

MS-008: Papers of William H. Young

Processed by Kelly Kemp
February 2000

Size

1 box, 0.27 cubic feet

Dates

Inclusive: 1862-1865

Provenance

Schmucker Memorial Library received the William H. Young Collection from Gettysburg College Professor of History, Robert L. Bloom in 1968.

Biographical Note

(by Robert L. Bloom, Ph.D)

William Humphreys Young was born on August 11, 1820, at Gallatin, Tennessee. He died on April 25, 1865, as a Confederate prisoner of war at Camp Chase, Columbus, Ohio. At his death he left a widow (Susan Caroline Thompson, 1828-1908), three daughters and two sons.

Only a fragmentary record, including 26 letters which he wrote to his wife, remain with which to piece together his service record in the Confederate forces. On August 10, 1862, he wrote to her to address him at Camp Bruce, 2nd Regiment of the 2nd Brigade of the Mississippi Minute Men. Another letter, dated December 10, 1862, reports his election to 3rd Lieutenant in this unit. He eventually rose to the rank of First Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Young was wounded in action sometime around June 22, 1862. Nevertheless, on August 22 of that year he reenlisted, this time in the Confederate cavalry regiment being organized by Capt. Trotter at Kilmicheal, Mississippi. Probably because of his prior military service and rank, he became a Sergeant in Company B, 5th Mississippi Cavalry almost immediately. Under the command of Colonel (later Brigadier General) Edward W. Rucker, the regiment was assigned to General James R. Chalmers' brigade (later division) as a part of General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry force.

Wounded again, this time at Colliersville, Tennessee on November 8, 1863 ("severe in thigh" the record reads), Sergeant Young was furloughed home. The record of this furlough designates him as "Sgt. Co. B, Georges Cav." He returned to his regiment in either March or April, 1864, saw action at Abbeville, Mississippi on August 23 and participated in Forrest's Johnsonville Expedition deep into West Tennessee October 19 to November 10, 1864.

At Nashville, Tennessee on December 16, 1864, in the battle in which General John B. Hood's Confederate army was dispersed and practically destroyed, Sgt. Young was captured during the fighting astride the Granny White Pike. Young was taken via Louisville, Kentucky to Camp Chase near Columbus, Ohio. There he died on April 25th 1865, of "Gen'l Debility" in the words of the official record. He is buried in the Confederate Prisoner of War Cemetery at Columbus under the headstone marked #1918.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists primarily of correspondence between William H. Young and his wife Susan from August 10, 1862 through March 18, 1865 (with gaps). Most of the letters are written by Young to his wife, with the exception of one dated February 8, 1863, which she writes to him. This collection focuses on the battles between the Confederate and Union armies in the Western Theater of the war. Young writes about the Yankees attempt to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi and also gives a detailed account of the battle at Nashville where he was captured. These letters also describe the life of a common soldier who has gone off to war and left his wife and children behind at home.

Series Description

This collection is divided into two Series. **Series I:** Biographical Information, **Series II:** Correspondence.

Box List

Box 1

Series 1: Biographical Information

1-1 Biographical Information

Series 2: Correspondence

- 1-2 Correspondence - August 10, 1862 - December 25, 1862
- 1-3 Correspondence - January 2, 1863 - February 10, 1863
- 1-4 Correspondence - March 7, 1863 - March 28, 1863
- 1-5 Correspondence - April 3, 1863 - April 16, 1863
- 1-6 Correspondence - June 16, 1863 - June 22, 1863
- 1-7 Correspondence - September 24, 1863 - October 17, 1863
- 1-8 Correspondence - August 1, 1864 - August 24, 1864
- 1-9 Correspondence - October 12, 1864 - November 14, 1864
- 1-10 Correspondence - January 30, 1865 - March 18, 1865
- 1-11 Correspondence - Fragments of Letters
- 1-12 Correspondence - Photocopies of Letters
- 1-13 Correspondence - Transcriptions of Letters

Contact Information

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