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Thomas W. Roane papers

Title: Thomas W. Roane papers
Collection No: MSS.314
Extent: 1.25 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1836-1922 and undated

Abstract: The collection mainly comprises correspondence, bills, receipts relating to Dr. Thomas Roane's medical practice and family life in Tipton County, Tennessee.

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Biographical information

Thomas Walter Roane was born in Gloucester County, Virginia, on May 17, 1830, the son of Robert (1798-1872) and Emily Nicholas Davies Roane (1800-1871). He had an older sister Henrietta E. (1829-1882). Robert Roane appears to have moved the family to Tennessee by 1836. Thomas married Mary Helen "Mamie" Somervell (1839-1916) from Mecklenburg County, Virginia, around 1859 and they had 11 children: Helen Davies (1860-1954), Walter Somervell (1862-1886), James William (1864-1898), Anna Hearne (1866-1930), Thomas Alexander (1868-1900), Julia Leigh (1870-1947), Marion Spottswood (1875-1959), Henry Selden (1877-1881), Holmes (1878-1935), Ruth (1882-1936), and Landon Boyd (1885-1952). Thomas W. attended the University of Virginia and University of Pennsylvania to become a doctor, graduating in 1854 and then returning to practice in Tipton County, Tennessee. He served as a surgeon in the Confederate Army from 1862 and was in Cheatham's Division during the Atlanta campaign in 1864. He returned to his practice in Tipton County after the war and died on 20 January 1896.

Scope and contents

These papers of a Tipton County, Tennessee, physician contain correspondence, bills and receipts relating to Dr. Roane's medical practice and family life. Several letters and various lists of drugs indicate pharmaceuticals and equipment available to a nineteenth century doctor. Two letters written in 1864 refer to Roane's service as a Confederate surgeon in Cheatham's Division during the Atlanta campaign. The doctor's amnesty oath, parole and oath of allegiance survive. A number of notes after 1865 allude to agreements between Roane and local landowners in Tipton County on the medical care of the newly freed black laborers. A Pike County, Mississippi, cousin writes in December 1860, about his support for secession and in September 1866, about his fears for the South immediately after the war. The collection contains several letters written in the late 1830s from family members in Virginia. Roane's class notes from the University of Virginia medical school, 1852-1853, are in a manuscript volume. Genealogical information is included in a family Bible.

Subject terms

Roane, Thomas W., 1830-1896.
Roane, Mary H., 1839-1916.
Tipton County (Tenn.)

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 Papers: 1836-1856. Contains several letters from family in Gloucester Court House, Virginia.
- OS1 September 7, 1836 - land sale. Indenture between surviving founders of LaGrange, Tenn., and Robert Roane, Fayette County, for two lots in town.
May 28, 1839 – Alyn Davies, Gloucester, Va., to Uncle Bob, refers to local election there. Colonel Smith goes to Legislature after very close vote.
September 2, 1839 – John T. Cooke, Gloucester, Va., states that he has quit gambling and swearing, his worst habits, "the Lord has so convinced me and changed my heart."
September 2, 1841 – John T. Cooke mentions hard economic times in Gloucester, Va.
March 1, 1853 - deed of land from Jesse D. Hall to Robert Roane, Tipton County, Tenn.
April 14, 1854 - accounts of Dr. Thomas Roane with a Philadelphia druggist Thomas P. James. List includes chloroform, digitalis, argente nitras, glass funnel.
April 9, 1856 - Philadelphia druggist Thomas P. James to Dr. Roane, Tipton County, Tenn., about physician's order which has been sent on steamer "Memphis #2", but "the freezing up of the River was the cause of delay" at Pittsburg.
May 30, 1856 - Philadelphia druggist Thomas P. James writes that he is sorry about the delay of the medicine and requests Roane to order earlier, "that I may get them onward before they can be overtaken by the cold."
September 2, 1856 - Philadelphia druggist Thomas P. James to Roane, says he is astonished at the price of quinine in Memphis. He sells it at \$3 per oz. "I hope you will report your case for the journals. It is the duty of practitioners to give to the public their experience in successful practice for the benefit of suffering humanity."
- 2 Papers, 1857-1860. Includes bill of sale, receipts, correspondence.
February 25, 1857 - Philadelphia druggist Thomas P. James to Roane on problems of getting some instruments Roane ordered, on instrument makers and types of microscopes, and on marriage. Notes Roane has not ordered this "article" [wife] from him. "You see I selected a Yankee and let me tell you, that the Yankee girls invariably make excellent wives.... [I] do most religiously recommend that you as a physician ought to marry.... I do assure that all the Yankee lasses are not abolitionists."
March 11, 1859, druggist Thomas P. James to Roane on the latter's marriage.
September 29, 1860 - from Philadelphia druggist Thomas P. James referring to Pomological Society, which held a session in Philadelphia. The American Pomological Society "comprises the intelligent fruit growers of the United States both Practical & Amateur...."
December 29, 1860 - Magnolia, Miss., Roane's cousin writes "We are all secessionists down here - wish to get rid of the accursed abolition crew.... The surgeon's knife must be applied, not for the simple pleasure of performing a surgical operation, but to save the life of the patient."
- 3 Papers, 1861-1863. Promissory notes, accounts, some probably with local stores in Tipton County, Roane's appointment as a surgeon in the Confederate Army.
- 4 Papers, 1864-1865.

