

RESOLUTIONS ON THE DEATH OF HONORABLE JOHN WESLEY GAINES,
PASSED AT A MEETING OF THE NASHVILLE BAR, HELD JANUARY
27, 1928.

John Wesley Gaines was born in Davidson County, Tennessee, on the 24th day of August 1861; he was a son of Dr. John Wesley Gaines, a noted physician of his time, and Mrs. Maria Wair Gaines, both pioneer citizens of Davidson County.

His early education was obtained in the District School, near the place of his birth, and later he was graduated from the University of Nashville and Vanderbilt University, with the degree of M. D., in 1882, but being without taste for the practice of medicine, and having taken his medical course, only because of the desire of his father, that he do so, he decided to become a lawyer, and after reading law with his kinsman, Judge Winchester, of Memphis, returned to Nashville, in 1884, and became a member of the local bar, as an associate of Hon. Nich D. Malone, then one of the leaders of the Nashville Bar.

In his chosen profession, he was successful from the beginning, but having a great love for public affairs, he entered politics in 1892, as District Elector on the Cleveland ticket, and in 1896, was elected as a Democrat to the Fifty-fifth Congress, succeeding Hon. Joseph E. Washington, and was successively re-elected as Congressman from his District, until March 1909.

During his term in Congress, he was active in Democratic leadership. He was first to propose by resolution a new plan or line of procedure, to secure reforms in the Reed-Cannon Rules, by appealing direct to the voters, by a plank in the National Democratic platform at the Denver convention in 1908.

A Democratic House was the result of this plank, and succeeding campaign. He was the first to suggest, and was active in the passage of the Federal law against the issuance of free passes, - amendment to Hepburn law - and was the first to suggest the repeal of the 6% tax on leaf tobacco, and the law providing for this tax was repealed, largely through his untiring efforts.

He instituted the movement to secure legal proceedings against the Tobacco Trust, and upon refusal of the United States Attorney General, to proceed against the Trust, without evidence of guilt, he proceeded to collect such evidence, through an evidence committee, which he conceived and organized as the "Dark Tobacco Growers Association of Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia."

He made an active fight to maintain the circulation of "clean money." Through his efforts the old law of docking absentee members of Congress, was revived by an amendment to the law, requiring members, to file written excuses for absences.

He introduced and was open in support of an amendment to the law increasing the salaries of members of future Congresses, and at all times vigorously demanded the enforcement of State and National anti-trust laws, both by injunction and criminal prosecution.

Upon his retirement from Congress, he returned to his home at Nashville, and resumed the practice of his profession.

Under the administration of President Woodrow Wilson, he was appointed a member of the Mexican Boundary Commission, and served in that office, for three years, when he voluntarily retired from same to continue the practice of law, in which he was actively engaged at the time of his death, which occurred at his home in Nashville, Tennessee, on the 4th day of July 1926.

