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**Massachusetts Agriculture: Charles S. Walker
And the National Agrarian Crusade of the 1880s and 90s**

By

Gerald F. Vaughn¹

Historian Thomas H. Greer tells us:

Before the War Between the States there had been little organization of farmers as a special-interest group. But from 1870 to 1896, successive reform movements developed with increasing power. They came as a result of revolutionary changes in agriculture and world economy. Farmers, adversely affected by these changes, moved to protect themselves.²

Greer further indicates:

The farmers fought the bankers and financiers in an effort to make money freer and to reduce interest charges. They put pressure on politicians to shift the tax burden from real property to income. They attacked the railroad and warehouse owners in order to lower

¹ The author acknowledges with thanks the very helpful assistance of Michael F. Milewski, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts.

² Thomas H. Greer, *American Social Reform Movements: Their Patterns Since 1865* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), 61.

transportation and storage costs. They fought the tycoons of industry in an attempt to break monopoly prices on articles the farmers bought.³

Massachusetts agriculture consisted largely of independent and conservative farmers, who at first were somewhat hesitant to become a part of this national agrarian crusade. But by the 1880s and 1890s, Massachusetts farmers were actively organizing. Professor Charles S. Walker of the Massachusetts Agricultural College (now the University of Massachusetts) reported in 1897 that there were in the Commonwealth “263 organizations of farmers recorded, besides others that are constantly being formed. These organizations are not ephemeral bodies, popular today and disbanded tomorrow, but are institutions of many years experience, firmly established in the hearts of the farmers.”⁴

Charles Swan Walker (1846-1933), initially appointed professor of history and political economy in 1886 and later named professor of mental and political science, taught at Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst through 1906. The college had been established in 1863 under provisions of the federal Morrill Act of 1862, which created a college of agriculture and mechanical arts in each state and funded them by sale of land-grants from the national public domain.

Walker’s time at Massachusetts Agricultural College coincided almost exactly with the administration of college president Henry Hill Goodell, whose presidency began in 1886 and ended in 1905 due to ill health. Goodell’s career at the college spanned 38 years as professor and president, a period of recovery that he and his faculty turned into advance. By 1890, enrollment reached 144 students, exceeding the 1870 enrollment for the first time in 20 years. The college won the grand prize for the exhibit of its educational work at the St. Louis exposition of 1904 – a fitting tribute to Goodell’s able administration. By 1905 enrollment reached 218, and the incoming freshman class was the largest recorded to that date.

³ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴ C. S. Walker, “The Massachusetts Farmer and Taxation,” *Yale Review* 6 (May 1897-Feb. 1898), 67-68.

From this vantage point Walker was in a position not only to observe but also, by his endorsement, to influence the farmers' movement in Massachusetts and throughout the United States. As an analyst, he wrote major articles with a recurring approach: "The innumerable details of the movement may be classified under organization, education, cooperation, political action."⁵

Who was this professor of economics whose life and work were shaped by training in theology and philosophy (Walker was an ordained Congregationalist clergyman and chaplain of both Massachusetts Agricultural College and the Massachusetts State Grange, the commonwealth's leading farm organization). The following essay seeks to examine Walker's life and work and his important contributions to the agrarian crusade in Massachusetts and the nation. The study of his major writings on Massachusetts agriculture at the height of the farmer movement of the 1880s and 1890s forms the basis of this essay.

Walker was born October 7, 1846, in Cincinnati, Ohio. His father was Samuel Swan Walker, a physician, teacher, lecturer, architect, and portrait and landscape painter. His mother was Harriet Newell (Fowles) Walker. Charles was educated in the Cincinnati schools and at the Albion (NY) Academy, after which during the Civil War he served as a private in Company G., 137th Ohio Infantry, from May 2 to August 19, 1864. He then attended Marietta College in 1864-1865, and next transferred to Yale as a junior in 1865. He was an outstanding student and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He received his bachelor's degree from Yale in 1867 and master's degree in 1870.

In the academic year 1867-1868, Walker studied at Yale Divinity School. The next year he attended Andover Theological Seminary. He returned to Yale Divinity School for his final year of theological training, 1869-1870, and received his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1870. Having been licensed to preach in 1869, he was ordained in the Congregational ministry in 1871. He served pastorates and/or taught in seminaries in Connecticut, West Virginia, and New York from 1871 to 1874. In 1873 he married Alice M. Morehouse, and eventually they had two children, both sons.

