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JAMES FOSTER AND FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE
(Mss. 2184)
Inventory

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
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Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

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SUMMARY

Size.	110 items and 1 manuscript volume
Geographic locations.	Natchez, Miss.; Tupelo, Miss.; New Orleans, La.; Richmond, Va.; Ashland, Va.; Fredericksburg, Va.; Williamsburg, Va.; Alexandria, Va.; Chancellorsville, Va.; Atlanta, Ga.; Barnesville, Ga.; Memphis, Tenn.; Chattanooga, Tenn.
Inclusive dates.	1861-1866
Bulk dates.	N/A
Language.	English
Summary.	Letters from James Foster's sons during their service in the Confederate States Army in several Civil War battles including First Bull Run, Shiloh, Gettysburg, Antietam, Chattanooga, and the Peninsula and Atlanta campaigns.
Organization.	Chronological
Restrictions on access.	If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm.
Related collections.	James Foster and Family Papers, Mss. 1705 James Foster Medical Record Books, Mss. 1403
Copyright.	Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
Citation.	James Foster Family Correspondence, Mss. 2184, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack location(s).	B:41
Also available on:	Microfilm 5735, Series B, Reels 5-6

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Isaac Gaillard Foster and John Sanderson Foster were the sons of James Foster, a medical doctor of Natchez, Mississippi. The family resided at Hermitage Plantation near Natchez, and both sons served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. John S. Foster died of wounds received at Brandy Station during the Gettysburg campaign, 1863; Isaac G. Foster served in Company B of the 10th Mississippi Regiment and died in 1864.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

John Sanderson Foster's letters from New Orleans (1861) relate his views on the secession of Louisiana and describe his life as a law student in New Orleans. Letters from his army training camp near Memphis, Tennessee, describe his captain, William T. Martin, and his unit, called Adams Troop. Letters from various camps in Virginia describe camp life; a railroad wreck of cars bound for Richmond; a hospital in Ashland; the efficiency, membership and size of the Adams Troop; picket duty; the activities of couriers; Confederate currency; and medical attention offered by women in Richmond to Confederate soldiers. Battles and skirmishes mentioned in John S. Foster's letters include the First Battle of Bull Run, the Battle of Williamsburg, the Seven Days Battles of Mechanicsville (Ellison's Mills), First Cold Harbor, the Second Battle of Bull Run, the Antietam Campaign, fighting at Fredericksburg, Virginia, the Battle of Chancellorsville, and the Gettysburg Campaign. The formation of the Jefferson Davis Legion from the Adams Troop and other companies from Mississippi and Alabama and the activities of the Washington Artillery are described.

Letters of Isaac Gaillard Foster describe his company's retreat from Corinth during the Shiloh Campaign, conditions during the Chattanooga Campaign, and at Camp Cleburne, Georgia (1863), the arrest of women at Natchez for carrying on contraband trade (1864), and fighting in the Atlanta Campaign. Confederate officers described include Patrick Cleburne, Leonidas Polk, and Joseph E. Johnston.

Miscellaneous papers include letters and items relating to the deaths and burials of John S. and Isaac G. Foster, lists of things made for soldiers, a military pass issued to James Foster, an oath of allegiance taken by Kate Foster to the Confederate States (1865), photographs of members of the Foster family, and a narrative description of John S. and Isaac G. Foster.

A diary kept by Isaac G. Foster (May-Aug. 1864) records his experiences during the Atlanta Campaign, detailing troop movements, duties, casualties, and skirmishes near Atlanta. Comments on Confederate military leadership and on the death of John S. Foster are included.

