

## Zachary Taylor

(24 Nov 1784 – 9 Jul 1850)

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*The National Intelligencer, Tuesday, July 9, 1850*

**The President's Health** It being generally known that President Taylor has been much indisposed for two or three days past, great anxiety was excited yesterday by information, which spread through the city, that his illness had assumed a very serious and critical aspect. This was really the case, we learn, during the greater part of the day. In the afternoon, however, the symptoms became less menacing.

His illness commenced on Friday last, with an attack of cholera morbus, which appeared to yield to medical treatment, but it afterwards assumed a different and more threatening type.

The following bulletin indicates his condition at ten o'clock last night:

"The President is laboring under a bilious remittent fever, following an attack of severe cholera morbus, and is considered by his physicians seriously ill.

*The National Intelligencer, Wednesday, July 10, 1850*

Weep, fellow-citizens! The hand of Death has stricken down a great and good man! Zachary Taylor, our honored and beloved President, is no more! A malignant and rapid disease has swept him from among the living. No longer ago than Thursday last, he was apparently in the full enjoyment of health and strength, participating in the patriotic ceremonies of our Nation's Birthday, and now he is numbered with the dead! He expired last night, at half-past 10 o'clock, surrounded by his afflicted family. He died with the composure which conscious virtue, fortitude, and confidence in the goodness of God can alone impart. His last intelligible words were: "I am not afraid to die; I have done my duty; my only regret is leaving those who are dear to me."

In all this wide land there is not a heart which honors the noblest attributes of our nature--truth, bravery, humanity, patriotism--that will not throb with pain and grief at this national bereavement.

"He was a noble gentleman:

"This general voice

"Sounds him for courtesy, behavior truth,

"And every fair demeanor an example.

"Titles of honor add not to his fame,

"Who was himself an honor to the title."

*The National Intelligencer, Monday, July 15, 1850*

### The Funeral

Can this be death? Then what is life or death?

'Speak!'—but he spoke not: 'Wake!'—but still he slept.

But yesterday, and who had mightier breath?

A thousand warriors by his word were kept.

In awe; he said, as the Centurion saith,

'Go,' and he goeth; 'come,' and forth he stepped.

The trump and bugle till he spake were dumb;

And now naught left him but the muffled drum.

When it became our melancholy duty, nine years ago, to record some account of the obsequies of the lamented Harrison, we little thought that during our brief remaining term of life, it would ever certainly not so soon, be our lot to repeat the tale of another Presidential Funeral. But that mysterious roll of

human fate, written in Heaven, but slowly unfolded, line after line, by the unerring hand of Time, has many things in reserve for us all, of which we little dream; and nations, like individuals, are sometimes shocked by the advent of calamities as sudden and unlooked-for as they are great. Such an event has befallen this youthful Republic; and no stranger who beheld this city during the last few days could doubt that some great and appalling stroke had fallen upon the community. The silent streets—the public offices, and even the private dwellings, shrouded in mourning—the national colors, wherever visible, displayed at half-mast, all told the story to the eye; while the looks of the people, the pause in public business, the rapid arrival of strangers, the groups collected in earnest conversation, or intent on public prints bearing their well-known badges of mourning, still more unfailingly impressed the fact upon the heart.

During the after part of Friday, the stream of people might be observed directing itself toward the Presidential mansion, while those who left it carried in their countenances an unusual gloom, and in their hands a leaf, a flower, a withered branch, to be treasured up as a memorial consecrated by its having once rested on the bier of Zachary Taylor. The body of the deceased President was on that day placed in the great East Room of the Executive Mansion, on an elevated platform in its center, under a canopy of black, being deposited in a coffin covered on the outside with black velvet and draperies of silver, and lined within with velvet, also, but of the purest white. The shroud was of satin, and a white cravat was gracefully thrown around the neck. The countenance there exposed was one not to be passed over with a slight or transient gaze. It fixed every eye. It had three things impressively written upon it: uprightness, benevolence, and peace. The face looked just as in life: frank, manly, simple, kind, with almost a smile about the mouth. On the coffin lay a profuse quantity of flowers and buds, which were continually being removed by the crowds who gathered from all quarters to contemplate the spectacle and were as often renewed.

