

Appraisal Report
Bancroft Camp 16, United Spanish War Veterans
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Provenance

These records were created and kept by a variety of officers of Bancroft Camp 16 in the normal course of administering the organization. The Racine County Historical Society and Museum donated them in 1984. From whom the records came to the county historical society is unknown.

Organization History

The United Spanish War Veterans was an organization of American veterans who fought in the Spanish-American War, which occurred from 1898 to 1899. After the war ended, five national veteran organizations were created for the support of the veterans. In 1904, the United Spanish War Veterans was established and consolidated the five veteran organizations into one. Wm. A. Bancroft Camp, No. 16 was the United Spanish War Veterans chapter for Racine, Wisconsin and was organized in 1905. Bancroft Camp 16 was named in honor of former Brigadier-General Wm. A. Bancroft, Philadelphia, who was a firm authoritarian and respected by his men.

Bancroft Camp 16 strived to work for true Americanism, continuation of Memorial Day, and allegiance to the flag. It also demonstrated a dynamic support system for its members and affiliations. Bancroft Camp held meetings, parades, and gatherings garnering support for local veterans and their families. It was a civic-minded organization that held a huge part in forming the Construction of Memorial Hall, an honor to the veterans of all American wars. Bancroft Camp was host to the Ladies Auxiliaries, the Sons of Veterans, and the Comrades across the state of Wisconsin and played a vital role in bringing veterans and their families together.

Bibliography of Related Records and Publications

Alger, R.A. (1901). *The Spanish American War*. New York, NY: Harper & Bros.

Coston, W.H. (1899) *The Spanish American War Volunteer*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press.

Keller, A.E. (1969). *The Spanish American War: a compact history*. New York, NY: Hawthorn Books.

McCaffrey, J.M. (2009). *Inside the Spanish-American War: a history based on first person accounts*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.

General Description of Records

This collection consists of materials from the United Spanish War Veterans' Bancroft Camp 16 located in Racine, Wisconsin. The dates of materials in the collection range from 1899 to 1956. Materials in the collection include correspondence, memorial booklets/programs, financial records, semi-annual reports, membership paperwork, newspaper clippings, and organization proceedings. The programs provide information on activities and ceremonies that were attended by the United Spanish War Veterans members, and gives a valuable perspective to military history. The correspondence between members demonstrates the comradery and eagerness among members of the organization. The financial records reveal the financial support that the members contributed, accurate details that were kept on the accounts, and offers a history of the organization.

The material in this collection shows that Bancroft Camp 16 was committed to connecting and supporting its members. Bancroft Camp 16 did this by keeping detailed and accurate records of the organization's financial records, correspondence, and member records. The collection is descriptive in the content, but the dates of material included are scattered with many years of records missing from the boxes. Because of the number of years missing from this collection, valuable information on the organization, its members, and events that took place during those years are unaccounted for. This is unfortunate, yet the collection itself is still valuable because of the content and history included in the materials. This collection should be acquired for preservation because it provides significant perspective about the Spanish-American War through the veterans that were involved. The materials in the collection offer an inside look at the programs and activities that veterans participated in to deal with the effects of the war, as well as the personal connections that grew among members after the war had ended.

Series Description

Financial Records – This series will include all bank statements, bank records, receipts, quartermaster accounts, and reports. The financial materials also include ledgers and miscellaneous information on the assets and spending of the organization and its members. The dates of the financial records vary from 1906 to 1938. This series should be organized and preserved.

Member Records/Papers – This series contains member applications, roll calls, rosters lists, pension papers, medical information, and confirmations. The material in this series links the members to each other and the organization through very detailed records. Member records are available from 1906 to 1917. This series should be organized and preserved.

Correspondence – This series contains all correspondence to and from members of the organization and ranges in date from 1906 to 1945. The materials in this series are primarily letters and notes that signify the communication and connections among the members of the organization. It also shows the history and relevance of the organization. This series should be organized and preserved.

Governing Records – This series contains the ceremonies and ritual records, the rules and regulations records, the orders and circulars, meeting minutes, encampment proceedings, programs, and legislation bulletin. The material in this series documents the organization's governing guidelines and key functions. It also provides an understanding about the sanctions passed to amend the governing policies. The books in this series will be kept with the rest of the materials. This series should be organized and preserved.

Scrapbook – This series contains one scrapbook that includes newspaper clippings of stories involving members of the organization. The newspaper clippings include funeral and memorial announcements. There is also correspondence and invitations to programs/picnics/functions addressed to members of Bancroft Camp 16. This series ranges in date from 1914 to 1921. This series contains valuable newspaper clippings and should be preserved. The clippings should be photocopied to preserve the quality of copy.

Processing and Conservation Note

Collection is clean and generally in good condition. Clippings should be replaced with photocopies.