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MOSCOW B. CARTER (1825-1913)
PAPERS,
1853-1908

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Moscow B. Carter Papers consist of family and military correspondence, fragmentary memoirs, genealogical notes, military documents, claims filed with the U.S. Claims Commission for wartime damages, and a leather-bound diary kept by Carter from November 20, 1861 to the fall of 1867. These papers were provided to TSLA for microfilming by a family descendant during the *Looking Back: The Civil War in Tennessee* project in October, 2010.

Moscow B. Carter was the oldest son of Fountain Branch Carter and most likely he managed the farm and the cotton gin before the war due to his father's advanced years. He married Orlena Caledonia ("Callie") Dobbins in 1851; they had five children, one of whom died in 1858 as reported in a letter from Carter to his mother-in-law. Moscow married twice more after Callie's death in 1861 and fathered children by both subsequent wives.

Moscow and his two younger brothers Theodoric (Tod) Carter and Francis (Wad) Carter all joined Company H, 20th Tennessee Infantry Regiment, CSA. Moscow won election to Lieutenant-Colonel of the 20th and served as such until his capture at Mill Springs, Ky., in January 1862. This battle is often referred to by other names, Fishing Creek, being the most common. Moscow spent time as a POW and as such writes a letter requesting a release due to the fact that his family was dependent upon him. He did secure a release (how exactly has remained a mystery) and returned to Franklin. Moscow apparently continued to run the farm and gin throughout the war, although Franklin remained occupied by Union troops for much of the war. Moscow apparently took the oath of allegiance to secure his freedom, as a document to that effect appears in the collection. It is possible that he remained home on parole throughout the war, but as most officers had been exchanged between 1862-64, that may not be the case. Regardless, Moscow was running the farm at the time of the Battle of Franklin. It was he who ventured onto the battlefield after the fighting ended to find his mortally wounded brother Tod.

Moscow continued to live in the Carter house after the war and rebuilt the farm and the gin. He and his father filed with the Southern Claims Commission to be compensated for damages to the gin and one of his plows. He only collected a small fraction of what he claimed. He is buried in the Franklin City Cemetery.

The diary begins on Nov. 20, 1861 when Carter is serving on the staff of General Felix Zollicoffer and his army in southern Kentucky. This Confederate force was defending the approaches to Tennessee from Federal forces massing in Kentucky during the winter of 1861-62. Carter describes scenes of camp life, including a detailed description of a cockfight pitting birds from various regiments on Christmas Day. He mentions his brother Tod and the United States government's demand for the surrender of Confederate envoys Slidell and Mason, and draws a map of the Mill Spring, Ky., fortifications (batteries and "Plan of Defense").

On January 19-20, 1861 Carter gives his account of the Battle of Mill Spring (aka Fishing Creek), Gen. Zollicoffer's death, and his own capture after having two horses shot from under him. After commenting that "The rout is complete," he claims to have been "treated kindly afterward" by his Union captors. He provides extensive lists of killed and wounded men from various Tennessee regiments after the battle. In February, 1862 Moscow Carter was marched with other Confederate prisoners to Louisville, Ky., where he was placed under house arrest, more or less on his honor, at the US Hotel in downtown Louisville. From there he was removed to the Camp Chase prisoner-of-war facility in Columbus, Oh., and finally to the Fort Warren prison in Boston Harbor, Ma. Carter comments at various times on the Federal army's treatment of escaped slaves, shedding light on the evolving Union policy toward African-American 'contrabands' or runaway slaves in the South early in the war. On July 31, 1862 he was paroled in a prisoner exchange near Richmond, Virginia and returned by foot to Tennessee in August.

The diary grows sporadic and sparse in the summer of 1862, and few entries appear as Carter seems to use the little volume to record names and other sorts of information. He appears to have lived in Cleveland, Tn., as a boarder for part of 1863-64, returning to the Franklin farm in the summer of 1864. He records detailed information about the cotton crop there in the autumn of that year, giving the specifics of how much was harvested and ginned, who picked it, etc. The volume ends with various ledger entries for payments and services, as well as details about postwar cotton crops.

Notable letters include ones from Moscow (MBC) to wife Callie 11/12/1853 from on board the steamer *Sultana*; MBC to Col. H.M. Doak 4/05/1904 describing the circumstances of Gen. Zollicoffer's death; Tod Carter (TC) to MBC 11/02/1862 discussing MBC raising a regiment and the possibility of an upcoming attack on Nashville; MBC to TC 3/01/1864 discussing upcoming elections, Andrew Johnson's "perfidy," US Colored Troops, and freedmen's schools; and TC to Fannie Carter 12/12/1863 describing life at Johnson's Island, Oh., prison. Transcriptions of most of the letters have been provided by the donor.

A virtual accounting of the personal property, livestock, and outbuildings (including the cotton gin) of the wartime Carter Farm in Franklin, Tn., can be found in the postwar claims filed by Moscow and Fountain Branch Carter with the Southern Claims Commission (and, later, the US Court of Claims). Such documents as a "*Memorandum of Property lost by Hood's fight*" detail property losses entailed during the Battle of Franklin, including the cotton gin and farm implements used to build up the Federal earthworks. Military documents include, most notably, a copy of the Oath of Allegiance issued to Moses[sic] Carter in November 1863 and a pass issued to Tod Carter by the Confederate Provost Marshal in August 1864.

The Moscow B. Carter Papers shed light on the military careers of Moscow and his brother Tod Carter (especially surrounding the Battle of Mill Springs), the management and physical particulars of the Carter Farm during and after the Civil War, and family life in one of the best known Confederate households in middle Tennessee.

CONTAINER LIST

1. Leather-bound diary kept by Moscow B. Carter, 1861-1867

Letters: (originals and transcriptions)

2. M.B. Carter to Callie Dobbins, Feb. 3, 1851
3. M.B. Carter to Callie Carter, Nov. 12, 1853
4. Callie Carter to M.B. Carter, Nov. 27, 1853
5. M.B. Carter to James F. Carter, May 25, 1854
6. M.B. Carter to "Mother-in-law", July 7, 1858
7. M.B. Carter to Sallie [Carter], Sept. 22, 1861
8. Sallie [Carter] to M.B. Carter, April 16, 1862
9. A.T. Wathen to M.B. Carter, June 20, 1862
10. M.B. Carter to "My dear friend", June 27, 1862
11. Tod Carter to M.B. Carter, Nov. 2, 1862
12. Tod Carter to Fannie Carter, Dec. 12, 1863
13. M.B. Carter to Tod Carter, March 1, 1864
14. Ann _____ to M.B. Carter, Aug. 15, 1865
15. M.B. Carter to Col. H.M. Doak, Apr. 5, 1904

Military documents and wartime claims against U.S. Government

16. Civil War claims
17. Oath of Allegiance, M.B. Carter
18. Pass from Confederate Provost Marshal, Tod Carter
19. Military passes
20. Permit from Union Provost Marshal to carry revolver, M.B. Carter
21. M.B. Carter memoirs (fragmentary)
22. Carter family genealogical notes
23. Envelope addressed to M.B. Carter at Camp Chase, OH