

THE UNION INFORMER

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A Civil War-era envelope with a depiction of Colonel Ellsworth and the words "Remember Ellsworth!"
See story on Page 3. (Library of Congress)

August Camp Meeting

Maybe this month's camp meeting will be the last of the steamy hot ones for the rest of the year. However, inside our meeting room, it's always quite comfortable, thanks to the Parkview Baptist Church.

Cdr. Steven Tolbert will be presenting his program on the Battle of Locust Grove, one of the local battles we should all understand. As you may know, Locust Grove is a small town 50 miles due east of Tulsa.

The camp meeting will be held August 25, at the Parkview Baptist Church, located at the corner of Sheridan Rd. and East 60 Street, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

July Camp Meeting

This meeting was very lightly attended. Only five members were present. The camp needs its Brothers to show more support through their meeting attendance. Please make a concerted effort to attend, and help us revive enthusiasm in camp affairs. If you have suggestions for improvement, these are more than welcome. The officers want to be responsive.

Following camp business and a discussion of various topics involving our activities for the rest of the year, Cdr. Tolbert gave his program on the shooting at the Hildebrand Mill, and the subsequent shootout at a schoolhouse in the Cherokee Goingsnake District. See story on Page 2.



Ezekial (Zeke) Proctor

The Hildebrand Mill/Goingsnake Massacre

This is the story Cdr. Steven Tolbert related during his program at our July Indian Nations Camp meeting.

About five miles west of the Arkansas border, in the Illinois River basin at the small settlements of Proctor and Christie, the deadliest day in U.S. Marshal Service history occurred on April 15, 1872 --150 years ago. This series of events, which eventually required the intervention of President Grant, took place in the Cherokee Nation's Goingsnake District.

A feud developed between two Cherokee factions who fought on different sides during the Civil War: one for the Union; and the other for the Confederacy. The gunplay originated when a family member, Ezekial "Zeke" Proctor, went to confront Kesterson about a perceived injustice. Kesterson had married Proctor's sister, had several children, and then left them destitute to marry another woman, Polly Beck, and help her operate the Hildebrand Mill. The operation was quite successful and became a center of commerce for the area, as people from the surrounding area brought their grains to be ground at the mill.

Ezekial Proctor, a full-blood Cherokee, came to Indian Territory as a young boy with his family over the Trail of Tears, after our government pushed them out of their home lands in Georgia. He grew up to be

known for his accuracy with firearms, and as a spokesman for his family.

Evidently, the confrontation between Kesterson and Proctor became heated, with Proctor pulling a gun. Some say that Polly saw the gun and jumped in front of her husband to take the bullet. She was killed, and Kesterson, injured.

Fessing up, Proctor turned himself into the Cherokee's Goingsnake District sheriff, and the sheriff held him for Polly Beck's murder. Later, when deputy U.S. Marshals came from Fort Smith to take Proctor to the Fort Smith jail, the Cherokee sheriff refused to give him up, because the marshals didn't have the required papers.

Beck was a Cherokee citizen, and by virtue of being married to her, Kesterson was too. However, Kesterson thought that if Proctor was tried in a Cherokee court, that he would be found not guilty. Therefore, he gave up his tribal citizenship to cause the case to be tried in a federal court, since that forfeiture would make Proctor's case a crime against a U.S. citizen. Some of the same legal jurisdictional issues that are in the news nowadays, were being contested during these times.

The whole case was highly explosive, because of the strong family ties and the jurisdictional issues involved.

A trial was scheduled for April 15, 1872, and was moved to a schoolhouse. Because of the strong emotions of the opposing sides, the schoolhouse was thought to be more easily defended than the district courthouse.

Two deputy U.S. marshals were assigned to lead an eight-man federal posse to attend the trial. Five Beck clan members accompanied them. If Proctor was acquitted by the Cherokee court, the marshals were ordered to arrest him on federal charges in the attack on Kesterson and bring him back to Fort Smith for trial.

Arriving at the schoolhouse, the 15 posse members dismounted and began walking toward the building. As they reached its steps, accounts vary as to what happened next.

The gunfight probably started when White Sut Beck fired a shotgun from inside the building to kill Johnson Proctor, Ezekial's brother in the posse. After that, shots came from inside the schoolhouse and from outside. The shooting lasted for about 5-10 minutes, with another 5-10 minutes for mopping up. In addition to the 15 posse members outside the building, there were another 15 Beck members inside—all probably engaged in the shooting. Up to 80 people outside the building ran for the hills when the shooting started.

When the shooting ended, eight members of the posse lay dead. Deputy Marshal Jacob Owens, had been mortally wounded and would die the next day. This was said to be the bloodiest gunfight that ever took place in the American west that the military wasn't involved in.

Cherokee authorities moved the court to a different location the next day, and the jury acquitted Zeke of the murder charge.

The Cherokees wanted to arrest all the surviving posse members, and the federal authorities wanted to arrest all the surviving court members inside the schoolhouse. Investigations were authorized by various governmental agencies, in an effort to sort out events of the day. Even a congressional investigation was implemented. It became a standoff. Eventually, the White House became involved. Pres. Grant offered a proposal to the Cherokees: "If the Cherokee Nation withdraws all of its warrants, the United States will withdraw all of their warrants."

