**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Nichols family archive  
**Inclusive Dates:** 1859-1899  
**Collection Number:** mssNichols  
**Collector:** Nichols family  
**Extent:** 3 boxes  
**Repository:** The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens  

Manuscripts Department  
1151 Oxford Road  
San Marino, California 91108  
Phone: (626) 405-2191  
Fax: (626) 449-5720  
Email: reference@huntington.org  
URL: http://www.huntington.org

**Abstract:** The Nichols family was a prominent New England family. This archive focuses specifically on two brothers: George Granville Nichols and Smith Woodward Nichols, Jr.

**Language of Material:** The records are in English.

**Access**

Collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, please go to following web site.

**Publication Rights**

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**Preferred Citation**

Nichols family archive, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

**Acquisition Information**

Purchased from James Arsenault & Co., 2018.

**Biography**

Smith Woodward Nichols (1809-1881), was a prosperous Boston builder and prominent Freemason. In the late 1850s, he moved to Melrose (now part of Greater Boston). His wife, Emeline Pope Nichols (1812-1893), was a daughter of a Maine master mariner and granddaughter of Major Isaac Pope, a Revolutionary War veteran. The couple had ten children, including George Granville and Smith Woodward, Jr.

George Granville Nichols (1836-1899), a stone mason, left Boston to go West, settling in Davenport, Iowa. In July 1862, he enlisted in the 42nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment and fought in Louisiana until his 9-month regiment was mustered out in August 1863. In April – August 1864, Nichols served as 2nd Lieutenant of an unattached company of the Regiment of Massachusetts Infantry, and on August 1, was commissioned 1st Lieutenant of Co. K of the 4th Regiment of Massachusetts Heavy Artillery. He was mustered out in June 1865.

Smith Woodward Nichols, Jr. (1843-1915), graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland in 1860 and served in the United States Navy. During the American Civil War, he served on the United States steam frigate "Wabash," sailing frigate "Macedonian," and steam sloop "Shenandoah." In January 1865, he commanded the assault at Fort Fisher. After the war, he served with Asiatic and South Pacific Squadrons and was commissioned Commander in 1876. Nichols retired in 1882.

**Scope and Content**

The Nichols family archive consists of correspondence, manuscript volumes, military records, and photographs. George Granville Nichols's letters constitute the largest group of correspondence. His letters from Iowa covered economic, social, and political life in the antebellum Midwest. He wrote about the politics of slavery and abolition, and activities of the local fraternities and lodges. His letters also contained detailed discussion of his plans to go West to mine for gold, complete with considerations of logistics, competitors, and financial risks. His wartime letters covered the entire period of his service in the 42nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. Nichols's letters to his family contained highly informative and vivid descriptions of the American Civil War in Louisiana, including his encounters with slaves, "contrabands," women of color,
“rebels,” Confederate prisoners, spies, and even some rather creative cotton smugglers. Smith Woodward Nichols, Jr.’s letters described his studies at the Naval Academy and his American Civil War service, including an account of the assault of Fort Fisher. In addition to letters from the Nichols brothers, letters from other family members are present in the collection and present a great resource for examining family and social dynamics of the American Civil War era.

A highlight of the collection is a 27-page diary letter written by George Granville Nichols to his family on May 1, 1859 (Box 1, Folder 7). This diary letter documented one of the most celebrated post-California gold rushes, the excitement that erupted after the discovery of gold in the vicinity of present-day Denver, Colorado. Nichols commented about the difficult conditions of travel, the captivating sights of unfamiliar wild life (especially buffalo), encounters with and presence of Indigenous peoples, and the great number of gold seekers on the road. Part of the journey occurred along the Santa Fe Trail.

Box 2 includes three volumes of lectures recorded by Commander Smith Woodward Nichols, Jr. In 1880, Nichols was ordered to take courses on torpedoes, explosives, and electricity at the United States Torpedo Station in Newport, Rhode Island.

