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DRANE FAMILY PAPERS
1719-1928

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INTRODUCTION

The Drane Family Papers (1719-1928) predominately concern the life of Dr. Walter H. Drane, notable Clarksville, Tennessee, physician during the 19th century. The papers were given to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. Hilliard Wood, a descendant of Dr. Drane.

The materials in this finding aid measure 1.2 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Drane Family Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Drane Family Papers (1719-1928) contain correspondence, public addresses, legal documents, genealogical data, and memorabilia, of Dr. Walter Harding Drane's family. Dr. Drane provided the bulk of correspondence (1824-1865), and, by virtue of his extensive travels as a tobacco planter and medical doctor, gives interesting insights into such cities as 19th century Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Louisville, Kentucky; London, England; and Paris, France. In February 1828, for example, he described Pittsburgh as "sooty and black as ever, pursuing its various manufactories with that spirit and industry as characteristic of the place abroad. It is much to be regretted that the coal burnt in Pittsburgh contains so much bituminous matter – the finest painting and papered walls, look more dingy in six months here after they are finished, than they would in six years in our section of the country."

Dr. Drane was faithful and paternal in writing his children while they were away in school. On May 18, 1848, he advised Walter, Jr. to "have regular hours for study and take, by walking, enough exercise, at stated times, to strengthen and invigorate your constitution. Be polite, obeying and obedient to your instructors, and kind and affable to your fellow students; at the same time take care with whom you form close friendships." In writing his children he dealt with sundry subjects of that day, as well as the current trends in the tobacco market.

Several members of the family provided forty-seven letters of particular interest to students of the Civil War period. Three sons, William, James, and Hugh served in the Confederate Army, with the latter two enlisting in the 14th Tennessee Infantry which organized in Clarksville in May 1861. William's unit is, as yet, undetermined. James, a student at Howard Theological Seminary, Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1860-61, relates noteworthy incidents occurring in that vicinity immediately prior to the war. His proximity to Washington (ten miles) gave him the opportunity in December 1860, to hear congressional debates on secession. On January 7, he wrote that "Everybody seem(s) to be for disunion in this section, (and) all are wearing secession badges." Other letters tell of Lincoln's approaching inauguration and school dropouts. By April, James was anxious to be home himself. His meager correspondence, thereafter, traces his return to Virginia when the 14th Tennessee made the "long, hot" (August 1) march through the Allegheny Mountains; his soldier activities; and, finally, his severe illness with typhoid fever which soon took his life in October 1861.

William's letters, written from the same vicinity, are more descriptive. On July 29, 1861, he described soldiers who fought at First Manassas. By August 20 he was so confident that the war would soon be over that he exclaimed, "Victory is with us in Va.: Victory is with us in Mo: Lincoln has not so good an army now as he had one month ago, there is much dissatisfaction in his army --- I think the Peace element in the North will soon be predominant."

Again, however, it was Dr. Drane himself who provided most of the War correspondence. In September 1861, he visited William's encampment, then joined James and Hugh near Cheat Mountain in Randolph County, Virginia (now West Virginia), where he volunteered his services as a surgeon. He told of caring for the wounded and dying, and described the army's plight when hundreds of Confederates were stricken with typhoid fever and dysentery. He was present when James died, and, with the sick Hugh, accompanied the body to Clarksville.

One of the most interesting documents in these papers is an 1829 public address on "National Disunion" given by James B. McClure. In this remarkable oration, McClure almost prophetically foresees the approaching national dilemma, which, at that time, he described as a "single black spot ...which impends with such threatening aspect o'er the path through which our country rapidly advances."

The genealogist will find helpful material on the Drane, Hampton, and Gibson lines. The legal documents are quite old, particularly the land indentures of the early 1800s. An 1851 map of Paris, France, makes an interesting addition to the memorabilia.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dr. Walter Harding Drane

