

Guide to the W.W.H. Davis Papers

WA MSS S-1323



by T. Michael Womack

March 1990

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
W. W. H. DAVIS (1820-1910)	4
DAVIS FAMILY	5
Scope and Contents	5
Collection Contents	11
Series I: Scrapbooks, 1846-81	11
LETTERS TO W. W. H. DAVIS, 1846-57	11
Incoming: family and non-family	11
CIVIL SERVICE IN NEW MEXICO, 1853-57	11
Incoming: non-family	11
Outgoing: family	12
WARTIME FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE, VOL. I	12
Mexican War. Outgoing: family	12
Civil War. Outgoing: family	12
WARTIME FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE, VOL. II	13
Civil War. Outgoing: family	13
MILITARY CORRESPONDENCE WITH W. W. H. DAVIS, 1861-64	13
Incoming: non-family	13
Series II: Autobiographical Writings, 1849-88	14
Series III: Personal Papers, 1822-1921	15
EXTRA-ILLUSTRATED LIFE OF JOHN DAVIS	15
Letters to John Davis from	15
Letters to W. W. H. Davis from	15
Miscellaneous	15
JOURNALS	15
LEDGER	15
MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS	16
Oversize, 1846-66	17
APPOINTMENTS	17
COMMISSIONS	17
Appendix: LIST OF SIEGE OF CHARLESTON DRAWINGS	18
Selected Search Terms	20

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-1323

CREATOR: Davis, W. W. H. (William Watts Hart), 1820-1910

TITLE: W. W. H. Davis papers

DATES: 1846-1896

BULK DATES: 1846-1864

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4.5 linear feet (10 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The W. W. H. Davis Papers consist of correspondence, writings, journals, diaries, drawings, newspaper clippings, photographs, and memorabilia which document the life and career of W. W. H. Davis. The five scrapbooks chronicle Davis's participation in the Mexican War and Civil War, service in New Mexico, and his interest in Democratic party politics. The correspondence and memorabilia in the scrapbooks are arranged according to major themes. The autobiographical writings series contains essays on the Mexican War, and a memoir of the Mexican War. The personal papers include an extra-illustrated Life of John Davis, journals of trips west to Santa Fe, and a journal kept during the siege of Charleston in 1863-64.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.davis>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.davis>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Please consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The W. W. H. Davis Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

W. W. H. Davis Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

W. W. H. DAVIS (1820-1910)

William Watts Hart Davis, attorney, editor, military officer, and historian, was born on July 27, 1820 in Southampton Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to John and Amy Hart Davis. He was graduated from Norwich University in 1842 and for the next two years taught at the Military Academy in Portsmouth, Virginia. Both of these institutions had been founded by Captain Alden Partridge, long-time instructor at West Point, considered the father of the system combining military instruction with college education. The collection contains several letters from Partridge, which refer fondly to Davis. Davis left Portsmouth in 1844 and returned to Doylestown, Pennsylvania, where he read law and was admitted to the bar in 1846. In the fall of that year he was admitted to Harvard Law School.

Davis knew that the heroes of the War of 1812, such as his own father, had fared well politically, and he viewed the war with Mexico as an opportunity to make a name for himself. He planned to enlist in his local militia unit, the Doylestown Guards, but the quota of volunteers from Pennsylvania was filled before the Guards could offer their services. He left Harvard after his first semester and enlisted in the First Regiment of the Massachusetts Infantry, commanded by Colonel Caleb Cushing. He was mustered out as a captain on July 19, 1848 and returned to Doylestown, where he practiced law for the next five years.

From 1853 through 1857 Davis served in the Territory of New Mexico as U.S. district attorney, attorney general, secretary of the territory, superintendent of public buildings, superintendent of Indian affairs, and acting governor. He also published the *Santa Fe Gazette* in Spanish and English for two and a half years.

In 1858 Davis returned to Doylestown, where he edited the *Democrat*, a small, politically partisan newspaper. He remained active in military affairs, and on June 6, 1859 was commissioned captain of the Doylestown Guards of the Uniformed Militia of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Following the outbreak of the Civil War, Davis was commissioned captain of Company I, 25th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, on April 26, 1861. The three-month tour of duty for the 25th Regiment having expired, he recruited the 104th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, in September 1861. During the war Davis served in the Army of the Potomac, the Department of North Carolina, and the Department of the South. For meritorious service during the siege of Charleston, Davis was later breveted brigadier general. He was mustered out on September 30, 1864.

Davis ran unsuccessfully as a Democratic candidate for Congress in 1882 and 1884. During the first administration of Grover Cleveland (1885-89), he served as U.S. Pension Agent in Philadelphia.

Davis was active in several historical and military organizations, such as the Bucks County Historical Society, which he served as president, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the American Historical Society, the Aztec Club, the Society of Foreign Wars, and the Society of the Army of the Potomac. He authored several works, including *El Gringo: or, New Mexico and Her People* (1857), *History of the 104th*

Pennsylvania Regiment (1866), *The Spanish Conquest of New Mexico (1869)*, *Life of John Davis (1886)*, and *History of the Doylestown Guards (1887)*.

William Watts Hart Davis died in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, in 1910.

