

## Daniel Rapine

( – 11 May 1826)

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**Rapine.** On Thursday Evening, in the 59th year of his age, Mr. Daniel Rapine. He was among the oldest and most respected inhabitants of this City, and has filled some of its most responsible offices; among others, that of Mayor of the city. His friends are invited to attend his funeral from his late Dwelling, at 10 o'clock this morning.

*The National Intelligencer, May 15, 1826*

### Obituary

On Thursday afternoon, the 11th inst. At his residence, on Capitol Hill, after a long and lingering illness, which he bore with singular fortitude and Christian resignation, Mr. Daniel Rapine, aged about fifty eight years, Postmaster of the House of Representatives of the United States

"Sure the last end

Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!

Night dews fall not more gently to the ground.

Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft." -- Young

Mr. Rapine was born near Germantown, Pennsylvania, and came to this city soon after it was laid out. By profession, he was a bookseller, and by industriously following his vocation, amassed considerable property; of which, however, credulously believing in an imprudent friend, who became unfortunate, he lost the greater part.

In the year 1812, Mr. R. was chosen Mayor of this City, which office he filled to great satisfaction; but, in which capacity, his rheumatic affection took a firmer hold on him, and was one of the principal causes of terminating his life. He was early appointed a Justice of the Peace in and for Washington County, and, if there ever was a strictly impartial man, that man was Daniel Rapine. Neither the frowns and authority of the rich and high standing, nor the obsequiousness and servility of the poor and humble, received other than even handed justice through him. His most striking characteristics were mildness and charity; "innocence was seated on his brow, and the milk of human kindness flowed around his heart."

The writer of this from childhood, knew Mr. R. and can safely assert that he never knew him to flatter any one, nor disguise, on any subject, his real sentiments. As a friend, he was candid, sincere, and constant; as a man of business his integrity was undeviatingly and inflexibly correct; as a citizen, his honesty, industry, and sobriety, procured him the love and esteem of all; and as a father, he was kind, indulgent, and pious; which last transcendent virtue supported him in his late long and lingering illness, and has borne him, we trust to a happier and a better world, to receive the recompense of his worth.

He possessed his reason, uninjured, to the last; and, to a friend, a few days before his death, on being asked how he felt, replied, "I feel tolerably easy; for Providence kindly diminishes our sensibility as the strength of disease increases."

The loss of such a man to the city can only be appreciated by the want of another like him; and the greatest consolation to his interesting family, who have suffered an incalculable loss, will be found in their being accompanied in their mourning, by nearly the whole city, as with one voice. S.A.E.

*The Washington Post, May 18, 1930, p. S1*

### **Daniel Rapine**

One hundred and four years ago this month there died in Washington the first duly elected head of the local municipal government. He was Daniel Rapine, who came here from Philadelphia in the fall of 1800, several months before Congress held its first sitting in the new Federal City. With Michael and John Conrade he established, at the south corner of B street and New Jersey avenue southeast, on November 16, 1800, the Washington Printing and Bookselling Co. (Rapine, Conrade & Co.), whose prospectus declared that perhaps a greater field was never opened in America for an early and lucrative extension of these pursuits than now present itself to the enterprising adventurers in the District of Columbia."

Daniel Rapine was no ordinary printer and pamphlet seller. Less than twelve years here found him directing the municipal affairs of Washington City. He had been keenly alive to the needs of the growing community, and had done much to foster culture and education within it. He had also been a "good mixer," and, in his bookstore, he was the presiding genius over many a fresh gathering of early American statesmen and learned individuals who were wont to make it their random headquarters. His bookshop, indeed, had been for twelve years (1801-1812) the city's intellectual center, lying across the road, as it did, from the Capitol and in the midst of the boarding houses on Capitol Hill. From it emanated numerous early Washingtonians (city) and Americans. Any book or tract bearing the colophon, "Washington City; Printed by Daniel Rapine," became a collectors' item when discovered.

Little thought has been given to this bookseller of long ago, whose term as Mayor of Washington was from June to June, 1812-1813. He came, became, and departed, unnoticed by succeeding generations. Posterity has been unkind to him -- as indeed it had been to many another worthy. No monument, no headstone or footstone marks the resting place of Daniel Rapine. In an unmarked grave in the oldest section of Congressional Cemetery his bones lie in the mold and dust of obscurity. Although he did much to upbuild this city, his memory is still ignored even to the extent of naming a school in his honor. The deplorable situation has not, however, gone entirely unnoticed.

"Every mayor has a public school named in his honor except Rapine," Allen C. Clark, president of the Columbia Historical Society, remarked some years ago, continuing: "there was a Rapine building near the Force. The jest of a New Englander -- 'What kind of schools are these, force and rapine?' -- bore too heavily on the sensitiveness of the Commissioners, and the name Rapine was taken down and another name put up in its place."

Washington is soon to have six new school buildings. The Board of Education, through its special committee on naming the schools, is inviting suggestions from the public. The largest and finest of these six schools should be named "the Daniel Rapine School."