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**LAUDERDALE FAMILY PAPERS
1812-1909**

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INTRODUCTION

The Lauderdale Family Papers, 1812-1909, predominately concern the life of Major William Lauderdale and two of his sons, James and Samuel. The papers were given to Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred A. Lauderdale, Hartsville, Tennessee.

The materials in this finding aid measure about 150 items. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Lauderdale Family Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Lauderdale Family Papers (1812-1909) contain correspondence, military records, legal documents, and genealogical data of Major William Lauderdale's family. Included in the correspondence are five valuable Mexican War letters written by Samuel Winslow Lauderdale (William's son) to his brother, James. A highly descriptive writer, Samuel, on June 13, 1846, described his crowded steamboat trip from Nashville to New Orleans. Later, on July 13, he told of the army's movements toward Matamoras. Camp life is also sketched as he wrote of the healthy elevation; water "as good...as the Mississippi; and watermelons and milk brought in by Mexicans each morning."

From Tampico (January 26, 1847), he was placed under the command of General Gideon Pillow and expected to leave for Vera Cruz momentarily because of the "sickly season [that was] coming on very soon". By February 25, however, he was still in Tampico expecting "a speedy descent" upon Vera Cruz. His letter written from Vera Cruz on April 2, burst forth with his unrestrained patriotic emotions as he opened with: "Glad tidings. Our arms have once more triumphed and the Gibraltar of Mexico is ours..Suffice it to say that a more splendid nor bloodless victory ever adorned the historic page." From his vantage point, he gave an eyewitness account of the battle as the Americans attacked with "banners flying" and "music beating" from the first bombardment to the surrender.

One other letter written by R.B. Alexander to Mr. Cyrus Hart, Hartsville, Tennessee, dated April 22, 1847, described the battle of Sieragorda [Cerro Gordo]. He said it was "awful to go over the battleground the next day and see the carnage." He thought the fighting was over and he would soon be home.

The military records include the original commissions given to William Lauderdale when he served under Andrew Jackson in the War of 1812. With the uprising of the Florida Seminoles in the late 1830s, Jackson induced Lauderdale to raise five companies of Volunteers in 1837 to serve under General Thomas S. Jessup. The original copy of Army Order, No. 79, Army of the South, Fort Jupiter, February 17, 1838, is available in this collection. It directs Lauderdale to take horses to Tampa Bay. During this trip, Lauderdale founded the post which became known as Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Among the other correspondents are J.L. Dillard; James S. Lauderdale, a cousin who wrote from Texas near the turn of the century; and J. Dillard Saunders, a Confederate soldier writing from his imprisonment on Johnson's Island.

Various wills, indentures, and an extensive genealogical sketch compiled by Mrs. Alfred A. Lauderdale, round out this valuable collection touching upon Tennessee's earliest period.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Major William Lauderdale

William Lauderdale (-1838) was the oldest son of James Lauderdale, who migrated to Sumner County, Tennessee, from Virginia about 1795. His birth date is unknown. As a captain of the 15th Tennessee Regiment, he fought under Andrew Jackson in the War of 1812. Later, as a Major he played an important role in the overthrow of the Creek Indians.

With the uprising of the Seminole Indians, Lauderdale, in 1837, organized five companies of volunteers and marched overland from Tennessee to Florida. During the Florida engagements, Lauderdale erected a blockhouse on the southeast coast, which today is the site of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. After being mustered out of service at New Orleans, Lauderdale died of malaria fever enroute home near Baton Rouge in 1838. There is no record of where he was buried.

Major Lauderdale had seven children, three by his first wife, Polly B. Hart, and four by his second wife, Helen Biblo.

James Hart Lauderdale

James Hart Lauderdale (1822-1909) has the major portion of documents in this collection. His wife was Darthula Barbara Goodall (1826-1901.)

Samuel Winslow Lauderdale

Samuel Winslow Lauderdale (1826-1847) never married. He lost his life during the Mexican War at the Battle of Cerro Gordo. Fortunately, five of his letters have been preserved and are included in this collection. They cover his departure from Nashville and his encampments at Loretto, Tampico, and Vera Cruz.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Correspondence – Outgoing – Alexander - Head
2. Correspondence – Outgoing – Lauderdale
3. Correspondence – Outgoing – Lauderdale
4. Correspondence – Outgoing – Saunders - Watton
5. Genealogical material, memorials, and obituaries
6. Legal documents – Deeds and surveys – 1821-1878
7. Legal documents – Guardianship papers – 1844-1870
8. Legal documents – Indentures – 1817-1838
9. Legal documents – Wills – 1822-1909
10. Military records – 1812-1838
11. Miscellaneous material – passes, promissory notes, receipts, etc.
12. Sketches – Mexican War

NAME INDEX

This is a name index of only the correspondence in the Lauderdale Family Papers, together with the dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. The figures in parentheses denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refer to the folder in which the material is to be found.

