HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRONOMY

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The history of the American Society of Agronomy traces to a date preceding its organization. There was a period of preparation. A time when conditions were so shaping themselves that the formation of the Society was a logical development. It was this that insured the immediate success of the organization.

During the last few years of the nineteenth century and the early part of the present one there began in the agricultural colleges a disintegration of the old departments of agriculture into units of more limited range. Among the offshoots was agronomy. The same movement took place in the Federal Department of Agriculture. Carleton in the first presidential address to this Society, stated that in 1900 there were only three agronomists in the agricultural colleges. Appointments in Agronomy increased so rapidly that in 1908 there were 99 persons holding that title. An equally rapid development of the subject took place in the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture. In 1900 the term was not used in the Federal Department but a few appointments of agronomists and assistant agronomists were made in 1901. By 1908 these appointments had increased to at least 100. I do not intend to convey the impression that agronomic work was not done before the closing years of the last century. Previous to that time, however, it was conducted in a somewhat restricted way by persons who bore other titles, and who in most instances conducted other lines of work as part of their official duties. The segregation of agronomy into a separate unit and the specialization which went with it created a need on the part of agronomists for contact with men in similar lines of work.

Many departments of agronomy in the agricultural colleges included such subjects as farm mechanics and farm management. However, these subjects were never considered to be within the field covered by this Society. Article II of the Constitution reads: "The