

# GEORGE S. DAVIS IS DEAD AT 85

## Was One of Founders of Drug Firm of Parke, Davis & Company.

Funeral services for George S. Davis, who died Wednesday at his home, 2240 Marquette avenue, will be held at 2 p. m. Friday in the chapel of the William R. Hamilton Co., Cass and Alexandrine avenues. Burial will be in Elmwood Cemetery. He was 85 years old.

Mr. Davis, founder with the late Hervey C. Parke, of the pharmaceutical supply house of Parke, Davis & Co., lived to see the business of which he was at one time the active manager pass to the control of strangers, and to have his fortune, which at one time was estimated to be close to a million dollars, slip through his fingers as he reached the age at which many men retire. He filed a petition in bankruptcy in 1903, showing liabilities of nearly a quarter of a million dollars, with assets of \$3,140. Bad investments were the alleged cause of his ill fortune.

Stock in the Continental Varnish & Paint Co., of which he was then president and treasurer, was included in his assets.

### REAL ESTATE INVESTOR.

Born in Detroit in 1845, Mr. Davis had been a large investor in local real estate prior to the money panic of 1893, and had extensive interests in California lands, upon which he was unable to realize when the crisis came. Then illness forced his temporary retirement and subsequent financial disaster.

A stock and dairy farm of nearly 500 acres on the lake front at Jefferson avenue and the Eleven Mile road, known as "Chalview," was one of his many ventures, and he was the owner of a number of fine horses, including a prize stallion known as Antevolo, for which he paid \$35,000.

Mr. Davis' parents, Solomon and Anne H. Duncan Davis, came to Detroit from Vermont in 1833, where the elder Davis established a brass foundry, in which business he continued until 1870, when he retired at an advanced age. The Davis family, of English origin, traced their American ancestry back to 1670.

### FOUNDED DRUG FIRM.

When George S. had reached the age of 15 and had graduated from the Detroit High School he was given the choice of a college education and a professional life, or a commercial career, and chose the latter, entering the wholesale drug house of Farrand, Sheley & Co.

Here he made a systematic study of the drug business for seven years, when in 1867 he purchased an interest in the firm of Duffield, Parke & Co., manufacturing chemists. In 1871 the firm name, after the retirement of two partners, was changed to Parke, Davis & Co., under which title, both as a firm and a corporation, the concern has since been known.

The enterprise suffered severely during its earlier history, through strong competition and want of proper capital, and though greatly crippled by the condition of commercial affairs incidental to the panic of 1873, it passed safely through the crisis. From 1877 its success became pronounced, and eventually it became known as the largest concern of its kind in the United States, if not in the world.

### CREDITED WITH SUCCESS.

With this success George S. Davis was an essential factor. The business was incorporated in 1875, with Mr. Davis as secretary and treasurer. In addition to his business as a manufacturer he was an extensive publisher of books and brochures of interest in the medical and scientific world. He was at one time president of the Michigan Phonograph Co., vice-president of the Imperial Life Insurance Co. and was interested in various corporations and other enterprises.

Mr. Davis had been mentioned for various public offices, including those of Mayor, congressman and park commissioner, but was in no sense an office-seeker. The farthest he ever got in that respect was to have been defeated in the Council for park commissioner after he had been named for that position by Stephen S. Grummond, Mayor of Detroit in 1884-5.

Mr. Davis remained a bachelor until Aug. 17 of this year, when he married Mrs. Jeannette R. Percival, who was his secretary in the early days of his business career.

### ACTIVE CLUB MEMBER.

During his active years he had been a member of various social clubs, including the Grosse Pointe Club, of which he was a director, and was an attendant of the Fort Street Presbyterian Church. He was a charter member of Oriental Lodge, No. 240, F. & A. M. He also was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution.

He was a brother of James E. Davis, 2506 Jefferson avenue east, for many years prominent in the wholesale drug business in Detroit, and more recently a member of the firm of Williams, Davis, Brooks & Co., and the Michigan Drug Co.

### WIDELY KNOWN IN DETROIT