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Article Summary: Dr. Hicks delivered this address at the seventy-fifth anniversary ceremonies at Union College on February 20, 1966. His speech emphasizes social changes in Nebraska during those seventy-five years.

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THEN (1891) AND NOW (1966); SOME COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

BY JOHN D. HICKS

IT MAY surprise you to learn that your speaker today has not a little in common with Union College. To begin with, there is the important matter of birthdays. Union College is now celebrating its 75th anniversary, while I am celebrating my 76th. We were very young together. More than that, we were neighbors, for if this immediate vicinity was the College's birthplace, mine was only a scant hundred miles to the southeast in the microscopic town of Pickering, Missouri. Furthermore, just as the windows of your infant college looked out upon rich farmlands, so also the windows of the Methodist parsonage in which I was born looked out upon the equally fertile acres of Nodaway County. I suspect that the founders and early patrons of this College were mostly country people; if so, they were not unlike my parents and the families into which they were born. My father was a farmer before he became a preacher; my mother's father was a farmer for all of his life; I have few male ancestors who were not farmers. I think I can go a little further than that; both Union College and I

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were products of the American frontier. My people and the founders of this College were alike the offspring of many generations of pioneers, men and women whose steadfast determination and unlimited resourcefulness served in the end to turn the wilderness of the West into a comfortable abode for civilized man.

By some strange chance also, the first decade of Union College and the first decade of my life marked a significant turning point in the course of American history. Outmoded ideas and institutions were giving way reluctantly to new ideas and institutions; indeed, few periods in our past have recorded changes so abrupt. It was during these years that Frederick Jackson Turner called attention to the disappearance of the frontier, always before this time a kind of common denominator of American development. The era of new land discoveries and surface exploitation by farmers was about over; if the United States must have new territory for future expansion, it must be found outside the continental boundaries. It was during these years that the United States began to turn its back on the old principle of non-involvement in world affairs, and to face up to the necessity of international participation. It was during these years that agriculture as the principal way of life for most Americans lost such substantial ground to manufacturing as to make it certain that eventually the country would be subordinated to the city. It was during these years that horse-drawn vehicles as the principal means of local transportation began to give ground to bicycles and horseless carriages. For long distances the supremacy of the railroads was as yet unchallenged, but, as we shall see, the demand for railroad regulation, both by state and by nation, was already strong in the land; the ascendancy of the railroad was not to last forever. It was during these years that the full impact of the new immigration began to sink into the American consciousness; the infusion of so substantial a percentage of non-Anglo-Saxon blood made it clear that the American national complex would never be the same again.

It was during these years that Darwinian ideas in science took deep root in American intellectual life, and forced nearly every field of learning to revise its premises and re-think its conclusions. In religion, the convulsions were particularly acute, as modernists undertook to reconcile the revealed truths on which their faiths had been founded with the startling discoveries of science, while in education the virtual monopoly that the classics had enjoyed for so long began to evaporate. In economics, the "dismal science" of wealth, disillusioned practitioners began their long retreat from the rugged individualism of Adam Smith, which for a century had held sway, toward the acceptance by the state of a high degree of responsibility for the welfare of society. In literature, it was the age of the idol-smasher, Mark Twain, with the great American boy well versed in the exploits of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, however much sophisticates might prefer the characters of Henry James and William Dean Howells. It was in this decade that Americans demonstrated their newly-discovered interest in culture and the fine arts by visiting, in incredible numbers, the "White City" of the Chicago World's Fair. My father's salary at the time was less than \$600 a year, but he and my mother somehow found the means to go, leaving me—a squalling three-year old—at home with the older children. It is reported that I made loud, frequent, and tearful protests over my abandonment, even if it had happened only in the interest of the finer things of life.

