

# A Guide to the Claudius Crozet Papers 1792-1832

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A Collection in Special Collections and Archives MS 0059  
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2001

## History

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## Title Statement

A Guide to the Claudius Crozet Papers 1792-1832

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## Profile Description

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## Revision Description

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## Descriptive Summary

**Collection number**

MS 0059

**Language**

French English

## Physical Characteristics

The collection consists of approximately 30 items 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 bulk of the collection was donated by Knox Wilson in 1932. The two Thomas Jefferson letters were purchased from the Lee-Jackson Foundation in 1972.

## Preferred Citation

Claudius Crozet Papers, MS 0059, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia.

# Alternative Form

Portions of this collection have been digitized. The Thomas Jefferson letters and selected other documents are available on the VMI Archives website at <http://digitalcollections.vmi.edu/>.

# Biographical/Historical Information

Claudius Crozet, engineer and educator, was born in Villefranche, France on December 31, 1789. Following his graduation from the Ecole Polytechnique, he entered the French Army as an artilleryman, and served until 1816. He was a prisoner of war in Russia from 1814-1816. In 1816 he married Agathe DeCamp, and the couple immigrated to the United States. Crozet accepted an appointment as a professor of engineering at the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he taught until 1823 and published *A Treatise of Descriptive Geometry for the Use of the Cadets of the United States Military Academy*.

Subsequent to his career at West Point, he served as the State Engineer of Virginia (1823-1832), State Engineer of Louisiana (1832-1834), President of Jefferson College, Louisiana (1834-1836), President of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors (1837-1845), Principal Engineer of Virginia (1837-1843), and as Principal of the Richmond Academy (1845-1849). In 1849 he was appointed Chief Engineer on a project to build a tunnel through the Blue Ridge, and from 1857-1859 he worked on constructing an aqueduct for Washington, DC. Crozet died in Richmond, Virginia on January 29, 1864.

# Scope and Content Information

The bulk of the material is in French and chronicles Crozet's early years in France prior to his move to the United States in 1816. Included are letters and military orders; discourses on linguistics and grammar; papers pertaining to his marriage and family, and mementos relating to his daughter, Adele, who died in 1830.

In addition, the collection contains two letters from Thomas Jefferson to Crozet, both dated 1821. The letter of March 31 is Jefferson's reply to Crozet's inquiry about a teaching position at the University of Virginia; the letter of November 23 acknowledges the receipt of Crozet's book and includes comments on scientific advancements.

# Contents List

## Correspondence and Orders 1812-1821

Box-folder 1:1

### Arrangement

Chronological

### Letter 1812 July 31

**Scope and Content**

To Crozet from Evans

A statement of Crozet's promotion to Second Captain

**Letter with enclosure 1814 October 24****Scope and Content**

To DeCamp family from (signature illegible)

A letter enclosing the certificate of death for Pierre DeCamp, brother of Crozet's wife, Agathe.

**Letter 1814 October 29****Scope and Content**

To Crozet from Evans.

Honors Crozet for his service.

**Order 1815 March 10****Scope and Content**

To Crozet from Baron De [Maller?]

Crozet is asked to supervise construction of a bridge

**Letter 1815 March 19****Scope and Content**

To Crozet from Colonel Dessalles

Bridge equipment to be sent to Paris; Crozet to proceed to St. Denis where officer's quarters were established; Crozet to inform General Neigre about disposition of troops.

**Letter 1815 March 28****Scope and Content**

To Crozet from Evans

Regarding army rank

**Letter 1815 June 13****Scope and Content**

To Crozet from General B. Neigre

Crozet to proceed to Vincennes and report to Col. Renaud.

**Letter 1821 March 31****Scope and Content**

To Crozet from Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson responds to Crozet's offer to teach at the University of Virginia; comments on the progress of the University and on the uncertainty of funding.

**Letter 1821 November 23****Scope and Content**

To Crozet from Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson thanks Crozet for sending him a copy of his new geometry textbook and for his contributions to teaching; comments on the advancement of science.

**Discourses**

## **Miscellany of French discourse on verbs**

**Box-folder** 1:2

### **Scope and Content**

A composition book which also includes several pages of analytic geometry proofs.

## **Des Mots Invariables**

**Box-folder** 1:3

### **Arrangement**

topics include formation of adverbs, prepositions, letters, vowels, etc.

## **Grammaire Russe**

**Box-folder** 1:4

### **Scope and Content**

A manuscript of approximately 100 pages on the Russian language, written for French readers. This may have been written during the period 1814-1816, when Crozet was a prisoner of war in Russia.

## **Grammaire Allemande**

**Box-folder** 1:5

### **Scope and Content**

A German grammar, probably written while Crozet was in Holland.

## **Second part: Syntax**

**Box-folder** 1:6

### **Scope and Content**

Includes discussion of articles, etc; beginning of dative.

## **Des Consonnes**

**Box-folder** 1:7

### **Scope and Content**

Discussion of consonants, their pronunciation

## **Histoire de France**

**Box-folder** 1:8

### **Scope and Content**

Covers the period 420-843 AD

## **Continuation of Histoire de France**

**Box-folder** 1:9

### **Scope and Content**

Covers the period 876-996 AD

## **Accord du Participe**

**Box-folder** 1:10

### **Scope and Content**

Use of the participle

## **Untitled discourse**

**Box-folder** 1:11

### **Scope and Content**

Probably a fragment of one of the above linguistic discourse; perhaps a part of Des Consonnes.

## Legal Documents

**Box-folder** 1:12

### Arrangement

Chronological

#### **Certificate of Life Insurance**

##### **Scope and Content**

Indicates that M. DeCamp and her husband had life insurance for their daughter Agathe. Agathe's existence is verified each year from 1793 to 1808 by endorsements on the back of the document.

#### **Testament or Codicil 1801**

##### **Scope and Content**

A statement that appears to document an agreement between Pierrette Varion (Crozet's mother) and a landlady regarding payment for living quarters.

#### **Division of inheritance of M. DeCamp 1814 December 5**

##### **Scope and Content**

A document which indicates that Madame DeCamp's estate is to be divided by the daughters, the son having died in 1813

#### **Marriage Contract 1816 June 5**

##### **Scope and Content**

Between Claud Crozet and Agathe DeCamp. Gives the names, ages, and addresses of the parties involved and their parents. At the time of the marriage the bride's parents were dead; Crozet's father was living but his mother was dead.

## Ephemera

**Box-folder** 1:13

#### **Lithograph of Marshall Ney**

**Extent** approx. 5" x 8"

#### **Sermon en proverbes 1790**

##### **Extent**

printed material, approx. 13" x 15"

## Subject File: Adele

#### **Letter 1829 July 11**

**Box-folder** 1:14

##### **Scope and Content**

Crozet expresses his deep affection for his daughter

#### **Keepsakes**

##### **Scope and Content**

Includes a clipping from an 1830 newspaper on keepsakes of deceased loved ones, which suggests a lock of hair is the best remembrance. The file includes a lock of Adele's hair, four baby teeth, and eyelashes.

#### **Adele's script book**

**Box-folder** 1:16

##### **Scope and Content**

Adele's script book, published by W. Darton in 1815, and a page of her practice with script

Adèle's script book, published by W. Darton in 1815, and a page of her practice with script.

## **Remembrances**

**Box-folder** 1:17

### **Scope and Content**

Memorial verses written by Crozet; receipt for painting an enclosure in graveyard, April 21, 1830

## **Miscellaneous**

**Box-folder** 1:18

### **Scope and Content**

Three calling cards bearing signature of Mrs. Crozet

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