



Legacy Finding Aid for Manuscript and Photograph Collections

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What are Legacy Finding Aids?

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FINDING AID

Title: MS 142 Richard L. and Vinnie Ream Hoxie Papers, 1862-1921

Processor: Gail R. Redmann, Taylor M. Beck

Date: August 1998; updated March 2002

Richard L. Hoxie (1844-1930) was born in New York City August 7, 1844, the son of Joseph and Jacqueline Hoxie. After attending local elementary schools, he was educated in Italy from 1851 to 1858, and then attended Iowa State University until 1861, when he enlisted as a private in the Union Army. He served as a bugler and later as a Corporal with the 1st Iowa Cavalry. In 1864, he received an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1868 with a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Engineer Corps. From 1868 to 1874, he served at Willett's Point, New York, and Boston Harbor. Richard Hoxie spent most of his military career in the District of Columbia. From 1874 to 1878 he served as Chief Engineer Officer for the Temporary Board of Commissioners of the District. He was particularly instrumental in establishing Washington's sewer system and designing a large underground aqueduct for the city's water supply. From 1878 to 1884, Hoxie served as assistant to Major William J. Twining, the District's first engineer Commissioner. From November 1882 to January 1884, he was simultaneously an assistant to the Engineer Officer in charge of the Washington Aqueduct.

In 1884, Hoxie was given charge of the Pensacola Defenses, which included designing river and harbor improvements in Florida, Alabama and Georgia, and was headquartered in Alabama. During the Spanish-American War in 1898, General Hoxie commanded forts along the New England coast. From 1901 to 1902, he was in charge of improving navigation along the upper Mississippi River and its tributaries, and along the Red River of the North.

General Hoxie retired from the military in 1908 and divided his time between Washington, D.C. and Florida, where he assisted Henry Flagler with the Key West railway project. He also published memorabilia of his wife Vinnie Ream Hoxie's sculpting career, 1865-1878, in a volume entitled *Vinnie Ream*, which was printed and distributed privately in 1908. A memorial supplement was added in 1916. After Vinnie's death, Hoxie married Ruth Norcross of Washington, D.C. General Hoxie was a member of the Army-Navy Club, the Columbia Historical Society, the Cosmos Club, and the Metropolitan Club. He died in Florida April 28, 1930.

Vinnie Ream Hoxie (1847-1914) was born September 25, 1847 in Madison, Wisconsin. Her father, Robert L. Ream, was a land agent, and Vinnie spent much of her childhood in the Midwest. She attended Christian College in Columbia, Missouri, excelling in art, literature, and music. During the Civil War, Vinnie moved with her family to Washington, D.C., where she obtained a position as a clerk in the Post Office Department. While in Washington, Vinnie came under the tutelage of the sculptor Clark Mills and soon gained praise for her work. In 1862, her sketches of President Lincoln were brought to his attention. The quality of her work and her humble circumstances prompted the president to agree to sit for Ream, and a special studio was prepared for her adjacent to his office in the Capitol. In 1866, Ream submitted her bust of Lincoln in competition for the Congressional commission for a life-size statue of the late president. Despite her age and relative inexperience, Congress judged her likeness of Lincoln to be the finest, and she became the first woman awarded a federal commission for sculpture.

In 1869, upon completion of the plaster model for the Lincoln statue, Vinnie traveled to Europe to study and practice her art and to oversee the carving of the Carrara marble for the statue. Upon completion of the statue, Ream returned to Washington, where the statue was unveiled in the Rotunda of the Capitol on January 25, 1871. In 1875, Ream was awarded the federal commission for the statue of Admiral David Farragut, which was cast in bronze at the Navy Yard and officially unveiled in April 1881 in Farragut Square.

Vinnie Ream married Lt. Richard L. Hoxie at the Church of the Ascension in Washington, D.C. on May 27, 1878. Upon completion of the Farragut model in 1880, she gave up sculpture for about eighteen years. At that time, she opened a small studio in her home and created a number of works, including the statues of Iowa Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood and the Cherokee leader Sequoia, which are displayed in the Capitol.

Aside from her work in sculpture, Vinnie Ream Hoxie was a prominent Washington hostess at her home at 1623 K Street. She was also a member of the League of American Pen Women and the Columbia Historical Society, and she achieved the Eighth Degree level of Masonic rank. She died on November 20, 1914, and her ashes are buried in Arlington National Cemetery under a reproduction of her statue "Sappho."

Scope and Content: The Richard L. and Vinnie Ream Hoxie Papers, 1862-1921, consist of correspondence, military records, photographs, and memorabilia. Richard Hoxie's papers primarily document his military career with the 1st Iowa Cavalry during the Civil War and with the U.S. Army Engineer Corps during 1902. They also include a unique letter in which he describes details of life at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point during early 1864. Vinnie Ream Hoxie's papers document her career as a sculptor, particularly highlighting her unique status as the first woman to obtain a federal commission for sculpture, which was awarded for her statue of President Lincoln. Her correspondents include many notable persons of her day, including William W. Corcoran, John Hay, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edith Roosevelt, William Seward, William Tecumseh Sherman, and Thaddeus Stevens.

This collection is arranged in two series:

Series I, RICHARD L. HOXIE PAPERS, 1862-1920, consists of correspondence, a journal, military records and reports, and programs. The Richard L. Hoxie Papers are arranged by document type and then chronologically.

