

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

DEPARTMENT OF COLORADO / WYOMING

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WESTERN

TRIBUNE



Sons of Union
Veterans
of the Civil
War

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS:

I appreciate the great privilege bestowed by the encampment in electing me your Commander for the next year and I humbly accept the challenges it presents. We Brothers have two complementary tasks before us. The first is to serve America by bringing our founding principles to life in our communities. The second is to do things that are “for the good of the Order”.

We are all familiar with our purpose and objects and the programs we conduct to carry them out – Eagle Scout Certificates ROTC Awards, graves registration, placing headstones, caring for monuments and patriotic ceremonies to name a few.

This year, I would like the Department to concentrate on the second task – the “Good of the Order” part. The work of the Order, indeed the strength of the order lies in the Camp. I would like to focus on making our Camps strong building blocks for our Order. To do this, I’ve established five goals for the Department:

First, **Build Camp Membership.** The goal of every Commander, everywhere. The fact is, robust recruiting is the foundation for all that follows. New members bring new ideas and new enthusiasm.

Second, **Improve Camp Programs.** I know of no one that joined the SUVCW because they enjoy business meetings. Tell stories about your ancestors and the battles they fought. Invite speakers from local school or historical societies. Put on a workshop to teach new members and other folk how we do what we do.

Third, **Improve Camp Visibility.** We can’t get people to join us if they don’t know we exist. Seek out opportunities to put your Camp in front of the community. Participate in community events. Publicize your activities in the local newspaper and include a way to contact you. Use social media like Facebook.

Fourth, **Improve Camp Leadership Training.** Mentor your new members. Involve them in Camp activities. Put them on committees or give them an ap-

pointed officer job. Challenge them and when they're ready they'll be your next generation of elected officers. An excellent starting point is the Officer's Training Course of the SUVCW Memorial University on the national website.

Fifth, ***Improve Camp & Individual Recognition.*** An easy way to garner recognition for your Camp is to write up your activities for "The Banner" and our Department newsletter, "The Western Tribune". There are also unit and individual awards through the national organization. Soon we'll have our own Department awards. Napoleon once quipped that "a soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon". A little recognition for a job well done will go a long way toward encouraging greater efforts.

In addition to these goals, I'll also continue the efforts begun by PDC Brewer to document our Department's history and those of PDC Richhart to organize a Camp in Idaho. The Department officers will stand ready to render all assistance possible as we work together to accomplish our goals and "honor the boys in blue".

Jim Barker, PCC
Department Commander

U.S. still making payments to relatives of Civil War veterans

By Eric Pfeiffer, Yahoo!

Juanita Tudor Lowrey received government benefits tied to her father, a Civil War veteran. (Charlie Riedel/AP)

Ten years after the launch of the Iraq War, a number of critics and analysts have been pointing to war's extravagant financial cost—to say nothing of its toll on human lives. But a surprising report shows that nearly 150 years after the Civil War's conclusion, the U.S. government is still paying relatives of veterans.

An analysis from the Associated Press found that more than \$40 billion annually is being spent on veterans and survivors of wars dating from the Spanish-American War of 1898 up through the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

There are only two recipients of Civil War benefits, both children of veterans and receiving \$876 per year.

Although their names are being kept private, the AP estimates that they were both born between 1920 and 1930, meaning their parents were themselves upward of 80 when their children were born.

Juanita Tudor Lowrey, 86, received Civil War benefits tied to her late father from the age of 2 until her 18th birthday.

Military veteran and former Republican Sen. Alan Simpson said the government should consider means testing veterans as the burden on the federal debt continues to grow.

"Without question, I would affluence-test all of those people," Simpson told the AP.

Simpson co-chaired President Barack Obama's deficit reduction committee in 2010, which offered a number of recommendations for reducing the federal budget deficit.

And while it would be natural to assume the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are the most costly, the payments to Vietnam War veterans nearly double the cost of our two current wars, \$22 billion and \$12 billion, respectively.

Simpson said a number of new ailments added to veterans coverage, including heart disease, has been driving up costs.

