

"Lost: 500 Congressmen!"



The "Congressional Burying Ground", Washington, D.C.

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

LOST: 500 Congressmen! Such is the wording of a headline or a want-ad, which might have appeared in the newspapers throughout the country recently, thereby providing newspaper paragraphs with ample material for one of their well-beloved jests at the expense of our representatives in the national legislature. Although such a statement has nothing to do with the 530 men and women who are now in session at Washington, it is true, nevertheless. Ask Anson Wold!

Anson Wold is the man who has just seen his great work, "Biographical Directory of the American Congress—1774-1927," go to press. Mr. Wold, who was brought to Washington from Minnesota 29 years ago by Senator Knute Nelson, was for many years a clerk in the census bureau. Four years ago the congressional joint committee on printing, headed by Senator Moses, of New Hampshire, authorized the publication of a new congressional directory, and Mr. Wold, secretary of the committee, was assigned to the task. For the last four years he and his assistant, F. L. Fridley, have been at work on the gigantic task of compiling the biographies of 9,000 men and women who have served in the two houses of our national legislature. Now their work is done, and within a few weeks libraries throughout the country will receive copies of the work, which libraries say is one of the most used volumes in their collections.

But despite the fact that Mr. Wold and Mr. Fridley have sent out something like 25,000 letters, communicated with persons in nearly every part of the world and toiled unceasingly to make the directory complete in every detail, there are in it 500 biographical "blanks" that they still are trying to fill. The roster of those who served in congress, of course, is complete. But the "blanks" have to do with birthdays, burial places, professions and politics.

Take, for instance, the case of William Wilson. He is listed in the directory thus (and his is the shortest biography in the book) "Wilson, William, a representative from Pennsylvania; was elected to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth congresses (March 4, 1815—March 3, 1819)." Or this one, "Woodruff, Thomas M., a representative from New York; elected as a Democrat to the Twenty-ninth congress (March 4, 1845—March 3, 1847); engaged in the furniture business in New York city, where he died about 1854 or 1855." Here are some other unsolved mysteries: Alexander Wilson was a representative from Virginia in the Ninth and Tenth congresses but neither the date of his birth or the date of his death is known. For that matter it is not even known where he lived in Virginia. Asariah Boody, a representative from New York, died as recently as 1885, and yet his burial place is unknown. Alfred Moore Gatlin, of North Carolina, served in the Eighteenth congress. Then he moved to Florida, which was then a wilderness, and no further trace of him has ever been found.

As an illustration of the difficulties which the two congressional biographers have experienced, take this case: for two years they searched for a granddaughter of Francis Scott Key,

who wrote the "Star-Spangled Banner," hoping that she might be related to or know something about two other Keyes who were Maryland representatives in congress. They found her eventually but learned that she knew nothing about either of the two men. Then there is the case of a distinguished Marylander, John Hanson, who was president of the Continental congress in 1781-82, and who is often referred to as "the first President of the United States," since he served as President under the Articles of Confederation. The directory says that Hanson is buried at Oxon Hill in Prince Georges county, Maryland, but Mr. Wold adds that this may be only tradition, since Hanson's grave has never been found. Maryland historians have tried to solve the mystery without success, and a Boy Scout organization has dedicated itself to make a search and help locate the grave.

Not only has the progress on the directory been hampered by the absence of reliable information but by receiving information which turned out to be misinformation. Frequently this was supplied to them by well-meaning relatives or descendants who had no more authentic data than that offered by family tradition, which is notoriously unreliable. Curiously enough some relatives or descendants refused to supply any information at all, declaring that the congressional relative or ancestor had dishonored the family name. One such case concerned a representative who had withdrawn from congress when his state seceded from the Union at the opening of the Civil war.

Other difficulties are explained in the foreword to the biography by Mr. Wold. Prior to 1809 apparently no effort was made to publish a directory of congress. The earliest known directory is entitled "Places of Abode of the Members of Both Houses of Congress, First Session of the Eleventh Congress." This was a pamphlet of 15 pages, published by R. C. Weightman in 1809, and contains the names and locations of boarding houses, arranged alphabetically, which are followed by names of senators and representatives residing therein.

