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Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
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[Winter quarters; soldiers in front of their wooden hut, "Pine Cottage." 111-B-256.](#)

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January Camp Meeting

Cdr. Rusk has arranged for us to meet in the *Oak Room at the Hardesty Regional Library, 8315 E. 93rd Street*, this month. This will be our first time to meet there, and we may have to make some adjustments.

As always, January is the month when we install camp officers, which will be our primary business. If you've seen an officer installation, you know that they all follow the SUVCW ritual, which makes them all very similar. You may want to bring a check and pay your

\$35 camp dues, or mail a check to the Treasurer, Carl Fallen at 6120 E. 76th St. Tulsa, OK 74136. There will also be a short program, and other business will be conducted, so there is reason to come out.

January, of course, will be the beginning of a new year of camp operation, although it will be under the leadership of the officers of the past year. Experience is a good thing, but we are always looking for new ideas and ways to create interest – in ways to make your membership more satisfying and rewarding. So, come out and make your voice heard.

November Camp Meeting

We are grateful that our November camp meeting was well attended. On hand were Brothers: Norman Crowe; Mike Gates; Charlie Walker; Jesse Walker; Mike Rusk; Carl Fallen; Rex Griffin; and Kevin White. Also present was visitor and prospective member, Ken Bassett, and Kevin's guest Brian.

The usual officers' reports were given, business items addressed, followed by a shortened program by PDC Rex Griffin on African American Soldiers of the Civil War. This allowed time for the election of officers for 2019.

Rex's program highlighted the fact that while much of the recognition of African American soldiers in the Union Army is given to the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment as the *first black regiment*, it was, in fact, *not* the first black regiment.

This misplaced recognition is attributed to the movie *Glory*. Rex pointed out that the movie closes with the epilogue, "*As word of their bravery spread, Congress authorized the raising of black troops throughout the Union.*"

Rex says, "Truth is, that regiment came into existence after, and largely because President Lincoln and Congress authorized raising black troops months earlier, after the Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863.

"The same day the 54th Massachusetts attacked Fort Wagner, July 18, 1863, the First Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment were marching victoriously off the field at Honey Springs, Indian Territory, its fourth engagement.

"In truth, the first black soldiers in the Civil War were raised by Major General Benjamin Butler in the occupied city of New Orleans. As I understand it, *The*

First Louisiana Native Guards – almost all from the free mulatto population of that city – had organized under the confederates, then volunteered for Federal service under Butler.

"There was a second black regiment in the film, portrayed as a bunch of yahoos fresh off the plantation with a slaveholding commander – Panama straw hat and all – who called them "monkey children." Though not named, this was a fictionalized portrayal of the *First South Carolina Colored*, a regiment which was, in reality, a highly-disciplined regiment of former-slaves-turned-soldiers officered by dedicated abolitionists who believed in the men and in their cause. The first *South Carolina Colored* made legitimate claim as the first black regiment because they were mustered – the usual claim of military seniority – on November 15, 1862."

Rex went on to recap the history and actions of these units as well as other regional black regiments. However, he certainly set the record straight about which was the first black regiment, and which was not!

Camp Business Conducted In December

- Guy Folger's application for membership was accepted along with his check. Secretary Rusk will forward it to the Department Secretary. Brother Folger is actually renewing his membership from the former Stillwater camp.
- Visitor Ken Bissett was invited to join our camp, and he expressed an interest in doing so.
- The camp dues amount was voted to continue at \$35 per member.
- All camp officers were willing to serve another term and were unanimously elected without opposition.
- In regard to whether we should continue the format of Civil War topics at camp meeting, we will have a speaker for our January meeting, as well as officer installations.
- Members discussed our project of jointly manning a recruiting table with the SCV at a future gun show, but no firm plan or specific date has been set.

Commander's Dispatch

It is a new year and a time for our Indian Nations Camp #3 to renew our sense of mission to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and to the growth and prosperity of our camp. Officers for the coming year have been elected according to the Constitution and Regulations and will be formally installed at camp meeting on January 24th. Brother Johnny Manley, PDC, will be present to install the new officers and will further present a short program on Civil War Medicine. Brother Manley is a Viet Nam war veteran and a holder of the Silver Star medal for courage in combat for which he served as a Corpsman in the US Navy during the conflict. He is a long time Civil War re-enactor and is commander of the Sgt Jacob Overturf camp #4 located in Broken Arrow and served as Oklahoma Department Commander in 2014-2015. I hope all camp members will plan on attending this meeting.

In February we will hold our meeting on the 28th at the Helmerich Library located on 91st street between Yale and Sheridan. At that time I plan to review the history of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and its original mission to carry out the legacy of the Grand Army of the Republic.

We have a new member, brother Guy Folger. Brother Folger is a past member of the Stillwater camp, the David L. Payne camp #2 now defunct. As a resident of Lawton, Ok, he may not be able to attend camp meeting regularly but I do hope to see him at our spring encampment.



Lincoln's Birthday

Lincoln's birthday on February 12 is a legal holiday in most states. He was born in Hodgenville, Kentucky. Serving as president during the Civil War, he was the 16th U.S. and the first Republican President.

