

# Biography of James H. Roe

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James H. Roe, a member of the firm of Holmes, Roe & Pierson, the publishers of the Riverside Daily Press and Weekly Horticulturist, is classed among the pioneers of Riverside, and for the sixteen years preceding this writing has been prominently connected with the interests and industries of the colony.

The brief facts gathered relating to his life are of interest: He was born in Birmingham, England, in 1843, his parents being the Rev. Charles Hill, a native of the north of Ireland, and Mary (Steadman) Roe, a native of England. His father emigrated with his family to the United States in 1851, and located in Boone County, Illinois, where he was engaged in his ministerial duties until the breaking out of the civil war, when he entered the United States service as a chaplain, and later was the superintendent of the Freedmen's Aid Commission, having jurisdiction of the affairs of that association in the southwest. He was a sincere Christian, a philanthropist and able orator, and visited England delivering lectures, and obtaining aid for the suffering freedmen of the South.

Mr. Roe was reared and schooled in Boone County until 1859, when he entered the University of Chicago and was diligently pursuing his course of study in that institution when the breaking out of the war induced him to abandon his college studies and tender his aid. In 1862 he accompanied his father, who was chaplain of the fifty-sixth Regiment Illinois Infantry, to the field, and participated in the campaign of the Shenandoah Valley under General Banks, and later was at the siege and surrender of Harper's Ferry. This closed his military career until 1864. In this year he was commissioned as a lieutenant in Company D, One Hundred and Thirty-fourth Regiment Illinois Volunteers, and served with his command in Kentucky and Missouri. At the expiration of his term of service he was honorably discharged. He then re-entered the Chicago University and completed his college studies, graduating in 1865. He sought employment and accepted a position as clerk in a drug store in that city, and the next year 1866 established a drug store in Marshalltown, Iowa, under the firm name of Mabie & Roe, which he conducted until 1868, when he moved to Belle Plain, Iowa, and engaged in the drug business under the firm name of Roe & Co.

In 1873 he decided to try life in Southern California, and located in Riverside, where he purchased a twenty-acre tract of land on the corner of Central and Riverside avenues, and established himself as a horticulturist, planting oranges, grapes and a large variety of deciduous fruits. Although successful in horticultural pursuits he sought other avenues in which to employ

his talents, and in 1874 he engaged in teaching in the public schools of Riverside, and the next year taught the old Spanishtown school in the Trujillo School District. In 1876 he decided to engage in his old business, and he established a drug store in Riverside, the pioneer drug store of the colony, and successfully conducted the same for the next ten years, during which time he also engaged in newspaper enterprises, and in 1878 also published Weekly Press, which paper he afterward sold to L. M. Holt in 1880. Early in 1886 he sold his drug store, the well-known City Pharmacy, to J. C. Hardman, and the same year bought the Valley Echo, and conducted it as editor until 1887, when the paper was consolidated with the Press and Horticulturist, and the firm of Holmes, Roe & Pierson was formed. For the year pre-ceding that consolidation the Echo had been issued by Roe & Pierson.

Mr. Roe is city editor of the Daily Press and of the Weekly Horticulturist, a history of which papers will be found elsewhere in this volume. He is an educated gentleman and an able writer, with sound practical knowledge of life, trained business principles, and is successful in his newspaper enterprises, as in other industries. He has ever taken the greatest interest in the schools and churches; for years he served as school trustee, and in 1884 was the clerk of the board. He is a member of the Baptist Church, and has for many years been a deacon and the treasurer of the society. Politically he is a straight Republican, but never an aspirant for political honors.

Mr. Roe was married in 1870 at Marshalltown to Miss Vina Price, a native of Illinois, daughter of the well-known pioneer, Owen Price, of Iowa. They have had two children: Robert P. and Mary Edna.