

**MEMORIAL ADDRESSES ON THE LIFE
AND CHARACTER OF THOMAS H.
HERNDON, DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES AND IN THE
SENATE, 48TH CONGRESS, 1ST SESSION**

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Memorial addresses on the life and character of Thomas H. Herndon, delivered in the house of representatives and in the senate, 48th congress, 1st session by United States Congress

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UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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NO

Thomas W. Winden.

ADDRESSES

ON THE

DEATH OF THOMAS H. HERNDON.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE HOUSE.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

December 5, 1883.

Mr. JONES, of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, it is my painful duty to announce the death of my predecessor, Hon. THOMAS H. HERNDON, which occurred on the 28th day of March last, at his home in Mobile, Ala. At some future time I shall ask that a day be set aside for the consideration of appropriate obituary resolutions. I now offer the resolution which I send to the desk.

The Clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That this House has heard with profound regret of the death of Hon. THOMAS H. HERNDON, late a Representative-elect from the State of Alabama.

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

The resolutions were unanimously agreed to; and accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 40 minutes p. m.) the House adjourned.

MARCH 12, 1884.

Mr. JONES, of Alabama. I ask unanimous consent that Saturday, the 12th day of April, be fixed as the time for the delivering of tributes to the memory of the late THOMAS H. HERNDON, late a Representative-elect from the State of Alabama.

There was no objection, and it was so ordered.

APRIL 12, 1884.

The SPEAKER. By resolution of the House this day at 2 o'clock was assigned for the offering of resolutions expressive of regret at the death of the late THOMAS H. HERNDON, a Representative-elect of this House. That hour has now arrived.

Mr. JONES, of Alabama. I offer the resolution which I send to the desk.

The Clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That this House has heard with deep regret of the death of THOMAS H. HERNDON, late Representative-elect to this House from the State of Alabama.

Resolved, That, as a testimony to his memory, the officers and members of this House will wear the usual badge of mourning for the space of thirty days.

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted by the Clerk of this House to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That the Clerk be directed to communicate a copy of these proceedings to the Senate, and that, as a further mark of respect to the deceased, this House do now adjourn.

Address of Mr. JONES, of Alabama.

Mr. SPEAKER: As Colonel HERNDON's successor in this House it becomes my duty, as his friend it is my privilege, to pay a humble tribute of respect to his memory. His well-known modesty and his aversion to everything like ostentation forbid that I should indulge in the language of extravagant praise so common on an occasion like this. I shall, therefore, in what I have to say simply call attention to a character of rare symmetry and completeness,

and endeavor to hold up to public view the record of a life full of honors and full of usefulness.

THOMAS H. HERNDON was a native of Alabama. He was educated in the schools and at the University of that State. After reading law at Harvard University he was admitted to the bar, and thereafter devoted his life and his talents to the service of his people. He was several times a member of the legislature. He was a delegate to two of the most important conventions ever held in the State. During the late war he was colonel of an Alabama regiment, and was several times severely wounded in battle. His command was engaged in the thickest of the fight at Chickamauga, where he received a wound which was at the time supposed to be mortal.

In 1872 he was earnestly supported by his party friends as candidate for the office of governor. His friends, who were numerous and devoted to him, justly considered him worthy to represent Alabama in the Senate of the United States, and frequently and zealously supported him for that exalted position. He was thrice returned to represent the Mobile district in this House. After a long and honorable career of public service, on the 28th of March, 1883, only a few days after his term of service in this Congress commenced, he died at his home in Mobile, in the bosom of his family, and in the midst of constituents who were all his friends.

It was my good fortune, Mr. Speaker, to know Colonel HERNDON well. I knew him at the bar, and in public and private life. He was a representative man. He was a type of the best elements of his State. Always and everywhere he was a gentleman. Born in Alabama, he had grown with her growth. He had fought and suffered with his people in war, and in peace he had labored to restore the blessings of good government. He was thoroughly identified with the people of Alabama by birth, by association, and by common pursuits and common sufferings. He knew their wants, and was in warm sympathy with their purposes and their aspirations. Hence it is not surprising that the people of Alabama desired that his abilities should not be confined to the bar.

Had he lived, it was the hope of his friends that his influence in public affairs should not be confined to the limits of a Congressional district, but might sweep out into broader fields of usefulness.

Colonel HERNDON was a model soldier, illustrating that rare combination of courage and gentleness which immortalized Sir Philip Sidney—

Mild in manner, fair in favor, sweet in temper, fierce in fight.

And in all the positions of trust to which he was elevated in civil life he exhibited the same modesty and courage that had rendered him conspicuous in the field. He was true at all times to his convictions and never swerved from the path of duty.

