



Guide to the Brantley York Records and Papers, 1838 - 1966

This collection guide was produced in **2003**.

This PDF version was created on **April 3, 2026**.

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

askRL@duke.edu

URL: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Background	4
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	6
Names and Subjects	6
Collection Inventory	6
Brantley York papers, 1838-1950 and undated	6
Writings, 1860-1910 and undated	7
Material about Brantley York and the York family, 1888-ca. 1900, 1957-1966, 1982, and undated	8

Summary

Collection Title:

Brantley York records and papers, 1838 - 1966

Creator:

York, Brantley, 1805-1891

Abstract:

Brantley York was an educator, author, and Methodist clergyman in North Carolina. He organized Union Institute Academy at Brown's Schoolhouse in Randolph Co., N.C. in 1839, which would evolve into Normal College, Trinity College, and later Duke University. York also wrote an English grammar, as well as several other instructional textbooks. The Brantley York Records and Papers contain correspondence, a grade book, certificates, manuscripts, and published works. Modern materials were added to the collection; these include York family genealogical information, as well as clippings about York and his activities. Major subjects include the early history of Union Institute, Normal College, Trinity College and Duke University; education in North Carolina in the 19th century; and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. English.

Extent:

0.3 Linear Feet

Language:

English

Language:

English.

Collection ID:

UA.03.50.0001

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/uapresyork/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Brantley York Records and Papers, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Background

Scope and Content

The Brantley York Records and Papers include correspondence, clippings, a grade book, certificates, manuscripts, and published works. Modern materials were added to the collection; these include York family genealogical information, as well as clippings about York and his activities. Preservation photocopies of all deteriorating clippings have been made for patron use.

The first series, Brantley York papers, includes certificates and other documents, a small amount of correspondence, and a grade book. The second series, Writings, features manuscript drafts and a published copy of York's autobiography, as well as copies of three of his instructional texts. The final series contains both contemporary and modern clippings about Brantley York's life, work, and family members. Also included in this series is a York family genealogy.

Biographical/Historical

A largely self-taught educator, Methodist minister, and author of a series of English grammars, Brantley York (1805-1891) was asked by Methodist and Quaker farmers in rural Randolph County, N.C. to help provide education for their sons and daughters. At the site of the former Brown's Schoolhouse, he organized Union Institute Academy in 1838 and met with instant success, building two new buildings within a year-and-a-half. Though gratified at his accomplishment, he worked extremely hard raising money, and he began to go blind working late at night preparing recitations in subjects he had not adequately studied. In fact, he recorded in his diary a statement saying he considered his years at Union Institute to be "truly onerous." York, however, had found his life's work at Union Institute and though completely blind by age forty-eight, he lived to be eighty-six and founded half-a-dozen schools, lectured over 8,000 times, and taught more than 15,000 pupils. He served as Principal of Union Institute from 1838 to 1842.

Duke University (Durham, N.C.) was established in 1924 and evolved from the following institutions: Brown's Schoolhouse (Randolph Co., N.C.) 1838-1839; Union Institute (Randolph Co., N.C.) 1839-1851; Normal College (Randolph Co., N.C.) 1851-1859; Trinity College (Randolph Co., N.C.) 1859-1892 and (Durham, N.C.) 1892-1924.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

askRL@duke.edu

URL: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Access Restrictions

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

No restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Copyright for Official University records is held by Duke University; all other copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

Acquisition Information

The Brantley York Records and Papers were received by the University Archives as a transfer.

Processing Information

Processed by University Archives staff, 1996; completed 2003. Preservation photocopies of clippings made in October 2003.

Encoded by Jill Katte, October 2003

Housing and finding aid updated by Tracy M. Jackson, January 2017.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Material

[Forms part of:] Duke University President records. University Archives, Duke University. Trinity College (Randolph Co., N.C.) Collection. University Archives, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- College presidents -- North Carolina
- Education -- North Carolina -- History -- 19th century
- Randolph County (N.C.) -- History
- Textbooks -- North Carolina
- Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) -- History
- York, Brantley, 1805-1891
- Normal College (Randolph County, N.C.) -- History
- Union Institute (Randolph County, N.C.)
- Duke University -- History
- Brown's Schoolhouse (Randolph County, N.C.)
- Methodist Episcopal Church, South -- Clergy -- North Carolina
- Duke University. Presidents

Collection Inventory

Brantley York papers, 1838-1950 and undated

Documents, 1838-1895 and undated

Oversize-folder 1

"Money received from College, Jan. 6, 1875"

Certificate ordaining Brantley York as a
Deacon in the North Carolina Conference of
the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Feb.
4, 1838

Certificate ordaining Brantley York as a
Minister in the North Carolina Conference of
the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nov.
26, 1848

Blank certificate: "Improved System of Teaching, by Rev. Professor B. York. Know all men by these Presents: I Hereby Certify, that _____ has gone through under me a full course of instruction in the English Language, on the Analytical, Constructive and Illustrative System ... I feel no hesitancy in recommending _____ as a Teacher of the English Language...", undated

Correspondence, 1841-1910, 1950

Box 1 > Folder 1

Scope and Contents note

Includes two postcards and one letter written by Bascom A. York, son of Brantley York. Bascom York (1858-1958) was a Methodist minister in N.C.

Grade book, 1856-1860 and undated

Box 1 > Folder 2

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Writings, 1860-1910 and undated

The Autobiography of Brantley York, Holograph manuscript, undated

Box 1 > Folder 3

The Autobiography of Brantley York, Typewritten excerpt of Chapter 11, undated

Box 1 > Folder 4

Published volumes, 1860-1910

York, Brantley, 1805-1891. An Illustrative and Constructive Grammar of the English Language. Raleigh, N.C.: Warren L. Pomeroy, 1860

Box 1 > Folder 5

York, Brantley, 1805-1891. The man of business and railroad calculator, containing such parts of arithmetic as have a special application in business transactions ... by Brantley York; to which are appended a few of the plainer legal forms necessary in ordinary business, prepared by Richard Watt York. Raleigh, N.C.: J. Nichols & Co., 1873.

Box 1 > Folder 6

York, Brantley, 1805-1891. Introduction to the analytical, synthetical and illustrated grammar; or, A grammar for common schools and beginners: illustrated by several

original diagrams, embracing analysis and construction of sentences in familiar lessons, with models, copious exercises and directions, in two parts. Raleigh, N.C.: L. Branson, 1885.

Box 1 > Folder 7

York, Brantley, 1805-1891. The Autobiography of Brantley York. Durham, N.C.: The Seaman Printery, 1910.

Box 1 > Folder 8

Alternative Form Available:

The Autobiography of Brantley York has been digitized and is available online at the following URL: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/york/menu.html>

The digital version of this book is part of the [Documenting the American South](#) project at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Researchers requiring assistance with the digital version should contact this repository directly.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Material about Brantley York and the York family, 1888-ca. 1900, 1957-1966, 1982, and undated

York family genealogy, 1982 and undated

Box 1 > Folder 9

Clippings on Brantley York and family [photocopies and transcriptions], 1888-circa 1900, 1957-1966, and undated

Box 1 > Folder 10

Clippings (copies and transcripts), 1858, 1891, 1961, 1962, and undated

Oversize-folder 2

[Return to Table of Contents](#)