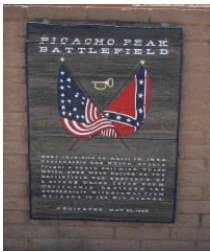
"That has been terribly abused," he said.

Meanwhile, World War II still costs the federal government about \$5 billion a year. And the Korean War still costs taxpayers about \$2.8 billion annually.

Amazingly, \$20 million is still being paid each year to 2,289 family members of veterans from World War I, many of whom are over 100. But perhaps even stranger, 47 benefit recipients were not even born until after the war ended.

Reprinted with permission

The Battle of Picacho Peak, the western most battle of the Civil War



Twelve Union cavalry troopers and one scout (reported to be mountain man Pauline Weaver but in reality Tucson resident John W. Jones), commanded by Lieutenant James Barrett of the 1st California Cavalry, were conducting a sweep of the Picacho Peak area, looking for Confederates reported to be nearby. The Arizona Confederates were commanded by Sergeant Henry Holmes. Barrett was under orders not to engage them, but to wait for the main column to come up.

However, "Lt. Barrett acting alone rather than in concert, surprised the Rebels and should have captured them without firing a shot, if the thing had been conducted properly." Instead, in mid-afternoon the lieutenant "led his men into the thicket single file without dismounting them. The first fire from the enemy emptied four saddles, when the enemy retired farther into the dense thicket and had time to reload ... Barrett followed them, calling on his men to follow him." Three of the Confederates surrendered. Barrett secured one of the prisoners and had just remounted his horse when a bullet struck him in the neck, killing him instantly. Fierce and confused fighting continued among the mesquite and arroyos for more than an hour, with two more Union fatalities and three troopers wounded. Exhausted and leaderless, the Californians broke off the fight and the Arizona Rangers, minus three who surrendered, mounted and carried warning of the approaching Union army to Tucson. Barrett's disobedience of orders had cost him his life and lost any chance of a Union surprise attack on Tucson.



The Union troops retreated to the Pima Indian Villages and hastily built Fort Barrett (named for the fallen officer) at White's Mill, waiting to gather resources to continue the advance. However, with no Confederate reinforcements available, Captain Sherod Hunter and his men withdrew as soon as the Column again advanced. The Union troops entered Tucson without any opposition.

The bodies of the two Union enlisted men killed at Picacho were later removed to the presidio in San Francisco, California. However, Lieutenant Barrett's grave, near the present railroad tracks, remains undisturbed and unmarked. Union reports claimed that two Confederates were wounded in the fight, but Captain Hunter in his official report mentioned no Confederate casualties other than the three men captured.

Aftermath

A Confederate patrol had actually reached the California border during the foray to burn hay at the stage stations in order to delay the Union advance from California. However, the goal of expanding Confederate influence to the Pacific Ocean never materialized. About the same time as the skirmish at Picacho, a larger force of Confederates was thwarted in its attempt to advance northward from Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the Battle of Glorieta Pass. By July the Confederates had retreated to Texas, though pro-Confederate militia units operated in some areas until mid-1863. The following year, the Union organized its own territory of Arizona, dividing New Mexico along the state's current north-south border, extending control southwards from the provisional capital of Prescott



The battle took place by the black rock.



Fort Collins' GAR Hall

Like many communities that had a GAR Post, Fort Collins boasted a GAR Hall – the meeting place for the local GAR Post.

The hall, at 245 Linden Street, was originally built in 1882 for the Odd Fellows Lodge. The GAR bought it about 1900. In addition to serv-

ing as the headquarters for the George H. Thomas Post No. 7, the hall was also the meeting place for the Women's Relief Corps, the Daughters of Union Veterans and the Sons of Union Veterans at various times through the years.

The GAR's meeting room was on the second floor of the building, the first floor being

owned by a private party. It was reached by a long stairway which must have become more and more challenging as the ravages of time overtook the Comrades. The hall had high ceilings, as was common at the time, and a well equipped kitchen.

