

# BILLY [WILLIAM] DAVIS COLLECTION, 1913-1993

---

**Collection #**  
SC 2382  
BV 2680-2682  
F1190

---

## Table of Contents

[User information](#)  
[Biographical sketch](#)  
[Scope and Content note](#)  
[Cataloguing information](#)

Processed by  
Charles Latham  
27 October 1993

---

## USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 3 folders, 3 bound volumes, 1 reel of microfilm

COLLECTION DATES: 1913-1993

PROVENANCE: Richard and Wilda Skidmore, Greencastle, IN, 12 August 1993

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: Published version: William Davis, *Civil War Diary of Billy Davis*, E 506.5 7TH D29 1989; microfilm of original journals and loose items F-1190.

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 444 Samuel V. List Papers; BV 2491 James Henry Vannuys Diary

ACCESSION NUMBER: 93.0584

---

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Davis (1838-1922) was born on a farm near Hopewell, Johnson County, Indiana. At five feet six, with a light

complexion, brown hair, and blue eyes, he enlisted in the 7th Indiana Volunteers at President Lincoln's first call in April 1861, and served in Virginia for three months. In September he reenlisted in the 7th for a full term. After battles at Kernstown and Port Republic (where he performed an especially dangerous mission), he saw action at Second Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. He was wounded in the Wilderness campaign and captured, but escaped before the end of the war.

Returning to civilian life, Davis was for four years a merchant in Franklin. He then moved to Iola, Kansas, to join in partnership with another Hopewell native, John Vannuys. In 1872 he married Candace Grimes, and they had one daughter. Davis became a leader in the Iola Presbyterian church, serving 52 years as an elder and four years as clerk of session. His occupation varied, from merchant to Presbyterian missionary (in Kansas and the Indian Territory) to court clerk and finally to rural mail carrier.

Toward the end of his life in 1913 Davis began to write a journal of his Civil War experiences, using his own diary and the letters of fellow soldiers such as Samuel Vannuys List. He completed the journal only as far as Chancellorsville (May 1863).

A portion of Davis's journal, from the beginning of his service (April 1861) through Port Republic (June 1862), was edited and published in 1989 by the donor, Richard S. Skidmore.

---

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of three folders and three bound volumes. In Folder 1 are loose papers taken from the journals, including an official account of Davis's action at Port Republic. In Folder 2 is a photocopy of an article from Civil War Times (December 1993) by the donor based on Davis's journal for November 1862. In Folder 3 is a copy of: Richard S. Skidmore, ed., *The Civil War Journal of Billy Davis* (Greencastle, Indiana; Nugget Publishers, c1989). The three volumes of the journal itself (April 1861-May 1863) are stored as BV 2680-2682. The original journals and loose papers in folder 1 were microfilmed by the Indiana Historical Society in August 1994.

---

## CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Davis, Billy, 1838-1922

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Davis, Billy, 1838-1922--Diaries

United States. Army. Indiana Infantry Regiment, 7th (1861-1864)

The Civil War journal of Billy Davis

Soldiers--Indiana--Hopewell--Diaries

Shenandoah Valley Campaign, 1862

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Regimental histories

Indiana--Histories--Civil War, 1861-1865--Personal narratives

Indiana--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Regimental histories

ADDED ENTRIES: Skidmore, Richard S.

END

