Collection #
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G.A.R. 80TH NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT PHOTOGRAPH, AUGUST 1946

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was an organization of Union veterans who served in the American Civil War. It included those who served in the Army, the Navy, and Marines. It was founded in 1866 and dissolved in 1956 with the death of its last member, Albert Woolson. It was organized into "Departments" at the state level and "Posts" at the community level. The GAR held its first annual National Encampment in 1866 and then every year from 1868 through 1949. Indianapolis hosted a total of eight of these events, including the first in 1866 and the last in 1949.

The National Encampments of the GAR held in Indianapolis were:

1st	November 20, 1866
15th	June 15–16, 1881
27th	September 6–7, 1893
54th	September 19–25, 1920
55th	September 25–27, 1921
76th	September 13–18, 1942
80th	August 25–30, 1946
83rd	August 28–September 1, 1949

The Claypool Hotel in downtown Indianapolis served as headquarters for the eightieth National Encampment of the GAR. The annual gathering began on Sunday morning, 25 August 1946, with services in local churches. A memorial service was held that afternoon in the Murat Temple. The 72-piece United States Marine Corps Band played a public concert in the evening at the State Fairgrounds Coliseum, with an estimated seven thousand people in attendance.

Another gathering was held at the Murat on Monday evening, with welcome addresses given by Governor Ralph F. Gates and Mayor Robert H. Tyndall, and by letter, President Harry Truman. The principal speaker was Reverend Howard J. Baumgartel of Indianapolis. The Marine Corps Band and the St. Joan of Arc chorus provided musical entertainment.

On Tuesday, 27 August, there was a reception at the Claypool in the afternoon. Later, a dinner was held at the Columbia Club, sponsored by the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, followed by a reception in the Statehouse.

On Wednesday morning, 28 August, a parade was held, beginning at Michigan and Pennsylvania streets. Led by the United States Marine Corps Band, the parade headed south down Pennsylvania Street. GAR members rode in cars behind the Marine Band, moving past thousands of spectators lining downtown streets. The parade turned west on Market Street and proceeded to Monument Circle. Other parade participants included the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Children's Home band, military police from Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana State Guard and band, Spanish-American War veterans, American Legion veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Indiana Boys School band, and the *Indianapolis News* Newsboys Band. A business meeting was held in the afternoon, attended by eleven GAR members, who decided that the annual convention should continue "as long as a comrade survives." That evening, GAR members reminisced at "Camp Fire" held at the Murat Theater and attended by the public.

At a business meeting on Thursday, 29 August, 101-year-old John Henry Grate of Ohio was installed as the new commander-in-chief of the GAR, succeeding 100-year-old Hiram R. Gale of Washington.

Auxiliary organizations also met during the GAR encampment. These included: Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Daughters of Union Veterans, and the National Women's Relief Corps.

Twelve members of the GAR attended the eightieth encampment: Hiram S. Gale of Seattle, Washington; John H. Grate of Atwater, Ohio; Theodore A. Penland of Portland, Oregon; Robert M. Rownd of Ripley, New York; John C. Adams of Jonesboro, Indiana; Orlando LeValley of Caro, Michigan; William H. Osborn of Joplin, Missouri; Albert Woolson of Duluth, Minnesota; Charles Lysander Chappel of Long Beach, California; Hiram H. Shumate of Riverton, Illinois; Robert Barrett of Princeton, Kentucky; and John R. Bennett of Waynesfield, Ohio.

The GAR encampments did not continue for quite as long as a comrade survived. The last was held in 1949 but some GAR members lived into the 1950s. The last survivor was Albert Henry Woolson, son of Willard Paul Woolson and Caroline Baldwin Woolson. He was born in Antwerp, New York on 11 February, with the year of his birth varying in records and ranging from 1847 to 1850. He enlisted in the Union Army as a drummer boy on 10 October 1864 in Minnesota after his father was wounded at Shiloh. Albert saw little actual combat but had garrison duty in Tennessee. He mustered out of service on 27 September 1865. He was not only the last member of the GAR but also the last surviving veteran of the Union Army of the Civil War. He died in Duluth, Minnesota, on 2 August 1956. A memorial statue of him was erected at Gettysburg Battlefield; a copy of this statue was placed in Duluth.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of one black-and-white photograph of Civil War veteran Albert Woolson playing the drum at the 80th encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, held in Indianapolis in August 1946. About twenty people are gathered around, but only four other GAR members are identified: William H. Osborn of Joplin, Missouri; Orlando LeValley of Caro, Michigan; Charles L. Chappel of Long Beach, California; and Theodore A. Penland of Portland, Oregon.

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Photograph showing Albert Woolson playing the drum at a gathering during the 80th Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, held in Indianapolis. About twenty other people are in the photo. The only ones identified are four seated in front by Woolson: William H. Osborn, Orlando LeValley, Charles L. Chappel, and Theodore A. Penland. (Associated Press Wirephoto [possibly the 27th of] August 1946.	Folder 1 of 1