

Photograph of Edmund Parker Standing Guard at George Washington's Tomb

Photograph of Edmund Parker Standing Guard at George Washington's Tomb

1890

Title Statement

Photograph of Edmund Parker Standing Guard at George Washington's Tomb
Photograph of Edmund Parker Standing Guard at George Washington's Tomb MSS 16755

Author: Ellen Welch

Publication Statement

Publisher: Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

P.O. Box 400110

University of Virginia

Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4110

URL: <https://small.library.virginia.edu/>

2023-03-20

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-03-05 17:43:41 +0000.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16755

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1477

Unit Date

1890

Mixed Materials

BW 49 (box)

Container

1 (folder)

Language

English

Extent

.03 Cubic Feet 1 folder 1 photograph

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Between the Covers by the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library on 10 January 2023.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16755, Portrait of Edmund Parker Standing Guard at George Washington's Tomb, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical

Edmund Parker (1827-1898) was brought to Mount Vernon in 1841 at the age of 14, as one of the enslaved people owned by John Augustine Washington III. Parker recalled that enslavery had been "mighty hard work. Had more put on me than I could perform..." He married Susan, an enslaved woman who Augusting had purchased in 182, and the couple went on to have 19 children, including two sets of twins.

During the Civil War, Parker fled from Mount Vernon, seeking refuge in Union-occupied Alexandria, Virginia. He later lived as a free man, followed by a stint in Pennsylvania, before settling back in Washington. In 1882 he was hired by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association to serve as the watchman at Washington's Tomb, and served until shortly before his death in 1898.

Content Description

This collection contains one photograph of Edmund Parker (1827-1898), formerly enslaved at Mount Vernon, standing guard at George Washington's Tomb circa 1890. In 1841, Parker was brought to Mount Vernon, at the age of fourteen, as one of the enslaved people owned by John Augustine Washington III. He married Susan, an enslaved woman Augustine had purchased in 1852, and the couple went on to have nineteen children, including two sets of twins. Parker fled from Mount Vernon during the Civil War, seeking refuge in Union-occupied Alexandria, Virginia. He later lived as a free man, followed by a stint in Pennsylvania, before settling back in Washington. In 1882, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association hired him to serve as the watchman at Washington's tomb, and he served until shortly before his death in 1898.

It is an albumen photograph 6 1/2 by 4 1/2 mounted on thick card stock measuring 7 by 5. Edmund Parker is dressed in his customary blue uniform with a silver badge. It is an uncommon view of a much-photographed subject.

Keywords

enslaved persons

Parker, Edmund, 1827-1898