

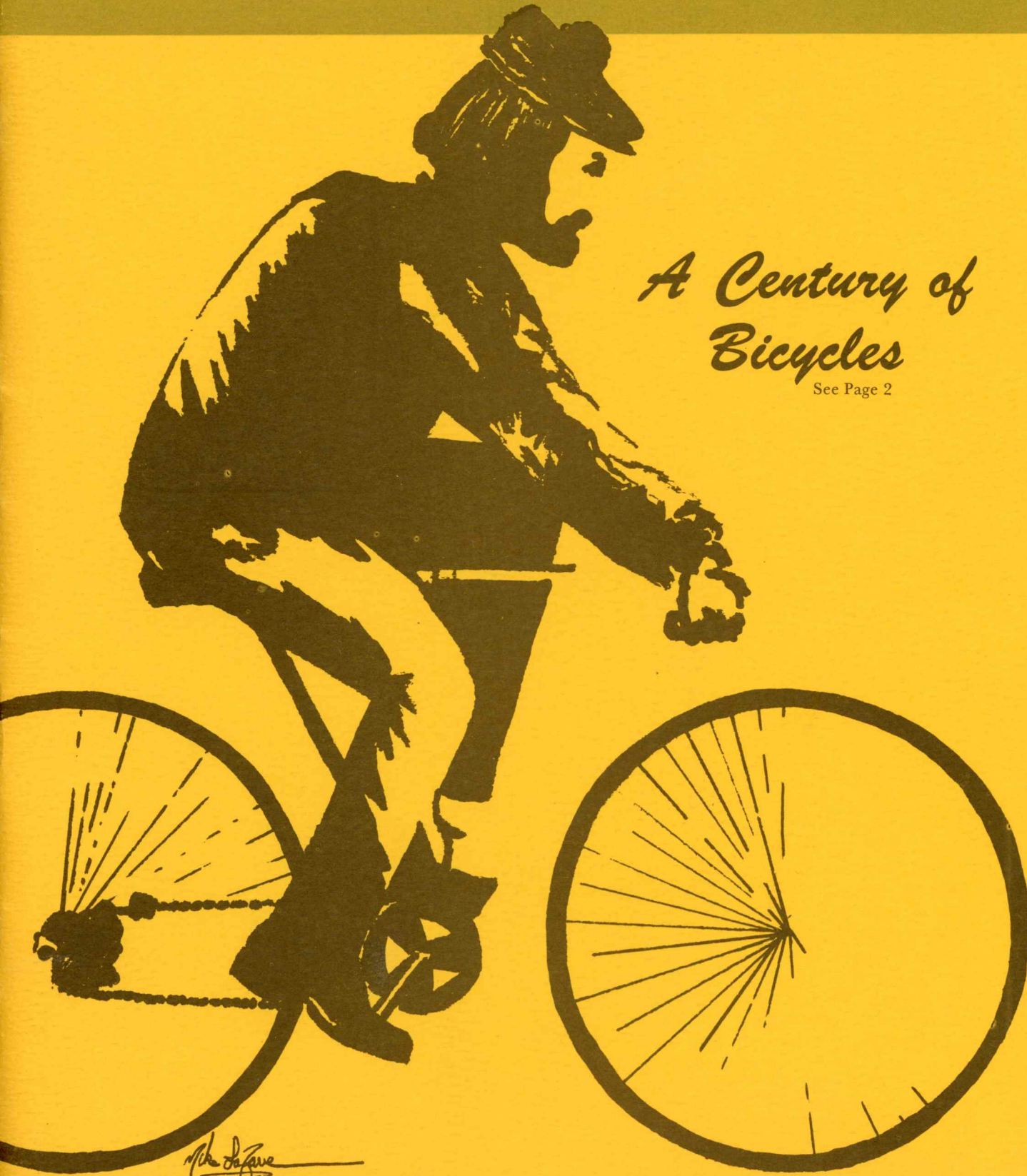
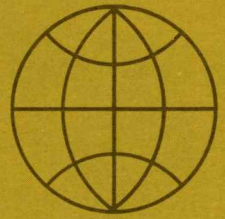
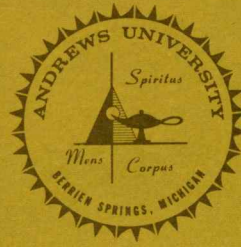
ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

FOCUS

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A Century of Bicycles

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John DeFave

Century of Bicycles

by OPAL H. YOUNG



At the turn of the century, two bicycles and their riders arrived at a place they were seeking for—the perfect location for a certain kind of college.

