

MINUTES FROM THE FIRST ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT ¹
February 22, 1997
Wichita, Kansas

The First Annual Encampment of the Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, convened at the Star Lumber Company Cabin located just outside of Wichita, Kansas, on February 22, 1997, in accordance with the orders of the Department Commander, Dean K. Speaks.

MORNING SESSION

The Encampment was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by the Department Commander with ceremonies per the ritual.

Following the roll call of Officers of the Encampment, member Roger Ackeret, sitting in for the Department Chaplain who could not attend, invoked the divine blessing and Department Color Guard Jim Finneran presented the colors.

The Encampment was honored to have in attendance our Commander-in-Chief, Alan R. Loomis of Valparaiso, Indiana and the Past National President of the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, Ercelle E. Speaks of Beloit, Kansas. Commander-in-Chief Loomis and Past National President Speaks both brought their greetings to our Encampment following their receiving their “welcome” from the Encampment.

Reading of the Minutes and Officer Reports

Department Secretary/Treasurer Christopher R. Horn of Hillsboro then read the roll of Members reported present and eligible to vote. The Secretary then read the minutes of the Special Encampment held on August 3, 1996, which formed our Department and gave the Treasurer’s Report. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and financial report as read and was passed unanimously.

Department Commander Dean K. Speaks then gave his report as follows:

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

At the Special Encampment held in Salina, Kansas, on August 3, 1996 for the express purpose of the formation of the Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, I had the honor bestowed upon me, by the Brothers present at that meeting, of being elected to serve as the first Department Commander for the Department of Kansas.

I would like to thank the Brothers of this Department who have shown their faith in me by selecting me to serve as their Department Commander for this past year. I want you to know that it has been an enjoyable experience and that I will continue to serve this Department in whatever capacity in the future.

1 – the minutes of the Special Encampment as well as the 1st Annual Encampment were written using notes of the Department Commander along with his memories of the events. This was due to the Department Secretary of 1996-97 resigning midway through his term and “misplacing” the minutes, etc. from the previous Encampments. It is entirely possible that some things were left out inadvertently, I’m sure, but this could not be helped. - Dean K. Speaks

As the newest Department of the SUVCW we have had quite a year. We have suffered through growing pains, as could be expected, and have survived to become a strong, and vibrant Department. As this is not only my Commander's report, but is a report on the State of the Department to date, I could not do it justice without providing a history of our Department to date.

Originally the idea was to recruit a couple of Camps of the Sons in Kansas under the auspices of the Department of Iowa. This was because at the time we felt it would be easier to form Camps under a Department that had been established for over 110 years to "get our feet wet" and then, as recruiting and Camp formation began to take shape, branch these Camps off into a Department of their own. As you will see later in this report, the idea didn't quite work as planned.

On September 2, 1995 the dream began that would take shape as the Department of Kansas. I had set up display tables at the local Chautauqua Celebration in Beloit featuring artifacts from the Civil War and information about our Order and the Allied Orders in Kansas. The theme for the 1995 celebration was "Civil War Remembered" and during a two-day stretch I spoke with over 500 people concerning our Orders and what we are all about. It was at this celebration that I met Bob Westgate and the idea of forming a local Camp started to take shape.

In November of 1995 I held my first of several meetings with the members of the Civil War Roundtable in Salina, better known as the 8th Kansas Infantry, and spoke with them about forming a Camp in North Central Kansas.

On February 12, 1996 I attended the Lincoln Day Celebration in Lincoln, Kansas where I first made acquaintance with the members of the 1st Kansas Infantry from Wichita. As I spoke with them about the Sons they mentioned that their group was to attend an encampment at Camp To-wah-kan-I (a Boy Scout Camp near Augusta, Kansas) on March 2nd and that I should come by and meet with them. At the event on March 2nd we started the process of putting together the Cpl. Patrick Coyne Camp #1 in Wichita, which became, officially, the first SUVCW Camp in Kansas. I also learned an interesting recipe for some kind of unidentified soup from Jerry Seery at this meeting. No wonder you guys like hardtack so much!

