

Connecticut Historical Society  
museum & library

Roger Risley Family Papers, 1771-1901

A Guide to the collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

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**Collection Overview**

<b>Repository:</b>	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
<b>Creator :</b>	Risley, Roger
<b>Title :</b>	Roger Risley Family Papers
<b>Dates :</b>	1771-1901
<b>Extent :</b>	1 linear foot (2 boxes)
<b>Location:</b>	Ms 66236
<b>Language:</b>	English

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**Biographical Sketch**

Roger E. Risley (1784-1865) was a medical doctor and businessman who resided in Glastonbury and Manchester, Connecticut. In Glastonbury he served as both constable and tax collector. He married Elsie Bissell and they had children Alonzo B., Wells N., Franklin B., Maria, and Eliza (b. 1813).

Roger's grandfather, Job Risley of Glastonbury, had eleven children, among who were Job Jr. (b. 1743) and Reuben (1745-1811), Roger's father. Reuben Risley of Glastonbury married Mercy Miller and they had eleven children, including Reuben Jr. (1769-1850), Mercy (1771-1830) who married William H. Turner, Susie (1773-1848) who married Jerijah Loomis (1769-1846), Waite (b. 1775), Jemima (1777-1860) who married Jacob Loomis, Noah (1781-1805), Roger E., who is mentioned above, Content (1786-1871), who married Isaac Rowley, and Truman (b. 1790).

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**Scope and Content**

The Risley family papers comprise medical notebooks, account and day books, an early 19th century copybooks, letters of accounts and billing, and correspondence between family members and business associates. The bulk of the materials relate to Roger E. Risley. They are arranged in generational order.

Brothers Job and Reuben Risley are represented by bills and accounts, 1767-1796. One document dated March 20, 1771 describes a "Settlement of balance on all accounts with Mr. Silas Deane and Mr. Job Risley.

Roger E. Risley's day books, 1822-1842 and four medical notebooks, 1808-1814, include descriptions of medicinal herbs, the etymology of names for muscles, parts of the eye, bones, and a catalog of different fevers (i.e. tertians). The day books also include diary-type entries for quotidian activities such as selling wood, cattle and apples, and the management of labor. Dr. Risley and his colleague Mr. Carpenter owned a stone quarry, possibly in Bolton, which is the subject of two 1832-1834 account books. Roger's business interests are further elucidated by the bills, notes and accounts among his papers, 1802-1858.

Dr. Risley received letters from his brothers Reuben and Waite, and his sister Content Risley Rowley. They discuss their affection for their brother and the wellbeing of their own families. The letters contain frequent thoughts on mortality and the desire to see distant relatives. Reuben and Waite address their letters from Truxton, NY, and Content addresses hers from Ogden, NY.

George Turner, Dr. Risley's nephew and son of his sister Mercy Risley Turner, traveled to Vanburen, Arkansas, and wrote to Roger on December 13, 1837. His letter contains a New England's consideration of the "extreme western point of our happy Republick [sic]." He comments on the excellence of the soil and cotton and corn crops. Of particular interest is his comparison of the southern and New England work ethic. In his view, "the people like all Southerners most abominable lazy and dissipated [sic] – working barely enough of their land to produce for their consumption." He further states that "a good Yankee farmer cannot help making money – in fact might coin it."

The family correspondence to Roger makes references to other Risley family members: Roger's sister Jemima Risley Loomis, his brother Truman Risley, and his nephews Alvah Risley and Chauncy Turner. A detailed genealogy of this family can be found in Edwin H. Risley's *The Risley Family History* in our library.

Roger's daughter Eliza is represented by a copy book containing poems, letters, reflective thoughts, and drawings of flowers. Since copybooks were designed to practice a lady's penmanship, it is unknown if the contents are original or copies of the works of contemporary authors. Eliza signs her name both as Eliza and Elizabeth A. Risley.

William E. Risley, Roger's grandson, is represented in the collection by bills, 1895-1901. Documents related to the Bissell family 1796-1820, the majority of which are Roger Risley acting as administrator of Leveret Bissell's estate. A letter from Content Rowley to Chauncy Turner, and Jacob Loomis' account against Jerijah Loomis, lack dates and are found in the same folder because of their family relation. The final folder in the collection

contains documents that do not appear to be related to the Risley family, but further research may uncover such a connection.

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## **Restrictions**

### **Access Restrictions**

There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

### **Use Restrictions**

Use of the material requires compliance with the Connecticut Historical Society's Research Center regulations.

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## **Subject Headings**

### **Personal Names**

Risley, Roger, 1784-1865.  
Rogers, Job, 1743-1798.  
Rogers, Reuben, 1745-1811.  
Rowley, Content Risley, 1786-1871.

### **Subjects**

Account books --Connecticut --Glastonbury --1822-1842.  
Account books, --1822-1842.  
Farmers --Connecticut --Glastonbury.  
Physicians --Connecticut --Manchester.

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## **Administrative Information**

### **Preferred Citation**

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (Box #, Folder #). Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

### **Processing Details**

Collection was processed by Raquel Thomison and Barbara Austen in 2007.

EAD Finding Aid created July 2011.

## Accruals

The collection is closed.

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## Contents:

### Papers

#### Box Folder

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | 1     | Job Risley (1743-1786) receipts, 1771-1790                                  |
| 1 | 2-3   | Reuben Risley deed, 1787; bills, notes, bill of lading, accounts, 1796-1832 |
| 1 | 4     | Roger E. Risley medical notebooks, 1808-1835                                |
| 1 | 5-8   | Roger E. Risley account and day books, 1825-1838                            |
| 1 | 9     | Roger E. Risley quarry accounts, 1832-1834                                  |
| 1 | 10-16 | Roger E. Risley bills, notes and accounts, 1802-1832                        |

#### Box Folder

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|---|-----|---|
| 2 | 1-6 | Roger E. Risley bills, notes and accounts, 1833-1858, undated<br>1833-1858, undated                     |
| 2 | 7-9 | Roger E. Risley incoming correspondence, 1811-1861  |
| 2 | 10  | Roger E. Risley legal documents, 1833-1836  |
| 2 | 11  | Eliza Risley copybook, 1822-1829  |
| 2 | 12  | William E. Risley bills, 1895-1901  |
| 2 | 13  | Bissell family papers, 1796-1820  |
| 2 | 14  | Content Risley Rowley letter to Chauncy Turner; Jacob Loomis<br>account against Jerijah Loomis, undated |
| 2 | 15  | Unidentified documents, undated   |