## Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Shelton, W.A. (William Arthur).

**Title:** W.A. Shelton papers, 1919-1950, bulk 1919-1920

**Call Number:** Series No. 187

**Extent:** 3 linear ft. (8 boxes)

**Abstract:** Papers of educator and Methodist minister William Arthur Shelton include correspondence, photographs, and other materials related to his participation in the American Scientific Mission, a 1920 exploration through Egyptian and former Ottoman territory led by James Henry Breasted. Also included are documents related to Shelton’s purchase of antiquities later housed in the Emory University Museum (now the Michael C. Carlos Museum).

**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

## Administrative Information

**Restrictions on Access**
Unrestricted access.

**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

**Source**
Transfer

**Custodial History**
Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum possessed the collection from 1987 until 2011, when it was transferred to the Emory University Archives.

**Citation**
[after identification of item(s)], W.A. Shelton papers, Emory University Archives, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

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Collection Description

Biographical Note
William Arthur Shelton was born on September 6, 1875 in Azusa, California. He received a bachelor of arts degree from Hargrove College in Ardmore, Oklahoma in 1904 as well as bachelor of divinity and master of arts degrees from Yale University in 1908. He was ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church and subsequently served as President of Oklahoma Wesleyan College in Oklahoma City from 1911 until 1914.

In 1914, Shelton began to study with James Henry Breasted, Professor of Egyptology and Oriental History and Director of the Haskell Oriental Museum at the University of Chicago. The same year, Shelton was appointed Professor of Semitic Languages and Literature at Emory University in Atlanta, where he had also been awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity. Shelton discontinued his studies at the University of Chicago within two years.

In 1919 and 1920, Shelton accompanied Breasted and three other men—Ludlow Bull, Daniel Luckenbill, and William Edgerton—on an expedition through Egyptian and former Ottoman territory then under British mandate. The expedition, called the American Scientific Mission, sailed from New York on the S.S. Duca D'Aosta on Christmas Eve of 1919. It passed through Egypt and eventually reached Mesopotamia via Bombay (Mumbai) in March 1920.

Shelton, Breasted, and the others were students of the Ancient Near East, and the expedition was devoted primarily to the exploration of ancient artwork and ruins throughout the so-called “Fertile Crescent” (a term coined by Breasted), and to the gathering of antiquities, especially in Egypt. Several of these items, including a full mummy purchased in Cairo, formed the initial foundation of the Emory Museum’s (now the Michael C. Carlos Museum) Egyptology collection. Shelton documented the American Scientific Mission in his memoir, Dust and Ashes of Empires, published in 1922.

The expedition's itinerary included the following cities and sites: Naples, Rome, Luxor, Aswan, Cairo, Port Said, Bombay (Mumbai), Basra, Ur Junction, Shatra, Naziriyah, Hillah, Baghdad, Mosul, Damascus, Jerusalem, London, and Paris. The expedition also visited numerous other places by ship, including several sites along the Euphrates River, in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and through the Suez Canal.

After the American Scientific Mission, Shelton remained at Emory for nearly another decade, until he became the pastor of Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church in Washington, DC, in 1930. Two years later he returned to Atlanta to lead Grace Methodist Church. Shelton became Superintendent of the Methodist Church’s Birmingham District in 1938. From 1949 to 1951 he was briefly Professor of Religion at Birmingham-Southern College. He died February 23, 1959.

Scope and Content Note
The papers of William Arthur Shelton primarily include materials related to his participation in the 1919 to 1920 American Scientific Mission led by James Henry Breasted of the University of Chicago, as well as some later documents cataloging his purchases for the Emory University
Museum. Shelton’s diary, personal correspondence, notes on the budget and purchases, photographs, print ephemera, and numerous glass lantern slides document the expedition. This material consists primarily of reportage from the field. Shelton’s primary correspondents include his wife, Ola, and their young children. Few of these materials are related to Shelton’s later career and none to his earlier years, so while the collection spans the period 1919 to circa 1950, the bulk of materials originate from late 1919 and January to August 1920. Researchers should note that Series 2 includes Shelton’s diary, chronicling the expedition from February 1920 forward, and that Series 3 includes fifty pages from a personal scrapbook in addition to many loose photographs.

