

INDIAN WAR VETERANS

Memories of Army Life
and Campaigns in the West, 1864-1898

Compiled and Edited by
Jerome A. Greene



Savas Beatie
New York and California

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Dedicated to the memory of Don G. Rickey,
who knew these men.

Books by Jerome A. Greene

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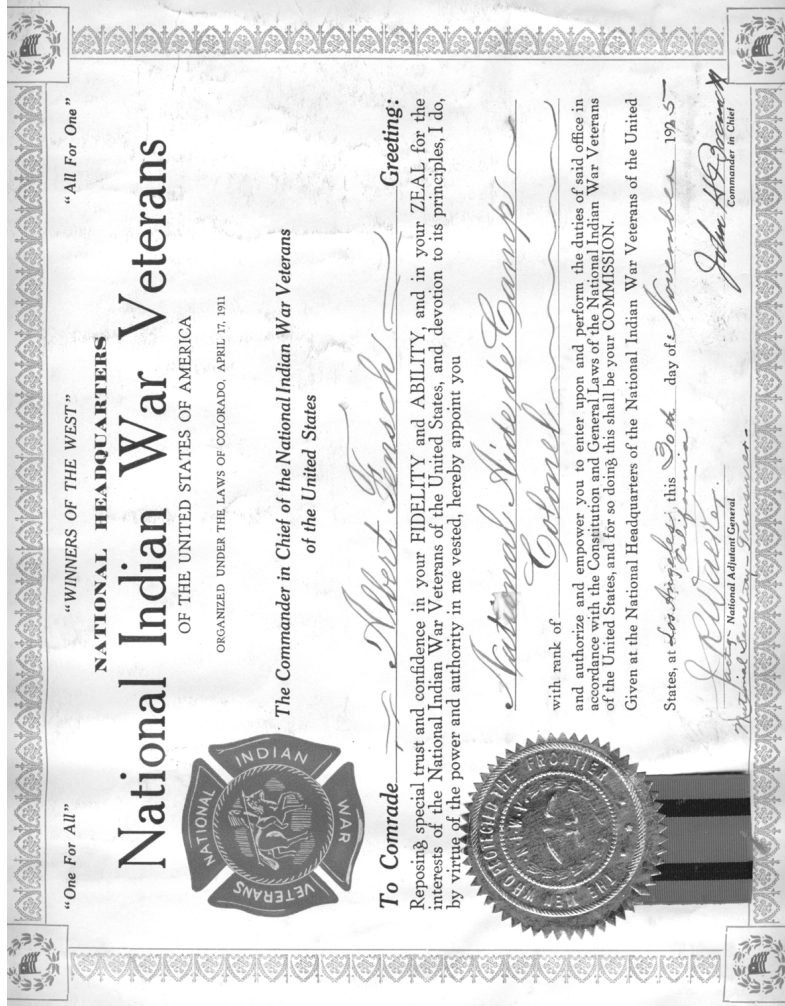
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Commission certificate appointing Albert Fensch as National Aide-de-Camp of the National Indian War Veterans and signed by Commander-in-Chief John H. Brandt in Los Angeles, 1925. Editor's Collection.

Preface and Acknowledgments

This book comprises a reader embracing significant personal accounts by army veterans of their life and service on the trans-Mississippi frontier during the last four decades of the nineteenth century, the core period of Indian-white warfare in that region. The essays are drawn from various sources, each as indicated, but with most from the constituency of the National Indian War Veterans Association via the group's periodical tabloid, *Winners of the West*. The first articles, those dealing with veterans' reminiscences of their routine day-to-day experiences on the frontier, are presented in chronological order. Those describing elements of campaign and warfare history are arranged chronologically within geographical areas of the West and constitute the largest part of the book. A few of these essays have appeared elsewhere, although none have previously been widely disseminated.

In all instances, the intent has been to reproduce the content of each essay so that readers might derive the author's original meaning clearly and comprehensively, despite obvious variances in writing technique and ability. Occasionally, minor grammatical, punctuation, and spelling changes have been introduced editorially without brackets to improve readability. Rarely, too, words have been interjected to complete and improve factual representations, such as in giving an individual's full name and/or military rank. (Infrequently, for example, authors of some pieces have referenced brevet or honorary rank in introducing officers, and this has been consistently corrected to reflect proper Regular Army rank usage throughout.) In no way has the substance of an article been altered or otherwise miscast. Footnotes have been scrupulously avoided in the essays for the purpose of insuring an uninterrupted reading experience.

While an ex-soldier might occasionally exaggerate recollected facts or conditions, he might also make factual errors, and in such instances bracketed insertions have been made to correct grievously erroneous data. Also brackets have been used sparingly wherever brief introductory, transitional, and clarifying material was deemed appropriate. In most

instances, the titles of individual essays have been changed from the headline format of the original presentations to better convey the content of each. And wherever parts of an article wavered from its purpose or became irrelevant to its subject, those parts were omitted and their omission indicated with ellipses. Finally and importantly, as testimony reflective of the periods during which the veterans performed their service (the 1860s-1890s) and later wrote their pieces (generally the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s), the references to Indians are often disparaging and occasionally brutally racist. As such, the remarks mirror a temper of thought grounded in ignorance that existed during those times. However objectionable they seem today, they nonetheless provide useful insights into the thinking of this element of early twentieth-century American society, and they have not been sanitized herein.

I wish to acknowledge the following individuals and institutions for their assistance in this project: L. Clifford Soubier, Charles Town, West Virginia; Douglas C. McChristian, Tucson, Arizona; John D. McDermott, Rapid City, South Dakota; James B. Dahlquist, Seattle, Washington; Thomas R. Buecker, Crawford, Nebraska; R. Eli Paul, Kansas City, Missouri; Paul L. Hedren, O'Neill, Nebraska; John Doerner, Hardin, Montana; James Potter, Chadron, Nebraska; David Hays, Boulder, Colorado; Gordon Chappell, San Francisco, California; Dick Harmon, Lincoln, Nebraska; John Monette, Louisville, Colorado; Paul Fees, Cody, Wyoming; Judy M. Morley, Centennial, Colorado; Robert G. Pilk, Lakewood, Colorado; Paul A. Hutton, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Neil Mangum, Alpine, Texas; Douglas D. Scott, Lincoln, Nebraska; Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Crow Agency, Montana; and Jack Blades of *Night Ranger*. Special thanks go to Sandra Lowry, Fort Laramie National Historic Site, Wyoming, for her help in providing full and correct names for many of the enlisted men mentioned herein.

My thanks are also extended to everyone at Savas Beatie who helped get this book into print.

Introduction

The Indian War Veterans, 1880s–1960s

They called themselves the “Winners of the West.” They were the soldier veterans of the U. S. Army and state and territorial forces in the West, many of them survivors of Indian campaigns between 1864 and 1898, and they regarded themselves as the vanguards of civilization on the frontier. Some had fought Sioux, Cheyenne, Nez Perce, Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache warriors at renowned places like Washita, Apache Pass, Rosebud, Little Bighorn, White Bird Canyon, Bear’s Paw Mountains, and Wounded Knee, although the majority who also claimed to be Indian war veterans had performed more routine and unheralded duties during their years beyond the Mississippi River.

