

# 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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Newly elected Indian Nations Camp Commander, Mike Rusk, outlines his views after taking command.  
(Photo by Mike McGraw)

## January Camp Meeting

A rude discovery greeted us when we arrived at our usual meeting room in the Kaiser Library for our January meeting. Another group already occupied the room and was preparing it for a meeting of their own.

Seeking to resolve the issue, we consulted personnel at the library central desk, only to be told that we did not have the room reserved, and that it had been allocated to another group. The group explained that their meeting would only last about 30 minutes, which we thought might be the best way to handle it.

However, in the meantime, someone said that one of the library staff had offered to let us use an exercise room down the hall, and with the assistance of our guys to bring in tables and chairs, he made the room ready for our meeting.

After the swearing in ceremony, we moved to the previously announced roundtable type discussion of the Battle of Shiloh. Everyone had a chance to contribute, and it was thought to be a productive and satisfying part of the meeting.

Arrangements have been made to reserve our regular room for future meetings.

## February Meeting Features Program by Brother Norman Crowe

A story of Cherokee Indians serving in Co. L, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guards will be presented by Brother Norman Crowe at the February meeting this Thursday, February 22. Norman will be telling about the service of his Great-Great Grandfather, Sgt. John Hendricks as

well as that of several of his other family members, also known as Pin Indians. The Guard was a part of the Federal Indian Brigade (mounted). Co. L was an artillery unit armed with mountain howitzers.

Sgt. Hendricks and his relatives were involved in most of the battles and skirmishes in Indian Territory from 1862 until the end of the war. You will hear about these skirmishes Thursday night. Sgt. Hendricks was wounded at the Battle of Newtonia, receiving a chest wound, from which he recovered.

Cdr. Rusk has reserved our regular meeting room at the Kaiser Library, 5202 S. Hudson Ave., for our meeting beginning at 6:30. Please plan to attend, and bring a friend.

## Camp Officers Installed

PDC Johnny Manley of the Sgt. Jacob Overturff Camp was gracious enough to come to the Indian Nations Camp meeting and install our 2018 officers for us.

Commander	Michael D. Rusk
Sr. Vice Commander	A. Carl Fallen
Jr. Vice Commander	Michael M. Gates
Secretary	Michael D. Rusk
Treasurer	A. Carl Fallen
Patriotic Instructor	Joe Fears
Counselor	Michael A. McGraw

Cdr. Rusk previously served as Camp Commander in 2002, and was only the second to lead the camp. With Mike's skills from the field of education, he is uniquely qualified for this position. While Mike has been quite active in other camp and department posts since that time, we're glad to have him back to direct the camp. JVC Mike Gates and Patriotic Instructor Joe Fears agreed to stay on at their positions for another year. This comes at a time when we have found it difficult to find brothers who were willing to volunteer for candidate positions. Therefore, we feel fortunate for their continued service. Both have performed in an outstanding manner. Outgoing Cdr. Fallen issued officer certificates and a small SUCW pocket knife to the past officers as a token of appreciation.

## Dues Payments

Most members have paid their dues already, but if you haven't please bring them to the camp meeting Thursday, or mail them to Treasurer at the address below. The amount remains the same: \$35.

Carl Fallen  
6120 E. 76<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tulsa, OK 74136



Three of the officer candidates: Carl Fallen, Mike Rusk, and Mike Gates. (Photo by Mike McGraw)

PCC Carl Fallen attended the November camp meeting of the Sgt. Jacob Overturff Camp. The camp shares some members with the Indian Nations Camp, and all their active members are, or have been, members of our camp. We come together for regular events such as Remembrance Day and Memorial Day ceremonies. Therefore, we have a lot in common. You may recall that we presented the camp with flag sleeves for their new flags purchased in 2017. Overturff Camp meets quarterly.

When the Stillwater camp folded, it left the Oklahoma Department with only three camps: one less than the required minimum of three for a department. To solve that problem on a temporary basis, some members of our camp agreed to form a third camp in Broken Arrow. However, after several years, no new camp has been formed, and that should become a high priority.



Overturff Camp's November meeting at the Military History Museum in Broken Arrow: Brothers Gene Turner; Bernie Cooper, Johnny Manley, Rex Griffin, and Dennis Hoch. (Photo by Carl Fallen)



**Cdr. Carl Fallen, representing the Indian Nations Camp # 3, and driver Dave Durand await the start of the Veterans Day Parade in downtown Tulsa November 10, 2017.**

## **Battle of Round Mountain Re-enactment**

The travelok.com website describes the Battle of Round Mountain in this way: “The Battle of Round Mountain is listed as the first battle fought in Indian Territory during the Civil War. This historic battle fought in Payne County saw approximately 1,400 Confederate soldiers under the command of Colonel Douglas H. Cooper pursue roughly 9,000 Unionist civilians led by Opothleyahola, a famous Upper Creek leader. These civilians were attempting to avoid an alliance with the Confederacy and ultimately chose to flee to the protection of Union forces in Kansas.