**Arrangement Note**

Organized into 5 series: (1) Correspondence; (2) Ephemera and other papers; (3) Photographs; and (4) Glass lantern slides.
Description of Series

Series 1: Correspondence, 1919-1923
Series 2: Ephemera and other papers, 1920-1950
Series 3: Photographs, circa 1920
Series 4: Glass lantern slides, circa 1920
Series 1
Correspondence, 1919-1923
Box 1

Scope and Content Note
Personal correspondence, much of it from Shelton's time with the American Scientific Mission.

Arrangement Note
Arranged chronologically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manget, John A., 1919 November 24-1919 November 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outgoing from New York, 1919 December 20-1919 December 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Incoming Correspondence, 1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>At sea, 1919 December 25-1920 January 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Naples, 1920 January 8-1920 January 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rome, 1920 January 11-1920 January 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Milano (ship), 1920 January 18-1920 January 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Page from letter recounting incident on a ship in the Mediterranean, c. 1920 January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Luxor, 1920 January 26-1920 January 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aswan, Egypt, 1920 January 29-1920 January 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cairo, 1920 February 4-1920 February 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Port Said, Egypt, 1920 February 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Gulf of Suez, 1920 February 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bombay, 1920 February 29-1920 March 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Persian Gulf, 1920 March 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>On the Euphrates, 1920 March 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Basra, 1920 March 13-1920 March 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ur Junction, 1920 March 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Shatara, 1920 March 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Naziriyah, 1920 March 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hillah (Babylon), 1920 March 31-1920 April 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Baghdad, 1920 April 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Mosul, 1920 April 17</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Baghdad, 1920 April 23-1920 April 27</td>
</tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Damascus, 1920 May 31</td>
</tr>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Jerusalem, 1920 May 7-1920 June 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Cairo, 1920 July 1-1920 July 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Port Said, Egypt, 1920 July 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>London, 1920 August 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Paris, 1920 August 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Miscellaneous envelopes, 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Incoming correspondence, 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Incoming correspondence, 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Incoming correspondence, 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Incoming correspondence, 1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Incoming correspondence, n.d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series 2
Ephemera and other papers, 1920-1950
Boxes 1-3

Scope and Content Note
Assorted ephemera, such as clippings, inventories, accounts, and illustrations. Includes Shelton's diaries of the American Scientific Mission.

Arrangement Note
Arranged alphabetically by topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Egyptian Antiquities Pass, 1920 January 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Biographical Directory of American Scholars page, circa 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Butcher's account, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Card from St. James Hotel, Assouan, 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>&quot;Curios from the Holy Land&quot; booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Expedition Diary (transcription), 1919-1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Expenses, 1920 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Food Inventory, circa 1920 March 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Illustrated Biblical scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Inventory and description of items purchased by Shelton, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Invitations and Programs, circa 1920-1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Invoices, 1920 June-1921 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Luther illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Newspaper clippings, circa 1925-1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Notes on plaster casts, circa 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Passenger List from SS. Duca D'Aosta, 1919 December 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Inventory of Shelton Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shelton's Diary, 1920 February-1920 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Newspaper clippings related to mummies, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series 3
Photographs, circa 1920
Boxes 1, 3-6

Scope and Content Note
Photographs from the American Scientific Mission. Box 4 includes 50 pages from a personal scrapbook assembled by Shelton (or his family). Page numbers are noted in parentheses. Item titles in quotation are taken directly from captions on the images themselves, otherwise they are descriptive titles derived while processing the collection.

