

A Guide to the John E. Roller Papers, 1862-1910 MS.0171

John E. Roller papers
1862-1910

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS.0171

Unit ID

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Unit Date

1862-1910

Language

English .

Creator

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Creator

Royster, Lawrence, 1841-1914

Creator

Overton, Archibald W. (Archibald Waller), 1845-1920

Creator

Prince, Joseph B. (Joseph Brown), 1844-1903

Creator

Randolph, Norwood B. (Norwood Beverley), 1849-1874

Creator

Lee, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1807-1870

Creator

Flannagan, William W. (William Walker), 1843-1923

Creator

Walker, Samuel T., 1830-1863

Creator

Baldwin, Briscoe G. (Briscoe Gerard), 1828-1898

Extent

0.50 cubic feet approximately 40 items

Physical Location

Manuscripts stacks

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Preferred Citation

John E. Roller personal papers, 1862-1910. MS 0171. VMI Archives, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

John Edwin Roller was born in Rockingham County, Virginia on October 5, 1844 to Peter Samuel Roller and Frances Allebach. In the summer of 1861, although underage for service, he briefly served with Company I of the First Virginia Cavalry, Confederate States of America. On December 31, 1861, Roller entered VMI as a second classman and graduated in July 1863. He subsequently taught mathematics at VMI for a few months, and then was appointed as a 2nd Lieutenant, Company G, 2nd Confederate States Engineers in October 1863. He served as an engineer officer in the Army of Northern Virginia until the end of the Civil War, and was paroled at Appomattox, Virginia.

After the War, Roller he studied law at the University of Virginia and practiced law in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He also served in the Virginia State Legislature and was a Brigadier General in the state militia. Roller was widely known in the Harrisonburg community as "General Roller." He died in Harrisonburg on August 10, 1918.

Scope and Contents

The John E. Roller papers include: Civil War era letters from cadet friends concerning life at VMI Civil War dispatches and telegrams that date from Roller's service with the Confederate States of America engineers, including one document signed by General Robert E. Lee One scrapbook (circa 1910) that contains clippings about Civil War battles, veterans, unit reunions, monument dedications, and other related information Two photographs, one of Confederate soldier Lieutenant Colonel Samuel T. Walker (10th Virginia Infantry Regiment) and one of the Virginia Legislature Centennial Committee (1871) Holograph text of a cadet literary-debating society speech delivered by Cadet Norwood B. Randolph in 1870 Other items

Keywords

New Market Cadets

Virginia Military Institute—Civil War, 1861-1865

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet debating societies

Virginia Military Institute—Class of 1863

Confederate States of America. Army—Corps of Engineers
Virginia—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865
Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869
Correspondence
United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Dispatches
Scrapbooks
Telegrams
Speeches, Addresses, etc.
Photographs

Online Access

A portion of the John E. Roller personal papers are available online.

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1540

Unit Date 1862-1876

Language English.

Correspondence, outgoing

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1545

Unit Date 1862-1863

Language English.

Extent 3 items

Letter from John E. Roller to his parents

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1571

Unit Date 1862 January 24

Language English.

Creator Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Scope and Contents

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter regards cadet life and the upcoming inauguration of Jefferson Davis.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Davis, Jefferson, 1808-1889

Transcription

No. 28 V.M.I. Jan 24th 1862

Dear Parents, As I could not finish on a half sheet I concluded I would commence on this as I had several things to write about yet. You enquired in your last about bedding. I have obtained a mattress and have plenty of cover. I put two of my blankets in my trunk in the arsenal because I did not need them. Only one trunk is allowed to a room and I had to send mine to the arsenal. I wish you had the big one at home, for I have not a thing in it. We are not allowed to go to town only on Saturday, when I will see about those slippers, though I think I can do without them very well. I wish I had kept a pair of citizens pants here as I could save my cadet pants very much by wearing them. But it is not worth while to try to send them to me now.

I will try and make out with what I have now. Tell John Carpenter I still think of his promise. I wonder if George would not like to come here, there are several fellows here from the 1st regiment, who got off to come here and if George will come, I will try and get him an appointment. I should like it very much to have him here with me.

You want to know what arrangements they have that cadets are not allowed to come home in two years, I will try and send you a catalogue, so that you may see how it is. I have to study very hard but I like the place better every day. I made a "perfect" today. Remember me to Cousin A.B. and all my friends. I hope he will succeed well with his school. R.A. Crawford says I must remember him to A.B. and ask him if he received his "Phonography." I wish you'd send me the Register every week. I do not get to see a paper here hardly and the Register would seem so familiar to me. If you see something really good in the Dispatch, I wish you would send that sometimes too. I wish you would send some soap, whenever you send me that studying gown. A piece or two of that old "homemade" would save some little money for soap is high here. But I must close this letter, as the mail box will soon be shut. Excuse it if you please, for it is badly connected, but that could not be helped for I had to write it whenever I had the chance. Write soon to me and give me the news. Much love to all and a kiss for "brother."

