

## Charles Stitcher Frailey

(1803 – 24 May 1857)

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**Frailey.** On the 24th instant, Dr. Charles S. Frailey, aged about 53 years.

*The Evening Star, May 27, 1857*

**The Funeral** of the lamented Dr. Charles S. Frailey took place yesterday afternoon, from his late residence on New York avenue, and was attended by a very large concourse of people, including the Grand Lodges of the Masonic and Odd Fellows' Orders, and by several subordinate lodges.

The services on the part of the family were performed by Rev. Dr. Pyne, of the Episcopal church; the eulogies at the grave (Congressional burying ground) by P.G.M. French and G.M. Whiting, of the Masonic Order; the Masonic prayer by Rev. Byron Sunderland; and that on the part of the Odd-Fellows by B.E. Gittings, Chaplain.

Wither's and Weber's bands accompanied the procession.

*History of the Naval Lodge, No. 4, F.A.A.M., p. 353-354: Grand Master, 1855-56*

Doctor Frailey was born December 29, 1803, in the City of Baltimore, Md., and was there educated, graduating from the University of Maryland in 1825, with a diploma as M.D. Removing to Ohio with a view of practicing his profession he was soon diverted therefrom by receiving an appointment as Assistant Surgeon in the United States Army, and repaired to Fort Brady, at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, where the extreme rigors of the climate soon implanted in him the germ of that disease which afflicted him through life. In the year 1835 he removed to Washington to accept a clerkship in the Land Office, where his abilities soon raised him to the position of chief clerk. He afterwards became chief clerk of the Interior Department, and spent the remainder of his life in this city.

Bro. Frailey was a man of distinguished ability, of vigorous and cultivated intellect, of stern integrity, and of honest purpose, and his untimely taking off at the age of fifty-two deprived the jurisdiction of one of its most valued leaders. A classmate at the University has borne testimony that he was a most congenial and attractive companion, very brilliant in conversation, with a fine tenor voice, and immensely popular with both his fellow-students and the faculty. A daughter, Miss Frailey, now residing in Washington recalls his charming personality, his wonderful memory, and his unusual ability as a reader, impersonating the characters so thoroughly as to lose his identity.

He was entered, passed, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason between January 31 and February 4, 1828, in Tuscarora Lodge, No. 59, then held at New Philadelphia, in the State of Ohio. In 1846 he demitted and became one of the original members of National Lodge, No. 12, of this jurisdiction. He was elected Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge in 1847, and acceptably filled that office until 1854, when he was elected Grand Master, being one of only three in our local history to reach that exalted station without previous service as Master of a subordinate lodge.

To Bro. Frailey is due the inauguration of the present elaborate system of correspondence, the first report along the lines now followed having been presented and signed by him as Chairman of the Committee on Correspondence in 1849.

He received the Capitular degrees in Columbia Chapter, No. 1, R.A.M., in 1854.

Bro. Frailey also possesses the distinction of being the first Past Grand Master to receive a jewel appropriate to his station, and the circumstances surrounding its presentation were as sad as they were unusual. The jewel having been authorized and procured the presentation was delayed by the condition

of the brother's health until a time when it was seen that the Grim Destroyer was marching on with relentless steps, when a committee repaired to the home of the sufferer, and in the presence only of his wife, Past Grand Master B.B. French, in a few beautiful and feeling words, made the presentation, to which Bro. Frailey submitted a written reply which is preserved in the Report of the Grand Lodge Proceedings of 1857 (p. 11), and recommend to the perusal of serious readers as the utterance of one who stood upon the brink of eternity and to whom in some measure had already come "the light that never was on sea or land."

Nineteen days thereafter, on May 24, 1857, he passed away.

His funeral took place two days later at Congressional Cemetery, under the auspices of the Grand Lodge, with Grand Master George C. Whiting conducting the Masonic service, and Past Grand Master B.B. French as eulogist.

A friend and admirer has left this tribute to his memory:

"A grave bedewed with manly tears,  
A name spotless and bright,  
The sum of all true fame."