



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

General William Nicholson Grier collection of photographs

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	3
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	General William Nicholson Grier collection of photographs
Date:	1868-1884
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.126
Creator:	Grier, William Nicholson, General, 1812-1885 (Collector) Wolfenstein, V (Valentin), 1844-1909 (Photographer) Choate, J. N. (John N.), 1848-1902 (Photographer)
Extent:	.03 Linear feet 10 Photographic prints
Language:	English .
Summary:	The General William Nicholson Grier photograph collection contains 10 photographs that Grier collected related to his service with the US Army (1835-1870). The photographs include depictions of Carlisle Indian School students circa 1879-1884 and portraits of the 1868 Navajo Treaty signers.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collected by General William Nicholson Grier (1812-1885) during his service with the US Army (1835-1870); inherited by his daughter, Anna Grier Campbell (1848-ca. 1915) and then by her son Robert C. Campbell (1891-1966); donated to Museum of the American Indian by Robert C. Campbell in 1963 in memory of his grandfather.

Provenance

There are some discrepancies in number of photographs in this collection. The original donation paperwork reported that there were 10 photographs total. However, 12 photographs were later cataloged under this collection at some unknown point in time. The additional 2 photographs were then marked as missing in NMAI's database in 2007. It is possible that only 10 photographs were donated and that the 2 additional photographs were accidentally attributed to this collection and corrected at some point without further documentation.

Separated Materials

General William Nicholson Grier's grandson Robert C. Campbell also donated objects to NMAI in 1963 (NMAI Catalog numbers 232812-232855). These objects were collected by Grier during his military career.

Related Materials

The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology also holds photographs related to the Navajo Treaty signing shot by Valentin Wolfenstein.

The National Anthropological Archives also holds photographs shot by Valentin Wolfenstein and glass plate negatives shot by John N. Choate.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Emily Moazami, Assistant Head Archivist, 2018.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); General William Nicholson Grier collection of photographs, Photograph Number; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

William Nicholson Grier was born on June 11, 1812 in Northumberland, Pennsylvania. After graduating from West Point U.S. Military Academy in New York, he served as a Major of the 2nd U.S. Regular Cavalry during the Civil War and later as a Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st U.S. Regular Cavalry. Throughout his 35 year military career, Grier served in a number of capacities. His posts included serving at Fort Carlisle, Pennsylvania from April 1866 to April 1868, where he was Superintendent of Mounted Recruiting Service and was promoted to Colonel of the 3rd Cavalry. He then served as Commander at Fort Union in New Mexico from July 12, 1868 to May 1870. Grier retired on Dec. 15, 1870. He passed away on July 8, 1885 in Napa City, California and was buried in Northumberland, PA.

Between 1863 and 1866, the U.S. Army forced almost 12,000 Diné (Navajo) people from their ancestral homelands and relocated them 400 miles away to Fort Sumner, Bosque Redondo Reservation in New Mexico. On June 1, 1868, General William T. Sherman and Colonel Samuel F. Tappen met in Fort Sumner with Diné (Navajo) leaders led by Chief Barboncito to negotiate a treaty to allow the Diné (Navajo) to return to their ancestral homelands.

Valentin Wolfenstein, a Swedish-American photographer, was at Fort Sumner, New Mexico from March to July of 1868 and photographed the events before and after the Navajo Treaty signing. The Diné (Navajo) set of photographs in this collection have been attributed to many different photographers over the years, but Wolfenstein is believed to be the original photographer. Based on an excerpt from his journal, a few scholars believed that Wolfenstein could have sold his photographic equipment and photographs to Nicholas Brown, and this belief, along with later reprinting of the Barboncito portrait, may have led to some misattribution of Wolfenstein's work to N. Brown and Son and the Browns' work to Wolfenstein.

John Nicholas Choate (1848-1902) was the official photographer of the Carlisle Indian School from the school's founding in 1879 to his death in 1902. The Carlisle Indian School was the first non-reservation government-supported Indian school. Choate sold his photographs as a series of cabinet cards, cartes-de-visite, and stereographs.

It is likely that Grier collected the Diné (Navajo) photographs when he served at Fort Union in New Mexico, immediately following the 1868 Navajo Treaty. Presumably, Grier collected the Carlisle Indian School photographs in this collection after his retirement from the U.S. Army, in connection to his service at Fort Carlisle.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 10 photographs that were collected by General William Nicholson Grier (1812-1885) related to his service with the US Army (1835-1870). The collection includes 6 photographs of Carlisle Indian School students and visitors that were photographed by photographer John N. Choate circa 1879-1884, and one portrait of Chief Standing Bear (also known as Mochunozhi or Ma-chu-nu-zhe).

The most significant photographs in this collection are three albumen prints shot by Valentin Wolfenstein between March and June 1868. Photograph P20819 depicts an outdoor portrait most likely of the Navajo Treaty signers at Fort Sumner, New Mexico. This photograph is one of only two known photographs depicting this scene (the other copy is at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology).

