

**BRITT, MARY NICHOLS  
COLLECTION  
1807-1954**

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**MICROFILMED**

## INTRODUCTION

This collection of Nichols-Britt Papers was obtained from James A. Britt, the son of Mary Nichols Britt, who collected the papers and retained possession of them until her death.

The collection occupies approximately 4.4 cubic feet of shelf space, and numbers approximately 3,000 items.

Literary rights in the unpublished writings of the Nichols, McCowns, McPhails, and Carters in these papers, and other collections of papers in the custody of the Archives and Manuscripts Section of the Tennessee State Library and Archives have been dedicated to the public. Single photocopies of unpublished writings may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

In 1997, the clippings and photographic parts of the collection received conservation treatment. Deteriorating clippings were encapsulated, and oversize clippings were removed from folders, encapsulated, and rehoused in oversized folders. Photographic materials in most instances were removed from their folders, encapsulated or sleeved, and some were placed in new boxes. See finding aid for the new location of these conserved items.

**Note: Richardson's Map of Texas, 1867, was removed from the Britt Collection and placed with the TSLA Map Collection, and Map of the Vicinity of Richmond made by order of Major General J. F. Gilmer, CSA was moved to Mss. Drawer Number 1 in Manuscripts.**

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Nichols-Britt Collection, numbering approximately 3,000 items, spanning the years 1807-1954, is composed primarily of correspondence and early documents relating to the Nichols, McCown, McPhail, and Carter families. In addition, there are some brief diary notes, about 500 photographs, a number of small account books, several day books, and five scrapbooks.

A letter written by John Donelson in 1807 is the earliest date in the correspondence. There is a copy of a letter written by John Nichols, an emigrant from England. He had come to North Carolina in 1760 at the age of 17 years and had fought with the colonists in 1776 against England. For this military service, he was granted land in Tennessee. In addition to the grants which he had earned, he purchased a number of grants belonging to Revolutionary soldiers who did not wish to move to Tennessee. There are also some slave deeds in the papers.

A number of surveys with plat maps of the same dates, one of which is signed by John Donelson, are bound together and are among the oldest items in the collection. John Nichols (sometimes spelled Nichol), the emigrant, accumulated a large estate of land and Negroes before his death in 1815. In the copy of his early letter to a sister in England, he urged her to come to this country and he would give her some land. His son, John Nichols, Jr., was made administrator of his father's estate at his death. This son married Elizabeth McCown, who is known throughout the correspondence as "Sister Betsy," "Aunt Betsy," "Mother," and later as "Grandma."

Her brothers, R. W. and J. W. McCown, wrote her numerous letters. Her children, whose letters are in the collection, are George S. Nichols, Sallie Nichols Bateman (who lived in Mississippi), and Ninnie Nichols Cliffe. Another child, James McAlister (Blackhawk) Nichols, is mentioned in the letters a number of times by others. George S. Nichols married Alice McPhail, daughter of Daniel and Mary Carter McPhail. Mary Carter McPhail was the daughter of F. B. Carter, and the sister of Tod Carter, who was killed in 1864 near his home, The Carter House, during the Battle of Franklin.

Daniel and John A. McPhail were sons of a Scottish emigrant who moved to Williamson County. These brothers were business partners in Fayetteville and Shelbyville, Tennessee. Early in 1854, Daniel McPhail and his family moved to Texas. John's letters to Dan for the years 1854-1861 are filled with sentiments of devotion for Dan and his family. In 1860, Dan's wife, Mary Carter McPhail, and children came to visit her father, F. B. Carter. Early in 1861, the Civil War started and nothing more was heard from Dan until he returned in 1865. According to the collection, John died in 1863.

Mary Nichols was the daughter of George S. and Alice McPhail Nichols. She married James Alphonso Britt in 1898. Her father was a Confederate veteran who had lost an eye during the war. He was a tax collector for several years, and lived in Franklin, Tennessee until his death in 1918. A number of his letters and sketches concerning the Civil War are in this collection.