Even in politics a new day seemed to be dawning. Reform was in the air. One of the most popular books of the time was Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, a novel describing the utopian world of the year 2000, a world in which the government owned everything and everyone was in reality, not merely in theory, as well off as every one else. The Prohibitionists, who had been around for quite a while but had scored few recent successes, concentrated on a single evil of society, the liquor traffic, and in 1893 founded the Anti-Saloon League to make more vigorous war on Demon Rum. But the rudest interruption to the game of battle-

dore and shuttlecock that the two older parties had been playing for so long came with the formation in the year 1891 of the People's (or Populist) Party. In the launching of this new party, Nebraska and Nebraskans played an important role. A Farmers' Alliance Convention, held in Omaha in January, 1891, warned Alliancemen to "take no part as partisans" in the struggle between Republicans and Democrats, and suggested a tentative platform upon which a third party could stand. The following May, at Cincinnati, with many Nebraskans present, the birth of the party was formally announced. There were those who described the Populists as "people who don't know what they want, but will never be satisfied until they get it," but there were others who conceded that they merely voiced "the spirit that is in the air. The Western farmers know that things are somehow wrong," wrote one observer. "Doubtless their diagnoses of society's diseases, and still more their remedial formulas, are at some points absurd. But they are honest and earnest, and in many of their views they are hard headed and right."

What the protesting farmers saw clearly and hoped to remedy was the disadvantage from which they suffered as individuals in dealing with the mortgage-holders, the middlemen, and the great corporations. Most visible of their oppressors were the railroads, who charged high rates both on the produce the farmers sent to market and on the merchandise the farmers bought from the stores. Moreover, the prices of the wheat and corn and livestock that the farmers sold went steadily down, for, thanks to railroads and steamships, the American farmer was now in competition with farmers all over the world, while at the same time improved methods of farming had greatly increased harvests, both at home and abroad. With prices so low that it paid to burn corn rather than to buy coal, how could farmers hope to pay the interest rates required of them, and the high freight rates that the railroads charged, and the exorbitant profits that every middleman demanded? They had tried to follow the example of the labor unions and had united into farmers' alliances, but

the weapon of the strike, so potent for the unions, was of no avail to them. What they must have, or so they believed, was the intervention of government. Let the government, both state and national, use its power to regulate the railroads, to ease the burden on money and credit, to restrain monopoly. Only thus, the farmers insisted, could they get their just deserts.

I do not know to what extent the hard times of 1893-1897 affected the farm boys and girls who attended Union College in the 1890's, or the faculty who taught them, or the parents who sent them to school. But all of them, no doubt, were well aware of what was going on. Nowadays we would call these lean years a depression, but the word was little used then. One farmwife, on being asked how the depression had affected her family, replied: "Oh, we wouldn't mind the depression so much, if it wasn't for the hard times that come along with it." After the Panic of 1893 not only the farmers suffered, but also business men of high and low degree, and unemployed city laborers probably most of all. Real estate prices, which had long been on the rise in most of the New West, suddenly tobogganed. Rees and Dick, in their admirable history of Union College,¹ tell how the College itself suffered from the panic and depression. With admirable foresight the founding fathers had realized that the surrounding real estate would soon be in demand for residence purposes, and would therefore rise in value well above the \$25 an acre it had formerly brought. Some of the College land they sold to real estate operators, but some of it they also cut up into lots and sold directly. The paper profits were great—until 1893—but then the blow fell. "Many people," Rees and Dick recount, "who had paid only one-fourth down for lots, gave their notes for the balance. The college had about eighty thousand dollars worth of notes of this kind, that became absolutely valueless, and the lots reverted to the school. A. R. Henry [the business manager] would sometimes

¹ David L. Rees and Everett Dick, *Union College, Fifty Years of Service*, Lincoln, 1941.

throw into his waste basket at one time notes totalling ten thousand dollars." That the college survived the adversities of the nineties and kept on forging ahead tells us much about the faith and determination of the men who made it. Today Professor Dick told me that your local church was built in the panic year, 1893.

