



**William Porcher DuBose correspondence, 1861-1865  
SCHS 388.00**

**Creator:** Dubose, William Porcher, 1836-1918.

**Description:** 1 linear ft.

**Biographical/Historical note:** William Porcher DuBose, a native of Winnsboro, S.C., was an Episcopal theologian and educator. During the War Between the States he served as a Confederate officer and chaplain. A graduate of the Citadel as well as the University of Virginia, his training at the Episcopal Seminary in Camden, S.C. was interrupted when he entered military service in 1861. On April 30, 1863, he married Anne ("Nannie") Barnwell Peronneau of Charleston. After two years of active service DuBose became a chaplain. Following the war he was ordained a priest and ministered at Winnsboro and Abbeville, S.C. In 1871 he became chaplain and professor at the University of the South at Sewanee, Tenn., and was later elected dean of the theological college. DuBose authored a number of theological works, and was considered one of the foremost thinkers in the Episcopal Church in America.

**Scope and content:** This collection of approximately 160 letters chiefly consist of letters from William Porcher DuBose to his fiancée, and later his wife, Nannie (Anne Barnwell Peronneau), chronicling his four years of military service as an officer and a chaplain. DuBose entered military service early in the war as an adjutant in Holcombe Legion (initially state troops, and later a Confederate unit in Evans' Brigade). In December 1861 he wrote from Adams Run (S.C.), and the following month, described an expedition to Edisto Island (S.C.). DuBose was wounded at Second Manassas, and the following month was taken prisoner near Boonesboro (Maryland) and sent to Fort Delaware (Del.) as a prisoner of war. He was soon exchanged and returned to active service, rejoining his command in North Carolina, where he was seriously wounded in a battle near the town of Kinston. In summer 1863 Evans' Brigade was in Mississippi, and the letters mention fighting at Jackson and Vicksburg. Late in 1863 DuBose was commissioned as a chaplain, with orders to report to Kershaw's Brigade. He ministered at a church in Greeneville (Tenn.) and in 1864 returned to Virginia with Kershaw's Brigade.

The correspondence includes many letters from DuBose to Nannie reflecting on spiritual matters and expressing his love for her. His letters sometimes mention the spiritual condition of individuals, the troops, and other chaplains, including John L. Girardeau, whom DuBose admires. Friends and family are also frequent topics, and there are numerous references to General "Shanks" Evans. The correspondence includes a letter to DuBose from his close friend John Johnson, several letters from Nannie, and a

letter (Sept. 22, 1862) to DuBose's sister Mrs. Marion Porcher from Colonel Peter F. Stevens concerning the fate of her "noble and lovely brother" in Maryland. In one of his last letters (March 17, 1865), from Smithfield (N.C.), DuBose responds to news of General Sherman's march through South Carolina: "So far I know I am the only member of the brigade who has heard directly from S.C. since the passage of the enemy...The heartlessness and vandalism of those wretches surpasses all my expectations."

**Note:** Published as: Emerson, Stokes, ed., Faith, Valor, and Devotion: The Civil War Letters of William Porcher DuBose (USC Press, 2010).

**Note:** Photocopies available.

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**Search terms:**

DuBose, Anne Barnwell Peronneau, d. 1873.  
Dubose, William Porcher, 1836-1918.  
Evans, Nathan George, 1824-1868.  
Girardeau, John L. (John Lafayette), 1825-1898.  
Johnson, John, 1829-1907.  
Stevens, Peter Fayssoux, 1830-1910.  
Confederate States of America. Army -- Chaplains.  
Confederate States of America. Army -- Officers -- Correspondence.  
Confederate States of America. Army. Evans' Brigade.  
Confederate States of America. Army. Holcombe Legion.  
Confederate States of America. Army. Kershaw's Brigade.  
Military chaplains -- South Carolina.  
Sherman's March through the Carolinas.  
Soldiers -- Confederate States of America -- Religious life.  
Fort Delaware (Del.)  
Maryland -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.  
Mississippi -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.  
North Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.  
South Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.  
Tennessee -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.  
Virginia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865.  
Winnsboro (S.C.)  
Letters (correspondence)

**Container listing:**

**Box 1**

Correspondence – October 4, 1861 – June 18, 1862

**Box 2**

Correspondence – July [29], 1862 – March 25, 1863

**Box 3**

Correspondence – March 31, 1863 – February 25, 1864

**Box 4**

Correspondence – March 3, 1864 – April 3, 1865

**Box 5**

Photocopies of letters

**Notes on William Porcher Dubose correspondence, 1861-1865:**

\*These mainly consist of his letters to his fiancée and later wife Nannie (Anne Barnwell Peronneau).