Arrangement Note
Arranged according to an index provided by Emory's Michael C. Carlos Museum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Photographic negatives—Shelton's scrapbook, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Various loose photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;Nippur&quot; (Page 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;On the way to Nippur&quot; (Page 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Afaq&quot; (Page 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;The smaller mound at Nippur&quot; (Page 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Basra, part of Hotel&quot; (Page 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Basra [...]&quot; (Page 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;Basra&quot; (Page 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;Indian Bullocks military, Basra&quot; (Page 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;Mohammerah sunset, Persian oil states&quot; (Page 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>&quot;Looking across the river from Basra&quot; (Page 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>&quot;Basra&quot; (Page 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&quot;British Officers Hospital Shatt el-Arab&quot; (Page 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>&quot;Anglo Persian oil tanks, Mohamerrah&quot; (Page 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>&quot;Military Church, Basra&quot; (Page 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>&quot;[...] Ottoman bank&quot; (Page 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;Basra [post office]&quot; (Page 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;Desert about Pithom&quot; (Page 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>&quot;Our Luggage Van at Ur Junction&quot; (Page 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>&quot;The Palestinian desert&quot; (Page 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>&quot;First mound seen in Mesopotamia below Ur&quot; (Page 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sign at Ur Junction (Page 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>&quot;One of the bricks of Ur with Bitumen marks (see Gen. 11)&quot; (Page 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>&quot;[...] Breasted, Luckenbill, and Edgerton&quot; (Page 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Small catamaran (Page 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ships on river (Page 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Large gathering around gazebo (Page 6)
"Eridu: This great mound is fifteen miles Southwest of Ur and was once a great city on the Persian Gulf" (Page 7)
"Ruins at Ur" (Page 7)
"[...] Lagash (with Semitic [...]" (Page 8)
Desert mounds (Page 8)
Desert mounds (Page 8)
Ruins of wall (Page 8)
"Loom at Afaq" (Page 8)
"Mosque, Hospital, and [...]” (Page 8)
"The Euphrates at Niziriyah, first view of the river" (Page 8)
"Ashur" (Page 9)
"Mosul" (Page 9)
"Mosul" (Page 9)
"Mosul" (Page 9)
"On Shatt el-Hai" (Page 10)
"Lagash [photo missing]" (Page 10)
"Lagash" (Page 10)
"Shatt el-Hai" (Page 10)
Mounted horse head quarters (Page 10)
"Kalat Sikkar" (Page 11)
"Captain Crawford" (Page 11)
"Door of Captain Crawford" (Page 11)
"Captain Crawford's [stable]" (Page 11)
"Kalat Sikkar" (Page 11)
"Leaving Kalit Sikkar" (Page 11)
"Tello, View from E. end" (Page 12)
"Baghdad" (Page 12)
"Street in Baghdad" (Page 12)
Balconies, Shatra (Page 13)
"Officer's Club, Baghdad, taken on leaving day" (Page 13)
"Baghdad"
"[...] Courtyard [...]" (Page 13)
Balconies, Shatra (Page 13)
"Baghdad" (Page 14)
"Archway Ctesiphon" (Page 14)
"Porter of Baghdad" (Page 14)
"Lion, Babylon" (Page 14)
"Gate of Ishtar" (Page 14)
"Babylon" (Page 15)
"Babylon" (Page 15)
"[...] Babylon" (Page 15)
"Ruins of Babylon" (Page 15)
"Building stone of Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd Palace" (Page 16)
"Babylon" (Page 16)
[Illegible] (Page 16)
"Babylon" (Page 16)
Looking across river (Page 16)
Monument (Page 16)
View toward church(?) (Page 16)
Group entering small cottage (Page 16)
"San Sebastian Gate on Appian Way" (Page 17)
"Across the square [...]" (Page 17)
San Sebastian Gate (Page 17)
"Thermos Baths of Caracalla, Rome" (Page 17)
"[...] Appian Way" (Page 17)
"Grand Canal of Venice" (Page 17)
"Austrian ships in canal" (Page 17)
View of St. Mark's Campanile, Venice (Page 17)
"Babylon" (Page 18)
"Babylon" (Page 18)
Walls of Babylon (Page 18)
"Babylon" (Page 18)
"Babylon" (Page 19)
"Excavation on the site of the Temple of Marduk" (Page 19)
"Babylon" (Page 19)
"Babylon' (Page 19)
"Babylon" (Page 19)
"Merchant of Mosul" (Page 20)