While in many ways their service facilitated the economic exploitation of Indian lands wrought by mining and settlement, as well as the internment of the tribes on reservations that followed, like most Americans of the time they embraced concepts of Manifest Destiny, by which they justified their own and their government’s actions. Most of them were former enlisted men, drawn together by camaraderie but also for the purpose of bettering living conditions for themselves and their families by championing pension benefits from a seemingly distant and unsympathetically frugal federal government that had extended its largess more charitably to the disabled veterans of the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.

The creation of associations specific to the interests of Indian war veterans followed a course similar to that of other veterans’ groups after the period of focus their service represented. Groups composed of veteran officers generally reflected their fraternal interests, as did, for example, the Society of the Cincinnati for those who served in the Revolutionary War; the Society of the War of 1812; the Aztec Club for former Mexican War officers; the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States for former Civil War

officers; and several smaller societies observing officer service in Cuba, the Philippines, and China late in the nineteenth century.¹

Enlisted veteran organizations, generally more concerned with welfare issues, had roots in various municipal and regional relief organizations founded during the Civil War to help needy soldiers and which continued to promote relief programs after the war. In the immediate postwar years, a profusion of groups evolved that eventually (1866-69) merged into a single association, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) that included both former Union officers and enlisted men. (A parallel and smaller body, the United Confederate Veterans, later served the interests of those who had fought for the South.)

Much of the GAR's purpose was to provide for the well-being of members and their families, objectives espoused by the Republican Party in the final decades of the nineteenth century, and the organization, which became sizable (400,000 members by 1890) came to register significant political clout. In time, the GAR's rolls gradually fell, and its influence waned during the early decades of the twentieth century; the last annual encampment took place in 1949.

A group formed to promote similar interests for its constituency was the United Spanish War Veterans, which shared ideals of the GAR as applied to officers and enlisted men who had served in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the Philippine Insurrection that followed, and the China Relief Expedition of 1900. Like the GAR, the USWV resulted from the merger of kindred bodies between 1904 and 1908. The goals of the GAR, meantime, inspired the birth of organizations of similar spirit dedicated to the interests of soldiers and sailors whose service postdated the Civil War. In 1888-90, from several such fledgling groups, the Regular Army and Navy Union was founded, mainly by veterans of duty in the postwar West, to provide like needs for soldiers, sailors, and marines without Civil War service, including those yet serving or retired from active duty. In the late 1880s and through the 1890s, garrisons or camps of the Regular Army and Navy Union flourished in cities around the country, as well as at various active army posts.²

1 E.g., the Society of the Army of Santiago de Cuba, the Military Order of the Carabao, the Military Order of the Dragon, and the Naval and Military Order of the Spanish-American War.

2 For early veteran groups, see Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1890* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Mary Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story*

Inspired by these various groups, and desirous of coming together for collateral purposes based upon their shared background and experiences, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the ex-soldiers of the so-called Indian wars period (ca. 1865-1891) began organizing into several bodies reflective of their common service. With their small and ever-decreasing base, however, they never attained the political strength of the GAR, whose large membership influenced pension legislation as well as the outcome of congressional and presidential elections from the 1870s well into the twentieth century. (Much the same was true of similar bodies of Spanish-American War and World War I veterans.) Beset by limited numbers and resources, the Indian war veterans shared fellowship, longevity, and perseverance, and played much the role of other veterans' groups in sharing reminiscences of their army life, seeking to improve government benefits (albeit with considerably less success), promoting patriotism, and otherwise ensuring that citizens did not lose sight of their contributions to the nation.

The first organization of Indian war veterans was hereditary and fraternal, consisting of retired officers and select enlisted personnel who had shared experiences on the frontier and whose meetings reflected collegiality and an interest in preserving the history of the Indian wars of the trans-Mississippi West for future generations. On April 23, 1896, a group of active and retired army officers convened at the United Service Club in Philadelphia to organize the Society of Veterans of Indian Wars of the United States. Its constitution designated three classes of members consisting of First Class ("Commissioned officers . . . who have actually served or may hereafter serve in the Army during an Indian War . . . [including] any officer of a State National Guard or Militia meeting the above requirements. . . ."); Second Class ("Lineal male descendants of members of the first class," or male descendants of officers who were eligible "but who died without such membership"); and Third Class (Non-commissioned officers and soldiers who have received the Medal of Honor or Certificate of

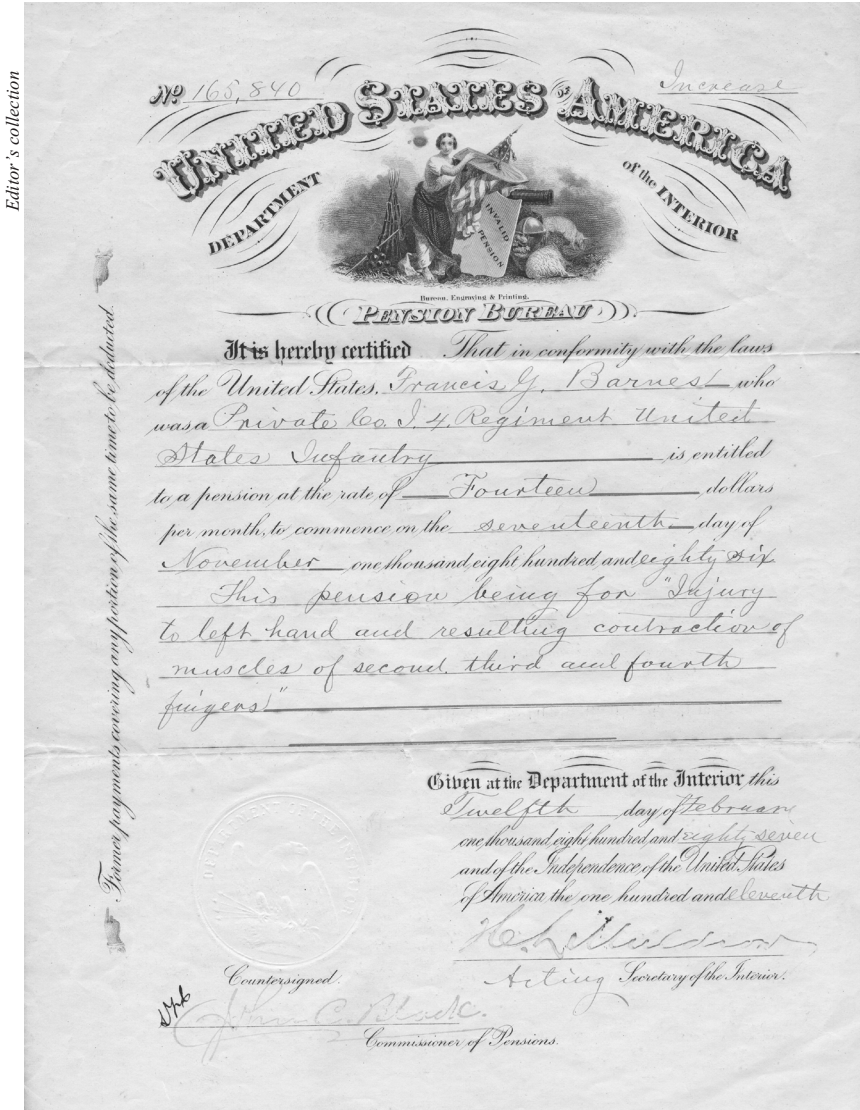
of the G.A.R. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952); J. Worth Carnahan, *Manual of the Civil War and Key to the Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Army and Navy Historical Association, 1889); Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Bryan, Taylor and Company, 1889); Harvey S. Eisenberg, "Medals and Badges of the United Spanish War Veterans," *The Medal Collector*, 24 (February, 1973), p. 4; and *The Army & Navy Union, U. S. A.: A History of the Union and Its Auxiliary* (The Army and Navy Union, U. S. A., 1942).