In 1926, the George H. Thomas Holding Co. was organized to hold title to the hall. It was composed of members of the GAR George H. Thomas Post No. 7, the WRC George Thomas Corps No. 26, and the DUV Aunt Becky Young Tent No. 6. When the SUV W. O. Collins Camp No. 2 was organized about 1928, SUV members were added to the holding company. During the years after Thomas Post No. 7 disbanded, membership in the WRC Corps and the SUV Camp dwindled leaving only the Aunt Becky Young Tent 6 to care for the hall. Finally, in March 1963, the building was sold to Mr. Arthur D. Churchill, a local real estate dealer and furniture store partner. The Daughters of Union Veterans held their last meeting in the hall on 5 Mar 1963. Mr. Churchill razed the structure to make way for a new building.



The GAR Hall in 1963, just before the building was torn down

GAR Window at Creede, CO

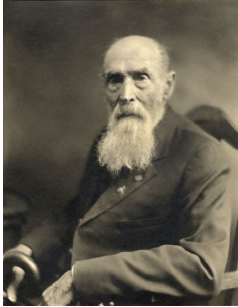


This GAR Memorial Window is located in the Congregational Church in Creede, CO. The inscription reads “ In Honor of Jim Bowie Post No. 92 of the G.A.R.”

(Photo courtesy of PDC Will Hinkley, Camp 100)



Uncle Billy Hildreth
Mesa County's "Little Big Man"



For those of you who have never seen the 1970 movie "Little Big Man" starring Dustin Hoffman, it's about a 121 year old man living in a rest home and telling his life story about being a captive of the Cheyenne, a gunslinger, a friend of Wild Bill Hickok, a storekeeper, a

scout for General Custer, and losing a wife and family. Living in Grand Junction in 1923, there was a man with tales to tell like the movie. His name, Uncle Billy Hildreth and this is his story.

It started on March 31 1923, in Grand Junction, Colorado, when Alfred B. (Uncle Billy) Hildreth had his 100th Birthday Party at the Oxford Hotel at the Northwest corner of 2nd and Colorado Ave in Grand Junction (*now the parking lot of Two Rivers Convention Center*), the party then moved on to the Grand Junction Elk's Club on the corner of 4th and Ute. The local Elks Club gave Uncle Billy a huge party as the oldest Elk in the world.

Uncle Billy claimed to have known Abe Lincoln while living in Illinois, before Abe became president. Billy said of Lincoln, "he was the homeliest, ganglingest, most awkward man I have ever seen," but he also thought "Lincoln was one of the smartest men he ever met."

Uncle Billy said he was born in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, on March 31, 1823. He also stated he came to Denver with a team of Oxen in 1858, when it was a colony of three tents surrounded by Indians. He claimed that during his life he scouted with Buffalo Bill, Kit Carson, Jim Baker and other famous Western heroes. A different account said he came to Estes Park by wagon train in 1859, with a man named Speers. Then in the same year, returned to Santa Fe, by pony, through country thickly settled by hostile Indians the same year.

His best tale was of scouting for General Custer and being within two miles of the Little Big Horn in 1876, and one hour after the last shot was fired, he had gone among the victims of the famous Custer massacre. He said he had been in the Civil War, serving on the Union side, and wounded at Shiloh, he was an Indian Scout with General Oliver Howard, and helped stem the tide of the Nez Perce Indians through the Yellowstone Park Area in 1877. He also had familiarity with the development of the whole Rocky Mountains and plains region.

Uncle Billy's stories were always interesting, and he would share them to all that would listen. He didn't sit by on the sidelines and watch other men do things, but was an actor on life's stage. Billy said when he was born in 1823; Napoleon died two years before his birth; he was 14 when Queen Victoria began her reign; and was 21 when the telegraph and telephone was invented, the Mexican War of 1847 was a far off event to come, and Karl Marx, the German Socialist was just five years older than him. He said he never got ill because he smoked half a dozen to twenty strong cigars each day and took a daily portion of whiskey which always kept him in good trim.

