

# **BATTEY, ROBERT, 1828-1895.**

## **Robert Battey papers, 1810-1894**

Emory University  
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
404-727-6887  
rose.library@emory.edu

---

### **Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Battey, Robert, 1828-1895.  
**Title:** Robert Battey papers, 1810-1894  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 361  
**Extent:** .75 linear feet (2 boxes) and 1 oversized papers box (OP)  
**Abstract:** Letters between Dr. Robert Battey; his wife, Martha Battey; and his brother Dr. George M. Battey of Rome, Georgia.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

---

### **Administrative Information**

#### **Restrictions on access**

Unrestricted access.

#### **Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

#### **Source**

Gift of Robert B. Troutman of the Trust Company of Georgia, 1960. Additions were donated by Janet Anson of the First National Bank of Atlanta in 1979.

#### **Custodial History**

Additions are materials from the safety deposit box of Adrienne Battey.

#### **Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Robert Battey papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

#### **Appraisal Note**

Acquired as part of the Rose Library's holdings in Georgia history.

---

## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

Dr. Robert Battey (November 26, 1828 - November 8, 1895) was born near Augusta, Georgia. His parents, Cephas and Mary Magruder Battey, died while he was a small child. He and a brother, George Battey (the only two of five children who lived to maturity) became wards of their uncle, Dr. George Magruder, who lived in Columbia County, Georgia. He attended school at Augusta, Georgia and at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

In January of 1848 he went into the drug business at Rome, Georgia with a Dr. Dickerson. That spring he visited "old friends" in Andover. In June, his brother George joined him in the drug business. In November he became 21 years of age and made a settlement of his property with his guardian. His business prospered and on December 20, 1849 he married Miss Martha B. Smith of Rome.

For several years, beginning in 1853 or earlier, he studied pharmacy, chemistry and medicine in Philadelphia. He graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1857 and began practice in Rome, Georgia. In September, 1859 he attended a medical association meeting in Boston and from there he went to England, Ireland, Scotland and then to Paris where he studied medicine for several months. He was cordially received by surgeons wherever he went. They were particularly interested in "Battey's Operation" a technique he developed concerned with removal of the ovaries. He later became best known for this operation.

Mrs. Battey frequently assisted Dr. Battey with his operations and he established the Martha Battey Hospital at Rome, Georgia, in her honor. The couple had thirteen children, five of whom died before reaching maturity. One son, Dr. Henry Halsey Battey, entered his father's profession and studied in Vienna Austria.

During the Civil War Dr. Battey served as a surgeon in the Confederate army. He began as senior surgeon of Hampton's brigade in July 1861 and later served in hospitals in Atlanta, Rome, and Vineville, Georgia and Lauderdale, Mississippi. His last assignment (until May 1865) was in Macon, Georgia where he was in charge of a hospital. In 1873 he became professor of obstetrics at the Atlanta Medical College where he remained until 1875. Dr. Battey continued the practice of medicine until his death in 1895.

### Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of 74 letters written by Dr. Robert Battey; 14 letters written by Mrs. Martha Battey; 20 letters written by Dr. George M. Battey. Also included are a group of miscellaneous family papers (59 items), the majority of which are letters and all of which are accompanied by typed copies; a Battey Family genealogy; a manuscript (with typed copy) of a speech delivered by Dr. Robert Battey before a group of former classmates and alumni of Jefferson Medical College, and a reprint of an article by Dr. Battey, "Antisepsis in Ovariectomy".

### Finding Aid Note

A calendar of correspondence is available.

