

On Growing Up in Iowa

An Oral Memoir

by
Henry A. Wallace
edited by
Robert K. Bower

Introduction

The name Wallace is familiar to Iowans. Students at two central Iowa educational institutions -- Simpson College and Iowa State University -- attend classes or live in buildings bearing the name. A recently-erected state office building on the Capitol grounds in Des Moines has been dubbed the Wallace Agricultural Building. And, undoubtedly the nation's most successful agricultural magazine, begun in 1894 and still in existence, carries the name in its title.

The most renowned of the Iowa Wallaces, Henry Agard Wallace (1888-1965), left a typical Midwestern childhood to eventually become Vice-President of the United States under Franklin D. Roosevelt. His influential and sometimes stormy political career included two cabinet posts (Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of Commerce) and a bid for the Presidency as the Progressive Party nominee in 1948.

His grandfather and father, both Henrys also, made the Wallace name widely-known and respected -- especially in agricultural circles -- with their powerful farm publication, Wallaces Farmer. After graduating from Iowa State University in 1910, young Henry A. Wallace worked on the family magazine, and he assumed the editorship in 1921 when his father (Henry C. Wallace) became Secretary of Agriculture. He authored many articles and books during these years before embarking on a career in politics, and among his accomplishments during this period

was the development of hybrid seed corn for commercial use.

Much information about the private as well as the public Henry A. Wallace is available in the reams of correspondence and other materials making up his papers. Much of this material, including a diary and a transcript of oral reminiscences, was opened to the general public for the first time in November 1975, ten years after Wallace's death. The following memoir of his early days in Iowa is an excerpt from the reminiscences, a series of interviews with Wallace conducted at Columbia University in 1950-51.

This excerpt from the opening pages of the massive 5,500-page transcript contains alterations in the order of the narrative as well as minor changes in punctuation and spelling. Except for deletions of superfluous material (indicated by ellipses), the following is just as Henry Wallace spoke it.

*The assistance of Earl M. Rogers, librarian for the University of Iowa Special Collections, and Louis M. Starr, director of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office, in making the material available and clearing it for publication is gratefully acknowledged. This excerpt from *The Reminiscences of Henry A. Wallace* (copyright 1977 by the Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York) is used by permission.*

R. K. B.

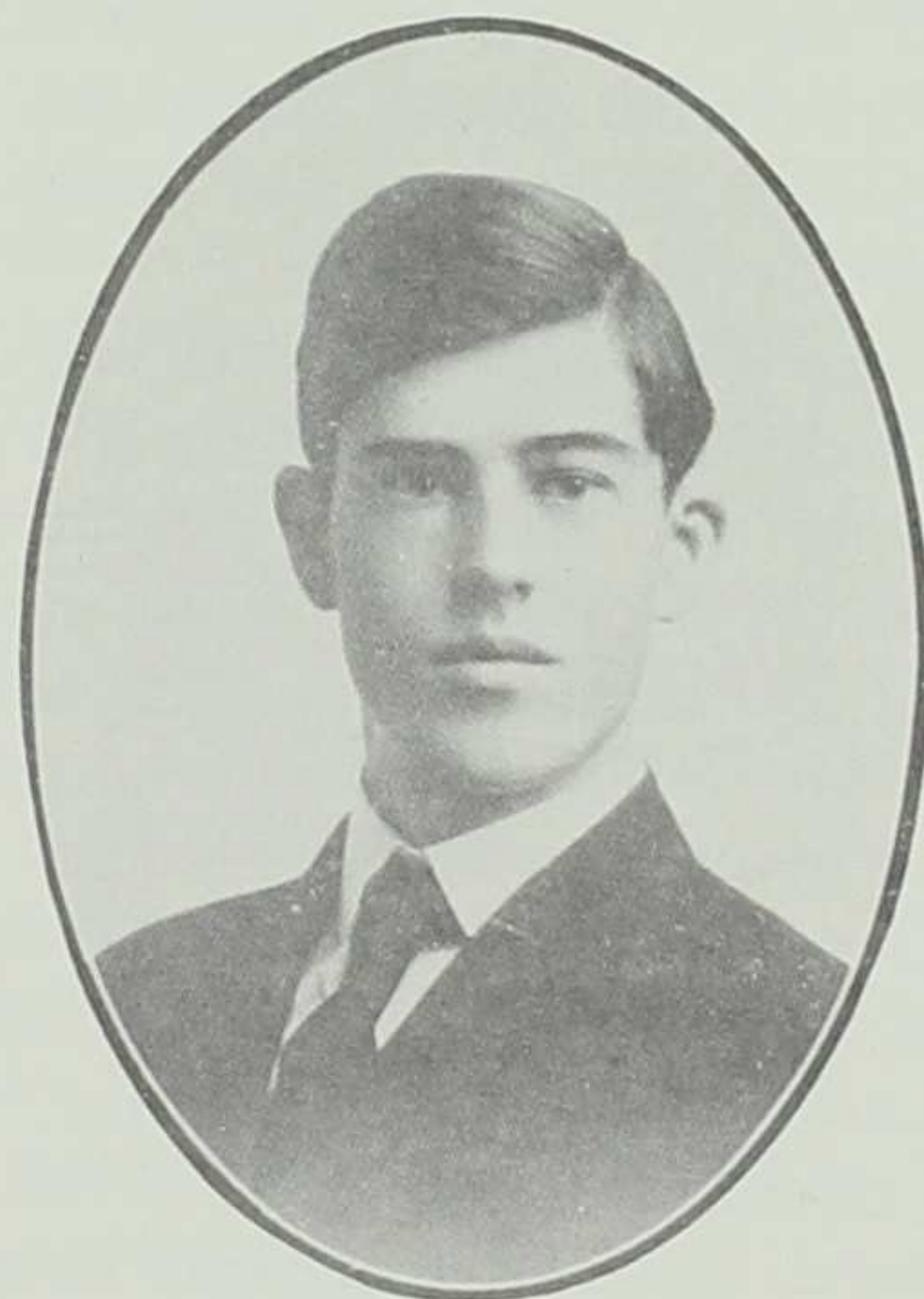
My earliest recollection is in driving to town in a bobsled on a very cold day when they had the rugs spread across the knees of the older people and forced me to stay under the rug in the dark to keep warm.