Your affectionate son, J.E. Roller

I can't think of any name for brother yet. Tell me in your next what you think of calling him. I [seem] to have forgotten to mention to you that that it is rumored that the Cadets will be invited to Richmond the 22nd of Feb. to see Jeff Davis inaugurated, but it is not generally believed. I wish they would for it will be a grand sight and a great honor to witness the inauguration of what will be one of the greatest powers in the world. J.E. Roller

Letter from Peter S. Roller to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1572

Unit Date 1862 August 25

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Written from Staunton, Virginia. Letter regards Peter S. Roller's inability to supply General Francis H. Smith with hired or slave labor. Letter also includes a discussion of when John E. Roller should join the Army.

Keywords

Correspondence

Slavery

Smith, Francis H. (Francis Henney), 1812-1890

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

Staunton, Va. Staunton Aug. 25th 1862

My Dear Son Your letter to your ma was duly received. In reply to your inquiry about negroes for Genl. Smith, I know of none that can be hired or none that could be bought at this time. If I should hear of any I will write again. Had I known it a week earlier I think I could have gotten several men for him belonging to a party in Loudoun County.

I have not been to Harrisonburg since you wrote about the goods for Pantaloons, and as the season is so far advanced and as you have a prospect of getting other clothing for winter I have concluded not to buy it unless you think you shall need it.

The Mt. Crawford company has been exchanged and I understand that Mr. Blackford has succeeded in getting quite a number of them to join his company. If you have a desire to join his company as first Lieutenant perhaps it would be the best thing you could do. I think it will be best for you to consult Genl. Smith about it. He knows best what your chances would be for a situation after [you graduate]. If you have to enter the service [missing word] it would be better to go into it [now] and get hardened to the service before the cold weather sets in. However, if Genl. Smith thinks you had better stay until you graduate, I shall say to Mr. Blackford as soon as I see him, I will say to him if he will have you appointed that you shall have the privilege of accepting it. I will write again as soon as I see him and let you know what the prospects are of you getting an appointment. George Carpenter could not get out of the army he being a conscript and no provisions being made by Congress for young men wishing to go to the Military Institution. I am though with the Dam and have the Mill running again. Yours in haste, P.S. Roller

Letter from John E. Roller to VMI Authorities**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/1573**Unit Date** 1863 March 18**Language** English.**Creator** Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917**Scope and Contents**

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. In the letter, John E. Roller submits a report concerning the theft of Commandant records.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Transcription

V.M. Institute March 18th 1863

The following is a true statement of the facts with regard to my tour of O.D. on the 16th inst. and in connection with the removal of reports from the Commandant's office. I marched on O.D. at the usual time on Monday morning, and from that time until the recreation drum at 4 PM, I was either in Mr. Grigg's room, the Commandant's office, or in front of the Barracks (several hours spent either in section room, Mess Hall, or my own room), with the exceptions of the following times, viz.-- from 8-9 in Col. Williamson's section room, from 10-11 in Col. Preston's, from 12 to 1 in Col. Gilham's, and from 1-2 spent partly in Mess Hall and partly in room. I attended all C.P.s and looked up absentees and went in the Commandant's office frequently during the day

Sometime in the morning, I cannot state positively the precise time, though I think between 9 and 10 o'clock AM, upon entering the Commandant's office, I saw one of the fatigue sentinels standing at the desk, with a key in the keyhole. I did not see him have the desk open, nor did I see him have any reports. I remarked to him, "What are you doing? Do you not know that you are responsible for those reports." He replied that he was not stealing reports, but that he just wanted to see if his key would fit the lock. I said nothing more, but turned around immediately and went out.

From 4 o'clock until E.P., I was in my room and went from there to Supper in the Mess Hall, after which I returned to my room (where I remained) until the Study Drum was beaten, when I went down to Mr. Grigg's room and remained there until 11 o'clock. And after spending 10 or 15 minutes in quieting noise, receiving reports of inspectors, seeing the sentinels challenge properly, I went to my room and retired for the night.

I arose about 5 minutes to 7 o'clock and left my room about 15 minutes after and proceeded to Mr. Beckham's room to see some Engineering plates which he had, and from there went to Mess Hall to breakfast, being just in time to meet the corps as it was leaving the Hall. After B. I marched of O.D. and on enquiring of Mr. Shaw for the Guard Book was told that Major Ship had it and also that the reports had been removed, which was the first intimation I had rec'd of the fact. I know not even the slightest circumstance upon which to ground even a suspicion, except the above circumstance, but in justice I feel bound to say, that I could not give any positive evidence that the desk had been opened by him or whether his key fit the lock, and can conscientiously express the belief that he was not the one who removed the reports after E.P., or before E.P. & [?]. Hoping the above may [prove] &

J.E. Roller

I forgot to mention that about ten o'clock, seeing the Orderlies Delinquencies laying outside the desk, and knowing that I was responsible for them, I got Mr. Grigg's key and placed them in the desk. Mr. Shaw and two of sentinels were present at the time. I am unable to say how the books came there, and according to the best of my recollection. I saw them there after I saw Mr. Turner at the desk. I do not pretend to say that he placed them there, or that there were left there by the Com't. I merely make the statement and leave the inferences to be drawn.

