



The portrait (oil on canvas) of Granville Hicks was painted in the 1940s by George Cole. Courtesy of the Corporation of Yaddo.

Granville Hicks: Champion of the Small Town

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Granville Hicks (1901-1982), prominent twentieth-century American author, literary critic and socialist, and long-time resident of Grafton, New York, is generally recognized as having some connection with the American small town. Two misconceptions of Hicks's relationship to the small town are widely held. A number of persons merely regard Hicks as yet another urban author who just happened to have a summer home in the country. Still others recall that Hicks was involved in small-town life, but believe that, as an intellectual, he had nothing in common with his less educated neighbors. Both assumptions are incorrect.

The notion of Hicks's aloofness from his neighbors is now widely held, due in part to both the title and the emphasis placed on this aspect of his life in the second and most thorough of his biographies, *Granville Hicks: The Intellectual in Mass Society* (1993), written by Leah Levenson and Jerry Natterstad. While their work is highly detailed and largely accurate, the authors stressed the continuing conflicts and differences between Hicks and his neighbors. Nonetheless, Granville Hicks needs to be appreciated as one of his era's principal proponents of the values of rural America and the small town.

Granville Hicks was born and raised in Exeter, New Hampshire, in a rural atmosphere of sorts, but far removed from a truly small town like Grafton, New York. As he noted in his unpublished 1952 article, "A Place in the Country," the few years he had spent in Exeter "had given me a strong bias in favor of small-town living."¹ He subsequently lived in urban Quincy, Massachusetts, then in suburban Framingham, where he graduated from high school and entered Harvard University. It was in Framingham that Granville Hicks married Dorothy Dyer in 1925. Following his college graduation, Hicks moved to the small but cosmopolitan city of Northampton, Massachusetts, where he accepted a teaching position at Smith College. When he accepted a teaching position at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, New York, in 1929, Granville and Dorothy rented an apartment nearby.

At this time Troy, formerly one of the major industrial and cultural centers in the Northeast, had declined to the status of a dingy, depressed former mill city. Hicks found Troy particularly unappealing and began looking for a summer

home in the country. Many weekends were devoted to house hunting in rural Rensselaer County and in nearby northwestern Massachusetts and southwestern Vermont. In May of 1932 he spotted an advertisement in a Troy newspaper which attracted his attention: an eight-room farmhouse for sale on 40 acres of land only 15 minutes east of Troy.

The farm was located on Shaver Pond Road (a narrow, steep dirt road also known as Agan Road) in the Town of Grafton, Rensselaer County, more than a mile north of the new “State Road” (Route 2). The house was a story-and-a-half wooden home that had been constructed as early as 1800 by Francis West, one of the town’s first settlers. The land included some old sugar maples, former agricultural fields and young forest, and extended to Shaver Pond, an unspoiled mountain lake. The old house lacked electricity, and the road was sometimes closed due to snow, ice, or mud, but Granville and Dorothy Hicks soon fell in love with the simple “charm” of the old West place. They purchased the farm for \$1,750 from Richard Cary, another RPI professor. Granville and Dorothy soon became very friendly with the Agan family who lived nearby; Mr. Agan was a descendant of Francis West and had once lived in the house.

Grafton was then a town of fewer than 650 residents, with little or no industry aside from logging. It had once supported subsistence farming and small local industries, and was a minor resort community, but now, like much of rural America, had a high rate of unemployment and was experiencing hard times. The town center along Route 2 consisted of a village green surrounded by neat but plain houses, two churches, two stores and a one-room schoolhouse. The town center struck Hicks as “comfortable and homelike—not dignified, not impressive, certainly not beautiful, but not unattractive.”² This simple rural “charm,” as James Kunstler reaffirmed 60 years later, is far more than a sentimental platitude, it implies a quality “that makes our physical surroundings worth caring for.”³

The Hickses used the Grafton residence as their summer home until 1935, when Hicks was dismissed from RPI, officially for budgetary reasons, but in reality for his radical political beliefs. He had joined the Communist Party and had become a well-known activist and a literary editor of the *New Masses*. When he was still employed by RPI, Hicks entertained his friends at his summer home. These persons included such literati as Newton Arvin, Robert and Hope Davis, Howard and Frances Wilde, Edith Walton, and Henry Christman. In 1933, Granville’s parents, Frank and Carrie Hicks, left Framingham and moved into the Grafton home.

During his first years in Grafton, Granville Hicks was not greatly involved in the Grafton community. "On the whole," he wrote in *Small Town*, "we did not belong to the town. . . . the part of life that was . . . intellectual, professional and social, had little to do with Roxborough [Grafton]. The manuscripts I read came from New York, and the manuscripts I wrote went there. As a communist I was active in Troy and Albany and New York, but not in Roxborough."⁴ Hicks wrote later that the memories of his first summers in Grafton were "wholly pleasant," involving hiking, swimming, entertaining guests, playing croquet and even opening a path to Shaver Pond.⁵ His wife and parents also found this "the home they liked best."⁶

After losing his position at RPI in 1935, Hicks gave up his apartment and began living in Grafton as a full-time resident. He enjoyed walking to town to pick up groceries at the general store, and his daughter, Stephanie, was attending the one-room school on the green. He was treated by the Grafton natives as an outsider for certain, but he was somewhat surprised that they did not greatly resent a Communist living in their midst. Anyone not born in Grafton and not descended from an old family was considered an "outsider," and he was once told that his being a Communist was really no different in the minds of natives than his being a liberal or a registered Democrat. He was viewed as a personable but harmless over-educated eccentric. He used to enjoy conversations with town residents, and remarked later that "nobody seemed to resent my being there."⁷

In 1938 Hicks accepted a Harvard Nieman fellowship, which lasted one year and was highly controversial in the Boston area. Even liberal Harvard did not renew his contract, and he returned home to Grafton, having been merely a renter at the Boston suburb of Waban. The following year was eventful for Hicks, whose public resignation from the Communist Party, following the signing of the Warsaw Pact, made national as well as local headlines. With Communism behind him, Granville Hicks's life now took a new and very interesting direction.

Not content with being merely an accomplished writer, biographer, and reviewer living and working at a country retreat like many other authors, Hicks began to take an active interest in his community. With their daughter in the local school, Granville and Dorothy Hicks first became involved with the local Parent Teacher Association, and to some extent with the local fire company, town government, and other town affairs. "We had been drawn a little more into the life of Grafton," Hicks later wrote, and "since I had thought of myself as living apart from the town, I was pleased to find that there were a good many townspeople I knew fairly well."⁸

Animosity to Hicks began to develop among natives who resented his being a liberal and an intellectual as well as an outsider. On the other hand, his new ideas seemed refreshing to some, and a “pro-Hicks” faction emerged as well. Hicks certainly resented the petty local politics, the ever-present gossip, the resistance by many natives to any kind of change, and the bigotry of some of his neighbors concerning Jews, Blacks, Catholics, homosexuals and others, but at the same time he came to realize that these prejudices were part of small-town life and beyond anyone’s power to change markedly.