My second recollection is my parents taking me to stay all night in a hotel at Creston, Iowa, which was fourteen miles south of the farm where I was born. We stayed all night at the hotel at Creston because we were catching the train the next day to go up to visit my grandparents in Des Moines. That was the first time that I ever saw a railroad train and I remember particularly the noisiness of the trains running near the hotel at Creston -- Creston is on the main line of the CB&Q and is a division point.

The first time I ever met other children, I think, was on that trip to Des Moines when I was about between three and four years old. I had a sister who was born in 1891 when I was a little past three, but the first time I saw any large number of children of my own age was when I went to Des Moines on that occasion.

I do remember at one time getting lost in a corn field at the farm. They had a large corn field right across from the house, and I wandered away in the corn field. There were sand burrs growing in the corn field and they got into my socks and hurt quite a bit so I began saying, "Where is mama's baby?" and they found me as a result of that. They had quite a search. That part of Iowa was rather wild in those days.

My greatest pal in those days was a collie dog. The collie dog would sit on the back porch and snap flies, so I'd imitate the collie dog and snap at flies. Occasionally I caught one and then would be very much surprised. I don't have any remembrance of that myself, and these last two stories were told to me by my Uncle Dan.



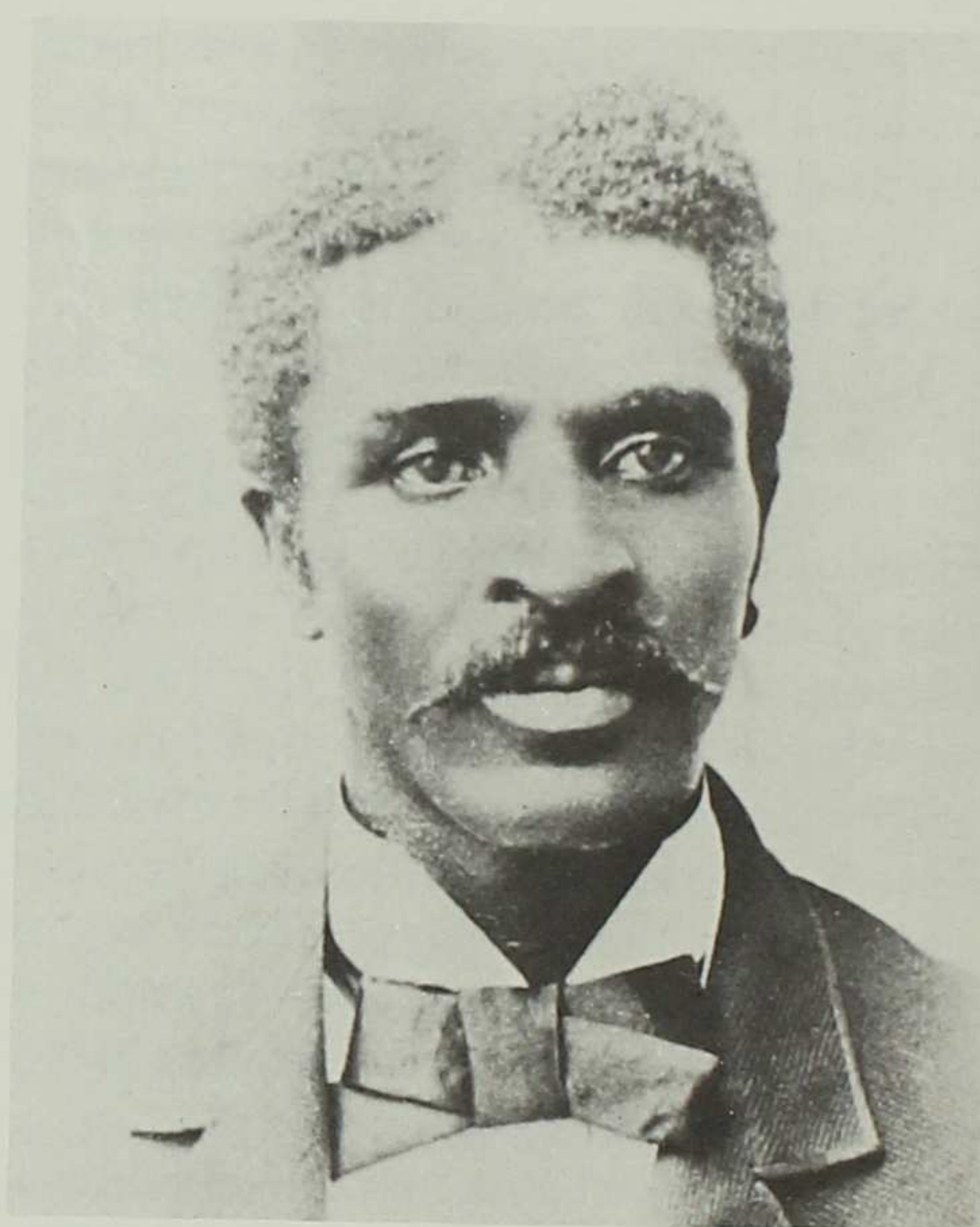
Young Henry A. Wallace as he appeared in the 1910 Bomb, the Iowa State University yearbook. Henry's collegiate peers saw him as "A chip of [sic] the old block" (courtesy Iowa State University).

We left the farm, and my father became a professor of dairying at Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts about 1892, when I was about four years of age. At that time he had a very close friend by the name of George Washington Carver, a Negro who was specializing in botany at the time, although later he became more famous as a chemist. His first love, however, was always plants, and, as is the case with many Negroes, he liked white children, and he took a fancy to me and took me with him on his botanizing expeditions and pointed out to me the flowers and the parts of flowers -- the stamens and the pistil. I remember him claiming to my father that I had greatly surprised him by recognizing the pistil and stamens of redtop, a kind of grass --

grass *agrostis alba*, to be precise. I also remember rather questioning his accuracy in believing that I recognized these parts, but anyhow he boasted about me, and the mere fact of his boasting, I think, incited me to learn more than if I had really done what he said I had done. I may have done it, but remember rather questioning it at the time.

George Washington Carver was a very tall, slender Negro at the time and a very kindly person. I had a very great affection for him, simply because he was patient. I suspect that he and my mother, between them were responsible for my acquiring a love of plants at a very early age. At the time, I was only a boy of about five years of age, and I think I would probably be making up things if I went into further detail about George Carver at this time. Of course later on I became *very* well acquainted with him, and one of the very first things I did when I became Secretary of Agriculture was to utilize the opportunity of picking up the old acquaintance.