#8 – Nov. 4, 1861, William Porcher Dubose's letter from seminary in Camden, SC mentions the engagement of Robert Wilson to Miss Nanna Shand.

#12 – Dec. 18, 1861, a letter from Nannie Peronneau to William Porcher Dubose mentions her work in Charleston helping to make clothing "for the poor destitute creatures burnt out last week."

#14 – Dec. 26, 1861, William Porcher Dubose writes to Nannie that his unit has been ordered to Adams Run, SC

#16 – Dec. 31, 1861, William Porcher Dubose writes from Holcombe Legion near Adams Run, describing his recent activities, and shelling by passing enemy steamers.

#17 – Jan. 4, 1862, a letter from E.M. Porcher at Roseland to Nannie

#19 – Jan. 31, 1862, William Porcher Dubose to Nannie, describing an expedition to Edisto Island, where 80 negroes were taken prisoner "several of whom were among those who fired upon the picket." He writes that "The negroes have all congregated on Charle's Island, or Botany Bay & burnt the bridge connecting it with Edisto." He mentions illness in the ranks and briefly describes Willtown.

#22 – Feb. 28, 1862, William Porcher Dubose's letter to Nannie reflects on lessons that might be learned from burdens and hardships. "Imagine the worst—suppose Charleston taken & yourself a fugitive. Might not God wisely & in love select such a method of teaching us that here 'we have no continuing city'—but that 'we seek a better, even an heavenly.' No, that is not the worst—imagine our great cause finally unsuccessful, & our beloved country conquered & ruined...I do not admit that because we are in the right in this particular strife, that therefore our cause must prevail. Our enemies might be more wicked than we, but the Bible teaches us that the ungodly are a sword of the Lord."

#24 – March 19, 1862, William Porcher Dubose writes we must get serious about the war.

#25 – March 24, 1862, letter concerns an upcoming expedition to Edisto of about 300 men, and mentions a musical concert in the camp.

#27 – April 4, 1862, letter includes a poem about the City of God.

#30 – April 28, 1862, an enemy gunboat came up the Dawho River and destroyed a Confederate battery.

#32 – May 9, 1862, datelined Holcombe Legion, is a love letter reminiscing about a happy day at a place called [Dungannon]. (SCHM, v. 41, p. 165, notes a Dungannon Plantation near Millbrook, 18 miles from Charleston on Hwy 17)

#34 – June 1, 1862, relates the death of William Porcher Dubose's mother.

#35 – June 18, 1862, more on the death of William Porcher Dubose's mother; the "remarkable" battle death of Beverly Means; the mysterious fate of Col. Bratton, who was wounded and then not heard from again.

#36 – June 18, 1862, William Porcher Dubose writes from Charleston, referring to a court martial and his duty as a judge advocate; the city is in mourning due to casualties on James Island; there is an expected assault on James Island.

#37 – July 2, 1862, William Porcher Dubose in Richmond, Va., seeing friends there, mentions Tom Dudley and the Dudley family, and his own family being behind enemy lines; William Porcher Dubose saw President Davis in church.

#42 – August 6, 1862, William Porcher Dubose, in Virginia, mentions Malvern Hill, and some exchanged prisoners. "There is a great deal of sympathy for us in Baltimore & Washington, but they were not well treated by the Yankees."

#43 – August 16, 1862, Nannie's letter to William Porcher Dubose mentions his being in Stonewall Jackson's army.

#44 – August 30, 1862, William Porcher Dubose in Anderson, SC, mentions the capture of enemy stores by General Stewart; says it would have been glorious to have captured Pope "and punished him in person for his barbarity."

#45 – Sept. 22, 1862, letter to Mrs. Marion Porcher from [P.] F. Stevens about the shooting or capture of her brother Willie in Maryland.

#46 – Sept. 26, 1862, William Porcher Dubose writes to his sister from Fort Delaware as a prisoner of war.

#57 – Nov. 14, 1862, William Porcher Dubose mentions he was officially exchanged on Nov. 11.

#59 – Nov. 19, 1862, William Porcher Dubose writes from Camp Evans Brigade near Kinston, NC, and mentions General Evans' drinking and "having us out...to meet imaginary enemies."

#62 – Dec. 16, 1862, William Porcher Dubose writes from a hospital in Goldsboro about his injury and trip to the hospital, and fighting a "vastly superior force" near Kinston.

