



HENRY GASSAWAY DAVIS
of West Virginia

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Henry Gassaway Davis, a Democrat of West Virginia, became chairman on March 19, 1879, and served in that position until March 4, 1881. The first Democratic chairman of Appropriations, he remained on the committee from 1873 until his retirement in 1883.

Born in Woodstock, MD, in 1823, Davis worked successively as a farmer, railroader, and businessman, then became a banker, railroad builder, and mining executive in West Virginia. After terms in the West Virginia Legislature as delegate and senator, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1871, serving until 1883, when he declined to be a candidate for reelection. He then resumed his banking and railroad career. In 1904 he ran for Vice President on the unsuccessful Democratic ticket headed by Alton B. Parker. He died in 1916. Davis was the father-in-law of Stephen B. Elkins, a Senator from West Virginia; the grandfather of Davis Elkins, also a Senator from West Virginia; and the brother of Thomas Davis, a Representative from West Virginia.

For further reading: Johnson, Allen, and Dumas Malone, eds. *Dictionary of American Biography*. 1935. Reprint. New York, 1946. Vol. 5.

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