These papers trace the families included in this collection back to the earliest settlements in Williamson and Davidson counties.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Microfilm Reel #1

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#### Box 1

1. Account Books--McPhail, Nichols and Britt, 1820-1911
2. Cotton Book--John H. Nichols, 1822-1844
3. Memorandum Book--Fayetteville Bank, 1825-1873
4. Tax Books--City of Franklin--George S. Nichols, 1871-1872
5. Record Book--James (?) George S. Nichols, n.d.
6. Day Book--Britt, 1903-1911
7. Accounts, Receipts and Ledger Sheets--J. H. Nichols--1814-1830-- See also Box 14, Oversized Materials, in folder titled, "Box 1, f. 7."
8. Accounts, Receipts and Ledger Sheets--J. H. Nichols--1831-1881
9. Accounts - Receipts, etc., Daniel McPhail, 1843-1872
10. Accounts - Daniel M. and J. A. McPhail, 1854-1863
11. Accounts - Miscellaneous Receipts, 1828-1935

### Microfilm Reel #2

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#### Box 2

1. Biographical Material--Nichols, George S.
  - 1a. Obituary, sketches, and will--Britt, Mary (Nichols)
2. Civil War--Records--Historical markers, etc.
3. Civil War--Records--Notes - George Nichols
4. Civil War--Records--Papers - John and George Nichols
5. Civil War--Sketches - Anderson Prison
6. Civil War--Sketches - Bate, General William
7. Civil War--Sketches - Battles of Chickamauga; Missionary Ridge; New Orleans
8. Civil War--Sketches - Buchanan, Admiral Franklin
9. Civil War--Sketches - Battle of Franklin - Carter House
10. Civil War--Sketches - Causes
11. Civil War--Sketches - Davis, Jefferson; Jackson, Stonewall
12. Civil War--Sketches - Davis, Sam
13. Civil War--Twentieth Tennessee Regiment Infantry
14. Clippings--Confederate items-- See also Box 14, Oversized Materials, in folder titled, "Box 2, f. 14."
15. Clippings--Confederate poets
16. Clippings--Franklin, Tennessee-- See also Box 14, Oversized Materials, in folder titled, "Box 2, f. 16."
17. Clippings--Miscellaneous-- See also Box 14, Oversized Materials, in folder titled, "Box 2, f. 17."
18. Clippings--Nashville, Tennessee--See also, Box 14, Oversized Materials, in folder titled, "Box 2, f. 18."

19. Clippings--Tennessee History--See also, Box 14, Oversized Materials, in folder titled, "Box 2, f. 19."
20. Clippings--Tennessee Schools

### **Box 3**

#### **Correspondence**

1. Britt, Mary Nichols - General, 1897-1952
2. Britt, Mary Nichols - re: Confederate Memorial, 1889-1899
3. Britt, Mary Nichols - re: Confederate Memorial, 1898-1903

#### **Microfilm Reel #4**

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4. McCown - Nichols - McPhail, 1807-1853
5. McPhail, J. A. to Daniel McPhail, 1854-1855
6. McPhail, J. A.; Carter, F. .B. to Daniel McPhail, 1856-1860
7. McPhail, Nichols, Carter, Britt; 1861-1865
8. McPhail, Nichols, et al.; 1866-1868
9. McPhail, Carter, Bateman, et al.; 1869-1872
10. McPhail, Nichols, McCown, et al.; 1873-1880
11. McPhail, Nichols, McCown, et al.; 1881-1887
12. McPhail, Nichols, McCown, Britt; 1888-1917
13. Nichols, Britt, et al.; 1901-1916-- See also Box 14, in folder titled, "Box 3, f. 13."
14. Nichols, Britt, et al.; 1950
15. Peacock, John R.; 1951-1954
- 15a. Miscellaneous, 1954-1955
16. Miscellaneous - Britt, McPhail, Nichols, n.d.