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Dakota (Eastern Sioux)
- Diné (Navajo)
- Kiowa
- Niimípuu (Nez Perce)
- Ponca
- Pueblo

Cultures:

- Dakota (Eastern Sioux)
- Diné (Navajo)
- Kiowa
- Niimípuu (Nez Perce)
- Ponca
- Pueblo

Container Listing

Photo-folder 1	<p>P20808: Portrait of Chief Standing Bear, 1877-1890 1 Photographic print Notes: Studio portrait of Ponca Chief Ma-chu-nu-zhe (also known as Mochunozh or Chief Standing Bear). The original photographer of this photograph is unclear; it has attributed to both William Henry Jackson and Charles Milton Bell. This print was published by Price & Campbell of New York. Culture: Ponca</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>P20809: Carlisle Indian School girls, 1879 1 Photographic print Notes: Carte-de-viste depicting a group portrait of Carlisle Indian School students. The girls may include Alice Lone Bear, Rebecca, Kissetta (Kesseta) Lopan, Mabel, and Harriet from the Dakota (Eastern Sioux), Kiowa, and Nimi'ipuu (Nez Perce) tribes. Photograph by Official Carlisle Indian School photographer John Nicholas Choate, 1879. Culture: Niimi'ipuu (Nez Perce) Kiowa Dakota (Eastern Sioux)</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>P20810: Carlisle Indian School students, 1879-1884 1 Photographic print Notes: Carte-de-visite depicting Carlisle Indian School students. The boys and girls are wearing school uniforms. Photograph by Official Carlisle Indian School photographer John Nicholas Choate, 1879-1884.</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>P20811: Carlisle Indian School students and teacher, 1879-1884 1 Photographic print Notes: Outdoor group portrait of Carlisle Indian School students and a teacher. The boys are wearing school uniforms. Photograph by Official Carlisle Indian School photographer John Nicholas Choate, 1879-1884.</p>
Photo-folder 2	<p>P20812: Stereograph of Carlisle Indian School students, 1879-1884 1 Photographic print Notes: Stereograph depicting a group of Carlisle Indian School students standing outside with books. The school dormitory can be seen in the background. Photograph by Official Carlisle Indian School photographer John Nicholas Choate, 1879-1884.</p>
Photo-folder 2	<p>P20813: Carlisle Indian School students, 1879-1884 1 Photographic print Notes: Group portrait of Carlisle Indian School students in uniforms. The girls, possibly from the Pueblo community, are wearing dresses and their hair is cut short. A few girls also hold dolls. Photograph by</p>

Official Carlisle Indian School photographer John Nicholas Choate,
1879-1884.

Photo-folder 2	<p>P20814: Chiefs visiting Carlisle Indian School, 1880 1 Photographic print Notes: Stereograph depicting three men visiting the Carlisle Indian School. They are from left to right: Standing Buffalo (c. 1835-1901), vice chief of the Ponca Nation; Joseph Esaw, Sr. (1833-1887), citizen of the Pawnee Nation; and White Eagle (c. 1827-1914), principal chief of the Ponca Nation. Photograph by Official Carlisle Indian School photographer John Nicholas Choate, most likely taken on February 28, 1880, during the men's brief visit and tour of the school.</p> <p>Culture: Ponca Chaticks Si Chaticks (Pawnee)</p>
Photo-folder 3	<p>P20815: Portrait of Chief Barboncito, Chief Manuelito, Chief Cayetanito, and a boy , March - July 1868 1 Photographic print Image(s): Portrait of Chief Barboncito, Manuelito, Calletano, and a boy Notes: Studio portrait depicting Diné (Navajo) Chief Barboncito (also known as Hashké Yich'I' Dahilwo; seated, holding rifle), Chief Manuelito (on left holding bow and arrow), and Chief Cayetanito, Manuelito's brother (on right holding bow and arrows). A boy is also visible behind Chief Barboncito's shoulder. This photograph was most likely shot by photographer Valentin Wolfenstein around the time of the Navajo Treaty signing in 1868 in Fort Sumner, New Mexico.</p> <p>Culture: Diné (Navajo)</p>
Photo-folder 3	<p>P20816: Portrait of Chief Barboncito, March - July 1868 1 Photographic print Notes: Studio portrait of Diné (Navajo) Chief Barboncito (also known as Hashké Yich'I' Dahilwo). This photograph was most likely shot by photographer Valentin Wolfenstein around the time of the Navajo Treaty signing in 1868 in Fort Sumner, New Mexico.</p> <p>Culture: Diné (Navajo)</p>
Photo-folder 3	<p>P20819: Group portrait of Diné (Navajo) Treaty signers and company, March - July 1868 1 Photographic print Notes: Outdoor group portrait of Diné (Navajo) men probably photographed around the time of the Navajo Treaty negotiations at Fort Sumner, New Mexico in 1868. Depicted in the photograph are Chief Barboncito, Chief Manuelito, and Manuelito's brother Chief Cayetanito (all seated in the lower right hand corner). Also in the front row is Chief Narbona Primero. Interpreter Jesus Arviso is standing in the left hand side of the back row (with a hat and moustache). The man standing second from the right may be Benjamin Stone Roberts. Photographed by Valentine Wolfenstein.</p> <p>Culture: Diné (Navajo)</p>