

Van Dorn Papers

A Finding Aid

Livingston County Historian's Office

5 Murray Hill Dr.

Mt. Morris, NY 14510

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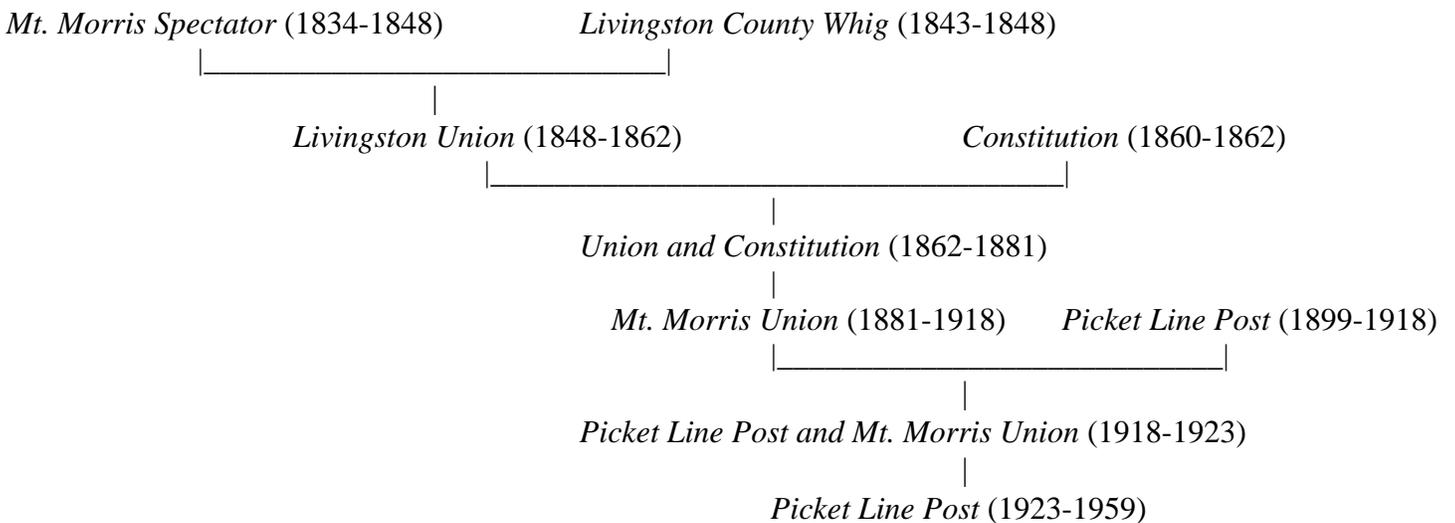
I. Collection Summary

Title	Van Dorn Papers
Collection No.	C117
Extent	.45 linear feet, 370 items
Date Range	c. 1832-1881(bulk 1840-1857)
Abstract	<p>This collection comprises handwritten notices and flyers probably submitted to Hugh Harding, the editor of the <i>Mt. Morris Spectator</i> published in Mt. Morris, Livingston County, New York, and subsequent newspapers. The items' topical span covers event publicity, lost and found notices, election results, business advertisements, marriage and death announcements, educational institution notices, legal classifieds, town government meeting bulletins, and other types of newspaper notices. Besides the <i>Spectator</i>, these communications may have been published in the <i>Livingston Union</i>, <i>Union and Constitution</i>, and <i>Mt. Morris Union</i>. The series is important as the full span of the published <i>Mt. Morris Spectator</i> and subsequent papers stemming from it is not held by the Livingston County Historian's Office. Therefore, the handwritten notes fill in important gaps in a time when documentation of local events was scant.</p>
Condition, Arrangement	<p>The documents in this collection are divided in no particular order among ten acid-free file folders. The papers are in good condition, and items can generally be recognized by a small round hole in one of the upper corners, likely from being placed on a receipt spindle. It should be noted that several items that did not have a provenance notation do display a small hole and fit the general description of items in this collection. They are housed elsewhere in the Livingston County Historian's Archives, not with the rest of the grouped Van Dorn Papers collection. They are noted separately in this finding aid.</p>
Languages	English.
Access and Restrictions	<p>Use of the documents in the collection is for serious research and by request and permission of the Livingston County Historian's Office. Any use of the material in publications must be cited as follows, "Courtesy of Livingston County Historian's Office, New York." Additionally, all documents should be handled with care.</p> <p>To arrange to conduct research with the documents in the collection, contact the Livingston County Historian by mail at: 5 Murray Hill Drive, Mount Morris, NY, by phone at (585) 243-7955, or by e-mail at Historian@livingstoncountyny.gov.</p>
Copyright	There are no items subject to copyright.

II. Biographical and Background Information

The provenance of the Van Dorn Papers is not known, though it was labeled by a county historian prior to the 1990s as the Van Dorn Collection. This may relate to Fred Van Dorn, the founder and publisher of the Mt. Morris paper, the *Picket Line Post*. A Mr. Van Dorn, possibly a descendant of the newspaper man, donated items to the Livingston County Historical Society in the 1940s and 1950s, and since the *Picket Line Post* superseded several previous Mt. Morris-based weekly papers, including the early *Mt. Morris Spectator*, there may be a connection between his ancestor and these papers. Many special collections were deaccessioned by the Livingston County Historical Society and transferred to the Livingston County Historian's Office around 2005, when the Historian's Office relocated. This collection was among those items to be transferred.

The *Spectator* began in the 1830s in Mt. Morris, run by Hugh Harding, and merged several times with other publications in Dansville and Geneseo, as illustrated by this tree:



Hugh Harding was the common denominator from the *Spectator* through the *Union* line, which eventually became the *Mt. Morris Union*. He began working in Dansville before 1834, and published until he retired in 1871.

Fred Van Dorn, son of John Van Dorn, was the founder of the *Picket Line Post* in 1899. When he died in 1907, his father took over the publishing of the paper, and it eventually merged with the *Mt. Morris Union*. It is speculated that this is the path which these papers traveled to get from Hugh Harding to a Van Dorn.

III. Contents List

Box 1 Folder 1 – Folder 10		Notices sent to editor, c. 1832-1881 (368 items)
Archival Files	B59-F5	Price list, Nathan Clark and Co. pottery, 1840 (1 item)
Archival Files	B59-F7	Advertisement, classes in dancing by Mr. C. J. Wood at Assembly Room, Empire Hall, 1850-1851 (1 item)

IV. Related Materials

Livingston County Historian’s Office
 Newspaper Series

- The *Mt. Morris Spectator* (scattered issues 1834-1845), *Livingston Union*, *Union and Constitution*, and *Picket Line Post* are available, among other papers of the time.