- Alexander, R.B., to Cyrus Hart, 1847, re: speaks of the progress of the war against Mexico; death of Hart's nephew near Cerro Gordo; hope to be home soon, 1
- Anderson, W.P., [William Preston], to William Lauderdale, 1825, re: have not received his letter but would appreciate delivery of check, 1
- Armstrong, R. [Robert], to William Lauderdale, n.d., re: asking help in winning election, 1
- Boyers, T., to James Lauderdale, 1847, re: expressing regret on the death of James' brother, 1
- Burnett, Thompson & Law, to G.W. Chipman, 1909, re: payment of past claim of James Lauderdale, now deceased, 1
- DeBow, Arch M., to DeRo Lauderdale, 1869, re: news of friends; advantages of living in Union City, Tennessee, 1
- Dillard, Helen, to daughter, Darthula Lauderdale, 1846, re: family news; good crop; good school for children, 1
- Dillard, J.D., to James Darthula Lauderdale (2), 1856-1874, re: purchase of land and need for money; death of Dero, 1
- Head, J.M., to James H. Lauderdale, 1879, re: help in business matters and purchase of home, 1
- Lauderdale, Jennie E., to J.H. Lauderdale, 1911, re: requesting information on the Lauderdale family, 2
- Lauderdale, James S., to Cousin, James H. Lauderdale (6), 1886-1904, re: family history and genealogy; progress in Texas; weather conditions and crops in Texas, 2
- Lauderdale, Samuel, to brother, James H. Lauderdale (5), 1846-1847, re: news of the Mexican War, 3
- Lauderdale, William, to Dear Cousin, 1887, re: genealogy of the family, 3
- Saunders, J. Dillard, to Mrs. Lauderdale, 1864, re: difficulties of prison life at Johnson's Island; desiring news from family, 4
- Smith, N.D., to James H. Lauderdale, 1847, re: sending word of the death of Samuel Lauderdale at Cerro Gordo, 4
- Watton, W.B., to James H. Lauderdale, 1897, re: sending badge commemorating the reunion of Mexican War veterans at Nashville, 4

Notes on Lauderdale Papers

Correspondence

J. Dillard Saunders to Mrs. Lauderdale, Johnson's Island, June 2, 1864.

Saunders, imprisoned, told something of prison life having received a communication from Mrs. Lauderdale for some assistance. For him, a box vegetables, cheese, and butter would be "quite acceptable" as well as "a small amount of money." Asked her to inform "Grandpa" of his imprisonment. Wanted to hear from family since he had had no word since imprisonment.

Samuel W. Lauderdale to brother James. Encamped at a warehouse near New Orleans, June 13, 1846.

Samuel departed Nashville on June 3, and after crowded trip of seven days arrived safely at destination. 300 men on board but he enjoyed trip pretty well. Expected to leave for Point Isabel about 16th or 18th. The three companies which came down from Nashville were Nashville Blues, Harrison Guards, and 10th Legion. General Gaines recalled to Washington to answer charges preferred against him.

Samuel W. Lauderdale to brother James. Encamped at Loretta, three miles above Barretra, July 13, 1846.

Left Brazos Santiago on July 7 and came 40 miles above mouth of Rio Grande, expecting to move directly on to Matamoras. On statement of Col. Anderson, however, how appeared the movement from mouth of river was unauthorized by General Taylor. Believed six months enlistees would be sent on ahead and those in for 12 months (himself included) would be held back. Col. Peyton told him that no fighting for him until the fall, if then, and opposition in Monterey was greatly exaggerated. Scarcity of provisions likely main reason for not sending them to Matamoras immediately. His present encampment was healthier and more elevated than Brazos Santiago "with as good water as the Mississippi." Mexicans brought in milk and watermelons each morning. There were a few cases of dysentery, three or four deaths, but he never enjoyed better health.

Samuel W. Lauderdale to brother James, Tampico, January 26, 1847.

Samuel had arrived within 10 miles of Tampico on January 19. He was under command of General Pillow. He did not know when they would leave for Vera Cruz. Tampico was a very well fortified place. Thought they would reach Vera Cruz in short time because the "sickly season coming on very soon." Indian troops and regiment of regulars had arrived that day. Had no idea what General Scott's movements would be. Much preferred General Taylor. "Remember that I will die like a soldier fighting for the injured rights of my country."

Samuel W. Lauderdale to brother James, Tampico, February, 25, 1847.

Said that General Twigg's command left several days earlier for the mouth Panued [Panuco] River, six miles from Tampico. General Pillow's Tennessee Brigade expected to leave within couple of days. Col. Smith's command embarking that day. Other commands will guard Tampico garrison. Everything indicated "speedy descent upon Vera Cruz." General Scott was greeted with hearty welcome by the troops upon his arrival. This letter is lengthy (3 pages) and quite descriptive of conditions, preparations, and activities in the army.

Samuel W. Lauderdale to brother James, Vera Cruz, April 2, 1847.

"Dear Brother. Glad tidings. Our arms have once more triumphed & the Gibraltar of Mexico is ours... Suffice it to say that a more splendid nor bloodless victory ever adorned the historic page." Samuel then gives an eyewitness account of the battle as the Americans attacked with "banners flying" and "music beating." He notes the position of the various regiments as the troops moved in on the city. The bombardment of the city is accurately described as is the final surrender.