A case study of the problems encountered in establishing a Smith-Hughes vocational agricultural course in the Brattleboro High School and its patronage area.

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A CASE STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN ESTABLISHING A SMITH-HUGHES VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COURSE IN THE BRATTLEBORO HIGH SCHOOL AND ITS PATRONAGE AREA

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A CASE STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN ESTABLISHING A SMITH-HUGHES VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COURSE IN THE BRATTLEBORO HIGH SCHOOL AND ITS PATRONAGE AREA

by Ralph Hawthorne Granger

Thesis submitted for degree of Master of Science at the Massachusetts State College, Amherst, June 12, 1939.
With definite expansion that is and has been taking place in vocational education during the past few years, there has come the need for organization of many new departments of vocational agriculture in the high schools of the country.

This thesis is unique in that it covers the work of an inexperienced teacher in organizing a new department. It is usually the duty of a teacher with years of practice to draw plans for establishment of a new work. But it matters little whether the teacher be well practiced in his profession, or relatively inexperienced as was the case in Brattleboro, for the work to be done is the same.

There are many obvious reasons why an experienced teacher might be expected to do a better piece of work than one who has just finished his apprenticeship, and yet the very fact that all is new may be an advantage. A man of experience would be tempted to pattern the new department after some previous experience that might not be applicable to the new locality. With everything so new, it was possible to develop a growth in vocational work that was based one hundred per cent on the community which it was to serve.

The following pages set forth some of the problems encountered by a new teacher in a new department, and
are intended to help prepare anyone who might read them to meet the situations as they arise. Although the case study is discussed from the viewpoint of an inexperienced teacher, any person organizing a new department of vocational agriculture may well expect to meet many of the problems that are mentioned in the following chapters.
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Chapter I

ORIENTATION

Town. Brattleboro, and the surrounding towns which send pupils to the Brattleboro High School, is located in Windham county which lies in the southeastern corner of the state of Vermont. Windham county is bordered on the south by Massachusetts, on the east by the Connecticut River, on the north by Windsor county and on the west by Bennington county. The county as a whole is mountainous and contains many narrow valleys, but no considerable area of level land outside of the Connecticut River valley.

Brattleboro High School and its patronage area are located in the southeastern corner of the county, and except for a large share of the level valley land, the description of the county is applicable to the area. Because of less altitude, and protecting mountains, there is a considerable difference in climate in the Brattleboro area from other sections of the county.

The precipitation is much less than in the hillier areas to the west, averaging forty inches at Brattleboro, and fifty-two inches in Somerset only twenty miles away. There is, however, sufficient rainfall for good crop production. Prolonged droughts are practically unknown in the area, for the average precipitation lies between three and four inches for all months except November, which averages five inches.
Although the amount of rainfall and time of rainfall are favorable to the growing of grains, hays, fruits and vegetables, there are other factors that do limit their growth within the county.

The length of growing season varies from 130 days along the river to 100 in the hills. The relatively short growing season is a limiting factor, especially in the higher townships, making it impractical to produce such crops as corn for grain, and tree fruits. The short growing season does not, however, limit the production of hays, small grains, and in most sections, corn for silage. In some sections of the Connecticut River Valley apples and vegetables are grown.

In general, the temperature is moderate and relatively uniform within seasons. Since dairy stock produce best in a cool climate, the moderate temperature is very favorable to dairying. The relatively cool climate is also favorable to the production of grasses, hays and corn silage. It is not so favorable for the production of corn for grain, or other grain crops.

The principle soil types are eight in number: Worthington, Merrimac, Colrain, Clandford, Hollis, Hermon, Berkshire and Rough Stony Land. The best soils are only fairly productive, and all need lime and complete fertilizers.

The town of Brattleboro has a population of
10,000, and the other seven towns from which the high school draws more than three pupils total 4355. While this number seems large, it must be remembered that only a small percentage of the pupils from these towns ever go to any high school, and that some sections of the outlying towns go to other schools in Wilmington, Bellows Falls, Keene, New Hampshire, or Bernardston, Massachusetts. The Brattleboro High School does draw a number of pupils from Chesterfield, New Hampshire and some are to be found registered in the Agricultural Department.

Many of the students in the Vocational Agricultural work live within a seven mile radius of the high school, but there are others that live as much as forty miles out, but stay in or near Brattleboro during the school year. (See plate #1.)

School. The Brattleboro High School is housed in two buildings, one of brick with revered ivy-covered walls, and physical equipment within that is harmonious with the exterior, and a wooden temporary structure located a few feet to the south and called the "Annex". It is in a part of this latter building that the classes in Agriculture are held. Since gymnasiums were not common in the days when the school was built, the Community Building, two minutes walk away, is used for a gymnasium and many of the school's parties.

Size. The student body has been averaging just over 500 pupils, who are drawn from Brattleboro and the towns
WINDHAM COUNTY, VERMONT
Shows enrollment by towns of Agricultural Students in Brattleboro High School during first year of the department.
Plate II

Showing -

1. Vermont
2. Windham County
3. Brattleboro (Red)
4. Patronage area of school. (Blue)

A. Brattleboro 368 pupils
B. Guilford 23
C. Dummerston 21
D. Vernon 19
E. Chesterfield, 16

N. H.
F. Putney 14
G. Newfane 8
H. Dover 4
I. Brookline 3
J. Londonderry 2
K. Westminster 2
L. Westmoreland, 2

N. H.
M. Wardsboro 2
N. Windham 1
O. Cavendish 1
P. Grafton 1
Q. Marlboro 1
R. St. Johnsbury 1

Total 489
surrounding it in both Vermont and New Hampshire. (See plate #2). The 1936-1937 enrollment was 489, of which 121 were tuition pupils.

**Type of Student.** One of the most pleasing aspects of teaching in Brattleboro is the type of pupil found. The above figures show that many of the students are from rural homes, and of those in town, few have contacted those phases of life which make so many problem cases in the larger towns and cities. There are few, if any, people who can surpass the rural Vermont Yankee in balance, hospitality, friendliness and sincerity. The farm youths in the Agricultural Course at the Brattleboro High School combine these characteristics and give the department a natural advantage tending towards success, and are well worth consideration by a person who would be sincerely interested and happy in his work as a teacher of Vocational Agriculture.

**Schedule.** The school offers five undergraduate courses: a preparatory course for those who are fitting themselves to enter college, a commercial course for those who expect to use stenographic, bookkeeping, or general clerical training, a household arts course for girls who wish to become nurses, an agricultural course for those who wish scientific training in that field or for those who wish to enter agriculture as a life work, and a general course for those who have none of these aims in mind, but who wish to get a good general high school education.
Because so many pupils commute from a considerable distance, it is found advisable to run the school on a one session, or solid session plan. Classes start at 8:00 in the morning, and, except for a fifteen minute recess about 11:00, the day runs with seven periods and ends at 1:15 P.M.

Because the Brattleboro High School draws so many of its pupils from rural areas surrounding, it is obvious that there are large numbers of students that have had agricultural experience in their bringing up, and it is also obvious that many of these will be going back onto farms to live.

Community Need. Previous to the time when this department was started, there had been no agriculture work in the high school, but an obvious need was felt. To whom credit for the idea should be given is not certain, but the School Directors did bring up the matter for discussion, and found that the Principal and others concerned were very much in favor of this as one means of broadening and developing the education being offered by the school. The idea of a Vocational Agricultural course in Brattleboro was first discussed only a year before the work was started. During that year the Principal had been working on plans and looking over candidates for the work. Even though financial conditions in the town during 1935 and 1936 were no better than in most other towns, this method of expansion in the high
school was obviously advantageous because of the financial set up under which such work is run. Even though there had been curtailment in certain other school expenses, this slightly added expense to the town was highly approved. There was no direct community agitation, committee, or outside individuals to sponsor the idea of establishing the department. It was just another illustration of the Principal and School Board doing their bit to broaden and improve the educational facilities of the community.

One reason why the need was felt so keenly was the fact that so many rural boys never came to high school, or else found little of practical value to keep them in school for the completion of their course. Even at this early date it can be safely said that there are some now in high school that would not be were it not for their interest in the Vocational Agricultural course, and as the years progress, there should be an even greater number of students who do stay in school and benefit in many ways other than just the vocational work which they receive. Then, too, there is this matter of tuition brought in by the out of town students. The tuition received from students who would not otherwise be in school or who stay in school longer because of the Agricultural work does, I feel, tend to help materially in off-setting the comparatively slight additional expense of the department.

The agricultural classroom is housed in the Annex which is located beside the main building. (See plate #3).
Brattleboro High School
Main Building (Right)
Annex (Left)
Agricultural classes are held in end third of Annex facing the street.
The Annex is divided into three nearly equal sections, with the center section being divided between a small room in the rear, and a hallway in the front, and large rooms on either end. The Agricultural room, located on the southeast side of the building, is 21 feet by 34 feet, inside measurements. This gives sufficient room for class work and customary laboratory preparations, as well as other displays of materials which are desirable in a class room. The building itself, put up as a temporary structure until another school could be built, used to house the seventh and eighth grades which were at one time held in the high school building. However, it has been some years, since the seventh and eighth grades were held in connection with the high school. The temporary building was found so useful for band, mechanical drawing, and so forth, that it was kept and is used now entirely by the high school. Needless to say, the construction of the building was of the most economical type, having a tar paper roof and partitions and walls covered with a paper board. Inside, the floor is of wide soft-wood boards, and has a coat of oil whenever it becomes necessary. Large windows covering the entire east and north sides furnish good light. The north side faces the main building, and is, therefore, not exposed to any wind currents. In preparation for the starting of the course, the room to be used for Agricultural classes was thoroughly cleaned and painted, so that all presented a very neat, although decidedly empty appearance
at the beginning of school. From this brief description, it can be seen that the building is not fancy, and yet it is in every way thoroughly practical, efficient, and, being a few feet from the main building, quite desirable for Agricultural purposes.
Introduction of Instructor. I was serving my apprenticeship at the Essex County Agricultural School in Hathorne, Massachusetts, at the time I was hired to start the work at Brattleboro. Inasmuch as the whole situation savored strongly of newness, I felt that it would be very desirable to have a look at the school, prospective students, and the community.

Shortly before school closed in June, a visit to Brattleboro High School was arranged. Previous to the June visit, the Principal had passed out application blanks to those students who signified their interest in taking the Agriculture course the following year. Therefore, on June 1, when I arrived in Brattleboro, he knew just who the students were with whom I came to talk. Of course, the students knew nothing of vocational work, and very little about that of which an Agricultural course would be made. As the students were in study hall for a study period, they were called into a vacant room where we discussed the new work and I answered their questions thus eliminating many boys who found that the work would not be to their liking. I came away with a list of students who were definitely interested in a study of Vocational Agriculture.