Box 3 primarily includes correspondence related to George Granville Nichols's military service from the United States Army Quartermaster General's Office; United States Department of Treasury; and United States War Department Subsistence Department. He accumulated this paperwork during his service as the assistant quartermaster of the 4th Mass. Artillery, including special orders, requests for ambulances, and proceedings of a board survey. There are three cartes-de-visite, one daguerreotype, and a United States Navy medal of service, likely owned by Smith Woodward Nichols, Jr.

**Arrangement**
Box 1: Correspondence; Box 2: Manuscript volumes; and Box 3: Miscellaneous correspondence, documents, and photographs

**Personal Names**
Nichols family
Nichols, George Granville, 1836-1899
Nichols, Smith Woodward, 1809-1881
Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr., 1843-1915

**Corporate Names**
Shenandoah (Screw sloop)
United States. Army. Massachusetts Heavy Artillery Regiment, 4th (1864-1865)
United States. Army. Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, 42nd (1862-1864)
United States. Navy
United States Naval Torpedo Station (Newport, R.I.)

**Subjects**
American bison hunting
Electricity
Explosives, Military
Sailors
Slavery -- United States -- Public opinion -- History -- 19th century -- Sources
Soldiers
Torpedoes

**Geographic Areas**
Colorado -- Gold discoveries
Davenport (Iowa)
Fort Fisher (N.C. : Fort) Siege, 1864-1865 -- Personal narratives
Louisiana -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Personal narratives
Middle West -- History -- 19th century -- Sources
New Orleans (La.)
Santa Fe National Historic Trail -- Description and travel
United States -- History -- 1815-1861 -- Sources
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Correspondence
Genre
Cartes-de-visite (card photographs)
Correspondence (letters)
Daguerreotypes (photographs)
Lectures
Military records

Box 1
Folder 1
(1859, Jan. 1), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
Location: Davenport (Iowa)

Folder 2
(1859, Feb. 25), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Emeline Pope Nichols
Location: Davenport (Iowa)

Folder 3
(1859, Feb. 2), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
Location: Davenport (Iowa)

Folder 4
(1859, Mar. 13), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
Location: Davenport (Iowa)

Folder 5
(1859, Mar. 13), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Sister"
Location: Davenport (Iowa)

Folder 6
(1859, Apr. 10), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Sister"
Location: Davenport (Iowa)

Folder 7
(1859, May 1), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Father, Mother, Brothers & Sisters"
Location: About 50 miles beyond Kansas City

Folder 8
(1859, June 8), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Kendall Nichols
Location: Kansas City (Mo.)

Folder 9
(1859, Nov. 18), Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr. A.L.S. to [George Granville Nichols]
Location: United States Naval Academy

Folder 10
(1860, Jan. 11), Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr. A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols
Location: United States Naval Academy

Folder 11
(1860, Feb. 6), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
Location: Davenport (Iowa)

Folder 12
(1860, Mar. 25), Nichols, Smith Woodward A.L.S. to [George Granville Nichols]
Location:

Folder 13
(1860, Mar. 29), Nichols, Smith Woodward A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols
Location: Melrose (Mass.)

