



Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War **National Policy on Records of the Grand Army of the Republic (August 2013)**



The purpose of this policy is to clarify the position of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), regarding our organization's role in the collection, preservation, disposition, and public availability of records of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR).

The Congressional Charter¹ of the SUVCW directs our organization "to assist in every practicable way in the preservation and making available for research of documents and records pertaining to the Grand Army of the Republic and its members." In addition, the Deed of Conveyance² between the GAR and SUVCW directs our organization to "use its best endeavors to return said records to the communities where Grand Army posts were located, so far as possible, for the use and benefit of the communities where such posts were located."

Using the above statements as the foundation for this policy, the following statements are provided to explain what the SUVCW will and will not do under the authority of the above cited documents.

The SUVCW's interest in GAR records is solely to identify where records are located, their condition, and if they are available for research or public viewing. Our organization has no interest in taking ownership of these records. In fact, the Deed of Conveyance between the GAR and the SUVCW instructs the SUVCW to return such records to the community where the respective GAR post existed.

The SUVCW recognizes that some GAR records are in private collections. Our organization will not use any authority that it may have under the Deed of Conveyance between the SUVCW and the GAR to claim or take ownership of any form, record, book or associated ephemera from any individual or organization against the current owner's wishes. This will not preclude accepting such items at the owner's request, or acting as an intermediary to assist with the donation of such records to proper repositories if requested. We do accept records from those wishing to donate them and will place them in local repositories as directed by the GAR. We also advocate the duplication of GAR records, especially in scanned (digitized) form, and encourage all efforts to create and distribute facsimiles of original GAR documents in paper or electronic form for the benefit of the public.

In cases where privately held GAR records collections are offered for sale, we do and will continue to request that the owner consider transferring said records to libraries, museums, or other similar repositories for long term preservation and public availability. The value of records can be used as a charitable donation to the extent provided by law. Also, in cases where GAR records collections held in libraries, museums or other

institutions, are under consideration for deaccession, our organization will assist in the transfer of said records to a suitable alternate repository.

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132nd National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

¹ 36 US Code Chapter 2003 et. seq.

² US District Court for Washington DC docket no. 3966-54