Mr. Carver had come to Ames from Simpson, where, incidentally, my wife had gone to school. (He had been born in Missouri.) Just how he happened to come to school at Simpson, a Methodist institution, I do not know, but from there he went on to Ames. From Ames, I believe, he went straight to Tuskegee and remained there for the remainder of his days. At any rate, when I met him at Tuskegee in 1933 or 1934, I found that he was still very much interested in plants, especially in the breeding of *Amaryllis*. Inasmuch as the Department of Agriculture had done some rather extensive work with *Amaryllis*, I saw that he was given some of the new sorts which the Department had brought out -- which made him very happy.



George Washington Carver's graduation picture from Iowa State University in 1894 (courtesy Iowa State University).

Sometime before his death, when a painter was painting him, he insisted on being painted with an *Amaryllis* flower. I believe this painting can be found in the Smithsonian Institution today.

I attribute my love of plants to my mother and to Mr. Carver, although I think my father was in the background of it. My mother liked plants very much, and under her supervision I did my first crossing of plants, which happened to be pansies. I remember that I planted the seed of the cross with a great deal of interest and was much interested in the outcome. It happened that in that particular outcome, the flowers were not as pretty as either parent, but I attributed to them unusual value simply because they had been crossed. (I was about eight years old at the time.)

In my early life, I would say that I thought completely in terms of seeds,

plants, and farming. At that time, I had no thought of public life.

When we moved to Ames in 1892, our family was comprised of my mother, my father, my baby sister, and myself. My uncle Dan and grandfather didn't live with us. We lived on a farm which was five miles from a little town called Orient, Iowa, fourteen miles from Creston to the south and I suppose about the same number of miles from Greenfield to the north.

We then moved to Ames and my brother John was born in 1894 at Ames. My sister Annabelle, who was born three years after I was, was born without any doctor in attendance since it was quite a ways to a doctor and easy to make a miscalculation with regard to time. My mother had none of her children in hospitals. I didn't realize that children were no longer born in the home until I had one.

My father had not finished his agricultural course when he went to work farming. He had started to work farming when prices were higher than when he quit. My mother had received some small inheritance and they invested it in Suffolk Sheep and short horned cattle which didn't pan out too well. My father when he sold off in 1892 didn't have very much money when he went to finish up his work at Ames, but he did know Tama Jim Wilson there who was Dean of Agriculture and he found it possible simultaneously to finish up his work in agriculture and also to teach dairying. He worked very hard, was very thin, and as a result when he caught typhoid in 1893 he almost died. That apparently affected his gall bladder and I suspect he never was in first class health all the rest of his life, but he never admitted it.

My father was a very capable person. He was a rather short man, about five feet

six inches tall. I suspect his growth must have been stunted because the family didn't have much money when he was young. He learned to chew tobacco at a rather early age and to smoke at a rather early age. He was very good at setting type. He set type in his father's print shop in Winterset, Iowa, and he learned to chew tobacco from the other printers there. That was a printer's habit in those days -- to chew tobacco. I never really knew he chewed tobacco myself until he was fifty years of age. Uncle Dan told me about it; Uncle Dan told me a great many things about father.

I've never played much golf -- maybe only six or seven times in my life, but I remember that after Father began to play golf I played with him a few times. When we'd be changing our clothes in the shower I noticed that his underwear was colored very yellow under the armpits from the excess tobacco in his system oozing out. It was terrific the degree to which he smoked. My grandfather also smoked a great deal. They smoked pipes and cigars; they didn't smoke cigarettes to any great extent -- Grandfather not at all, and Father very little. Grandfather smoked Pittsburgh stogies.

Father had very great dexterity at games of all kinds and at all kinds of work. He was *very* good with his hands. He was good at sports. He could take up any of our childhood sports and rapidly become very proficient at them even though he had not engaged in them before. He took up golf when he was past forty and became very good at golf. He played some tennis, which he had taken up after the age of forty, and became quite good at tennis.

He had an innate sense of rhythm and tune and he could play a guitar well. He could fix tools well -- he had tool sense. He

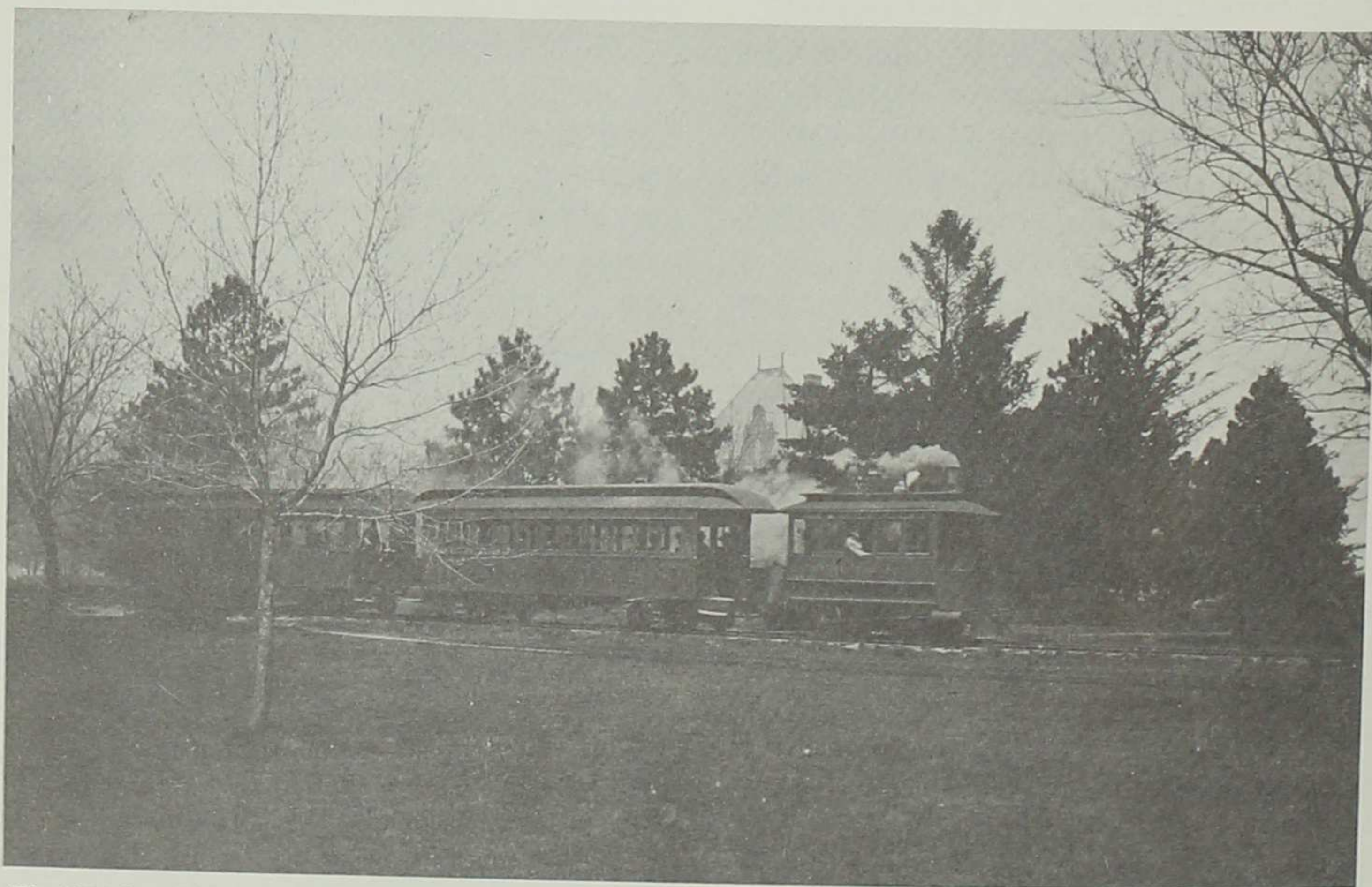
was an excellent businessman, though he was the worrying kind. He was distrustful of humanity. Neither my grandfather nor myself were, but Father was very distrustful which probably made him a good businessman, though on one occasion he would invest his money unwisely following a hunch.