Folder 14
(1860, Sep. 1), Nichols, Kendall A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols
Location: Saint Joseph (Mo.)
| Folder 15 | (1860, Nov. 7), Peck, J.M. A.L.S. to [George Granville Nichols]  
| Location: Davenport (Iowa) |
| Folder 16 | (1860, Nov. 11), [Hayek, E.O.?] A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols  
| Location: Davenport (Iowa) |
| Folder 17 | (1860, Nov. 11), [Nichols], Fred A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols  
| Location: Davenport (Iowa) |
| Folder 18 | (1860, Nov. 25), [Hayek, E.O.?] A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols  
| Location: Davenport (Iowa) |
| Folder 19 | (1862, Dec. 8), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols  
| Location: On Board Steam Propellor [sic] Quinebaug |
| Folder 20 | (1862, Dec. 15), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols  
| Location: Port Royal (S.C.) |
| Folder 21 | (1862, Dec. 21), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Parents, Brothers, & Sisters, & Friends"  
| Location: On Board Steam Propellor [sic] Quinebaug |
| Folder 22 | (1862, Dec. 29), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols and Emeline Pope Nichols  
| Location: Onboard Steamer Quinebaug |
| Folder 23 | (1862, Dec. 31), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. "Sister"  
| Location: New Orleans (La.) |
| Folder 24 | (1863, Jan. 9), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols  
| Location: Carrollton (New Orleans, La.) |
| Folder 25 | (1863, Jan. 18), [Nichols, George Granville] A.L. to "Father, Mother, Brothers & Sisters, & Friends"  
| Location: Mansfield (La.) |
| Folder 26 | (1863, Feb. 26), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols  
| Location: Camp Farr, Bayou Gentilly (La.) |
| Folder 27 | (1863, Mar. 5), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S to "Father, Mother, and all hands"  
| Location: Camp Farr, Bayou Gentilly (La.)  
Sketch of defenses on p. 3 |
| Folder 28 | (1863, Mar. 30), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols  
| Location: Camp Farr (La.) |
| Folder 29 | (1863, Apr. 3), [Nichols, George Granville] A.L. to "Sister"  
| Location: New Orleans (La.)  
Incomplete? |
| Folder 30 | (1863, Apr. 11), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Sisters"  
| Location: Camp Farr, Bayou Gentilly (La.) |
Folder 31  (1863, Apr. 19), [Nichols, George Granville] A.L. to "Sister"
   Location: Location: New Orleans (La.)
   Incomplete

Folder 32  (1863, May 8), [Nichols, George Granville] A.L. to Adelaide A. Nichols
   Location: Camp Farr, New Orleans (La.)
   Incomplete

Folder 33  (1863, May 12), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
   Location: Location: Camp Farr, New Orleans (La.)

Folder 34  (1863, May 20), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
   Location: Camp Farr, New Orleans (La.)

Folder 35  (1863, May 22), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Sister"
   Location: Camp Farr, New Orleans (La.)

Folder 36  (1863, May 26), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Sister"
   Location: Camp Farr, New Orleans (La.)

Folder 37  (1863, June 13), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
   Location: Camp Farr, New Orleans (La.)

Folder 38  (1863, June 18), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to [Sister]
   Location: Camp Farr, New Orleans (La.)

Folder 39  (1863, June 23), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
   Location: New Orleans (La.)

Folder 40  (1863, June 29), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to "Brother"
   Location: New Orleans (La.)

Folder 41  (1863, June 30), Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr. A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols
   Location: New York (State)

Folder 42  (1863, July 1), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
   Location: New Orleans (La.)

Folder 43  (1863, July 23), [Nichols, George Granville] A.L. to Smith Woodward Nichols
   Location: Algiers (New Orleans, La.)

Folder 44  [1863], Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to ----- ----- 
   Location: [New Orleans (La.)]
   Incomplete

Folder 45  [1863], Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to ----- ----- 
   Location: [New Orleans (La.)]
   Incomplete

Folder 46  (1864, Mar. 20), Carlton, A.S. A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
   Location: Brownville (N.Y.)
CONTAINER LIST

Folder 47
(1864, Aug. 14), Jones, Edward J. A.L.S. to "Miss Baxter"
Location: Petersburg (Va.)

Folder 48
(1864, Aug. 27), Dunbar, Charles C. A.L.S. to Susie G. Baxter
Location: Boston (Mass.)

Folder 49
(1864, Nov. 12), Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr. A.L.S. to [George Granville Nichols]
Location: Shenandoah (Screw sloop)

Folder 50
(1865, Jan. 18), Nichols, Smith Woodward A.L.S. to [George Granville Nichols]
Location: Melrose (Mass.)
Written on Waverly Royal Arch Chapter printed document

Folder 51
(1865, Jan. 21), Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr. A.L.S. to [George Granville Nichols]
Location: Shenandoah (Screw sloop)

Folder 52
(1865, Feb. 3), Nichols, Smith Woodward A.L.S. to George Granville Nichols
Location: Melrose (Mass.)
Written on Waverly Royal Arch Chapter printed document