During this visit, we also had a chance to visit the eighth grades about town and to contact many of the
students who would be coming into high school for their first year, and who might be interested.

Between times, when the students were being interviewed, there was also an opportunity to look over the general plan of the school and get acquainted with the faculty as well as to get a general impression of the type of student body. While it might have been possible to have omitted this June visit, it certainly was of great value in formulating plans for the opening of school in the fall. I certainly would recommend that a prospective instructor should get acquainted as much as possible with the students while school is in session, before he tries to take over or open a new department.

Vocational Teachers' Conference. The teachers of Agriculture in the states of Vermont and New Hampshire meet annually, late in June for a joint conference. The 1936 conference was held at Shanty Shane, at Lake Fairlee, Fairlee, Vermont. Fortunately the apprenticeship was nearly over and the very cooperative officials at Essex were in full sympathy with my desire to attend this conference the year before starting to teach in Vermont. Attendance at this conference is required of all Agricultural teachers who are employed at the time.

At the conference there was an opportunity to work, visit, and play with the state Supervisor and teachers who had considerable experience in the Brattleboro area, and who proved to be very helpful with information and
suggestions that turned out to be quite valuable in the establishment of the course. There were also a number of speakers, discussion groups and question periods which gave this not-too-experienced neophyte much help and encouragement. The conference lasted four days, from June 24 to June 27, 1936. We were privileged to hear such men as Dr. C. H. Lane, North Atlantic Regional Agent, U. S. Office of Education, Ralph Noble, State Director of Vocational Education in Vermont, as well as our State Supervisor. There were also certain other specialists brought in who offered much in their line of technical work. Mr. Lyman E. Jackson, Specialist in U. S. D. A. gave us much help on the then new Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment plan. Also Roger B. Corbett, Director of Research for the New England Council discussed the future of New England. At the time of this conference, little had been done in Vermont to develop the possibilities of out of school instruction, so Mr. Harold A. Mostrum, Educational Manager at the Essex Agricultural School was brought in, and from his advanced experience with out-of-school groups gave us a great deal of help in establishing Part-time and Evening School work. Another thing which made the conference interesting and valuable was the fact that the entire accommodations of Shanty Shane including tennis, golf, canoeing, boating, swimming, etc., were put at our disposal when there was time to use them. Although not adding to the educational
value of the just mentioned offerings, it is interesting
to know that I was partially reimbursed from state funds
for the expenses of this conference. I considered it a
privilege to be allowed to make this acquaintanceship
with others in the work, and to derive benefit of the
educational offerings of the conference.

Pre-school Visits. On Monday, August 31, which was ten
days before school opened, I went to Brattleboro to
visit the homes of the students whose names appeared on
the selected lists obtained at the time of the June visit.
Three days were spent in making these visits, which were
most helpful in organizing the work, for it not only
gave me an opportunity to learn the roads about the
community, observe the types of farming, see the actual
home life and size up the boys in their natural surround-
ings but also it gave me opportunity to talk with the
parents. In this work it is almost impossible to have a
boy carry a satisfactory project to completion unless
the parents are solidly behind his program. So I
welcomed this chance to explain the new work and what
might be expected of the boy and of them before we had
progressed far with plans. Also, I was able to eliminate
a few of the students who, although supposedly interest-
ed, were entirely unsuited to take up work in Vocational
Agriculture. In a few cases, the prospective student
decided after the June visit and as a result of the pre-
school visiting in his home that the work was nothing
that he desired. For these reasons, I secured a great deal of information and also improved the quality of the classes that were to enter. Inasmuch as a project is a large part of the work, it was very desirable to see and discuss project possibilities on the home farm and be sure of the parents’ attitude.

Assembling Supplies and Equipment. In the days immediately before school opened, the class room was partially prepared for the opening day. During this preparation, what few books and supplies that I had were arranged and tentative course outlines were made. The assembling of supplies and equipment was not a very large task, for we had practically nothing with which to work when school opened, and that, I consider to be an asset rather than a liability, for we did not have any useless junk as initial impediment to success. Neither did we have material which we did not need, nor know how to use, and as will be pointed out later, we were able to get what we needed when the time for its use arrived.

Schedule Making. Although the Principal had been over the matter, it was left for me to go over and approve the non-Agricultural courses which Agricultural students would be required to take. The Agricultural course was set up along the lines of the General course, except that Agriculture was required throughout the full four years. We also made arrangements whereby elective courses were available which would give the student an opportunity to
prepare himself for meeting the entrance requirements of the Land-Grant Colleges if he were qualified and interested in doing so. This gave the Agricultural student in his first year English, Agriculture, physical education, general science half a year, and community civics half a year, as required subjects, and the choice of either algebra or junior business training as electives. In the Brattleboro High School all courses are such that changes are made readily after the first year. In the second year, the course required English, Agriculture, physical education and a choice of two of the following: geometry, modern history, biology, French, typing or vocational mathematics. Because of duplication in mathematics, this second year program was changed after one year's experience. During the third year the course required to take English, Agriculture, American history and physical education, with one of the following electives: intermediate algebra, physics or French. And during the fourth year requirements were only English, and Agriculture with two electives from the following group: Economic problems and economics for a half year each, chemistry, French, solid geometry, and trigonometry. Of course, during the first year there were a large percentage of students who were transferring over from the General, Commercial, or College Preparatory courses and were, therefore, not following too closely the schedule that was set up. It will not be until after three years when all students in the course have followed Agricultural
work since they were Freshmen that we will be able to stick very closely to the list of courses as outlined in the school catalog, and at the present time there is no indication that schedules of courses should be adhered to too carefully, for each case is individual and the courses best suited are, perhaps, better selected by the student and the Principal than by any pre-arranged list.

**Pre-school Faculty Meeting.** On Tuesday after Labor Day, it is customary at the Brattleboro High School to have a faculty meeting to discuss any matters necessary to be considered before the opening of school. This meeting was called by the Principal at three in the afternoon and lasted for about two hours. During this time there was a very good opportunity for becoming better acquainted with the faculty and answering the many questions which they had concerning the new type of work we were about to start. As it turned out later, this opportunity for acquaintance and explanation was very valuable when I needed to enlist their aid in securing supplies, help and discussion about the students whom they had had but who were new to me. The meeting also gave me an opportunity to look into the many management problems that face both faculty and Principal. The more that one can understand of the inside workings, the better and easier is the work accomplished. At this meeting the teachers' schedules were passed out so that each teacher knew when his classes came.
As I had mentioned previously, the music work was conducted in the Annex, which meant that three mornings a week the band or orchestras were rehearsing throughout the first period back of a paperboard wall so it is obvious that no classes were conducted in the Agricultural room at that time. Therefore, the Principal arranged the schedule so that I would have a study hall to watch during the first period. In the seven-period day which we followed, recess is scheduled between the fourth and fifth periods, so the first group of Agriculture students met the second and third periods. After which there were two free periods with recess between and the second group of Agriculture students met the sixth and seventh periods of the day. The students were grouped into these two divisions, the freshmen and sophomores being in the second and third period group, and the juniors and seniors in the sixth and seventh period group. When school opened, the agricultural enrollment stood at 35 students with ten in the freshman group, thirteen in the sophomore group, making twenty-three in that division and seven in the junior group and five in the senior group making twelve in that division. This schedule of four class periods and one study hall was considerably lighter than that carried by most other teachers, but fortunately it did offer a chance for a great deal of planning of individual work and provided an opportunity to do the many little time-taking things that are
necessary in organizing a new department. So even though not so many hours were spent teaching, there was little time to waste.
Nature of Work. After classes met the opening day of school, September 9, 1936, part of the period was spent in explaining the nature of the work to be offered in Vocational Agriculture. Inasmuch as none of the pupils had ever had any vocational work, it seemed necessary to spend some time in acquainting and orienting them with the type of instruction they were to receive in the new department. I explained to the pupils the meaning of the work "vocational", the other vocational fields of instruction, gave a brief resume of why vocational instruction came into being, and what the Smith-Hughes Act did to hasten its adoption. It was interesting to notice the response of students to the vocational idea. They were so thoroughly saturated with the purely academic approach that when the matter of field trips, projects, comparatively light home work assignments, and few class room tests were mentioned, they immediately showed an increased interest in their new course. This fact alone was very encouraging to the new instructor for it showed that the vocational course was needed by this group of students.

Project requirements were reviewed, the purpose of a project explained, and the project credit towards graduation was emphasized. (I feel that this early emphasis upon the project had many very desirable results, for it not only started the boys thinking in vocational
lines, but also was a very efficient method of weeding out those who were definitely non-vocational.) Time proved that there were, in the group, still a few that were obvious misfits. To those who were material for the Agriculture work, it gave an incentive to start practical planning. The idea of field trips in class time was another incentive for interest in the course. As might be expected, the boys were slightly disillusioned at the practical nature of the field trips, and that, I considered a very desirable situation. When they were first mentioned, the excursions to the fields during school hours sounded like quite a lark, but when the first field trip brought the boys in contact, not only with the ensilage cutter and silo, but also into the field where they loaded bundles of wet corn onto the wagons, they then realized that these trips were educational ventures.

I am sure that these physical and the less desirable farm tasks are especially helpful to the boys who have not had farm experience, for there are those who sign up for Agricultural courses expecting that the farm life is just as they had experienced it during their few weeks vacation on grandfather's farm some years previous. Some of them soon decided that perhaps farming is not, after all, the vocation for them. For this reason I strongly encourage all non-farm reared boys to get plenty of actual experience early in their membership in the Vocational Agriculture work.
Plans for Department. In explaining the course to the pupils, I went over plans for the department in order that they might, early in their enrollment, better understand what we aimed to do. It should be realized at this time, however, that even the instructor was not too well acquainted with the community and the needs that had developed. Yet, there was plenty of material to bring to their attention. I pointed out that the course would endeavor to meet some of the needs of the community, that the department was to be definitely of a service to the community, and that its supplies, equipment and I stood ready to help in individual problems as well as in class instruction in any way that I could. The inner workings of the department were also previewed. We discussed possible improvements within the class room, such as the building of tables, lockers, shelves, etc., as well as the building of a suitable Agricultural reference library. I felt that it was very desirable to lay all the cards on the table, so to speak, especially when I considered that the department was so new, the students were so unfamiliar with vocational work, and also that I was inexperienced in many lines which I was endeavoring to organize. In fact, throughout the whole first year, I purposely maintained an attitude that we, the pupils and the instructor, were working and experimenting together on something entirely new, that none of us was too sure of where we were going, that what we
did should be cooperatively done, and that there were many things which even I did not know or understand. I am still not certain but what this is rather a good attitude to take, providing one has not too large a group of students and that group of students is sincerely interested in the work being done. I realize that there are dangers, under many circumstances, in admitting so openly to the students that questions and problems do exist, but in this case I was very satisfied with the results obtained, and where all is so new to school, community, instructor, and students I suggest that the admission attitude may well be considered.

