

## Roger Chew Weightman

(18 Jan 1785 – 2 Feb 1876)

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*The Evening Star, May 22, 1854*

### Rock Creek Lower Bridge



The Iron bridge over Rock Creek at the foot of K street, which broke down on Saturday as mentioned in our last issue, remains in a wrecked condition, lying, partly in the bed of the stream and partly resting on the abutments. Gen. Weightman, we understand, had his arm broken, and the remaining passengers were rescued from the water, which, however, is not perhaps deep enough to drown a grownup person, being about five deep at present. There were three boys on the sidewalk at the time, who were all precipitated into the stream. Two of them were uninjured, and swam to land; the third was wedged in among the iron work, and could not extricate himself until he was released by some persons with crow bars. The little fellow was badly injured, and screamed out with fright and pain. It is not exactly known which part of the bridge was defective and many conjectures are hazarded.

*The Evening Star, Monday July 1, 1872*

### Serious Illness of General R.C. Weightman

General Roger C. Weightman, one of our oldest and most estimable citizens, is lying at the point of death at his residence on 20th street, between G and H. General Weightman has been in feeble health for the past year or two but was not compelled to go to his bed until last Tuesday, and since then he has been rapidly sinking. His attending physician, Dr. Maxwell, of the navy, is of the opinion that he cannot survive much longer, although he has no settled disease, but is gradually sinking under old age and feebleness. His youngest daughter and a sister-in-law and several of his grandchildren are now with him. His only son is at Centreville, Louisiana, and one daughter resides in Baltimore, both of whom have been summoned to his bedside.

Gen. Weightman was born in Alexandria, Va., in January, 1785, and is, therefore, in his 88th year. He came to this city in 1801 when quite a boy with Mr. Duane who published a paper here at the time, and he served his time as a printer of that journal. Following this business for some years he was finally elected public printer, and held that position several years. In early life he was quite successful in business and accumulated some money with which he erected a row of stores on the site now occupied by the National Hotel. In 1830 he was elected mayor of Washington and was re-elected to that position two or three times. Subsequently he was cashier of the Bank of Washington, and in 1851 he was appointed chief clerk of the Patent Office by Commissioner Ewbank. He remained in this position several years, when he was removed by Mr. Ewbank's successor and appointed a second-class clerk in the Patent Office. He continued in that position, doing duty in the library of the Patent Office, until June, 1870, when he was removed by Commissioner Fisher on account of his old age. In 1861 General Weightman was commissioned Brevet Major General of the Militia of the District of Columbia by President Lincoln and reorganized the militia here at that time. In 1812 he was in the battle of Bladensburg, and acted with much bravery on that occasion.

His wife, who died some years ago, was the youngest daughter of Col. Samuel Hanson, of this city. Although Gen. Weightman accumulated some property, his generous disposition soon disposed of it, and of late years he has depended upon his labor entirely. After he was removed from the Patent

Office, Mr. A.R. Shepherd, vice-president of the board of public works, generously tendered him a position in his office, which Gen. Weightman has since filled with entire satisfaction to the board. No name stands higher in this community than Roger C. Weightman. Nearly all of his early associates have passed away, but none have left a purer record than that of Gen. Weightman.

It is to be hoped that his useful life may be spared despite his serious illness at his advanced age.

*The Evening Star, February 2, 1876*

#### **Death of Gen. Roger C. Weightman**

We regret to announce that Gen'l Roger C. Weightman, one of the oldest residents of the District of Columbia, died this morning, at his residence on 20th street, near G, at the ripe age of 89 years, having observed his last birthday on the 18th of last month. General Weightman was a native of Alexandria, Va., but came here in 1801, where he learned the printing business with Andrew Way, who subsequently carried on business with the late Jacob Gideon, under the firm name of Way & Gideon. Gen. Weightman afterwards was the foreman for W.J. Duane, the Congressional printer, for several years, having his office near the corner of 6th street and Pennsylvania avenue. Gen. Weightman succeeded Duane as Congressional printer, and established an office on the south side of E street, near 7th, and held the position for one or two terms of Congress. During the war of 1812 he was an officer of a cavalry company, and at the close he accepted a commission in the militia of the District of Columbia, and at the time of Lafayette's visit to this country was a brigadier general. He held a commission as such until the death of Gen. Walter Jones, major general commanding, when he succeeded him in that position. During the early days of the rebellion, although his health would not permit him to participate in active out-door service, he performed the duties of the office of commander-in-chief of the District militia his headquarters being at the time in the Patent Office building. The orders calling for troops for mustering in, etc., were issued from there as also commissions for the officers. Col. Charles P. Stone, then of the U.S.A., and now commanding the forces of the Khedive of Egypt, was the inspector general and doing the out-door duty. When the death of Samuel N. Smallwood, mayor of Washington, occurred, in 1824, Gen. Weightman was elected by the city councils to that position, and filled the same from October 1824, to August 1827, being elected by the people in June, 1826; and with such fidelity did he perform the duties of the office that for years afterwards his administration was referred to as a model one. He was succeeded by Mr. Gales. On the 31st of July, 1827, he resigned the mayoralty, having been elected cashier of the Bank of Washington, then located in the National Hotel building, and he filled that position until 1834, when he resigned on account of ill health. Subsequently he was appointed to a clerkship in the Patent Office, and for a long series of years was the librarian there. He had an unsullied reputation, and possessed many traits of character, which ennoble the possessor. His death will be lamented by our older citizens generally. For a number of years past he has been quite infirm, and consequently many of the younger members of the community knew him only by reputation.