DAVIS FAMILY

John Davis (1788-1878) m. 1813 Amy Hart (1784-1847)

-----Ann H. Davis m. 1835 James Erwin (-1844)

-----Anna Mary Erwin

-----Rebecca Davis (-1884) m. 1840 Alfred T. Duffield (-1871)

-----Sarah S. ("Sallie") Davis m. 1850 Ulysses Mercur

-----Amy Davis m. 1850 Holmes Sells

-----William Watts Hart Davis (1820-1910) m. 1856 Anna Carpenter (-1881)

-----Amy Hart Davis (1857-1857)

-----Jacob C. ("Gabie") Davis (1859-)

-----Margaret Sprague ("Maggie") Davis (1861-)

-----John Davis (1863-)

-----Elizabeth N. ("Lizzie") Davis

Scope and Contents

The W. W. H. Davis Papers contain correspondence, writings, journals, drawings, newspaper clippings, photographs, and memorabilia which document aspects of the life and career of William Watts Hart Davis, attorney, editor, military officer, and historian. The papers span the dates 1846 to 1896, with the bulk of the material falling between 1846 and 1864.

The W. W. H. Davis Papers have been arranged into three series. The largest portion of the collection was originally housed in four scrapbooks, bound in the early 1880s. These volumes consist chiefly of chronologically arranged correspondence, interspersed with drawings, newspapers clippings, photographs, and other ephemera. A fifth volume was prepared but never bound. For ease of use and preservation of individual letters, these volumes, which constitute Series I, *Scrapbooks*, were disbound. The identity of each volume has been maintained and Davis's original order retained, with each volume representing a separate subseries. Series II, *Autobiographical Writings*, contains essays, draft fragments, and a memoir. Series III, *Personal Papers*, is composed of journals, a ledger, and miscellaneous papers. *Oversize* material is placed at the end of the collection.

Democratic Party politics is the common thread running through the three periods of William Watts Hart Davis's life represented in this collection. His papers reveal the prevailing attitude that loyal service to party should be rewarded with political gain. Davis possessed a keen sense of public duty, which had been encouraged by his father. He was also ambitious and frequently sought advice and assistance from his father, who was influential in both the Democratic Party and the military. John Davis served as a captain in the War of 1812 and later rose to the rank of general in the Pennsylvania State Militia. He was elected as a Democrat to the Twenty-sixth Congress (1839-41) and was an unsuccessful candidate for re-election in 1840. He was appointed surveyor of the port of Philadelphia by President James K. Polk and served from 1845 to 1849. He was a delegate to several Democratic state and national conventions and was a friend and advisor to President James Buchanan (1857-61).

[Series I, Scrapbooks](#), is divided into five subseries, which represent the original bound volumes. Davis arranged the correspondence and memorabilia in the scrapbooks according to major themes, but within the volumes he further subdivided material by chronological period, incoming versus outgoing correspondence, or family versus non-family correspondence. This scheme produces a certain amount of overlap in the chronological sequence of the volumes and sometimes makes it necessary to consult two or more volumes to follow events occurring at the same time.

The scrapbooks cover a twenty-year span and chronicle Davis's military and civil service to the United States. The material falls into three categories: 1) the Mexican War (1846-48), covered in the first and third volumes; 2) Davis's civil service in the Territory of New Mexico (1853-57), covered in the first and second volumes; and 3) the Civil War (1861-65), covered in the third, fourth, and fifth volumes.

Elected first lieutenant of Company E, Davis and his regiment sailed from Boston on February 23, 1847. Twenty-nine days later, the ship arrived at Brazos Santiago on the Mexican border. Davis's letters describe the trip from the coast to Matamoros. His company was attached to Colonel Caleb Cushing, who was soon promoted to brigadier general. Davis hoped to become Cushing's assistant adjutant general through his father's influence with President Polk, but this did not come about. Cushing, however, a friend of Davis's father and a loyal Democrat, soon promoted him to aide-de-camp with the pay of assistant adjutant general.

After being stationed two months at Matamoros, Cushing was ordered to join forces with General Taylor in Monterey. The troops sailed up the Rio Grande to Ciudad Camargo and marched westward to Monterey. Davis's letters describe the march, the countryside, and its people. Most meals consisted of fried pork and hard bread, and dysentery from the drinking water was common. After many weeks, they reached Monterey and from there proceeded to Saltillo. In August Davis wrote from Buena Vista, having arrived shortly after the battle. He described in vivid detail the carnage of war. While there, Davis recounted he had met General Taylor several times.

A month later Davis wrote from Camp Sabinito in Texas, as his brigade had been transferred from upper Mexico and was en route to Vera Cruz to join forces with Major General Patterson. From Brazos Santiago, Davis's brigade sailed on the steamer *Fanny* and arrived in Vera Cruz around the first of October. They were soon transferred again to join forces with General Winfield Scott in Mexico City. After a march of five weeks, they arrived in the capital at the end of November 1847.

Davis was pleased to be transferred to Mexico City. In a letter to his father dated December 6, 1847, he expressed the hope that being in the capital "will afford us some fighting and give us a chance to try our maiden swords" (Box 3, folder 38). Davis was impressed by the size and magnificence of Mexico City and was especially struck by the grandeur and immensity of the public buildings. Later he traveled to Guadalupe to witness the festival in honor of "Our Lady of Guadalupe."

