GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK
GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

FINDING AID FOR

GETTYSBURG NATIONAL PARK COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
MONUMENTS, MARKERS, AND TABLETS
PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS, 1898-1911

CATALOG NUMBER: GETT 41140

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HISTORY ASSOCIATES INCORPORATED

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PREFACE

This document, the *Finding Aid for the Gettysburg National Park Commission Office of the Commissioners Monuments, Markers, and Tablets Photograph Albums, 1898-1911* contains photographic material relating to monuments, markers, and tablets on the Gettysburg battlefield. This finding aid was completed in 2004 and is the result of a project carried out by History Associates Incorporated and the Gettysburg National Military Park.

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INTRODUCTION

This document, the Finding Aid for the *Gettysburg National Park Commission Office of the Commissioners Monuments, Markers, and Tablets Photograph Albums, 1898-1911*, is the result of work by the staff of the Gettysburg National Military Park and History Associates Incorporated. HAI archivist Ryan P. Semmes completed a survey and processing plan of the series in November 2003. From January 2004 through April 2004, Mr. Semmes, with assistance from HAI historian Garry E. Adelman, processed the series under the guidance of Greg Goodell, archivist, Gettysburg National Military Park and Anita M. Weber, Deputy Director of the Information Resource Management.

This finding aid describes a series of three albums containing photographs depicting the monuments, markers, and tablets on the Gettysburg battlefield. Many of the images are identified by a number and caption provided by the original creator. The provenance of these albums is unclear. The 1900 inspector's report of the records of the Commission does not list these photograph albums, nor is there any accession information to indicate as to when the Commission came into possess them.

The albums are housed in three flat storage boxes.

The finding aid is divided into four sections:

- Part 1: Series Description
  - Scope and content note
  - Series Description
- Part 2: Historic Note
- Part 3: Series List
  - Box list
- Bibliography

Record-keeping Practices of the GNPC

Greg Goodell, Archivist, Gettysburg National Military Park

The U.S. War Department began to create records relating to the Gettysburg battlefield in the 1880's. On March 3, 1887, as part of the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill, Congress appropriated $15,000 for the erection of monuments to the regular commands of the U.S. Army. Colonel John Wilson of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Corps of Engineers had responsibility for the expenditure of these funds appropriated by Congress. Wilson began to accumulate correspondence on such topics as the marking of the positions of the regular army, the proper use of government funds for expenditures, the creation of text to appear on monuments, and the purchase of land from local residents. Congress appropriated additional funds in the intervening years for the erection of additional monuments, the purchase of property and, later, the construction of avenues to link those monuments with other preserved areas. By the beginning of 1893, however, the administration of these programs passed from the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds to the Office of the Quartermaster General. The Quartermaster General's office continued to create records similar to those of its predecessor.

The passage of the Civil Appropriation Act of March 3, 1893 ushered in a new era of federal involvement on the Gettysburg battlefield. With the passage of the act came a new appropriation of $25,000 for the purposes of preserving lines of battle and marking the positions occupied by the Union and Confederate armies during the battle. In order to oversee this expenditure, Secretary of War Daniel Lamont established a three-member Gettysburg National Battlefield Commission consisting of John P. Nicholson (Chairman), John B. Bachelder, and William H. Forney. Charles Richardson, William Robbins, and L. L. Lomax would later serve as commissioners as well. Within their first orders from the Secretary were instructions to procure "such stationary and blank forms as [were] necessary for official purposes."

The commissioners had to address the management of records. One of the first items the Commission received was the official history of the battle of Gettysburg written by commissioner John Bachleder for the War Department. In a letter to the Secretary of War Nicholson reported that "an examination of the manuscript . . . by J. B. Bachelder . . . now in the possession of the Chairman . . . demonstrates that for practical field purposes and reference it will be necessary to have [the report] properly paged and bound." Nicholson continued by outlining a number of estimates that had been obtained for such a purpose and recommended that the text be bound in folios on linen for a cost of $109.[1] This was to be one of the Commission's first acts of records management.

