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ANNAPOLIS

TERCENTENARY HISTORY
OF
MARYLAND

EMBODYING
BIOGRAPHICAL RECORDS OF COLONISTS, PIONEERS, JUDGES,
GOVERNORS, MILITARY OFFICERS, ETC.

COMPILED PRINCIPALLY BY
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was not to be used to coerce the seceded states. Speaking on this bill he said: "I have no idea that this Union can be maintained or restored by force. Nor do I believe in the value of a union, which can only be kept together by dint of a military force."

Pearce indignantly denounced the arrests of prominent Marylanders by the federal government and the contempt shown by the military authorities for the writ of habeas corpus during the war, and used his best endeavors, without avail, to put an end to the petty tyrannies practiced in his state. In January, 1862, he denounced the dismissal by the provost marshal of runaway slaves from the District of Columbia jail, believing that any act of emancipation would inflame suspicion as to the object of the war. On March 24, 1862, he was in the senate chamber for the last time. His health had been failing for some time under the stress of the times. His last public act was to present a petition for a mail route in Maryland. Returning to his home he lingered for nearly nine months. The closing months of his life were absorbed in religious contemplation. He had long been a vestryman of the Episcopal church and a firm believer in Christ, but as death approached "his mind became so set on Heaven that the only thoughts that ever put aside religion were those that the unhappy condition of his country forced upon him," so his son wrote after his death. The end came on December 20, 1862.

Senator Pearce was a typical Maryland gentleman of the old school. Political discord never prevented him from maintaining amicable relations with men of opposite opinions. His purity of character and extensive attainments, as well as his marked abilities and judicial temperament, caused his name frequently to be mentioned in connection with the presidency of the United States, although he never figured prominently as a candidate. Despite his strong southern predilections and the acridity of the politics at the time of his death the public tributes paid his memory by northern senators were as generous as those of men of his own way of thinking.

RICHARD POTTS.
(1753-1808.)

Richard Potts, United States senator (1793-1796), was born in Upper Marlboro, Prince George's county, Maryland, in July, 1753. He studied law and settled in Frederick county, where he practiced his profession. Frederick county was conspicuous for the zeal in behalf of the revolution and Richard Potts took an active part in the exciting events of the times. He was a member of the county committee of observation in 1776, served as clerk of the county court from 1777 to 1779, was a member of the legislature in 1779 and 1780 and was a delegate to the congress in 1781 and 1782. In 1784 he was named as state's attorney for the counties of Frederick, Montgomery and Washington, and in 1787 and 1788 was again a member of the state legislature. In the latter year he sat in the Maryland convention which ratified the constitution of the United States. In 1789 President Washington appointed him United States Attorney for Maryland. He had held this office two years when he was chosen as chief judge of the fifth judicial circuit of the state. On January 10, 1793, he was elected to fill the unexpired term in the senate of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who had resigned, and served as senator until November 30, 1796, when he was succeeded by John Eager Howard. From 1801 to 1804 he was an associate justice of the Maryland court of appeals. He died in 1808. In 1805 the College of New Jersey at Princeton conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws. He was twice married, his first wife being the daughter of Captain John Hughes who bandaged the eyes of Major Andre at the time of his execution.

HENRY WINTER DAVIS.
(1817-1865.)

Henry Winter Davis, an orator of rare gifts and a conspicuous member of the house of representatives during the stormiest years of the slavery controversy and during the war for the preservation of the Union, was born in Annapolis, Maryland, August 16, 1817. His father, the Rev. Henry Lyon Davis, D. D., was a learned clergyman of the Episcopal church, at the time of his son's birth, president of St.

John's College in Annapolis and rector of St. Anne's, one of the historic Church of England parishes created after Maryland became a royal colony. His mother was Jane Winter Davis, a descendant of the Wintour family, which came from England to Maryland with the first settlers of the province.

The Rev. Dr. Davis was a man of strong convictions and was at no pains to conceal them, even when their avowal was inimical to his own material interests. In politics he was an ardent federalist, and his zeal for that party led to his removal from the presidency of St. John's College by a democratic board. Before, as well as after this personal grievance, his ruling passion was an aversion for the democratic party. This aversion he transmitted without diminution to his son, whom he warned to "beware of the follies of Jacksonism." Possibly the son's course in politics owed its direction in some measure to this parental injunction.

