

## William Taylor

(5 Apr 1788 – 17 Jan 1846)

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### *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989*

A Representative from Virginia; born in Alexandria, Va. (then included in the District of Columbia) April 5, 1788; completed preparatory studies; studied law; was admitted to the bar and commenced practice in Staunton, Va.; moved to Lexington, Va. in 1813; became a member of the bar; Commonwealth attorney for the county court of Rockbridge 1817-1843; Commonwealth attorney for the circuit court of Pocahontas County 1817-1843; member of the house of delegates in 1821; elected as a Democrat to the 28th and 29th Congresses and served from March 4, 1843 until his death in Washington, D.C., January 17, 1846; interment in the Congressional Cemetery.

### *The National Intelligencer, Monday, January 19, 1846*

It has become our melancholy duty to announce the death of the Hon. William Taylor, a Representative in Congress from the State of Virginia. He died suddenly at his lodgings in this city on Saturday morning last, about 4 o'clock, mourned by his afflicted family, and sincerely lamented by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance; for he commanded the esteem of all who knew him by his estimable personal qualities, and by the purity and integrity of his character. A faithful sketch of that character, and an eloquent and touching tribute to his memory, pronounced by one of his colleagues in the House of Representatives on Saturday, will be found in another column.

The following are the arrangements which have been ordered by the Committee of the House for the funeral of the deceased:

#### *Order of Procession*

#### *For the Funeral of the*

*Hon. William Taylor,*

#### *A Representative in Congress from the State of Virginia*

The Committee of Arrangements, pall-bearers, and mourners, will attend at the residence of the Hon. Thomas H. Benton, at 11-1/2 o'clock a.m., on Monday, at which time the corpse will be removed in charge of the Committee of Arrangements, attended by the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives, to the Hall of the House.

At 12-1/2 o'clock p.m. funeral service will be performed in the Hall of the House of Representatives and immediately thereafter the procession will move to the Congressional Burial Ground, in the following order:

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

Mr. Dromgoole, of Virginia

Mr. Dunlap, of Maine

Mr. McKay, of N. Carolina

Mr. Abbott, of Mass.

Mr. Hungerford, of N.Y.

Mr. Vance, of Ohio

Mr. King, of Georgia

4. Pall-bearers:

Mr. Arnold, of R.I.

C

O

Mr. Black, of S. Car.

Mr. Sykes of N.Y.	R	Mr. Martin, of Tenn.
Mr. Ritter, of Penn.	P	Mr. Houston, of Ala.
Mr. Chapman, of Md.	S	Mr. Born, of Kentucky
	E	

5. The family and friends of the deceased
6. The Senators and Representatives from the State of Virginia, as mourners
7. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives
8. The House of Representatives of the United States, preceded by their Speaker and Clerk
9. The other officers of the House of Representatives
10. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate
11. The Senate, preceded by their President and Secretary
12. The other officers of the Senate
13. The President of the United States (Polk)
14. The Heads of Departments
15. The Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States and its officers
16. The Diplomatic Corps
17. The Comptrollers, Auditors, and other Heads of Bureaus of the several Departments of the Government with their officers
18. Officers of the Army and Navy at the seat of Government
19. The Mayor of Washington (Seaton)
20. Citizens and Strangers

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### **Death of Hon. Wm. Taylor**

Mr. Dromgoole rose and addressed the House as follows: Mr. Speaker, to me, sir, has this day been assigned the melancholy duty of making, the solemn announcement to this House that death is in our midst. William Taylor, a Representative in Congress from the State of Virginia, is no more. He died at his own chambers in this city this morning at 4 o'clock.

The brief time which has elapsed since his decease has not allowed me an opportunity of ascertaining the circumstances attending that event. Since he reached Washington, at the commencement of our session, he has labored under constant indisposition. A general debility pervaded his physical frame; and this morning he suddenly expired. He sunk suddenly, and in a moment life was extinct. Without a murmur, without a sigh, he sank to rest--evincing, at his departure from this world, a calm composure, a quiet resignation, which admirably corresponded with the smooth progress of his previous life.

He was born in Alexandria, in this District. In early life he removed to the Valley of Virginia; and, having married, located himself in Rockbridge country, where he has ever since resided. Blest in his domestic relations, happiness and contentment have been his good fortune.