Merit from the United States Government . . . or who have been proffered, or recommended for, a commission, or who have been specially mentioned in orders by the War Department or their immediate commanding officer for services rendered against hostile Indians. . . .” Charter members of the society included William F. (“Buffalo Bill”) Cody, who was a colonel in the Nebraska National Guard, and retired Captain Charles King, the army novelist who had campaigned against the Apaches and Lakotas under Brigadier General George Crook.³

For reasons not altogether clear, the Society of Veterans of Indian Wars almost immediately evolved into the Order of Indian Wars of the United States, under which title it functioned for nearly fifty years. Chartered in Illinois just months after the Philadelphia meeting, the stated purpose of the group was “to perpetuate the memory of the services rendered by the American Military forces in their conflicts and wars within the territory of the United States, and to collect and secure for publication historical data relating to the instances of brave deeds and personal devotion by which Indian warfare has been illustrated.” Membership was restricted to “commissioned officers and honorably discharged commissioned officers of the U. S. Army, Navy and Marine Corps, and of State and Territorial Military Organizations . . . who have been, or who hereafter may be engaged in the service of the United States . . . in conflicts, battles or actual field service against hostile Indians within the jurisdiction of the United States. . . .” The organization also accommodated inclusion of male descendants and provided for honorary and associate memberships.

On January 14, 1897, a meeting of the Order in Chicago elected the first national officers, including as commander retired Ninth Cavalry Lieutenant Colonel Reuben F. Bernard. Later commanders included such formerly prominent retired Indian wars officers as Brigadier General Anson Mills, Brigadier General Leonard Wood, Brigadier General Edward S. Godfrey, Major General Hugh L. Scott, and Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles. During its half century of existence, the Order of Indian Wars performed valuable commemorative and historical services through its annual dinner meetings, usually held at the Army and Navy Club in Washington, D. C. At a standard gathering, members discussed the Order’s business then listened as a companion presented a formal paper on an aspect of Indian wars history based largely on his service. The proceedings were generally published and today constitute important historical data of the organization and the era it

3 *Society of Veterans of Indian Wars of the United States*, Circular of Information (nd, ca. 1896), pp. 1, 3-4, 8.



Pension certificate granted in 1887 to former private Francis G. Barnes, Company I, Fourth Infantry. Barnes's pension was for "Injury to left hand and resulting contraction of muscles of second, third and fourth fingers," for which he was awarded fourteen dollars per month. Barnes died in 1921 in Hamburg, New York.

memorialized. Among the trappings of the society were vellum membership certificates signed by the commander. They bore an elaborate engraving of

troops attacking an Indian village, as well as an elitist-sounding sentiment honoring members for “maintaining the supremacy of the United States.”

The Order of Indian Wars was most active during the 1910s, 1920s, and early 1930s. Membership peaked at 376 in 1933. By the 1940s, death rapidly took its toll. During World War II Commander Charles D. Rhodes recorded that “we have a difficulty in keeping up interest in the organization. . . . The generation fighting this present war never heard of an Indian war.” Staying true to its precepts, however, the Order remained active until 1947, when dwindling membership forced its affiliation with the American Military Institute. During its existence, however, members of the Order of Indian Wars and their descendants accumulated a wealth of historical material that is presently deposited in the research collections of the U. S. Army Military History Institute, Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.⁴

Despite its focus on fraternity and history throughout its existence, the Order of Indian Wars frequently supported the causes of several other Indian war veteran groups that existed contemporaneously with it and which were more interested in improving matters respecting the welfare of members and their families. These groups, while likewise bonded by their service fraternity, were driven more by bread-and-butter issues regarding pensions. (Since 2001, a revival group of hereditary companions retaining the title The Order of Indian Wars of the United States has convened annually in

4 *Army and Navy Journal*, September 12, 1896; *By-Laws of the Order of Indian Wars of the United States, Amended to February 20, 1936*, pp. 5-6; *Army and Navy Journal*, January 23, 1897; John M. Carroll (comp., ed.), *The Papers of the Order of Indian Wars* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1975), viii (quote); *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Order of Indian Wars of the United States Held November Eighteenth Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-six*, p. 18; Rhodes to Brigadier General (ret.) Thomas H. Slavens, June 30, 1944. Don G. Rickey Collection, Evergreen, Colorado; Important Notice to Members of the Order, July 7, 1947. Rickey Collection; “Indian War Veterans,” *The Westerners Brand Book* (Chicago), 5 (August, 1948), p. 1. Membership tallies, 1924-45, appear in the annual *Proceedings*. Total membership, 1896-1947, stood at 630. Carroll, *Papers of the Order of Indian Wars*, pp. 273-81. Each member of the Order of Indian Wars received a 14-karat gold membership badge suspended from a ribbon of multi-colored (red, white, blue, and yellow) stripes manufactured by the Philadelphia firm of Baily, Banks, and Biddle. *Military and Naval Insignia and Novelties* (Philadelphia: Baily, Banks and Biddle Company, 1918), p. 5. The colors of the Order of Indian Wars repose in the Manuscripts Division of the U. S. Army Military History Institute.

