

# A Guide to the Thomas H. Williamson Papers, 1788, 1850-1888

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## History

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## Title Statement

A Guide to the Thomas H. Williamson Papers, 1788, 1850-1888

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## Profile Description

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## Revision Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Collection number

mss 00105

### Language

English

### Physical Characteristics

The collection consists of approximately 20 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.

## Preferred Citation

Thomas H. Williamson Papers, mss 00105, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia.

# Biographical/Historical Information

Thomas Hoomes Williamson was born August 30, 1813 in Richmond, Virginia, the son of Thomas and Anne Walke Williamson. He spent most of his childhood in Norfolk, Virginia, where he received his early schooling. He entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1829, but resigned in 1833 before receiving his degree. In 1834 entered the profession of Civil Engineering and was the assistant to the U. S. Engineer in charge of building the dry dock in the Norfolk Navy Yard. Williamson married Louisa Henrietta Fenton Garnett on May 11, 1837. The couple had five children before Louisa died in 1859-- Mercer, William, Anne, Thomas, and Olympia.

In 1841, Williamson accepted a faculty appointment at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, where he was to spend the remainder of his career except for a brief absences during the Civil War. He taught tactics, drawing, and engineering, and at various times was assigned additional duties (Commandant of Cadets, Treasurer, Librarian). While at VMI he wrote a text book, *An Elementary Course of Architecture and Civil Engineering*, for use by his students.

Williamson took on various special assignments during the Civil War. In April 1861 he served with the Confederate Engineers Corps and worked on the defenses of the Rappahannock River and Manassas. In October of that year, he was ordered to return to VMI to teach Civil and Military Engineering, but he was recalled to the Confederate Army in April 1862 for temporary special duty on the staff of General Stonewall Jackson. In 1864 Williamson married for the second time. His new wife was a widow, Mrs. Julia Wharton (nee Lewis) of Lexington. She was the mother of his two youngest children--Sydney Bacon, and Cornelia.

Williamson continued his teaching career at VMI until shortly before his death on March 31, 1888. He is buried in the Stonewall Jackson Cemetery in Lexington.

# Scope and Content Information

The papers consist of Thomas H. Williamson's Civil War memoirs, in which he discusses the events that took place during his temporary assignment to the command of Major General Thomas J. (Stonewall) beginning in April 1862; lecture notes (1850's) used in teaching his engineering and architecture courses at the Virginia Military Institute; 2 copies of the textbook written by Williamson for use at VMI, *An Elementary Course of Architecture and Civil Engineering*; Williamson family genealogical material; and miscellaneous letters.

# Contents List

## Civil War Memoirs, circa 1883

Links [Full Text](#)

### Scope and Content

*My Service with Genl. Thos. J. Jackson.* Covering his assignment to General Stonewall Jackson's command in the Spring of 1862

## Lecture Notes and Textbooks, 1850's

### Scope and Content

Materials used by Williamson while teaching his architecture and engineering classes at the Virginia Military Institute.

## **Glossary of Architectural Terms**

### **Extent**

Notebook, approximately 100 pages.

### **Scope and Content**

Definitions of various architectural terms in Williamson's hand; accompanied by small sketches.

### **"Lecture No. 1"**

#### **Scope and Content**

"Babylon - Edfou, Parthenon-Colosseum"

### **"Lecture No. 2"**

#### **Scope and Content**

"Church of Our Savior, Saxon Church, Smithsonian Institute, Pisa Cathedral, Mosque at Cordova, Mosque at Constantinople"

### **"Lecture No. 3"**

#### **Scope and Content**

"Illustrations, 1st-3rd Period of the Gothic"

### **"Lecture No. 4"**

#### **Scope and Content**

"Illustrations, English Parish Churches"

## **Textbook, An Elementary Course of Architecture and Civil Engineering"**

### **Scope and Content**

Written by Thomas H. Williamson for the use of VMI cadets.

## **Williamson Family Genealogy**

### **Scope and Content**

Notes and oversized chart

## **Miscellaneous Correspondence and Documents, 1788; 1869-1888**

### **Scope and Content**

Includes one letter (Feb. 3, 1788) from William Watts to his brother, Capt. John Watts; the exact relationship to Williamson is not known, but the letter is presumed to be related to an ancestor.