Correspondence, incoming**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/1546**Unit Date** 1863-1864**Language** English.**Extent** 10 items

Letter from William W. Flannagan to John E. Roller**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/1574**Unit Date** 1863 November 8**Language** English.**Creator** Flannagan, William W. (William Walker), 1843-1923**Scope and Contents**

Written from Richmond, Virginia. Letter congratulates John E. Roller on his Army commission.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Prince, Joseph B. (Joseph Brown), 1844-1903

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

Richmond, Va. Nov. 8th/63

Dear Roller, Allow me to congratulate you upon your success in obtaining a commission. I want to follow your example. A commission is something I have been seeking, ever since we graduated, but all my efforts are unavailing. Will you inform me by what "slight of hand" you were so successful. Let me know all the minutiae, the letters you had & from whom & to whom they were addressed & the political or rather military friends you employed. Present my kindest regards to Prince, with many wishes for your success & the hope you may do honor to my class (which you can do)

I am Truly Yr. Friend & classmate W.W. Flannagan Box 610

Letter from Lawrence Royster to John E. Roller**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/1575**Unit Date** 1864 January 6**Language** English.**Creator** Royster, Lawrence, 1841-1914**Scope and Contents**

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter discusses examinations and mutual friends at VMI.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Pizzini, Andrew, Jr., 1846-1913

Chaffin, Richard B. (Richard Booker), 1844-1902

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

"V.M.I." Jan. 6th '64

Dear Roller, Your letter was a pleasant surprise. I did not expect it for some time to come, it was received however too late for me to reply by Thursday's mail, the mail is now always a day too late.

Well sir, I enter upon the deep and stormy waters of the Rubicon on tomorrow. I have labored up to this time as diligently as I could, but I never was now fearful of shipwreck before. I leave the result to fate, wherever she casts my lot, I will have to remain satisfied. I will write you the result however immediately it is known, if I should be thrown I will see you a short time after.

Many thanks to you for your kind invitation to visit you as well as the ladies, it would afford me great pleasure, and if possible, I will accept it. Pizzini and myself are just enjoying the contents of two boxes, which "that confounded packet" has at last brought to hand, we wish so much that you were here to share it with us. Prince was out frolicking last night until 12 o'clock, so that I could not attend to your messages. This morning I gave him the letter and told him that I intended writing to you and would send any message he might desire, but he said nothing at all. I have delivered your message to Blum and Perkinson. Beckham left last Saturday for Staunton and carried your trunk with him as you directed, I suppose you have received it by this. Smith F. has not written the letter to his brother yet, as soon as he does, I will forward to you if he does not do so himself. I have heard nothing of Crawford since you left. Dick Chaffin was severely wounded in the recent fight near Covington, 'tis thought his leg will have to be amputated. I wish I could have received your letter in time to reply by Thursday's mail as I know you will expect an answer then. I have attended to your little affairs, no trouble I can assure you. If you have other business in this section, let me hear and I will also attend to that.

Overton as well as all the occupants of No. 23 send their kindest regards. You will hear from me again by Monday or Tuesday next.

Your sincere friend Lawrence Royster

Letter from Lawrence Royster to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1576

Unit Date 1864 January 9

Language English.

Creator Royster, Lawrence, 1841-1914

Scope and Contents

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter regards results of examinations and that Lawrence Royster is considering leaving VMI.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Pizzini, Andrew, Jr., 1846-1913

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

V.M.I. Jan. 9th 1864

My dear Roller, The Rubicon I think is crossed though I did not pass as good an examination as I desired, and have had the misfortune to be thrown in the third section, which is terrible, as you know that section is almost always deficient, though I am through yet I am disheartened at the idea of being that low. I stand only 37, which you know is very low, twenty-six were found deficient. I should like very much to join you and go to Charleston, but you know getting through is better than any thing else. If I should not stand a very good chance as June approaches, I shall resign and join you wherever you at all hazards. The idea of going into the last section has made me feel almost as badly as a deficiency, I can assure you. I hope that you will continue to write me after you leave for the army. I will take great pleasure in replying to you whenever it is in my power. I shall always be happy to hear from you. Sally Crawford has arrived. Pizzini passed a very good examination, made 3 on subject, was not questioned. The thought of being in that deficient section and thrown in June, takes away all the pleasure of getting through. I must close. Let me hear from you.

Your sincere friend Lawrence Royster

Letter from Lawrence Royster to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1577

Unit Date 1864 February 22

Language English.

Creator Royster, Lawrence, 1841-1914

Scope and Contents

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter regards academic problems, uncertainty about staying at VMI, and mentions several recent graduates and cadets.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Smith, Francis H. (Francis Henney), 1812-1890

Prince, Joseph B. (Joseph Brown), 1844-1903

Grigg, Wesley P. (Wesley Peyton), 1846-1865

Steptoe, Charles Y. (Charles Yancey), 1838-1877

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

V.M.Institute Monday Feb. 22nd 1864

My dear Roller, This is the first holyday that has not found me on fatigue guard for some time past so I will take advantage of it by replying to your letter which was received on yesterday morning. The last account I had of you was that you were in Richmond, applying for an office in the Ordnance Department. I am glad to hear that you are busily engaged in your new department. Allow me to thank you most kindly for your wishes for my success here as well as the desire you expressed of having me

