

# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

## A Guide to the Albert and Garrett Vander Veer Civil War Correspondence Papers and Craig Family Papers

### Collection Summary

**Collection Title:** Albert and Garrett Vander Veer Civil War Correspondence Papers and Craig Family Papers

**Call Number:** MG 148

**Creator:** Albert and Garrett Vander Veer

**Inclusive Dates:** May 14, 1850 – February 22, 1922

**Bulk Dates:** 1889-1914

**Abstract:** This collection is composed of letters written by brothers Albert and Garrett Vander Veer to family members. Garrett and Albert were the fifth and seventh children, respectively, of Abraham Harris and Sarah (Martin) Vander Veer and were officers in the Union Army during the American Civil War. The majority of the letters are addressed to the Vander Veer's sister and brother-in-law, Esther and John Craig.

**Quantity:** Two document boxes. Box 1 has 18 folders; 2.5 linear inches. Box 2 has 11 folders; 4.75 linear inches.

### Administrative Information

**Custodial History:** This collection was purchased from Dennis Holzman on December 22, 2005.

**Preferred Citation:** Albert and Garrett Vander Veer Civil War Correspondence, MG 148. Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

**Acquisition Information:**

Accession #: LIB.2005.018

Accession Date: January 2005

**Processing Information:**

Processed by Rachel Dworkin; completed on April 13, 2005. Brendon Peabody; completed on April 27, 2010.

Finding aid completed and revised by Caitlain Devereaux Lewis; July 2005. Finding aid revised by Linda Simkin; February 2017.

## Restrictions

**Restrictions on Access:** None

**Restrictions on Use:** Permission to publish material must be obtained in writing prior to publication from the Chief Librarian & Archivist, Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.

## Index Terms

### Persons

Craig, Esther (Vander Veer)  
Craig, John  
Craig, Marion  
Vander Veer, Abraham H.  
Vander Veer, Albert  
Vander Veer, Garrett  
Vander Veer, James N.  
Vander Veer, Sarah (Martin)

### Organizations

Albany First Presbyterian Church  
Albany Times Union  
54th Massachusetts Infantry  
New York Volunteers, 66th Regiment.  
New York Volunteers, 115th Regiment.  
The Knickerbocker Press  
State Education Department: The University of the State of New York

### Subjects

Auxiliary Sciences of History-Genealogy  
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865  
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Afro-Americans  
United States – History – Civil War, 1861-1865 – Medical Care

### Places

Kentucky – Frankfort  
Massachusetts – Boxford

Nebraska – Davenport  
New Jersey – Dover  
New Jersey – Freehold  
New Jersey – Manalapan  
New Jersey – Somerville  
New Jersey – New Brunswick  
New Jersey – Trenton  
New York - Albany  
New York - Amsterdam  
New York - Brooklyn  
New York - Cobleskill  
New York - Fultonville  
New York – Lisha Kill  
New York – Montgomery County  
New York - Oswego  
New York - Rochester  
New York - Root  
New York - Schenectady  
New York - Slingerlands  
South Carolina – Beaufort  
South Carolina – Fort Wagner  
South Carolina – Hilton Head  
Washington, D.C.

**Document Types**

Bulletin  
Letters  
Newspaper Clippings  
Photographs  
Programs

**Titles**

None

<b>Biography</b>
------------------

**Abraham H. Vander Veer** was the eighth son of Garret and Rachel (Couwenhoven) Vander Veer. He was born in the town of Root, Montgomery County, New York, June 18, 1804, and died August 19, 1888. He was the father of ten children among them are Albert and Garrett Vander Veer, and Esther (Vander Veer) Craig.

**Garret Vander Veer** was born on August 8, 1836, the fifth child of Abraham and Sarah (Martin) Vander Veer. He was married to Margaret Kline on December 18, 1861 and they had one son, John, who died at an early age. Garrett joined the army and was commissioned as captain of Company A in the 115th New York Volunteers. Over the course of his career, he was stationed at various island forts along the South Carolina

coast. He was shot four times at the battle of Olustee, Florida, but refused to be removed for treatment until the battle was over. He was then transported to Beaufort, South Carolina where he died of his wounds on February 24, 1864. At the time of his death he was a newly promoted lieutenant-colonel.

**Albert Vander Veer** was born in Root, New York on July 10, 1841, the seventh child of Abraham and Sarah (Martin) Vander Veer. At the age of nineteen, he began to study medicine with the local physician Dr. Simeon Snow, whose daughter Margaret he later married on June 5, 1867. When the Civil War broke out, Vander Veer was attending Albany Medical College but withdrew to volunteer for the Army medical division. His first post was the Ira Harris Hospital in Albany. In May 1862, he was assigned to complete his medical training at Columbian College Hospital, now George Washington University, in Washington D.C. where he had enrolled as one of the first hundred medical cadets called to Civil War service by the surgeon general.

