

Hon. Barker Burnell

(30 Jan 1798 – 15 Jun 1843)

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989

A Representative from Maine; born in Nantucket, Mass., January 30, 1798; member of the State house of representatives in 1819; member of the Massachusetts constitutional convention in 1820; served in the State senate in 1824 and 1825; delegate to the Whig National Convention at Harrisburg, Pa. in 1840; elected as a Whig to the 27th and 28th Congresses and served from March 4, 1841 until his death in Washington, D.C. June 15, 1843; interment in the Congressional Cemetery; reinterment in Prospect Hill Cemetery, Nantuckett, Mass., in 1844.

The National Intelligencer, Saturday, June 17, 1843

Death of the Hon. Barker Burnell, M.C. of Massachusetts

With all the sympathy which high worth and sense and private relations the most amiable can inspire, it is our painful duty to communicate to the public the loss of this excellent public servant and most exemplary man. He expired at his lodgings in this city, at a few minutes before 10 o'clock, night before last, at the age of 45 years, a victim, in the very prime of mature life and of what seemed a vigorous frame, to the painful and wasting disease of consumption; which first declared itself, in a decisive form, just at the close of the late session of Congress; and has ever since held him here in its fatal grasp, far from the consolations of home, the soothing of that general affection with which he would there have been surrounded, and everything that could soften the sure approaches of death, except the kindness of a circle of friends who had learned here to know his value, the still warmer attentions of a few associates of his early life, and that one consolation, dearer and surer than all other human ones--the devoted care, the he unexhausted tenderness and courage of one to whom his earliest attachment had united him, and whose love supported him to the last of the life which she had adorned and blest. A native, and all his life an inhabitant of that hardy island (Nantucket) where yet linger in perhaps greater vigor than anywhere else the virtues of the New England race, Mr. Burnell was an admirable specimen of that remarkable lineage. Without the slightest tinge of their austere spirit, the gloom and the hardness of mind upon which their first colonists bordered, he had their force of character, their indomitable adhesion to what they believed right. To their robust, their muscular practical sense, which everywhere makes them serviceable in public affairs and successful in private ones, he joined a truth and a simplicity of heart the most entire. No man had ever better preserved the integrity, the faith, the disinterestedness of private life, in mixing with those ambitious schemes which usually make such havoc among men's individual virtues. He came into public life as alone one should come, without a reproach; he remained in it, to the last, that admirable thing, an uncorrupt politician.

Such were the qualities of which we know that he had ever maintained the repute among his own people, or of which we have ourselves been able to mark the display here upon a theatre where, to observant eyes, no man can pass for what he is not. At home, his excellent abilities and the confidence which his just and sagacious mind created in all about him, had rendered him, almost in his youth, the common umpire of the difficulties and disputes of all his neighbors and townsmen. Men who had quarreled, or who could not agree upon their rights, said, "Come, we will leave it to Barker Burnell;" and they were sure to have justice done, without the intervention of the law. This general esteem of his fellow-citizens introduced him, betimes, into public life. At only 22 he was already a member of the House of Representatives in his native Commonwealth. A few years later he passed into the Senatorial body; where, in spite of his youth, his excellent purposes and soundness of judgment soon made him a

leading member. In the two bodies he served most usefully and honorably some ten years. He sat also in the Convention which framed the present Constitution of Massachusetts; took an active and influential part in the Harrisburg Convention and the great civil revolution of 1840; and was afterwards returned a member of Congress, to which he had been again elected this spring. In the last named body his speeches have not been frequent, but have always won him the praise of sense, usefulness and knowledge of his subject, rather than the reputation of mere rhetoric. He came, however, with an influence and a weight more felt than any which mere speeches can get or keep; and few men from his quarter possessed, while his health allowed him to exert himself, more power in the body to which he belonged.

Upon the close of a life of such rectitude Religion could scarcely fail to shed calmness, courage, and hope. The rational but warm faith in which he had all his days walked lent patience to his bodily sufferings and the manliest composure to the last act of life. He died as one must die who had slighted no duty and felt every affection--with the regrets of a husband, a father, and a friend; but with the courage of a man and the confidence of a Christian.

The Funeral of the deceased will take place on Sunday afternoon, at 4 o'clock, from Mrs. McDaniel's near the corner of 4 1/2 street and Penn. avenue. All officers of Government, civil, judicial, and military, the Corporate authorities of Washington, and citizens, are invited to attend.

The National Intelligencer, Monday, June 19, 1843

Funeral of the Hon. Barker Burnell

Order of Procession for the Funeral of the Hon. Barker Burnell, a Representative in the Congress of the United States from the State of Massachusetts

The pall-bearers, mourners, and all others wishing to pay the last tribute of respect to the deceased, will attend at Mrs. McDaniel's, near the corner of Four and a half street and Pennsylvania avenue, at four o'clock p.m. on Sunday, the 18th instant, where the funeral service will be performed, and immediately thereafter the procession will move to the Congress Burial Grounds in the following order:

The Reverend Clergy

Physicians who attended the deceased

Pall-bearers	C	Pall-bearers
Hon. John P. Van Ness	O	Hon. Albion K. Parris
Hon. Elisha Whittlesey	R	Hon. Thos. H. Crawford
Gen. George Gibson	P	Com. Lewis Warrington
Hon. Thomas H. Blake	S	Hon. Selah R. Hobbie
	E	

The family and friends of the deceased

The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives

Members of Congress who may be in the city

The officers of the House of Representatives

The officers of the Senate

(The President of the United States absent from the city)

The Heads of Departments

The Diplomatic Corps

The Judges of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Columbia, with the Marshal and all other Judicial Officers

The Comptrollers, Auditors, and other Civil Officers of the Government, and

The Officers of the Army and Navy at the seat of Government

The Mayors, Members, and Officers of the Corporation of Washington
The Freeman's Vigilant Total Abstinence Society of Washington, of which the deceased was a
distinguished member
Citizens and Strangers.
Friday, June 16, 1843.