

John R. Mahoney

(10 Jan 1846 – 7 Aug 1940)

Mahoney, John R. On Wednesday, August 7, 1940, at Sibley Hospital, John R. Mahoney, beloved husband of the late Sarah E. Mahoney of 333 C st. s.e. Funeral from the James T. Ryan funeral home, 317 Pa. ave. s.e., on Friday, August 9, at 2 p.m. Relatives and friends invited. Interment Congressional Cemetery.



JOHN R. MAHONEY.
—Star Staff Photo.

Mahoney, John R. On Wednesday, August 7, 1940, John R. Mahoney, aged 94. Our brother was High Tent secretary of Independent Order of Rechabites for 25 years and a member of our order for about 75 years. All Rechabites are invited to meet at Ryan's funeral home, 317 Pa. ave. s.e., on Thursday, August 8, at 8 p.m., for memorial service.

Mrs. Susie Clarkson, Chief Ruler
Mrs. Minnie E. Kissinger, Rec. Sec.

Mahoney, John R. Members of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants are requested to attend the funeral of our late associate, John R. Mahoney. Services at the James T. Ryan funeral home, 317 Pa. ave. s.e., on Friday, August 9, 1940, at 2 p.m.

Theodore W. Noyes, President
John B. Dickman, Sr., Secretary

The Evening Star, August 7, 1940, p. A-2

John R. Mahoney, 94, District Temperance Figure, Succumbs Anti-Saloon League's Founding Sometimes Is Credited to Him

John R. Mahoney, 94, the District's "grand old man" of temperance, died early today in Sibley Hospital after an illness of six weeks.

Mr. Mahoney, who was one of the Capital's oldest inhabitants, became a temperance advocate early in life. He is sometimes credited with having been responsible for the founding of the Anti-Saloon League of America.

He was ruler of the Grand Tent of the District of Columbia Rechabites for two years and for many years was high tent secretary for the Nation. A vice president of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants, he served as the group's financial secretary 36 years.

Mr. Mahoney was born in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, and came to Washington when about 12 years old. In the 1860's he was a policeman, but was best known professionally as a paper hanger. For a great many years he operated his own paper-hanging business in the 300 block of Pennsylvania avenue S.E. Some five years ago he sold the business and retired.

One Concession to Intemperance

Of remarkable vitality, Mr. Mahoney retained all of his faculties except his hearing, which was slightly impaired, until his death. He often declared he would live to be 100, and when his health began to fail shortly before his death and he was forced to use a cane, he apologized for it to several of his friends.

His one concession to intemperance, he often said, was the use of tobacco. He smoked large, black cigars which, he once told a friend, "would be the death of him."

During the early 1890s the liquor situation in Washington was something of a disgrace, what with improper control of sale and distribution. Mr. Mahoney was one of a group of persons who determined to do something about this. They formed the Anti-Saloon League of the District of Columbia in 1893.

Failed in "Expose."

Having laid the groundwork for a campaign against intemperance, the league next determined on a course of action. Many of the establishments selling liquor, they found, were on property owned by outstanding District citizens. This and other data in the nature of an expose they gathered and asked local newspapers to publish. They were refused.

Undaunted, they pooled their resources and published a paper called No Compromise, which waged a war against intemperance. Then in 1895, the group decided to extend its sphere of influence and called a convention of all organizations interested in temperance. The meeting was held in Mr. Mahoney's home. Shortly afterward the Anti-Saloon League of American came into being. Mr. Mahoney became a figure in the Nation as well as the Capital.

Voted Twice in His Life

Mr. Mahoney had civic pride. Washington, when he was a boy, was a town with one Federal building -- the White House -- and with a population of less than 36,000. He watched with approval the city's growth, taking pleasure in the new Government buildings and the swelling census figures.

He was over 90 when he voted for the second time. He first cast a ballot in 1868 for a Washington mayoral candidate. The second time he went to the polls was in 1938, during the District suffrage referendum. He favored both national representation and local suffrage.

During his later years he liked to think of temperance as a going concern. To his home frequently came men who had come within his sphere of influence in early life. They told him they thought they were better and more successful men because of the things he had drummed into them years before. These incidents he felt to be something of a justification of his efforts.

On the occasion of his birthday three years ago he was given a party by the Association of Oldest Inhabitants at Old Union Engine House.

Doubt as to His Age

There was some doubt as to Mr. Mahoney's exact age. His birth date, recorded in the family Bible, was given as January 10, but the year was confusing. It was written either 1846 or 1847, the last figure being double, with either the 6 superimposed over the 7 or vice versa.

Felicitations at the birth celebration included a telegram from President Roosevelt.

Mr. Mahoney was an advocate of prohibition from the time the Prohibition party was organized in 1869. He was a member of the International Order of Good Templars, once serving as chief templar.

He was twice married. His first wife, Marion Parker Mahoney, died many years ago. The second Mrs. Mahoney, the former Sadie Hissey, died three years ago.

Among those surviving Mr. Mahoney are a daughter, Mrs. Emily R. Pollock of Washington; a granddaughter, Mrs. Edyth Grailey of Baltimore; two grandsons, Robert E. and Charles W. Mahoney; a niece, Mrs. Bertha Davis, and a nephew, William Mahoney, all of this city.

The Evening Star, August 8, 1940, p. A-4

**Funeral Services For John R. Mahoney Set for Tomorrow
Rechabites Will Hold Rites for Temperance Leader Tonight**

Funeral services for John R. Mahoney, 94, prominent national and District temperance leader, who died yesterday in Sibley Hospital, will be held at 2 p.m. tomorrow in the Ryan funeral home, 317 Pennsylvania avenue S.E. Burial will be in Congressional Cemetery.

Earlier rites will be held at 8 o'clock tonight in the funeral home by Eagle Tent of the Order of Rechabites, with friends and other organizations of which Mr Mahoney was a member invited to attend. Mrs. Susie Clarkson, chief ruler of the tent, will be among those officiating.

Honored by Organization

At a meeting last night in the organization hall, 7 Fourth street N.E., Mr. Mahoney's memory was honored by national officers, including High Chief Ruler E.H. Hamilton, High Treasurer William J. Miller and High Chaplain Porter C. Fox.

When 12 years of age Mr. Mahoney came to the District from the Oklahoma Indian Territory. For many years he was in business here, retiring about five years ago from operation of a paper-hanging business in the 300 block of Pennsylvania avenue S.E.

Active in Anti-Saloon Group

In 1893 he and fellow citizens formed the Anti-Saloon League of the District of Columbia, and he is credited with a part in the later establishment of the Anti-Saloon League of America.

His character and career were lauded last night at a meeting of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants, of which he had been financial secretary for 33 years. A committee was named to attend the funeral, including John Clagett Proctor, Christian Heurich, Charles A. Langley, Fred A. Emery, Joseph I. Keefer, John B. Dickman, Elra C. Palmer, Jesse C. Suter, L.E. Brueninger, Walter E. Allen, Anthony Denekas, Dr. Hugh M. Smith, James F. Duhamel, Harry A. Burr and Harry Gladman.