

A Guide to the Fulkerson Family Papers, 1835-1925

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History

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Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

MS 0363

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

The papers consist of approximately 50 items and are 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 Fulkerson Family Papers were donated to the Virginia Military Institute Archives in 1996 by Jane Davis Copenhaver, William R. Davis, and James G. Davis.

Preferred Citation

Fulkerson Family Papers, MS 0363, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia.

Alternative Form

Selected items from this collection (Civil War documents) are available in full-text format on the VMI Archives website at: <http://www.vmi.edu/archives.aspx?id=5169>

Provenance

The papers were formerly in the possession of the donors' grandfather and father. James Livingston Davis, the grandfather, was a lawyer in Bristol, Virginia, who came into possession of the papers in January 1903, shortly after the death of Abram Fulkerson. Subsequently, James's son, Judge Robert Bolton Davis, held the papers until his death in 1979. His heirs donated the papers to VMI.

Biographical/Historical Information

Samuel Vance Fulkerson, a son of Col. Abram Fulkerson, Sr. and Margaret Vance, was born in Washington County, Virginia on October 21, 1822. As a young man he undertook the study of law, and in late 1846 he obtained his license and opened a practice in southwestern Virginia. Samuel served in the United States Army during the Mexican War (1847-1848), and subsequently returned to the practice of law in Estillville and Abingdon, Virginia. In 1857 he was elected judge of the thirteenth judicial district and held this position until the beginning of the Civil War. He was a member of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors from 1852-1854 and from 1857-1858. During the war, he served as Colonel of the 37th Virginia Infantry Regiment. Samuel was killed in the Battle of Gaines's Mill on June 26, 1862; survivors included siblings (he did not marry).

Abram Fulkerson, Jr., younger brother of Samuel V. Fulkerson, was born May 13, 1834 in Washington County, Virginia. He graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1857, and after a brief career as a teacher went on to study law. During the Civil War he served as Colonel of the 63rd Tennessee Infantry Regiment and was a prisoner of war (one of the "Immortal 600"). After the war he continued the practice of law and was active in politics, serving in the Virginia legislature and in the United States Congress. He married Selina Johnson, of Clarksville, Tennessee, in 1862; they had nine children, including Samuel Vance Fulkerson, VMI Class of 1884. Abram Fulkerson died at Bristol, Virginia on December 17, 1902.

Samuel Vance Fulkerson, the son of Abram Fulkerson, Jr. and Selina Johnson, was born at Abingdon, Virginia on October 22, 1863. He graduated from VMI in 1884 and subsequently studied law at the University of Virginia. He was a lawyer (partner in the firm of Fulkerson and Davis in Bristol, VA) and served two terms as City Attorney. During the Spanish-American War (1898- 1899) he was a member of the Fourth Tennessee Regiment, U.S. Volunteers. Samuel married Lura Bradley of Sherman, Texas in 1904; they had twin sons, born April 1906. He died July 2, 1926 at Virginia Beach, VA; he is buried at East Hill Cemetery, Bristol, VA.

Scope and Content Information

The papers consist of correspondence and other material relating to three members of the Fulkerson family: Samuel Vance Fulkerson (1822-1862); his brother, Abram Fulkerson, Jr. (1834-1902); and Abram's son, Samuel Vance Fulkerson (1863-1926).

Significant items are Civil War letters (March-May 1862) written by Samuel V. Fulkerson; Samuel's reports of the Battle of McDowell and the Battle of Winchester, May and June 1862; 3 wartime letters (1863; 1865) written by Samuel's brother Abram Fulkerson, two of which were written while he was a prisoner of war; and a letter of appreciation, September 1862, written by Gen. Stonewall Jackson following Samuel's death in battle. In addition to the battles mentioned above, topics include the Battles of Port Republic and Kernstown; death of Turner Ashby; refugee and civilian life; camp life; many references to Stonewall Jackson, including Samuel's assessment of his character and Abram's reflections following the General's death.

Also included are biographical and genealogical material; business and financial papers of Samuel V. Fulkerson (VMI Class of 1884), Abram's son; and miscellaneous family correspondence.

Contents List

Samuel V. Fulkerson (b. 1822 d.1862) Papers, 1853-1862

Correspondence 1853-1862

Box-folder 1-4 (Folder)

Letter to Abram Fulkerson (brother). 1853 February 14

Scope and Content

Written from Estillville, Scott County, Virginia.

