

# Heizer, James F. & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection

James Francis Heizer & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection  
1861-1868



## Title Statement

Heizer, James F. & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection James Francis Heizer & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection, 1861-1868 Ms.2016.013

**Author:** Kenna Crane, Staff, and Kira A. Dietz, Archivist

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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>



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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

Ms.2016.013

### Unit Date

1861-1868

### Language

English .

### Abstract

This collection consists of 100+ letters written between the years of 1863–1868, accompanied by a book entitled, *The Heizer Family: American Pioneers* by James Marion Heizer c.1861-1868. The majority of the letters are authored by James Francis (Frank) Heizer, a private in the Confederate army, whose letters are mostly addressed to his love interest and eventual fiancée, Pheobe Ann McCormick.

### Creator

Heizer, James Francis, 1841-1930

### Creator

Heizer, Phoebe Anne McCormick, 1845-1906

### Extent

0.3 Cubic Feet 1 box

## Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

# Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

## Use Restrictions

Permission to publish material from James Francis Heizer & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection must be obtained from Special Collections, Virginia Tech.

## Acquisition Information

The James Francis Heizer & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection was purchased by Special Collections in December 2015.

## Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the James Francis Heizer & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection was completed in June 2017.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: James Francis Heizer & Phoebe Anne McCormick Heizer Collection, Ms2016-013, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

# Biographical Note

James Francis "Frank" Heizer was born in 1841 in Churchville, Augusta County, Va. His parents were James and Sarah J. Heizer and he had at least three siblings. Prior to the Civil War, he lived on his family's farm and worked as laborer. On April 19, 1861, Frank enlisted as a private in Company I, 14th Regiment, Virginia Cavalry and McClanahan's Battery. Alongside details of Frank's military service, this collection details the relationship between Frank and his longtime friend and love interest, Pheobe Ann McCormick (1845-1906). Pheobe Ann(e) McCormick (also known as Annie) was born in Augusta County, Va., in 1845.

The pair's first engagement took place on April 18, 1864, when Frank revealed his feelings to Pheobe in a letter. A year later, the pair broke their engagement on August 10, 1865, based on Frank's "wishes to be released" so that he could freely pursue a career as a student and later, a traveling artist. The pair kept in touch through the years and eventually reconciled on January 21, 1867, re-establishing their engagement.

In a letter dated January 22, 1867, Pheobe accepted Frank's second proposal by stating: "I feel that I can't trust myself to write you a long letter now but will give you the reply that Gen'l Jackson sent to Santa Anna. 'If he wants me, let him come and take me.'" The pair married on February 21, 1867.

By 1870, Frank and Pheobe were living in Augusta County and they had the first of their children. Records suggest they had at least eight children: William A. (1870-1932); Ida B. (later Ott) (abt. 1874-?); Mary R. (later McComb) (1874-1949?); Eveline Frances (or Frances E. or F. Evelyn) (1878-1960); Willie (abt. 1877-?); James W. (married Lillian Holt) (1880-1945); Robert E. (1882-?); Francis P. (1887-?).

In 1880, the family was still in Augusta County and Frank's occupation on the census was listed as "farmer." By 1900, they had relocated to Buena Vista and Frank was working as a carpenter. Pheobe died in 1906, at the age of 61. James lived another 24 years and his daughter Frances continued to live with him. By 1920, Frank was working as a commissioner of revenue at the court house in Buena Vista. He died in 1930, at the age of 88. Both he and Phoebe are buried in Buena Vista, along with two of their children.

Sources:

[Find a Grave](#)

[Ancestry Library Edition](#)

# Scope and Content

This collection consists of 100+ letters written between the years of 1863-1868, and is accompanied by a book entitled, *The Heizer Family: American Pioneers* by James Harion Heizer c.1861-1868. The majority of the letters are authored by James Francis (Frank) Heizer (1841-1930), a private in the Confederate army, whose letters are mostly addressed to his love interest and eventual fiancée, Pheobe Ann McCormick (1845-1906). This collection also includes a few of Pheobe's letters to Frank, though many of her letters were burned after being answered, as per a request by Pheobe in an attempt to conceal their relationship status until after the

war. The letters include a variety of information about the war and Heizer's movements throughout the state, along with his wishes for leave and travel plans. Along with these wartime details, the letters include a good deal of conversation involving the blossoming friendship between Frank and Pheobe, and eventually their romantic relationship. This period includes letters in which their engagement is made and then broken, and is followed by letters that include much sarcasm and veiled insults towards one another. After about a year, the pair had reconnected and had re-established their engagement, eventually marrying and having 9 children together.

## Keywords

Augusta County (Va.)  
Buena Vista (Va.)  
Civil War  
Correspondence  
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South  
Staunton (Va.)  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865  
Heizer, James Francis, 1841-1930  
Heizer, Phoebe Anne McCormick, 1845-1906

## Alternate Form Available

This collection has been digitized. Digitized documents and transcripts are available online.

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged in chronological order , with undated materials are at the end.

## Description of Subordinate Components

### Letters and Heizer's Record of Service

**Unit Date** 1861-1865

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 1 (folder)

#### Scope and Contents

This folder includes letters that discuss information about Heizer's regiment movements, friend/family news, and conversations about Frank and Pheobe's personal correspondence. In a letter dated April 18, 1864, Frank confesses his romantic feelings to Pheobe and asks her to accept his marriage proposal. Also included in this folder is Heizer's written record of service during "The war between the states - 1861-1865".

### Letters

**Unit Date** January - December 1865

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 2 (folder)

#### Scope and Contents

This folder includes letters that discuss information about Heizer's regiment movements, friend/family news, questions about personal correspondence between Frank and Pheobe, and Frank's desired educational pursuits. In a letter dated Aug. 10, 1865, Frank and Pheobe broke off their engagement on the basis of Frank's wishes to be released from the relationship.

### Letters

**Unit Date** 1866

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 3 (folder)

### **Scope and Contents**

This folder contains letters that discuss Frank and Pheobe's personal correspondence, each person's daily activities, family and acquaintance news. Additionally included, is news of Frank's leaving school at Roanoke College to pursue work as a traveling artist.

### **Letters**

**Unit Date** 1867

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 4 (folder)

### **Scope and Contents**

This folder includes a letter from Pheobe's sister, Becca and letters that discuss Frank and Pheobe's personal correspondence, family and friend sickness updates and each individual's travels. In a letter dated January 21, 1867, Frank recants his earlier wishes to be released from the pair's engagement and asks Pheobe again to marry him. She replies in a later letter with the simple phrase: "I feel that I cant trust myself to write you a long letter now, but will give you the reply that Gen'l Jackson sent to Santa Anna. "If he wants me, let him come and take me." The pair married in February 1867.

### **Letters**

**Unit Date** January - July 1868

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 5 (folder)

### **Scope and Contents**

This folder contains letters that detail information on Frank's teaching and travels, news of Pheobe's sickness/family sickness, the health and well-being of the pair's new baby (birthdate unknown) and news of house repairs.

### **Letters**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 6 (folder)

### **Scope and Contents**

This folder includes letters to Frank from his sister Jennie, from Pheobe's sister Becca, both womens letters detail Pheobe's sickness and health news, along with the welfare of Frank and Pheobe's baby.

### **The Heizer Family: American Pioneers, by James Marion Heizer**

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 7 (folder)