

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection title: Vespasian Warner, M 13.3

Dates: Various

Size: One (1) Box

Creator/Collector: Various

Acquisition info.: Various

Accruals: None

Custodial history: Unknown

Language(s): English



Repository: Vespasian Warner Public Library District

Processed by: Bobbi Perryman (2016)

Conservation notes: Not applicable. Some photographs have been digitized and added to VWPLD's online accounts.



RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Access restrictions

Collection is open for research. The collection or parts of the collection may not leave the library building.

Physical access restrictions

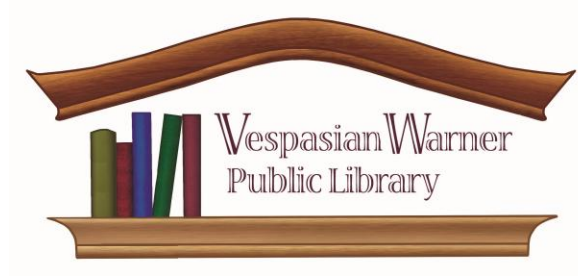
None

Technical access restrictions

None

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INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Preferred citation

[item identification], **Vespasian Warner, 13.3**, Vespasian Warner Public Library District, Clinton, Illinois

Related collections

None

Separated material

Artifacts related to Vespasian Warner are on display or in artifact storage.

Published descriptions

Not applicable

Location of originals

Some photographs are located in the Indiana State Archives and in private collections.

Location of copies

Archive.org

Publication note

Not applicable

Subject headings

Warner, Vespasian, 1841-1926

Legislators – United States – Biography

Veterans – Illinois

United States. Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Biography



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION/ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Boyhood

Vespasian Warner was born April 23, 1842, in Mount Pleasant (now Farmer City), DeWitt County, Illinois and moved with his parents to Clinton in 1843. He attended the common and select schools in Clinton and Lombard University in Galesburg, Illinois. Once he reached adulthood, Warner began studies to become a lawyer. Since there were no law schools near where he lived, Warner “read law” or apprenticed under Clinton attorney Lawrence Weldon. His studies ended with the advent of the Civil War.

Civil War Soldier

When the Civil War began in April 1861, nineteen-year-old Warner was one of the earliest Illinoisans to enlist. He was mustered as a private in Company E, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry, June 13, 1861, promoted to sergeant June 23, 1861, second lieutenant February 4, 1862, captain and commissary of subsistence February 10, 1865. He was given a field promotion to major on March 13, 1865.

Warner saw action at some of the most significant battles in the Western Theater including the Battle of Shiloh, the Siege of Vicksburg, and Sherman’s March to the Sea. At Shiloh he was struck in the cheek with a sabre and would carry the scar for the rest of his life. He also walked with a limp from a horse being shot from under him during the Battle of Atlanta.

After the war ended in 1865, Warner enlisted in the regular army and was made a captain. He would spend the next two years fighting out West in the Indian Wars.

Harvard Student

In 1867, when Warner was twenty-five, he decided he did not want to spend the rest of his life in the army. He resigned his commission and came back East. After stopping in St. Louis to purchase a new suit, Warner continued on to Cambridge, Massachusetts. There he spoke with a representative of Harvard University, explained his personal history, and asked to be admitted to Harvard School of Law. Warner was accepted and resumed his legal studies. A Western man who had never been East of Ohio, except while he was in the army, Warner had difficulty fitting in. His new yellow suit,



complete with high-heeled boots and a red vest and tie, made him stand out from the somberly dressed students around him. After several weeks of other men looking askance at him, Warner went to a tailor and ordered a new suit. After the tailor took measurements, Warner began to leave the shop. Surprised, the tailor stopped him as asked if he had chosen the fabric and style of the new suit to which Warner replied: “No, I haven’t and I don’t think I will either. I selected this suit I have on.” When telling the story of his early days at Harvard Warner remembered the other students told him he was “...the greatest curiosity they had ever seen. They didn’t know whether I was a ‘three-card Monte’ man or a horse thief.”

Lawyer

Warner graduated in 1868 and returned to Clinton. That same year he married Winifred Moore, daughter of important Clinton citizen and attorney Clifton H. Moore. Together, they would have six children.

After being admitted to the bar, Warner entered into law practice with his father-in-law. Towards the end of his life, Warner described his first case: “...some man was foolish enough to employ me as his attorney in a lawsuit in the circuit court. There was a lawyer in those days by the name of Palmer who was a holy terror, to the young men particularly. He was on the other side. Well, I thought my entire future depended on the result of that lawsuit, and I was afraid if Palmer took hold of me I would be ruined, so I went to Mr. [Lawrence] Weldon and asked him to come into the case with me. He wouldn’t do it. He said, ‘You have got to try it alone.’ When the case was called I looked around and there sat Weldon among the lawyers and I knew he would help me in case it became necessary. Well, I tried the case and as luck would have it I won out. Then Mr. Weldon came up to me and said, “Don’t you see that it was best that I forced you to try that case alone? If I had gone in with you, I would have had to go in with you in every case you had in the future.”

Congressman

Warner was elected as a Republican to the Fifty-fourth and to the four succeeding Congresses (March 4, 1895-March 3, 1905). He served as chairman of the Committee on Revision of the Laws (Fifty-fifth through Fifty-eighth Congresses).

He served as Commissioner of Pensions from March 4, 1905, to November 25, 1909. The Commission of Pensions was what we now call the Director of Veterans’ Affairs. In this



position, Warner assisted Civil War veterans, from both the U.S. and Confederate armies, as well as their widows in securing the pensions they had earned through their service.

He engaged in business in Clinton, Illinois, as a banker and realty owner and agent. He died in Clinton on March 31, 1925.

Legacy

Clifton H. Moore passed away in 1901, leaving his extensive collection of books to the city of Clinton, which did not have a public library at that time. Warner donated the funds and land to build a library to house Moore's collection. Construction on the new library began in 1906. The Free Clinton Library, which had opened in 1901, was reorganized into the Vespasian Warner Public Library and opened to the public in 1908.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Collection includes photographs (including copies), and correspondence specifically related to Vespasian Warner.



Vespasian Warner Collection Inventory		
<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Profile photographs of Vespasian Warner (2)	1	1
Letter from T. Roosevelt to V. Warner	1	2
Receipt dated 15 Sept 1900	1	3
Copies of photograph of Vespasian Warner in Uniform	1	4
Copies of ten (10) photographs of Vespasian Warner from the collection of John Warner IV	1	5
Transcript of letter from V. Warner to the <i>Clinton Morning Journal</i> 24 Dec 1924	1	6
Transcript of letter from V. Warner to C.H. Leichleiter 24 Dec 1908	1	7
Undated photograph of Vespasian Warner (copy)	1	8
Last will and testament of Vespasian Warner (copy)	1	9
V. Warner for Governor undated	1	10
Photograph: Portrait of Young Vespasian Warner, ~1950s (with note of reproduction for 2011 exhibit)	1	11
“Col. V Warner Tells DeWitt County Attorneys of A. Lincoln and Early Days of DeWitt Bar” (4)	1	12
Col V. Warner congressional address, marriage announcement	1	13