The Funeral was appointed for Saturday. The weather was cool, and the morning opened with a clear sky and a welcome breeze, both continuing throughout the day. Funeral salutes were fired at sunrise; all stores were closed; and very soon the sound of the drum was heard—the military were in motion, and the streets began to be thronged with horsemen and vehicles of all descriptions. The lines of railroad brought such trains of cars as are seldom witnessed for number, and all densely crowded. The city resembled some hive, alarmed and astir for a general move; and yet, with all the hustle and movement, there was mingled a prevailing quietness, a chastened abstaining from all tumultuous noise, which reminded one of the Sabbath.

The troops hastened to their appointed rendezvous, the various civic associations to their respective halls of meeting: while the whole population with a countless addition of strangers from all the adjacent States of the Union, grouped themselves at the intersections of streets with the main avenue or at the open windows of houses where the procession was to pass. From these latter the sashes were in many cases removed, and story above story, clustering heads, with eager look, were peering out upon the scene. In some places the very roofs were almost literally filled with human heads. It is estimated that no less than a hundred thousand human beings were concentrated in this city on that memorable day. The avenue itself (we mean of course Pennsylvania avenue) was, by the activity of Marshals, posted from point to point along its whole length, kept entirely clear of all vehicles and horsemen but such as formed a part of the funeral cavalcade.

#### THE FUNERAL SERVICE

Never has it been our lot to be present at any scene of such solemnity and dignity as that which the East Room of the Presidential Mansion offered on this occasion. Her lay in state the venerated dead and here the last ceremonies of the Church were appointed to be performed. Beneath the capacious sable canopy the mortal remains of Gen. Taylor lay confined, and around those remains were clustered a host of the distinguished living. At the foot of the bier sat in sadness the Successor to the honors and the

responsibilities of the Executive chair, with the constitutional advisers of the President; at its head were the Ministers of Religion in the habiliments of their high office; to the right, occupying the southern portion of the room were the distinguished Chiefs of the Army and the Navy. The General-in-Chief of the Army, Winfield Scott, with his Staff; Naval Commanders; Officers of the Marine Corps; the Major General of the Militia, with his Aids, and Officers of the Engineer Corps, presented a spectacle of imposing grandeur, greatly heightened by the brilliant array of Foreign Ministers in their official costumes. On the left, in close proximity to the lamented dead, were seated world-renowned Statesmen. But they thought not of eminence to be attained in this sphere. An inscrutable Providence had given their minds a direction to the grave. They sat in sorrow, among the designated pallbearers, Statesmen long distinguished by public service in both Houses of Congress, whose names have become familiar as household words to the People. There too sat, on the opposite side, the immediate relatives of the deceased: Col. Taylor, his brother, Dr. Wood, Col. Bliss, the Hon. Jefferson Davis, and others who are nearly allied, all furnishing painful evidence of

We too great to be expressed

Which broods in silence and corrodes the heart.

The western part of the room was occupied by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Members and Officers of both these bodies, Heads of Bureaus, and a large body of Clergymen of all denominations.

All being seated, under the well-conceived instructions of the Marshal of the District, by Aids who performed their office with prompt attention and noiseless tread, an amateur choir from several churches, under the direction of Professor Berlyn, sang, in solemn cadence, the anthem:

“I heard a voice from Heaven saying, write, write from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors. Amen.”

The Ritual of the Church, “Lord let me know my end,” was impressively read by the Rev. Mr. Pyne, the responses being given by the Rev. C.B. Butler, in which other clergy and laymen joined. The latter gentlemen then read a portion of the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians: “But now is Christ risen,” etc.