### **Box 4**

1. Diary Material

#### **Microfilm Reel #4**

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2. Documents--Indentures - Nichols, McPhail, 1828-1833
3. Documents--Indentures - Nichols, McPhail, 1836-1925
4. Documents--Miscellaneous
5. Documents--Nichols, John - Indentures - Land Grant Purchases - Slave Deeds, 1771-1829
6. Documents--Petition for Division of Fentress County, 1861
7. Documents--Plat Book--Revolutionary Land Grants, 1785-1786
8. Documents--Slave Deeds--1828-1851
9. Genealogical Data--Atkinson, Armistead, and January families
10. Genealogical Data--Britt family
11. Genealogical Data--Carter family
12. Genealogical Data--Cemetery Records
13. Genealogical Data--Clippings

## **Box 5**

### **Genealogical Data**

1. Correspondence
2. Hulme family
3. Lytle family
4. McCown family
5. McPhail family
6. Miscellaneous
7. Nichols family
- 7a. Nichols family
8. Nichols family
- 8a. Nichols family
9. Nichols, McPhail, and McCown families
10. Nichols, Carter, McPhail, and McCown families; Company D, First Tennessee Regiment

## **Microfilm Reel #5**

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11. Postlethwaite family
12. Searight family
13. Sharp family
14. Wills--Armistead, Atkinson, Carter, Fitch, Reynolds, and Wood families
15. Wood family

## **Box 6**

- 1a. Historical sketches--Cleburne, Patrick P.
1. Historical sketches--Early Nashville
2. Historical sketches--Flags - Early Landmarks of New England
3. Historical sketches--Franklin, Tennessee
- 3a. Historical sketches--Gist - States' Rights
4. Historical sketches--Ku Klux Klan
5. Historical sketches--Old Gardens
6. Historical sketches--Pioneer women, etc.
7. Memorabilia--Autograph books, drawing book, et. al.
8. Memorabilia--Poems, invitations, programs, etc.
9. Memorabilia--Recipes and remedies--"Cure for Cancer"
10. Military Papers--Britt, James A.
11. Writings--Miscellaneous--Nichols, Sally and John A., 1847, 1868
12. Lists--Items given to Carter House

## **Box 7**

1. Photographs--Tintypes, Daguerreotype--Atkinson, Britt, McCown, and Nichols-- See also Box 12
2. Photographs--Britt and allied families

## **Box 8**

### **Photographs**

1. Britt and Nichols family members
2. McCown and McPhail family members
3. Confederate soldiers -- cartes de visite  
Confederate veteran activities  
Federal soldiers -- cartes de visite
4. Carter House and artifacts at Carter House, Franklin, Tenn.
5. "At 1897 Exposition" (Centennial gondola ride), Miss Mary Nichols, Miss Frances Nichols, Mrs. George S. Nichols, and Charles W. Sirgrims
6. Centennial, 1897 -- group seated on steps of Parthenon

## **Box 9A**

### **Photographs**

1. Early photographs--Tintypes & Daguerreotypes, etc.--McCown, McPhail, Nichols, etc.  
-- See also Box 13
2. Photographs-- Nichols and kindred families
3. Early photographs--Tintypes & daguerreotypes, etc.--McCown, McPhail, Nichols, etc.
4. Photographs-- Nichols and kindred families

## **Box 9B**

### **Photographs**

1. Photographs--school pictures
2. Photographs--school pictures
3. Photographs--stereoscopic views

## **Box 10**

1. Scrapbook No. 1--Poetry, stories, miscellaneous

## **Microfilm Reel #6**

2. Scrapbook No. 2--Margaret Clouston Jones from Aunt Mamie, 1891--Poetry, stories, etc.
3. Scrapbook No. 3--"Aunt Betty"--1855-1930--Poetry, stories, etc.-- See also Box 14, Oversized Materials, in folder titled, "Box 10, f. 3."
4. Roll Pictures (3)--CCC Side Camp, Savannah, Tennessee, March 29, 1934 - Photograph U.D.C. gathering-- See also Box 14, in folder titled, "Box 10, f. 4."
5. Scrapbook fragments