America had now become directly involved in the Second World War, and some of Grafton’s sons had gone off to battle. Communities in New York State were now expected to develop war-effort support activities. Granville Hicks was in the forefront in organizing the Grafton Defense Council in 1942, which became involved in collecting scrap metal and paper, monitoring gas rationing, and leading civil-defense-related training. Hicks put his literary talents to good use in establishing a small local bulletin/newsletter, the *Grafton Defender*, which he edited until 1957. The *Grafton Defender* contained a wide variety of community and personal information as well as information on the progress of the war and civil-defense efforts. This modest mimeographed small-town newspaper gained recognition throughout the state. The Grafton Defense Council eventually became the Grafton Community League and sponsored various civic affairs after the conclusion of the war.

Hicks’s next major effort involved the establishment of a town library in 1943, first opened in the Methodist Church parsonage with a collection of over 600 volumes that Granville had donated, many of them his father’s. A permanent library building was constructed with considerable help from town residents and opened to the public in 1954. Hicks devoted much of his time working in and promoting the Grafton Free Library (now the Grafton Community Library) and considered its establishment “the achievement of a hope and the fulfillment of an obligation.”⁹ One of Hicks’s more interesting journal articles was his “Thoughts in a Small-Town Library,” which appeared in the *American Scholar* in 1956.¹⁰

Granville Hicks was also active in the establishment of the Grafton Fire Company and the Grafton Fire District, and in the creation of a modern Grafton Elementary School, which opened in 1963. He was always involved in town government, speaking at Town Board meetings and working on town activities, but, probably wisely, never sought elected political office as some of his friends and supporters had often suggested. Grafton was clearly not ready for a Town Supervisor or even a Councilman who was a liberal-minded author and somewhat of a celebrity.

Hicks wrote a number of works while he was a full-time Grafton resident. The first was *I Like America*, an interesting and attractively designed little paperback illustrated by Richard Bennett, in which Hicks essentially explained why being a Communist was not un-American. His comments on rural America in this work will be discussed later. His next two book-related projects involved seeing *The Letters of Lincoln Steffens* through publication, also in 1938, and authoring *Figures of Transition*, a Marxist approach to British literature, which appeared the following year.

The next four years saw the publication of the first three of his four novels, *The First To Awaken* (1940), *Only One Storm* (1942) and *Behold Trouble: A Novel* (1944). All three novels, as well as his later novel, *There Was a Man in Our Town* (1952), received mixed reviews and were set in a small town resembling Grafton. Some of his neighbors recognized that characters in his novels were based on local residents, and while some resented this association, others were flattered. Hicks once commented that “there are some of my fellow townsmen who wouldn’t like anything I did” and that “doesn’t particular bother me.”¹¹

Granville Hicks did not produce great fiction, although all of his novels possessed some merit. His most significant works up to that time had been *The Great Tradition: An Interpretation of American Literature Since the Civil War* (1933), still regarded as the most important work of American Marxist literary criticism, and two important biographies of John Reed. *One of Us: The Story of John Reed* (1935), illustrated by Lynd Ward, remains a classic in the genre of revolutionary literature, and *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary* (1936) has never been replaced as the standard detailed Reed biography. Hicks’s next important non-fiction work, and by far his best-known book, is *Small Town*, published in 1946. By this time he felt the need to compose a serious nonfiction work on small-town life in the Northeast, based on his personal experiences. Aided by a grant from the Humanities Program of the Rockefeller Foundation, Hicks produced *Small Town*, now recognized as one of the first sociological studies of small town life, along with *Plainville*, *Small-Town Stuff* and the USDA series.

While a number of novels and short stories about the small town preceded Hicks’s book, the first sociological study of a small town seems to be Arthur Dunn’s *An Analysis of the Social Structure of a Western Town* (1896), in which he studied Galesburg, Illinois. James Williams, academic from Columbia University, authored the next small-town study, *An American Town* (1906), in which he studied Sangerfield, a town in central New York. Williams covered the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and decline of the community was not yet noticeable. Newell Sims’s *A Hoosier Village: Sociological Study* (1912) was an

equally competent study of Angola, Indiana. Sims, a Professor of Rural Sociology in Florida and in Massachusetts, later edited *The Rural Community: Ancient & Modern* (1920) in which he collected a number of essays and articles, some dealing with “the problem” facing rural America and offering suggestions for “community reconstruction.” In his study of Angola, Sims recognized the beginning of the decline of the rural community. Like Hicks, Sims saw “hope” in the influx of outsiders moving into the community and assimilating into its culture.

A few significant works on rural sociology were published in this period by persons with either religious or agricultural-science backgrounds. Rural America was already losing population to the cities at an alarming rate, and these sociologists had begun to recognize the problems developing in rural communities. Frank Farrington’s *Community Development* (1915) was primarily concerned with making the small community a better place to conduct business, and recommended the establishment of “commercial clubs.” Farrington, as Hicks would later reaffirm, believed that the “values” of a small rural community were superior to those of the large city. Paul Vogt’s *Introduction to Rural Sociology* (1917) stressed the importance of the village as the “natural center” of rural life. Warren Wilson’s *The Evolution of the Country Community* (1912, revised 1923) stressed the importance of religious institutions and contended that rural life centered on the farmer rather than the entrepreneur or businessman. Edmund de S. Brunner’s *Cooperation in Coopersburg* (1916) stressed the importance of organized religion in preserving the community identity of a Pennsylvania farming community.

Charles Galpin of the University of Wisconsin, later with the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Division of Farm Protection and Rural Life, authored a number of rural-life studies during this period, including an instructional manual, *A Method of Making a Social Survey of a Rural Community* in 1912. Galpin’s *The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community* (1915) covered the “distinct country problem” by studying the roles of the farmer and townsman in Walworth County, Wisconsin. In his *Rural Social Problems* (1924), Galpin recognized there was more to improving rural life than merely improving the economic viability of agriculture; he advocated “courageous rural humanism” to deal with rural decline.

The small-town dilemma was in fact first presented in Thorstein Veblen’s “The Country Town” which appeared in his 1923 work *Absentee Ownership and Business Enterprise in Recent Times*. Veblen was quite pessimistic in predicting the future of the small town, because he realized that its economic foundations were disintegrating. The best known of the early community studies were *Middletown* by Robert and Helen Lynd, published in 1929, and its sequel,

Middletown in Transition, issued eight years later. As important as those groundbreaking studies were, the subject of their work, Muncie, Indiana, had a population over 38,000 and was not truly a small town. Elin Anderson's *We Americans* (1937) was a sociological study of Burlington, Vermont, another small city. Anderson offered, as did Hicks, suggestions for the preservation of the community. While communities like Burlington "must face the fact that they are inextricably a part of our modern industrial world [and] cannot withdraw from its influence . . . they must make the personal values of their established way of life the other side of the more impersonal . . . relationships" of the new community.¹²

Harlan Paul Douglass's *The Little Town* (1919, revised 1926) was not a study of a single town, but rather outlined many characteristics of small-town life. Douglass did comment on the few existing small-town studies, and included a bibliography. The next significant early small-town study was Albert Blumenthal's *Small-Town Stuff*, published in 1932, in which he studied Philipsburg, Montana, a town of 1410 inhabitants, which he called "Mineville." Blumenthal's observations often read much like those of Granville Hicks, but Philipsburg was strikingly different from Grafton for one reason: its future largely depended on the future of the mining industry. Like Hicks, Blumenthal noticed an improvement in the standard of living in the town, but unlike Hicks, he did not fear loss of the sense of community so long as the community did not lose its mines and become a ghost town.

