

Foster, Jack, Letter

Jack Foster Letter

1883



Title Statement

Foster, Jack, Letter|Jack Foster Letter, 1883 Ms.2008.018

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Publication Statement

Publisher: Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries (0434)
560 Drillfield Drive
Newman Library, Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
Business Number: 540-231-6308
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URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



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Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2023-08-07 13:42:02 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2008.018

Unit Date

1883

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The collection includes a letter from Jack Foster, a formerly enslaved person and body servant in the 36th Virginia Infantry, to Confederate General John McCausland, reminiscing about the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain and his time in camp service during the American Civil War.

Creator

Foster, Jack

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Jack Foster Letter was purchased by Special Collections in 2008.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the Jack Foster Letter commenced and was completed in April 2008.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Jack Foster Letter, Ms2008-018, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

At the time of the American Civil War, Jack Foster was enslaved by the Tompkins family of Virginia. Though Christopher Q. Tompkins, Foster's enslaver, served with the 22nd Virginia Infantry during the war, Foster found himself in the 36th Virginia, body servant to a young soldier in the regiment. By 1883, Foster was living in Richmond, Virginia. He may have been the same man as a driver named John Foster enumerated in the 1880 census living in Richmond, Virginia, with wife Virginia and daughters Hattie, Lucy, Ada, and Ida. By 1900, Virginia Foster was a widow in Richmond, living with children Ada, Ida, and Chris.

Scope and Content

This collection contains an 1883 letter written by Jack Foster, a formerly enslaved person who served as a body servant in the 36th Virginia Infantry during the American Civil War. Foster writes to former Confederate General John McCausland, one-time commander of the 36th. After inquiring about the general's wellbeing, Foster mentions his family, then begins to reminisce about his time in the general's camp. Foster mentions being at Camp Narrows (Giles County, Virginia) and being present when McCausland took command following the death of General Jenkins at "Floyds Mountains" [i.e., the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain, May 9, 1864]. Foster then proceeds to recollect a discussion between Jenkins and McCausland regarding battle strategy and the Confederate units present. He also recalls baking bread in the camp.

Related Archival Materials

Letters from Foster to Christopher Quarles Tompkins may be found in the Tompkins Family Papers, Mss1 T5996 a, at the Virginia Historical Society.

Keywords

African Americans -- History

Civil War

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Existence and Location of Copies

This letter has been digitized and is available online.

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Description of Subordinate Components

Letter

Unit Date 1883

folder 1