

# American University of Beirut: The Story of America's Influence in the Middle East

Brian VanDeMark

# TRANSFORMATION OF AUB

- How a humble missionary school became a premier regional university
- Stopped preaching to students and started teaching them to overcome cultural barriers
- Shifted from religious conversion to educational enlightenment and independent thinking
- Served as neutral ground where tolerance and mutual respect prevailed
- Muslims, Christians, and Jews learned to work together and understand one another

# HOW BLISSES AND DODGES LED SPC/AUB

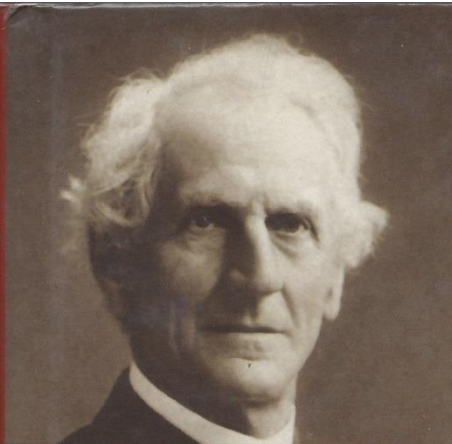
- Bold, persistent, visionary, and resilient in face of adversity
- Shed American arrogance and Western paternalism for tolerance, patience, and generosity
- Through hard experience learned to engage Middle Easterners on their own terms
- Realities and limits of American influence in the Middle East sobered them but did not deter them
- Lived ethos of service to AUB and larger Middle East

# LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE AT SPC/AUB

- **Daniel Bliss**  
Shed his initial arrogance and naivete by channelling his determination and optimism in a practical direction -- touching and improving lives through education rather than proselytization.
- **Howard Bliss**  
Guarded SPC/AUB amidst the winds of war and put local popular interests above outside national/imperial interests because he grew up and identified with Middle Easterners.
- **Bayard Dodge**  
Championed progressive values (e.g. education of women), toleration, and independence. Deeply respected ME's various religious traditions but struggled to grasp the emotional appeal and impact of Zionism
- **David Dodge**  
Kept AUB going through the trauma of the Lebanese Civil War. Quiet courage and endurance reassured and inspired others. Lived ethos of service to AUB and larger Middle East
- **Malcolm Kerr**  
Made his career in the US but his heart lay in Lebanon. His principles and sense of duty conquered his fears. Gave his life for the school and its ideals that he loved.
- **John Waterbury and Peter Dorman**  
Kept AUB alive and afloat in the face of many challenges. Understood the wisdom that only understanding can overcome fear and hatred.

# FUTURE AGENDA FOR AUB

- Show that AUB still offers, rather than imposes, best of American/Western values
- Hold fast to ideals of intercultural engagement, mutual respect, and tolerance
- Do what's been done before at AUB:
- Teach Middle Easterners of all faiths and perspectives that they can live together, work together, and solve problems together
- Demonstrate understanding of modernity's challenge to traditionalism to Muslims *and* the emotional resonance of Zionism to Jews
- Be bold and imaginative:
- Encourage Israelis to attend AUB (as earlier Jews did). Indispensable to building a shared future between Arabs and Jews.



# AMERICAN SHEIKHS

TWO FAMILIES, FOUR GENERATIONS, AND THE  
STORY OF AMERICA'S INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



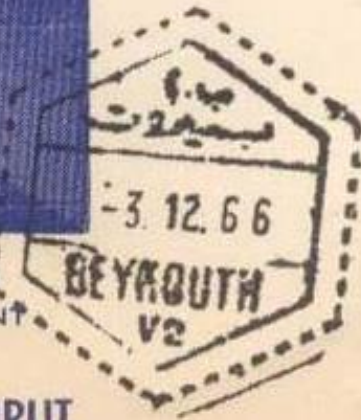
Brian VanDeMark



**Rev. DANIEL BLISS**  
FOUNDER AND FIRST PRESIDENT

In honor of the  
**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT**  
on the occasion of its  
**CENTENNIAL DAY**

F.D.C.