Topics:

sister Kate on her way to Tazewell to teach school; reports on his trip to Iowa; talks of Abram's first days at the Virginia Military Institute and encourages him to study- "you now have a chance of getting a better education and of doing more for yourself than any of your brothers have ever had an opportunity of getting or doing for themselves, and if you do not turn you chance to good advantage it will be your own fault."

Letter to Abram Fulkerson (brother) 1854 January 7

Scope and Content

Written from Jonesville, Lee Co., Virginia.

Topics include Abram's progress at school (VMI); family news.

Letter to Abram Fulkerson (brother) 1854 July 26

Scope and Content

Written from Jonesville, Lee Co., VA.

Topics:

VMI examinations and grades; warns him about excessive number of demerits; cautions about leaving school- "I do not like to hear you expressing a desire to resign. You know that a great part of your expense is paid by the state, and that you have undertaken to teach two years in the state as a sort of recompense. You will not forget this obligation."; family news.

Letter to Abram Fulkerson (brother) 1854 August 27

Scope and Content

Written from Jonesville, Lee Co., VA.

Topics:

School finances; complains about his "unkind conduct."

Letter to Kate (brother) 1859 March 27

Scope and Content

Written from Jeffersonville.

Topics:

his recent trip; family news.

Letter to his mother. 1862 March 9

Scope and Content

Written from Winchester, VA.

Topics:

War news; concerned about family- "In a letter from Col. Gibson he asked what I wished you and Kate to do in case the enemy got into our county. If they should get in, and you are willing to do so, I think that you had better remain at home. Refugees have a hard time, and when people leave their homes everything is destroyed. Mr. Faulkner (Honl. Charles J.) told me that his wife had saved his property by staying at home. But if it should come to the worst, and you prefer it, leave and let the property go. I care little for the property except on yours and Kate's account. For myself I feel that I have no home so long as it is threatened by the enemy, and I would willingly give up all I have, and commence the world anew without a thing, rather than that the enemy should subjugate us."

Letter to Kate (sister). 1862 April 3

Scope and Content

Written from Camp near New Market, VA.

Topics:

Battle of Kernstown. "The [people along the valley] claim our fight as a victory, but it is not so. We attacked a greatly superior forces and were repulsed with heavy loss. If night had not set in we would all have been captured or killed. The enemy's loss was very heavy, for our men fought with desperate courage."

Report, Battle of McDowell. 1862 May 16

Scope and Content

Fulkerson's report after the Battle of McDowell, discussing the participation of his regiment (37th Virginia).

Report, Battle of Winchester. 1862 May 25

Scope and Content

Fulkerson's report after the Battle of Winchester, discussing the participation of his regiment (37th Virginia).

Letter to sister-in-law. 1862 June 14

Scope and Content

Typescript copy. Discusses the character of General Stonewall Jackson.

From General Stonewall Jackson to F. M. Fulkerson of Rogersville, TN. 1862 September 2

Scope and Content

Extends condolences after the death of Col. Fulkerson.

Documents 1853; 1857

Scope and Content

Appointment to the VMI Board of Visitors (1853) and to judgeship (1857).

Samuel Fulkerson Biographical Material

Extent Typescript

Abram Fulkerson (b. 1832 d. 1902) Papers, 1863-1865

Correspondence

Letter to his wife Selina. 1863 May 18

Scope and Content

Regarding the death of General Stonewall Jackson.

Letter to his wife Selina. 1865 May 7

Scope and Content

From Ft. Delaware Prison; regarding end of war and defeat of south.

Letter to his wife Selina. 1865 May 13

Scope and Content

From Prison at Ft. Delaware. "I cannot express my gratification at learning that you were all well, and living. The terrible events which have transpired in the Confederacy within the past two months, and my great anxiety about you, taken together, had rendered me very unhappy, indeed wretched."

Samuel V. Fulkerson (b. 1863 d. 1926) Papers, 1914-1925

Scope and Content

Largely misc. financial and business papers; genealogical information also included.

Fulkerson Family Letters, Miscellaneous, 1835-1848

Folder 12

Scope and Content

Three items. 1835 October 24, Margaret Fulkerson to Mrs. Jane Preston. 1847 July 24, J. S. Bradley to his cousin Harriet Fulkerson. 1848 Feb 27, Dolly Bradley to Harriet Fulkerson.