

Thomas R. Bruce

Dr. Thomas Rowland Bruce, the son of Samuel Bruce and Elizabeth Gould, was a practicing physician and surgeon in several locations in Jefferson County including Central Twp., Frumet and later in his career, Festus, Missouri. It appears that he was born in Ireland about 1824. He attended the University of Michigan and received his diploma in medicine in the year 1856. Three years later he married Irene Beall in Jefferson County, Missouri on January 4, 1859. Irene was born in Nelson County, Kentucky to Thomas A. Beall and Matilda Gwynn. The Beall family later moved to Indian Creek, Monroe County, Missouri. Where Irene was reared and educated.

The young couple was living in Central Township, Jefferson County when the Civil War broke out. On September 3, 1861, Thomas entered into the Confederate service in Bloomfield, Missouri. Between Sept 11, 1861 and October 5, 1861, Dr. Bruce was in the Confederate Missouri State Guard, 3rd Regt Infantry, as the Assistant Surgeon. Then between October 5, 1861 and December 1861, he was listed on the rolls of the Confederate Missouri State Guard, 1st Battalion, as a Surgeon. His service to the Confederacy was short lived. By April 1862, he was imprisoned at the U.S. Military Prison in St. Louis, Missouri. No record has been found that states the length of this stay.

In later years Dr. T.R. Bruce applied for a Confederate Pension. Although his pension was rejected, his application list he was present at the battles of Fredericktown, Blackwell or Big River, and the Indian Ford skirmish on the St. Francois River. The application was written as if Doctor Bruce was actually present at these battles. However, it was more likely he attended to the wounded of soldiers who were engaged in these conflicts.

Dr Thomas R. Bruce and his wife Irene had six children together, however only three lived to adulthood. Thomas Rowland Bruce, Jr was born about 1861. Later in life, Thomas Jr. tragically took his own life. His body was found in the Mississippi River on May 19, 1911. Ellen or Nellie Bruce was born about 1864. She taught school in Festus. She became a widower when her children were still young and returned to her parent's house. Thomas and Irene Bruce's youngest son, Robert Earl Bruce was born about 1869. As an adult he lived in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dr. Thomas R. Bruce practiced his profession as a physician for many years in Union Township, Washington County, Missouri where he and his family lived. In fact, the family resided in Washington County from the end of the Civil War to at least 1880. It also appears that the doctor at least for a short time practiced in Frumet, Missouri. However by 1884 he was living in Festus, Jefferson County, Missouri.

Thomas retired from practice in the year 1903. By this time, he has been living in Festus for over 18 years and had been a physician for 47 years. Thomas Rowland Bruce died on May 28, 1914 at the Pittsburgh Plat Glass Company Hospital in Crystal City, Missouri. He was 90 years old.

Contributed by Christine Merseal, JCGS member, cosmergen@yahoo.com, December 2007

Sources:

Thomas Rowland Bruce, death certificate no. 16444 (1914), Missouri State Archives – Office of Secretary of State, Jefferson City, Missouri. [Birth date given as May 12, 1824.]

Marriage entry for Bruce-Beal; January 4, 1859, St. Joachim- Old Mines, Cadet, Washington, MO, marriage entries 1851-1899; p. 44; St. Louis Archdiocesan Parish Records, SLCL roll #214, St. Louis County Library, Frontenac, Missouri.[Marriage took place in Jefferson County, Missouri.]

Marriage return for Bruce-Beall (1859), Jefferson County, Missouri Marriage Records 1849-1871, p. 147, MSA roll C3415.

Polk's Medical and Surgical Register of the United States and Canada, 6th revised edition, (Detroit, Michigan: R.L. Polk & Co., 1900), 1022. Provided by the National Genealogical Society.

Tho. R. Bruce household, 1860 U.S. Census, Jefferson County, Missouri, population schedule, Central Twp., sheet 535, dwelling 133, National Archives, M653 roll 626.

T.R. Bruce file, Confederate Pension and Home Application (Missouri), Bollinger-Casey; Adjutant General's Office; St. Louis County HQ Library roll # CONF-2, Frontenac, Missouri. [T.R. Bruce states his birth date is May 13, 1823 on the application. This conflicts with the birth date on his death certificate.]

Carolyn M. Bartels, *The Forgotten Men: Missouri State Guard* (Shawnee Missions, KS: Two Trails Publications, 1995), page 38.

T.R. Bruce, Missouri Union Provost Marshal Papers, Missouri State Archive, MSA roll F1286. [Photocopies of film are very difficult to read.]

Deed from T.R. & Irene Bruce to Joseph Hagan Sr. [brother-in-law to Irene] (recorded 16 April 1866), Monroe County Deed Book U:532, Recorder of Deeds Office, Paris, Missouri. [Deed states T.R. and Irene Bruce of Washington Co., Mo.]

Jefferson Democrat, Hillsboro, Missouri, Oct 1, 1884. [Notice that Nellie Bruce was teaching at Festus.]

Todd [sic] Bruce household, 1870 U.S. Census, Washington County, Missouri, population schedule, Union Twp., sheet 147, dwelling 156, National Archives M593 roll 825.

T.R. Bruce household, 1880 U.S. Census, Washington County, Missouri, population schedule, Union Township, ED 180, dwelling 138, National Archives T9, roll 740. [No sheet number given.]

Advertisement in the Jefferson Democrat, Hillsboro, Missouri, provided by Lisa Gendron. [Notice states Thomas R. Bruce's office located in Frumet over the Frumet store.]

Thomas R. Bruce household, 1900 U.S. Census, Jefferson County, Missouri, population schedule, Joachim Township, City of Festus, ED 54, sheet 4, dwelling 77, National Archives T623 roll 867. [The majority of the censuses list Thomas' birthplace as Ireland, as this census does. However the 1860 and 1870 censuses list his birthplace as Canada. This conflict has not been resolved.]

"Missouri Death Certificates, 1910-1955, digital images, Missouri State Archives-Office of Secretary of State, Jefferson City, Missouri (www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/deathcertificates/: accessed on June 29, 2006) entry for Thomas Roland Bruce, Jr. Cause of death is asphyxiation due to drowning, suicide.

Irene Bruce probate record #4564, Jefferson County Missouri Estate Files, Missouri State Archive roll C8720. [Robert Earl Bruce is listed on his mother's probate file as living on 1700 Olive Street, St. Louis, Mo.]