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George Vasey Papers, 1889-1893

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <a href="mailto:osiaref@si.edu">osiaref@si.edu</a>
<b>Title:</b>	George Vasey Papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 7087
<b>Date:</b>	1889-1893
<b>Extent:</b>	0.25 cu. ft. (1 half document box)
<b>Creator::</b>	Vasey, George
<b>Language:</b>	Language of Materials: English

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7087, George Vasey Papers

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## Historical Note

George Vasey (1822-1893), a physician and botanist, was born near Scarborough, England. In 1828 his parents emigrated to the United States, settling in Oneida County, New York. Vasey became interested in botany as a youth, reading Almira Hart Lincoln's *Elements of Botany*, and meeting the German botanist, P. H. Kneiskern, who subsequently introduced him to John Torrey and Asa Gray.

Vasey graduated from Oneida Institute in 1841 and the Berkshire Medical Institute at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1846. After spending a few weeks of training at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City, Vasey left to practice medicine in New York and Illinois. Vasey collected botanical specimens while practicing medicine and helped form the Illinois Natural History Society. In 1864 he received an M.A. from Illinois Wesleyan University.

In 1872, Vasey was appointed Botanist of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Curator of the National Herbarium; and in 1889 he became Honorary Curator of the Department of Botany, United States National Museum. Vasey held these positions until his death. At the USDA, Vasey built up its collections of North American grasses, and was instrumental in establishing the Grass Experimental Station at Garden City, Kansas. Vasey's most important botanical study was on the agricultural grasses of the United States, published in 1884. In 1891 he began preparation of his work on North American grasses for publication. The first part of his work was issued in 1892, but he died before the second part could be published.

Vasey was a member of the Geographical Society of Washington; the Biological Society of Washington; a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and an associate fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1892 he was one of the vice-presidents at the Botanical Congress at Genoa, representing the USDA and the Smithsonian.

## Descriptive Entry

These papers consist of appointment letters to special posts and functions, and honors and awards. Official files of Vasey may be found in Record Unit 220.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Botanists
- Botany
- Grasses
- Physicians

Types of Materials:

- Manuscripts

Names:

- American Academy of Arts and Sciences
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Berkshire Medical Institution (Pittsfield, Mass.)
- Biological Society of Washington
- College of Physicians and Surgeons in the City of New York
- Geographical Society of Washington
- Grass Experimental Station
- Gray, Asa, 1810-1888
- Illinois Natural History Society
- Illinois Wesleyan University
- International Botanical Congress
- Kneiskern, P. H.
- Oneida Baptist Institute
- Torrey, John, 1796-1873
- United States National Herbarium
- United States National Museum. Department of Botany
- United States. Department of Agriculture
- Vasey, George

## Container Listing

Box 1

Box 1 of 1

Correspondence and Awards