Series II, VINNIE REAM HOXIE PAPERS, 1865-1921, consists of biographical material, correspondence, memorabilia, and photographs. The Vinnie Ream Hoxie Papers are arranged alphabetically by document type and then chronologically.

Donor: Mrs. Robert Clay Sherrill, 1959 (from the estate of her sister, Ruth Norcross Hoxie); 1983.142

Size: 0.34 cubic ft. (one container; one oversize folder)

Restrictions: None

Container List

SERIES I: RICHARD L. HOXIE PAPERS, 1862-1920

Folder 1: Military service records, 1862-1868, including military appointments and discharges related to Richard Hoxie's service with the 1st Iowa Cavalry, 1862-1864; military appointment to U.S. Military Academy at West Point, 1864; and records of service with U.S. Army Engineer Corps, 1868.

Folder 2: Correspondence, 1868-1905, 1911, including letter from Hoxie to his aunt and uncle in Iowa City about his experiences at West Point, February 29, 1868, and copy of a letter of W. Tindall to Mary Fuller of the Patent Office regarding Hoxie's plan for Rock Creek Park. Other correspondents include Brigham Young, George Bancroft, Fitzhugh Lee, and James Blaine. A letter from Crosby Noyes in 1905 appointed Hoxie to the Committee on Reception for the inaugural of Theodore Roosevelt.

Folder 3: Journal, July 29-September 1, 1872. Journal documents the notes of 2nd Lieutenant Hoxie, commanding a topographical survey party (comprised of both soldiers and civilians) along the alkaline flats west of Salt Lake City. Entries of note include: supplies requisitioned, distances and locations traveled, and orders given. Also recorded is an instance of cattle rustling perpetrated by some of the men under the command of Lt. Hoxie and the prosecution of crimes committed in the field.

Folder 4: Printed materials, 1891-1902, 1920, including program of memorial service of William Tecumseh Sherman, May 7, 1891; annual report of Hoxie's military activities with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the headwaters of the Mississippi, 1902; programs of the parade and dedication ceremonies for the Arlington Memorial Amphitheater, Arlington National Cemetery, May 14-19, 1920.

Folder 5: Portraits of Richard Hoxie, 1881-ca. 1920s.

SERIES II: VINNIE REAM HOXIE PAPERS, 1865-1921

Folder 6: Biographical material, 1908-1921, including memorial essay issued by the Vinnie Ream Memorial Committee of the League of American Pen Women, 1914; Supplement to 1908 book *Vinnie Ream*, 1916; newspaper clipping describing the J.P.A. Healy portrait of Vinnie Ream at the National Gallery of Art, 1917; "A Group of Songs by Vinnie Ream," ca. 1921, published by Ruth Norcross Hoxie.

Folder 7: Correspondence, 1862-1910, and undated, including letters, notes and invitations. Subjects include the Lincoln statue, death of President Garfield and Garfield Memorial Hospital, a gift for John Hay's daughter, and correspondence with Wu Ting-fang from the Chinese Legation. Invitations include those for the wedding of President Grant's daughter Nellie, General Sherman's daughter, and the Ream-Hoxie wedding.

Folder 8: Memorabilia, 1865-1904, and undated, including invitation to 1865 inaugural ball, printed list of members of the U.S. House of Representatives, March 4, 1867; printed letter from the Secretary of the Navy describing Ream's contract for sculpting the Farragut statue, February 3, 1875; newspaper clipping with etching of Ream modeling the Farragut statue, June 7, 1878; poem "Old Fort McRee," written by Vinnie Ream Hoxie at Pensacola, Florida, June 1886; program of the unveiling ceremony for the statue of Frederick the Great at the Army War College, November 19, 1904; Masonic ritual book "Arcana," undated. Masonic certificates are located in the oversize document folder.

Folder 9: Photographs, including a portraits of Vinnie Ream as she looked when Lincoln posed for her and an unidentified portrait of a woman, possibly Vinnie Ream Hoxie; and photographs of Ream's sculpture.

Folder 10 (oversize):

Proeses et Quaesitores Societatis Medicorum certificate, November 1851. Presented to Gulrelums J. C. DuHamel? Hoxie connection unknown.

Richard L. Hoxie appointment certificate, Corporal, 1st Iowa Volunteers, June 6, 1863.

Richard L. Hoxie appointment certificate, Second Lieutenant, Corps of Engineers, June 15, 1868. Signed by President Andrew Johnson.

Folder 10 (continued)

Masonic certificate to Vinnie Ream, March 1869? Document, which appears to be in French and signed by Albert Pike, is very faded.

Certificate of appreciation to Richard L. Hoxie on the occasion of his transfer from District service, ca. 1884.

Richard L. Hoxie appointment certificate as Major, Corps of Engineers, December 30, 1895. Signed by President Grover Cleveland.

Commemorative diploma, Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, NY. Presented to Richard L. Hoxie for valuable service in U. S. Treasury Department exhibit.

Richard L. Hoxie appointment certificate as Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers, April 23, 1904. Signed by President Theodore Roosevelt.

Richard L. Hoxie appointment certificate as Colonel, Corps of Engineers, Jun 9, 1907. Signed by President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretary of War William Taft.

Masonic certificate to Vinnie Ream (in French), undated. Only top half of this document remains intact.