October 21, 1864 - Roane writes to wife Mamie from Cheatham's Division Hospital, Gadsden, Alabama. "The Negroes captured at Dalton have been claimed by owners from Tenn and Ga & taken by them. The others are sent south to work for the army. The White Yankees were paroled & sent back." Discusses religion.

Oct. 21, 1864, Gadsden, Ala., Roane to sister, "We have been moving rapidly since the 28th of Sept flanking Atlanta. we got into Sherman's rear and have torn up & destroyed about 40 miles of the RR from Chattanooga to Atlanta. while Forrest has destroyed gaps in the Road from Nashville to Chattanooga. thus completely cutting off Sherman from his base of Supplies & compelling him to give up his prize Atlanta for which he spent 50,000 men & millions of treasure our last reports say Sherman has left the city & is following this army...[which] will be in position to compel him to fight his way to Nashville....Hood has gained the confidence of his army immensely...Still there will hardly be an election for Lincoln on the 5th Nov in TennesseeI shall be proud to tell my children that I pass up all the chances of fortune for my country.

March 16, 1865 – West Point, receipt for pay as Confederate surgeon, \$162/100 for September 1864.

May 23, 1865 – Roane's parole from Office of Provost Marshal, District of West Tennessee, Memphis.

June 21, 1865 - Oath of allegiance from Office of the Provost Marshal, District of West Tennessee, Memphis.

July 21, 1865 - receipt for payment to Mrs. G.M. Tarwater (Mrs. Roane's sister), \$80, for hire of girl, Ruby, for 1865. Roane will furnish usual clothing "awarded to hired Negroes."

September 5, 1865 - Amnesty oath, District of West Tennessee, Memphis.

December 7, 1865, note from D.T. Holloway to Roane regarding treatment of patients for which Holloway will pay. Probably refers to agreement between Roane and Holloway for medical care of Holloway's work force.

5 Papers, 1866.

Promissory note, tax receipt, notes from T.R. Sharp, on medical care of workers.

December 27, 1866, note asks Roane to treat freedmen on the Unsted and Sharp farm for the coming year. The landowners will not be responsible for the cost of surgery but they would like to be informed if Roane thinks it would be necessary.

April 15, 1866, Cumberland City, Tenn., from C.R. Willson, a fellow physician, to Roane. At the end of the war Willson was surgeon of 1st Consolidated Tennessee Regiment, "we all went up the spout near Greens Boro, N.C." At Greeneville, East Tennessee, "the Yanks would neither let us put our horses in the cars nor ride them through...." Now Willson has "a large, but not a paying practice." Refers to Professor Jennings and a medical school in Nashville, unnamed, where he had hoped to become a demonstrator. All the students supported him but Dr. V.S. Linza got the position.

September 20, 1866, price list from druggists Robert Shoemaker and Co., Philadelphia.