#63 – Dec. 23, 1862, a letter to William Porcher Dubose from John Johnson.

#67 – Jan. 10, 1863, William Porcher Dubose discusses the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

#70 – Feb. 24, 1863, William Porcher Dubose writes from Holcombe Legion in South Carolina; mentions legal proceedings involving General Evans.

#77 – March 25, 1863, William Porcher Dubose asks Nannie to consider marrying him before the war is over rather than waiting; says he'll get a furlough.

#80 – April 9, 1863, William Porcher Dubose writes of their engagement and his furlough.

#85 – June 1, 1863, William Porcher Dubose writes to "My precious wife."

#91 – June 29, 1863, William Porcher Dubose writes of his upcoming transfer to the chaplaincy and his duties and trials as a chaplain; mentions Mr. Giradeau.

#95 – July 10, 1863, this and previous letters describe troop movements and fighting in Mississippi near Jackson; intense heat; General Evans is often mentioned.

#99 – July 21, 1863, "I have not regretted assuming the Chaplaincy."

#103 – Aug. 11, 1863, William Porcher Dubose at Isle of Hope near Savannah, Ga., at "Grimball's Place."

#108 – Sept. 10, 1863, William Porcher Dubose at Mount Pleasant, SC writes of a bombardment in Charleston harbor by Monitors, mainly against Fort Moultrie; describes damages and casualties; a Brooks gun at Ft. Moultrie fired on grounded Monitor.

#109 – Sept. 19, 1863, William Porcher Dubose in Mt. Pleasant mentions his servant: "I have sent William home on a short furlough. He has served me faithfully." Mentions talk of "the Anglo-Rebel fleet" which is expected.

#111 – Sept. 28, 1863, discusses a possible invasion of Charleston via James Island.

#112 – Oct. 9, 1863, William Porcher Dubose receives his appointment as chaplain, and is ordered to report to General Kershaw.

#116 – Nov. 1, 1863, reports on damages at Fort Sumter. “My resignation has arrived...and I am now free to leave when I please.”

#117 – Feb. 8, [1864], William Porcher Dubose with Kershaw’s Brigade, mentions bushwhackers and Morgan.

#121 – Feb. 25, 1864, William Porcher Dubose at Blue Spring, Tenn. near Greeneville. The next four letters are from Greeneville.

#125 – March 7, [1864], William Porcher Dubose describes a visit to General Arnold. “While he is a good Southerner & hates Abe Lincoln, Andy Johnson, Parson Brownlow & Yankees generally, was opposed to disunion & ‘is afraid he was right’.”

#126 – April 4, 1864, William Porcher Dubose from Bristol, Tenn., describes a raid on the Commissary stores in Bristol by Confederate troops, who were fired upon by the guards; some killed, wounded, and captured.

#129 – April 30, 1864, William Porcher Dubose in Gordonsville [Va.], writes that General Lee reviewed the corps and was received with tremendous cheers; Lee looked “greyer & older.”

#130 – May 9, 1864, William Porcher Dubose near Spottsylvania, describes fighting in that area; two of his best friends, officers, killed (Col. Frank Gaillard and Nance); Col. Gaillard buried several miles from the field of battle while the fighting was still going on; William Porcher Dubose describes Gaillard’s spiritual condition.

#131 – May 14, 1864, more about Spottsylvania.

#134 – May 30, 1864, William Porcher Dubose in Hanover County, Va., mentions losses of the Charleston Light Dragoons. “I have several relations & a good many friends in that company.” William Porcher Dubose discusses the religious conversion of a sergeant. “We hear this morning that the big fighting has begun in Georgia.”

#136 – June 4, 1864, this letter includes a note to [John] Elliott about his wounded brother Ralph. “Capt. Elliott was shot in a very gallant charge.”

#140 – July 7, 1864, William Porcher Dubose in Petersburg, Va. describes a camp hospital 2 miles outside the town under the charge of Dr. Porcher, and refugees from Petersburg living in tents nearby.

#142 – July 18, 1864, news of the death of Nannie’s mother.

#151 – Oct. 12, 1864, William Porcher Dubose, writing from Woodstock, Va., describes an engagement of the cavalry and Union forces.

#155 – Feb. 5, 1865, William Porcher Dubose at Blue House, Salkehatchie, SC, writes “Sherman must be very near Branchville.”

#157 – March 2, 1865, William Porcher Dubose hears reports “our house in Wbo [Winnsboro] has been burned...I cannot conceive of their turning out so many women & children to burn the house.” (a later letter contradicts the reports)