

J. L. Roark Estate Funeral Registers, Greenville, Kentucky

James Lewis or J. L. Roark was born 14 April 1840 in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky. He was the son of John R. Roark and grandson of Muhlenberg County pioneer, William Roark. He served as a first lieutenant in Co. K 11th Kentucky Infantry sustaining some disability during his service. He married Jennie E. Morgan, daughter of William K. Morgan. Their children included Orien L., Cecil E., Charles W., and J. Louis Roark. James Lewis Roark died in Greenville, Kentucky on 5 April 1893.¹

According to historian, Otto A. Rothert, J. L. Roark was one of the best known funeral directors of his day.² J. L. Roark established a business in early 1879 in Greenville, Kentucky which included furniture, wall paper, pictures, moldings, decorations, and an undertaking and embalming department. The undertaking department was said to be one of the best stocked and equipped in western Kentucky. The business offered an elegant hearse and “every accompanying appliance for the proper conduct of a funeral and burial service. They employed a capable embalmer and offer preparation of bodies for shipment to distant states. After J. L. Roark’s death in 1893, his son, Orien L. Roark was running the business by 1903.³

The J. L. Roark Estate Funeral Registers include two books covering the period, 1893 through 1918. The original record was probably photocopied by Gayle Carver with a copy given to Brenda (Collier) Doss sometime after the original book was copied. This photocopy of the original came into the possession of Gail Jackson Miller in 1999 from Brenda (Collier) Doss. The order has been maintained from the photocopy given to Gail Miller.

¹Otto A. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County, Kentucky* (Louisville: J. P. Morton & Co., 1913) 394.

²Ibid.

³“J. L. Roark Estate,” included in an article, “Greenville of To-day” dealing with the businesses in Greenville at that time, *The Record* (Greenville, Kentucky) 20 January 1903.