



Nebraska History posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

Article Title: The Founding of Union College, 1890-1900

Full Citation: Everett Dick, "The Founding of Union College, 1890-1900," *Nebraska History* 60 (1979): 447-470.

URL of article: http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1979Union_College.pdf

Date: 7/13/2011

Article Summary: The roots of Union College run deep into the reform movement of the 1840s. From small beginnings in New England and New York, Seven-day Adventism moved west and in 1874, the first Adventist educational institution, Battle Creek College, was founded. When the Real Estate Exchange in Lincoln offered to give 280 acres of land for a site and paid the expenses of the locating committee to come to Lincoln, the decision was soon made to accept the Lincoln offer. This article presents the first decades of the history of Union College in Lincoln.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Joshua V Himes, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Henry Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Miller, G H Bell, J H Kellogg, W K Kellogg, C W Post, J H Morrison, Henry E Hitchcock, O A Olsen, W W Prescott, Allen Moon, John H McClay, J J Gilliland, David and Tillie May, E W Farnsworth, A R Henry, Austin H Weier, W C Sisley, James H Canfield, M W Newton, Nora Hiatt, Mae Pines, David Weiss

Place Names: Boston, Massachusetts; Ohio; Battle Creek, Michigan; Atlantic, Iowa; Fremont, Nebraska; Omaha, Nebraska; York, Nebraska; Wichita, Kansas; Lincoln, Nebraska; Knoxville, Iowa; North Dakota; Seward, Nebraska; Marshalltown, Iowa

Keywords: Chardon Street Chapel; Christian Church; Transcendentalists; Adventists; Oberlin College; Iowa Conference; Real Estate Exchange; Adventist Mission; *Daily Nebraska State Journal*; General Conference; Columbian Bank of Lincoln; Cushman Park; Burlington Railroad; *Review and Herald*; the College Building; North Hall; South Hall; *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*; College View; Bible; Panic of 1893; Nebraska Sanitarium; Battle Creek health food; granola; Peanut Hill; Battle Creek Sanitarium; Postum; Post Toasties; Grapenuts; peanut butter

Photographs / Images: Union college about 1895; Joe Sutherland, first college business manager supervising removal of trunks to railroad station at close of school, 1905; College Building, about 1920; North Hall, about 1920; College View from the campus showing the intersection of present 48th and Bancroft; Union College Scandinavian Chapel about 1907; General dining hall, 1904; Dressmaking class in College Building about 1904, Nora Hiatt, instructor

THE FOUNDING OF UNION COLLEGE, 1890-1900

By Everett Dick

The roots of Union College run deep into the reform movement of the 1840s, which centered in Boston with its ferment of activity and experiment endeavoring to find the better life. The focal point for gatherings of reformers was the Chardon Street Chapel, one of the larger church houses in the city, presided over by Elder Joshua V. Himes of a minor denomination of New England known simply as the Christian Church. Himes seemed to have an affinity for reforms of every hue and welcomed their propagators. In this church Transcendentalists such as Henry Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, and Ralph Waldo Emerson held forth and planned their rural communal living experiment; William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips thundered against the evils of slavery as they formed the abolitionist movement; here temperance and non-resistance movements found fertile ground.¹

When Joshua V. Himes heard William Miller's stirring message of the second advent of Christ, which was expected to be the next great event in history, he espoused it as another great reform and thenceforth propagated it. When reproved by his fellow reformers for deserting them, his response was that it was of immediate importance to warn people to get ready for Christ's coming for at that time all of the evils they had been trying to eradicate would be wiped out.

Although disappointed in the immediacy of the end of the world, Adventists retained a devotion to reform which surfaced in such items as hydropathic treatment of the sick, vegetarianism, an anti-tobacco stance, and teetotalism. Some of these principles found their way directly to Adventist education from the sources, but Oberlin College in Ohio was also a transmitter through G. H. Bell, one of the influential teachers in early Adventist college history who had attended Oberlin.² The

Puritan background of the denomination was also long evident in Adventist thought. Although marked changes have been made over the years, some of the original ideas were still discernible when Union College was founded in 1890.

From small beginnings in New England and New York, Seventh-day Adventism moved west to Battle Creek, Michigan, where the church was organized in 1863 and made its headquarters the next 40 years. Three years later they founded Battle Creek Sanitarium as a water-cure institution but gradually changed it into a medical institution. It still used some natural treatments when Dr. J. H. Kellogg took charge and made it one of the most famous health institutions of the United States. Among the items emanating from this institution were important processed foods designed to take the place of meat and coffee which the reformers considered harmful. On this foundation the cereal industry so important to Battle Creek's history had its beginning. Corn flakes were developed by Dr. Kellogg and his brother, W. K. Kellogg, made it a national commercial titan. The sanitarium also manufactured granola, a crunchy cereal made by forming a dough from several grains, rolling it out, baking, and coarsely grinding it. As a substitute for coffee, a drink was made from roasted grains which was called caramel cereal coffee. C. W. Post, an impecunious patient at Battle Creek Sanitarium, visited the institution's food factory and gained ideas which he used in setting up another cereal empire. With changes in the formulas, he produced his well-known coffee substitute, Postum; grapenuts, a variation of granola; and Post Toasties, a cornflake competitor with Kellogg's cornflakes. Dr. Kellogg continued to experiment with food manufacture, but his interest was in making healthy people rather than building commercial empires. The sanitarium originated another well-known food which was brought to Nebraska by the Adventists—peanut butter.³

In 1874, the first Adventist educational institution, Battle Creek College, was founded, and Adventists have become increasingly educationally minded until today it is said by some that they have a higher per capita of college-trained members than any other church in America.