LIST OF SERIES

Series I, John Sanderson Foster Correspondence, 1861-1863

Series II, Isaac Gaillard Letters, 1862-1864

Series III, Family Miscellany, 1864-1866

Series IV, Photographs, 1862, undated

Series V, Manuscript volume, 1864

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

[Correspondence is arranged chronologically within the collection. See container list for detailed description reflecting physical arrangement]

Series I, John Sanderson Foster Correspondence, 1861-1863

Two letters from James Foster, at Hermitage Plantation, to his son, John Sanderson Foster, a law student in New Orleans, state his views on immediate secession and the need for the South to present an “undivided front” (Jan. 7, 1861); he also seeks approval for hiring William Cannon as the overseer of Spring Bayou Plantation (Jan. 22, 1861). Letters from John, in New Orleans, to his father, state his own views on secession and express hope for a more lasting Union to arise, but also convey his willingness to serve his state (Jan. 11, 1861). He also writes to his grandmother, mentioning his poor living conditions as a law student, the meeting of the Louisiana Secession Convention, and “no desire” to fight because of a “few designing [sic] politicians” as Jefferson Davis and “men of that class” (Jan. 30, 1861).

John S. Foster also writes to his family from a camp near Memphis and comments on the strict discipline and training of Adams Troop under William T. Martin, Confederate captain, and the kindness of Memphis citizens in giving produce (June 16 and 19, 1861). Eighteen letters from John Foster, from various camps in Virginia, describe to his family the hardships of camp life including cold weather, rain, lack of blankets, and inadequate clothing. He also mentions troop movements, events of battles, morale of soldiers and civilians and criticizes the decisions of officers (June-November 1861). Later letters concern the Peninsular Campaign, promotions and other news from the army, outbreaks of diseases, and eyewitness accounts of battles, including the Battle of Mechanicsville, the Second Battle of Bull Run, and the Antietam Campaign (May-December 1862).

Other topics in his letters to his family include war rumors, the home front in Adams County, and the shortage of horses, food, and clothing. He also describes the destruction of Vicksburg, Shreveport, and the Texas Railroad in Madison Parish, which deprived the Confederate Army of 5,000 bushels of salt daily (Jan. 1 and 20, 1863), and states that the Confederate private bears the full expense of the war excluding arms and ammunition (Jan. 12, 1863). He describes William Henry Seward, U. S. Secretary of State, as possessing the “meaness of the Devil with a great share of his tallent” (May 21, 1863), and calls Lincoln “a fool” with ideas of subjugation and emancipation to which South will never yield (Feb. 20, Apr. 14, 1863). He expresses confidence in General Braxton Bragg and comments on the hardships of picket duty along the Rappannock River (Jan. 20, 27, and Feb. 20, 1863). He likens the Confederate Navy on the Mississippi to the *Monitor* – “it rises and falls,” and mentions ships being built on the Yazoo and Red Rivers (Apr. 13, 1863). In a letter to his father, he urges the evacuation of slaves from Spring Bayou Plantation for security and the hanging of runaway slaves when caught (Apr. 13 and May 21, 1863). Foster also mentions fighting near Fredericksburg, the defeat of Joseph Hooker by Gen. Lee, and the death of Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville. He comments on the efficiency of Confederate general William Barksdale’s Mississippi Brigade at the Battle of Fredericksburg and

the successful entry of Union general George Stoneman into Confederate lines during the Chancellorsville Campaign (May 12 and 31, 1863). He mentions preparations for the Gettysburg Campaign (May 12, 21, 1863) and gives eyewitness accounts of the Brandy Station Battle (June 13, 1863).

An unsigned message stating that a member of the family would visit John Sanderson (Sept. 15, 1863) is followed by a letter home from James Foster in Culpepper County, Virginia. He mentions a skirmish at Culpepper Court House and the removal of his badly wounded son, John, to a private home about 10 miles away. He comments on the kind treatment afforded his son by a Federal doctor (Sept. 21, 1863).

A letter from H. Bixby to John Foster predicts Southern victory but economic ruin for the country. He mentions preparations made by the United States Army to take Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and states that General Martin was almost killed in the streets by his own horse (Feb. 5, 1863). A notation on a later copy of the letter states that Bixby died in Adams County on April 8, 1863, and John Foster died September 28, 1863 from wounds during the Gettysburg Campaign.