Upon completing his requisite coursework for his medical degree, Vander Veer was assigned to the 66<sup>th</sup> Regimental New York Volunteers as Assistant Surgeon. In June 1864, at the age of 24, Vander Veer became one of the youngest regimental surgeons of the war. During his time with the 66<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Vander Veer was engaged in the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg.

After the war, Vander Veer continued his education with post-graduate courses at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York and a tour of the medical colleges and hospitals of Europe. Upon returning to Albany, he opened a private practice on Jay Street and took up residence at the corner of State and Eagle Streets.

Vander Veer's experiences in private practice led to an interest in public health issues; he served on Albany's first Board of Health and Water Board, fighting for closed city sewers, clean drinking water, and other sanitary improvements. He was also one of the major lobbyists behind the construction of the Albany Hospital.

Vander Veer was also concerned with qualifications for practicing physicians. He therefore worked to create legislation designed to create state-wide standards for medical practitioners. In the later part of his life, he was a member of the regulatory commissions he helped to create, serving first as Vice-Chancellor of the State Board of Regents in 1915 and then as Chancellor in 1922.

As part of his commitment to medical education, Vander Veer also served as a professor, and later the dean, at Albany Medical College from 1896 to 1905. He was also an active member of several professional organizations, and was elected President of the American Surgeons Association in 1905 and President of the American Medical Association in 1916. Vander Veer was honored for his achievements as a surgeon, educator, and pioneer of public health by being granted membership within the French Legion of Honor.

Apart from his professional pursuits, Vander Veer was a family man; he had six children, three of whom survived to adulthood. Each of his three sons, Edgar, James, and Albert Jr., became physicians. Vander Veer was also interested in his Dutch Heritage and an active member of the Holland Society of New York. He was awarded the Order of Orange-Nassau by the Queen of Holland. Vander Veer lived a full life, succumbing at the age of 89 on December 19, 1929.

**Esther (Vander Veer) Craig** was born on January 14, 1830, second child of Abraham and Sarah (Martin) Vander Veer. She was married on June 10, 1852 to John Craig. She had six children, four of whom survived into adulthood.

**Marion Mead Craig** is the fifth child and fourth daughter of John and Esther (Vander Veer) Craig. She is the niece of Albert Vander Veer.

**James N. Vander Veer** is the second child of Dr. Albert and Margaret E. (Snow) Vander Veer, and was born December 12, 1877. He is a graduate of Albany Medical College, MD, 1903. He was a distinguished surgeon and widely known urological specialist. He was chief of surgical staff of the Albany Hospital, attending surgeon at the South End Dispensary and Home of the Friendless, and consulting surgeon of the Good Shepherd. He married, December 3, 1908, Ada daughter of Thomas and Cornelia (Quadland) Holt; and had one son, Adrian Holt, born November 4, 1909. He died May 15, 1937 (at the age of 59), after suffering from a heart ailment for about a year.

### **Scope and Contents of the Collection**

This collection is composed of letters written by brothers Albert and Garrett Vander Veer to family members. Garrett and Albert were the fifth and seventh children, respectively, of Abraham Harris and Sarah (Martin) Vander Veer and were officers in the Union Army during the American Civil War. There are thirty-two letters in total written between 1862 and 1864. Twenty-six of these letters were written by Garrett Vander Veer from November 1862 until shortly before his death in 1864; all of these are addressed to his sister and brother-in-law, Esther and John Craig. In his letters, Vander Veer describes Beaufort and Hilton Head, South Carolina, complains about problems with army life and the incompetence of his superior officers, gives a lengthy account of a court martial, and describes troop movements. He also writes of his interactions with the African American troops of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry.

The remainder of the letters was written by Albert Vander Veer and letters are addressed to Esther and John Craig, as well as to his parents, Abraham and Sarah (Martin) Vander Veer. In his letters, Vander Veer also describes troop movements, comments on the state of the Army of the Potomac, and talks about the difficulties he encounters as regimental surgeon. The collection also includes several newspaper clippings about the death of Albert Vander Veer in 1929 and later memorial services.

There are also newspaper clippings (a vast majority of which are obituaries) and miscellaneous objects.

### **Organization of the Collection**

This collection is housed within two boxes. Box one has eighteen folders and is divided into three series. Series I, "Letters from Garrett Vander Veer, 1862-1864," is contained within the first fourteen folders. The next three folders contain Series II, "Letters from Albert Vander Veer, 1863-1864." The last folder in Box one houses Series III, "Newspaper Clippings." Box two has 11 folders, all containing materials in Series IV, "Civil War letters written by Garrett or Albert Vander Veer."

