

## William Nathaniel Roach

(25 Sep 1840 – 7 Sep 1902)

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### *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989*

A Senator from North Dakota; born in Washington, D.C., September 25, 1840; attended the public schools and Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.; clerk in the quartermaster's department during the Civil War; moved to Dakota Territory in 1879 and settled in Larimore; interested in mail contracts for several years; took up land in Dakota and engaged in agricultural pursuits; mayor of Larimore 1883-1887; member of the Territorial house of representatives in 1885; unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Governor at the first State election in 1889 and again in 1891; elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate and served from March 4, 1893 to March 3, 1899; was the caucus nominee of his party, which was in the minority, for reelection; discontinued active business pursuits and lived in retirement in Washington, D.C.; died in New York City, where he had gone for medical treatment, on September 7, 1902; interment in the Congressional Cemetery.



*The Washington Post, November 29, 1901, p. 3*

#### **Former Senator Roach Dying**

#### **In New York Sanitarium, Where Condition Is Said to Be Hopeless**

Former United States Senator Roach, of North Dakota, is fatally ill in a New York sanitarium. A recent operation disclosed the fact that his condition is hopeless.

Mr. Roach was born in Washington, and was educated here, in the public schools and at Georgetown University. He went to Dakota in 1879. He first engaged in mail contracts, and then took to farming. He was elected to the territorial legislature. He was later defeated as Democratic candidate for governor of Dakota. In 1893 he was elected to the Senate of the United States, his term expiring in 1899.

*The Evening Star, August 12, 1902, p. 7*

#### **Ex-Senator Roach**

#### **Being Treated by X-Ray -- Hope for His Recovery**

#### **From the New York Journal**

Ex-United States Senator William A Roach, who three months ago was believed to be dying from a malignant growth which seventeen physicians pronounced incurable, is improving.

The three physicians who have charge of his case say that he may yet recover. The senator is confident of his recovery, and in his home, the Huntington, No 218 West 112th street, the certainty of death has given way to hope.

The case is so curious that it may yet be known in medical annals as "the strange story of Senator William Roach." Last November an operation was performed upon him for an internal tumor. He left the hospital and was able to move about the house with assistance, but in the spring it became evident that there was a renewed growth in the affected part.

Despairing of the efficacy of the knife, Dr. Robert T. Morris and Dr. J.J. Edward Stubbert ordered X-ray and static treatment.

"He cannot live forty-eight hours unless this is done," they said. The great machine was placed in his room at the Huntington and electric treatment was given daily, the wire springs of the bed acting as conductors. A tube was inserted in the incision made by the former operation, and through this the X-ray was applied to the affected part. The apparatus was so regulated that while it gave forth a strong light there was no heat.

The attempt was being made to dry up the tumor which the surgeons had failed to remove thoroughly with the knife. Gradually the dangerous symptoms have been lessened, and at last there is genuine ground for hope.

Mrs. Roach from the first assisted the physicians in the daily treatments, which require delicate skill and the utmost nicety of perception. She has been her husband's nurse by day and night, and to her, in no small degree, the doctors say, is his improvement due.

Mrs. Roach was the widow of A.L. Pollock, consul at Salvador, who died there of yellow fever. Singularly it was Dr. Stubbert who attended him in his last illness. Mrs. Roach's three children are Channing Pollock, who is on William A. Brady's business staff and is the author of the novel "Behold the Man;" John Pollock, who is with the "Under Southern Skies" company, and Miss Kate Pollock, who recently won a scholarship in St. Agnes' School. Mrs. Roach is well known in Washington society.

Of the sick man Senator Morgan of Alabama said: "No man ever left the Senate more respected. We all loved him."

He has been unwaveringly patient in his long and trying illness.

**Roach.** On September 7, 1902 at 7 a.m. in New York, William N. Roach. Funeral Wednesday, September 10 at 10 a.m. from St. Patrick's Church. Burial at Congressional cemetery.

*The Evening Star, September 8, 1902*

### **Ex-Senator Roach**

#### **Died of Cancer in New York City**

#### **Was Born and Spent His Early Manhood in Washington, Then Went to Dakota**

Former Senator William Nathaniel Roach of North Dakota died in New York yesterday. He was a member of the Senate from 1893 to 1899. The cause of death was cancer, from which he suffered for a long time. His treatment in New York was supposed to greatly benefit him and a month ago it was announced that he was out of danger. He had been confined to bed for ten months.