with you in your new home. Your letter inspired me with an ardent desire to join you. Since you left I have been several times on the eve of resigning and going to Charleston. I was fortunate enough in January to pass an examination, while many others were thrown and had to resign or be sent home. But at the same time I was so unfortunate as to be thrown into the third section. Since then I have labored with unceasing fidelity, but it seems the harder I work, the worse marks I make. I thought Analytical Geometry was hard enough, but Description certainly surpasses it by far, on that subject I am totally in the dark. My low mark and imperfect recitation have discouraged me so much that I have lost all taste for study. I wrote home for advise on resigning, but they wrote back earnestly entreating me to remain until July. However I have no idea that I will take that advice, I may leave at any time. I may leave am exceedingly anxious to be with you, and I now promise, if I leave at any time, will join you. It is a struggle between life and death with me now, if I leave, I give up all hope of ever obtaining an education, and seeing you do so well, inspires me with new desire of finishing my education at the "V.M.I." At the same time I am anxious to be with you. If I enter the service at all I shall not even think of applying for an office of any kind, I expect to be a private wherever I go. At the same time accept my most sincere thanks for your kindness in offering me the office of O.S. if you could get it and I would accept it. I would accept it with great pleasure. I sometimes give up all hope of passing, and then again think of remaining and taking my chances in June, so I do not know what to be at. I shall consult Spex in a day or two and will be guided very much by what he says; though very little confidence can be put in anything that he says on such a subject as that, I do not suppose he would tell me even what he thought, however I shall try him.

Prince left here about one month ago, I heard since then that he was a Sergeant in the Engineers Corps, you seem to be the only successful one in your class. Grigg I hear is walking around loose in Petersburg. I am sure no one at the "V.M.I." was glad at your leaving, indeed I heard some express their regret at it. Your old room is vacant. Sally Crawford and Lieut. Steptoe (new Sub) occupy No. 20 together, the former remains very quiet, is swelling on his bars and escorting the ladies home from church, etc. I do not know his qualifications as professor. The occupants of 23 all send their kindest regards. Pat Shafer has just come from the Hospital where he had been confined for several weeks with a severe attack of pneumonia, we thought at one time that he intended leaving us. Blum has been reinstated, but Spex refused to let him go on with the 2nd Class, so he has resigned, he says he will accept a Sergeancy if you will give it to him. Capt. Whitwell has recently returned from furlough accompanied by his lady, they are boarding at the Lexington Hotel. Miss Logan and Mr. Davidson were recently married also, the former I expect you know, a refugee from Winchester. What do you think of the recent law of Congress in regard to the Currency, taxes, etc? I am extremely glad that it will reduce the price of goods. The Steamer which has been as long on the way from Europe has recently arrived, but was destroyed for the goods falling into yankee hands, there were on board all the goods which we needed, the finest english gray cloth, etc. but unfortunately all were lost so I have given up on the idea of wearing a fine suit again.

Spex is still shipping indiscriminately, sometimes twelve or fifteen daily, rats are also reporting in numbers.

Patsy says he will accept an Orderly Sergeant's place if you will give it him, but he adds "if he can do no better." Ross desires his kindest regards to you. I must close, though it is the 22nd, my time is limited. If I do leave, which I confidently expect to do, will write you immediately. I am anxious to be with you. I hope you will write me as often as possible, your letters will always be agreeable.

I am, as ever, Your Sincere friend Lawrence Royster

Letter from Archibald W. Overton to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1578

Unit Date 1864 April 10

Language English.

Creator Overton, Archibald W. (Archibald Waller), 1845-1920

Scope and Contents

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter discusses rumors about deployment of cadets and cadets who have left VMI.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Prince, Joseph B. (Joseph Brown), 1844-1903

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Smith, Francis H. (Francis Henney), 1812-1890

Transcription

Va. Mil. Institute April 10th 1864

Dear Roller, Your last letter was received several days since and wishing to keep up a more regular correspondence between us, I answer your letter at the first opportunity and hope you will not delay writing a reply to this as long as you did my previous one, although your excuse for doing so was a good as well as a sufficient one. No news worthy of notice has taken place since last writing to you, but the old V.M.I still keeps up her notoriety for rumors and there are a thousand and one afloat about going on marches etc., which I would not like to enumerate, and were I so disposed, I think time and paper would fail me before I accomplished that end. But there is one which if true will wreck all the hopes I have been sustaining for the last six months and before which the pleasure of a long vacation will go "glimmering like all things that were": it is that no furloughs will be granted this summer and that our usual vacation of two months will either be spent in Gen. Lee's or Gen. Imboden's camp. This rumor is said to have good foundation, for those who were most interested were watching her with an eagle's eye and after having poised herself above the V.M.I. for some time during which many feathers were plucked from her wing, she was seen to direct her course toward Col. Preston's where she rested from his labors. There was another last week that we were going on a march and this one came from the direction of Gen. Smith's and with such force against barracks that some of her feathers are still visible on the stoops. Numerous others are afloat but as I said before to enumerate them would take more time than I have at my disposal.

With regard to your inquiry about Prince, I have not heard from him since he left nor have I seen any one who has; but I reckon he is having a good time wherever he is as he always takes things easy. Crawford resigned a few weeks since and has again entered the army as a private; Col. John Ross has been appointed to fill his vacancy. Old Max studies as hard as ever and talks as much about being found [deficient], but I believe they would put him through even if he were deficient on account of his good conduct. He received a letter from you a few days since and says he will answer it soon. I am very glad you like my uncle as I expected you would. I think you estimate his services too highly when you say that he deserves more of the credit for the defense of Charleston tho' he has done a great deal towards it. I hardly ever hear from him except through you and therefore your letters are doubly acceptable. Give my best to him when you next see him. With best wishes for your future prosperity I remain,

Yours truly, A.W. Overton

Letter from Lawrence Royster to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1579

Unit Date 1864 April 21

Language English.

