

**New
Names
for
Student
Houses
at
Amherst**

Introduction

In February, 1984 the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to end fraternities at Amherst College. They recognized the important role which fraternities had played for most Amherst graduates over the previous century and a half. Yet the Trustees became convinced that the reduced number of remaining fraternities with their significantly smaller proportion of members in the student body now stood in the way of creating more just and rewarding patterns of social life for the benefit of the whole college.

A committee composed of students, faculty, alumni, emeriti faculty, emeriti trustees, and former administrators with wide knowledge of the history of the college was asked to propose new names for the old fraternity houses. In its choice of names the committee strove to avoid invidious distinctions by omitting the name of any living person. It decided to recognize primarily the names of those who in a variety of ways had performed distinguished and distinctive service to Amherst. In an effort to encourage a sense of continuity between past and future, the fraternity designations still clinging to nine houses were replaced by the names of persons associated with the societies which built those houses.

By 1984, four former fraternity houses already had taken on new lives and new names. In three of these cases (Drew House, Porter House, and Tyler House) the committee happily agreed to continue the use of these distinguished Amherst names. Boltwood House, however, had been named simply for its street location. The street in turn was originally named for a prominent local Tory without connection to the college. Hence the committee felt free in that case to honor Amherst's most revered nineteenth-century teacher of Moral Philosophy, Charles E. Garman. His emphasis on teaching Amherst students their responsibilities for social service was also the central purpose of the students who, fifteen years ago, established Boltwood House.

The committee recommended strongly that some major College building of more significance than a former fraternity house should be named in honor of Charles W. Cole '27.



Drew House

56 College Street

Formerly Phi Alpha Psi

Charles Richard Drew came to Amherst in the Class of 1926 from Dunbar High School in Washington. He was one of that splendid group of black leaders from Dunbar which included Charles Houston, Judge William Hastie, Professor Mercer Cook, and Doctor Montague Cobb. Like each of these men, Charles Drew made an outstanding record at Amherst, went on to a distinguished career in his chosen profession, and fought effectively throughout his lifetime to overcome discrimination against his race.

At Amherst Charles Drew was an outstanding athlete — “the best player I ever coached” in football, according to Tuss McLaughry; he was elected captain of the track team and was winner of the Mossman Trophy as the athlete who had brought “most honor” to the college during his four years. Failure to vote him membership in Scarab, the Senior honorary society, roused strong protests within that group and among his classmates.

The achievement which earned Charles Drew the lasting gratitude of all human beings was the medical research he did on the transfusion and storage of blood plasma, published as his doctoral dissertation at Columbia on “Banked Blood: A Study of Blood Preservation” in 1940, just in time to save countless lives during World War II. Selected to head a program of “Blood for Britain,” he overcame all the technical problems in providing massive supplies of blood plasma for Britain during the German air raids.

Appointed also as the first director of the American Red Cross blood program, Drew felt obliged to resign after

three months when the armed forces adopted a policy of accepting only “Caucasian blood” for transfusions.

During the next decade before his untimely death in an auto accident in 1950, Drew trained more than half of all the black surgeons trained in this country. The *Washington Post* said of him:

He chose to devote his gifts to the advancement of medicine rather than to the advancement of a personal career or to winning the monetary rewards that were easily within his reach. In particular, he devoted his gifts to the training of young Negro surgeons desperately needed for the medical care of their race.



Charles R. Drew '26



Garman House

62 Boltwood Avenue

Formerly Beta Theta Pi and Boltwood House

Charles Edward Garman graduated from Amherst in 1872 and returned to teach here in 1880. He turned down offers of several college presidencies and university appointments to devote his lifetime to teaching Amherst students with an intensity, an ingenuity, and an effectiveness which won him renown throughout American higher education. The best intellectual history of Amherst affirms: "For the student whose term at Amherst came between 1881 and 1906 the most stimulating intellectual experience and probably the most lasting influence was association with Charles Edward Garman, professor of Philosophy."

