

IHLC MS 307

**Sylvester Family Papers,
1852-1877**

Manuscript Collection Inventory

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**Sylvester Family.
Papers, 1852-1877.**

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I. George W. Sylvester Civil War Correspondence

George W. Sylvester (Camp Yates, Springfield Illinois) to Amanda and children,
September 18, 1862.

[waiting for recruits from Champaign, then company will join regiment in Alabama]

George W. Sylvester (Portland, Kentucky) to Amanda and children, [November 1862?]
(3 pages)

[anxious for word from home as he has not received any mail yet]

George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, December 1, 1862
(4 pages)

[attending church; friends dying from the measles; making rings from mussel shells
from the Cumberland River]

George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, December 14, 1862
(8 pages, plus a playing card from the card game *Authors*)

[wife found playing cards that were hidden at home, mailed one to him; brother Cy
visits from 86th Illinois Voluntary Infantry]

George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, December 20, 1862
(4 pages)

[word of defeat at Fredericksburg; Amanda might visit Indiana, visit to the 86th, but
Cy was not there]

George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, January 10, 1863 (4
pages)

[Company I is now known as Company B; report on battle at Stone's River
(Murfreesboro); Cy was wounded]

George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, January 12,
1863 (4 pages)

[concerned over debt at home; first reference to being a musician]

George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee) to "Till" (sister), February 19, 1863 (4 pages)
[lives in a tent with other musicians - 3 fifers, 5 drummers; asserts that the best
present a soldier can receive is a letter]

George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee), to Amanda and children, February 28, 1863
(4 pages)

[anti-conscription; thinks war is taking too long; disease is killing too many; thinks
Governors should call up an overwhelming force to end the war immediately; "we
all desire peace;" new order: "no more newspapers is to come in the lines"]

George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, March 17, 1863 (4
pages)

- [rant about Copperheads and secessionists; he is mad that people at home asked if he is a "secesh"]
- George W. Sylvester (Camp Schafer) to Amanda and children, April 19, 1863 (4 pages)
[musicians played at party for Sheridan, where he was presented with a ceremonial sword and guns; officers drank too much wine; consolidating regiments into battalions]
- George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, May 15-16, 1863 (2 pages)
[drill practice; complaints about the officers; "officers don't know as much about drill as the privates"]
- George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, May 24, 1863 (4 pages)
[false reports of the Union capturing Richmond and Vicksburg; soldier recently executed for desertion; no longer playing the fife because of conflict with an officer, back to carrying a rifle; brother Cy is unwell; asks for picture of Amanda]
- George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, May 31, 1863 (4 pages)
[rumors of Grant abandoning Vicksburg; predicts Confederacy will fall if Union can take Richmond, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga; afraid that Rosecrans will be sent East to command Army of the Potomac]
- George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, June 11, 1863 (4 pages)
[tried out the new sharpshooter guns - "Colts revolving rifles;" expects good news from Vicksburg; "if we cannot starve them we can fight them for 8 or ten years if Uncle Sam will let us fetch our wives to the Army so we could raise some new recruits"]
- George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, June 28, 1863 (3 pages)
[George W. Sylvester is sick; further admiration for Rosecrans]
- George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, July 4, 1863 (4 pages)
[army is preparing for advance on Chattanooga; bought some 20 cent pints of beer to sweat out his fever]
- George W. Sylvester (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, July 19, 1863 (4 pages)
[tired of the army; predicts war will end soon; sends home his war diary (not in collection); jokes about bringing home a slave; deception in the newspaper]
- George W. Sylvester (Bridgeport, Alabama) to Amanda and children, August 6, 1863 (2 pages)
[describes land, value of U.S. dollar compared to Confederate; might be placed in a convalescent camp, but wants to get well to stay with his regiment; "it seems a man cannot get furlough until after he is dead"]
- George W. Sylvester (Bridgeport, Alabama) to Amanda and children, August 12, 1863 (2 pages)
[told to be ready to march at any time with ten days ration; plenty of food: catfish, beef, corn, apples, peaches, potatoes]

- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, November 1, 1863 (4 pages)
[wounded in left shoulder; still trying to capture Lookout Mountain; uncertain of when he will be mustered out; new teeth for Amanda]
- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, November 9, 1863 (4 pages)
[back injury, cannot do much work; friend captured by the Confederates; shelled daily]
- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, November 19, 1863 (4 pages)
[still in hospital because of back injury; homesick]
- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, December 1, 1863 (4 pages)
[can limp around hospital now; regiment left without him; talks about how Meade and Hooker can end the war, also mentions Sherman, Grant, Bragg, Lee, and Longstreet]
- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, December 13-16, 1863 (4 pages)
[attending church; Christian Commission brought them cheese and butter; had not seen women in so long; doctors recommended him for the Invalid Corps; homesick]
- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, December 25, 1863 (4 pages)
[regiment left for Knoxville; expects to be sent North with others from the hospital; shocked by Tennessee women and their chewing tobacco habits]
- George W. Sylvester (Louisville, Kentucky) to Amanda and children, April 1, 1864 (2 pages)
[describes a furlough: Chicago, Indianapolis, Lafayette; back with the 51st Illinois]
- George W. Sylvester (Nashville, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, April 4, 1864 (3 pages)
[quartered in the Zollicoffer House with 8000 men]
- George W. Sylvester (Cleveland [sic], Tennessee) to Amanda and children, April 30, 1864 (4 pages)
[advice to Amanda regarding property dispute at home]
- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, June 23, 1864 (3 pages)
[300 Confederates captured by Hooker]
- George W. Sylvester ("Chattahoochee River, six miles from the front") [Chattahoochee River?] to Amanda and children, August 3, 1864 (4 pages)
[list of towns they marched through on their way from Chattanooga]
- George W. Sylvester ("camp near Atlanta, Georgia") to Amanda and children, August 17, 1864 (2 pages with additional pages missing)
[describes fighting]
- George W. Sylvester (Chattanooga, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, October 29, 1864 (3 pages)
[marched to Alpine and back; about to march to Decatur, Alabama, to fight Hood; hopes they will not be marching all winter]

George W. Sylvester (Pulaski, Tennessee) to Amanda and children, November 16, 1864
(3 pages)
[recently sent home a picture and money; resolving debts at home]

II. Sylvester Family Correspondence

George W. Sylvester (Attica, Indiana) to Amanda [?], July 28, 1852 (3 pages)
[?] to Mary [Sylvester?], August 3, 1863 (2 pages)
William B. Sylvester (Attica, Indiana) to Alice Sylvester (Otterbein, Indiana), May 8, 1876
(2 pages)
Hester [?] to Alice Sylvester, November 12, 1876 (2 pages)
James Sylvester (Attica, Indiana) to the Postmaster of Homer, Illinois, December 18, 1876
(1 page)
[asks Postmaster to let William H. Sylvester know that William B. is dying]
Mrs. M. Thompson [Mary Sylvester?] (Attica, Indiana) to William H. Sylvester (care of
Homer, Illinois, postmaster), February 19, 1877 (Western Union telegram, 1 page)
[William B.'s wife died]
Hester to Willie [William H.] and Alice [Sylvester], February 28, 1877 (4 pages)
M.B. Sylvester (Sidney, Illinois) to husband, [undated] [January 22] (3 pages)
Clinton Martin (Jersey, Ohio) to cousin, [undated] (3 pages)

III. Other Materials

Three checks ("Bank of East Tennessee," "Bank of Tennessee," and "Georgie Rail-road
and Banking Company") Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1852
George Sylvester's army pension records [photocopies], 1866
Toledo, Wabash & Western Railway Co. receipt, April 8, 1876 (1 page)
[transferred one boxed organ from Attica, Indiana, to William H. Sylvester in
Homer, Illinois]
R.S. Hopkins Trade Palace (Homer, Illinois) bill, July 17, 1877 (1 page)
[materials purchased by William H. Sylvester over a 6-month period]
Handwritten acrostic poem, "AMANDA CATHARINE HERSHBERGER" by [?] Bonner,
[undated] (1 page)
Printed song [lyrics], "The Battle of Stone's River" ("Composed by Sergeant L. V. Phillips,
Company H, 27th Reg. Ills. Vols."), [undated] (1 page)
Printed song [music and lyrics]: "My Days are Gliding Swiftly By" ("composed by G. F.
Root"), undated (1 page)
["Amanda C. Sylvester" inscribed on verso]
Printed song [lyrics]: "Forward! March!" ("by a private of the Twenty-First Michigan
Infantry"), undated (1 page)