Series II, Isaac Gaillard Letters, 1862-1864

A letter to his father from Isaac Gaillard Foster near Tupelo, in Lee County, Mississippi tells of all his clothing burning in the retreat from Corinth. He states that Confederate general Sterling Price is "the darling of the army" and is treated as a companion and friend (June 10, 1862). Two letters to his family mention that he is on picket duty with Captain Inge's company at Bridgeport, Alabama because he did not have the means to join the cavalry. He describes the hanging of his uncle's wife, a Confederate civilian, because she refused to tell Federals his whereabouts (Aug. 16, 1863), and a postscript lists those killed, wounded, and captured at Brandy Station (Aug. 21, 1863).

A letter from Missionary Ridge, near Chattanooga, Tennessee, to his sister discusses the death of their brother, John Sanderson Foster, hardships experienced, particularly from the cold, and he describes in detail the encampment of the two opposing armies during the Chattanooga Campaign (Nov. 14, 1863).

Letters home from Isaac G. Foster advise his sisters how to treat Yankee invaders (Feb. 11 and Mar. 29, 1864), comment on the health, spirits, and food of the troops (Mar. 15 and Apr. 17, 1864), and express resentment over the arrest of ladies in Natchez for conducting contraband trade (Apr. 17, 1864). In other letters to family, written from a camp near Marietta, Georgia, Foster discusses rations, troop movements, and fighting in the Atlanta Campaign at New Hope Church, and Resaca, Georgia (June 10, 17, and 23, 1864), and states that General Patrick Cleburne's "gallant division" forced the enemy back (June 10, 1864).

He describes Leonidas Polk at the time of his death at Pine Mountain as “a good soldier,” with “virtues of a Christian,” (June 17, 1864), and in a letter to his father, Foster expresses confidence in Joseph E. Johnston, though forced back by William T. Sherman in the Atlanta Campaign, and comments on “barbarities” of the Union Army (June 13, 1864). He describes battles around Atlanta, Confederate casualties, heavy fighting, and Stoneman’s raiders (July 30, Aug. 2-3, 10, 22, and 30, 1863).

A letter from W. Rhasa-Parker to Miss Chase states that Isaac Gaillard Foster was mortally wounded in battle on August 31, 1864 and died the next day.

Series III, Family Miscellany, 1864-1866

Other family letters primarily pertain to the deaths and burials of John Sanderson Foster and Isaac Gaillard Foster; they address the removal of the remains of John Sanderson from the Confederate Cemetery at Culpepper Court House to Natchez (September 1864).

Papers include lists of supplies such as candles and clothing made for soldiers (undated), a war pass issued to Dr. James Foster by Headquarters, Army of the Potomac (Sept. 30, 1863), and an oath of allegiance taken by Kate Foster to the Confederate States Government (May 5, 1865).

Two letters to Katie Foster from Jennie at Oakland College, near Rodney in Jefferson County, Mississippi, comment on local news, Federal visits to the College, and the plunder and arrest of citizens (Aug. 29, 1861 and June 28, 1863).

Also included is a character analysis of John S. and Isaac G. Foster based somewhat on their letters and the diary of Isaac G. Foster, most likely written by some member of the family (undated).

Series IV, Photographs, 1862, undated

The collection contains a photograph of John S. Foster, ca. 1862. A notation states that John was killed near Atlanta, but according to letters John died in Virginia, near Culpepper Court House. Also included are two photographs of Sinah Foster (undated), two photographs of Katie Foster (undated), and a photograph of Lizzie Foster (undated).

Series V, Manuscript volume, 1864

The collection also contains a diary of Isaac Gaillard Foster, inscribed: “I. Gaillard Foster (Natchez, Miss.); Co. ‘B,’ 10th Miss. Rgt., Tucker’s Brigade, Hindman’s Division, Hood’s Corps.” Within the diary, Foster comments as a participant in the Atlanta Campaign from

Dalton to the outskirts of Atlanta, Georgia, on troop movements, hardships of picket duty, casualties, engagements with the enemy in the vicinity of Resaca, Cassville, New Hope Church, Marietta, on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, and describes the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain (June 27), and the Battles around Atlanta (July 20-28).

