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Jones, Edmund A. – Memories of Dr. Edmund A. Jones

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Memories of Dr. Edmund A. Jones

One exposes himself to being considered trite - in fact, extremely so - if one extols the virtues and characters of those Otterbein professors who charted our perilous courses through the academic seas! After all, hasn't it been done, and properly so, whenever and wherever two or more of her sons and daughters are gathered together? Isn't that one of the heritages, yes, the innate right of each of us when we assume the status of an alumnus!

Perhaps a fresher, more vivid and striking approach might revolve about our individual recollections as to which particular professor remains greenest in our memory. Let us stipulate, to be sure, that the Sanders, Scotts, Millers, Wagners, et al, were all noble men and true and that each of them did exert a substantial influence on our thinking and living after we departed the halls of our Alma Mater. To each of these I acknowledge a deep and eternal debt of gratitude as I chisel out a granite niche in Otterbein's Hall of Fame for Dr. Edmund A. Jones.

Even though the intervening years have rushed down the Corridor of Time at an all-too-breathtaking a pace, my mental image of him still stands out like a keenly-cut cameo. Who could doubt even momentarily whence came this sterling character? Could one be so superfluous after hearing him say: "Do you get the 'idear'?" or "So spake Jevohahar!" The very ruggedness of his native Green Mountains seems to reflect itself in the strength of his being and, surely, if one were to excavate the roots of his family tree, I strongly suspect it would uncover members of Ethan Allen's stalwart band.

Amherst College can proudly raise her head as she proclaims him as one of her renowned sons. In fact she did that very thing on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation. I remember, so well, his telling me of that event, but he put the emphasis on his pride in being one of her sons.

Evidently his scholastic career was interrupted by the Civil War for he served in a New England regiment as a drummer boy. I can fairly picture this youngster's drum beats reverberating through the hills of Confederate country as he pounded out "Marching Through Georgia"!

What a school administrator he must have been in that period he served the community of Massillon as its Superintendent of Schools. How many of the little tots he must have perched upon his knee as he related a funny story, always with a helpful point, or inspired the graduating class to a finer conception of life and the service they could render.

I have heard William Jennings Bryan hold his audiences spellbound as he wove his magic phrases, but Edmund Jones was Bryan's oratorical superior by more than the proverbial eyelash. Who among those of us who have been his auditors shall ever forget his stirring speeches at football rallies when, in the bright glare of the campus bonfire, he exhorted our teams to victory. What American ever delivered more soul-stirring pronouncements on patriotism that made the chills of exhilaration race up and down your spine. What other human being had such a supernatural ability to read a poem once and immediately repeat it verbatim with nary a mistake, regardless of its length. With what pride you were overpowered as you heard him introduced at public meetings as "a member of the Otterbein faculty." I dare say many in the audience who never before had heard the name Otterbein remembered it well after he had spoken. It is my considered opinion that he was the greatest public relations asset Otterbein ever possessed.

One of his greatest personal interests lay in pre-historic Indian mounds. He was a national authority on this subject and the personal friendship that grew up between us began almost the first week of my Freshman year when he learned

I lived not so far from Moundsville, West Virginia, where is located one of the most famous monuments of the mound-builders' art. When he learned that I had played in, on, and around it in my boyhood days, the first stones of a rich friendship were laid.

His classes in history and Bible were paragons of the teaching art. His treatment of historical events were masterpieces and such background facts of the Bible as I possess are preponderantly attributable to my having been his pupil. In some inexplicable manner your absorption of facts in his classes just came about sans effort.

The most romantic memory picture of Westerville that still is as fresh as the dew is that of Dr. Jones escorting his wife down the avenue. She, a petite little lady who ever reminded me of Lavender and Old Lace; he, the proud escort bestowing upon her a courtly attendance and yet in a manner so unostentatious and dignified that you felt, rather than observed, his conduct.

His physical appearance, his attire were the very breath of impeccability. Perhaps a trifle below medium stature, this fact was dimmed by his commanding presence. Springy step, twinkling eyes, a full beard of grey, reminiscent of the Civil War and Robert E. Lee, and trimmed to immaculate neatness were his. Spotless linen, pearl grey derby with a pronounced flatness on top, spiked-tailed grey suit and gleaming black shoes gave him the appearance of an affluent banker. His dignity and bearing made him stand out in any assemblage.

Here's to Dr. Edmund A. Jones - a brilliant and inspiring teacher, a cultured gentleman, a distinguished and outstanding American and, above all, a warm and wise friend.

By: Stanton W. B. Wood