"Directories, containing added congressional information, compiled and printed under contract by private firms," the foreword continues, "appeared from time to time. Though still printed by contract, the congressional directory for the first session of the Thirtieth congress, issued in 1845 by J. & G. S. Gideon, assumed an official air by bearing the title-page words 'Compiled and published for the use of Congress by the Postmaster of the House of Representatives.' Similar information was carried on titles up to and including the first session of the Thirty-eighth congress.

"At the beginning of the second session of the Thirty-eighth congress, a joint resolution, approved February 14, 1865, was unanimously adopted, providing for the compilation and publication of the first congressional directory under the supervision of the joint committee on public printing. The committee held numerous sessions, obtained and examined like publications issued in foreign countries, and finally decided upon a work similar in essentials to The House of Commons, published in London since 1852.

"Biographical sketches of senators and representatives appeared in 1867 in the first edition of the congressional directory for the second session of

the Fortieth congress. In the compiler's note it is called a 'proof edition,' and has approximately 235 biographies of senators, representatives, and territorial delegates.

"It is referred to as being incomplete, and in 1868 was replaced by a second edition which contained a few more sketches. The directory for the third session, printed in 1869, contains approximately 290 biographies.

"The work of preparing and publishing a biographical directory to include all the preceding congresses was first undertaken by Charles Lanman in 1850. It bears the imposing title, 'Directory of the United States Congress.' There have been at least six subsequent editions, which were intended to give up-to-date and authentic biographical data. Since Mr. Lanman's last volume, however, the succeeding compilers appear to have done little more than to add such information as could be obtained from the congressional directories published during each session of congress. It seems that no effort to correct, revise or perfect the work of former compilers was ever attempted, and thus original errors were perpetuated.

Filling in some of the "blanks" in the new directory would have been easy, though, for the compilers, if all of the dead congressmen had been buried in the congressional cemetery established for that purpose in the early days of the Republic. That cemetery is one of the most interesting and historical spots in the city of Washington today. In 1807 Christ Episcopal church in Washington first established this burying ground, and a few years later it was chosen as a place of burial for senators and representatives who died while in office. Since that time 109 government officials have been buried there and monuments have been erected over a hundred of those graves. In addition 85 cenotaphs have been placed in honor of members of congress who have been buried in other cemeteries.

Up to 1835 practically every member of congress who died in office was buried there. Means of transportation were so limited that few families were able to convey the bodies of their dead from the capital. But as transportation facilities grew better this practice finally ceased. By an act of May 23, 1876, congress abolished the custom of erecting cenotaphs and provided that hereafter monuments should be authorized only when the deceased congressman was actually buried in the cemetery.

The first congressman to be buried was Ezra Darby, of New Jersey, who died January 28, 1808. George Clinton, Vice President of the United States, was first buried there, and years elapsed before his body was taken to his old home in New York. But other notables still sleep there. One of them is Tobias Lear, the faithful private secretary to George Washington. Near by are the graves of Push-Ma-Ta-Ha, the noted Choctaw chief; Scarlet Crow, another famous Indian warrior; William Wirt, an attorney general of the United States, and Abel P. Upshur, a former secretary of state and secretary of the navy. One monument has a particular romantic interest. Beneath it, side by side in a single grave, rest the bodies of Capt. Beverly Kennon and Abel Parker Upshur, victims of an explosion of a gun aboard the American frigate, "Princeton," in 1844. Both were natives of Virginia, and the two men formed a friendship in early youth that lasted until the grave.

Standard Time

The United States Naval observatory has three standard clocks running in constant temperature vaults, electrically wound and sealed to keep the air pressure constant. Meridian circle observations of selected stars are taken regularly on clear nights, and from these observations the errors of standard clocks are determined. The observatory sends out time signals. Correct time is given over radio networks as an advertising device.

There is no day without sorrow.