Washington, D.C. to partake in the tradition of the annual dinner meetings of the original Order; this group presently members nearly 200 members.)⁵

Early in the twentieth century, federal invalid pensions for Indian war service were given to disabled individuals who qualified under a few antiquated laws. That of July, 1892, for example (which was the first designated specifically for Indian war service), had provided \$8 per month to disabled veterans and to widows and children of veterans disabled during Indian wars occurring between 1832 and 1842 (“known as the Black Hawk

5 “Pension” in the late nineteenth century was defined as “a stated allowance to a person in consideration of past services; payment made to one retired from service for age, disability, or other cause; especially a yearly stipend paid by government to retired officers, disabled soldiers, the families of soldiers killed, etc.” Thomas Wilhelm, *A Military Dictionary and Gazetteer* (Philadelphia: L.R. Hamersly and Company, 1881), p. 421. For earlier period reference, see also the definition in Henry L. Scott, *Military Dictionary: Comprising Technical Definitions; Information on Raising and Keeping Troops; Actual Service, including Makeshifts and Improved Materiel; and Law, Government, Regulation, and Administration Relating to Land Forces* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1864), pp. 461-62. Invalid pensions to soldiers disabled during Indian war service, and to the dependents (widows and orphans) of soldiers killed in such service, were customarily extended by Congress under existing pension laws from the War of 1812 (Brigadier General William Henry Harrison’s campaign against the Shawnees and affiliated tribes, for example) to the Civil War. Notably, they offered benefits the same as those for War of 1812 service to those combat casualties of Indian wars in Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and elsewhere. The pension act of 1862 also included benefits to soldiers disabled in Indian conflicts and to surviving dependents. William Henry Glasson, *History of Military Pension Legislation in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1900), pp. 64-66; William H. Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1918), p. 114. For the various early pension acts, see Robert Mayo and Ferdinand Moulton (comps.), *Army and Navy Pension Laws, and Bounty Land Laws of the United States, Including Sundry Resolutions of Congress, from 1776 to 1852* (Washington, D.C.: Jno. T. Towers, 1852); *Laws of the United States Governing the Granting of Army and Navy Pensions Together with the Regulations Relating Thereto* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), chapter 2, and *passim*. A less bureaucratically phrased account of early pensions into the 1880s, designed especially for informational purposes for soldiers and veterans, is in *The Soldier’s Manual: A Hand Book of Useful and Reliable Information showing Who are Entitled to Pensions, Increase, Bounty, Pay, Etc.* (Washington, D.C.: Milo B. Stevens and Company, General War Claims Attorneys, 1888), *passim*.

[Sac and Fox] war, the Creek war, Cherokee disturbances and the Seminole war”). Amendments in 1902 and 1908 extended pension coverage to veterans whose service fell between 1817 and 1860. A 1908 amendment raised widows’ pensions to \$12 per month, while another in 1913 increased those for invalid veterans under the 1892 act to \$20 per month. Surprisingly, at this late date a soldier’s participation in Indian warfare between 1860 and 1891 was not yet recognized for attaining pensionable status.⁶ In effect, disabled survivors of the Sioux and Apache troubles of the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s went without pensions, even though the War Department had acknowledged their service with authorization of a campaign badge in 1907.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in efforts to come to grips with the pension question for Indian wars service, several regional groups organized to improve opportunities for those veterans. The Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast organized by 1889 and commemorated the service of soldiers, mostly militia, during the Indian warfare in the Northwest during the 1840s-1850s. Likewise, the Utah Indian War Veterans Association, composed largely of former Mormon militia soldiers who had fought in that territory’s Black Hawk War, organized at Springville, Utah, in 1893, to work for federal pension recognition for their service. In Kansas in the early 1920s, a regional group called the National Indian War Veterans sought to promote pension legislation, but in 1925 changed its name to the Cantonments of the National Indian War Veterans of the United States of America to differentiate from a larger body then-current called the National Indian War Veterans Association (see below).⁷

6 Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions*, p. 115; *Laws of the United States Governing the Granting of Army and Navy Pensions*, pp. 20-21, 22, 23, 184-85; *Winners of the West*, October 30, 1935; *Winners of the West*, September 30, 1937. Throughout the post-Civil War Indian wars period, the standard retirement for career enlisted men was thirty years, after which they were entitled to enter the Soldiers Home, Washington, D.C. Don Rickey, Jr., *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 29, 341.

7 “The Grand Encampment. Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast,” membership certificate dated July 16, 1889, in the editor’s possession; Peter Gottfredson (comp., ed.), *History of Indian Depredations in Utah* (Salt Lake City: Skelton Publishing Company, 1919), pp. 332-35; Amendment to Charter of the Cantonements [sic] of the National Indian War Veterans of the United States of America, Wichita, Kansas, January 7, 1925, State of Kansas, Department of State, executed February 28, 1925. Original copy in the Scrapbooks of Albert Fensch, National Adjutant General, NIWV and UIWV, Scrapbook No. 1, editor’s collection (hereafter cited as Fensch

While these regional groups fostered fraternal objectives, their primary focus lay in enhancing the well-being of their constituents. They lacked sufficient numbers and direction, however, to successfully accomplish that end, and remained largely fraternal in character until most of their members ultimately merged with a single unified national body.

The preeminent national association that coexisted with these regional bodies through much of their own histories was first called the National Indian War Veterans Organization when founded in Denver, Colorado, in April 1909 (it incorporated under the laws of Colorado on April 17, 1911).⁸ Later its name changed to the National Indian War Veterans Association. The NIWV proved an activist body, chartered for the purpose of improving the lot of ex-soldiers whose service in the West and its attendant sacrifices had seemingly been forgotten by the government. More precisely, as the group evolved through ensuing years its stated mission became:

to seek out veterans of the Regular Army eligible in either the "Indian Wars" or "Regular Establishment" [pension] class; and all State Troops eligible to pension in the Indian Wars class, and bind them together into one common fraternal brotherhood and comradeship, cooperating together for their common good, especially in the matter of obtaining just recognition from the Congress of the United States by the enactment of equitable pension laws.⁹

Scrapbooks). "National Indian War Veterans [Kansas], in *The Veteran*, 8 (November, 1925), p. 7. Luther Barker of Clay Center, Kansas, founded the Kansas organization. Authorization for badges for Indian wars service appears in General Orders No. 170, War Department, August 15, 1907, as cited in "Report of the Adjutant-General," October 17, 1907, in *War Department, U. S. A., Annual Reports, 1907* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), pp. 260-61.

8 *Winners of the West*, March 30, 1926; U. S. Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Pensions, [*Hearings Regarding Pensions for Survivors of Certain Indian Wars*, 63rd Cong., 2d sess., March 7, 1914, p. 3; Certificate of Incorporation, National Indian War Veterans, State of Colorado Office of the Secretary of State (duplicate), April 17, 1911. Fensch Scrapbooks, Scrapbook No. 1.

9 *Winners of the West*, July 30, 1930. Pension benefits were administered by the Bureau of Pensions of the Department of the Interior until 1930, when the Veterans Administration was created. *VA History in Brief: What It Is, Was, and Does* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 1, 2, 4. Technically, membership was extended to "those who served in Indian wars

Many of these veterans, opined an exponent of the organization,

spent the best years of their life [sic] protecting our frontier. Their gallantry and bravery, the endurance of . . . terrible hardships and fearlessness of the most horrible of deaths, made possible the opening and populating of the Great American Desert, which is now the backbone of the greatest and wealthiest nation on the face of the earth. Even though some of the men who enlisted for the Indian wars were not in actual combat, they helped to keep down uprisings among the savages and endured the terrible hardships of hunger and weather, which were [often] a great deal worse than the actual fighting, and were there ready and willing to fight when called upon. Many of them fell victims of disease, storms, hunger, and thirst, and of those who survived through sheer hardihood, many are cripples from frozen limbs or disease.¹⁰

Organization of the NIWV in Denver occurred under the leadership of Charles R. Hauser, a Fifth Cavalry veteran who assembled local ex-soldiers with Indian wars service to seek pension benefits. The seal of the incorporated body read: "NIWV," encircled by "The Men Who Protected the Frontier." Seeking to improve the pensionable status of members and their families, the Denver leaders, together with those of camps established in 1912 in San Francisco and St. Louis, campaigned to change existing laws to include veterans with post-Civil War Indian campaign service in the West. Over six years, the members of the Denver, St. Louis, and San Francisco camps joined with those camps founded in Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., and Newark to promote new and more broadly encompassing legislation.

