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Long, Juliette Blanche (Underwood) Western, 1835-1909 (MSS 361)

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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 361 LONG, Juliette Blanche (Underwood) Western, 1835-1909

1 box. 4 folders. 1 item. ca.1909. Photocopied typescript.

1976.52.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Juliette Blanche Underwood, the second child of Warner Lewis Underwood (1808-1872) and Lucy Craig Henry (1816-1893), was born on 16 October 1835 in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Called "Jupe" by her family, she grew up at Mount Air, the Underwood home and farm purchased in 1839, and attended Visitation Convent School in Washington D.C., where her father served in Congress. On 22 June 1859, Juliette married William Wallace Western, Jr. (1834-1870), and moved to Memphis, Tennessee. When the Civil War broke out, Juliette found her loyalties split between most members of her family (particularly her father), who were Union supporters, and her husband, a secessionist who left his law practice to serve in the Confederate Army. Her conflict grew especially stark when the Confederate government appointed William Western as an emissary to Great Britain. At the time, Juliette's father, Warner Lewis Underwood, was serving as U.S. consul to Glasgow, Scotland, and the Confederates believed (wrongly) that his influence might allow Western to escape the Union blockade of the South.

Widowed in 1870, Juliette married Frederick H. Long on 27 July 1885. After Long's death, Juliette lived with her daughter, Lucy (Mrs. Hunter M. Meriwether) in Kansas City, Missouri. Juliette died in Kansas City on 12 June 1909 and was buried in Fairview Cemetery in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists of an unpublished Civil War memoir by Juliette Blanche (Underwood) Western Long entitled "'Betwixt,' or A Story of the War, by a Kentucky Woman." The title reflects Juliette's conflicting loyalties as the daughter of a Unionist and the wife of a secessionist. Asked which side she supported in the war, she insisted that she was "for both, and against neither" (p. 18).

In the memoir, Juliette recalls her childhood at Mount Air, including her kindnesses to the family's enslaved servants. After her marriage, she and her husband, William Wallace Western, move to Memphis, where he departs to serve in the Confederate Army after the outbreak of the Civil War. Juliette recounts a discussion with her husband about secession, and describes her

close relationship with her enslaved household servants in Memphis. She harbors a Unionist minister and his wife on their journey from Mississippi to their home in New York, and even hides them when the authorities seek them out as suspected spies. She writes that the couple, named Beekman, were related to an old New York family and named their daughter Juliette in gratitude for her help.

After the Federal occupation of Memphis in 1862, Juliette returns to Bowling Green to stay with her sister Frances (“Fanny”) Grider, but attempts to travel to Huntsville, Alabama to see her husband and present him with their newborn son. En route, she witnesses the aftermath of the Battle of Stones River in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Diverted to stay at a relative’s in Clarksville, she warns Union troops along the way of a waiting ambush by Confederates. She encounters many difficulties in her travels, including lack of money to hire conveyances, accusations of spying and carrying contraband, and a sick servant girl whose return to Bowling Green she must arrange. After being offered the use of a carriage by the wife of former President James K. Polk, she is reunited with her husband near Columbia, Tennessee. Upon his return to service, she makes her way back to Bowling Green, where her young son becomes ill and dies. When her husband is appointed by the Confederate government as an emissary to Great Britain, she goes abroad with him, where they learn of Lee’s surrender.

Originally created for Juliette’s daughter Lucy, the memoir is written in dramatic and sentimental language. Its factual basis is uncertain, as it includes many reconstructed scenes and dialogue. Slaves are portrayed as speaking effusively but submissively, and in heavy “negro dialect.” The manuscript is typewritten but includes handwritten edits and comments that Juliette made in an attempt to ready it for possible publication (see p. 7). According to Juliette’s obituary published in the *Bowling Green Messenger*, she had substantially completed this memoir at the time of her death in 1909.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Long, Juliette Blanche (Underwood) Western	c. 1909	1 item
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Folder 3	“Betwixt, ’ or A Story of the War, by a Kentucky Woman”	pp. 102-203	
Folder 4	“Betwixt, ’ or A Story of the War, by a Kentucky Woman”	pp. 204-291	

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS LONG, Juliette Blanche (Underwood) ca. 1909
361 Western, 1835-1909

“Betwixt,’ or A Story of the War, by a Kentucky Woman,” an unpublished memoir (290 pp.) by Bowling Green native Juliette Blanche (Underwood) Western Long of her experiences during the Civil War. The daughter of a Unionist family, Juliette married a supporter of the South who served in the Confederate Army.

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