



The Indiana Legion

Department of Indiana • Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
Thomas L. Schmitt - Commander

Issue 1-25

April 2025



As the weather continues to improve, I find that I have spent the last four Saturdays in cemeteries. I hope many of you are doing the same. Two were spent at an abandoned cemetery named Oak Grove. It is claimed that there are eleven Veterans buried there, it was so overgrown, I have personally only seen one. The place is improving and is getting to a point where it is almost presentable.

On March 20th I installed the officers at our newest camp. The William Bumgarner Camp #33 in Bluffton, Indiana. On March 22 and there was a ceremony for Civil War nurse Helene Wolff, at Lindenwood Cemetery. This ceremony was put on by the DAR. I fired volleys and played taps. On March 29th I attended a ceremony arranged by John Auten camp #8 at Saint Mary's Campus, Notre Dame, Indiana. Flags were placed at 74 Civil War nurse's gravesites, with a ceremony for Mother Angel. The LGAR ladies were present and participated in the ceremony. This was a very nice ceremony and was well attended. The rain even stopped long enough for the graveside ceremony to take place. Congratulations to

Commander Jon Swarts and to the brothers of John Auten camp. This ceremony took a lot of extra work due to the number of nurses. As my term as Commander comes to an end, my plan is to continue cleaning and straightening Veterans Headstones, they deserve it. I also plan to continue to work in abandon cemeteries as these are the reasons I joined the SUVCW in the first place. I have also unexpectedly become the chairman of the Lincoln Charitable Foundation, That will be quite a challenge.

Message from the new editor

Greetings brothers of the Department of Indiana, my name is Taylin Allen and I will be taking on the role as editor of *The Legion*.

My hope is to maintain the quality of my predecessors, though I have much to learn. Going forward, I ask that articles, activities, events and otherwise interesting items that camps or members wish to be published be sent to my email at XatLuxain@gmail.com

Not everything can get published but it is better to have too much than too little to work with, so when you are sending me items please include lots of details & images to choose from.

Ideally I would like to publish an edition of *The Legion* quarterly with maybe a special, shorter edition with a focus on our Annual Encampment in April. I hope to meet plenty of you there.



Department of Indiana

Officers

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Council Member: J. Alan Teller, PDC
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Eagle Scout Coordinator: Michael W. Beck, PDC
Counselor: Bruce R. Kolb, Jr., PDC
GAR Highway Officer: William R. Adams, PDC
Signals Officer: Timothy J. Beckman, PDC
Legion Editor: Taylin Allen
GAR Records Officer: Bruce R. Kolb, Jr., PDC

Camps

Orlando A. Somers #1 (Kokomo)
John W. Foster #2 (Evansville)
John Auten #8 (South Bend)
Champion Hill #17 (Huntington)
William P. Benton #28 (Centerville)
William Bumgarner #33 (Bluffton)
David D. Porter #116 (Valparaiso)
John B. Anderson #223 (Columbus)
Ben Harrison #356 (Indianapolis)

UPCOMING Events

April

12th: 69th Annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony (SVR)
Oak Ridge Cemetery
Springfield, Illinois
10:00 a.m. CDT

12th: NSDU Marker Dedication (SVR)
Governor Oliver P. Morton House
Centerville, Indiana
1:00 p.m. EST

19th: 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution
Nation Wide
(Later page)

**26th: 139th Department of Indiana
Annual Encampment**
Indiana Veterans' Home
West Lafayette, Indiana
9:00 a.m. EDT

*SVR: Indicates event at which Sons of Veterans
Reserve members are encouraged to participate in
uniform.*



139th Annual Encampment Department of Indiana

Held at 9:00 a.m. Saturday April 26th. Join us at the Indiana Veterans' Home in West Lafayette. Our ancestors in the Grand Army of the Republic were instrumental in establishing the Veterans' Home, which opened after a 10 year campaign in 1896. We will be meeting in the old Commandant's Quarters, of which you can see here in a few historic postcards. The grounds are quite large, some 250 acres with a park and trails if you wish to come early or stay late and explore. Address and registration provided on the flier on the next page!



Brothers of the Department of Indiana at the 138th annual encampment.