⁵ C.S. Walker, "The Farmers' Movement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 4 (Mar. 1894), 96.

Beginning in 1874 and continuing through 1886, Walker was a pastor at churches in Massachusetts with the exception of two years (1879-1881), which were spent ministering in New Jersey. He was a charter member of the Connecticut Valley Congregational Club in 1882. His last pastorate before coming on the faculty of Massachusetts Agricultural College was at South Congregational Church in Amherst, Massachusetts, from 1881 to 1886. While there he undertook graduate study in political economy and philosophy at Amherst College in 1884-1885. Anson D. Morse taught political economy, and Julius Hawley Seelye and Charles E. Garman taught philosophy when Walker was a student at Amherst.

Walker's first major published article in the field of political economy appears to have been "The Condition of the Laboring Classes of England," in *New Englander* magazine for September 1884. Here he compared and contrasted the levels of living of British and American laboring classes, including both agricultural and nonagricultural labor, with emphasis on the British.⁶

Walker's Ph.D. dissertation in philosophy was titled *An Examination of Herbert Spencer's View of the Evolution of Religion*. His dissertation sought to study and, where possible, to refute some of Spencer's religious theories. Walker received his doctorate in 1885.

Upon his appointment in 1886 to the Massachusetts Agricultural College faculty, Walker soon became active in the newly-founded American Economic Association, serving on its national council for several years, and was an officer in the AEA's Connecticut Valley Branch. He later became a member, and served on the national council, of the National Economic League. He also joined the American Academy of Political and Social Science and the American Statistical Association. Examples of early articles he wrote, apart from those regarding the farmers' movement, include "The Limit of Power" and "The Civil and Political Relations of the Discovery of America."⁷

⁶ C.S. Walker, "The Condition of the Laboring Classes of England," *New Englander*, Sept. 1884, APS Online 695-706.

⁷ Charles S. Walker, "The Limit of Power," *Christian Union* 40 (July 11, 1889), APS Online 49-50; Chas. S. Walker, "The Civil and Political Relations of the

Joining the faculty as professor of history and political economy, Walker also served as college chaplain and secretary of the faculty. As college chaplain he conducted a chapel service each morning and also each Sunday's church service.

It is illuminating to ponder the courses Walker taught each year, as to their sequence and content, when his title was changed to professor of mental science and political science. To the junior class he taught Rhetoric and Composition in the fall term; to the senior class he taught Mental Science in the fall term, Political Economy in the winter term, and Constitutional History in the spring term.

The 29th Annual Report of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, published January 1892, gives much useful insight to what Walker taught. Of the instruction in Rhetoric and Composition, his basic course, he said:

Daily exercises in writing have been required from each student, together with more formal essays. Topics have been assigned, which have compelled the writers to search far and wide for material; investigating things, consulting libraries, questioning men...Each man is required to do his best, to do original work in the investigation of the topics assigned him, and then to give the class, in the best form possible, the results of his labor. In this way, during the last two years of his college course, the student is afforded a view of American and English men of letters and statesmen, and participates in a serious discussion of the practical and social questions of the day in the field of morals, economics, education and political life.⁸

Discovery of America," *American Journal of Politics* 1(Dec. 1892), APS Online 579-586.

⁸ C. S. Walker, "Department of Mental and Political Science," *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Agricultural*

Regarding Mental Science, Walker said of the end in view: “Mental Science has for its object of study the mind itself, and the brain considered as the instrument of thought...Especial care is taken to train the mind to collect data, to discriminate essentials from unessentials, to discover the law in phenomena, and from known laws to derive wider applications to particular cases and new problems.”⁹

Next, Walker took up in Political Economy, the “elements of the science of American economics” and said: “Especial pains are taken to show how the farmer, who has produced crops of the best quality, at the lowest cost, may exchange them to the best advantage and thus increase his own wealth while benefiting all classes of society.” As the textbook he used the abridged edition of Francis Amasa Walker’s *Political Economy*, which was 415 pages and originally printed in this form in 1884.¹⁰

Walker considered Mental Science and Political Economy as preparatory training for Constitutional History. He said: “The history of our government is studied and the origin and evolution of present institutions are shown. In all the work the end kept prominently before the mind is the practical one of fitting the young man for the duties of the citizen.”¹¹

