

# THE INDIANA LEGION

ORLANDO A SOMERS CAMP #1 KOKOMO  
JOHN AUTEN CAMP # 8 SOUTH BEND  
WILLIAM P BENTON CAMP#28 CENTERVILLE  
JOHN B ANDERSON CAMP #223 COLUMBUS

JOHN W. FOSTER CAMP #2 EVANSVILLE  
CHAMPION HILL CAMP #17 HUNTINGTON  
DAVID D PORTER CAMP #116 VALPARAISO  
BEN HARRISON CAMP #356 INDIANAPOLIS

Newsletter of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Department of Indiana  
Dennis C. Hutchinson – Commander  
Issue 3-20

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Sitting Lincoln  
Wabash, IN  
Courthouse Lawn

## From the Desk of the Department of Indiana Commander - Dennis C. Hutchinson



Brothers, to say that this has been a challenging year is an understatement. The COVID-19 virus has put a damper on all of our lives, but our organization carries on as can be seen by the activity the Camps have been able to accomplish. Several memorial events have been carried out and new members have been welcomed into the Fraternity. The Department of Indiana has gained 13 new members or transfers into the Camps since May. Unfortunately the Department had 1 brother pass away this summer. Some of the Camps have been meeting virtually using Zoom and others have been able to meet in-person. As we all know several National events were cancelled this year including the cancellation of the August, 139th National Encampment in Atlanta, Georgia. The National Encampment was then moved to October 24th as a virtual Encampment, with 13 Department of Indiana Brothers participating.

The Department of Indiana Winter-Encampment was planned to take place in Huntington, Indiana in January. Due to the pandemic being more widespread, the Encampment will be held virtually January 30th, 2021. I believe that the Department should continue to be in communication with Brothers in our Camps and therefore I request that this is an opportunity for all members to participate in the Zoom Encampment. More information will be forthcoming about this.

As Commander, I want to thank all of you for your hard work and perseverance in keeping the good works going forward. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and hope that 2021 brings stability and happiness to everyone!

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via email: [31stind@gmail.com](mailto:31stind@gmail.com) or by Cell: 812-660-2192.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,  
Dennis Hutchinson  
Commander – Department of Indiana Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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*Remembering the sacrifices made by the soldiers and sailors of the Civil War who fought to preserve the Union  
we are dedicated to continuing the patriotic work begun by our parent organization,  
The Grand Army of the Republic*

**Whitley County Indiana – Sept 26, 2020**

Brother Jim Floyd led a group of merry members in the fine art of removing old headstones and setting new ones at the graves of Daniel and Noah Stoner. With the simple but effective apparatus supplied by Brother Floyd the job was relatively easy to do and provided a marked improvement over the old stones that had deteriorated. Any camp wanting to work on headstones that have come to their attention in need of cleaning or replacement can contact Brother Rick Wiegman (Camp 17) or Brother Jim Floyd (Camp 356) for more information.



**Brother G. Young, P. Dyer, R. Wiegman and T. Beckman (Young & Dyer supervising).**



**Bro. T. Beckman, T. Schmidt, G. Young, and Rick Wiegman (Young supervising).**

**Champion Hill Camp No. 17 – Headstone Replacement and Dedication on October 17, 2020  
(photo by Todd Cordill)**



**Brothers (l to r) Phil Dyer, Rick Wiegmann, Brian Ford, Gib Young, Dave Tilden, Todd Cordill**

Camp 17, at the request from Brother Todd Cordill of Michigan ordered and replaced two headstones for brother Daniel and Noah Stoner who are buried in the Washington Township Cemetery in Whitley County, Indiana. The brothers were in the 34th and 51st Indiana Infantry respectively. At the dedication were about 16 descendants Stoner brothers. Members of Camp 17 and several neighbors of the township were also in attendance. Brother Rick Wiegman spoke about the efforts to obtain and replace the stones and Brother Brian Ford spoke on the SUVCW and its mission in honoring the soldiers. Camp 17 wishes to acknowledge and thank Brothers Jim Floyd and Tim Beckman with their help in removing the old stones and replacing them with the new ones.

(below is a letter of thanks that was to the Department through Rick Wiegmann)

Dear Rick,

I would like to thank you and all involved from the Department of Indiana for installing the headstones and conducting the ceremony for my relatives Daniel and Noah Stoner. It was nice to have about 20 descendants of Daniel Stoner in attendance Saturday. I have enclosed a photograph that my wife took during the ceremony. I thought it was a good ceremony and everyone was thankful for that.....

