

## WILLIAM WALLACE THAYER

William Wallace Thayer was born upon a farm near Lima, Livingstone County, in the state of New York, July 15, 1827. His father was a farmer, having migrated from Rhode Island to Western New York while that country was a wilderness. He derived his education in the common schools of that state and labored industriously to secure a foundation for the profession he had resolved to enter as a means of livelihood. He read law and was admitted to the bar in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, at Rochester, during the March term of 1851. He located at Buffalo soon after his admission to the bar and associated himself in the practice of law at that place; but after remaining at Buffalo a few months he went to Tonawanda, a town upon the Niagara River, about half way between Buffalo and Niagara Falls, and there opened an office. He remained in Tonawanda ten years, married his wife there - Samantha Vincent - but went back to Buffalo in 1861, and again associated himself with his brother, E. Thayer, in the practice of law. In 1863, however, at the instance of another brother, A. J. Thayer, he migrated to Oregon.

He crossed the plains in coming to Oregon by the former mode of travel; arrived at Corvallis, Benton county, September 13, 1862, where A. J. Thayer resided and was engaged in a mixed business of farming and practicing law. He remained in Benton county until the summer of 1863, when he went to Lewiston, Idaho Territory, where he stayed until 1867. He was a member of the Territorial Legislature of Idaho in the winter of 1866-7. He was elected District Attorney of the Third Judicial District of that Territory in 1866, which position he resigned in 1867, when he removed to Portland, where he again entered upon the active practice of his profession, and where he built up a lucrative and honorable practice.

In 1878, when the Democratic party was casting about for a candidate to succeed Governor Chadwick as the Chief Executive of the state, the name of Hon. W. W. Thayer was proposed and it resulted in his nomination and election. He was inaugurated as Governor September 11, 1878, and at once set about correcting certain abuses of public trust and introducing in all departments under his immediate control much needed reforms. His appointments were made with a view to the fitness of the applicant, and his entire administration was characterized by an economical management of public affairs and an evident desire to make all things subservient to the best interests of the state at large. He was very popular as Governor, being one of those plain, every-day sort of men who are always the same wherever you meet them and having a kindly greeting for all. He took especial pride in the economical management of the Penitentiary, which institution was under his complete control, and in the judicious administration of other state matters he was ably assisted by his associates in office.

In 1884 he was elected a judge of the Supreme Court and served a term of six years in that office, two years of which time under the constitution, he was Chief Justice.

He was married November 11, 1852, to Miss Samantha C. Vincent,

of Tonawanda, New York, their family consisting of one son, a prominent attorney of Tillamook county.

Judge Thayer died October 15, 1899.