Striving to produce independent thinkers, Walker said: “In the discussion of economic and political questions the constant aim of the lecturer has been simply to help the student to do his own thinking and to

College, Public Document No. 31 (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., State Printers, 1892), 43.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43, 56.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

come to his own conclusions after a fair and full consideration of the facts and principles from the best points of view within reach.”¹²

In 1892 a modified elective system was introduced for the senior year. Only two courses were required, and the rest were electives. Harold Whiting Cary, in his history of Massachusetts Agricultural College, observed: “The most popular electives in 1894 proved to be the courses of Walker in political economy, of Brooks in agriculture, Goodell in German, and Goessmann in chemistry.”¹³

Turning to Walker’s work outside the classroom, one of his earliest statements on social reform organizations was a paper titled “The Knights of Labor,” presented circa 1887 before the Connecticut Valley Branch of the American Economic Association. The Knights of Labor were not directly involved in the farmer movement, but instead were instrumental in the labor movement. The Knights of Labor, however, appear to have been a useful model for and also supported the farm movement. Walker saw many parallels between the plight of the farmer and that of unorganized labor.

In 1890 Walker wrote an article in *The Andover Review* titled “The Farmer’s Alliance.” This was his first major contribution to the literature of the farm movement. In a brilliant statistical analysis, he showed that in Massachusetts, “When from the value of the gross amount of agricultural products we deduct the cost of the farmer’s raw material, wages paid to hired help, taxes, and interest upon his actual capital, we find that the remuneration of the average farmer for his superintendence and for his own manual labor proves to be but \$326.49, while the wages of the average hired farm laborer in \$345.00.” The farmer takes the risk in operating a farm, yet earns less than his own hired man.¹⁴

Walker was trying to create greater awareness among readers that Massachusetts farmers, and other American farmers, were not getting

¹² Ibid., 44.

¹³ Harold Whiting Cary, *The University of Massachusetts: A History of One Hundred Years* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1962), 75-76.

¹⁴ C.S. Walker, “The Farmer’s Alliance,” *The Andover Review* 14 (Aug. 1890), APS Online 128.

their fair share of the net profits of agriculture. He was particularly concerned for the New England farm economy, grounded in his personal experiences and observations while living and traveling throughout the region. Describing conditions in New England, from Canada to Long Island Sound, he said, "When the average farmer of New England receives for his wages of superintendence and manual labor combined less than the average mill hand, and less, even, than his own hired man, is it strange that he offers to sell his farm for less than the cost of the buildings and, failing in that, abandons the old homestead?"¹⁵

Wilbert L. Anderson, in his classic work *The Country Town: A Study of Rural Evolution*, observed: "By 1890 the abandonment of farms had become so common as to provoke much popular interest. The census of that year brought out an alarming evidence for a loss of five million acres, of which four fifths was improved land, was recorded of the farms of the North Atlantic States, --every state in the division sharing this decrease." In Massachusetts alone, improved acres of farmland fell from 2.1 million in 1880, to 1.6 million in 1890, to 1.3 million in 1900, and to 1.2 million in 1910.¹⁶

Taxation was a core issue, and Walker averred "the indisputable fact still remains that the farmer pays taxes at rates assessed upon the highest possible valuation, in many cases far exceeding its true value." Finally, "The fact is already too manifest that the American farmer is directly confronted with the question, Whether or no he shall, like the tillers of the soil in the Old World, degenerate from his honorable station to the condition of the serf?"¹⁷

Walker then proceeded to show how he felt the newly-formed National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union efficiently promoted social, business, and educational ends. He asserted: "If the farmers' movement shall succeed in turning the public opinion of the nation to the necessity of 'demanding equal rights for all and special favors for none,'

¹⁵ Ibid., 129, 131, 133.

¹⁶ Wilbert L. Anderson, *The Country Town: A Study of Rural Evolution* (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1906), 66.

¹⁷ Ibid., 131, 133.

and of 'suppressing personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices,' it will atone for many mistakes and prove itself to be one of the great developments of a people's life."¹⁸

Ultimately the greatest achievement of the Farmers' Alliance proved to be its awakening of agrarian consciousness, informing farmers about their problems and giving them experience in collaborative efforts. It paved the way for Populism, the People's Party, and William Jennings Bryan, to pursue agrarian reforms via political methods. Despite the failure of the People's Party to attain great political influence, and the party's gradual collapse, nearly all of its objectives were reached over the next half-century by other means during the Progressive and New Deal eras.

