

# Guide to the Alexander Stewart Webb Papers

MS 684



compiled by Manuscripts and Archives Staff

October 1984

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 684

**CREATOR:** Webb, Alexander S. (Alexander Stewart), 1835-1911

**TITLE:** Alexander Stewart Webb papers

**DATES:** 1818-1930

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 6.5 linear feet (10 boxes, 2 folios)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence and papers of Alexander Stewart Webb which detail his personal, military, and academic activities. Webb's military service at Fort Pickens, Florida; as a member of the Army of the Potomac, and with General George Meade during the Civil War is documented, as is his tenure as president of the College of the City of New York.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0684>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0684>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.        box

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of members of the Webb family including Mrs. Eliza Osgood Webb, Anna R. Alexandre, and Mrs. Frederic Schenck, 1936-1964.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research; due to the nature of the material, box 12 requires staff supervision.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

Alexander Stewart Webb Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Alexander S. Webb: joined U.S. Army in 1855; served in Minnesota and Florida, and in 1857 became professor of mathematics at West Point; served in Civil War, attaining rank of major-general, and retiring in 1866; returned to teaching at West Point; left the army in 1870; in 1869 became president of College of the City of New York.

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## Scope and Contents

The Alexander Stewart Webb Collection consists of five boxes of correspondence and four boxes of printed and written material dealing with the public and private life of Alexander Stewart Webb (1835-1911). The span of the collection 1818 to 1930. The early letters are of his mother and other relatives and the later letters concerning him are Written friends to Webb's son and daughters. The bulk of the collection is the letters of Webb during the Civil War and later as President of the College of the City of New York.

The wartime letters of Alexander Stewart Webb to his father, wife, and sister cover Webb's activities, impressions, and thoughts as an officer at Port Pickens, later in the Army of the Potomac, and ultimately to serving under General Meade in the final decisive battles of the war. Webb was very active the Peninsula campaign, about which he later wrote a book. He played an outstanding role in the battles at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, in the letter of rich displayed "distinguished personal gallantry" for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Having been seriously wounded at Spotsylvania, Webb was reassigned to teaching at West Point. He resigned, to accept the presidency of the College of the City of New York in 1869 when assigned to field duty in the West. He was an active administrator in this post and was highly regarded by both students and faculty; his tenure saw a great rise in the prestige and reputation of City College.

During the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's, much of the correspondence deals with the attempt to have Webb's name placed on the U.S. Army officer's reserve list. The bill for this purpose passed either the House or Senate at various times, but it was never passed by both and enacted. Another main topic of the correspondence is the disagreement between two factions over General Meade's conduct at the Battle of Gettysburg. General Webb was one of the leading spokesmen of the pro-Meade group opposing the anti-Meade group led primarily by Generals Butterfield and Doubleday. The conflict reached its height in 1890 at the occasion of the visit of the Count of Paris to the United States.

Webb served as head of City College until his retirement in 1902. He remained active in the civic duties in New York until his death in 1911.

The collection consists of 9 manuscript boxes, one folio, and one folio case containing approximately 4,500 items, donated by various members of the Webb family, including Mrs. Eliza Osgood Webb, Miss Anna R. Alexandre, and Mrs. J. Frederic Schenck, 1936-1964.

## Collection Contents

### Inventory, 1818-1930

4.5 linear feet (9 boxes, 1 folio, 1 folio case)

b. 1	Correspondence A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1818-1863
b. 2	Correspondence	1864-1868
b. 3	Correspondence	1869-1885
b. 4	Correspondence	1886-1896 March
b. 5	Correspondence	1896 April-1930, undated
	Civil War material	
b. 6	Books of military dispatches	1865 February 5- April 16
b. 6	Journals	1861 May 4- August 4, undated
b. 6	Record of supply shipments	undated
	Fitz-John Porter	
b. 6	Printed matter re court martial, appeal, summary of case, and biographical sketch	
b. 6	Typescripts and manuscript re the battle of Malvern Hill and the character of Porter	
	Gettysburg	
b. 7	"Battle of Gettysburg and Personal Recollections of that Battle" by Colonel Fred. Fuger: typescript English	
b. 7	Manuscripts, printed matter, and clippings re Meade at Gettysburg	
b. 7	Biographical sketch of Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum (1826-1894): typescript	
b. 7	Printed matter	
b. 7	Reproduction of painting with caption "A view between the opposing lines at a critical point of the battle"	
b. 7	Synopsis of testimony re the location of monument of the 72nd Regt. Pa. Volunteers on Gettysburg Battlefield: typescript	