The next year, 1933, saw the publication of *Rural Social Trends* by Edmund de S. Brunner and John H. Kolb, a study produced under the direction of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends. This capable study of the changes that had occurred in rural social life in the first three decades of the twentieth century was the result of study in a number of small communities (the nearest to Grafton was the Village of Altamont in Albany County). But *Rural Social Trends* was clearly not meant to be the study of one community like Philipsburg, and did not describe individuals, but rather treated small-town residents from a collective perspective. Another exhaustive study was Carle Zimmerman's *The Changing Community* (1938), which included some small towns in the series of hypothetical communities he describes; Zimmerman did touch on the future of each of these community types. John Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (1937) dealt primarily with race relations and economics in Natchez, Tennessee, which he called "Southerntown."

E. Dwight Sanderson wrote two important works on rural America during this period. His first work, *The Rural Community* (1932) studied social life in

rural communities across the globe. The other, *Rural Community Organization* (1939), coauthored by Robert Polson, dealt more specifically with some rural communities in New York State. In the case of Waterville in Oneida County, New York, they observed the significance of the community having a “common hope, a common need, a common center of interest.”¹³ In the case of Hartford, a small community in Washington County, Sanderson found that a “community week” celebration brought townspeople together and raised money for the local fire company; by the 1940s, Granville Hicks would become involved in similar activities in Grafton. Sanderson also summarized a series of rural life studies conducted by staff of Cornell University and the USDA in *Rural, Social and Economic Areas in Central New York* (1934), which included a lengthy bibliography of these studies and related reference works. None of these, however, comprises a detailed study of an individual small town.

In the 1940s a few additional small-town studies predated Hicks’s *Small Town*. William Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt published *Social Life of a Modern Community* in 1941 and *The Status System of a Modern Community* the following year. Warner and Lunt were part of a team largely of anthropologists from Harvard University who embarked on a major project called “Yankee City Research.” “Yankee City” was their name for Newburyport, Massachusetts, smaller than Muncie or Burlington, but clearly not a small town like Grafton or Philipsburg. Warner and his team studied class and social structure in Newburyport at great length, and their work was read and respected by Granville Hicks.

Arthur E. Morgan’s *The Small Community* also appeared in 1943. Morgan was not writing about one specific small community, but had seen many during his travels and long career with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Like Hicks he recognized the significance of the small community, and suggested ways in which community economics, organizations and government could grow to help maintain the community’s viability into the future. The “community council” that Morgan recommends reminds us of the importance of the Community League in Hicks’s post-war Grafton. Morgan published a short pamphlet the same year entitled *The Great Community*, where he argued that some of the more positive attributes of small-town life could be incorporated in larger communities in the future. Hicks and Morgan were correspondents and Hicks visited Tennessee to study small towns affected by TVA activity.

In 1942 under the direction of Carl Taylor, the USDA published six studies, each entitled *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community*, “intended to determine the effects of the Depression era on rural communities.”¹⁴ Granville Hicks was familiar with these studies, and admitted that he had “learned what

he could about other communities” that had been studied by sociologists, to help him “define more accurately the particular elements of the Roxborough situation.”¹⁵ All five of these Rural Life Studies addressed the future of the small town to some degree. Four of the towns studied: Irwin, Iowa; El Cerrito, New Mexico; Sublette, Kansas; and Harmony, Georgia, were unlike Grafton because their disintegration was largely related to the problems facing American agriculture. The study of Landaff, New Hampshire, however, particularly interested Hicks because Landaff was quite similar to Grafton even though it was more isolated. The authors of the Landaff Study, Kenneth MacLeish and Kimball Young, recognized, like Hicks, the importance of maintaining community institutions in preserving community identity. Unlike Hicks, however, the authors did not see the possible “disintegration” of the small hill towns to be “tragic” from other than “a romantic viewpoint,” because outsiders would purchase the old farms to use as summer homes. While the homes would survive in Landaff, the potential loss of the sense of community deeply worried Hicks.¹⁶

Plainville, USA, by Carl Withers (under the pseudonym “James West”), sponsored by the Social Sciences Research Council of Columbia University, was published in 1945 and resembles *Small Town* in a number of ways. “Plainville” (Wheatland) was a town of 275 persons in central Missouri, and Withers’s work resembles Hicks’s book to some extent. While Withers spoke of changes that might result from the recent “new integration” of long-time residents with outsiders, he did not offer a “plan” for saving the small town. Small towns like Plainville, according to Withers, were doomed to lose their community existence even if their income “doubled or tripled. . . . their ancient value systems [will] crumble under blows of a new ‘tradition’ imposed from the outside.” Like Hicks, however, Withers recognized that “the problem of Plainville is the problem of America.”¹⁷ *Town Meeting Country* by Clarence Webster, which also appeared in 1945, examined both the history and current conditions in a few small southern New England towns. Webster admitted that they were “in a bad way indeed . . . when the Twentieth Century dawned,” but felt that they had survived economic problems because their “folkways have been tested and have proved worthy to survive.”¹⁸ As Granville Hicks had, Webster noticed how “outsiders” could assimilate into small-town society and help to preserve the sense of community identity.

What distinguished *Small Town* from any of its predecessors (and many of the similar works that followed) was the status of its author. While the other books represented the work of sociologists or anthropologists who came from academia to visit, or briefly live in, small towns they were studying, *Small Town*

was the first to be written by a small-town resident. Hicks declared in *Small Town*, “I could not adopt the point of view of a visiting anthropologist; I am writing from inside.”¹⁹ For this reason Hicks stood apart from most other scholars who studied small towns from the perspective of aloof outsiders, as sociologist Baker Brownell also noted, who “fail to evaluate the community of statement and people where good work is done.”²⁰ When Granville Hicks moved to Grafton in 1932, composing a study of small-town life was not part of his literary agenda. It was not until the spring of 1944 that he admitted studying small-town affairs “in a semi-professional fashion” and received encouragement to apply for a Rockefeller fellowship. He had pretty much exhausted the small-town theme in his first three novels, and now set his sights on a far more important nonfiction work on the subject.²¹

Unlike the authors of the small-town studies that preceded it (and most of those which followed), Hicks, unlike the objective sociologists, was never at a loss to express his strong opinions. Likewise *Small Town* is a highly personal account of his neighbors and his community; neither statistical tables nor a bibliography of academic studies is included. But this work was to become, as Hicks had intended, more than merely “a plea for the small town” but rather “a book about a small town in another kind of world.”²² In other words, the “new” small town, reconstituted by bringing forth its traditional values into a viable modern rural community as Hicks outlined, might become a bulwark against the rootless and impersonal society which he saw growing rapidly in America.

Small Town became, along with *Plainville, U.S.A.*, prototypes that other authors would follow. Even local histories, such as Townsend Scudder’s *Concord: American Town* (1947), now began to give more emphasis to the modern era and to discuss the problems facing smaller communities.²³ *Democracy in Jonesville: A Study of Quality and Inequality* (1949), the next work by William Lloyd Warner and his associates, mirrors *Small Town* in many ways. “Jonesville” (Morris, Illinois) was more similar to Grafton in size than was Newburyport, and the authors, for instance, noted how wartime efforts brought together townsfolk and strengthened their sense of community.

