

Election by College Presidents

1904-1917

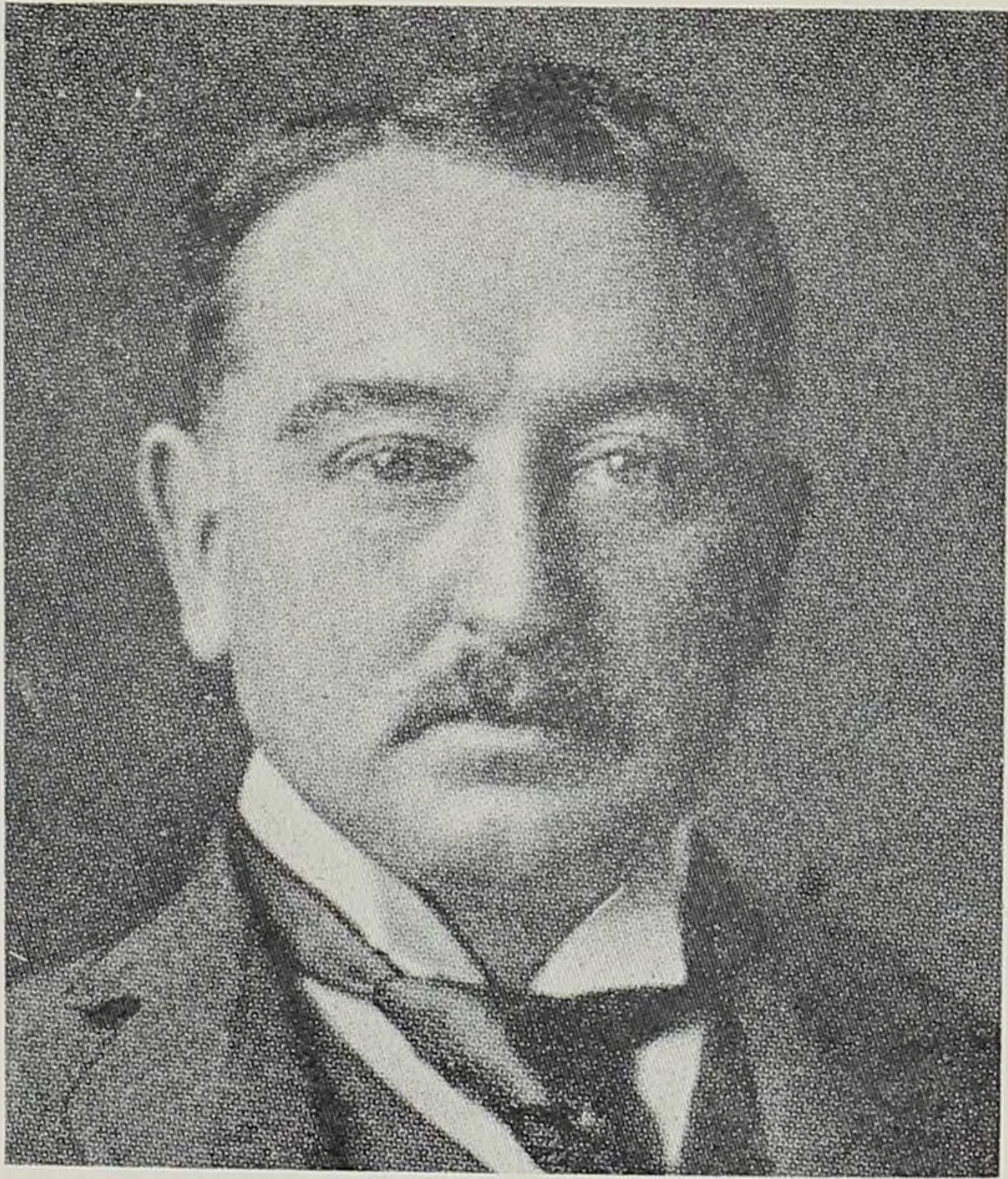
The executors of the Rhodes will requested Joseph H. Choate, American ambassador in England, to bring the scholarships to the attention of Secretary of State John Hay; and the latter then communicated with governors throughout the union. In letters dated July 15, 1902, Governor Albert B. Cummins of Iowa asked R. C. Barrett, superintendent of public instruction, and George E. MacLean, president of the State University, for suggestions on how to select Iowa's Rhodes scholars.

