

Thomas Blagden

(- 2 Feb 1870)

Blagden. Wednesday, February 2, 1870 at Argyle in District of Columbia, Thomas Blagden in the 65th year of his age. Friends and relatives of the family are respectfully invited to attend his funeral Sunday at 3 p.m. from New York Avenue Presbyterian Church (late Dr. Gurley's). Washington papers please copy.

The Evening Star, February 3, 1870, p. 4

Death of An Old Citizen

Thomas Blagden one of the oldest and most respected citizens died at Argyle in the District this morning in the 65th year of his age. Deceased has been during his whole life one of the most prominent business men of this city. Commencing as he did early in the lumber business on what has ever since been known as Blagden's wharf at the foot of 3d street east and among other results of his prosperity is the row of magnificent residences bearing his name on Indiana avenue between 3d and 4-1/2 streets. The father of the deceased was killed by the falling of a bank at the southwest corner of the Capitol during the erection of that building on the 3d of June 1826.

The Evening Star, February 7, 1870, p. 4

Funeral of the Late Thomas Blagden

The funeral of the late Thomas Blagden took place yesterday from the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church which was crowded by the relatives and friends of the deceased. After prayer and reading appropriate passages of Scripture, Rev. Mr. Mitchell, pastor of the church and Rev. Dr. Samson spoke appropriately of the deceased. Two verses of a favorite hymn with the deceased "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord" was sung, after which the cortege was formed under the direction of the undertakers Messrs. Harvey and Marr, and proceeded to the Congressional Cemetery where the remains were placed in the family vault. The pallbearers were Admiral Lee, Jas. P. Tustin, Chief Justice Casey, Wm. B. Todd, Dr. May, Dr. Nichols, J. Carroll Brent and T.M. Hanson. The coffin was of lead in a walnut case, covered with black broadcloth, ornamented with massive silver handles, bestudded with silver-head tacks. It was lined with quilted satin, and on the lid was a silver plate bearing a record of the name and age of the deceased.

Zevely, "Residences in City Hall Neighborhood," Columbia Historical Society, April 14, 1902

Next to his house is a row of five houses built in 1852 by the late Thomas Blagden (No.s 310 - 318 Third street). William Baldwin, one of Almon Baldwin's sons, already referred to, was the architect of these houses, and they were known, when originally built, as Blagden's row. I think this name for them is still retained. Robert Toombs, of Georgia, at that time U.S. Senator, occupied one of these houses; also Chief Justice Taney, and the Minister from Peru to this country. In comparatively recent years Senator Christiancy, of Michigan, was an occupant of one of the houses.

Thomas Blagden was the son of George Blagden, who came from England and settled in this city in 1793, where the son was born in October, 1803, and he continued to have his home here until his death, February 2, 1870. Mr. Blagden's second wife is still living, also his two sons and one daughter. The widow and one of the sons have a home near the city, known as Argyle, and a portion of the original

estate in that section has been improved in recent years by the construction of suburban homes. A brother of Mr. Blagden's, Rev. Geo. W. Blagden, settled in Boston early in the last century, and was at one time pastor of the Old South Church.

Goode, James M., *Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1979

Blagden Row

310-318 Indiana Avenue, NW

1852--razed 1931

Architect: William Baldwin, Washington DC

Razed in 1931 for the Municipal Building, Blagden Row was originally one of the most elegant of the many pre-Civil War row house groups in Washington. Facing the then fashionable residential area of Judiciary Square, these row houses were designed by a currently little-known local builder and architect named William Baldwin, and were commissioned as a real-estate investment by Thomas Blagden (1803-1870).

Blagden was the son of builder George Blagden, an English immigrant who settled in Washington in 1793, becoming superintendent of masons at the Capitol Building. George Blagden was killed there in 1826 when a ditch collapsed while he was inspecting construction work. Thomas Blagden operated the family flour mill on Rock Creek after his father's death, and built a substantial house on an entire square on New Jersey Avenue, SE; his country house, Argyle, was located near the present intersection of 16th and Upshur Streets, NW. Even though the row houses passed to other owners after Blagden's death, they continued to be in a desirable neighborhood until the late 1950s. Two streets were named in Blagden's honor in the late nineteenth century -- Blagden Avenue and Argyle Terrace.

When first rented, Blagden Row was occupied by a number of prominent figures, including Sen. Robert Toombs of Georgia and Chief Justice Roger Taney. Taney lived in the westernmost house, number 318 (shown in the foreground of the photo), where he died at the age of eighty-seven in October 1864. President Lincoln and his cabinet attended the funeral services there.

The five four-story row houses were united by a common cast-iron balcony at the second-floor level, and their façade was made much more interesting by the pavilion-like effect caused by the outward thrust of the central and end houses. The row was further embellished by the bracketed cornice, the unusually large windows (for the early 1850s) with molded lintels, and the beautifully channeled, smooth ashlar masonry.