Creator Royster, Lawrence, 1841-1914

Scope and Contents

Written from VMI, Lexington, Virginia. Letter regards academics, changes in faculty, and cadet life.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Shipp, Scott, 1839-1917

Transcription

"V.M.I." April 21st 1864

My Dear Roller, Your kind and interesting letter should have had a more speedy reply, but as the examination approaches, I am more and more busy every day. The Class has lost a great deal of time and consequently will not have so much to review in. We are now in the field surveying, have not yet finished Shades and Shadows. The weather has been during the past month colder than I have felt for eight years even in the depth of winter. The mountains in sight are still covered with snow, and today is the only mild and clear day that we have had for over one month, and notwithstanding this we have not had fire since Christmas, and during the deep snows we had suspension of all duties for several days at a time. The cold was so severe that it was impossible to study, a great many went to bed in order to keep warm. This together with Col. Massie's sickness has thrown the 3rd class back very much, so now the hard work comes.

Since you left quite a change has taken place in the Faculty. Lt. Col. Ross has been appointed assistant Prof. Math 4th Class in your place; Sal Crawford received a commission in his old regiment and resigned about a month ago. Dr. Ross is Asst. prof French as well as Asst. Surgeon.

Spex is still very fond of his "reviews and parades." Not long since Gen. Rosser's Cavalry Brigade came

through here and encamped about ten or twelve miles beyond Lexington, by Spex's invitation he reviewed the Corps and inspected the barracks. Several days afterwards, he presented the Corps with a flag captured in battle from 164th New York Regiment as a trophy; the presentation speech was very fine indeed, it took place under guard tree before a very large crowd. Scott Shipp received it and replied; his was also very good but he was very much excited though, however it was his first speech in public. After the ceremony was over the Cavalry made a charge in field in front of barracks to give us an idea of it. But the idea, Roller, of the Corps of Cadets receiving a trophy taken by our troops in the field from the yankees; it looked like saying, "Well, you are too weak and afraid to do any thing of this yourselves, so we will make you a present of one," I feel that it is a disgrace to the Corps. The speaker alluded in such a touching manner to the precious blood which was spilt in taking it, and of the Col. falling in the charge. That night he invited the officers of the Institute and the 1st Class to attend a party at the house where he was staying, but as all could not attend, Spex allowed only the four Captains and Adj. to go. Several days afterwards he invited Spex to review his brigade, and the officers and 1st Class again to dine with him, which as many as could conveniently do so, very readily accepted of.

I should like very much to enjoy those nice vegetables and fish you were speaking of, it certainly would be a great treat, especially when everything is so high and scarce, we are nearer starving here than ever before, a piece of beef frequently comes on the table for nine men which candidly speaking I could easily cover with one hand. If the school cannot be maintained on a better scale, I think they had as well close it. It is rumored and I partly believe it that instead of giving the Corps furlough next summer, we are to be sent in a body to Gen. Lee's army. We have not had a march since December last, which I think I gave you an account of. Err this reaches you I imagine you will have received some news from the two grand armies on the Potomac, we are of opinion that it will be the greatest of the war up to this time. May Heaven give us the victory! Many thanks to you for your kind offer, it will be very acceptable. I will inform you immediately of the result of the examination after I know my fate, should I be unsuccessful will go directly from here to Charleston, so in your next letter write me what to equip myself with before leaving and what articles I can procure in Charleston as I do not want to carry more than is necessary.

There are now about fifty odd in the third class and I do not think Massie will pass more than twenty. I know he intends making a most "awful rake." I must not neglect to tell you of the marriage of Miss Sanders (I suppose you remember her) to Capt. Contri an Italian on Gen. Morgan's staff. They say he is a very accomplished and gallant man, fought fourteen pitched battles in Europe, was in Crimean war etc., that is all I know however. They were here today. The Commandant's Office is now a reception room for all visitors, they are not allowed to come into barracks during study hours under any pretence whatever.

How are you progressing with the ladies now or do you visit them at all? As for myself, I have long since abandoned all thoughts of them, scarcely even look at them, you know how fatal they are. I have many things to write, but it is almost 11 o'clock PM and this is the last chance I will have to write for sometime to come. Finished my day's survey in[--] rather earlier today or would not have had this [missing word]. Write me as often as you can.

Your sincere friend, Lawrence Royster

Sam Hopkins who was here last year, after being confined in some Yankee prison for several months returned home and died two days after.

Letter from Joseph B. Prince to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1580

Unit Date 1864 May 3

Language English.

Creator Prince, Joseph B. (Joseph Brown), 1844-1903

Scope and Contents

Written from Camp Stephens, Richmond, Virginia. Joseph B. Prince recently resigned from a teaching job at VMI to join the Army, but is disappointed in his Army position.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

Camp Stevens- Richmond May 3, 1864

Dear Roller, Your esteemed favor did not reach me as soon as it would, had I not been absent on duty

when it reached Camp. I hope you will pardon the delay on that account.