## Civil War material (continued)

b. 7	Printed matter	
	Photographs	
b. 7	"Battle Field of Fredericksburg Va"	
b. 7	"Genl Webb's Hdqs"	
b. 7	"Commissary Head Quarters ... in Stevensburg Va"	
	Sketches	
b. 7	"Sketch of 2nd Manassas, August 29th 1862": annotated printed map English	
b. 7	"Battles Brigade, Ewells Corps": diagram English	
b. 7	"Why does not the Army of the Potomac Move???": cartoon English	
b. 7	"A Recollection" [of Chancellorsville] by Wm. C. Reiff: typescript English	
b. 8	Writings by Alexander S. Webb	
b. 8	Writings about Alexander S. Webb	
b. 9	Writings about other Webb family members	
b. 9	Photographs of Alexander S. Webb	
b. 9	Reproductions of drawings by Alexander S. Webb	
b. 9	Printed matter on military subjects	
b. 10	Storage cases for memorabilia (Eye glass case, etc.)	
b. 11	Military maps LIST OF MAPS	
b. 11	"Reconnoitering of Chesapeake Bay" (printed) English	1818
b. 11	"Manassas Junction" (printed) English	1962
b. 11	"Sketch Exhibiting the Approach to Richmond from Pamunkey River..." (printed, annotated) English	[1862?]
b. 11	"Campaign Map: Army of the James" (printed) English	1864
b. 11	"Extract of Military Map of N.E. Virginia" (printed, 2 copies) English	1865
b. 11	"Central Virginia Showing Lieut. Genl. U.S. Grant's Campaign" (printed) English	[1865?]

## Military maps (continued)

b. 11	"Antietam" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"Appomatox Court House" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"Bermuda Hundred" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"Chancellorville" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"Harper's Ferry" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"High Bridge and Farmville" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"Jetersville and Sailors Creek" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"Petersburg and Five Forks" (printed) English	1967
b. 11	"Spottsylvania Court House" (printed, 2 copies, 1 annotated) English	1867
b. 11	"The Wilderness" (printed) English	1867
b. 11	"Gettysburg and Vicinity" (printed, 2 copies, both annotated) English	1885
b. 11	"Topographical Map of the Vicksburg National Military Park" (printed) English	1903
b. 11	"Gettysburg Battle-Field" (printed) English	Undated
b. 11	"Map of the Battle Field of Gettysburg" (printed) English	Undated
b. 11	"Cotton Map No. 2: Battle-Field of Five Forks" (printed, 3 copies) English	Undated
b. 11	"Map of the Environs of Petersburg" (printed) English	Undated
b. 11	"Map Showing Route of Marches of the Army of Genl. W.T. Sherman ..." (printed) English	Undated
b. 11	Fragment of map of Yorktown area (printed, annotated)	Undated
b. 11	Unidentified area near Malvern Hill (printed, annotated)	Undated
b. 11	Unidentified area near Berkely Landing on the James River (printed)	Undated
b. 11	Unidentified area (manuscript sketch indicating troop locations)	Undated



b. 11	Newspapers
	Memorabilia of Bvt Maj Gen Alexander S. Webb Due to the physical nature of the material in box 12, staff supervision is required.
b. 12	2nd CORPS BADGE
b. 12	5th and 6th CORPS MEDAL made by Tiffany with bars for the battles of: Antietam, Shepardstown, Snickers Gap, Chancellorsville
b. 12	MEDAL OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC made by Tiffany with bars for the battles of:  Bull Run; Mechanicsville; Guines  Mechanicsville  Gaines Mills  Malvern Hill  Shepardstown  Chancellorsville  Bristoe Station  Mortons Ford  Spottsylvania  Hatchers Run  Yorktown  Hanover Court House  Savage Station  Antietam  Snickers Gap  Gettysburg  Robertsons Farm  Wilderness  Petersburg
b. 12	SOUVENIR MEDAL OF THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND reverse side lists the battles of: Chickamuga, Wautalchie, Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain, Mission Ridge
b. 12	MEDAL OF HONOR "The Congress to Bvt Maj Genl Alexander S Webb—US Army for distinguished personal gallantry in the battle of Gettysburg—July 1-3, 1863"

