

# THE UNION INFORMER

Monthly Newsletter of the Indian Nations Camp No. 3  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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President Lincoln at Maryland's Antietam Battlefield on Friday, October 3, 1862, during his visit to General McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, to encourage him to attack the Confederate Army.

*Source: National Archives*

## October Camp Meeting

This month's camp meeting will again be held at the Schusterman Library, 3333 E. 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, the same as last month: Thursday, 6:30 p.m. DC Anderson is working on a program about the Andersonville Prison.

Our plans for a cookout, replaced by a dinner outing at a Tulsa restaurant having fallen through for October, the possibility of a new date and location will be a topic for discussion. This dinner would be for Brothers and their guests.

## September Camp Meeting

Our September camp meeting was lightly attended. Perhaps that isn't surprising after members have not been attending camp meetings for three months.

This was a business meeting without a program. Brothers C. Walker, Fallen, Rusk, Wilkerson, Gates and Preston attended. The business portion of the meeting is outlined under 'Camp Business' in the newsletter.



Park Service to help preserve a part of the former military site.

The grant, amounting to \$750,000, will help fund the preservation of Fort Gibson Historic Site's stone barracks, site of the 2018 OK Dept. Encampment.

The historic site is the only project in Oklahoma that received funding from NPS in the recent round of Save America's Treasures grants.

“Today, we celebrate a significant milestone in preserving our nation’s history as the Fort Gibson Historic Site receives a generous \$750,000 grant from the National Park Service,” said State Senator Dewayne Pemberton. “This investment not only honors the legacy of those who came before us but also ensures that future generations can explore and learn from this remarkable landmark. Together, we forge a path toward a brighter future where the stories of Fort Gibson continue to inspire and educate. This grant is a testament to the enduring value of our shared heritage power.”

Fort Gibson was originally established in 1824 to protect the US western border and further westward expansion, according to the Fort Gibson Historic Site. It was occupied by military troops until it was abandoned in 1890.

“We are so grateful for granting agencies like NPS that help preserve our sites,” said Jennifer Frazee, director of the Fort Gibson Historic Site. “The barracks hold an incredibly rich history, from the people who constructed it and the purpose it was intended for, all the way to how folks adapted it to support the community in the years after statehood.”

While the Oklahoma Historical Society tried to repair the stone barracks, it could only be done in a patchwork approach due to limited funding.

NPS' grant now provides the funding necessary to stabilize the building.

“I am very excited the Oklahoma Historical Society was awarded this monumental grant from the National Park Service. This grant will go a long way toward shoring up and restoring this important structure at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma’s oldest fort,” said Trait Thompson, executive director of the Oklahoma Historical Society. “Work to construct the barracks began in the 1840s but wasn’t completed until after the Civil War. Over the years, it has served not only as living quarters for the soldiers but also as a mess hall, workspace for the Dawes Commission, and a school



**Ft. Gibson Barracks, Ft. Gibson, OK. Photo & published by F.F. Storer, Tulsa, OK.**



**Commanding Officer's Qtrs. - Fort Gibson, OK  
(Photos Courtesy of Oklahoma Historic Site)**

## **National Park Service awards \$750k grant to Fort Gibson Historic Site**

(Reprinted from ABC News Channel 8, KTUL)  
September 28, 2023

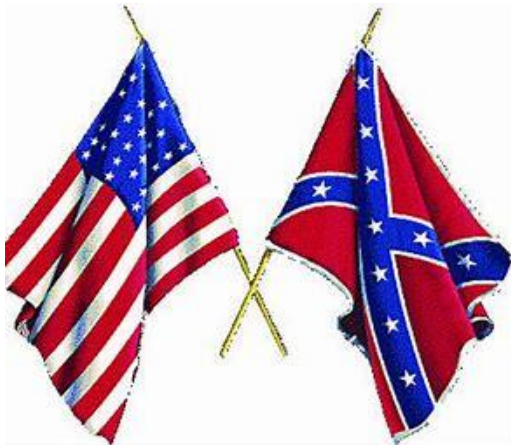
FORT GIBSON, Okla. (KTUL) — The Fort Gibson Historic Site was awarded a grant from the National

for blind and deaf American Indian children. Restoration of the barracks will allow us to interpret its history for a new generation of Oklahomans.”

The Oklahoma Historical Society said it will use money from a \$46 million Legacy Capital Fund passed by state lawmakers in 2022 to match the grant "dollar-for-dollar".

“Of course, being from Fort Gibson, I grew up with the knowledge of the pivotal role the fort played for our state and our nation during a time when many settlers were moving west, and peace was sought with many Native American tribes,” said State Representative Chris Sneed. “I’m thrilled with the news of this grant from the National Park Service that will help us preserve our history. I think it is very telling that this is the only project in Oklahoma to receive funding from the NPS in the latest round of Save America’s Treasures grants. It speaks to both the continued importance of this historic site and the many lessons it can still offer us today.”

NPS' Director Chuck Sams said preserving historic places and collections ensures current and future generations will enjoy and learn from stories across time and places in US history.



## Camp Business

At the September camp meeting, the subject of the camp cookout planned for October 7 was addressed. A poll was taken of those present as to whether they preferred a restaurant meal or a cookout. The result was that most preferred a restaurant meal with guests. Everyone would order their preference and pay their own costs. A restaurant was to be selected, but finding one available with a suitable sized room has proven difficult to book. It appears that December is our best bet.