"Coppersmith of Mosul" (Page 20)
"Mosul" (Page 21)
"Mosul" (Page 21)
"Tomb of [...] Ali" (Page 21)
"Mosul" (Page 21)
"Mosul" (Page 21)
"Walls of Mosul" (Page 22)
"Bridge of Mosul" (Page 22)
Minaret, Mosul (Page 22)
"Mosul" (Page 22)
4 104 Road near Mosul-Nineveh (Page 22)
4 105 "Nineveh: Dr. J.H. Breasted makes a landing on the east side of the Tigris, on the road to Nineveh." (Page 22)
4 106 "Kellik [raft on inflated goatskins] loaded with millstones, Mosul" (Page 22)
4 107 "Mosul crossing to Nineveh" (Page 23)
4 108 "Looking toward the [...]" (Page 23)
4 109 "Looking toward the walls of Nineveh" (Page 23)
4 110 "Mosul Bridge" (Page 23)
4 111 "Mosul" (Page 24)
4 112 "Nineveh" (Page 24)
4 113 "Ali and some Negro children [...]" (Page 24)
4 114 "Edgerton in the street at Neby Yunus" (Page 24)
4 115 "Nineveh" (Page 25)
4 116 "Christian village between [Nineveh and Mosul]" (Page 25)
4 117 Empty niche in Christian monastery near Nineveh (Page 25)
4 118 "Monastery near Nineveh" (probably St. Elijah's Monastery south of Mosul) (Page 25)
4 119 "[...] stop at an abandoned [...] desert of Syria" (Page 25)
4 120 "Jerua [...]" (Page 25)
4 121 "Chalk hill by the Euphrates" (Page 25)
4 122 "[...] Euphrates" (Page 25)
4 123 "Near the Christian village returning from Nimrod" (Page 26)
4 124 View of desert and small gathering of people (Page 26)
4 125 Photo of ground and shadows (Page 26)
4 126 Breasted with Iraqi Christians, possibly including two monks (Page 26)
4 127 Syrian man (Page 26)
4 128 "NORTHERN SYRIA: This village of Beehive huts is Southeast of Aleppo" (Page 26)
4 129 "A broken wagon on the [...]" (Page 26)
4 130 "A NATIVE OF NORTHERN SYRIA: Back of him is the home in which he lives." (Page 26)
4 131 People bathing in river (Page 27)
4 132 "Hit from S.W. [...]" (Page 27)
4 133 Stone mounds (shelters?) (Page 27)
4 134 "Well at Hit" (Page 27)
4 135 "Aleppo" (Page 27)
4 136 Edgerton along Dog River, beneath inscription marking the British capture of Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo (Page 27)
4 137 Dog River behind [...] vines and reeds [...] by Nebuchadnezzar" (Page 27)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Inscription commemorating Napoleon III's intervention in Ottoman Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Gate (jail?) with sign reading &quot;Syria not to be divided&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;The High Altar at Baalbek, Luckenbill&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;In a niche of the gods, Luckenbill&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;In a niche at Baalbek, W.A. Shelton&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ludlow Bull in a niche at Baalbek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;[...] Sidon&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;Syrian Coast South of Sidon on the promontory...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;Syrian coast&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;Syrian Coast North of Beyrout&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>&quot;Doorway at Baalbek&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>&quot;Baalbek&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Baalbek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>&quot;Ruins of Baalbek&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Field with mound in the distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>&quot;Karseir&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Landscape with fields and stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>&quot;Looking over Jerusalem from the top of the North wall&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>&quot;Wailing Wall&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Wall, Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>&quot;Zion Gate&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Dome of the Rock from the northern entrance to the Mosque of el-Aksa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>&quot;Valley of Hinnom [...]&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>&quot;Spring [...] at the entrance to the Tomb of the Judges&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Kidron Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;Marriage procession at Jerusalem&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;Indian soldiers&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;East wall [...]&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Soldiers, Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;Via Dolorosa, place where Pilate said, &quot;Behold the man&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;Garden of Gethsemane&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;North Wall&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;[...] place where Jesus was arrested&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>&quot;[...] on north side of temple [...] 70 feet deep&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>&quot;Jaffa Gate&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Valley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Kidron Valley and Mt. Olive" (Page 32)