What were the conditions of life in mid-America as the nineteenth century entered its last decade? For this region, at least, the country still dominated the city, and rural customs prevailed, not only on the farms, but also in the towns and villages. Food was abundant and people ate well. For the most part, the sod-house frontier had receded into time past but Professor Dick tells me that it was by no means gone. Most families lived in decent frame houses, usually entirely innocent of plumbing, but often handsomely decorated with lightning rods. Water came from a well in the back yard, or from a cistern that caught the rainwater off the roof, or from both. Fire-places were rare, and wood- or coal-stoves heated the houses in winter. In the summertime one took the weather as it came, hot or hotter, for there was no air-conditioning. For the housewife, wash day came on Monday (Sunday for Adventists), ironing day on Tuesday, cleaning day on Wednesday, and so on with other chores through the week. For farm people the rising hour was four o'clock, and in winter the cows had to be milked by lantern light; towns people were a little more leisurly, but the Benjamin Franklin adage of "early to bed, early to rise" was seldom disregarded.

Some of my earliest recollections concern wash-day. In that age of few laundries and no launderettes the labor involved in getting out the family wash was almost incredible, particularly when the family was large. First, someone had to pump the water and carry it into the house, pailful after pailful, until the big boiler on the kitchen stove and all other available containers were filled. Next, the "dirty clothes" had to be sorted into "batches" of appropriate size, color, and character. After that (or while it was going on) some female member of the family soaped

and scrubbed, usually by hand on a zinc washboard, the worst soiled garments, or parts of garments—collars and cuffs of shirts, for example. This process was particularly back-breaking, for the tub of warm-to-hot water in which it was done invariably sat on a low stool or box, over which the unhappy operator had to bend half double. After the initial scrubbing most of the clothes—especially if they were white and wouldn't fade—went into the boiler on the stove to be boiled for a time in soap-saturated water. (Sometimes the soap used on wash day was home made in a big black kettle over a fire in the back yard. But that's another story). After the boiling process had continued long enough, the steaming hot clothes were fished out with a wooden rod about a yard long (usually the sawed-off handle of a worn-out broom) for transfer to a hand-operated washing-machine, if the family owned such a luxury. Then somebody pulled a lever back and forth and back and forth or turned a crank-wheel round and round and round and round until the proper degree of purity had been obtained. If, after all this, any items failed to pass inspection, they might go back to the washboard again. If the family happened to own a rubber wringer, the wringing-out process did not have to be done by hand; and if there happened to be a small boy around (in our family I was always there), he was detailed to turn the wringer. But one wringing-out was never enough—the clothes had to be rinsed (most country women said “rensed”) in clear water or bluing water, then wrung out again, then carried outdoors to be hung on the clothesline to dry. This process went on, assembly line fashion, until the last batch of clothes (overalls, socks, and such) was done. On a good drying day, by the time the last batch went out the first batch could be brought in, but if there were room enough most housewives preferred to let the whole wash flap in the breeze for a half day or so. Big washings and getting one's wash early on the line were status symbols; some women managed to have the work all done and the clothes a-flapping by nine o'clock in the morning. Techniques varied slightly; few of the women old enough to remem-

ber how the Monday wash was done would agree with every item of my recital. But on one item I refuse to be corrected. My mother, as the commander-in-chief of the wash-day complications at our house, never failed to lose her temper early in the proceedings. I marvelled then, and I marvel now, at her ability to chew us all out in language that contained not a single naughty word, but that in tone and tempo would have made any army sergeant green with envy. The last time I saw my older brother alive he said to me: "Don, will you ever forget washday?" I had no need to answer.

