

(Notes on Cornelius Patton written by Mike Zlonis)

Cornelius Howard Patton (1860-1939) was born on Christmas Day in Chicago where his father (William Weston Patton) was minister of the First Congregational Church. Cornelius' great grandfather, Robert Patton, had been postmaster of Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War. His grandfather, William Patton, was the long-time minister of Central Presbyterian Church ("the old Broome Street Church") in New York City. In 1867, Cornelius' father, William Weston Patton, left the First Congregational Church of Chicago and founded the weekly Congregational magazine *Advance*, which soon became the most influential Congregational periodical outside New England and New York. William Weston Patton left the editorship of *Advance* to become president of Howard University in 1874. Howard University had been founded seven years earlier by an act of Congress which came about largely through the efforts of members of the First Congregational Society of Washington to found an institution for the education of African Americans in the liberal arts and sciences (Howard University did not have a black president until Dr. Moredecai Wyatt Johnson assumed the presidency in 1926). Young Cornelius received his preparatory training for college at the Howard University Preparatory Department and the Emerson Institute (now Emerson Preparatory School) in Washington, D.C.. He received a B.A. from Amherst College in 1883 and a B.D. from Yale in 1886. Cornelius married (June 5, 1889) Pauline Whittlesey, whose father, General Eliphalet Whittlesey (Yale: B.A., 1842; M.A., 1847) had been a Congregational minister (Central Congregational Church, Bath, Maine), Civil War officer (Colonel, U.S. Colored Infantry), a founder and faculty member of Howard University, adjutant general of the Freedman's Bureau (1868-1872), and Secretary of the Board of Indian Commissioners (1874-1900). Cornelius Patton was ordained February 16, 1887 at the First Congregational Church, Westfield, New Jersey, where he would serve as minister (1887-1895). In February 1895, Cornelius and Pauline came to Duluth's Pilgrim Congregational Church. Cornelius' lengthy annual reports to the congregation suggest that he was earnest and hard working. He was consistently disappointed by poor attendance at the Sunday evening service. Patton promoted and seemed to take pleasure in an expanded music program under Pilgrim's new "musical" director Arthur Drake. Pauline served as president of the Ladies Union and the Women's Missionary Society. After leaving Pilgrim, Patton was minister of the First Congregational Church St. Louis, Missouri (1898-1904). In 1904, Patton was appointed Home Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston, Massachusetts. Patton donated a major collection of books by and about William Wordsworth to Amherst College. These books constitute most of the Wordsworth Collection in the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. Patton wrote many journal and magazine articles in addition to a number of books. His books include: *The Lure of Africa* (Methodist Book Concern, 1917), 208 pages; *World Facts and America's Responsibility* (New York: Associated Press, 1919), 236 pages; *The Business of Missions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), 290 pages; *Eight O'clock Chapel: A Study of New England College Life in the Eighties* (New York & Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), 345 pages (written with his Amherst classmate Walter Taylor Field); *Foreign Missions Under Fire: Straight Talk with the Critics of Missions* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1928), 180 pages; and *The Amherst Wordsworth Collection: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Amherst: Trustees of Amherst College, 1936) 304 pages. Cornelius Patton served as a member of the Amherst College Board of Trustees from 1905 to 1939.







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