Adventism moved still further west with the frontier as did other church bodies. Members crossed the Mississippi and took up land, battling the elements for existence, as did other settlers.

They were a very active group, anxious to share their new-found religion with other lonely uprooted neighbors. The denomination grew rapidly in the rural setting, with many small groups meeting in sod schoolhouses and holding annual camp meetings until the Trans-Mississippi region became the stronghold of the church. Like the Amish and related groups, they wished to keep their children from straying away from the church by associating with others in post-grammar school education. Even had they chosen public high school education, there were not many high schools available to rural dwellers. In its zeal for an educational opportunity for its children, each state conference proposed to establish a boarding school. Minnesota and Kansas were straining at the bits to take this action, but wiser heads in the General Conference urged sensible restraint. At their camp meeting in 1889, Kansans seemed determined to establish a school of their own, but General Conference leaders persuaded the brethren to join with the other western conferences in establishing one strong school for the Trans-Mississippi region.⁴ Other conferences endorsed the idea and the General Conference agreed to build the institution.

A locating committee composed of representatives of the Trans-Mississippi states, with General Conference representation, was authorized to select a location. J. H. Morrison, president of the Iowa Conference, was the chairman. The brethren let it be known that they would accept inducements from the various cities of the region to locate in their areas. Des Moines and Atlantic, Iowa; Fremont, Omaha, and York, Nebraska; and Wichita, Kansas, each entered the lists. Late in the game, a delegation from Lincoln, representing the Lincoln Real Estate Exchange, armed with charts, graphs, pictures, and figures, appeared before the locating committee, which was sitting at Des Moines. Among the inducement group was Professor Henry E. Hitchcock of the mathematics department of the University of Nebraska. Most important was their offer to give 280 acres of land for a site and to pay the expenses of the locating committee to come and look over the Lincoln offer. The Adventists were inspired by the Real Estate Exchange which had done its homework well.⁵ In response to the invitation, the locating committee arrived at the Burlington depot on January 20, 1890, where they were met by members of the Real Estate Exchange and escorted to the Adventist Mission, the state office of the

Nebraska Conference at 1505 E Street. There they made their headquarters for nearly a week looking over the various Lincoln sites offered. The *Daily Nebraska State Journal* in the breezy manner of the day extended its welcome:

Today the locating board of the Adventist college will begin the work of looking over the different sites offered by the people of this city.

The Journal extends a hearty welcome to the worthy gentlemen and assures them that should their decision be favorable to Lincoln, the people will do everything in their power to aid in building up a strong and useful institution. . . all promises will be faithfully kept. Interest will not flag when the location is made, but the city will stand by the college with a loyalty that will insure its success. Members of the committee, Lincoln is here for your inspection. Make yourselves at home. Ask as many questions as you please. Look at the public records, and take notes on anything and everything that will aid you in making a choice. Stay until you really know what Lincoln is, and if you do not decide that this is the best possible location for your college, you are at liberty to carry away the dome of the State House to ornament your first building, wherever you may choose to put it.

After a long look at Lincoln and a brief visit to see Fremont's offer, the committee returned to Knoxville, Iowa, the home of J. H. Morrison, the chairman of the committee, who lay ill, and there the committee made its choice of a city. The president of the General Conference, O. A. Olsen, was there and offered prayer asking God's guidance on a correct choice. The offers of the various cities were opened and a free discussion ensued for half a day. Voting was to be by secret ballot. By 10:30 in the evening it was the consensus of opinion that a straw vote be taken. The result showed the body leaning toward Lincoln, and it was decided to take a formal ballot the next day at 2 p.m., with the result that of the eight votes cast two were for Des Moines and six were for Lincoln. The chairman declared Lincoln the winner and telegrams were sent to the various competing towns stating that Lincoln had been selected as the home for the new school.⁷

A board of trustees had been elected before the location had been selected. A subcommittee of three consisting of W. W. Prescott, Allen Moon, and J. H. Morrison, all of whom were trustees, was now selected with power to choose one of the Lincoln sites to which the whole committee had narrowed the choice. The Lincoln victory was a bitter disappointment to the Iowa Conference office force, who draped their state headquarters at Des Moines with crepe.⁸

Two of the best known of the Lincoln Real Estate Exchange members were John H. McClay, a former county clerk and at

that time president of the Columbian Bank of Lincoln, and J. J. Gilliland, an active real estate figure. The exchange, only recently organized, must have done some frantic work among the land owners in outlying parts of the city for they offered to give 280 acres of land on any one of six sites. It was urged upon the locating committee that the donated land could be cut up into lots, sold to those who would be sure to move in around the college to educate their children, and in large part pay for the construction of the buildings.

