

Henry Gaither Worthington

(9 Feb 1828 – 29 Jul 1909)

The Evening Star, July 26, 1909, p. 2

Last Lincoln Pallbearer

Gen. Worthington in Critical Condition at Hospital

The condition of Gen. Henry G. Worthington, the last surviving pallbearer at the funeral of President Lincoln, who is critically ill at the Garfield Hospital, was reported unchanged this afternoon.

Gen. Worthington, who is eighty-one years of age, was stricken blind about three weeks ago while on Pennsylvania avenue. He was removed to his home, 621 4th street northwest, and later taken to the Garfield Hospital.

He was born in Cumberland, Md., February 9, 1828. In 1849 during the gold strike in California Gen. Worthington went to that state.

After prospecting for some time he struck gold and accumulated a large fortune. Later he resided in San Francisco and entered politics, being elected a member of the state legislature in 1861. He resigned later and went to Austin, Nev., where, in 1862, he was elected a delegate to the Thirty-eighth Congress. He served until March 3, 1865.

The following year he was appointed minister to Uruguay by President Johnson and later transferred to the Argentine Republic. He served there twelve months and then returned to Nevada to practice law. In the early eighties he went to the frontier with Gen. Nelson Miles to fight the Indians and was wounded several times.

The Evening Star, July 27, 1909

General Worthington No Better

The condition of General Henry C. Worthington, the last surviving pall bearer at the funeral of President Lincoln who is at Garfield Hospital critically ill, was stated late this afternoon to be practically unchanged. General Worthington's death was said may occur at any moment.

The Evening Star, July 29, 1909, p. 2

Gen. H.C. Worthington Dies

Last Lincoln Pallbearer Passes Away at Hospital

Filled Long and Distinguished Career--Was Born in Cumberland, Md., in 1828

Gen. Henry Clay Worthington, the surviving pallbearer at the funeral of President Lincoln, died at the Garfield Hospital this afternoon at 12:20 o'clock. Death came peacefully and the cause is ascribed by the physicians as cerebral hemorrhage. Robert Naylor, a nephew, was at the bedside when death came. No arrangements have been made for the funeral.

They will probably be completed this afternoon after Representative Pearre of Maryland, another nephew of the deceased, is consulted.

About three weeks ago Gen. Worthington was stricken while on Pennsylvania avenue and was removed to his home on 4th street northwest. Later he was taken to the Garfield Hospital. His condition gradually became worse. He has been lying at the point of death for some days.

Distinguished Colonial Family

Gen. Worthington was born in Cumberland, Md., in 1828. His father came of a distinguished colonial family, and while he held slaves, was an anti-slavery advocate. Henry Clay was often his guest

on his way from Kentucky to Washington, and when a son came to the family he was named after the bluegrass statesman. When Mr. Clay, in later years, visited the Worthington home he always took a great interest in his namesake. A daughter of the Worthington family became the mother of Representative George Pearre of Cumberland.

Early in life Judge Worthington took up the study of law. Later he went to California to enter the practice of his profession. At that time the greater portion of the prominent men of the coast were southern sympathizers, and Judge Worthington with his anti-slavery views was soon challenged to a duel. He engaged in seven of these affairs, six proving fatal.

His Varied Career

He was successively a member of the California legislature, head of a vigilance committee, delegate in Congress from Nevada, collector of the port of Charleston, S.C.; minister to Uruguay, judge of a United States court and major general of militia.

He was also a candidate for the United States Senate at one time in Nebraska and came within two votes of an election.

He always entertained a high regard for President Lincoln and was the confidant of the executive on many occasions. He also enjoyed the friendship of Gen. Grant and other notable men of the country.

The Evening Star, July 30, 1909, p. 8

Funeral Plans Not Made

Nephews of Gen. Worthington to Arrange Details

The remains of Gen. Henry C. Worthington, the only surviving pallbearer at the funeral of President Lincoln, are now at the undertaking establishment of J. William Lee, 382 Pennsylvania avenue northwest, awaiting the completion of the funeral arrangements. After a conference this afternoon between Representative Pearre of Maryland and Robert Nailor of this city, both nephews of the deceased, the date of the funeral will be announced.

