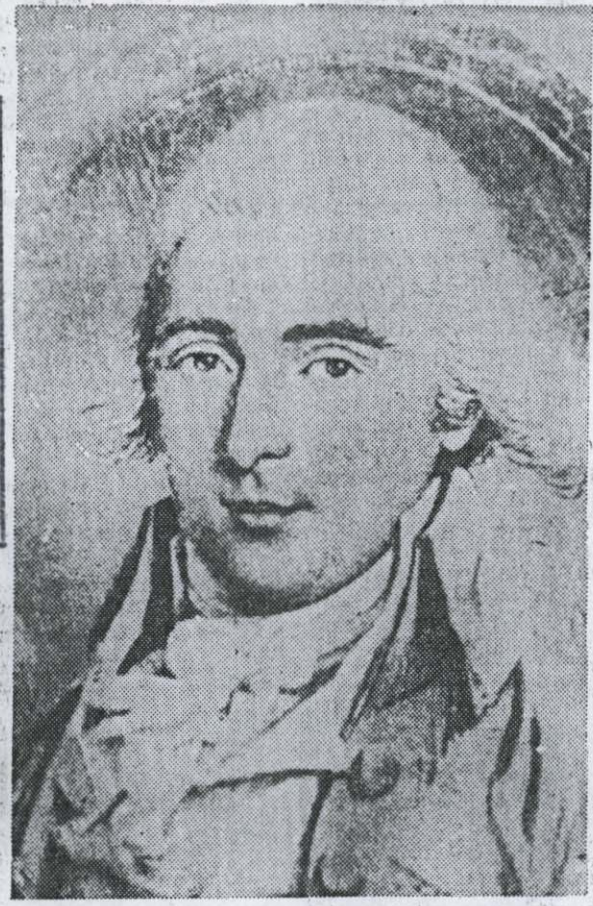


Va. VA 0101

Nov. 2, 1975

Wash. Post

Prince William Public Library
MANASSAS, VA.



By Linda Wheeler—The Washington Post

William Grayson was one of state's first two senators.

Grayson's cement-covered tomb is located on Omer B. Fisher's property south of Woodbridge.

Plan to Restore Patriot's Grave Stirs Opposition

VIRGINIANA FILE
A. Stearns
S. H. S.
Grayson's Tomb

By Donnel Nunes
Washington Post Staff Writer

Until a few months ago, no one but Omer B. Fisher cared enough about the 185-year-old Prince William County grave of William Grayson, a patriot and one of Virginia's first two U.S. senators, to protect it from vandals or decay, and that was the way Fisher liked it.

Then, earlier this year, prodded by the approaching Bicentennial, the county's

historical groups voted to request \$12,500 from the county to restore the tomb so that it would be attractive to visitors.

It was a decision that angered Fisher, who owns the land on which Grayson was born and buried.

"We've had a good lifestyle here," said Fisher, who is not related to Grayson and bought the property with the grave in the early 1960s. "We don't want people thinking they can

just walk up on our property anytime."

Fisher said the pressure on him to grant permission to allow visitors on the property, located in the Marumsco Hills subdivision south of Woodbridge, is subtle but persistent. "It's been 200 years and we just don't want to be shoved," he said.

The restoration of the Grayson tomb is not the only Prince William Bicentennial restoration project that is

meeting some opposition from land owners on whose property lies a grave or landmark of historical interest, according to Sandra Kinsey, county Bicentennial coordinator.

The unmarked grave of Robert E. Lee's grandfather, also south of Woodbridge, lies on a tract owned by the Hawaiian Steamship Co. A \$5,000 restoration project there is being held in abeyance while the company

decides whether to allow public access, according to Mrs. Kinsey.

"I have a feeling that some people are getting a bit more excited about the historical facts than they warrant," said Fisher. "Look at Grayson. He didn't sleep in the same houses as Washington. Maybe he did something important because they named a county after him, but they went all

See GRAVE, A22, Col.1

Grave Restoration Plan Meets Opposition

GRAVE, From A19

The way to the other end of the state to do it," Grayson County touches North Carolina and Tennessee in Southwest Virginia.

Grayson was born in 1736 on the Belle Air estate where Fisher now lives with his family. Grayson practiced law in Dumfries and in 1774 he formed a militia group in Prince William. He later served as a military aide to Washington.

Later he served in the Continental Congress.

According to a locally produced history of Prince William County, Grayson was the author of a clause prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territories that was designed as a concession to Northern sentiment.

That account is discounted in Scribner's Dictionary of American Biography, which claims that Grayson only approved of the clause.

Grayson apparently was not motivated by antislavery feeling in whatever action he took. He wrote to James Monroe, a fellow Virginian, that he agreed to it to prevent tobacco and indigo from being made on the northwest side of the Ohio" and for "several other political reasons." Tobacco and indigo were crops grown almost exclusively in the South and much of their cultivation depended upon slave labor.

