

Author: Grand Army of the Republic. P. Stearns Davis Post
57 (East Cambridge, Mass.)

Title: P. Stearns Davis Post 57 records, 1867-1920.

Description: 2 cubic ft.
1 oversize box.

Notes: Grand Army of the Republic Post 57 held its first preliminary meeting on the evening of 19 June 1868 at the Sons of Temperance Hall in East Cambridge. Alphonso M. Lunt called together a meeting of members of different GAR posts for the purpose of establishing a post in East Cambridge. On the evening of 16 Nov. 1868, Comrade Lunt put forth the suggestion to secure the name P. Stearns Davis for Post 57, and the motion was unanimously adopted. P. Stearns Davis was a colonel in the 39th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, mustered in on 4 Sept. 1862. The 39th regiment was recruited in the late summer of 1862 from the eastern towns and cities in Massachusetts. The regiment first went into camp at Lynnfield, but was eventually transferred to Camp Standton, Boxford, where Col. Davis took command. The 39th spent time guarding the north bank of the Potomac River from Seneca Creek to Conrad's Ferry. On 14 Oct. 1862, the 39th was assigned to Grover's Brigade at Seneca Creek. Col. Davis commanded the brigade from 11 Nov. 1862 until 5 Jan. 1863. He died in battle at Petersburg, Va., on 11 July 1864. The records of Post 57 of the Grand Army of the Republic, East Cambridge, document the activities of its meetings and record keeping activities over the years. Records of meetings (Series I., A) are contained in eleven volumes that carefully document the activities of post meetings which were held weekly. Activities at meetings included the nominations of soldiers by members of the post, who were then either reported favorably and mustered in or rejected. Communications from other GAR posts were read and remarked upon, and committees were formed to organize different activities and events sponsored by Post 57. Records of meetings were kept by the adjutant, an elected member of the post whose job included keeping in books the rules and regulations of the GAR, including the by-laws of the post, and making sure that every new comrade signed these by-laws (Series I., C) The adjutant was also in charge of keeping descriptive books (Series I., E), which described the soldiers who had been dismissed or suspended and why. Medical descriptive books were also kept, which described the kind of wounds received by members and in which battle the wound was received. The adjutant also kept the black lists, which featured information about applicants for membership to the post who had been rejected or dishonorably discharged from the post (Series I., B.). According to the by-laws of the GAR, the adjutant was assisted in his duties by the sergeant major, which may explain the occasional change in handwriting within the records he kept. Also included in this collection are several "Adjutant's Quarterly Records", which are not bound but collected and arranged chronologically (Series I.D.) This report was made four times a year to the assistant adjutant general of the department by the commander of the each post, and attested by the adjutant. The report records the number

of members at last report, together with the number of new members, detailing which members were mustered in and which dropped out or passed away. It also contains a statement of the condition and prospects of the post and a record of their proceedings for that quarter. Several applications for membership are collected here (Series I., H.), which were submitted to the post commander, looked over by a committee of three and voted upon. The adjutant kept a record of which applications were elected and mustered and which were not. Another officer of the post, the quartermaster, was in charge of all property of the post, collected all monies due the post, paid bills and kept records of all monies received and paid. He also rendered a monthly report of the finances of the post. The quartermaster records of Post 57 (Series II., A-C) are collected here in the form of cash books, records of individual members' dues paid, and quartermaster reports. The quartermaster was assisted in his duties by the quartermaster sergeant, which could explain the discrepancy in handwriting within the records he kept.

Also contained in this collection is what appears to be a hand-assembled collection of pamphlets containing reports from GAR headquarters (Series III. A). The reports, titled "General Orders", detail proceedings of meetings that include members from various departments and posts across the country, beginning in 1892 and continuing until 1911. The "General Orders" also include death notices, the election of new officers throughout the organization both nationally and locally, and general news announcements. In addition to these "General Orders," a "Report of the Committee on Pensions to the National Encampment," in Washington, D.C., on 9 October 1902, is taped into the very front of the binder. Also collected here are documents pertaining to the court martial of Everett Farrah and Thomas Dempsey (Series III. B). Farrah was charged with "conduct unbecoming of a comrade and a gentleman" in May 1870, for failing to pay a bill. An announcement of his court martial and a formal charge signed by the quartermaster and three witnesses are collected. No other information regarding the outcome is included. Thomas Dempsey was charged with "conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline" in June 1875 for appearing drunk at an event. A letter written by Comrade John L. Chase to post commander A.M. Lunt calling for the charge, an announcement of a court martial, along with detailed proceedings of the court martial, and a list of witnesses are included here. The court martial found Dempsey guilty as charged and recommended a dishonorable discharge as punishment. They submitted a request to the dept. headquarters in Boston for his dishonorable discharge, which was rejected and sent back to them, directing that "the within sentence is to reverse." This document and various documents related to the proceedings are included here. Finally, correspondence addressed to the commander of the post from Somerville's Willard C. Kinsley Post 139, concerning the building of a memorial hall, as well as a notice of transfer from Post 139 to Post 57 is included here (Series III. C). Another letter written to the post from a Carolyn Saunders, dated 15 June 1926, concerns a photograph of interest, which is not

included in this collection. A "Preamble and Resolution on the Death of Comrade James Dalton" is also included here. Preambles on a comrade's death have also been included in the volumes that contain records of meetings; however, this particular preamble is loose and undated.

Requests for permission to publish from the collection should be made to the Executive Director. The Cambridge Historical Society does not hold copyright on the materials in the collection.

Records for similar posts exist in various historical societies as well as at the Library of Congress.

Subjects:

Dalton, James (Comrade) -- Death and burial.

Dempsey, Thomas -- Trials, litigation, etc.

Farrah, Everett -- Trials, litigation, etc.

Lunt, Alphonso Moses, 1837-1885 --

Correspondence.

Saunders, Carolyn -- Correspondence.

Grand Army of the Republic.

Grand Army of the Republic. P. Stearns Davis Post 57 (East Cambridge, Mass.) -- Finance.

Courts-martial and courts of inquiry -- United States.

Military pensions -- Massachusetts.

Patriotic societies -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge.

War memorials -- United States.

Veterans -- Medical care -- Massachusetts.

Veterans -- Massachusetts -- Death.

Veterans -- Massachusetts -- Societies, etc.

Veterans -- Pensions -- Massachusetts.

Veterans -- Services for -- Massachusetts.

East Cambridge (Mass.)

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Monuments.

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Societies, etc.

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Veterans.

United States -- Politics and government -- 1861-1865.

By-laws -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge.

Death notices -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge.

Medical records -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge.

Cashbooks -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge.

aat

Correspondence -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge. aat

Financial records -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge. aat

Membership lists -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge. aat

Minutes -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge. aat

Regulations -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge. aat

Reports -- Massachusetts -- East Cambridge. aat

Rules (instructions) -- Massachusetts -- East
Cambridge. aat

Other authors: Chase, John L. (Comrade)

Other authors: Grand Army of the Republic. Willard C. Kinsley
Post 139 (Sommerville, Mass.)

Location: Cambridge Historical Society (Cambridge, Mass.)

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