At the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities, Dr. MacLean, its president, read a paper on the Rhodes Scholarships and urged that scholars be chosen from colleges rather than from secondary schools. After extended conferences with Dr. George D. Parkin, general secretary of the Rhodes Trust, several recommendations were adopted by the association, one providing that in every state the president of the state university and representatives of colleges with standards at least equivalent to those of the university should base the selection of Rhodes scholars upon rotation among institutions or open competition among candidates.

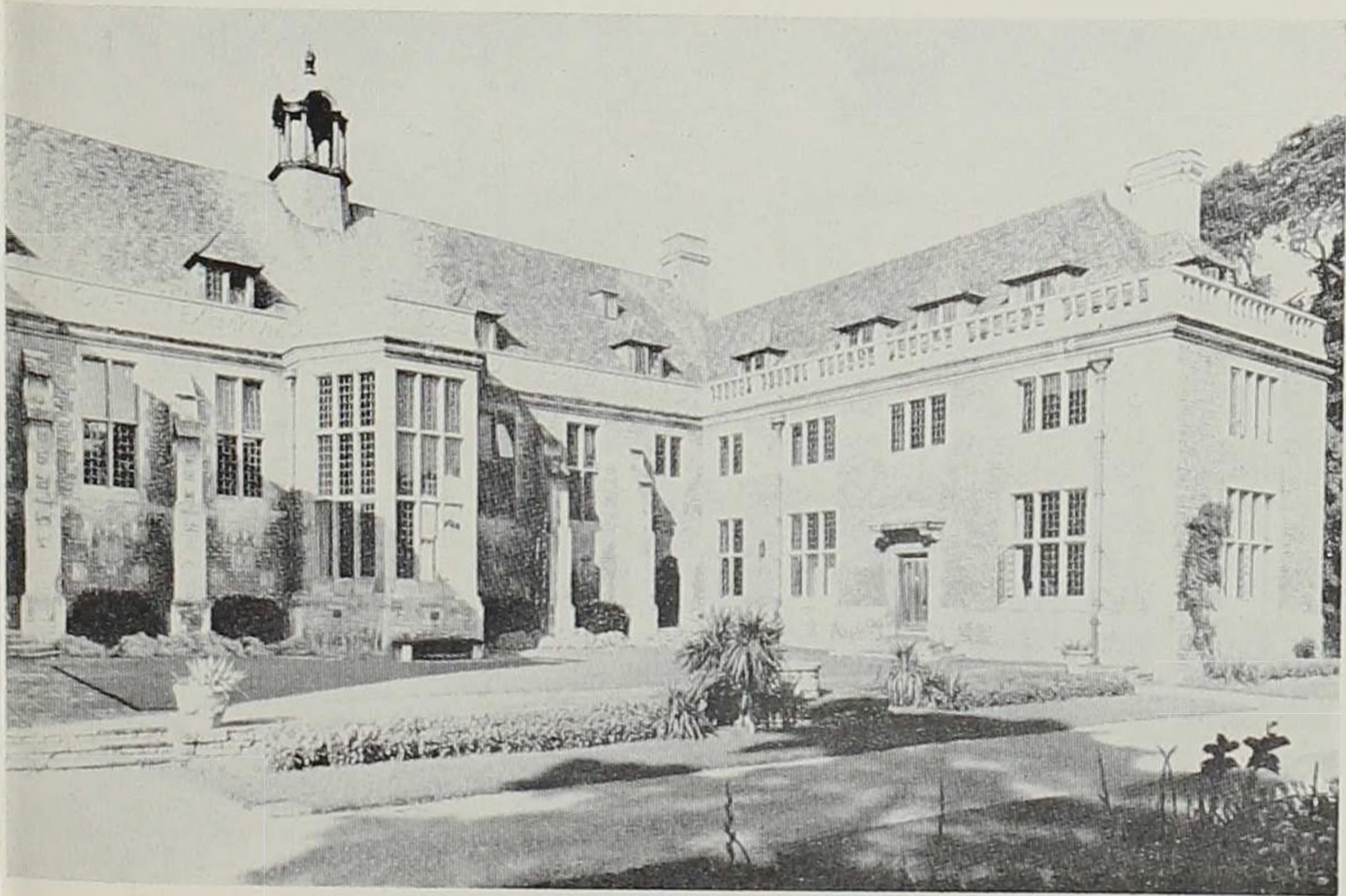
The committee which put the scholarship scheme into operation in Iowa consisted of the heads of five colleges: George E. MacLean of the State University as chairman, Dan F. Bradley of Grinnell, Hill M. Bell of Drake, William F. King of Cornell, and A. B. McCormick of Coe. In June of 1903 circulars of information were distributed to all Iowa colleges announcing that the state's two scholarships would be awarded in 1904 and 1905 — each for a term of three years with an annual stipend of £300, the intention of Cecil Rhodes being that each state would have two scholars in residence at Oxford in perpetuity.

