

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATIONAL SUBSIDY

Iowa & the Land-Grant Movement



HOPE OF FEDERAL AID

Iowa legislators authorized the establishment of an agricultural college with the definite expectation of federal aid for their project, either through general grants to the states such as that proposed in the first Morrill bill then pending or by a special subsidy. The latter was definitely sought two weeks before the passage of the Iowa agricultural college bill. On March 3, 1858, the legislature approved a memorial to Congress asking "a donation of 50,000 acres of land, to be taken from public lands in this State, for the purpose of establishing scientific agricultural schools." The memorial urged that "the *farmers* of the State of Iowa are exceedingly desirous to establish a scientific agricultural college and schools for the purpose of giving freely to all a profound knowledge of the great truths and fundamental principles of nature, whereby all may become fully acquainted with the properties of the earth, the vegetable kingdom, and the peculiar adaptation of plants to certain soils, and likewise to obtain a complete knowledge of animals, that their stock may be brought to the highest perfection." Such assistance to the "*respectable* portion" of the community, it was urged, would help all branches of industry. In justification of this type of aid, the national legislators were reminded that though they had adopted the practice of making "munificent grants of land for the endowment of schools and universities . . . in all cases the interests of that class of

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the community which is generally termed the backbone of trade and commerce has been entirely overlooked." The memorial was received on March 17, the very day that the college bill passed the Iowa House, and referred to the committee on public lands.

IOWA AND THE MORRILL BILLS

A month later the first Morrill bill was being considered in the House of Representatives. In this debate the main controversy centered on the southern state rights defense against the free-soil interest, with the East and West rivalry involving a subordinate controversy. On the issue thus presented Iowa sentiment was strongly for the bill. Even the redoubtable individualist, Le Grand Byington, of Iowa City, was reported as one of the lobbyists in attendance at the capital. Correspondents from different parts of the state assured Morrill of their sympathy. N. S. Young of Batavia wrote on February 1 that though the measure should be supported by the masses of farmers and mechanics, he feared that it might not be understood, and he was circulating a petition for it. James Thorington, who as the state's first free-soil representative in Congress (1855-57) had gained notoriety by his zeal for the railroad grant, promised on May 17 to refer to Morrill's speech in the fall campaign and offered to distribute copies of it in his district. O. C. Hale, a Keokuk banker, wrote rather belatedly on October 16 that Governor Lowe desired a copy of the "great speech."

The Board of the Agricultural College strongly favored a federal grant but its members felt that the one proposed was inadequate, and on January 11, 1859, they petitioned the state's delegation "to obtain for the state of Iowa an amount commensurate with her *area and present population*, instead of the proportion contemplated in the conditions of the bill" provided such an effort would not "materially affect the success of the bill."

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In the Senate James Harlan, Iowa's first superintendent of public instruction, an ex-college president, and at all times an ardent free-soiler, was among the leading supporters of the measure. He argued for the constitutionality of the bill on the ground that acceptance by a state was a voluntary matter. The complaint of Senator Mason of Virginia that the bill would open the way for Congress to substitute the New England school system for that of the South aroused Harlan's indignation as an educator. He charged that the southern leaders were opposed to the uplift and advancement of the masses through education and twitted Virginia in particular about having the largest percentage of illiteracy of any state—a distinction his state did not covet. His colleague, George W. Jones, was a state rights Democrat who, like others of his convictions, West and South, had supported grants for railroads on the ground of regional interest but drew the line there. So on the final vote Iowa's senators were divided. In the House both representatives, Samuel R. Curtis, Republican of Keokuk, and Timothy Davis, American of Dubuque, voted for the bill.

In the debate on the bill of 1862, with southern opposition removed, the division involved a direct contest between the older and the newer state interests and provided the most clear-cut northern sectional alignment of any portion of the free-soil program. In this controversy Iowa interests were divided. With public lands subject in part to outside scrip location, the state had a defensive attitude toward the proposed grant, but the value and strategic location of her lands had led to such rapid pre-emption and sweeping grants that the bulk was already on the way to disposal. Positively the educational sentiment in the state was unusually strong with two chartered institutions desirous of aid.

