

Earhart, David, Collection

David Earhart Collection

1862-1863



Title Statement

Earhart, David, CollectionDavid Earhart Collection, 1862-1863 Ms.2002.017

Author: Catherine G. O'Brion, Archivist

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
specref@vt.edu
URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



2002 (CC0 1.0)

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-10-09 07:03:56 -0400.

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

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Revision Description

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 2020-10-07 | Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags |
| 2022-05-20 | Tyler Williams updated components and dates. LM Rozema updated notes and added series numbers to series titles. |
| 2022-10 | Updated description to person-first language when discussing enslaved people. adw |

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2002.017

Unit Date

1862-1863

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection consists of thirty letters written by David Earhart while serving in the Stonewall Jackson Brigade, 4th Virginia Infantry, Company L. Correspondents include his wife Mary Elizabeth Caddell Earhart, his parents, people he enslaved, and his sister Mag. Also included are a letter to Mary Earhart after David Earhart was killed at Chancellorsville, images (probably ambrotypes) of Mary and David Earhart, a later cartede visite of Mary Earhart, and additional family correspondence.

Creator

Earhart, David G., 1834-1863

Extent

0.3 Cubic Feet 2 boxes

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

The copyright status of this collection is unknown. Copyright restrictions may apply. Contact Special Collections and University Archives for assistance in determining the use of these materials.

Reproduction or digitization of materials for personal or research use can be requested using our reproduction/digitization form: <http://bit.ly/scuareproduction>. Reproduction or digitization of materials for publication or exhibit use can be requested using our publication/exhibition form: <http://bit.ly/scuapublication>. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives (specref@vt.edu or 540-231-6308) if you need assistance with forms or to submit a completed form.

Source of Acquisition

The David Earhart Collection was donated by Thomas M. Perdue, Carolyn P. Johnson, and Mrs. Richard M. (Virginia) Perkins in 2001.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the David Earhart Collection was completed by Catherine G. O'Brien in May 2002.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], David Earhart Collection, Ms2002-017, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

David G. Earhart was born in 1834 in Montgomery County, Virginia, the fourth child of George Earhart and Nancy Taylor. He married Mary Elizabeth Caddall (1833-1887) of Thornspring Farm in Pulaski County. They had a son, George Fitzhugh Earhart, who was born in 1862 and died when he was eight months old.

Earhart left his wife and infant son in April 1862 to join the Stonewall Jackson Brigade, 4th Virginia Infantry. During Earhart's service, the Stonewall Brigade was engaged in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign (May and June 1862), the Seven Days Campaign near Richmond (June 25 to July 1, 1862), the Battle of Cedar Mountain, near Culpeper (August 9, 1862), Second Bull Run (August 30, 1862), Harpers Ferry (September 15, 1862), Antietam (September 17, 1862), Fredericksburg (October 20, 1862), and Chancellorsville. Earhart was killed in the battle of Chancellorsville on May 3, 1863.

After the war, Mary Elizabeth Earhart returned to live with her parents on their farm in Pulaski County and lived there until her death in 1887.

Scope and Contents

The David Earhart Collection spans the years 1862 to ca. 1880 (bulk 1862-1864). It is organized into the following series: I. Outgoing Correspondence, II. Miscellaneous Correspondence, and III. Pictures.

Series I: Outgoing Correspondence comprises the letters Earhart wrote to his family while he was a soldier in the Stonewall Jackson Brigade. Letters in this series date from 9 April 1862 to 26 April 1863. The bulk of the letters (24) are letters from David Earhart to his wife Mary Elizabeth, also called Mollie. There are also three

letters to the people he enslaved living on his farm (Anchy, Wash, Jeff, Green, Nancy, and Susan), two to his parents, and one to his sister Mag. The letters contain descriptions of daily life for enlisted men in the 4th Brigade and accounts of military actions at Front Royal, Petersburg, Winchester, and Sharpsburg (Antietam). Earhart describes the effect of the Union occupation of the northern Shenandoah Valley on Unionist sympathies there, living on meager rations, and the death and destruction he has seen on the battlefield.

In addition to relating news of his experiences, Earhart writes of his concerns about his farm and gives specific instructions to his wife and people he enslaved working the farm. He tells his wife how much wool to use for blankets for the family they enslaved on the farm and warns the people they enslaved to continue working hard.