So great was the interest of Iowa college students in the scholarship that twenty-two asked for application blanks, but only six had courage enough to file returns. The sudden dashing of hopes is accounted for by the discovery that candidates to be eligible for appointment had to prove their academic fitness by passing certain written tests. The Rhodes trustees prescribed a qualifying examination equivalent to the Oxford University entrance examination, because doubt existed in England about American standards of higher education.

Only five students gathered in the office of the superintendent of public instruction at Des Moines in 1904 to wrestle with questions forwarded from Oxford. Two hours each were allotted to papers covering Greek and Latin grammar, translations

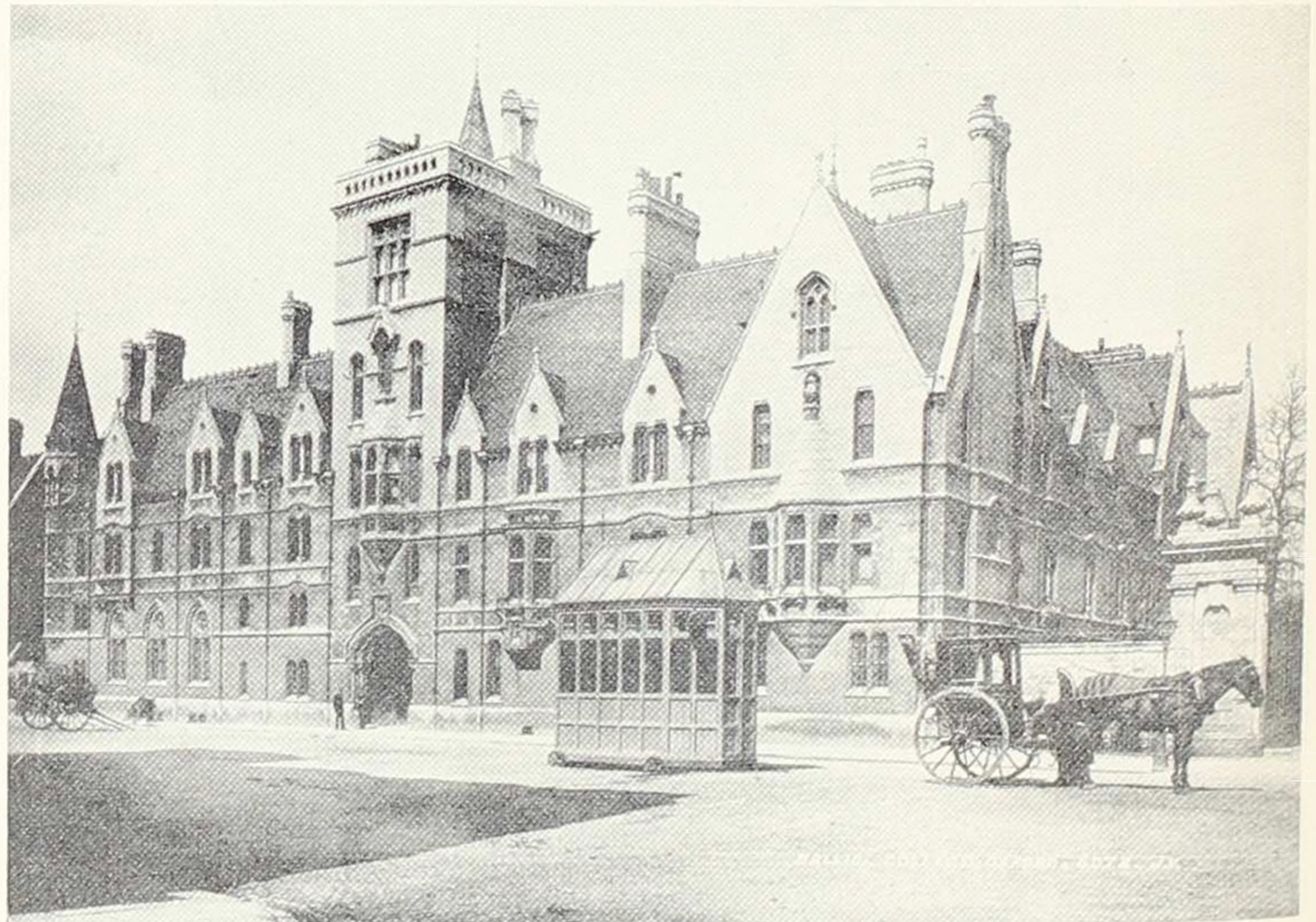


CECIL JOHN RHODES

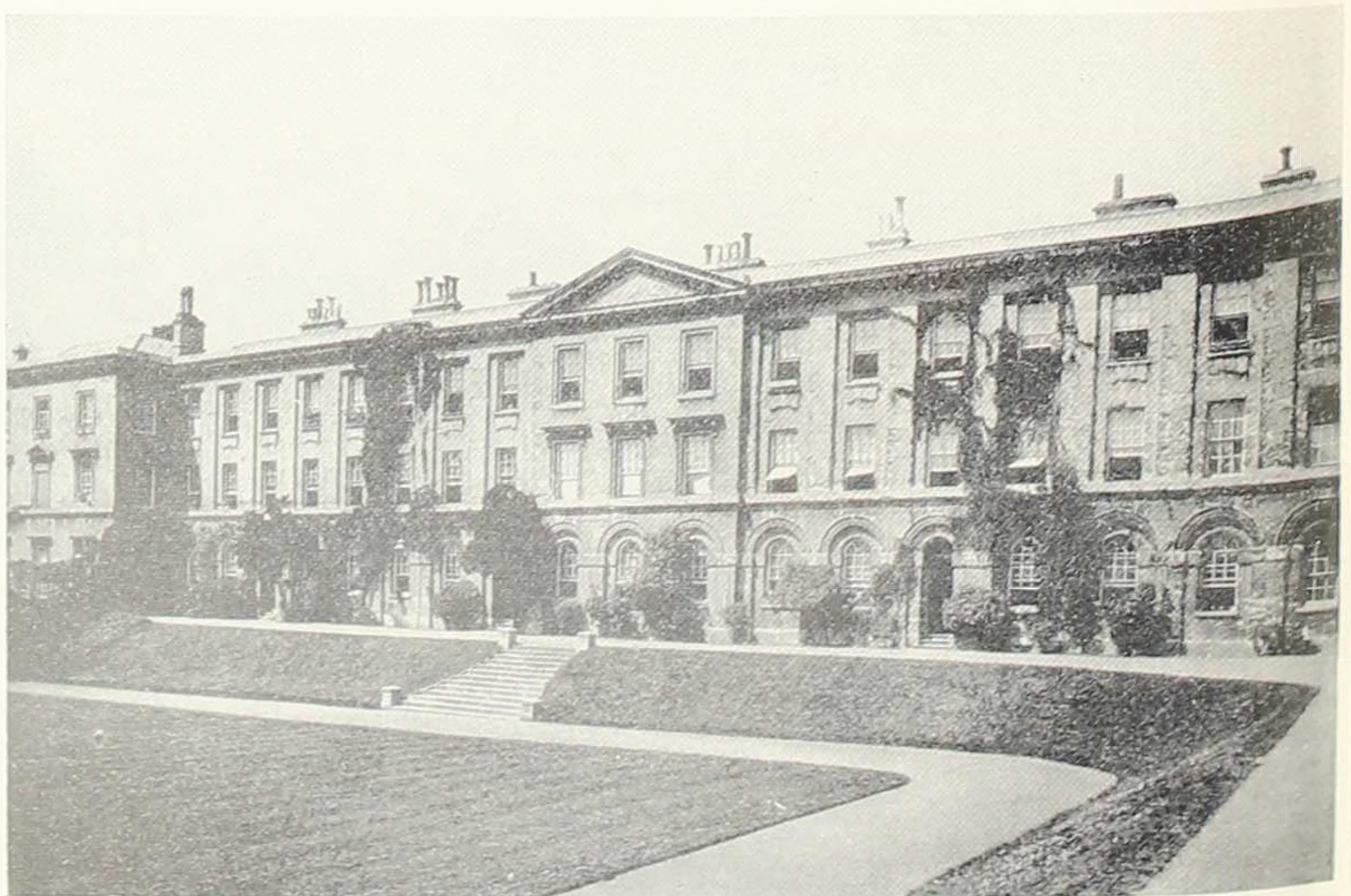


Rhodes House — Administrative and Social Center for Rhodes Scholars

OXFORD COLLEGE SCENES



Balliol College



Worcester College, New Building

from Greek and Latin authors, Latin prose composition, arithmetic, and algebra or geometry. The examination papers were packaged, sealed, and dispatched to Oxford.