While Father was rather a small man, he had unusual dexterity and physical capacity. In the mental world, he was a good businessman -- he was a good politician, which my grandfather was not. Of course neither my grandfather nor Father ever ran for any office, but Father understood what was going on in the political world in a most unusual way.

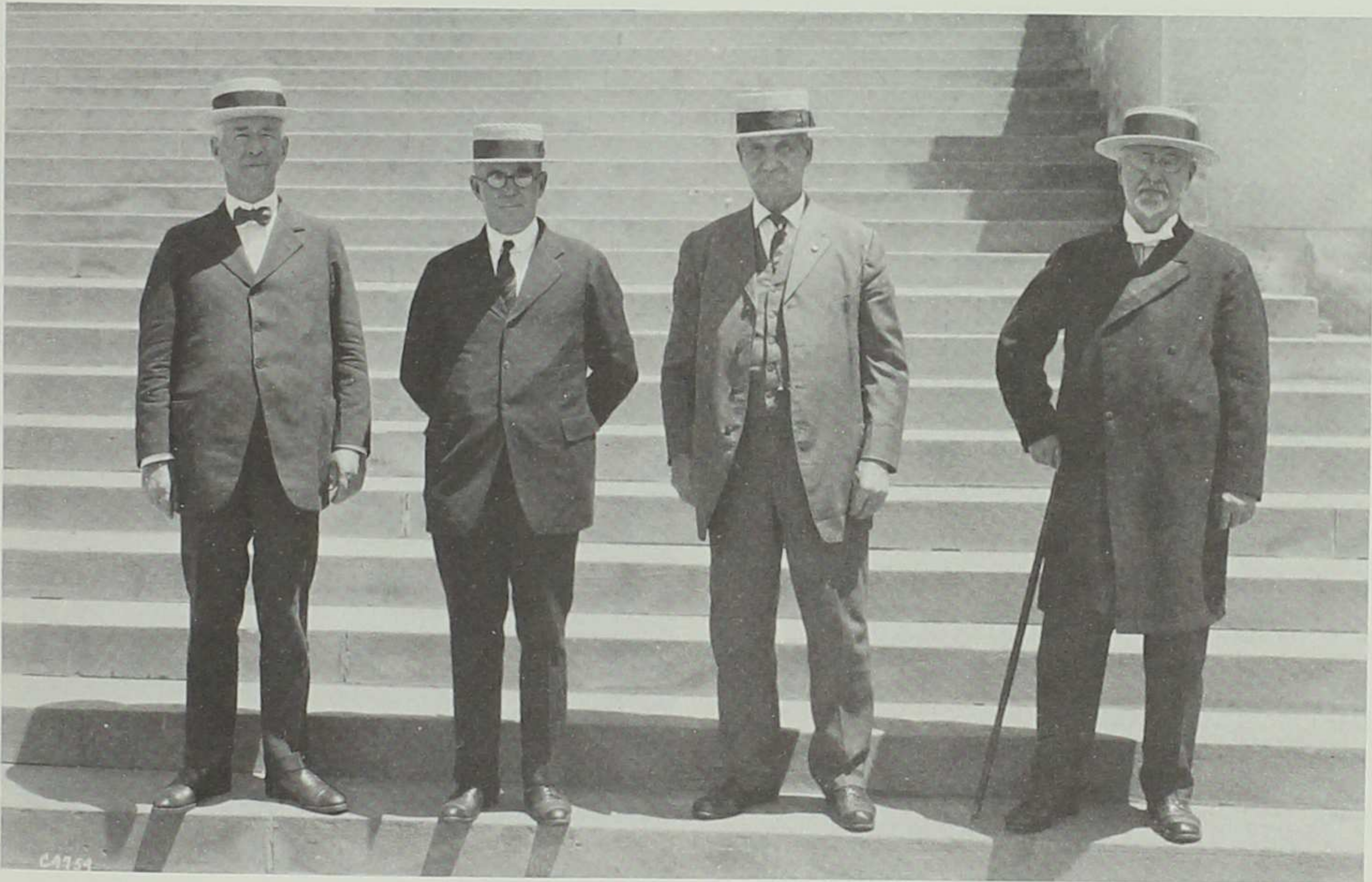
My first political recollection was in 1892, when I heard my father say to my mother, the day after the Presidential election, that hard times were coming be-

cause Grover Cleveland and the Democrats had been elected. For many years thereafter, I associated the word "Democrat" with hard times. My grandfather used to say, "Democrats can't read." The farmers used to say the Democrats were those wet Irish Catholics over along the river.

