

# The National Intelligencer,

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## WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

VOL. I. WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, NEW-JERSEY AVENUE, NEAR THE CAPITOL. No. XIX.

FIVE DOLLS. PER ANN.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12th, 1800.

PAID IN ADVANCE.

### WASHINGTON CITY.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1800.

*Statement of facts attending the application of the Editor for permission to occupy a position within the bar of the House of Representatives, that he might be enabled to report with fidelity their proceedings and debates.*

On the first day of the sitting of Congress, as well as the Editor recollects, he spoke to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and stated that, having been informed that it was usual to obtain his permission to take the debates, the Editor then did himself the pleasure of making a request to that effect.

The Speaker replied that it was usual, and that the permission would be cheerfully granted as a matter of course.

At this period a member came up to the Editor, and asked him how he intended to publish the debates, and whether he designed publishing them at full length. Before the Editor had time to answer the question the Speaker said, addressing himself to the Editor "You had better not. When the speeches are so long nobody reads them." The Editor replied that he had not prescribed to himself any settled plan, but that he certainly should give all important debates in detail; it was probable that he should abridge those that were not interesting.

At the time it was understood by the Editor, though not expressed in terms, that permission was given by the words of the Speaker, to take the debates in the manner in which they had heretofore been taken, and with the advantages of place which had previously been allowed.

The Editor does not recollect, and he is persuaded that if it had occurred he would recollect it, that the Speaker made any remark whatever respecting any previous application made to him.

As an evidence of the conviction of the Editor that permission was granted to take the debates in the customary way, he need only mention, in addition to what is already stated, that he immediately had made a desk of such a size as to produce the least possible interference with the convenience of the members.

The next morning the desk was taken to the capitol. Previously to placing it within the bar, the Editor again spoke to the Speaker, considering it respectful to consult him respecting the best place for it.

It was then that the Speaker declared his fear that the accommodation requested could not be granted, said that he had been applied to by several other persons, and stated the area to be so small as not to justify the admission.

The Editor assured the Speaker that he felt no desire to incommode the members of the house; that his opinion was that a position within the bar at the windows would not have such an effect; for that as there were four windows, in each of which there was a space that retired within the line of the wall far enough to admit a desk on each side, whereby eight persons might be accommodated, it was evident that no obstacle to the sight or passage of the members would be created by the stenographers.

The Speaker did not repel this suggestion by the expression of any other idea than the one already assigned by him, but said that he had been applied to by a number of individuals, that it was probable more meant to apply; if one was admitted, all must be admitted, and it was utterly impossible to admit the whole.

The Editor replied that he could not answer for the actions of others. But that his own opinion was that there would not be more than two, if so many, stenographers that would steadily attend. He further informed the Speaker, that Mr. Stewart, to whose application he had alluded, had told him that he did not mean to publish the debates in detail, but intended to condense them.

The Speaker, without yielding to the ideas of the Editor, repeated his conviction of

the impossibility of admitting the stenographers within the bar, and stated his opinion that they might hear very well without the bar. The Editor replied unequivocally that, in his opinion, they could not.

The manner of the Speaker impressed the Editor with a hope that his decision was not conclusive, as he said something in reference to his speaking to the members, and expressed a desire that the Editor would try whether he could succeed in hearing outside of the bar.

Under this impression he waited, for several days, any further conversation with the Speaker. In the mean time he consulted a large portion of the members of the house, indiscriminately without reference to political opinion. Of those he consulted, there was not one that did not express a perfect coincidence with the Editor that little, if any, inconvenience could be experienced by the admission of the stenographers; and most of those, on terms of political friendship with the Speaker, engaged to speak to him in favor of the application, not entertaining a doubt of succeeding in the accomplishment of the object.

The Editor made use of these means, from an earnest solicitude to gain admission within the bar, without being obliged to resort to the unpleasant expedient of memorializing the house, and from a sincere desire to manifest the highest respect for the Speaker.

