

**Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum**  
**Record Unit 245**  
**Grand Army of the Republic**  
**On Martha's Vineyard**  
by Kathryn Harcourt

**Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** Grand Army of the Republic on Martha's Vineyard

**Creator:**

**Quantity:** 1 cubic foot

**Abstract:** The Finding Aid Grand Army of the Republic on Martha's Vineyard is a small collection of records, meeting minutes, ledgers, and membership information primarily pertaining to the Henry Clay Wade Post No. 201 which was located in Cottage City, Massachusetts.

**Administrative Information**

**Acquisition Information:** The material for Grand Army of the Republic was acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Processing Information:** Kathryn Harcourt

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred Citation for Publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, Grand Army of the Republic, Record Unit 245.

**Index Terms**

G.A.R.

Grand Army of the Republic

Henry Wade Clay

Woman's Auxiliary Corps

**Series and Subseries Arrangement**

Series I: Organization Papers

Series II: Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Meeting Minutes

Series III: G.A.R. Membership Rolls

Series IV: G.A.R. Financial Records

Series V: G.A.R. "Black List"

Series VI: Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the G.A.R.

Series VII: Clippings

## **Historical Note**

The Grand Army of the Republic became the preeminent veterans' organization formed at the close of the Civil War. It was based upon three objectives: fraternity, charity, and loyalty. The first ideal was encouraged through regular locally scheduled meetings as well as joint gatherings with members from other posts.

Its second objective, charity, was depicted in several ways: the veterans set up a fund for the relief of needy veterans, widows, and orphans which was used for medical, burial and housing expenses, and for purchases of food and household goods, as well as arranging loans. Sometimes the veterans found work for the needy. The G.A.R also had a number of auxiliaries: the Woman's Relief Corps (organized on a national basis in 1883); the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic (1896); and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (1881). These three organizations along with the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and the Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War still carry on the work begun by the G.A.R in establishing and improving veterans facilities.

Loyalty, the third ideal, was fostered through constant reminders to those who had not lived through the war of the significance of the G.A.R in reuniting a divided nation. The organization spent much of its time soliciting funds for monuments and memorials, busts and equestrian statues of Union soldiers and heroes, granite shafts, tablets, urns, and mounted cannon. The G.A.R also encouraged the preservation of Civil War sites, relics, and historic documents. Cannons and field-pieces were placed in many towns or courthouse squares and parks. The members also gave battle-stained flags, mementos, and documents to local museums.

The G.A.R.'s principal legacy to the nation is the annual observance of Memorial Day, which is now observed on the last Monday in May. General John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the G.A.R., requested members of all posts to decorate the graves of their fallen comrades with flowers on May 30, 1868; in subsequent years, it was to include fallen veterans of all wars.

## **Scope and Content**

This collection consists primarily of record logs of the G.A.R. post in Cottage City (Oak Bluffs), Massachusetts from its inception on June 19, 1890 until 1918, as well as a section on two Woman's Relief Corps on Martha's Vineyard, one in Cottage City, the other in Edgartown.

## **Series Description**

### **Series I: Organization Papers**

Box 1 of 2

Folder 1: Documents--G.A.R. Post 201. Address to Veterans of Dukes County at Edgartown, May 30, 1889, by Hosea H. Knowlton. By-Laws, Henry Clay Wade Post, No. 201, Cottage City, MA, 1890. Souvenir Program of the 24<sup>th</sup> National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, Boston, Aug. 1890 (and the 4<sup>th</sup> Convention of the National Naval Veterans Association and the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps).

### **Series II: G.A.R. Meeting Minutes**

Box 1 of 2

Folder 2: "Minutes" July 3, 1890-May 3, 1894.

Folder 3: "Journal" May 17, 1894-Jan. 4, 1917.

### **Series III: G.A.R. Membership Rolls**

Box 1 of 2

Folder 4: Roster, Cottage City G.A. R. Post.

List of Vineyard Servicemen, death dates -1899.

Folder 5: "Ledger" – Dues Records of Members.

### **Series IV: Financial Records**

Box 1 of 2

Folder 6: "Cash Book," June 19, 1890-April 1, 1914.

Box 2 of 2

Folder 1: "Cash Book," May 1, 1914-Feb. 6, 1918.

### **Series V: Black List**

Box 2 of 2

Folder 2: Black List: Alphabetical listing of applications and their dates of rejection from G.A.R. Columns included for name, rank, company, regiment, length of service, post where rejected, comments.

### **Series VI: Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic**

Box 2 of 2

Folder 3: Henry Clay Wade Corps No. 134, Meeting Minutes Journal, Nov. 5, 1908-March 5, 1914.

Folder 4: Notice from Tisbury Cemetery Commissioners designating plot of cemetery land for G.A.R. and Woman's Relief Corp Members to use. (original notice was glued to the inside cover of the WRC's Journal for 1908-1914).

Folder 5: Wilmon St. Blackmar Corps No. 166, Department of Massachusetts, (Edgartown, MA) Meeting Minutes, Feb. 6, 1934-Jan. 4, 1938.

## **Series VII: Clippings**

Box 2 of 2

Folder 6: "Martha's Vineyard Keeps Memorial Day: Impressive Ceremonies in all the Towns," Vineyard Gazette, June 3, 1920.

Various newspaper clippings on Harry S. Castello, last surviving G.A.R. man on Martha's Vineyard, 1932.