The legislature instructed the senators and advised the representatives to support the bill, and such action undoubtedly was favored by the great majority of Iowans at all

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interested in the measure. Harlan again was prominent in support, though less enthusiastically. He held that, as a landed state, Iowa had little to gain, but he felt that the predictions of injury to western states generally was greatly exaggerated, and that in any case the grant was justified as a partial measure of compensation to the old states for the liberal grants to the new. It was on this plea, much emphasized by Morrill, that he mainly based his support. Suel Foster wrote two years later that the trustees of the College had been in constant correspondence with Harlan about the bill.

Senator Grimes by reason of his agricultural and educational interests was favorable to the project and, with his Whig background, regarded the grant as a proper use of the public domain. Furthermore, he maintained confidently that the progress of the western states would be hastened rather than retarded by the location of the scrip within their borders, as the lands could then be taxed until the holders were forced to dispose of them to settlers. The charge by Senator Lane of Kansas that Grimes himself when governor had been a speculative holder of large tracts in western Iowa and had thus contributed to the region's economic and social backwardness was apparently regarded as undeserving of notice. The states, Grimes felt, could protect themselves against landholders, resident or absentee, but he was fearful for the territories. The limitation of the amount to be located in any state to one million acres and the defeat by eastern senators of his amendment to include the territories in the restriction opened the way, he maintained, for large land companies—one of which was already formed—to carry on speculative colonization projects that would postpone for years the admission to the union of new free-soil states. For this reason, in spite of the instruction of the General Assembly, he voted against the final bill.

In the House Iowa's two representatives gave no aid to the cause. James F. Wilson, who had led the early opposition to the agricultural college bill in the legislature though later

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supporting it, joined with other western free-soil leaders in the opposition. The other member, Colonel William Van-dever, had vacated his seat by active service with his regiment.

THE LAND-GRANT ACT

The far-famed Land-Grant or Morrill Act of July 2, 1862—the organic law of the land-grant colleges—provided a grant of public lands or land scrip to each state in the amount of 30,000 acres for each senator and representative that the state had under the apportionment of 1860. The proceeds from the sale of the land or scrip invested in United States or other safe stocks yielding at least 5 per cent was to constitute a permanent “endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”

The main condition—to be accepted by special legislative acts—was that the states maintain the capital fund undiminished except that not more than 10 per cent might be used for the purchase of a site or of an experimental farm. No portion of the fund nor of the income from it could be used for the “purchase, erection, preservation, or repair of any building or buildings.” Acceptance was required within two years and the establishment of a college within five years. The only check of the colleges’ work was an annual report to be sent to the other colleges and to the Secretary of the Interior.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE GRANT

The calling of a special session of the General Assembly on September 3, 1862, to consider pressing war concerns, offered

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an opportunity for early action on the congressional grant. Governor Kirkwood in his message recommended immediate action, as delay until the next session might enable other states to select Iowa lands "and manage and dispose of them in a manner very undesirable to us." In response to this warning, House File No. 1, which provided that the lands "are hereby accepted by the State of Iowa, upon the terms, conditions and restrictions contained in said Act of Congress" and providing for the selection and location of the lands granted under the act, passed that chamber without opposition. The Senate's amendments respecting the appointment of a commissioner to select the lands led to a disagreement which was adjusted by a conference, and the bill was approved on September 11. Iowa thus became the first state to signify official acceptance of the grant.

RIVALRY FOR THE GRANT

Acceptance of the grant did not mean that it would go automatically to the Agricultural College. In consideration of a portion of the grant, the University was willing to launch another school at a time when none of its fields of effort was fully established. At the next session of the legislature, January, 1864, the representative from Floyd, Azro B. F. Hildreth, a journalist who had served as a member of the state Board of Education and who as a native of Vermont had been an intimate friend of Morrill, introduced a bill to provide for the teaching of agriculture and mechanic arts at the State University and for dividing the federal grant between the University and the Agricultural College. Hildreth's argument in support of his bill was that the federal grant was not to any particular institution but to the state for performing a certain service, and the question was how that could best be performed. To develop a new agricultural college with instructional and housing facilities within the time set by the act would necessitate a larger expenditure than the state was

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prepared to make. If the grant were saved by the organization of the required work at the University, the new College would be afforded time in which to develop adequately. The present income of the University was wholly inadequate, but by a division of the new grant both institutions would have sufficient means. There would be no strife, he assured, between the two institutions if they were developed in the public interest. Just what the program of the Agricultural College would have been after its main subjects were taught at the University was not specified.