One site offered was at Cushman Park, the city amusement park some 5 miles west of town on the Burlington Railroad. The railroad ran a regularly scheduled train from downtown Lincoln to this resort. The promoters might as well have saved their breath in puffing that locality, for with the Puritan background of the brethren they would never have countenanced locating their campus near that "worldly" place of amusement. They wanted their school as far removed from such a locality as possible. They expected the students to study and not play around.

The three choices finally narrowed down to: (1) a spot south of the insane asylum (now called the Regional Center); (2) the Taylor site on east Randolph; (3) the May farm, as it was called, where College View is now located.

On February 7 at a meeting of the Real Estate Exchange, W. W. Prescott of the General Conference announced that the site of the new Adventist college had been selected—the land owned by David and Tillie May on the old Walton farm. Actually, the major portion of the campus was given by J. H. McClay, but the location was popularly known as the May site. At the same meeting Professor Prescott announced that the name of the institution was to be Union College and that the village that was expected to grow up about it was to be called College View.⁹

McClay offered 20 acres on the crest of the eminence for the campus. Mrs. Tillie May gave an area just west of present 48th Street between Calvert and Pioneers Boulevard with the provision that part of the campus be located on her land. This accounts for the jog of 48th Street at 48th and Calvert and back again at 48th and Pioneers Boulevard. Mrs. May clearly wanted a guarantee that the land which she retained on her quarter section west of McClay's gift would be near the center of the expected town and she could sell the remainder of her land in the

form of lots guaranteed to become valuable because of proximity to the institution. The scheme worked well for all parties. J. H. McClay had bought the 80 acres, part of which he offered as a campus, for \$65 an acre in 1888 and after the college was located he sold four acres adjoining the campus on the north to one of the Adventist brethren for \$1,000, or \$250 an acre, and the area adjoining the campus on the south where the new Adventist church is located he sold for \$300 an acre. Tillie May sold lots for from \$100 to \$250 each. At that rate she sold her land for from \$800 to \$2,000 an acre. Even if the Real Estate Exchange was motivated by a desire to enhance Lincoln as an educational center, its members profited handsomely by their public-spirited project.¹⁰

No record survives concerning the naming of the institution. It probably evolved without much discussion. The board of trustees, appointed before the locating committee had made its decision, referred to itself as the board "of the union college," referring to the fact that the institution was to be supported by a union of effort of all state conferences from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Professor Prescott told me he suggested the name since it so obviously fit. A news note in the February 4 *Review and Herald*, the general church journal, stated that some of the men had returned to Battle Creek from the meetings of the locating committee and that the institution was named Union College.

In contrast to Iowa's disappointment, the city of Lincoln showed high exultation over the results of the decision. Lincoln had for years waged a running fight against her more populous rival, Omaha, and seemed to rejoice especially that the big city north of the Platte had been bested in this competition. Actually, the minutes of the locating committee show no evidence that Omaha appeared before the locating committee with an offer, but the Lincoln editors thought they had. One broke forth with this bit of doggerel:

Omaha, Omaha
Seeking after knowledge,
Omaha, poor Omaha
Lost the Advent College!

In response to the offer of 280 acres of land guaranteed by the Real Estate Exchange, the General Conference gave bond to the amount of \$100,000 that it would erect a plant worth \$70,000 by



Union College about 1895, when sidewalks were of wood. Left: North Hall (razed, 1958). Center: College power house and laundry, destroyed by fire, 1907; replaced, 1908. Right: College Building razed, 1975; replaced by Everett Dick Building). College View streetcar connected with downtown Lincoln. . . .(Below) "Uncle" Joe Sutherland, first college business manager (right), supervises removal of trunks to railroad station at close of school, 1905.



July 1, 1891. The Real Estate Exchange promoters also promised as a part of their agreement that they would see that a streetcar line was built to the college and was in operation by the time the college opened for students.¹¹

Speaking for the denomination concerning the building of Union College, E. W. Farnsworth said in July, 1890, that it was "the largest enterprise our people have ever undertaken. Other enterprises have grown to be larger but none has started so large." The plant arising on the eminence southeast of town seemed out of proportion to what was anticipated because it rose out of a cornfield and could be seen for miles in every direction.

The people of Lincoln were surprised at the burst of activity in College View. Late in the summer the *Lincoln Daily Call* carried this story:

Work on Union College is progressing well, though building will be actively continued until September of next year. Two mammoth buildings are now erected and plastered, and work is commenced on the third structure. Few people have any idea of this, the Adventists' structure; a trip to that locality and a view of the enormous buildings being erected will convince the public that it is a big affair, and will build up a southeastern suburb in a lively and substantial manner. Already there is quite a town there.¹²

By August the central building was up to the fourth story and the carpenters were putting on the rafters. Fifty carpenters were at that time employed in addition to workmen of other trades.¹³

In the 1880s large numbers of European immigrants were settling in the region which desired the new college. These uprooted newcomers were particularly susceptible to a change from an episcopal type of ecclesiastical organization to a more democratic one, and the active Adventists' won many of the newcomers to their persuasion. At the camp meetings in North Dakota, there were twice as many in attendance in the big German tent as in its English counterpart; in Minnesota and Iowa the Danish-Norwegians were prominent. In Kansas the Germans and Swedes always had their special assemblages. It was anticipated that the great stream of immigrants then entering the United States would continue and these Adventists of foreign extraction had a real burden to share the faith found in the new world with their countrymen.