Walker also wrote favorably, if less fervently, of the Grange, which in Massachusetts comprised a State Grange, 15 district granges, and 135 subordinate granges with a membership of over 12,000. He said, "The Grange once established, maintains itself to this day, and has proved a powerful instrument. Of late years the Grange, composed of the more prosperous farmers, has been very conservative, keeping out of politics and devoting itself principally to social and educational interests." Elsewhere Walker observed that the Grange was "intent upon exerting its power at the opportune moment and place to secure the best effect."¹⁹

Walker was chaplain of the Massachusetts State Grange in 1888-1900, at the height of the farmers' movement. In June 1892, Walker gave, as the college baccalaureate sermon, an address titled "The Duty of the Hour." An abstract of it was published at the request of the master and secretary of the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry.

What is that duty to which Walker referred? The following abstract gives his answer:

¹⁸ Ibid., 139.

¹⁹ Ibid., 135; C. S. Walker, "The Farmers' Movement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 4 (Mar. 1894), 97.

The duty of the hour, incumbent upon all college graduates of today but especially upon those who graduate from colleges of agriculture supported by state and national funds, is to labor night and day with all wisdom and zeal to carry back to the farm, to the rural life, the best improvements of modern civilization...It is for the educated youth of today to join heart and soul with the farmers of the nation in making the conditions of country life in America such that its very environment shall transform European peasants, settled on our farms, into prosperous and intelligent citizens, and all tillers of the soil into country gentlemen.²⁰

On August 24, 1892, at the evening session of the annual meeting of the American Economic Association, on the subject "The Farmers' Movement," Walker gave the main paper titled "The Movement in the Northern States," which was followed by extensive discussion. An abstract of his paper was published, and in it we read: "The farmers' movement is the awakening of these sturdy citizens from engrossment in manual labor to a sense of their duty, first to themselves and then to society." He stated: "(1) Organization of farmers are now many and strong, and constantly increasing in numbers, in their field of action, in usefulness and in power...(2) The movement is a widespread and powerful advance along all educational lines...(3) The movement is progressive along the line of cooperation...(4) Organization, education, cooperation have led to political action, within and without the old parties."²¹

Walker's paper prompted considerable discussion. For instance, Professor Richard T. Ely, of the University of Wisconsin, agreed that the Farmers' Alliance and the Knights of Labor were a viable combination

²⁰ C.S. Walker, *The Duty of the Hour: Abstract of the Baccalaureate Sermon Delivered June 19, 1892*, one sheet, published at the request of the master and secretary of the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, 1892.

²¹ C.S. Walker, "The Movement in the Northern States," *Publications of the American Economic Association*, 8 (Jan. 1893), 62-63.

of interest groups. However, he said, "It would be interesting to know to what extent the farmers actually endorse the platform of the People's Party and the St. Louis platform...the farmer in the North does not, especially the farmer in New England. The majority there would repudiate them altogether." Ely must have been correct about the New England farmer, since Walker's writings suggest that he [Walker] knew the national agrarian crusade faced insurmountable political odds at home in Massachusetts.²²

In the *1894 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Walker authored a paper titled "The Farmers' Movement." He re-emphasized that "the farmer has for years demanded equal taxation, in order that the farmer's thousand dollars invested in his farm shall bear no more burdens than the thousand dollars of other men. But the statesman has confessed that he has not been able to remedy the evils of unjust taxation. He even acknowledges that they are growing worse." Farmer demands for an improved system of finance and for cheaper transportation between the farm and the market are also discussed.²³

One of the most compelling indictments Walker makes is that, when the farmer has asked the scholar for help in developing "a fair statement of the problem and a clear solution,...the scholar has been too preoccupied and prejudiced to give the question that painstaking investigation and careful and impartial decision which alone can make his answer of much practical value to the hard-pressed agriculturist." Walker was one of the few social scientists addressing these issues, while many if not most seemed unsure whether there was a distinct agricultural question. Perhaps Walker's zeal was because Massachusetts farmers "demanded that the Massachusetts Agricultural College should not be, as in some States, a subordinate department of a classical college, but must be a distinctively agricultural college, in name as well as in character,

²² Richard T. Ely, discussion of Walker's paper, *Publications of the American Economic Association* 8 (Jan. 1893), 64-65.