Folder 53
(1865, Feb. 28), ----- ----- A.L. to Walter B. Dick
Location: Arlington (Va.)
Incomplete

Folder 54
(1865, Feb. 28), ----- ----- A.L.S. to J.M. Reno
Location: Arlington (Va.)
Verso: Signatures

Folder 55
(1865, Mar. 15), Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr. A.L.S. George Granville Nichols
Location: USS Passaic

Folder 56
(1865, Mar. 16), Dick, Walter B. A.L.S. to J.M. Reno
Location: Fort Corcoran (Arlington, Va.)

Folder 57
(1865, May 26), Nichols, George Granville A.L.S. to Smith Woodward Nichols
Location: Richmond (Va.)

Folder 58
(1865, Dec. 7), Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr. A.L.S. to Kendall Nichols
Location: Shenandoah (Screw sloop)

Folder 59
(186-, May 24), Marden, Emmeline Pope (Nichols) A.L.S. to "Brother"
Location: Washington [(D.C.)]
Postscript from Addie F. Marden

Folder 60
[186-], ----- ----- A.L.S. to [Lewis B. Co---is?] Draft?

Folder 61
Signed by Jacob H. (Jacob Harold) Gallinger, 1837-1918

Box 2
Manuscript volumes
Volume 1  
[Cover title]

Volume 2  
[Cover title]

Location:

Volume 3  
[Cover title]

Box 3  
Miscellaneous correspondence, documents, and photographs

Folder 1  
Affidavit -- Notice of Appointment, (1865, Apr. 15)  
Filed by Elijah Baxter regarding Erasmus Thomas' estate  
Included: Letter from U.S.A. General Hospital related to Thomas' death, Mar. 14, 1865

Folder 2  
Appointment -- Commonwealth of Massachusetts to George Granville Nichols, (1864, Aug. 18)

Folder 3  
Blank form -- Post Historian, Record Book, [after 1863]  
Filled out by George Granville Nichols

Folder 4  
Blank form -- Volunteer Enlistment, (1862, Sep.)  
Filled out by John Carvey

Folder 5  
Cartes-de-visite (card photographs), (1865)  

Folder 6  
Certificate -- Commonwealth of Massachusetts to George Granville Nichols, (1864, Apr. 29)

Folder 7  
Commemorative medal -- [Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr.], [undated]  
For service in the United States. Navy

Folder 8  
Correspondence (letters) -- United States. Army. Quartermaster General's Office to George Granville Nichols, (1865-1868)  
Related to returns

Folder 9  
Correspondence (letters) -- United States. Department of the Treasury to George Granville Nichols, (1865-1867)  
Related to letters of settlement and returns  
Included: Reply letter from Nichols, July 13, 1865

Folder 10  
Correspondence (letters) -- United States. War Department. Subsistence Department to George Granville Nichols, (1865)  
Included: Printed Circular No. 1

Folder 11  
Daguerreotypes (photographs) -- [Nichols, George Granville], [1855]  
Higgins, Oscar T., (active Boston, Massachusetts 1854 - 1864)  
Housed in original thermoplastic case
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder 12</th>
<th>Discharge -- Greene, Rufus C., (1863, Aug. 20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Torn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Discharge -- Nichols, George Granville, (1863, Aug. 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 14</td>
<td>Empty envelope, [1860s]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Lists (documents genre) -- Nichols, George Granville, (1865)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Received of...the following clothing, camp and garrison equipage, at Camp Meigs, Readville, Mass.; Received of...the number of copies of Military Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 16</td>
<td>Memoriam -- In Memoriam. George Granville Nichols, [1899]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 17</td>
<td>Orders (military records) -- Special Order No. 5, 13, 71, 116, 173, and 223; General Order No. 14, (1863-1865)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Included: Printed copy; retained copy; and extracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 18</td>
<td>Printout -- Nichols, Smith Woodward, Jr., [1873]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer printout of photo # NH 43226 from Naval History and Heritage Command</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>