March 14th, 1996 I met again with the Civil War Roundtable in Salina and at this meeting we had 8 sign up on the Charter Request to form the Col. John A. Martin Camp #8 in Salina. Both Camp Charter Requests along with applications for 24 new members were turned in to the Department Commander of the Department of Iowa at their Spring Encampment on March 30, 1996. During this Encampment I was honored to receive the "Wayne W. Moriarty Award" for recruiting from the Department of Iowa.

Unfortunately for the Department of Iowa and, perhaps, fortunately for the Department of Kansas, the Department Commander failed to act on either of these Charter Requests for a period of close to 3 months. During this amount of time I had met with a group of Sons in the Kansas City area and formed the Brig. Gen. Thomas Ewing, Jr. Camp #2 in Johnson County. I had also recruited enough members to form a second camp in the North Central Kansas area, the Joseph Gaston Camp #3 in Beloit and the Department of Kansas was well underway.

Due to the lack of timely cooperation from the Department Commander of Iowa, I had been keeping in contact with the Commander-in-Chief and, while apprising him of our situation, asking for a recommendation. By order of Commander-in-Chief David R. Medert, after his receipt of requests from the Camp Commanders of all 4 Camps in Kansas, I undertook the task of calling a Special Encampment of the Department of Kansas to be held in Salina, Kansas on August 3, 1996. At this meeting the delegates from the respective Camps elected Department Officers, passed Department Bylaws and set the date for the Encampment that we are at today.

I attended the National Encampment in Columbus, Ohio on August 9, 10, & 11th and, as the first Delegate to the National Encampment from the Department of Kansas, was able to cast our vote on several key issues affecting the policies of the SUVCW. At the Encampment Banquet I had the honor, in front of several hundred attendees, to receive the Department Charter for the newest Department in the SUVCW, the Department of Kansas. I also am honored to have been chosen by the Commander-in-Chief to receive the "Cornelius F. Whitehouse Award" for "Most Outstanding Member" for 1995-96, which was awarded at the National Encampment.

I was chosen to represent the Commander-in-Chief at a Charter Presentation ceremony for a new Camp-at-Large of the Sons in Omaha, Nebraska. The ceremony was held on October 5, 1996 on the porch of the Arbor House in Nebraska City, Nebraska. This camp has approximately 25 members and, at one time, was contemplating joining our Department. I was informed by the Camp Commander, George Schultz that the Camp decided that at this time it was better for the Camp to remain as a Camp-at-Large but that at some time in the future they may be reconsidering whether to join our Department. I informed the Camp Commander that the invitation will remain open and that if they needed any help from our Department we would be glad to oblige.

On November 11, 1996 I attended the Veteran's Day services at Maple Grove Cemetery conducted by the Cpl. Patrick Coyne Camp #1. These services were held at two locations in the Cemetery including the G.A.R. Memorial. I was given the honor of helping conduct the services, which were attended by a large crowd and featured a three round volley by the honor guard. This ceremony was also attended by representatives of the Daughters of Union Veterans and the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic. A wreath was placed at the steps to the monument and a tour of the area after the ceremony brought about the discussion of raising funding for the restoration of the area. I will be more than happy to assist the Cpl. Patrick Coyne Camp in its efforts to raise the funds for this much needed restoration project. I feel that such projects are what we are here for and they will be very beneficial to bringing the SUVCW much needed publicity.

During my short time as your Department Commander I have driven thousands of miles on Sons business and have attended meetings with every Camp, have written countless hundreds of letters, electronic mail correspondence, etc, corresponding with each and every member of the Department.