"Indian [...] on streets of Jerusalem" (Page 32)
"From the German Hospital tower..." (Page 32)
View toward Mt. Olive (Page 32)
Walls (Page 34)
Desert landscape (Page 34)
Building (monastery?) on hill in desert (Page 34)
Desert landscape (Page 34)
Stone building with engraved pediment (Page 34)
"Hebron" (Page 34)
"[...] Hebron" (Page 34)
Crowded street, Hebron (?) (Page 34)
"Bombay" (Page 35)
"Bombay" (Page 35)
"Porters and [...], Bombay" (Page 35)
Man on wooden walkway, Bombay (Page 35)
"Hostel [...] Bombay" (Page 35)
Rajabai Clock Tower, Bombay (Page 35)
Shipyard, Bombay (Page 35)
Palms near Bombay (Page 35)
Step pyramid at Zoser (Page 36)
"Alexandria, Pompey's Pillar" (Page 36)
Alexandria harbor or canal (Page 36)
Statue at waterfront (Page 36)
Alexandria harbor (Page 36)
"[...] Sphinx and Pompey's Pillar" (Page 37)
"Zoological Gardens, Cairo" (Page 37)
"Zoological Gardens, Cairo" (Page 37)
Ruins, Alexandria (Page 37)
"Zoological Gardens, Cairo" (Page 38)
"Banyan Tree [...] Cairo" (Page 38)
View of road (Page 38)
"Looking from new [...] hotel [...] gate Le Caire" (Page 38)
"Looking over Cairo from the minaret of Mosque-Madrassa of Sultan Hasan" (Page 38)
"Citadel Cairo" (Page 38)
"Minaret of Sultan Hasan and city of Cairo" (Page 38)
View of Cairo (Page 38)
Sphinx (Page 39)
Sphinx (Page 39)
Ruins of wall (Page 39)
"Pyramid of Kufu (Cheops)" (Page 39)
"[...] Minaret of Alabaster [...] Cairo from Minaret of Sultan Hasan" (Page 39)
"Mosque of Hasan..." (Page 39)
"Mokattam hills, Cairo" (Page 39)
"Mosque of Sultan Hasan" (Page 39)
"Door at the Church of Holy Speulchre" (Page 33)
Men in street with camels (Page 33)
View of city from hilltop (Page 33)
View of church (Page 33)
View toward Bethel (Page 33)
"From the roof of the Mosque on Neby Samwill toward Kubeibeh (Emmaus)" (Page 33)
View of mound (Page 33)
View of hill (Page 33)
"Back of the Sphinx" (Page 40)
"Firth and Breasted on the margin of the [road near] Sakhara" (Page 40)
"Granite Temple of [Great] Sphinx" (Page 40)
Effaced photo (Page 40)
Aerial or hilltop view of fields (Page 40)
Obelisks in Karnak (Page 41)
Schist statue of Thutmose III, Cairo (Page 41)
Hut of a fellah (Page 41)
"Alabaster Sphinx in Memphis" (Page 42)
View from below cliffs (perhaps ancient quarry?) (Page 42)
View toward a causeway (Page 42)
"Citadel [...]" (Page 42)
People aboard ship (Page 43)
People aboard ship (Page 43)
People aboard ship (Page 43)
People aboard ship (Page 43)
Sailor and group of civilians (Page 43)
Soldiers (Page 43)
Soldiers (Page 43)
Group of men, including priest (Page 43)
"The judgment of the heart before god Osiris from papyrus of Queen Maat-ka-ra, 21st Dyn." (Page 44)
"Ramesseum, Luxor [...]" (Page 44)
"Ramesseum, Luxor" (Page 44)
"Superbe statues of Pepi I and his son..." (Page 44)
View of cliff with cuttings (?) (Page 44)
Unidentifiable (Page 44)
Archaeologist standing on ground with walking stick (Page 44)
View of cliff with cuttings (Page 44)
Temple of Luxor (Page 45)
"Temple of Luxor" (Page 45)
Temple of Luxor (Page 45)
"Hills of the Kings' tombs, Luxor" (Page 45)
"Karnak" (Page 46)
"Tomb furniture" (Page 46)
Colossi of Memnon (Page 46)
"Temple of Luxor" (Page 46)
"Sundown on the Red Sea" (Page 46)
Suez canal (?) (Page 46)
Suez canal (?) (Page 46)
Suez canal (?) (Page 46)
"Crossing through the Suez Canal" (Page 47)
"Island in the Red Sea" (Page 47)
Statue at harbor (Page 47)
Desert railroad (Page 47)
Inscribed panel (Page 48)
"Ashur-bani-pal, King of Assyria...hunting lions" (Page 48)
"Crossing fro Arabian Sea to Persian Gulf" (Page 49)
"Shatt el Arab" (Page 49)
"Shatt el Arab" (Page 49)
"On board [...] from Bombay to Basra" (Page 49)
"[Bishop] Frank W. Warne" on board [...]" (Page 49)
"The Sphinx and the Great Pyramid" (Page 49)
Image effaced
"The Second Pyramid of Khafre" (Page 49)
"Shatt el Arab" (Page 50)
"River tributary to Shatt el Arab" (Page 50)
"Tributary to Shatt el Arab" (Page 50)
"Shatt el Arab" (Page 50)
Archways
Railroad or causeway
Archway, Hebron
"Babylon, Looking down the Hillah Euphrates. The river once ran to the left and just behind Edgerton and Bull are the hills of the Nebuchadnezzar Bridge."
Colossi of Memnon
5  1  Scrapbook cover
6  1  Shelton on bench