In F, C, and L, Todd Cordill Dept. of Michigan



**Stoner Brothers Ceremony Bothers (L to R) Steve Williams, Phil Dyer, Rick Wiegmann, Gib Young, Dave Tilden, Don Morgan, Brian Ford, Al Bowers, Todd Cordill (Flags on New Headstones)**

Below is the last half of Brother Ford's words to those assembled. He reviewed the service of both the Stoner Brothers and then spoke of the duty and mission of the SUVCW. They are words worth reading and remembering.

....While time and generations may have faded the legacy of these two brothers let us never forget after all the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War have pledged since 1881 to uphold and to preserve that very legacy. It is our duty to protect these individuals and their stories. It is a privilege to be able to care for their final vestige in perpetuity. This is a task the sons do not take lightly I know that our members feel a high sense of dedication for the causes of our organization - especially given Union men were our forefathers. They were our own blood, their sacrifices affected our very own families and those said trajectories. Just as the nation continues to still heal its wounds from the war the 'Sons' have been hard at work every day through various programs in picking up the pieces leftover. Our organization promises to locate and record every single Union grave and its condition. Our efforts are to educate the public and our youth with an unvarnished history of the war. These are the simple things that are owed to the army of the republic. The Sons of Union Veterans goes even further though. We have pledged to locate, inspect and catalog every single Grand Army of the Republic and civil war monument. We even seek out to find and log all of the records of the Grand Army of the Republic. While the tasks we face may be large. Our dedication of heart remains larger. And until the last headstone is cared for and the last shred of paper is documented we will continue on. Major Augustus Davis said in 1881,..." through this organization the declining days of the Union veteran will be made pleasant, his record of service to his country preserved, his memory honored, and his patriotism promoted." In fraternity, charity, and loyalty. Thank you

**Treasurer's Report**



I'm Gib Young – the Department Treasurer.

I was elected by members because I have great hair and I dress very well – very well.

And my Las Vegas investments have done well for the department.

As of the printing of this issue of the Indiana Legion our funds stand at....\$9,515.00

**The 'You Thought I didn't mean it Department**

**On Sale – Still!**

**Sons of Veterans – Department of Indiana Badges.**

These 'sharp looking' badges are of bright red bordered with gold. They are like those adopted and issued by the various departments over 100 years ago. The look sharp on hats (slouch or kepi) and look equally dashing on blazers or suit coats. The cost is a miniscule \$6.00 per badge. Send your check (or cash) to Gib Young, 2004 Hunters Ridge Dr. Huntington, Indiana 46750.



**Warning!**

**This ad will be repeated until we get these badges sold**

The Company Singers of Camp 17 are still alive and creaking – I mean kicking. Here they are performing for spectators at Huntington's Veterans's Day Parade on November 11. Left to right – Gib Young, Jim Kline, Dave Tilden, and Rick Hensley.

Believe it or not, some people actually sang along.



**Please note that the Mid Winter Encampment is to be held virtually on January 30th. You will have to wait awhile to come up and see 'Huntington – the hidden gem on the Wabash'. (You will have to have a pass to get through the gate.)**

**President Benjamin Harrison Birthday Ceremony - August 22, 2020**

Members of the Ben Harrison Camp No. 356 and Co. D, 27th Indiana S.V.R. celebrated the 187th birthday of President Benjamin Harrison at his grave in Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis. Since the "official" ceremony was cancelled due to COVID-19, members of the camp decided to have a smaller ceremony. As is customary, the President of the United States provided a wreath, which was presented at the grave a few days prior. Taps were played and three volleys were fired at the conclusion of the ceremony (see pictures below).

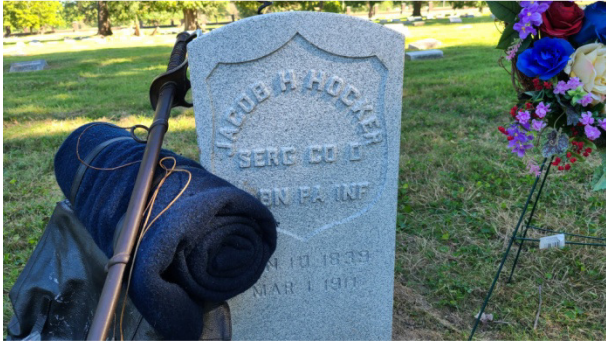


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**Gravestone Dedication Ceremony, Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis, IN - September 5, 2020**