In closing, I would like to make several recommendations to this Encampment for future action by our Department. My first recommendation is that we need to set some sort of Department Dues that will enable the Department to provide at least postage for mailings. Communication is the key to success in any venture. I feel that we need to provide, in a budget, some sort of funding for a Department Newsletter to be mailed out on at least a quarterly basis and that contains not only Department Orders and

communications, but also interesting articles on the Civil War period in American and Kansas History along with information of interest to our membership and future recruits.

My second recommendation is that each and every member of this Department recruit at least one new member to their Camp (or to another Camp) of this Department in the next 12 months. This would, in effect, at least double the size of our Department. This is where we should be and it is not that hard to do. I, personally, have recruited over 30 new members to our Department in the last year or so, so I know we can do it.

The third recommendation is that each Camp find a project of some sort to undertake locally that can not only help out their community but will also bring much needed publicity to their Camp, our Department and to our Order. We are not some top-secret lodge or society that we don't want anybody to know about. We must do what we can to let people know who we are and what we do.

My fourth recommendation is that we establish and maintain a site on the World Wide Web either through the National Organization or linked to it from another site. I have e-mailed the Webmaster of the SUVCW about this in this past week and am awaiting his instructions. The SUVCW site receives at least 1,200 hits per month and if we're not on it we don't get any of the traffic. The cost is minimal and this avenue should be explored.

Recommendation number five is that we target areas of the state with advertising to recruit and establish new Camps for, or to enlarge existing Camps of our Department. This can be done by finding out about and attending local Civil War Roundtable meetings, placing ads in the local paper, or magazines of interest to our target audience, putting out flyers, etc. Go by your local Historical Society and if you are not already a member, join, and give them information sheets and/or applications for their information table. The same can be done at your local library, a local college or university History Department, etc. There are hundreds of ways to get the word out about what we are trying to do. We just have to take a little time to do it. Bring a buddy to your next Camp meeting. There is nothing we do, maybe with the exception of the election of Officers, that they cannot witness for themselves. You would be amazed at the response you get.

We have a unique opportunity here gentlemen! Other Departments in this Order have been established for many years and are pretty much set in the way they do things. We have none of those problems in our Department. We control our own destiny and by doing so we can set the tone for future generations of our Department to follow. We are not stuck in a rut with no way out. We can make a difference in our Communities, our State, and our Country. All we have to do is do it!

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Dean K. Speaks
Department Commander

Following a standing ovation for the Department Commander and his efforts, a motion was made by Franklin Bergquist that the report be accepted as given. The motion, seconded by Jerry Seery, was passed unanimously by the Encampment.

There were no other Officer Reports.

INITIATION OF NEW MEMBERS

Commander-in-Chief Loomis was then extended the invitation to speak to the Encampment about topics of interest nationwide in our Order. He reminded the membership about the charge of the SUVCW to perpetuate the memory of the G.A.R., assisting others in promoting patriotism and good citizenship, etc. The Encampment gave him a standing ovation following his address and the Department Commander then requested the Commander-in-Chief do the honors of installing the five new members to the Order, which were present.

Commander-in-Chief Loomis then proceeded to initiate the following new members into their respective Camps of the Department of Kansas:

Cpl. Patrick Coyne Camp #1 – Wichita

Harry Embry, John McDaniel, Van Delhotal and Will Page

Brig. Gen. Thomas Ewing, Jr. Camp #2 – Johnson County

Randy Thies

Following the initiation of the new members the Encampment recessed for lunch, which was catered by Kenneth Strader.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The Encampment was called back to Order by the Department Commander at 1:00 p.m. per the Ritual.

Department Commander Speaks then presented all correspondence received during the year. The most noteworthy of which was a Proclamation of Invitation from the City of Beloit to be the Host City for our Encampment in 1998. The Department Commander explained that this was due to the plan of having the re-dedication of “Soldier’s Square” during our Encampment. Soldier’s Square is a project that he has been working on for about 3 years and would be completed shortly before our Encampment date in 1998. The proposed date of the Annual Encampment would be April 25, 1998.

