President Jefferson Davis for treason, a position he resigned from before charges against Davis were eventually dropped.

Clifford retired from law in 1867 and went to work as president of the Boston and Providence Railroad. He was an Overseer of Harvard University and President of the Board where he helped induct two presidents of the university; James Walker in 1853 and Charles William Eliot in 1869.

Although he declined many appointments abroad he did accept one as United States Commissioner on the Fisheries under the Arbitration Treaty with Great Britain, one he was unable to fulfill for he died of heart disease in 1876.

George Bemis was born in Watertown, Massachusetts in 1816. He passed the entrance exam to Harvard in 1829 at the age of 13, which he delayed enrollment for three years. He then entered as a sophomore in 1832 and graduated second in his class in 1835. Bemis continued his studies at Harvard Law School under the tutelage of Judge Joseph Story and Professor Simon Greenleaf until 1839 when he was admitted into the Massachusetts Bar.

Mrs. Samuel Ripley, the teacher who prepared him for Harvard said, “that her objection to George Bemis was that he was too perfect.”

Bemis was an advocate for reform of the penal code in Massachusetts, especially laws that allowed a defendant's previous convictions to extend his current sentence. He often represented those undergoing long imprisonments for mischievous crimes and made the subjects of crimes and punishments the object of profound and philosophical study. In 1843, he and George T. Bigelow defended Abner Rodgers, an inmate at the State Penitentiary accused of killing the warden. The case was twice tried in the face of public opinion that was extremely hostile. Bemis argued that Rodgers was insane and not responsible for his actions. Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw issued an opinion that became the American authority on insanity pleas during criminal prosecution.

Bemis was one of the most esteemed lawyers in Boston during the 1850s and developed a profitable law practice while being involved in many famous legal proceedings.

Bemis acted as co-counsel to State Attorney General John H. Clifford in the Parkman-Webster murder case at the behest of the Parkman family for which he was paid $1,500. He also served as a 'quasi' court reporter, eventually publishing what is regarded by many to be the official transcription of the case. When compared with the Stone Report of the trial, especially with regard to Justice Shaw's charge to the jury, it is considered to be heavily edited and some scholars believe 'slanted' to justify the execution of Dr. Webster.

The design of the publication was not for profit but to vindicate the character of our state judiciary — a character which, you will allow me to add, was most severely drawn in question on the other side of the water for the insufficiency of the evidence to justify a conviction of Webster and for the harsh and unwarranted charge of the judge.

George Bemis Papers, Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society