Nicholson's recommendations to the Secretary of War on binding important records arose from personal experience. Nicholson was a bookbinder by profession. His father, James B. Nicholson, had been a partner in the Philadelphia bookbindery of Pawson and Nicholson and, in 1856, had written a treatise on the subject entitled A Manual of the Art of Bookbinding. In this volume, James Nicholson had exalted his readers to place

[1] Letter, John P. Nicholson to Daniel S. Lamont, Secretary of War, October 20, 1893, *Approvals of Requests, 1893*, Records of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, Archives, Gettysburg National Military Park.

important works into substantial bindings. "Let the bindings upon your books," he wrote, "be characteristic of the contents and the value of the work."[2] Upon entering the family business, John Nicholson would follow this rule. He would continue to do so after becoming Commissioner of the GNPC. Throughout his tenure as Commission chairman, Nicholson would request authority from the Secretary of War to bind the important records – such as those items documenting property purchases, decisions in land condemnation cases, and requests approved by the Secretary – for future reference. Nicholson arranged these volumes almost entirely by subject, sometimes dividing the subject volumes by date. This was an important step in maintaining the integrity of the Commission's records and properly documenting the decisions it made. Nicholson would also be very specific in the types of binding materials to be used in the process.

As the commission continued its work in the succeeding years, records accumulated. By the time Congress formally established the national military park in early 1895 (and the commission officially became the Gettysburg National Park Commission), the Commission was sending close to 3,000 pieces of correspondence per year to various individuals, groups, and government bodies relating to the management of the battlefield. This did not include the numerous pieces of correspondence that the commission received, but the amount was probably similar to the number of letters being sent. In the Engineer's Department, park Engineer Emmor B. Cope and his assistants created maps and architectural drawings to support the work of the Commission. The department also generated journals of work completed on the battlefield, account books showing salaries paid to Commission staff, and property registers showing items purchased.

The flow of correspondence, it appears, fell into a particular pattern. Letters arrived at either the Commission's office in Gettysburg or at Nicholson's residence in Philadelphia. Nicholson would forward letters from Philadelphia to his office in Gettysburg if appropriate. Since the commissioners did not reside in Gettysburg they traveled to the town to conduct business, letters sent there for Nicholson would often accumulate and create quite a task for the chairman. Nicholson would often work well into the evening answering correspondence, reviewing the details of work, and approving vouchers.[3] If necessary, he would route the letter to Cope for his review as well, with follow-up instructions to place the original back on his desk when Cope had finished.

The organization of loose correspondence at the Commission is less clear. There is no evidence that points to a certain pattern of organization among Nicholson's loose correspondence. Once he had reviewed correspondence, Nicholson would often mark "Desk" or the subject of the letter on its reverse for reference. Periodically, Nicholson would review this correspondence and select the most important documents for binding. The organization of Cope's loose correspondence is more evident. Once a letter had been

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[2] James B. Nicholson, A Manual of the Art of Bookbinding, (1856) as quoted by Amanda Holmes in summary of research, "The Vanished Hand: John Page Nicholson and the Development of Gettysburg National Military Park, 1893-1922" November 11, 2000

[3] For examples, see *Commission Journals*, Records of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, Archives, Gettysburg National Military Park.

received and reviewed by Cope, he marked the letter "done" in the margin and filed the letter chronologically within blocks covering several months of time.
Nicholson especially recognized the important historical record being created. As early as 1897 Nicholson wrote about the "use and preservation" of records in "the Archives of the United States Commission."[4] In an inspection report of 1904, Colonel E.A. Garlington, U.S. Army Inspector General, provided an overview of the Commission's records, which included 12 volumes of its journals, 52 volumes of contract books, record books of property purchases made by government, engineering journals, and a host of other bound records. In conclusion, Garlington wrote that archives of the records of the commission were "full and complete" and remarked that he saw no way in which the "intelligent system" of their organization could be improved.[5]

Nicholson's concern for the records also extended to their usage. In a letter to the Secretary of War in 1911, Nicholson justified binding loose photographs because they were "from day to day removed from the files for comparison and report and mislaid, and if bound in volumes they cannot be taken out or away."[6] Nicholson would continue to insist upon good records management and care of the Commission archives until his death in 1922 (at which time the Commission ceased to exist). In a letter of instruction to GNPC staff member W.C. Storrick dated April 9, 1919, Nicholson stated: "A package, roll, or any other document that is marked DESK is not to be sent to me [in Philadelphia], because it is already in its proper destination."[7]

[4] John P. Nicholson to R. A. Alger, Secretary of War, April 23, 1897, *Approvals of Requests – 1897*, Records of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, Archives, Gettysburg National Military Park.

[5] Colonel E. A. Garlington, *Gettysburg National Park: Inspection Report by E. A. Garlington* (Washington, 1904), p. 4

[6] John P. Nicholson to Robert Shaw Oliver, Assistant Secretary of War, April 15, 1911, *Approvals of Requests – 1911*, Records of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, Archives, Gettysburg National Military Park.

[7] . John P. Nicholson to William C. Storrick, Letter, April 9, 1919, Staff Correspondence, Engineer's Department Records, Records of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, Archives, Gettysburg National Military Park.