6  2  Hills of the Kings' Tombs, Luxor, Egypt
6  3  Buildings
6  4  Long stretch of road
6  5  Cairo, Mosque of Sultan Hasan
6  6  Metropolitan excavation near Den al-Bahri
6  7  Colossi of Memnon
6  8  Great Colonnade of the Temple of Thebes
6  9  Pompeii's Pillar
6 10  Ramessseum
6 11  Tombs of the Mamelukes, Cairo, Egypt
6 12  New gate by the Jaffa gate, opened by the Kaiser, Jerusalem
6 13  Cairo, looking toward the pyramids from the Hasan minaret
6 14  Temple of Thebes, showing colonnade, part of pylon, and obelisk
6 15  The Abana as it runs through Damascus
6 16  Animals grazing
6 17  Cartouche carved into stone
6 18  Plaque commemorating site where Pilate apprehended Jesus, Jerusalem
6 19  Golgotha, or Gordon's Calvary
6 20  Looking down the wells of Nineveh from Kunyunyik to Neby Yunus
6 21  Tower of Babel/Burj Nimrud
6 22  Tower of Babel from a distance
6 23  Men on horses in Lagash
6 24  Statue of the god Nebo in alabaster
6 25  Babylon, Gate of Ishtar
6 26  Bridge-head, Babylon
6 27  Body of water with peninsula
6 28  Gate of Ishtar, Babylon
6 29  Babylon, behind ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace
6 30  Gethsemane
6 31  Mosul, Kelluk loaded with millstones
6 32  Gateway to Persian Gulf
6 33  Ain Karin, where John the Baptist was born
6 34  Long hilly stretch of vast land
6 35  Front of a rock tomb outside Jerusalem, almost buried
6 36  Ain Karim, birthplace of John the Baptist
6 37  Mosque containing tombs of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekkah, Jacob, and Leah
6 38  Near Pithom, the city built by the Hebrews while in Egypt
6 39  Ur of the Chaldees
6 40  Serai ' Aveh, many archways and a single flag
6 41  North Wall of Mosul
6 42  Dog River, Inscription commemorating British victory
6 43  Ruins of wall where Samuel ministered
6 44  Hittite lion around the rivers of Babylon
6 45  View of part of Hebron from hill
6 46  Spring of Phillip on the road from Jerusalem to Hebron
6 47  Ashur, Dr. Clay reading a new inscription
6 48  Garden
6 49  Expedition caravan crossing a valley
6 50  Caravan
6 51  People underneath trees along a road
6 52  Near the Christian village
6 53  Nebi Yunus from palace mound, Nineveh
6 54  Bandits' guest tent
6 55  Nazareth, on the Galilean hills
6 56  Looking down the ancient wall from Nebi Yunus
6 57  View of buildings from a stone ledge
6 58  Upper Pool, Hebron
6 59  Russian Church on Mt. Olive from Gathsemane
6 60  Ur
6 61  Debris and rocks
6 62  Large stone wall or cliff
6 63  Hebron
6 64  Battlefield of Rameses II Kadesh
6 65  Airplane
6 66  Overhead view of flat area
6 67  Neby Samwill, near Jerusalem
6 68  Ur of the Chaldees, station on the Baghdad railway
6 69  Breasted, Luckenbill, Edgerton
6 70  Temple ruins
6 71  Mosque of Sultan Hasan and Alabaster Mosque, Cairo
6 72  Tower of Babel
6 73  People on river bank
6 74  Desert
6 75  Damascus
6 76  River with a city in the distance
6 77  Tower in the distance
Men walking down a street
Caves in a hillside
Street
Garden
Abbaye des Catacombes postcard addressed to Mr. A.L. Shelton, 1920 January
Roma postcard addressed to Fred Shelton, 1920 January 13
Pompeii postcard addressed to Ruth Shelton, 1920 January 10
Roma postcard addressed to Mr. A.L. Shelton
Village Arabe postcard
Catacombes de St. Caliste postcard addressed to Ruth Shelton
Venezia-Palazzo Ducale postcard addressed to Ruth Shelton, 1920 January 18
Egyptian papyrus postcard
Roma-Carcera Tulliano postcard addressed to Dr. W.A. Shelton, 1920 April 2
Jerusalem, Pool of Bethesda postcard addressed to Mildred Shelton, 1920 June
The Holy Land, Fields of Ruth and Boaz, 1920 June 5
Damascus postcard addressed to Ruth Shelton, 1920 May 31
Egypte blank postcard addressed to Mrs. W.A. Shelton, 1920 July 26
Alexandrie-Phare de Ras-El-Tin postcard addressed to Ruth Shelton, 1920 July
Jerusalem, Pool of Bethesda postcard addressed to Ruth Shelton, 1920 June
Port Said postcard addressed to Mildred Shelton, 1920 July 22
British Museum postcard addressed to Fred Shelton, 1920 August 13
British Museum postcard addressed to Ruth Shelton, 1920 August 13
Paris-Eiffel Tower postcard addressed to Fred Shelton, 1920 August 21
British Museum postcard addressed to Mildred Shelton, 1920 August 14
Reims-Statue C. Arnold postcard addressed to Hadley Shelton, 1920 August 22
Dieppe postcard addressed to Hadley Shelton, 1920 August 27
Cairo, view taken from Citadel blank postcard
Oxford, Christ Church Cathedral, 1920 August 28
Rameses II postcard
Mummy of Set postcard
Postcard
Mummy of Menephtah postcard
Cairo, old Mosque in the native quarters blank postcard
Jerusalem Garden Tomb Maintenance Fund postcard
Garden Tomb, Jerusalem, blank postcard
Series 4
Glass lantern slides, circa 1920
Boxes 7-8

