

Daves, Graham ^[1]

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by Curtis Carroll Davis, 1986

16 July 1836–27 Oct. 1902

Graham Daves, antiquarian, railway agent, and *Confederate* ^[2] officer, was born in New Bern, the fifth of six children of *John Pugh Daves* ^[3], a planter in that town, and Elizabeth Batchelor Graham, his third wife. An older brother was educator Edward Graham Daves. An older sister, Mary McKinlay Daves, became the second wife of future governor *John W. Ellis* ^[4]. The father died when Graham was about two years old, but the mother survived until 9 May 1885. Young Daves's childhood and youth were passed in his hometown, where he attended the *New Bern Academy* ^[5]. In the autumn of 1851 he was placed as a cadet at the prestigious but short-lived Maryland Military Academy, at the village of Oxford on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where he studied under Superintendent John H. Allen for almost two years. In the autumn of 1853 he enrolled as a freshman at *Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.* ^[6], where his brother Edward was professor of Greek. At college he pledged Iota Kappa Alpha fraternity. He was graduated in July 1857, delivering a commencement oration on "Recent Events in Mexico."

Returning to North Carolina, Daves began the study of law with Judge *Richmond M. Pearson* ^[7], subsequently chief justice of the state, at his Richmond Hill home in *Surry County* ^[8]. On 1 Jan. 1859, upon election to the governorship of his brother-in-law J. W. Ellis, Daves became the governor's private secretary and remained in that position until Ellis's untimely death on 7 July 1861.

North Carolina having seceded from the Union on 20 May 1861, Daves enlisted on 11 July in the Twelfth Regiment North Carolina Infantry (volunteers), later designated the Twenty-second Regiment (state troops), commanded by *Colonel J. Johnston Pettigrew* ^[9], and was commissioned first lieutenant. On 24 July he was named unit adjutant and served with the outfit at Raleigh and at Richmond, Brooks Station, and especially at Evansport (now Quantico) in Virginia. On 1 Apr. 1862 he was detached and transferred to general staff duties under Major General Samuel G. French as assistant adjutant general assigned to *Wilmington* ^[10], Goldsboro, and Petersburg, Va., with rank as captain. On 5 Nov. 1862 he was promoted to major, remaining on active duty in Virginia until June 1863. He was then transferred to the Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana sector, where he served as assistant adjutant general of division, based near Morton, Miss., under General Joseph E. Johnston during the campaigns in that state prior and subsequent to the Confederate surrender of Vicksburg. Daves returned to North Carolina and resigned his commission for unknown reasons on 16 Nov. 1863. Reporting to the Conscription Bureau, he was enlisted as a private and assigned to the conscription office at Raleigh. There he served until 7 July 1864, when he was commissioned first lieutenant of reserves and aide-de-camp to *Lieutenant General Theophilus H. Holmes* ^[11], with whom he remained until March 1865. He was then temporarily transferred by Holmes to the division of Major General *Robert F. Hoke* ^[12], with which he saw duty until the surrender of Johnston's forces to *Major General William T. Sherman* ^[13] near *Durham* ^[14] on 26 Apr. 1865. His personal parole bore that date.

After the war Daves went to work at Wilmington for DeRosset & Company, general commission merchants. Subsequently he engaged in the railway business at Wilmington and, during the eighties, at Charleston, S.C., as freight agent for The Charleston Line. He retired from business in 1891 when his health deteriorated and, settling at New Bern, took up his favorite avocation, the study of the colonial, *Revolutionary* ^[15], and Confederate history of his native state. In its obituary the Raleigh *News and Observer* ^[16] asserted that Daves had produced "many written contributions of great value" in the field of North Carolina history; and Mrs. Elvira Moffitt, state regent for the *Society of the Daughters of the Revolution* ^[17], affirmed in 1906 that he had "contributed many articles of historical value to the columns of various periodicals."