SUVCW

2025

139th ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT

TOM SCHMITT

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA • SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

April 26, 2025 • 9:00 a m E D T

Commandant's Home
Indiana Veterans' Home

3851 N. River Road, West Lafayette, IN 47906

- BUSINESS MEETING -

- JIMMY JOHN'S BOX LUNCH MEAL AND WATER ON-SITE -

- ENCAMPMENT IS FREE TO ATTEND (COST ONLY FOR LUNCH MEAL) -

PLEASE BRING YOUR CAMP FLAG AND ITS BASE

Please pre-register if you plan to attend.



ENCAMPMENT PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Camp: _____

You may pre-register electronically by contacting Tim Beckman, timbeckman@gmail.com

LUNCH MEAL, IF DESIRED, MUST BE PAID FOR IN ADVANCE

Lunch meal checks should be made payable to: *Department of Indiana, SUVCW*

Mail this order form and check to: Tim Beckman 1135 North Leland Ave. • Indianapolis, IN 46219-2949

LUNCH MEAL ORDERS AND PAYMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 23, 2025

Number of lunch meals @ \$14.00 each - indicate quantity:

TURKEY ___ HAM ___ ROAST BEEF ___



101st Lincoln Day

On February 9th the 27th Indiana Sons of Veterans Reserve participated in Lincoln Day programs at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Spencer County, Indiana. Programs included presentation of the colors, special music, a pilgrimage & wreath laying ceremony at Nancy Hanks Lincoln's grave and Joshua Claybourn's program: "Nancy Hanks Lincoln: The Woman Who Shaped a President"

Brothers present were:

Alan Teller, Mike Beck, Bruce Kolb, Andrew Kolb, Tim Beckman, Joe Beckman, Fred Leicky, Dennis Hutchinson, Gary Walls, Tom Schmitt, Terry Furgason, Mike Ochs, Jeff Maudlin, Randy McNally, David Hoesli & Josh Claybourn





Patriotic Instruction

Jonathan Swarts
Patriotic Instructor

One of the privileges of being a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is knowing that we are heirs to an incredibly rich history, both that of the SUCVW as well as of the Grand Army of the Republic. One wonderful way to experience that history is to look back through old issues of The Banner, which are archived on the national SUCVW website (<https://sucvw.org/Banner-Editions>). Reading these past issues, one gets a sense of our rich history, the many traditions we still carry on today, and also what has changed over the course of time.

I would like to share one short article that appeared in the January-February 1959 Banner. It was written by Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant III, SUCVW Commander-in-Chief in 1953 and 1954, and Chairman of the Civil War Centennial Commission, discussing the upcoming observance of the centennial of the Civil War. As we observe in 2025 the 160 th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, its message is as meaningful and fresh as it was in 1959.



Published bi-monthly by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Organized 1881—the only male organization recognized by the Grand Army of the Republic—Chartered by Act of Congress

Volume 63

P. O. Box 457, Trenton 3, N. J.—January-February, 1959

No. 1

Why Commemorate the Civil War?

In answer to the questions “Why commemorate the Civil War?” “Why revive the memory of fratricidal strife?” I submit that the Civil War was the greatest test our country ever faced. Built of the heroism and endurance that were drawn from men and women of both sections by devotion to principles valued more than life itself, it was our most profound and tragic experience. What was finally gained by it affected our national character and our national destiny itself—the preservation of the American Union as an instrumentality of freedom for all the peoples of the world—was gained by all of us. The loss, the gain and the experience itself are a common national possession.

To commemorate the Centennial of this war we do not want simply to string together a series of holidays, reviving here the exultation of victory and there the sadness of defeat. Rather, the Centennial must give us a new understanding of the way in which Americans built from sacrifice and suffering an enduring Nation and a lasting peace. Our ancestors fought to the limit of endurance for four years; when the fighting ended they closed ranks, saw in the unity of their land something that overshadowed the bitterness of the fight. Ever since the sons and grandsons of the enemies in that war have fought shoulder to shoulder in four foreign wars. This is an inspiring happening unique in history.



