

Davidson, Charles Baker Letter

Charles Baker Davidson Letter

1861-1862



Title Statement

Davidson, Charles Baker LetterCharles Baker Davidson Letter, 1861-1862 Ms.1990.024

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2020-09-08 Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags

2021-06-23 LM Rozema added missing notes for an unprocessed collection (abstract, acquisition, processing info), added FA title and filing title, added FA date from EAD, and added component with instances previously attached to collection level.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1990.024

Unit Date

1861-1862

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Letter attributed to Charles Baker Davidson, written from Evansville [Indiana] to an unidentified brother (probably James Dorman Davidson of Lexington, Virginia) on December 24, 1861, and commenting upon communications via mail between the war's lines, his future prospects, and personal news. Appended is a brief note from J. W. Hughes of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, written on January 21, 1862, noting his receipt of the letter and promising to forward any future mail that he receives.

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 Charles Baker Davidson Letter was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1990.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the Charles Baker Davidson Letter commenced and was completed in September, 2022.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Charles Baker Davidson Letter, Ms1990-024, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical / Historical

Charles Baker Davidson, son of Andrew B. and Susan B. Dorman Davidson, was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia on January 19, 1816, and graduated from Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) in 1837. He married Lucy C. Johnson in Marion County, Indiana on August 16, 1840; the couple would have two children. The 1850 federal census lists the Davidsons as residents of Madison (Jefferson County), Indiana, with Charles Davidson employed as a methodist minister. In 1860, Davidson was employed as pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at New Albany, Indiana and served as a delegate from the Indiana Conference to the General Conference of the M. E. Church, held in Buffalo, New York. That same year, Davidson's alma mater awarded him the degree of doctor of divinity. In 1873, Davidson was named rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, Cincinnati. Charles Baker Davidson died on December 3, 1874, and was buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati (Hamilton County), Ohio.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of a single letter attributed to Charles Baker Davidson and written to "Dear Brother" (probably James Dorman Davidson of Lexington, Virginia). Writing from Evansville [Indiana] on December 24, 1861, Davidson comments on the difficulties of communicating via mail with Virginia during the war and shares news of his situation: "We have left this place [and] are staying at present at New Albany. ... The troubles of these times have jossled [sic] me out of my conf. [and] I am now without any regular employment." He briefly discusses his prospects, the wellbeing of other family members, and notes that he has enclosed "a letter from A. [likely brother Alexander H. Davidson] which will speak for itself."

Appended to Davidson's letter is a brief note from J. W. Hughes of Caseyville (Union County), Kentucky. Writing from Hopkinsville, Kentucky on January 2, 1862, Hughes states that Davidson's letter had been forwarded to him for transmission, that his community has weekly mail communication with Hopkinsville, and that he will forward any future correspondence that he receives via care of Ben Berry of Hopkinsville.

Related Materials

See also Ms1990-023, Alexander H. Davidson Letter.

Keywords

Civil War

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

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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General

This item had been purchased, accessioned, and originally cataloged as the "Civil War Letters." During processing in 2022, it was determined that the letter in this collection and that in Ms1990-023 were connected in some way. (The matching patterns of rust and dirt stains along the two letters' upper edges show that they had once been attached.) Attribution of this letter to Charles Baker Davidson rests partially on the attribution of Ms1990-023 to his brother, Alexander H. Davidson (see general note in finding aid for Ms1990-023). Furthermore, the writer of this letter mentions that he has enclosed "a letter from A. which will speak for itself." Various names mentioned in this letter also match with those of the Davidson family: "Henry" would be Henry G. Davidson, brother to Charles; "Hanah" would be Hannah McClanahan Greenlee Davidson, wife of James Dorman Davidson. The signature on the letter, which had originally been interpreted as the initials "B. K.," could be read as a hastily scribbled "Baker." An article in the July 2, 1860 edition of the Richmond *Daily Dispatch* confirms that Davidson was often familiarly identified by this middle name: "the degree of D. D., was conferred by the Trustees of the College [Washington College, now Washington and Lee University], on the Rev. Baker Davidson, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at New Albany, Indiana."

Description of Subordinate Components

Letters

Unit Date 1861-1862

folder 1