That consideration was wholly secondary to Nathan Brainerd of the Iowa City *Republican* in his modest proposal for disposing of the national grant: "Let, then, this grant be divided between the State University and the College Farm giving each one-half; let the department in connection with the University be put in immediate operation, and let the College Farm institution be coming along as fast as may be, without too great expense. In this way the State University will be permanently endowed, the College grant will be secured without great outlay of money, and two institutions will be provided, as the wants of the State demand, and, in our judgment, the best possible use will be made of the noble grant from the General Government."

In newspaper letters the Rev. Oliver M. Spencer, president of the University, argued to the same effect concerning the intent of the act and made the illogical plea that if his institution did not receive increased support disaster would soon follow. He cited as precedents for sharing the fund with a literary university the cases of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York, where the People's College was held, not very accurately, to be a literary institution. Meanwhile, Judge Francis Springer, a trustee of the University, had submitted a memorial to the legislature "relative to attaching the Agricultural College to the State University."

In heated defense of the agricultural cause Suel Foster

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wrote that the understanding had been all along that the grant was for institutions like the Agricultural College which, indeed, in cooperation with similar institutions of other states, had been influential in its enactment. The issue was that of the right of the masses to higher education: "We appeal in most earnest terms to the friends of agricultural education to decide at this session of the legislature whether or not the great interest of our state, the men engaged therein, are worthy of a higher education than the 'common schools.' "

In the midst of the discussion, the joint committee appointed to visit the college farm, headed by Gue, who was now in the Senate, in concluding their report of observations and recommendations expressed vigorous dissent to the proposal of the University supporters, which they regarded "as manifestly unjust and dangerous." The two institutions were not only distinct but contrasting in their basic aims and programs, and hence their activities could not be interchanged or intermingled. The University was "intended to be a higher grade school than any other in the State, in which students from the various seminaries, academies and colleges may enter, and complete an education in the highest branches taught, affording facilities and advantages that no other educational institution in the State possesses. The object is a noble one, worthy of our great State, and we trust that the purpose will be fully carried out, without endangering its success by 'any entangling alliances.' " As it was, both the state and national government had dealt generously with this institution of highest learning, and it found itself relatively well supplied in buildings and endowment. The Agricultural College, in direct contrast, was projected with a wholly different aim to be realized by its own peculiar plan. A working class college for practical training "in the industrial pursuits they desire to follow . . . must be entirely independent of ordinary colleges and universities where theories are taught, without prac-

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tical illustrations." The manual labor requirement written into the founding act was basic to the system, socially and pedagogically. Such aims and requirements made evident the ridiculous futility of a connection with an urban university: "Does any reflecting person believe that these most important provisions of the system of agricultural education can be connected with the State University, located in the heart of a populous city, where no experimental farm can be connected with it, with no suitable boarding house where young boys can be under the care and control of a suitable person who would look to their welfare? They would be turned loose after school hours, to all the enticements, vices, and corrupting influences of a city. They must find boarding places among the inhabitants of the town, where their labor cannot be employed to defray expenses; a department thus conducted can derive none of the benefits contemplated by the friends of the Agricultural College, in providing an industrial school in accordance with the act of our own Legislature, and the law of Congress making the munificent land grant, to enable the plans of the College to be faithfully and honestly carried out." The committee was "satisfied that any such attempt at consolidation would result in endless strife, quarrels, jealousy, and confusion, and would go far towards destroying the usefulness of both. We believe it to be the duty of the Legislature to encourage and sustain both of these valuable institutions by judicious and liberal assistance, while both are left free to stand or fall on their own merits."

The public interest in this rivalry was so keen that during the session several evenings were devoted to a discussion of the question in the hall of the House of Representatives. Kirkwood, recently retired from the governorship to a residence in Iowa City, led for the University forces, while the college cause was supported by Senator Gue and Representatives George M. Maxwell of Story, John Russell of Jones, and