Moreover, the Civil War was a marvelous display of American ingenuity in the way our citizen armies and navies, both entirely unprepared and untrained for war, met the emergencies of the situation in equipment, supply and armament. It was not fought on the basis of the previous war, but new methods, new tactics, new arms and ammunition were developed to meet the exigencies of the changing situation. It was the first war in which the telegraph permitted the coordination of armies in different geographical theaters of operation, and facilitated keeping the population advised promptly of events; the first war in which rifled guns and repeating rifles were used; the first in which the iron-clad ship was improvised; the first in which land mines and submarine mines (then misnamed torpedoes) were tried; the first in which observation from the air was tried; the first in which railroads were effectively used for the movement of large bodies of troops from one theater of operations to another; the first in which the use of cavalry masses by themselves to grasp strategic points quickly and hold them dismounted was fully developed (a premonition of the armored corps of today); the first in which the care of the wounded was finally organized; the first in which the treatment of citizens in occupied territories were codified; the first in which the entire population was called upon to bear its part of the burden of war. Indeed, it was the first modern war.

Finally, while our country raised and trained two citizen armies, who fought one another with an effectiveness and self-sacrifice seldom equaled in human history; when the war was over the combatants of both sides quickly and without question returned to their homes and resumed their peaceful occupations; another unique demonstration of American character.

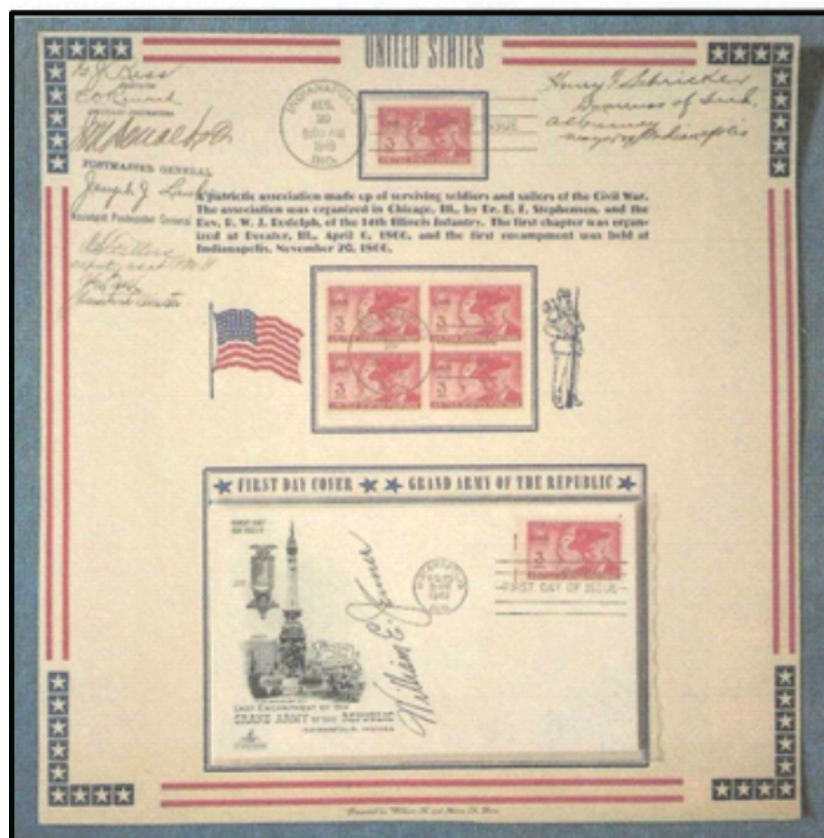
So, the Centennial observances must be a new study of American patriotism and capability—a study which should give us deeper understanding of the immense reserves of bravery, of sacrifice and of idealism which lie in the American character.

- U. S. Grant 3rd, Maj-Gen. U. S. A. Ret. Chairman Civil War Centennial Comm.



