

Alexander Barrow (- 29 Dec 1846)

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989

A Senator from Louisiana, born near Nashville, Tenn., March 27, 1801; attended the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York 1816-1818; studied law; was admitted to the bar in 1822 and commenced practice in Nashville, Tenn.; moved soon afterward to Louisiana and settled in Feliciana Parish and continued the practice of law which he later abandoned to become a planter; member of the State house of representatives for several terms; elected in 1840 as a Whig to the U.S. Senate and served from March 4, 1841 until his death in Baltimore, Maryland, March 29, 1846; chairman, Committee on Public Buildings (27th Congress); Committee on Militia (27th and 28th Congresses); interment in a private cemetery at Afton Villa plantation, near Bayou Sara, Louisiana.

The National Intelligencer, Wednesday, December 30, 1846

IN SENATE



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Mr. Johnson of Louisiana, rose and addressed the Senate as follows:

Mr. President: Louisiana has to mourn the loss of another of her distinguished sons. It is with unfeigned sorrow I announce to the Senate the death of my late friend and colleague, the Hon. Alexander Barrow, who died at Baltimore yesterday morning at 5 o'clock, after a short and violent attack of illness, which would not yield to the best medical skill. All the relief that medical science and skill could accomplish was applied in vain. He left this city on the 24th instant, on a short visit to Baltimore, apparently in perfect health, and I only heard of his illness the day before his death. Indeed, so sudden and unexpected was the shock produced by the annunciation of the sad event yesterday, that I cannot yet hardly realize the fact, and do not feel sufficiently composed to do justice to the memory of the deceased in the few remarks I propose to make. The deep anxiety felt here not

only by the members of both Houses of Congress, but by all classes of the community, when his dangerous situation became known through the Telegraph, is now dispelled by the melancholy gloom spread over the whole city. It is indeed but too true that Alexander Barrow, the pure patriot and enlightened statesman, is no more.

Three years have not passed away since Mr. Barrow announced in appropriate and eloquent terms the death of his late distinguished colleague; and since then it has devolved on me to present the ordinary resolutions as a mark of respect to the memory of two of my colleagues of the House of Congress, and a similar resolution will now be offered on this melancholy occasion. In less than three years two Senators and two Representatives in Congress from the same State have been gathered to their fathers. The death of my late colleague was the most unexpected; for he was not only in the vigor of life, but he possessed a strong constitution.

The ways of Providence are indeed inscrutable. It may with truth be said that "whilst in life we are in death."

Of Mr. Barrow's early history I know but little. He was a native of Tennessee, and was, I am told, about forty five years of age. His family and connections are of the highest respectability, and have

been long distinguished for their talents and patriotism. After having completed his education, Mr. Barrow studied law, and was admitted to the bar in Tennessee; immediately after which, I believe, he removed to Louisiana, where he pursued his profession for some time with success; and, had he remained at the bar would have attained the highest distinction. Being independent in his circumstances and fond of agricultural pursuits, after a few years' practice he retired from the bar and became a successful planter, and has since devoted his attention mainly to the cultivation of the earth.

Mr. Barrow served, however, repeatedly in the Legislature of Louisiana with reputation, and was regarded as a distinguished member; and he received from the people of the State many other proofs of their highest respect and confidence. His election to the Senate of the United States, under circumstances the most flattering, is the best evidence of the high estimation in which he was held by the people of his adopted State, by whom his character and services will ever be held in grateful remembrance. The news of his death will produce throughout the State, as it has produced here, the deepest emotions of sorrow.

Mr. Barrow was distinguished for his bland and courteous manners, for his frank and manly deportment, and for his many generous and noble traits of character. No man, in fact, had more sincere and devoted friends whilst living, and no one has died more lamented. He performed his duties here with zeal and ability, and, at the same time, in the most frank and conciliatory spirit; and I am sure that it is no exaggeration to say that, in his intercourse with his brother Senators, his deportment on all occasions was such as to command the respect and confidence of every member of this body. He has now closed his earthly career, but he has gone, I hope, to a better and happier world.