When Union College was first projected, the place of the foreign language group was apparently not quite clear but the



College Building, about 1920. . .(Below) North Hall, about 1920. Originally the foreign dormitory, it became the Nebraska Sanitarium in 1899. It again became North Hall, ladies' dormitory in 1920; razed, 1958, and replaced by Rees Hall.



desire of the special ethnic groups made itself felt. Possibly the fact that the incumbent General Conference president was a native of Denmark who had become an Adventist in America and later went to Scandinavia on a mission had some influence in this instance. At any rate there was strong sentiment that the different language groups should receive special attention in the new college. The plan finally adopted was to segregate the major groups in order that their culture not be lost by the melting-pot effect of association with the more numerous English students. It was hoped that students educated in their own languages would evangelize the stream of immigrants which it was expected would continue to pour into America, and indeed that those educated in the new college could be sent as missionaries to evangelize their people in Europe.

In order to further this separate language concept, three big buildings were planned. On the top of the hill was to be the College Building, as it was called, as all instruction was to take place in it. On the south was to be the English dormitory designated South Hall, and to the north was the foreign language dormitory called North Hall. All worked out as planned. The English students entered the west door of the College Building and went upstairs to the third floor where there was a large chapel accommodating over 500 and classrooms surrounding it on the third and fourth floors. The Germans entered a door on the north end of the building, advanced to the second floor where there was a chapel accommodating 100 students in the midst of classrooms. The Scandinavians entered the door at the south side of the building and climbed the stairs to a chapel and classrooms identical to the facilities of the Germans. The first floor of this classroom-administration building was given over to a gymnasium and administration offices. North Hall was larger than South Hall as it was intended to accommodate the "foreigners." There were two entrances on the west side of the long building, one for the Germans toward the north end and the other toward the south end for the Scandinavians. In each case the ladies lived on the two lower floors, which were reached by the usual type of staircases. The men took separate stairs which ran directly to the third and fourth floors. This arrangement of double stairs guaranteed that the living quarters of the two sexes were entirely separate. In the basement were

two dining rooms—one for each language group, although the food was cooked in the same kitchen. One wonders how the Scandinavians and Germans got along eating the same kind of food. The English-speaking students, housed in South Hall, took their meals in the walk-in basement of that building.

With the promise of land from the citizens and a growing optimism, there was talk of erecting six buildings—dividing the Swedes from the Danish-Norwegians, making North Hall the Scandinavian dormitory, and building another to house the Germans. A sixth would house the English-speaking men, leaving South Hall entirely for the English-speaking ladies. These ethereal plans did not materialize, however. The idea of having boys and girls under the same roof in North Hall might be thought to have allowed association between the sexes in the same dormitory, as on some campuses in more recent times, but such was not the case. They were as segregated as though they lived in different buildings. Women were never admitted to the men's floor, and at the entrance of the women's dormitory area was a lady teacher in charge, known as the preceptress, so effectually guarding the young ladies that although all lived under one roof there was no hint of the sexes ever being in each others rooms.¹⁴

When the college was nearing completion in late August, 1891, the annual Nebraska camp meeting convened at Seward with hundreds in attendance from over the state. Wide-awake, the Real Estate Exchange decided to promote an excursion to inspect the new college. Lincoln people under the leadership of J. J. Gilliland met the special train bearing the visitors at the Burlington depot with a band and escorted them to College View. The promised streetcar line at the last minute had been rushed to completion for the occasion. Ten open holiday trolley cars hooked together to form a gala train were boarded by the visitors. As the train moved through the cornfields toward the college, section hands with shovels and picks lined the track working to complete the line for regular service. Up to that time Lincoln transportation had consisted of horsecars, but the electric car was just coming into use and A. R. Henry gave the company \$3,000 as an inducement to get the new invention installed on the College View line. (The first electric cars in the United States had been installed in Richmond, Virginia, only three years before). But "pride goeth before a fall," and such was the

case when the train of ten cars reached a point almost directly west of College View on Prescott Street. When the train of ten heavily loaded cars eased down into the valley, there was not enough electricity in the trolley wire at one time to run the motors in all cars, loaded as they were with a mass of humanity, and motormen had to unhook the cars and run them one at a time up the hill to the corner of present 48th and Prescott.

