

Edward Bradley

(Apr 1808 – 5 Aug 1847)

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989

A Representative from Michigan; born in East Bloomfield, Ontario County, N.Y., in April 1808; attended the common schools and the local academy in Canandaigua; associate judge of the common pleas court of Ontario County, N.Y. in 1836; moved to Detroit, Mich., in 1839; studied law; was admitted to the bar in 1841 and commenced practice in Marshall, Calhoun County, Mich.; prosecuting attorney of Calhoun County in 1842; member of the State senate in 1842 and 1843; elected as a Democrat to the 30th Congress and served from March 4, 1847 until his death on August 5, 1847, in New York City while enroute to Washington, D.C., before the assembling of Congress; interment in Congressional Cemetery, December 1847.

The National Intelligencer, December 30, 1847

SENATE

Obituary

A message was received from the House of Representatives announcing the death of Mr. Edward Bradley, Representative elect from Michigan; when Mr. Felch rose and addressed the Senate as follows:

Mr. President: The announcement just received from the House of Representatives arrests the attention of the Senate in the midst of its ordinary business, with the melancholy tidings of death. Again and again, since the commencement of the present session,, similar announcements have called us to mourn, with the country, the decease of distinguished members of the present Congress, and to pay the tribute of respect to the memory of departed associates. If the melancholy expression of our feelings here cannot restore the deceased to life, nor recall to a seat in these halls the trusted agent of a confiding constituency, nor restore to the domestic circle its stay and its support, it may at least show that we cherish a high regard for the memory of the departed; that we appreciate his virtues and his abilities, and sympathize with those who, united with the deceased by closer ties, have felt even more keenly than we this sad dispensation of Providence.

Edward Bradley, whose death is thus announced, was born in the county of Ontario, in the State of New York, in April, 1808. At the age of twenty-six years he was appointed an Associate Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in his native county. Previous to this he had moved in the humbler walks of private life. Engaged chiefly in agricultural pursuits, with few advantages of early education, there was little in the influences by which he was surrounded to kindle his ambition or to stimulate to those unceasing mental efforts which alone can secure high attainments and give assurance of future eminent. But his was a mind of no ordinary energies. Availing himself of every opportunity for improvement, he gathered knowledge from every source within his reach, acquiring strength in his struggles with adversity, and accumulating in his contact with the world, the rich treasures of mental efficiency and practical information. The appreciation of his merits by his friends prompted him to still more ardent efforts, and a taste for forensic discussion induced him to become a devoted student of the law. In 1839 he removed to Michigan. Having been admitted to the bar, he devoted himself to the business of the legal profession, and soon acquired the reputation of an able lawyer and an eloquent advocate. In 1842 he was called by the suffrages of the district in which he resided to a seat in the State Senate, and ably and faithfully performed his duties in that station during his term. In 1846 he was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the thirtieth Congress. This last evidence of the

high esteem in which he was held among those who knew him best was scarcely received when disease marked him for a victim. In July he left the place of his residence, intending to seek the restoration of his health by a protracted journey to the capital, and a temporary sojourn on the seacoast. The end of this journey he was destined never to reach. He arrived in the city of New York on the last day of July, and on the morning of the fifth day of August he was numbered with the dead. She who came to administer that aid and consolation which his debility required, returned with the lifeless remains of her husband to her stricken family—the widowed to the fatherless.

I am aware, Mr. President, that, in alluding in this place to the virtues of the deceased, I speak to those who have had no opportunity, by personal intercourse, to enjoy the friendship or to know his worth. He was called to the world of spirits when about to assume his position among the Representatives of this people. By his death, his constituents have been deprived of the services of an able representative, and the country of a faithful guardian of the public weal.

Himself the architect of his own fortunes, his sympathies were with the struggling, the poor, and the oppressed. Ardent in his feelings and strong in his attachments, he was nevertheless tolerant to an opponent and forgiving to an enemy. At the bar, in the legislature hall, and in the popular assembly, his good sense and strong reasoning faculties always commanded attention and respect, and by his eloquence he carried persuasion and conviction to the hearts of his audience.