“You can look for a site from here to Traverse City, but you’ll not find one equal to the bluff out there overlooking the river for a school,” said the owner of the parcel of land where Andrews University now stands.

And they didn’t! Not that they hadn’t tried! A systematic scouting program was organized, and the territory around Paw Paw, Benton Harbor, and South Haven was explored on bicycles. Sallie Sutherland is quoted as recalling: “My husband and I rode all over this country on bicycles. We went both up and down the [St. Joseph] river.” They almost settled on an area by Goguac Lake until the bicycle scouts discovered the choice land lying near Berrien Springs.

One “beautiful day in May” of 1901, educators Edward A. Sutherland and Percy T. Magan took a bicycle ride through deep sand and dust on the narrow, hilly roads that led from South Bend to Niles and on beyond to the Edgar F. Garland

farm (and the adjoining Richardson farm). There it was that Magan made his now famous \$5.00 option payment to buy the land for a college that was to be moved from Battle Creek. Rumor has it that the two men spent the night camping out on the bluff overlooking the river.

A few days later, a score of officials sat there on the banks of the river while they waited for a group of “black-frosted ministers” to arrive in a buggy and walk over the farms in question. And on June 16, the “black frocks,” and others involved, voted officially at a meeting in the town of Berrien Springs to buy the 272 acres at the cost of \$18,000.

And so it came about that this acreage became the nucleus of a campus that today comprises over 1400 acres. The fruit orchards gradually disappeared as buildings, beginning with a student-faculty homemade one, began to go up—buildings that served well for many years but have since been replaced with a plant that consists of 35 modern buildings and equipment valued at \$21,380,000. The fifty hardy students who had dared to follow the college down from Battle Creek for that first rugged year or so were seed for the between two- and three-thousand enrollment that Andrews registers yearly.

With the extension of the campus and distances between buildings, many of the students ride bicycles to and from class, laboratories, and work assignments. There were almost no bicycles on campus when the college put down its first roots; students, then, had no money for bicycles and no time to ride them—they were building a college, the hard way! A do-it-yourself assignment.

When competitive sports were banned at Battle Creek College, students and teachers came under the spell of a bicycle craze. Dr. Emmett K. Vande Vere, author of *The Wisdom Seekers*, tells of the appearance of the bicycle at the college. During one of the “Rhetoricals” held at chap-

el on Friday mornings, a young Englishman who had come direct from England, drew a picture on the blackboard of a “new-style bicycle that had two big wheels of moderate size and the seat midway between them, with a sprocket chain from the crank with pedals to drive the rear wheel.” It did not seem to be very practical. But an improved machine was brought out the next year by the Columbia Bicycle Company.

Bicycles became the order of the day, and Vande Vere notes that the cyclists staged races, carnivals, and parades. One evening in May, 1894, some 250 cyclists paraded from the college campus through the suburbs and city, their wheels decorated with flags and Japanese lanterns.

“The advent of the bicycle,” Vande Vere says, “disrupted the world as young women then knew it; now they could mingle more freely with men than ever before. The college administration and chaperons felt deep concern. . . . America was changing, and with easier travel available to students, the job of being college president would never be the same again.” (Of course, President Prescott hadn’t seen anything yet!)