Many of the jubilant group had brought along well-filled lunch baskets; these were opened and the food spread under a line of cottonwood trees southwest of "the college building." Those who had no lunch were supplied a generous repast of fried chicken and other delectables furnished by the city reception committee. After dinner, as the noon meal was always spoken of by Midwesterners at that time, the band summoned the crowd into the unfinished chapel for a program of band music and speeches. Mayor Austin H. Weier welcomed the visitors and spoke of the pleasure of the city to have the new college, declaring that its presence would cause a growing settlement to spring up in the southeast which in time would be annexed to Lincoln. After the program the guests were taken up into the magnificent clock tower on the College Building to look over the surroundings. They could see for miles in every direction with almost no sign of occupation except to the northwest where lay the little city of Lincoln with its 25,000 inhabitants. A narrow dirt road paralleling Antelope Creek ran toward the state house with scarcely a house along what was to become 60 years later the southeast diagonal. After tours of the other buildings and grounds, the camp meeting visitors returned to Seward bubbling over with enthusiasm for the new college.¹⁵

On September 24, 1891, about 600 guests crowded into the chapel for the dedication of the college. Since the contractor had failed to deliver the opera chairs in time for the occasion, the audience had to sit on planks supported by nail kegs and boxes. The *State Journal* in reporting the speech of architect and builder W. C. Sisley as he turned the keys over to the chairman of the board of trustees stated that one of the pleasures of construction

was that they had never asked for money without getting it which enabled them to pay practically cash for everything, and today he knew of no unpaid bills and no unfilled contract. Ninety-five percent of the money had been expended in Lincoln. . . . He expressed his gratitude to God for marked prosperity bestowed and thanks to the businessmen of Lincoln for the kindly feeling extended and courtesies shown.



College View from the campus showing the intersection of present 48th and Bancroft (State Capitol in background). The house on the left stands on the present site of Union Bank. . . (Below) Union College Scandinavian Chapel about 1907.



Professor W. W. Prescott, who was in charge of Adventist education at the time and functioned as the president of the college in its beginnings, gave the dedicatory address on the subject of Christian education. He emphasized the philosophy of education of the new institution, stating that in Christian education a knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is primary and that the educator should recognize God in everything. Said he: "Our motto is: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' To provide facilities for such education as this have these walls been erected. To such purpose are they dedicated today."¹⁶ Chancellor James H. Canfield of the University of Nebraska welcomed Union to the sisterhood of higher learning in Lincoln.

On the morning of September 30, a dinner bell mounted on a low derrick south of the college building announced the opening of classes. A little handful of students gathered in the big chapel that dark rainy morning—73 in all. Other students came straggling in during the following weeks until the enrollment for the first year was 301.

As is often the case in openings, the buildings were not ready for school to begin, but the start of school had been announced long in advance and the momentum to move ahead was too much to stop. The only dormitory completed was South Hall, which was used to house the girls on the first two stories and the boys on the upper two. The foreign language students had to wait until November for their program to start. There was no water in the dormitory but each room was provided with a commode, bowl, pitcher, and slop jar. Water was procured for this makeshift toilet arrangement from a well outside the building. In the meantime, outside privies apparently were used for daytime convenience. Bath water was heated on the kitchen stove. Each room had a kerosene lamp which the students had to fill and keep clean. There was one double bed in a room and two students, even though they were complete strangers before coming to school, slept together.

The boiler house which was to provide heat and water for the plant was not completed until late in the season, leaving the dormitory and classrooms uncomfortable. To remedy this situation, the administration secured two large heating stoves, which were mounted in the South Hall parlor with the stovepipes stuck out of the window. At first each student had one chair only and

carried his chair from his room down to the heated parlor to study and to the dining room for meals. Great piles of dirt from construction excavation rose around the buildings. Unfortunately, a rainy season set in on September 30, the day classes began. There was not a foot of sidewalk, and the sticky clay made passage from building to building almost impossible.¹⁷

Of all operating problems the first year the most knotty were those of water supply and sewage disposal. When the locating committee inquired about a water supply, they were assured that there was an ample supply—that down 100 feet or so there was a sheet of water, a veritable lake that could never be pumped dry. Had the locating ministers been experienced in such matters, they would have found that water had been a problem in Lincoln ever since the capital city was founded, and the area southeast of the city was no exception. In building the boiler house a dug well 135 feet deep was sunk in the basement of the building. They found a layer of limestone covered by three or four feet of gravel. Now with the greatest of difficulty the well diggers hollowed out a reservoir about 15 feet deep in the limestone, thinking that the water would drain from the gravel and form that veritable lake which they had been told could never be pumped dry. A gravity tank was installed in the clock tower of the College Building and a steam pump lifted hundreds of gallons per minute. It was now thought that the water problem had been solved for all time. But when the big pump pulled up water for a few hours, the reservoir was exhausted. It filled up again but never rapidly enough to satisfy the demands. The school limped along the first year when the enrollment was low, but everyone was conscious of the need to conserve water.

The next summer in an attempt to augment the scanty water supply a well was dug 200 feet southeast of the boiler house. This new source seemed to be capable of supplying an inexhaustible stream, but how were they to get the water into a position where the steam pump could raise it? M. W. Newton, an ingenious faculty member (who in time proved himself a versatile figure, serving as organizer and leader of the choir, photographer, engineer of the town of College View, developer of the town's first fire department, and college accountant) now stepped into the role of hydraulic engineer. Newton figured that if a tunnel could be run between the two wells it would not only

lead the water from the superior source to the powerhouse well but that it would tap sheet water along the way, thus bringing an abundant supply to the steam pump.

