



Legacy Finding Aid for Manuscript and Photograph Collections

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What are Legacy Finding Aids?

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The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., is a community-supported educational and research organization that collects, interprets, and shares the history of our nation’s capital. Founded in 1894, it serves a diverse audience through its collections, public programs, exhibits, and publications.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON D.C.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FINDING AID

Title: MS 298 Washington Light Infantry Corps Records, 1840-1898

Date: September 12, 1997

Processor: Mary Kalfatovic

The **Washington Light Infantry Corps** was founded in August 1836 with forty members. It made its first public appearance on September 12, 1836 at the opening of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad terminal in Washington. Many original members of the Washington Light Infantry Corps had been members of an earlier group, the National Cadets. The purpose of the Corps was to serve as a militia for Washington, D.C. In addition to drilling and other aspects of military preparedness, the Corps marched in parades and entertained visiting military companies. The first captain of the Corps was A.B. Blake. An original member was Joseph Tate, who founded the *Washington Evening Star* in 1852. Tate served as the Corps secretary from 1840 to 1845 and later became its commanding officer. By 1858, the membership in the Corps had increased sufficiently to form a battalion.

In April 1861, the Corps was mustered into the Union army and was responsible for guarding Washington until other troops could arrive. Later in 1861, the Corps was discharged as a unit and most members joined other Union commands. For the next decade the Corps existed only in name. In 1871, it was reorganized with Colonel William W. Moore as its captain and continued its military and social activities. A member of the Corps in the 1880s and 1890s was Jesse Grant, son of President Ulysses S. Grant. In the 1880s, an armory for the corps was built at the corner of 15th and E Sts. The Corps disbanded in February 1902.

Scope and Content: The Washington Light Infantry Corps Records, 1840-1898, consist of correspondence, minutes, photographs, and other memorabilia of the Washington Light Infantry Corps. The collection is arranged by document type and then chronologically.

Provenance: Mrs. Charles E. Wheeler (muster roll of Captain Lem. Towers), 1971; Helena E. Wright, from the estate of Helena M. Clements Gray (invitations, membership certificate and photograph of her great-grandfather Charles A. Clements), 1992.094; other materials found in collection, including George Hale memorial certificate, 1986.077.

Size: 0.70 cubic ft. (2 containers and one oversize folder)

Restrictions: None

Preferred Citation: [Identified item], *Washington Light Infantry Corps Records, 1840-1898*, [container #, folder #]. The Historical Society of Washington, D.C./City Museum.

Related Materials: Photograph of Charles A. Clement at his desk in the Disbursing Office of the Department of Interior, ca. 1920s (CHS 09347)

Container List

Container 1

Folder 1: History of the Washington Light Infantry Corps, including newspaper clipping, ca. 1880s, and a brief, handwritten history, ca. 1881.

Folder 2: Meetings record book, April 1840-May 1847.

Folder 3: Meetings record book, June 1847-June 1852.

Folder 4: Meetings record book, January 1882-July 1885.

Muster rolls: Company A, Capt. Lem. Towers, 1861; Company A, Captain William G. Moore, 1871 (in oversize folder 13)

Folder 5: Correspondence and other records related to the Armory Committee, 1883.

Folder 6: Memorabilia, 1871-1895, including invitations, calling cards, dance cards, and programs, and membership certificate for Charles A. Clements, 1879. Folder also includes photocopy of memorial certificate for George E. Hale, recording secretary and second sergeant of the corps, November 3, 1886. (Original stored in oversize folder 13)

Folder 7: Memorabilia, 1880s, consisting of ribbons from Detroit Light Guard Quatro-Centennial Anniversary, 1880; Washington Light Infantry Corps camp at Cape May, New Jersey, August 1882; and Washington Light Infantry Corps fair, 1886.

Folder 8: Scrapbook pages, October 19, 1880-August 6, 1881, including newspaper clippings and memorabilia.

Container 2

Folder 9: Scrapbook pages, August 6, 1881-June 15, 1882 and "In Memoria," including newspaper clippings and memorabilia.

Folder 10: Newspaper clippings about Washington light Infantry Corps, 1882-1884.

Folder 11: Photographs of Washington Light Infantry Corps laying cornerstone of D.C. Armory, May 22, 1884; and activities at Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1889.

Folder 12: Photographs of Washington Light Infantry Corps in uniform, ca. 1893; baseball team at Atlantic City, New Jersey 1893; Ladies Committee entertainment at fundraising fair, ca. 1895; Corps basketball team at Great Falls, Virginia, 1898; drilling in uniform at Atlantic City, New Jersey, ca. 1890s; and portrait of Charles Alexander Clements in Washington Light Infantry uniform, undated.

Folder 13 (oversize): George E. Hale certificate and Muster Rolls described above.