

Richard Smith Coxe

(- 28 Apr 1865)

Coxe. On Friday morning, the 28th inst., Richard S. Coxe, Esq., L.L.D., in the 74th year of his age. The friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral from his late residence tomorrow, Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock.

The Evening Star, April 28, 1865

Death of Richard S. Coxe.

Richard Smith Coxe, favorably known to the legal profession throughout the country, died this morning about six o'clock of chronic diarrhea, from which he had suffered several months. He was born in Burlington, N.J., graduated at Harvard in the same class with Judge Wayne of the U.S. Supreme Court, and studied law with Horace Binney of Philadelphia. Coming to Washington in 1822 he was soon recognized among the leading members of the District Bar, and the Supreme Court of the U.S., intimately associating with Gen. Jones, Pinckney of Maryland, Webster and other distinguished men. At the commencement of the rebellion he took a decided stand in favor of the Union and throughout the contest ably supported the Government. Death has removed him at the age of 72, from a large circle of valued friends, and deprived the legal profession of one of its most eminent members. His funeral will take place on Sunday next, at four o'clock, p.m.

The Evening Star, May 1, 1865

The Funeral of Richard S. Cox

The interment of the remains of this much esteemed citizen was attended by a very large representation of the members of the bar, many other prominent citizens, and a large concourse of friends. Among the number were included many of the oldest residents of Washington. The funeral services were performed by the Rev. Mr. Kelly and Dr. Pyne. The pall bearers were Hon. W.W. Seaton, Johnson Hellen, Esq., Mr. Robert Beale, warden of the jail, Wm. A. Bradley, Esq., Dr. P. Parker, Philip R. Fendall, Esq., Major T.L. Smith and Chief Justice Carter. The remains were interred in the Congressional burying ground.

The Benning-McGuire House, Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Vol. 33-34, p. 101-105

When Secretary Ingham resigned in June 1831, he very soon thereafter gave up his residence at the Benning house on E street.

As Mr. Benning's death occurred a few months thereafter, it appears there was no tenant in this house the balance of the year. However it was soon to have a notable and more permanent tenant as the following advertisement in the Intelligencer of May 6th, 1831, indicated.

"For Rent

"The three-story brick house, with nine rooms, lately occupied by Richard S. Coxe, Esq. on C street, east of the City Hall, and near to the same."

From this C street house Mr. Coxe removed early in 1832, to the Benning house on E street. Whether Mr. Coxe arranged for the lease of this house with Mr. Benning in the fall of 1832, or after Mr.

Benning's death in December, with the Executors, Messrs. Lenox and Peter, we are unable to say. There is little doubt that Mr. Coxe knew in the summer of 1831 of Secretary Ingraham's intention of giving up the house, as he resigned from the Cabinet in June, and by July had left the city. Here Mr. Coxe and his family resided for 18 years. It was in this interim that the alley adjoining on the west and running through Square 457 from D to E street, became known as Coxe's Alley.

Richard S. Coxe

In consideration of his connection with the Benning house, his long residence here of 44 years, and prominent identification with the affairs of the city as well as of the nation, and the universal esteem and confidence in which he was held, it is appropriate to here make further record of the life and activities of this exemplary citizen.

Richard Smith Coxe was born in Burlington, N.J. in 1792. He was the son of Hon. William Coxe, who was a Representative in Congress from New Jersey, from March 4, 1813 to March 3, 1815. He was a graduate of Harvard University, and came to Georgetown in 1822, engaging in the practice of law, where he resided until 1826, when he removed to Washington, and soon rose to distinction in his profession.

While much of his practice was before the Orphans' Court, he argued important cases before the Supreme and other courts. It is said of Mr. Coxe that he had more cases before the Supreme Court in the 40's than any attorney in the United States. He was the Attorney for the Corporation of Washington from 1834 to 1838. He was Judge Advocate of the Court in the trial of Commodore Porter in July, 1825.

In the celebrated case of "The United States vs. Anne Royal" before Judge Cranch, in the Circuit Court, 1829, Richard S. Coxe voluntarily defended Anne Royal. In 1862 President Lincoln appointed Richard S. Coxe and Philip R. Fendall to codify the Laws of the District of Columbia.

In the fall of 1850, after the sale of the Benning house to James C. McGuire, Mr. Coxe removed to No. 430 D street, north side, next to the corner of Fifth street. The corner house, No. 432 D street, had been built in 1838 by Johnson Hellen, a leading attorney and the intimate friend of Richard S. Coxe. Mr. Hellen occupied it as his office and home until the close of the Civil War. This was also the office of the late Hugh T. Taggart, Esq. for many years, where I had the pleasure of visiting him in quest of accurate historical information, in the closing years of his busy life.

Richard S. Coxe and Johnson Hellen, intimate, confident friends and neighbors, were destined to spend their remaining years and close their careers in their adjoining D street homes, the second surviving the first for a short time only.

"Died

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