

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

John E. Roller Papers, 1862-1910

1862-1910

---

A Collection in Virginia Military Institute Archives mss 00171

Virginia Military Institute Archives

2002

## History

**Processed by:** Virginia Military Institute Archives Staff

**Funding:** Web version of the finding aid funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## Title Statement

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

**Subtitle:** Roller, John E., Papers

**Collection:** mss 00171

**Sponsor:** Web version of the finding aid funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2002 Virginia Military Institute

**Publisher:** Virginia Military Institute Archives

[Conditions of Use](#)

## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from html file. Machine-readable finding aid created by Diane Jacob. Date of source: 2002.

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

**Feb 16, 2004** PUBLIC "-//Virginia Military Institute::Preston Library::Archives//TEXT (US::ViLxV::vilxv00014::A Guide to the John E. Roller Papers)//EN" "vilxv00014.xml" converted from EAD 1.0 to 2002 by v1to02.xsl (sy2003-10-15).

**Feb 26, 2004** converted to conform to eadVIVA.dtd by vivastrict.xsl

**2013-11-21** Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

## Descriptive Summary

### Accession number

mss 00171

### Language

English

### Physical Characteristics

The papers comprise approximately 50 items and are filed in one box.

## Repository

Archives, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute

# Administrative Information

## Access

There are no restrictions.

## Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

## Preferred Citation

John E. Roller Papers, mss 00171, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia.

# Alternative Form

A significant number of items in the Roller Papers are available in full text format on the VMI Archives website at <http://www.vmi.edu/archives/manuscripts/0171main.html>

# Biographical/Historical Information

John Edwin Roller was born in Rockingham Co., Virginia on October 5, 1844, the son of 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. On December 31, 1861, he entered the Virginia Military Institute as a second classman (equivalent to Junior), and was graduated in July 1863. He subsequently taught mathematics at VMI for a few months, and then was appointed 2d Lieutenant, Company G, 2d Confederate States Engineers in October 1863. He served as an Engineer officer in the Army of Northern Virginia to the end of the war, and was paroled at Appomattox. After the war, he studied law at the University of Virginia and practiced law in Harrisonburg (Rockingham County), Virginia. He also served in the Virginia state legislature and was a Brig. General in the state militia; he was widely known in the Harrisonburg community as "General Roller." He died in Harrisonburg on August 10, 1918.

# Scope and Content Information

The John E. Roller Papers consist of personal incoming and outgoing correspondence, 1862-1870, including Civil War era letters from cadet friends concerning life at VMI; Civil War dispatches and telegrams (1864), dating from his service with the Confederate States Engineers, including one document signed by General Robert E. Lee; scrapbook, ca. 1910, containing clippings about Civil War battles, veterans, unit reunions, monument dedications, and related information.; 2 photographs, of Confederate soldier Lt. Col. Samuel T. Walker (10th Virginia Infantry Regiment) and of the Virginia Legislature Centennial Committee (1871); holograph text of a cadet literary-debating society speech delivered by Cadet Norwood B. Randolph in 1870; and misc. other items.

# Arrangement

The Roller Papers are arranged in chronological order.

# Contents List

## Correspondence, 1862-1876

### Scope and Content

Incoming and outgoing letters

### Virginia Military Institute

#### Scope and Content

Letters written and received while Roller was a VMI Cadet.

**Cadet Roller to his parents. 1862 January 24**

**Scope and Content**

Cadet Roller to his parents, written shortly after he entered VMI. Mentions clothing needed; studying; upcoming inauguration of Jefferson Davis.

**Peter S. Roller (father) to Cadet Roller. 1862 August 25****Scope and Content**

Mentions his inability to supply Gen. Smith (Superintendent of VMI) with hired or slave labor; discussion of when son should join army.

**Cadet Roller to VMI authorities. 1863 March 18****Scope and Content**

Cadet Roller submits a report concerning the theft of Commandant's records

**Personal Letters Received, Civil War. 1863-1864****From VMI classmate William W. Flannagan 1863 November 8****Scope and Content**

Congratulating Roller on his army commission.

**From Cadet Lawrence Royster. 1864 January 6****Scope and Content**

Royster discusses examinations; mutual friends at VMI.

**From Cadet Lawrence Royster. 1864 January 9.****Scope and Content**

Royster is discouraged about the results of his examinations and is considering leaving VMI.

**From Cadet Lawrence Royster. 1864 February 22.****Scope and Content**

Royster discusses his academic problems; uncertainty about staying at VMI; mentions several recent graduates and cadets.

**From Cadet Archibald W. Overton. 1864 April 10****Scope and Content**

Overton discusses rumors about deployment of cadets; cadets who have left VMI.

**From Cadet Lawrence Royster. 1864 April 21.****Scope and Content**

Royster discusses academics; changes on faculty; hardships caused by cold weather; Gen. Rosser presents captured flag to Corps; cadets don't get enough to eat.