When Henry Winter Davis was ten years old his father removed to a plantation in Anne Arundel county, Maryland, where the lad mingled with the slaves and received his first impressions of African bondage. They were decidedly unfavorable. Referring to them in after life, he said: "They (the slaves) spoke with freedom before a boy what they would have repressed before a man. They were far from indifferent to their condition; they felt wronged and sighed for freedom; they habitually spoke of the day when God would deliver them." A few years later he accompanied his father's slaves to Cecil county, Maryland, where his relative's owned land, and there he was thrown in contact with his cousin, David Davis, who later became a justice of the supreme court and a United States senator from Illinois. Another period of his boyhood was passed with an aunt who resided in Alexandria, Virginia. Thus his whole early environment was southern. Meanwhile, his education had been largely directed by his father, whose learning amply qualified him to lay the foundation for the broad culture and extensive acquirements which the son displayed in later years.

In 1833, young Davis was sent to Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, an Episcopal church institution attended by students from all parts of the United States. Sectional antagonism was rife in the college. Separate societies were formed by undergraduates; from north and from south. Davis joined the Southern Society and wrote to his mother: "The southern students I am pleased with; the northern students I am not much acquainted with and have no desire to be so." His father, displeased with the narrow spirit which this letter indicated, wrote to him in terms of rebuke. The future radical republican, replying to his father's letter, said: "I am from the south. * * * Nothing could be more disagreeable to me than to belong to their (the northern student's) society. Their manners and habits are so different from what I have been accustomed to."

Davis was graduated from Kenyon in 1837. Meanwhile, his father had died, leaving an estate encumbered with debt. It consisted chiefly of negroes and was the sole source of support for Davis and his sister. The young man refused his consent to the sale of any of the negroes to enable him to pursue his intention to study law, nor was he willing to subsist on the proceeds of their toil. Securing a position as tutor, he maintained himself for two years, at the end of which period a maiden aunt provided him with the means of entering the law school of the University of Virginia. On being admitted to the bar, he began practice in Alexandria, Virginia. He married and remained there several years, but his wife having died, he removed to Baltimore in 1850, where he soon rose to prominence as a lawyer and also took an active part in politics. In 1854 he was elected to congress and was reelected in 1856 and 1858. When the whig party dissolved Davis united with the newly-formed American or "know-nothing" party, and became one of its most important adherents. His connection with the reign of lawlessness instituted by this party is perhaps the greatest blemish in his career. In the memorable contest between Nathaniel P. Banks of Massachusetts and William Aiken for the speakership of the thirty-sixth congress in 1855, Davis supported neither, he and Representative Cullen of Delaware being the only members of the house from the slave states who failed to vote for Aiken.

In 1859 there was again a protracted struggle in congress over the speakership and Davis pursued a bolder course, deliberately wrecking his political career for the time being. Neither the republican nor the democratic party could command a clear majority for its candidate and forty-three ballots were taken without an election. Then both candidates withdrew and William Pennington, a New Jersey republican, was presented as a compromise candidate. On the forty-fourth ballot, Davis cast his ballot for Pennington, who was elected speaker with one majority. A storm of denunciation burst upon Davis' head in consequence of this

vote. The Maryland legislature passed a formal vote of censure upon him, the press of the state assailed him bitterly and popular opinion was overwhelmingly against him. His reply to this flood of obloquy was: "You can send a slave to congress, but you cannot send me." At the next election he lost his seat in congress, a result which he must have anticipated when he voted for Pennington. Previous to this vote, Davis had never actually broken away from the southern element in congress. He had voted against the expulsion of Representative Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina, whose assault with a cane upon Charles Sumner in the senate chamber had aroused intense indignation in the north, and had never shown any sympathy with the antislavery zealots whose activities from time to time had caused turmoil in and out of congress. His vote which made possible the election of a republican speaker of the house of representatives was, however, the turning point in his career, and from that time to the close of his life, he was progressively identified with the radical republican element until, in 1865, in an address delivered in Chicago, he advocated negro suffrage as the only means of securing to the emancipated race its new gift of freedom.

In the north, Davis' vote for Pennington produced a very different effect from that which it had in Maryland and some of the most influential republican leaders, smarting from the reproach that their party was wholly sectional, turned their gaze upon him as an available candidate for the vice-presidency. He appears to have entertained at one time the idea of some sort of an alliance between the "know-nothing" party and the republican party in the presidential election of 1860. In a letter written by him in 1859, he had stated that he saw no difference of opinion on public measures between them which ought to keep them asunder. But he was too experienced a politician to be blind, on the eve of the campaign, to the fact that in the coming contest, the republican party would have no chance of carrying Maryland against the democratic party. He therefore turned a deaf ear to the overtures of the republicans and gave his support to the Bell and Everett ticket.