Billy was an active member the local Grand Army of the Republic, John A. Logan Post 21, and loved to walk in all the Grand Junction parades.

About 5 months after his 100th Birthday on August 1, 1923, Uncle Billy died in the hospital in Ouray, Colorado, while visiting his adopted daughter, Mrs. Edna Corn. Billy had taken ill ten days earlier from a combination of all his diseases.

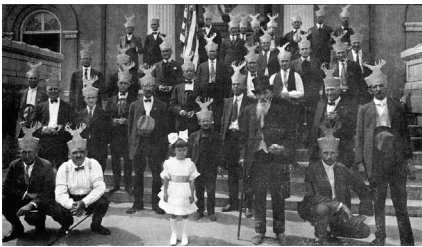
According to the records of the local G.A.R. Post his next of kin was his daughter Alice Hildreth Outland of Iowa and granddaughter Gertrude Reed of Denver. Sgt. Alfred B. Hil-

dreth of Company C, 41st Illinois Infantry, was buried in the Rawlins, Wyoming cemetery by his Comrades and according to his wishes.

A man of such interesting stories needs a second look at his life; more than what he told the newspaper, the Elks, the local Civil War Post and the citizens of Mesa County.

Thus starts our review of documented facts of this 5'9", hazel eyed, 100 year old soldier, scout, pathfinder and trailblazer of the west, who looked out on the face of the new American frontier.

Alfred Blaine Hildreth was born in Mt. Vernon, Ohio on March 31, 1830, the son of Arnold W. Hildreth and Mary Beardsley. By 1850, nineteen year old Alfred was living in his parent's home in Miller, Knox County, Ohio, learning his life trade as a Carpenter. On January 19, 1857, he married Matilda (Mattie) Rose Rowley in Mahaska, Iowa; they had two children, a daughter Alice V. born in 1857 in Iowa and a son William (Willie) A. Hildreth, born March 7, 1862, in Clinton, Illinois.



When Civil War broke out, Alfred with other men from Clinton answered the call to serve in the Union and joined Company C, 41st Illinois Infantry on May 8, 1861. During his time in the service he saw some of the worst battles of the western campaigns of the Civil War. He was present at Fort Donnellson; and the Battle of Shiloh, or as he called it, "Pittsburg Landing." There he was wounded, shot in the right shoulder and arm. In the first day of fighting at the "Hornets Nest" his unit helped keep the Confederates from the

Union Gunboats on the Tennessee River. After the battle they moved on to Corinth, Oxford, and Vicksburg, Mississippi where the 41st Illinois marched across Tennessee to Marietta, Georgia. For a short time, Billy was on detached service in the Pioneer Corps (*Seabee's of the civil war*) at La Grange, and Grand Junction, Tennessee. These soldiers built roads and bridges for army units. They also tore up railroads and telegraph lines to stop the confederates from moving men and supplies.

Sgt. Alfred B. Hildreth was honorably discharged on August 20, 1864; his regiment the 41st Illinois had seen many casualties of the war and was merged with the 53rd Illinois to form one regiment. Alfred returned to his wife Mattie, daughter Alice and new son Willie at Clinton, Illinois, where the family lived until 1870. For some reason in 1874, Alfred moved west without his family.

According to Alfred's civil war pension record, he moved to Rawlins, Wyoming in 1874, and then on to the Black Hills of Dakota in 1877. 1878 finds him in Montana, working as a gold miner, carpenter, and clerking in stores. He returned to Chicago, Illinois and lived in a boarding house from 1879 to 1880 where he did carpentry work. At this time he and Mattie divorced. Mattie and his son, Willie were still living in Clinton, Illinois and his daughter, Alice was married by then and living in Iowa with her husband, Joel Outland.

By 1881, Alfred is now becoming known as Uncle Billy and he moved back to Rawlins, Wyoming where he homesteaded a section of land that used to be an old military outpost. Billy received the patent from President Glover Cleveland in 1895.

