



Descriptive Summary:

Title: The Grand Army of the Republic Collection

Repository: Northern State University Archives & Special Collections, Beulah Williams Library

Creator: Ethel Mertz

Dates: 1883-1933, 1957-1958

Extent: ½ linear foot

Administrative Information

Acquisitions Information: This collection was donated by Ethel Mertz

Processing Information: This collection was processed by Toni Mayer

Access Restrictions: None

Copyright Notice: Literary rights and copyrights, when applicable, have been assigned to Beulah Williams Library

Preferred Citation: [Item Name], The Grand Army of the Republic Collection, Williams Library Archives and Special Collections, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD.

Related Collections: For related collections, please refer to:

The Women's Relief Corps Collection

Beulah Williams Library Archives and Special Collections

Note: This collection includes meeting minutes, memorabilia, newspaper clippings, publications, records, and scrapbooks of the South Dakota branch of the WRC.

Biographical Note

The Grand Army of the Republic, commonly abbreviated to G.A.R., was an organization formed after the Civil War to provide comradery and support to Union Veterans. They worked primarily to advance causes that benefited veterans, such as ensuring that pensions were paid out to wounded veterans. They later became heavily involved in politics, primarily with the Republican Party, to further their causes. The GAR is also responsible for the creation of Decoration Day on May 30th, which would later evolve into Memorial Day. The organization focused on fraternity, charity, and loyalty between veterans. Their annual meetings were called encampments, and offered veterans discounted train tickets and the opportunity to relive some of the fonder aspects of their service. The G.A.R. also helped establish funds for veterans in need. Finally, the G.A.R. was passionate about preserving war memorials and fought to preserve mementos from the Civil War by donating them to local museums.

The organization was split into departments at the state level and posts for specific towns/cities. Posts were commonly named after important figures in addition to the post number they were given upon joining their state's department. The post in Aberdeen was Post #19, also known as the Robert Anderson Post. The Women's Relief Corps worked closely with the G.A.R. and was designated as their official women's auxiliary. As the number of surviving Civil War veterans declined, posts either closed or consolidated. The national office of the G.A.R. officially closed in 1956 with the death of the final member. The G.A.R. was succeeded by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, who carry on their legacy.

Information found at Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/main/gar/garintro.html>

Scope and Content

This collection consists of a variety of item types including, membership rosters, correspondence, newspaper clippings, books, applications, and photographs relating to

the GAR. It has been divided into three series. The first series, *Woman's Relief Corps*, focuses on the women's auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic. The second series, *Grand Army of the Republic, Dept. of South Dakota, Robert Anderson Post #19*, pertains specifically to the GAR post located in Aberdeen, South Dakota. The third and final series, *Grand Army of the Republic*, contains items relating to the organization as a whole. This collection is entirely in English.

Series Descriptions:

Series Title: Woman's Relief Corps Boxes: 1 Dates: 1917-1929, 1957-1958

This series contains newspaper clippings, correspondence, stickers, and a booklet concerning the Women's Relief Corps. It has been left in its original order.

Series Title: Grand Army of the Republic, Dept. of South Dakota, Robert Anderson Post #19 Boxes: 1 Dates: 1889-1931

This series contains correspondence and membership records pertaining to the Aberdeen, SD post of the GAR, known as Robert Anderson Post #19. This series is arranged chronologically, with undated items located at the back.

Series Title: Grand Army of the Republic Boxes: 1 Dates: 1883-1889, 1911-1933, 1957

This series contains photographs, booklets, applications, and books relating to the Grand Army of the Republic. This series is arranged chronologically, with undated folders and books located at the back.

Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Series Title: Woman's Relief Corps

Box # 1

FF1 Woman's Relief Corps 1917-1929, 1957-1958

2. Series Title: Grand Army of the Republic, Dept. of South Dakota, Robert Anderson Post #19

Box # 1

FF2 Grand Army of the Republic. Robert Anderson Post #19. Record of Members Attending Encampments 1889 to June 1913, 1889-1913

FF3 Grand Army of the Republic. Robert Anderson Post #19. Complete Record from May 23, 1889 to May 24, 1931, 1899-1931

FF4 Grand Army of the Republic. Robert Anderson Post #19. Correspondence, 1916, 1922

FF5 Grand Army of the Republic. Robert Anderson Post #19 Requests Observance of (Memorial) Decoration Day, 1931

FF6 Grand Army of the Republic. Dept. of South Dakota, Robert Anderson Post #19 Membership Record, n.d.

3. Series Title: Grand Army of the Republic

Box # 1

FF7 Grand Army of the Republic. Dept. of South Dakota Proceedings of the Annual Encampment, 1883-1889, 1919-1921

FF8 Photograph of A.K. Stoddard CoC, 1st Iowa Calvary, 1914

FF9 Grand Army of the Republic Dept. of S.D. Encampment Pictures, 1922-1933

FF10 Final Journal of the Grand Army of the Republic, 1957

FF11 GAR Membership Application and Headstone Application, n.d.

FF12 Lincoln Sesquicentennial Booklets, n.d.

Item #1 Back to the Republic The Golden Mean: The Standard Form of Government by
Harry F. Atwood, 1924

Item #2 In Memory of John Alexander Logan a Senator for Illinois; Eulogies by Senators
& Representatives in the Congress of the United States, 1911