Perhaps the chief differences between seventy-five years ago and the present can be measured best by noting the immensely greater use then than today of man-power and horse-power. Then, farmers quite literally followed the plow and horses pulled it; now farmers ride in state while a tractor pulls the plow. Then horse-drawn vehicles generally got people about, if the distance was too great for walking; now automobiles and trucks do the work. Incidentally, think of the endless man-hours, or boy-hours, it took to fuel up and service those old hay-burners. Storing hay in the hay-loft, pushing it down into the manger, currying the horses, cleaning the stable, harnessing the horse or the team, hooking them up to the wagon or buggy, and so on *ad infinitum*. In "the olden days" a good healthy boy (and I was one such) was expected also to saw and split the wood for use as fuel, to bring it into the house each evening, and to get up early in the morning to light the fire in the kitchen stove; now, any sleepy late-riser has only to turn on both the furnace (if this isn't done automatically) and the gas or electric stove. Then, some member of the family had to fill the lamps with kerosene (coal-oil, we called it), trim the wicks, and wash the chimneys. Now, he only punches a switch to get complete electric illumination. Then, somebody had to milk the cows, strain the milk, skim off the cream twelve or twenty-four hours later and churn the butter. Now, a milking machine, a separator, and a creamery will do it all. Then, one mowed the lawn the hard way—if not with scythe and sickle, at

least with a lawnmower that had to be pushed. Now, everybody who is anybody has a power mower. And so on interminably. When I read of gangs of boys breaking into houses, cluttering up the roads with "hot-rods," and robbing pedestrians, I give thanks for the "chores" that kept the boys of my youth out of mischief. Washing the buggy was another example. Washing a car may be work, but at least the car has flat surfaces. How many boys could tell you today that there were exactly sixteen spokes in a buggy-wheel? And how many ever experienced the feeling of relief when the sixteenth spoke of the fourth wheel—sixty-four spokes in all—was finished?

Schools were different then. In the towns there were graded schools, usually with one teacher for each grade, and two or three more for high school. But in rural sections the one-room ungraded school held undiminished sway. Not many changes had occurred since Edward Eggleston had described it in *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, published two decades before. As a boy I listened with delight to stories my mother told me of her experiences as a country schoolteacher during the 1880's. Fifty to seventy-five children of all ages packed together in one room; the predominance of the "Three R's,"—"readin, 'ritin', and 'rithmetic"; wages for the teacher of twenty to thirty dollars a month—on one occasion, when the free silverites were in the ascendancy, my mother was paid entirely in silver dollars—; "boarding around," once she declared, as she took up quarters with a new family, the mistress of the house inquired, "How old air ye, Miss Hattie, or d'ye know?" Big children teaching little children in every corner of the school-room long before anyone in those parts had heard of the Lancastrian system.² Twin boys only six years old who had chewed tobacco since they were four,

² The Lancastrian system of education, founded in England by Joseph Lancaster in 1798, utilized the services of advanced pupils who acted as monitors. It allowed one teacher to teach many students. The Lancastrian system was tried on an experimental basis in the United States during the first half of the 19th century. *Encyclopedia Americana*, (New York 1957) XVI, 687-689.

and couldn't wait for a re-fill until re-cess. My mother, so she said, solved that small dilemma by seating the pair near a knot-hole in the floor, a mark to shoot at that they never once missed.

People looked differently. Nearly all the older men and many of the younger ones wore whiskers, which they carved into attractive designs. Some, like my father, restricted the growth to their upperlips and chins, and trained the product into a dignified whisk-broom. Some shaved the chin, and grew what looked like a mutton chop on each cheek, General Burnside or Chester A. Arthur fashion. Others shaved the upper lip only, a good idea when it came to drinking milk, or coffee out of a saucer, or disposing of a chew of tobacco. Still others just let nature take her course, hoping perhaps that if their whiskers grew long enough they could dispense with the necessity of wearing a necktie, or on a hot day even a shirt, when they went to church. Perhaps the most noticeably different item of men's apparel was the shirt, especially the one worn on dress-up occasions, which had a heavily starched bosom, and was buttoned up behind. There is a shirt story about Grover Cleveland, President of the United States for two terms, one in the 1880's and one in the 1890's. (Cleveland, incidentally, being a Democrat and thus by definition a suspicious character, wore only a mustache.) But, according to Republican subversives, he enjoyed an extraordinary advantage over ordinary men. His neck was so thick that he could take off his shirt without ever having to unbutton it, and put it on again the same way. Most other items of men's apparel would not look especially strange today, unless, perchance, some special occasion called for the wearing of a high silk hat—a stovepipe hat, as people called it then. My father had one and wore it now and then. Zippers, believe it or not, were invented in 1891, the very year Union College was born, but their extensive use in both men's and women's apparel came much later.

