

Hubbard Bowyer McDonald

(Mar 1850 – 2 Mar 1907)

McDonald. On Saturday, March 2, 1907 at 5:45 p.m., H. Bowyer McDonald, chief clerk, U.S. Senate at the Bachelor on H street northwest. Funeral services at St. John's Church on Monday, March 4 at 2 o'clock. Interment private.

The Evening Star, March 3, 1907, p. 2

H.B. McDonald Dead

For Years Senate's Chief Clerk and Parliamentarian

His Demise Unexpected

His Position Had in Turn Been Held by Father and Grandfather

Cycle of One Hundred Years

Funeral Arrangements are not Complete, but Services to Be Held Tomorrow



Hubbard Bowyer McDonald, chief clerk and parliamentarian of the United States Senate, died at the Bachelor Apartment House, 17th and H streets northwest, at 6 o'clock last night of cancer of the liver. Until two months ago he was in apparently robust health; two weeks ago his condition became serious. He began to sink yesterday morning and was unconscious several hours before death came. His son and only child, Donald McDonald of New York, was at his bedside.

Although the final arrangements have not yet been decided upon, Donald McDonald stated last night that his father would be buried from St. John's Episcopal Church tomorrow afternoon, interment to be at Rock Creek cemetery. Mr. McDonald's wife is in New York. His sister, Mrs. Sinclair, and his brother, William J. McDonald, both reside in Washington.

Early in January Mr. McDonald complained of pains in his shoulders and limbs, which, he stated, were rheumatic in character.

They became so acute that he obtained a leave of absence from the Capitol and went to Hot Springs, Ark., upon the advice of friends, to get the benefit of the baths. He remained at that resort several weeks, but instead of improving his condition grew worse, and he returned to Washington February 15. He was then attended by his family physician, Dr. Ralph Walsh, and his illness was diagnosed as a cancer of the liver, which finally proved fatal.

His Sufferings Intense

According to a statement made by his son last night, Mr. McDonald suffered intense agony almost every moment up to within a few hours before death claimed him. "Those last few hours," said Donald McDonald, "must have been pleasant ones to my father, as the expression of suffering and pain passed from his face as he lay unconscious, his life rapidly ebbing away. When he died there was a slight trace of a smile about his mouth."

Mr. McDonald was regarded as an authority on parliamentary law and on practices of the Senate and was appointed March 4, 1873, to the position which he held at the time of his death. He was born in Washington in 1854, and after several years of instruction by a private tutor was graduated from Georgetown University. He was married in 1874.

The position of chief clerk and parliamentarian of the Senate which Mr. McDonald held was also held by his father and grandfather. Among some of Mr. McDonald's most treasured papers were those containing requests from prominent senators, including Daniel Webster, Stephen A. Douglas and Thomas H. Benton, for the appointment of his father to the place to which Mr. McDonald succeeded.

His grandfather, John Gunn McDonald, was a prominent man in his time and was in high favor with the national leaders and prominent senators in the early part of the nineteenth century.

When he died a paper was passed around the Senate requesting the appointment of his son, Andrew McDonald, Hubbard McDonald's father, to the position. The appointment was made upon the earnest solicitation of twenty-eight senators, being more than half of the members who composed the Senate at that time. Among his effects Mr. McDonald has the letter which was written by Mr. Benton and signed by the senators alluded to, with their various recommendations, urging his father's appointment. He looked upon the paper as interesting and valuable, because of the aggregation of signatures of the most prominent men in public life at that time. His father died in office after a service of nearly forty-two years.

His Own Appointment

Speaking of his appointment some time ago Mr. McDonald said:

"My own position was created at the request of my father, although I was a trifle young, and I was assigned to duty March 4, 1873. I was appointed a journal clerk in 1878 under a political change of administration of the Senate, but was superseded by my predecessor in 1883, who was reappointed to that office, but died March 12, 1898, and I was again appointed journal clerk."

Mr. McDonald's mother was a Miss Ann Johnson, daughter of Thomas Johnson, nephew and secretary of Thomas Johnson, an early colonial governor of Maryland. She was born at Annapolis in 1787, and died in 1881.

As chief clerk and parliamentarian of the Senate it was Mr. McDonald's pleasure and duty to break in President Roosevelt when he was Vice President. Referring to this experience, Mr. McDonald once stated that Mr. Roosevelt was one of the most obdurate of all the Vice Presidents that it had been his fortune to coach. Mr. Roosevelt was a man, he said, of the most decided opinions, and was at first wont to pay but little heed to the early precedents in parliamentary practice.

Had Mr. McDonald lived another year he would have completed the cycle of one century during which he, his father and his grandfather were in the service of the United States Senate.

Death Unexpected

The news of his death came as an especial shock to his many friends because until his late illness he was a man of fine physique and athletic build. At one time he was a great lover of outdoor sports, but in these he had not indulged in recent years.

Mr. McDonald was a member of the Metropolitan Club and was prominent in social circles.

The New York Times, March 3, 1907, p. 7

Senate Clerk Dead

H.B. McDonald's Father and Grandfather Had Held the Same Office

Special to The New York Times

Washington, March 2 -

H. Bowyer McDonald, chief clerk in the office of the Secretary of the Senate, died here today. He was taken sick two months ago with liver complaint and went to Hot Springs. He came back worse than when he went away, and grew gradually weaker.

Mr. McDonald was born March 4, 1850, and was educated at Georgetown University. His funeral will take place on the fifty-seventh anniversary of his birth.

Mr. McDonald had been preceded in his office by his father and grandfather.

The Evening Star, March 5, 1907, p. 16

Last Rites Over Dead

Funeral of H.B. McDonald From St. John's Church

The funeral of Mr. H. Bowyer McDonald, for many years chief clerk and parliamentarian of the Senate, took place from St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock. The gathering, which was a large one, was composed of many of the men prominent in the capital of the nation and who had known and esteemed Mr. McDonald during his life. Rev. Dr. Roland Cotton Smith, rector of St. John's Church, conducted the services, which consisted of the simple and impressive Episcopal ritual for the dead. The pallbearers were chosen from among the close friends of the deceased, and were as follows: Mr. Robert Hinkley, Mr. Henry M. Rose, Mr. Benjamin S. Platt, Mr. Henry H. Gilfry, Mr. A.A. Chapin, Mr. Frank Moss, Mr. Charles McPhie, Mr. Robert Shepherd, Mr. Justice Day, Mr. Kemp Duvall and Col. Wright. The interment was in Congressional cemetery.

The deceased came of a line of distinguished ancestry, as previously stated in *The Star*, his grandfather, John Gunn McDonald, having been prominent in the political world in his day. While in the employ of the Senate Mr. McDonald became acquainted with many distinguished men. He had among his papers written requests from Daniel Webster, Thomas H. Benton and Stephen A. Douglas, asking the appointment of Mr. McDonald's father to the position in the Senate, to which his son afterward succeeded. The elder McDonald served over forty years in the position, in turn succeeding his father, and the three rounding out a cycle of nearly one hundred years in the office.