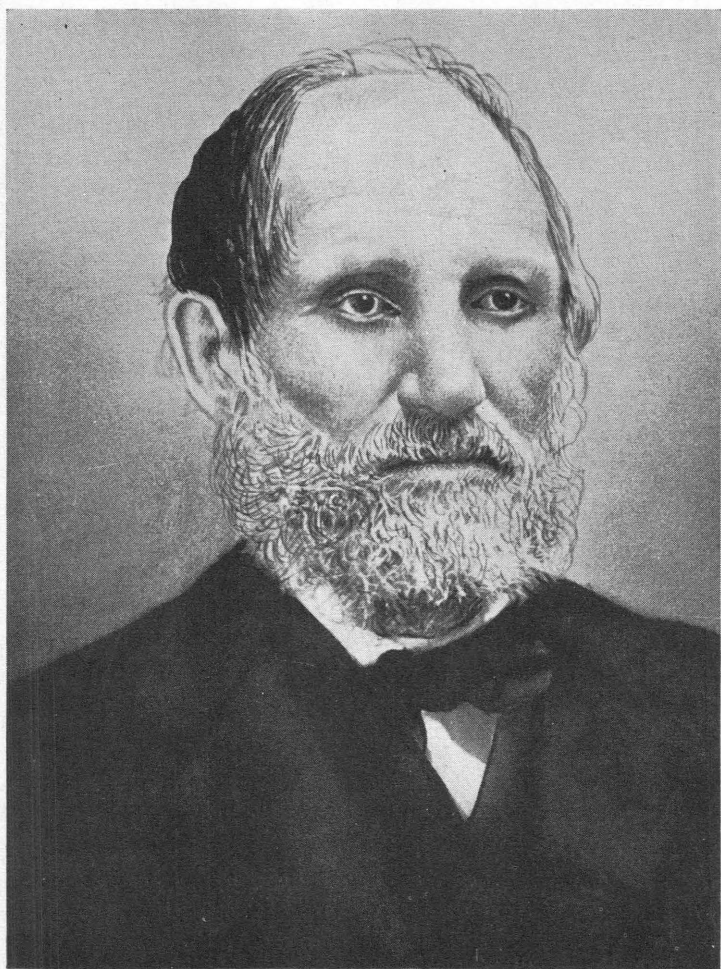
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Hugh M. Thomson of Scott, later to become the farm superintendent.

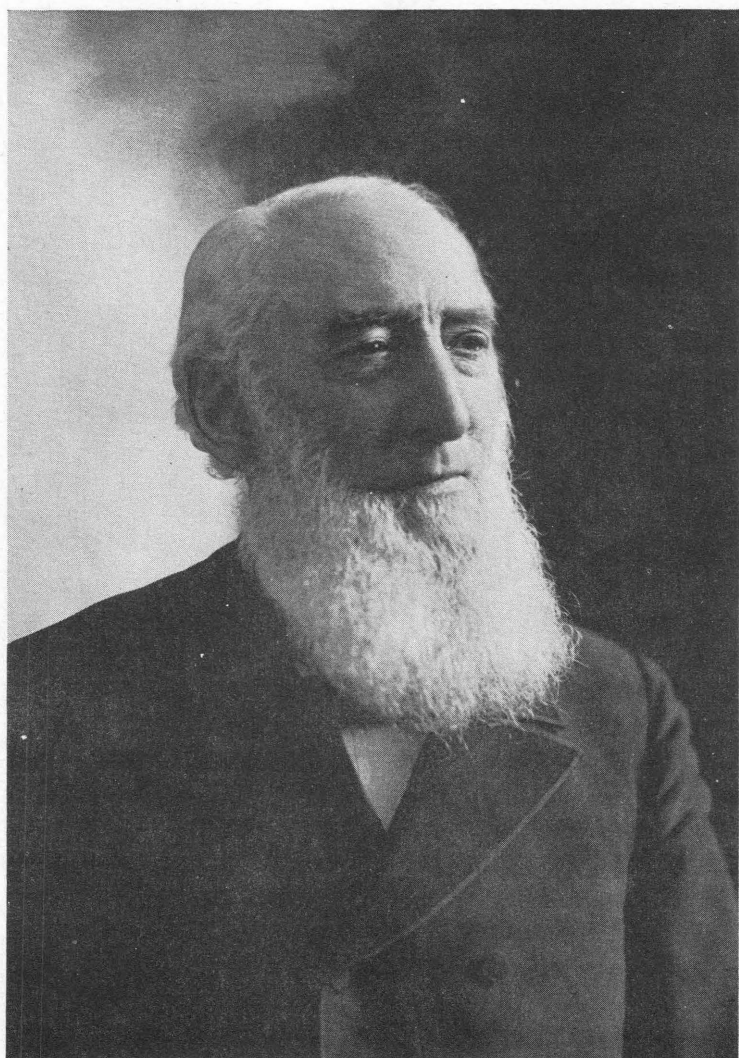
AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE BECOMES A LAND-GRANT COLLEGE