The Rev. Mr. Pyne then delivered a Discourse adapted to the occasion, characterized by that earnest devotion to his sacred office which must have been remarked in him by any one who has ever heard him; in the course of which he did justice to the high personal qualities of the deceased—independently of his military or civil service, however great—such as his perfect integrity, conscientiousness, truthfulness, love of justice, discharge of duty under all circumstances, and at all times—preferring his own convictions of right to any transient popularity, which had secured to him the great hold which he had upon the confidence and the affections of the People. These principles the Reverend gentleman evidently conceived had influenced the whole course of action of the illustrious dead, to such an extent that, as far as is possible for merely mortal man, he acted as a man should do were he expecting at any moment to be called to his last account. The practical duty which it appeared to be mainly the object of his discourse to inculcate upon each of his hearers, was, so to live from day to day as to be ready at any time to “go to his last account.”

The benediction closed the Funeral Services at this place, and the body was removed to the carriage prepared for it in the order of procession, the infant Eberbachs mingling their sweet voices with the measured tread of the marines, who bore the body to the car, as they sang—

His triumphs are o’er—he’s gone to his rest—

To the throne of his Maker, the home of the blest.

How peaceful and calm he now rests on the bier!

Each hart droops in sadness, each eye sheds a tear.

The hero, the statesman, his journey is done,

All his cares now are over, his last battle won;

Now sweetly he rests from his sorrows and fears,  
And leaves a proud nation in sadness and tears.

#### THE MILITARY HONORS AND PROCESSION

It was past one o'clock before the ceremonies at the Presidential Mansion closed; and, soon after, the procession began to move. We enjoyed a favorable post for observation, having a fair view of both the civic and the military portions of it; and the impression was that of a solemnity every way worthy of the occasion. How the troops may have borne the criticism of an experienced military eye, we prefer not to know; to us, certainly, they appeared well-trained and soldierly in their movement, and neat, tasteful, and striking in their many different and contrasting uniforms. They were drawn up in line on the avenue, fronting the Presidential Mansion, with their officers posted in military order; and, when the Funeral Car made its appearance, it was received with the highest military honors and solemn sounds of martial music. The mingling dirges filled the air, and seemed impressively to chant to each other the poet's immortal strain,

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

The Catafalque, or moving bier, which bore the mortal remains of the late President, was drawn by eight white horses, splendidly caparisoned, each led by an attendant groom in white turban and corresponding dress. The car, large and elevated covered with black, and hung round with festoons of white silk, was surmounted by a canopy, above which was seen the American Eagle, deeply shrouded, in fact almost hidden, in black crape. The coffin occupied a conspicuous position, and was fully exposed to view. But all eyes were drawn even from this solemn sight to one still more calculated to touch the feelings of a promiscuous assemblage; it was the General's favorite horse, the far-famed "Old Whitey," so well known to every soldier who served under the brave old man through the perilous and glorious Mexican campaigns. He is a well-made animal, of some fifteen and a half hands in height, in fine condition, and, as it seemed, with a military air. On the saddle were the holders and inverted spurs. Poor fellow! He stepped proudly; but how would his pride have been quelled, could he have known that he now accompanied his beloved master for the last time! Yes, Whitey! You are surrounded by soldiers, as you were wont to be; the cannon thunder in your ear; that is a familiar sound; and near you is he whose heart never quailed and whose sword was never turned back from the fight; but, alas! He has met, at last, a foe he could not conquer, and the hand that so often patted your neck and reached you a morning token of his loving care, is cold in death and will caress you no more!

The Military Escort was closed by Major General Scott and his Staff. The noble and commanding figure of the General-in-Chief, mounted on a spirited horse, and shadowed by the towering plume of yellow feathers which marks his rank, presented an object well calculated to fill the eye and to swell the heart with patriotic pride. He looks in better health than we expected, and promises long to continue to be the pride of the army and an ornament to his country. It is at once an elevating and a moving sight to behold such a Hero as Taylor followed to the grave by such a Hero as Scott.