Many of the plans discussed with the students during the opening day and the days following, were quite vague, and many items were changed before being executed, because additional experience and information made a change desirable. This was especially noticeable in the classroom arrangement and equipping. I feel that this planning with the students, getting their reactions, and asking their advice on where to put this and that was very good educational procedure. Whereas, it may be true that I used my own judgment in final analysis, the thought started in the students, the knowledge that they, too, were building this department was very desirable, and assisted in keeping their attitude and cooperation at a very high level.
Requirements of the Course. Many of the requirements of the course were explained at the same time as the nature of the work, but it was not until after the nature of the work had been covered that the requirements were pointed out as such. The matter of lesson assignments, promptness, thoroughness, etc., were given only passing consideration on the opening day, for I felt that they would be emphasized and drilled into the students' minds more as time proceeded. The primary requirements considered centered around the project. It was largely a matter of telling, with occasional questions and answers coming from the students. From the very beginning, even at the pre-school visits, there was never any opportunity given to question the necessity, desirability and requirement of a Vocational Agriculture project, for all students taking the course. As I have talked with other instructors, especially those who have taken over departments where the project work had been allowed to slip, I have found that this attitude of mine was very fruitful. As a result of this attitude, there has never been any questions raised or any complaints made about the project requirements. A project of reasonable scope was expected, and the word "vocational" was emphasized frequently. I pointed out to the students that a "two-by-four" back-yard family garden which would be cared for by some other member of the family or which they would be required to take care of anyway, regardless of their vocational work, did not meet my definition of the
word "vocational". I continued to emphasize the fact that they were learning how to make a living from Agriculture, and in order to do so they must have some project which would net them a reasonable cash income, that it must be something of their own wherever possible, and must be something in addition to what they would be doing anyway. Again, I repeat for the benefit of any in a similar position, that the first impressions and requirements are the basis upon which student attitude is formed, and are very, very important if one is to maintain a high standard of work. It is always easy to let down the standards, but it is almost impossible to raise to higher levels of requirements after the students have been allowed to drift with too little expected of them.

Assembling Equipment With Pupils. In organizing a course, as in farming, necessity is often the mother of invention, and school teachers as well as farmers are required to get along with what they have, even though it may not be just what they desire. So it was in assembling the equipment for the Agricultural room.

Tables. As previously mentioned the Agriculture class room consisted of four bare walls. So, before much work could be done, tables seemed necessary. The school authorities did not see fit to equip the class room with furnishings before school opened, and before they knew just what was wanted. I am personally just as glad they did not, for had they gone out and bought the equivalent
of what we later made, they would have sunk a great deal of money unnecessarily, and money that was needed much worse for other things later.

For a play which was presented at the Green Street School (where several of the lower grades are taught) a temporary extension to the stage had been made. This extension was stored in the basement of the high school, and in wandering about the building, I had discovered the pieces, so one of the first things we did as a class was to resurrect these two platforms, twelve feet long, four feet wide, and thirty inches high, and place them in the class room. They were very roughly made, the legs being of unplaned hemlock two by fours, and the tops were of six inch native hard pine, and fortunately for their class room use had been planed. Surprising as it may seem, these tables served their purpose very nicely. The boys soon learned to keep their pens and pencils out of the cracks while writing, and the spaces between the knots were sufficiently smooth to make good writing surfaces. There was no finish of any kind on the tables, so the tops soon became well stained with spilled ink and offered excellent surfaces for the boys to develop their artistic talents. These tables served until the end of shop in March when we had new tables of our own making.
Chairs. We were quite fortunate in securing chairs for the classroom, for the school had a supply of folding chairs which it used about the premises on various occasions. We were able to get what we needed of these readily. Although they were not very sturdy in construction, they stood up quite well, and the weaker ones furnished some practical jobs when shop started. There was a caution about these chairs that quickly became evident to all concerned, and to one not familiar with folding chairs for regular class room use, it might be well to experiment and find just how far forward one could tip without disastrous results. This particular brand of folding chairs had a very undignified habit of shooting backward and collapsing when inclined forward a bit too far. At first, this occurrence was viewed as quite humorous by the students, but when one boy collapsed with the chair and endeavored to see whether the back of his head or the corner of the piano were harder, the amusement left this altogether too common happening and comparatively little trouble was experienced with the students leaning forward in their chairs after that.

Bookshelves, etc. Although our supply of books was very small when school started, we were fortunate in having an outmoded bookcase that had been used previously for storing music. This case had four shelves that were adjustable in height and we readily adapted to our needs. The shop instructor
also donated a small bookcase which one of the students had made but never claimed, and from various places around the cellar and attic, three small miscellaneous tables were appropriated. With the initial supply of equipment which actually cost the school nothing to secure, we were well equipped to start the school year. The fact that the department was started with little cash outlay, the fact that we used what we had and made it suffice very nicely until better could be obtained, and the fact that we considered ourselves lucky to have even that were all very philosophical teaching points so far as student attitude was concerned. It served to show what could be done and also was used many times thereafter as encouragement to those who felt that they had very little with which to start ownership projects. It also furnished an incentive to try to improve conditions. Thus, it can be seen that as each new item of equipment was added, all of the students had a feeling of interest and pride in bettering the class room.

Type Of Pupils Enrolled. When the department was opened, there were two definite divisions of pupils. They were the previously enrolled high school students who switched over to take the vocational work and the Freshmen who were entering high school as well as Vocational Agriculture for the first time. This upper class group of transfer students presented many interesting cases. They came from all four classes and represented a widely variant set of interests. The seniors who signed up were as a whole
quite genuinely interested as well as qualified for the work. The lower classes, however, seemed to descend in interest qualifications as their class rank descended. Too many of the students were what are termed as class-backs, that is to say, they were still juniors after four or five years of study or sophomores after three or four years in the institution. Probably the least desirable members were those rated as freshmen but who had been in high school through one or more years. At this point, let me justify their entrance into the course even though careful selection had been practiced previously. All of these students who transferred to the Agricultural course had background and project possibilities sufficient to entitle them to be in Vocational Agriculture and, of course, they must have had some interest else they would not have signed up. But it was found that among the group of class-backs several were no better in Agriculture than they had been in other courses. In general it might be said that those that were failures in other lines continued their same habits in Agriculture. There were, however, a number of satisfactory exceptions to this rule. Those who had been failing in other courses and signed up because the work was something new were definitely in the minority and the sooner they decided the work was not what they wanted, the better satisfied were all concerned. Among the genuinely interested members of the group were found many that stayed through until graduation, and
proved to be of the very most desirable type of Agriculture students. But in any new work it must be expected that the dissatisfied, chronically shifting group of not too desirables will always make application in hope that this may be the something new for which they are looking. In general, however, it is safe to say that the new will not be what they are looking for, and they will not prove to be satisfactory Agriculture students. And yet we must expect a certain quota to register when a new department is established.

The first year freshmen, however, presented a slightly different picture. There were only seven of these the first year because not enough field work had been done to acquaint the incoming group with what was being offered. They were, however, a very interested and sincere group and furnished the basis on which a long time program could be worked. For purposes of class room instruction, the classes were divided into two divisions. A freshman-sophomore group of twenty-three students and a junior-senior group of twelve students. For a two-class divisioning, this seemed the only logical way in which to divide them, even though it did make too large a division of the freshman-sophomore group. As the number of students increased, divisions were changed so that there were three classes: a freshman group; a sophomore group; and a junior-senior group. This proved much more satisfactory from the teaching angle.
Importance Of Opening Day. With such a large group of shifting transfers as registered in the course, it was very essential that no wrong attitude or misconception be allowed to start. I feel quite strongly that the outlining which was done, the standards which were set, and the expectations which were explained to the students were very, very valuable in establishing student attitude toward the organization, especially as it concerned the sincerity with which they, not too successful students, embarked on the new course. First impressions are lasting impressions, and here, I feel, that the success or failure of the department is largely determined.

Respect Of Teacher. Among the many impressions which are secured that first day is, of course, the impression of the teacher. At no time is the teacher more on the spot, so to speak, than the first day. A frank admission of his lack of boundless knowledge and imperfection will help to create a better feeling of equality between students and teacher. As the result of the first day's discussion together, the students felt that all was on the level, and that they were working with and not under the teacher. I believe that this was a helpful attitude and built up a cooperative and not a fearful respect that helped greatly in the future hours of work together.
Public And Parent Acceptance. Probably more questions are asked at home after the first day of school than at any other time during the school year. I believe that the impressions which the students carried home about their new course that first day had much value in shaping home attitude and winning parent backing and cooperation. Next to the pre-school visits, I would place the students’ impression of the opening day as the major contributing factor to project success.

The importance of the opening day cannot be over emphasized. I feel that the future of the department hinged very closely on the success of that day—on the attitudes and impressions that were given, and upon the students’ acceptance of the aims and procedures which we had in mind. It certainly appeared a good omen to have that first day run smoothly as the course appeared attractive to the students enrolled.
Chapter IV

COURSE ARRANGEMENT

Community Survey. In setting up the course so that it might best meet the needs of the community, I found that considerable inquiring was necessary in order to ascertain what might be the major needs which the course should meet. Surveying the community was not done on a very highly organized basis, but was accomplished by visits, reports and conferences with those who were informed. During the pre-school visits, and during travel throughout the surrounding territory, I observed much and learned through discussion of the types of Agriculture carried on what was considered to be the needs as they then existed.

There are a number of reports and records published by the Extension Service that also proved very valuable in understanding what had been happening in the community. Also, the reports gave statistical information of great value in determining relative importance.

Cooperation of Extension Service. The two people who are probably best qualified to help in starting Vocational Agricultural work, are the County Agent and the 4-H Club Agent. Fortunately, both of these men working in Windham County, are located in Brattleboro, so that they are thoroughly familiar with the people, background, etc., of the patronage area of the school. From these men, I learned much about the individual boys
with whom I came in contact, about the people and their philosophy in general, and something of what was expected of the high school Agricultural course. To one not acquainted with a community, whether he be starting a department or taking over after a previous teacher, there is no one source of information that I could suggest that would be of greater value than the Extension Service. It has been rumored, and in many places it appears to be a fact, that the Agriculture teacher and the 4-H agent do not work in harmony. As things have worked out in Brattleboro such a lack of harmony is entirely impossible, and here is a good place to stress cooperation rather than antagonism. The relations of Vocational Agriculture and 4-H club work have been of the very best and, I believe, mutually helpful. The County Agent was of service in many ways, including suggestions for the arrangement of field trips, what farmers could be counted on for cooperation and the background and home conditions of some of the boys. With cooperation as the password, the already established Extension Service had much to offer the infant Agriculture department, and in a short time made possible very worthwhile reciprocal relations as will be pointed out later in this thesis.

