

THE UNION INFORMER

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

VOLUME 28 NUMBER 05

MAY 2026



Visitors to the Oklahoma Department Encampment in Edmond, OK of May 9, 2026:
Sandra Cole Flores and Kaitlyn Flores of the Women's Relief Corps; Kevin Tucker Commander-in-Chief, SUVCW, Carol Comp, National President, DUVCW, with Terry Handley, Oklahoma Department Commander, and his wife, Wilma Handley, Oklahoma President of the DUVCW.
(Photo by Clint Anderson)

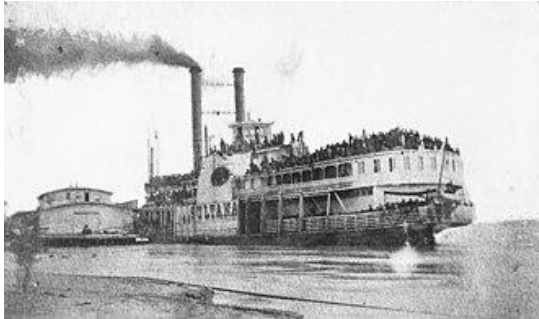
May Camp Meeting

Spring is upon us. The trees are all leafed out, and the outdoors is fresh with new growth. A great time to be alive. The Oklahoma Department is embarked on its 26th year, and the Indian Nations Camp #3, under strong leadership, is on its 27th year. Our camp meeting for the next three months will be at the Hardesty Regional Library. This month, our speaker will be Brother Mike Rusk whose topic will be Battle Cries & The Rebel Yell. The meeting will start at 6:30 pm.

April Camp Meeting

As anticipated, Brother Clint Anderson, PDC, delivered an excellent updated presentation with photos and descriptions in a PowerPoint presentation on the sinking of the Sultana on the Mississippi River. Records show the grossly overloaded vessel was carrying 2,137, including a crew of 85, and was contracted to deliver recently released POWs from Confederate prisons trying to make their way home from the war.

Boilers providing power to the vessel needed repair that was unavailable if the vessel were to meet its schedule. Three of her four boilers blew up about 7 miles north of Memphis near the town of Marion, Arkansas, with the loss of life put at 1,164, although that number was difficult to validate. The explosion and fire caused the vessel to sink near the Arkansas bank on April 27, 1865. To this date, it ranks as the worst maritime disaster in our country's history.



The steamship *Sultana* overloaded with former POWs on the Mississippi River.

It is understandable that some capacity guidelines may have been relaxed to help soldiers get home from such wretched prison conditions as they had experienced, but operator's greed for the per person fee may have entered the equation as well. The overloading of the vessel probably played a big part in its demise.

Thanks, Clint, for another excellent presentation. Let us all observe a moment of silence in respect for Clint's relatives lost on board the vessel.



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.

From the Camp Commander

While traveling through Little Rock, Arkansas, in April, I came across this historical marker along the Arkansas River (See last page) and stopped to

learn more about the Little Rock Campaign of September 1863. The marker describes how Union forces constructed a pontoon bridge at this location to move General John W. Davidson's cavalry division across the river during the capture of Little Rock. The crossing was made under Confederate artillery fire, but Union forces successfully secured the opposite bank and continued their advance toward the city. Confederate troops eventually withdrew from Little Rock, allowing Union forces under Major General Frederick Steele to occupy the Arkansas capital on September 10, 1863. What especially caught my attention was that troops from Missouri fought on both sides of the engagement, with both Union and Confederate Missouri cavalry units participating in the action. I encourage Camp members to keep an eye out for Civil War sites, monuments, and markers during your travels and share your discoveries for future newsletters.