Grayson, along with Richard Henry Lee, the great grandfather of Robert E. Lee, both opposed the federal constitution. Grayson told

Virginians during the debate on whether the state should ratify it that the new constitution would make the North the dominant power in the Union.

Following its approval, Virginia chose both Grayson and Lee as its first senators. Subsequent federal actions, which Grayson felt supported his earlier fears, led him to write Patrick Henry that the South was now destined to become "the milch cow of the Union."

Grayson was the third child of Benjamin Grayson and

Susana Monroe, the aunt of James Monroe. He married Eleanor Smallwood, sister of Thomas Jefferson's friend William Smallwood.

Described as skilled in debate, he was said to have excelled "in fascinating manners, in humor, in wit" and "in an almost unrivalled play of the intellectual powers."

He died at Dumfries during the second session of Congress.

"He was a relatively major figure in Virginia history," said Dr. Henry Ward, a

University of Richmond historian. "But you have a problem, because when compared to Washington and Jefferson (both Virginians) all the rest seem like secondary figures."

Grayson was buried on a hillside overlooking the Belle Air fields. Today those fields are covered with single-family homes, and the gravesite sits on about 4 acres of land owned by the Fishers—all that is left of the original 400-acres-plus plantation.

The county has agreed to pay for the restoration, but

only on the condition that the public is granted some form of access to Fisher's land, according to county officials.

"You just can't go invading private property," said Mrs. Kinsey. "That's certainly not what the county wants to do." She said that if Fisher rejects the county's restoration proposal the historical groups probably will try to build the memorial to Grayson elsewhere.

"It's sad that it's taken this long for anyone to get interested in protecting the grave," said Mrs. Kinsey.

Meditation Law Stirs Little Enthusiasm

By Marjorie Hyer
Washington Post Staff Writer

A new Connecticut law requiring one minute of "silent meditation" in public schools each day is producing little enthusiasm among religious leaders, wariness among civil libertarians and some confusion among students.

In effect since Oct. 1, the measure is the latest effort by proponents of school prayer to circumvent Supreme Court decisions a decade ago that ruled devotional exercises in public schools unconstitutional.

Mary Ambler, of the Connecticut Council of Churches, said that the mandatory one minute of silence offers "hardly enough time for making it a relevant period of personal devotion."

Mrs. Ambler, the council's director for social and legislative affairs, said that in the four weeks the new law has been in effect, Connecticut churches "have been

relatively silent" about its effect.

A spokesman for the Connecticut Catholic Conference said the new law "seems to have had very little effect."

An Associated Press check of how the pupils themselves used the minute elicited a variety of responses.

"I was thinking about a big exam . . . trying to memorize something," Charles Gripper, 14, of New Haven, replied as to how he used the minute.

Cindy Bosco, 14, of Winsted, complained that "all it is is one minute of staring at the walls."

Classmate Frank Sherwood

said he tries to use the time to "go into transcendental meditation, but I need about 5 to 10 minutes. Just as I'm getting into it, the bell rings."

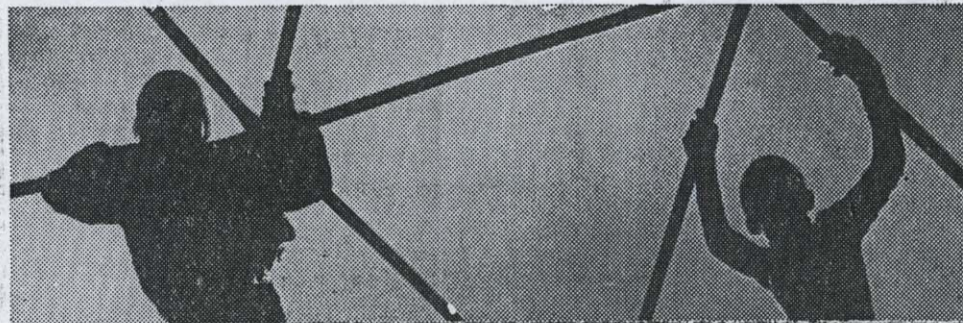
Connecticut Sen. Joseph J. Fauliso, who introduced the measure into the legislature last spring, said he was "very satisfied" with the way the new law is working, although, he added, "it doesn't go as far as I wanted to go."

The law Fauliso originally introduced called for a daily minute for prayer in the schools. It was changed to meditation to bring it into harmony with the Supreme Court decision.

The present law requires the schools to provide the one-minute period at the opening of each school day but does not stipulate what use students must make of it.

Civil libertarians have been "informally monitoring" the implementation of the new law, said William Olds, head of the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, to make certain school officials do not interpret the period to students as a time for prayer.

Proponents of the measure hope, however, that just such suggestions will come to the youngsters from parents and religion leaders.



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