



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**JAMES LITTON COOPER (1844-1924)
COLLECTION,
1861-1864**

Prepared by:

Wayne C. Moore
Archival Technical Services

Date completed: March 8, 2011

Microfilm Accession Number: 1976

MICROFILM ONLY

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The James Litton Cooper Collection consists of family and military correspondence (most of which are transcribed), fragmentary reminiscences in the form of newspaper articles, military documents, and additional newspaper clippings. The letters and military documents date from the Civil War or its immediate aftermath. These papers were provided to TSLA for microfilming by a family descendant during the *Looking Back: The Civil War in Tennessee* project in February, 2011.

James Litton Cooper was born in Nashville on July 19, 1844. He was the son of Washington B. Cooper of Davidson County, TN, a well-known portrait artist, and Ann Litton Cooper. He enlisted in October 1861 at Cumberland Ford, KY in Company C of the 20th Tennessee Infantry CSA. He served in Gen. Felix Zollicoffer's Confederate army operating in the vicinity of Cumberland Gap, KY during the winter months of 1861-62. He was at the Battle of Mill Springs as well as the earlier Battle of Rock Castle (Wild Cat), and his letters describe that winter campaign and those engagements. Captured after Mill Springs, Cooper was kept in the vicinity of Somerset, KY before being sent as a prisoner-of-war to Camp Chase, Ohio, from which he writes a series of 21 letters home.

Cooper was eventually paroled and rejoined his unit in time to participate in and be wounded at the Battle of Missionary Ridge. He convalesced at a military hospital in Dalton, GA and was involved in the fighting around Atlanta, GA in the summer of 1864, eventually being appointed as aid-de-camp for Generals Tyler and W. R. Smith. Documents from the Provost Marshal's Office in Nashville, TN show that his father had part of his property taken and used as a "pest house" during the latter years of the Civil War. James L. Cooper served with the Army of Tennessee until the end of the war. Having mustered in as a private, he was promoted to sergeant and lieutenant and mustered out as a captain. Cooper died in Nashville on September 7, 1924 and was buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

The James Litton Cooper Collection sheds light on the military career of Cooper (especially surrounding early Confederate activities near Cumberland Gap and the Battle of Mill Springs), his subsequent imprisonment at Camp Chase, Ohio, and the wartime fortunes of a prominent Nashville family. This collection covers some of the same experiences described in the papers of Moscow B. Carter (Mf. 1971), also in the 20th TN Infantry and also at the Battle of Mill Springs.

CONTAINER LIST

1. **Correspondence (15)** --- Kentucky campaign, October 1861-April 1862 (Letters from JLC to parents from Big Creek Gap, Somerset, Cumberland Ford, Beech Grove, Mills Springs, Albany, and Nicholasville, KY)
2. **Correspondence (21)** --- Camp Chase, Ohio, May – August 1862 (Letters from JLC to parents from Prison Camp)
3. **Correspondence (4)** --- Atlanta campaign, January, 1863-September, 1864 (Letters from JLC to family members from Marietta, Jonesboro, and Atlanta, GA)
4. **Confederate & Federal (Provost Marshal's Office, Nashville, TN) Official Documents** --- Passes, request for furlough, assignment as aid-de-camp of Gen. Tyler, amnesty oath, orders protecting and returning property of Mr. & Mrs. W. B. Cooper, etc., 1863-1866
5. **Scrapbook Clippings** --- Flags & bearers of the 20th Tenn. Infantry, newspaper articles by and about JLC, including his own reminiscences of battles at Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville, etc., 1864-1964
6. **Transcripts of Letters, 1861-1864**