

# Poultry, 1896 to 1936

By A. M. Pilkey

The subject of shelter was a great problem in this new country. Good barns were expensive. The first poultry shelter at the Northwest Experiment Station was built in 1896 and consisted of poles and boards packed with marsh hay, flax straw, and other cheap material. The walls were made thick. The roof was made of straw, thatched with rye straw or marsh hay. Such was the only shelter used at the experiment station for cattle, sheep and poultry. These shelters were light, warm, dry and well ventilated. They were not models of convenience or appearance.

"Poultry Culture in Minnesota" was published in October, 1904. This appears to be the first bulletin sent out by the Northwest Experiment Station and was the 91st bulletin published by the University of Minnesota. This was a general treatment of the entire subject matter of poultry, including poultry house construction, incubation breeding, care of laying hens, marketing of chickens and turkey culture.

During March, 1907, Mr. C. E. Brown took charge of the poultry department. At that time the equipment consisted of one log laying house containing nine pens of fifty birds each. Fifty per cent of the flock were Leghorns and the other fifty per cent Plymouth Rocks. There was also a small flock of African geese and Pekin ducks.

The incubator equipment consisted of two 400 and two 240-egg sized Cyphers machines. About 1000 chicks were hatched annually. All market poultry was sold to Royal Alexandria Hotel, Winnipeg. A few birds were sold to farmers as breeders. About 3000 eggs were sold annually from 1907 to 1910 to farmers for hatching purposes.

During 1911-12 Mr. Brown conducted a trial which indicated the value of fresh air for poultry health, fertility, hatchability and ability of chicks to live.

Wet and dry mash feeding trials were conducted during 1910-13 as were also experimental projects involving egg preservatives, natural versus artificial hatching, concrete versus wooden poultry houses, and straw loft poultry house construction.

The main poultry house when first constructed consisted of a shanty room 16 feet wide and 150 feet long, constructed after plans laid down for New York state. The house was well constructed and worked fine during mild weather but was very damp and uncomfortable during cold weather. During summer of 1911 this house was moved from its first location east of the present heating tunnel, farther south to its present location. The shanty roof was removed and the present gable style roof constructed, which gave space for an abundance of straw.



*Poultry Free Range*