Later, Billy sold his land to the Hamilton family. Here Uncle Billy was hurt helping the Hamilton's clear trees in the Ferris Mountains of Wyoming. A falling tree hit him in the head and body.

In 1882, Billy went to the Bear River area in Colorado for two years to recover from his injuries. He then went back to Rawlins, Wyoming. There he was a member of the C.W. Collins, Post 58 of the

G.A.R. Uncle Billy might have first come to Grand Junction, Colorado for a Department of CO/WY meeting on May 13, 1910. Over 800 Union Veterans of Colorado /Wyoming attended during this week long meeting.



Uncle Billy remained in Rawlins, Wyoming until 1913 when he got sick and was taken to The Old Soldier's Home in Sawelle, California. There Billy probably met many Union Veterans from Grand Junction. Billy's stay in the hospital was from 1913 to 1915, and then he was released to return home to Wyoming.

We know, from his records, he was in Rawlins in 1918 and then appears in the Grand Junction records of the local G.A.R. John A. Logan Post 21 in December of 1920. Here he had a room at the Oxford Hotel; his pension checks were sent to the Grand Junction post office. The post office and Elks Lodge, where he was a member, was just a few blocks away from the hotel and within walking distance for Uncle Billy. Sometime during his time here he stumbled and fell and was hit by a truck. But this durable soul survived his brush with death.

It seems ironic that he lived in the Oxford Hotel in Grand Junction... Oxford and Grand Junction being two places in Tennessee and Mississippi where he fought in the Civil War. Living here must have brought memories of the battles of his youth.

Uncle Billy liked to winter in Grand Junction and go to Ouray in the summer to visit his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Graves Corn, whom he met in Grand Junction. They had moved to Ouray and opened their home to him for visits.

During his time here in Grand Junction, Uncle Billy took the town by storm with his great stories, marching in parades, and his activities in the G.A.R. Post and the Elks' Lodge. He told everyone he was going to be 100 years old on March 31 1923. Frank Dean took his photo and the Elk's

gave him a huge party, which he loved. However, all of Billy's records; his military and pension records, Grand Junction medical records, records from the old soldier's home and census records from 1840 to 1920, show his birth year was 1830. Therefore Uncle Billy was only 93 years old.

But who cares? Uncle Billy wanted to be 100 years old and have a big celebration. Well, he got his wish, his picture was in the paper, a big party was given in his honor and everybody showed up! We should all be so lucky!

While some of his tales may be a little far fetched, his real life was full and fascinating. The actual facts were as exciting as the tales he told to all who would listen.

Quoting the aged Indian "Old Lodge Skins" from the movie "Little Big Man" when he was waiting for death, "Sometimes the magic works and sometimes it doesn't." Let's give Alfred "Uncle Billy" Hildreth a cigar and a shot of whiskey, because he made the magic work for him and we all believed.



Garry Brewer

Finder of Odd Knowledge, Uninteresting Items, A Bore to his Grandchildren, a Pain to his wife on spelling, but a Locater of golden nuggets & truths and pearls of wisdom.

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Sources and Photos: Museum of Western Colorado, Loyd Files Room, Michael Menard,, Bill & Linda Buvinger, Wanda Allen, Snap Photo, Grand Junction News Records, Daily Sentinel Records, Grand Army of the Republic, John A. Logan Post 21, C.W.Collins Post 58, Department of CO/WY, Pension Records of Sgt. Alfred B. Hildreth, Lodge No. 575 Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks book" Our First Fifty Years, 1900 to 1950, Dennis M. Edelin Chief, Forms Reference Section, Archival Operations - Washington, DC, Frank Dean Photo, Iowa State Marriage Records, 1834 to 1900. Records of the Veterans Old Soldiers Home,*

Sawelle, California and the History of Lamont, Wyoming, Ferris Wyoming, Flight of the Nez Perce 1877, Rawlins Cemetery Records. Adjutant General of the State of Illinois Flag Collection, E. Cobham Brewer 1810–1897. Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. 1898.

