

James Bryce

(1838–1922)

Born in Belfast, Ireland, James Bryce distinguished himself in history, law, politics, and diplomacy. For more than 20 years he taught civil law at Oxford University, and from 1880 to 1907 he was a Liberal Party member of Britain's House of Commons. Bryce served in the last cabinet of Prime Minister William Gladstone and was chief secretary for Ireland under Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman. James Bryce became British ambassador to the United States in 1907. He had visited the country many times before and was the author of *The American Commonwealth* (1888), an analysis of American political institutions.

During his six years as ambassador to the United States, Bryce became popular with the public as well as with official Washington. When he retired in 1913 from his diplomatic service, Britain awarded him the title of viscount and appointed him representative to the Hague Tribunal, a court that arbitrates international disputes. Following World War I, Bryce worked to establish the League of Nations. His final published work, *Modern Democracies* (1921), analyzed the present and future of self-government, comparing the United States with other democratic nations. In his last speech in the House of Lords in 1921, Bryce urged the acceptance of the treaty that established the Irish Free State. He died in England the following year.



British ambassador to the United States James Bryce addresses a crowd in New York State, July 1909.

(Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Sir William Reid Dick executed this bust of Lord James Bryce around 1922 for presentation to the American people. The bust had been commissioned by officials of the Sulgrave Institution in London to honor their former member. The Sulgrave—composed of prominent men from Great Britain, Canada, and the United States—promoted friendly relations among the three countries.

In 1922 a Sulgrave official indicated by letter to Senator James Wadsworth of New York that a delegation headed by Sir Charles Cheers Wakefield, former lord mayor of London, would soon visit America. The delegation, he wrote, would be “presenting to the American people and unveiling statues of Edmund Burke, the Elder Pitt, and two busts of Lord Bryce.” Both Bryce busts were by Dick, who was considered “the most eminent of the British sculptors.” One of the busts was to be unveiled in Trinity Church in New York City. The institution desired to place the other bust of Bryce in Washington, D.C., on the Senate side of the U.S. Capitol. The Joint Committee on the Library authorized acceptance of the bronze bust of James Bryce in August 1922, following a poll of its members by the committee chairman, Senator Frank B. Brandegee of Connecticut. The bust was officially unveiled in the Senate wing of the Capitol at ceremonies held that October.

Dick was renowned during his lifetime as a sculptor of portrait statuary. His important works include a massive bronze statue of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Grosvenor Square in London; the equestrian statue of Lady Godiva in Coventry, England; and likenesses of the British royal family. Dick served as president of the Royal Society of British Sculptors from 1933 to 1938. He was also an associate [ARA] of the Royal Academy of Arts—a select society of 40 members dedicated to promoting the arts of design—and later achieved the status of royal academician and trustee of the academy. He was knighted by King George V in 1935.

The Sulgrave Institution ceased to exist as a separate body in the 1920s. Since 1914 it had maintained Sulgrave Manor, George Washington's ancestral home in England. The property had been purchased by a British peace committee and presented as a gift to the people of Great Britain and the United States. Shortly after the Sulgrave officials' trip to the United States, the Sulgrave Institution became the Sulgrave Manor Board, which continues to run the manor as a museum.

James Bryce

Sir William Reid Dick (1879–1961)

Bronze, 1922

30¾ x 18¾ x 13⅛ inches (78.1 x 47.6 x 33.3 cm)

Signed and dated (on back of subject's left shoulder): W. Reid Dick ARA 1922

Gift of Sir Charles Cheers Wakefield for the Sulgrave Institution of Great Britain, 1922

Accepted by the Joint Committee on the Library, 1922

Cat. no. 24.00001