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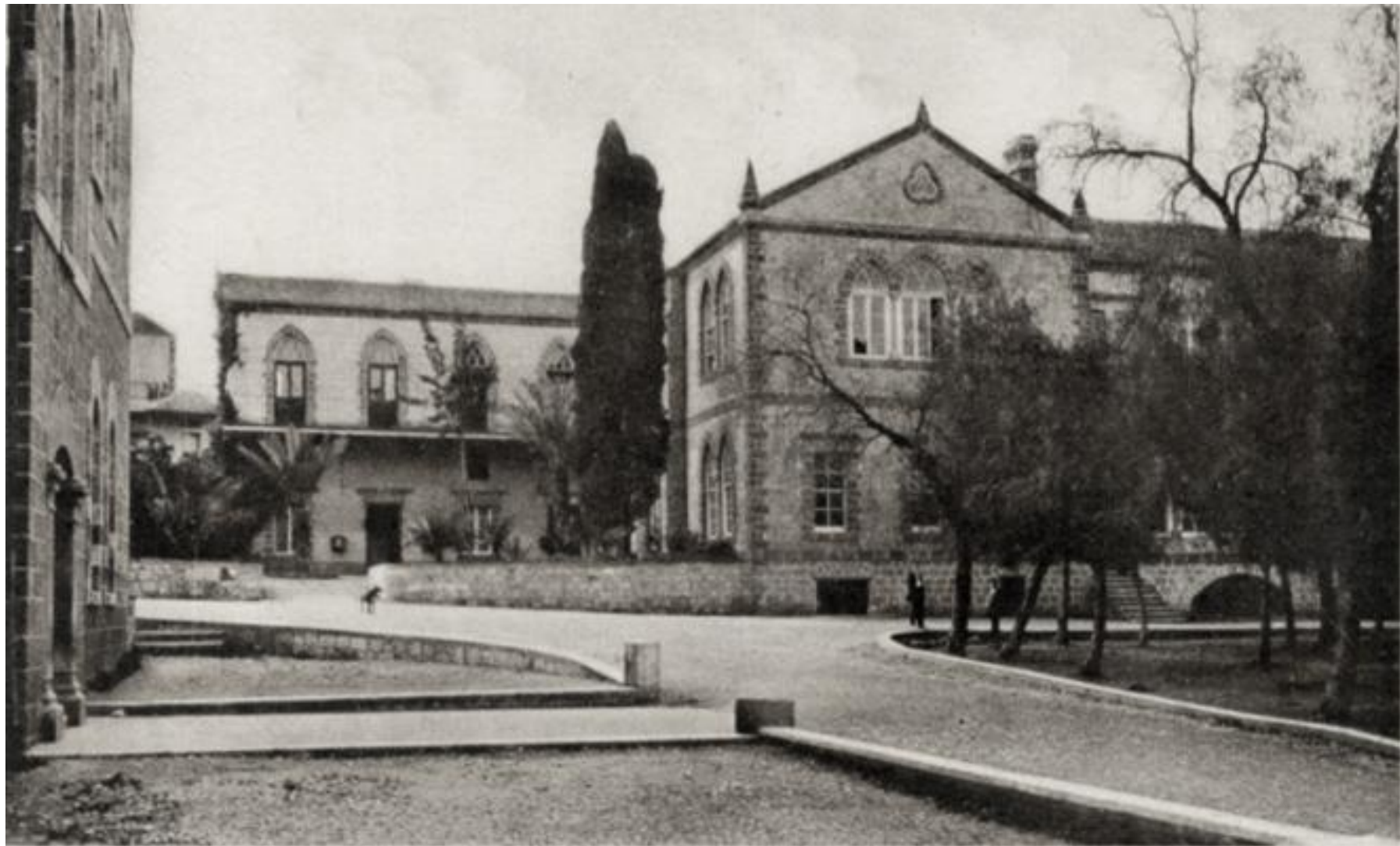




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No. 9 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, BEIRUT - DODGE HALL.