**Preliminary Project Planning.** It seemed advisable to do some teaching before a very definite or long term
course plan was outlined. I preferred to wait until I had a wider knowledge of community needs before organizing too rigid a course outline. In order to find the major source of interest along Agriculture lines of the pupils in the class, I spent some time with them in determining what they had at home in a line of project possibilities, and what their interests were and what they would like to take up when they had finished high school. First, we discussed the farms from which the boys came and what was done on each farm, what the primary products were, where they were shipped, the number of people employed on the farm, the size of the family, labor available, and any other factors which would give an insight into the needs of the boy concerned.

Pupil Interests. For the benefit of the few boys who had comparatively little project opportunity at home, and for the others also, some time was spent in determining just wherein lay the pupil's primary interest. With the better boys, it was not difficult to discover what they wanted to know. With the group previously mentioned as transfers, it was more difficult to find wherein their interest lay, for in a few cases they had no genuine interest in Agriculture—or in anything else. We did succeed, however, in getting a very fair picture of the
majority interest and I had a working basis upon which to start teaching, and also a chance to plan a curriculum that would be of definite interest to a majority of the class members. This procedure was definitely of value, for the students were, theoretically at least, studying that which they desired to study. Thus, they did not have a chance to feel that any knowledge they did not want was being forced upon them. Also, I cannot picture any procedure which would net a more worthwhile course of study for the pupils concerned. It should be kept in mind that this is only for the preliminary course arrangement. As the community becomes more and more familiar to the instructor, and as the needs of the community, and its future Agricultural possibilities are learned, more cut and dried courses may be arranged. But to one who is starting from scratch, this offers one reasonable solution which worked. The problem of course arrangement need not be terrifying if it is approached in light of community need and pupil interest with a firm basis upon the project. The connection between class room activity and project is so close that the two should be tied together at every possible opportunity.
Places Visited. In line with the promises made earlier in the course, a field trip to observe and discuss local harvesting procedure was arranged early in the second week of school. We visited a nearby farm where corn was being ensiled which gave the boys their first lesson in field observation, practice and behavior. This field trip was very valuable to the instructor because it showed aptitudes, interest and ability much more clearly than any class room proceedings. I was quite sure after returning from this trip that a certain few boys were obvious misfits in the Vocational work, and was equally impressed with the favorable aptitude, interest, and ability that was shown by certain of the other students who later proved to be of the very best. After the trip, we held a discussion of corn harvester which we did not have the opportunity of seeing in operation.

A field trip was taken to the Scott Farm to observe and practice the harvesting of apples. Here again the boys had an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their interest and abilities. The handling of fruit can demonstrate very quickly how thorough, how careful, how considerate, and how reliable a boy is. As the field trips increased in numbers and variety, I became better and better acquainted with the boys. Later comparisons showed that observations and opinions secured on field
trips were quite accurate in determining a boy’s future success in Vocational Agricultural work. We followed the principle of getting out about once a week and using the intermediate time for discussion of trips and organization work.

The third week we went to one of the boy’s farms where we secured some practice in the digging of potatoes. This particular boy had raised a patch of potatoes as a 4-H project and we assisted him in harvesting. To many of the boys, potato digging was quite an art, and one lesson did not suffice to teach them to dig without stabbing a large percentage of potatoes. I tend to feel that digging potatoes with a hand digger was one of the best tests of a boy’s patience and sincerity of desire to learn of any exercise which we encountered.

The following week, we visited the farm of another class member and assisted him in preparing his popcorn crop for drying. A sudden change of weather made field work impossible so we spent the period in husking, studying, and judging the ears of popcorn and considering the place and method of drying the corn.

The above were the preliminary field trips taken with the class during the fall season. As the weather began to get less and less favorable for outdoor work we put more time on class room work and less on field interests. The field trips do add a desirable variety
to the instructional program and wherever possible should be strung throughout the year, although it is obvious that the planting and harvesting times are the most desirable. We did have one boy working in a local greenhouse establishment and because of the interest shown by him and his project and the hearty cooperation of the greenhouse management, we spent one period on an inspection tour of the greenhouse, including the culture and care of some of the plants and the problems of heating and management under glass. This trip was worked in more as a matter of interest and general broadening of the pupils' Agricultural viewpoint than it was with direct connection with class room activities. It certainly did show the boys a different type of Agriculture and therefore, I think it was quite beneficial to many of them.

In the spring, starting late in March, we again went out of doors on seasonal jobs. The pruning of grapes and other small fruits took a few periods at various farms on which the boys lived, and served to get the rest of the boys started on similar projects of their own.

**Methods of Transportation.** Transportation is always a problem with the lower classes because so few of them have drivers' licenses. At Brattleboro there is no provision made for transportation of students so there was no school bus to hire or other conveyance available except what the students had among themselves.
Consequently, all trips were arranged with the use of students' and instructor's cars. Fortunately, there were enough of the older class-backs who had licenses and cars which came in with them daily from the rural districts, to make transportation not a serious problem. In the upper divisions of twelve junior-senior students, we had seven cars for the thirteen of us, and the boys always seemed very willing to use their cars. We developed a system of remuneration which worked quite well during the first year. Each boy was allowed to contribute one cent a mile for the field trips we took, and inasmuch as the instructor's car went on every trip, but nothing was withdrawn from the money taken in for the use of his car, those students who did take their cars received sufficient money to cover gas and other expenses. Even though a few did not seem able to make their contributions, those who found it difficult to pay were not pressed at all because we did not wish to develop any ill feeling towards the field trips. As I mentioned above, the instructor's car always went on every trip, and what students' cars were necessary were taken along in addition.

Difficulties Encountered. When relying upon student cars, there is a certain element of uncertainty, for the instructor does not know until it is time for the class to begin, whether or not the student whose car was planned upon is or is not in attendance that day. Also, not all of the students are the best drivers, and
some of them are known to be slightly reckless, so that even though student cars do make field trips possible, it is not necessarily a thoroughly desirable situation. But fortunately there were no mishaps of consequence and the system worked out quite satisfactorily.

The two forty minute periods which we had for our field trips presented what seemed like a very short time after working under the half-day system which is in effect in Massachusetts. So on some of the first field trips we did not arrive back at school in time to become dressed and arrive at the next class on time. It is very evident that if a department is to keep in the good graces of the other departments of the institution, it is necessary to see that students are not kept from their next class too often. More will be said about this later.

Another custom which was established here and which worked out very satisfactorily, was known as the "old clothes requirement". Each member of the Agriculture department was required to have and keep at school at all times a set of old clothes which he might wear on any field trip where any dirty work might be encountered. Experience proved that this was a very valuable requirement. It not only kept the boys from getting their good clothes harmed, but also made it possible for all boys to enter into the learning processes and activities of the trips. With the old clothes, no one had an excuse of hanging back and failing to get the benefit of actual practice on these trips. Vocational pupils learn best by doing.
Facilities. Shop work is a vital part of the Vocational Agricultural program and in the state of Vermont merits approximately six weeks of study during each school year. Of course, little was done to equip a shop for the Agriculture work at Brattleboro during the first year. We were very fortunate, however, in having a well equipped Manual Training shop at our disposal when we needed it. So arrangements were made during February and March for the complete use of the Manual Training Shop.

Tools. The shop was equipped with enough benches and vises so that only two students had to work at a bench. There were enough hammers, planes, hand saws, chisels, etc., so that no one was hindered in his work. A power band saw, power circular saw, and lathe were also available. This made a very fortunate beginning set up and sufficed to meet our needs the first year.

Room. The shop is located in the basement of the main building and has a row of windows facing the south so it is well lighted and also it has a good heating and ventilating system. Altogether, the shop presented a very efficient and attractive place to begin our shop work.

Materials. The first year we concentrated primarily in woodworking projects so that the materials for our shop were secured from the local lumber yard. In several
cases, the boys brought their lumber from their home, for it seemed to these farm raised boys that were used to producing their own lumber that the prices charged were exorbitant. I heartily encouraged this home grown lumber as good economy, and from an educational view point, it encouraged the boys to use what they had available. As for minor supplies, such as nails, screws, bolts, etc., the school had a charge account at a local hardware store from which we secured whatever supplies we needed.

Interdepartmental Relations. This using of another department's shop illustrated very forcefully the aforementioned fact that the entire school system was of a very cooperative nature. To have a group of comparatively inexperienced boys use the shop and tools for the heavier type of vocational projects certainly must have been trying to the manual arts instructor. His cooperative attitude and generous manner in giving up his shop to us certainly was appreciated. We experienced no difficulties in mutual use of the shop and the only question that ever arose was over the addition of new equipment. At one time it seemed desirable to have in the school shop a small planer that could be used in smoothing up the rough boards which the boys brought in from home. This would have meant additional expense on the shop budget. At the time when I was inquiring about such an addition, I did not know that the Agriculture shop came out of the same general fund as did the expense of the Manual Training work. So, when I suggested a comparatively expensive addition, the Manual Training instructor
felt that I was requesting for a comparatively short period of time a rather expensive addition—especially when one considered that the town finances were not too ample, and the shop instructor had not been able to get all the tools he wanted for his year-round work. When I learned of the nature of the situation I understood his feeling perfectly and no more difficulty has ever arisen along such lines. This experience showed very clearly the need for understanding what one is doing when delving into interdepartmental relations. The use of the school basement for storing of project lumber and supplies also brought the work in very close contact with the janitor. Here again, the need for careful consideration of others became evident, for any new addition and new work in such an establishment is bound to make difficulties, additional work and inconvenience for someone else, so the new instructor in an institution should be very, very careful, as I learned by experience, when there is danger that he may be treading upon someone else’s toes. Here again, however, I must say that all concerned were of a most cooperative nature, but perhaps the cooperation was more readily extended because I made it a rule to suggest and request rather than to demand or expect too much. Getting along with people always seems to demand cooperation but when cutting in on their prerogatives or causing them inconvenience is involved, a little tact goes a long way. Thus, when plenty of student labor was available and projects not too pressing, helping to fix little odds
and ends around the school, such as hurdles for the track coach, chairs in the biology room for the biology teacher, and janitor, etc., all helped interdepartmental relations greatly and encouraged a friendly spirit, not only towards the Agriculture instructor and the Agriculture department but also towards the vocational work in general.

Philosophising about departmental relations is easy and comparatively simple here, as is the case in the rest of life. One seems to receive back upon the waters, the bread which he has cast forth previously. Little is to be gathered by expecting or asking for much, but when a little appreciation and consideration are shown, everyone is ready to assist.