Scott Preston
(918) 409-0039

Oklahoma Department Encampment



New Brothers Michael Landers and Thomas Thompson flank CinC Kevin Tucker after receiving their membership badges and certificates. (Photo by Carl Fallen)

This year's OK Department Encampment was moved from its planned location in OKC to the rented VFW Post 4938 HQ at 425 South Frets Ave., Suite E-F in Edmond, OK. Among the honored guests were the SUVCW Commander-in-Chief, Kevin Tucker, and the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, National President, Carol Comp, a rare honor for us, and Wilma Handley, President of the Oklahoma Department, DUVCW. Other dignitaries from the Allied Orders were, Katlin Flores and Sandra

Cole Flores of the Women’s Relief Corps. Lori Cooper of the Rachel Cormany Auxiliary #3, SUVCW (attended by Zoom).

Treasurer
Council Member #1
Council Member #2
Council Member #3

Clint Anderson
Mike Gates
Steven L. Clapp
Mark Edwards



Dept. Archivist Mike Rusk, PDC, gives a 25-year history of the OK Department. (Photo by Carl Fallen)

Two new Brothers, Thomas Thompson and Michael Landers were installed as members of the Jeremiah Smith Camp #1. Mike Rusk, PDC, gave a condensed history of the Department’s first 25 years of operation.

Lunch, paid from the Encampment fee, was catered by Mission BBQ. With more business to be conducted, the Encampment was reconvened after lunch. This primarily included the presentation of awards, the election of Department candidates for 2026-2027, their installation, and other business.

We were honored to have CinC Kevin Tucker as the Installing Officer. The elected officers were:

Department Commander	Terry Handley
Sr. Vice Commander	Scott Preston
Jr. Vice Commander	Mark Reichardt
Secretary	Steven J. Stealey



Thomas Thompson observes as CinC Kevin Tucker pins a membership badge on Michael Landers. (Photo by Clint Anderson)



Dept. Secretary Scott Preston, CC, and Treasurer Clint Anderson, PDC, receive the Turner/Williams Award from CinC Kevin Tucker at the Encampment. (Note Tucker’s Okie hat.) (Photo courtesy of Clint Anderson)



The Encampment in Session. (Photo by Jeff Kennedy)

Two new Brothers, Thomas Thompson and Michael Landers were installed as members of the Jeremiah Smith Camp #1. Mike Rusk, PDC, gave a condensed history of the Department's first 25 years of operation.

Three awards were presented at the Encampment this year. The coveted Dr. Mary Edwards Walker Award was given to Sandra Cole Flores of the Women's Relief Corps.

Two Brothers received the Department's highest award: the Turner-Williams Award for their distinguished service to the SUVCW. They are Life Member Clint Anderson, currently serving as Department Treasurer, and Col. Scott Preston, serving as Department Secretary, and Camp Commander of the Indian Nations Camp #3.



Carol Comp, National President, DUVCW, DC Terry Handley, OK Dept, SUVCW, and Wilma Handley, President, Oklahoma DUVCW, pose for a picture. (Photo by Clint Anderson)

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DC Terry Handley reads the citation conveying the Turner/Wiliams award to Brother Clint Anderson, PDC. Brother Scott Preston (left) was also a recipient of the award.

(Photo by Jeff Kennedy)

Elected for an unprecedented third consecutive term as Department Commander was Brother Terry Handley, who has done a remarkable job in executing the office.

The Encampment business was concluded in the afternoon session after the BBQ lunch had been served.

National Encampment to Be Held at Gettysburg, PA

The 145th National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Allied Orders will be held in Gettysburg, PA, July 30-August 2, 2026.

Dress: Male business attire, to include jacket, tie, long pants and Membership Badge.

Hotel accommodations are available at the Aspire Hotel & Suites in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Eisenhower Hotel is directly connected to the Aspire, and attendees may choose to stay at either property. Both properties offer convenient on-site lodging, included breakfast, and easy access to all encampment meetings and events. Room rates are \$145 per night at the Aspire Hotel & Suites and \$135 per night at the Eisenhower Hotel (rates are exclusive of applicable taxes).