As a result of lobbying efforts by nearly 500 members of the NIWV and collateral groups, a law enacted on March 4, 1917, extended previous legislation regarding veterans of the early Indian wars, fixed age for pension eligibility at 62, and for the first time specified campaigns between 1866 and 1891 for which service would be recognized for pension claims. Under provisions of the Keating measure (named for Representative Edward

between Jan. 1, 1817, and Dec. 31, 1898, in accordance with the classification given Indian war veterans by the United States pension office." *St. Joseph Gazette*, September 13, 1927.

10 *Winners of the West*, December, 1923. An early undated roster, perhaps from ca. 1917-18, lists the names and addresses of 407 members of the "N-A-I-W-V" (National Association of Indian War Veterans). Original in the Walter M. Camp Collection, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Crow Agency, Montana.



Members of General Custer Camp No. 4, United Indian War Veterans, at their Los Angeles convention in 1929.

Keating of Colorado), pensions of \$20 per month would be allotted to qualified ex-soldiers of the later Indian campaigns, while widows of such veterans might qualify to receive the standard \$12 per month.¹¹

The significant Keating law additionally provided for invalid pensions for qualifying individuals who served in specified state and territorial militia organizations that campaigned against Indians in Texas, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Utah, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Colorado, and Nebraska from 1859 to 1868. Further, as sanctioned by the War Department, pensionable Regular Army service was at last recognized in the following campaigns:

11 *Winners of the West*, December, 1923; *Winners of the West*, February, 1924; *Winners of the West*, December, 1924; *Winners of the West*, July, 1925; *Winners of the West*, March 30, 1926; *Winners of the West*, December 30, 1935; *Winners of the West*, September 30, 1937; *San Francisco Examiner*, December 22, 1912; Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions*, p. 115. (A table showing numbers of Indian wars pensioners and pension expenditures between 1893 and 1916 is in *ibid.*) For the act, see Public Law 400, *Statutes at Large*, 39, Part 1, pp. 1199-1201.

Campaign in southern Oregon and Idaho and northern parts of California and Nevada, 1865-1868.

Campaign against the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Comanches, in Kansas, Colorado, and the Indian Territory, 1867, 1868, and 1869, inclusive.

Modoc War in 1872 and 1873.

Campaign against the Apaches of Arizona in 1873.

Campaign against the Kiowas, Comanches, and Cheyennes, in Kansas, Colorado, Texas, Indian Territory, and New Mexico, 1874 and 1875.

Campaign against the Northern Cheyennes and Sioux, 1876-1877.

Nez Perce War, 1877.

Bannock War, 1878.

Campaign against the Northern Cheyennes, 1878 and 1879.

Campaign against the Ute Indians in Colorado and Utah, September, 1879, to November, 1880.

Campaign against Apache Indians in Arizona and New Mexico, 1885 and 1886.

Campaign against the Sioux Indians in South Dakota, November, 1890, to January, 1891.¹²

12 *Winners of the West*, January, 1924; General Orders No. 170, War Department, August 15, 1907, as cited in "Report of the Adjutant-General," October 17, 1907, pp. 260-61. Keating later wrote: "As originally drawn, the Keating bill was to pension all veterans of all Indian conflicts. The members of the committee on pensions of the House of Representatives took the position that only those who had participated actually in 'Indian campaigns' should be pensioned. That made it necessary to get a definition or designation of 'Indian campaigns' or 'Indian wars.' So we appealed to the War Department, and found that at various times the Secretary of War and his associates had designated certain 'campaigns' against the Indians as 'wars.' The committee on pensions took it for granted that the War Department knew what it was doing, and we wrote into the bill the official designation of every 'war' that the department certified to us. I am now [1923] convinced that there are a great many 'campaigns' or 'wars' which were omitted by the War

Despite the success of the Denver-based NIWV in pursuing pension benefits for Indian wars veterans, the organization headquarters in that city waned in the years after World War I. As Denver Camp No. 1 dissolved, the San Francisco chapter became increasingly active, soon assuming a national role in the organization and promoting the establishment of several smaller West Coast chapters of the group. Few further improvements to veterans' benefits occurred, however, until 1923. The revival of the national NIWV at that time was due to the dedication of George W. Webb of St. Joseph, Missouri. Webb had served with the Third Infantry during its 1870s campaigns on the southern plains, and he brought organizational talent to the languishing group (and in 1927-29 served as National Commander of the NIWV). He prepared a petition to Congress regarding Indian war veterans' pension needs and distributed it among seven thousand veterans and widows for signatures to be forwarded to Congress. His primary innovation, however, was to design, edit, and publish a monthly (briefly bi-monthly) newspaper entitled *Winners of the West*. The tabloid, which highlighted pension matters and kept its members abreast of related legislative developments, also offered members an outlet for writing about historical events from their service. *Winners of the West* was roundly applauded and contributed to the acceleration of NIWV membership nationwide.¹³

One of Webb's missions lay in convincing the smaller regional bodies of Indian wars veteran organizations to join together in the larger national group to create a unified lobby. The motto of the NIWV became "One for All, All for One." As Webb put it: "It behooves every comrade, every widow, and every friend of our cause to stand shoulder to shoulder and

Department, which should have been included in that bill." *Winners of the West*, December, 1923.

13 *Winners of the West*, December 30, 1935; *Winners of the West*, April, 1924; *Winners of the West*, December 28, 1944. Two other publications initiated by Webb were his compilation entitled, *Chronological List of Engagements between the Regular Army of the United States and Various Tribes of Hostile Indians which Occurred during the Years 1790 to 1898, Inclusive* (St. Joseph, Mo.: Wing Publishing and Printing Company, 1939; reprinted New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1976), and a commemorative booklet *First Account of the Custer Massacre published in the Tribune Extra, Bismarck, Dakota Territory, July 6, 1876. Republished for Distribution at Sixtieth Anniversary Commemoration of The Custer Battle, Custer Battlefield, June 25, 1936* (St. Joseph, Mo.: Winners of the West, 1936). *Winners of the West* was published twice monthly for a short time; it also changed its format and design several times during its run.

