

Jules A. Rodier

(1871 – 21 May 1963)

Rodier. On Tuesday, May 21, 1963 at Prince Frederick, Maryland, Jules A. Rodier, husband of the late Bessie Otterback Rodier, father of Donald E. Rodier, John M. Rodier and Elizabeth R. Portner. He also is



JULES A. RODIER

survived by 5 grandchildren. Friends may call at Gawler's Chapel, Wisconsin ave. at Harrison st., n.w. (parking on premises) after 1 p.m. Thursday, May 23 where services will be held on Friday, May 24 at 11 a.m. Interment Congressional Cemetery.

Rodier, Jules A. The members of Naval Lodge No. 4, F.A.A.M. are hereby notified of the death of Brother Past Master, Jules A. Rodier on Tuesday, May 21, 1963. Funeral services will be held at Gawler's Funeral Chapel, Wisconsin Avenue and Harrison st. n.w. at 11 a.m. Friday May 24, John Lockwood, Master, Roland M. Brown, Secy.

The Evening Star, March 23, 1963

Jules Rodier, 91, Dies; Ex-Aide at White House

Jules A Rodier, who went to work at the White House as one of six employees and stayed for nearly half a century, died Tuesday in Prince Frederick, Md., his home for the last 12 years. He was 91. He joined the White House telegraph office in 1900, working in the attic of the mansion itself. But soon a large first family -- the Teddy Roosevelts and all their children--made a separate staff office

necessary. During those early days, Mr. Rodier recalled, there was but one telephone, and whoever was nearest when it rang answered, from domestic help to the President himself.

An expert at decoding confidential messages, Mr. Rodier was an invaluable aide during two world wars and other international crisis and the death of President Harding. President Roosevelt offered him a life-time extension of service in 1941, but he retired under President Truman in 1949. Since then, however, he had attended nearly every White House Christmas party as the oldest living White House employee.

Perhaps a portent of his long career at the Executive Mansion came when he was 10 years old. He shook hands with President Garfield then, the first of 14 Presidents he was to meet.

A native of Washington, Mr. Rodier attended District schools and in 1885 went to work as a Western Union messenger boy, where he learned Morse code, advancing to telegraph operator. He worked at the United States Capital Western Union office from 1890 to 1900. A master of the Masonic Naval Lodge No. 4 in 1908, he remained active in Masonry until a few years before his death.

He was the White House office chess champion and a fisherman. After his retirement, he moved to Chesapeake Bay, where he remained an avid angler. He traveled to Europe with his eldest grandson nine years ago. He leaves two sons, Donald E., of Atlanta, Ga., and John M., of Springfield, Md.; a daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth R. Portner, of St. Leonard, Md., and five grandchildren. Services will be at 11 a.m. tomorrow at the Gawler Funeral Home, Wisconsin avenue at Harrison street, with burial at Congressional Cemetery.

History of the Naval Lodge, No. 4, F.A.A.M.

Jules A. Rodier, Master in 1908, was born in Washington, D.C., November 6, 1871, and attended the public schools through the sixth grade when, due to poor health, he was unable to continue his education. He later became a messenger for the Western Union Telegraph Company and when nineteen years of age became a telegrapher at the U.S. Capitol. After completing ten years at the Capitol he was transferred to the White House where he was head telegrapher up to the time of his retirement in 1949, having served under the administration of nine Presidents. In addition to his telegraphic duties at the White House he also served as a Code Expert. He was married to Miss Bessie B. Otterback November 9, 1905, and of this union there were three sons and one daughter, Jules B., Donald E., John M. and Mary Rodier. Brother Rodier was raised in Naval Lodge November 28, 1902; exalted in Washington Naval Chapter, No. 6, R.A.M., February 17, 1903, and served as High Priest in 1911. He was a member of St. John's Episcopal Chapel, the Columbia Athletic Club and the Anglers Club. He is now living with his daughter at St. Leonard, Maryland.

p. 245: In August 1953 the Master recognized Past Master Jules A. Rodier, who had recently returned from an extended tour in many European countries with his 13 year old grandson. Brother Rodier gave a talk on his interesting experience abroad.