

## AMZI ATWATER

By Prof. Theophilus A. Wylie, from "History of Indiana University" 1891.

"Amzi Atwater was born November 9, 1839, at Mantua, Ohio, and commenced his academic education, 1853, at the Eclectic Institute, which afterwards became Hiram College\* On leaving the institute, and after two years of teaching, he attended the Northwestern Christian University (now Butler) at Indianapolis. Later he entered the junior class of Indiana University in 1865. In his senior year he was appointed principal pro tem of the preparatory department of the university, taking the place of Prof. James Woodburn, the principal of this department, who had died shortly before the commencement of the college year 1865-6. In 1866 he graduated, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and three years later the degree of Master of Arts. After graduation he was made adjunct professor of languages and principal of the preparatory department of the university. This position he held until 1868, when he was elected professor of Latin and Greek in Hiram College. While holding that position he was called to the pastorate of the Disciples church at Mentor, Ohio. In 1870 he was elected professor of Latin in Indiana University, and returned to Bloomington, where he has since remained and has since 1889, been vice-president of the university.

"Professor Atwater is well known as an able and interesting lecturer, especially on educational topics. He lectured in the northeastern part of the state in the interest of the university in the summer of 1875, and has since frequently lectured on these and kindred subjects before literary societies and institutes in the adjacent states. He married Miss Cortentia C. Munson, who had been lady principal in Hiram College."

Reference of President Hinsdale, Hiram College, to the Atwater family: "Perhaps the best known family group of students that attended school at Hiram, in the early period, were the Atwaters, three brothers and a sister. Belonging to a well-known family in the vicinage and possessing abilities and character, they naturally impressed themselves upon the school, both as a group and as individuals."

Four Months in the War, from the Atwater Family History, published by Francis Atwater: "While at Northwestern University, with three other students, Mr. Atwater enlisted in May, 1864, for the hundred-day service, in the One Hundred and Thirty-second Regiment, Indiana Volunteers, Colonel Vance. The plan of the campaign was, while Grant should assail Richmond in the East, to send General Sherman, with well-drilled troops, through the heart of the Confederacy in the West. and thus break the back of the rebellion. The short-service, raw recruits were to fill the place of the trained soldiers on guard duty. The plan worked and really ended the war. They had their little part in it. The regiment went South by way of Louisville and Nashville, the boys often singing, 'John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave, But his soul goes marching on.' And they really felt that the great soul of the slave liberator was someway in their van. The regiment camped, and drilled, and guarded the important points at Nashville, later at Stevenson, Alabama. Being sent on some duty to Chattanooga in July (it was the time when Sherman was marching into, or through, Georgia) our 'tenderfoot' soldier had the pleasure of climbing with peaceful Alpine stock, or perpendicular ladder, the steeps of Lookout Mountain, near where Hooker, the preceding November, had forced his way up above the clouds in the face of blood and fire. A visit to Mission Ridge, on the east of the city, brought clearly to light the proofs of the hard fighting where Sherman, co-

operating with Hooker, attacked Bragg and, after repeated repulses, had driven him head long from the ridge. The trees that stood in the center of the fierce conflict were riddled with bullets, and many branches and even trunks were broken off. You could even then pick up unexploded shells and cannon balls on the blood-drenched plain in front of the rebel breastworks, and the limbs of dead rebel soldiers protruding from their shallow graves on the mountain side bore painful witness to their cheap and hasty burial. These last days of '64, the trains of the South were loaded with disabled soldiers and wounded men had their stories to tell of the bloody battles near Atlanta, where General Sherman, by skillful maneuvering and desperate fighting, was forcing the Confederates from their well-chosen and fortified positions. It was the beginning of the end. By September 1st Atlanta was taken, and the success of the great campaign planned by Grant was assured. A little later Sherman began his great march to the sea. The time was up and the playing at war by our hundred-day men was over. With the loss of a very few, they rode back to Indianapolis."

In 1882 Mr. Atwater made a vacation trip to Europe. He crossed the Alps on the 4th of July, passing by Genoa and Pisa to Rome and thence to Naples. Here he lodged in the home and had as his guide the famous antiquarian and ex-consul, Dr. J. C. Fletcher, of Indianapolis. No more perfectly equipped leader of sightseeing could possibly be found. With him, he visited ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In the former of these, the explorations perhaps were still going on and the relics of all sorts were being transferred to a museum in Naples. With Dr. Fletcher he visited Pozzuoli (Puteoli, where Paul landed), the famous lake Avernus and brought off interesting relics dug up at old Cumae on the coast. One day the Doctor left his pupil to go alone and he went up by carriage, without guide, the side of Mount Vesuvius, took the steam tramcar lift to near the top and scrambled up through sand and ashes to the summit. The visitor finds himself on that high lookout really far above the clouds. The volcano was at that time in a mild state of eruption, but as it looked very innocent (though the Italian attendant reported lava flowing in places) the venturesome sight-seer passed down by a little slanting path into the immense crater, peering through the dense, misty darkness for a sight of the cavernous opening whence the smoke and fire were pouring. But August had come and, taking the train for the North, having already made his stay in Rome, the tourist hastened by Florence without stopping to view its treasures of art or glance into its old churches. At the close of a hot summer day he dropped into Venice, whose drays and carriages are boats and whose streets are waterways. It was here restful sightseeing to ride by gondola among the wonders of this famous city on the sea. On the other side of the Alps his old Hiram friend, the noted consul, Frank H. Mason, made his stay at Lake Lucerne most delightful. He stopped for a few hours at Heidelberg—the old German university. The route was next down the Rhine and across the straits of Dover into England, the ancient home of his forefathers. A week in London, a day at Windsor palace and castle, and the meadow of Runnymede, where King John signed the Magna Charta; an hour or two at Oxford, time enough to glance at the great university and view the spot where Cranmer Ridley and Latimer perished at the stake; a Sunday at Chester and a sea-sick voyage from Southampton to New York completed his hasty trip to Europe. It was undertaken to study Roman antiquities, and was a success and an inspiration.

In 1893, after more than a quarter of a century of teaching in the university, Mr. Atwater left the institution, returned to the ministry and spent several years of pastoral

work among the churches, one of which was near Yale University and the residence of his ancestors, the other at the home of his childhood in Ohio. A little later he was chosen field secretary for the endowment of Butler College, Indianapolis. Since that service he has returned to Bloomington and made that place (his favorite town) his residence, his son, Munson D. Atwater, having for many years a desirable position with the Bell Telephone Company either in New York, Indianapolis or Chicago. About 1904 Indiana University conferred on Mr. Atwater the title of Emeritus Professor of Latin. This is an honorary title involving no duties and conferring no salary. He prizes this honor the more because many of the present faculty and members of the board of trustees who voted for it were students of his, in years long past. It is an interesting fact that he is the only person now living of the faculty of 1865 when he entered it. Nor does any member of the board of trustees of that day survive. Teachers and managers and officers of all kinds have passed to the other side.

About his last public duty in the university was to deliver the baccalaureate—the address to the graduating class—June 19, 1904. The text was, “They that are in health need not the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” The duty impressed upon the “educated man” was to devote his powers and his education to meeting the world’s needs.

In March, 1905, Mr. Atwater joined with several other professors and citizens in forming the Monroe County Historical Society. Prof. James A. Woodburn, who had been the first to suggest the enterprise, became its first secretary, largely gave it direction and helped to make it a success. The commissioners wisely conceded to it a conveniently located room in the new court house and suitable furniture. The society is now filling an important place in the county.

Mr. Atwater having now (November 1913,) reached seventy-four, is pleasantly spending his old age at his home in Bloomington. He devotes much of his time to his books and papers, perhaps preparing some of his addresses for publication or it may be simply for the binding of the typewriter. He assists the minister of the Christian church in caring for the congregation, which he has known almost half a century. He teaches his Bible class and counsels with his brethren of other congregations in the county, preaches an occasional sermon, is deeply interested in religion, education and government and is in ardent sympathy with men and missions and all efforts for the world’s advancement.

**\* Mr. Atwater regards it as a part of his education, next in value to that of his early home training, that he was at Hiram College during the presidency of James A. Garfield. Mr. Garfield had entered the Eclectic in 1851, soon was a teacher and became the president of the institution in 1856. Few strangers to Hiram can understand the wonderful enthusiasm of the students for this man. Almost without exception, they regarded him without an equal in the world. Again and again they prophesied he would become the President of the United States. One of them said: “Then began to grow up in me an admiration and love for Garfield which has never abated, the like of which I have never known”**

*(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana , 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 520-524)*