The Iowa committee then required faculties and students of the five colleges which had candidates for the scholarship "to cast a fair and secret ballot answering in detail the questions printed thereon" relating to such nonscholastic qualifications as athletics, personality, and character. This peculiar procedure caused a good deal of wasted effort, because word soon arrived that only two of the candidates had survived the examination ordeal.

The committee assembled at Iowa City to pass upon the claims of the two successful examinees who represented the State University of Iowa and Iowa College at Grinnell. They canvassed campus ballots, compared scholastic records, examined official recommendations, and subjected the candidates to a thorough inquisition. It may be noted that for half a century the Iowa and other state committees have been under strict obligation to observe the terms of the Rhodes will, especially its insistence "that the students who shall be elected to the Scholarships shall not be merely bookworms."

Joseph Garfield Walleser

The winner of the first Rhodes scholarship in Iowa, Joseph Garfield Walleser, was born at

Nashua on September 26, 1881. Walleser was the son of Henry Walleser, a blacksmith of German ancestry, and his wife Anne (Dichman) Walleser. He graduated from Nashua high school and received his A. B. from Grinnell in 1903, majoring in Greek and minoring in Latin. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1907. Walleser, a Roman Catholic, never married.

Walleser's venture into Old World life began with his admission to his benefactor's old college, Oriel, where he was assigned "sitter and bedder" in October, 1904. Like other "semi-savage" Americans then and later, he soon discovered that some twenty-three colleges supplied meals and rooms, scouts (men servants), social atmosphere, tutorial or other instruction, chapel services, and discipline, while the university gave the examinations, conferred degrees, and enforced more discipline. There were both varsity and college sports, most of them strange to Americans. He found that first-year Rhodes scholars were two to four years older than English freshmen.

American college graduates had for many years bypassed Oxford on their way to continental universities for research degrees. When the Rhodes scholars arrived they received little more recognition for their academic achievements than boys from English public schools. Harvard, Wisconsin, Princeton, and Michigan were the first to gain such recognition, the former being the first Amer-

ican university placed on the list of affiliated institutions in 1904. Graduates of an affiliated college received the privilege of senior status, exempting them from Oxford's first public examination and the examination in Holy Scripture.

Walleser had to be satisfied with junior standing which compelled him to spend much of his first year disposing of examinations in mathematics, Greek, and Latin, besides two of the gospels in the original Greek and the Acts of the Apostles. Having surmounted these hurdles, Walleser entered upon his favorite field of study — English language and literature. A Rhodes scholar not qualified to study for an advanced degree was required to choose one of the fifteen honor schools with its week of final comprehensive written and oral examinations instead of the less formidable pass school with its periodic tests on parts of the course (the practice so common in the typical American college).

Besides getting adjusted to a tutor and countless other unfamiliar conditions, Walleser (and his successors) had to get used to the idea of serious study in vacation time. Three eight-week terms of residence per year separated by vacations totaling twenty-eight weeks do not really mean that the Oxonian leads a life of ease. Rhodes scholars, to be sure, have never been allergic to travel, but final examinations and limited funds have generally delivered them from the tempta-

tion to neglect their studies too much. Walleser completed the work for his B. A. degree in 1907 and, by keeping his name on the books for a certain number of additional terms and paying further dues and fees, received the M. A. in 1911.

Walleser began his professional career by teaching history at Fargo College; served the Grinnell department of English until 1925; taught French and English at Cicero Junior College; and retired as professor of English at Quincy College (1939-1946). Meanwhile, he had been a member of the Student Army Training Corps in 1918; had done extension work for the University of Indiana; and had acted as tutor for the Keewaydin Club in Naples, Florida. Besides contributing verse and articles to a number of publications, Walleser composed the words of a libretto. As class poet he helped celebrate the fiftieth reunion at Grinnell in 1953.