Following some discussion from the members on the subject the motion was made by Franklin Berquist and seconded by Randy Thies that we accept the invitation from Beloit even though by doing so we would be foregoing our previous decision to rotate “Host Camps” by Camp number. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Department Commander Speaks presented a resolution from the Gaston Camp proposing a change tour Bylaws, which would change the number of members on the Department Council of

Administration from the original proposal of four to three so that we can comply with the National Organization's Constitution and Regulations. The motion was made by Jerry Seery and seconded by Franklin Bergquist to accept the proposed change. The motion passed unanimously.

Department Commander Speaks presented a resolution from the Gaston Camp proposing a Department Per Capita Tax of \$1.00 per member per quarter for use in covering expenses of the Department. The motion was made by Franklin Bergquist and seconded by Jerry Seery to accept the resolution. The motion passed unanimously following some discussion.

Department Commander Speaks presented a resolution from the Gaston Camp proposing a change to our Department Bylaws, Article 9, Section B, which would change the Camp Charter fee from the current \$5.00 to \$25.00 to correspond with the National Organization's changed fees. The motion was made by Chris Horn and seconded by James Coyne to accept the change in our Bylaws. The motion passed unanimously.

Franklin Bergquist made a motion that the Department support the "Soldier's Square" renovation project in Beloit with the members getting together for at least one work day to be held prior to the 1998 Department Encampment. The motion was seconded by Jerry Seery and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Franklin Bergquist and seconded by Chris Horn that any member of the Department of Kansas attending the National Encampment, who is not already elected to serve as a Delegate or is not entitled to a vote at the National Encampment by being either a sitting or Past Department Commander is therefore considered an Alternate Delegate of our Department. This will enable anyone from our Department who attends to serve as a Delegate in place of a missing Delegate. The motion passed unanimously.

Franklin Bergquist made a motion, seconded by Jerry Seery, that in order to allow the attendance by re-enactors in our membership we hold our Encampment on the first full weekend in March from now on. This motion passed unanimously. (The exception to this motion being the next Encampment, which is being held in April due to weather concerns from outdoor activities.)

Randy Thies spoke to the assembly about the work of the Kansas State Historical Society and the importance of working with your local Historical Society on projects.

Ercelle Speaks, Past National President of the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic presented the Department with a beautiful Bible and an altar cloth (which she hand made) for use by the Department. The gifts were on behalf of the Department of Kansas, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic. Ercelle was given a standing ovation by the assembly and received the heartfelt thanks of the Department for her gifts. (Note – until this time we had been using a 1860's era Bible whose use was donated by Jerry Seery.)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Franklin Bergquist moved that the same slate of Officer's be kept for the upcoming year with the exception of the Department Council. The motion was seconded by James Coyne and passed unanimously.

The following were nominated and elected to serve on the Department Council of Administration for the next year:

Randal M. Thies.....Topeka
Kenneth D. Strader.....Argonia
Franklin C. Bergquist.....Wichita

The following were nominated and elected to serve as the Department's Delegates to the National Encampment for 1997:

Thomas L. PageWichita
James C. MartinDorrance
Randall M. Thies.....Topeka

The Department Officer's were installed by Commander-in-Chief Alan R. Loomis with the assistance of James Coyne and Harry Embry.

There being no further business to come before it, the Encampment adjourned in due form per the Ritual at 4:30 p.m.

Following a short break the members of the Department were treated to a catered Banquet in the meeting hall, which included the Awards presentations for the Department and the Department Commander's Banquet Speech. The Banquet was followed by "The Commander's Ball" a Civil War period dance, open to the public, featuring music by "Blackwolf" from Salina.

The following were presented Awards during the Banquet:

Cpl. Leonidas B. Davis Award for "Recruiter of the Year" – Jerry Seery, Wichita
Capt. Patrick H. Coney Award for "Member of the Year" – Jerry Seery, Wichita
William W. Nixon Award for "Camp of the Year" – Cpl. Patrick Coyne Camp #1, Wichita