If, sir, his life has been marked by no extraordinary incidents, that fact constitutes an encomium on the moral beauty of his character. Although a well-educated lawyer, and highly reputable member of the bar, he manifested no restless eagerness for distinction, and suffered not the prompting of worldly ambition to disturb the evenness of his temper and betray him into uncongenial controversy. Remarkable throughout life for his uninterrupted equanimity, nevertheless he was, in his public capacity, firm and decided in his opinions; and in the conscientious discharge of his duties he was inflexibly upright.

Justice and integrity characterized his entire intercourse with his fellow men. Honor in its best sense regulated his conduct.

Whether contemplated in the faithful discharge of his public duties or in his fair and honorable intercourse with his fellow men, or as an exemplary husband and father, reposing in tranquil happiness by his own fireside, in company with an affectionate wife and children--in whatever scene, or under whatever aspect we may examine the character of my departed colleague, he will be emphatically pronounced, in the most dignified and refined definition of the term, a gentleman.

Such sir, was the man who, in the wise dispensation of an inscrutable Providence, has been removed from his country and his family before he had attained an old age.

Of the grief of his bereaved companion, and his now fatherless children, it does not become me to attempt a description. Into that private and sacred scene of mourning I will not, even by imagination, intrude.

If earthly consolation can alleviate their distress, some portion of it may, perhaps, be derived from the reflection that he was universally esteemed and beloved by his acquaintances, and that all his colleagues, in the highest degree, respected and loved him, and mourn his loss as that of a brother.

But, sir, at last, the highest source of comfort, and consequent resignation to their bereavement, will be derived from their Christian belief that the ways of God, however inexplicable to the finite wisdom of man, are just; and from the Christian hope that a world of sin and sorrow and temptation has been exchanged for one of immortal bliss.

Mr. D. concluded by offering the following resolutions which were adopted:

Resolved, That this House has heard with deep emotion the annunciation of the death of the Hon. William Taylor, a member from the State of Virginia.

Resolved, That this House tenders to the relatives of the deceased the expression of its sympathy on this affecting event, and, as a testimony of respect for the memory of the deceased; the members and officers of the House will go into mourning by wearing crape on the left arm for thirty days.

Resolved, That the members and officers of the House will attend the funeral of the Hon. William Taylor, deceased, on Monday next, at half-past 12 o'clock p.m.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed for superintending the funeral of the deceased,

Ordered, That a message be sent to the Senate to notify that body of the death of Hon. William Taylor, late one of the Representatives from the State of Virginia, that his funeral will take place from the Hall of the House on Monday next, at half-past 12 o'clock p.m., and that the Senate be invited to attend the same.

Resolved, That, as a further mark of respect for the memory of the deceased, this House do now adjourn.

The resolutions were read, and agreed to unanimously, and Mr. Dromgoole, of Virginia, Mr. Dunlap, of Maine, Mr. McKay, of North Carolina, Mr. Abbott, of Massachusetts, Mr. Hungerford, of New York, Mr. Vance, of Ohio, and Mr. King, of Georgia, were appointed the committee for superintending the funeral.

And the House adjourned until Monday, 12 o'clock.

*The National Intelligencer, January 20, 1846*

### **Obsequies of the Late Hon. Wm. Taylor**

The Funeral took place in the Hall of the House of Representatives yesterday, with impressive solemnity. Besides the presence of the Members of that House and of the Senate, the President of the United States (Polk), the Heads of Departments, the Chief and other Officers of the Army, and various Officials were present, and the galleries were crowded by spectators of both sexes. The religious ceremonies were conducted by the Chaplains of the two Houses: the Rev. Mr. Milburn addressing the throne of grace in a fervent and appropriate prayer and the Rev. Mr. Tuston following in an impressive

discourse on the enviable character of the deceased, and on the solemn admonition conveyed to all his surviving associates and friends by the suddenness of his summons to another world.

No business was of course transacted yesterday in either House of Congress.

*Diary of John Silva Meehan*

(at Library of Congress, Manuscript Division)

January 19, 1846:

The Hon. William Taylor, a Representative in Congress from Virginia was buried in the Congressional burying ground today. He died at 4 o'clock on Saturday morning. His death was quite unexpected where it occurred. He took a heavy cold on board a canal boat on his way from the western part of the State to Richmond and came here quite unwell. He had been confined to his bed here for some time but was so far recovered from sickness as to occupy his seat in the House of Representatives on the 14th inst. His death is greatly lamented by a large circle of relations and friends, to whom he was much endeared by his private and political virtues.