Although he expired far from his home, and from the cherished partner of his bosom, it must be a source of some consolation to her, and to her orphan children, to learn that he was surrounded at that awful moment by devoted friends, from whom he received every attention which friendship could bestow, and that he died as he had lived, without fear and without reproach, relying upon the mercy of his Redeemer. And what shall be said of their bereavement? There is a silence which is more expressive than language. We forbear, in humble submission to the will of Heaven—in grateful recollection that "He who strikes has power to heal."

The character of the deceased was indeed, sir, of the highest order. As a Senator, a citizen, and a gentleman—indeed, in all the relations of public and private life, he was esteemed and beloved. As a patriot, a firm and uncompromising friend of his country and of her constitution, he had no superior.. Brave, ardent, and chivalrous in his temperament, and devoted to the principles of civil and religious liberty, had he lived in the days of the early struggles for English freedom, he would have bled by the side of Hampden in the field, or died with Sidney on the scaffold. Yet sir—

"His life was gentle
And the elements so mixed in him,
That nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "THIS WAS A MAN."

Additional eulogies by Mr. Benton, Mr. Breese, Mr. Hannegan and resolutions by Mr. Mangum.

The National Intelligencer, Thursday, December 31, 1846

Death of the Hon. Alexander Barrow

A message having been received from the Senate announcing the death of the Hon. Alexander Barrow, Senator from the State of Louisiana--

Mr. Morse, of Louisiana, rose and addressed the House as follows:

Mr. Speaker: The melancholy communication which has just been read, and a request from my colleagues in this House, has devolved upon me the painful duty of arresting the ordinary business of

your body for the purpose of announcing the solemn intelligence that Alexander Barrow, late one of the Senators from the State of Louisiana, is now no more.

Within the past year Death has reaped a golden harvest, and numbers among his victims some of the brightest ornaments of our Commonwealth.

To many of these it has been permitted to give the latest pulsation of their hearts and the last life drop of their blood in defense of their country—to realize the noblest sentiment that can animate the human heart, “How sweet it is to die for our country.” But that death is still more noble when heralded by the shouts of victory, so dearly purchased by their own valor.

Among the many noble sons whose untimely death our common mother now deplures, none, not one, combined in a more enviable form those rare qualities of head and heart which make men love them than did my departed friend.

A native of the State of Tennessee, born within a few miles of the city of Nashville, the first elements of that chivalric character, that noble bearing, that manly form and vigorous constitution, were in part received from early education and discipline at the Military Academy at West Point.

He pursued his legal studies in Tennessee, and there laid the foundation of a thorough acquaintance with English jurisprudence. He removed soon afterwards to the State of Louisiana, and made himself well acquainted with the principles of the civil law, in which he promised to become one of the most distinguished jurisconsults, had not the partiality of his friends and his own inclinations marked out for him another career.

His fine talents, generous impulses, and integrity of character soon won for him the esteem and admiration of an enlightened constituency, who selected him as their representative in the Legislature of his adopted State, and continued their confidence in him by re-electing him as often as was agreeable to his wishes.

The occasional development of talents which, on ordinary subjects, he seemed unwilling or adverse to exhibit, the suavity of his manners in his intercourse with his brother members, and the confidence in the purity of his motives, served still more to increase the admiration of his friends, and extorted homage from his opponents.

In 1840, then not forty years of age, he was elected to a full term in the Senate of the United States, which elevated position he filled in a manner highly honorable to himself and eminently useful to his country.

There was a blunt honesty of purpose and a frank boldness in his manner which, though it might sometimes offend, always commended itself to our respect from the consciousness of its integrity.

He was taken suddenly ill on Friday evening, while on a visit to Baltimore. His disease resisted all the skill and attention which the solicitude of his friends had summoned from Baltimore and Philadelphia, and on Tuesday morning about five o’clock, in the full possession of all his faculties, with a perfect consciousness of his approaching end, with a firmness which marked his whole life, surrounded by numerous friends from both houses of Congress, perished all but the immortal spirit of Alexander Barrow.

Although his disease was so violent in its course that many of his friends scarcely knew of his illness until after its fatal termination, I had the melancholy satisfaction of being with him a few hours before he died. His last moments were occupied with the tenderest and heart-rending allusions to his wife, children, and country.

