McLean County Museum of History

American Legion Collection

Inventoried by
Carol Straka
Summer 2011

Collection Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection Information</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</td>
<td>One Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVENANCE:</td>
<td>Various.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RESTRICTIONS:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:</td>
<td>Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER FINDING AIDS:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION:</td>
<td>Archives</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| NOTES:                                                      | Photos: American Legion – Louis E. Davis Post
American Legion Beauty Contest 1932
American Legion Corn Eating Contest 1956
American Legion Auxiliary |
Brief History

Congress chartered the American Legion in 1919 as a patriotic veterans’ organization. It has become the nation’s largest veterans’ service organization and sponsors youth programs in local communities, advocates patriotism and honor, promotes a strong national security, and serves both active military members and veterans. Among the best known activities of the Legion are a youth baseball league which began in 1926 and legislative lobbying.

The Legion has 14,000 posts worldwide. These posts are organized into 55 departments: one each for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines.

The Illinois Department currently has about 100,000 members in over 800 local Posts. These Posts are organized into Divisions, Districts and Counties. The State Headquarters is located in Bloomington with additional offices in Chicago.

(Source of info: legion.org)

Scope Note

This collection includes various Legion programs and publications, plus newspaper articles and research on the origins of McLean County posts.
Box 1 (6 Folders)

General (Folder 1-2)

Folder 1: General
1.1.1 “Why You Should Join the American Legion Now!” recruiting pamphlet, American Legion of Illinois, 1925, 4 pp. with photos of Illinois Soldiers’ Orphans’ Home Band, insane hospitals, etc.
1.1.2 “Twelfth Annual Conference of Post Officers,” conference program for Department of Illinois held at Bloomington, Dec 7 & 8, 1935.
1.1.3 Souvenir Programme, for the play Journey’s End presented by McLean County Council of the American Legion, 1944, 32 pp.
1.1.4 Unused Membership card for Rail Splitters Past Commanders Club, 4th Division, 1966.
1.1.5 Typed notes and envelope with instructions for burial ritual, undated.
1.1.6 “So tell me, why should I become an Illinois Legionnaire??” recruiting pamphlet, American Legion of Illinois, circa 2015.

Folder 2: The Firing Line

Individual McLean County Posts (Folders 3-6)

Folder 3: Laurel Quaid’s research on McLean County posts
Includes correspondence with posts, copies of book pages, handwritten biographies of namesakes, etc.
Material is organized by town name:

American Legion Posts in McLean County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Namesake</th>
<th>Post #</th>
<th>Status per legion website</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anchor</td>
<td>Erwin Martensen</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>currently listed as Colfax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrowsmith</td>
<td>Witt-Webber-Carroll</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>currently listed as Cooksville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellflower</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>Louis E. Davis</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>Stevenson Lewis</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>Redd-Williams</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chenoa</td>
<td>Ben Roth</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colfax</td>
<td>Davis-Kerber</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooksville</td>
<td>Edward Dwyer</td>
<td></td>
<td>not listed; see Arrowsmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danvers</td>
<td>Lloyd Fleischer</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downs</td>
<td>Lloyd Fleischer</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellsworth</td>
<td></td>
<td>1244</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gridley</td>
<td></td>
<td>218</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Heyworth  |  Carl E. Miller  |  624  |  current  
LeRoy   |  Ruel Neal      |  79   |  current  
Lexington |  Elmo F. Hill  |  291  |  current  
McLean  |  Burger-Benedict |  573  |  current  
Normal  |  Carl S. Martin |  635  |  current  
         |  David Humphrey |       |          
Saybrook |  Daniels        |  427  |  not listed  
Towanda |  Marion Lee Miller |  931 |  current  

Source: see Laurel Quaid's research. Current status per legion.org as of July 2011

Folder 4: Carl S. Martin Post No. 635, Normal
1.4.1 “Post 635 The Early Years,” history booklet published by the post, about 1981, 9 pp (2 copies).
1.4.2 Souvenir program of McLean County Legion Meeting (Guest of the Carl S. Martin Post), February 17, 1936.

Folder 5: Louis E. Davis Post No. 56, Bloomington
1.5.1 “Lieut. Louis E. Davis of Bloomington is Killed,” Pantagraph, May 10, 1918.
1.5.2 “Local Post Named for Lieut. Louis E. Davis,” Pantagraph, July 11, 1919.
1.5.3 “Legion Auxiliary Grows Rapidly,” Pantagraph, April 23, 1920.
1.5.4 “Louis E. Davis Post No. 56 invites the Dept of Illinois to Make Bloomington State Headquarters,” undated brochure promoting new McBarnes Bldg as free site for state headquarters.
1.5.5 Program/Dance card for Valentine Charity Ball at Coliseum, Feb 14, 1922.
1.5.6 Program for Corner-Stone laying of John McBarnes Memorial Building, May 27, 1922. 3 copies.
1.5.8 The Evening Bugle, newsletter of The Chow Club, Vol. 666, December 20, 1923.
1.5.9 8 ½ x 11 color poster commemorating WWI armistice, 1938.
1.5.10 Post to Press-Radio-News Release to award citation to Santa Claus (a/k/a Chester P. Wonderlin), December 9, 1949, 2pp. plus envelope.
1.5.11 “History of the American Legion Louis E. Davis Post No. 56,” advertisement in McLean County Courier, Sept 15, 1950. (Photos of post commanders from 1919 -50)
1.5.12 “post 56 scripts,” post newsletter, June-July 1975.

Folder 6: Redd-Williams Post No. 163, Bloomington
1.6.1 Email with attached photo negative print from January 25, 1942, Pantagraph, plus info on the post from Greg Koos and Jack Muirhead, Jan 30, 2017.
Legion Baseball (Folder 7)

Folder 7: American Legion Baseball
1.7.2 “American Legion Baseball,” blank scorecard with photo of new legion ball field at O’Neil Park and sponsor ads, Louis E. Davis Post 56, 1967, 2 copies.
1.7.3 Correspondence from junior baseball committee chair Carl Nierstheimer to parents enclosing blank scorecards and soliciting input, August 9, 1967.
1.7.4 Typed list of sponsors of junior baseball, 1967, 3pp.