

# JOSEPH ANDERSON

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*"His mind reacted in the presence of nearly every subject of thought. Nothing in heaven or earth seemed uninteresting to him. His eager mind ranged easily over an incredible number of fields of knowledge."*

— Rev. Dr. Charles A. Dinsmore

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Anderson admirably filled the role of leading literary man in nineteenth century Waterbury. Born December 16, 1836 in Scotland, he came to America with his parents in 1842 and, in 1854, graduated as valedictorian of the College of the City of New York. He enrolled in the Union Theological Seminary and came to Waterbury to assume the pastorate of the First Congregational Church in 1866.

In addition to serving the Church for thirty years, he was an antiquarian, historian, philologist and writer of poetry and magazine articles. He also wrote numerous short pieces on local history before undertaking the monumental task of editing a new history of Waterbury. The publication of such a work was proposed by the firm of Price, Lee & Co. in order to update Henry Bronson's earlier history published in 1858. Waterbury had experienced a rapid growth since then and there was a wealth of material on all periods of its history awaiting inclusion in an updated history.

Although there were numerous contributors to the history, whose official title is *The Town and City of Waterbury, Connecticut, from the aboriginal period to the year Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-Five*, Dr. Anderson was responsible, either in full or in part, for twenty-seven chapters. Significant portions of this 1896 work were the responsibility of Sarah J. Prichard who wrote the sections on the first hundred years and Anna L. Ward who was in charge of the later period.

More extensive in scope than other town histories at the time, this compilation included many topics not heretofore included, as shown in the chapters on street names, corporations, inventors and their patents, philanthropic institutions and amusements. Another significant inclusion is the one hundred and sixty-six page "Appendix of Family Records" compiled by Katherine Prichard, containing a transcript, with important additions, of the records of the town in relation to births, marriages, and deaths.

Among other works written by Dr. Anderson are *History of the Soldiers' Monument*, *Book of the Riverside Cemetery*, and *The Churches of Mattatuck*. Truly, anyone interested in the history of Waterbury remains in debt to this diligent pursuer of historical records who died August 18, 1916.