**Type Of Projects.** In line with supervised practice, we started out on our shop work making woodworking projects that would be useful in connection with the supervised practice program the boys were carrying on, or were planning to carry on in the near future. This meant that much time was spent on poultry feed hoppers, milking stools, wheelbarrows, trellises, and such simple forms of wood construction. Because of lack of tools and experience, little besides woodwork was encouraged. Other work was left for a later date when the shop would be more highly organized and more experience had been obtained by the instructor. There were, however, a few boys in this group who had little or nothing to do in connection with home projects. To these who were,
incidentally, the poorer carpenters was left the job of building the class room fixtures. 

Tables. The tables mentioned under the opening day's activities were becoming quite unsuitable, written upon, and too many reports of damage to clothing had been received, so one of the first jobs was the building of tables for the class room. After some inquiring and experience the instructor, with the help of some of the older boys, designed tables for the class room. These tables were six feet long by three and one-half feet wide. Four of them were planned for use in the class room. The legs were made of two by four hemlock stock which was glued up in the shop with cold glue. The runners around the top of the legs were made of six inch native pine and the tops were made of matched hard pine flooring covered with a very hard grade of Masonite known as temper-board. These tables were a very satisfying piece of shop work, for they were very economical to build, very efficient in use and saved the school a great deal of expense, at the same time giving the boys much additional experience that they would have missed had the school department spent money for tables. These tables cost for materials only $4.50 each and when arranged in a "U" shape, comfortably seating fifteen to eighteen students and when arranged lengthwise readily took care of the larger class of twenty-three students. There is much to be said in favor of these tables
besides the ease of their construction and their economy. The Masonite top, when the hard grade of temper-board is used, is practically resistent to prying pens and pencils, in fact it was found by experiment that a pen point would not stand up at all when pressed against this hardened surface and that a pen would not cause any serious scratches. There is only one objection to the top and that is the fact that ink, if left to stand upon the surface, will leave a stain. If, however, the ink is wiped up soon after being spilled, there is no trace left. The Masonite was bought in twelve foot by four foot strips and cut to fit the tables with very little waste. In order that the tops might stay on and be perfectly smooth and still offer no place for prying pencils, an edging was put around the top. Investigation of standard molded edges showed that it would be an expensive proposition to use it around the tables. So Yankee ingenuity combined with Scotch ancestry to devise a metal strip which could be bought for thirteen cents a pound and shaped in a "break" at the local tinsmith's, so that there was a five-eighths inch edge protruding onto the table top, a one inch wide rim running vertically down by the edge of the top and lumber, and a three-fourths inch angle going under the edge of the table top, so that there were no possible places into which pries could be put and no rough edges on which clothes might catch. The corners where these strips came together were soldered in place. The result was a very inexpensive and practical binding
for the top. After three seasons of use these tables and tops show very, very few signs of wear.

Lockers. The problem of keeping the old clothes, notebooks, etc., was not satisfactorily met until lockers were built. The design called for lockers in the class room. The lockers built were six feet high and started six inches from the floor. They were built in tiers, six feet high and eight feet long, making forty-eight little lockers, each one approximately a foot square and a foot deep. These lockers were then covered with four doors approximately two feet wide, and each boy was assigned one locker for his belongings. This locker system made the class room much neater and also kept belongings together much more readily.

Magazine Rack. Various experiments have been tried in arranging the magazines to which the school subscribed, and the many commercial magazines which came free of charge, in an attractive, convenient and orderly manner. Consequently a magazine rack was designed to fit along the front of the north windows. This rack consisted of a slightly tipped shelf which extended two feet into the room from the window sills and was of similar construction to the table tops. Underneath the shelf were arranged two open shelves. Half way between the top and bottom was a shelf on which back issues of the magazines were placed in piles corresponding to the position the current issue held on the top rack. In one corner of
the rack a large drawer was built, the front being made of inch material and the rest of three-ply wood. This drawer was so constructed that it had just room enough for a standard manila folder to be filed. This drawer proved to be the beginning of a very convenient filing system and there again served the purpose of a more expensive file and actually cost the department very little. For educational offerings, for economy and for favor with an already expense ridden school system, the more of such items that can be built in the Agriculture shop, the better all round. At a later date, the top of the magazine rack was marked with gummed labels, each label being marked with the name of the magazine belonging on that spot.

Picture Framing. During the course of the first few months, several live stock pictures had been accumulated from the various breed associations headquarters. Some of the boys were set to working building frames and fitting glass into the frames for use around the true type pictures. These added much to the decorations to the class room as well as furnishing an opportunity to keep in good condition true type pictures before the boys' eyes much of the time.

Results. The first year of shop pointed out many things. It gave a very valuable insight into the boys' mechanical abilities. It supplied many much needed articles of class room equipment and it showed a definite need of
more shop instructions for teachers of Vocational Agriculture. On the whole, I tend to feel that the boys secured a fair degree of instruction in wood-working and secured a good basis upon which to build in future years of shop work.
Chapter VII

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE AG. CLUB

Organization. The Future Farmers of America is very strong within the state of Vermont, and is to be found in practically every Smith-Hughes department. It is the overhead organization which handles the extra curricula work of the departments including such things as judging contests, State F. F. A. meetings of students, exhibits at fairs, recreational meetings, etc. In order to apply for membership in the state organization of Future Farmers of America, certain requirements had to be met. It is assumed that every department will organize a chapter as soon as possible after the department starts to function. Consequently the "Ag. Club" was organized very shortly after school opened and we started holding regular meetings.

Fall State Meeting. The Vermont Association of Future Farmers of America holds two annual meetings, one in the fall and one in the spring. The fall meeting was held at Middlebury some ninety miles north of Brattleboro, and to this meeting our quota of delegates was invited. It was the boys' first opportunity to see the Future Farmers of America and to learn something of its meetings and purposes. From many angles, the meeting was a disappointment, for the business was carried on altogether too inefficiently. The program was much behind schedule and to the Brattleboro delegates who had been in the
habit of doing things when and how scheduled, it seemed like quite a let down. Nevertheless, the State Supervisor was approached concerning the proper steps to take in securing a charter for the Brattleboro organization.

**Application For Membership In The F. F. A.** The requirements necessary for application as outlined by the state adviser were to submit a program of work and a list of officers of our "Ag. Club" to the Executive Committee of the Association and we would receive our charter within a month. This particular application proved to be very trying upon the interest of the boys in the Future Farmers of America. Through explanation, encouragement, and talking, I have succeeded in building up within the boys a strong desire to be "Future Farmers of America" members but when December arrived and our charter was not received, they began to wonder. Inquiry informed us that there had been some delay and that our charter would be ready in January. Again the boys were pepped up with the idea of receiving our charter and becoming Future Farmers of America members—only to have January and February pass with still no charter and no explanation. All of this waiting and wondering were very, very detrimental to the boys' interest in the Future Farmers of America although our "Ag. Club" was functioning during the period. In March, another inquiry to the State Advisor netted only an excuse which meant nothing to us. So it was that we about decided that the state Association
of Future Farmers of America did not care about taking in new members. The judging contests which were held in the spring under the sponsorship of the Future Farmers of America were not attended for two reasons, but primarily because we were not "Future Farmers of America" members, and, therefore, did not feel that we should attend. The same was true in regard to participation in the state F. F. A. public speaking contest, but even though we did not take part in these activities and let it be known why we did not, still the charter was not forthcoming. When it came time for the spring meeting of the F. F. A., we wrote to the State Advisor telling him that we could not accept the invitation to the state meeting because of the fact that we were not and could not seem to be taken into the organization. Whereupon, we received word that our charter was waiting for us and would be given to us at the state convention. With this encouraging information, our interest again revived and we were off to the annual spring meeting of the Vermont Association of F. F. A. in Milton, 165 miles north of Brattleboro and were ready to receive and bring home our charter signifying membership in the F. F. A. Here again the state F. F. A. let us down, for at no time during the two days of the conference was any mention made of the presentation of a charter. Inquiry of the state Advisor brought forth only a comment that he knew we doubted that he had our charter. There was no course
left but to wait patiently and return home with no charter.

To one who is trying to keep morale and interest in a worthwhile project, such continual let downs were very, very disillusioning to the students as well as to the instructor. It made us wonder if the F. F. A. was such a fine organization as it had been pictured. As a result of all this, the June meeting of the "Ag. Club" at Brattleboro by vote of members present decided that the F. F. A. was not an organization worthy of its consideration, and so decided not to make any further application for membership. The boys were completely disgusted and thoroughly disillusioned concerning it all and thought that our own active little "Ag. Club" operating in a very efficient and business-like manner was much more in accordance with their desires. To increase the mixed up state of affairs, the next mail after this vote brought to us a charter which, because school was ending in a very few days, was filed away for the summer and thus ended our application for membership in the F. F. A.

It might be added that the following year after considerable effort to determine standards and objectives, another charter was finally accepted and the Brattleboro group did become an active and efficient F. F. A. chapter. There were many trying circumstances in connection with this application and many opportunities for serious misunderstandings with the boys, but because our "Ag. Club" was so active and so much was accomplished,
we were fortunate in weathering the disillusioned circumstances of F. F. A. application. It appears that a strong group organization, so long as it has the backing of its own members, can weather many a storm. Throughout the year that we were an "Ag. Club" we were invited into all the activities normally sponsored by the state F. F. A. which included the Long Trail hike.

The Long Trail Hike. Because of another activity on the same date, the Brattleboro Chapter was unable to attend this hike. On some Saturday early in each October, the various chapters of the state organization of F. F. A. take assigned sections of the Long Trail which goes from the Massachusetts line to the Canadian border. An effort, as yet unsuccessful, has been made to have the entire trail covered in one day by F. F. A. members. It seemed a very worthy recreational activity, but circumstances prevented our participation.

Judging Contests. Each spring the state F. F. A. sponsors a series of judging contests at the university at Burlington. As before mentioned because of the F. F. A. connection and also because of the fact that the newly organized department had not worked much judging practice into its curriculum and because finances for travel were not too plentiful, it was decided not to participate in the judging contest this first year. There is much that might be said on both sides of the participation question from the educational viewpoint.
It would have been good practice for the boys; it would have given them an educational trip and it would have allowed them to become acquainted with other vocational Ag. students from about the state; but because of lack of preparation and other mentioned difficulties, we saw fit not to participate.

Spring Meeting. The spring meeting which was mentioned in connection with the F. F. A. application was held in Milton early in May, and proved an interesting and educational trip to those who went, but because of the charter situation and the feeling that developed within the boys, it would have been much better had the organization not spent all its money on this long trip which netted disappointment.

Financing. In order to take the trips which were required or desirable, to get certain supplies and paraphernalia and meet the miscellaneous expense of our organization, we had to sponsor some money raising activities. The "Ag. Club" was very fortunate in that it was given the refreshment concession at the athletic contests of the school. We started up early in the fall by selling refreshments, consisting primarily of candy, soda, and hot dogs at the football games. We were again fortunate to have the weather favorable and a team destined to become state champions who drew large crowds; therefore, at the end of the football season, we had a very adequate bank balance with which to work. Similar
activities with a lesser profit were conducted at the
basketball and baseball games.

