In 1858 Bemis suffered a hemorrhage in his lungs while arguing a case regarding railroads. Subsequently he moved to southern France for the remainder of his life. During this time in Europe, he focused on the study of public law and the law of nations. Between 1864 and 1869, he published a number of pamphlets about American neutrality in response to British positions on these topics. He was never married and died in Nice, France in 1878.

Bemis was a Fellow of the Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society both of which he left $1000 in his will and apologized for being a negligent member. The ‘dutiful son of Harvard College’ also endowed money to create the first professorial position at the law school duly named in his honor, the Bemis Professor of International Law.

Defense Attorneys

Hon. Pliny T. Merrick was born in Brookfield, Massachusetts in 1794. He graduated from Harvard University in 1814 and was admitted to the Bar in 1817 practicing law in Worcester, Charlton, Swansea and Taunton until 1824.

From 1824 through 1843 he served as district attorney of Worcester County, until he was appointed Judge of the Municipal Court in 1844 and then Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1843. He resigned this appointment in 1848, and was later reappointed in 1851.

Merrick was an early promoter of the Anti-Masonic Party; the first “third party” in America. The party lasted only ten years, but had introduced a number of important innovations into American politics such as nominating conventions and party platforms before becoming absorbed into the Whig Party c.1838.