## **Box 11**

1. Scrapbook--Britt, Mary Nichols
2. United Daughters of the Confederacy--Franklin Chapter - Confederate Monument
3. United Daughters of the Confederacy--Franklin Chapter - History
4. United Daughters of the Confederacy--Franklin Chapter - Membership lists; By-laws
5. United Daughters of the Confederacy--Franklin Chapter - Minutes; Memorials, etc.
6. United Daughters of the Confederacy--National Founders - General history
7. United Daughters of the Confederacy--"Admiral Raphael Semmes"--Britt, Mary Nichols, 1946

## **Box 12**

### **Cased Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, and Tintypes**

Originally in Box 7, folder 1: Early photographs--Daguerreotypes: Atkinson, Britt, McCown, Nichols Families, now in Box 12--

1. Unidentified woman (Ambrotype)
2. Blackhawk Nichol or Wilson McCown? (Daguerreotype)
3. Unidentified (tintype)
4. Unidentified (tintype)
5. Unidentified (tintype)
6. Amanda Atkinson (Ambrotype)
7. Unidentified soldier (Ambrotype) and unidentified man (tintype)

Originally in Box 8, folder 1: Britt and Nichols Family--

1. George S. Nichols, 1862 (Ambrotype)
2. George S. Nichols, Dec. 1861 (Ambrotype)
3. George S. Nichols, Albumen print same as December 1861 Ambrotype
4. George S. Nichols, taken after losing an eye about the time of the Battle of Shiloh (tintype)
5. Alice McPhail Nichols, wife to George S. Nichols (tintype)

## **Box 13**

### **Cased Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, and Tintypes**

Originally in Box 8, folder 2: McCown, McPhail, and Nichols Families

1. Angus McPhail (tintype)
2. Rev. Burr McCown and wife Mary (Daguerreotype)

Originally in Box 9, folder 1: Early photographs, McCown, McPhail, and Nichols Families

3. Ferdinand Stith Nichol (Ambrotype) and Matilda P. Nichols (Ambrotype)
4. Mary Alice Carter McPhail (Daguerreotype)
5. John Nichols, Jr. (Daguerreotype)
6. Mary Carter McPhail (Daguerreotype)
7. Mary A. Carter, wife of Dan McPhail (Ambrotype) and unidentified young boy in uniform (Ambrotype)
8. Mrs. Elizabeth Nichols and Gus Watson her oldest grandson in one tintype
9. Wilson McCown and Wife (Daguerreotype) and unidentified man (Ambrotype)
10. Sallie Nichols Bateman and William Bateman (Ambrotypes in double case)

## **Box 14**

### **Oversized Materials**

Box 1, folder 7

Box 2, folders 14, 16, 17, 18, 19

Box 3, folder 13

Box 10, folder 4, and clippings from Scrapbook 3

**Portfolio Number 8**

1. Land Grants, Deeds, Indentures, Surveys, 1775-1837
2. Commission--Nichols, John--re: Treaty with Chickasaws, 1791

**Portfolio Number 9**

1. Diplomas, certificates, etc.--Nichols, Sarah (3)--Two from Female Academy, Franklin, Tennessee, 1847, 1848
  - a. Diploma from Female Institute, July 13, 1850
  - b. Certificate--Nichols, John F., First Sergeant, Sixth Battalion, 1894
  - c. Diploma--Nichols, Fernando Stith--Medical School, University of Nashville, 1856

## INDEX

### United Confederate Veterans McEwen Bivouac Number 4 Organized Franklin, Tennessee, March 24, 1888

Bigby, Charles	1826-_____;	buried Confederate Cemetery
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Burkes, Nathan	1826-1890	
Core, J. D.		
Cown, Grundy	died 1901	
Cunningham, William E. (Capt.)	1841-1894	
deGraffeweid, T. D.		
Doss, W. W. (Col.)	1830-1894	
Douglas, E. W. (Capt.)	1840-_____;	buried Mt. Olivet
Ferrell, Oscar	1824-_____;	buried Mt. Hope
Gee, James L.		20th Tennessee Infantry
Hampton, J. H.		
Hayes, M. P.	died 1890	
Hearn, Grandison T.	died 1896	
Hyde, J. W.	1841-1890	
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McEwen, James	1834-1891	
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Neely, G. R.	1845-1894	
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Pope, Thomas A.		
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