As for the women, the differences between then and now were decidedly greater. St. Paul's admonition, "If a

woman have long hair, it is a glory," was taken literally, and all the women who could grow it had long hair. But the idea of just letting it hang, the straighter and stringier the better, now common on some of our campuses, was not then the fashion. Quite generally, it was done up in a becoming "top-knot" high on the head, with the fringes over the forehead and around the neck curled into position with a curling-iron. That instrument, a kind of rounded clamp, could be heated in any lamp chimney, and if cautiously applied at a high temperature to such "scolding-locks" as would not otherwise behave, would turn them into tight little curls. But one had to be careful; if this treatment were prolonged too long, instead of curls, charcoal. As a child it was my great delight to clamp any curling iron I could find to my father's coattail (cold, of course), and to watch him stride down the street with this bit of hardware swinging merrily behind. Severe threats and some punishment never cured me of this misconduct; I wouldn't trust myself with a curling iron even today.

But it would be women's *dress* that we would notice most. Fortunately, by the 1890's, the great hoops and other bouffant dress extenders of the 1880's were going out, but it would still take a good fifteen yards of dress material to make a stylish walking costume for milady. Skirts reached to, or near, or even beyond the floor, and grew wider the farther down they went. Sleeves sprouted out more and more violently from the shoulders until by the middle nineties they had reached "leg o'mutton" proportions. Waists were ruthlessly constricted by steel-reinforced corsets, and high-heeled shoes (sometimes highbuttoned also) gave dress-reformers something else to rave about. Deeply concerned with the problem, a National Council of Women met in 1891 at Washington to devise more sensible attire for American women. Naturally, the findings of these reformers won little support, but styles did change a bit for the better. How could a girl ride a bicycle, or play tennis, or basketball (invented in 1891), or baseball (Union College had a women's team) with all that excess yardgoods to deal with? But the free wheeling garments of today

(which I shall not attempt to describe) were still far in the future. Hats of the 1890's, pinned on to the wearer's hair with vicious hatpins, rose and fell or widened and shrunk, as fashion might dictate, while veils appeared and disappeared with equal whimsy.

But we have dwelt long enough on the 1890's; it is time now to turn our attention to the 1960's. The contrast is startling. The population of the United States is today three times as great as it was then, but the increase is to be found almost exclusively in the cities, not in the towns and country. Nebraska, for example, which was and still is primarily an agricultural state, has not grown correspondingly. Instead of a 300 percent increase since 1890, census statistics give it little more than a 20 percent increase. Furthermore, most of this increase is accounted for by the growth of its two large cities, Omaha and Lincoln, each of which is many times larger than it was in 1890. It would not be very wide of the mark to say that, as far as population growth is concerned, rural America has stood still during the last three-quarters of a century, while urban America has plunged forward with frightening rapidity. By the 1920's American cities had burst their boundaries and had expanded into the countryside that surrounded them to such an extent that census-takers had to re-define their terms. The old city boundaries had become unrealistic, for the cities had spilled over them; each central city was now surrounded by a ring of suburb and even ex-urb satellites. The census of 1930 therefore marked out ninety-six metropolitan districts, all strictly urban whether within or without any city's boundaries, and together accounting for more than 44 percent of the nation's population. Adding to this figure the people who lived in smaller separate cities, the total urban population of the nation was already over 56 percent. Now in the 1960's over 70 percent of our people live in cities. Nor is that quite the end of it. The good roads movement, under full swing since the 1920's, has by the 1960's connected every American city with every other by means of a bewildering system of highways. Traffic that the highways and the railroads can't handle

takes to the air, a means of transportation unknown to the 1890's, when even a balloon ascension was a big event. Add the universal sweep of the telegraph, the telephone, and the power lines, and it becomes apparent that the whole nation is today well on the way to becoming one great city. No wonder that the Populists—the prophets of the 1890's—were frightened and lifted up their voices against the wave of the future that was about to make agriculture forever secondary to industry, and to abolish the country to make room for the city.