In letters to his father, David Earhart discusses his unsuccessful effort to buy a substitute to enable him to come home and manage the farm. Other subjects include: the death of a child, religious faith, disease, Greenwood Hospital in Albemarle County, Camp Steavenson, and Camp Winder in Caroline County.

Series II: Miscellaneous Correspondence dates from 22 February 1862 to 1 June 1863. It contains a letter from David Earhart's father-in-law John Caddall congratulating David Earhart on the birth of his son, George Fitzhugh Earhart, in 1862; a letter from J.D. Caddall (David Earhart's brother-in-law) to John Caddall informing him of David Earhart's death at the battle of Chancellorsville, and a letter from Lieutenant Hamilton D. Wade, Earhart's commanding officer, to Mary Elizabeth Caddall Earhart regarding Earhart's death and attempts to have his body sent home.

Series III: Pictures contains three pictures: images (probably ambrotypes) of David and Mary Elizabeth Caddell Earhart in matching wooden cases, ca. 1862, and a carte de visite, ca. 1880, of Mary Elizabeth Caddell Earhart.

Keywords

Civil War

Montgomery County (Va.)

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

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

Anchy (enslaved person)

Wash (enslaved person)

Jeff (enslaved person)

Green (enslaved person)

Nancy (enslaved person)

Susan (enslaved person)

Provenance

Soon after David Earhart's death, his wife Mary Elizabeth moved back to her parents home, Thornspring Farm, in Pulaski County and took the letters with her. They remained there for over a hundred years. Ownership of the Caddall home passed from Mary's father, John Caddall, to her brother James B. Caddall in 1880, and to his niece Mary Cecil Stephens in 1906. The farm, the home, and much of the contents, including 29 of the letters, passed in 1949 to Margaret Painter Perdue, daughter of Mary Cecil Stephens and Thomas Morrison Painter, and at her death in 1975 to her children, Carolyn Cecil Perdue Johnson and Thomas Perdue. This information was provided by Thomas M. Perdue in September 2001.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

The guide to the David Earhart Collection by Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, is licensed under a CC0 (<https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/>).

Description of Subordinate Components

Series I: Outgoing Correspondence

Unit Date 1962-1963

Scope and Contents note

Letters David Earhart wrote to his wife, parents, sister, and people he enslaved while serving in the Stonewall Jackson Brigade, 4th Virginia Infantry, Company L.

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically.

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-04-09

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1962-05-13

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-05-18

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-05-23

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-05-29

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-06-13

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

David Earhart to Mother and Father

Unit Date 1862-06-28

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-07-02

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-07-11

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

David Earhart to Archy, Wash, Jeff, Green, Nancy and Susan

Unit Date 1862-07-25

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-07-25

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-08-19

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-09-02

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-09-19-1862-09-24

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-10-01

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

David Earhart to sister Mag

Unit Date 1862-10-09

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-10-11

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 17 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-10-30

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 18 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-11-11

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 19 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1862-12-23

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 20 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-01-03

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 21 (folder)

David Earhart to Father (George Earhart)

Unit Date 1863-01

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 22 (folder)

David Earhart to Archy and Jeff

Unit Date 1863-01-09

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 23 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-01-22

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 24 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-03-19

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 25 (folder)

David Earhart to Arch, Jeff, Wash, and Green

Unit Date 1863-03-20

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 26 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-03

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 27 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-04-12

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 28 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-04-19

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 29 (folder)

David Earhart to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-04-26

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 30 (folder)

Series II: Miscellaneous Correspondence

Unit Date 1862-1863

Scope and Contents note

Letters David and Mary Elizabeth Caddall Earhart received from John Caddall, a letter from Lieutenant Hamilton Wade to Mary Elizabeth Caddall Earhart, and a letter from J.D. Caddall to John Caddall.

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically.

John Caddall to David Earhart

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 31 (folder)

J. D. Caddall to John Caddall

Unit Date 1863-05-04

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 32 (folder)

Lieutenant Hamilton D. Wade to Mary Earhart

Unit Date 1863-06-01

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 33 (folder)

Series III: Pictures

Unit Date 1862 - ca.1880

Scope and Contents note

Images (probably ambrotypes) of David and Mary Earhart, ca. 1862, in matching wooden cases, and a carte de visite of Mary Elizabeth Caddall Earhart, ca. 1880.

David Earhart Ambrotype

Unit Date ca. 1862

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Mary Earhart Ambrotype

Unit Date ca. 1862

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Mary Earhart Carte de Visite

Unit Date ca. 1880

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)