Accordingly, Newton surveyed the distance. He led one digging crew and Enoch Jenkins, one of the college builders, a practical man, led another from the opposite end. The rival crews met as mathematically calculated at mid-point between the two wells. The meeting was a gala College View occasion, many citizens coming to inspect the feat of the ingenious young "professor." Newton had used little cars mounted on rails to carry out the excavation dirt and now by way of celebration he carried citizens through the tunnel from one well to the other. Newton's wife was one of the first to make the unique excursion.

It now seemed that the water problem had really been solved. But alas, again came the cry, "The well's dry!" This second year of the college operation, when the enrollment ran to a high of 607, the water was so scanty that at times there was scarcely enough to wash dishes, let alone do laundry and take care of the personal needs of the students. Eventually, in an attempt to solve the problem, Newton dug a well about a block north of Calvert Street and laid a pipe line to the boiler house. Still later, three wells were drilled on the college farm about halfway between Calvert Street and Antelope Creek and three powerful windmills were installed to pump water up to the campus, where a series of huge cisterns were used to store water for use during periods of calm weather.¹⁸ It was not until about 1931, after College View had been annexed by Lincoln and the city put in a 30-inch line to Ashland, that Union College and the rest of Lincoln could count on an abundant supply of water.

The other vexing problem of the first year was the disposal of sewage. Before school opened, a large cesspool was dug on the east side of the campus but incomplete knowledge of sewage treatment for large numbers made it impossible to anticipate the problems ahead in this matter. The copious rains which soaked the ground like a sponge worsened the problem. The soil refused to absorb the sewage, and before long it was necessary to lay a tile line to Antelope Creek to carry off the soakage. By spring the residents in the Antelope Valley area were threatening to bring suit against the college because of this nuisance. The only possible solution seemed to be to lay a sewer line all the way to Lincoln, a distance of four miles to the nearest sewer.



General dining hall, 1904. . . (Below) Dressmaking class in College Building about 1904; Nora Hiatt, instructor.



Permission from the county commissioners was gained to run the line down Normal Boulevard in Antelope Valley and connect with the Lincoln sewer system at 21st and J Streets. But since the connecting line lay through residential sections, the citizens saw a chance to get a sewage system at the expense of the college, which would have been compelled at a prohibitive figure to lay a larger main than necessary for the college. The residents threatened to stop the work with an injunction as soon as it should begin. M. W. Newton, ever resourceful, made the survey and set the stakes but was frankly told by the residents along the route that the college could never turn a spadeful of earth unless they were allowed in on the project. Newton sought help from two German-Russian students, and left the record of how he solved the problem:

Henry Block and his brother, who were Russians. . . had many friends in the Russian settlement on the west side of Lincoln. These were all husky laboring men. I had Mr. Block go down among his friends and engage about sixty of these men to come and dig a ditch for us through the residence section, and do it entirely and finish laying the pipe all on a single Sunday. We began at daylight and by dark Sunday evening we had the sewer built from 27th street to 21st and J streets, covered and ready for use. Of course, they could get no injunction on Sunday, as no court was open.

In 1890 most private colleges were not co-educational, especially in the South and East, but Oberlin College years before had been the first to introduce the radical idea of allowing the male and female sexes to attend the same educational institution. Possibly as a result of her influence, Adventist colleges were co-educational from their beginnings.

Because they were liberal in that respect, however, did not indicate that loose association of the sexes was countenanced. Quite the contrary; any coupling off or indications of courtship were strictly forbidden. According to the first college catalog of 1891: "Gentlemen must not escort ladies on the street or to or from public gatherings." In order to prevent special friendships from evolving, "town days" were set apart; for example, the women were allowed to board the streetcar and go to town on Mondays and Wednesdays, and the men on Tuesdays and Thursdays. For the few who went home for Christmas vacation, the men were allowed to leave on one day and women students had to take the train on another day, lest forbidden friendships arise by riding on the same train together. To emphasize the faculty horror of the formation of a romantic friendship while students were in school, on May 1, 1892, the faculty passed an

action refusing readmission for another year to a young married couple because they were married only a few days after the close of the winter term, and since they had never met before coming to school, it was certain that they carried on a courtship while they were students.²⁰

The parents seemed to approve of these rules against "sentimentality," as it was denominated, but the students viewed the matter differently. In 1894 Mae Pines from Marshalltown, Iowa, sighed: "There is an awful gulf between the boys and girls here." Nevertheless, the faculty members in trying to prevent normal wholesome association among the students made a great deal of trouble for themselves. In October, 1903, the faculty minutes declared: "There's nothing that has caused more real anxiety in the school than that one question—the co-mingling of the sexes."²¹

There was one ray of light in the social darkness for the love-smitten swain who had some encouragement from a member of the distaff circle. Each Thursday afternoon was set apart as the time for "the calling hour." A young man could, upon securing permission from the preceptress, call on a young lady "in the public parlor." A half hour was allowable, though 20 minutes was accounted better taste. Another break which allowed a bit of mingling was the Sabbath afternoon sing. From the noon meal until 3 o'clock the parlor in the ladies' dormitory was open for the ladies and gentlemen to gather around the piano and sing. As a precaution to those whose presence was accounted for, not so much because of their vocal ability as their social skill, the faculty warned that there be no loitering in the ladies' "home." It was often possible to bootleg a little visit during the singing, however, since it was logical to sit and rest a bit from the exertions of vigorous singing, and it was not natural to sit alone in an unsociable manner. An ever-present faculty member held that extra-legal sweetness to a minimum, however.

