

At Winant Memorial Portrait Unveiling



House Speaker Lane Dwinell sets the stage for the unveiling, before a joint legislative session yesterday, of the John G. Winant memorial portrait. Left to right: Acting Senate President Charles F. Hartnett, Brown Company President

Lawrence F. Whittemore, former New Hampshire Episcopal Bishop John T. Dallas, Speaker Dwinell, portrait artist Miss Ruth L. Berry, Governor Adams and House chaplain, Rev. Austin H. Reed.

Joint Convention

The Honorable Senate came in and the two branches being in convention:

Prayer was offered by Bishop John T. Dallas of Lee, New Hampshire.

Eternal Father: 'Strong to save, whose arm" doth rule the land and sky and sea, we praise they name for all Thy mercies. We beg that though wilt ever bless our country and that Thou wilt ever give us the leadership of men and women who revere Thee.

This day we gather together to remember one in whom Thou didst plant a dream of service to the State, to the Nation and to mankind. Help us to keep in mind his humanness and his belief in people of every sort. May we too, listen to those who are in want, to those who have seen a

vision of the glory that awaits humanity when Thy Kingdom shall come on earth. May we the friends and neighbors of him who was our governor and who represented America to the world always aim to keep “the faith of our fathers.”

Grant, O God, that this likeness of one of our citizens be a symbol to keep us at work, day by day, in the hope of the peace of a new world tomorrow. Amen.

The following program was presented:

Presentation of the

JOHN GILBERT WINANT

MEMORIAL PORTRAIT

Presentation of the Portrait by the Artist

RUTH L. BERRY

Acceptance in behalf of the State of New Hampshire by

GOVERNOR SHERMAN ADAMS

Address – JOHN GILBERT WINANT

by LAWRENCE F. WHITTEMORE

John Gilbert Winant was born in New York City, February 23, 1889. He came from a well-to-do family and in the course of his education was sent to St. Paul’s School here at Concord.

New Hampshire exercised its peculiar charm on the young man and ever after coming here as a boy, New Hampshire was his acknowledged home and the place he loved best of all others.

In 1912 he came back to New Hampshire and to St. Paul’s as teacher of English and as Assistant Rector. He was not content to confine his activities to teaching school, however, and since he had decided to make New Hampshire his home he characteristically took an interest in all phases of its life. He became a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives in the 1917 session at the age of 28.

Leaving that session he went to Paris and there enlisted as a private in the American Expeditionary Forces. His purpose in going to Paris seems to have been a determination to get into the fight and not risk the possibility of being sidetracked into some teaching capacity which would cause him to stay in the comparative safety of this country.

Although he enlisted as a private, he advanced rapidly and became Commander of the Eighth Aero Squadron. He was discharged as a Captain at the end of the war. I have talked with some of the men who knew him when he was a combat flier in France. Their statement to me has been that he was never an expert flier but his devotion to duty and grim determination made him an excellent fighter. Such was his high purpose that he volunteered for desperate missions and the fact that he survived is something of a miracle.

On coming back to New Hampshire he served as a member of the 1921 State Senate, but returned to the House for the 1923 session. In the election of 1924 he was elected Governor, having put on a spectacular personal campaign in the primary in opposition to the candidate of the party organization, Colonel Frank Knox. Incidentally, the two men finally became good friends when Mr. Winant was Ambassador to Great Britain and Knox was Secretary of the Navy.

There are many persons now in the state services and in public life in New Hampshire who remember John Winant's first term as Governor. His administration was marked by a sincere and vigorous effort to serve the interests of the State without respect to who might have been pleased or displeased. While at that time he was not extremely popular with the so-called "Old Guard Republicans," in subsequent years many of them became his staunch friends and admirers. In fact, George H. Moses, the great conservative leader of those days, finally came to express his friendship and admiration for John Winant's services to the nation during World War II.

Governor Winant was re-elected in 1930 and in 1932, being the first person for many years to serve three terms as Chief Executive of the State.

To me, at least, the most significant of many services to the State during his second and third terms was his courageous action whereby the State met an emergency situation by financing the pulpwood needs of the Brown Company, enabling that company to avoid liquidation. The legal and constitutional manner of effecting this result was not definitely clear when the need first arose, but Winant brought about a practical method of meeting the situation through consultation with many persons of good will in the State who were interested in saving the North Country's most important industry. Since that time, and it is hoped for generations to come, New Hampshire has and will benefit from this unusual action in the face of a great emergency. A weaker character might not have dared to take the initial responsibility.

When he retired from the governorship in 1934 the State and Nation were in the bottom of a desperate depression. It is evident that he decided then to risk his popularity as a Republican by accepting appointment by a Democratic national administration. He then chose to meet the national emergency as a citizen rather than as a member of one political party.

He served as Chairman of the Textile Inquiry Board in 1934, Assistant Director of the International Labor Office in Geneva from 1935-1939, and Director after 1939. In the interim, he became the first Chairman of the Social Security Board in 1935 and served as such during the years when the present Social Security System of the nation was evolved. This task was one

which particularly fitted his temperament and his desires. His exhaustive studies of all that had gone before in the field finally produced the system which has so far withstood the test of time. It is a remarkable tribute to his work that neither political party has suggested a change in the system since that time. Whatever faults there have been with Social Security have been faults of administration, not of original concept.