Remembrance Day this year is November 18, and our ceremony will be conducted at our monument in Rose Hill Cemetery.

Since our meeting date each year conflicts with the Thanksgiving holiday, our next (and last) meeting of the year will be on the 1st Thursday of December.

The camp is entertaining the prospect of volunteering to conduct the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Tulsa’s oldest cemetery: the Perryman Cemetery at 32nd Street and Utica Avenue. The Wreaths Across America is an organization whose objective is to hold a ceremony at many different sites all across the country at the same time. Hundreds of localities participate. The intent is to honor those veterans who have fallen in the line of duty, as well as those who have served and those who are presently serving their country in the military. It is intended that they are never forgotten. Cdr. Rusk has conducted these in the past, and he’s willing to do it again.

Cdr. Rusk appointed a Nominating Committee chaired by PDC Carl Fallen, with members JVC Mike Gates and PDC Rex Griffin. The committee has met and will present its slate of recommended candidates for election at the December camp meeting. Other candidates will also be solicited from the floor.

We will need to discuss our plans for Remembrance Day which will be observed on November 18.

## Words of Wisdom

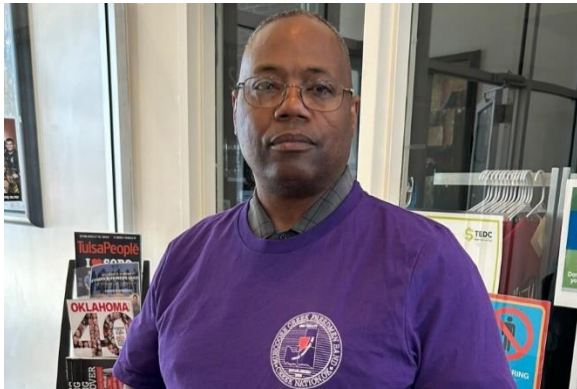
General Dwight D. Eisenhower famously said, “Plans are useless, but planning is essential.” The quote implies that even a well-made plan often ends up not being worth the paper it was written on, once the situation moves from speculation to reality. However, planning is still essential, because it helps to prepare for the situation and to react instantly to changes in the situation.



*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.*



## Freedmen Trial and Ruling Concluded



*Brother Jeff Kennedy, PDC*

As many of you know, Brother Jeffrey Kennedy was one of the plaintiffs in a lawsuit brought against the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, which ended April 7 this year after a two-day trial. The plaintiffs were appealing to a tribal district court judge to have the Freedmen's tribal citizenship re-established. After a lengthy period of consideration, the tribal court handed down its ruling on September 27.

The plaintiffs are descendants of Freedmen, African American slaves the tribe held and freed at the end of the Civil War. Some of these slaves accompanied the tribe on its long walk to Indian Territory known as "The Trail of Tears" when the tribe was removed from its homelands.

The Muscogee Nation's 1866 treaty with the United States granted the tribe's freedmen – former slaves of Muscogee citizens – and their descendants citizenship rights. The problem developed when the tribe's 1979 constitution limited tribal citizenship to "Muscogee (Creek) Indians by blood whose names appear on the final rolls, sometimes referred to as the Dawes Rolls."

The Freedmen were on a separate list called the Creek Freedmen Roll. The tribe used only the Creek Blood Dawes Roll to determine membership eligibility. As a result, when the plaintiffs applied for membership, their applications were denied. even though, prior to the 1979 constitution, the nation followed the treaty and included those listed on the Creek Freedmen Roll and their descendants when determining tribal citizenship.

Concluding that their citizenship rejection violated the 1866 Treaty, which the recent *McGirt vs. Oklahoma* decision revealed was still in force, the court action

sought to cause the Creek nation to follow the Treaty provisions.

The September ruling came from Muscogee Nation District Court Judge Danette Mouser. She found that the nation had illegally denied citizenship to two freedmen descendants, Rhonda Grayson and Jeffrey Kennedy. The 1866 Treaty was still in effect and had not been abrogated by the tribe's 1979 constitution.

"The court finds that the Board's actions in denying Plaintiffs' application and appeals were unsupported in light of the substantial evidence regarding the applicability of the Treaty of 1866," Mouser wrote.

"There can be no doubt that the Treaty must be followed in all regards, including as it relates to the eligibility for citizenship of those whose ancestors are listed on the Creek Freedman Roll." Jeff, obviously pleased with the outcome, commented that "She was a fair Judge." He cited Articles 2 and 3 of the 1866 Treaty as being key parts that applied to the decision.

The trial's outcome, could open the door for thousands of other Freedmen descendants who may want to join the Muscogee Nation. They could be eligible for citizenship pending approval from the tribal nation's Citizenship Board. The Cherokee Nation recently struck from its constitution language defining citizenship purely by blood. Benefits of tribal citizenship include health care and educational benefits, among others.

Muscogee Nation officials maintain that the decision is deeply flawed and still contend that the tribe's 1979 constitution governs eligibility for tribal citizenship. The officials have appealed the decision to the tribe's Supreme Court, Jeff says.

## Camp Calendar



- Oct. 26 Indian Nations Camp meeting  
**Schusterman Library – 3333 E. 32<sup>nd</sup> St.**
- Nov. 3-6 Honey Springs Civil War Demonstrations
- Nov. 10 Tulsa's Veterans Day Parade
- Nov. 18 Remembrance Day - Rose Hill Cemetery
- Dec. 7 Indian Nations Camp Meeting

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