

CW/VFM-146: *William D. Holtzworth's Battlefield Lecture Notes*

Provenance: Gift by George Maharay in memory of Janet Hancock Maharay, Class of 1939

Biography: “Of course we went with Holtzworth! What sane man would go with anyone else? This Holtzworth is a combination of a good fellow and an encyclopedia. He can instantly tell the position occupied by any regiment or battery and is the acknowledged authority.” (Reported in the June 1, 1886 edition of the Salem, New Jersey *South Jerseyman* reporting on the excursion to Gettysburg to dedicate the Twelfth New Jersey Volunteer monument)

William D. Holtzworth was born and raised in Gettysburg. At the outbreak of the Civil War, at age 18, he responded to Lincoln's call and enlisted in the Second Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. After his three-month term of service, he re-enlisted in the 87th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry and served in that unit for the remainder of the war. He was wounded at the battle of Winchester, Va., June 15, 1863, and taken prisoner. Paroled in July of that year, he rejoined his old unit and was again wounded more severely at the battle of Weldon Railroad near Petersburg, Va., June 23, 1864. While unable to engage in actual fighting, he remained on active duty, assigned responsibility for the company letters. He was present at Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

Upon his return to Gettysburg, the citizen of Adams County elected him to a three-year term as Register and Recorder. As part owner of a livery stable, Holtzworth was in a position to provide transportation and to offer tours to the many visitors to the Battlefield. It is reported on the Gettysburg Evergreen Cemetery 'List of Notable People' that among his guests were Presidents Grant, Hayes and Cleveland and Generals Meade, Sheridan, Sherman, Hancock, Sickles, Warren, Slocum, Gregg, Hooker, Crawford and Longstreet. As his reputation grew, during the winter months, Holtzworth offered lecture tours throughout Pennsylvania and Ohio most often using local Grand Army of the Republic chapters as local sponsors. In this way he promoted the Gettysburg Battlefield as a historical site worth visiting. In 1884 he became a member of the Board of Directors of the Battlefield Memorial Association, an early Battlefield preservation group, and in September, 1887 he was appointed the third Superintendent of the Soldier's National Cemetery, a position he held until his death in 1891.

Scope and Content: Typescript copy of William Holtzworth's extensive and detailed notes on the events leading up to and troop maneuvers and actions during the Gettysburg Battle. Written in pencil on the first page and very faded: "William Holtzworth B/G Lecture, from Bill Holtzworth via Geo. Gabler (?) to J. M. Sheads." B/G probably means battlefield guide. J.M. Sheads, the recipient of the notes, followed in the Holtzworth legacy during a 35-year career as a teacher of history at Gettysburg High School and part-time ranger historian at the Gettysburg National Military Park. Sheads was a 1932 graduate of Gettysburg College.

Keywords: Union – East – Pennsylvania– 87th; Diaries; Army – Infantry; Soldier – Non – Commissioned Officers; Gettysburg – Battle; Adams County – Civilians

For more information:

Schwarz, Mary Lou; "Of Course, We Went With Holtzworth..." W.D. Holtzworth and the beginning of the guiding tradition at Gettysburg; 2004: a monograph available at the Adams County Library 973.7349 S96o

History of Cumberland and Adams Counties Pennsylvania, Illustrated; Chicago: Warner, Beers & Co., 1886

From the Internet:

Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides-The Early Years

Evergreen Cemetery Notable People

Location: Civil War Vertical File Manuscripts, Special Collections & College Archives, Musselman Library at Gettysburg College.

See also: [Civil War Sources in Special Collections](#)