²³ Walker, "The Farmers' Movement," 95.

fully equipped to do the best work for students, for farmers and for agriculture.”²⁴

As before, Walker presents his argument along the lines of organization, education, cooperation, and political action. He noted that the “Massachusetts Board of Agriculture devotes fifteen pages of its report for 1892 to a directory of the agricultural organizations of the State.” He pointedly observes: “In their endeavor to secure organization the farmers soon discovered the necessity of broadening their education, especially in the field of economics and politics.” He further adds: “In all agricultural colleges the science of economics and of politics is receiving more and more attention.” He lauded the national reform press, the agricultural press, “the town meeting, the district school, the public library, the Chautauqua movement, the country church” for their educational contributions to the farmers’ movement.²⁵

Since Walker worked so closely with the Grange in Massachusetts, this passage is especially apropos: “Recently it was ‘resolved that the Worthy Lecturer of the National Grange be instructed to continue the distribution of subjects for discussion to Subordinate Granges, and that questions of political economy be given prominence, such as those relating to gold, silver, greenbacks, national banks, corporations, interstate and trans-continental transportation, and the tariff, as it relates to agriculture’.” He adds: “A similar work is carried on in the Alliance, which has prepared for its local branches a system of weekly lessons in political science. In all agricultural colleges the science of economics and of politics is receiving more and more attention.”²⁶

In Walker’s estimation: “The farmers’ movement has thrown a great deal of light upon cooperation, both distributive and productive...The nature of the problem, the conditions of success, the dangers and difficulties in the way, have been made clear and the preparatory work

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 96; C.S. Walker, “The Massachusetts Farmer and Taxation,” *Yale Review*, 6 (May 1897-Feb. 1898), 73.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 97-98.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

accomplished which will make cooperation in the future more common and profitable.”²⁷

As to political action, Walker writes: “Organization, education, cooperation, have led the farmers’ movement toward political action... The radical demands of the farmers, as set forth in the platform of the People’s party, are socialistic and are not likely soon to be formally ratified by the public opinion of the nation. But the People’s party and its platform are only an incident in the greater movement of the farmers of America. It is an experiment being tried by the radicals among the agrarian leaders, but which has not yet received the endorsement of the great mass of the farmers.” He holds that “Farmers have suffered in the past because of their neglect to compete earnestly for their own interests, but now the signs of the times indicate that in all parts of our country they have at last aroused themselves and have begun a movement, the outcome of which will be to secure for them their full share of the products of the national industry and of the advantages of modern civilization.”²⁸

In June 1896, Walker’s baccalaureate sermon was a review of “Ten Years of Agricultural Education.” He placed emphasis on development of the state boards of agriculture, formation of national farmers’ organizations, stimulus to the agricultural press, and increased efficiency of the US Department of Agriculture, which had become a cabinet agency. He said the agricultural population had been awakened to the study of agriculture in relation to the protective tariff, finance, political economy, and political science.

In December 1896, the American Economic Association took up the question, “Is There a Distinct Agricultural Question?” This appears to have been the first professional meeting of American economists on agricultural problems. Henry C. and Anne Dewees Taylor, in their history of American agricultural economics, write: “While it will be

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 99, 101, 102.

noted that most of these speakers took a cool and objective view of the farm problem, showing little or no sympathy for the difficulties of the farmer, Charles S. Walker, Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Agricultural College, had evidently been in closer touch with farmers and showed a sympathetic understanding of their problems. Walker said: 'I hold that there does exist a distinct agricultural question, and moreover that it is one of the great and vital questions of the day. The question is the important one whether the American farmer shall become a peasant or whether he shall maintain the honorable and independent position which the farmers of New England and Virginia maintained in the first two centuries of our country's history.'"²⁹

