MS-122: Civil War Institute Collection

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MS-122: Civil War Institute Collection

Description
This collection contains two different types of materials. Series I contains materials relating to the Civil War in general, and are organized by subject. Series II and III contain materials or records pertaining directly to the Civil War Conferences and the Civil War Institute from 1957 – 1963.

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Keywords
Civil War, Battle of Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Civil War Institute

Disciplines
History | Military History | United States History
Guide to the
Civil War Institute

Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections & College Archives

Processed by Thomas Lester
July 2011
MS – 122: Civil War Institute
(9 boxes, 9.36 cubic feet)

Inclusive Dates: 1859 -1997
Bulk Dates: 1940-1965

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Agency History:

The Civil War Institute originated out of a three day conference on the Civil War, November 17-19, 1957, held at Gettysburg College, as part of the activities commemorating the 125th anniversary of the war. Directed by Professor Allan Nevins of Columbia University¹, “the conference was such a success that it was repeated every November through 1961. Each had a different director and was devoted to a different topic. By November 1961 almost every major Civil-War-era scholar had participated in one or more of these conferences.”²

As early as December 1957, President Willard S. Paul spoke to the trustees of the College about his idea to expand the first November conference into a Civil War institute. His hope was to make the College a national center of Civil War studies. In 1959, he named librarian John H. Knickerbocker director, and gave the Institute a small building recently vacated by the bookstore.

Following Knickerbocker’s death in 1964, President “Arnold Hanson decided to abandon the effort. The Books and museum articles were placed in (in many instances returned to) Schmucker Library.” This would not be the end of the Civil War Institute, as Professor Robert Bloom, history professor at Gettysburg College, and others continued to expand the library’s Civil War collection. In 1983, Gabor S. Boritt would hold the first in a series of summer study groups now called Civil War Institutes.³

Scope and Content Notes:

This collection contains two different types of materials. Series I contains materials relating to the Civil War in general, and are organized by subject. Series II and III contain materials or records pertaining directly to the Civil War Conferences and the Civil War Institute from 1957 – 1963. (The collections was originally catalogued as Record Group 4.6.2.)

² Ibid, 994.
³ Ibid, 995.
Subject Series I consists of an alphabetical listing of material related to the Civil War. Major subject areas include the Battle of Gettysburg, anniversaries of the Battle of Gettysburg, and Abraham Lincoln. Folders contain material on each subject that can include newspaper articles, magazine articles, images, booklets and pamphlets.

Series II, Civil War Institute Programs and Activities contains mostly materials related to the Civil War Conferences between 1957 and 1963. The Correspondence in Series III contains general correspondence of the Civil War Institute.

Civil War Institute Container List

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1-47  Gettysburg, Battle of, 1863 – Anniversaries – 100th, 1963 (#1 of 2)
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1-54  Gettysburg, Battle of, 1863 – Anniversary, 75th, 1938

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2-14  Gettysburg National Military Park
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The Gettysburg National Park Gift Book

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**For more information about the Civil War Institute**

RG 4.6.2 Civil War Institute (Papers of current Institute re-established in 1982)