No dues were charged to members of the organization
and all boys enrolled in the department were automatically
members. This developed a situation which later had to
be changed. The selling was done by students who
volunteered to do the work and they received no
particular remuneration for themselves. It so worked
out that the boys who did most of the selling, were not
the most active farm boys, and the boys who went on the
trips and spent most of the money were farm boys who had
no time for money raising activities. So it seemed
quite unfair that one group should do all the work and
another group should get all the direct benefits. But
even so, we went through the first year quite satis¬
factorily. The second year, a system of relatively high
dues and a payment for labor on money raising activities
helped to equalize the financial burden.

Value. There is no doubt that the "Ag. Club" was of
very great value to the students. It increased their
interest in their Ag. work; it gave them training in
business conduct and parliamentary procedure. Probably
the largest value of the first year was the experience
the boys had in selling. After a boy had developed
the ability to walk through the stands selling the candy,
making the change, and taking the good-natured riding
that went with it, he had developed a poise and a
business sense that would stand him in good stead throughout life. It would seem that this particular "Ag. Club" was very fortunate both financially and in the active interest shown by its members.

Prospects Of Coming Change Of Name. Although we were having great difficulty in becoming members of the F. F. A., the fact that all departments eventually became members made it seem quite obvious that we should some day come into harmony with the state organization and appear under the name of Future Farmers of America.

We were carrying on the activities that a local chapter should, we had our program of work and tended to feel, among ourselves, that we were more efficient than the F. F. A. organization. Nevertheless, we kept thinking in terms of F. F. A. membership which finally did take place in January of the second year. The whole metamorphosis of the "Ag. Club" proved very interesting, educational, and offered the boys an illustration of efficient and inefficient organized management. It was of great value to the boys, stimulated an interest, and I would tend to feel now, that even if a F. F. A. membership were not a part of the state system, that an active group within the department to handle the extra curricula activities would be a very worthwhile addition to a Vocational Agricultural Department.
Chapter VIII
PROJECT PLANNING

To get the students to plan for their activities and especially long term project plans seems to be a difficult task, for many of them, who had acquired the habit of doing something when they felt like it, were quite reluctant to make a very definite program as to what they might do in the near or not so near future. When it came to planning their projects, they were quite indefinite. To meet this attitude, considerable time was spent the first year in planning for their current and long time projects.

Pupil Interviews. Early in the year a report for the state office was called for indicating what the preliminary project plans for each pupil were. Because not all of the pupils had been visited and because many plans were at that time so vague, some time was taken in class for individual discussion and interviews to determine just what should go on this preliminary report. Also, as rapidly as time permitted, the homes were visited and interviews carried on there with the pupils and the parents.

Home Visits. In project planning, the home visit is, of course, the most important. It is at the home where tangible project possibilities may be seen; it is at the home where attitudes and efforts are most easily seen; and it is, of course, at the home where the project for most cases will be conducted. During these
home visits, I made it a point to talk with the parents to learn the degree of their interest and sincerity, to look over and discuss the physical equipment of the farm, and to discuss project possibilities which would be in line with the boys' desires and interests. This last point is worthy of very careful consideration, for here, as in all other cases, applied psychology is fundamental to success and if the boy once gets the idea that the instructor and the parents want him to do such and such for a project, the attitude automatically becomes very undesirable.

Parental Cooperation. An ownership project without parental backing is almost impossible and yet there are difficulties to be guarded against from too much parent interest. In a few cases, projects were encountered where excess interest led to parent domination with the unfortunate result that neither instructor's nor parents' recommendations were followed, and the poor student was left not knowing what to do, and when trying to follow both he succeeded in impressing neither favorably. If a parental encouragement and offering of opportunity can be obtained and still reserve the right of instruction for the teacher, success is much more apt to follow. Each project is an individual case as is each student and parent, and the instructor must develop tact and use judgment if he is to be respected by parents and students. One must be constantly aware of developing antagonistic attitudes among the students or parents.
Need of Practical Project. Throughout the above discussion, it had been assumed that a boy was having a project. At no time have I ever let it be thought that such was not the case. If we were to follow that cardinal principle of vocational education "that we learn by doing", we must emphasize the practical project. This becomes even more necessary with the student who has a less fortunate farm background. A thorough knowledge of farm life is essential. The more practical experience, the more of farm life philosophy, problems and attitude that a student can get, the better will be his chances for success in an Agricultural career. To the boy raised on a farm, the project should be practical and develop within him managerial, financial, and long-time planning abilities. To the student interested in Agriculture who has not had the advantages of a practical farm life, it is even more essential that he make this contact, and acquire those attitudes and philosophies which are inborn in the farm-reared youth. Wherever possible, it has proved desirable to have an ownership project because of the added interest which a boy will develop in his own properties, because of the added opportunities for business experience which an ownership project gives and also because the net returns are more apt to become the property of the student. However, where an ownership project is not possible (and there are too many such cases even in rural Vermont) the employed project offers the best solution. The employed project varies considerably
from being a routine hired man proposition to a project that virtually is a partnership, but from which the student draws wages rather than a share of the profits. In selecting the employed project, there are many features which we should keep in mind. First of all, the project is an essay. We should make sure that the boy is working under practical circumstances, that his employer has a healthy attitude towards Agriculture as a way of life, and the processes are carried on in an approved fashion. It should be kept in mind that wherever possible, and this means with all boys living on home farms and a great many boys who cannot have projects at home, that ownership is much to be desired over any other type of project. 

**Importance Of Success.** In order that we may develop in the boy a liking for farming, a confidence in the future, and a desire to continue in Agricultural work, it is essential that his project be a reasonable success. As a rule this is not too difficult for the parents or others concerned are always willing to make circumstances favorable and with careful guidance from the instructor, there is all probability that the project will turn out to be a financial success. If it does not, the student usually develops a very bad attitude, and working with him in the future is much more difficult. It has been observed, also, that many times he is a detriment to the class, because of a feeling of failure which he has developed and will express altogether too frequently. A
small successful ownership project is much to be desired over a large unsuccessful or employed project. One principle which I have kept ever in my own mind and tried to impress upon the boys in connection with starting this work or in starting their own projects is "a small success is much better than a large failure". With this thought constantly in mind, project success is usually not too difficult.
Chapter IX
PROJECT SUPERVISION

After the project was planned and more or less organized specifically, it was necessary to check the starting and supervise the boys' activities through the school year.

**Home Visits and Schedule of Visits.** Visits to the pupils' homes to supervise their projects were carried out during the school year and during the summer vacation. During the school year, comparatively little project visiting or supervision was done because of the fact that many of the projects were not sufficiently under way to need much supervision and also the time seemed to be used to better advantage at school and on class work rather than on the road. However, many projects were under way and whenever any questions arose, visits were made. During the school year visits were planned more as a matter of necessity rather than as regular supervision and opportunities for teaching. During the summer vacation, however, much of the time was spent on the road supervising project work. An effort was made to visit each project about once in two weeks. This two week schedule worked out very well, for it brought the instructor in contact with the boys' work at frequent enough intervals to keep a careful check on progress. It also gave an opportunity for the boy to ask questions and keep problems in mind until he had a chance to talk with the instructor. With the thirty
projects that were under supervision, a two weeks' schedule left just about the right amount of time for a thorough visit at each place, and still time enough to cover all the projects as often as was desirable.

**Type of Projects Carried.** During the first project season, the projects were small because it seemed desirable that the boys should tackle something that they could handle and have a reasonable chance of making a success of it. Among the boys living and working on their home farms, live stock projects were quite popular, although many of them did have either in addition or as their only project a patch of potatoes, a patch of popcorn or some such annual crop. Thus projects were of the very best, because of the ownership nature and the fact that they did yield the boys a reasonable cash income. To many of the boys, this was their first experience in handling their own money. Among the boys who did not have large farms or project opportunities at home, the employed project was a solution in most cases. These employed projects varied from year around board and room, plus arrangements to working out during the summer, to a day by day job during rush seasons. There were several cases where sufficient land was available for a small vegetable garden and many of the boys utilized that ground for their project. Many of these projects, however, were not strictly vocational as I interpreted the term to them, but in starting a work, it is often
necessary to make allowances and this was one case where boys passed with less rigid requirements the first year than they could at any later time.

Teaching On Visits. The project visit offers the most fertile opportunity for effective teaching. It is then that we have the problem, the desire to know, and the instruction all together at the same time. With a practical project program, there is little left to be desired for the true teacher. From the project can be drawn innumerable lessons in subject matter. Many skills can be taught in connection with the work of the project and as far as making related science interesting and comprehensible, there is nothing like a project situation to increase effectiveness. Throughout the project visits during the summer, much time was and should be spent in "on the job" instructing. The teacher who fails to teach in connection with project supervision is missing one of his most promising opportunities.
Chapter X
REPORTS AND RECORDS TO STATE OFFICE

In any line of work requiring the spending of public moneys, reports are a necessary evil and this work certainly is no exception. The Ag. teacher in Vermont is required to make reports, programs, and plans of his past, present, and future actions almost continuously. The reports which are most worthy of mention are the monthly reports, the annual report, and the reports on the F. F. A. activities of the chapter. Also the Annual Plan of the department and the Program of Work of the department for the year are called for.

Monthly Report. The monthly report is divided into six main headings calling for the jobs taught, the time spent on each individual job, and any other remarks for each class conducted. Also the field trips taken must be reported, giving the date, personnel, and the number taking the trip, destination, purpose, and success, means of transportation, and the mileage. Under the heading of supervised practice there must be reported the names of persons visited, along with the purposes of the visit, suggestions made to students, accomplishments and other remarks as well as the length and date of each visit and the mileage. If Part-time or Evening Schools are conducted, these too must be reported under the same form. In reporting F. F. A. or "Ag. Club" activities, the date, the type of activities, remarks,
and mileage are all called for. In order that the state office may know what other works besides agricultural teaching are engaged in by the instructor, a report is called for on the extra curricula and other school work. The date along with remarks and mileage is required. The last item on the monthly report calls for a statement of accomplishments in terms of the annual plan, as will be mentioned later.

All the details called for in this monthly report may seem at times to be unnecessary, but actually there is a very definite purpose behind it all. It serves, primarily, to keep the State Office informed on the work and the progress of the local department, but it also has considerable value, in that it gives or requires the instructor to take the opportunity of summarizing his progress periodically. Whereas many look upon these reports as a burden and not a necessity, they serve to promote better work and keep superiors informed, which, after all, is very much worthwhile.