My uncle by marriage, Newton B. Ashby, was a Democrat and was looked on to some degree as the black sheep of the family on that account. In 1893, he was appointed by Cleveland to be Consul to Dublin. In the late 1880s and early '90s he had been a lecturer for the Farmer's Alliance, which was essentially a part of the Populist Movement, and worked to some degree later on with the Democrats. Apparently Cleveland's appointing of my uncle, Newton Ashby, as Consul was an overture to this radical element among the



The "Dinkey," a steam motor line operating between Ames and the Iowa State campus, made enough impression on Henry A. Wallace for him to recall it a half century later (courtesy Iowa State University).



Distinguished-looking faculty of Iowa State University include on the left the long-time dean of agriculture Charles F. Curtiss and next to him Henry C. Wallace. Also pictured are Mr. Eckles and John Gosling (courtesy Iowa State University).

farm people of the Middlewest. He had written a book entitled, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*.

I don't remember too much about the days in Ames. I do remember the Russian thistles or tumbleweeds blowing up from the Northwestern railroad tracks against the house making big piles. While the wind was blowing the tumbleweed up I remember the howl of the wind around the corners of the house. That kind of a howling wind in the fall of the year still makes me think of those days. I really can't seem to remember much about Ames, although there were various professors that would come to my father's house. There was one veterinarian named Stalker.

I used to go out with Father occasionally to the college. I suspect he took me out

to relieve my mother of household duties. We'd ride out on what they'd call the "Dinkey," which was a sort of Toonerville trolley affair -- run by coal however. It connected the town of Ames with the college which was about two miles distant. The "Dinkey" was discontinued about 1900 or 1905.

The professor of Animal Husbandry at Iowa State College when my father was professor of dairying was C. F. Curtiss and in those days our families seemed to be rather close together. I remember that we had Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner together on one occasion and I worked hard one afternoon teaching one of the Curtiss girls, who later became the first wife of John Cowles of *Look* magazine, how to creep.

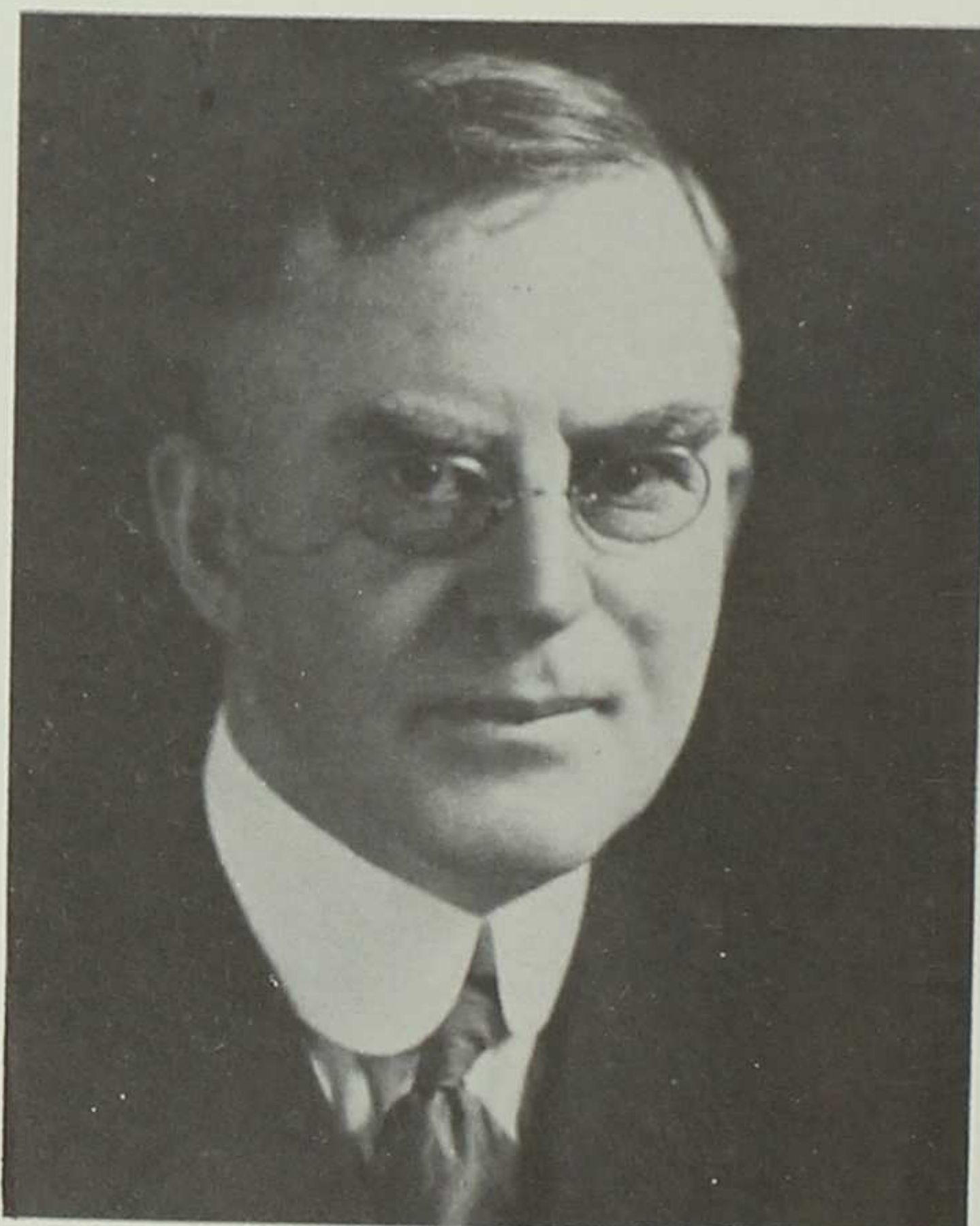
I remember I was astonished when I was in Ames with the gum-chewing abil-

ity of a girl in the neighborhood by the name of Lena Pitts. She could crack her gum like those who now chew bubble gum. She could do that better than any other child in the neighborhood.