In taking the steps which he took in 1934 to join the Democratic administration in important work, he realized, I am sure, that he probably was closing the door to future political advancement. It is characteristic of John Winant that he made the choice in the time of emergency and did not thereafter voice or feel regret as to his decision.

It may be said of his decision and his deportment at this time, as was said by Edmund Burke of Charles James Fox in 1783. Fox had introduced a bill into the House of Commons calling for a searching investigation of Indian Affairs. Such investigation affected the pocket books of many of the great families of England and was displeasing to the King.

“He has put to hazard his case, his security, his interest, his power, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people whom he has never seen. This is the road that all heroes have trod before him...(In his faults here is) nothing to extinguish the fires of great virtues...no mixture of deceit, of hypocrisy, of pride, of ferocity, of complexional despotism, or want of feeling for the distress of mankind...”

John Winant, in spite of his affluent background, had a tremendous interest and faith in people in ordinary and less-than-ordinary financial circumstances. I have reason to know of the sincerity of his interest because of my knowledge of the many, many instances where he gave of himself and his property to people whom he felt needed it more than he. In this respect he carried the Christian injunction “Give all thy goods to feed the poor” further than any person I have ever known.

In 1941 he was appointed Ambassador to Great Britain. That country was staggering under terrific onslaught of German might which was characterized as the Blitzkrieg.

To go to London and stay there at that time was hazardous in the extreme, but John Winant stuck to his post, working hard and effectively to meet the desperate situation brought about by World War II. He forswore the usual luxuriant living of an Ambassador and lived without ostentation in three rooms with one servant. His contribution to the spirit of sacrifice of the country to he was accredited, warmed the hearts of Englishmen everywhere.

I remember his telling me on one of his visits to this country that time about forgetting to tell his housekeeper that Winston Churchill was coming to dinner. When the Prime Minister arrived there was nothing in the house to eat. This happening was afterwards confirmed to me by Churchill on his most recent visit to this country when he came to Boston and I had an opportunity to talk with him.

On the occasion of his retirement as Ambassador to Great Britain in 1946 many important people spoke generously of his great service. I will quote but one: Winston Churchill who said, "He is a friend of Britain but he is more than a friend of Britain, he is friend of justice, freedom, truth."

Those who knew John Winant will realize that in spite of his proclivity for friendship, his intense love of people, and his burning desire to right wrongs and to correct situations, he really walked alone.

Here in New Hampshire sometimes his faults have been overemphasize. That he had them all who knew him must admit, but they were human faults and vastly overshadowed by his sincerity of purpose, devotion to duty, extraordinary kindness and great humility, John Winant not only walked alone, but he walked humbly before God and man.

From the Journal of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, pages 946-150, Wednesday, July 25, 1951, January Session 1951 – Special Session 1950.

Program

Invocation - BISHOP JOHN T. DALLAS

Presentation of the portrait by the artist

RUTH L. BERRY

Acceptance in behalf of the State of New Hampshire by

GOVERNOR SHERMAN ADAMS

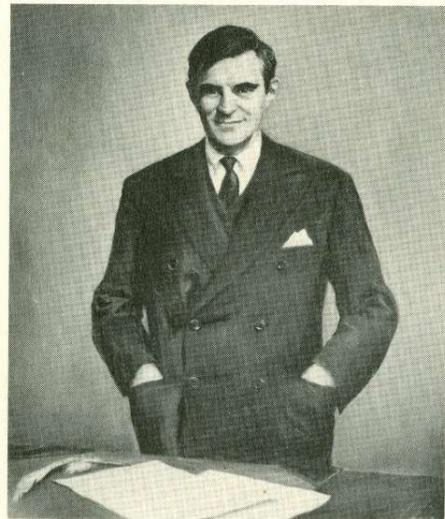
Address - JOHN GILBERT WINANT

by LAWRENCE F. WHITTEMORE

Presiding Officer

LANE DWINELL

Speaker of the House of Representatives



JOHN GILBERT WINANT

Governor of New Hampshire

1925-1927 1931-1935

Ambassador to Great Britain

1941 - 1946

The Artist

Miss Ruth L. Berry of Lexington, Mass., is the artist who produced the portrait being presented to New Hampshire today.

Not a New Hampshire native, she nevertheless acquired a love for our State when, upon getting her master's degree in art from Radcliffe, she taught all art courses at St. Mary's-in-the-Mountains at Littleton.

She studied under recognized experts in the field of portrait painting in many sections of the country including Boston, New York, and Washington.

Miss Berry has done the portrait of another prominent New Hampshire man whom we have with us today, former Episcopal Bishop John T. Dallas.

John G. Winant

Portrait Acceptance Committee

Lane Dwinell

Fred T. Wadleigh

Blaylock Atherton

Norman A. McMeekin

Edward Ellingwood

Presentation

of the

JOHN GILBERT WINANT

MEMORIAL PORTRAIT

Joint Session

The Governor, the Executive Council

and the General Court of the

State of New Hampshire

July 25, 1951

11:00 a. m.

State House

Concord, N. H.

Memorial Program and news clipping from the Governor Lane Dwinell Collection, New Hampshire State Archives.