

DAVIS, JEFFERSON, 1808-1889. Jefferson Davis collection, 1846-1905

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Davis, Jefferson, 1808-1889.
Title: Jefferson Davis collection, 1846-1905
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 22
Extent: .5 linear feet (1 box)
Abstract: Correspondence of planter, statesman and President of the Confederate States of America Jefferson Davis, from 1846 to 1901.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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Related Materials in Other Repositories

Confederate Museum of Richmond, University of Georgia, Confederate Memorial Hall, Library of Congress, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Virginia State Library, Virginia Historical Association, and Duke University Library.

Source

Purchase, 1938 with subsequent additions.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Jefferson Davis collection, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

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Collection Description

Biographical Note

Jefferson Davis, planter and statesman, was born June 3, 1808 in Christian County, Kentucky, and died December 6, 1889 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He served as a United States legislator from Mississippi (1847-1851), U.S. Secretary of War (1853-1857), and president of the Confederate States of America (1861-1865). Davis married Varina Howell in 1845.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of letters to and from Jefferson Davis or his wife, Varina Davis from 1846-1905. Correspondents include European representatives of the Confederacy Ambrose Dudley Mann, James Murray Mason, Peter Adolph Rost, Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, and William Lowndes Yancey; and military and civilian leaders Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, Braxton Bragg, Joseph E. Brown, Howell Cobb, Nathan Bedford Forrest, John Adams Gilmer, Ambrose Powell Hill, Joseph Eggleston Johnston, Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, Mansfield Lovell, John Bankhead Magruder, Humphrey Marshall, Francis Wilkinson Pickens, Edmund Kirby Smith, and John Taylor Wood.

The letters from Varina Davis mainly relate to statements made by General Nelson Appleton Miles concerning Jefferson Davis. Particularly interesting is a six-page account written by Mrs. Davis regarding her husband's capture and imprisonment.

Arrangement Note

Arranged in chronological order.

Container List

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS, 1 p. to Mrs. Varina (Howell) Davis (1826-1906), Mouth of the Rio Grande, August 16, 1846. A personal note reminding her of their promises to each other, his to not use profanity and hers on the subject of prayer.
1	2	Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS, 1 p. to Hon. J. Campbell; n. p. [185-?]. This is a short note on Mississippi politics.
1	3	Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), Typescript photocopy, 2 p. to Varney A. Gaskill, Esq.; Washington, D.C., September 21, 1853. Discusses his political differences with Robert Toombs regarding the Compromise of 1850 and discusses his viewpoint on the possibility of a "railroad to the Pacific Ocean."
1	4	Tucker, Nathaniel Beverley (1820-1890), ALS, 8 p. to Jefferson Davis; London, March 22, 1861. Tucker writes a long, confidential letter on the state of public opinion in England and on its recent shift from pro-"Black Republican" to pro-Confederate.
1	5	Bragg, Braxton (1817-1876), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Barancas, Florida, May 18, 1861. Bragg opposes the plan to incorporate the New Orleans Zouaves into the regular army and states the number of troops he can spare for Virginia.
1	6	Beauregard, Pierre Gustave Toutant (1818-1893), LS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Manassas Junction, Virginia, June 12, 1861. This letter offers a plan of campaign for his troops to be united with General Joseph E. Johnston's to retake Arlington Heights and Alexandria for the protection of Washington or to fall back to Richmond.
1	7	Johnston, Joseph Eggleston (1807-1891), ALS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Winchester, Virginia, June 26, 1861. Johnston discusses the current campaign and urges on Davis the role of a military leader who would leave civil affairs to the hands of others.
1	8	Beauregard, Pierre Gustave Toutant (1818-1893), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Manassas Junction, Virginia, July 1, 1861. Beauregard describes the enclosure of two intercepted letters giving information relative to the strength of the enemy. Enclosures wanting.
1	9	Beauregard, Pierre Gustave Toutant (1818-1893), LS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; Manassas Junction, Virginia, July 11, 1861. This letter describes the strength of his forces and discusses possibilities of the coming battle.
1	10	Rost, Peter Adolph (1797-1868), LS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Paris, July 20, 1861. Rost summarizes Confederate affairs in Europe with special reference to cotton trading and to Russell's news dispatches to London.
1	11	Mason, James Murray (1798-1871), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Charleston, South Carolina, October 11, 1861. The Confederate diplomat writes a short letter about his immediate departure for England.

- 1 12 Lovell, Mansfield (1822-1884), ALS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; New Orleans, Louisiana, October 18, 1861. Endorsement to General Gorgas initialed by Davis. This is a pessimistic report on the state of affairs at New Orleans and a request for more ordnance.
- 1 13 Yancey, William Lowndes (1814-1863), ALS, 8 p. to Jefferson Davis; London, December 30, 1861 (Postscripts dated December 31, 1861, and January 1, 1862). This long letter discusses the Confederate diplomatic position in Europe and the possibilities of a war between the United States and England.
- 1 14 Johnston, Joseph Eggleston (1807-1891), ALS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Centreville, Virginia, February 16, 1862. Instructions for answer initialed by Davis; "answd" initialed by G. W. C. Lee. Johnston's postscript mentions enclosures. These were returned by Davis with his answer February 19, 1862. Johnston urges that Major General Gustavus W. Smith be not ordered to Tennessee but retained on the Potomac.
- 1 15 Davis, George (1820-1896), ALS, 1 p. to Jefferson, Davis; Richmond, Virginia, February 19, 1862. Instructions for answer initialed by Davis; "answd" initialed by G. W. C. Lee. Davis requests an appointment for a congressional committee to inform the provisional president of his election as President.
- 1 16 Johnston, Joseph Eggleston (1807-1891), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Centreville, Virginia, March 5, 1862. Endorsement to the secretary of war initialed by Davis; returned to the President with ANS, Judah P. Benjamin; instructions for answer initialed by Davis. This letter concerns a handbill of a recruiting officer claiming that special privileges had been grant to him by the secretary of war.
- 1 17 Johnston, Joseph Eggleston (1807-1891), ALS, 1 p. to Jefferson Davis; Fredericksburg, Virginia, April 4, 1862. Johnston suggests that the Confederate sources be consolidated in front of the advancing enemy.
- 1 18 Johnston, Joseph Eggleston (1807-1891), ALS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Hd Qrs dept Northn Va., May 29, 1862. Letter explains Johnston's delay in effecting reorganization.
- 1 19 Pickens, Francis Wilkinson (1805-1869), ALS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; Columbia, South Carolina, August 10, 1862. The Governor of South Carolina questions the fitness of General John C. Pemberton to direct the defense of Charleston and the Carolina coast.
- 1 20 Marshall, Humphrey (1812-1872), ALS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; On Millstone Cr., Letcher Co., Kentucky, September 9, [1862]. Long letter expressing Humphrey's dissatisfaction at Davis' appointment of others over him in Kentucky and offering to resign. The latter part of the letter is devoted to a general discussion of the Confederate cause in Kentucky.
- 1 21 Magruder, John Bankhead (1810-1871), LS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Galveston, Texas, January 6, 1863. ANS initialed by Davis. Small engraving of Magruder mounted above letter. Magruder announces the capture of Galveston and the dispersal of the blockading fleet and discusses further action in Texas.

- 1 22 Hill, Ambrose Powell (1825-1865), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Near Fredericksburg, Virginia, January 29 [1863]. Instructions for answer initialed by Davis. Hill requests that the resignation of his brother D. H. Hill be not accepted but that he be given a furlough.
- 1 23 Marshall, Humphrey (1812-1872), ALS, 8 p. to Jefferson Davis; Jonesville, Virginia, February 2, 1863. This long letter deplores the addition of certain Virginia counties to the department of East Tennessee and recommends the formation of a new department. The latter part of the letter is a discussion of political affairs in Kentucky.
- 1 24 Wood, John Taylor (1830-1904), ALS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Charleston, South Carolina, February 19, 1863. Wood discusses the launching of iron-clads in Charleston harbor and the naval defenses of the harbor.
- 1 25 Stephens, Alexander Hamilton (1812-1883), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Crawfordville, Georgia, April 20, 1863. Endorsed by William M. Browne and twice by Samuel Cooper. The Vice-President asks executive clemency for a Georgia soldier, Herbert Mitchell (grandson of ex-Governor David Mitchell) of Company A, 4th Georgia Infantry Regiment, under sentence of a court martial in Castle Thunder.
- 1 26 Brown, Joseph Emerson (1821-1894), LS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Milledgeville, Georgia, May 25, 1863. Two endorsements initialed by Davis; one signed by James A. Seddon. The Governor of Georgia requests military aid in the defense of Rome and emphasizes the importance of the region to the armies in Tennessee and western Virginia.
- 1 27 Hill, Ambrose Powell (1825-1865), ALS, 1 p. to Jefferson Davis; Hd Qrs 3d corps, June 7 [1863]. General Hill relays a letter giving information as to the movements of General Joseph Hooker.
- 1 28 Kirby-Smith, Edmund (1824-1893), LS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Shreveport, Louisiana, September 5, 1863. About three-fourths of the letter is in cipher. The letter is a pessimistic view of affairs in the Trans-Mississippi department.
- 1 29 Gorgas, Josiah (1818-1333), NS, 1 p. to Jefferson Davis; Richmond, Virginia, September 11, 1863. Gorgas relays the information that two founders are at Shreveport, Louisiana.
- 1 30 Bragg, Braxton (1817-1876), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; near Chattanooga, Tennessee, October 22, 1863. Bragg relates the particulars of his controversy with General Simon B. Buckner.
- 1 31 Cobb, Howell (1815-1868), ALS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; Atlanta, Georgia, November 6, 1863. This is a candid report on the personal relations of Braxton Bragg and the officers associated with him.
- 1 32 Forrest, Nathan Bedford (1821-1877), LS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Jackson, Tennessee, December 8, 1863. Endorsement initialed by Davis; ANS (May 3, 1864) by Braxton Bragg. Forrest outlines a plan of attack on the Memphis & Charleston railroad.

- 1 33 Rost, Peter Adolph, (1797-1868), LS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; Fumel, France, December 24, 1863. Rost discusses reasons for France's failure to recognize the Confederacy.
- 1 34 Mann, Ambrose Dudley (1801-1889), ALS, 8 p. to Jefferson Davis; London, February 12, 1864. Mann discusses the repudiation of the Mississippi bonds and its effect on European opinion and describes the attitudes of the Pope and the King of Italy toward the Confederacy.
- 1 35 Mason, James Murray (1798-1871), LS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; London, February 19, 1864. Mason reports on the failure of the Confederate representatives to secure ships in England or in France and gives his opinion as to the possibility of English recognition.
- 1 36 Longstreet, James (1821-1904) ALS, 2 p. to G. W. C. Lee; Greeneville, Tennessee, March 6, 1864. The letter concerns proposed troop movements.
- 1 37 Brown, Joseph Emerson (1821-1894), LS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; Milledgeville, Georgia, March 7, 1864. Brown complains about the drain on the state railroad by Confederate demands.
- 1 38 Longstreet, James (1821-1904), ALS, 2 p. to Samuel Cooper; Greeneville, Tennessee, March 24, 1864. Endorsed by Sam W. Melton and H. L. Clay. The letter concerns troop movements.
- 1 39 Lee, Robert Edward (1807-1870), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Hdqrs, April 5, 1864. Lee summarizes supposed Federal troop concentrations in anticipation of an attack on Richmond.
- 1 40 Hardee, William Joseph (1815-1873), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Hdqrs 2 miles west of Marietta, Georgia, June 22, 1864 (with typed transcription). Hardee discusses the great loss to the army in the death of General Leonidas Polk and mentions possible successors to him.
- 1 41 Cobb, Howell (1815-1868), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Macon, Georgia, June 24, 1864. Cobb discusses the necessity for an increased military guard at Andersonville prison.
- 1 42 Cobb, Howell (1815-1868), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Macon, Georgia, July 7, 1864. This letter amplifies and explains Cobb's meaning in terming the exemption certificates of Governor Joseph E. Brown false.
- 1 43 O'Sullivan, John Louis (1813-1895), ALS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; London, September 21, 1864. This letter introduces Mr. McHenry and requests consideration for his and O'Sullivan's pleas to become citizens of the Confederacy.
- 1 44 Stephens, Alexander Hamilton (1812-1883), ALS, 27 p. to Jefferson Davis; Richmond, Virginia, December 13, 1864. Stephens traces the history of an Ohio man, David F. Cable, who came south on a private peace mission only to be taken prisoner and sent to Andersonville where he died. The letter also reviews the difference of opinion between the President and the Vice-President on the United States election of 1864.

- 1 45 Pendleton, William Nelson (1809-1883), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Hd Qrs, Arty Corps, December 26, 1864. Pendleton makes the suggestion that General Robert E. Lee be made field Commander-in-chief of the Confederate forces.
- 1 46 Cobb, Howell (1815-1868), ALS, 4 p. to Jefferson Davis; Macon, Georgia, December 28, 1864. Cobb recommends that conscription be supplemented by allowing the formation of new regiments of volunteers.
- 1 47 Magrath, Andrew Gordon (1813-1893), ALS, 6 p. to Jefferson Davis; Charleston, South Carolina, January 22, 1865 (with typed transcription). The Governor of South Carolina emphasizes the urgency of the situation and urges more men for the defense of Charleston and the defeat of Sherman. He stresses the importance of Charleston both physically and to the morale of the nation.
- 1 48 Lee, Robert Edward (1807-1870), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Hdqrs, February 23, 1865. Lee reports his order to General G. T. Beauregard to join General Joseph E. Johnston and gives in general terms his plan to meet the threat of an attack by Sherman from the south.
- 1 49 Preston, John Smith (1809-1881), ALS, 3 p. to Jefferson Davis; Richmond, Virginia, March 3, 1865. Preston applies for the post as head of the newly created Bureau of Inspection.
- 1 50 Lee, Robert Edward (1807-1870), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Petersburg, Virginia, March 14, 1865. Lee quotes from his correspondence with General Joseph E. Johnston and defends Johnston's plan not to engage Sherman unless absolutely necessary.
- 1 51 Gilmer, John Adams (1805-1868), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Greensboro, North Carolina, March 31, 1865. Gilmer asks clemency in behalf of a deserter, J.G. Brown of Company C of the 45th North Carolina Infantry Regiment.
- 1 52 Hood, John Bell (1831-1879), ALS, 2 p. to Jefferson Davis; Richmond, Virginia, March 31, 1865 (with typed transcript). Small engraving of Hood mounted above letter. This letter is a statement of personal friendship and confidence before Hood leaves for Texas
- 1 53 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS, 2 p. to Richard H. Wilmer; Memphis, April 24, 1875. Davis thanks Bishop Wilmer for a copy of his sermon on Bishop Stephen Elliott.
- 1 70 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS, 2 p. to Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus (L.Q.C.) Lamar, May 3, 1881. Also includes a typed transcript.
This folder contains material that was originally part of Miscellaneous Collection A, Autograph letters. In 2017, the Autograph letters collection was discontinued and the contents were dispersed amongst other collections by subject or provenance to improve accessibility.
- 1 54 Clipping of letter from Jefferson Davis to Samuel M. Duncan, April 12, 1882 from the Cincinnati Commercial Guide. Letter discusses Davis' family genealogy.

- 1 55 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS, 1 p. to unknown, Beauvoir, Mississippi, March 13, 1883. Directs letter writer elsewhere to find out the name of the mayor of Fredericksburg during the war.
- 1 56 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS, 2 p. to J. D. S. Newell; Beauvoir, Mississippi, June 8, 1885 (with envelope attached). This letter concerns plantation business.
- 1 57 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS (photocopy), 4 p. to Thomas Fenwick Drayton; Beauvoir, Mississippi, January 20, 1886. Discusses the problems of black tenet farmers on his properties, family news, and fellow West Point graduates.
- 1 58 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ANS and photograph (photocopy), 1 p. to L. W. Matheson; Beauvoir, Mississippi, March 11, 1886. Brief note to confederate soldier thanking him for his service.
- 1 59 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ALS (photocopy), 1 p. to Rev. K. I. Stewart; Beauvoir, Mississippi, September 30, 1886. Davis remembers Stewart's kind sympathy while imprisoned.
- 1 60 Davis, Jefferson (1808-1889), ANS (photocopy), 1 p. to Rev. O.D. Bowen; Beauvoir Mississippi, April 23, 1889. Reschedules appointment to see Rev. Bowen and Rev. Gray.
- 1 61 Davis, Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), telegram, 1 p. to Col. William L. Mickle; New York, May 17, 190?. "Thanks for letter, gladly consent. She would feel honored living."
- 1 62 Davis, Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), ALS (photocopy), 3 p. to Col. G.N. Saussy; Humberstone Club (Port Colborne, Ontario), September 11, 1903. Thanks Saussy for his efforts with the Georgia Legislature in naming an annex of an educational facility for girls (location unknown) after her daughter and discusses recent losses on her property due to flooding and cyclone.
- 1 63 Davis, Mrs. Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), ALS, 4 p., to Mrs. Mary Stuart (Waller) Young; New York, May 13, 1903. Discusses the celebration of her recent birthday.
- 1 64 Davis, Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), ALS, 8 p., to Mrs. Mary Stuart (Waller) Young [Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada] August 15, 1903. This is a personal letter.
- 1 65 Davis, Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), ALS, 4 p. to [Walter Charlton?] New York, 1905. This letter is about statements made by General N. A. Miles concerning the treatment of Davis while a prisoner at Fortress Monroe.
- 1 66 Davis, Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), ALS, 2 p. and 6 p. statement to "My Dear Massa;" n.p., February 20, 1905 (typed transcript of account). Personal letter (possibly to Louis Gourdin Young?) enclosing account of Davis' prison life.
- 1 67 Davis, Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), ALS, 3 p. to [Walter] Charlton; n. p., May 18, 1905. Mrs. Davis thanks Charlton for his published answer to the statements of General Miles. Accompanying is a clipping of Charlton's article from the Savannah Press, May 8, 1905.

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| 1 | 68 | Davis, Varina (Howell) (1826-1906), ALS, 2 p. to Louis Gourdin Young, n. p., May, 1905. Mrs. Davis forwards an account of the Miles statements. |
| 1 | 69 | Envelope addressed to Charles O'Connor, Esqr., Fort Washington, New York with handwritten note "handwriting of Jeff Davis" |
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