present a solid front of effort in their own behalf. Thousands of comrades have kept their names off of the rolls of all such organizations because they do not propose to be drawn into a scrap with their comrades because [of their] belonging to separate organizations. . . .” Webb especially targeted the Kansas group with its sizable membership. Both the NIWV and the Kansas organization held conventions in September, 1926, and Webb urged members of both groups to see the folly of their ways. “These two conventions . . . have it within their hands to put a stop to this foolishness forever. Elect only comrades to office who will be willing to co-operate to bury the differences which now separate them as organizations. . . . Let us . . . get together in one mighty effort before the last one of our aged veterans and widows are laid beneath the sod, beyond any possibility of earthly help.” Webb’s message was clear, but the Kansas veterans remained remote. The NIWV expanded in membership during the 1920s, and in 1931 the association obtained a perpetual charter from the State of Colorado.¹⁴

Through two decades up to 1944 following Webb’s assumption of affairs, between twenty-two and forty-four camps variously operated in major cities throughout the country (although some appear to have been paper camps with few if any members; many became defunct within a few years). In 1928, membership was reported to be 1,300. In addition, there were designated departments at the state level operated by appointed commanders. Within departments, various camps bore such names as Gen. Nelson A. Miles Camp No. 32 (Boston), Gen. George A. Custer Camp No. 4 (San Francisco), and Gen. Philip H. Sheridan Camp No. 20 (Chicago). (Two in New York City, plus those in Boston, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Portland, Oregon, contained core membership and were designated “Big Six Camps.”) Abraham Lincoln Camp No. 30, San Antonio, comprised enlisted veterans of the Ninth and Tenth cavalry and Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth infantry regiments—all-black units known to history as the “Buffalo Soldiers.” St. Joseph became home for Winners of the West Camp No. 11, the so-called headquarters camp, to which members nationwide who were unaffiliated with municipal camps might belong (this camp in 1933 numbered 600 members). Additionally, during the 1930s four ladies’ auxiliary camps existed, including Elizabeth B. Custer Camp No. 3, Los Angeles, and Lorena

14 *Winners of the West*, October, 1924 (first quote); *Winners of the West*, October, 1924; *Winners of the West*, June, 1925; *Winners of the West*, July 31, 1926 (second quote); *Winners of the West*, February, 1938. The constitution and by-laws of the NIWV appear in *ibid*.

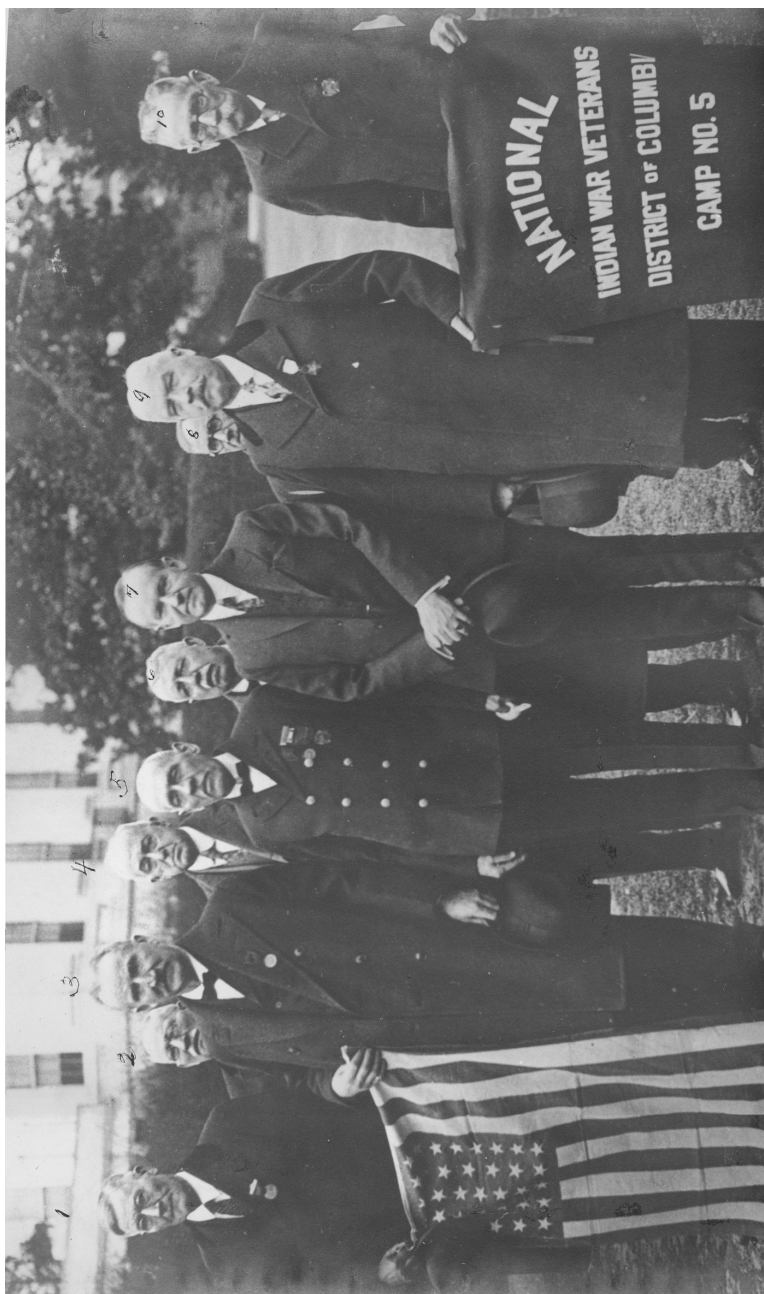


Delegates' Convention of the National Indian War Veterans in St. Joseph, Missouri, 1927. George W. Webb is seated in front center, with cane. To his right is his wife and ladies' auxiliary national leader, Lorena Jane Webb. To his left is NIWV National Adjutant General Albert Fensch. Fensch was a leader in the walkout the next year that led to the founding of the United Indian War Veterans.

Jane Webb Camp No. 1, Stockton, California, the last named in honor of George Webb's wife.¹⁵

An average camp meeting consisted of a formulaic assembly of veterans, probably not unlike that held monthly by the Captain James H. Bradford Camp of San Antonio, Texas. "After the camp is called to order while all the members stand at attention, 'America' is sung and the

¹⁵ *Winners of the West*, September, 1940. The creation of the different camps is periodically discussed in various issues of *Winners of the West* between 1923 and 1944, its range of publication. Camp No. 11 evolved after disaffected members of the Kansas organization united against the Kansans' leadership to honor the spirit of the original Denver NIWV. *Winners of the West*, September, 1940. For a comprehensive list of the NIWV camps, see Jerome A. Greene, *Indian Wars Veteran Organizations* (Mattituck, New York, and Bryan, Texas: J.M. Carroll and Company, 1985), pp. 33-35.