In spite of the distinguished and influential championship, with the state's definite provisions for a separate agricultural college the University plan was evidently not regarded as expedient. A bill approved March 29, 1864, granting to the state's Agricultural College the lands received for supporting such an institution and authorizing the trustees to sell or lease the lands for the College's endowment, was opposed by only three votes in the Senate and by none in the House, though more than a score of members were reported absent or not voting. It was highly significant for the future program that this act was confined wholly to the matter of the disposal of the lands and the investment of the proceeds and made no alteration in the organization and policies of the College as provided in the founding act of 1858. Any broadening of that act in accord with the provisions of the Morrill Act was to be implied in the acceptance of the grant and not in legal specification. Which policy would be the more determining upon the College's organization and program remained to be seen.

The state was thus committed to a supposedly distinct division of its higher education. The University, thanks to an early start, to inheritance of the Old Capitol, and to some devoted leadership, was getting its program under way. The land-grant college remained to be housed and organized.



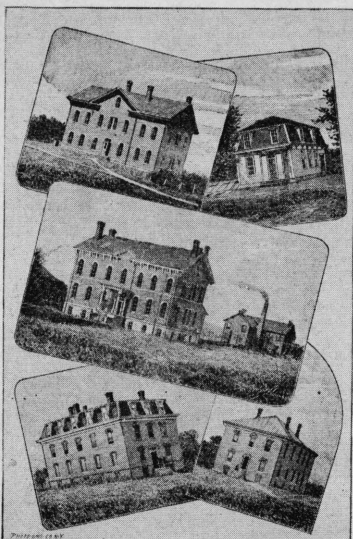
SUEL FOSTER



PETER MELENDY



WILLIAM DUANE WILSON



1, Chemical and Physical Hall, with work-shop in the back-ground; 2, North Hall; 3, Horticultural Hall; 4-5, Boarding Halls.

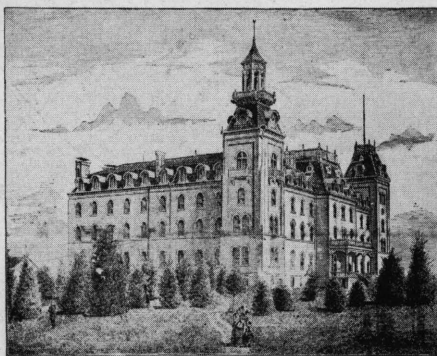
STUDENTS AND GRADUATES.

The College is open to both young men and young women.

Candidates for admission must be at least sixteen years of age.

The average attendance is about two hundred and fifty, of which about one-fourth are young women.

Twelve classes have graduated, and the whole number of graduates is now, (1884,) two hundred and fifty-five.



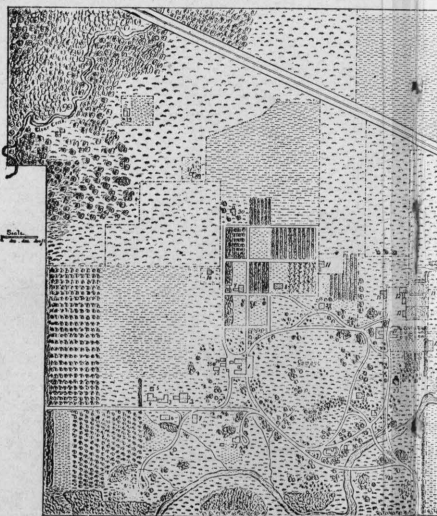
Main College Building.--South-east View

IOVA AGRICULTURAL AMES,



Main College Building.

Founded by the State, 1858: Endowed by the State.



1. Main College Building. 2. Chemical and Physical Hall. 3. Engine Building. 4. Horticultural Hall. 10. Veterinary Hospital. 11, 12, 13 & 14. Barns. 15. Feed Barn. 16. Pigsty. 17. Water Works. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23 to 32. Dwellings.

The FARM, consisting of a great variety of soil and aspect, and including the woodlands and meadows of Montgomery and Char creek bottoms, and the adjacent high, rolling, gravelly and loamy prairie lands.

The EXPERIMENTAL PLANTS OF GRAINS AND GRASSES.

The BARNYARD for Horses, cattle and sheep, also pigsty with ample yards attached.

The STOCK, consisting of improved breeds of horses, cattle, sheep and swine.

