

## Pettis County

### **Younger, Simpson Charles**

(1853 – 14 May 1943)

27th USCT Co A.

of Sedalia. Died at 950 N Cleveland, Wichita, KS in home of his daughter.

The following information on Simpson Younger comes from an interview with Younger in 1937 as part of a W.P.A. Collection Project. Source: Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

"My father was Charles Younger, the originator of the Younger family in Missouri, and grandfather of Cole, Bob and Jim Younger. My father was my mother's master. She was a Simpson. I knew Cole Younger well."

The Younger brothers, Cole, Bob and Jim, were notorious outlaws. It is recorded that Sim's father was the Younger who operated a canoe ferry across the Missouri at Chouteau's Landing.

"My father died when I was five years old, and left Mother a farm on which my brothers and sisters are still living. Father arranged for my education and, by the terms of his will, I was sent to Oberlin, Ohio, where I was reared by Delia Sheppard, in whose care I was placed."

Sim Younger attended Oberlin College, graduated in 1870. He did not see his mother from the time he was five until he was the age of twenty-one.

"I was born in slavery and I enlisted in the Union Army January 1, 1864, at Oberlin, Ohio, and, according to the National Tribune, I was one of the youngest soldiers in the ranks."

"I was present at the battle of Petersburg, Va., July, 1864, one of the disasters to the Northern forces of the War; and present on June 15, 1864, at the initiatory battle of Deep Bottom and also at Cold Harbor."

"I was in the Ninth Army Corps, under Burnside, and was transferred around in front of Richmond, Va."

"General Butler went down to Fort Fisher and failed, which was the last open port of the Confederacy.

Another expedition was organized and General Terry given command. We embarked on the night of

31-Dec.-1864, landed the morning of 13-Jan.-1865, on the peninsula. On the night of 15-Jan.-1865, we captured Fort Fisher."

"We had a terrible, terrible time landing! There was an awful storm! I was told to jump overboard and oh my! I swallowed a good deal of the Atlantic!"

"I want to tell you of one of the tragic things that happened during the war, I was there and saw it."

"It was at the Southside Railroad at Petersburg, on 27-Sept.-1865. I was put on picket duty. The "Rebs" had built a fire and the wind was driving it toward us. They began to holler and cheer, very happy over the fact."

"All at once we could hear someone coming toward us. The pickets opened fire on what they thought were "Rebs" and found out, to their distress, that it was a bunch of recruits from our own lines. Many were killed."

"If I could choose my weapons for the next war, I would choose doughnuts, to be thrown at each other across the Atlantic!"

At the time of this interview, Sim Younger was living in a modest two-story frame home, located at 400 North Moniteau St., Sedalia, Missouri.

There was a quiet soldierly dignity about the old

Negro that was striking and impressive. At 87 years of age, his keen eyes needed no glasses. The impress of his college education and soldierly training were evident in his bearing and conservation.

## TWO EXCEPTS FROM ASSORTED BOOKS

Simpson Charles Younger of the former “Penfields” was now a member of the “Resolutes,” and the only black man on the only integrated ball club on the Western Reserve.

Simpson came to Oberlin in 1854 at age four, along with his sister Katherine and mother Elizabeth, after being freed from slavery in Missouri by the children’s father, white slave owner Charles H.L. Younger. Simpson was educated in the Oberlin schools, and at age thirteen after several attempts to join the army was made a member of the United States Colored Troops in January of 1864. He was one of the youngest soldiers to tote a gun and see action in the Civil War. He wrote a number of poems in later life about his beliefs and experiences concerning the war.

The Resolutes came to Cleveland on July 21, 1868, to play the Occidentals for the junior trophy.

Simpson Younger pitched and they won the game. The Oberlin-based *Lorain County News*: “Bat and ball are hours, Score 43 to 13. ‘Hip!’ The exultant monosyllable is pardonable. Well done, Resolutes.”

From *Runaway and Freed Missouri Slaves*:

In 1888, the light-skinned Simpson purchased orchestra seat tickets for a performance at the Ninth Street Theater in Kansas City, Missouri, but because the woman accompanying him was a darker color than he, the usher refused to seat them in the orchestra section of the theater; it was reserved for whites. An angry Simpson Younger filed suit in Jackson County Circuit Court against the owner of the theater. He alleged that his rights under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution had been violated. The trial court found for the defendant theater owner, and Simpson then took an appeal from this decision to the Supreme Court of Missouri. It upheld the right of the theater owner to segregate members of his audience on the basis of their skin color. The Court wrote, “Such separation does not necessarily assert or imply inferiority on the part of one [race] or the other. It does no more than work out natural law and

race peculiarities.” (Four years after the Missouri Supreme Court interpreted the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause in Simpson Younger’s case, the U.S. Supreme Court enunciated the infamous doctrine of “separate but equal” regarding the segregation of white and black passengers in railroad cars.) Simpson Younger lived until May 1943. He died in Wichita, Kansas, while staying at his daughter’s home. The *Sedalia Democrat* (Pettis County, MO) described him as the last living Civil War veteran of the county. His life was lived as a man of color, and there was more in it, including his lawsuit for civil rights, to be enjoyed than to be endured.