Mr. Roach was born in this city September 25, 1840. He was educated in the public schools and later attended Georgetown College. In 1861, when he had hardly completed his course in college, he was given a clerkship in the quartermaster's department of the Union army, which he retained throughout the war. At the close of the war he returned to this city and entered the National Metropolitan Bank and when the Citizens' National Bank was organized he became its cashier.

#### *Removed to Dakota*

In 1879 he removed to what was then Dakota territory, where he was interested in mail contracts for a number of years. He also took up land and developed a farm. He was elected mayor of Larimore four years after his arrival in the territory and held that office until 1887. He was a member of the territorial legislature of the session of 1885 and was democratic candidate for governor at the first state

election, and was defeated by John Miller. He was renominated at the next election and was again defeated.

On the 20th of February, 1893, after thirty-three days of balloting, he was elected United States senator upon the sixty-first ballot, receiving twenty-three democratic, seventeen populist and ten republican votes, against forty-two Republican votes cast for H.F. Miller, Republican. He took his seat March 4, 1893.

At the expiration of his term in March, 1899, he remained in Washington, where he was interested in several matters pending before the Court of Claims.

Mr. Roach's first wife was Miss Liebermann of this city, who died nearly fifteen years ago. Two years ago he married Mrs. Verona Pollock, widow of Alexander L. Pollock. He left one son and a daughter, the son being engaged in the practice of law in New York.

The remains will arrive in Washington tomorrow afternoon, accompanied by his widow and her sister, Mrs. J.P. Finley, wife of Captain Finley of the army, and will be carried to the residence of his sister-in-law, Miss Ella F. Larkin, 1229 O street. Funeral services will be held at St. Patrick's Church at 10 a.m. Wednesday. The interment will be at Congressional cemetery.

*The Evening Star, September 10, 1902, p. 5*

#### **Last Rites Over Dead**

#### **Tribute to Memory of the Late Senator Roach**

#### **Prominent Citizens Attend Services at St. Patrick's Church**

#### **Interment at Congressional Cemetery**

Prayers were said this morning in St. Patrick's Church over the body of the late Senator William N. Roach, who died in New York last Sunday and over whose remains funeral services were conducted in that city yesterday morning. The interment was made in Congressional Cemetery.

The services in New York city were conducted at St. Ignatius' Church, Amsterdam avenue and 84th street, and consisted of a high mass of requiem conducted by Rev. Fathers Healy, Ennis and McKernon. The first named was one of Mr. Roach's boyhood instructors. The attendance included many New Yorkers who had known Senator Roach during his political career. The body was borne from the church directly to a train and arrived in Washington yesterday evening. It was then taken to the residence of Mrs. Roach's sister, Miss Ella F. Larkin, No. 1229 O street northwest.

A congregation of notable size gathered at St. Patrick's Church this morning to attend the Washington services. It included a great number of persons with whom the deceased had been associated in his youth--former schoolmates, his early employers and business associations. Among these were Messrs. H.S. Thyson, J.T. Burch, Charles W. Handy, Nicholas H. Shea and Tolbert Dyer, with whom Mr. Roach attended the old Washington Seminary on F street between 9th and 10th streets. Senator Pascoe, former Senator Matthew C. Butler and Senator Gorman attended as representatives of the United States Senate. The relatives present included M. Roach's widow, formerly Mrs. Verona L. Pollock; Miss Larkin, Miss Pollock, M. J. Edward Roach, brother of the deceased; Ms. J.E. Roach and Miss Roach.

Acolytes, robed in blue and red, and carrying a crozier and candles, met the casket at the church door, with Rev. Father Dolan, an assistant at St. Patrick's, who was to conduct the service. Ms. Roach walked behind the coffin, leaning on the arm of Mr. D.I. Murphy, an old friend of the deceased. There was no sermon, only the simple prayers for the dead, which Senator Roach's church provides for services to follow the ordered funeral ceremonies. Father Dolan was assisted, however, by Rev. Father Gaynor. At the close of these prayers the body was taken to Congressional cemetery and interred.

The honorary pallbearers included Senators McCumber, Hansbrough, Clark, Heitfeld, Jones, Blackburn, McLaurin and Gorman.