Inexorably, as the city grew the country declined. But it also changed. Just as machinery was revolutionizing business and industry, so also it was revolutionizing farming. Until after World War I, man-power, supplemented in the literal sense by horse-power, still did most of the work on the farms. But during the decade of the twenties tractors that could pull far heavier loads than horses began to put the farm horses out of business, and for that matter many farm workers also. The 1930's for most American farmers were years of unrelenting depression, not because the farmers produced less, for they produced more. The trouble was that the cost of production had gone up, while the price of everything the farmer had to sell, responding to a glutted market, had gone down. With mechanization on the march, only the big commercial operators did well; for many country dwellers who had lost their jobs on the farms there was nothing left to do but to join the retreat to the cities, a retreat in which many of the town-dwellers, who once had served the country, went right along. The Second World War restored farm prosperity for the relative few who remained on the farm, and after the war, government subsidies and government controls kept agriculture alive—prosperous, even, for the big producer. The Populist demand for governmental intervention had been met, if in a vastly different way from Populist expectations. But the old ascendancy of agriculture was gone. Business and industry were in the saddle.

The urban boom, as we all know, stemmed from the spectacular growth of industry that overtook the nation after World War I, and, with some ups and downs, has been with us ever since. To understand this phenomenon, I think we have to go back to Henry Ford and his assembly line. The idea of mass production was not his alone, but he was perhaps the first to make spectacular use of it. Nor was he unaware of the fact that mass production, in order to survive, required equally unbridled mass consumption. That was the reason why he favored high wages, not only for his own employees, but for all employees. You can't sell Ford cars by the million without millions of buyers with cash enough for at least a down payment. The Ford concept caught on everywhere in American business, and a veritable revolution was the result. Not that the nation had not known big business before, for by this time the importance of great industrial combinations to the economy was an old story. But, by exploiting the Ford idea, big businesses grew steadily bigger and fewer. Even the service and retail fields fell prey to the same general trend. Local power companies, a commonplace from Edison's time on down, gave way to vast regional systems; soon ten great holding companies were producing 70 percent of the nation's electric power. The banking business likewise responded to the new influences; not only in California, but elsewhere, branch banking was on the march. And meantime, all over the nation, chain stores were putting the corner drug store and the neighborhood grocery out of business—the day of the supermarket was at hand. In earlier times the ordinary American had seen big business only at a distance, as through a glass darkly, but now he met up with it face to face, eyeball to eyeball, right across the counter.