Davis seems never to have gotten the opportunity to "try his maiden sword," but his six-month residence in Mexico City was not in vain. His position as General Cushing's aide-de-camp placed him in a perfect position to observe and record events, frequently ones at the heart of Mexican authority and influence. The general and his staff stayed in the houses of wealthy residents and Davis took advantage of this situation by learning Spanish. (Box 3, folder 39)

Davis contributed to our knowledge of the Mexican War through his detailed observations of the process by which the Mexican government ratified the peace treaty concluding the war. A letter of February 7, 1848 to his father provides detailed information on the drafting of the treaty, its terms, and the process of ratification:

"As to the ratification by the Mexican Congress, I think it very doubtful, and so do all thinking men here. The President has not been able to bring a quorum together, and when a quorum is assembled it will be more difficult to control their votes. All agree that the President has but little power, and that it will be impossible to bring a constitutional majority to his way of thinking. To effect his purpose of a ratification, he is now raising a million of money with which to influence the votes of the members of Congress. One member in the city of Mexico demands twenty thousand before he will take his seat, to say nothing of the sum he will require to buy his vote." (Box 3, folder 39)

Later in a letter of May 20, 1848 to his sister Ann, Davis accurately predicted Mexico's future:

"What will become of this unhappy country when the American Army leaves, God only knows. The seeds of discord already begin to show themselves, and ere long must grow up and bring forth bad fruit. The disorganizers of their country who are too cowardly to fight, and yet always oppose peace, are anxiously awaiting the time when they can raise up new revolutions to distract their already unhappy and unfortunate country. I fear revolution will follow upon revolution in quick succession and the treaty instead of bringing peace and quite to Mexico will be the forerunner of new discords and dissensions. I hope these predictions may turn out to be untrue but I have fears and doubts." (Box 3, folder 40)

The bulk of Davis's correspondence during the Mexican War consists of letters to his parents and three unmarried sisters: Amy, Lizzie, and Sarah (Sallie). He encouraged them to read his letters to any friends who might drop by and they frequently wrote to tell him that they did so. In addition, he frequently sent letters for publication to S. J. Paxon, editor of the Doylestown *Democrat*, and John W. Forney, editor of the *Pennsylvanian*.

Davis received considerable correspondence from his friends, many of whom were lawyers. Among them were Edward J. ("Ned") Fox, Joseph Pfeiffer Longhead, and John Blair. They were devoted Democrats who often discussed local, state, and national politics and took every opportunity to castigate the Whigs. A typical attitude was expressed in a letter of July 4, 1847 by Davis's brother-in-law, A. T. Duffield, who wrote of his disgust with the Whigs over their vehement opposition to the Mexican War: "Our country right or wrong has long been a favorite motto with Americans, but these bipeds never acknowledge their country right under any circumstances" (Box 1, folder 4). The great fear of Davis's friends was that the Whigs would grab General Taylor as a presidential candidate before the Democrats could.

Another of Davis's correspondents was the wealthy Philadelphia Quaker merchant Oliver Howard Wilson. He opposed the war and sympathized with the patriotism exhibited by the Mexican people in defending their homeland. In keeping with his love of peace, Wilson remarked in one letter how he gained great pleasure from gazing at his painting "The Peaceable Kingdom," which he had purchased from artist and fellow Quaker Edward Hicks. As victories by the U.S. forces continued, Wilson expressed the fear that Mexico would be annexed as slave territory and that this action would lead to the dissolution of the union.

The greatest personal tragedy suffered by Davis while he was away at war was the death of his mother on August 17, 1847 of complications related to palsy and dysentery. Davis's father and sisters were devastated by her death and John Davis asked his son to resign his commission and return home, but on October 4, 1847, Davis replied:

"The motives which would govern me in such a course, could not and would not be appreciated by men at large, and although they might know all the circumstances, the *very fact* of my resigning at such a period would appear strongly against me. I am now living for the future, and as I hold my spotless reputation dearer than life, I wish to give those who would hereafter injure me, no chance to do harm. What a grand opportunity it would be for political capital." (Box 3, folder 38)

Three months later Davis asked his father to use his influence to get him a lieutenant colonel's commission. By April he had lowered his sights: "The Majority is still vacant, and I stand a good chance of being elected" (Box 3, folder 39). On July 19, 1848, Davis was mustered out of the army with the rank of captain.

With the war over and the imminent likelihood of a Whig administration in the White House, Davis returned to Doylestown and practiced law for the next five years. Upon Franklin Pierce's election to the presidency in 1852, Davis began a flurry of correspondence to Congressmen and other prominent Democrats, seeking support for a consulate or port position. Although Caleb Cushing, Davis's commanding officer in the Mexican War, was secretary of state in the new administration, Davis was unable to secure a position he wanted. On September 11, 1853, however, Cushing informed Davis that the position of United States District Attorney for the Territory of New Mexico was open. Davis accepted the offer and received the appointment eight days later (Box 2, folder 13).

Davis arrived in Santa Fe on November 24, 1853 after a twenty-three-day trip from Independence, Missouri. He was unimpressed with the territorial capital and described it as a mud city of some six or seven thousand individuals. He threw himself into his work, traveling on horseback to the U.S. District Court over

the territory, which then included most of present-day New Mexico and Arizona and parts of Colorado and Nevada.

Davis was appointed secretary of the Territory of New Mexico on May 22, 1854. Pleased with his promotion, he wrote in a letter of August 26, 1854 to his sister Lizzie: "I am the next biggest man to the Governor in the Territory now, and hope one of these days to be the biggest duck in the puddle" (Box 2, folder 27). At the time, the Territory of New Mexico had a population of sixty thousand, practically all of whom were of Hispanic origin.