The results of this monthly report are many. In the first place, it serves as a guide to accomplishments, it keeps one constantly on his toes, so to speak, and it helps to organize into logical sequence a year's activity. All in all, the results obtained from this requirement of monthly reporting certainly justified the bother involved.
The Annual Report. The annual report is, in many ways, a summary of the monthly reports for the year, but many other items are also included. The annual report calls for a general survey of the situation within the department's patronage area as it effects the area's program in Vocational Agriculture. In this connection, it also calls for the important developments of the year and the matters as they exist at the close of the year. Any changes in the organization, or the personnel are asked for along with any interesting details. If the course or course outlines have been changed, these also should be listed in the annual report. Changes in the plan and equipment are also asked for. All the above points mentioned in the annual report help to keep the state organization in better touch with just what is taking place within each department. Because many of the departments are so far from the State Office, and the supervisor's time is so limited that constant personal checking is often impossible, these reports are especially valuable. The work of the teacher is an important part of the annual report. The accomplishments in terms of the annual program of work and the way in which they support the state program are called for. Any other works of the instructor should be included under this same heading. An important item in the instructor's work, of course, is his travel in project visiting in other school connections. Under transportation, we are expected to report the number of supervised trips made,
the mileage involved in making them, the amount of mileage 
used in field trips, judging trips, etc., along with 
transportation expenses incurred. There were, however, 
no arrangements made for transportation expenses during 
1936-37. If any amounts were received for travel 
expense from any source whatsoever, these are to be 
reported in the annual form. The figures of enrollment 
in all the classes both at the beginning of the year and 
close of the year, as well as the total enrollment of 
boys in the entire school, grade by grade, are requested. 
The last item on the annual report calls for numbers and 
percentages of the total enrollment who have dropped out 
of the Agricultural work during the year. The annual 
report serves to summarize the year's activity very 
clearly, and has a definite value not only to the State 
Office which, of course, must make its own reports, but 
also presents a rather clear picture to the instructor 
and to any others interested in the accomplishments of 
the year. In this new department, there were no previous 
years with which to draw comparisons, but judging from 
the material contained in this first report, it would 
seem that comparisons of accomplishments and annual 
reports over a series of years would be very enlighten¬
ing for one who is trying to maintain continued progress 
in a department.

The F. F. A. Reports. About the time that the poor 
instructor strikes F. F. A. reports, he begins to think
that reports are more essential than work accomplished, and yet they must be filled out as the work is done or else they are difficult to complete. The first report called for the F. F. A. program or work, which lines up the chapter's activities for the year with the intended means to accomplish the many goals which are set down. This program of work is based very closely upon the state program which is in turn based upon the national program of work. The items included in the F. F. A. program of work are a source of some question to me, especially, as I consider the first years of a department where they have nothing upon which to base their future activities. The program of work for the first year, which was drawn and submitted as part of the requirement for obtaining a charter, contained many items which were included, primarily because they were in the state program of work. As it worked out in the course of the year many, many items were never seriously considered. Therefore, in order that we may keep before the boys a goal that is possible to obtain, I would suggest that it might be well to keep the program of work within the bounds of possibility and not let the enthusiasm of a start carry one beyond the means of practical application. This program of work had hardly been completed before another report came calling for the officers of the club.

The annual F. F. A. report was another long and detailed blank, calling for accurate and detailed
accounts of all chapter activities. If it is ever logical to assume that there are rewards for not doing things, the filling out of this blank was certainly one of those times, for the work which we did not do, did not have to be reported and those items in our program of work which were not accomplished certainly saved a good many hours of figuring that first year. The first item called for, concerned the initiations and degrees held by members, as well as the number of degrees granted and the number of students raised to the higher degrees. Many percentage figures of increased enrollment, increase of the number holding the various degrees, etc. were wanted. The amount of the dues paid to the state treasury was also requested as was the total enrollment in Vocational Agriculture, and the number of those that were in the F. F. A. There were many little details of information most of which hinged upon some goal in the state program of work that are not necessary to mention in this thesis, but which make it safe to say that an accurate record of items accomplished and work done in connection with the F. F. A. should be kept throughout the year. In fact, it would be well at this point to deviate for a few minutes and discuss some conclusions drawn from this first year's record keeping experience.

To one starting a department and I should imagine one taking over an already organized department, it is very essential to keep accurate and detailed accounts as things are done or happen. Even though one tends to
rely quite strongly upon his ability to remember, I have found that many details are not reliably retained. Also, one does not know until the end of the year just what reports will be expected, and what information they will call for. Being new to the state of Vermont, I had no information whatsoever with regard to what might be expected for reports. Even though a fairly complete diary account was kept of all daily activities there were many facts and figures which I had to give with an element of approximation. As long as we are spending public money and are working under superiors who need to know of our activities, it is necessary, and if viewed objectively, very desirable that we should keep on hand for our own use, and the use of others, accurate details of plans, activities and progress.

Other reports which are called for annually in the Vermont system are the annual plan and the program of work for the department. These reports are due early in the fall, but because no form was available and the fact that little information was obtained concerning their exact nature, the Brattleboro department did not turn in these two reports the first year.

Annual Plan. As might be assumed from the title of the report, the annual plan calls for the proposed subject matter to be covered, and the manner in which the lessons are to be handled. It is, naturally, only a working guide, and is not expected to be followed too rigidly. In common with all other reports, it is of great value
to the instructor in that it requires him to organize his work more carefully than he might otherwise do. It also furnishes a very good guide to one who would take the time and interest to go back over his year's accomplishments and see how well he has followed a rounded and balanced plan throughout the year. The drawing up of a year's plan which is well rounded and broadened is an easier matter than checking over and drawing an annual report which shows equal roundness. But to one who wishes to accomplish the most, whether he be a vocational student planning his annual project, or a vocational teacher planning his yearly teaching schedule, a definite plan of action is essential to a successful accomplishment.

Program Of Work. A program of work for the department calls for a more or less general statement of plans ascertained from the teaching schedules and subject matter. It includes such items as additions in equipment for class room, for the library and any other expansion in the service offered by the department. It is just a broadened and organized thinking plan for the year's activities of the department. As previously mentioned, these last two reports were not sent in this first year. Although they would have had definite value, it is safe to say that during this first year, the program was all so new that they probably would not have been followed as closely as they will be in future.
In a school system, as in any other line of public relations, it is necessary that one cooperate and live in harmony with others connected with his work. In running a department the instructor will certainly find much help and assistance from the other departments of the school worthwhile. The necessity of planning one’s course of action so that it does not cross or antagonize any other department quite evidently has its advantages. This is especially true of a new department coming into an already established system, for it is quite probable that the new one is inconveniencing someone else, either by the taking of room previously used by another department or by fact that a new teacher has been added to a system where some might feel that the additional expense could be used to better advantage in expanding the existing departments.

With The Principal the departments of the Brattleboro High School are very, very fortunate in having a cooperative principal. It would be hard to imagine an individual more ready to help a department to success than Mr. Wiggin. His cooperation in helping this Vocational Agricultural work to become established was largely responsible for the favorable start. The picking of students for the department was, of course, very largely under the principal’s influence, and here was
the first illustration of the great cooperation which was shown throughout the school. It has been observed that in altogether too many schools the vocational courses in general were used as a "dumping ground" for those students who are not naturally adapted to text book activity, but it is only right to say that certainly no more than the just share of "dead wood" landed in this new department, and it should further be said that what "dead wood" there was in the department belonged there because of its Agricultural background and the obvious fact that most of it would continue in some field of Agricultural work throughout life. This act of cooperation by the principal in itself was certainly a great help toward establishing a successful department, as it was the basis upon which student attitude as well as vocational success in the department was built. This was only one instance of the fine support which teachers do receive and to this support may be credited much of whatever success the department has attained.

Explanation Of Purposes. This Agricultural work was somewhat new to the principal, so considerable explanation of the intended activities seemed desirable. In this work, as in any other, it is only logical to keep in very close contact with the principal, and cooperate with him whenever it seems desirable. At any rate, all plans of action should be expressed in order that he might be familiar with the work being done. I personally
gathered much help from these discussions and in a few cases was prevented from making some mistakes that might have been costly to personal and departmental reputation, for the principal with his broader knowledge of school management and his understanding of the pupils, the town, and its reaction knew much better what the acceptance or non-acceptance of ideas would be, and thus he knew where to draw a reasonable check line. So, I place considerable value on the explanation of purposes in working with the principal, both as a help to success and as a prevention of costly errors. Also, it is only reasonable to expect that the principal would like to know what is being done and it is much less embarrassing to volunteer this information than to be called for it.

Supplies. To listen to many instructors talking of their department, one would gather the impression that they had very little with which to work and small possibilities of getting additional equipment. This, fortunately, was not the case in Brattleboro, for all necessary supplies to start on were found, and as needs arose they were immediately taken care of. This was indeed fortunate and may have been made possible partially through the philosophy adopted by the instructor. Following the good advice of State Supervisor Sheldon, I did not order too many items of supplies and equipment before they were needed. It is wasteful to have unused equipment about, and where funds are limited, the obtaining of unneeded equipment may preclude the possibilities
of securing that which is necessary. So I made it a practice not to request until a thing was needed, and until I was sure that it was going to be needed a sufficient length of time in the future work of the department to make it worthwhile. By asking for only what was needed and when it was needed and learning to get along with a reasonable amount of equipment I experienced no difficulties at all in obtaining necessary supplies. To anyone starting a department, the ability to use what is available and get along without too much until he is sure what is needed is a desirable asset. It might also be added that before securing expensive items it is better to wait a few months, or a year in some cases, in order to be sure that the plans will not change to make this equipment unnecessary. I do recall a few items which I thought at the beginning would be very necessary, but because of the attitude previously expressed, I desired to get along without them. Since then I have found that they were not as necessary as I previously imagined, and that the money which I might have spent on them then has been used to a much better advantage since.

Discipline in Department Management. Probably no item is more dependent upon the principal's backing than discipline. Again, Brattleboro is very fortunate in having a type of pupil which presents few discipline problems. But in any department there is bound to arise
cases in which punishment is necessary to maintain proper relations and get work accomplished. The school's principal punitive system is based upon an afternoon session program. Each school day afternoon for one hour there is a special session during which students subject to punishment return and study under supervision. This system has its good and its bad points, but when the student anticipates an extended number of these afternoon sessions, there seems to be a greater desire to cooperate. Especially is this true with the Agriculture students who work at home and need the time for farm work. Also, the fact that many of them commute, makes it difficult and inconvenient for them to return to afternoon sessions. In any cases of complaint by the students, the principal has always been found one hundred per cent cooperative in backing up its teachers and with this backing, discipline problems are kept at a minimum. All the way through, the cooperation of the principal is vital to success and the Ag. teacher, as well as any other, should do his utmost to keep the principal informed, and return that cooperation to the greatest of his ability. It may well be said that the intramural relationships of the principal were very, very fortunate indeed for the department's successful beginning.