The means, made use of, proved ineffectual. For on a personal application to the Speaker, the Editor was informed by him that on the most deliberate consideration of the request, it could not be granted; that it was impossible to grant it without destroying the DIGNITY and ORDER of the house, and the CONVENIENCE of the members.

The memorial offered was forthwith prepared. But before it was presented, the Editor again addressed the Speaker, and informed him that, guided by a sense of duty, he meant to request from the house that permission which he had refused; but still desirous of evincing his respect for the Speaker, he wished to know from him in what way it would be best to present the memorial; stating that if not objected to by him, it would be presented through him to the house. The Speaker said that would be improper, and remarked that the usual way of presenting memorials was through a member. The memorial was accordingly so presented.

These facts are thus minutely stated by the Editor, under a conviction that the subject is, not only interesting to him personally considered, but likewise deeply interesting to the people of the United States. How they are to obtain that correct information, which it would have been his effort to give, and which he thinks it is their right to receive, from reporters occupying their present positions, he does not know.

He has affirmed, and he still solemnly affirms, that he is unable to hear a large portion of the remarks made by many members. Even the words of the Speaker and clerk, generally deliberately uttered, are often unintelligible. On the floor of the house, there is not a position without the bar better than the one he at present occupies; and as to the upper gallery no man who has been there during a debate will deny that it is altogether unfit for a stenographer, owing to the constant passage of individuals and the unceasing noise.

The Editor has been complimented by the ascription to him of pride, as the motive of his conduct. How just this ascription is, in the sense conveyed, let any man decide, who has perused the foregoing statement. It will demonstrate that the Editor, so far from courting a collision with the Speaker, did every thing in his power, which reiterated language and acts of respect could effect, to conciliate his good will.

The Editor of the National Intelligencer has, since the commencement of the session, reported the debates with the greatest fidelity and impartiality that circumstances would admit. His situation has been

unpropitious to the full accomplishment of his wishes. Still he has done his best. This he will continue to do, so long as he is impressed by those convictions of duty which he at present cherishes. While he continues to conduct a print at the seat of government, designed to diffuse correct political statements, it shall not be said that the centinels of the public liberty are inattentive to the official conduct or sentiments of those who are its constituted guardians. Whatever, therefore, may be the inconveniences experienced or the obstacles presented, he will persevere in the faithful discharge of his professional duties, resolved, though furrounded with unfavorable circumstances, not to violate his trust.

### CONGRESS

#### OF THE UNITED STATES

##### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 10, 1800.

The House went into a committee of the whole, Mr. Edmond in the chair, on the Bill for erecting a Mausoleum to the memory of GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Mr. ALSTON was in hopes when he first made the motion now under consideration, that a question would have been taken upon the amendment without debate; but as his wish upon that subject had not been complied with, he held it his duty to give to the house the reasons which actuated him.

He said that he by no means wished to detract any thing from the merit of that illustrious character, whose memory we were now about to perpetuate; that it was his wish that his character might be handed to the latest posterity unimpaired, and that he really thought the amendment equally calculated to effect that desirable purpose, with the bill; that the difference of expence was a matter of importance to the people of this country; that the expence of a mausoleum, from the best information he had been able to collect, would amount to at least 150 or 200,000 dollars; that a monument, such as was contemplated by the amendment, would not cost more than one tenth as much as a mausoleum, as contemplated by the bill as it now stood. Indeed he believed that the bare expence of interring the remains of general Washington in a mausoleum would cost as much as the proposed monument.