PART 1:

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

U.S. War Department Gettysburg National Park Commission Office of the Commission Monuments, Markers, and Tablets Photograph Albums, 1898-1911

Accession number: GETT-1055

Catalog number: Collection: GETT 41140

Quantity: 4.5 linear feet.

Storage: 3 flat storage boxes

Location: Gettysburg National Military Park, 1195 Baltimore Pike, Gettysburg, PA 17325, (717) 334-1124

Description: The *U.S. War Department Gettysburg National Park Commission Office of the Commissioners Monuments, Markers, and Tablets Photograph Albums* are bound volumes of photographs taken of the Gettysburg battlefield monuments. Two albums contain images recorded circa 1898 and one album contains images recorded from 1899 to 1911. The first two albums include monuments that were on the battlefield in 1898. They are organized roughly according to battlefield location. The third album represents an ongoing attempt to compile images of memorials erected after 1898. Images in this album appear generally in the order of the date in which the monuments were erected. The index that accompanies the album is written in various manuscript styles, suggesting that entries were made over time. Most of the images in the third album show Union and Confederate artillery plaques, United States Regular plaques, and Confederate brigade, division, and corps plaques, most of which were erected between 1899 and 1911.

The presence of snow and the lack of foliage indicate that a large number of images were recorded in the winter months, which is uncommon for Gettysburg Battlefield imagery. Views of a beautiful battlefield in full foliage were more typical because the primary goal of local photographers was to sell photographs.

Organization: *U.S. War Department Gettysburg National Park Commission Office of the Commission Monuments, Markers, and Tablets Photograph Albums, 1898-1911*.

I. Album One, 1898
II. Album Two, 1898
III. Album Three, 1899-1911

SERIES DESCRIPTION

The images in these albums were recorded by William H. Tipton as a series specifically for the GNPC. That the images are "Tiptons" is supported by the duplication of some of the views in Tipton's *Gettysburg: The Pictures and the Story.* Also, his photographic wagon, complete with his name and logo, appears in at least one view.

The negative numbers from the albums are not the same as those that appear in Tipton's 1894 *Catalogue of Tipton's Photographic Views of the Battlefield of Gettysburg* (probably because most were recorded later, after the GNPC had been formed). For instance, Tipton's image for sale in his catalog lists the 84th New York Infantry monument as #962, while in the album an image of the same monument appears as #354. Furthermore, the images of the 84th New York Infantry monuments in the album and the souvenir booklet are different. Note that even when the image in the album is the same as an image in the Tipton souvenir book, the negative number listed in his 1894 catalog does not match that in the album. Most of the album images have never appeared in print making this series rare if not unique.

William Tipton had been recording battlefield views since 1863. The GNPC's predecessor, the GBMA, also commissioned Tipton for similar work. The following appears in the May 1888 minutes of the GBMA:

> "On motion of Col. Bachelder, it was Resolved, that the Association have Mr. Tipton prepare a mat and photographs of the monuments erected on the field and that they be framed and placed on exhibition in the City of Boston, Mass. Col. Bachelder stated that Mr. Tipton had agreed to furnish the photographs gratuitously".

However, the images in these albums are not those requested by the GBMA because many of the monuments included in the first two albums (and all of those in the third) were erected after 1888. Other battlefield features that appear in the images, such as steel observation towers erected by the GNPC in 1895, also show that the images were recorded post-1895.

A descriptive label containing a negative number and caption printed on the bottom of the image exists for most of the images in the first two albums. A handwritten caption is below the image without a negative number in the third album.

I. Album One, 1898

The first album contains 240 black and white images recorded by William H. Tipton in 1898. The images of monuments are in general groupings by battlefield location.

II. Album Two, 1898

The second album contains 243 black and white images recorded by William H. Tipton in 1898. The images of monuments are in general groupings by battlefield location.

III. Album Three, 1899-1911

The third album contains 113 black and white images recorded by William H. Tipton from 1899-1911. The images of monuments are in the approximate order in which they were erected.

PART 2:

HISTORICAL NOTE

Monument Photographs at Gettysburg National Military Park

Monument History

Not long after the Battle of Gettysburg, fought July 1-3, 1863, people began to memorialize the actions of those who struggled there. The first known memorials, other than headstones for the fallen, were inscriptions on boulders and trees. Some of these, carved as early as 1864, remain today. In 1865 the first permanent memorial was dedicated at Gettysburg with the laying of the cornerstone of the Soldiers' National Monument in the Soldiers' National Cemetery. The monument was completed four years later. In 1867, survivors of the 1st Minnesota Regiment placed a memorial urn in the Cemetery to honor the dead from that state. In 1871, a bronze statue of Union General John F. Reynolds was erected in the Cemetery.