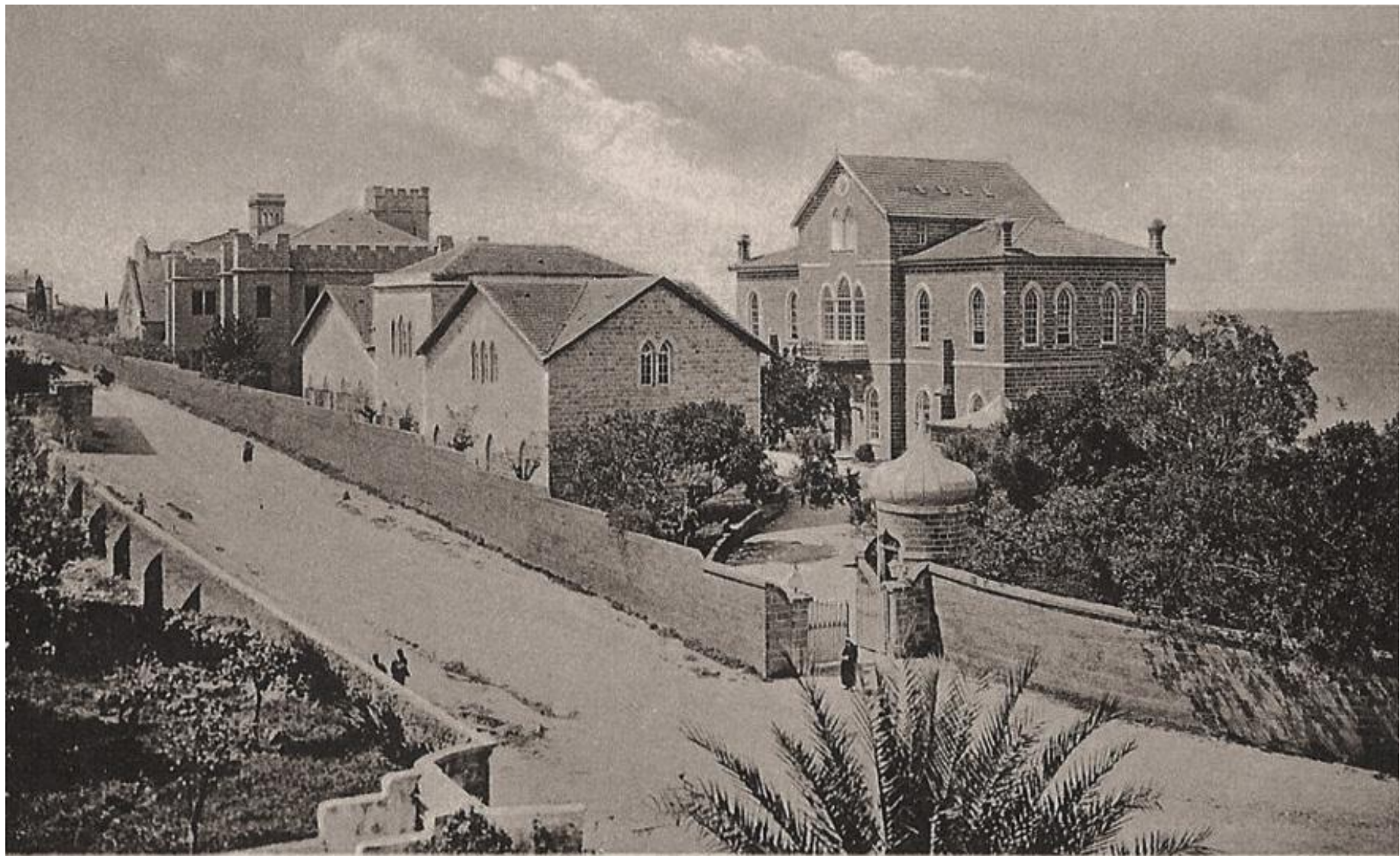




No. 2 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, BEIRUT - WEST HALL



No. 4 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, BEIRUT - POST HALL.



No. 19 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, BEIRUT - VIEW FROM AMERICAN HOSPITALS



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT













