

Collection #  
M 0080  
OM 0362

## JEFFERSON COLUMBUS DAVIS COLLECTION, 1847–1997

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by  
Alexandra S. Gressitt  
September 1996

Updated by  
Emily Castle, and Dorothy Nicholson  
November 2005

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department  
William Henry Smith Memorial Library  
Indiana Historical Society  
450 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 3 oversize folders, 5 photograph folders, 1 oversize photograph folder.

COLLECTION DATES: 1847-1997

PROVENANCE: Through gift or purchase from: Walter R. Benjamin Autographs, New York City, NY, September 1949; King Hostick, Texas, January 1957; Indiana Civil War Centennial Commission, 1965; Mrs. E. Vernon Hahn, Indianapolis, IN, July 1967; Joseph Rubinfine, Pleasantville, NJ, February 1971, and Gary Hendershott, Little Rock, Arkansas, March 1988; Gordon D. Whitney, Madison, IN, August 2002; Prof. Jerah Johnson, Univ. of New Orleans, LA, September 2003; Raynor's Historical Collectible Auctions, Burlington, NC, October 2011

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: F160 *Jefferson Davis in Blue, 1846-1866*, by James P. Jones (1954, Thesis, University of Florida, Gainesville) and R649 (artifact) Jefferson C. Davis sword.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1949.0907; 1957.0113; 1965.0046; 1967.0708; 1971.0213; 1988.0264; 1996.0703X; 2002.0689; 2003.0538; 2011.0272

NOTES: A portion of this collection was a gift of Marietta [Finley] Hahn (Mrs. E. Vernon) a great-niece of Jefferson C. Davis. Her mother, Ida [Davis] Finley, a niece of Jefferson C. Davis, was raised by Davis and his wife. This information was provided in 1967 by Frances Morrison Rabb (Mrs. Albert) of Indianapolis, whose father was a nephew of Mrs. Davis, his mother's maiden name being Athon.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jefferson Columbus Davis was born on a farm near Memphis in Clark County, Indiana, on 2 March 1828. He was the first of eight children born to William Davis, Jr. (1800-1879) and Mary Drummond (1801-1881). He grew up in the Charleston area of Clark County on his father's farm.

In 1846, Davis began his military career as an enlisted man in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indiana Regiment during the Mexican War. Following his participation in the battle of Buena Vista he was appointed Lieutenant of the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery. In 1858 he was posted to duty at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, and was serving there on 12 April 1861 when the Confederates started their 34-hour bombardment.

In May he was promoted to captain but left his regular army position to accept command of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment. On 17 August, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Indiana was sent to seek out the Confederates in the interior of Missouri. The following March, Davis contributed much toward a Union victory at the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, while in command of a division. As a result, he was promoted to Brigadier General of U.S. Volunteers in May 1862, the commission backdated to the previous December. Following the war he was appointed Colonel of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry and served in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, from 1866 to 1879.

Some of the highlights of his career include commanding a division at the Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Atlantic campaign and a corps on the March-to-the-Sea in the Carolina campaign; and participation in the Modoc War following the murder of General Edward Canby in 1873. His career was marred only by a quarrel in the lobby of the Galt House, Louisville, Kentucky, in September 1862, with General William Nelson. Davis in defending his honor shot and killed Nelson. Though an investigation was conducted, through the efforts of Indiana Governor O. P. Morton, Davis went unpunished and returned to active duty. In 1872 he was elected a Companion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Class of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion in the United States, and in 1878 he was selected by the President to serve as a member on the Board of Visitors for the annual examinations at the U. S. Naval Academy.

Around 1860 he married Marietta Woodson Athon of Indianapolis, a daughter of Dr. James S. Athon (1811-1875). They had no children, but adopted and raised a niece, Ida Davis. Davis was a career officer in the United States Army (1848-1879) and died while still on active duty, 30 November 1879, in Chicago, Illinois. He is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Sources:

Materials in Collection

Boatner, Mark Mayo. *The Civil War dictionary*. New York: D. McKay Co., c1959. General Collection: E468 .B7 1959

*Dictionary of American Biography*. Volume III. New York: Scribner's, c1964. Reference Room: E176 .D563

Dunn, Jacob Piatt. *Indiana and Indianans: a history of aboriginal and territorial Indiana and the century of statehood*. Volume IV. Chicago: American Historical Society, 1919. General Collection: F526.D85 I53 1919

*Historical times illustrated encyclopedia of the Civil War*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1991. General Collection: E468 .H57 1991

Sifakis, Stewart. *Who was who in the Civil War*. New York, N.Y.: Facts on File, c1988. General Collection: E467 .S56 1988

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, arranged chronologically, 1847–1880, is artificial, and has been created out of a donation from family and several acquisitions from manuscript dealers. The collection relates largely to Davis' military career and includes correspondence, military appointments, special and general orders, military reports, memoirs, memorials and photographs—two are personal, the remainders reflect his military career. Although there are a few items dating from early in his career, the bulk of the collection relates to his Civil War activities and post Civil War career and death.

Several items in the collection are of significance. These include an annotated copy (Folder 4) of a reprint of *General R. E. Lee's Report of the first day 2d Bull Run, August 29, 1862* (*Rebellion Record* Frank Moore—sometimes cited as "Putnam's Rebellion Record" Vol. 9, p. 277). Also in Folder 4 there is a letter, Thos. C. to John, dated 29 September 1862 on Galt House stationary relating details of General Nelson's death at the hands of Davis. Charles O'Neill of Greens Farms, Connecticut in September 1962 identified the author of this letter as Thomas C. James. The letter provides an interesting perspective of a fellow officer on a controversial event and on the players involved. There is a report written by W.P. Carlin in Folder 5 which protests Davis' official account of the battle at Stone River, 30 and 31 December 1862. In Folder 8 there is an autograph organization chart of the 14<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, Brevet Major General J.C. Davis, Commanding, Divisions 1, 2, 3, and Temporary and Brigades 1, 2, 3, and Temporary with list of officers. Autobiographical accounts of Davis' military career, as well as a printed copy of W.S. Rosecrans' letter to Horace Greeley concerning Rosecrans' Campaign and the Battle of Chickamauga are in Folder 9. Folder 11 contains a presentation copy, George H. Thomas to Jeff C. Davis, of *Legends of the Army of the Cumberland*, Washington, 1869. Following his death in 1879, Mrs. Davis received numerous letters and telegrams of condolence as well as resolutions and general orders in memory of General Davis. Examples of these tributes are found in Folders 15-16 and include resolutions from the Common Council of the City of Indianapolis, The Chicago Union Veteran Club, the Mexican Veteran Association of the State of Indiana, and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion in the United States.

Correspondents in this collection include: S. Benton; P.T. Broderick; George Pearson Buell; Edward Canby; William Passmore Carlin; Wm. C. Carroll; Octavus Cohen; Mary D. Crook (Mrs. George); John C. Fremont, Henry W. Halleck; Thomas Henley; T. A. Hendricks; Thomas C. James; A.C. McClurg; Theophilus Wylie Morrison; Lazarus Noble; Galusha A. Pennypacker; George O. Penton; John Pope; W.S. Rosecrans; P.H. Sheridan; W.T. Sherman; Lorenzo Thomas; and R.W. Thompson.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

### CONTAINER

Correspondence, 1847–48	Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, 1852	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, 1861	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, 1861	OM 0362, Folder 1
Correspondence, 1862	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, 1863	Box 1, Folder 5
Part of Northern Georgia, Map, 5 May 1864	Box 1, Folder 6
Correspondence, Aug.–Oct. 1864	Box 1, Folder 7
Correspondence and Military Reports, 1865	Box 1, Folder 8
Correspondence and Military Reports, 1865	OM 0362, Folder 2
Correspondence and Reports, 1866	Box 1, Folder 9
Commission of Davis as Brigadier General, 17 July 1866	OM 0362, Folder 3
Correspondence, 1867–68	Box 1, Folder 10
Legends of the Operations of the Army of the Cumberland, Washington, 1869	Box 1, Folder 11
Correspondence, 1872–73	Box 1, Folder 12
Correspondence, 1875–76	Box 1, Folder 13
Correspondence, 1878	Box 1, Folder 14
Correspondence, Military Reports, Resolutions, 1879	Box 1, Folder 15
Correspondence and Resolutions, 1880	Box 1, Folder 16
Correspondence and Memorial Address by A.C. McClurg, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 17

Correspondence from Davis, 1832, 1872	Box 1, Folder 18
Stay in Alaska, Clippings, ca. 1867–69	Box 1, Folder 19
Trip to Mexico, Clippings, 1878	Box 1, Folder 20
Research letters from Gordon D. Whitney, re: Davis, 1975–97	Box 1, Folder 21
Jefferson C. Davis portrait photograph, ca. 1865	Visual Collections: OVA Photographs, Folder 1
Davis Monument, Crown Hill Cemetery, Davis Homestead, Clark County, Indiana, and Clark County, Indiana, n.d.	Visual Collections: Photographs, Folder 1
W.T. Sherman, signed, and Absolom Baird, signed with autograph envelope, n.d.	Visual Collections: Photographs, Folder 2
Military Officers, Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie, South Carolina: Truman Seymour, G.W. Snyder, Jeff C. Davis, R.K. Meade, Jr., Theo Talbot, Abner Doubleday, Robert Anderson, B.W. Crawford, J.G. Foster, and Theo Talbot, Abner Doubleday, Robert Anderson, B.W. Crawford, J.G. Foster, circa 1858–61	Visual Collections: Photographs, Folder 3
General Smith's Headquarters, General Brook's Headquarters, Ayres Battery accompanying the Vt. Brigade, and foraging expedition going out from Camp Griffin, Virginia, n.d.	Visual Collections: Photographs, Folder 4
Photocopies of four images sent by the Indiana Historical Society to the Vermont Historical Society 1975—Camps of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> at Camp Griffin, Virginia, 4 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Vermont Regiments, n.d.	Visual Collections: Photographs, Folder 5

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:  
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M0080, OM0362).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.