

## James H. Ricketts (1818 – 2 Dec 1915)

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**Ricketts.** On Wednesday, December 1, 1915 at 2 o'clock a.m., at her residence, 638 G street s.e., James H. Ricketts, aged 97 years. Funeral Friday, December 3 from his late residence at 2 p.m.

*The Evening Star, December 1, 1915, p. 9*

### James H. Ricketts Dies In Ninety-Seventh Year

#### Veteran Bookbinder and Grape Culturist Succumbs at His Home on G Street



James H. Ricketts, ninety-seven years old, veteran bookbinder and grape culturist, whose gray beard, thirty-eight inches long, and white hair to his shoulders, distinguished him on Washington streets, died early this morning at his home, 628 G street southeast. On retiring last night he was in his usual good health, having read the papers with his accustomed interest. Funeral services are to be held Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock, at the residence.

Mr. Ricketts was born at Old Bruige, N.J., in 1818. His family migrated to Indiana, settling at Greencastle where De Pauw University is now situated. Young Ricketts ran away from home going to New York, where he learned the trade of bookbinder. He then went to Newburg, N.Y., and opened a shop of his own. He did work for the West Point Military Academy library, and for many years made the register books for the use of visitors at Washington's headquarters at Newburg.

#### *Interested in Grape Culture*

Bookbinding was Mr. Ricketts occupation, but his avocation was grape culture. He had an extensive vineyard at Newburg, where he experimented over a long period of years, bringing out during that time more than seventy new varieties of grapes, one of which became famous as a wine grape. His specialty was hybridizing different species, crossing them while in bloom. His work has been extensively reviewed in publications issued by the Department of Agriculture.

#### *Worked in G.P.O.*

Mr. Ricketts came to Washington thirty-five years ago to accept a position in the government printing office, which position he held until five years ago. In 1901 he and his wife believed at that time to have been the oldest couple in the District, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary Mrs. Ricketts died in 1905.

In the rear of his home on G street the veteran grape culturist had a little vineyard 50 x 100 feet, where he devoted the last years of his life to his hobby, cultivating grapes and vegetables.

Two sons, Eugene K. Ricketts and Edmond L. Ricketts, and a daughter, Mrs. Josephine Painter, are living.