## Memorabilia of Bvt Maj Gen Alexander S. Webb (continued)

b. 12	<p>GAR 33d NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT Philadelphia, "made of cannon captured by New York, Penna and Mass Regiments at Fort Fisher"</p>
b. 12	<p>GAR MEDAL</p>
b. 12	<p>ORDER OF THE CINCINNATI broach engraved: "Alex S Webb, July 4, 1860"</p>
b. 12	<p>SHOULDER BOARD, BELT BUCKLE and TWO BUTTONS from the uniforms of Gen Webb</p>
b. 12	<p>SURVIVORS PFZ 72nd PV MEDAL reverse engraved: "presented to Genl Alex S Webb by Assoc of the Survivors 72nd Regt PV December 13, 1886"</p>
b. 12	<p>SOUVENIR PIN US Grant Monument Committee, April 27, 1897</p>
b. 12	<p>GUEST MEDAL commemorating the dedication: of the Gen Alexander Webb Monument, October 12, 1915, Gettysburg, Pa.</p>
b. 12	<p>POLLAK &amp; SON PIPE engraving: "Army of the Potomac—April 1st 1861 to Lee' s Surrender —Yorktown Hanover Mechanicsville Chichominy to the James River Wilderness Spottsylvania Pettersburg Antietam, Gettysburg Chancellorsville Bristoe"</p>
b. 12	<p>IN THE CENTER replica of the bronze tablet presented to the College of the City of New York by its officers to commemorate Gen Webb's presidency of that institution 1869-1902</p>
b. 12	<p>ACROSS THIS BOTTOM a piece of the original ribbon given by Lafayette to the Society of the Cincinnati when it was first formed shortly after the American Revolutionary War. This ribbon was given to Gen Webb.</p>

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Geographic Names

Fort Pickens (Fla.)  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

### Subjects

Education  
Educators  
Universities and colleges -- United States

### Occupations

Soldiers

### Names

Allen, Ethan, 1832-1911  
Banes, Charles Henry, 1831-1897  
Barnard, Frederick A. P. (Frederick Augustus Porter), 1809-1889  
Chamberlain, Joshua Lawrence, 1828-1914  
Conkling, Roscoe, 1829-1888  
Evarts, William Maxwell, 1818-1901  
Fish, Hamilton, II, 1849-1936  
Foster, David Johnson, 1857-1912  
Jay, John, 1817-1894  
Lee, George Washington Custis, 1832-1913  
Lincoln, Robert Todd, 1843-1926  
Low, Seth, 1850-1916  
Lydecker, Charles Edward, 1851-  
Meade, George Gordon, 1815-1872  
Moore, John, 1826-1907  
Morton, Levi P. (Levi Parsons), 1824-1920  
Paris, Louis-Philippe-Albert d'Orléans, comte de, 1838-1894  
Peck, Theodore Safford, 1843-1918  
Porter, Fitz-John, 1822-1901  
Reid, Whitelaw, 1837-1912  
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919  
Root, Elihu, 1845-1937  
Ruggles, George David, 1833-1904  
Schaff, Morris, 1840-1929  
Sherman, William T. (William Tecumseh), 1820-1891  
Sprague, William, 1830-1915

Stanton, Edwin M. (Edwin McMasters), 1814-1869  
Tarbell, Ida M. (Ida Minerva), 1857-1944  
Van Amringe, J. Howard (John Howard), 1835-1915  
Walker, Francis Amasa, 1840-1897  
Webb, Alexander S. (Alexander Stewart), 1835-1911  
Webb, William Seward, 1851-1926  
Wheeler, Joseph, 1836-1906

### Corporate Bodies

City University of New York  
United States Army. Army of the Potomac