The students were allowed on limited occasions to attend selected concerts in the city or at the Normal School on the corner of 56th and Normal Streets, but no dating was involved in these appointments. Attendants had to secure their culture in splendid segregation. The boys went in one group accompanied by a male faculty member and the girls went in a separate group with a lady faculty member as chaperone.

Although Union was called a college, actually only a mere

handful of the enrollees were ready to take college work at first. The latter were primarily transfer students from other colleges. The large majority were what was usually known at that time as preparatory students; viz., academy enrollees. The rules were made with the presumption that the students were in school to apply themselves to learning and that the faculty should see that they got their money's worth. On week nights a bell rang for study period, and everyone in the dormitory was expected to stay in his room for study until 9:45, when the first warning for bedtime was indicated by the engineer at the powerhouse pulling the electric switch momentarily to warn the whole campus of the close of study period. Ten minutes later a second "blink" warned that lights would go out in five minutes. Promptly at 10 the switch was pulled, and every room and hallway in each building became as dark as a tomb. This near-military regimen, although void of democratic decision on the part of the student, gave every opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of study, hopefully giving the parents value received for the expense of college attendance by their offspring.

According to the first catalog, the total expenses were \$15 a month. This included board, furnished room, light, heat, plain washing, and tuition in the regular course of study. In accord with the reform education plan handed down from earlier times, an hour of labor a day was required in addition to the cash payment. This "domestic work," as it was called, was required in part as a democratic measure in order that wealthy students might not gain a social ascendancy over those with little means. It was, however, principally a family plan where each one helped with the chores. In addition to this, roommates had to clean their own room and carry water. The student who was delinquent in his "domestic work" was charged 8¢ an hour for every hour he failed to perform. This set the wage for all work done on campus.²²

In keeping with the custom of the day, the college curriculum consisted of strait-jacket lists of subjects which were required of every student enrolled in a given year. They were especially heavy in ancient languages and mathematics, as was customary in the classical education of the times. In the first few years the two courses of study were the scientific and classical of four years each leading to the bachelor's degree, but by 1893 a three-year Biblical course was offered. By 1899 a reform movement

had come from the General Conference to make Union College Christian. The classics were dropped, all pagan authors eliminated, and the Bible used as a textbook for the study of Greek and Latin.²³

Professor Prescott, the first president of Union College, was concerned that the rural-minded students learn to become ladies and gentlemen. Meals were served in courses. Men students were addressed as Mr. and even little girls of 13 years were called by the title of Miss.²⁴ Each student was taught politeness, etiquette, good form, and social ease. Many young men had never worn a white shirt, starched collar, and necktie (all marks of a college student of that day) before they arrived at Union. More used to breaking horses and herding cattle than attempting to be gentlemen in a drawing room, they had to learn social graces from faculty members and the more sophisticated older students. The rustic frontier traits of the students are indicated as late as 1904, when the faculty in session felt compelled to ask the director of dining service and the business manager to go through the dormitories and collect all revolvers and other dangerous weapons from the students and to forbid the use of target guns on the campus. Often the call of the wild freedom of the range was stronger than the pursuit of knowledge, and the thought of the unused horse and saddle at home made the young men long for the corral and roundup. Upon at least one occasion one of these broncho riders got his parents to ship a carload of wild range horses to College View, and he and his ranch-bred friends went into the business of breaking horses, preferring that sort of thing to washing pots and pans in the domestic work assignment. The city fathers finally put an end to the breaking of mustangs by passing an ordinance forbidding the riding of wild horses on the streets.

The late 1880s were boom years in the West, but the early 1890s ushered in a series of devastating dry years. To compound matters, the Panic of 1893 brought a jolting economic halt to the boom in the West. College View was an even more decided boom town than the rest of Nebraska. When the college was finished, there was little employment in the mushroom village. Many who had bought lots with a 25 percent down payment found themselves unable to make their payments and moved away. The enrollment, which had mushroomed to 607 the second year, dropped to 312 in 1895. With dormitories half emp-

ty, the board of trustees was persuaded to lease the largest dormitory for use as a medical institution. This move was patterned after the general headquarters of the church at Battle Creek, Michigan, where Dr. Kellogg's famous Battle Creek Sanitarium stood across the street from the denomination's first collegiate institution, Battle Creek College. In response to the invitation of College View people, in 1895 Dr. Kellogg came to College View and started the Nebraska Sanitarium. The empty Union College dormitory, North Hall, in time was taken over completely by the institution. College and sanitarium operated on the Union College campus under interlocking boards of trustees. Each had something to contribute to the other: college students found employment and medical care, and the sanitarium enjoyed the cultural advantages provided by the college. Nursing students received their preparatory education at the college and on occasion a sanitarium doctor taught a science class at the college.

