

# **Guide to the Bennett family collection of Civil War correspondence and other material 2009.012**

**Finding aid prepared by Robyn Hjermsstad**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Brooklyn Historical Society  
November 2010  
128 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY, 11201  
718-222-4111  
[library@brooklynhistory.org](mailto:library@brooklynhistory.org)

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Brooklyn Historical Society
<b>Creator</b>	Bennett family
<b>Creator</b>	Bennett, Harman, b. 1840
<b>Creator</b>	Bennett, Winant, b. 1829
<b>Creator</b>	Tandy family
<b>Creator</b>	Tandy, Abram Van Winkle
<b>Creator</b>	Tandy, Catharine M. Bennett, 1835-1892
<b>Creator</b>	Van Winkle, Frank
<b>Title</b>	Bennett family collection of Civil War correspondence and other material
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1832-1909
<b>Extent</b>	0.25 Linear feet in one manuscript box
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language of Materials</b>	Materials in English.
<b>Text [Box]</b>	1
<b>Abstract</b>	This collection contains twenty-nine letters written by members of the Bennett, Tandy, and Van Winkle families between the years of 1832-1909. Twenty-two of the letters are written to or by soldiers while they served in the American Civil War. The content of the letters relates

to the lives of Union soldiers regarding naval battles, camp life, and family matters. Other topics include the secession of the South, Lincoln's candidacy, and family businesses. Some letters refer to New York's 84th Regiment from Brooklyn, also known as the 14th Militia. Most of the letters were written to or by Winant Bennett while he served for the Union during the Civil War. Several of the letters are on various forms of letterhead and some envelopes are included. Transcriptions of the letters, though incomplete at points, are available. Also included in the collection is a United States Treasury form, a certificate of membership to the Order of American Firemen for Abram Van Winkle Tandy, and a picture postcard of a bungalow at Laurel, Long Island.

**Preferred Citation**

Identification of item, date (if known); Bennett family collection of Civil War correspondence and other material, 2009.012, Box and Folder number; Brooklyn Historical Society.

## Biographical/Historical note

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The letters in this collection demonstrate the close relationships maintained by the Bennett, Tandy, and Van Winkle families during the American Civil war. The Bennett correspondents in this collection are fifth generation descendants of William Adrianse Bennet, who along with Jacques Bentyn, bought tracts of land from the Canarsee Native Americans in 1636, and became the first settlers of Gowanus in Brooklyn, New York. Catharine M. Bennett Tandy, Winant (Winie, Winnie), and Harmanus (Harmie, Harman) Bennett are three of the six children of Maria Wyckoff and Harman Bennett. Catharine Bennett married Abram Van Winkle Tandy; Abram's uncle, Frank Van Winkle and Winant Bennett both fought for the Union Army and Navy during the American Civil War. Winant Bennett served in the 90th New York Infantry Regiment at the Marine and Stewart Hospitals in Key West, Florida and at Camp Parole in Annapolis, Maryland. Frank Van Winkle served in the Union Navy at Fort Monroe and Port Royal, among other places.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection documents both the routine and dramatic events that took place for various family members of the Bennett, Tandy, and Van Winkle families during the American Civil War. The documents in this collection range from 1832-1909, while the bulk of the letters are dated during the 1860s and 1870s. The letters illustrate the details of camp life at Fort Monroe, the Marine Hospital at Key West, Florida, Port Royal, Camp Parole in Annapolis, Maryland, and Camp Williamsburg. Winant (Winnie, Winie) Bennett and his sister Catharine M. (Kate, Kitty) Bennett Tandy are the primary correspondents in this collection. Other correspondents include Harmanus Bennett, Abram Van Winkle Tandy, Susan and James Van Winkle, Frank Van Winkle, and John F. Tandy, among others. Many letters to and from Winant Bennett were written when he was stationed at the Marine and Stewart hospitals in Key West, Florida. His letters are very descriptive of everyday tasks, such as cooking and gathering supplies that are associated with camp life; Winant's letters also describe in detail the meals that he ate, the weather, and illnesses common to his "messmates" while stationed at various military camps and hospitals.