Members of NIWV District of Columbia Camp No. 5 pose with President Calvin Coolidge on the White House lawn, 1928. Left to right, Evan D. Lewis, A. V. Dummel, G. A. Scheader, Jerome Lawler, Paul Schneider, C. W. Crawford, the President, J. J. Murphy, Henry McDonnell, and C. T. Edwards. *Editor's collection.*

invocation asked by the [camp's] chaplain. Then follow the salute of the colors, reading of minutes and [consideration of] applications for membership. Each candidate is required to repeat an 'Obligation of Candidates,' in which he pledges loyalty to his country and obedience to its laws, defense in time of danger and allegiance to his comrades of the Indian wars. After other business is attended to, the meeting closes with a patriotic song, the salute of the colors, and a benediction."¹⁶

Membership in the NIWV was "Active," "Associate," or "Honorary." Active members were veterans eligible for invalid pensions based on actual Indian wars service, while Associates were veterans and dependents deemed ineligible for Indian wars pension status. Associate members included Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War veterans who nonetheless supported the ideals of the body. Similarly, Honorary members comprised interested non-veterans who aspired to the ideals of the association. Annual dues were \$1.50 for men and \$1.00 for women. (To help defray costs, the NIWV permitted dues to be paid in two semi-annual installments of half the total, i.e., 75 or 50 cents, respectively, every six months.) The command hierarchy consisted of both elected and appointed officers from Commander-in-Chief (National Commander) through Vice-Commander down to state and district commanders. There were also honorary positions, like National Chief of Staff, National Adjutant General, National Quartermaster General, and National Grand Marshall. National headquarters of the NIWV was at first located in the home city of the National Commander, although most administrative functions took place in St. Joseph under the guidance of Webb, who was appointed National Chief of Staff in 1925. Throughout most of its existence, the NIWV sponsored annual conventions, usually in the hometown of the National Commander. The assembly of 1924, for example, convened in San Francisco, presided

16 *Houston Post-Dispatch*, January 16, 1927. Minutes of Scranton Camp No. 22 on February 10, 1930, read as follows: "Meeting opened at 8:00 o'clock [p. m.]. Advance of colors, after which club sang three verses of 'America.' The camp was led in prayer by Chaplain Mrs. Jacob Goerlitz. Reading of last meeting's minutes. Reading of communications from Geo. W. Webb. A motion was passed and seconded that the Hawaiian Trio be non-paying members on the condition that they bring their instruments to each meeting. Refreshments were served. Meeting adjourned." "National Indian War Veterans, Scranton Camp No. 22" Minutes book, 1928-1931, in editor's possession.

over by National Commander J. F. W. Unfug. Eventually, St. Joseph, Missouri, became permanent National Headquarters City.¹⁷

The mother camp of all NIWV chapters remained that in Denver, which enjoyed resurgence in the early 1930s largely because of John F. Farley, who became Colorado state commander for the body in 1931. A former Third cavalryman who had been wounded by Apaches near Fort Bowie, Arizona, in 1871, Farley years later had served as Denver's chief of police. He single-handedly rejuvenated the membership in flagging Denver Camp No. 1, and served as state commander until his death in 1940.

Through the work of Farley, Webb, and others, the NIWV prospered, affording unity and therefore valuable assistance to veterans who had heretofore perceived their sacrifices as having gone unacknowledged by the federal government. Pension-related objectives of the body continued to lie in the solidarity of its members. Whereas congressional omnibus measures often included individual pension claims for Indian wars service, the NIWV promoted a community of support to seek legislation that would best serve all such veterans. "Congress will do nothing if it is bombarded by hundreds of different claims and appeals," opined Webb, "and it stands to reason [that] Congress will likely be disgusted and the waste basket is the depository of your writings."¹⁸

Although neither the NIWV nor its collateral bodies could ever boast large memberships, the NIWV nonetheless registered some worthy accomplishments in its lobbying before Congress. In 1924 the group enlisted the aid of former Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles, then eighty-five years old and himself a past participant in notable western campaigns. Supporting

17 *Winners of the West*, July, 1925; *Winners of the West*, July 30, 1930; *Winners of the West*, October, 1924; *Winners of the West*, July, 1925; *Winners of the West*, September 30, 1937. The NIWV constitution and by-laws appear in *Winners of the West*, February, 1938.

18 *Winners of the West*, December, 1923; *San Francisco Examiner*, December 22, 1912; *National Tribune*, March 19, 1936; *Winners of the West*, December 30, 1931 (quote); *Winners of the West*, October, 1940. Farley's attempts to resurrect the Denver camp are mentioned in Webb to Farley, April 29, 1932, and May 31, 1932. Copies provided by Marcella Farley Dillon in the editor's collection. For more about Farley, see Mary M. Farley and Marcella E. Dillon (comps.), *The Farley Scrapbook: Biography of John F. Farley, 1849-1940, One of "The Winners of the West"* (Pueblo, Colo.: Privately printed, 1985). For a list of pension recipients in a single typical omnibus bill, see *Winners of the West*, April 30, 1926.

then-pending legislation on behalf of Indian war veterans, the retired commanding general wrote that these men:

placed their lives between the . . . unprotected settlements and savage barbarians who were committing atrocities of the most cruel and savage character. They endured the severe and destructive heat of the extreme southern districts of our country, as well as the blizzards and the winter blasts of the extreme north, and by the exposure and hardship of the service the lives of many have been shortened.

Most bills advanced, however, never became law. Beyond the significant 1917 legislation, perhaps the major success to which the NIWV contributed occurred on March 3, 1927, when a measure co-sponsored by Representative Elmer O. Leatherwood and Senator Reed Smoot of Utah, and which superseded all previous Indian wars pension legislation, passed both houses of Congress.

The new law extended the period of requisite Indian wars service from 1817 to 1898 and insured that veterans received a minimum of \$20 per month graduated upwards with advancing age to a maximum of \$50 (still less, however, than that received by veterans of other wars). Moreover, fully disabled veterans might receive \$20 to \$50 more per month commensurate with their individual impairment. And for the first time, widows of Indian war veterans would receive \$30 per month, besides an allowance of \$6 per orphaned child up to age sixteen. Unlike earlier legislation, Leatherwood-Smoot did not enumerate specific Indian campaigns for which service pensions might be granted. Instead, it included provision for service “in the zone of any active Indian hostilities,” wording that proved imprecise and confusing for many veterans.

In addition, the schedule accompanying the law was unduly complex and many veterans perceived inherent inequities in its application. While the act brought legislative success for Indian war veterans, it came only after a long drought following the 1917 Keating legislation. By 1927, many veterans had reached an age where its benefits would be minimal.