The EXPERIMENTAL SORGHUM-WORKS.

The CUPBOARD.

The TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS OF THE FARM.

The AGRICULTURAL CABINET OF SEEDS AND GRASSES.

MEANS 213.

The HARBOR and OUCH.

The EXPERIMENTAL NUTRITION.

The COLLEGE PLANTATION.

The COLLEGE WOODS.

The COLLEGE FISH-POND.

The INSTRUMENTS OF AGRICULTURE.

The VETERINARY CLINIC.

The EXPERIMENTAL KITCHEN.

The PHYSICAL LABORATORY.

The CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

dating 100 students.

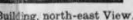

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For full Information or Catalogue

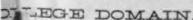
Daily Republican Press, at

AL COLLEGE

IOWA.



The Nation, 1862: Opened for Students, 1869.



1. Messing Hall. 4. Shops. 5. Gas Works. 6 & 7. Boarding Halls. 8. North Hall, 15 & 16. Experimental Buildings. 17. Creamery. 18. Farm House. 19. Sheep 2. Dwelling Houses. 33. Gymnasium. 34. Coal and Ice Houses. 35. Water Tank.

5 OF ILLUSTRATION.

CRYSTAL NURSERIES, including many rare Trees
introduced from Europe and Asia.

and Pteris, including many green-house plants.
and Wood Specimens.

and WAX FRUIT-MODELS.
are supplied with Tools and Machines.
Supervised by the Civil Engineer.

LABORATORY with its apparatus, accommodates

2. RESIDENT

to his address, the President of

address, the President of the

in F. St., Cedar Rapids, Ia.

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1. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1995, 32, 1, 1-15.

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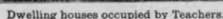
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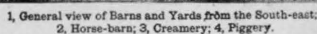
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COURSES OF STUDY.

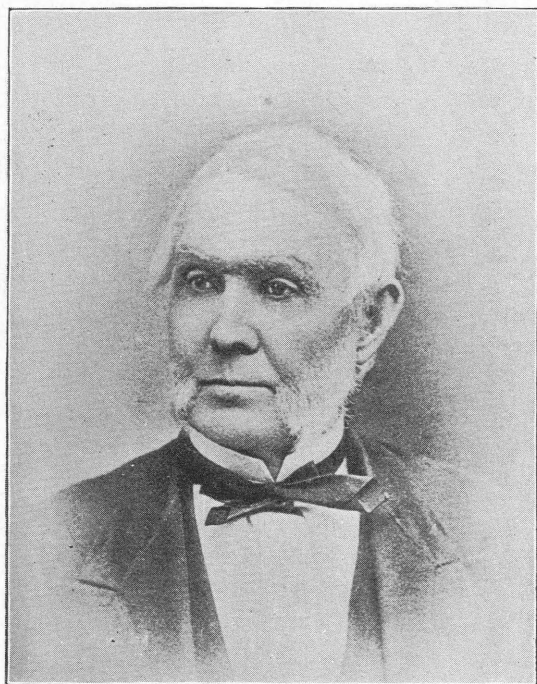
1. Course in General Science.
2. Course in Agricultural Science.
3. Course in Mechanical Engineering.
4. Course in Civil Engineering.
5. Course in Veterinary Science.



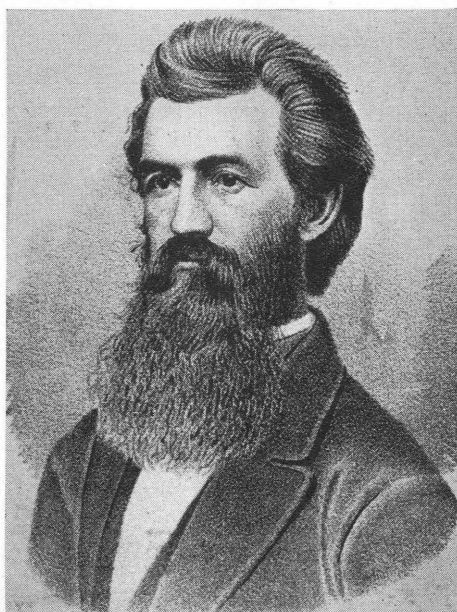
RESIDENTS OF IOWA.

address, the President of the College.

n Front, Cedar Rapids, Ia.



RALPH P. LOWE



BENJAMIN F. GUE



COKER F. CLARKSON