Scope and Content Note
Glass lantern slides, many of which duplicate the photographic prints found in the Photographs series. Numbers in the title were assigned by the Michael C. Carlos Museum before the collection was transferred to the Emory University Archives.

Arrangement Note
Arranged according to an index provided by the Michael C. Carlos Museum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beautiful Colonnade in Egypt—Temple court at Luxor, 1987.3.8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Famous Colonnade at Karnak, 1987.3.8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elaborate colored Egyptian chair, 1987.3.8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oasis of Elim, Sinai Peninsula, 1987.3.8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Relief map of Palestine, 1987.3.8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jerusalem, beautiful for situation, from southeast, 1987.3.8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Great Pyramid of Gizeh, 1987.3.8.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cedars of Lebanon, scions of mighty groves, Syria, 1987.3.8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Jordan's main source, Dan, Palestine, 1987.3.8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jerusalem from the Hill of Calvary, 1987.3.8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Jews' wailing place, outer wall of Solomon's temple, 1987.3.8.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Dome of the Rock, from the northwest, 1987.3.8.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Picturesque Palestine, the wilderness of the scapegoat, 1987.3.8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jordan and the Promised Land from cliffs of Moab, 1987.3.8.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Samaritan High Priest and Pentateuch roll at synagogue, 1987.3.8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Abana River, &quot;sweet waters&quot; of Damascus, 1987.3.8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Damascus and gardens from northwest, 1987.3.8.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>River Kishon and the steep slopes of Mount Carmel, 1987.3.8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>In the heart of the Arabah, 1987.3.8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Great altars for burnt offerings and libations on &quot;High Place&quot;, 1987.3.8.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Traditional Mount Sinai, 1987.3.8.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Outer wall of ancient Canaanite Jericho, 1987.3.8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>One of the oldest Bible manuscripts in existence, Sinai monastery, 1987.3.8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>In the monastery library, Sinai peninsula, 1987.3.8.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Northeast from the rigid slopes of Mount Serbal, 1987.3.8.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Old turquoise mines at Wadi Maghara, 1987.3.8.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Where the river enters Sea of Galilee, 1987.3.8.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ancient cromlick on Mount Nebo, 1987.3.8.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7  29  Waterfront, Tiberiad, Galilee, 1987.3.8.19
7  30  Flooring of Nebuchadnezzar's throne hall, Babylon, 1987.3.8.38