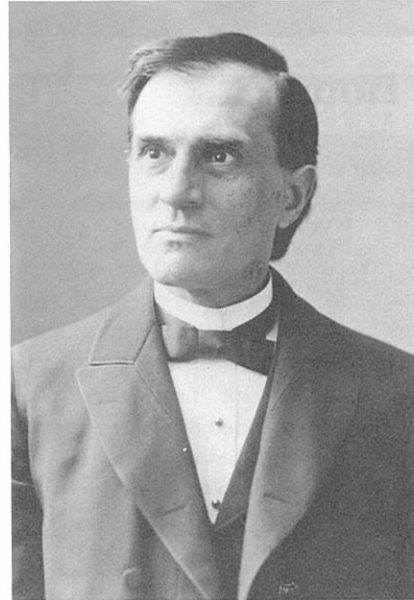
Another distinguished Amherst philosopher, Julius Seelye Bixler '16, has described the nature of Garman's teaching:

Garman met his students not so much as one who would furnish them with data, but rather as one who would embark with them upon a common cooperative enterprise, the outcome of which was a matter of life or death. He entered into endless discussions, after the closing bell, at his home with groups or individuals, after graduation when alumni made special trips back to talk with him. . . . In addition to this friendly assistance we notice an unusual facility in the handling of illustrative material, an unconventionally large amount of time and energy spent in the analysis and criticism of student papers, and a conscientious attempt in the classroom to present problems rather than solutions. The most unique of his devices was the use of pamphlets printed by himself on a press set up in his own home. These made possible the use of

classroom time for discussion. . . . The older group (of students) unquestionably caught what Garman wanted them to catch, a capacity for independent judgment.

The tablet to Garman's memory in the Amherst College Church says simply:

"He chose to write on living men's hearts."



Prof. Charles E. Garman 1872



Hamilton House

32 College Street

Formerly Phi Chi Phi

During much of the last century, Amherst has taken pride in being “the singing college.” No single person contributed more to this dimension of Amherst life than James Shelley Hamilton from the Class of 1906. It was he who wrote the words and music for “Lord Jeffery Amherst” in his senior year. Intended by Hamilton as “a burlesque of Alma Mater songs,” he began it originally as “Oh Lord! Jeffery Amherst, look at what you’ve done!” He also composed “Senior Song,” “High Upon Her Living Throne,” and other Amherst favorites.

After heading college musical associations and the monthly literary magazine as an undergraduate, James Hamilton moved easily into editorial positions on a number of leading magazines during the decade before World War I when magazines were at the height of their influence as the only nationwide media. He was among the first to write serious criticism of the movies. As a screenwriter himself, he mastered serial suspense in “The Perils of Pauline.” His “enthusiastic appreciation for quality and sanity” as a movie critic led to the post as Executive Director of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures where he exercised a significant influence on American culture.

Editor, critic, novelist, book collector, Hamilton continued his love and his song writing for Amherst over many reunion years. Lines he composed for the last initiation banquet held in “The Old House” of his fraternity, Chi Phi, before it moved into the present structure, capture the feelings that many alumni have cherished for these buildings of their youth:

Here is their house, where brotherhood began,
And friendship learned its beauty and its power,
Here where the boy began to be the man,
And life first showed beyond the present hour.

So all the things we dreamed and did not do —
The songs within us that were never sung
Stay on, forever fresh and ever new,
Stay on and on and keep the old house young.

And though the house may go, they linger yet,
For youth is in them and they cannot die,
And we may go, but never quite forget.



James S. Hamilton '06



Hitchcock House

101 South Pleasant Street
Formerly Alpha Delta Phi

On November 15, 1845 both Edward Hitchcock, the newly inaugurated President of Amherst, and Edward Hitchcock, Jr., his freshman son, were initiated into the secret society of Alpha Delta Phi.

Edward Hitchcock was a college president who had himself never attended college. He was an internationally known geologist who had never formally studied science and whose primary concern lay in theology. Constantly complaining of ill health, he nevertheless managed to teach some twenty-one subjects and to write more than 8,000 published pages. Assuming the presidency when the college was badly in debt, with enrollment dropping dangerously, faculty salaries unpaid, and with inadequate buildings for its needs, Hitchcock managed within nine years to secure the funds for four new professorships, three major new buildings, and to double the enrollment. As professor Tyler said, "Dr. Hitchcock was our Joshua, who led us into the promised land, conquered our enemies by making them friends, and gave us secure and permanent possession of houses that we did not build, and vineyards and olive yards that we planted not."

Edward Hitchcock, Jr., M.D., known to all as "Doc," returned to the Amherst faculty in 1860 to found here the first student health service and a program of physical education for all students which became a national

model. He concluded fifty years of teaching at Amherst as Dean of the Faculty, from 1898 to 1910.