The Evening Star, July 31, 1909

Gen. Worthington's Funeral

Services Conducted by Rev. C.H. Butler of Luther Church

Funeral services over the remains of Gen. Henry G. Worthington, the last surviving pallbearer at the funeral of President Lincoln, were held at the undertaking chapel of J. William Lee, 332 Pennsylvania avenue northwest, this afternoon. Many men prominent in the affairs of the nation were in attendance.

Rev. Charles H. Butler, assistant pastor of the Luther Memorial Church, conducted the services. He described the services Gen. Worthington rendered to his country upon many occasions.

The list of honorary pallbearers included Senator Newlands, Henry Baker, Capt. Hiram Buckingham, Charles Dudley and the entire congressional delegations from Nevada, California and Colorado. Interment was in Congressional cemetery.

Col. George A. Pearre, representative in Congress from Maryland, and John H. Nailor of this city are surviving nephews of the deceased.

Las Vegas Review-Journal, Wednesday, April 12, 2000

Nevada Congressman's Grave Marked

By Steve Tetreault

WASHINGTON--Nevada reclaimed a piece of its history on Tuesday when a headstone was installed at an unmarked grave of its first congressman.

About 100 people attended the ceremony for Henry Gaither Worthington, who served in the House of Representatives for only three months after Nevada was granted statehood in October 1864.

Worthington moved out of the state sometime after he was denied the Republican nomination for re-election. He went on to become a diplomat in South America, a customs official in South Carolina and a political aide in Washington.

In 1909, he was buried in a numbered grave in Congressional Cemetery near Capitol Hill, forgotten until David Henley, a Northern Nevada newspaper publisher, tracked him down two years ago.

Henley, who runs the Lahontan Valley News & Fallon Eagle Standard, and Sen. Richard Bryan, D-Nev., found Worthington's burial spot, and Bryan arranged for the headstone to be purchased and carved.

Among those who attended were present-day Nevada lawmakers Shelley Berkley and Jim Gibbons, and former members of Congress Barbara Vucanovich and James Santini.

"For nearly a century, Worthington was an obscure figure nationally, unknown to almost all of us in Nevada, and in an unmarked grave," Bryan said. "If one were to try to capture the essence of the adventuresome roaming 19th century experience, he would have epitomized it."

Born in Maryland, Worthington ventured to California during the Gold Rush where he became a state legislator.

A Union supporter, he moved to Lander County in 1863, established himself as a minefield lawyer in Austin, and kept politicking. When Nevada was declared a state, he was sent East, where he cast a vote in Congress for the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery.

A friend of Abraham Lincoln, he attended Ford's Theater the night Lincoln was shot and served as a pallbearer at his funeral.

After being denied a chance for re-election, Worthington persuaded President Andrew Johnson to name him U.S. minister to Uruguay, becoming Nevada's first ambassador overseas. Present-day Uruguayan charge d'affaires Dr. Carols Mora was present at the headstone ceremony.

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989

A Representative from Nevada; born in Cumberland, Md., February 9, 1828; completed preparatory studies; studied law; was admitted to the bar and commenced practice in Tuolumne County, Calif.; traveled in Central America and Mexico and upon his return settled in San Francisco, Calif.; member of the State house of representatives in 1861; moved to Nevada in 1862 and settled in Austin; upon the admission of Nevada as a State into the Union was elected as a Republican to the 38th Congress and served from October 31, 1864 to March 3, 1865; collector of the port of Charleston, S.C.; served as United States Minister to Uruguay and the Argentine Republic in 1868 and 1869 by appointment of President Andrew Johnson; United States district judge; major general of militia; defeated by two votes for election to the United States Senate; served as a pall-bearer at the funeral of President Abraham Lincoln; died in Washington, D.C., July 29, 1909; interment in Congressional Cemetery.