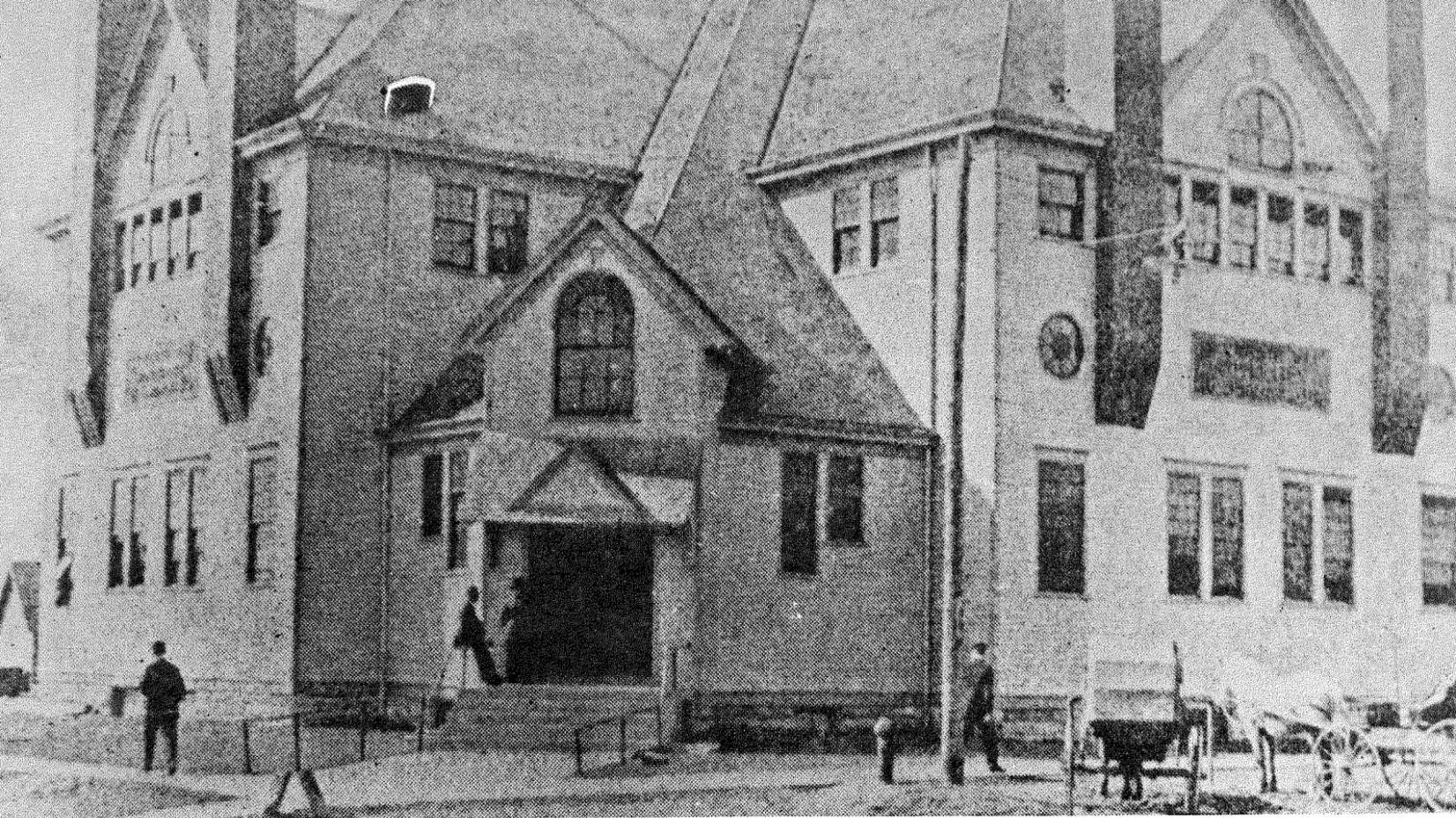
Not that he disliked what he saw, for on the whole he liked it. Business gave him what he wanted, well-tailored clothes, foodstuffs of standardized merit, cars (if we include used cars) for every pocketbook, electric refrigerators and a host of other kitchen gadgets, power tools and garden equipment, better jobs and shorter hours, even elab-



Washday, Gibbon, Nebraska. (Charles Putnam Collection.)



The family buggy in front of the Theodore Wagoner home, Amherst, Buffalo County, 1903.



Seventh Day Adventist Church, College View.



Union College Campus, 1904.

orate amusement facilities. Producers kept books on what the public liked, and catered with skill to the taste of the masses. The radio and T-V blared forth with plugs for every variety of consumer product, supplemented by programs geared to the mentality of a twelve year old. Buyers were seduced with the installment concept, buy now, pay later. Strangely, it never seemed to occur to businessmen that by planting assiduously the thought that it was OK for the customer to live beyond his means they were promoting also the idea of the government living beyond its means. If it's fair for the individual to buy now and pay later, why not also for all federal, state, and local authorities? We have, indeed, come to count on public spending as a business stimulant, especially spending in the domain of national defense. One of the most troublesome of our many unanswered questions is this: What will happen to our economy if ever peace breaks out and defense expenditures are drastically curtailed?