Foster expresses confidence in Joseph E. Johnston, Confederate general, entry; monthly summary (May 1864), and states Johnston's removal considered "ill-timed" and "uncalled for," entry (July 18). He believes Hiram B. Granbury's (Confederate general) brigade did its duty "nobly," mentions Patrick R. Cleburne's (Confederate general) "gallant division," (May 27); and regrets the death of General Leonidas Polk, "a Christian & officer," (June 14).

Other prominent Civil War names mentioned in the diary include John Bell Hood, William T. Sherman, William J. Hardee, Joseph Hooker, J. E. B. Stuart, Joseph Wheeler, Samuel Wragg Ferguson, William Tucker, and Arthur Manigault.

Entries Aug. 31 through Sept. 2 comment on the wounding and death of Foster.

CROSS REFERENCES

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
Alabama--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Women.	1863	Aunt hanged by Federals for refusal to disclose whereabouts of husband. I. Gaillard letter, Aug. 16, 1863. [Alabama]
Antietam, Battle of, Md., 1862.	1862	Eyewitness account of march into Maryland, and demonstration of Union feeling at Frederick. Sept. 23 and fragment, September. 2 John S. Foster letters.
Atlanta Campaign, 1864.	1863-1864	16 letters and diary of Isaac G. Foster describe Confederate maneuvers, retreat, and comment on encounters with the enemy, fortifications, leaders, hardships of picket duty, health, and spirits of troops, rations, and casualties.
Bull Run, 1st Battle of, Va., 1861.	1861	Eyewitness account of battle; victory over "Grand Army" should dispel any fear of defeat. 5 John S. Foster letters, Aug. 2, 6, 15, and 19, and Sept. 3.
Bull Run, 2nd Battle of, Va., 1862.	1862	Eyewitness account. John S. Foster letter, Sept. 23.
Chattanooga, Battle of, Chattanooga, Tenn., 1863.	1863	Detailed description of encampment of two opposing armies, hardships, and picket duty. 2 Isaac G. Foster letters, Oct. 11 and Nov. 14.
Christmas--Virginia.	1862	No prospect of a good Christmas; lack of sugar or molasses for a cake and only wheat flour and no corn meal. John S. Foster letter, Dec. 11.
Confederate States of America. Army. Jeff Davis Legion.	1861-1863	Comments on its organization, election of officers, size, reputation, and participation in the Battle of Williamsburg, the Peninsular Campaign including the Seven Days Battles of Mechanicsville (Ellison Mills) and First Cold Harbor (Gaines' Mill), the Second Battle of Bull Run, the Antietam Campaign, and the Gettysburg Campaign. 31 letters by John S. Foster.

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
Confederate States of America. Army. Jeff Davis Legion. Company A.	1861	Adams Troop organization, training, leadership, and efficiency; encampment at Memphis en route to Virginia; participation in the First Battle of Bull Run, and absorption into the Jefferson Davis Legion. 15 letters by John S. Foster; June 16, 19, and 29, Aug. 2, 6, 15, 19, Sept. 3 and 22, Oct. 11, 14, 22, and 31, and Nov. 4 and 14.
Confederate States of America. Army. Mississippi Cavalry Battalion, 2nd.	1861	Another name for Jefferson Davis Legion. John Sanderson Foster letter, Nov. 19.
Confederate States of America. Army. Washington Artillery Battalion (New Orleans, La.)	1861-1862	Noted for “precision and rapidity of firing” near Alexandria, Sept. 16, 1861; distinguished itself by “mowing down the enemy” at Fredericksburg, Dec. 8 and 11, 1862. 2 John S. Foster letters; 1 letter from “Bud.”
Confederate States of America. Navy.	1863	Like the <i>Monitor</i> —“it rises and falls.” John S. Foster letter, Apr. 13.
Connor, William G.	1861-1862	Confederate officer, Adams Troop, later Jefferson Davis Legion; popular, strict, but gentlemanly. Aug. 2, Oct. 14, 22, Nov. 14, 1861; accorded rough treatment by Federals as Confederate prisoner of war captured at Williamsburg, May 13, 18, Aug. 9, 1862; promotion to major of 3 Mississippi companies, Dec. 4, 1862. 8 John S. Foster letters.
Davis, Jefferson, 1808-1889.	1861	John S. Foster lacks desire to fight because of a few designing politicians like Davis and “men of that class.” Jan. 30.
Epidemics--Confederate States of America.	1862	Comments on outbreak of typhoid, measles, smallpox, and dysentery; cars carry hundreds back daily from front. 5 John S. Foster letters, Sept. 22, Oct. 11 and 14, Dec. 8, 1862.
Foster, Isaac G. (Issac Gaillard), d. 1864--Diaries.	1864	Private comments on troop movements from Dalton to Atlanta, enemy encounters, casualties, hardships of picket duty, and military leaders in Atlanta Campaign. May-August.