"Mentally alert, shrewd, discerning, yet kindly, sympathetic, uplifting; he was broad-minded and large-hearted. He did not know how great he was. He did not think of himself at all."



President Edward Hitchcock



Prof. Edward Hitchcock 1849



Humphries House

62 Snell Street
Formerly Alpha Theta Xi

G. Rolfe Humphries entered Amherst in the Class of 1915 and joined a young society which would become Alpha Theta Xi. His father taught Latin, his mother English in the same high school, and their early influence flowered for him into a lifetime of achievement as teacher, poet, and Latin translator.

Rolfe Humphries taught for fifty years, as head of the Latin Department at Woodmere Academy, at Yale, at Hunter and at other universities, and at many writers' conferences; after 1957 he capped his career by teaching in the English Department at Amherst. His faculty colleagues here wrote of him:

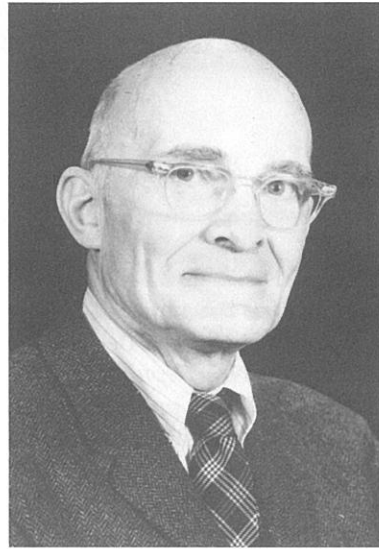
Rolfe Humphries was a highly disciplined classicist and on occasion a stern teacher. The two generations of hopeful young writers who flocked to his classes at Amherst will not soon forget the roaring disapproval with which he responded to slovenly work, but they will never forget the enormous patience and kindness with which he helped them in endless hours of extra conferences.

His eight published volumes of poetry won him fellowships (Guggenheim, Academy of American Poets) and awards (the Shelley Memorial Award in Poetry) as well as the judgment by Phyllis McGinley that he produced "good, careful, singable, memorable lines — writing them with love and skill and artistry."

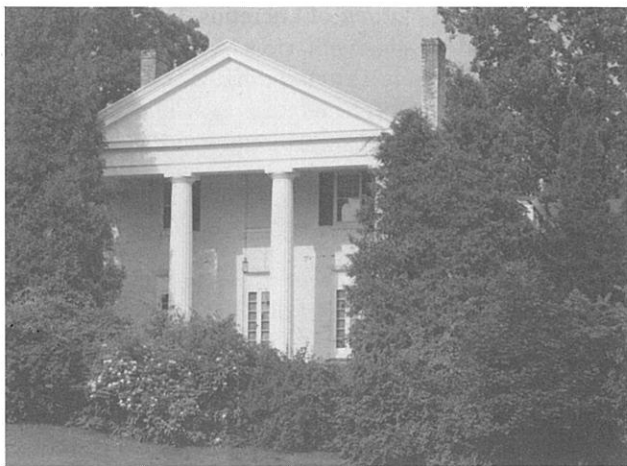
The highest praise came for his eight volumes of translations of Latin classics ranging from *The Aeneid* of Ver-

gil to *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius. Ezra Pound ranked his translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Art of Love* as essential to the pursuit of a liberal education. And Rolfe Humphries vigorously defended the art of translation: "Translators should swashbuckle a bit more than we do. So here I am now, look you, a poet translating a poet, not some frayed but polite border functionary."

Rolfe Humphries loved horse races, ball games, good wit, poetry, Amherst, and a bit of swashbuckling.



Prof. G. Rolfe Humphries '15



Marsh House

81 Lessey Street

Formerly Phi Gamma Chi

Allison Wilson Marsh, known to all as Eli Marsh, graduated in the Class of 1913 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Bond Fifteen, and Phi Gamma Delta. He went on to write articles for *The New Republic*, the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, and other publications. His wife became a member of the Sociology Department and a dean at Smith College. Learning to paint at age fifty, Eli Marsh developed a distinctive style described as “ordered, precise, and innocent.” It has been said that “Painting, like physical activity, was always a celebration to him.”