## Related Material

The following materials in the Library's holdings are related to the Vander Veer brothers' collection:

### **Adirondack Mountains Camps, VF – Subject – Camps – NY – Adirondack Mountains.**

Contains the essay "A History of the Vander Veer Camp" by Grace Vander Veer McDonough.

### **Albany Medical College, VF – Subject – Albany Medical College (Albany, N.Y.).**

Contains a photograph of the faculty, including Dr. Albert Vander Veer, and students of the Albany Medical College in 1884.

### **Albert Vander Veer Papers, DB 560.**

This collection is composed of the personal papers of Albany physician Albert Vander Veer, including his journals, diaries, scrapbooks, certificates, personal correspondence, playbills, transportation timetables, and various newspaper clippings. The collection also contains papers concerning Vander Veer's life as a physician, public health advocate, and educator after the Civil War until his death in 1929. Vander Veer's papers also include genealogical information on the Vander Veer family as well as an assortment of other materials belonging to Vander Veer's sons, Albert Jr., Edgar, and James, and papers associated with the Wooster and Brown families.

### **Correspondence 1863-1865, Albert Vander Veer, MS 2100.**

Five ALS and two letters concerning Vander Veer's tenure as assistant surgeon and regiment surgeon of the Sixty-Sixth Regiment New York Volunteers during the Civil War. Vander Veer's recipient is an unidentified Albany, N.Y. friend.

### **Vander Veer Family, VF – Biography – Vander Veer Family.**

Contains a 1927 article on the life of Dr. Albert Vander Veer from the *Knickerbocker Press*.

## Other Finding Aids

There is a brief description of the collection prepared by the collection's vendor along with several excerpts from the Vander Veer letters.

### **Albert Vander Veer Papers, DB 560**

This collection comprises the personal papers of Albany physician Albert Vander Veer, including his journals, diaries, scrapbooks, certificates, personal correspondence, playbills, transportation timetables, and various newspaper clippings. The collection also contains papers concerning Vander Veer's life as a physician, public health advocate, and educator after the Civil War until his death in 1929. Vander Veer's papers also include genealogical information on the Vander Veer family as well as a assortment of other

materials belonging to Vander Veer's sons, Albert Jr., Edgar, and Hames, and papers associated with the Wooster and Brown families.

### **Correspondence 1863-1865, Albert Vander Veer MS 2100**

Five ALS and two letters concerning Vander Veer's tenure as assistant surgeon and regiment surgeon of the Sixty-Sixth Regiment New York Volunteers during the Civil War. Vander Veer's recipient is an unidentified Albany, N.Y. friend.

### **Detailed Description of the Collection**

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

#### **Series I. Letters from Garrett Vander Veer, 1862-1864**

<b>Box #</b>	<b>Folder #</b>	<b>Title / Description</b>
1	1	N.D. Partial letter.
1	2	<b>October 29, 1862.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) and John Craig. States that he has been acting as Colonel of the Regiment in the absence of other officers. <b>November 26/27, 1862.</b> Letter to John Craig. Describes a recent march through Virginia.
1	3	<b>January 4, 1863.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) Craig recounting his week.
1	4	<b>February 4, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig describing unrest in the ranks. <b>February 5, 1863.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) and John Craig written from prison about troop movements and an impending court martial.
1	5	<b>February 9-17, 1863.</b> Extended letter to Esther (Vander Veer) and John Craig in daily increments. Describes an arrest for cowardice, a court martial, the incompetence of his superior officers, the mismanagement of the Army, and the treatment of African Americans in the armed forces.
1	6	<b>March 1, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about general military action and the nature of freedom. <b>March 10, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig mentioning ironclads. <b>March 16, 1863.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) and John Craig. <b>March 26, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about procedures. <b>March 28, 1863.</b> List of monies deposited with Captain Vander Veer to be sent to John Craig for distribution to military families.
1	7	<b>April 6, 1863.</b> Letter and envelope addressed to John Craig mainly on the subject of fleas. <b>April 14, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about the spectacular failure of the latest military venture. <b>April 30, 1863.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) and John Craig.
1	8	<b>May 2, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig describing seeing the rebel

		flag for the first time.
1	9	<b>June 12, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig regarding a new commanding officer, discharges, and an illness that is laying the regiment low.
1	10	<b>July 1, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about his new post in Beaufort. <b>July 20, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about the conduct of the Massachusetts 54th at Fort Wagner.
1	11	<b>August 7, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about the war, troop movement, and the economy. <b>August 13, 1863.</b> List of monies deposited with Captain Vander Veer to be sent to John Craig for distribution to military families.
1	12	<b>November 2, 1863.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) and John Craig about regimental politics. <b>November 27, 1863.</b> List of monies deposited with Captain Vander Veer to be sent to John Craig for distribution to military families.
1	13	<b>December 4, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about the affect of African-American soldiers on the rebels. <b>December 11, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig about the adventures of two escaped slaves attempting to reach the Union line.
1	14	<b>January 11, 1864.</b> Letter to John Craig describing troop movements and the appointment of officers.