Baker Brownell praised Hicks in *The Human Community* (1950), in fact defining the community as a “small town in which each person can know a number of others as whole persons, not as functional fragments . . . when it becomes so large that the people in it do not know one another, the community disappears.”²⁴ Baker and Hicks had been corresponding with each other, and Hicks believed that Brownell “states the [small-town] problem well [and is] tackling it the right way.”²⁵ Hicks, in turn, praised *The Human Community* in his review of

two 1950 works, Brownell's and David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*. Brownell, like Hicks, had observed changes in American culture related to the shift in population and power from the country to the city. "The consequences have been two-fold," Hicks wrote, "the isolation of man from nature . . . and the isolation of man from man." In confronting this problem with what Hicks referred to as "remarkable courage," Brownell believed that "the movement away from the human community can be checked, and even reversed."²⁶

Brownell had the opportunity to read a manuscript of *Small Town* earlier in 1946, and while pointing out to Hicks specific passages that might need some refinement, was effusive in his overall praise of the work:

This is the best book that I have read on the small town. I doubt if a better has been written, at least in recent decades. It really is not solely on the small town, but on the relation of an intellectual to a small town, each seen in the light of the other, and this is its greatest value. Or, to put it more abstractly, it presents the relationship, the conflict, the modern dilemma of mind and folk, and the sterility and impoverishment of one without the other. It is a regional book in the best sense of the word, presenting . . . a whole human situation. The disciplines of sociology, history, anthropology, psychology, education are synthesized so well in it, that these harsh specialties sink back, unrecognized as such, in the fluid movement of the book as a whole. It would be better to say that it is a masterpiece of plain, human observation deeply interwoven with critical and personal insight.²⁷

Small Town in Mass Society, by Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman (1958, revised 1968) reminds one of Hicks's writing by their interest in "mass society." It covers Candor, New York, and deals with some of the same issues Hicks faced in *Small Town*, but clearly from the viewpoint of outside academics. Joseph Lyford's *The Talk in Vandalia* (1962) echoes Hicks's emphasis on the importance of "the power of personal word." Lyford concluded that small-town residents "are in some ways in a better position to observe and to feel, sometimes most painfully, the consequences of a changing society" than the suburbanite or the city dweller. While the conversation of Vandalia residents "lacks the sort of serious communication with each other that would seem to be the basis of democratic life, . . . the potential exists" for citizens to preserve the best of small-town life and "make their town better."²⁸ Lyford's little book is, like *Small Town*, a highly personal work. Anthony Bailey's *In the Village* (1971), is also noteworthy

because its author was not a sociologist conducting a study, but was, as was Hicks, an outsider who had become a resident of Stonington, Connecticut and had come to appreciate small-town life.

Two of the most notable works that followed in the Hicks tradition were Vance Packard's *A Nation of Strangers* and Edwin Rosskam's *Roosevelt, New Jersey; Big Dreams in a Small Town and What Time Did to Them*, two 1972 books that Hicks reviewed. Roosevelt, a small factory town of late-nineteenth-century ethnic immigrant origin, despite its dissimilarity to Grafton, faced, as Hicks noted, the same problem with the loss of its identity. August Heckscher echoed the same sentiment in a speech he delivered in 1965 (later issued as a pamphlet), in which he commented that "the result of technological forces—combined with increased numbers of people, increased wealth, increased mobility and increased leisure—is to threaten the existence of every place which is separate and distinct." "The destruction of the place," Heckscher added, leaves "the individual diminished."²⁹

Margaret Mead, in reviewing *Small Town* for the *New York Times*, praised it as a "perceptive and moving book," and she added that unlike other works that had appeared recently lamenting the decline of rural life, Hicks's work "lacks the note of disappointment and repudiation that springs of the memories of" a contented rural America of the past, which has been lost "in the realities of the present." Mead continued:

He comments perceptively on Roxborough people, who function in ways to make the intellectual, anxious for the future of mankind, stop, reassess his problems, and soberly lowers [sic] his sights to conform to the realities of small town inertia, lack of orientation and lack of motivation. Interwoven, however, is a genuine, convincing appreciation of what the small town gives not only to the native but also to the intellectual. He values the chance to know many kinds of people, in many different contexts, so that people become, not functions, not types, but individuals to be shunned in one situation, but depended on wholly in another.³⁰

Robert Lynd, co-author of the "Middletown" books, also praised *Small Town* in his review. "This book derives from a general conviction that I respect deeply," Lynd wrote, "that democracy is worth making an effort for; that the people in all the little communities at the grass roots must be immediately and continuously involved in that effort." Lynd recognized that *Small Town* was far more than merely the latest book in the "city person returns to the country" genre,

adding, despite his reservations, that he found “a warmth and perceptiveness about . . . Hicks’s approach to his neighbors that makes the book fascinating in its detail.” Lynd, however, did not share Granville’s optimism in proposing conditions for salvaging the small town. “Hicks is right in recognizing the potential power in the little people of America; but it is sheer moonshine to expect them to find and to exercise this power to build more democracy within the present coercions of monopoly capitalism.”³¹

Baker Brownell was profuse in his praise of *Small Town*:

This is a book about one of the little places of the world. Because it is well done, it is also a book about all the little places in the world and about the human beings in them. It is written from the inside and clearly is one of the best books on the small town in American literature.”³²

Malcolm Cowley, despite having some serious reservations about life in Grafton, elevated Granville Hicks above other intellectuals who “scatter to the corners of the earth . . . when they become disenchanting” or “take to the woods . . . trying to achieve independence on five acres . . . they want to cut the ties to society and achieve the illusion of leading their own lives.”

Granville Hicks has taken an opposite course, one in which I imagine that comparatively few will follow him, because . . . it involved more day-to-day problems than arctic exploration or beach-combing in the South Seas. He has stayed at home and has plunged into the loosely knit community life of an upstate New York town.³³

Although Grafton is called “Roxborough” in the book (an early name of the town used in the late 1700s) and while the names of persons mentioned there are fictional, the events the book details are entirely factual. *Small Town* achieved great popularity and general critical acclaim. Granville Hicks received numerous letters of praise from small-town residents and natives from across the country. Some of his Grafton neighbors enjoyed the book while others detested it, as one might expect. *Small Town* lacked any Richard Bennett or Lynd Ward illustrations and was printed by Macmillan on the poor quality paper used during and after the war; its design and its printing were certainly not commensurate with the book’s importance.