As secretary, Davis was charged with recording, maintaining, and making public all legislative acts and proceedings of the territory. One important function was to print and disseminate the acts and proceedings. Davis let this lucrative contract to the *Santa Fe Gazette*, which he served as editor for some two and a half years. Davis further supplemented his income by serving as the Santa Fe agent for Hockaday and Hall, stage proprietors, who provided the main communication link with the "States" through their monthly mail deliveries.

New Mexico Territory contained numerous Indian tribes, many of whom periodically clashed with local whites. In hopes of making peace treaties with the Apache, Navajo, and Utah Indians, Governor David Meriwether was frequently out of the capital. The governor often encountered Mormons to the north, who were held in contempt by the New Mexican territorial officials. Meriwether's absences left Davis as acting governor.

In New Mexico Davis developed a number of strong political enemies, chief of whom was his former business partner at the *Santa Fe Gazette*, James L. Collins. Their quarrel originated in a dispute over Governor Meriwether's handling of Indian affairs. When Meriwether took office, his duties included the responsibilities of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. During his term these two offices were separated and Collins was appointed the first full-time superintendent. Shortly after Collins's appointment, Meriwether returned to the States on business. In leaving, he removed from the letterbook of the Office of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs copies of certain letters which he considered personal. When Collins obtained the letterbook and discovered the missing copies, he accused Meriwether of removing evidence of his mismanagement of the Office of Indian Affairs. Collins demanded that Davis, as acting governor, apprehend Meriwether and recover the letters. Davis, however, had discussed the matter with Meriwether and dismissed the affair, and claimed that Collins's motivation was to run him out of the country, ultimately leaving the administration of the territorial government to Collins and his crooked friends. Accusations and counteraccusations made their way to Washington. Davis wrote his father urging him to go to Washington to speak with the president and resolve the matter.

In another controversy, the National Democrats of the County of Santa Fe sent a resolution to Washington demanding Davis's removal as secretary of the Territory. In that position, he was required by the territorial constitution to have the annual proceedings of each legislative session printed and distributed throughout the territory. In 1855, however, the Treasury Department failed to allocate money for this purpose. Since he was not authorized to incur deficits and since communication with Washington often took months, Davis printed and distributed one hundred copies of the most important proceedings. The citizens group interpreted Davis's action as willful disregard of his responsibilities and filed a complaint. To make matters worse, the lower house declared that the Territory of New Mexico did not recognize the authority of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States within its borders.

The volume of Davis's civil service papers contains two legislative reports filed with the House of Representatives of the Territory of New Mexico. The first concerns the issue of slavery and stated that when the Territory of New Mexico applied for statehood, it would declare its position on slavery in its proposed state constitution. The second report urged support for the passage of a bill authorizing both civil authorities and Protestant and Jewish religious officials to perform marriages. Previously only marriages performed by Roman Catholic priests were valid in the Territory of New Mexico.

Soon after his arrival Davis was hired to serve as legal counsel for the New Mexico Mining Company. Davis's primary duties were to insure the validity of the charter and the legality of the land titles. The president and chief stockholder of the company was Abraham Rencher, a native of Pennsylvania.

Dissatisfied with both the Pierce administration and his own career, Davis wrote to his sister Lizzie on November 25, 1855, "If a new Democratic President should be elected, I must try and obtain a good office in a more civilized country" (Box 2, folder 29). After the election of Pennsylvanian James Buchanan, Davis wrote his father and other influential Democrats asking for an appointment to a consulate position in Europe or the West Indies. When success appeared unlikely, he petitioned for the office of territorial governor of New Mexico. At the end of the summer Abraham Rencher was appointed governor and Davis submitted his resignation as territorial secretary.

In other letters, Davis complained about the climate, the landscape, the high cost of living, the isolation, and the strange customs and backwardness of the local people. He remarked in a May 27, 1854 letter that the morals of the natives of New Mexico were "rotten to the very core, in fact they have none. . . . They are familiar with every vice known. . . and practice them without let or hindrance." On Christmas Day he wrote about the legislature: "They are about as fit to make laws for themselves as so many children. . . . The fools are talking about a state government, when they will not be fit for it under twenty five years" (Box 2, folder 27).

He also felt his talents and abilities were under-utilized and unappreciated. Two happy events transpired during his tenure in New Mexico, however. On June 24, 1856 he married Anna Carpenter, daughter of a wealthy Brooklyn businessman, and in August of that same year he signed an agreement with Harper & Brothers for the publication of his first book, *El Gringo: or New Mexico and Her People*. *El Gringo* records his views of the Spanish-speaking Roman Catholic inhabitants of the former Mexican holding.

In the summer of 1857 Davis began to make alternate plans in case his political aspirations did not materialize. On May 27, 1857 he wrote his father that he was considering becoming editor of a good newspaper. Eventually Davis purchased the Doylestown *Democrat* from S. J. Paxon and returned home.

Following the bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the Doylestown Guards responded to President Lincoln's request for troops to defend the capital. Davis was commissioned captain of Company I, 25th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers on April 26. Soon thereafter Davis and his men went to Harrisburg, where they joined the other companies of their regiment for training. On May 3 from Camp Scott in York, Pennsylvania, Davis wrote his wife that he had been placed in command of six companies, numbering some four hundred men. (Box 3, folder 43) He reported that his company, the Doylestown Guards, was the best outfitted, armed, and disciplined in camp.