Over the span of forty-one years this man who was an intellectual and an artist as well as an exuberant athlete set the tone and the philosophy for Amherst’s program of physical education and athletics. Sports were fun and worth doing well. No one could expect always to be a winner (though Eli’s soccer teams won more than seventy percent of their games). Participation to the best of one’s ability was the goal rather than winning, and he never cut a student from one of his squads. He made these ideas effective at Amherst and advocated them vigorously as president of the College Physical Education Association and as a vice president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

What many generations of Amherst graduates took from Eli Marsh was described by one of them as “a quality of

wholeness, of the integrity of body and soul and feeling. He taught me to love and play soccer. More importantly he taught me to love life.”



Prof. Allison W. Marsh '13



Mayo-Smith House

19 Northampton Road
Formerly Delta Chi Psi

Richmond Mayo-Smith was one of those top students in the Classes of 1875 and 1876 stimulated by the teaching of John W. Burgess to embark on careers in Political Science. When the faculty vetoed Burgess's plan to develop graduate education at Amherst, these men followed Burgess to New York where they turned Columbia College into Columbia University by founding the graduate Faculty of Political Science and publishing the *Political Science Quarterly*. They all played key roles in professionalizing the social science disciplines.

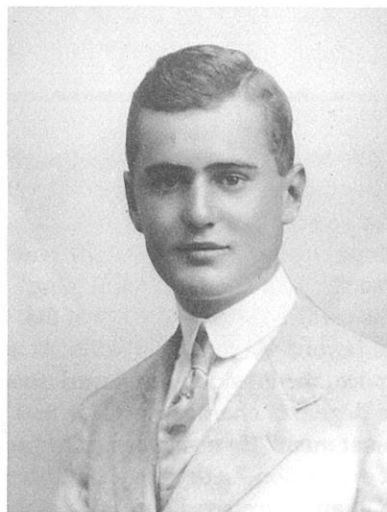
Richmond Mayo-Smith became Professor of Political Economy at Columbia, taught the first course on statistics at any American university, helped to found both the American Economics Association and the American Statistical Association. His distinguished career was cut short by a fall from a fourth-story window.

Richmond Mayo-Smith, Jr., like his father a descendant of Noah Webster and also a loyal member of Chi Psi, graduated with the Class of 1909 into a lifetime of service to Amherst which paralleled his vocation as president of the Plimpton Press. He helped to organize and served as chairman of the Alumni Council and the Society of the

Alumni. His service on the Board of Trustees and as its chairman was remembered with gratitude by his fellow Trustees:

A leader in creating good books he turned with enthusiasm to the problems of creating good men. With an open and lively mind, but with convictions and the courage to state and stand up for them, he brought to this Board freshness of viewpoint, endearing candor, and the rare blend of laughter and wisdom.

He enlightened our deliberations with the flash of his wit and brought them to earth with the soundness of his judgment and he presided over us with humor and dispatch.



Richmond Mayo-Smith '09



Newport House

32 Northampton Road
Formerly Phi Delta Sigma

Dwight Newport, known to more than forty classes of Amherst alumni as “Doc,” came to the College in 1889 as athletic trainer for intercollegiate teams and as instructor in boxing. Many coaches testified that he was “the most skillful person they had seen at bandaging injured limbs,” but his contributions to the life of the College extended well beyond his technical skills. At an anniversary of his service, the President conferred upon Dwight Newport “the degree of character builder and body builder of Amherst men.” He was gifted with “an epigrammatic style of expression,” a dry sense of humor, a fine singing voice, and an impressive knowledge of the Bible. His assistance in finding financial help and work for black students at Amherst was noted by several leading black journals.

Edward Foster Newport, from the Class of 1909, at first assisted and then succeeded his father as trainer for Amherst’s intercollegiate athletes so that together the two men established a tradition of service to the College for seventy-five years. His service also as custodian for the Phi Delta Sigma house won him election as an honorary member of that fraternity and led graduate and undergraduate members to petition that the house be named in his honor.

Their request noted:

As college trainer and house man at Phi Delt for over 50 years, he not only knew the students, but knew them well. . . . He took an interest in all his students, could tell you about their families and achievements. He also knew about their problems, though he did not discuss these except with the students themselves, for some of whom he served as a remarkably effective counselor.