With Shop And Instructor. Of all the relationship within the school, the shop situation offered the greatest possibilities for difficulties, and it is with a feeling
of relief that I look back over that first year of shop
and realize that very little trouble arose. Although it
seemed like quite a demand to make, I found it necessary
to the carrying out of programs to step into another
department's shop, use its equipment, put the instructor
from his own department for a period of time, and cause
the necessary wear, tear, and inconvenience that would
go with occupation of his shop in carrying out our shop
program.

Use Of Equipment. The Ag. department had full use of all
equipment in the shop which included some power tools and
a rather complete line of hand tools. There was a certain
amount of wear and tear and some of the smaller tools
became lost or strayed during the six weeks that we were
in the shop. It was also an inconvenience to the shop
instructor to have to give up his instruction during
that six weeks period and devote all of his time to
mechanical drawing in another part of the school. However,
he did this with no complaint, although I know it was a
real inconvenience to his program of work. Also, the
nature of the projects which we made was such that the
shop was quite crowded at times and many of the larger
items had to be left in the middle of the floor which
caused the afternoon classes considerable trouble by
being in their way.

Here again it might be mentioned that considerable
tact and a feeling of appreciation for favors received
tend to go a long way towards securing benefits from
other departments. The benefits received from the manual training department and its instructor were purely one-sided, for there was very little the Ag. department could do in return. There were a few tools which we would have liked to have secured for our work, but here again the idea of making sure and getting along the first year without any more expense than necessary made it desirable to keep our shop work within the woodworking field for which we were equipped. A need for cold metal work and tool fitting was evident. This broadening of program was postponed until another season so we did get through without buying much in the way of tools. It is very economical as well as philosophical to develop the ability of getting along without and being efficient with what is available. This shop was certainly far superior to what might be expected in starting a department, and equipping a new shop at the same time.

Staff In General. As the year progressed, many chances came up for cooperation among the departments. Some of these workings were quite one-sided, and some were for mutual benefit. One of the first difficulties which I struck and one which instantly should be guarded against was the matter of returning from field trips a little too late to make the next class. It is easy to overestimate the rapidity with which a class can change its clothes and get washed. There were too many instances where the boys did not have sufficient time to make the
next class before the bell rang. And so it was that I had to ask their teachers to admit these students late and thus disrupt their own plan of work. A very undesirable situation it is true, and yet one that will arise even with very careful planning.

A way in which we were able to be of some assistance and help to make up for some of our inconveniences came in the shop program when some of the boys who had finished their projects for the season still had time left for other things. There were a number of chairs in various class rooms that needed repair work, tables and desks that had unsteady legs and rough edges to be smoothed so as not to catch garments and many other little items which we were able to do to make others more comfortable, and at the same time make more practical future Ag. boys. This matter of repair work around the school might possibly be over done, but it certainly was not in our case, and I tend to feel that it was very, very good work for the general activities of the department.

Inasmuch as intramural relations are so important, there are a few cautions that might well be mentioned at this time. Try at all times to avoid trespassing upon others prerogatives and when it becomes necessary in the performing of your own work to interfere with others, discussion and explanation of the cause will usually give maximum results and still leave a desirable relationship existing. Where it is necessary to return
from a field trip late, a slight apology and explanation tend to keep relations harmonious. Necessary inconveniencing of others as much as this vocational work did will make little helps which may be done in return around the school much more worthwhile.
INFORMING OUR PUBLIC

In any line of work which contacts the general public about the area as closely as does the Vocational teaching, it is very desirable to keep activity in progress before them. In starting a new work, it is especially important to keep the public well informed because they know of the work and are anxious to know how it is progressing, and also it enables others to build up an interest in what is being adopted.

Brattleboro Daily Reformer. Early in the department’s history, the Brattleboro Daily Reformer, the only daily paper in town, was contacted and was found to be very cooperative in handling any news concerning the department. The news for the daily paper went in two different arrangements. Special articles were published whenever any outstanding news took place such as a trip to a conference or convention where that immediate release was most effective. For the general run of information, the "Spotlight" was used. The "Spotlight" is a weekly column in the Reformer and carries items about general activities of the school including departmental subdivisions. Through this means we had something in the paper concerning the vocational department on the average of about once a week, and I am sure that these notices help greatly to keep the public informed about the new department and what it is doing.
Talks. There were several group organizations about the community who lost no time in requesting a talk by the new Ag. teacher and his work. It is not clear in my mind yet whether the interest displayed by these groups was entirely for the sake of knowledge or whether perhaps it was a case of entertainment committees being hard pressed with the need of something with which to fill their programs. At any event, the local P.T.A.'s, and county P.T.A. soon made several bookings. These opportunities to explain the intended work, I very much appreciated, for I believed it helped greatly in increasing the enrollment for the next year's entering class and possibly they may have had long-time values.

Granges. The lecturers of the local Granges quickly seized upon the opportunity of engaging the Vocational Agricultural instructor to appear on Agriculture night of their Grange program. Here again was an opportunity to contact them for the best possible prospective students. Talks were given before several local Granges and before the Windham County Pomona Grange.

Lion's Club. The talk before the Lion's Club may have had as much political significance as all other talks put together, but so far as directly contacting prospective students was concerned it had very little effect. The Lion's Club is made up of business and professional men who have not as a whole too much direct contact with agriculturally minded youths. However, the opportunity
to speak before this group of men and let them know of
the work which we were doing was welcome.

Advantages To The Department. All of these talks
certainly did a great deal to spread information con-
cerning the department and also gave the instructor an
opportunity to meet many people who proved to be
influential in his work. These people were not only
parents of prospective students but included many other
people who proved to be valuable assets to the work.

Work With 4-H Clubs. In some sections, there is quite
a strong feeling of competition between the 4-H and
F. F. A., but so far in Brattleboro, we have no indica-
tion whatsoever of anything but the best of feelings.
Our harmonious relationships may be based partially
upon the fact that the instructor has only the kindest
feeling towards 4-H work, and does have the realization
that much of his own background and training has been
a direct result of eight years as a 4-H member. There-
fore, cooperation seems only the natural thing. Also
the Club Agent is very broadminded and cooperative and
we have found many instances in which we can work
together to mutual advantage and have experienced no
noticeable competition.

Youth Exhibit. One of the most interesting cooperative
adventures which we have undertaken is the annual Youth
Exhibit which, prior to the establishment of Vocational
Agriculture, was held by the 4-H Club Agent alone.
This exhibit is held each fall shortly after school opens and is used as an exhibit of the work done by the clubs during the past year. Now that the F. F. A. is also cooperating, it serves a similar purpose for the F. F. A. projects. Many of the exhibitors are showing in both classifications and it seems an entirely healthy attitude for them to take. Here again, I might turn philosophical and state that cooperation seems to be the most pleasant and most profitable procedure to follow.

Recruiting. In order that prospective students might be better informed about the high school, in the spring of the year, Mr. Wiggin, the principal, visits all the eighth grades in Brattleboro and surrounding towns which would normally come to the Brattleboro High School and explains to them the various courses offered by the high school. On these visits I accompanied Mr. Wiggin and had an opportunity to talk with any boys who might be interested in Agriculture work. This serves to inform them of our offering and also helps to spread knowledge about the department as well as giving me a preliminary insight into their qualifications.

Informing the public is a very important part of our work and even though some of these opportunities to appear before groups may come at a time which seems inconvenient, it certainly is time well spent and I look upon every opportunity to talk as a good way to improve
the department's rating in the community. Therefore, one should miss no chance to apply the old saying, "It is a squeaking wheel that gets the grease."
Chapter XIII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Strong Points Of Procedure. To one who might be reading this thesis with the thought in mind of establishing a department himself, there are certain points which should bear re-emphasis because of the success or lack of success which they brought forth. After watching the department grow for nearly three years, I feel that among the strong points worthy of note is the pre-school work which had a very valuable effect both on the people of the community and upon the instructor's ability to fit the course into the community. Certainly one would be in no position to start in teaching shortly after his first arrival in the community, so I would say, were one to start teaching, whether in continuation or establishing a new department, he should make every effort to spend as much time as possible in becoming acquainted with the new community. It will seldom be found possible to have everything which one desires in the way of physical equipment to start or run a department and so the ability to use what is available and make it suffice is fundamental to success. Since one cannot have everything, he must adopt a reasonable philosophy of accepting what is available and go ahead on that basis and never complain about the state of affairs, as more time will be spent in negative complaint than in positive success. Another strong point in the procedure of building up this depart-
ment was the importance centered around the establishing of the extra curricula Ag. Club. Although many of its associations with the F. F. A. were not too desirable, the idea of an active extra curricula club is, I believe, very, very good, and serves many useful purposes in building up student attitude and interest in agriculture as a way of living. In fact, we should bring before the pupils as much as we can the idea that agriculture is "a way of life and not just a way of making a living". There is a decided difference and I have tried to impress that upon all the students. The standard of project requirements is also important and the time spent on project planning and the emphasis placed upon a truly vocational project was well spent. I feel that because standards are so much more easily lowered than raised that it was a very wise procedure to establish the project requirement quite high.

Advisable Changes. It is difficult at this time to be very specific about advisable changes. It is always easy to look back and say "I would do that different next time", but in the light of circumstances I have really not much to regret, although it is true I would do some things differently another time. In my own particular case, I feel that possibly more thorough preparation and long-time planning for the course of study during that first year might have been a possible
advantage, although at the time, lack of knowledge which I had of the community made a plan of progressive building seemed the only course available. Also it might have been advisable to have worked in more field trips during class time. But here again it seemed inadvisable. In fact, some trips were impossible because of the comparatively short period of time available. Two forty-minute periods do not give much time for field work. However, the more work that can be conveniently done in class time, the greater will be the interest quotient and the educational offerings.

Precautions. If a record were kept from day to day of the minor errors, questions, and precautions which arose over this first year, it might total and make quite a lengthy list, and yet after they have settled themselves and events have changed with increased knowledge of circumstances and conditions, they are relatively unimportant. It is well, however, to keep in mind that the Ag. department is, in the final analysis, only one department of the school. It is cooperating and working with a larger educational system and is directly under the principal. Therefore, it is thoroughly advisable to keep these facts constantly in mind and at all times to cooperate with others even though it might seem desirable to keep matters within one's own jurisdiction. Avoid "treading on others toes" and be of assistance wherever possible, for nothing can be more damaging to student
interest than to have some other department or departments antagonistic to the work. Aim high and the chances are good for a reasonable level of attainment. After all the rules and regulations that can be written are thoroughly mastered, the success or failure of a department probably rests most heavily upon the interest, the aptitude and the willingness to work that is displayed by the instructor.
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