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### MSS0265. Tennessee State Board of Health letter book finding aid

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**University of Memphis Libraries  
Special Collections Department**

126 Ned R. McWherter Library  
Memphis, TN 38152 - 3250  
Phone: (901) 678 - 2210  
E-mail: lib\_sc@memphis.edu

## **Tennessee State Board of Health letter book**

**Title:** Tennessee State Board of Health letter book  
**Collection No:** MSS.265  
**Extent:** 0.25 cubic feet  
**Inclusive Dates:** 1879

**Abstract:** The collection comprises a letter book which contains mostly copies of telegrams to and from James D. Plunket, M.D., president of the Tennessee State Board of Health, regarding the presence of yellow fever in Memphis and elsewhere between July and October 1879.

**Provenance:** Purchased from Bookworm and Silverfish, Virginia, April 2013.  
**Processed by:** Gerald Chaudron, August 2015.  
**Access:** Open to all researchers.  
**Language:** English  
**Preferred Citation:** Tennessee State Board of Health letter book, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

**Publication date:** August 2015

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## Scope and contents

The collection comprises a letter book which contains mostly copies of telegrams to and from James D. Plunket, M.D., the president of the Tennessee State Board of Health, regarding the presence of yellow fever in Memphis and elsewhere. The telegrams, from July to October 1879, document the efforts of the state and local boards of health to contain outbreaks of yellow fever through quarantine, despite continued breaches by individuals. There is also a legal challenge by the Memphis cotton industry to the state board's quarantine policy which prevented the transportation of cotton into the city. The board defended its policy and its actions were upheld by the court.

The telegrams were bound into a letter book which, when received by the department, was in poor condition with no covers and some contents damaged or missing. A number of telegrams had also been removed at some point. For preservation and access reasons, it was decided to separate the telegrams from the binding that remained and place them in folders.

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## Subject terms

Tennessee. State Board of Health.  
Yellow fever—Tennessee—Memphis.

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## Related materials

Tennessee Department of Public Health, 1874-1975, Record Group 1, Tennessee State Library & Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

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## Inventory

### Box 1

#### Folder

##### Telegrams, 1879:

- 1 July 10-17.
- 2 July 17-24.
- 3 July 25-August 5.
- 4 August 6-14.
- 5 August 14-28.
- 6 August 28-September 9.

- 7 September 8-20.
- 8 September 22-October 3.
- 9 Index.
- 10 Spine of letter book.