

A GUIDE TO THE THOMAS B. DAVIS PAPERS, 1862-1864 MS.0026

Thomas B. Davis papers
1862-1864

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS.0026

Unit ID

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Unit Date

1862-1864

Language

English

Creator

Davis, Thomas B. (Thomas Bowker), 1842-1864

Extent

2 items

Physical Location

Manuscripts stacks

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

There are no restrictions

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Preferred Citation

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Biographical / Historical

Thomas Bowker Davis was born in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1843 (some records show 1842). He entered VMI in January 1862 and resigned in January 1864 to join the Confederate Army. He enlisted as a Private in Company D, 2nd Virginia Cavalry Regiment. He was wounded in action and captured on October 8, 1864 near Fisher's Hill, Virginia, and he died in prison on October 20, 1864.

Scope and Contents

The Thomas B. Davis papers contain two items. The first is a letter (dated March 22, 1863) from Davis to his sister, Camillus Christian. This letter was written while Davis was a cadet at VMI. In this letter he mentions activities at VMI, Civil War news ("a considerable cavalry fight on the Rappahannock"), the unusual late snows, and provides an early use of the term "rat" as a reference to new cadets ("The legislature is still cutting up about our maltreating the new cadets, or as we call them, Rats....says that we are a set of precocious youths who came here to avoid conscription"). The second item is a VMI cadet account book containing school expenses.

Keywords

Confederate States of America. Army—Virginia Cavalry Regiment, 2nd
Virginia Military Institute—Slang
Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1866
Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869
Account Books
Correspondence

Description of Subordinate Components

Letter to Camillus Christian

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/5819

Unit Date 1863 March 22

Scope and Contents

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter mentions activities at VMI, Civil War news, the unusual late snows, and provides an early use of the term "rat" as a reference to new cadets.

Keywords

Correspondence
Virginia Military Institute—Slang
Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Transcription

Virginia Mil Institute March 22nd, 63

My Dear Sister As it has been some time since I have had the pleasure of hearing from you, I will now drop you a few lines with the expectation of receiving a speedy reply. It has been snowing for the last two or three days, and there is now on the ground one of the deepest snows, that I ever saw at this season of the year. It seems, that as soon as one snow fairly melts, another comes and takes it[sic] place. Whe[sic] had quite an exciting time here the other night occasioned by the Tailor's shop burning up; it was supposed to be the work of an incendiary. I saw Jack Miller & Cally McCorcle with their wives[sic] at church last Sunday. Miller and McCorcle are engaged in the commission business at this place. I see from the papers that there has been a considerable cavalry fight on the Rappahannock. I don't know what Regiments were engaged in it, but I suppose the 2nd Virginia Cavalry was one of them; as there was a good many killed, I would like to

hear the particulars. The Legislature is still cutting up about our maltreating the new Cadets or as we call them Rats. I enclose you a part of the proceedings of the Legislature, thinking probably you have not seen it. You will see from it what a reputation we have. The Legislature says that we are a set (the most of us) of precocious youths who come here to avoid conniptions. Write soon. Give my love to Father & the Baby.
Your Brother Thos. B. Davis

P.S. I only write to get an answer from you, every thing is so dull that a person never has anything to write about. So you must excuse this short and badly written letter.