After the secession movement had taken definite shape Davis served on the house committee appointed to devise some means of arresting the tide of disunion, and made a number of suggestions which were embodied in its majority report. He also announced himself a candidate for reelection to congress as an unconditional unionist. He succeeded in polling six thousand votes, but was defeated. He devoted all his energies to preventing the secession of Maryland and shared with Chief Justice Taney, Reverdy Johnson and other eminent citizens of the state the credit of directing the tide of popular sentiment in favor of the Union. He was prominently mentioned for a place in the Lincoln cabinet, but believing a cotton state man should be chosen to represent the south, he urged the appointment of John A. Gilmer, a North Carolina unionist. The president, however, appointed Montgomery Blair, who was practicing law in Washington and had a home in Maryland, near the District of Columbia line. This appointment gave serious offense to Davis and other Union men, who did not regard Blair as a bona fide citizen of the state. In 1863 Davis was again a candidate for congress and the polls being under the control of the Union party, he had no difficulty in being declared elected. He was made chairman of the important foreign affairs committee, took a prominent part in the debates and gave vigorous support to the war measures of the administration. He opposed the bill to give General U. S. Grant the rank of lieutenant general, however, arguing that it was premature, as no one was then able to foresee who, in the end, would hold precedence among the generals of the army.

In 1863 it had become apparent that the triumph of the Union arms would mean the extinction of slavery in all parts of the country. Lincoln's emancipation proclamation had not affected the status of the negro in Maryland and Davis, deeming the time propitious, issued an address to the people of Maryland urging emancipation by means of an amendment to the state constitution. It was arranged to take a test vote at the next election, and under the existing conditions at the polls the result was a foregone conclusion. In the following year a new constitution was drafted and ratified and Maryland became a free state.

The arbitrary arrests of civilians by the military authorities towards the close of the war had filled the prisons in Washington to overflowing. Not only political prisoners but criminals, such as counterfeiters of the national currency, were thrust into cells without due process of law. During the second session of the thirty-eighth congress Davis took a firm stand against this practice offering an amendment to the miscellaneous appropriation bill which provided that no person

should be tried by court martial or military commission in any state or territory where the courts of the United States were open, except persons actually in the military service, or "rebel" enemies charged with being spies. The amendment was adopted almost unanimously by the house but was stricken out of the bill in the senate. Davis declared that not one item in the appropriation bill should pass with his consent, without the amendment. The bill was sent to conference where no agreement could be reached. Davis submitted the report of the house conferees, which read: "The conference committee on the part of the house have come to the determination, so far as the constitutional privileges and prerogatives of this house will enable them to accomplish the result, that this bill shall not become law if these words do not stand as part of it—the affirmation by the representatives of the states and of the people of the inalienable birthright of every American citizen; and on this question, they appeal from the judgment of the senate to the judgment of the American people." The end of the session was but a half hour off and the bill was dead, but the firm stand made by the house remained as a stinging rebuke to the lawless abuse of power which the amendment was intended to correct.

Davis was now an outstanding figure in congress, picturesque and brilliant. Men of all shades of opinion listened when he spoke, the orator beyond comparison of the house, orator, perhaps, more than leader. At this moment he took a step which, coming on the eve of a presidential campaign, rendered him unavailable as a candidate for reelection by placing him in antagonism to the head of his party. After the Union arms had subdued a large part of Louisiana and Arkansas, President Lincoln had recognized state governments in those states which had been organized by men professing to be unionists. In congress the initiative of the executive in the matter of reconstruction met with strong disapproval. A bill was passed embodying the views of the national legislature concerning the readmission to the Union of the states lately engaged in resisting the federal authority. The president failed to sign the bill and only because of the adroit diplomacy employed by him was a grave situation avoided. The extreme radicals in Congress, who were little inclined to adopt a conciliatory policy towards the south, were by no means pleased that the executive should take the subject of reconstruction into his own hands. At this juncture, Davis joined with Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio, a radical of radicals, in signing and publishing a bitter protest against the president's course. This protest, believed to have been written by Davis, accused the president of having perpetrated "a studied outrage upon the legislative authority of the people." It told him that "the support of the republican party was of a cause, and not of a man; that the authority of congress was paramount and must be respected"; that "the whole body of union men in congress will not submit to be impeached by him of rash and unconstitutional legislation." In language almost as menacing as that used by the radical republicans in addressing Andrew Johnson a few years later, it bade the president to "confine himself to his executive duties—to obey and execute, not make laws." More serious than these words was the aspersion on the president's motives contained in the following sentence: "If electors for president be allowed to be chosen in either of those states (Louisiana and Arkansas, in which state governments had been set up and recognized) a sinister light will be cast on the motives which induced the president to 'hold for naught' the will of congress."

