

## William Sterrett Ramsey

(12 Jun 1810 - 18 Oct 1840)

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### *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989*

A Representative from Pennsylvania; born in Carlisle, Cumberland County, Pa., June 12, 1810; pursued classical studies in the U.S. and Europe; attaché of the American Legation in London; elected as a Democrat to the 26th Congress and served from March 4, 1839 until his death before the commencement of the 27th Congress to which he had been reelected; died in Baltimore, Md., October 17, 1840; interment in Ashland Cemetery, Carlisle, Pa.

### *National Intelligencer, Wednesday, October 21, 1840*

We copy from the Baltimore Patriot of Monday evening the following account of the lamentable suicide of which a brief notice was published in our last:

"The Hon. William S. Ramsey, of Carlisle, Pa., a Van Buren member of the present Congress, and re-elected at the recent election, committed suicide at Barnum's Hotel, in this city, yesterday evening, about six o'clock. The deceased arrived in town on Saturday evening, and took lodgings as above; and, it is said, manifested nothing unusual in his behavior or appearance, up to five o'clock yesterday afternoon, at which time he made some inquiries at the bar of the Hotel relative to the time of the boats and cars leaving for Philadelphia. He then retired to his room, and in an hour afterwards the report of a pistol was heard. On entering the apartment the unfortunate man was discovered in a dying condition, speechless, and lying near the fire, with a pistol close at his side, and the blood flowing profusely from a wound in the right eye. The deceased was recognized by the Hon. Mr. Jennifer, of Maryland, who was attracted to the spot, and who sent for the Hon. Messrs. Carroll and Howard. A coroner's inquest was held over the body by Seth Pollard, Esq. when on examination, the ball was found to have entered the right eye, and to have penetrated nearly to the back of his neck. The verdict of the jury was: "Death by shooting himself with a pistol."

We learn that the deceased gentleman came to this city (Washington) in the train of cars on Saturday morning last; whence, it appears, he returned to Baltimore in the evening train. Whilst here, he purchased a pistol at one of the variety stores of this city, with percussion caps for it, and procured some bullets to be molded.

### *The National Intelligencer, December 15, 1840*

#### **Death of Mr. Ramsey (of Pennsylvania)**

Mr. Leet, of Pennsylvania, rose and addressed the House as follows:

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with a practice which has been sanctioned by long usage, I rise to discharge a painful duty, in doing which I feel sure the House will sympathize with me. I rise, sir, to announce the death of William Sterrett Ramsey, who was a distinguished member of the Pennsylvania delegation, and represented the Cumberland district. He died suddenly, in October last, in the city of Baltimore, somewhat remote from the bosom of his near relatives, but where, however, there were not wanting friends to show appropriate marks of respect to his memory. His death was not less sudden than melancholy. From early infancy he was afflicted with feeble health and a weak constitution.

Having been called by the people of his district, to serve them in the National Legislature of his native country, and desirous to execute the trust reposed in him, he struggled through the last unusually

arduous and exciting session, in the discharge of his duties, in a manner alike honorable to himself, gratifying to his friends, and satisfactory to his constituents. At the close of the session he found his constitution rapidly yielding to the ravage of a confirmed consumption; and, during the recess of Congress, in the youth of his days, with the fairest earthly prospects before him (could he have lived to realize them,) and at a time when one would think, he might be buoyant with hope, he sank a victim to gloomy melancholy, leaving numerous devoted friends to lament his premature and deplorable death.

I have never been able to feel fully the propriety of panegyric on occasions like this; it excites little or no interest where the subject of it is unknown and cannot reach his ear, nor enhance his character in the esteem of those who knew his goodness, his talents, and his virtues. I may be indulged, however, in simply saying that Mr. Ramsey, as a man, was liberal and kind—as a friend, was true and faithful. He enjoyed the advantages of an accomplished education, received in this country; and he visited some of the most famous places in Europe in the anxious pursuit of knowledge and for the improvement of his health.