My mother represented a good housewife and mother of the type which had no use for women's clubs. Until I was twelve she had no use for salads because she thought they were some new-fangled notion that was being foisted on the American people by women's clubs. She was so busy with her children that she didn't see how any woman could afford the time to go to a woman's club. Later on, she changed her views completely when family circumstances improved and she had time to go around with women of her own age. But while I was a child she had no use for activities of this sort simply because she couldn't have. What she couldn't have, she had no use for. My grandmother used to try to push her into taking an active part in women's clubs, but she resented this.

My mother suffered to some extent from my aunt Josephine because I think Aunt Josephine felt that Father had married beneath him when he married my mother. As a matter of fact, my mother's ancestry was all old American. I think the most recent one that had come to this country had been in 1745, while Father's ancestry had come more recently than Mother's. His grandfather, John Wallace, had come here about 1830. Mother was more completely old-fashioned American stock than Father was, but Aunt Josephine felt very aristocratic. She'd traveled in Europe and Mother had not -- she never did.

Mother was old-fashioned New England American stock with all their prejudices, frugality, their ability to pinch pennies to the utmost. My instinct today



Henry C. Wallace, father of Henry A. (courtesy James W. Wallace).

would be to avoid very carefully the spending of any unnecessary money, although if I get much interested in something in a scientific way, I'll spend thousands of dollars.

Mother had a very great effect in forming my personal habits with regard to money. She never drank coffee, and so I never drank coffee until I passed the age of fifty. Mother never smoked of course and had a strong prejudice against smoking, so I didn't smoke. She didn't drink liquor. Of course, the various relatives by whom she was raised didn't believe in going to the theatre or playing cards and Mother didn't go to the theatre until I was about ten years of age or so, and then she enjoyed it very greatly and tried to get Aunt Lucy to go to the theatre. When I was about fifteen she began to play bridge and she became quite a good bridge player. Father and she used to play bridge quite a bit.

I first learned to read as a result of my mother teaching me and didn't go to school until we moved to Des Moines in late 1895, when I was seven years old and entered the first grade.

In 1895 we lived at 1619 7th Street in an old house on the north side of Des Moines. This was the place where lower middle class people lived. I went to Oakland School through the first four grades in north Des Moines.

At Oakland School about the only thing that I can remember is the playground. In the wintertime there was a hill that would ice over and we'd get a barrel-stave, sit on it, and go down hill.

I was fairly good at school. Usually I was competing with some very bright Jewish girl -- or a Jewish boy but usually a Jewish girl -- to be the brightest boy in the class. I think they probably incited me to efforts along that line. It never would have occurred to me in the first instance but they seemed to set great store on it so I'd see if I couldn't be as bright as they were.

I remember in the first or second grade the teacher asked, "How many of you think that oak trees have flowers?" All the children agreed that oak trees had no flowers. I insisted that they had flowers, that I'd seen the flowers on the oak trees, and so when the teacher came out on my side, I was very much puffed up. The mere fact of having demonstrated a knowledge which the other children didn't have caused me to seek for more psychic returns along the same lines. I'm sure I must have made myself quite a nuisance to my companions because they weren't in the slightest degree interested along those lines.

I remember the great tragedy along about the second or third grade was that I

had a Golden Wyandotte hen in the backyard at 1619 7th Street. I used to gather up the eggs, though I wouldn't gather them up every day. On one occasion I gathered two or three eggs, put them in my pocket, forgot to take them out, and went to school with them. They smashed in my pocket and made an awful mess in my side pocket. For some reason or other, the teacher felt that I shouldn't have done that and made me stand in the corner of the room. I thought that was unjust and that was the great tragedy of my first three years -- the indignity of standing in the corner of the room because I'd forgotten to take the eggs out of my pocket.

Later on we were taking a big cork, putting a horseshoe nail through the cork, and then we had to have feathers to put in the other side of the cork so we could throw it up against the side of the barn like a dart. I was so thoughtless as to chase my beloved Golden Wyandotte hen for the purpose of getting some feathers to put in this. My mother gave me a lecture for that, which I richly deserved.

In north Des Moines the two children I can remember most were Clifford and Alice Depuy. Clifford Depuy's father had one of the early poultry magazines and they kept chickens in their backyard. Clifford Depuy, himself, as a boy was one of those who developed his capitalistic instincts very early. He would make lemonade and sell it from a sidewalk stand. He had no hesitancy about proclaiming his wares to the passing public in a very loud tone of voice. I couldn't understand how a person could do a thing like that, and felt that Clifford was really very superficial in his approach to life by indulging in activities of that kind. Today [1950] he runs the *North American Banker*, a publication published in Des

Moines. He's very conservative and has written many editorials against me.

There was another boy by the name of Louis Sanderson whom I knew. I never did know what became of him, but he was more nearly my own age. Clifford was about two years older. We used to go out walking quite a bit around the woods in that territory.

I remember the campaign of 1896 very vividly, because all the boys took sides and argued about McKinley and Bryan. There were McKinley and Bryan pictures in the windows of private homes. Everyone in Des Moines used to put up a picture of his favorite candidate. Father was very strongly for McKinley, and Grandfather was too. My grandfather had been very much interested in monetary theory -- at one time, I think, was for bi-metalism. But with the situation as it existed in 1896, he felt that the way to bring prosperity and stability to the United States was to stay by the old-fashioned gold standard. He felt that Bryan was dangerously radical, I guess, although my grandfather was much more progressive than the ordinary Republican.

I remember walking around the street one Sunday afternoon with my father and mother, counting the Bryan and McKinley pictures and deciding that Des Moines was going to vote for McKinley. My father was very much relieved thereby. He felt that Republican victory would mean the success of the publishing business which he had just started in Des Moines with his father and brother.

The habits of the family changed very greatly as the paper began to make money about 1900 or thereabouts. The habits didn't change all at once, though.

Along about 1898 we moved to 38th and University Avenue to a dilapidated house with sagging floors. When we were out looking around to find a house to move to, we dropped in on the people who were renting this house and who were from the Ozarks. I remember the man saying to us, "Take a cheer (chair)." It was explained to me that these people had no education and that proper people just didn't speak this way. So we moved into this tumbledown old house and lived there for a year or two.