The Nebraska Sanitarium, patterned after its Battle Creek parent, was a medical institution with emphasis on hydrotherapy and other natural treatments. With urbanized life and a more hectic competitive daily program, many patients came for relief from chronic ailments. A lengthy stay while learning to relax and form new health habits was prescribed. A grove on the northeast corner of the campus invited nature walks; and a life of relaxation was promoted by a tennis court, croquet ground, ample sun porch, beautiful spacious veranda, shady lawn, and swinging lawn chairs. This together with daily steam baths and massage made the relaxation cure more effective. A vegetarian diet completed the sanitarium prescription.

A bakery was soon built on the campus and the institution began to make Battle Creek health food. Granola, the parent food from which C. W. Post developed granenuts and other foods originated by Dr. Kellogg, were widely sold. Perhaps most important was peanut butter, which was to bring local fame to College View. David Weiss, who in the early 1890s had attended Union College, capitalized on the peanut business. He lived with his mother on the south side of present-day Prescott Street between 47th and 48th Streets and conducted a flourishing peanut business.²⁵ He shipped in quantities of goobers from the southern states and sold them as roasted

peanuts or made peanut butter (a new thing in Nebraska) in Lincoln and Omaha. At that time College View had an outstanding band which was invited to march in parades down O Street and regularly played on Sunday afternoons on the Union College campus. Hundreds came on streetcars from Lincoln and strolled about the grounds listening to the concerts. Enterprising small boys bought roasted peanuts from Weiss and hawked them on these occasions. Around 1900 boys in the grandstand at the Lincoln baseball park, selling their wares, shouted:

Candy to eat
 Gum to chew
 And roasted peanuts,²⁶
 From College View.

Perhaps because of availability of goobers in College View, or possibly because of a tendency of people to laugh about the vegetarianism of the Adventists, the name "Peanut Hill" was given to the eminence on which the college and sanitarium were located.

NOTES

1. "Chardon Street and Bible Conventions," *The Dial* (Boston), July, 1842, 100-101; *The Liberator* (Boston), August 8, 1841; May 20-June 3, October 28, 1842; Everett Dick, "William Miller and the Advent Crisis, 1831-1844" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1930), 33.
2. Arthur W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 442-444, 450.
3. Richard W. Schwartz, *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1970), 118-122; Horace B. Powell, *The Original Has This Signature—W. K. Kellogg* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), 102-104; Gerald Carson, *Cornflake Crusade* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1957), 13, 107.
4. *Topeka* (Kansas) *Daily Capital*, May 26, 28, 1889; *Review and Herald*, (Battle Creek, Michigan) June 25, 1889, 412.
5. Minutes of the Locating Committee, Union College Library, Lincoln, Nebraska; David D. Rees and Everett Dick, *Union College, Fifty Years of Service* (Lincoln, Nebraska; Union College Press, 1941), 11-12.
6. *Daily Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), January 20, 1890, 4.
7. Rees and Dick, *Union College, Fifty Years of Service*, 14-15.
8. George E. Hutches, "History of Union College and College View" (Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1936), 26; Everett Dick, *Union: College of the Golden Cords* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Union College Press, 1967), 24-25.

9. *Lincoln Call*, February 7, 1890, 4.
10. Register of Deeds, Lancaster County, Nebraska, Book 26, 337; Book 55, 292; Union College Abstract of Title, Union College Business Office, Lincoln, Nebraska.
11. Report of A. R. Henry in *General Conference Bulletin*, 1891, 40.
12. Rees and Dick, *Union College, Fifty Years of Service*, 20.
13. *Review and Herald*, August 19, 1890.
14. Everett Dick, personal knowledge.
15. *Daily Nebraska State Journal*, August 20, 1891, 4; August 29, 1891, 7; interview with Mertie Wheeler, early Union College student, Dick Manuscripts, Union College Library.
16. *Daily Nebraska State Journal*, September 25, 1891.
17. "An Alumnus," *Educational Messenger*, College View, Nebraska, Annual Number, 1910, 40.
18. Rees and Dick, *Union College, Fifty Years of Service*, 57-59; the story of the struggle for an ample supply of water and effective sewage disposal was secured by D. D. Rees in 1938 from M. Wallace Newton, the principal actor in this drama.
19. M. W. Newton to D. D. Rees, quoted in Rees and Dick, *Union College, Fifty Years of Service*, 60-61.
20. Minutes of the Faculty, May 1, 1892, Union College Library.
21. *Ibid.*, October 4, 1903.
22. *Union College Calendar*, 1891, 12.
23. *Ibid.*, 1893, 19; *Union College Yearbook*, 1899-1900, 4.
24. Mae Pines to Dora Pines, November 7, 1894, in Mae Pine's bound letter book, Dick Manuscripts, Union College Library.
25. Interview with Claris B. Morey, postmaster of College View, Dick Manuscripts, Union College Library.
26. Legendary source—oral statement of Dr. D. G. Olson, a student at Union College in 1900, to his son Boyd Olson, who quoted it to Everett Dick; as a student in 1920, the author remembers buying roasted peanuts at the Weiss home; Everett Dick, *Union: College of the Golden Cords*, 127-128.