

Daniel, John Reeves Jones ^[1]

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by Louise MCG. Hall, 1986

13 Jan. 1802–22 June 1868

John Reeves Jones Daniel, lawyer, congressman, and planter, was born near [Halifax](#) ^[2], the son of Judith Jones and Willie Daniel. He attended [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[3], from which he was graduated first in his class with an A.B. degree in 1821 and received a master's degree in 1831. He was a university trustee from 1833 to 1853. Admitted to the [North Carolina bar](#) ^[4] in 1823, he practiced law in Halifax with much success. In 1831 he was elected to the House of Commons where he served until 1834. In that year he became attorney general of the state, a post he held until 1841 when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the Second District. On entering Congress he was appointed to the Committee on Roads and Canals and later to the Committee on the Territories. For several sessions he was chairman of the Committee of Claims. A supporter of [states' rights](#) ^[5] and the annexation of Texas, he was one of the two signers from North Carolina of Calhoun's Southern Manifesto. He remained in the House until 1853.

Some time after retiring from Congress, Daniel moved to Louisiana. There he settled on a plantation in Caddo Parish, on the Red River a few miles south of Shreveport, and continued to practice law. His son Junius joined him in 1858 to assist in the management of his plantation. Junius, a [West Point](#) ^[6] graduate, returned to North Carolina to serve in the army for the [Confederacy](#) ^[7], rising to the rank of brigadier general. He was killed in the [Battle of Spottsylvania Courthouse](#) ^[8] in 1864.

Daniel had a reputation as a brilliant lawyer and an able speaker. He has been cited for his clear and discriminating mind, patient industry, and high integrity. He seems to have been generally respected and, according to his obituary, was known as "Honest John Daniel."

Daniel was married in Halifax on 5 Apr. 1825 to Martha Elizabeth Long Stith, the daughter of Colonel Basset Stith and his wife Mary Long. Martha's sister Margaret Maria Basset Stith was the wife of Daniel's first cousin, Judge [Joseph John Daniel](#) ^[9], also of Halifax. John Reeves Jones and Martha Daniel had four children: Willie Augustus (1826–58), John Napoleon (1827–52), [Junius](#) ^[10] (1828–64), and Virginia Frances (1830–died in infancy). Of these, only Junius was married; he had no children. Daniel's wife Martha died in Halifax in August 1831 after a short illness. On 29 Aug. 1844 Daniel married Sarah Frances Washington Stith, the sister of his first wife. There were no children of this marriage. Mrs. Daniel died on 26 Nov. 1895 in Washington, D.C., and was buried in [Raleigh](#) ^[11].

Texts of Daniel's speeches in Congress appear in appendices to the [Congressional Globe](#) ^[12]. [Duke University's](#) ^[13] Perkins Library has two manuscript letters. There are scattered references to Daniel in the Papers of David Outlaw, located in the [Southern Historical Collection](#) ^[14] of the Library of [The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) ^[3]. (Outlaw and Daniel served together in both the House of Commons and Congress.)

References:

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T. H. Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, vol. 2 (1856).

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A. C. Gordon, "Daniel Family of Halifax, North Carolina," *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, vol. 13 (March 1931).

Daniel L. Grant, *Alumni History of the University of North Carolina* (1924).

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Additional Resources:

"Daniel, John Reeves Jones, (1802 - 1868)." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. Washington, D.C.: The Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000034> ^[15] (accessed June 4, 2013).

David Outlaw Papers, 1847-1855; 1866 (collection no. 01534). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/o/Outlaw,David.html>^[16] (accessed June 4, 2013).

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Halifax](#)^[22]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#)^[23]

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