The Funeral Escort, of course, headed the Civic Procession—the Car which bore the remains of our late President being preceded by the Civil Officers of the District, the Committee of Arrangements of the two Houses of Congress, the Chaplains of Congress, the officiating Clergymen of the occasion, the attending Physicians to the late President, and the Pall-Bearers, twenty in number, whose names have already been announced; and followed by the Family and Relatives of the late President, by the President of the United States and Heads of Departments, the Senate and House of Representatives and their Officers, the Diplomatic Corps, and a great number of official persons, as enumerated in the program, and filling more than a hundred carriages, besides those attending in carriages and on foot from neighboring States, all of whom would deserve particular notice had we any means of ascertaining them. Among them we ought not to omit to mention the Governor of the State of Maryland, of whose

presence we happened to be apprised; also, the Mayor and City Councils of the metropolis of that State, and a small band of its heroic volunteer Defenders in the war of 1814.

The Procession extended nearly two miles, its rear being at the President's House when the military Escort, which occupied more than a third of its entire length, had passed the Capitol. It slowly wound its way over the high grounds East of the Capitol, pursuing the broad and lately improved avenue which leads to the Congressional Cemetery. All the way along the distance from the starting point to the place of interment, were stationed private carriages, horsemen, groups of citizens, families of children, and a mixed collection of expectant people, patiently awaiting (many of them for hours) the coming of the mourning train. Every shady spot was availed of; but, these being soon occupied, as well as every window, roof or tree that would command a view of the procession, numbers sat or stood in the burning sun, so great was the desire to witness the solemn spectacle.

Arriving at the graveyard, the artillery were posted on a rising ground, the troops drawn up in double line, and the coffin, preceded by the Clergy and attended by the Pall-Bearers, passed through the center gate, and slowly reached the front of the receiving vault, which had been tastefully decorated with festoons of black, and was guarded by sentries to keep off the pressure of the crowd, which had already filled the enclosure. Here, the bier being set down, the Rev. Mr. Pyne read the solemn and beautiful service for the dead appointed in the Episcopal liturgy; when the body was taken up and deposited in a place appointed for its reception, until it shall be finally removed to its last earthly resting place in the West, where the remains of Zachary Taylor will be emphatically at home.

During the ceremony, as indeed during the whole march of the Procession, the utmost silence had prevailed. The eyes of the surrounding multitude were now directed to the tall and venerable figure of Senator Clay, whose appearance on such a spot and in such an office, gave rise to many a serious reflection. They then turned, inquiringly, and with deep interest and solicitude, to the less familiar countenance of President Fillmore, who stood immediately in the rear. It was filled with solemn awe, and seemed to express a meek and becoming sense of that omnipotent and inscrutable Providence which had thus suddenly and unexpectedly elevated himself to the highest human dignity, while it struck down, as in a moment, the great and good man whose ashes were before him. Yet there was mingled with that native modesty which never leaves him, a serene firmness, equally characteristic of the man, and which seemed to a reflective observer to say that the restless hand which had lifted him up, unsought, to so high and perilous a station, was as strong to sustain as to elevate. To that hand, as merciful as mighty, is he heartily commended by the hopes, the wishes, and the prayers of every virtuous American.

Thus has a grateful Nation performed its last sad duty, and yielded the latest of many well-earned tributes to the honor of Zachary Taylor. Of the tears that have embalmed his memory many fell from eyes unwont to weep, and many from those whose relentless party ties, or whose stern convictions of political duty, placed them in the ranks of his decided political opponents. Opponents they may have been, enemies they could not. So much obvious honesty of purpose, so much true devotion to the country's cause, so much unpretending but unyielding bravery, so much unaffected kindness of heart, united to so much many sense and clear discernment, could excite the enmity of nothing that could ever live, it is now dead—buried in his tomb. On that sacred tomb will flourish ever only the laurels of his military glory, mingled with all those milder, wreaths of fragrant gratitude which are the meed of every social virtue.