- 1798 November 1, born in Montgomery County, Maryland. About 1808 his family moved to Logan County, Kentucky, where he grew into manhood. In 1822 he graduated from the medical school of Transylvania, Lexington, Kentucky, then moved to Clarksville, Tennessee, to practice.
- 1825 Married to Miss Eliza Jane McClure, (1808-1889) daughter of Hugh McClure one of Clarksville's most prominent businessmen. From this union were born eleven children. The five who survived into later years included William, Walter, Jr., Henry, Jennie (Johnson), and Edward. One son, James, died of typhoid fever while serving with the 14th Tennessee Infantry Regiment during the Civil War.
- 1837 Dr. Drane was an enterprising citizen of early Clarksville. He especially supported educational programs and was instructional in the founding of the Clarksville Male Academy in the Spring of 1837. He promoted the building of turnpikes and bridges which added immeasurably to the town's early growth, and, on one occasion, gave \$10,000 to complete the Memphis, Clarksville, and Louisville Railroad.
- 1843 Dranes moved to a farm, Fairfield, on the Hopkinsville Road. Thereafter, Dr. Drane gave up his medical profession and devoted most of the remainder of his life to the tobacco business, which accrued to him considerable wealth.
- 1861 September, served as volunteer surgeon with 14th Tennessee Infantry in Virginia, where two sons, James and Hugh, contracted typhoid fever. James died but Hugh eventually recovered and returned to the army.
- 1865 October 30, Dr. Drane died at his home. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Montgomery County.

CONTAINER LIST

Microfilm Roll #1

Box 1

Accounts

1. Correspondence – General, 1806-1888
2. Correspondence – General, 1914-1928
3. Correspondence – General to Mrs. Walter H. Drane, 1825-1878
4. Correspondence – General to Walter H. Drane, 1837-1861
5. Correspondence – James M. Drane, 1858-1861
6. Correspondence – Louise Drane, 1848-1864
7. Correspondence – Marion Drane, 1861-1865
8. Correspondence – Walter H. Drane, 1824-1859
9. Correspondence – Walter H. Drane, 1860-1865
10. Correspondence – Walter H. Drane, Jr., 1854-1865
11. Correspondence – William M. Drane, 1848-1865
12. Correspondence – Hugh H. Poston, 1848-1853
13. Correspondence – Photostatic Duplications

Box 2

1. Legal Documents – Court summons
2. Legal Documents – Evaluation of Hugh McClure estate
3. Legal Documents – Land grants (typed), 1801-1820
4. Legal Documents – Land grants, 1810-1817
5. Legal Documents – Land indentures (typed) 1797-1831
6. Legal Documents – Land indentures, 1788-1813
7. Legal Documents – Land indentures, 1816-1851
8. Legal Documents – Miscellaneous
9. Legal Documents – Miscellaneous
10. Legal Documents – Miscellaneous
11. Legal Documents – Wills

Box 3

1. Genealogy – Drane line

Microfilm Roll #2

Box 3

2. Genealogy – Gibson – Hampton lines
3. Genealogy – Miscellaneous lines
4. Memorabilia – W.M. and W.H. Drane, Jr.
5. Miscellaneous
6. Miscellaneous

7. Passports – William M. Drane
8. Postage stamps and envelopes
9. Speech on National Disunion, James B. McClure, 1829
10. Sketch – Dr. Walter H. Drane

ACCOUNT BOOKS GIVEN TO THE JOINT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY BY MISS
MYRTLE DRANE, CLARKSVILLE, TN, AND WITH HER PERMISSION GIVEN TO
THE MANUSCRIPT SECTION OF THE TENNESSEE STATE LIBRARY AND
ARCHIVES

August 5, 1959

Accession Number 251

Box 3

1. Large account book of the firm of McClure and Drane, Clarksville, Tennessee, 1826-1828
2. Large account book for the dates 1828-1847. This book contains accounts for merchandise and also medical accounts for various families. This is the account book of Dr. William Harding Drane.
3. Account book containing an inventory of Dean and Gillette, Clarksville, Tennessee, September 6, 1848. Some other accounts for the years 1845-1848 are partially covered by scrapbook material.

Microfilm Roll #3

Box 3

4. Account book of W.H. Drane, Clarksville, Tennessee, 1866-1889. Contains statements of accounts of money paid out by W.H. Drane as agent since January 10, 1866 until and including February 23, 1884. There are some other accounts in the book for the dates 1884-1889
5. An account book of W.H. Drane as agent, containing the numbers and the place of deposit of all the bonds held by W.H. Drane as agent from January 1874-1889
6. An account book of W.H. Drane, Clarksville, Tennessee, 1874-1878 for Leaf Tobacco
7. An account book of W.M. Drane, Clarksville, Tennessee, 1880-1890, containing business letters and bills dealing primarily with tobacco