The next week Davis received special orders from General Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, to detach the battery belonging to the Ringold Artillery and report to Colonel Cake in Washington. Davis with eighty men and four pieces of cannon departed York by railroad and reached the north side of Baltimore early on the morning of May fifteenth. The battery of the Ringold Artillery was the first company to pass directly through the City of Baltimore since the bloody riot of April 19, in which Pennsylvania and Massachusetts troops were attacked by Southern sympathizers. In letters to his wife and father, Davis described in gripping detail the tension and fear he and his men experienced while passing through the cursing, taunting crowd. (Box 3, folder 43)

The battery arrived safely in Washington and was attached to the Advance Pennsylvania Regiment, nicknamed the Cameronians, after Secretary of War Cameron. Toward the end of June, Davis and his men were sent to the upper Potomac, some fifty miles above Washington in northwestern Maryland, to reinforce the column of Colonel Stone. They passed through Rockville, Poolsville, and Point-of-Rocks before reaching Harper's Ferry. Occasionally they engaged in brief skirmishes with rebel forces but never actually came into battle. From Williamsport they crossed over the Potomac to Martinsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia) to reinforce General Patterson. From there they went to Winchester, Virginia, and then back to Charlestown, Virginia (now West Virginia), where Davis was made provost marshal of the town. On August 1 the term of Davis's three-month enlistment expired. Upon special orders of the secretary of war, Davis returned home, where he raised the 104th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Volunteers.

By the fall Davis had returned to Washington. He was stationed at Camp Davis in Kalorama Heights, named in honor of his father, and commanded the 3rd Provisional Brigade, numbering some thirty-two hundred men. In letters to his father he constantly urged him to use his influence to help secure him a brigadier generalship. These letters accomplished little, but as a "pet" of the secretary of war, he was introduced

to such notables as General McClellan and the Count de Paris. In a letter of February 2, 1862 to his father, Davis expressed his fears of being passed over and missing the glories of battle. (Box 3, folder 47) Around the end of March Davis was ordered to accompany General McClellan in his campaign to take Richmond. His letters provide a detailed account of the transport of the troops from Alexandria to Fortress Monroe, as well as ensuing skirmishes and battles.

During the campaign Davis and his men were constantly on the march, frequently separated from their baggage, forced to sleep in their clothes in the open and to subsist on hard crackers, as well as being shot at by the enemy. By the end of the month, when his regiment was within six miles of the Richmond, he was wounded in the arm and sent home to recover. Davis returned to active duty in August, but the Union army was now in retreat and evacuating the peninsula. Around the end of the month Davis was placed in command of the fort at Gloucester Point, just across the river from Yorktown. He set about repairing and strengthening this stronghold, where he remained until the end of the year.

In January 1863 Davis's brigade was shipped to Carolina City, North Carolina, but by the end of the month they were transferred to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. In early July Davis and his men were sent to Folly Island in Charleston Harbor to take part in the siege of Charleston. General Gillmore placed Davis in command of all the Union forces on Folly Island, which was the base of supplies for operations against Charleston. For the next year Davis variously served on Folly, Morris, and James Island and he carefully recorded events and observations in his letters and in a journal. On July 6, 1864, Davis was in a tree examining the position of the rebel forces with his field glasses when a shell exploded near him. The resulting injury cost him most of the fingers of his right hand. For W. W. H. Davis the war was over and he was mustered out on September 30, 1864.

In addition to correspondence, the scrapbooks also contain photographs of Davis, his wife, Harvard Law School, and various public buildings in Monterey, Mexico; newspaper clippings, especially published letters written by Davis about the Mexican War; some broadsides in Spanish from Davis's civil service in New Mexico; a few crude, hand-drawn maps; a number of receipts; and twenty-six captioned pencil drawings depicting scenes from the siege of Charleston. See [appendix](#) for a list of these drawings.

[Series II, *Autobiographical Writings*](#), reflects Davis's involvement in and impressions of Mexico and the American Southwest. The series contains an essay on the occupation of Mexico City by American forces during the Mexican War and another on the Spaniard in New Mexico. There are numerous draft fragments describing the Mexican War. The series also contains a lengthy letter to an unidentified editor in which Davis rebuts a letter of William Ellery Channing to Henry Clay on the question of Texas annexation. The greatest portion of the series consists of a memoir, written by Davis in 1849, recounting his experiences as captain and aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Caleb Cushing during the Mexican War. There are two typescript copies of this memoir.

[Series III, *Personal Papers*](#), consists of an extra-illustrated *Life of John Davis*, journals, a ledger, and miscellaneous papers reflecting Davis's travels and responsibilities in New Mexico and military service in the Mexican War and Civil War. Davis kept journals of a trip west in 1852 and his 1853 journey from Doylestown to Santa Fe. A ledger documents Davis's service as Santa Fe agent for Hockaday and Hall. Davis also kept a journal during the siege of Charleston in 1863-64. Pamphlets of the Aztec Club and the National Association of the Veterans of the Mexican War provide evidence of Davis's affiliation with Mexican War veterans's associations. There is also a student notebook in Spanish.

[Oversize](#) consists of official appointments to civil service in the Territory of New Mexico and commissions to military service in the Mexican War, Pennsylvania State Militia, and the Civil War.