It was not until 1878 that a granite or bronze memorial was erected on the battlefield outside of the National Cemetery. That year, memorials to two Union colonels were placed to mark the sites where they were killed or mortally wounded. With the erection of the 2nd Massachusetts monument in 1879, the era of memorializing specific units that fought at Gettysburg began. Within a decade most northern states had allocated funds to memorialize regiments that fought in the battle. During the late 1880s hundreds of regimental monuments were placed on the battlefield. For two decades, nearly all monuments on the battlefield honored Union regiments. The poor economic conditions in the south after Reconstruction created a roadblock to Confederate veterans' efforts to place monuments on the Gettysburg battlefield. Neither individuals nor states possessed the necessary funds to create, erect and care for memorials. Furthermore, many southerners were more concerned with erecting monuments on battlefields where they were victorious. It was not until the turn of the century that southern states began to place monuments and markers along the battlefield.

Regimental monumentation continued throughout the 1890s and continues to the present day. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, the larger military units (brigade, division, corps, and army) from the north and the south, as well as the "regular" or United States units were memorialized with plaques and tablets of various sizes. To date, some 1,400 monuments, markers, and tablets have been placed on the Gettysburg Battlefield.

Park Custodians and Monuments

A few weeks after the Union and Confederate armies departed from the battlefield in early July 1863, Gettysburg attorney David McConaughy purchased portions of the land upon which the battle was fought in order to preserve its historical integrity. Soon after his purchase he and a group of local citizens founded the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (GBMA)—incorporated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on April 30, 1864. Within a few years, the GBMA owned plots of land all over the battlefield. As GBMA real estate holdings grew in the following decades, so did the number of memorials around the battlefield. As a means of maintaining the historical

accuracy of the battlefield, the GBMA established strict rules pertaining to the erection of memorials on its land. These ranged from location, to materials, to size and to methods for ensuring accuracy in its inscriptions. The GBMA did not adhere to all of its guidelines all of the time, and many monuments and markers were placed on the battlefield contrary to its own regulations.

In 1889 the Pennsylvania Legislature "formally invited the United States to purchase Land and occupy the field of Gettysburg" in order to create a national park. In 1892 a Congressional bill was introduced which proposed the establishment of such a park. The following year, the three-man Gettysburg National Park Commission (GNPC) arrived in Gettysburg to survey, locate, and preserve the lines at Gettysburg. John P. Nicholson of Pennsylvania (chairman), John B. Bachelder of Massachusetts, and William H. Forney of Alabama made up the GNPC. On February 1, 1895, an act of Congress authorized the acquisition of all GBMA assets and the creation of the Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP). In addition to road construction, park maintenance, and marking the lines of battle, the GNPC managed the erection of memorials on the field according to a strict set of rules and regulations. In 1933, the National Park Service (NPS) acquired stewardship over the GNMP.

William H. Tipton

William H. Tipton (1850-1929) was the most prolific Gettysburg photographer in the 19th and early 20th centuries. At the time of the battle he was an apprentice to the Tyson Brothers who owned the only Gettysburg photographic studio at the time. He is known to have been on the battlefield assisting with some of the earliest images ever recorded at Gettysburg. Tipton would eventually acquire the Tysons' business and by the 1880s he was firmly established as a photographer with the equipment and staff to handle the rigors and demands of the Gettysburg market. During the 1880s and 1890s he was an active battlefield photographer. When the GNPC began to license Park photographers in the 1890s, Tipton became one of only five such businessmen. He recorded groups photos, battlefield images, and views of individual monuments. Tipton sold these images in his studio, in local shops, and by mail. For mail orders, he published his *Catalogue of Tipton's Photographic Views of the Battlefield of Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, PA: J.E. Wible, Steam Printer, 1894). He also published souvenir books that contained images of the field and its monuments. One of the most popular was his *Gettysburg: The Pictures and the Story* (Gettysburg, PA: Tipton & Blocher, 19th edition in 1913).

PART 3:

SERIES LIST

Monuments, Markers, and Tablets Photograph Albums

Box 1 Flat storage box

Volume 1, 1898

Includes a loose index in typescript. There are 60 pages in the album with 240 black and white photos. A descriptive label including negative number and caption is printed on the photographs.

Box 2 Flat storage box

Volume 2, 1898

Includes a loose index in typescript. There are 60 pages in the album with 243 black and white photos. A descriptive label including negative number and caption is printed on the photographs.

Box 3 Flat storage box

Volume 3, 1899-1911

Includes a loose index in manuscript. There are 29 pages in the album with 113 black and white photos. The descriptive captions are handwritten underneath the photographs.

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