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
Foster, James, d. 1880.	1861, 1863	Personal opposition to immediate secession and divided Southern front; selection of overseer for Spring Bayou Plantation; medical care of son wounded in Gettysburg campaign. 3 letters by: Jan. 7 and 22, 1861; Sept. 21, 1863; war pass from Headquarters, Army of the Potomac. Sept. 30, 1863.
Fraternization--Virginia--Fairfax County.	1861	Captains of both armies agree not to shoot pickets; Federal officer gave Confederate officer as many cigars as he could smoke. John S. Foster letter, Sept. 3.
Frémont, John Charles, 1813-1890.	1861	Assisted South by his emancipation proclamation. John S. Foster letter, Oct. 14.
Gettysburg Campaign, 1863.	1863, undated	Preparations for campaign; eyewitness account of Brandy Station Battle. 3 John S. Foster letters, May 12 and 21, June 13; casualties at Brandy Station Battle listed by Isaac Gaillard Foster. Aug. 21; medical care of John S. Foster from wounds at Brandy Station, and subsequent death. James Foster letter, Sept. 21; narrative, undated
Illinois--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Prisoners and prisons.	1864	Simeon Chase states clothing, books, and as many letters as friends will write can be received at Camp Douglas, Illinois; list of things sent by Foster family to Chase. Dec. 31, 1864, and undated.
Jackson, Stonewall, 1824-1863.	1862-1863	Described as “a man of energy” who “overcomes insurmountable difficulties,” June 10 and Aug. 9, 1862; death of Jackson, May 12, 1863. 3 letters by John S. Foster.
Martin, William Thompson, 1823-1910.	1861-1862	Overbearing, insulting, vain, lacks gentility, “a first rate overseer,” and strict disciplinarian; more affable since promoted to brigadier general; visits Natchez for recruitment. 11 John S. Foster letters: June 16, Aug. 2, 6, 19, Oct. 22, Nov. 14, Dec. 8, 1861; Oct. 21, 31, Nov. 13, 1862; and ca. 1862.