*The Evening Star, February 3, 1876*

#### **The Funeral of Gen. Weightman –**

The following letter was to-day addressed by the District Commissioners to Col. Webster, adjutant general of the D.C. militia:

"The funeral of the late Roger C. Weightman, the Commissioners are informed, will take place on Sunday next under the auspices of the Masonic societies of the city. General Weightman was major general of the District militia, and at one time mayor of the city; he was also an officer in the last war with Great Britain, and for many years an influential, prominent and active citizen. It would, therefore,

seem to be a proper occasion for a military display as a mark of respect, and the Commissioners refer the subject to you for such decision and action as you shall consider advisable and proper in the premises.

Very respectfully,  
Wm. Tindall, Secretary"

Col. Webster issued the following order in compliance with the above letter:

General Orders No. 16 -- The companies composing the 1st Regiment N.G.D.C.M., are hereby ordered to attend as an escort at the funeral of the late Major General Roger C. Weightman, to take place on Sunday, the 8th inst., at 2:30 o'clock p.m., from the Masonic Temple. Col. Robert J. Fleming will command and make all necessary arrangements for the prompt execution of this order. By order of the Commissioners.

A. Webster, Adj. Gen. D.C.M. To Brig. Gen. Wm. G. Moore, Commanding D.C.M.

*The Evening Star, February 5, 1876*

The Funeral of the late Gen. Roger C. Weightman, as has been stated in The Star, will take place in the main saloon of the Masonic Temple tomorrow afternoon at 2 1/2 o'clock, and will be a very imposing one. The religious services of the Episcopal Church will be conducted by Rev. Mr. Jackson, of St. Paul's Church, and Rev. Dr. Pinckney, assistant bishop of Maryland. The Masonic services will be conducted by the Grand Lodge, Mr. I.L. Johnson; grand master. The pall bearers selected all Masons, are the following: Dr. John B. Blake and T.M. Hanson, representing the Oldest Inhabitants; Cols. J.G. Payne and N.B. Fugitt, the military; Past Grand Masters C. F. Stansbury and J.E.F. Holmead, the Grand Lodge of Masons, and John Purdy and Nicholas Acker, Lebanon Lodge of Masons. The military will for the escort under Col. R.I. Fleming, and it is expected that companies A and B and D will be out. The Grand Lodge of Masons will be escorted by the Commanderies of Knights Templare and Lebanon Lodge will attend as mourners. The President has directed the U.S. Marine Band to furnish the music. After the services at the hall the remains will be taken (under the direction of Mr. Anthony Buchly, undertaker) to the Congressional cemetery; the procession moving in the following order: Section of the Marine band; first regiment N.G., D.C.M., Col. Robert I. Fleming commanding; section of the Marine band; Washington Commandery, No. 1, Knights Templar, Charles F. Stansbury, eminent commander; Columbia Commandery, No. 2, James E. Waugh, eminent commander; Potomac Commandery, No. 3, J.H. Wood, eminent commander, De Molay Commandery, No. 5 (mounted), George B. Clark, eminent commander; carriages with clergy and pallbearers; hearse; Grand Lodge of the District, Lebanon Lodge, No. 7; Master Masons; Oldest Inhabitants' Association; carriages, with relatives of the deceased. At the cemetery, the solemn and impressive Masonic burial services will be conducted by the Grand Master of the District, Isaac L. Johnson. At the conclusion of the services at the grave the military will fire a salute.

