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 _________.
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Access Restrictions:  none
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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 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

Series II: G.A.R. Meeting Minutes
Box 1 of 2
Folder 2: “Minutes” July 3, 1890-May 3, 1894.

Series III: G.A.R. Membership Rolls
Box 1 of 2
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 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
Various newspaper clippings on Harry S. Castello, last surviving G.A.R. man on Martha’s Vineyard, 1932.