Jacob Van der Zee

In 1905 six Iowa college men sat down to the examinations — one at Princeton and five in the regents' room of the Old Capitol at Iowa City. Only two satisfied the examiners. As the defeated candidate of the previous year again applied for appointment, and since two of the three were seniors at the State University of Iowa, it became necessary to eliminate one of the University's candidates. President MacLean appointed three pro-

fessors to investigate their scholastic records and directed the seniors to ballot on the nonscholastic merits of the candidates. Jacob Van der Zee was favored on both counts. The state committee convened at Iowa City in April; canvassed the procedure alluded to above; interviewed the two representatives of Iowa and Drake; and, after a close informal ballot, cast a unanimous vote for Van der Zee. That anyone could survive such a harassing experience was almost a miracle.

The second Iowa Rhodes scholar was born at St. Anna Parochie, Friesland, The Netherlands, February 9, 1884, the son of Bauke and Janna (Van der Weg) Van der Zee. Young Jacob was brought to the United States in 1890. He was educated at Sioux Center high school and Northwestern Classical Academy at Orange City before attending the State University of Iowa, where he majored in Greek and Latin with a history minor. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received his A. B. in 1905. In 1913 he married Ethel A. McKnight to whom two sons were born. He is a Presbyterian.

Admitted to membership in Merton College, a freshman once more, Van der Zee first cleared the public examination in pass and divinity moderations. He then did the final honor school of modern history with its elective but mostly required subjects covering recent European and every phase of English history besides Mill's dismal

political economy, political science (gathered around Aristotle's *Politics*, Maine's *Ancient Law*, and Hobbes's *Leviathan*), and the German language. His experience attending lectures at various Oxford colleges and writing weekly essays for his tutor disclosed the essence of the Oxford idea: "in the long run a student cannot be taught — he can only learn and what he learns for himself is doubly valuable."

After receiving the B. A. degree from Oxford in 1908, Van der Zee began research work for the State Historical Society of Iowa but soon turned to the study of law at Harvard. He returned to Iowa for the LL. B. in 1913. Oxford conferred the M. A. in 1913 and Iowa the J. D. in 1924.

In 1913 Van der Zee became instructor in political science at the State University of Iowa, advancing to the rank of professor in 1929. On leaves of absence he compiled indexes for the Iowa Codes of 1919 and 1924 and taught in the University of California at Los Angeles. In the summer of 1926 he accompanied a Carnegie Endowment party of fifty professors to observe the operation of international organizations in Europe. Van der Zee's writings on Iowa history, law, and government were published by the State Historical Society as were two books — *The Hollanders of Iowa* (1912) and *The British in Iowa* (1922). He enlisted in the S. A. T. C. at Fort Sheridan in 1918, served six years as alderman in Iowa City,

and was secretary of the Iowa Rhodes scholarship committee for nearly thirty years. In 1949 the Van der Zees retired to a rural homestead in Barnstead, New Hampshire.

Jay Walter Woodrow

Of the five Iowans who took examinations at Iowa City in 1907, only two survivors appeared before the selection committee, and Drake's Jay Walter Woodrow won over Grinnell's representative. Woodrow was born on a farm near Luverne, Minnesota, April 3, 1884, the son of Joseph and Della (Kennedy) Woodrow. He was a graduate of Drake Academy and University, majoring in language and minoring in science. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received his A. B. in 1907. In 1915 he married Flora B. Williams. The couple had one daughter. Woodrow was a member of the Christian Church.

Woodrow attended Queen's College from 1907 to 1910. He studied physics and obtained the B. A. degree. He won the Oxford half-blue in the 100-yard dash. The following two years he was an instructor at the University of Illinois and a fellow at Yale, where he was awarded the Ph. D. After serving the Western Electric Company as research engineer, Woodrow moved on to the University of Colorado in 1914. He left Colorado as full professor to join the Iowa State College physics department in 1921. On a Guggen-

heim Memorial Foundation fellowship he studied at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Liverpool and returned to teaching at Ames, acting as head of his department from 1930 to 1947. Drake honored him with an LL. D. He served on Rhodes scholarship committees for thirty years and published numerous articles on physics. The war years put such a heavy strain on Woodrow that he developed an irreparable heart condition. He died on June 29, 1951.

William Burt Millen

When the examination of five candidates in 1908 produced three eligibles and the defeated man of 1907 again applied for appointment, competition for the scholarship became so keen that the state committee took seven ballots before a decision was reached in favor of William Burt Millen. Born on December 10, 1884, Millen was the son of a Greeley banker, Horace Greeley Millen, and his wife Emma (Robison) Millen. A staunch Methodist, Millen attended Epworth Seminary and Cornell College, receiving his A. B. from Cornell in 1906 with a classics major and an economics minor. He was a Phi Beta Kappa. Millen married Marjorie Carlyle in 1915; the couple had one son.

