



Department of State

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

**MITCHENER FAMILY PAPERS
1918-1957, bulk 1942-1945**

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INTRODUCTION

The Mitchener Family Papers (1918-1957, bulk 1942-1945) were loaned to TSLA for microfilming by Mack “Skip” Sawyer, the nephew of Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr., in May 2009. This collection is directly linked with Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr.’s P.O.W. diary available at TSLA (THS 760), which was created during his imprisonment at Stalag Luft III during World War II. The diary includes drawings, songs, poems, and notes about his experiences as a P.O.W. The Mitchener Family Papers primarily include items that pertain to his wartime experience, including his military service records, letters written to his mother during the war, and other related materials, including some photographs. The collection is less than a cubic foot in size, and there are no restrictions on its use.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Mitchener Family Papers (1918-1957, bulk 1942-1945) were loaned to TSLA for microfilming by relatives of Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr. His diary (THS 760) recounts his experiences as a P.O.W. at Stalag Luft III during World War II. The items in the Mitchener Family Papers were provided by Skip Sawyer, whose mother, Margaret, was Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr.'s sister. After Mitchener's death in 1957 from cancer, his sister and mother were unable to locate the diary; it was likely in the possession of Mitchener's wife. The family rediscovered its existence when they saw the item digitized on TSLA's website.

The materials in this collection primarily cover Mitchener's wartime experiences, although there are a few unrelated family items from before the war. Of chief interest in the collection are Mitchener's service records as well as a number of photographs. Most of the photographs show Mitchener with his mother, Estelle, and his sister, Margaret. Several photographs picture Mitchener in uniform, including one from his time at navigation school or shortly thereafter. There are two copies of a group photo of some of the crew members of the "Jenny Lee" aircraft; these men were shot down during a bombing raid in Germany in 1944. All of the photographs in this collection have been digitized. The digital image ID number is listed after the image.

For a full account of Mitchener's experiences during World War II, refer to the finding aid for the Hardy A. Mitchener Journal, THS 760. Additional records may also be available in the acquisition file.

CONTAINER LIST

Folder

1. Membership Certificate for the Caterpillar Club with pin (May 1944)
2. German POW ID for Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr. (1944)
3. Laminated obituary of Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr. from the Nashville *Tennessean* (1957)
4. *War Prisoners and News* volume 2, number 2 (Published by War Prisoners Aid of the YMCA) (February 1945); *War Prisoners and News* volume 1 number 6 (Published by War Prisoners Aid of the YMCA) (October 1944); *War Prisoners and News* volume 2, number 4 (Published by War Prisoners Aid of the YMCA) (April-May 1945)
5. Five Western Union Telegrams (includes one envelope):
 - a. June 13, 1942 (Birthday note from Mitchener)
 - b. June 13, 1944 (Reported MIA)
 - c. June 26, 1944 (Reported POW)
 - d. April 29, 1945 (Mitchener returned to military control)
 - e. (no date; 1945) (Mitchener returns to U.S.)
6. Letter to Mrs. Mitchener from Lt. Ivan Moody RE: Mitchener (Feb. 1945)
7. Four letters home when Mitchener was a POW
 - a. Postcard from June 6, 1944 (writes that he is decently treated)
 - b. Postcard from June 17, 1944 (states he is happy and healthy)
 - c. Letter from July 9, 1944
 - d. Letter from October 1944
8. Receipts, slide and letter pertaining to Mitchener burial site at Spring Hill cemetery and additional unrelated receipt from 1964
9. Senior class announcement from 1936 (Isaac Litton High School); Calling card for Jerry Mitchener enclosed; Graduation Program for May 22, 1936 for Mitchener; Graduation Program for May 12, 1932, Jere Baxter School, includes Mitchener; Isaac Litton High School Commencement for 1938 for Margaret Mitchener; Isaac Litton High School Commencement for 1937
10. Newspaper clipping of Nashville's cutest babies; includes baby picture of Mitchener
11. Two V-mail letters from Mitchener before taken prisoner
 - a. April 3, 1944
 - b. April 9, 1944 (page 2 only)
12. Five Receipts (for POW parcels sent and cigarette orders)
13. Official correspondence about food parcels sent to POWs (includes parcel mailing instructions and tobacco mailing instructions)
14. Individual flight records for Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr. (June 1943- May 1944)
15. Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr's, Service Records
16. Five official military service certificates for Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr. (includes discharge certificate)
17. Officers' Mess Army Air Base coupon book (from Bainbridge, Georgia)
18. Dupont Engineering Company (Old Hickory Works) time cards belonging to Hardy A. Mitchener, Senior (1918)
19. Newspaper clippings

20. Photographs

- a. Mitchener as a baby boy (ca. 1920) [DB 34572]
- b. Mitchener at six years old, 11 months [DB 34574]
- c. Mitchener with [sister and mother?] [DB 34573]

21. Photographs

- a. Mitchener as a young man [DB 34594]
- b. Mitchener in military uniform (U.S. Army Air Corps) [DB 34593]
- c. Military ceremony on 23 March 1945 (decorations awarded to five Nashville and two Middle Tennessee airmen for meritorious achievement while participating in combat operations; Mrs. Estelle F. Mitchener receives the Air Medal for her son, 2nd Lt. Hardy A. Mitchener, POW) [DB 34592]

22. Photographs

- a. Mitchener in uniform with his sister [DB 34580]
- b. Mitchener with his sister [DB 34581]
- c. Mitchener with his mother [DB 34578]
- d. Mitchener saluting [DB 34585]
- e. Mitchener in uniform [DB 34588]
- f. Crew members of Jenny Lee; top row from left to right: Crawford Hicks, Eugene Bianco, Hardy A. Mitchener, Jr.; bottom row from left to right: Frank Young, Marvin Allen, Kenneth Gelderman, Lowell Reid, Steve Vaslik; (2 copies) [DB 34571]
- g. Mitchener with his sister [DB 34583]
- h. Mitchener with his mother and sister [DB 34579]
- i. Mitchener's mother [DB 34577]
- j. Mitchener's sister and mother [DB 34576]
- k. Mitchener with his mother, [father?], and sister [DB 34575]
- l. Mitchener in uniform [DB 34586]
- m. Mitchener at navigation school with unidentified friend (2 copies) [DB 34584]
- n. Mitchener in uniform [DB 34587]
- o. Mitchener with his sister [DB 34582]
- p. Mitchener at a desk [DB 34589]

23. Photographs

- a. World War II USO entertainment, including Bob Hope [DB 34591]
- b. Bob Hope and other USO entertainers with locals during World War II [DB 34590]