There were ten acres in connection with this house. It was out on the west edge of town. There was an old barn connected with it that had no electric lights. It was my duty to take care of the sow and her pigs, the cow, and the horse. It was really rather tough. Also I had to bring in the sorghum which had been cut -- that was the sorghum fodder. My father had seeded it in the spring, then cut it and put it into rounded cocks. It was my duty to pry enough of it loose with a pitchfork to carry it into the barn to feed to the cow. The snow would come and freeze down the ends of it so it was awful hard to pry it loose.

I remember having a terrific admiration for my father on either Thanksgiving or Christmas when he went out with me and we worked very hard and got enough loose to last for a week or two. The vigor with which my father attacked the problem impressed me enormously because he got so much more done than I had been able to get done.

My sister used to hold the lantern when I'd go out to milk the cow or take care of the pigs. If it was real cold I'd put her into the box which held the bran while I milked. She rather liked the warmth of being in this box that held the bran. I suspect she wouldn't remember it now, but



The entire Henry C. Wallace family posed for this group portrait in 1921. Left to right are Henry C. Wallace, Mary, Henry A., Annabelle, John B., Mrs. Henry C. Wallace, James W., and Ruth (courtesy of James W. Wallace).

she had a pointed kitty hood woven out of some kind of angora thread. Annabelle made a cute little girl in her kitty hood, and she'd traipse along with me to do the chores.

Annabelle always supported me, and I think she was closer to me than my brothers because she was more nearly my age and knew what it was like when the family had a hard time. My brothers came on when the family had an easy time, so that my brothers took on the habits of a family in comfortable circumstances.

I had two brothers, John and James. My mother used to call John "mother's sunshine boy." He was a very happy boy and was born on April 1, 1894. I was loaned to the neighbors for that day when John was coming.

James weighed less at birth than the others and had probably come a little too soon after John and didn't start out with quite as much vitality as the other children. He had long flaxen hair when he was a boy and was better looking than the rest. He loved to climb trees.

As the oldest child I was raised in the stern tradition. This is true of the oldest boy in so many families. Then the discipline lets up very much later on, and the results are usually better later on when the discipline is relaxed. The oldest one has to carry the brunt of the parents' enthusiastic but wrong ideas. So I was called Henry -- that's all, with no nickname that I can remember.

When we moved in 1900 or 1901 to 3780 Cottage Grove, which was on the same ten

acre piece just about two blocks away, the new house cost \$5000 -- which was an awful lot of money in those days -- and it had a third floor. My Uncle John came out and built a house next door to us and his cost \$6000. We had the best houses in the neighborhood.

My father planted an orchard and I started a hot bed and grew all kinds of vegetables -- tomatoes, cabbages, celery, and so on. I took care of our cow and my uncle's cow, which I didn't resent particularly until when I went to college [and] found that he was paying the boy who took my place three dollars a week. That discrepancy caused me to feel there was a certain amount of social injustice in the whole thing. But our barn didn't have any electric light in it and my uncle's barn had an electric light, so it was such a relief to work where there was an electric light that I felt it was almost a privilege to take care of Uncle John's cow.

I liked the cows and I liked the chickens. I usually liked plants better than animals, as a matter of fact. I appreciated the animals because they gave manure that nourished the plants.

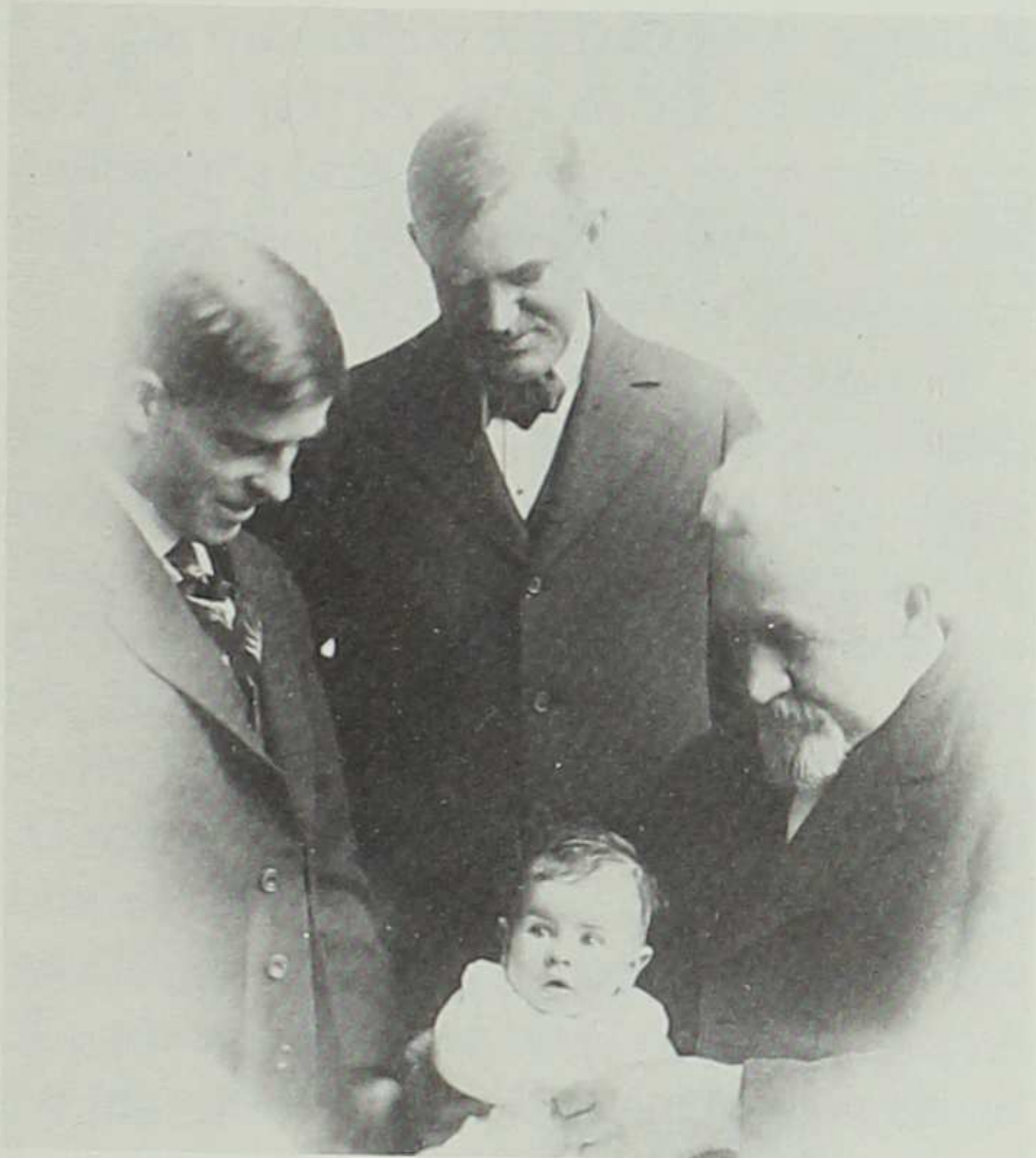
When my sister, Ruth, was born it meant that there had to be a lot more water in the house and I was the water system. I had to go down in the basement and pump enough soft water up. We had hard water and soft water -- the hard water I pumped in the backyard from a well and the soft well and the soft water I pumped from a cistern. They were two different kinds of pumps and this water went up to two separate tanks in the attic of the house and I'd have enough water there to take care of the household needs.

