

## Jonathan Elliott

(1784 – 12 Mar 1846)

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**Elliott.** On Thursday afternoon, at half past four o'clock, Jonathan Elliot, Esq., in the 62d year of his age, and for more than thirty years a resident of this city. His funeral will take place this day (Friday) at 4 o'clock p.m., from his late residence on Capitol Hill, (formerly James Greenleaf's,) corner of 2d street east and C street north, where his friends and acquaintances are invited to attend without further notice.

Mr. Elliot was born near Carlisle, England in the year 1784 and came to New York about the year 1802, where he commenced the business of book printing. In 1810 he left New York to take part in the revolutionary movement at Caracas, to establish the independence of New Grenada, and was in several engagements under Bolivar, in one of which he was severely wounded. He was taken prisoner when General Miranda surrendered in 1812, and suffered many hardships. He was finally liberated and returned to the United States in 1813: he then served in the American army in the late war. In 1814 he became a permanent resident of the city of Washington, and during thirteen years, edited the Washington Gazette with much ability.

Mr. Elliott is principally known to the public as the author of "The American Diplomatic Code," "Debates on the Adoption of the Constitution," "The Comparative Tariffs," "Funding System of the United States," "Statistics of the United States," etc.

In private life he was frank, generous, and warm hearted, an affectionate father, and a kind husband. W.

### Diary of John Silva Meehan

*(at Library of Congress, Manuscript Division)*

#### March 12, 1846:

Jonathan Elliott, an old citizen of Washington died this afternoon at 4 1/2 o'clock. He had been confined nearly two months by various maladies and died a penitent. Twenty years ago the first of last month, I purchased from him the "Washington City Gazette" with all the printing materials connected with that establishment and issued instead of it "The United States Telegraph" which I soon afterwards sold to General Duff Green.

#### March 13, 1846:

The remains of Jonathan Elliott were buried this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

**Will of Jonathan Elliot, of City of Washington, D.C.** (dtd. Feb. 1, 1846, probated March 17, 1846; Book 6, pp. 82-84; O.S. 2634; Box 18)

To wife Elizabeth Elliot, the house in which I now live, with all appurtenances; all furniture and books; north half of Lot 7 in Square 507; quantity of lots from 1 to 10 in Square 724; lots 9 to 30 in same square; after her death to sons Robert and John Elliot.

Wits.: William H. Ball; John Kedglie; Charles E. Ball

Codicil, Feb. 4, 1846; Henry Elliot and Elizabeth Elliot joint authorized to transact any business relating to collecting of debts.

*Biography, by Ann Frances Gray Benson, daughter of Elizabeth Elliot Chase Gray,  
Silver Spring, Maryland*

## **Jonathan Elliot**

### **Publisher**

Jonathan Elliot was born near Carlisle, England, in 1784 and came to New York about 1802, where he worked as a printer. His brothers William and Seth also located in New York for a time and they too engaged in printing.

When a movement for independence gained momentum in Venezuela, General Francisco Miranda persuaded two New York merchants to furnish him vessels, supplies and munitions and gathered an expedition of Americans and others to help him free his native land. Jonathan Elliot was one who responded. In 1810 he left New York to join in the struggle under General Miranda. He fought in several engagements, suffered a severe wound, and was taken prisoner when General Miranda surrendered. After experiencing many hardships, he was released and returned to the United States in 1813. The struggle for independence continued under the leadership of Simon Bolivar, regarded as the George Washington of South America. In 1814 Jonathan was back in Washington. By August of that year he and his brothers were again engaged in printing when the British invaded and burned many public buildings in Washington. William's home at 222 North Capitol Street was ransacked by the British. It was in the shadow of the burning Capitol Building and adjacent to the house built by George Washington in the same block.

Publication of the Elliots' paper, the Washington Gazette, was suspended shortly after the British invasion. In November 1815 the paper was revived as The Washington City Weekly Gazette, with Jonathan Elliot as publisher and editor. In 1817 the journal, now the City of Washington Gazette, became a daily.

Elliot is known chiefly for his publication of Debates, Resolutions and Other Proceedings in Convention on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, published in 1827. Three more volumes were published between 1827 and 1830. In 1836 a second edition was published, "much enlarged and improved." Nine years later he added a fifth volume including Madison's notes of debates in the Federal Convention. "Elliot's Debates" was for many years one of the most valuable collections relating to the Constitution. Elliot also published "The Diplomatic Code of the United States;" "Floral Columbianae" compiled by J.A. Brereton; and in 1830 a work of his own, "Historical Sketches of the Ten Miles Square Forming the District of Columbia" which is a 500-page compilation, including descriptions of the flora and fauna in the District, paragraphs describing a number of the mansions in the area, i.e., Arlington House, General Van Ness's Mansion, Meridian Hill, Mason's Island, Hayes' Manor, and the Calvert Mansion in Riverdale, Maryland. Also in this guide book are the names of all the members of the 21st Congress, (David Crockett of Tennessee appears in the list.) And statistics of deaths in 1829 in the District, wherein teething is given as cause of death for 7 infants.

Jonathan Elliot's last publication in 1845 was the "Funding System of the United States and Great Britain."

The mother of Jonathan and his brothers, who made her home in the United States with her sons, died in 1820, and is buried in Congressional Cemetery, Range 32, Site 21.

Jonathan was married twice, first to Brigit, who came from Ireland. It is said that they met on shipboard. They had two sons, Jonathan, Jr., and Henry, who became a lawyer in New Orleans. Brigit died and was buried in Congressional Cemetery, September 22, 1831, Range 31, Site 17.

Jonathan's second wife was Elizabeth King, daughter of Harry King of Richmond County, Virginia. Their first son Thomas was born in 1836 and died at nine years, in 1845. Their second son was Robert Kerr Elliot (1839-1885). Their third son was John Milton Elliot (1843-1896).

Jonathan died in March of 1846 after suffering with inflammatory rheumatism. His funeral took place at his residence at 2nd Street East and C Street North (formerly John Greenleaf's Corner) with

burial in Congressional Cemetery Range 31, Site 5. His widow, Elizabeth, was left with her two small boys, Robert, seven, and John, three. The two older sons of Jonathan, Jonathan, Jr., and Henry, were probably young adults in 1846. In her later years Elizabeth made her home with her son Robert's family at Melrose, in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Robert Kerr Elliot married Emily Teresa Lake of Falmouth, England. Robert practiced law in Washington and had property and a home in Hyattsville, Maryland. The first child of Robert and Emily was young Robert, who died at 2 years of age, and is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, as is Robert K. Elliot. Roberta, their daughter, was born in 1872. She grew to adulthood, married and had a number of children. For some years after Robert K.'s death in 1885, his widow, Emily, operated a rooming house for young women at 1400 L Street, N.W. About the turn of the century, Emily, her daughter and son-in-law left the United States to live in Dublin, Ireland.

John Milton Elliot my great-grandfather and third son of Jonathan and Elizabeth Elliot, married Josephine (Josie) Harrison of Maysville, Kentucky, daughter of Robert and Diana Harrison, in 1864. Their children were: Inez Elliot Chase - my grandmother, Bessie Elliot Anderson, Thomas Harrison Elliot, Edith Rives Elliot Chapman, Robert King Elliot, and Jenny, who died at 2 years. John M. and Josephine Elliot made their home in the Washington, D.C. area as have four more generations of descendants of Jonathan and Elizabeth Elliot.