

A Guide to the Claudius Crozet Papers 1792-1832

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A Collection in Special Collections and Archives MS 0059
Virginia Military Institute Archives, Preston Library
2001

History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Claudius Crozet Papers 1792-1832

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Collection number

MS 0059

Language

French English

Physical Characteristics

The collection consists of approximately 30 items filed in one manuscript box.

Repository

Archives, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute

Administrative Information

Access

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

The bulk of the collection was donated by Knox Wilson in 1932. The two Thomas Jefferson letters were purchased from the Lee-Jackson Foundation in 1972.

Preferred Citation

Claudius Crozet Papers, MS 0059, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia.

Alternative Form

Portions of this collection have been digitized. The Thomas Jefferson letters and selected other documents are available on the VMI Archives website at <http://digitalcollections.vmi.edu/>.

Biographical/Historical Information

Claudius Crozet, engineer and educator, was born in Villefranche, France on December 31, 1789. Following his graduation from the Ecole Polytechnique, he entered the French Army as an artilleryman, and served until 1816. He was a prisoner of war in Russia from 1814-1816. In 1816 he married Agathe DeCamp, and the couple immigrated to the United States. Crozet accepted an appointment as a professor of engineering at the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he taught until 1823 and published *A Treatise of Descriptive Geometry for the Use of the Cadets of the United States Military Academy*.

Subsequent to his career at West Point, he served as the State Engineer of Virginia (1823-1832), State Engineer of Louisiana (1832-1834), President of Jefferson College, Louisiana (1834-1836), President of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors (1837-1845), Principal Engineer of Virginia (1837-1843), and as Principal of the Richmond Academy (1845-1849). In 1849 he was appointed Chief Engineer on a project to build a tunnel through the Blue Ridge, and from 1857-1859 he worked on constructing an aqueduct for Washington, DC. Crozet died in Richmond, Virginia on January 29, 1864.

Scope and Content Information

The bulk of the material is in French and chronicles Crozet's early years in France prior to his move to the United States in 1816. Included are letters and military orders; discourses on linguistics and grammar; papers pertaining to his marriage and family, and mementos relating to his daughter, Adele, who died in 1830.

In addition, the collection contains two letters from Thomas Jefferson to Crozet, both dated 1821. The letter of March 31 is Jefferson's reply to Crozet's inquiry about a teaching position at the University of Virginia; the letter of November 23 acknowledges the receipt of Crozet's book and includes comments on scientific advancements.

Contents List

Correspondence and Orders 1812-1821

Box-folder 1:1

Arrangement

Chronological

Letter 1812 July 31

Scope and Content

To Crozet from Evans

A statement of Crozet's promotion to Second Captain

Letter with enclosure 1814 October 24

Scope and Content

To DeCamp family from (signature illegible)

A letter enclosing the certificate of death for Pierre DeCamp, brother of Crozet's wife, Agathe.

Letter 1814 October 29

Scope and Content

To Crozet from Evans.

Honors Crozet for his service.

Order 1815 March 10

Scope and Content

To Crozet from Baron De [Maller?]

Crozet is asked to supervise construction of a bridge

Letter 1815 March 19

Scope and Content

To Crozet from Colonel Dessalles

Bridge equipment to be sent to Paris; Crozet to proceed to St. Denis where officer's quarters were established; Crozet to inform General Neigre about disposition of troops.

Letter 1815 March 28

Scope and Content

To Crozet from Evans

Regarding army rank

Letter 1815 June 13

Scope and Content

To Crozet from General B. Neigre

Crozet to proceed to Vincennes and report to Col. Renaud.

Letter 1821 March 31

Scope and Content

To Crozet from Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson responds to Crozet's offer to teach at the University of Virginia; comments on the progress of the University and on the uncertainty of funding.

Letter 1821 November 23

Scope and Content

To Crozet from Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson thanks Crozet for sending him a copy of his new geometry textbook and for his contributions to teaching; comments on the advancement of science.

Discourses

Miscellany of French discourse on verbs

Box-folder 1:2

Scope and Content

A composition book which also includes several pages of analytic geometry proofs.

Des Mots Invariables

Box-folder 1:3

Arrangement

topics include formation of adverbs, prepositions, letters, vowels, etc.

Grammaire Russe

Box-folder 1:4

Scope and Content

A manuscript of approximately 100 pages on the Russian language, written for French readers. This may have been written during the period 1814-1816, when Crozet was a prisoner of war in Russia.

Grammaire Allemande

Box-folder 1:5

Scope and Content

A German grammar, probably written while Crozet was in Holland.

Second part: Syntax

Box-folder 1:6

Scope and Content

Includes discussion of articles, etc; beginning of dative.

Des Consonnes

Box-folder 1:7

Scope and Content

Discussion of consonants, their pronunciation

Histoire de France

Box-folder 1:8

Scope and Content

Covers the period 420-843 AD

Continuation of Histoire de France

Box-folder 1:9

Scope and Content

Covers the period 876-996 AD

Accord du Participe

Box-folder 1:10

Scope and Content

Use of the participle

Untitled discourse

Box-folder 1:11

Scope and Content

Probably a fragment of one of the above linguistic discourse; perhaps a part of Des Consonnes.

Legal Documents

Box-folder 1:12

Arrangement

Chronological

Certificate of Life Insurance

Scope and Content

Indicates that M. DeCamp and her husband had life insurance for their daughter Agathe. Agathe's existence is verified each year from 1793 to 1808 by endorsements on the back of the document.

Testament or Codicil 1801

Scope and Content

A statement that appears to document an agreement between Pierrette Varion (Crozet's mother) and a landlady regarding payment for living quarters.

Division of inheritance of M. DeCamp 1814 December 5

Scope and Content

A document which indicates that Madame DeCamp's estate is to be divided by the daughters, the son having died in 1813

Marriage Contract 1816 June 5

Scope and Content

Between Claud Crozet and Agathe DeCamp. Gives the names, ages, and addresses of the parties involved and their parents. At the time of the marriage the bride's parents were dead; Crozet's father was living but his mother was dead.

Ephemera

Box-folder 1:13

Lithograph of Marshall Ney

Extent approx. 5" x 8"

Sermon en proverbes 1790

Extent

printed material, approx. 13" x 15"

Subject File: Adele

Letter 1829 July 11

Box-folder 1:14

Scope and Content

Crozet expresses his deep affection for his daughter

Keepsakes

Scope and Content

Includes a clipping from an 1830 newspaper on keepsakes of deceased loved ones, which suggests a lock of hair is the best remembrance. The file includes a lock of Adele's hair, four baby teeth, and

eyelashes.

Adele's script book

Box-folder 1:16

Scope and Content

Adele's script book, published by W. Darton in 1815, and a page of her practice with script.

Remembrances

Box-folder 1:17

Scope and Content

Memorial verses written by Crozet; receipt for painting an enclosure in graveyard, April 21, 1830

Miscellaneous

Box-folder 1:18

Scope and Content

Three calling cards bearing signature of Mrs. Crozet