the fire, smack their lips in mugs of cider;
Hear the winds whip through the orchard,
Watch the snow drift by the window; boast a bit of other winters,
Dream of half-forgotten huskings; then they sometimes tell the children
Of the Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving—of the golden grain, Mondamin
Of the harvest, and the planting,—of the first recorded field-day.
When the lonely, friendly Squanto—gave his famous demonstration.
—Frank Prentice Rand

THE FIRST DEMONSTRATION
"... Afterwards they (as many as were able) began to plant their corn, in
which service SQUANTO stood them in great stead, showing them both ye
manner how to set it, and after how to dress & tend it. Also he tolled them
except they got fish & set with it (in these old grounds) it would come to
nothing, and he showed them yt in ye mide of April they should have store
enough come up ye brooke, by which they began to build; and taught them
how to take it, and when to get other provisions necessary for them; all
which they found true by trial & experience..."
—(1621) Bradford's History

As Squanto gave the first method demonstration, his words of instruction have come down through history as follows:

"My good friends, the time for the planting of maize has come. The
geese have left the river and the bay for their summer home in the North-
land. The robin and his mate have returned from the Southland and are
nesting in the trees. The earth is warm and the moon but a shadow in the
heavens. The first early flowers of spring have faded and the violets, blue-
bells and sweet Williams scent the air. The giant oak has begun to unfurl
its leaves. By these signs and many others, my father and my father's father
have learned to know the proper time for the planting of maize has arrived."

—By A. F. MacDougall, County Agent, (Retired), Concord, Mass.