Men of the Missouri River valley, this is a most important meeting. The time has come when we must think southward and not westward alone.

Our part of the U.S. is not growing in population, or in wealth and industry as rapidly as the coast belt of our country. We have largely reached maximum growth depending on present day use of our farms and livestock.

In fact, mechanization of farming is slowly but surely causing a declining population on our farms, thereby creating a less consuming population for products manufactured in our nearby cities and towns.

Concentration of factories along our coasts, far removed from our own agricultural section, lessens the market price received for farm products of our region.

We have a rapidly declining birth rate in our nearby states. We have a long haul cost on most things we sell.

Certain unavoidable shifting in channels of trade; certain regulations in methods of merchandising; certain broad economic changes, are adversely affecting the Middle West. Necessary increased freight costs particularly mitigate against us and constantly narrow and restrict our area of distribution.

This is a challenge to the men of our time. Shall we retain our share of national growth? Shall we use the great wealth of raw products with which our region abounds? Shall not our universities and states prosecute research in new uses through synthetic chemistry of these products? Shall we use the immense waste products of our farms in the world’s greatest agricultural area by transforming them into manufactured articles?

New England states many years ago realized their adverse economic situation, organized, and beat back to prosperity.

Southern states recently put their shoulders to the wheel and are making great forward strides today.

You all know the story of Los Angeles, California.

We have the men – leaders with vision and daring. We have banks ready to cooperate; we have a fine body of American born workmen ready to do their part. We have progressive farmers tilling our soil. We have railroads serving us; airplanes; a magnificent system of highways, and a great God-given river rapidly coming into service on the inland empire along the Missouri. We have immense quantities of gas, coal, and
oil for cheap fuel. We occupy the safest position in America in event of attack in foreign wars.

This meeting today is a battle cry to build more industry in our valley to benefit every man, woman, and child. It is only one step of the many we must take.

To the south of us lie 20 great republics with whom the U.S. has an enormous export and import trade. Our railroads and river lead to great ports represented here today. Trade experts have come from Washington to advise and guide us. Every dollar of profitable additional export trade from any industry in our valley will spell new growth and reflect itself in every business, every profession, and every farm.

Recent world affairs may make our time more opportune.

Perhaps quite a part of our three billion dollars being spent on relief could be devoted to development of employment in factories throughout our land.

The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce commands nearly a thousand men and women through the world to help serve us.

Let us all devote these three important days to digging into every fact, every bit of information, which may help us. Let us realize that even a small boost in our volume of industry may be the road to a more commanding position in our own industrial approach to a wider market for our factories throughout the U.S.

We wish you to ask all questions that occur to you, in our group meetings.

I believe those round table discussions, as set forth on the sheets in your hands will be of immense value. These men are here to serve you, let’s use them, and now we are off.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN054

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City. Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

Nichols’ objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.” The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911- ), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers. Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols’ private and business life. Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him. Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.