The New York State Education Department selected *Small Town* for their Educator’s Book Club, and as a result the book became immensely popular with

teachers and school administrators. Although *Small Town* “does not pretend to treat of formal educational matters,” their review noted, it should be “almost required reading for school folks,” as important a work as Margaret Mead’s *Coming of Age in Samoa* or *The Education of Henry Adams*. “It is as readable as a novel,” the reviewer continued, “and as folksy as a gossip column . . . this is the kind of book that can be read for enjoyment and ‘pondered’ over for understanding.”¹⁴

I have identified seven positive attributes or values of small-town life that Granville Hicks has delineated in *Small Town* and his other writings. First, even though his educational background and literary career had been restricted to academia, Hicks soon developed an appreciation of nature, rural scenery and the out-of-doors. Shortly after purchasing his Grafton home, he recognized the scenic beauty of the area:

We look to the east, to the mountains. Our Taconics. Two or three times a day some one of us calls the others to look. Even in the winter, when the clouds are over them, we speak of their invisibility. The colors of sunrise over our Taconics. The disc of the moon showing above them. Snow lying heavy or streaked along the tops. The steady change of color from day to day and hour to hour. And behind them Greylock of the Berkshires, whose beacon nightly reminds us that the mountains are there.¹⁵

The Rensselaer Plateau, a mountainous area of 97,500 acres in east-central Rensselaer County, is heavily wooded and contains many significant wetlands, lakes, and small streams. It features unique disjunct areas of northern forest, little known in this southerly altitude. Its ecological communities, flora, and fauna are among those typically found in the Adirondacks. Hicks remarked in *Small Town* that Grafton held particular appeal because of “wild country . . . becoming wilder now that abandoned farms are growing up to woods.”¹⁶ Repeatedly in his journals, Hicks commented on the beautiful rural scenery, reminding one sometimes of John Burroughs:

When I went for water, the stars were out . . . When I came home the mountains were sharp, and little clouds were just turning pink. I had my second cup of coffee and was up in the study before the sun rose, and by then there was no cloud anywhere . . . The snow glistens, and the shadows are blue.¹⁷



The portrait-photograph above is by Lotte Jacobi taken in about 1943.

The photographs on the next two pages were taken by Kosti Rouhumma in the winter of 1946-47 for Life Magazine. These were not published at the time and were given to the Hicks family. Courtesy of Stephanie Carib.





His acute sense of the natural world around him in Grafton is evident in this passage from his unpublished 1952 article, "A Place in the Country":

We learned, too, how much color there is in winter. Not only the delicate hues that the snow takes from the sun, the grays and the blues, but also the incredible red of the buds. We saw it particularly at sunset, when the blueberry bushes were close to scarlet and the tops of the maples were afire. The sunlight would pick out the white trunks of the birches, the silver and gray of maples, the gray and brown and black of the other trees, and above all the rich red that promised spring.

We are so well protected on the west that in summer we cannot see the sunsets, but in the winter we can, and, in any case, in winter the glory of the sunset is as likely to be in the east as in the west. Take a day when the clouds have been gathering and the sun has been wallowing through snow. Suddenly, as it is close to the western horizon, the sun breaks through and immediately the whole east is a dazzling lavender—not merely the Taconics but our own woods and Dr. Sampson's hill and a dozen little hills that ordinarily we are not aware of. The grays and the red alike are wonderfully transmuted, and each tree stands out by itself in its own radiance. The light flames toward red, and then sinks into blue and a deeper and deeper blue, until the switch is abruptly pulled and the stage is dark.¹⁸

In his 1946 radio/television debate with Charles Jackson, author of the book, *The Lost Weekend*, Hicks wondered how people can live in a big city "without quietness and without clean, fresh air."¹⁹ "The charm of the country," he commented in the *Life Magazine* article which followed, "far outweighs . . . rural disadvantages."²⁰

The second important attribute of small-town life that Granville Hicks recognized was what he called "the power of personal word." In his article, "The Mind of A Small Town," the issuance of which preceded the publication of *Small Town* by a few months, Hicks discussed this attribute at some length. "Talk between neighbors [in rural America] used to be the only means for the transmission of news and opinions, and it is still an important means wherever neighborly contacts exist" as they did in Grafton.

Weather, crops and animals, both wild and domestic, furnish material for thought and themes for conversation, but the great source is expe-

rience with people. For one thing, most ideas, whatever their ultimate origin, circulate through personal rather than impersonal channels.

Personal contact not only passes ideas along; in itself it provides material for thought. If people think most of the time about themselves, a good deal of the rest of the time, they spend in thinking about other people.⁴¹

Grafton, Hicks concluded, “has almost no impersonal spectacles . . . There is every chance for a person . . . to learn about his neighbors, and few distractions to keep him from doing so.”⁴²

Closely related to the “power of personal word” is small-town neighborliness. In a *small* town like Grafton, for better or worse, you know your neighbors. In *Small Town* he commented that Roxborough was composed of “people they know and have known from childhood, people who know them, who know their faults and have got used to them, know their virtues and appreciate them.”⁴³ He later wrote that as “mass society” or “large society” became larger and larger, “more and more relationships would become impersonal” if the process couldn’t be “slowed down.” In small towns “most relationships were between person and person, not between function and function.” Hicks commented how much he enjoyed trading in the country store “where I am known by name and can meet friends and swap gossip.” In a small town, one is “thrown with many kinds of men and not merely with intellectuals. In short I like living in a small town.”⁴⁴

Max Lerner, another former Communist and long-time friend of Hicks’s, echoed the same sentiment in 1957 when he wrote that

the value of small-town living lies in the face-to-face relations that it makes possible throughout the community. One might say that a small town ceases to be one as soon as someone who has lived in it a number of years finds unfamiliar faces as he walks down the street, and is not moved to discover who they are and how they got there.⁴⁵

Hicks made an interesting observation on social classes in a small town. Whereas as many as six social classes might exist in a larger community, he observed only two in Grafton, and it is was “not easy to define the differences between them”: “The lower class,” he wrote, “has a few rather disreputable characters, but for the greater part it is made up of people not strikingly different in outward appearance or in income from the bulk of the upper class. It is no won-

der that for all the more important affairs of life Roxborough is a classless society.”⁴⁶ Coming from a former socialist, this is indeed an interesting attribute of small-town life.

“Efficiency” of life was another value of small-town life that Hicks admired. Life in a small country house was “efficient” and very basic as he first had noted in *I Like America*. His Grafton home had fresh air, clean water and sunlight, and with firewood as a heat source, one didn’t need to “give the superintendent hell about if you don’t get it,” as might his “city friends.”⁴⁷ Life was also “efficient” in a small town because “small town functions overlap, and as a result one can do two or three strokes of business in a single call.”⁴⁸ Because small-town politicians are little concerned with overriding political ideologies, local political matters tend to be handled more simply than in a larger, more cosmopolitan community. Everett Ladd, in his later study of Putnam, Connecticut, noted that Hicks, unlike most of the social scientists, was “concerned with what people *don’t* talk about.”⁴⁹ In this regard, Ladd recognized that Hicks had “found the same preoccupation with the concrete and the immediate” in rural America as de Tocqueville had over a century before.⁵⁰

Hicks observed that “there is never a week that is wholly free from community activity of some kind or another.”⁵¹ While most of those tasks involved little or no compensation, they did involve various residents working together on an assortment of projects and strengthened a sense of community. “What Toynebee calls ‘the link of loyalty’ is still very important in Roxborough, and it is my guess that this is a far more significant tie than any other,” he wrote in *Small Town*.⁵²

Loyalty—to the town, to an organization, even to friends—I have come to appreciate in proportion as I have discovered its rarity. I was brought up on Galsworthy’s ‘it’s not enough,’ and of course I know that loyalty isn’t enough. But it is something. In the rarefied air of the intellectual loyalty may not be greatly missed. . . . But even the simple human loyalty to be found in Roxborough has come to seem admirable, for it is the chief corrective to greed and malice.⁵³

The final positive attribute of small-town life that Granville Hicks recognized he referred to as the understanding of “community past.” “The significant thing about the natives,” he wrote in *Small Town*, “is the way they think in terms of the past—not merely the individual past but the community past.”⁵⁴ He had come to learn that a majority of Grafton residents descended from old families and were in some way related to each other. Hicks had always found Grafton’s

history interesting. In 1938, in *I Like America*, he touched on the early history of the town, when it was part of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck, and had come to learn the history of the Francis West family who had established the farm where he now resided. He addressed these topics at length in his unpublished 1952 article, "A Place in the Country." While Hicks did not discover any diaries or journals of early Grafton residents, he did study early town records, and, at some length, the amazingly detailed diaries of George Holcomb of nearby rural Stephentown, covering the period 1805-1856, housed in the New York State Library. Grafton, Hicks concluded, had still been an "isolated and partly self-sufficient community" into the early 1900s, and this was important because "there are so many people in the town who remember that period and are constantly looking back to it."⁵⁵ "Because the past is so close, it seems to the younger people as well as the old-timers that Roxborough life is different from city life."⁵⁶ Psychologist and sociologist David Riesman, admittedly "enormously stimulated" by *Small Town*, has observed an interesting parallel with "American Indian culture," particularly the Sioux and Hopi, whose neighborliness seemed for Riesman to have its roots in a deep sense of the past.⁵⁷

Following the publication of *Small Town* and the wide acclaim it received, Granville Hicks soon became recognized as one of the nation's principal spokespersons for the virtues of small-town life in rural America. His reputation was greatly enhanced by his participation in a debate on the popular public-radio program, "Town Meeting of the Air," held on December 26, 1946. The debate was held in Schenectady in the studios of WRGB Channel 6 and was also televised. Hicks debated Charles Jackson, who had spent a few disappointing years of his life in Orford, New Hampshire, an even smaller and more isolated town than Grafton (very closely resembling Landaff, in fact). The debate, entitled "Would You Rather Live in a Small Town or a Big City," was narrated by George V. Denny, Jr., and lasted nearly an hour. The debate was lively, made even more so when the two "interrogators," the husband-and-wife team of radio personalities, Reagan "Tex" McCarthy and "Jinx" Falkenburg, took strongly opposing positions, each sympathizing with one of the two authors.

When Hicks had written *I Like America* in 1938 he still maintained a fondness for the many activities that life in New York City offered, but he soon realized that while the big city was an interesting place to visit, his home would be in the country. He began to see the many activities the big city offered as "impersonal spectacles" and now distrusted "the judgements of the city intellectuals when they talk about the 'people'—whether they take the line that the people are boobs or refer piously to the common man." He had developed by

now a “strong distaste for big cities” and he had proven “that an intellectual remains an intellectual even though he does live in a small town.”⁵⁸ “Whenever I am in New York City,” he proclaimed near the beginning of the debate, “I wonder how people can live without quietness and without clean, fresh air. I wonder, too, how they can stand the pressure of anonymous humanity. I know people as individual human beings. I don’t like their bitter faces and the sharp elbows of the subway.”⁵⁹ Granville Hicks is generally acknowledged to have “won” the debate and the people of Grafton felt that he “had successfully defended the small town.” Many urban dwellers, Hicks noted, have “small-town backgrounds, and when urban frustrations grow too severe, they long for quiet and simplicity.” Even Charles Jackson admitted that the “American dream” consisted of “a Cape Cod cottage on a village green.”⁶⁰

As a result of the broadcast, *Life* decided to run a story contrasting Hicks’s life in Grafton and Jackson’s life in New York City, which Hicks referred to as a “megapolitan monstrosity.” Photographer Kosti Rouhoma shot hundreds of photos in Grafton on a visit that winter, and six of them were used in the article “City vs. Country” which appeared in *Life* on March 17, 1947. Grafton townsfolk delighted in the publicity and attention they were receiving; Hicks’s friend, storekeeper Sherman Barnhart, said that the “pictures of this small town . . . will be seen all round the world.”⁶¹

Later in 1947 in an article in *Georgia Review*, “Reflections of a Small-Towner,” Hicks commented on the big city versus small town debate that he had popularized the previous year:

I did not set out, as some reviewers assumed, to debunk the small town, nor was I undertaking a crusade against big cities. . . . First of all, I personally prefer life in a small town to life in a city. Secondly, I believe that the small town is an important part of American life, and should neither be sneered at or neglected. . . . We chose our present residence not because we wanted to live in a small town but because we wanted to live in the country. . . . But in time the people came alive for us, and their affairs became important to us, and we are glad that this happened. They are our people now, our neighbors, our fellow-citizens, our friends and our enemies, and their affairs are our affairs. These people and their affairs have taught us a great deal about human nature and the problems of democratic government.⁶²

Reflecting on the now-famous debate, Hicks reminded readers that his purpose

“in examining the shortcoming of cities” was “not to call city-dwellers to repentance but rather to awaken in small-townners an appreciation of their advantages, their opportunities and their responsibilities.”⁶⁵

Small Town, as Margaret Mead had indicated in her review, stood alone from other books on the subject published before 1946, in part because it not merely lamented the loss of small-town values, but also dealt with the small town’s future. “Has any small town a future in this age of industrialism, urbanism and specialization?” Hicks asked at the beginning of a chapter on the subject.⁶⁴

What is the place of the small town in the larger society? It is certain that the economic life of the individuals who live within the boundaries of Roxborough, or any other small town, will be increasingly shaped by forces that are operating throughout the entire nation and, many of them, throughout the entire world. It is equally certain that state and federal government will count for more and the town government for less in the political life. Can the small town survive?⁶⁵

If Grafton lost its churches, school, store and post office it would cease to have much if any identity, being reduced to no more than “houses along the highway.”⁶⁶ These were the places, after all, along with the Town Hall, where Hicks so enjoyed swapping gossip with his neighbors. Grafton of the 1940s was still somewhat of a community “in the old-fashioned way,” and while “urbanites may say that this is sentimentality,” Hicks insisted that when this sense of “community past” ceases to exist, then the community ceases to exist as well.⁶⁷

“The old basis of the small town has been destroyed and cannot be rebuilt, but I can believe that new foundations can be established,” Hicks wrote, upon which the small town can survive as a community, providing that three conditions are satisfied:

The first essential, obviously, is an economic basis for the existence of the town. The second is the establishment of a standard of living comparable of [sic] that of the cities. And the third is the development of forms of activity that will bring the people of the town closer together—that will take the place of a network of personal and economic relationships that once linked the members of the self-sufficient community.⁶⁸

Hicks speculated how the small-town mind, with its resistance to outside authority, would react to regional planning. He advocated “planned decentral-

ization,” where county, regional, state and federal government would provide the town assistance, but not interfere with local autonomy, which he considered “a valuable bulwark against totalitarianism.”⁶⁹

Because of its small population and the many interpersonal contacts between its residents, Hicks saw the small town as a “school of practical democracy.”⁷⁰ Despite the problems associated with small-town politics, one’s vote counted more in a small-town election, and a small-town resident could more easily participate in the local political process than in a large city. Hicks advocated the “town meeting” form of government as practiced in rural New England, because it led to greater citizen involvement. “In the past the small community was the seedbed of our American kind of democracy” Hicks wrote. “In the future, if we are wise, the small community may become an experiment station for new democratic processes.”⁷¹