**Opothleyahola**

Colonel Cooper set out on November 19, 1861 in an attempt to coerce Opothleyahola into submission. Each

February, the town of Yale comes alive with the Battle Round Mountain Re-enactment.”

Another source says that roughly 2,000 Creek and Seminole Indians fought about 1,600 Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians and a contingent of Texas cavalry under the direction of Confederate commander Col. Douglas Cooper. The battle, sometimes called the Battle of Red Fork, started late in the afternoon. Its actual location has been debated for years. Part of the battlefield may even be under the water of Lake Keystone. This contingent maintains that the battle site was at the nearby town of Keystone, not the “twin mounds” site four miles west of Yale in Payne County. The site of a battlefield historical marker almost certainly doesn’t mark the correct location.

Sometimes called the Battle of Red Fork, the name comes from the numerous hills located north of the Red Fork (Cimarron) River in southeastern Pawnee County.

The fighting took place over a considerable distance, because the Indian contingent was fleeing from Indian Territory as they sought to make their way to Union protection in Kansas. They fought off the Confederate troops as they made their way north.

Upon first learning about this battle, one might ask, why would the Confederates attack a band of largely civilians seeking to leave Indian Territory? Obviously, however, the Indian band contained a group of fighters with weapons. Evidently, it was a case of “If you aren’t with us, you’re agin’ us.” Therefore, the Indian band was considered hostile and an appropriate target.

In May 1861, Secretary of War, Leroy Pope, sent Cooper a letter authorizing him to “take measures to secure the protection of these tribes in their present country from the agrarian rapacity of the North.

When hostilities broke out between the Union and Confederate States, inhabitants of Indian Territory were forced to choose between the two sides and who they would support. Most chose the Confederacy. Opothleyahola’s group consisted first of Upper Creeks, with members from several other tribes joining them, chose the Union.

Opothleyahola’s group traveled in wagons, on horseback and on foot carrying as many of their possessions as they could.

As a brigade commander, Cooper pursued Opothleyahola and his band of loyal followers during the months of November and December as it made its way out of Indian Territory toward Kansas.

A series of clashes occurred: first at Round Mountain, followed by and a second called Chusto-Talasa, and a third at Chustenahlah, the later of which was considered a decisive Confederate victory. The remnants of the Unionist band fled toward Kansas stripped of their belongings.



Colonel Douglas H. Cooper

## Commander's Dispatch

By Mike Rusk

We are beginning a new year as Brothers of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and this is a good time to reaffirm our mission which is to carry on the work of the Grand Army of the Republic and to keep alive the work of those who have gone before. Our motto is "Lest We Forget" and it has never been more appropriate than it is today.

In our camp I want to call on each member to be prepared when you come to camp meeting. Be ready to bring to the group something you have read or researched about the Civil War. Also there are many relevant questions today that can be traced back to the Civil War. Preservation of battle sites, preservation of monuments, statues and memorials. In our own area we have several Civil War monuments that we should be actively involved in honoring and preserving.

So, read a book or an article and share it with the camp. We are returning to our roots as students of the Union

side of the Civil War and will be spending time in each camp meeting sharing our interests and findings with the others in our camp. Also plan to attend our department encampment this April. As more information about the encampment appears I will make sure everyone is informed. Attendance as either a delegate or an alternate from our camp is essential. Brother Norman Crowe will bring his program on Native American soldiers in the Civil War to our February camp meeting. A discussion will follow.

### Rachel Cormany Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary to our camp meets once per month at the Schusterman Library. President Lori Cooper is committed to growing the auxiliary and supporting our camp in every way. This year I plan to seek their assistance and expertise in rebuilding our old and battered Memorial Day wreath. They have done a great job in the past and will do so again. Auxiliary Chaplain Lana Cooper has had a successful surgery and is now at home re'cooper'ating. The card we sent to her last month was appreciated

## Department Encampment News

(From DC Rex Griffin)

This year our annual Department Spring Encampment will be held at the Fort Gibson Historic Site at 11 AM, Saturday, April 14. Though I have yet to talk to them--I intend to visit soon to dot the i's and cross the t's-- expect to eat lunch at the delicious barbeque a short walk from the fort.

If the weather cooperates, we will hold Encampment ceremonies outdoors, hopefully on the parade grounds. If the weather is foul, we will fit into the Mess Hall. Either way attendees should bring their own camp chairs to be sure everyone has a place to sit. I suspect a folding table or two might come in handy, also.



## Camp Calendar

March 22	Camp Meeting – Kaiser Library
April 26	Camp Meeting – Kaiser Library
April 14	Department Encampment at Fort Gibson Historic Site
May 28	Memorial Day – Rose Hill Cem.

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