The Final Grand Army Encampment

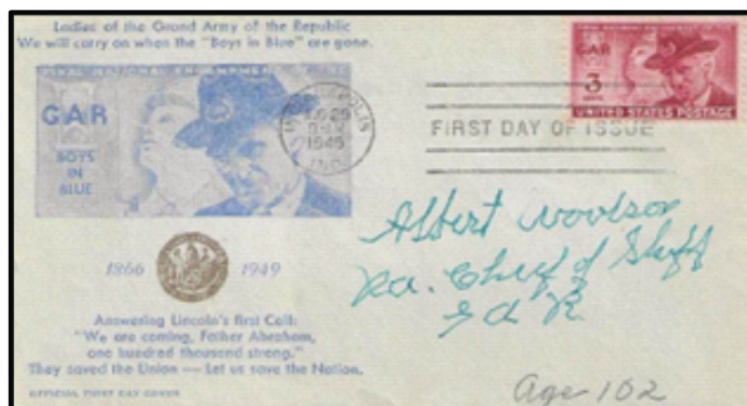
By Michael Downs



The very first National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic was held in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1866 after it was started by Dr. B. F. Stephensen in Decatur, Illinois. It was formed as a fraternal organization for the veterans of the army and navy who fought in the Civil War, 1861 thru 1865. Over the years it grew into a very powerful political organization that protected the fundamental rights of the Civil War veterans. However, over the years its membership slowly passed away until by 1949 there were a mere handful of soldiers from the Civil War era still alive. Making a conscientious decision not to allow veterans of other conflicts to become members the organization decided instead to pass from the scene when the last member was laid to rest.

This program souvenir is signed by several dignitaries including the Governor of Indiana Henry Schricker the Mayor of Indianapolis Al Feeney and the Postmaster General Jessie M. Donaldson. The cachet was designed by Art Craft and shows the War Memorial in downtown Indianapolis and the G.A.R. membership badge. The G.A.R. stamp was issued on August 29th, 1949, the second day of the encampment and the speaker at the program was the Assistant Postmaster General Joseph J. Lawler. The stamp was designed by Charles R. Chickering of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and depicts a young soldier going off to war and the aging veteran facing eternity. The stamp itself was printed using the rotary process in red and issued in sheets of fifty and is Scott #985.

This is a First Day Cover of the Grand Army of the Republic stamp with the cachet designed by the Ladies of the G.A.R. It is unique in that the cover is signed by Albert Woolson who would be the very last member of the veterans organization to pass away in August of 1956. In his honor a memorial was placed in the Gettysburg National Military Park.





ORLANDO A. SOMERS CAMP #1

Orlando A. Somers Camp #1 has reached their goal of \$12,000 to repair the Civil War monument in Thraikill Cemetery, north of Swayzee, Indiana. This monument was the first of its kind in Grant County, having been originally dedicated on July 4th, 1910 by the Edwin Lennox Post #408 of the Grand Army of the Republic. When it was dedicated, the local Swayzee press stated: ***"It stands also as a silent testimonial that the lives and deeds of those heroes are not forgotten nor unappreciated by the present generation and that their memory shall be perpetuated through future ages."*** Does this statement not encapsulate the feelings of the generation that preserved the Union and of the generation that came after? Do these words not perfectly align with the purpose of our order? To keep green the memory of the boys in blue?



Thanks to the brothers of Orlando A. Somers Camp, we can rest assured that the answer is, and will always be, an emphatic "Yes!". Their efforts, in a task that was no small undertaking, will preserve this monument for generations to come.

A re-dedication ceremony is planned for July 12th, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Address for the cemetery is 522 N 800 W 27, Converse Indiana.



JOHN W. FOSTER CAMP #2

Bellefontaine Cemetery Headstone Rededication

Mt. Vernon, Indiana

By Dennis Hutchinson

John W. Foster Camp No. 2 held a re-dedication ceremony for the veterans in Soldiers Row at Bellefontaine Cemetery in Mt. Vernon, Indiana on November 9, 2024. Members of John W. Foster Camp No. 2 and the Owen Dunn Post No. 5 worked together to install 102 new military headstones and cleaned 26 older headstones as well as installing a fence enclosure. The project began in spring of 2022 and was completed in the spring of 2024.

