

DAVIDSON, JOHN MITCHELL, 1829-1917.
John Mitchell Davidson papers, 1851-1960

Emory University
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
Atlanta, GA 30322
404-727-6887
rose.library@emory.edu

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Davidson, John Mitchell, 1829-1917.
Title: John Mitchell Davidson papers, 1851-1960
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 357
Extent: .125 linear ft. (1 partial box) ; 1 microfilm reel (MF)
Abstract: Microfilm copy of the papers of John M. Davidson, who served in the 39th North Carolina Infantry Regiment, including correspondence and miscellaneous items regarding the Civil War.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Additional Physical Form

Transcripts of select letters are available.

Source

Loaned for microfilming, 1960.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], John Mitchell Davidson papers, 1851-1960, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Lt. John M. Davidson (October 21, 1829-January 17, 1917), Company C, 39th North Carolina Infantry Regiment, was the son of William Mitchell and Betsy Vance Davidson. The family moved to Texas in 1844 and returned to North Carolina in 1847. From 1855 to 1861 John M. Davidson "operated a store at Copper Hill, Tennessee in the vicinity of the copper mines in Tennessee in partnership with his brother Samuel." In 1861 he apparently went to Virginia to try to sell "some of the stock of the store to the supply department of the Confederate Army in order to provide some money for the benefit of his family, which he left behind when he enlisted in May 1862 at Clinton, Tennessee." His first wife, whom he married on November 1, 1855, was the former Miss Julia Dunn. She died in 1890, and he later married her sister, Julia, whose parents, Isaac M. Dunn and Eliza Dowell Dunn, operated a small hotel, Washington Hall, in Atlanta during the Civil War, lived in Atlanta (apparently not at the hotel) "from about 1862 until the surrender of the city to Sherman in 1864, at which time she and her small children were evacuated and traveled to Anderson, South Carolina in a boxcar, going by way of Macon." After the war Davidson worked for the W & A Railroad as a station agent at Calhoun, Adairsville, and Kingston, Georgia, where he retired in 1901. John M. Davidson's older brother, Allen T. Davidson, served in the Confederate Congress. John was a first cousin of Zebulon Vance, Civil War governor of North Carolina.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of a microfilm copy of the papers of John M. Davison from 1851-1960. The papers include 144 letters, some of which have typescript copies filmed after the originals. Three of the letters (January 30, 1863; July 26, 1864; August 4, 1864) are transcriptions of which the originals have been lost. Brief lists, giving date, place of origin, writer, and person addressed precede the letters of each year. Another transcription is an "Abstract from a letter written by John M. Davidson in May 1895" relating his experiences in the Atlanta Campaign, May 8 - June 15, 1864, and containing a brief paragraph about his subsequent army career. Several miscellaneous pieces, such as a furlough and a "Special Order," are included.

Also included on the microfilm are: "Biographical Sketch of Isaac Dunn or McDunn, father of Julia A. Dunn who married John M. Davidson on November 1, 1855," 2 pp. typed; "Emigration of Wm. Mitchell Davidson and Family from Buncombe County, North Carolina, to Texas in 1844," 15 pp. typescript; photograph of Lt. John M. Davidson in his uniform; a portion (4 letters, April 19-May 19, 1961) of the correspondence between Mr. John L. Davidson, owner of the letters, and Dr. Bell I. Wiley of Emory University; and a scrapbook kept by John M. Davidson.

Arrangement Note

Arranged in chronological order.

Container List

Biographical information

Box	Folder	Content
MF1	1	Photograph of John Mitchell Davidson in Confederate uniform
MF1	1	3 letters (April 19, April 21, and May 19, 1960) from Mr. John L. Davidson. These letters contain some biographical information about John M. Davidson's family.
MF1	1	"Biographical Sketch of Isaac Dunn or McDunn, father of Julia A. Dunn who married John M. Davidson on Nov. 1, 1855," typescript. The original of this was found in the effects of John M. Davidson; the handwriting appeared to be that of Julia Davidson.
MF1	1	"Emigration of William Mitchell Davidson and family from Buncombe County, North Carolina, to Texas in 1844," typescript, 15 pp. This was written by John M. Davidson in about 1904 or 1905. At the time of this trip he would have been about 15 years old.

Correspondence

MF1	2	September 14, 1851; University of North Carolina; Zebulon B. Vance to John M. Davidson. Vance and Davidson were cousins.
MF1	2	February 20, 1855; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; John M. Davidson to Julia [Dunn]. He describes things he saw in Washington, D. C. and Philadelphia on this trip, which he apparently took to buy merchandise. He and Julia were married in November 1855.
MF1	2	November 11, 1857; Swannanoah, [North Carolina]; Samuel Davidson (uncle of John M. Davidson) to John M. Davidson. Included in this letter is one written to John by his mother Betsy (Betty) Vance Davidson.
MF1	2	March 31, 1859; Swannanoah, [North Carolina]; Betty (Betsy) Vance Davidson to John M. Davidson.
MF1	2	January 8, 1861-December 4, 1861; 5 letters of John M. and Julia Davidson to each other.
MF1	3	January 19, 1862-December 28, 1862, 26 letters. Most of the letters are by John and Julia Davidson to each other.
MF1	4	January 8, 1863-December 27, 1863, 54 letters. Four of the letters are undated. Also included are a furlough and a requisition form for fodder dated August 30, 1863.
MF1	5	January 2, 1864-November 27, 1864, 26 letters; 1 furlough.
MF1	6	August 30, 1865-December 31, 1865, 6 letters.

Scrapbook

MF1	7	Scrapbook kept by John M. Davidson, containing Confederate souvenirs; newspaper clippings; a pamphlet, "The Story of the 'General,' 1862," issued by
-----	---	--

the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway; and a few letters, including one from Betsy Davidson to John M. Davidson, Swannanoah, March 31, 1859 and a letter from Samuel Davidson (John's brother), Valley Rivery, North Carolina, June 23, 1867. The other letters are letters of recommendation written for Davidson by various men in Asheville, North Carolina in December 1854 and January 1855, and a letter dated Salisbury, North Carolina, December 25, 1865, from a Masonic official, written for Julia Davidson to carry with her on the trip to join her husband in Calhoun, Georgia. The letter requests that any Mason who can help her in trouble or danger do so.

Original records

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Transcriptions of some of the letters on the microfilm that did not film well. A list of those transcribed are filed before the transcriptions. |
| 1 | 2 | Typescript copy of a letter (acquired May 9, 1961) written by Zebulon Baird Vance (1830-1894; Chapel Hill, North Carolina) to his cousin, John M. Davidson (Asheville, North Carolina), February 1, 1852. Vance, who later became Confederate governor of North Carolina, was attending the University. His cousin, John, was clerking in the store of James Smith in Asheville. |
| 1 | 2 | Genealogical chart of part of the Davidson family, showing, among other things, the relationship with Zebulon Vance, prepared by the archivist. [not microfilmed] |
-