



The Cleveland Grays: An Urban Military Company, 1837-1919

George N. Vourlojianis

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Vourlojianis examines the history of the Grays from its founding in 1837, through military service in three wars, to its modern incarnation as a social and philanthropic group. All over nineteenth-century America, private citizens banded together to form independent volunteer military companies to reinforce undermanned police departments and to support civic authority I times of local emergency. From its founding during the dangerous days of a brief 1837 Canadian rebellion against Britain, when Cleveland was uncomfortably close to the fighting, the Cleveland Grays military company served Cleveland at home as well as in active wartime duty, fighting in Civil War battles from Bull Run to Appomattox and then in service during the Spanish-American War and World War I. Primarily comprised of the city?s economic and social elite, the company offered its members the martial training of a military organization and camaraderie of a social club. Vourlojianis culls the Grays archives and city and county records to give readers a detailed look at company's membership, military service, travels, and social activities. And in his examination of the shifting perception of the Grays by the citizens of Cleveland and on the company's changing role, he comments on the national movement away from private militias and toward a more central National Guard. While the nature of the organization has changed, the Grays still maintain a proud tradition of service to their city. Primarily a social group with strong philanthropic and educational interests, the expanded membership of the modern Grays continues to add to and participate in the rich, colorful history of Cleveland.

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