The problem of farm taxation persisted, and in 1897 Walker wrote an article titled "The Massachusetts Farmer and Taxation" for *Yale Review*. The problem was daunting, since previous attempts at reform had proven counter-productive. Walker stated: "Nothing has occurred since 1880 to cause us to think that the decline in the condition of agriculture in Massachusetts has been checked: the indications are that it has been aggravated. The farmers are fully aroused as to the importance of the question of taxation. They understand the evils by which they are confronted and they know that, if any efficient remedies are applied, they themselves must take the initiative and persevere in their demands and in their efforts." He indicated that a special committee would present its report to the legislature of 1898, in hopes that tax reforms may be consummated.³⁰

In a paper titled "Recent Economic Changes in Massachusetts," published by the American Economic Association in 1899, Walker stated that in Massachusetts "1,935 abandoned farms have been reported." He gives as the cause: "The first class farmer makes a fair profit, the average farmer a bare living, the poor manager suffers loss of capital."³¹

Walker's stature was such that, in 1899, he was the final speaker at

²⁹ Henry C. and Anne Dewees Taylor, *The Story of Agricultural Economics in the United States, 1840-1932* (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State College Press, 1952), 43-44.

³⁰ Walker, "The Massachusetts Farmer and Taxation," 67, 74.

³¹ C.S. Walker, "Abstract of Recent Economic Changes in Massachusetts," *Economic Studies*, American Economic Association, 4 (1899), 99.

the three-day Public Winter Meeting of the State Board of Agriculture. The program announcement stated: "The final lecture of the meeting will be by Dr. C. S. Walker of Amherst, professor of mental and political science, Massachusetts Agricultural College, --subject, 'Trusts and their Relation to the Farmers...as timely and important a subject as any now before the people. Dr. Walker has been for years an earnest student of economic conditions, particularly as they affect the farmer, and is as well qualified as any man in Massachusetts to give us an interesting and instructive lecture upon this subject."³²

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, farm organizations had little direct relationship with the US Department of Agriculture. In January 1903, Walker delivered a lecture titled "What the United States Department of Agriculture is Doing for the Farmer" before the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. If the farmers' movement hoped to accomplish much reform, and individual farmers hoped to make their own farm operations more profitable through better management and marketing, the steadily increasing services of the US Department of Agriculture needed to be understood, utilized, and supported in the federal budget. Walker made clear this mutually-supportive relationship.

Agricultural adjustment to changing conditions was well underway by the turn of the century. R. Douglas Hurt reports: "As agricultural profitability declined precipitously in New England, land values quickly dropped. Those farmers who remained on the land necessarily adopted new agricultural practices to survive. Many New England farmers who remained on the land emphasized dairying...By the late nineteenth century, improved refrigeration technology and increased urban demands caused dairy farmers to emphasize the production of fluid milk, which brought even higher profits than the traditional sale of that commodity to secondary markets for the manufacture of butter and cheese." High production of feed crops was essential to support profitable dairying, and John Donald Black writes: "Much of the Connecticut Valley was able to

³² *Programme, Public Winter Meeting* (Boston: State Board of Agriculture, Nov. 10, 1899), 18.

support this amount of dairying..because of the high productivity of its soils.”³³

As America entered the twentieth century, *The Watchman*, in a column headed “What Leading Men Say,” quoted Walker as saying:

The great thought of the 19th century left to the 20th is the perfection of society. Once dreamers dreamed that socialism necessitated the destruction of individualism; but we are now learning that the perfection of the individual are indissolubly connected. Improve society and the individual is bettered; benefit the individual, society is advanced. Neither can be injured without harm to both.³⁴

By 1906, Wilbert L. Anderson believed the worst had passed, at least in New England. He wrote: “In the main rural depletion is over. In its whole course it has been an adjustment of industrial necessity and of economic health; everywhere it is a phase of progress and lends itself to the optimism that discerns deeper meanings.” Prosperity in American agriculture continued until the end of World War I, when economic depression immediately confronted farmers a decade before the Great Depression struck the rest of the nation’s economy in 1929. It has been said that the agricultural economy fell first, fastest, and farthest. To help alleviate this farm crisis, old farm organizations were revived, new organizations were formed, and all became active in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁵

It is said that all good things must come to an end, and though still vigorous, Walker resigned his college post in 1906. Speculation as to his

³³ R. Douglas Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1994), 171; John Donald Black, *The Rural Economy of New England: A Regional Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 310.

³⁴ C.S. Walker, “What Leading Men Say,” *The Watchman* (June 27, 1901), APS Online 2.