## Series II. Letters from Albert Vander Veer, 1863-1864

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
1	15	N.D. Envelope and portion of a letter addressed to Esther (Vander Veer) Craig.
1	16	<b>January 21, 1863.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) and John Craig about troop movements. <b>February 23, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig. <b>March 12, 1863.</b> Letter to John Craig. <b>August 9, 1863.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) Craig about his medical duties, Secesh women, and General Meade's blunder.
1	17	<b>April 7, 1864.</b> Letter to his parents concerning the death of Garrett Vander Veer. <b>October 21, 1864.</b> Letter to Esther (Vander Veer) Craig about his duties as surgeon in which he states that his love for the profession increases daily.

## Series III. Newspaper Clippings

1	18	<b>1929.</b> Obituary of Albert Vander Veer from Knickerbocker Press.
---	----	---



**N.D.** Article recounting the unveiling of the commemorative plaque of Albert Vander Veer at the Albany Hospital.

#### **Series IV. Civil War Letters Written by Garrett or Albert Vander Veer**

- 2            1            **Civil War letters written by Garrett or Albert Vander Veer, October 8, 1857 – October 2, 1864**
- October 8, 1857.** Letter from Garrett to his sister describing new lodgings
- N.D.** Day after Thanksgiving. Letter from Garrett to “Bro” concerning some drafts and the problem of “mail robbing.”
- December 31, 1861.** Letter written to John, from Yorktown Virginia. Author unknown.
- N.D.** Letter written to “My Dear Es. (Esther?) from Garrett describing his quarters in a Camp.
- February 23, 1863.** Letter written to John from unknown author. It starts with a request that John cash the two enclosed drafts and return \$46 to him and further describes the disposition of the remaining cash.
- March 30. No year. Hilton Head, S.C.** Letter written to John from Garrett regarding a list of men who had sent John money for distribution to relatives or deposit in banks.
- April 10, 1863. Letter to “Bro John” from Garrett questioning “whether we shall have a very long or short war.”
- May 9. No year. Hilton Head, S.C.** Letter written to “Bro and Sister” from Garrett.
- October 8, 1863. Port Royal Island, S.C.** Letter written to “Bro” from Garrett describing breaking camp and his march to the “advance pickett line” and getting “tight” on apple jack.
- January (2?), 1864. Beaufort, S.C.** Letter written to “Bro John” from Garrett describing his frustration with the mail and his “jolly” Christmas. He says he is “licked” and requests a coat.
- February 5, 1864. Fultonville, NY.** Letter written to “Gar” from John. Describes meeting with the Adjutant-General and Governor about Gar’s commission.
- March 7, 1864.** Letter written to “Dear Sister” from her brother Albert expressing great sorrow about the death of Garrett.
- April 15, 1864.** Letter written to “Bro John” from Albert Van Derveer about bringing Capt’s remains home and also her new “partner.”
- October 2, No year. Beaufort (?), S.C.** Letter written to “Dear Bro. Billy” from A. Vandever, Capt. begins with a discussion about Billy’s improving penmanship and its importance.
- 2            2            Vander Veer family photographs – Garrett Vander Veer, Katherine Vander Veer, and others

- 3 Miscellaneous papers concerning the Vander Veer Family and  
Craig family (e.g. Newspaper clippings, a church program, and a  
State University of new York School Bulletin
- 4 Vander Veer/Craig family genealogy correspondence, and  
personal correspondence, May 14, 1850 – July 8, 1887
- 5 Vander Veer/Craig family genealogy correspondence, and  
personal correspondence, June 19, 1889 – August 30, 1895
- 6 Vander Veer/Craig family genealogy correspondence, and  
personal correspondence, September 11, 1895 – October 19,  
1896
- 7 Vander Veer/Craig family genealogy correspondence, and  
personal correspondence, January 11, 1897 – October 26, 1899
- 8 Craig family genealogy correspondence, April 6, 1900 – April  
23, 1901
- 9 Vander Veer/Craig family genealogy correspondence, and  
personal correspondence, November 14, 1902 – October 24,  
1914
- 10 Vander Veer/Craig family genealogy correspondence, and  
personal correspondence, January 21, 1921 – February 22, 1922
- 11 Miscellaneous Vander Veer/Craig family genealogy  
correspondence, and personal correspondence, Undated  
envelopes and letters