



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

**MARTHA FARMER ANTHONY
COLLECTION
OF FARMER FAMILY PAPERS
1838-1889**

Processed by:

Elbert L. Watson
Archives & Manuscripts Unit
Technical Services Section

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INTRODUCTION

The Martha Farmer Anthony Collection of Farmer Family Papers, 1838-1889, was compiled by Martha Farmer Anthony of Coopertown, Tennessee. The collection was given to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. Robert Dodd of Nashville.

The collection occupies .4 linear feet of shelf space and contains approximately 300 items. There are no restrictions on the collection, and single photocopies may be made for individual or scholarly purposes.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Martha Farmer Anthony Collection of Farmer Family Papers, covering the period 1838-1889 and numbering approximately 300 items, contains correspondence, legal documents, and accounts. The collection's strength rests primarily with the Civil War correspondence (60 letters) by various family members who wrote from such places as Fort Donelson, Tennessee, and Camp Butler, Illinois, a Northern prison where many of the Donelson captives were sent for imprisonment.

The Fort Donelson letters written by G. T. Williams, J. M. Soyers, John Wesley Murphy, and William H. Farmer, all of Co. A, 30th Tennessee Regiment, reveal conditions there from the private soldier's perspective. Williams, for instance, on January 18, 1862, told of the arrival of a 128-pound cannon which, he predicted, would "tar them (Yankees) up here if they come." Young Murphy wrote, on January 25, that Donelson was the first fort which "I ever saw," and proceeds to describe the quarters, defenses, and life at the fort in general. He, too, was impressed with the 128-pounder, and seemed confident that the Yankees would be beaten if they attacked. One week later, however, he heard of the "disgraceful retreat of our army" from Fort Henry, and wrote in a more solemn tone that "if they do attack us hear (sic) many of there (sic) men will bite the dust and I fear many a true southern man will never see home again."

An interesting Civil War letter from Mrs. E. B. Keen of Ringold, Virginia, gives an description of the first Battle of Manassas in which the South gained "a glorious victory. There was (sic) thousands and thousands of yankees kiled (sic)... the ground was strued (sic) for three miles with the dead. The enemy came so close that they had to fite (sic) with boua (bowie) knives an(d) the sword."

Equally interesting is the 1871 letter written from Green Martin, a resident of Cow Skins, Sedgewick County, Kansas, to William H. Farmer. Martin was a recent arrival at Cow Skins, now the site of Wichita, and it was with genuine elation that he described the country and climate where his 160 acre property was located. He said the area abounded in buffalo, deer, antelope, turkey, wildcat, badger, and wolves. Of concern to Martin was the fact that Indians lived nearby, and he was fearful lest they steal from him. "We keep four revolvers loaded," he wrote, "and sleep with one eye open to catch them... There is no law here but the revolver and knife and that is the best law in the world (if) ever body attends to ther (sic) own business."

The remaining portion of the correspondence is largely concerned with family affairs, religious activities (camp meetings, protracted meetings, churches, etc.), and farm life. One writer, Tom Martin of Pleasant Plains, Illinois, mentions that one of his neighbors was Peter Cartwright, the famous frontier Methodist preacher. Other writers in the collection include R. B. Crockett, Mary Martin, G. P. Martin, and Fannie Martin.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Correspondence--General, A-C
2. Correspondence--General, E-F
3. Correspondence--General, G-L
4. Correspondence--General, M
5. Correspondence--General, N-W
6. Correspondence--E. B. Keen to Mrs. Fannie Martin, 1861-1888
7. Correspondence--Green Martin to William Martin, re: describes Cow Skins, Sedgewick County, Kansas, which is now Wichita.
8. Correspondence--Civil War, four Fort Donelson letters, December 1861-February 1862
9. Correspondence--Civil War, William H. Farmer, 1861-1864
10. Correspondence--Civil War, R. B. Crockett, 1862-1863
11. Correspondence--Civil War, Felts-Williams
12. Correspondence--unidentified
13. Legal documents--Miscellaneous
14. Miscellaneous
15. Accounts--Notes, receipts, and statements