




5-2000

MS-021: Papers of John C. Tidball

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MS-021: Papers of John C. Tidball

Description

The John C. Tidball collection consists of the diary kept by Tidball during his time at Fort Pickens in Pensacola, Florida, April 1861; a letter to his father, dated November 16, 1862; a report of the actions of his artillery brigade leading up to the fall of Petersburg in April, 1865; an engaging account of his impressions and recollections of Savannah, written for his son in 1905.

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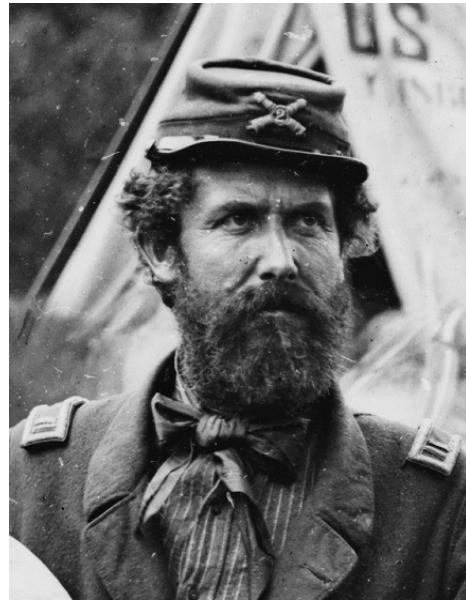
Keywords

West Point, Seminole Wars, Fort Defiance, John Brown, Harpers Ferry, Gaines' Mill, Battle of Antietam, 4th New York Heavy Artillery, U.S. Artillery, Horse Artillery, Taps

Disciplines

History | Military and Veterans Studies | Military History | United States History

**Guide to the
Papers of John C. Tidball**



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May 2000**

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Biography:

John Caldwell Tidball was born to a strict Presbyterian farm family near Wheeling, West Virginia in 1825. He attended West Point from July 1, 1844 to July 1, 1848, when he graduated eleventh in his class. Second Lieutenant Tidball of the 2nd U.S. Artillery, after a period in Savannah, served in the Seminole Wars in Florida from 1849-1850. He spent three years in South Carolina before being assigned to frontier duty at Fort Defiance, New Mexico, where he was promoted to First Lieutenant. Tidball served on Coast Survey from September 6, 1854-September 20, 1859. He was garrisoned at the Artillery School for Practice at Fort Monroe, Virginia, until 1860. During this period he was part of the expedition sent to suppress John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry.

When the Civil War began, Tidball was stationed with Battery A of the 2nd U.S. Artillery at Fort Pickens near Pensacola, Florida. He was offered a captain's post in both his own battery and the 12th U.S. Infantry, but he declined the latter. He was brevetted Major after the battle of Gaines' Mill, and took command of the 2nd Artillery Brigade for Cavalry Corps (known as the Horse Artillery) of the Army of the Potomac as Lieutenant Colonel after the battle of Antietam (September 17, 1862). Tidball was promoted to Colonel of the 4th New York Heavy Artillery on August 28, 1863, and became Brigadier General and Artillery Chief of the 9th Army Corps the following August. During the Civil War, Tidball was brevetted a total of six times for gallant and meritorious service on the field.

After he was mustered out of volunteer service on September 30, 1865, General Tidball resumed his position of Captain in the 2nd U.S. Artillery. He served in the west, where he was promoted to Major in 1867, and in Alaska, where he was in command of the District of Alaska and wrote the *Manual for Heavy Artillery* which later became a standard text at Artillery School at Fort Monroe. He was the Superintendent of Artillery Instruction at that institution from 1874-1881, when he became General Sherman's aide-de-camp. Tidball accompanied Sherman on his 1883 expedition across the western United States and Canada. In 1884 he returned to Virginia where he occupied the post of Commander of the Artillery School until his retirement in 1889.

Tidball married twice during his life. His first wife was Mary Davis, daughter of Captain Davis of the U.S. Army and his second was Mary Langdon Dana, daughter of General N.J.T. Dana of the U.S. Army. When he died on May 15, 1906 at the age of 81, Tidball was survived by his four children, Mabel Tidball and Mrs. Robert S. Potter of Brownsville, NY, Professor John S. Tidball of Ohio State University, and Lieutenant William Tidball of the Artillery Corps.

He is best known best for his command of the Horse Artillery, his *Manual of Heavy Artillery*, and as the first officer to insist on the playing of "Taps" at a soldier's funeral.

Scope and Content Notes:

The John C. Tidball collection consists of the diary kept by Tidball during his time at Fort Pickens in Pensacola, Florida, April 1861; a letter to his father, dated November 16, 1862; a report of the actions of his artillery brigade leading up to the fall of Petersburg in April, 1865; an engaging account of his impressions and recollections of Savannah, written for his son in 1905.

Also see our Tidball subject file and Eugene C. Tidball's *No Disgrace to my country: The life of John C. Tidball*, Kent State University Press, Kent Ohio, 2002.

Box 1:

1-1 Fort Pickens Diary - April 2- 27, 1861. Includes photograph of hand-drawn plan of Fort Pickens.

1-2 Letter - Camp at Waterloo, November 13, 1862: Dear Father.

1-3 "Report of Operations of the Artillery Brigade 9th A.C. From March 30 to April 28, 1865 (In front of Petersburg, Va.)."

1-4 "Reminiscences of Savannah, 1849" Parts I-III - handwritten in three notebooks

1-5 Miscellaneous information - biographical information on John C. and William Tidball, articles by Eugene C. Tidball: