

# THE UNION INFORMER

Monthly Newsletter of the Indian Nations Camp No. 3  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War  
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**Department Encampment Planning Meeting: Tucker McHugh, Mike Rusk, Terry Handley, Dept. Cdr. Clint Anderson, Scott Preston, Steve Clapp, and Joe Fears. (Photo by Carl Fallen)**

## April Camp Meeting

Same as last month, our April camp meeting will be held at the Schusterman-Benson Library at 3333 E. 32<sup>nd</sup> Street beginning at 6:30 p.m. Cdr. Joe Fears will present a program on a "Biography of Albert Pike," a prominent politician in this area during the Civil War. He was appointed a Confederate Brigadier General commanding the District of Indian Territory in the Trans-Mississippi theater.

Albert Pike is a gentleman that we should all be well informed about, since he was very influential in the Arkansas – Indian Territory during the war. Joe will tell us what we need to know, so let's all show up to hear what he has to say.

We will also be electing delegates to the Department Encampment scheduled for May 11 at the Honey Springs Visitor Center where our last year's Encampment was held. Mark your calendars.

You may want to come to the meeting prepared for a camp photo. No kidding: The camp WILL offer juice and fresh home-baked cookies. (Editor's Note: Sorry about the slip-up on this commitment at the last meeting.)



*Albert Pike in Masonic Regalia*  
(Photo by Mathew Brady)

## March Camp Meeting

There was a mix-up on who was to be the speaker at the March Meeting, but Secretary Rex Griffin, PDC, stepped up to give an impromptu program on the Battle of Glorieta Pass, which was fought March 26-28, 1862, in northern New Mexico Territory. This battle was important for ending the Confederate efforts to capture the territory and other parts of the Western U.S.

Speaking without notes, Rex gave an excellent presentation and filled what would have been a gap in our camp meeting. Good work Rex!

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Union Ancestor of Scott Preston:  
Pvt. Lewis Cass Hodge  
Co. K, 49<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry

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## Camp Business

Regretfully, three camp members will have to be dropped from membership for non-payment of dues this year. The camp's Annual Report is to be filed during the next few days, and payments due the OK

Department and the National Organization must be included.

On the bright side, however, JVC Bob Wilkerson has brought one new applicant to the camp: he is Charles G. Simmons, who has submitted his application and membership dues.

Treasurer Carl Fallen prepared a Check Register for the past year and distributed it to the camp members present along with an Income and Expense Statement for the same period showing a net loss of \$79 for the year. If you weren't at the meeting and would like a copy of the documents, please notify the treasurer.

Membership cards have been prepared and distributed at camp meetings as payments are received. Those remaining will be available at camp meeting.

Since some members in the past had voiced a hardship in attending camp meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, the issue was brought up at the March meeting as to whether we should try a different night. There was no support for such a move.



Individuals attending events hosted by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, by virtue of their attendance, agree to the usage of their likeness in the Banner, any Camp or Department Newsletter, any SUVCW website and/or on any SUVCW Social Media outlet, promotional brochures, or any other SUVCW material.

## Encampment Planning Meeting Held in Tulsa

Department officers assembled at Tulsa's Hardesty Regional Library on March 31 to make plans for the Department Encampment on May 11 at the Honey Springs Battlefield Visitors Center. Adam Lynn is the director there. Attending the meeting were: DC Clint Anderson; Terry Handley; Joe Fears; Mike Rusk; Carl Fallen; Scott Preston; Steve Clapp; and Tucker McHugh.

Camp reports were given along with other officer reports, but those will no doubt be a part of the Encampment agenda and may be modified in the meantime.

Steve Clapp announced that Fort Gibson had asked us to come to the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fort Gibson Celebration on Saturday, **April 20**. He expressed the opinion that the Fort's buildings were in bad need of repair and maintenance. The town of Fort Gibson was to mark the event with a parade culminating at the historic site. Fort Gibson and Fort Towson were both established in 1824.



**Fort Gibson (Photo courtesy of OK Historical Society)**

We understand that the JROTC awards are to be handled through the National Organization, rather than the camps. The school submits Form 7 to the National Organization, and it sends the medal to the school and pays for it. The school may ask a nearby camp representative to attend the ceremony.



**Jeff Kennedy (holding rifle) and fellow members of Co. L, 3rd Indian Home Guard, SVR, participate in the 200th Anniversary celebration of Historic Fort Gibson.**

## **200th Anniversary Commemoration**

### **at Fort Gibson Historic Site**

The Oklahoma Historical Society is commemorating the bicentennial of Fort Gibson and Fort Towson this year. Both forts were established in 1824 in Indian Territory—and 2024 marks 200 years since their

inception. The nearby town of Fort Gibson, the oldest town in Oklahoma, is also celebrating its bicentennial. The center of town was blocked off for the event.