The ceremony drew a large crowd including reporters from the local media. Wreaths were presented by the John W. Foster Camp No. 2 as well as the Brigadier General Eli Huston Murry Chapter of Daughters of the Union and seven area heritage groups representing the American Revolution and the War of 1812 veterans. The Owen Dunn Post assisted Brother Dennis Hutchinson of the Sons of Veteran Reserve in the Honor Guard service. Available on hand were seven members of the Mt. Vernon Fire Department with a ladder truck and a drone to provide aerial photos of the event. Tents and refreshments were provided by the Owen Dunn Post No 5 Sons of the American Legion.



The project and event were a great example of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the community working together to preserve the history of our Civil War veterans.

See next page for more photos



JOHN W. FOSTER CAMP #2





JOHN AUTEN CAMP #8

Honoring Mother Angela and the Civil War Nurses of the Holy Cross

By Jonathan Swarts

A Ceremony of Remembrance was held on the campus of Saint Mary's College in South Bend on March 29 to honor Mother Angela Gillespie, CSC and the Civil War Nurses of the Holy Cross for their service during the Civil War. The event, organized by John Auten Camp #8 and the Sisters of the Holy Cross, recognized the contributions of these women who left Saint Mary's to care for wounded soldiers.

The program began with the Presentation of Colors by Co. D, 27th Indiana Infantry, Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR), under the command of the Lt. Col. Alan Teller. The SVR Honor Guard also led a firing of muskets in tribute.

After an invocation by Sister Sharlet Ann Wagner, CSC, President of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Jonathan Swarts, Commander of John Auten Camp #8, welcomed attendees and spoke about the importance of remembering Civil War nurses. Speakers also included Erin Mongelli, National President of the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, and Thomas L. Schmitt, Commander of the Department of Indiana, SUVCW. Sister Maureen Grady, CSC, then gave a very informative and moving presentation on "Mother Angela and the Sisters of Saint Mary's Academy as Civil War Nurses," recounting personal stories of the nurses and their work caring for the sick and wounded.



The ceremony included wreath-layings by John Auten Camp #8, Orlando Somers Camp #1, the Department of Indiana, the National LGAR, and Arsinoe Martin Circle #78, LGAR, as well as music from bagpiper Lenny Sailor. The Department's commemorative Civil War Nurses medallion was presented to Sister Sharlet Ann Wagner on behalf of the SUVCW in recognition of the Sisters' service.



Sister Maureen Grady, CSC





CHAMPION HILL CAMP #17

Friends of



Oak Grove Cemetery

Current Events

3001 Sleepy Hollow Ln
Aubrie Township—Fort Wayne



Oak Grove Cemetery – Saturday, March 15

Rain was in the forecast BUT not at Oak Grove Cemetery! We had a great volunteer turnout despite the rainy forecast. A little iffy at 10 am, then the clouds parted and showed us some love. Not too hot, not too cold and no rain. Perfect. You cannot judge a cemetery workday by the forecast!



New cemetery restoration skill introduced on March 15th.- Headstone straightening. Brad Mills completed the process on OGCs Civil War Veteran William C Bowman's sunken and crooked headstone.

We are welcoming two new volunteers to the OGC roster: Tom Schmitt and William Pond. Each of these guys stepped right on the cemetery ground to chop, chip, rake and whatever...

Great work and very much appreciated.

Thank you for all that you do.

**Upcoming OGC workdays
10 am**

**Saturday, April 19
Saturday, May 17**

Volunteers of Champion Hill Camp #17 pitch in with Friends of Oak Grove Cemetery to clear brush and weeds that were overtaking it. This was an abandoned cemetery and was in need of some care. The Friends of Oak Grove Cemetery are working diligently with the SAR, DAR & SUVCW to care for the cemetery and bring it back to a presentable state.

Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Flier from the Friends of Oak Grove Cemetery.

Taps played at an event for Wreaths Across America, Oak Grove Cemetery.





WILLIAM BUMGARNER

CAMP #33

Welcome to our most recent addition to the Department of Indiana!

From left to right members are: Robert Vanover, Curtis Vanover, Kash Vanover, Greg Vanover and Jeff Lemler.