You can tell from that big smile that Brother Jeff Kennedy enjoyed snatching the opportunity to get his picture taken with the Commander in Chief.

Union Ancestor of Joe Fears
Pvt. William A. Fears,
Co. A, 1st Arkansas Vol. Cavalry



Sandra Cole Flores stands before officers Rex Griffin, Scott Preston and Brian Pierson during the ceremony awarding her the Dr. Mary Edwards Walker Award. (Photo by Jeff Kennedy)



Camp Calendar

- May 25 Memorial Day Ceremony
GAR Monument,
Rose Hill Cemetery 10 a.m.
- May 28 Indian Nations Camp Meeting
Hardesty Regional Library
- June 14 Flag Day – Fly your flag!
Schusterman-Benson Library
- Jun 22 Indian Nations Camp Meeting
Hardesty Regional Library
- July 4 Independence Day
250th Anniversary
- July 30 – Aug. 2 National Encampment
Gettysburg, PA

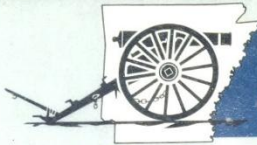
Editor: A. Carl Fallen

Camp Website:

<http://indiannationscamp3-suvvw.weebly.com>

Webmaster: Terri Walker

See Continuation on next page.



The Little Rock Campaign

4 River Crossing

Union Troops Cross Arkansas River To Capture Little Rock

North of where you are standing, Union troops on September 10, 1863, constructed a wooden pontoon bridge across the Arkansas River allowing Union Brigadier General John W. Davidson's cavalry division to proceed to Little Rock. Major General Frederick Steele's Union forces continued advancing to Little Rock north of the river.

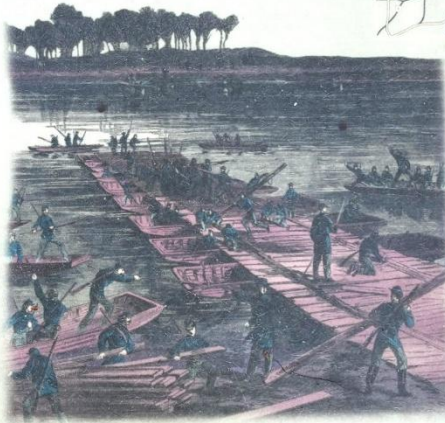
In front of you, Willow Beach Lake occupies part of the old river channel where Union troops made the crossing under protective artillery fire. Across the lake near the present water tower, Confederates with artillery unsuccessfully engaged the Union forces to try to prevent them from crossing.

"As soon as the bridge was done, General Davidson ordered over a brigade of infantry to take possession of a levee in the opposite woods, to cover and protect my brigade while crossing and forming, as the enemy had opened artillery upon us. At about 9 a.m., my brigade began to cross the river. When two squadrons of the First Iowa Cavalry were over, they were ordered to the woods in front, where I found the infantry... As soon as my command was fairly over, it moved out to the road running up the river to Little Rock... [M]y brigade had not moved more than 1 1/2 miles on the river road, when the enemy opened a heavy volley of musketry, soon repeated, accompanied with artillery. The firing commenced precisely at 12 m. [noon]."

-Colonel J. M. Glover,
3rd Missouri Cavalry
Commanding 2nd Brigade of
Davidson's Cavalry Division, U.S.A.



Map from Official Reports of the War of the Rebellion
Series I, Vol. XXII, Part I, page 515



"At sunrise on the morning of the 10th, the brigade... was ordered to leave the forks of the Brownsville and Shallow Ford roads (at which point we had bivouacked the night previous), cross at the lower pontoon, and move down the river at the double-quick to meet the enemy, who had early in the morning effected a crossing at Terry's Ferry..."

-Colonel William L. Jeffers
8th Missouri Cavalry,
C.S.A.

This exhibit was financed with assistance from the American Battlefield Protection Program, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, and the North Little Rock Volunteers for Improvement and Preservation.

