

## James Louis Parsons

(18 Mar 1847 – 30 Jun 1917)

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**Parsons.** On Saturday, June 30, 1917 at 4 o'clock a.m. at his residence North Chevy Chase, Maryland, James L. Parsons, beloved husband of Mary Louisa Parsons in the 71st year of his life. Funeral from his late residence, North Chevy Chase Maryland, Monday, July 2nd at 2 o'clock p.m. Interment at Congressional Cemetery.



JAMES L. PARSONS  
Contractor and Builder of the New Municipal Building.

**Parsons.** Special communication of Naval Lodge No. 4, F.A.A.M. is called for Monday, July 2nd at 12:30 p.m. for the purpose of attending the funeral of our late brother James L. Parsons. M.T. Dixon, Secretary.

*The Evening Star, July 2, 1917, p. 7*

### **James L. Parsons Dies At the Age of 70 Was Civil War Veteran and Long Prominent, Locally, as Building Contractor**

James L. Parsons, for many years a prominent contractor of this city, died Saturday morning at his home at North Chevy Chase.

Mr. Parsons' illness, while of several months' duration was not considered serious, but he suffered a sudden relapse and died of heart failure before his nurse could summon the family to his bedside.

Funeral services were held at 2 o'clock this afternoon at his late residence. The Masonic ritual was observed. the deceased having been identified with the Knights Templar and Mystic Shrine. Interment was in the family lot at

Congressional cemetery.

Mr. Parsons had been a factor of prominence in contracting and building circles for more than forty years, having completed many structures of importance here and in other cities. Among his more notable local achievements were the erection of the two-million-five-hundred-thousand-dollar municipal building the remodeling of the Treasury and the building of Stoneleigh Court.

### *Was Native of Virginia*

Born in Virginia March 18, 1847, Mr. Parsons entered the ranks of the Confederate Army at the age of fifteen, serving throughout the war, and being present at the final struggle about Richmond. After the close of the war he entered the quartermaster's department of the regular army, where he mastered the carpenter's trade, beginning his long and honored business career in this city in 1872.

The government, as well as scores of individuals of prominence, had implicit confidence in Mr. Parsons' integrity and good business judgment, and he served many times on boards of appraisal, when property was to be valued for condemnation or sale, notably when property for the Union station and Capitol Park extension was valued.

### *Head of Master Builders*

Mr. Parsons was president of the Master Builders' Association, a member of the Board of Trade and a director of the National Capital Bank. Essentially a man of domestic tastes and inclinations. Mr. Parsons was never so content as when surrounded by the members of his household.

He was twice married and is survived by his second wife, three sons and four daughters.

*The History of the City of Washington, Its Men and Institutions*

**James Louis Parsons**

Few persons have figured more prominently in the growth of Washington, beautifying it and its adjacent towns than has James Louis Parsons, one of the leading builders of the national capital, with offices at 1425 New Jersey avenue. Mr. Parsons, originally from Louisa county, Virginia, is a son of Oswald L. and Susan H. Armstrong Parsons, and was born on March 19, 1847. His early education was acquired in the county school of his home. There he remained until he was nineteen years old, when he went to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and in the United States Quartermaster's Department learned the trade of a carpenter. Coming to Washington in 1873, Mr. Parsons worked for a few years as a journeyman and then went into the building business on his own account. The business gradually grew and expanded until it acquired its present far-reaching proportions, and many of the handsomest structures now in Washington erected by Mr. Parsons will stand for generations as a monument to the memory of one whose successful career is entirely and exclusively due to his own efforts and perseverance.

When but fifteen years old, Mr. Parsons responded to the call of his country and joined the Confederate Army at Gordonsville, Va., on July 25, 1862. Young Parsons was first under fire at the Battle of Cedar Run, and fought at Culpeper Court House, having enlisted in the 23rd Infantry, attached to Stonewall Jackson's division. Continuing, Mr. Parsons was in the thick of the fighting at Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and continuously below Richmond, until the close of the war. Mr. Parsons was married twice. His first wife was Wilhelmina Ryles, and his second Louisa Rathbone. They have seven children as follows: Annie M., Charles W., James L., Jr., Edith, Florence, Susan H., and David A. Parsons. Mr. Parsons is a Mason in the Blue Lodge; member of the Royal Arch Commandery, Mystic Shrine, Master Builders' Association, and a member of the executive board and president of the Employers' Association. Some of the principal buildings erected by Mr. Parsons are the Business High School, Eighth street, northwest; addition to Central High School, Harrison School Building, family building and water tower for Reform School, addition to Bureau of Engraving and Printing; building of office rooms in the United States Patent Office Building, temporary roof on United States Pension Office, United States fish ways, Great Falls; two cavalry stables, Fort Myers, Va.; administration building, Fort Myers; Fourteenth street car house, Capital Traction Company; remodeling Georgetown power house, Capital Traction Co.; National Capital Bank Building, building for Washington Title Insurance Company, T.W. Smith's mill, William M. Galt & Company's mill, bakery for the Havenner Baking Company, addition to St. Mark's Church, Van Doren office building, store for C. Auerbach, Hygienic Ice Company plant, store for Dulin & Martin, College of History building, American University, United States Census Office, Jennifer office building, warehouse for E.O. Whitford, Coliseum Park, Marlborough apartment house, Corby's bakery, Hubbard memorial building, alterations to First Presbyterian Church, to Strong Building, to Washington Market, Melrose Institute, Hyattsville, Md.; six residences at Hyattsville, Md.; residences for W.W. Dannenhower, Prince George's county, Maryland; Mr. George W. Gray, Prof. Rawson, Mr. D.S. Carll, S.H. Walker, T.W. Smith, Elmer Gates, Chevy Chase; row of houses for Dr. W.P.C. Hazen; row of houses for Mr. George B. Whiting; row of houses for the Acker estate; row of houses on North Capitol and B streets. Mr. Parsons is now beginning the erection of the Stoneleigh Court apartment house. In 1892 Mr. Parsons was appointed by the Hon. William E.

Chandler, chairman of a Senate committee, as an expert to inspect the character of the work and to examine into the contracts for the improvement of the emigrant station on Ellis Island, New York harbor, which amounted to an expenditure of over \$600,000. The report was submitted on June 23, 1892.