All that I have said adds up to the fact that ours is today a business oriented, city civilization. The predominance of agriculture in the national economy, still evident when Union College was founded, is now merely an odd historical fact. Politicians today compete for the city vote, and fear no agricultural protests such as the Populists provided in the 1890's. American literature, which once reflected a rural background, now concerns itself mainly with the problems of the city. Southern Negroes, dispossessed of their jobs by tractors and cotton-picking machines, have moved to the cities, more to northern than to southern cities, to produce the gravest social problem of our age. The South, I verily believe, will solve its Negro problem before we solve ours. The old immigration from Europe has been cut off, but newcomers from Puerto Rico and Latin America have brought in another flood of humanity far more difficult to assimilate. Our great cities are sick. When New York, our largest metropolis, must witness within the space of a few months the drying up of its water supply, the loss of its electric power, and the tying up of its traffic by a transport strike, what hope is there

for the city? If even in New Testament times Jesus "beheld the city, and wept over it," what would he do today?

On the international front we have done a complete about face since the 1890's. First we acquired a great colonial empire, with all the problems of world involvement it entailed. Then we intervened in Europe to upset the existing balance of power and to determine the outcome in World War I. But when the war was over, we abandoned our handiwork to the vultures, who soon produced Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, and a second World War. Now we know, however much we may dislike the thought, that we are involved in all the problems of the free world. Few of us like what we are doing in Vietnam, or in Santo Domingo, or what we thought we had to do in Korea, but fewer still know what better course we could have taken. We do not like being engaged in a cold war; we do not like maintaining a balance of terror in atomic weaponry; we do not like the necessity of supporting a huge army, and a navy and air-force superior to that of any other power. But internationalism has replaced isolationism, and we foresee little prospect of turning back. As for the United Nations, with all its shortcomings, we cherish its existence as the hope of the future. Our aim is to improve it, not to destroy it.

What has all this to do with Union College? Quite a lot, I think. If we are to deal effectively with our great metropolitan areas, if their sickness is ever to be cured, the leadership will have to come from our colleges and universities. The scientists they produce will have to find the means to replenish the urban water supply, to clean up the air city dwellers must breathe, to solve their vexing problems of transportation. If the scientists we have already produced can discover the means of putting a man on the moon, as they seem about to do, surely future scientists ought to find a way to renovate our cities. There is a job, too, for our future graduates in the social studies and the humanities. It is up to them to devise decent systems of city government, to promote both business and governmental efficiency, to iron out the conflicts between labor and

management, to help competing races and nationalities to understand each other better, to find better answers for the problems of sickness, old age, and unemployment. Where would we get our leaders for such programs, and where would they get their followers, if it were not for our colleges and universities? It is up to these future generations of graduates, also, to find the means by which the democracies of the world can survive, and can work with better success for peace on earth. To them we have no choice but to entrust the future of our nation and the world.

And may I, in closing, say a good word for the small (or at least relatively small) denominational college. I should be sorry indeed to see this typically American institution either pushed to the wall or turned into a small university. The intimacy of the small college campus, the cohesiveness of its program, the unity of its social as well as its educational interests, the emphasis it places upon moral and spiritual values, these are assets that in the main cannot be duplicated in the university, large or small. For years I have noted that a quite disproportionate number of our graduate students come from the small colleges. Perhaps this is because the colleges beat out the universities on what the educationists call motivation; perhaps there is some other explanation. But I, for one, hope that the small college, which in our past has done so much for our country, will be permitted to continue its good work. With these thoughts in mind, let us salute Union College, not only for its past achievements, but also for those we have every right to expect from it in the future.³

³ A few sentences in this paragraph and a few others on my mother's teaching experience are adapted from an earlier essay, "The Democratic Tradition in American Education," in John D. Hicks, *The American Tradition* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955). Reprinted by permission.