Members of the Ben Harrison Camp No. 356 with assistance from Co. D, 27th Indiana S.V.R. and the Department of Indiana Commander Dennis Hutchinson, along with many descendants of the veteran participated in the headstone dedication service for SGT Jacob H. Hocker - Co. D, 3rd BN PA INF. His grave had gone unmarked for over 100 years (see pictures below). This ceremony also received excellent Indianapolis television news coverage. Click on the link below to view one of the news stories:

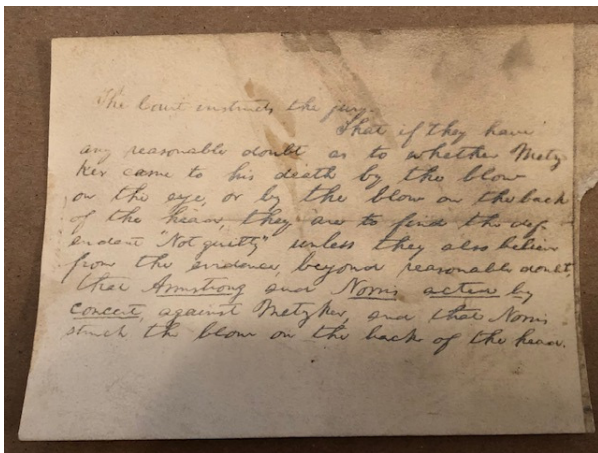
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euEznQh19L0&feature>



**A Small Photo Tells a BIG Story - by Bruce Kolb, PDC**

A couple of weeks ago, I was looking through a collection of Lincoln related photos. I came across this small photo. It was very inexpensive and I recognized one name right away “Armstrong.”

The three by five inch silver albumen photo was of a handwritten note. The note was instructions to be read to a jury informing them of their charge. The handwriting is unmistakable that of Abraham Lincoln.



The note states: The Court instructs the jury - That if they have any reasonable doubt as to whether Metzker came to his death by the blow on the eye, or by the blow on the back of the head, they are to find the defendant "Not guilty" unless they also believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Armstrong and Norris' actions by concert against Metzker and that Norris struck the blow on the back of the head.

Jack Armstrong was the town bully and one of the Clary’s Grove boys who Lincoln wrestled as a young man in New Salem. He bested the young Jack, earned his respect, and they became life long friends. Jack went on to marry a girl named Hannah and they had a son named William “Duff” Armstrong. Duff went on to become a Union soldier and was granted a discharge by Lincoln, at his Mother’s request, in 1863 because of illness. Jack Armstrong, having died several years earlier, left Hannah Armstrong to once again asks Lincoln for help when her son was arrested and charges with the murder of James Metzker.

On April 29, 1857 Duff Armstrong, James Metzker, and a James Norris were drinking in a small grove of trees near a Camp Meeting. An argument was ensued and Metzker was hit in the back of the head by a "slung shot" or what is commonly known as a blackjack. The fight broke up, and Metzker road home on his horse (falling off at least twice according to testimony). Metzker died three days later.

Both Armstrong and Norris were tried for murder. Within the month Norris had been tried and convicted of manslaughter and was sentenced to eight years in prison. Lincoln was granted a change of venue for the trial. Lincoln called two witnesses a Nelson Watkins who testified that the slung shot was his and he threw it away the day after the fight, and a Dr. Parker who testified that the fatal injury could have occurred when Metzker repeatedly fell from his horse.

The prosecution's main witness was Charles Allen who testified that from a distance of perhaps 60 feet under a bright moon, he saw Armstrong strike Metzker with the slung shot. This was when Lincoln who had been complacent most of the trial sprang to life. He repeatedly questioned Allen again and again on what he saw and how it was possible being almost midnight when the fight broke out.

Lincoln being ever resourceful pulled out an 1858 almanac and found the day in question. He was granted permission to have the jury look at the almanac which showed no full moon high overhead on the day at issue. This as far as the jury was concerned invalidated all of Allen's testimony.

Armstrong was acquitted and Lincoln did not ask for any payment.

It is interesting how important this case was to Lincoln's legacy. Norman Rockwell did a famous painting of Lincoln holding the almanac during his defense of Duff Armstrong. Another reveling of the story was the basis of the movie Young Mr. Lincoln.



All of this history comes to life as a result of this small photo.

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**"The 'Sometimes I sit and think and other times I just sit' Department"**

If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

Why is a person who plays the piano called a pianist, but a person who drives a race car is not called a racist?

If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?

Do Lipton Tea employees take 'coffee breaks?'