As a tribute to Lincoln's importance in American history, his portrait was introduced on a U.S. coin on the centennial anniversary of his birth.

The Department of the Treasury website states: "When the Lincoln one-cent coin made its initial appearance in 1909, it marked a radical departure from the accepted styling of United States coins, introducing as it did for the first time a portrait coin in the regular series. A strong feeling had prevailed against using portraits on our coins, but public sentiment stemming from the 100th anniversary celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birth proved stronger than the long-standing prejudice."

"The only person invited to participate in the formulation of the new design was Victor David Brenner. President Theodore Roosevelt was so impressed with the talents of this outstanding sculptor that Brenner was singled out by the President for the commission. The likeness of President Lincoln on the obverse of the coin is an adaptation of a plaque Brenner executed several years earlier which had come to the attention of President Roosevelt.

"In addition to the prescribed elements on our coins -- LIBERTY and the date -- the motto In God We Trust appeared for the first time on a coin of this denomination. Of interest also is the fact that the Congress passed the Act of March 3, 1865, authorizing the use of this motto on our coins during Lincoln's tenure in office."

On September 12, 2009, four new U.S. coins went into service as part of Lincoln's birthday bicentennial. The commemorative coins have designs on the back which depict various stages of his life. One shows a log cabin representing his birthplace, another shows Lincoln as a young man reading while taking a break perched on a log he had been splitting. A third shows him as a state legislator in front of the Illinois Capitol, and a fourth is of the partially built dome of the U.S. Capitol. The standard portrait of Lincoln remains on the front side.

Civil War Re-enactor Ranks Declining

(Excerpts from a New York Times story by Brian Stole - July 28, 2018)

At the height of the surge in Civil War Re-enactments (1980s – 1990s) tens of thousands would turn out for an event. At the 135th re-enactment of the Battle of Gettysburg, in 1998, there were 50,000 spectators and 30,000 re-enactors.

This past year, the number of re-enactors had declined to 6,000. Thousands of spectators still flock to watch the event and pay \$40 for activities over a four-day period, including an old time ball on Saturday night.

Stone says, “Many of today’s re-enactors were born as the last Civil War veterans were dying, and grew up amid the celebrations and re-enactments of the centennial that lasted from 1961 to 1965. But the heyday of re-enacting was the ’90s, during another moment of national fascination with the Civil War.”

Many re-enactors have reached the age that they had to give up the hobby because of physical ailments, and the younger set are more interested in computer games, motorcycles, girls, etc. The younger men aren’t entering the hobby in the numbers of the past. Of course, there are other factors contributing for the decline over the years, including the hardening of political views and polarization toward Civil War symbols and history.

By and large, re-enactors are honoring the soldiers, and pay little attention to the causes of the war or its aftermath. However, that aspect of the war had become more public in recent years, detracting from the hobby.

Thomas Downes, 68, a retired machinist from Cleveland, who has been re-enacting for the Union side for 38 years said, “Up until the last five or 10 years, the social causes of the war did not come into what we do. We were paying tribute to the fighting man.

“It wasn’t ‘I’m racist and I want to glorify slavery,’” he said. “Nobody really thought a lot about the social reasons of why the South went to war. It was just these poor guys who were underfed, undermanned, underequipped, fighting valiantly to the last man, until they couldn’t stand anymore.”

Most re-enactors are obsessed with historic detail and go to great lengths to keep their work and gear authentic, such as using a horsehair toothbrush, while others fudge a little by bringing flashlights, propane tanks, air mattresses, jugs of Gatorade, etc.. It is not easy, or comfortable, to keep things authentic. Some attribute diminishing interest to the rising expense of gear. A reproduction Civil War rifle alone can cost more than \$1,000.

Stone stated, “There are many hard-core re-enactors — the kind of people who want to know what it felt like to march 25 miles in disintegrating shoes, sleep in ditches and subsist on hardtack and rancid salt pork — who eschew Gettysburg as a mainstream event. But at least one Union unit spent several days marching along highway shoulders to get to this year’s re-enactment, retracing the movements of the Army of the Potomac.”

Politically, Civil War re-enactors tend to be conservative, perhaps a reflection of the demographics

of a hobby that skews heavily white and middle-aged. But it’s not a monolith. Most re-enactors have strong preferences, but few stick exclusively to one side, instead switching into Confederate or Union garb if the opposing ranks are too thin.



Credit Daniel Arnold for The New York Times

Still, some Union re-enactors said they chose to wear blue at least in part because of their political convictions or because they wouldn’t fight against the United States flag. The Confederates were more likely to say family history had a role in how they picked their side.

We, the public, have been the benefactor of these thousands of re-enactors who have spent their spare time and worked so hard, mostly at their own expense, to depict scenes from our past great Civil War. Most re-enactments have been free to the public, or provided at a nominal charge. Movie companies have been able to stage battle scenes that would have cost them millions of dollars, without having to costume or train the thousands of actors. We’ve enjoyed a good thing. Let’s hope it doesn’t disappear.



Camp Calendar

January 24	Camp Meeting – Hardesty Library
February 12	Abraham Lincoln’s birthday
February 28	Camp Meeting – Helmerich Library
March 28	Camp Meet – Shusterman-Benson Lib

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