I must confess, I have been sadly disappointed in my calculations. When I resigned at the Institute, I was confident of a position in the Engineers. Alas! For the uncertainty of human expectations! I had thought very seriously of joining the Infantry, as a private, & but for the remonstrances of my parents, think I would have. There is little, well, I see none, chance of promotion in this service unless specially favored, which I have no right to expect. But I am not murmuring. I will be contented, if I only get through this struggle safe. It would afford you little interest, & cause me more mortification, to detail to you the many ways in which I have been deceived. If I could only forget the many apparently bright prospects which have been offered me, I should feel at least consoled, but memory still sings out "he, who tries to better a good condition, often renders it worse."

Your very kind offers in my behalf, I can assure you, are highly appreciated, & nothing would give me more pleasure than to be with you, I hope it may be so.

We are anxiously awaiting the result of the impending issue in Northern Virginia. I may say, in truth, never was so much anxiety manifested in any one battle. That we shall be victorious is my confident belief. We had some little excitement in this immediate locality last week, occasioned by the appearance of the enemy in some force at our positions [?] on the Pamunkey. It turned out, however, to be a slight demonstration. Nothing else of special interest. Beckham & Boyd send their regards. Crawford has left the Institute, he failed to get a detail. Write soon & let me know all.

Your sincere friend, J.B. Prince

Letter from Peter S. Roller to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1581

Unit Date 1864 May 17

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Written from Grassy Dale, Virginia. Letter reports news of fighting in the Shenandoah Valley between forces of General Breckinridge and General Sigel. The letter also mentions the Battle of New Market.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

New Market, Battle of, New Market, Va., 1864

New Market Cadets

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

Grassy Dale Va., May 17th 1864

My Dear Son, It has now been two weeks since we heard from you, but we suppose you have written but owing to the Raiders destroying the Rail Roads around Richmond we have no mail communication with the South. Since I wrote to you from Charlottesville we have had an exciting time in the Valley. I heard at Charlottesville that the Yankee Genl. Sigel was advancing up the Valley. When I returned to Staunton I found Genl. John C. Breckinridge at that point with two Brigade of Infantry and 12 pieces of Artillery. They left Staunton on Friday last and encamped at Mt. Crawford that night and left early the next morning and encamped that night at Lacy Springs and commenced their march next (Sunday) morning at one o'clock and halted a little below Tenth Legion and remained in that position until Gen. Breckinridge had news from the front.

To get you to understand the situation of things I will go back several days and give you a History of Gen. Imboden's doings. Gen. Imboden found out that the yankees were advancing in three columns, one up the Page, one up the Hardy & Pendleton Valley, and the main force up our valley. Gen. Imboden by forced marches fell upon the column (all Cavalry) near Moorefield very unexpectedly, routed them completely, and pursued them within 6 or 7 miles of Romney, in this time capturing all their train which he had to destroy, having no horses to bring out the wagon.

He then returned to the Valley traveling day & night, and only stopping long enough to graze his horses, and returned to the Valley in time to attack the column coming up the Page valley. Before Sigel's forces got up to New Market he attacked the column and utterly routed it, scattering it in the mountains and captured on Friday about 100 of them with about 200 fine cavalry horses. He attacked them on Friday night and on Saturday picked up the prisoners and would have gotten more but Sigel advanced and our forces had to fall back on this side of New Market, our men making a very stubborn resistance but was forced to fall back about 8 o'clock on Saturday night to a point 3 miles this side [of] New Market, the yankees having possession of the town during the night. This now gives you to understand the position of things and I will now commence where I left off with Gen. Breckinridge's

troops.

Gen. Breckinridge advanced with his troops a little after day light and not wishing to be tedious he maneuvered his forces from one point to another until about 12 O'clock, when he attacked the enemy with his artillery. Having gotten the [heights] back of the town and after an artillery duel of perhaps one hour, the Cadets from Lexington with the 62 Regiment (Col. Smith's Regiment) charged one of the yank's Batteries. They captured it, but lost heavily, the cadets lost 5 killed and 39 wounded, some of them seriously, your friend Cary Watson Adjutant of the Battalion with Col. Shipp leading the Charge, they both came out safe except Col. Shipp had a slight scratch; Royster also came out unhurt. I give you a list of the killed. Cabell, W.H. McDowell, Crockett, C., Stanard, Jones H. It is said that Col. Gilham and Capt. Sims [Semmes] stayed in the rear where there was no danger.

It was at this time that Gen. Breckinridge commenced pressing the enemy at every point and although they had two to our one we drove them from the field capturing five pieces of their Artillery, 111 prisoners and leaving nearly all of their killed and wounded upon the field and in order to make good their retreat burned the bridge over the river. An Officer reports to me today that Sigel is retreating to Winchester in great haste, reporting that we have 30,000 men while we had not more than 4,000 in the fight, our reserve having never been brought into action. Gen. Breckinridge's forces are [returning?] up the Valley, whether they go to reinforce Gen. Lee or go to some other point. I went down the Valley with General Breckinridge having gone down with him at his request and was with him most of the time during the fight. I came home last night having left New Market about 1 o'clock yesterday. We have had and will continue to have heavy fighting in Virginia, but of the final result no one doubts but we will be successful. We have driven them and at least [repulsed?] them at every point. We are all well. Write soon and often.

Your father

Josie sends her love, so do all the rest. I hope when I write again to be able to give you the glorious news that we have driven the yanks from Virginia soil.