Lt. Steve Clapp, Commander of Co. L, 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guard, SVR, and a member of the Jerimiah Smith Camp #1 in OKC, was invited to form an Honor Guard and post the colors at the beginning of the ceremony. He said they had perfect weather for the event, because it was cool enough that their wool uniforms were quite comfortable. Following their part in the ceremony, he said that it seemed like everybody wanted to have their picture made with them. The other Co. L members assisting in the ceremony were Sgt. Phil Wulz, Cpl. Jeff Kennedy, and Pvt. Craig McKinley.

Steve has a special connection to the Fort, because his Great Grandfather served with the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry while he was stationed there.



Fort Gibson Historic Site hosted the 200th Commemoration on Saturday, April 20. The town of Fort Gibson marked the anniversary with a community parade ending at the fort. After the parade, the OHS staff began the bicentennial program honoring the occasion with speeches from Trait Thompson, state legislators, and other dignitaries. Visitors were invited to partake of cake and refreshments in the mess hall and tour the

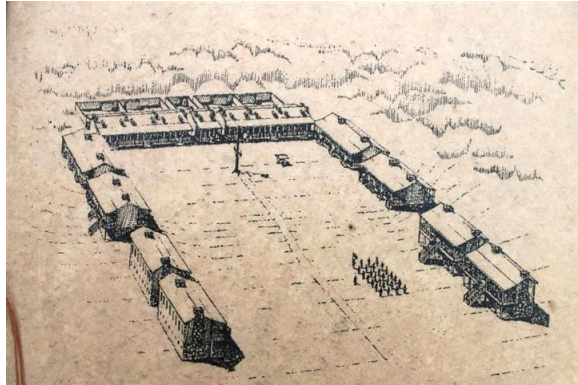
grounds, which consist of 80 acres and several historic structures and outbuildings.

In addition to the commemorative activities, education stations were located around the Fort Gibson Historic Site, with living historians conducting demonstrations about 19th-century foodways, weaponry, and civilian and soldier life. Many reenactors camped at the fort all weekend, adding to the atmosphere of the occasion.

Visitors were also able to sign up for Neosho River walking tours to view a replica 19th-century keelboat docked at the riverside where supplies and people ferried along water highways first during transcontinental trade and later with the establishment of the fort and subsequent communities.

### Fort Towson Bi-Centennial Celebration

On May 18, a similar 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration is scheduled for Fort Towson located in the SE corner of the state. This was the first U.S. military post in what would become the State of Oklahoma and was further west than any other post in the United States at the time. Closed after 30 years of use, little remains of the post today other than building foundations and the remains of stone structures.



Fort Towson layout.

The 200th commemoration will be on Saturday, May 18. The ceremony will recognize the contribution of the soldiers who manned Fort Towson when it was active while celebrating the tremendous contributions of the Choctaw and Chickasaw people.

“A common theme in the life of the fort was building roads to improve communication and transportation,” said Fort Towson Historic Site Director Calista Stephens. “The fort was really a transportation hub. The network of roads that comes together here is a physical reminder that Fort Towson was a destination. This year’s events will emphasize the importance of

the fort in westward expansion as well as the enduring relationships with the Choctaw and Chickasaw people that continue to this day.”

The Fort Towson Historic Site visitor center offers engaging exhibits that delve into the fort’s rich history from its construction in 1824, its role in the Mexican-American War and the Civil War, to the steamboats that ferried people and supplies through the region. Visitors will hear the story of nearby Doaksville, where a trading post was first established that later became a thriving commercial center and capital of the Choctaw Nation. This is also the location where Confederate General Stand Watie is reputed to have surrendered after the war ended.

The event will run from 10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Living historians will present a glimpse into the lives of military members and civilians who lived in military outposts 200 years ago. Scheduled presentations will be held every hour between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The event will be free to the public.

Throughout the day, guests can explore the site and learn from living historians about period infantry, artillery, laundresses, officer’s wives, topographical engineers, 1st Choctaw mounted rifles, dragoons, historical music, and 1800s merchandise.

### Camp Calendar



- April 25 Indian Nations Camp Meeting  
Schusterman-Benson Library
- May 11 Department Encampment  
Honey Springs Visitors Center
- May 18 Bicentennial of Fort Towson
- May 23 Indian Nations Camp Meeting  
Shusterman-Benson Library
- May 27 Memorial Day Ceremony  
Rose Hill Cemetery 10 a.m.
- May 27 Memorial Day 2024
- June 14 Flag day – Fly your flag.

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**See Fort Gibson Map on Next Page**