Davis did not long survive his retirement from congress. In the following winter he was attacked by an illness which terminated in his death on December 30, 1865, at the early age of forty-eight years. By setting apart a day for tributes to his memory congress accorded him an honor never before paid to a representative who died after he had ceased to be a member of that body.

Of Henry Winter Davis, as an orator, friends and foes alike spoke with unstinted admiration. James G. Blaine, in his memoirs, says of him: "As a debator, in the house, Mr. Davis may well be cited as an exemplar. He had no boastful reliance on intuition or inspiration on the spur of the moment, though no man excelled him in extempore speech. He made elaborate preparation by study of all public questions and spoke from a full mind with complete command of premise and conclusion. In all that pertained to the graces of oratory, he was unrivaled. Had he been blessed with length of days, the friends who best knew his ability and ambition believed that he would have left the most brilliant name in the parliamentary annals of America."

Samuel S. (Sunset) Cox, the democratic colleague of Davis on the house foreign affairs committee, speaks of him in his book "Three Decades in Congress,"

as follows: "In the writer's opinion, he was the best orator in every sense of the word that he has ever heard in Congress. He reproduced the eloquence of Pinkney, with the cogency of Wirt. * * * He had logic, but it was logic set on fire of rhetoric."

Davis' reputation as a lawyer was eclipsed by his fame as a politician, yet his standing at the bar was one of eminence. He was especially well equipped in ecclesiastical law and was counsel for the Rev. H. V. D. Johns, an Episcopal clergyman of Baltimore in a church trial of some note growing out of Mr. Johns' participation in a service at a Methodist church. In 1853 he published a volume entitled: "The War of Ormuzd and Ahriman in the Nineteenth Century," a dissertation on liberty and despotism which commanded little attention. In 1867, a memorial volume of his speeches and addresses was published with an oration giving a sketch of his life, by the Hon. John A. J. Cresswell.

JOHN SELBY SPENCE.
(1788-1840.)

John Selby Spence, United States senator and twice a member of the house of representatives from Maryland with an interval of six years between his terms, was born near Snow Hill, Worcester county, Maryland, February 29, 1788. His family came from Scotland and settled in Maryland about the year 1680. After attending schools in his native section he entered the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania and was graduated Doctor of Medicine in 1809. Returning to Worcester county, he began the practice of his profession and, with occasional interruptions when engaged in the public service, continued to minister to the sick until his death. After serving in the General Assembly of Maryland for several years he was elected to congress as a democrat in 1823 and served one term. In 1831 he was again elected to the house of representatives and again retired after serving a single term. On the death of United States Senator Robert H. Goldsborough on October 4, 1836, he was appointed to fill his unexpired term, and was later elected by the general assembly for a full term of six years. He did not live to complete his term, dying at his home near Berlin, Worcester county, October 24, 1840. Two of his brothers were men of distinction. One, Ara Spence, served in the legislature and was chief judge of the fourth judicial circuit of Maryland. The other, Irving Spence, was the author of a volume entitled "Early History of the Presbyterian Church," published in 1838. Thomas Adams Spence, a nephew of Senator Spence, born in 1810 in Accomac county, Virginia, practiced law in Snow Hill, Maryland, and was a whig representative in congress from 1843 to 1845. He died in Washington, D. C., November 10, 1877, while occupying a prominent position in the post office department.

FRANCIS ASBURY.
(1745-1816.)

Francis Asbury, pioneer bishop of the Methodist Episcopal church and its presiding genius during the years in which it spread throughout the United States, was born in Handsworth, Staffordshire, England, August 20, 1745. His parents being in comfortable circumstances he was sent to school at an early age. The master of the school was addicted to all the harshness of pedagogues of the period and Asbury was removed, on account of this cruelty, and placed in the home of a wealthy family. He had been trained in piety from his infancy but in his new environment, according to his own account, he became "somewhat vain," but was not "openly wicked." In a few months he returned to the home of his parents. A little while later he went to live with a family under the influence of whose members he resumed the practice of praying. He also attended the parish church, heard many of England's greatest preachers speak from the pulpit, and read Whitfield's sermons. Hearing of the Methodist movement, he visited a neighboring town and attended Methodist services. Being deeply impressed, although still a mere boy, he led meetings at the home of a neighbor. At the age of sixteen he joined the local ministry of the Wesleyans and six years later became an itinerant preacher. After traveling circuits for five years, he was present at a meeting