Save Freight Costs

A representative of the Australian dairy industry has been making a tour of the world in the interests of the Australian business men. He is now in this country moving through the West and on his way to Canada. While in England he took the opportunity to confer with English business men about the feasibility of shipping butter to that country minus its water content. This plan, if adopted, will

mean that the Australians will save more than \$1,000,000 in freight costs during a year. The price of the butter could be lowered and the market would be increased. With the water extracted the butter would be even less apt to acquire bacteria of a harmful nature, he said.

Australia ships 40,000 tons of butter to England and consumes 80,000 tons herself. Butter manufacturing is one of the large industries of the country.

Community Building

Indiana Towns Planning to Reduce Fire Loss

Organization of the Indiana Fire Waste council, as a means of concentrating the fight against fire, has been announced by B. R. Inman, chief of the educational division in the office of the state fire marshal.

Operating as an advisory group, the council will co-operate with local authorities in the organization of subordinate councils in the various incorporated cities and towns of the state. The plan, Inman said, contemplates continuation of the present educational work through the public schools. In many places the councils will be built around local civic organizations interested in reduction of the toll from fires. After assisting in the organization of local units, the state department will turn its attention to co-operating with the local councils in arranging practical programs and surveys.

The Indiana council will work in co-operation with the national body bearing the same name and the National Fire Protection association. Part of the work of the state body will be to promote contests in the different subsidiary councils and to provide suitable trophies for the originators of new ideas for reducing the waste from fires. In laying the groundwork for the state council, Inman has had the co-operation and support of a large number of state leaders in fire prevention work.

San Francisco Citizens Recognize Their Duty

Sometimes we are almost led to believe that the orderly development of American cities may be furthered through the unselfish aid of citizens themselves. An urge in that direction is the reminder from the National Municipal Review that San Francisco recently has been saved the trouble of costly condemnation procedure in the interest of better planning by the voluntary offers of the property owners to replat their holdings on their own account. They apparently made a willing response to a suggestion to that effect from the city's planning authorities. Now the way has been opened at only nominal expense, which the city assumed, for proper planning of considerable areas. It is intimated that the same thing might be done in cities generally. We hope so. There's the moral value of the example, anyway. Ultimately, city residents, especially property owners, may be able to see that by advancing their own interests, they are advancing their own interests.—Kansas City Star.

Ground Scheme Important

Your home represents a definite opportunity, an opportunity to make it something exceptionally fine. The greatest opportunity comes at the beginning before the building is designed and started. Here is the finest chance to work out a scheme offering the most in convenience, attractiveness and general satisfaction from the standpoint of both the house and grounds.

That is the purpose of the landscape plan. The landscape plan provides a program for orderly development in which all the requirements for fitness and beauty have been satisfied to a degree possible only when approached in this comprehensive manner.

In making a plan, a choice is made before money is expended. This is the safest, the surest, and usually, the least expensive way in the end. This is the main value of the plan. The results depend upon it.

Community Yards

This city might profitably study a scheme that has already been favored in many populated cities of installing "community" yards. The idea behind this plan is to abolish unsightly sheds in back yards, substituting a general square; upon this "community" square gates open from the back yards of the various tenements. In it a building is erected in which is placed an electric washing and wringing machine for communal use. Facilities for heating water and for ironing are also provided.—Montreal Daily Star.

Work for Beautiful Roads

Beautification of the grounds surrounding every home in the state was made the campaign goal of the Illinois Nurserymen's association at a session of the annual convention. Spokesmen of the group pointed out that the European rural and urban landscape is beautiful because of the care bestowed by householders on their properties.

Citizens Must Help Beautify

Clubwomen throughout New Jersey have started a campaign to "make New Jersey's roads beautiful." A petition was sent to the state board of highway commissioners asking that part of the \$150,000,000 appropriated for building and improving highways "be used in the artistic development of the state's road-building program."

Where "Yes Men" Fail

It is complained that we have too many "yes men," who assent to everything said to them, but there are not enough to say "yes" when you go around seeking for help to carry on the community causes.—Garibaldi (Ore.) News.