Mr. Alston said he considered congress pledged as far the resolutions of the last session went; that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Otis) who was up a few days ago upon this subject had requested information; in answer to which he had only to observe that if that gentleman would have given himself the trouble to have examined the proceedings of the last session of Congress he would have been better informed than he appeared to be; that a committee, equally respectable with that which had reported the bill at the present time, had then fully investigated the subject, and had made a report, which was to be found upon the journals of the last session of Congress, recommending a monument such as was contemplated by the proposed amendment, and that the request made by the President of the United States to Mrs. Washington in conformity to the report of that committee, was for a monument; to which request she had consented; he therefore, considered Congress as pledged thus far and no farther; that a motion was made in this house to change the monument to a mausoleum; that the recent death of general Washington at that time, prevented any person from opposing any measure which was offered, let the expence be what it would; but that the time which had elapsed since, had enabled the public mind the better to judge.

The gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Lee) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Griswold) had dwelt a great deal upon the subject of public gratitude. It was by no means his wish or intention to lessen that sentiment, but he said that he could not give his consent to an expensive measure like that contemplated in the bill, when a mea-

sure far less expensive, in his opinion, would answer every purpose as well.

Mr. ALSTON was followed by Mr. HUCKER, who advocated the erection of a Mausoleum.

Mr. SMILIE replied. He considered the erection of a Mausoleum as productive of unnecessary expence, as a monument would answer every rational purpose contemplated in the bill.

General LEE next spoke at some length in favor of a mausoleum, and read a letter received from Mr. King, our ambassador at London, enclosing a plan, presented to him by an eminent foreign artist, for a mausoleum of one hundred and fifty feet base and the same height, the expence of which was estimated at 170,000 dollars.

We shall make no apology for the brief notes taken of these speeches. We could not hear them.

Mr. CHAMPLIN, after some remarks, the indistinct hearing of which did not enable us to determine on which side of the question he argued, moved that the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again. Which motion being carried without a division, the committee rose; and on the question to grant them leave to sit again, only three members rose in the affirmative. Leave was, of course, denied.

Mr. CHAMPLIN then moved the recommitment of the bill to the same committee that reported it, with the addition of two members, which was carried, and Messrs. Claiborne and Champlin appointed.

After Mr. CHAMPLIN'S motion for a recommitment of the Bill to a select committee was carried,

Mr. CLAIBORNE said, he had risen to move that the committee just appointed be instructed to enquire into the expediency of carrying into effect a resolution passed by the old Congress, on the 7th of August 1783, "Directing an equestrian statue of general Washington, to be erected at the place where the residence of Congress shall be established."

Mr. Claiborne said, that on a question which could not fail to excite the sensibility of every American heart, it was a subject of great regret, that a division of sentiment should arise. The memory of our departed patriot lives in the affections of a grateful country, and will triumph over time. During a long life, so usefully and honorably employed, Washington had reared to himself a fabric of fame, the lustre of which can neither be diminished or heightened by any measure that we can take. But, sir, from a respect for our own, as well as for the feelings of the nation, we should endeavor to unite in the last act of attention, which we propose to shew this venerable character.

Mr. Claiborne said, that the proposition for a Mausoleum was calculated to create division. The expence of such a monument would be immense, and would be viewed by many, as a profuse and useless expenditure of the public money.—He believed that the statue, recommended by the old Congress, could be better justified upon principles of economy, and would meet with more general support. Here Mr. Claiborne read from the journals of the old Congress the following resolutions:—

"Resolved, (unanimously, ten states being present) That an equestrian statue of general Washington be erected at the place where the residence of Congress shall be established.

"Resolved, That the statue be of bronze.—The General to be represented in a Roman dress, holding a truncheon in his right hand, and his head encircled with a laurel wreath. The statue to be supported by a marble pedestal, on which are to be represented in basso relievo, the following principal events of the war, in which general Washington commanded in person, viz. The evacuation of Boston—the capture of the Hessians at Trenton—the battle of Princeton—the action of Monmouth—and the surrender of York. On the upper part of the front of the pedestal, to be engraved as follows. The U. States in Congress assembled, ordered this statue to be erected in the year of our Lord 1783, in honor of George Washington, the illustrious commander in chief of the armies of the United States of