It is understood that the Family of Gen. Taylor, removed, on Saturday evening, from the Presidential Mansion to the residence of Mr. Meredith, whose hospitality is accepted for a few days; after which, the afflicted Relict of the late President will for the present take up her abode with her friends in Baltimore.

THE MILITARY PART OF THE PROCESS

The Military portion of the Funeral Procession of Saturday is worthy of a special notice. It was anticipated that many Volunteer Companies, and indeed military men generally would be anxious to attend the obsequies of the illustrious Chieftain and President of the Republic; and this anticipation was fully realized. Baltimore contributed largely and patriotically to the military display, than which we never witnessed a more imposing one in this city. The whole was under the command of the distinguished General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army, whose manly form and martial bearing surrounded by a numerous staff, attracted all eyes as the funeral cortege moved solemnly from the Presidential Mansion to Congress Burying Ground. From a favorable and commanding position that we occupied, at the corner of one of the cross streets, we noticed the troops marching in slow time, in the following order:

Patapsco Riflemen, of Baltimore, Capt. Swain, preceded by their Band

Independent Greys' Band, of Baltimore

Light Infantry, from Wilmington, Delaware

German Yagers, of Baltimore, Capt. Pracht

Maryland Cadets, of Baltimore, Capt. Poor

National Blues, of Baltimore, Capt. Chesnut

Taylor Light Infantry, from Catonsville, Maryland, under the command of Lieut. Brown, of the Independent Greys, Baltimore. This interesting corps consisted of two companies of youths, who are being educated at St. Timothy Hall. Their uniform was handsome and they were well drilled.

German Washington Guards, of Baltimore, Capt. Hoffman

National Greys, of Washington, Capt. Bacon

Independent Greys, of Baltimore, Capt. Hill

A platoon of commissioned officers representing volunteer companies of the 53d regiment of Baltimore

A portion of the patriotic volunteer Defenders of Baltimore in the year 1814, with their banner. Amongst them we recognized Gen. Anthony Miltenberger, Joseph K. Stapleton and Wm. P. Mills, Esqs.

First Baltimore Sharpshooters, of Baltimore, Capt. Lilly

Jackson Guards, of Baltimore

Independent Blues, of Baltimore, Capt. Shutt

Independent Greys, of Georgetown, Capt. Goddard

National Guards, of Philadelphia, Capt. Lyle

Mount Vernon Guards, of Alexandria, Capt. Fields

Richmond (Va.) Blues, Lieut. Regnault, accompanied by their Band

Worth Infantry, of York, Pennsylvania

Eagle Artillery, of Baltimore, Capt. Phillips

A platoon of officers representing volunteer companies of the 5th regiment of Baltimore

Mounted Carbineers, of Baltimore, Capt. S.C. Owings

The Marine Band attached to the Washington Navy Yard

Two companies of United States Marines, Capt. Tansill

Walker Sharpshooters, of Washington, Lieut. Birkhead

Washington Light Infantry, of Washington, Capt. Tate

Four companies (C. E. F. G) U.S. Artillery, acting as infantry under the command respectively of Capt. Bowen, Lieut. Doubleday, Capt. Williams, Capt. Brannan, and Lieut. Nichols

1st Artillery Band, from Fort Columbus, New York

One company of U.S. Flying Artillery, mounted and fully equipped, under the command of Major Sedgwick, from Fort McHenry, Baltimore

Officers of the United States Navy, in uniform, on foot

Maj. Gen. Jones, commanding the Militia of the District of Columbia and Staff

Maj. Gen. Scott, General-in-Chief of the United States Army, and Staff

Marshal the District of Columbia and his Aids

Mayors of Washington and Baltimore

Joint Committee of Arrangements on the part of the two Houses of Congress

Committee of the Senate

Mr. Webster of Massachusetts; Mr. Cass of Michigan; and Mr. King of Alabama

Committee of the House

Mr. Conrad of Louisiana

Mr. Strong of Pennsylvania

Mr. McDowell of Virginia

Mr. Vinton of Ohio

Mr. Winthrop of Mass.