The new camp is named in honor of William Bumgarner, a sergeant in Company A, 4th West Virginia Infantry. William was born in 1837 and was 24 years old when he enlisted into the Union Army on June 1st, 1861, for a period of three years. On May 22nd 1863, at Vicksburg Mississippi, 150 soldiers, including sergeant William, volunteered to be part of a storming party in what would later famously be known as "The Forlorn Hope." These men were tasked with carrying logs, planks & ladders over an open field in an attempt to build makeshift bridges over the ditch below the fortifications of Vicksburg and then to place ladders in preparation for an all out assault. It was an unmitigated disaster, out of the 150 volunteers, 19 were killed and 34 wounded.

For his heroism, William Bumgarner was awarded the Medal of Honor. His citation reads: "For gallantry in the charge of the volunteer storming party."





JOHN B. ANDERSON CAMP #223



Terry Furgason at Ohio Valley Opportunities Head Start in North Vernon, Jennings County, March 6th. Brother Furgason served for forty-three years as an educator, thirty-seven as a teacher at Jennings County High School before retiring in 2022.

Brother Furgason also portrays Governor Oliver Morton & General Lew Wallace at events to educate younger and older generations alike.



Brother Taylin Allen accepts a grant of \$1200 from the Martin County Community Foundation. December 18th 2024 .

These funds have been used to purchase an interpretive panel for his 19th Illinois Civil War Train Wreck Project in Shoals, Indiana.

A monument for the 28 soldiers killed in the accident is also in the works, with the total cost of the entire project coming in at around \$6000. Thanks to an anonymous donation of nearly \$2700, the project is now **fully funded!**

The monument & panel are slated to be set in place by September 2025 for a dedication ceremony. Contact Taylin Allen for details.



Headstones put in place for John T Noblitt (59th Indiana) and Charles Manship (66th Indiana) Both men previously had no stone.

Rock Springs Cemetery Orange County, Indiana, March 12th.



BENJAMIN HARRISON CAMP #356



Joe Beckman, Mike Beck, Bruce Kolb, Tim Beckman & Brian Mexin

Brothers of Benjamin Harrison Camp participate in Wreathes Across America at Williams Creek Cemetery, Indianapolis. December 13th 2024.



America's 250th Birthday



The Semiquincentennial of the American Revolution and Declaration of Independence is rapidly approaching. The Semiquincentennial Commission is working with historical societies and patriotic organizations nationwide to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Plans are well underway to kick off events and displays of patriotism on April 19th 2025, the anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord, to celebrate our shared national history. The project, "America 250", will ultimately culminate on the fourth of July, 2025, in what will likely be the largest national celebration of Independence Day since 1976.

Brothers and Camps are encouraged to contact and work with their local historical societies to plan and coordinate activities. This will be a great chance to meet and make connections with other like minded groups and people. As Americans look to channel that patriotism that guided us through the revolution, we have the opportunity to offer our order, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, as a home to do just that.

For more information, visit America250.org



"Declaration of Independence" - John Trumbull



IN MEMORY OF Deceased Brothers of the Department of Indiana

Brother Lew (Mike) Michael Thomas, Life Member 1029, died June 3, 2024 at the age of 79. He was a member of the Orlando A. Somers Camp #1.

He served 25 years as a firefighter, Captain and instructor for the Anderson Fire Department and later Chief of the Pendleton Correctional Facility Fire Department. He also was a member of East Christian Church, Markleville; Madison Masonic Lodge #44 F.& A.M., Pendleton where he was a past worshipful master; Scottish Rite Valley of Indianapolis; Order of Kentucky Colonels; Sons of Confederate Veterans and Sons of Union Veterans. Mike was a school bus driver for many years for South Madison Schools.

Brother Donald E. Gradeless, Life Member 193 aged 73, passed away peacefully on September 26, 2022, at Peabody Retirement Community. He was born on April 17, 1949, in Warsaw, IN, to Harmon and Donna Gradeless. He graduated from Almond High School in 1967 and earned a Bachelor of Business Education in 1972 and a Master of Science in Teaching in 1975 from the University of Wisconsin. He obtained a Ph. D. in Education in 1988 from Pacific Western University.

Dr. Gradeless had a teaching career spanning over three decades in various schools and earned multiple awards for his teaching excellence. He was a Master Mason, member of the SUVCW, SAR, Mensa Society and other organizations. His passion for history and genealogy resulted in many publications.