

CLASS OF 1823.

THOMAS M. DRAKE.

Dr. Thomas M. Drake, formerly a professor in the Ohio University at Athens, was drowned in the canal Zanesville, on Sunday last. He was a native of Ireland, not long resident in this country, and a good scholar, with fine oratorical abilities.

New York Daily Tribune  
May 11, 1859.

THOMAS M. DRAKE, 1823, of Rhinebeck, N.Y., was a member of the Adelpic Society.  
Adelpic Catalogue 1830 (Died: 1859)

October 20, 1943

Professor George M. Dutcher,  
Wesleyan University,  
Middletown, Connecticut.

My dear Professor Dutcher:

I have your letter of inquiry respecting Dr. Thomas M. Drake, of our Class of 1823. As I look into our biographical files I notice, interestingly enough, that the folder next to his is for a lawyer named Salem Dutcher who hailed from the Albany region.

We have very little about Dr. Drake. Our alumni office was started in 1911 and at that time collected from the Library and other sources what information it could on our graduates before that time. Since then we have tried our best to gather material, but the search touching Dr. Drake seems to have been less successful than in most cases. The New York Daily Tribune for May 11, 1859, has the following:

"Dr. Thomas M. Drake, formerly a professor in the Ohio University at Athens, was drowned in the canal at Zanesville, on Sunday last. He was a native of Ireland, not long resident in this country, and a good scholar, with fine oratorical abilities."

The Adelpic Society's catalogue, published in 1830, lists Dr. Drake as having been a member of the Society. Our old printed alumni catalogue puts him down as "M.D., Phi Beta Kappa, lawyer, born in New Scotland, New York (near Albany), died at Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1859, professor Wesleyan University." You will notice that the place of his death is differently given, but I suppose one might follow the current account of the Tribune.

Several years ago Frank M. Drake, Esquire, 1017 Kentucky Home Life Building, Louisville, Kentucky, wrote us for information touching his grandfather, Thomas Murray Drake. We were glad at least to get the middle name out of that letter. The writer had gained from his own father a vague idea that his grandfather graduated from Union some time between 1815 and 1825 but apparently did not know much about him. In my reply, setting forth the same sort of meager information we are giving you, I asked him to send us any biographical data which he could discover. We did not hear from him, but still he may be worth writing.

Hoping to see you on Saturday, I am,

Cordially yours,

Dixon Ryan Fox.

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY  
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

GEORGE M. DUTCHER  
77 Home Avenue

October 19, 1943

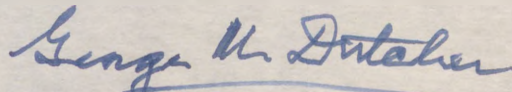
President Dixon Ryan Fox  
Union College  
Schenectady, New York

Dear President Fox:

I am busy doing some work on the history of Wesleyan University. The first person appointed Professor at Wesleyan in 1831 was Thomas M. Drake, M.D. There is nothing in our records to show who he was. Indeed he never served here. The fact that he was the first person selected, however, suggests that he must in some way have been a desirable person to secure for the new faculty. After considerable without results, our librarian, Mr. Rider, was lucky enough to unearth for me the fact that Drake was at the time Professor of Natural Science at Ohio University, Athens. I have written to Ohio University; but they have no additional information about him. A day or two ago I chanced to discover that Drake had graduated from Union College in 1823. Consequently, I am writing to you to inquire whether the records of Union College graduates furnish any further significant biographical data about him. I am mainly interested in being able to answer reasonably the question of why he was selected here. Of course he was the selection of Willbur Fisk, Wesleyan's first president. I do not want to put you personally to any trouble; but you can probably turn my letter over to someone on your staff who may be able to furnish me with some information.

I have not happened to hear whether you are going to be able to be present at Doctor Butterfield's inauguration on Saturday. I trust that you are to be present and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you. With many thanks for your kind attention to this inquiry and with kindest personal regards.

Very cordially yours,



George M. Dutcher

GMD:EFF

November 9, 1943.

Dear Mr. Dutcher:

We have searched the records of the Albany Medical College and do not find any reference to a Thomas M. Drake in them, so I think he must have obtained his M.D. Degree from some other medical school. I am forwarding your letter to Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox, President of Union College with the request that he supply you with any other information that might be available at the college.

I am very sorry that we are not able to claim Dr. Drake as an alumnus of our medical college.

Sincerely yours,

R. S. Cunningham, Dean.

Mr. George M. Dutcher  
Department of History  
Wesleyan University  
77 Home Avenue  
Middletown, Connecticut.