Motorists Slow Down in German Small Towns

The typical German highway is full of curves and sharp turns. It proceeds from one country village to the next, going through the main streets of every town and hamlet where traffic is frequently blocked by all sorts of hindrances. As villages are usually only a short distance apart, the time for getting through them often nearly equals the time spent traveling at high speed between them.

Outside the village proper, however, the road may be an excellent one kept up by the provincial government. Inside the village boundary the road becomes the main street, paved with the roughest kind of cobbles but quite satisfactory to the inhabitants, who possess no automobiles of their own.

The villagers wish to keep their streets rough and crooked in order to slow down fast automobiles and so prevent injuries to geese, pigs and chickens, and possibly to induce motorists to stop in the village.—New York Times.

Tailor Too Sanguine Concerning Mr. Goad

Commander Richard E. Byrd said at a luncheon in Washington: "One thing that our various transatlantic flights has proved is that the weather bureau can't forecast Atlantic weather." Commander Byrd shook his head. He went on: "The weather bureau misread the signs. They prognosticate all wrong. They're like the poor tailor. 'A poor tailor rang Scattergood Goad's bell and asked if Mr. Goad was in.' 'Yes, sir; step this way, sir,' the young footman said. 'He's in the library.' 'Thank goodness,' said the tailor. 'I'm going to see my money at last.' 'Oh, don't make that mistake, sir,' said the footman. 'If Mr. Goad had any money he wouldn't be in.'"

Resented Uncalled-for Slam at Dead Brother

Ralph W. Smith of the bureau of standards is conducting for the government a nation-wide investigation of taximeters, and he said in Washington the other day: "This investigation doesn't mean that taxicabs, like taxidermists, skin you, and the men who take offense at us fail to understand. In fact, they're like Smith. 'A man came back to the home town after thirty years in New York and, of course, he inquired affectionately about this old friend and that.' 'And Bill Smith?' he said. 'How is dear old Bill Smith getting along?' 'Bill,' said John Smith, a brother—'Bill is dead.' 'What? Bill dead?' sighed the visitor. 'Ah, me, peace to his ashes.' 'How dare you?' said John Smith hotly. 'Bill was as good a chap as ever breathed.'"

Maintains School Work

Having reared a family, taught school and helped others to educate themselves, Mrs. Lucy E. Woodhead, at seventy-five years of age, is attending Oklahoma A. and M. college, pursuing work leading to a master's degree. When her daughter Madge was eleven years old, Mrs. Woodhead started renewing her school days with her. Up through high school and college they were in the same class. They were graduated from the Emporia (Kan.) State Teachers' college recently.

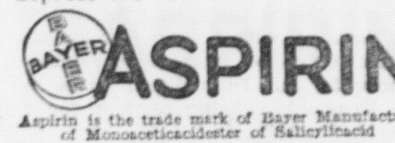
In 1930

"Can't produce your scenario." "Why not?" "In your big scene the cowboy rides his horse into a saloon." "What of that?" "We can reproduce the saloon, but where are we gonna get a horse?"

When people lived in log cabins, they were more romantic. Romance always goes with discomfort.

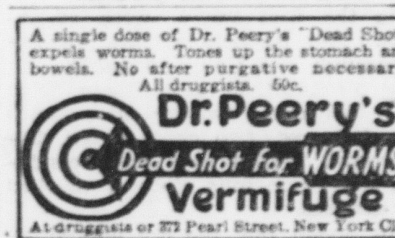


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Of Greater Feminine Interest

The professor was showing a young woman the heavens through his telescope. He directed her gaze to a planet which he told her was Venus. "Oh, isn't it perfectly lovely!" she exclaimed—and then, "Now please show me Adonis."

Between Artists

Von Smeer—You actors usually overestimate your ability. De Foote Light—Yes! I know of several who imagine they can play "Hamlet" as well as I can.

One has enough bad luck to make any bad luck superstition come true.



KILLS—Flies—Mosquitoes—Bedbugs—Roaches—Moths—Ants—Fleas Waterbugs—Crickets and many other insects. Write for educational booklet, McCormick & Co., Baltimore, Md.



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