September 21, 1866, W.H. Roane (cousin) Magnolia, Pike County, Miss., writes, "I really fear that we are on the eve of terrible times, & I almost dread to see Congress meet again. If war should break out between the Radicals & Johnson's party, wo to this land." On Tennessee's Governor Brownlow he comments, "He will certainly get a world-

- wide reputation if he goes on in his present course much longer. I must confess that I have very little relish for Brownlow in any shape or form. It may be my fault, however, as my relish for African perfumery is not the best in the world." Mississippi is quiet and biding its time until Congress grants permission to be represented as well as taxed. Talks about cotton farming. Asks if Tennessee Presbyterians favor the Southern or Northern General Assemblies. "Vital religion in our section seems to be dead.... This is the worst feature in our whole case I think."
- 6 Papers, 1867. Receipts from Memphis and Tipton County stores.
February 4, 1868 - C.C. Crenshaw asks Roane to treat a patient. Other such notes from Sharp, J.A. Wright, W.C. Hart and John Blackwell are included.
- 7 Papers, 1868-1878.
Correspondence regarding a financial note Roane stood surety for Colonel Somerville. At one point the note became overdue and Roane was worried.
February 17, 1868, R.B. Koen, Collierville, Tenn., nurseryman. Flyer and letter with advice on pruning and planting.
Receipts, including tax receipts,
Note on the estate of D.T. Holloway.
- OS1 Robert Roane's estate distribution, 1873. (damaged)
Life insurance policy from Southern Life Insurance, Memphis, 1875.
Daily Memphis Avalanche, Memphis, Tenn., 22:72, September 29, 1878, pp.1-2. Re: yellow fever.
- 8 Papers, 1881-1890.
Tax and other receipts.
May 2, 1885 - Ebenezer Grange grants Roane a dimit.
August 28, 1889, Dallas, Tex., physician, S.D. Thruston, to Roane. "I was called away, just as I had finished the last sentence, to see a deputy sheriff whose right jugular vein had been cut, by a bullet from the pistol of an obstreperous Negro." Letter badly scorched.
- 9 Papers, 1891-1896.
Tax and other receipts, promissory notes, accounts with Hall & Calhoun, Dry Goods, Mountcarmel, Tenn., and Kinney & Wortham, Covington, Tenn.
January 24, 1896 – L.W. Irwin, Iron Gate, Va., to Mrs. Roane, January 24, 1896, sympathy letter on death of Dr. Roane.
- 10 Papers, 1897-1899.
Tax and other receipts, accounts from Covington stores for Mary H. Roane and Marion S. Roane, legal agreement establishing land trust by R.W. Sanford on behalf of Mary H. Roane for payment of notes owed by W.G. Watkin, lease between Meriam Sanford and Marion S. Roane.
- 11 Papers, 1900-1922.
Tax and other receipts, certificate of registry and pedigree of hog.
- 12 Papers, undated.
Notes, receipts, accounts.
Letter from Ward & LeGuere, Memphis, on new pessaries.
- 13 Printed Items, circa 1868-1915 and undated.

Flyer on imported Spanish fowls; United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Washington, D.C.: "The Selection of Cotton and Corn Seed for Southern Farms," 1909; "Field Instructions for Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work," 1909; "Fall-Breaking and the Preparation of the Seed Bed", 1910; R.D. Ward & Co., Drugs, Memphis, business card, Ad. for Silver's New Poultry Book, Salem, Ohio.

OS1 Diploma:

T.W. Roane, University of Virginia, 1853 June 29.

T.W. Roane, University of Pennsylvania, 1854 April 1.

James William Roane, Medical College of Memphis, 1890 March 28.

Certificate:

Registration of T.W. Roane's medical diploma, Tipton County, Tenn., 1899
November 5.

Anna Roane, Member of Baker Lemmon Chapter (Covington), Tennessee
Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated. (Ella Simonton signed
as Chapter secretary.)

Newspaper: *Daily Memphis Avalanche*, Vol. 22:72, 1878 September 29, 2pp. Re: Yellow
fever.

unboxed Metal document tube.

14 Newspaper clippings, undated.

Includes obituary: George Duffield Holmes, Tipton Female Seminary, Covington, 1894.

15 Genealogical information.

Obituaries: Dr. Thomas W. Roane, Covington, 1896; Rev. Robert Arthur Roane,
Virginia, 1901; resolutions on death of T.W. Roane; genealogical notes on Roane family.

16 Memorandum book. Notations for 1852, 1857.

17 Class notes of T.W. Roane, University of Virginia, 1852-1853.

Includes sections on physiology of generation, principles of zoological classification,
physiology of respiration.

Box 2

1 Leather Wallet.

2 "The Confederate States Almanac", 1864. H.C. Clarke, Mobile, Alabama.

3 Empty envelopes.

4 Cased photograph: Two tintypes of unidentified women. Photographs separated from
case.

Box 3

unfolded *The Holy Bible*, Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1816. Contains genealogical information.