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Review of Five for the Land and Its People

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BOOK REVIEWS

Five for the Land and Its People. By Bill G. Reid.
Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional
Studies, 1989. Notes, index. 154 pp. \$12.00.

Every institution has its pioneers, its founding fathers, whose personal natures and work were instrumental in shaping the course of its development. This book is an account of five such men whose lives are reflected in what is today North Dakota State University.

North Dakota State University of Agriculture and Applied Science was established as North Dakota Agricultural College in 1890. The story of its early years is importantly the story of five extraordinary individuals—C.B. Waldron, H.L. Bolley, and Edwin F. Ladd, who joined

its staff in 1890, John H. Shepperd, who came in 1893, and finally L.R. Waldron, who arrived in 1915. This book largely consists of the portraits of these scientists. They were condensed by the author from lengthy but unpublished biographies of these men originally written by Dean H.L. Walster.

These five men were all young, farm-raised, recent college graduates, but only one, Shepperd, had followed an agricultural curriculum, a new field at that time. They came from the Midwest, except for Ladd, who came from Maine. Each was remarkably able; each had a broad range of interests, both professional and extracurricular. This new and developing institution provided an environment in which they could and did give full expression to their respective interests; except for Waldron, each participated in the triad of the land grant system—teaching, research, and extension. All of them achieved professional distinction. All except Waldron eventually held senior administrative assignments; all except Ladd became involved in politics in one way or another. Each did unexpected things. Thus, Bolley introduced football to the college! Waldron, a botanist, became the college's first entomologist, in addition to planning the landscaping of the college grounds. Ladd, a chemist, served as the first state food commissioner. Shepperd, whose first love was livestock, was awarded a gold medal at the Paris World Exhibition for his plant breeding work. The contributions made by these five men to the economic welfare and social well-being of the people of their state, if they could be measured, would be great indeed.

This book will be fascinating to North Dakotans interested in the agricultural history of their state and will be of interest to a wider Great Plains audience as well, since it illustrates the process of agricultural development that took place in the whole region.

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