

Littleton Purnell Dennis

(21 Jul 1786 – 14 Apr 1834)

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989

A Representative from Maryland; born at "Beverly," Worcester County, Maryland, July 21, 1786; attended Washington Academy, Somerset County, Maryland; was graduated from Yale College in 1803; studied law; was admitted to the bar and practiced; member of the State house of delegates in 1815, 1816 and 1819 - 1827; presidential elector in 1800, 1812, 1816, 1824 and 1828; member of the executive council of Maryland in 1829; an elector of the Maryland State Senate in 1831; elected as a Whig to the 23rd Congress and served from March 4, 1833 until his death in Washington, D.C., April 14, 1834. Interment in the Congressional Cemetery.

Nephew of John Dennis (Representative from Maryland).

The National Intelligencer, Wednesday, April 16, 1834

In the Senate

A message was received from the House of Representatives by Walter B. Franklin, Esq. their clerk, notifying the Senate of the death of the Hon. Littleton Purnell Dennis, late a member of the House, from the State of Maryland, and that his funeral would take place from the Hall of the House of Representatives tomorrow at 12 o'clock.

The message having been read, Mr. Kent, of Maryland rose and said -- Mr. President: The message which has just been read, announces to you, and to the Senate, the death of the late Mr. Dennis, one of the Representatives from the State of Maryland, in the other branch of Congress. Already, Mr. President, our feelings have been repeatedly agonized by the sudden death of several of our associates, in the legislative labors of the session, and the one that has just been made known to us is little less sudden than those that have preceded it.

But a few days since, and the deceased was busily engaged in the attentive discharge of the duties of his station, and he is now numbered with the dead. He is gone to "that bourne from whence no traveler returns." Truly has it been said, "in the midst of life we are in death." The deceased was a native of Somerset County, in Md., a prominent member of a highly respectable family, in the 50th year of his age, and although of a delicate constitution, was justifiable in looking forward yet to many years of usefulness and happiness. He was a member of the Bar, justly esteemed in his profession, and always in possession of the confidence of his countrymen. His modest, unassuming, and retiring habits, could not conceal from them his good sense, and high attainments; and early in life he was returned a delegate to the General Assembly of Maryland, and has been continued in the discharge of his legislative labors, with but little interruption to the period of his decease.

Mr. Kent then submitted the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted;

Resolved, unanimously, That the Senate will attend the funeral of the Hon. Littleton P. Dennis, late a member of the House of Representatives, from the State of Maryland, at the hour of 12 o'clock tomorrow; and, as a testimony of respect for the memory of the deceased, they will go into mourning by wearing crape round the left arm for thirty days.

On motion of Mr. Kent, the Senate then adjourned.

In the House

The Journal of yesterday's Proceedings having been read, on the opening of the House--Mr. Stoddert, of Maryland, rose, and addressed the House as follows:

Mr. Speaker: In announcing the death of Littleton Purnell Dennis, a Representative on this floor from the State of Maryland, I discharge a sad and solemn duty. Not a week has elapsed since he mingled in the deliberations, and cooperated in the active duties of this House; he now sleeps the sleep of death. What an impressive illustration of the instability of human life -- "of what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue." The deceased stood to me, sir, in the double relation of colleague and friend. I knew him long and well. He was a useful, benevolent, and estimable man, and has finished his course in honor. He was no tame and ordinary character; and although his modesty may have delayed the development of his faculties for public service, during his brief connection with this House, his State is not left without proofs of his legislative prudence and skill. He served her in both branches of her Legislature for many years, with honor and ability. He was well gifted by nature, well educated, and well principled. His native sagacity, sound judgment and decision, and purity of purpose, made him what he was, a capable and honest public agent. The brave, generous, open, and manly qualities of his nature secured him the confidence and affections of the people among whom he lived, and made it their delight to honor him. He is gone hence, sir, but his memory will survive, embalmed in the kindly regards of those who knew and appreciated his noble and manly qualities, and unembittered and untarnished by a single act of meanness, injustice and oppression. He died, as he had lived, deserving and possessing the warm-hearted esteem of many, the ill-will of none. As the last act of respectful duty which it remains for friendship to perform, I move you, sir, the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Members of this House will attend the funeral of the late Littleton Purnell Dennis, at 12 o'clock, tomorrow.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to take order for superintending the Funeral of Littleton Purnell Dennis, deceased, late a Member of this House from the State of Maryland.

Resolved, That the members of this House will testify their respect to the memory of Littleton Purnell Dennis, by wearing crape on the left arm for thirty days.

Ordered, That a message be sent to the Senate to notify that body of the death of Littleton P. Dennis, late one of the Representatives from the State of Maryland, and that his funeral will take place tomorrow, at twelve o'clock, from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The above resolutions and order were unanimously adopted, and then The House adjourned.

The National Intelligencer, Thursday, April 17, 1834

The funeral of the late Hon. Littleton P. Dennis, one of the Representatives in Congress from Maryland, was attended by both Houses of Congress yesterday at the appointed hour. In consequence of this melancholy engagement, neither House transacted business yesterday.