As a member of Pembroke College (1908-1911), Millen studied modern history for the B. A. degree. After an instructorship at Princeton, Mil-

len worked as associate editor of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and was employed for eleven years in the foreign department of the Merchants National Bank of the same city. He became European representative of G. L. Ohrstrom and Company, investment bankers, in 1927. Since 1940 he has been institutional representative of Stroud and Company, investment bankers of New York City, incidentally helping the United States Treasury as New York examiner of foreign funds control and the Alien Property Custodian during World War II. While in attendance with four hundred Rhodes scholars at the Jubilee Reunion on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Cecil Rhodes and the 50th of the scholarships, Millen and others took advantage of the occasion to have the M. A. conferred upon them by Vice-Chancellor Lowe.

William Alexander Ziegler

In order to give the Oxford secretary of the Rhodes Trust more time to get scholars-elect admitted to the Oxford colleges, the trustees wisely set an earlier date for the qualifying examinations in 1909. A more important innovation was the announcement that examinees would no longer be required to have a knowledge of Greek, though this concession did not exempt anyone from meeting the university's Greek requirement after arrival in Oxford. In other words, examination

questions on Greek became optional in the hope that more American students would compete for the scholarship.

Of five aspirants in Iowa in 1909 only William Alexander Ziegler satisfied the examiners and he won over two eligibles of the year before. Ziegler was born at Rock Rapids, March 28, 1889, the son of a leather goods dealer, William A. Ziegler, and his wife Ida (Arends) Ziegler. He attended Goldfield high school and Grinnell College, majoring in Latin and history. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received his A. B. in 1910. Ziegler married Sally Cootes in 1923. The couple have one son. Ziegler is an Episcopalian.

Ziegler was admitted to membership in Wadham College and obtained the B. A. in chemistry, besides winning his varsity half-blue in the shot. The next four years he taught at Grinnell College and St. Mark's School. In World War I he became a major in the infantry. After three years as a chemist with the Casale Ammonia Company in Rome, he turned to real estate development in New York City (1922-1934). Then followed thirteen years of employment with the National Recovery Administration, the Home Owners Loan Corporation, the Federal Works Agency, and the Defense Homes Corporation. Since 1947 Ziegler has been general manager of the Fairmac Corporation which owns housing developments in Washington, D. C., and Bremerton, Washington.

Jakob Aall Ottesen Larsen

Since four college seniors took the Rhodes examinations in October, 1910, and not one survived the experience, three successful examinees of previous years once more presented themselves before the Iowa selection committee. Jakob Aall Ottesen Larsen won the appointment. Born at Decorah, March 1, 1888, the son of the distinguished Luther College president, Peter L. Larsen, and his wife Ingeborg (Astrup) Larsen, Jakob attended the Luther preparatory department before entering Luther College. He received his A. B. in 1908, majoring in the classics. He won his A. M. in Latin at the State University of Iowa in 1910. He married Clarice Grindeland in 1917.

Larsen was admitted to Queen's College and completed the work in Literae Humaniores (at Oxford called "Greats" and recognized as the most difficult avenue to the B. A. degree). The M. A. was awarded in 1920. He taught classics at Luther and Concordia (1914-1918). During World War I he enlisted as a private in the 62nd United States Pioneer Infantry, was commissioned first lieutenant, and assisted the military attaché of the American legations in Norway and Denmark. After another year of graduate study at Harvard, he taught ancient history at the University of Washington (1921-1926) and Ohio State (1926-1930), where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. In 1928 he obtained a Ph. D. in history

from Harvard. At the University of Chicago he was professor of history (1930-1953), retiring as professor emeritus. Vermont conferred the LL. D. in 1953, and Larsen has recently been visiting professor at Northwestern and California. He has written a great deal in the field of Greek and Roman history and philology; was managing editor of *Classical Philology* (1939-1951); and was on the editorial board of *The American Historical Review* from 1948 to 1952. As president of the American Philological Association, Larsen attended historical and classical congresses at Paris in 1951.