---



---

## Container List

### Robert Battey correspondence [typescripts available]

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	<p>January 4, 1846 - December 16, 1849</p> <p>15 letters. All of these letters were written to Mary Battey, daughter of his grandfather's second wife and his father's half sister, who was only 6 years older than Robert. She lived in Marshall, Mich. and in 1845 married Henry Halsey and later moved to Ithaca, N.Y. Robert is marking time until he comes of age, (November 1849) when he can "make a settlement" with his guardian. His business was prospering and he mentions (December 16, 1849) his forthcoming marriage.</p>
1	2	<p>May 30, 1852 - November 29, 1857</p> <p>13 letters. All 13 of these letters were written to Mary Battey Halsey. Robert is away from home studying pharmacy and medicine in Philadelphia. He graduates in 1857 and begins practice in Rome.</p>
1	3	<p>August 28, 1859 - September 15, 1859</p> <p>8 letters. All 8 of these letters were written to his wife. Before departing for his winter study in Paris he visits Philadelphia, describes countryside, a pottery, mentions "an auracle" he sent home for Mrs. Carey and the interest of several doctors in his improvement in "vesico vaginal" operation and use of his "apparatus". He discusses the institution of slavery with a "quakeress." From Ithaca, N.Y. he mentions a "letter from Mr. (William Henry?) Stiles to our French minister" and his visit or interview with Drs. Logan and Westmoreland in Atlanta on his way up. At the Delaware House in Albany, N.Y. he notices that the headwaiter was a mulatto man and the waitresses were white girls. At Boston he presides over a meeting of the College of Pharmacy and is complimented on a speech. He mentions prominent members: Proctor Parrish, Ellis, Garrigues, Taylor, Graham, and 'Squibb.'</p>
1	4	<p>September 18, 1859 - December 11, 1859</p> <p>12 letters. All but the last of these letters are addressed to his wife. He visits Phillips Academy where he and George attended school, and the home of the "notorious" Harriet Beecher Stowe. He has some "specimens" to present to the Atlanta Medical College. He is surprised he has not heard from his Atlanta friends. On October 3 he writes from Liverpool with a detailed description of the people, animals, architecture, hotels, food, clothing and transportation facilities. On October 6-9 he writes from Dublin, continuing his "journal" and mentions being "most cordially received by the Physicians and Surgeons" there. On October 19 he writes from Edinburgh, Scotland and October 26-November 3 from London. He expresses grief and resignation at news of death of his son and mentions the openhanded generosity of the medical men wherever he has been. On November 16, 24, 27 he writes from Paris, advising his wife about her health and home affairs and describing Paris, his living</p>

quarters, meals and French bread. The letter of December 11 is addressed to Mr. Newman whom he advises about his health.

- 1 5 January 2, 1860 - January 31, 1865  
12 letters and 1 form. 12 letters, January 2, 1860-April 11, 1860 are written from Paris, France to his wife. He expresses concern for the future in "the Virginia difficulties." He describes Paris, the people, fashions, customs, manners, architecture, Church of St. Genevieve, the use of fireproof building materials. About April 1, he takes a trip into Belgium. He has no definite word from his "Atlanta friends". On November 24, 1860 in a letter to Mary Halsey written from Rome, Georgia he encloses 3 county newspapers that contain "some indication of the state of popular feeling" and asks her for some "village papers" that he may see the state of affairs". A form "Report of Surgeon General's Office on the Examination of Dr. Robert Battey by the Army Medical Board of the Confederate States; November 20, 1861." August 29, 1864, a letter from Macon, Ga. to Mary (Halsey?), his hands are healing from an infection of gangrene, the first since he has been in the service. January 31, 1865, a letter from Polk Hospital, Lauderdale, Miss., to his wife mentions Dr. Slaton, Dr. Kennedy. Small pox "moves on well".
- 1 6 July 19, 1865 - November 3, 1894  
11 letters. 7 letters, July 19, 1865-November 22, 1868 are written to Mary Halsey. He describes early Reconstruction conditions in North Georgia in his family, his practice, the community. He feels that the experience of war has strengthened certain elements of spiritual character in some of the people but has had a demoralizing effect upon others. He is grateful for a trunk full of supplies, August 6, 1865. On August 29, 1867, he is uneasy about economic and political conditions. On November 22, 1868, he reports that his financial standing has improved. 2 letters, March 9, 1880 and January 24, 1881, to his son Henry in Vienna, Austria. He gives advice about his medical studies, European travel and the purchase of apparatus. 2 letters, both dated November 3, 1894, to Mary Halsey asking for a loan of \$10,000 to be secured by mortgage on brick stores in Rome, Georgia.
- 1 7 Speech  
Manuscript and typed copy of a portion of a speech delivered by Robert Battey at his old Medical College - Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, Pa., No title, no date. Concerned with the influence of the personality of the physician upon those around him -- colleagues, students, patients, his fellowmen. "Antisepsis in Ovariectomy" by Robert Battey, M.D., Rome, Ga., Transactions Medical, Association of Georgia (reprint).