The Early Sons, Part 1

Jim Barker, Department Commander

Notes from the 1st National Encampment, Sons of Veterans of the USA:

The first National Encampment of the Sons of Veterans was held on 18 Oct 1882, in Pittsburgh, PA. Eight delegates attended; the Colorado Division was not represented.

Highlights:

- A \$10 charter fee was instituted.
- Per Capita Tax was fixed at 15 cents per year.
- The Commandery-in-Chief and Council-in-Chief were authorized to issue \$1000 worth of bonds in sums of \$10 & \$20 to bear 6% interest.
- Officers for the next year were elected and New York City was selected as the site of the next encampment.

For the first and only time in its history, the encampment completed its business in two brief sessions in one day. Although not mentioned in the minutes, it's obvious from later encampment proceedings that a provisional constitution and ritual were also approved.

Notes from the 2nd National Encampment, Sons of Veterans of the USA:

The second National Encampment of the Sons of Veterans was held on 6-7 Aug 1883, in Columbus, OH. Sixty delegates attended; the Colorado Division was represented by F. E. Brown of Denver and Gen A. V. Bohn of Leadville (Commander of the 4th Grand Div.).

Highlights:

- The encampment approved a procedure for conferring brevet rank and past honors. It conferred brevet rank and past honors on several brothers.
- A new Ritual was approved.
- New officers were elected for the next year. F. E. Brown of the CO & WY Div. was elected to the Council-in-Chief with the rank of Col. Harvey M. Burrell of Leadville was appointed Chief Ordnance Officer with the rank of Col.
- Charter fees were set at \$15 for Divisions and \$25 for Grand Divisions. Per Capita Tax was set at 15 cents per year and a special assessment of 10 cents for each member in good standing was imposed to liquidate the indebtedness of the Commandery-in-Chief.

- Charter fees were set at \$15 for Divisions and \$25 for Grand Divisions. Per Capita Tax was set at 15 cents per year and a special assessment of 10 cents for each member in good standing was imposed to liquidate the indebtedness of the Commandery-in-Chief.

G.O. No. 2 issued by Provisional Commander-in-Chief Col. Harry T. Rowley established 5 Grand Divisions. Each Grand Division facilitated the expansion of the order and coordinated the activities of several state divisions and were usually commanded by a GAR Comrade. The 4th Grand Division consisted of California, Oregon, Washington Territory, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Arizona, and New Mexico. It was under the

Brothers,

The Riverside Cemetery GAR Flag Pole Project (phase 1) is completed. I must say, It's Awesome! It's taken a long time to complete due to a myriad of situations. Persistence does prevail. I wish to thank you all for your patience and tolerance in this "monumental" endeavor.

We now face the Veterans Walkway (phase 2) project. I think that in order to make this project proceed successfully, we need a committee ready to work together finding people to buy bricks for their family veterans. These veterans Bricks can begin from the time our country's Army, Navy and Marines began protecting our nation. Our source is Profit Resources located in Denver. Their laser technique is proven. The clay brick sizes are 4" x 8" and 8" x 8". Our color is Rustic (red). Since the original paver group has been closed down, I am looking for other paver's that might be willing to help us. All ideas are welcomed. So let's get in the spirit and band together so that this final phase can be complete.

I have attached a before and after picture so that you can get an idea. I photographed every step of this undertaking and I will be putting together booklet of the building of the GAR Flag Pole Project for our archives. Contact me if I have missed anyone on this email. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty

Craig Ayler

Dept. Grave Registration Officer

Dept. of CO & WY

Centennial Camp 100, SUVCW



Flag Pole area before.



Flag pole area after construction.



2013 Department Encampment. L-R: Craig Ayler, PCC (Camp 100), Dept. GRO; James Barker, PCC (Camp 100), Dept. Cmdr; Tad Campbell, PDC, National JVCinC; Eric D. Richhart, PDC (Camp 1), Dept. Sec/Treas; Bryan Walls (Guest); Gerald F. Mosley, PDC (Camp 1), Dept. ESC; Cecil Tapey, PDJVC (Camp 7)

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