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Cover Art is by Mike LaFave

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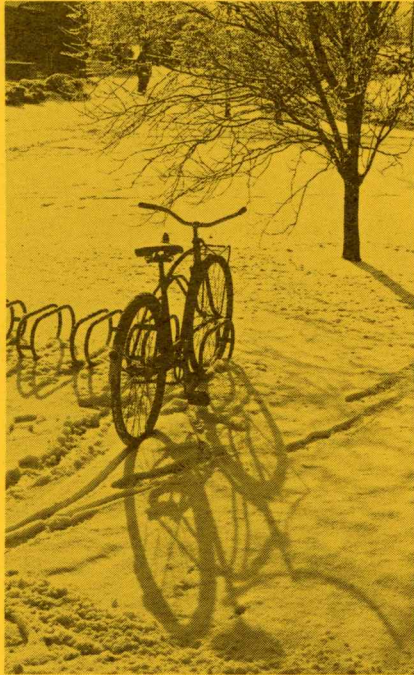
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Century of Bicycles (Continued from page 2)



A testimony from Ellen G. White on the bicycle craze and the unnecessary amount of money spent on this pleasure vehicle brought the bicycle carnival at the college to an abrupt end.

But there were some bicycles about when the bicycle scouting team discovered the site that we now know as the AU campus.

Some of us who have been here for many years on this campus, first as students, then returning to teach or engage in other types of service, have learned to love this campus. We have watched it grow. We have learned to love every tree—from the stately spruces, full of wind and sound, that lined the campus thoroughfare connecting the “Stone Road” with the river dock—to the artful and complex landscaping of varieties of trees that delight the eye on today’s “campus beautiful.”

Among those trees that we knew the first half of the century was the “Option Elm,” a young elm tree standing a few hundred feet away from the spot where Magan whipped the five-dollar bill option money from his pocket, in a moment of inspiration, to hold the land for the college.

We watched the tree grow—and we watched it die, when in 1967 the

Dutch Elm disease took its toll of many such stately trees over the country. We also had a part in arranging for the huge slab of the tree to be saved and the growth rings marked with labels, indicating the important events that corresponded with the rings.

We have watched many dramatic changes, too, on the campus. We feel a justifiable pride (after having lived in Birch or Maple Halls or listened to the sounds coming from the “unsound-proof” music building of those times, or worked among the smells of the quantitative and qualitative chemistry labs—no stack to usher them out of the building) yes, a justifiable pride in the new buildings such as the Science Complex. The three-halled complex was dedicated the last of October to research on the God-Creator premise: “In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth . . . and without Him was not anything made that was made.” (It has a rack for bicycles, too, at one of its entrances, for the convenience of students.)

But even as we are thankful for progress, we also note with nostalgic memory that the halls of this complex carry names we knew as former teachers, colleagues, or peers: Haughey Hall, Halenz Hall, Price Hall. We remember other names on campus—and the dedication of the deans memorialized in Burman and Lamson Halls and Rachel Christman Chapel; EMC’s “golden-age” president, Griggs, whose name appears on another building. And many others who have loved this campus and who have come and labored and left their names here.

We remember the old cinder paths that led from Maple Hall to Birch Hall and down past the sundial to the old onion-top-architected administration building. As class members we helped put in the first sidewalks on campus with class funds—and hard labor. (They make bicycle riding on campus easier now!)

We remember the untouched beauty of “The Point” above the river and Mystery Island, both with a history of their own. We remember

the old paths skirting the campus where students hiked and lovers met; and the “Garden of Eden” down by Lemon Creek where the first wildflowers announced the spring, with hosts of violets and white trillium coming on a bit later. It was a favorite walk for students AWOL from classes when spring fever spread through listless classrooms.

Hiking was the order of the day. Neither cars nor bicycles were available. If, as a new student, you were invited on a hike, you knew you “had it made.” Many a young lover won or lost in his wooing during a hiking party.

Yes, we are happy for the progress and growth with which God has seen fit to honor Andrews since those days in 1901 when the college was moved to Berrien Springs in response to a message from Ellen White: “It is time to get out now” [from Battle Creek]; and later, “This move is in accordance with God’s design for the school before the institution was established. . . . Begin at once to look for a place where the school can be conducted on right lines.”

And so today, after nearly a century of bicycles later, as we observe our Centennial year, we think back on that eventful bicycle scouting trip in the early summer of 1901, over sandy, dusty roads; and the subsequent establishment of a college near the bluff overlooking the river. Truly, as Garland pointed out, there couldn’t have been a “nicer spot!”



Everybody loves a bike!

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