*The Evening Star, February 7, 1876*

The Funeral of the late Roger C. Weightman took place from Masonic Temple yesterday afternoon, and a large concourse of people was in attendance. About noon Mr. Anthony Buchly, the undertaker, removed the remains from the late residence of the deceased, on 20th street, to the Masonic Hall. The body was in a handsome walnut coffin, covered with black cloth, with black bar handles and black Masonic emblems. On the lid was a handsome silver plate with black border inscribed: "Roger C. Weightman, died February 2, 1876, aged 89 years." On the lid was the lambskin, and two elegant crosses composed of the choicest exotics. About 2:45 o'clock the Masonic fraternity entered the hall in

the following order: -- Washington Commandery, No. 1, Knights Templare, Robot Boyd, Eminent Commander; Columbia Commandery, No. 2, James E. Waugh, Eminent Commander; Lebanon Lodge, No. 7, entered the hall and opened ranks, when the Grand Lodge with the Master Masons, followed by the Grand Master of the District and the officers of the Grand Lodge entered and passed through the ranks. After the Masons had been seated, the coffin, preceded by Rev. Mr. Jackson, of St. Paul's P.E. church, was removed up the center aisle to the end of the hall by the following pall-bearers: Past Grand Masters Charles F. Stansbury and J.E.F. Holmead, Nicholas Acker, John Purdy, Dr. John B. Blake, T.M. Hanson, Nath'l B. Fugitt and James G. Payne, Rev. Mr. Jackson read the funeral service, and there was solemn singing by the Masonic choir, under the direction of Mr. Robert Ball.

The procession was formed on F street, right resting on 11th street in the following order: Detachment of mounted police; Marine band, 55 pieces; battalion of First Regiment National Guard D.C., under command of Colonel R.I. Fleming, consisting of Company A, Capt. Moore and Lieuts. Dalton, Harrison and Meding, 46 men; Company B, Capt. McCathran, Lieuts. Greenfield, Shaw and McFadden; 40 men; Company D, Capt. Thorpe and Lieuts. Quantrill and Plant, 40 men; Washington, Columbia, and DeMolay Commanderies of Knights Templare; Lebanon Lodge of Masons; Grand Lodge.

At the conclusion of the services at the hall, the remains were born to the hearse, and the cortege moved to the Congressional cemetery, where the body was deposited in the vault. After the church services before the vault,, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Isaac L. Johnson conducted the Masonic ceremony for the burial of the dead in his usual solemn and impressive manner, and at the conclusion a salute was fired by the military.

The members of the Commanderies and of the Oldest Inhabitants' association contemplated following the remains to the cemetery in a body, but the rain compelled them to disband; however, many of them attended in carriages. There were many of the oldest citizens present, among them General P.F. Bacon, General G.C. Thomas, ex-Governor Shepherd, T.L. Hume, H.N. Easby, and the staff of the National Guard of the District was represented by Colonel Amos Webster, Colonel Joseph D. Barnes and Colonel J.V.N. Vandenberg.

*Harper, Kenton N., History of the Grand Lodge, 1911, p. 341-342:*

#### **Grand Master, 1833**

Born in Alexandria, Va., in 1787, he removed to Washington in 1801, where he learned the printing business with Andrew Way, who subsequently carried on business with the late Jacob Gideon under the firm name of Way & Gideon. He served for a time s foreman to the Government Printer and later, for several Congressional terms, held the latter position, with his office on the south side of E Street near Seventh, N.W. He also at one time conducted a book store on the northwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Sixth Street, N.W.

During the War of 1812 he was an officer in a cavalry company, and at the close accepted a commission in the militia of the District, and at the time of LaFayette's visit to this country was a Brigadier General and assisted in the entertainment of the nation's guest. His home, 324 Virginia Avenue, S.E., still standing and now dedicated to and used for settlement work, played an important part in the social functions of that event, the ball-room on the side being specially erected for the better handling of the numerous guests.

He was later promoted to be a Major General and Commander-in-Chief of the District Militia, and was occupying that position at the outbreak of the War of the Rebellion, although his impaired health would not permit of his participating in active outdoor service.

Bro. Weightman for a number of years held office in the City Council and was elected Mayor of Washington in 1824, and served to August, 1827, and with such fidelity did he perform his duties that his administration was referred to for years as a model one. He resigned the mayoralty to accept the

position of Cashier of the Bank of Washington, then located in the National Hotel building, and held that position until 1834, when he resigned on account of ill-health and was subsequently appointed a clerk in the Patent Office and for years was librarian there.

He had an unsullied reputation and possessed many ennobling traits of character, was a successful businessman and a dignified, courtly gentleman.

In the Masonic Fraternity Bro. Weightman long held a leading position and possesses the unique distinction of having been called from the post of Senior Warden of his lodge to the chair of Grand Master, making one of three similar instances in the history of this jurisdiction.

He was made a Master Mason in Lebanon Lodge, No. 7, November 24, 1811, being the first candidate who received the degrees in that body and for nearly sixty-five years held continuous membership therein.

Bro. Weightman passed away February 2, 1876, at the advanced age of 89, and was interred in Congressional Cemetery under the auspices of the Grand Lodge and with an escort of all the Commanderies, K.T., of the District and several companies of militia.