³⁵ *The Country Town*, 76.

reason(s) may be in order. First, student attendance in morning chapel and the compulsory Sunday services had revealed an increasing lack of enthusiasm since the 1890s, and in 1903 the Sunday services were suspended entirely. Cary writes: “Although able to stir student interest in some of the reform movements of his day, such as temperance and the labor movement, he [Walker] was unable to hold them up to a high level of religious enthusiasm.” The anti-religiosity of the students even extended to making Walker the object of campus pranksters. This had to be discouraging to Walker, who upon resigning in 1906 returned to his first love: pulpit preaching in churches.³⁶

Second, the college student body no longer came predominantly from farms and looked forward to a future in agriculture. Cary writes: “Only one-third of the M.A.C. students in 1905 came from farming families, and another one-fifth from the homes of mechanics. The parents of nearly half were occupied in business and professional tasks.” Thomas Jefferson had said of farmers, “Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people.” In this connection Cary asserts “Possibly the students had not found their attitudes compatible with the professor’s defense of the gold standard, or with his urgings to hold fast to the farm life and to make it ‘so much more desirable than the strife and struggle of the city Street that the tenement house and the saloon, the lofty flat and the clubhouse, shall be deserted...’” Moreover, “Charles Walker was an enthusiast of agricultural education and devoted to the land-grant ideal of the educated gentleman farmer, but his Jeffersonian preachments...must have chilled the minds of many an inquisitive student anticipating his future in an industrialized America.”³⁷

Third, the college’s handling of student discipline also may have discouraged Walker. Cary writes of an incident surrounding Walker in mid-February 1905: “A disturbance in Professor Walker’s political

³⁶ Cary, *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁷ Thomas Jefferson, quoted in *The Great Thoughts*, compiled by George Seldes (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985), 207; Cary, 93-94, 100.

science class was referred to the disciplinary committee of the faculty, which meted out a punishment of suspension of three students for one year. Although the senior class apologized to the professor, it later packed up and left for home when the faculty refused to shorten the suspensions. Acting President Brooks persuaded the trustees to reinstate the three students, and the seniors returned in time to complete their studies and graduate.” This disturbance appears to have been premeditated as a protest against the professor’s teaching method.³⁸

Perhaps unable to keep his chaplaincy and teaching relevant in a changing student milieu, Walker resigned and never again took an academic post. After resigning from the college, he became more active in church and civic affairs. He served briefly as acting pastor of the First Congregational Church in Amherst in 1906, then served as pulpit supply in western Massachusetts from 1906 to around 1923. He was a trustee of the First Congregational Church in 1904-1906 and again in 1913-1916. He was moderator of its annual meeting in 1905, 1906, 1908-1910, 1912-1914, and 1920. He was appointed councilman of the Amherst Interchurch Union in 1922. Walker was chaplain of the Pacific Lodge of Masons in Amherst, 1905-1913, and of the E.M. Stanton Post, Grand Army of the Republic, Amherst, 1917-1925.

Walker wrote articles for a wide variety of periodicals and was a regular correspondent of the *Springfield Union*, the *Boston Globe*, and the Associated Press over the span of 1906 to 1923. He authored the book *Samuel Minot Jones, the Story of an Amherst Boy*, in 1922.

A member of the Amherst School Committee from 1884 to 1891, Walker was chairman in 1891. He served on the school committee again in 1914-1916 and was secretary both years. During World War I he served as chairman of the local committee of the US Fuel Administration. He was secretary of the Republican Town Committee in Amherst from 1922 to 1926. A founder of the Amherst Historical

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 100; Frank Prentice Rand, *Yesterdays at Massachusetts State College 1863-1933* (Amherst: The Associate Alumni, 1933), 76.

Society in 1903, Walker was a director from 1903 to 1925, secretary from 1916-1920, and president 1920-1925. He remained a resident of Amherst for 47 years.

One of the first and ablest scholars in the emerging field of agricultural economics, a man devoted to strengthening agriculture in Massachusetts and across the nation, Charles Swan Walker richly deserves this belated accolade. Walker's contributions toward better understanding of the economics of agriculture helped to pave the way for President Butterfield to create a separate Department of Agricultural Economics within Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1910, headed by Alexander E. Cance, who held a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Wisconsin with a dissertation on land tenure. Walker died January 14, 1933, in Stamford, Connecticut and is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, Darien, Connecticut.