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
McClellan, George Brinton, 1826-1885.	1862	Removal because of military failures causes dissatisfaction in Union army. 4 letters by John S. Foster, June 10, July 6 and 16, Dec. 4.
Military hospitals-- Confederate States of America.	1861-1862	Filth and stench sufficient to keep self out of hospital. Ashland, Aug. 2; transfer from hospital to hotel arranged by Dr. Farrar. Richmond, Oct. 11. 2 John S. Foster letters.
Mississippi--History-- Civil War, 1861-1865-- African Americans.		Urges firm treatment by family of runaway slaves, and suggests evacuation of slaves from Spring Bayou Plantation, July 16 and Dec. 4, 1862; May 21, 1863. (Adams County) 4 John S. Foster letters; complaint by Jennie of theft of clothing by washwoman. June 28, 1863. (Jefferson County)
Money--Confederate States of America.	1861	Only "shinplasters," no gold and silver circulate in Virginia; all specie in banks; no "small paper" currency in Mississippi; those who hold money will suffer when war is over. Nov. 14. John S. Foster letter.
Natchez (Miss.)--History-- Civil War, 1861-1865-- Women.	1861-1862, 1864	Stage tableau as Confederate benefit; make shoes and weave cloth; carry on contraband trade; suffer theft of clothing; send gifts to soldiers and prisoners of war; advised on treatment of Yankee invaders. 9 items including 2 John S. Foster letters, Nov. 29, 1861 and Dec. 4, 1862, and 3 I. Gaillard Foster letters, Feb. 11, Mar. 29, and Apr. 17, 1864.
Oakland College (Miss.)	1861, 1863	Local news, visits by Federals, plunder and arrest of citizens, theft of clothing by washwoman. 2 letters by Jennie: Aug. 29, 1861, and June 28, 1863.
Otey, James Hervey, 1800-1863.	1861	Criticizes service as "most too Episcopalian." June 16. John S. Foster letter.
Peninsular Campaign, 1862.	1862	Eyewitness accounts. John S. Foster letters. May 13 and 18, June 10.

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
Polk, Leonidas, 1806-1864.	1864	Described at time of death as “a good soldier” with “virtues of a Christian.” Isaac G. Foster letter, June 17.
Price, Sterling, 1809-1867.	1862	Regarded as “the darling of the army” and treated as a companion and friend. Isaac G. Foster letter, June 10.
Railroad accidents--Virginia.	1861	Eyewitness account of wreck of cars en route to Richmond. June 29.
Richmond (Va.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Women.	1861	Medical care given generously by Richmond women. John S. Foster letters, Oct. 11 and 14, 1864.
Salt--Louisiana--Madison Parish.	1863	Destruction of Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Texas Railroad deprives Confederate Army of 5,000 bushels of salt daily. John S. Foster letters, Jan. 1 and 20.
Secession--Southern States.	1861	Agreement in views opposing immediate secession expressed by father and son. James and John S. Foster letters, Jan. 7 and 30.
Seven Days' Battles, Va., 1862.	1862	Eyewitness account of battle at Mechanicsville (Ellison's Mills), July 6, and First Cold Harbor (Gaines Mill), July 16 and 17. 3 John S. Foster letters.
Seward, William Henry, 1801-1872.	1863	Described as having the “meanness of the Devil with a great share of his talent.” John S. Foster letter, May 21.
Shiloh, Battle of, Tenn., 1862.	1862	All clothing burned in retreat. Isaac G. Foster letter, June 10.
Soldiers--Confederate States of America--Correspondence.	1862-1864	18 letters to family from Isaac Gaillard Foster, of Company B, 10 th Mississippi Regiment, in Tucker's Brigade, comment on retreat from Corinth in Shiloh Campaign, describe encampments of opposing armies at Missionary Ridge during Chattanooga Campaign, discuss retreat in Atlanta Campaign from Dalton to outskirts of Atlanta; 1 request for payment of wages by Foster. Aug. 18, 1864.

Subject	Date	Description of relevant documents
Tennessee--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--War work.	1861	Close and calculating, but Memphis citizens give produce freely to soldiers. John S. Foster letter, June 19.
Virginia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--African Americans.	1862-1863	Dismissal of African Americans from "mess," Apr. 13, 1863 (Virginia)
Virginia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Chaplains.	1861	"A plain but educated man" who delivered lecture and not a sermon on Psalm 1. Sept. 22, John S. Foster letter.
Virginia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Prisoners and prisons.	1861, 1862	Most prisoners comment on dissatisfaction and state they "fight for a livelihood." Nov. 19; William G. Connor reports on Federal treatment following exchange after capture at Williamsburg. May 13 and 18, 1862.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder(s)</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
B:41	1	1-4	Correspondence, 1861-1866, undated
		5-6	Family Miscellany, 1864-1866
		7	Photographs, 1862, undated
		--	Diary, 1864
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