**From Joseph B. Prince, Roller's classmate. 1864 May 3.****Scope and Content**

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

**From Peter S. Roller to his son. 1864 May 17.****Scope and Content**

Reports news of fighting in the Shenandoah Valley between forces of Gen. Breckinridge and Sigel; Battle of New Market.

**From Cadet Lawrence Royster. 1864 July 28.****Scope and Content**

VMI temporarily closed after Hunter's Raid; his mother a refugee after Union troops destroyed her property.

### **From Cadet Lawrence Royster. 1864 December 7.**

#### **Scope and Content**

The Corps is in Richmond, camped on the Intermediate Line; In a few days they plan to move into VMI's temporary headquarters at the Alms House.

### **Correspondence, Post-war, Miscellaneous.**

#### **Scope and Content**

Miscellaneous business correspondence, 10 items. Correspondents include Richard L. Gray, Nannie Lewis, G. W. Berlin, C. L. Hammond.

## **Civil War official documents, 1863-1864**

### **Scope and Content**

Includes dispatches, telegrams.

### **1863 October 14.**

#### **Scope and Content**

From Lt. Col. A. L. Rives, C. S. Engineer Bureau, concerning receipt of recommendations.

### **Legal document. 1864 March 12.**

#### **Scope and Content**

Certifies Thomas Hubbard born Caswell Co. NC

### **Dispatch. 1864 May 13**

#### **Scope and Content**

Gen. Robert F. Hoke to Gen. Braxton Bragg, reporting on enemy strength.

### **Document. 1864 May 19**

#### **Scope and Content**

Request for officer to be assigned at Weldon.

### **Dispatch to Lt. Col. J. M. Maury 1864 May 23**

#### **Scope and Content**

From C. S. Flagship "Virginia" near Drewry's Bluff, re: enemy naval forces

### **Note, from HQ Engineers, Army of Northern Virginia 1864 August 13**

#### **Arrangement**

To J. W. Williams in regard to a meeting.

### **Dispatch, Gen. Robert E. Lee to General Ewell. 1864 August 14**

#### **Scope and Content**

"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."

### **Dispatch. 1864 August 16**

#### **Scope and Content**

Lt. Col. Briscoe G. Baldwin (VMI Class of 1848), to J. Willcox Brown.

### **Dispatch. 1864 August 17.**

#### **Scope and Content**

Walter H. Taylor, A.A.G., to Gen. Lee at Chaffin's Bluff. Scouting report.

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 19**

### **Scope and Content**

Regarding transportation for officer.

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 21**

### **Scope and Content**

Gen. G. T. Beauregard to Capt. Chisholm, re: matter pending before War Dept.

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 21**

### **Scope and Content**

Lt. Col. Briscoe Baldwin to Col. J. Gorgas, re: personnel request.

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 22**

### **Scope and Content**

From Lt. Col. Briscoe G. Baldwin, near Petersburg. Request for ammunition.

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 22**

### **Scope and Content**

Lt. Col. Briscoe G. Baldwin to Lt. Col. W. Brown; send forge to Dunlops Crossing

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 23**

### **Scope and Content**

Gen. Wade Hampton to HQ, requesting map of Dinwiddie

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 23**

### **Scope and Content**

To Medical Dept. "Send down all amputating sets on hand."

## **Dispatch. 1864 August 24**

### **Scope and Content**

W. H. Taylor to Gen. George E. Pickett.

"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."

## **Dispatch. 1864 September 2**

### **Scope and Content**

W. H. Taylor to Court Martial, Goldsboro. Col. Mayo too sick to attend court.

## **Dispatch. 1864 September 23**

### **Scope and Content**

From HQ, Engineers, ANV to Col. W. P. Smith at Chaffin's Bluff; conveying instructions and reprimand.

## **Dispatch. 1864, no day.**

### **Scope and Content**

To Gen. Braxton Bragg, re: troop movements (Hoke, Kemper)

## **Dispatch. 1864, no day.**

### **Scope and Content**

Send five dollar notes.

## **Scrapbook, circa 1910.**

### **Scope and Content**

Scrapbook containing various items, including a letter from Gen. Beauregard to Capt. Chisholm, re: matter pending before War Dept.

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

## **Photographs.**

### **Photograph, Lt. Col. Samuel T. Walker. ca. 1862**

#### **Scope and Content**

Walker served with the 10th Virginia Infantry Regiment and was killed in action at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863.

### **Photograph, Virginia Legislature Centennial Committee. 1871.**

## **Miscellaneous.**

#### **Scope and Content**

Includes holograph text of a cadet literary-debating society speech delivered by Virginia Military Institute Cadet Norwood B. Randolph in 1870; and misc. other items.