Collection Contents

Series I: Scrapbooks, 1846-81

1.25 linear feet (5 boxes)

Series I, *Scrapbooks*, is divided into five subseries, each of which represents one of Davis's original volumes.

LETTERS TO W. W. H. DAVIS, 1846-57

Incoming: family and non-family

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1846 Dec
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1847 Jan-Mar
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1847 Apr-May
b. 1, f. 4	Correspondence	1847 Jun-Jul
b. 1, f. 5	Correspondence	1847 Aug-Sep
b. 1, f. 6	Correspondence	1847 Oct-Dec
b. 1, f. 7	Correspondence	1848 Jan-Mar
b. 1, f. 8	Correspondence	1848 Apr-Dec
b. 1, f. 9	Correspondence	1849-50
b. 1, f. 10	Correspondence	1851-52
b. 1, f. 11	Correspondence	1853-54
b. 1, f. 12	Correspondence	1856-57

CIVIL SERVICE IN NEW MEXICO, 1853-57

Incoming: non-family

b. 2, f. 13	Correspondence	1853
b. 2, f. 14	Correspondence	1854-55
b. 2, f. 15	Correspondence	1856 Jan-Sep
b. 2, f. 16	Correspondence	1856 Oct-Dec
b. 2, f. 17	Correspondence	1857 Jan-Feb
b. 2, f. 18	Correspondence	1857 Mar-May
b. 2, f. 19	Correspondence	1857 Jun
b. 2, f. 20	Correspondence	1857 Jul-Aug
b. 2, f. 21	Correspondence	1857 Sep
b. 2, f. 22	Correspondence	1857 Oct-Dec

CIVIL SERVICE IN NEW MEXICO, 1853-57 > Incoming: non-family (continued)

b. 2, f. 23	Correspondence	1858 Jan-Mar
b. 2, f. 24	Correspondence	1858 Apr-Nov
b. 2, f. 25	Correspondence	1859-60
b. 2, f. 26	Correspondence	1881-84
Outgoing: family		
b. 2, f. 27	Correspondence	1854
b. 2, f. 28	Correspondence	1855 Feb-Jul
b. 2, f. 29	Correspondence	1855 Aug-Dec
b. 2, f. 30	Correspondence	1856
b. 2, f. 31	Correspondence	1857 Feb-Apr
b. 2, f. 32	Correspondence	1857 May-Aug
WARTIME FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE, VOL. I		
Mexican War. Outgoing: family		
b. 3, f. 33	Correspondence and memorabilia	1846
b. 3, f. 34	Correspondence and memorabilia	1847 Jan-Feb
b. 3, f. 35	Correspondence	1847 Mar-Apr
b. 3, f. 36	Correspondence and memorabilia	1847 May-Jun
b. 3, f. 37	Correspondence and memorabilia	1847 Jul-Aug
b. 3, f. 38	Correspondence and memorabilia	1847 Sep-Dec
b. 3, f. 39	Correspondence and memorabilia	1848 Jan-Apr
b. 3, f. 40	Correspondence and memorabilia	1848 May
b. 3, f. 41	Correspondence and memorabilia	1875
b. 3, f. 42	Correspondence and memorabilia	1881
Civil War. Outgoing: family		
b. 3, f. 43	Correspondence and memorabilia	1861 Apr-May
b. 3, f. 44	Correspondence	1861 Jun
b. 3, f. 45	Correspondence and memorabilia	1861 Jul
b. 3, f. 46	Correspondence	1861 Nov-Dec
b. 3, f. 47	Correspondence and memorabilia	1862 Jan-Mar
b. 3, f. 48	Correspondence	1862 Apr

WARTIME FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE, VOL. I > Civil War. Outgoing: family (continued)

b. 3, f. 49	Correspondence	1862 May
WARTIME FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE, VOL. II		
Civil War. Outgoing: family		
b. 4, f. 50	Correspondence and memorabilia	1862 Jul-Aug
b. 4, f. 51	Correspondence	1862 Sep-Oct
b. 4, f. 52	Correspondence	1862 Nov-Dec
b. 4, f. 53	Correspondence and memorabilia	1863 Jan-Feb
b. 4, f. 54	Correspondence and memorabilia	1863 Mar-Apr
b. 4, f. 55	Correspondence and memorabilia	1863 May-Jun
b. 4, f. 56	Correspondence and memorabilia	1863 Jul-Aug
b. 4, f. 57	Correspondence and memorabilia	1863 Sep-Oct
b. 4, f. 58	Correspondence and memorabilia	1863 Nov-Dec
b. 4, f. 59	Correspondence and memorabilia	1864 Jan-Feb
b. 4, f. 60	Correspondence and memorabilia	1864 Mar-Apr
b. 4, f. 61	Correspondence and memorabilia	1864 May-Jul
MILITARY CORRESPONDENCE WITH W. W. H. DAVIS, 1861-64		
Incoming: non-family		
b. 5, f. 62	Correspondence	1861 Apr-May
b. 5, f. 63	Correspondence	1861 Jun-Jul
b. 5, f. 64	Correspondence	1861 Aug
b. 5, f. 65	Correspondence	1861 Sep
b. 5, f. 66	Correspondence	1861 Oct
b. 5, f. 67	Correspondence	1862
b. 5, f. 68	Correspondence	1863
b. 5, f. 69	Correspondence	1864-65
b. 5, f. 70	Correspondence	1871-79
b. 5, f. 71	Correspondence	1880