If, in common with his fellow men, he had his faults, they were trivial and easily to be forgiven; while his virtues, prominent and numerous, will long be the theme of praise, and his early death the subject of heartfelt sorrow.

In token of respect to his memory, I submit the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Senate has received with deep sensibility the message from the House of Representatives announcing the death of the Hon. Edward Bradley, a Representative from the State of Michigan.

Resolved, That the members of the Senate, from a sincere desire of showing every mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

Resolved, That, as a further testimony of respect for the memory of the deceased, the Senate do now adjourn. And then the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Immediately after the reading of the Journal—

Mr. Stewart, of Michigan, rose and said: Mr. Speaker: The melancholy duty has been assigned to me of announcing to the House the death of my lamented friend, the Hon. Edward Bradley, late a member elect of the present Congress from the second district of Michigan.

He was born in the town of East Bloomfield, in the county of Ontario, and State of New York, in April 1808. At the age of twenty-six he was appointed an Associate Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of that county, the bar of which then numbered among its members several gentlemen of distinguished legal reputation.

The forensic displays of such men could not fail to produce upon a mind like Mr. Bradley's a powerful influence, and it is therefore probable that his choice of the legal profession may date from this period of his life.

At the expiration of his term of office, he removed to Michigan, and in July, 1839, located at Marshall, in the county of Calhoun, and entered upon the practice of his profession. His advancement was rapid, and he very soon ranked among the first at that bar—a position which all acquainted with its members will concede was as difficult of attainment as it was honorable to its possessor.

Mr. Bradley's early pursuits having been exclusively agricultural, his feelings, sympathies, and consequently his interests, were naturally and strongly identified with the producing classes. To become a general favorite, however, it was only necessary that he should be generally known, and in 1842 he

was elected from his district to the State Senate. Though chosen to fill a vacancy, and serving but one year, he acquired the reputation of a powerful debater, a sound legislator, and a faithful and able representative. His great and varied powers of oratory were, however, best adapted to popular assemblies. In those his depth of thought, his force and style of reasoning, combined with his inimitable sarcasm, told with prodigious effect; and hence in a political canvass as conducted in the West, he was an able and efficient champion.

At the general election in 1846 he was chosen a Representative to the present Congress; but early in the succeeding spring it became but too evident that the disease which finally terminated his existence had seized him with an unyielding grasp.. Favored with medical treatment of the most skillful character, he finally, after a severe and painful illness, partially recovered; and, having perfected his arrangements, left home, accompanied by his wife, to enter upon his duties here. The terrible ravages of disease were distinctly marked, and the fears of his friends were consequently increased. But, Mr. Speaker,

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast;”

and, guided by its seductive illusions, Mr. Bradley felt confident that traveling, change of climate, and, more than all, the eminent medical skill he should employ in New York, where he contemplated a protracted delay for that purpose, would restore him to health and happiness.

It is written, sir, that “Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery; he cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.”

This melancholy truth was strikingly exemplified in the case of my late excellent friend. He reached New York on the 30th of July, and died on the morning of the 5th of August. In his death, in the eloquent language of another, “the poor have lost a friend, the bar an ornament, the people a champion, the councils of the nation a statesman, whilst his widow and children have lost a husband and a father.

“Thus vanish mortal dreams.”

In token of respect, sir, I offer the following resolutions:

Resolved, That this House has heard with deep sensibility the announcement of the death of the Hon. Edward Bradley, late a member elected of the present Congress from the second district of Michigan.

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

Resolved, That the proceedings of this House in relation to the death of the Hon. Edward Bradley be communicated to the family of the deceased by the Clerk.

Resolved, That this House, as a further mark of respect for his memory, do now adjourn. The House then adjourned.