It was good exercise all right, especially doing the pumping in the backyard. I have pretty strong back muscles to this

day, as a result of that exercise. I don't have any particular athletic ability, but I do have a certain kind of strength on the basis of that exercise. That is, I remember the boy who could put the shot further than anybody else at high school. I wasn't any good at shotputting, nevertheless I could lift heavier weights than this high school athlete. My strength was based on farm work, and his on athletic training.

About 1902 I ran across a catalog from R. M. Kellogg at Three Rivers, Michigan, about the wonders of strawberries, so I ordered six different kinds and put them out in what is now 38th Street between Cottage Grove and Kingman Avenue. There's a paved street going through there now, but in those days it was part of my garden. I planted my strawberries there of six different sorts. I inveigled my brothers to help me plant them. I gave Jimmy the "Senator Dunlap" variety to take care of, and I think my brother John got the sample variety to take care of. Jimmy's did very well. John's didn't do as well -- it was the fault of the variety, not the fault of the care. I didn't get so very much work out of Jimmy and John -- they didn't see why they should be compelled to take care of strawberries just because I was interested in strawberries, although they did like to eat them.

I remember when we moved to 3780 Cottage Grove; we were building a chicken house. There was an old Swede carpenter who said as we children were playing around in the chicken house, "This is a fine place for the shickens and the shilds." A little later I was walking along in this chicken house with rather a low ceiling and I bumped against the ceiling and said, "Oh Damn!" It's the only time that my mother ever heard me swear, and I got a laying out for that. I'd



A 1916 picture of four Wallace generations: grandfather Henry, son Henry C., grandson Henry A., and great-grandson Henry B. (courtesy of James W. Wallace).

committed the unforgivable sin.

About that time I made a deal with a man by the name of Foy to raise chickens for him. He furnished me with one hundred eggs of White Wyandotte chickens, and I bought an incubator that was run with a kerosene lamp. I had to watch the temperature very carefully, but out of those hundred eggs I only got about fifty chickens, which was a great disappointment. I didn't know whether it was the fault of the eggs or my care of the incubator, but there were supposed to be more chickens than that. But I fed out the chickens and later on I was very much gratified when Foy came around to see the roosters that were finished out and said that they were outstanding examples of White Wyandottes. The White Wyandotte breed has always been rather notorious for lack of fertility, but I didn't know it in those days. Nobody's ever sorted out a good strain of White Wyan-

dotte in this country yet, and Foy certainly didn't have it in those days. But anyhow they were impressive, full-breasted roosters, and Mr. Foy was happy to buy them.

Later on we grew quite a number of Barred Rocks, and I remember I used to take them when they were about four pounds in weight to 24th and University Avenue to market. I remember the mother of one of the pupils in the sixth grade, where I was, admiring them so greatly -- "Where could she buy such fine chickens as these?" That was Mrs. Peck... whose husband was in one of the leading life insurance companies in Des Moines.

My grandfather usually came to visit us on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and several times in between. My grandfather traded off the Adair County farm which my father had farmed back in the late '80s and early '90s for a farm about ten miles southeast of Des Moines in northern Warren County. In the process of running that farm, I got acquainted quite a bit with my grandfather because I would drive down in the horse and buggy with Grandfather or with Father to this farm. It was an all day's trip to do that. Later on we used to go down in an automobile to this farm. I got acquainted with Grandfather while walking with him over the fields to see how the clover seeding was coming along, how the winter wheat crop looked, and so on. Grandfather was always trying out some new idea. I don't think Grandfather ever made much money out of farming, but he was always much interested in trying out new ideas and then writing about the new ideas. Insofar as he made money it was writing about his experiments, rather than by actually converting the experiments themselves into cash.

But he did, over the years of his life, introduce many new agricultural practices. I think he was the first to grow clover in western Iowa. I think probably he was the first to bring bluegrass into that section of western Iowa in the late '70s.

I wouldn't say that he impressed me as such a glamorous figure . . . but as a substantial one. That is, he was more like God. I don't think the word glamorous is correct -- he was a very solid person. I think there was much more fun in his make-up than I ever realized. I don't think a grandchild can ever realize what his grandparents are really like, or a son can ever realize what his parents are really like -- it seems impossible. It's one of the misfortunes that you can't get really acquainted with any of your relatives for that matter. There's something strange about the whole relative situation -- I don't know what it is. I'd like to have known my parents as human beings instead of as parents. I think I would have liked them very much better, because I think they were both very remarkable human beings.

Until we moved to 3780 Cottage Grove I associated with children of the lower middle class who had a great disdain for

children with parents with more money. They would speak in awed terms of people who were rich -- that was something that the ordinary children just couldn't understand about people being rich.

We didn't finally make the complete transition to being *utterly* respectable until 1912 when we moved to 37th and John Lynde Road, which was over south of Grand Avenue. Grand Avenue was the place where the real wealthy people lived. That was in 1912. Father built a house that cost \$50,000. In 1917 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. visited us out there and we were amused when he said, "How nice this simple little country place is." It was a nice place and was later bought by E. T. Meredith who was Secretary of Agriculture in the last year of Wilson's administration, and later was bought by, I think, Mike Cowles.

Three Secretaries of Agriculture lived in that house and there have been various noted people entertained there. Theodore Roosevelt was there; Howard Taft was there.

This rapid resume is an illustration of the way life changed for a number of Americans from about 1890 on up to 1914. □