Series II: Autobiographical Writings, 1849-88*0.75 linear feet (2 boxes)*Series II, *Autobiographical Writings*, is arranged alphabetically.

b. 6, f. 72	"The Halls of the Montezumas": draft, holograph	n.d.
	"The Journal of a Volunteer Officer in the Mexican War by W. W. H. Davis, Captain and Aide-de-Camp of Brigadier General Cushing, 1846-48, Doylestown, Pennsylvania"	
b. 6, f. 73	Draft, holograph	1849
b. 6, f. 74-79	Draft, typescript	n.d.
b. 6, f. 80-83	Draft, typescript, carbon	n.d.
b. 7, f. 84-86	Draft, typescript, carbon	n.d.
b. 7, f. 87-88	Mexican War, description of: draft fragments	n.d.
b. 7, f. 89	"The Spaniard in New Mexico": printed version	1888
b. 7, f. 90	Texas, Annexation of: rebuttal by W. W. H. Davis to Mr. Channing's letter to Mr. Clay: draft, holograph	1849 Oct 7

Series III: Personal Papers, 1822-1921*0.5 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Series III, *Personal Papers*, is divided into four subseries: *Extra-Illustrated Life of John Davis*, *Journals*, *Ledger*, and *Miscellaneous Papers*. Within each subseries the material is arranged alphabetically.

EXTRA-ILLUSTRATED LIFE OF JOHN DAVIS

Letters to John Davis from

b. 7a, f. 90a	Wright, Silas	1866 Sep 12
b. 7a, f. 90a	Ziegler, Jacob See: Box 8, folder 90b	1841 Oct 26

Letters to W. W. H. Davis from

b. 7a, f. 90a	Belville, J.	1886 Nov 10
b. 7a, f. 90a	Carell, J. B. Encloses letter to Carell from Thomas J. Beans, 1898 Jul 26.	1898 Jul 29
b. 7a, f. 90a	Chapman, Henry	1886, 1889
b. 7a, f. 90a	Davis, John	1833 Jan 30
b. 7a, f. 90a	Kelley, William D.	1887 Jan 19
b. 7a, f. 90a	Lundy, John P.	1886 Oct 8
b. 7a, f. 90a	Paxon, Edward M.	[1887]
b. 7a, f. 90a	Wright, C. E.	1886 Nov 20

Miscellaneous

b. 7a, f. 90a	47 engravings of American historical figures, maps of battles	1822-68
b. 7a, f. 90a	42 albumen photographs of American historical figures, family members, local buildings	n.d.
b. 7a, f. 90a	Clippings of obituaries of family members, review of the Life of John Davis	1888-1921
b. 8, f. 90b	Writings: obituaries, genealogical chart of William Simpson, extract of a letter from S. S. Davis to W. W. H. Davis	n.d.

JOURNALS

b. 8, f. 91	Journal of a trip to the West	1852
b. 8, f. 92	Journal of a trip from Doylestown, Pennsylvania, to Santa Fé, New Mexico	1853
b. 8, f. 93	Private Journal of the attack on Charlestown, South Carolina, by W. W. H. Davis, Colonel, 104th Pennsylvania Volunteers, Commander of 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, 18th Army Corps	1863 Apr

LEDGER

LEDGER (continued)

b. 8, f. 94	W. W. H. Davis, agent, in account with Hockaday and Hall, stage proprietors, Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico	1854
-------------	--	------

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

b. 8, f. 95	"The Constitution of the Aztec Club of 1847 and List of Members" [pamphlet]	1896
-------------	---	------

b. 8, f. 96	"Fifth Annual Reunion of the National Association of the Veterans of the Mexican War" [pamphlet]	1878
-------------	--	------

b. 8, f. 97	Student notebook in Spanish	n.d.
-------------	---	------

Oversize, 1846-66*2 linear feet (1 box)*

Oversize is divided into two sections: *Appointments* and *Commissions*. Within each section the material is arranged chronologically.

APPOINTMENTS

b. 9, f. 98	U.S. District Attorney for the Territory of New Mexico	1853 Sep 19
b. 9, f. 99	U.S. District Attorney for the Territory of New Mexico	1854 Mar 14
b. 9, f. 100	Secretary of the Territory of New Mexico	1854 May 22

COMMISSIONS

b. 9, f. 101	First Lieutenant of Company E in the First Regiment of the Massachusetts Infantry	1846 Dec 31
b. 9, f. 102	Captain of the Doylestown Guards of the Uniformed Militia of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	1859 Jun 6
b. 9, f. 103	Captain of Company I in the 25th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Volunteers of the Uniformed Militia of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	1861 Apr 26
b. 9, f. 104	Brigadier General by Brevet, U.S. Volunteers	1866 May 22

