

Richard G. Dove

(26 Jan 1814 – 11 Dec 1891)

Dove. December 11, 1891, at 2:22 a.m., Richard G. Dove, aged 77 years and 11 months. Funeral from his late residence, 1317 L street northwest, Sunday, at 2:30 p.m. Burial at Congressional cemetery. Friends and relatives invited to attend.

The Evening Star, December 11, 1891

The Oldest Clerk Dead

The Nestor of the Treasury Department Passes Away This Morning

Richard G. Dove, the Nestor of the treasury, is dead. The death occurred this morning at Mr. Dove's home, 1317 L street northwest. After having served the government for fifty seven years and lived to a greater age than that allotted to man he has passed away. He was born in the vicinity of Washington Circle, on the 26th day of January 1814. Those were troublous times and when less than a year old his father and mother took flight from the city in August 1814, when the British marched through the streets, setting fire to the Capitol, White House and other public buildings. When Lafayette visited this country in 1824 Richard Dove was a schoolboy and was among the number of children who were sent to the navy yard, where the noble Frenchman landed, and assisted in strewing flowers in the pathway of that ardent patriot. When he was born this city was but fourteen years old and consisted of only a few houses scattered along Pennsylvania avenue from the Capitol to Georgetown. The thickest settlement was then in the vicinity of Washington Circle, which was, at that time supposed to be the best residence section of the city. It was near the stores and markets of Georgetown, where all the shopping and business was done. Pennsylvania avenue was then a dirt road and a stage line ran from Georgetown to the Capitol. In his boyhood he attended a school which stood near St. John's Church, which was at that time the only building of importance north of the avenue and west of 15th street. The place where the Arlington Hotel stands was the children's playground and Lafayette or Jackson Square was a briar thicket where the children went during "play time" to gather blackberries.

The fashionable northwest was to him a gunning ground, abounding in slashes, brambles and marshes. It was the home of the hare, the partridge and the hissing reptile, and was considered the most undesirable section for residence purposes in or about the city. During a part of his boyhood he lived in the old two-story frame house on Vermont avenue opposite the Arlington. This house is still occupied and is, apparently, in a well-preserved state.

He had seen and remembered the appearance of all but four of the Presidents; had heard and seen Clay, Webster and Calhoun in their palmyest days and remembered having seen the democratic hero of New Orleans walking arm in arm with the workmen who laid the foundation of the treasury building. It was in 1829, during the administration of Andrew Jackson, that Mr. Dove, who was then only fifteen years of age, was appointed to a position in the Treasury Department, which he continued to hold without intermission until 1861, when he was removed because he was what was then termed a southern sympathizer. Having accumulated considerable property he engaged in business during the war and was quite successful, but during a financial stringency soon after the war, during which one or more of the most substantial banks in the city went to the wall, he lost most of the funds that he had spent the better part of his life in accumulating.

In 1866, at the request of Assistant Secretary Hartley, with whom he had been associated in the department, he accepted a reappointment and was placed in charge of the Secretary's files, which position he held at the time of his death. He was thoroughly conversant with the files, having devised

the system of filing that is in vogue in the Treasury Department. One of his pet ideas or hobbies was a fireproof file building, where all but the current files of all the departments could be kept. He was never married; was temperate in his habits; amiable, almost to effeminacy, in disposition; a gentle, kind and affectionate friend and relative. Generous to a fault, his purse was always open to his friends. He always lent a willing ear and a helping hand to every worthy cause and never turned away the poor and needy unaided. He leaves a few relatives and many friends to mourn his death.

Arrangements have been made for the funeral to take place Sunday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock from the house.