F. Dwight Newport



Plimpton House

82 Lessey Street

Formerly Delta Kappa Sigma

George Arthur Plimpton entered Amherst in 1872 at the age of seventeen, and for the remaining sixty-four years of his life he was “continuously faithful in attendance” upon the interests of this college. He served for forty-one years on the Board of Trustees, for twenty-nine of them as its chairman. He gave much of himself to Amherst. He built a library for his fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon, and installed there a fireplace beside which Sir Isaac Newton had sat. He oversaw the building of the Lord Jeffery Inn and installed there his impressive collection of portraits, letters, and maps from the French and Indian Wars. A publisher of school books, he gathered an unsurpassed collection of such books from around the world and throughout history. “For him they came to represent man’s supreme effort to preserve from generation to generation the continuity of learning . . . the great historical enterprise of mankind.”

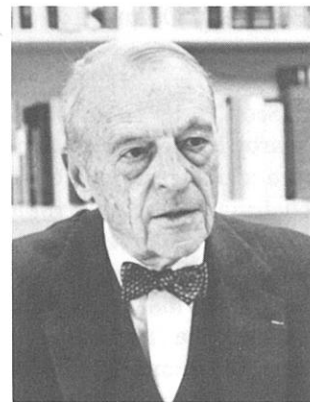
Francis Taylor Pearson Plimpton followed his father to Amherst (and to D.K.E.) in the class of 1922. He also followed his father’s example as a lifetime trustee of Amherst, Exeter, Barnard, and Union Theological Seminary. Francis T. P. Plimpton achieved for himself a remarkably distinguished career in the law and in public service, becoming President of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Chairman of the Board of Ethics of New York City, and Deputy Permanent Rep-

resentative to the United Nations. The Mayor of New York remembered him as “the fairest man I ever knew.” A State Department colleague said, “He was the most honorable man I ever met.” A President of Amherst concluded:

He taught those who serve the College the very meaning of service. What he expected — indeed what he exacted — of those who serve the College, was character. Francis Plimpton’s own character, the public contours of self for all to read, was graceful and strong. He was a splendid, shining man whose example altered the conduct of the many lives whom he touched with his trust.



George A. Plimpton 1876



Francis T. P. Plimpton '22



Porter House

46 Boltwood Avenue
Formerly Delta Upsilon Delta

C. Scott Porter entered Amherst from his home town of nearby Hatfield and made his place in the Class of 1919 as a member of Delta Upsilon and of Sigma Xi, as chairman of the *Amherst Student* and president of Phi Beta Kappa. He returned in 1924 to teach mathematics, but in 1931 he found his true vocation as Dean of the College. In that post he fulfilled simultaneously the duties of the Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Students, and Dean of Financial Aid. Until his death thirty-five years later he continued as Dean of the College, serving under four presidents and initiating three. His faculty colleagues said that "he came to seem a sort of tribal memory, always knowing what had been done before and how it had been done, though very seldom insistent that the precedent had to be followed."

Two years after he began as Dean the student newspaper noted that Scott Porter "gave Amherst men the feeling that the College is a human being, that it respects the hopes and troubles of its students." Thirty-three years later the paper reiterated that judgment and added: "He never made us feel that the problems and questions we brought to him were the same as those a thousand students had raised before. Always we found a person responsive to each of us as individuals."

"A man of towering integrity. A man with a vivid sense of order and propriety. A man who valued excellence. He had, in his life, wasted few words and less time. And he had had a marvelous good time."



Dean C. Scott Porter '19



Seelye House

129 South Pleasant Street

Formerly Psi Upsilon

Julius Hawley Seelye was a member of the Class of 1849 and of Psi Upsilon. He joined the faculty in 1858 as Professor of Moral Philosophy and served as President of Amherst from 1876 to 1890. During the last two years of the Grant administration he was elected as an independent to a term in Congress.

President Seelye guided Amherst's development through the crucial years of transition away from a school primarily for evangelical ministers toward the model of a modern liberal arts college. Himself a devout and remarkably effective Congregational minister, he called upon the college to follow the principles of "Truth and freedom — truth coming from whatever direction, and freedom knowing no bounds but those the truth has set." He gathered a faculty with advanced graduate training in German universities. For students he developed the "Amherst plan" of self-government with a Student Senate to adjudicate issues of discipline and with a revised grading system to reduce undue competitiveness. He defended fraternities "so long as they remain literary societies." He set a style of evolutionary change at Amherst which, under his ministrations, was able to avoid the crisis of challenge to paternalistic presidents experienced at many other New England colleges in that period.

