

McLean County Museum of History

American Legion Collection

Inventoried by
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Collection Information:

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1925 – 1994, 2015.
PROVENANCE:	Various.
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
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

Three issues of *The Firing Line, Facts for Fighting Communism*, published by-weekly by The National Americanism Commission of the American Legion, May 1, 1953; May 15, 1953; Dec 15, 1956.

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

Town	Namesake	Post #	Status per legion website
Anchor	Erwin Martensen	164	currently listed as Colfax
Arrowsmith	Witt-Webber-Carroll	617	currently listed as Cooksville
Bellflower	Grant	202	not listed
Bloomington	Louis E. Davis	56	current
Bloomington	Stevenson Lewis	556	not listed
Bloomington	Redd-Williams	163	not listed
Chenoa	Ben Roth	234	not listed
Colfax	Davis-Kerber	653	current
Cooksville	Edward Dwyer		not listed; see Arrowsmith
Danvers		732	not listed
Downs	Lloyd Fleischer	1150	current
Ellsworth		1244	current
Gridley		218	current

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.
- 1.5.7 *The Evening Bugle*, newsletter of The Chow Club, Vol. 1. No 9999999, March 15, 1923. 2pp.
- 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

- 1.7.1 "American Legion Junior Baseball 1966 Yearbook," Louis E. Davis Post 56, 32 pp.
- 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.