Mr. Caldwell of Florida

Mr. Bissell of Illinois

Mr. Kent of Maryland

Mr. Duer of New York

Mr. Stanley of N. Carolina

Mr. Orr of S. Carolina

Mr. Littlefield of Maine

Mr. Breck of Kentucky

Chaplains to Congress and Officiating Clergymen

The Pall Bearers, as follows:

Hon. Henry Clay Hon.

T.H. Benton

Hon. Lewis Cass

Hon. Daniel Webster

Hon. J.M. Berrien

Hon. Truman Smith

Hon. R.C. Winthrop

Hon. Linn Boyd

Hon. Jas. McDowell

Hon. S.F. Vinton

Hon. Hugh White

Hon. Isaac E. Holmes

G.W.P. Custis, Esq.

Hon. R.J. Walker

Chief Justice Cranch

Joseph Gales, Esq.

Major General Jesup

Major General Gibson

Commodore Ballard

Brig. Gen. Henderson

Funeral Car, drawn by eight white horses, each horse attended by a groom

General Taylor's horse, "Old Whitey," fully caparisoned, attended by a groom

The Family of the late President in three carriages

The President of the United States (Fillmore)

The Cabinet

The Senate of the United States, preceded by its Officers

The House of Representatives, preceded by its Officers

The City Councils of Washington

A representative of the Firemen and of the Temperance Societies of Washington

The Band of the Independent Blues, of Baltimore

Clerks of the Executive Departments of the Government

The Mayor and City Councils of Baltimore, in mourning

Judges of Courts, citizens, strangers, etc., etc.

It is not extravagant to state that the Procession was from one mile and a half to two miles in length.

The line occupied, three quarters of an hour in passing before us.

Of the good conduct of the soldiery who formed the military escort at the funeral, it is unnecessary to speak. The United States troops, under Capt. Brannan, (a native of this city), Major Sedgwick, Capt. Bowen, and Lieut. Nichols, departed themselves in a soldier-like and becoming manner. The same may be said of the volunteer companies and the young Cadets. The Taylor Infantry, from Catonsville, Maryland, for the most part juvenile, behaved admirably.

The arrangements made by the Marshal of the District and the Mayor of the city were admirably carried out by the Aids of the former, and the police officers appointed by the latter. The line of the

Funeral Procession was kept clear of carriages and vehicles of every description, as the cortege passed along. No accident occurred, that we have heard of, during the whole day.

The magnificent Funeral Car, which was used in the Procession last Saturday, and attracted so much attention from every beholder of the solemn pageant, was prepared, at very short notice, by Messrs. Haslup and Weeden, at their Coach Factory, in this city. The design was furnished by Mr. William H. Winter, who superintended the workmanship until the time the Car was completed. We understand the running gear was obtained from Mr. Chas. Goddard, of Baltimore. The Car was formed on an ancient model. The body was eleven feet long and six and a half feet wide. On this body rested a pyramidal platform eight feet long, four feet wide, and twelve inches high. From that sprung an arch, five feet in height, as a canopy, which was beautifully festooned with white and black silk. On the top of the arch rested a very large and beautiful gilt eagle, enshrouded with crape. The body of the Car was festooned with rich black cloth, with black silk velvet in the background, ornamented with black and white silk fringes and white rosettes. The pyramidal platform was covered with black silk velvet, interspersed with silver stars and tassels. At the corner of each platform rested a large gilt urn, making altogether eight rich and emblematic ornaments of this magnificent Funeral Car. The Car was drawn by eight remarkably fine white horses, which were handsomely and suitably caparisoned. Each horse was led by a groom dressed in a white frock and a white turban.

Following the corpse of the deceased hero, "Old Whitey," fully equipped with the war accoutrements used by his old master in the Mexican War, was led by two soldiers who served in the wars, the one under General Taylor and the other in the wars of Florida.