Letter from Lawrence Royster to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1582

Unit Date 1864 July 28

Language English.

Creator Royster, Lawrence, 1841-1914

Scope and Contents

Written from Richmond, Virginia. Letter regards Hunter's Raid and family news.

Keywords

Hunter's Raid—Virginia—Lexington

Correspondence

Overton, Archibald W. (Archibald Waller), 1845-1920

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

Richmond July 28 1864

My Dear Roller, Your letter sent by Overton was duly received and contents noted. I have inquired of the Express Company in regard to your trunk, they tell me that it will be safe to send the blankets in it. In regard to your jacket and vest, you merely told me to order them without saying how I was to send them or whether I was to pay for them. I have seen Doherty in regard to them and he can make them out of excellent cloth for \$250 so they will be ready in a few days. I will wait until I hear from you before I ship any of the things, if you say so I can put both blankets & clothes in the trunk, let me hear immediately and I will attend to all with great pleasure. I should like very much to go over to see you, but cannot possibly do so, though I do not intend to remain here idle longer than the first of August. I am ashamed of it, will return to Lexington and remain there in camp first.

I have not seen Overton since the school closed. About two dozen of the boys are staying here. Speaking of the appointments, a good many of them surprised me, though I am very well satisfied with what I got, I don't care much however, you know kissing goes by favor. There are eight privates now in the first class, but it is my private belief that the Institute will not be in operation again until the war is over, although they have made arrangements to carry it on, books cloth and provisions all wanting.

I am glad your Father did not suffer by the yankees. Mother lost absolutely every thing she had, and is now a refugee here, sick too, they not only stole all provision, and stock she had, but went about the house breaking up what they could find and then had the assurance to ask my sister if she could not furnish them with a snack of ham. Roller, if I am ever spared to get into yankee land, I will respect nothing but a woman's person, I'll break, pillage and plunder. My Mother, from living in luxury at home,

is now forced to the necessity of borrowing a wagon to get home in, and I don't know what she is going to live on after she gets there.

Speaking of old "23," she did [ro__] this time, if the appointments are permanent (which I doubt) but I am afraid Pat will not stand first, I think Davis will get him. Pat has been thinking too much of Miss Mollie, she will ruin him I am afraid, or rather has done so. I will write you a letter in a few days.

Sincerely, Your friend Lawrence Royster Address Care, Purcell, Ladd & Co.

Letter from Lawrence Royster to John E. Roller

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1583

Unit Date 1864 December 7

Language English.

Creator Royster, Lawrence, 1841-1914

Scope and Contents

Written from Richmond, Virginia. Letter regards travel to VMI's temporary headquarters at the Alms House in Richmond.

Keywords

Correspondence

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet life—1860-1869

Virginia Military Institute—Civil War, 1861-1865

Roller, John E. (John Edwin), 1844-1917

Transcription

Corps Cadets Camp on Intermediate Line Near Richmond Dec. 7th 1864

My Dear Roller, I am really ashamed at the idea of neglecting your letter for so long a time, but out here even I scarcely have time to write a letter, so busily are we occupied drilling and having dress parades. Soon after you were at Camp Lee, we moved to this place and it seems impossible, although we have procured the Almshouse for us to get away, we are anxiously expecting a furlough of two weeks to prepare etc. When we will be relieved from duty here I cannot say, we are daily expecting a fight on this line, certainly before the end of this week. They are making such a stir about our getting the building that I do not expect we will be able to study in peace after we do get there. The provisions and "we officers" have all been moved down ready for work but the much persecuted Corps has not been released from the Confederate Authorities yet. Not long since a foreign battalion was raised under Col. Tucker to be stationed in Columbia & Aiken SC as a garrison. A good many of our boys have accepted positions as Captains and Lieutenants, among them, several of the old class, also Duncan, Brockenbrough, James F., Dinwiddie, Barton, Penn and Tunstall. I came near going myself but concluded not to do so, and now I congratulate myself upon not going. I believe we intend to occupy the Alms House until the spring and then move to Lexington again. I am sure I cannot study much in Richmond, and now I have my fears concerning Calculus etc. as it would be more disgraceful than ever should I fail in that, oh! I do want that diploma so much. I have studied hard for two long years and now do not want to fail. We are to room by company, consequently our old room will greatly, to the regret of all parties, be broken up, Pizzini, Davis and myself being in different companies. With that exception I have as pleasant a room as I could desire. Stuart, Echols, Etheredge, Royster, Ridley R., James J., Jarratt & Peirce, the officers and non-commissioned of "B" Co. The house is an elegant building, much more than old barracks. We will also have to study on Saturday which I do not like much. That fine breakfast on Saturday will be knocked in the head then.

Ross & Echols desire to be remembered to you.

Correspondence, post-Civil War

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1547

Language English.

Extent 10 items

Scope and Contents

Correspondents include Richard L. Gray, Nannie Lewis, G. W. Berlin, and C. L. Hammond.

Official documents

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1541

Unit Date 1863-1864

Language English.

Extent 21 items

Scope and Contents

Includes dispatches, notes, and telegrams.

Letter from A. L. Rives

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1548

Unit Date 1863 October 14

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Letter regards receipt of recommendations.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Legal document

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1549

Unit Date 1864 March 12

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Certifies Thomas Hubbard, born in Caswell County, North Carolina.