Letters written by Frank Van Winkle reference the fall of Charleston, the attack on a Confederate battery on Back River in Virginia in 1861, and the "Burnside Expedition" led by Union Army General Ambrose Burnside in New Bern, North Carolina. This collection also includes a letter to Abram Van Winkle Tandy from Chas T. Brewster regarding his concerns of the South "seizing" the Capitol. Another letter to Abram Van Winkle Tandy from F.W. Lovejoy describes soldier life at Camp Williamsburg in Maryland. Some letters refer to New York's 84th Regiment from Brooklyn, also known as the 14th Militia. In addition to named correspondents are two anonymous letters to soldiers from "a friend of the soldiers of the

U.S." declaring their admiration for those risking their lives. The anonymous letters were found in a bag handmade by a child.

In addition to to correspondence to and from soldiers are many letters regarding the personal affairs of family members. The letters address illness in the family, mortgages, loans, family businesses, and travel and holiday plans. John F. Tandy writes to his brother Abram about his recent 35 dollar purchase of a sailboat called "White Squall"; and another letter to Abram from his brother in-law Harman Bennett describes his family's close relationship and recent holiday visit with Harry, one of his grandfather's old slaves.

Other document types include a United States Treasury form and a certificate of membership to the Order of American Firemen, both for Abram Van Winkle Tandy. One picture postcard (1909) of a bungalow at Laurel, Long Island, is also included in this collection.

Many of the letters and envelopes include Civil War Union Army letterheads printed in color. A significant amount of the letters are paired with envelopes with Civil War stamps, most of which are very well preserved. Some examples include a letterhead with music notes with text "For Auld Lang Syne," an envelope with a decal in color of the American flag that says "God Save the Union," and a letterhead with Lady Liberty leaning on a red, white, and blue shield.

The first folder of the collection contains a typed list of the items in the collection, as well as full and partial transcriptions of the handwritten letters, as provided by the donor.

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## Arrangement note

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Materials in this collection are arranged chronologically, following the sequence established by the donor. Each folder contains between one and three items. Transcriptions provided by the donor are in the first folder.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Brooklyn Historical Society November 2010

### Conditions Governing Access

Open to researchers without restriction.

### **Conditions Governing Use note**

Material in this collection is in the public domain.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

The letters were passed down through the Bennett family as follows: Catharine (Kitty, Sister Kate) M. Bennett Tandy gave them to her daughter, Catherine (little Kitty) M. Tandy Thurber, who then passed them to her daughter-in-law, Emeline Goergens Thurber. Emeline passed them to her daughter Evelyn Thurber Nostrand, who then gave them to Elaine C. Thurber in 1991. This collection was donated to Brooklyn Historical Society by Kathryn Crones and Elaine Stevens in October 2009.

### **Processing Information note**

The collection was processed by Robyn Hjermstad in November 2010.

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Archival Materials note**

The Bennet and Ryder families collection (ARC.001) contains information about the descendants of the Bennett correspondents found in this collection.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Corporate Name(s)**

- United States. Army. New York Infantry Regiment, 84th (1861-1864).

### **Family Name(s)**

- Bennett family -- Correspondence

- Tandy family

### **Genre(s)**

- Correspondence
- Forms (documents)
- Letters
- Postcards

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- United States |x History |y Civil War, 1861-1865
- United States |x History |y Civil War, 1861-1865 |x Health aspects
- United States |x History |y Civil War, 1861-1865 |x Hospitals
- United States |x History |y Civil War, 1861-1865 |x Social aspects

### **Personal Name(s)**

- Bennett, Harman, b. 1840
- Bennett, Winant, b. 1829
- Tandy, Abram Van Winkle
- Tandy, Catharine M. Bennett, 1835-1892
- Van Winkle, Frank

### **Subject(s)**

- Secession |z Southern States
- Soldiers
- Soldiers |x Family relationships |z United States
- Soldiers |z United States |v Correspondence