The proposal was accepted. *Nobody would ever be charged with killing the nine marshals.*

Zeke Proctor returned to live in the area, and by the 1880s he owned a small ranch. He was elected a Cherokee senator in 1877, and in 1894 was elected sheriff of the tribe's Flint District. He served as a deputy U.S. marshal from 1891-94, and died February 23, 1907. He is buried at the Johnson's Cemetery in West Siloam Springs.

Commander's Comments

Greeting's Brothers,

I hope everyone is doing well as summertime is wrapping up, and school has begun. I just wanted to

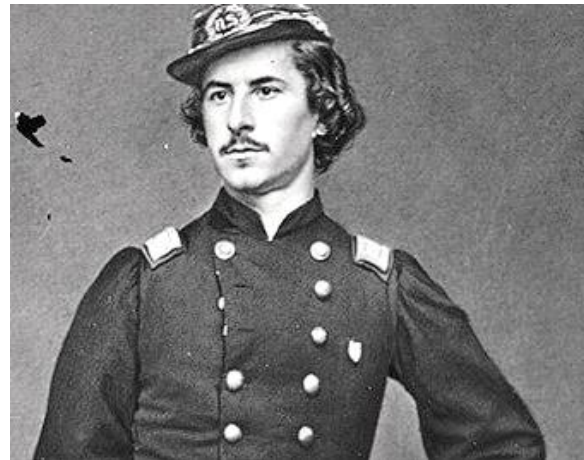
make you are aware of upcoming events for the rest of this year.

We will have our August meeting this Thursday. After that our schedule will shift some. Please see below.

September meeting, we are looking at a family cookout (maybe at our Dept. Cdr. Anderson's home). October meeting, will be our annual joint meeting with Tulsa's Col. Daniel N. McIntosh, SCV camp. November meeting, we will not have one due to Thanksgiving Holiday. December meeting will be elections for the new year.

Times and dates will be announced in the near future. Hope to see everyone this Thursday when I give my presentation on the battle of Locust Grove. Even though it is one of the smaller battles fought in Indian Territory it had the greatest impact on the Cherokee Nation.

Cdr. Tolbert



(National Portrait Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution)

Colonel Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth

(From the American Battlefield Trust)

Colonel Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth of the 11th New York Volunteers, also known as the First Fire Zouaves, has the conspicuous distinction of being one of the first Union officers killed in the war. Ellsworth had worked as a lawyer under [Abraham Lincoln](#) in Chicago and became his friend. After Lincoln was elected to the presidency, Ellsworth

followed him to Washington. He then traveled to New York to raise the 11th New York Volunteers, which consisted of many of the city's volunteer firemen. On May 21, 1861, Ellsworth and his men entered the city of Alexandria, Virginia. There, Ellsworth and four of his men approached the Marshall House Inn, which was flying a large Confederate flag. As Ellsworth took down the flag, the innkeeper James Jackson fired at Ellsworth with a shotgun and instantly killed him. Upon hearing about his friend's death, Lincoln reportedly cried "My boy! My boy! Was it necessary this sacrifice should be made?" Ellsworth's body laid in state in the White House before returning to New York. Subsequently, Ellsworth became a martyr for the Union cause. "Remember Ellsworth!" became an oft-repeated slogan and the 44th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment even called themselves the "Ellsworth Avengers."



National Encampment – Grand Rapids, MI

As you have seen from the General Orders issued recently, the 141st National Encampment in Grand Rapids, MI, is history. CinC Bruce D. Frail succeeds PCinC Michael A. Paquette in that position.

The 142nd National Encampment of the Allied Orders of the Grand Army of the Republic will be hosted by the Department of New Hampshire on August 3 – 6, 2023 in Nashua, New Hampshire.

Union Ancestor of Brother **Jeremy Carl Woods**
Pvt. Nathaniel R. Ewing
Co. E/F, 11th Kentucky Infantry

Camp Business

At our July camp meeting, we discussed the possibility of changing our meeting venue back to one of the public library locations. While we are extremely grateful for the Parkview Baptist Church's meeting room during the pandemic, it may be time to move back to one of the libraries. As it is, we are dependent upon DC Clint Anderson being present to open and close the present meeting room, and he may not always be available. If you have thoughts, or input to such a decision, you may want to state your preferences to one of the camp officers.

Cdr. Tolbert attended the ceremony marking the anniversary of the Battle of Honey Springs, and reports that we are building rapport with the park director. He sends his thanks for our excellent work on clearing brush from the sides of the park trail.

The possibility of conducting a "Wreaths Across America" ceremony this year was discussed, but no decision was made. The next Wreaths Across America day will be Saturday, December 17, 2022.

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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.

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Camp Calendar



Aug. 25 Camp Meeting – Parkview Baptist Church
Sept. 22 Camp picnic – Location to be announced
Oct. 11 Joint Camp Meeting with D. N. McIntosh
Camp, SCV – Tulsa Little Theatre

Nov. 11 Tulsa Veterans Day Parade
Nov. 17 Wreaths Across America Day
Nov. 19 Remembrance Day – Rose Hill Cemetery
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<http://indiannationscamp3-sucw.weebly.com>

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