When these melancholy tidings shall reach his now happy home, who can penetrate, in imagination, that veil of woe that must enshroud his wife and only daughter, but will offer up to the Disposer of all things one prayer that he will “temper the wind to the shorn lamb.”

Two sons, the younger of whom was with him, and the other a student of Harvard College, with his wife and his daughter in Louisiana, constitute all his immediate family. A recommendation to his friends to watch over their education, and be as a father to them, one bitter pang that he could not for the last

time press her to his bosom who had been to him the most devoted wife, were the last of earthly matters that occupied his thoughts. May his children be only worthy of their sire! His friends ask no more.

When I pressed his cold hand for the last time, he returned that grasp with a strength which even disease seemed scarcely to have weakened, and, in a voice of more than usual firmness, said, "I shall never see Louisiana more." No, brave spirit, you will not again revisit the scenes of so many bright and happy years, but your numerous friends need not the presence of that many form, nor the marble nor the canvass, to recall the many kind and delightful associations that will forever be entwined with the name of Alexander Barrow.

Was this dispensation of Providence visited upon us to remind us how frail the tenure of our lives is, the death of our friend forms an impressive lesson.

Among the youngest members of the Senate, blessed with competence, extensive and influential family connections, health and a constitution not impaired or even approached by disease, there was no member of either House who had a more reasonable expectation in looking forward to a long and brilliant career; and, when the summons shall come to all of us, may the consciousness of a well-spent life enable us to meet it like a "Preux Chevalier, sans peur et sans reproche."

The death of Alexander Barrow is the fourth that has occurred, within the brief space of four years, in the small delegation from Louisiana; and true it is "death loves a shining mark" Porter, Bossier, Dawson, Barrow! What four names living can outweigh yours dead? The earth that holds you dead bears not alive four nobler spirits; and, while the mighty Mississippi rolls her tribute to the sea, your memories will live in the hearts of your countrymen.

Followed by resolutions.

The National Intelligencer, Thursday, December 31, 1846

The scene presented in the Senate yesterday on the announcement of the death of Mr. Barrow was more affecting than any similar occasion ever drew forth in either House of Congress. The deep emotion under which each successive Senator paid the earnest tribute of affection and admiration to the shining and winning virtues of the deceased, gave to the eloquence of speech all the touching eloquence of the heart, and moved many an eye to tears; but when at length he who stood amongst the nearest in private friendship to the deceased, and amongst the highest in esteem and attraction himself, and to whose eloquent lips every face turned in deepened anticipation—when he rose, and, with moistened eyes, essayed to speak, but found his own firm heart overpowered and utterance denied to him, every heart melted in painful sympathy.

The funeral will take place this day, according to the following order of arrangements:

The Committee of Arrangements, pall-bearers, and mourners will attend at the room of the Senate, where the body is deposited, at half-past 11 o'clock a.m., at which time the corpse will be removed, in charge of the Committee of Arrangements, attended by the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate, to the Senate Chamber, where Divine service will be performed.

At 12 o'clock the funeral will move from the Senate Chamber to the place of interment, in the following order:

1. The Chaplains of both Houses
2. Physicians who attended the deceased
3. Committee of Arrangements

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| Mr. Mangum | Mr. Speight |
| Mr. Berrien | Mr. Corwin |
| Mr. Huntington | Mr. Cass |

4. Pall-Bearers

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Crittenden | Mr. Archer |
| Mr. Benton | Mr. Sevier |
| Mr. J.M. Clayton | Mr. Johnson, of Md. |

5. The family and friends of the deceased

6. The Senator and Representatives from the State of Louisiana as mourners

7. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate of the United States

8. The Senate of the United States preceded by the Vice President and their Secretary

9. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives

10. The House of Representatives, preceded by their Speaker and Clerk

11. The President of the United States (Polk)

12. The Heads of Departments

13. The Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and its officers

14. The Diplomatic Corps

15. Judges of the United States

16. Officers of the Executive Departments

17. Officers of the Army and Navy

18. The Mayor of Washington (Seaton)

19. Citizens and strangers