

MAJOR SOL PALMER.

Sketch of a Distinguished Educator and Former Citizen of Marshall.

A telegram from Birmingham Saturday morning to Robt. N. Bell announced the death of President Solomon Palmer of the East Lake Athenaeum. Major Palmer died at 9:26 a. m., May 15, from apoplexy. He was out walking in the lawn of the Athenaeum about 7 o'clock with a party of gentlemen, apparently in his usual health, when suddenly he was stricken about to fall. The gentlemen rushed to his assistance and carried him into the college unconscious. In this state he remained until death ensued within about two hours. It develops since that Major Palmer had already received a warning that paralysis or apoplexy had marked him, but the physicians had deemed it wise not to fully unfold to him the nature of a premonitory shock he had sustained. The diagnosis of the physicians proved correct and apoplexy came as a final summons. Death came peacefully, in the presence of his devoted wife and young children.

President Palmer was fifty-seven years of age and leaves a wife and eight children. The latter are, Lillie, wife of Robt. N. Bell of Guntersville; Sarah, wife of Rev. J. B. Cummings, pastor of the Methodist church at Attalla; Millard, of the U. S. railroad service between Attalla and Guntersville; Misses Maude, Claude, and Laura, members of the Athenaeum faculty; and Misses Lela and India, not grown.

A sketch of Major Palmer's life will be a beacon to guide brightly struggling youths who seek to do honor to their country and a blessing to their race. He was born in the vicinity of Reolap, Blount county in 1839. Being reared on a farm, his early days were devoted to agriculture, under the care of frugal and temperate parents who encouraged him as far as possible with limited means the son who sought an education

as a means to rise in the world and make of himself a good and useful man. After having received what education was then furnished by the public schools of his county until manhood faced him, he determined to go further in the path of learning. To this end he worked hard and saved his money. In time he had enough to pay for a year's schooling at the State University at Tuscaloosa. In order to make his earnings go as far as possible he walked to Tuscaloosa, and there matriculated and received his collegiate education.

He had scarcely finished his studies at the University before the war came. He enlisted with the Nineteenth Alabama as Lieutenant of his home company, and served gallantly through the whole history of carnage. After the battle of Shiloh, in which he was under the intrepid Joe Wheeler, he was promoted for bravery and good service to the rank of Major, and retired with that title and the reputation of having been what was known as a fighting soldier.

At the close of the war Major Palmer returned to his home, afterward coming to Guntersville to locate in the practice of law. Here he was a number of years chairman of the county democratic executive committee, was county superintendent of education, and in 1880 he bought the Democrat, which he conducted with ability until in 1887, when he sold it to the present owner. In 1884 he was made state superintendent of education by the democratic party and again elected until he had served three terms. One term longer than has ever been accorded to any Alabamian, and narrowly missed nomination for the fourth term.

After he retired from the office of state superintendent of education he settled in Birmingham, and, with the hearty aid and co-operation of the East Lake Land Company, organized a school for girls, which was given the name of the East Lake Athenaeum. Plans were called for and submitted, and when a proper one was selected and the contract awarded ground was broken and the first steps taken toward erecting the beautiful structure which will ever stand as a monument to his devotion to the higher education of his race.

The building was completed and the first session began October 7, 1890, under most favorable auspices, and has been more and more successful each year.

Not only was President Palmer deeply interested in his own school, but he took an active interest in all matters pertaining to education. He was a regular attendant at the annual sessions of the National, Southern and Alabama Educational associations. He was a warm advocate of the Hundley amendment to the constitution, and desired much to see it adopted by the state.

At the time of his death he was making extensive preparations for the commencement exercises of the Athenaeum, which were to begin May 29th.

The funeral was held Sunday afternoon at the Athenaeum and the large crowd of distinguished people present gave a practical illustration of the high standing of the deceased.

The grave of its founder and first

president was made in the Athenaeum grounds where a suitable tomb will be reared in his memory. The beautiful Athenaeum building, however, will stand as a fitting memorial to its founder.

The pall bearers were: Our next governor, Capt. Joseph F. Johnston, a long time devoted friend of the deceased; State Sup't. of Education John O. Turner; Sup't. of Birmingham Public Schools J. H. Phillips; Col. Robt. S. Jemison; Dr. J. H. Finch; Prof. S. L. Robertson; Dr. A. W. McGaha, President of Howard College; Prof. I. W. McAdory; Prof. A. J. Waldrop; Capt. W. R. Nutt, and Tax Collector R. G. Hewett.

Rev. Drs. Hosmer, McGaha and Ellis conducted the funeral services in the college chapel.

Rev. J. B. Cummings will take charge of the Athenaeum and attend to all matters pertaining to the college, and will continue the unexpired term until commencement, which event takes place on the 29th.

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