One contemporary said, "The fact is, that President Seelye was one of those large men, large every way, physically, intellectually, morally, and religiously, who

are endowed in large measure with all the faculties proper to man, and can do anything well."



President Julius H. Seelye 1849



Seligman House

67 Northampton Road
Formerly Theta Delta Chi

In his undergraduate years from 1906 to 1910 Eustace Seligman enjoyed his associations in Theta Delta Chi and came to love Amherst College. Amid a life of high professional attainment, notable civic distinction, and truly world-wide philanthropy, he continued to devote astonishing portions of time, thought, and the most conscientious care to promoting the welfare of his alma mater — especially during the three and a half decades he served as Trustee and as a very active Trustee Emeritus. It was the Presidents of Amherst along with his fellow Trustees who came to appreciate in the fullest perspective the quality of his contribution to the college.

One President said simply, "The wisest and most devoted Trustee is Eustace Seligman." Another concluded: "Eustace had the best mind I ever dealt with, the keenest, the quickest, the most logical and, withal, the most judicious, for he never let petty, transient, or personal considerations influence his judgment."

The Board of Trustees itself recorded:

Eustace brought to the Board and the College not only a deep and abiding devotion, but also the benefits of a keen and logical but flexible mind, a high sense of honor and ethics, an ability to weigh fairly both sides of a problem and to arrive at a reasoned conclusion devoid of prejudice and, withal, a great warmth of heart and understanding not only for his colleagues on the Board but also for the many members of the administration, faculty and student body whom, in his quiet way, he sought out and con-

sulted over the years. All became his admirers and friends.

Wise, judicious, patient in discussion, affectionate, he aided greatly in the deliberation of the Board. Constant in his attendance at its meetings and generous of his time and energy, he was truly a great Trustee of the College.



Eustace Seligman '10



Tyler House

35 Tyler Place

Formerly Kappa Theta

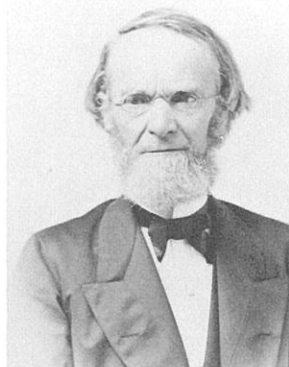
William Seymour Tyler, from the Class of 1830, identified his life with the life of Amherst and with the evangelical purposes of its founders to a degree reached by no other individual. For fifty-eight years he taught Greek with the aim “not only that I make Grecians but scholars, and not only scholars but men, and not only men but Christians.” He knew personally almost every student in the first sixty-five classes. He wrote a massive history of the first half-century of the College. He cared as much for the higher education of women as of men, served for twenty years as President of the Trustees for Mount Holyoke Seminary, and then became the first President of the Trustees for Smith College.

It could not be said of him that he was an attractive man in the classroom for he was brisk in manner, abrupt, and often keenly sarcastic. But he had the rare faculty of being able to illuminate his subject.

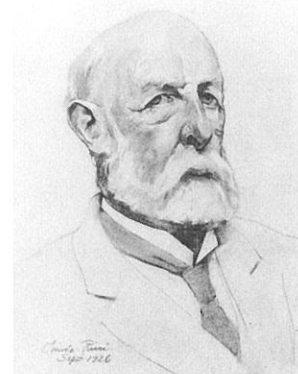
John Mason Tyler, known fondly as “Tip,” from the Class of 1873, taught biology at Amherst for thirty-eight years in an effort to reconcile his excellent scientific training from German universities with the evangelical faith inherited from his father and from his Amherst education. Author of such books as *The Whence and Whither of Man*, and *Man in the Light of Evolution*, he was termed a genius as a teacher because he was “a genius as a friend and a poet in the classroom.” Also interested strongly in the education of women, he served

as Trustee of Smith College and said, “The voice of women is the voice of God.”

“Tip” Tyler was described as “master of the rare art of being unconventional without being undignified; a man who sees deeply enough into life to perceive its humor as well as its sublimity and therefore makes learning interesting and goodness attractive.”



Prof. William S. Tyler 1830



Prof. John M. Tyler 1873

Text prepared by Theodore P. Greene
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