Paul Graves Williams

In the Oxford report of Iowa examination results in 1912, Paul Graves Williams was awarded exemption from responsions (the university's entrance examination); another Iowan was given the same exemption except in Greek; while three others failed altogether. Williams was born June 13, 1894, at Bureau, Illinois, the son of Mark Williams, a Presbyterian minister, and his wife Anna A. (Graves) Williams. From high school in Madison, South Dakota, he went to Grinnell, where he majored in Latin and Greek and was active in athletics and debate. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received his A. B. in 1913. Unlike his father, Williams was a Congregationalist.

Entering Oxford at the age of nineteen, he was

the youngest American Rhodes scholar in residence. Granted senior standing, Williams escaped preliminary examinations and immediately launched upon the study of *Literae Humaniores*. He was a member of Lincoln College, where he coxed the crews both in the spring races ("torpids") and eights. At the close of his first year there, he and James N. Keys of Kansas went to the continent for the long summer vacation. While mountain-climbing in the Swiss Alps above Lake Lucerne, they became separated. Williams kept climbing with the express understanding that he would rejoin his companion by taking an easier return route to the starting-point, while Keys descended safely and waited in the rain and darkness of July 22, 1914, for the reunion that never took place. Thoroughly alarmed, Keys sought help from a mountaineer without result and next day called out the Alpine Club and rescue station. For five days from seven to a dozen men scoured all parts of the mountain, and for another ten days smaller companies kept up a systematic search. Just as Keys was leaving Switzerland on August 30, "the accidental discovery of a coat in a quantity of rubble washed down by the heavy rains which continued for a week after the tragedy, led to a careful search of the bed of the current," and further investigation led to the body of Williams and the spot where he had plunged over the cliff. The remains were carried to the local chapel and

held until funeral arrangements were completed. The outbreak of World War I made it impossible for Keys to attend the funeral.

James Hamilton St. John

Of the seven Iowans who ventured to submit to examinations in October, 1913, two succeeded in all subjects; two others in all but Greek; and three failed completely. The winner was James Hamilton St. John, a native of Muscatine, where he was born November 21, 1890, to James H. St. John, a grocer, and his wife Agnes L. (Hatch) St. John. From Muscatine high school young St. John went to Grinnell, where he majored in Latin and minored in mathematics. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and received his A. B. in 1914. His marriage to Naomi Wylie in 1918 was dissolved and in 1941 he married Martha B. Trossen. He had one daughter by his first wife. St. John is a Congregationalist.

At Merton College (1914-1917) St. John read modern history and helped live part of it amid the alarm and confusion incident to England's participation in the war. In 1918 he served as a private and cadet in the United States Air Force. After six years of banking experience at Arlington, Iowa, St. John turned to graduate study in modern European history at Iowa leading to the Ph. D. degree in 1927. Since then he has been professor of history and assistant dean at Miami

University, Oxford, Ohio. He has published a book on Edmund Dummer and his West India packets.

Norman Dunshee Scott

Four men competed for the Rhodes scholarship in 1915, but two failed in the examinations. The winner was Norman Dunshee Scott, who was born at Maxwell, January 6, 1894, to Dr. Elisha C. Scott and his wife Josie D. (Dunshee) Scott. He attended Grant high school in Des Moines and Drake University, where he majored in chemistry and science, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and received his B. S. in 1916. He married Myrtle E. Jobse in 1923. They had four children. Scott was a Presbyterian.

His residence in Merton College and study of Chemistry was interrupted by the war; in 1917 he enlisted in the 30th United States Engineers which later became the First Gas Regiment of the Chemical Warfare Division, and he served for about two years in France. He resumed work at Oxford in the autumn of 1919 and completed requirements for the B. A. (with distinction), the M. A. in 1920, and the B. Sc. in 1921.

Scott taught chemistry at Wisconsin (where he obtained his Ph. D. in 1924) and at Middlebury and Harvard, and was research fellow under Professor (later President) James B. Conant. He then began distinguished research in the chemical

industry by joining a firm which was absorbed by the Du Pont Company in 1930. The extent of his contributions at the Niagara Falls plant until his sudden death on December 30, 1948, may be gauged by the fact that he assigned forty-five patents to his employer in the field of electrochemicals and the reaction of sodium with organic compounds. Numerous published articles testify to his profound knowledge of organic chemistry.

The selection of Rhodes scholars by college presidents from candidates determined by written examinations ended with the appointment of Norman Scott in 1915, because five aspirants in 1916 and 1917 failed their examinations.

JACOB VAN DER ZEE