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY  
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

GEORGE M. DUTCHER  
77 Home Avenue

November 6, 1943

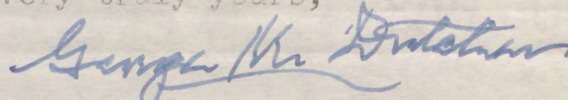
Dean  
Albany Medical College  
Albany, New York

My dear Sir:

I am engaged in writing a history of Wesleyan University and have run upon a problem where you may be able to render me assistance. The first person appointed a professor at Wesleyan was Thomas M. Drake, M.D., elected in 1830. For some reason, unknown, when the college actually opened in September, 1831, Drake did not appear for duty. The Wesleyan records furnish no further information concerning him. I have been able after considerable investigation and correspondence to unearth only two additional bare facts concerning him: first that he graduated from Union College in 1823; second that he was in 1830 professor of natural science at Ohio University at Athens. In as much as he was a graduate of Union College, it has occurred to me that possibly he obtained his M. D. degree from Albany Medical College somewhere between 1823 and 1830. I should be very glad if you can inform me as to whether this was the case and shall appreciate any additional information that you might possibly be able to give me concerning him.

With hearty thanks for your kind attention to my request.

Very truly yours,



George M. Dutcher

GMD:EFF

UNION UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT  
ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE  
ALBANY, N. Y.

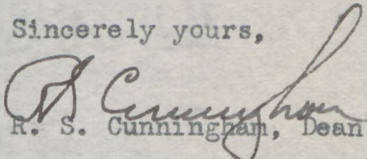
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

November 9, 1943.

Dear Dr. Fox:

I am taking the liberty of forwarding to you the enclosed letter which I thought might be of interest. I would appreciate it if there is any information in the archives of the college that might be sent to Mr. Dutcher.

Sincerely yours,



R. S. Cunningham, Dean.

Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox, Chancellor  
Union University  
Schenectady, New York.

October 7, 1940

Mr. Frank M. Drake,  
1017 Kentucky Home Life Building,  
Louisville, Kentucky.

My dear Mr. Drake:

In reply to your letter of October 5, I must say that our records show very little information on your grandfather, Thomas M. Drake. Our alumni office was started in 1911 and at that time collected from the Library and other sources what information it could on our graduates before that time. Since then a more or less complete record has been kept of our alumni. The following statements are found in the folder of your grandfather.

CLASS OF 1823

THOMAS M. DRAKE

Dr. Thomas M. Drake, formerly a professor in the Ohio University at Athens, was drowned in the canal Zanesville, on Sunday last. He was a native of Ireland, not long resident in this country, and a good scholar, with fine oratorical abilities.

New York Daily Tribune  
May 11, 1859

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THOMAS M. DRAKE, 1823, of Rhinebeck, N.Y., was a member of the Adelpic Society. (Died: 1859) Adelpic catalogue 1830.

If you should have any other biographical data, we would, of course, be most grateful to you if you would send us a notation on it.

Cordially yours,

Secretary to the President.

FRANK M. DRAKE  
LAWYER  
1017 KENTUCKY HOME LIFE BLDG.  
LOUISVILLE, KY.

October 5, 1940.

Dixon R. Fox, Esq., President,  
Schenectady, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Fox:-

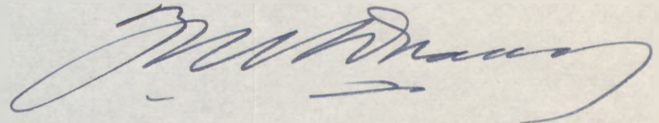
By chance a reference to your name and connection with Union College recently came to my attention, and it reminded me to make an inquiry that I have occasionally thought of, but as to which I have never acted.

If I correctly recall, my father used to tell me that his father, Thomas Murray Drake, graduated from Union College, probably between 1815 and 1825. I further recall that he said the President of Union at that time was Dr. Eliphalet Knott, who delivered the oration at the funeral of Alexander Hamilton. 1823

If the College records are of sufficiently convenient access, would you be good enough to check back and let me have what information you find in regard to my grandfather's attendance at Union, together with any biographical information which may be shown.

Thanking you in advance for your courtesy, and assuring you that I do not wish this request to become an imposition on you, I am,

Very cordially yours,





November 15, 1943

Dean R. S. Cunningham,  
Albany Medical College,  
Albany, New York.

My dear Dean Cunningham:

On October 19th we received a letter from Professor George M. Dutcher, of Wesleyan University, with respect to Dr. Thomas M. Drake. We answered him as per the enclosed copy. I have written a note to Professor Dutcher, mentioning that we have received his later letter to you.

With all good wishes, I am,

Cordially yours,

Secretary to the President.

Enc.