7  31  Ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, Babylon, 1987.3.8.39
7  32  Reliefs of sacred bull and dragon on walls of gate, Babylon, 1987.3.8.21
7  33  Birs-Nimrud, traditional "Tower of Babel", 1987.3.8.20
7  34  North over site of Haran, 1987.3.8.22
7  35  Plowing the fertile fields in the Haran country, 1987.3.8.23
7  36  The citadel or castle of Ur of the Chaldees, from south, 1987.3.8.24
7  37  From the street of columns, Palmyra, southeast, 1987.3.8.25
7  38  East over the Arnah, the Garden of Eden on the Euphrates, 1987.3.8.26
7  39  Arnah, on the right bank of the Euphrates, east, 1987.3.8.27
7  40  Mosque of Omar, 1987.3.8.28
7  41  Glass pottery in grave, 1987.3.8.40
7  42  Desert ruins, 1987.3.8.41
7  43  Wall water spout, 1987.3.8.42
7  44  Ruins of a city with lake or cistern, 1987.3.8.43
7  45  Floor ruins, 1987.3.8.44
7  46  Egyptian wall drawing, 1987.3.8.45
7  47  Floor ruins, 1987.3.8.46
7  48  Funeral boat, 1987.3.8.47
7  49  Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian signs showing six words, 1987.3.8.48
7  50  12 bowls, 11 tools, 1987.3.8.49
7  51  Assyrian engraving of wounded lioness, 1987.3.8.50
7  52  Translation of signet words, 1987.3.8.51
7  53  Egyptian colored wall painting with boats, 1987.3.8.52
7  54  Entrance to stone [...], 1987.3.8.53
7  55  Faintly colored Egyptian grave goods, 1987.3.8.54
7  56  Egyptian wall drawing, German inscription, 1987.3.8.55
7  57  Egyptian wall writing and drawing, 1987.3.8.56
7  58  Archaeologist among ruins, 1987.3.8.57
7  59  Inscribed pottery fragment, 1987.3.8.58
7  60  Six symbols with translations, 1987.3.8.59
7  61  Head of Christ, 1987.3.8.60
7  62  Egyptian wall drawing, 1987.3.8.62
7  63  Desert ruins with archaeologist, 1987.3.8.63
7  64  Alabaster head rest, 1987.3.8.64
7  65  Makeup box, 1987.3.8.65
7  66  Sphinx, 1987.3.8.66
7  67  Three-tier Egyptian drawing, 1987.3.8.67
Covered wagon and workmen, 1987.3.8.68
Wood casket with objects on top, 1987.3.8.61
Boat docks on river, 1987.3.8.69
Hieroglyphic fragment, 1987.3.8.70
Brightly colored Egyptian wall, 1987.3.8.72
Painted Egyptian chest, 1987.3.8.73
Covered wagons and fort, 1908, 1987.3.8.74
Man standing on remains of wall, 1987.3.8.75
Arch of Ctesiphon, 1987.3.8.76
Caravan of jeeps, 1987.3.8.77
Seated Arabs, 1987.3.8.78
Fragment of cylinder seal, 1987.3.8.79
Explorers in front of Arch of Ctesiphon, 1987.3.8.80
Explorers in front of mountain, 1987.3.8.81
Symbols on wall, 1987.3.8.82
Ruins on side of mountain, 1987.3.8.83
Desert, 1987.3.8.84
Arabs and archaeologist in front of covered wagon, 1987.3.8.85
Many Arabs outside of tent, 1987.3.8.86
City on hill with long ditch, 1987.3.8.87
Train car, 1987.3.8.88
Black and white wall drawings, 1987.3.8.89
Black and white wall drawings, 1987.3.8.90
Hieratic writing, possibly geometry, 1987.3.8.91
Ruins, 1987.3.8.92
Two green glass goblets, 1987.3.8.93
Jeep with gun and two drivers, Syrian desert, 1987.3.8.94
Expedition wagon on the Syrian desert, 1987.3.8.95
Borsippa, the so-called Tower of Babel, ten miles from Babylon, 1987.3.8.96
Babylon, 1987.3.8.97
Michael Angelo, 1987.3.8.98
Double-sided relief, 1987.3.8.99
Wall art, 1987.3.8.100
Shores of the river near pyramids, 1987.3.8.101
Map, 1987.3.8.102
Granite, Temple, Sphinx and Great Pyramid, Egypt, 1987.3.8.103
Wall art (?), 1987.3.8.104
Thumb ring or cylinder, 1987.3.8.105
Archaeologist standing on pyramid wall
8  34  Colossi of Gemnon, Thebes
8  35  American Scientific Mission aboard the City of Benares