Granville Hicks continued to maintain an interest in the viability of the small town. In 1953 he contributed an article to *Commentary* called “Roxborough, Post-Truman: The New Small-Town Community in the Making.” In the intervening years since *Small Town* was published, the population of Grafton had increased by about 200 persons, mostly “newcomers.” “Some of them take part in town activities . . . and contribute to town causes. . . . Far from being a disruptive factor, they have helped transform Roxborough into a suburb” of sorts.⁷² “If the newcomer is reasonably personable, he will be urged to join two or three organizations as soon as he has made a few friends in town,” he continued. These newcomers have “put down roots” and while they will always be treated as “outsiders” they find more “people of congenial tastes and habits, which would not have been true twenty years ago.”⁷³

As Hicks had predicted in *Small Town*, the “psychological effect of prosperity” had been “tremendous.” The stark rural poverty he had observed when house hunting in 1932, which he mentioned in *I Like America*, had begun to disappear:

I find it hard to remember how it used to be—the unpainted, ramshackle houses, the yards full of junk and ragged children. Now, there is a television aerial on every roof, of course, and there are refrigerators, washing machines, and electric or bottled-gas ranges in the kitchens. . . . I used to be distressed by the hangdog faces I saw, especially on the women, at school meetings and elections. Now the same women hold their heads up, and when they have something to say, they say it.⁷⁴

The “conversion to suburb status” had benefited the small town, wrote Hicks, “first by making possible prosperity, second by extending the experience of many

of the natives, and third by giving it a more varied population.”⁷⁵ While much remained to be accomplished in Grafton, Hicks continued to profess that

there is still much to be said for the small community. At least we are a long way from urban impersonality and anonymity. Face-to-face relationships do prevail, and the individual is not reduced to a function. Furthermore, when, as in Roxborough, one is so close to a self-sufficient past that it still influences the attitudes of many people, one gains a better perspective on the values and deficiencies of a mass society.⁷⁶

Granville Hicks wrote an article entitled “Is the Small Town Doomed” in 1956, intended for publication in *Woman's Home Companion*. The article never appeared because the magazine ceased publication in 1957, but it survives in typescript drafts in the Granville Hicks Papers at the Syracuse University Library. “While many small towns have been swallowed up,” Hicks noted, “the situation is not quite so bleak as some observers maintain.” Hicks recognized that the automobile had “made possible a new pattern of living” where small-town residents could commute to jobs in nearby cities while spending quality time in the small-town community. Hicks also saw the “decentralization of industry” and the development of rural tourism and outdoor recreation as benefiting the small town. He concluded this article with a note of optimism:

One of the greatest dangers is the belief that the destruction of the small town is inevitable. As we have seen, there are forces working for the small town as well as forces working against it. If no one cared for the small town, the destructive forces would almost certainly prevail but millions of people do care, and their caring can make a difference. When people have succumbed to fatalistic lethargy, there is little hope, but much can be done by intelligent, planned action.⁷⁷

Socialist Michael Harrington visited Grafton in the 1950s to see the famous small town for himself. “At first glance,” he noted, Grafton seemed to be “a bend in the road, a clump of life, and not much more. But Grafton is different,” he concluded, “different from the image that develops in the urban imagination—whereas what really distinguished Grafton is that it has a chronicler, Granville Hicks . . . He has not been an alien sociologist from some great university looking for the stuff of statistics. For twenty-five years he has been an active, partisan citizen, one of the few intellectuals to make good the threat to

find roots.”⁷⁸ Harrington had seen suburbs being absorbed by cities and lose their community identity, wondering if the hamlet of Eagle Mills in the Town of Brunswick, which he had passed through on the way to Grafton, would eventually suffer this fate. But a “curious mixture” seemed to be maintaining the “small-townishness” of Grafton, namely that “the economy is based upon the [nearby] city” of Troy, but Grafton’s “social relations are that of the country.”⁷⁹

Granville Hicks last commented on the small town in his 1972 reviews of Vance Packard’s *A Nation of Strangers* and Edwin Rosskam’s *Roosevelt, New Jersey; Big Dreams in a Small Town and What Time Did to Them*, which appeared in the *New York Times*. As Packard and Rosskam both noted, the progress of technology threatened to doom small-town life, in spite of the best efforts to preserve it. It will either assimilate the small towns into mass society or take them “into the abyss,” Hicks lamented. “In the meantime, for many of us, the small town is a better place than most to spend whatever time remains.” The newly found social mobility may have been blindly embraced by many, but was feared by both Packard and Hicks, for this mobility led to “rootlessness . . . because of the problems” it caused “in establishing and in keeping identity.”⁸⁰ This loss of the sense of community, feared so greatly by Hicks, and later by Packard and Rosskam, is most recently echoed in James Kunstler’s recent work, *The Geography of Nowhere* (1993).

In his later years, Granville Hicks became somewhat less involved in local affairs, to some extent because of his failing health, but also because he wanted to devote additional time to literary criticism. He had stated in *Small Town* that he “hoped to unload” some of his town-related projects, but concentrate on a few, particularly his work with the Grafton Free Library. A “complete withdrawal” from local activities “would be both an admission of defeat and a betrayal of the friends who have worked with us. So long as we live in the town,” he concluded, “we cannot do anything to jeopardize the gains that we have helped to win.”⁸¹ When the final issue of the *Grafton Defender* appeared in 1957, Hicks remarked that this now ended “fifteen years of intense community effort. . . . I was not disillusioned,” he continued, “I was not bitter. I had no regrets. Though less had been accomplished than I had dreamed of [in particular, the lack of a community center] the accomplishments were not to be laughed off.”⁸²

Malcolm Cowley, his long-time friend and colleague, praised the life and work of Granville Hicks in a long review of Hick’s autobiography, *Part of the Truth*, which appeared in the *New York Times* in 1965. Largely as a result of Hicks’s untiring efforts, Cowley noted that Grafton not only now had a firehouse, library and modern school, but also “seems to have developed more local

pride and a stronger sense of community." Still, as Cowley accurately noted, "Grafton is not a beacon light for the nation." Cowley admired Hicks but regretted "that for 20 years Hicks's talent for leadership, his doggedness and his social conscience" had been "chiefly confined to that narrow field" of improving life in a small town, which today still only has a population of about 1900.⁸⁴

Thirty-five years have passed since Cowley's review and it has become easier to examine the career and writings of Granville Hicks from a broader perspective. Hicks's interest in studying small-town values and reconstituting small-town life as a viable part of the American experience had a far broader influence than Cowley might have imagined. Baker Brownell elevated Hicks to the status of a benevolent missionary of sorts, who along with Arthur Morgan and some prominent members of the American clergy, "made impressive demonstrations of modern ways to stabilize the community or identity the intellectual life with it."⁸⁵

For Hicks, Grafton was not only his home, but also a representative "little slice of America."⁸⁶ As Margaret Mead commented in her review of *Small Town*, Granville Hicks "blazed . . . a path" in the interest in small-town studies. The soft-spoken transplanted New England intellectual, staunch in his beliefs, had left his mark in a field seemingly unrelated to, but equally as revolutionary as American social history or Marxist literary criticism.

Notes

1. Granville Hicks, "A Place in the Country," 1952, unpublished article, Granville Hicks Papers, Syracuse University Library, p. 2.
2. Granville Hicks, *Small Town* (New York, 1946), pp. 3-4.
3. James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* (New York: 1993), p. 168.
4. *Small Town*, p. 143.
5. Granville Hicks, *Part of the Truth: An Autobiography* (New York, 1965), p. 106.
6. *Part of the Truth*, p. 111.
7. *Part of the Truth*, p. 157.
8. *Part of the Truth*, p. 195.
9. *Grafton Defender*, July 17, 1954.
10. Granville Hicks, "Thoughts in a Small-Town Library," *The American Scholar*, Vol. 25, Spring 1956, pp. 177-192.
11. *Small Town*, p. vii.
12. Elin Anderson, *We Americans: A Study of Cleavage in an American City* (Cambridge, Mass: 1937), p. 268.
13. E. Dwight Sanderson and Robert A. Polson, *Rural Community Organization* (New York: 1939), p. 43.

14. Louis Ploch, *Landaff—Then and Now* [Landaff, New Hampshire] (Orono, Maine: 1989).
15. *Small Town*, p. 199.
16. The six "Rural Life Studies" all entitled *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community* are: #1, El Cerrito, New Mexico, by Olen Leonard and Charles Loomis; #2, Sublette, Kansas, by Earl Bell; #3, Landaff, New Hampshire, by Kenneth MacLeish and Kimball Young; #4, The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, by Walter Kollmorgen; #5, Irwin, Iowa, by Edward Moe and Carl Taylor; and #6, Harmony, Georgia, by Waller Wynne.
17. Carl Withers ("James West"), *Plainville, U.S.A.* (New York: 1945), pp. 225-226.
18. Clarence Webster, *Town Meeting Country* (New York, 1945), p. 175.
19. *Small Town*, p. 11. Angie Deho's *Prairie City: The Story of An American Community* (1944) is better classified as a local history (of Marshall, Oklahoma), but covers the modern era and presents an interesting picture of small-town society.
20. Baker Brownell, *The Human Community, Its Philosophy and Practice for a Time of Crisis* (New York, 1950), p. 220.
21. *Part of the Truth*, p. 223.
22. *Small Town*, p. 274.
23. Other noteworthy small-town studies which followed *Small Town*, and are not mentioned above, include Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow* [Wasco, California] (1947); Harriet Herring, *Passing of the Mill Village: Revolution in a Southern Institution* [North Carolina] (1949); August Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth: The Impact of Social Classes on Adolescents* ["Jonesville," Illinois] (1949); Richard Poston, *Small Town Renaissance: A Story of the Montana Study* [Montana] (1950); Maurice Stein, *The Eclipse of Community: An Interpretation of American Studies* (1950, 1960); Art Gallaher, Jr., *Plainville: Fifteen Years Later* ["Plainville," Missouri] (1961); Helen Santmyer, *Ohio Town* [Xenia, Ohio] (1962); Anthony Bailey, *Through the Great City* [Atlantic shore] (1967); Christopher Rand, *The Changing Landscape* [Salisbury, Connecticut] (1968); John McCarty, *Maverick Town: The Story of Old Tascosa* [Tascosa, Texas] (1946, revised 1968); Lynn Eden, *Crisis in Watertown: The Polarization of an American Community* [Watertown, Wisconsin] (1972); Donald Connery, *One American Town* [Kent, Connecticut] (1972); Bert Swanson, *The Small Town in America: A Guide for Study and Community Development* (1976); Paul Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill: Man and the Land in a New England Town* [Lincoln, Massachusetts] (1976); Reed Wolcott, *Rose Hill: A Documentary of Shared Experience* [Rose Hill, North Carolina] (1976); John Baskin, *New Burlington: The Life and Death of an American Village* [New Burlington, South Carolina] (1976); Orville Schell, *The Town That Fought to Save Itself* [Briones, California] (1976); Richard Lingeman, *Small Town America: A Narrative History, 1620-the Present* (1980); Art Gallaher, Jr. and Harland Padfield (eds.), *The Dying Community* (1980); Peter Davis, *Hometown* [Hamilton, Ohio] (1982); Ron Powers, *White Town Drowsing* [Hannibal, Missouri] (1986); Donald Harrington, *Let Us Build a City: Eleven Lost Towns* [Arkansas] (1986); Louis Ploch, *Landaff—Then and Now* [Landaff, New Hampshire] (1989); Elaine Dundy, *Ferriday, Louisiana* (1991); Ron Powers, *Far From Home: Life and Loss in Two American Towns* [Kent, Connecticut and Cairo, Illinois] (1991); Richard Francaviglia, *Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small-Town America* (1996).
24. Brownell, *The Human Community*, p. 207.
25. *Small Town*, p. 219.
26. Hicks, "The American Character Changes," *New Leader*, March 12, 1951, pp. 20-22.
27. Letter, Baker Brownell to Granville Hicks, March 1, 1946, Granville Hicks Papers, Syracuse University Library.
28. Joseph Lyford, *The Talk in Vandalia* (Santa Barbara, California, 1962), pp. 99, 102.
29. August Heckscher, *The Individual and the Mass* (New York, 1965), pp. 15, 17.

30. Margaret Mead, "Grass Roots and the Intellectual," *New York Times Book Review*, Dec. 15, 1946, p. 4.
31. Robert Lynd, "Ivory Village," *Saturday Review*, vol. 30, no. 3, January 18, 1947, p. 14.
32. Baker Brownell, "Small Town by Granville Hicks," *Survey Graphic*, June 1947, pp. 37-38.
33. Malcolm Cowley, "Hicksborough," *New Republic*, December 9, 1946, vol. 115, pp. 766-767.
34. Letter, Peter P. Muirhead to Granville Hicks, January 15, 1947, with review attached, Granville Hicks Papers, Syracuse University Library.
35. Granville Hicks, *I Like America* (New York, 1938), p. 10.
36. *Small Town*, p. 89.
37. Granville Hicks, Journal, Jan. 6, 1943, Granville Hicks Papers, Syracuse University Library.
38. "A Place in the Country," pp. 40-41. Because this article dealt with local history and seemed to have little appeal to a national audience, as Malcolm Cowley concurred, it was never published.
39. "Would You Rather Live in a Small Town or a Big City?," *Town Meeting* (Bulletin of America's Town Meeting of the Air), vol. 12, no. 35, Dec. 26, 1946, p. 4.
40. "City vs. Country," *Life Magazine*, March 17, 1947, p. 96.
41. Granville Hicks, "The Mind of a Small Town," *The American Mercury*, vol. 63, no. 272, August 1946, p. 157.
42. *Small Town*, p. 106; "The Mind of a Small Town," p. 158.
43. *Small Town*, p. 90.
44. *Part of the Truth*, p. 235.
45. Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization: Life and Thought in the United States Today* (New York, 1957), p. 150.
46. *Small Town*, pp. 93-94. See also W. Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt, *The Status System of a Modern Community* (New Haven, 1942).
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