Appendix: LIST OF SIEGE OF CHARLESTON DRAWINGS

1. "Secessionville and adjacent Rebel Works, James Island, S.C." [Hoffmann] (Box 3, folder 43)
2. "Mount Pleasant, Sullivan's Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 3, folder 47)
3. "Camp of 104th Pennsylvania Regiment, Morris Island, S.C., 1863-64" [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 50)
4. "Castle Pickney, Charleston Harbor, Morris Island, S.C., Nov. 19, 1863" [Otto Enz Rgt., Enfants Perdus, N.Y.V.] (Box 4, folder 50)
5. "Fort Ripley, floating battery, Charleston Harbor, Morris Island, Nov. 20, 1863" [Otto Enz Rgt., Enfants Perdus, N.Y.V.] (Box 4, folder 50)
6. "Quarters of Col. W. W. H. Davis, and Guard Mounting, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 53)
7. "Beacon House, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 54)
8. "View in Battery Chatfield, during Bombardment of Sumter" [Hoffmann] (Box 4, folder 55)
9. "Fort Wagner as seen From the Fifth Parallel, Morris Island, S.C." [Otto Enz Rgt., Enfants Perdus] (Box 4, folder 55)
10. "Light House Inlet, from Ordnance Yard, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 56)
11. "Opening the Trenches, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 56)
12. "The Marblehead," "The Wabash," "New Ironsides," "Monitor Lehigh, showing effect of shots," "English Blockade Runner" [Otto Enz Regt., Enfants Perdus] (Box 4, folder 56)
13. "Head Quarters of Col. Davis, Commanding U.S. Forces, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 57)
14. "Inside of Fort Wagner, Rebel Battery, Charleston, S.C., As it was left on Evacuation, Nov. 7, 1863" [Otto Enz Regt., Enfants Perdus] (Box 4, folder 57)
15. "Bursted Three hundred Pounder, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 57)
16. "Mortar Battery, in Chatfield, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 58)
17. "Fourth Bombardment of Fort Sumter, Charleston, S.C., As it appeared, November 18, 1863" [Otto Enz Regt., Enfants Perdus, N.Y.V.] (Box 4, folder 58)
18. "Interior view of Battery Purviance, Morris Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 58)
19. "Battery, North End Folly Island, S.C." [unsigned] (Box 4, folder 59)
20. "Exterior View of the Sally-port, Fort Wagner, Morris Island, S.C." [Otto Enz Regt., Enfants Perdus, N.Y.V.] (Box 4, folder 59)
21. "View from Craig Hill, Looking North, Morris Island, S.C." [Hoffmann] [on reverse, same title with date of Feby 2nd 1864] (Box 4, folder 59)
22. "Battery Marshal, Sullivan's Island, S.C." [Hoffmann] [on reverse, same title with date of January 16th 1864] (Box 4, folder 59)
23. "Fort Putnam, formerly Gregg, Morris Island, S.C." [Hoffmann] [on reverse, same title with addition: "Charleston and Rebel Fortifications in distance"] (Box 4, folder 60)
24. "Payne's Dock with Confederate Batteries in the Distance" [unsigned] [on reverse, same title with addition: "'Bull of the woods' in distance on the left, Morris Island, S.C., Feb'y 6th 1864"] (Box 4, folder 60)
25. "Fort Shaw, Morris Island, S.C." [Hoffmann] [on reverse, same title with date of Feb'y 5th 1864] (Box 4, folder 61)

26. "Fort Strong, formerly Wagner, Morris Island, S.C." [Hoffmann] [on reverse, same title with date of Feb'y 9th 1864] (Box 4, folder 61)

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Preferred Titles

Democrat (Doylestown, Pa.)
Life of John Davis
Santa Fe Gazette

Subjects

Apache Indians
Buena Vista, Battle of, Mexico, 1847
Civil service -- United States
Editors -- United States
Historians -- United States
Indians of North America -- Government relations
Indians of North America -- New Mexico
Indians of North America -- Utah
Mexican War, 1846-1848
Monterrey, Battle of, Monterrey, Mexico, 1846
Mormons -- New Mexico
Navajo Indians
Patronage, Political -- United States
Political parties -- United States
Press, Political party
Press and politics -- United States
Soldiers -- United States

Geographic Names

Charleston (S.C.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
Davidsville (Pa.) -- Description and travel
Doylestown (Pa.) -- Description and travel
Fort Sumter (Charleston, S.C.)
Maryland -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
Mexico City (Mexico) -- History -- American occupation, 1847-1848
New Mexico -- Description and travel
New Mexico -- History -- 1848-1848-1950
North Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
Pennsylvania -- Description and travel
Pennsylvania -- Politics and government -- 1861-1865
Philadelphia (Pa.) -- Description and travel
Santa Fe (N.M.) -- Description and travel
South Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
United States -- Politics and government -- 1849-1861
Veracruz (Veracruz-Llave, Mexico)
Virginia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
Washington (D.C.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
West (U.S.)
West Virginia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Genres / Formats

Albumen prints
Diaries -- United States
Drawings -- United States
Photographic prints
Photographs -- 19th century

Occupations

Lawyers -- Pennsylvania

Names

Blair, John
Collins, James L.
Cushing, Caleb, 1800-1879
Davis, Anna Carpenter, -1884
Davis, Elizabeth N.
Davis, John, 1788-1878
Davis, W. W. H. (William Watts Hart), 1820-1910
Fox, Edward J.
Longhead, Joseph Pfeiffer
Mercur, Sarah S. Davis
Meriwether, Davis
Partridge, Alden, 1785-1854
Wilson, Oliver Howard

Families

Davis family

Corporate Bodies

Democratic Party (N.M.)
Democratic Party (Pa.)
Democratic Party (U.S.)

United States. Army (Military life)
United States. Army (Officers)
United States. Department of the Treasury --
Officials and employees