In private life Colonel HERNDON was modest as a woman, gentle as charity, and possessed a genial magnetism that attracted men and bound them to him "as with hooks of steel." While he lived laborious days he did not scorn the delights of life. But it was in the sacred precincts of the home circle that his social nature shone with the purest luster. Upon his hearthstone the fires of domestic happiness always burned brightly. In his home peace and love were enthroned; there he found an incentive to his ambition and rest from his public labors. Learned and successful as a lawyer, brave and chivalrous as a soldier, enlightened as a statesman, singularly fortunate in all his family relations, his life was blessed with a larger share of happiness and brightened with more of "sweetness and light" than usually fall to the lot of mortals.

I will be followed by other gentlemen whose remarks will show in what high estimation Colonel HERNDON was held by his fellow-Congressmen. It was my desire, and it would have been highly gratifying to the family of our departed friend, that to-day's obsequies should have been graced by the taste and eloquence of the gentleman from New York [Mr. Cox], but I am this moment in receipt of a letter from him informing me of his being confined to his bed by sickness. In this letter he incloses to me a letter addressed to him by Mr. John Bigelow, formerly our distinguished

minister to France, which contains sentiments so appropriate to this occasion and so fitly illustrating the utilities of occasions like this that I send it to be read at the desk.

The Clerk read as follows:

APRIL 10, 1884.

DEAR MR. COX: Until to-day I have had no opportunity of running through the memorial addresses which you were good enough to send me and for which please accept my cordial thanks. I thank you not only for sending them to me but for uttering them. Any man who does or says anything to cultivate and cherish a respect among our people for their benefactors gives power to the Government, efficacy to the laws, and new guarantees to public order. In doing all this he in a corresponding degree checks and discourages the satanic spirit of detraction and irreverence with which the privileges of a free press are always conditioned.

Mortuary eloquence is neither history nor biography nor criticism, but the commendation in high places of those virtues which should illustrate public life helps to elevate and sustain the national standard of official duty, and in that respect answers a purpose as important perhaps as if it embodied the fullness, the accuracy, and the discrimination of all three. The higher we raise the popular standard the more will the people tend to admire and respect in those who have had a part in shaping the history of their country.

The taste and skill with which you have decorated the tombs of your departed friends one at least of your readers gratefully appreciates.

Very truly, yours,

JOHN BIGELOW.

Address of Mr. FORNEY, of Alabama.

MR. SPEAKER: It was my good fortune during the life of my deceased colleague, Hon. THOMAS H. HERNDON, to be numbered among his friends. We had known each other for more than a third of a century. During this long period our relations had been the most cordial, friendly, and intimate. What I have to say upon this sad and solemn occasion I know but voices the general sentiment of the people of his State from the mountains to the Gulf. No citizen of Alabama from its organization as a State was more beloved, esteemed, or respected. He was a native of Alabama, born and raised in the county of Greene, the most beautiful section of the South, lying in the heart of the cotton-belt, with its broad acres and fertile fields.

My colleague was brought up in the midst of a refined and highly cultivated community. He had all the advantages of learning that the country afforded. He received a classical education at his State university; after graduation entered the law school of Cambridge, Mass. He commenced his professional career in the city of Mobile. His education, training, and natural ability rapidly secured for him a high position at the Mobile bar, then as well as now noted for the number of learned, prominent, and distinguished lawyers.

THOMAS H. HERNDON was a true Southerner; a representative man of the South; the soul of honor; chivalrous, polished, and courtly in manners; kind and generous in spirit; conservative in temper and action; considerate of the feelings of others, but brave in principle and true to every trust confided in him. He had occupied many prominent positions in Alabama. The people of Mobile, when he was quite young—in 1857—knowing his great worth, appreciating his ability, integrity, and high character, elected him to the legislature. During the great excitement which pervaded the South in 1860 he was elected a delegate from Greene County to the convention known as the secession convention of Alabama. He took a prominent position in that body. The result of that convention was the adoption of the ordinance of secession, on the 11th of January, 1861, which separated Alabama from the Federal Union. My colleague voted for that ordinance. He was one of those who honestly and conscientiously believed it was right. So believing, when the hour came for action, thoroughly in feeling and sympathy with his people, he joined the Confederate army. By his valor, coolness, and efficiency in camp and field he was promoted to the rank of colonel. He had the entire confidence of the officers and men of his regiment; upon many fields of battle won the admiration of his general, who on several occasions mentioned him in his reports of engagements with the enemy for his bravery and gallantry upon the field.

During the war he was twice wounded so severely that he could with credit and honor to himself have retired from the army; yet so soon as his wounds were healed, like a true patriot, he would re-