Despite these statements, only fourteen items from Daves's pen have been identified: four articles in the *Southern Historical Society Papers* (Richmond, Va.)—"The Battle of Averasboro," 7 (1879), "Artillery at the Southern Arsenals," 12 (1884), "Twenty-Second North Carolina Infantry: Its History . . .," 24 (1896), reprinted from the *Charlotte Observer*, 21 Apr. 1895, and "The Causes of the War 1861–5, and Events of Its First Year: The Events in North Carolina during the Administration of Governor J. W. Ellis," 32 (1904); a Memorial Day address at Raleigh, 10 May 1901, reprinted from the *News and Observer*, 11 May 1901; *A Sketch of the Military Career of Captain John Daves* (1892), a sixteen-page pamphlet on his paternal grandfather, who served in the Third Regiment, North Carolina Continental Infantry, during the American Revolution; three articles on the officers of the North Carolina Continental Line and of the State Cincinnati, all in *University of North Carolina Magazine* N.S. 12–13 (October 1892, May 1893, May 1894); *In Memoriam, John A. Guion, M.D., New Bern, N.C., 1816–1894* (1894?), an eight-page pamphlet; *a note on Virginia Dare* ^[18], *University of North Carolina Magazine* N.S. 14 (March 1895); an expansion thereof entitled *Virginia Dare* ^[19] (1901), a sixteen-page pamphlet ranking as the first item in the "North Carolina Booklet" series; "Twenty-Second Regiment," in Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments . . .*, vol. 2 (1901), an eighteen-page narrative dated New Bern, 9 Apr. 1901, which revised and augmented his 1896 paper; and "Enlistments for the War," *Confederate Veteran* 10 (January 1902).

In 1894 Daves succeeded his brother Edward as second president of the *Roanoke Colony Memorial Association* ^[20], a

post he held until his death. At the ceremonies marking the dedication of a monument on the site of Fort Raleigh, 24 Nov. 1896, he delivered the principal address. He spoke again on the Roanoke Colony at the second Annual Meeting of the State Literary and Historical Association ^[21], Raleigh, 22 Oct. 1901. In the mid-1890s, for reasons of health, Daves commenced regular summer sojourns in Asheville ^[22]. There he met Major Charles L. Davis, a Union veteran then in the Tenth U.S. Infantry and assigned as instructor in military tactics at the Bingham School ^[23]. Daves had for some time been interested in attempting a revival of the State Society of the Cincinnati, ^[24] founded at Hillsborough in 1783 but dormant since about 1800. Under his guidance and enthusiasm Major Davis (an hereditary member of the Pennsylvania Society) worked toward this goal, and their efforts were rewarded by the revival of the North Carolina Cincinnati at Raleigh in April 1896. As principal reorganizers the two men were elected the new society's first honorary members. Though genealogically ineligible for membership—his late brother Edward's right having passed to son John Collins Daves—Daves was accorded the tribute of appointment as assistant secretary of the society and in 1897 was named its vice-president. He was one of the group's delegates to the triennial meetings of the General Society of the Cincinnati held at Philadelphia in May 1896 and at Hartford in June 1902. His pioneering researches were used by Major Davis and Captain Henry H. Bellas in their volume, *A Brief History of the North Carolina Troops on the Continental Establishment . . . A Sketch of the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati* . . . (1896).

Daves was a charter member (1893) and on the board of visitors of the state chapter, Sons of the Revolution ^[25], and a member (as of 1901) of the State Literary and Historical Association ^[21]. He also belonged to the Association of Confederate Veterans and was regularly addressed as Major Daves. After his death the Virginia historian Robert A. Brock mourned (1904) the passing of "this broadly accomplished and most lovable man. He was our valued friend and correspondent for years." Marshall DeLancey Haywood ^[26] declared (1907) of Daves: "He was the friendliest, most polished, and in many respects, within his sphere of life and action, the most useful gentleman of the State."

On 27 Nov. 1862, at Hillsborough, Daves married Alice Lord DeRosset (1835–2 Sept. 1897), daughter of Armand John DeRosset ^[27], M.D., of Wilmington, and Eliza Lord DeRosset. The couple had one child, a boy, who did not survive infancy. Mrs. Daves died at her father's home in Wilmington. Daves died at the Hotel Manor, Asheville, of a tubercular heart condition. Both were buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery, New Bern. Daves was an Episcopalian ^[28], but his political affiliation is unknown. The only likeness known of him is as a bearded young lieutenant in a group photograph of officers of the Twenty-second Regiment.

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Alumni Archives (Trinity College Library, Hartford, Conn.).

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Asheville Citizen, 27 Oct. 1902.

Bassett Papers (Manuscript Department, Library, Duke University, Durham).

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Confederate Records (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.).

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Hemphill Family Papers (Manuscript Department, Library, Duke University, Durham).

E. E. Moffitt, "Major Graham Daves, AB. ^[29]," *North Carolina Booklet* 4 (July 1906).

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Ruffin Papers (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond).

Saunders Papers and Fries Collection (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

N. J. Tolbert, ed., *Papers of John Willis Ellis*, vols. 1, 2 (1964).

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Additional Resources:

Daves, Graham 1836-1902 in WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n00-65542> ^[30]

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