



Guide to the Fort Constitution Records, 1839-1870, 1907, bulk 1846-1863

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:

Fort Constitution Records, 1839-1870, 1907, bulk 1846-1863

Repository:

New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6688
<https://www.nhhistory.org/>

Collection Number:

1990.101

Author of Finding Aid:

Unidentified; reformatted by Korrena Cowing

Creator:

Fort Constitution (N.H.)
Davidson, James, 1801-1874

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:

1 box and 1 oversized folder ; 0.42 linear feet

Abstract:

Papers of Sgt. James Davidson who was in charge of Fort Constitution in the 1830s to 1860s. The papers include military orders, ordnance records, financial accounts, enlistment papers, etc.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

The Fort Constitution Records were purchased at the Martin Willis Auction in Portsmouth on November 8, 1990.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by an unidentified person at an unknown date. The finding aid was written by an unidentified person at an unknown date and reformatted by Korrena Cowing in June 2020. This finding aid follows the standards set forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

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Preferred Citation:

Item title, Fort Constitution Records, 1990.101. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

Collection Overview

Administrative Information:

Fort Constitution was built on the remains of the earthworks of the Revolutionary War Fort William and Mary on Fort Point in New Castle, NH. It was completed in 1808. During the time that Colonel Walbach was commander of the Fort, from 1808-1821, he built a tower to guard the beaches to the South from landing parties. During the War of 1812 and again as the Civil War began, the walls were repaired but as the Fort saw little action, it gradually fell into disrepair. See the pamphlet "History of Fort Constitution and Walbach Tower" by Thomas B. Frost, 1862, for further details.

James Davidson came to Ft. Constitution in 1821. On September 27, 1829 he married Ann T. Amazeen, a daughter of Capt. Christopher Amazeen of New Castle. In 1835, he went with his regiment, the 3rd U.S. Artillery to Florida to put down the Seminole uprising. From there he was assigned to New York and Maine. Davidson resigned in December of 1846 to fight in the

Mexican War. He returned to the company in 1848 at Connecticut and on July 30, 1852 was transferred back to Fort Constitution. He was in charge of a vacant post until April 1861 when Gov. Ichabod Goodwin commissioned him Captain in the Second New Hampshire Regiment and detached the garrison to the Fort. For the next two years, he helped train many men in different companies who were then sent to the front. In March of 1863, Captain Sales was put in command and Davidson returned to his original position as Ordnance Sergeant.

Collection Scope and Content Note:

The bulk of the Fort Constitution Records, 1839-1870, 1907, reflect the career of James Davidson as Ordnance Sergeant and temporary Captain at Fort Constitution. There are a few papers from Davidson's early career, including enlistment papers, statement of service, documents regarding property he owned, his quarters, and a theft at his house. Series one contains various types of financial records such as ordnance, treasury, fuel, housekeeping, and quartermaster accounts. Series two includes orders, muster rolls, and court-martial papers. There are also enlistment papers for 1861 and morning reports from Captains Dunbar, Begley, and Gillis.

Arrangement:

The materials in this collection are organized into the following series:

Series 1. Financial records, 1845-1870

Series 2. Enlistments and administrative records, 1839-1861, 1907

Contents List

Box 1

Folder 1 Sgt. James Davidson personal and professional papers, 1842-1874

Series 1. Financial records, 1845-1870

Extent: 10 folders

Scope and Content: Series one contains various types of financial records from 1845 to 1870, including receipts, treasury accounts and audits, statements, housekeeping records, and quartermaster store records.

Box 1

Folder 2 Ordnance records, 1846-1869
Folder 3 Post treasury accounts, 1851-1853
Folder 4 Receipts, 1853-1862
Folder 5 Summary statements, 1853-1863
Folder 6 Quartermaster stores records, 1853-1863
Folder 7 Fuel accounts, 1857-1869
Folder 8 Treasury audits, 1855-1864
Folder 9 Quarterly accounts current, 1857-1861
Folder 10 Housekeeping records, 1859-1870

Series 2. Enlistments and administrative records, 1839-1861, 1907

Extent: 18 folders

Scope and Content: Series two contains administrative records including military orders, muster rolls, and court martial papers. There are also enlistment papers, organized alphabetically, for 1861 and morning reports from Captains Dunbar, Gillis, and Begley. The materials in this series date from 1839 to 1861, with one army manual dated 1907.

Box 1

Folder 11	Military orders, 1839-1865
Folder 12	Muster rolls, 1848
Folder 13	Court martials, 1849-1868
Folder 14	Enlistment miscellaneous, 1855-1865
Folder 15	Enlistments: A, 1861
Folder 16	Enlistments: B-C, 1861
Folder 17	Enlistments: D-F, 1861
Folder 18	Enlistments: G-H, 1861
Folder 19	Enlistments: J-L, 1861
Folder 20	Enlistments: M-O, 1861
Folder 21	Enlistments: P-T, 1861
Folder 22	Enlistments: W-Y, 1861
Folder 23	Morning reports, 1861
Folder 24	Morning reports, Capt. Dunbar, Winnicunet [Winnacunnet] Guards, 1861
Folder 25	Morning reports, Capt. Gillis, 1861
Folder 26	Morning reports, Capt. Bruce & Lt. Begley, 1861
Folder 27	Army manuals, 1855, 1907
Folder 28	Envelopes, 1857, undated

Separated Materials:

The following materials have been moved to Oversized Manuscripts Box 'F' due to their size:

- Accounts of the Post Fund of Fort Constitution, 1850-1853 [13 items]
- Muster Roll of Steward, Wardmaster, Cooks, Nurses and Matrons, attached to the Hospital of Fort Constitution, 1849 February 28 [1 item]
- Post Return of Fort Constitution, 1850 December, 1852 February-March [3 items]
- Quarterly returns of the Quartermaster and abstracts of purchases, 1854-1863 [12 items]
- Quartermaster and subsistence accounts, 1854-1862 [7 items]

Subject Terms

People:

- Amazeen family
- Begley, J.R.
- Bruce, John N.
- Davidson, James, 1801-1874
- Dunbar, C.F.
- Gillis, G.N.

Organizations:

- Fort Constitution (N.H.)
- United States. Army

Subjects:

Military
Recruiting and enlistment
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

Locations:

New Castle, NH

Occupations:

Armed Forces--Officers
Soldiers

Related Materials

The New Hampshire Historical Society has numerous materials related to Fort Constitution. A sample of these materials is listed below.

Archives

Fort Constitution Papers, 1990.101
Fort Constitution, N.H., plan showing land adjoining the U.S. Reservation on westerly boundary, 1898, 912.778b N533ft
Records, 1981.048 (m)

Library

Frost, Thomas Bell. *History of Fort Constitution and Walbach Tower, Portsmouth Harbor, N.H.* Portsmouth, N.H.: C. W. Brewster & Son, printers, 1865. Call number: 977.8b N533co

New Hampshire. Dept. of Resources and Economic Development. *Fort Constitution (Site of Fort William and Mary), New Castle, New Hampshire.* Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire. Dept. of Resources. Division of Parks, 1975. Call number: 355.7 N532c

Museum

Badge, 1916, 1990.074.10
Painting, Fort Constitution, circa 1910, 1990.074.02