Keywords

Legal instruments

Dispatch from Robert F. Hoke to Braxton Bragg

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1550

Unit Date 1864 May 13

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch reports on enemy strength.

Keywords

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Correspondence

Dispatches

Document

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1551

Unit Date 1864 May 19

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Document requests for officer to be assigned at Weldon.

Keywords

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Dispatch from C. S. Flagship to J. M. Maury

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1552

Unit Date 1864 May 23

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Written near Drewry's Bluff, Virginia. Regards enemy naval forces.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Dispatches

Letter from Army of Northern Virginia to J. W. Williams

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1553

Unit Date 1864 August 13

Language English.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Arrangement

Letter regards a meeting.

Dispatch from Robert E. Lee to General Ewell

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1554

Unit Date 1864 August 14

Language English.

Creator Lee, Robert E. (Robert Edward), 1807-1870

Scope and Contents

"I have telegraphed Hampton to return to Richmond. Send for him. Young's brigade under Col. Wright cannot be far in advance of Richmond. Get your Cavalry together, aid it with the Infantry, and drive back enemy."

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Dispatches

Dispatch from Briscoe G. Baldwin to J. Willcox Brown

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1555

Unit Date 1864 August 16

Language English.

Creator Baldwin, Briscoe G. (Briscoe Gerard), 1828-1898

Keywords

Correspondence

Dispatches

Dispatch from Walter H. Taylor to Robert E. Lee

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1556

Unit Date 1864 August 17

Language English.

Creator Taylor, Walter H. (Walter Herron), 1838-1916

Scope and Contents

Scouting report.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Dispatches

Dispatch

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1557

Unit Date 1864 August 19

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch regards transportation for officer.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Dispatches

Dispatch from G. T. Beauregard to Captain Chisholm

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1558

Unit Date 1864 August 21

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch regards a matter pending before the War Department.

Keywords

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Correspondence

Dispatches

Dispatch from Briscoe G. Baldwin to J. Gorgas

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1559

Unit Date 1864 August 21

Language English.

Creator Baldwin, Briscoe G. (Briscoe Gerard), 1828-1898

Scope and Contents

Dispatch regards a personnel request.

Keywords

Correspondence

Dispatches

Dispatch from Briscoe G. Baldwin

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1560

Unit Date 1864 August 22

Language English.

Creator Baldwin, Briscoe G. (Briscoe Gerard), 1828-1898

Scope and Contents

Dispatch regards a request for ammunition.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Dispatches

Dispatch from Briscoe G. Baldwin to W. Brown

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1561

Unit Date 1864 August 22

Language English.

Creator Baldwin, Briscoe G. (Briscoe Gerard), 1828-1898

Scope and Contents

Dispatch directs W. Brown to send forge to Dunlap's Crossing, Georgia.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Dispatches

Dispatch from Wade Hampton

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1562

Unit Date 1864 August 23

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch requests map of Dinwiddie, Virginia.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Dispatches

Dispatch from Medical Department

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1563

Unit Date 1864 August 23

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch requests "all amputating sets on hand."

Keywords

Correspondence

Dispatches

Dispatch from W. H. Taylor to George E. Pickett

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1564

Unit Date 1864 August 24

Language English.

Scope and Contents

"If you should receive an unintelligible signal dispatch from Gen. Beauregard tonight or in morning take no notice of it- it is sent for a purpose."

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate
Dispatches

Dispatch from W. H. Taylor to Court Martial

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1565

Unit Date 1864 September 2

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch explains that Mayo is too sick to attend court.

Keywords

Correspondence

Dispatches

Dispatch from Headquarters, Engineers to W. P. Smith

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1566

Unit Date 1864 September 23

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch conveys instructions and reprimand.

Keywords

Correspondence

Confederate States of America. Army—Corps of Engineers

Dispatches

Dispatch to Braxton Bragg

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1567

Unit Date 1864

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch regards troop movements.

Keywords

Correspondence

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives—Confederate

Dispatches

Dispatch

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1568

Unit Date 1864

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Dispatch requests five dollar notes.

Keywords

Correspondence

Dispatches

Scrapbook

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1542

Unit Date circa 1910

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Scrapbook contains clippings about Civil War battles, veterans, unit reunions, monument dedications, and related information.

Keywords

Scrapbooks

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

Photographs

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1543

Language English.

Extent 2 items

Photograph, Samuel T. Walker

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/1569

Unit Date circa 1862

Language English.

Scope and Contents

Samuel T. Walker (1830-1863) served with the 10th Virginia Infantry Regiment and was killed in action at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia in May 1863.

Keywords

Photographs

Walker, Samuel T., 1830-1863

Photograph, Virginia Legislature**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/1570**Unit Date** 1871**Language** English.**Keywords**

Photographs

Speech and other items**Unit ID** /repositories/3/archival_objects/1544**Language** English.**Creator** Randolph, Norwood B. (Norwood Beverley), 1849-1874**Scope and Contents**

Includes holograph text of a cadet literary-debating society speech delivered by Norwood B. Randolph in 1870, and other items.

Keywords

Virginia Military Institute—Cadet debating societies

Virginia Military Institute—Speeches, addresses, etc.