**Martha Battey correspondence [typescripts available]**

- 1 8 August 31, 185[6] - January 22, 1888  
14 letters. 13 of these letters were written to Mary Halsey. Concerned with the illness and death of Dr. George Battey and the character and the affairs of

his widow; with the slaves before the war and the freedmen after Jenny, a slave, has a child "whiter than any of mine...I am sorry he is so white," she says on December 20, 1857. June 6, 1858 she writes that she has 13 in her family (including slaves) and sews for all of them. December 10, 1860 and February 17, 1861, she is "sorry to see our people so anxious to fight". Letters of October 11, 1865 and June 29, 1867, are full of the hardships of the late war and of Reconstruction. Mrs. Battey's letter of November 17, 1864 (Typescript copy) to Dr. Robert Battey is a graphic description of hardships on the home front.

### **George M. Battey correspondence [typescripts available]**

- 1     9     April 26, 1838 - November 6, 1847  
 10 letters. 7 letters to Mary Halsey. Letters of April 26, 1838, December 31, 1840, and Jan- 30, 1841 are written from Andover, Mass. July 14, 1842-January 27, 1845 he writes from Georgia. He helps his uncle on the plantation and later studies medicine in Augusta. Two letters to his step grandmother, Mrs. Susan Ketchum Battey on April 30, 1838 tell of death from "consumption" of his little sister and on June 24, 1841 of his mother who "gave Robert and I to Uncle Geo. and sister to Aunt Susan." Letter of November 6, 1847 is addressed to Robert. The original of this letter is part of a letter of Robert Battey to Mary Halsey, November 21, 1847. It mentions the fact that George is married.
- 1     10     October 21, 1854 - June 28, 1856  
 10 letters. All 10 letters to Mary or Henry Halsey or both. He sold his share of drug business to Robert and is improving his farm and planning to resume the practice of medicine. He urges Mary to visit him for her health. He advises her not to take "Physic" and that her heart acts rapidly because she is "in an atomic condition". He is in debt and may have to sell some of his "servants". "that unpleasant feature and crying sin in slavery, the sale of slaves against their will." He would like to have a poor white boy from the North to be his "shop boy." "Our young Negros can't answer my purposes...our whites are too proud." His health is bad, he takes morphine for his cough and he does not expect to live very long, May 2, 1856. June 28, 1856, he has stopped practice entirely.

### **Battey family correspondence [typescripts available]**

- 1     11     March 25, 1810 - December 72 1858  
 38 items. Letters written by: Marilla Newton, niece of Susan Ketchum; Robert Battey, grandfather of Dr. Robert Battey; Katherine and Sylvanus Battey, children of Robert; Dorcas Lydia and Johnathan Battey, apparently Quaker relatives; Henry Halsey; Mary Halsey; Susan Magruder; Dr. Robert and Dr. George Battey; Emma Halsey Mary Halsey's daughter; Grace and George Battey, children of Dr. Robert Battey.

- 1 12 December 29, 1858 - October- 3, 1885  
 21 items. A continuation of the Battey Family letters many of which are concerned with establishing ownership of some land in New York State. Several are written by children. Some throw additional light on the lives and backgrounds of Robert and George Battey.

### **Typescripts of correspondence**

- 1 13 Robert Battey correspondence, 1846-1894  
 1 14 Martha Battey correspondence, 185[6]-1888  
 1 14 George Battey correspondence, 1838-1856  
 1 14 Emily Verdery Battey correspondence, 1847-1867  
 1 15 Battey family correspondence, 1910-1885  
 1 15 Battey family genealogy, 1675-1922

### **George Magruder Battey III**

- 2 1 Correspondence, etc.

### **Adreinne Battey**

- 2 2 Correspondence, etc.  
 2 3 Writings by

### **Other materials**

- 2 4 Genealogical information  
 2 5 Newspapers clippings by or about the Battey family  
 2 6 Photographs  
 OP1 1 Photographs, Oversized
-