Nonetheless, passage of Leatherwood-Smoot produced an increase of around one thousand Indian wars pension claimants by 1930.¹⁹

Despite overall improvements to Indian war veterans' lot from the Leatherwood-Smoot measure, the NIWV continued to seek pension increases for its constituents on an equitable par with those granted veterans of other wars. During the 1930s, however, the fight ran counter to national circumstances during the Great Depression, and in March, 1933, while implementing his New Deal recovery program, President Franklin D. Roosevelt directed a 10% reduction in veterans' pensions for a period of one year. The NIWV vigorously protested the cuts as being unfair, as George Webb editorialized in *Winners of the West*. "When the Veteran of Indian Wars . . . witnesses the Civil War Veteran receiving a pension of \$100 per month, the Spanish-American and World War Veteran considered eligible [for] various amounts even in excess of that paid to Civil War Veterans . . . he begins to question whether or not he is being dealt with by the Government

19 *St. Joseph Gazette*, October 11, 1928; *Winners of the West*, December, 1924 (Miles quote); *Winners of the West*, January 30, 1930; *Winners of the West*, October 30, 1935; *Winners of the West*, September 30, 1937. For details of a typical bill never enacted yet seeking apportioned increases in pensions based upon advancing age and disability, as well as extending increased benefits to widows with provision for orphaned children, see *Winners of the West*, June, 1924. Precursor of the Leatherwood-Smoot measure was various legislation introduced in 1925 and 1926 by Senator Selden P. Spencer (Missouri), Representative Addison T. Smith (Idaho), Senator Frank R. Gooding (Idaho), and Representative Leatherwood. *Winners of the West*, October, 1925; *Winners of the West*, December, 1925; *Winners of the West*, March 30, 1926. The Leatherwood-Smoot bill of 1927 passed Congress over the objections of Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work, who opposed the cost of the increase. *Winners of the West*, June 24, 1926. For an effort to publicize the act to appropriate veterans, see "Pension the Indian Fighters," *Frontier Times*, 4 (July, 1927), pp. 36-37. The 1898 addition accommodated service during the Chippewa uprising of October, 1898. For the act, see Public Law 723, Statutes at Large, 44, Part 2, pp. 1361-63. Later amendatory efforts did not succeed to provide for those who served during the 1906 expedition to capture Ute Indians (the "Absentee" Utes) who left their Utah reservation to take up residence at the Cheyenne River Sioux reservation in South Dakota. See U. S. Congress, House, Committee on Invalid Pensions, *Hearings . . . on . . . Bills to Liberalize the Now Existing Benefits with Reference to Veterans and Dependents of Veterans of the Indian Wars*, 76th Cong., 3d sess., January 22 and 23, 1940, *passim*.



Birthplace of the United Indian War Veterans at 901 Charles Street, St. Joseph, Missouri. Members who bolted the National Indian War Veterans convention in September, 1928, reconvened at this address to organize their own body. *Editor's collection.*

with any spirit of fairness. . . .” Webb’s future successes were limited. In August, 1937, a new pension law increased by \$5 (a “magnanimous sum,” he remarked) the monthly stipend to all Indian war veterans, while allowing those totally disabled \$72 per month.²⁰

By late in the decade, only slightly more than 3,000 qualified Indian war veterans still lived (including, interestingly enough, 400 who were Indians—former scouts who had enlisted to serve against their kinsmen). Dependents of deceased veterans numbered approximately 4,500. Yet another pension act passed Congress in March, 1944, providing for graduated raises based upon age and disability, and at last accorded Indian war veterans (those with appropriate service in specified Indian wars or

²⁰ *Winners of the West*, March 30, 1933; *Winners of the West*, February 28, 1934; *Winners of the West*, June 30, 1933 (quote); *Winners of the West*, September 30, 1937. Throughout the 1930s, many bills introduced in Congress sought to amend the 1927 law to raise pensions of the Indian wars class to a level equitable to those of other war veterans. Some proposed a single higher rate (as high as \$75) for all Indian wars pensioners, yet none were enacted. See *Winners of the West*, January 30, 1931; *Winners of the West*, January 30, 1932; *Winners of the West*, December 30, 1933; *Winners of the West*, March, 1937; *Winners of the West*, May, 1939.

campaigns) certain parity with Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans. This legislation was the last supported by the NIWV as an identifiable body. By then the association had become an untenable enterprise with increasingly mounting deaths in its membership. George Webb had died in 1938, and continuation of *Winners of the West* rested with the volunteer efforts of interested non-veterans. Shortly after Webb's death, National Commander Edmund Graham resigned, and many camps with dwindling rolls disbanded altogether. In 1940 a brief revitalization attempt occurred led by the General O. O. Howard Camp in Chicago that resulted in the installation of a new slate of officers.

But the inexorable march of time, hastened by the sudden onset of World War II, ultimately insured the end of the NIWV. (During that conflict *Winners of the West* carried such incongruous headlines as "Veteran Who is Almost Blind . . . Would Enjoy Chance at Japs and Nazis with His Old Springfield," and "[He] Saw Geronimo Fall: Axis Next.") In 1941 only nine diminishing camps remained active, and three years later, with publication of the final issue of *Winners of the West*, the National Indian War Veterans Association ceased existence.²¹

The demise of the NIWV did not close the pension movement for Indian war veterans altogether. Since 1928, a successful rival organization had emerged with headquarters in California whose work paralleled that of the NIWV. Among numerous western camps, a simmering dispute had arisen over George Webb's domination of the organization as National Commander, and many opposed his re-election to that office.

In 1928, at the eighteenth annual NIWV convention in St. Joseph, Missouri, the rebels took issue with a motion by Webb supporters to dispense with the reading of the officers' reports because some contained criticism of Webb. On the afternoon of October 10, when the matter was put to a vote and the regulars won, the minority faction of delegates from six

21 *Winners of the West*, May 30, 1937; *Winners of the West*, March 28, 1944; *Winners of the West*, December, 1939; *Winners of the West*, January, 1940; *Winners of the West*, June, 1940; *Winners of the West*, April, 1941; *Winners of the West*, May 28, 1943; *Winners of the West*, June 28, 1943; Frank Ostlin, *What Every Veteran Should Know* (Chicago: Published by the author, 1945), pp. 100-01, 102-03, 108. Following Webb's death, the editor of the paper from 1938 to 1944 was Virginia Elizabeth Wing (Mrs. Frederick S. Bangerter) of St. Joseph. *Winners of the West*, June 28, 1942. The final issue, dated December 28, 1944, carried the following notice: "Due to existing conditions beyond our control, labor finances, and war-time constriction, we are forced to discontinue the publishing of *Winners of the West* at least for the duration of the war. This is our last issue."



Attendees at the third annual convention of the United Indian War Veterans stand before the Yavapai County Building, Prescott, Arizona, September 14, 1931. Note the banner at right for the Gen. George Crook Camp No. 1, Los Angeles.

camps bolted the meeting to convene nearby where they drafted their own constitution and by-laws and elected officers. Horace B. Mulkey, who had been National Senior Vice President of the NIWV became National Commander of the new United Indian War Veterans of the United States (UIWV).

Of the 1,300 NIWV members scattered in camps throughout the nation, UIWV leadership immediately claimed 542 members in camps in San Francisco; Chicago; Los Angeles; San Antonio; Billings, Montana; and Yountsville, California, and additionally announced that the three independent groups in Kansas, Utah, and Oregon would join with the new national body.

The organization eventually embraced thirteen departments across the country, each under a commander. The UIWV was incorporated under the laws of the State of California on November 5, 1928, and held its first annual convention in September, 1929, at the Disabled Veterans Hall in Los Angeles.²² Oddly enough, by the 1928 rupture, the very unity that the Indian

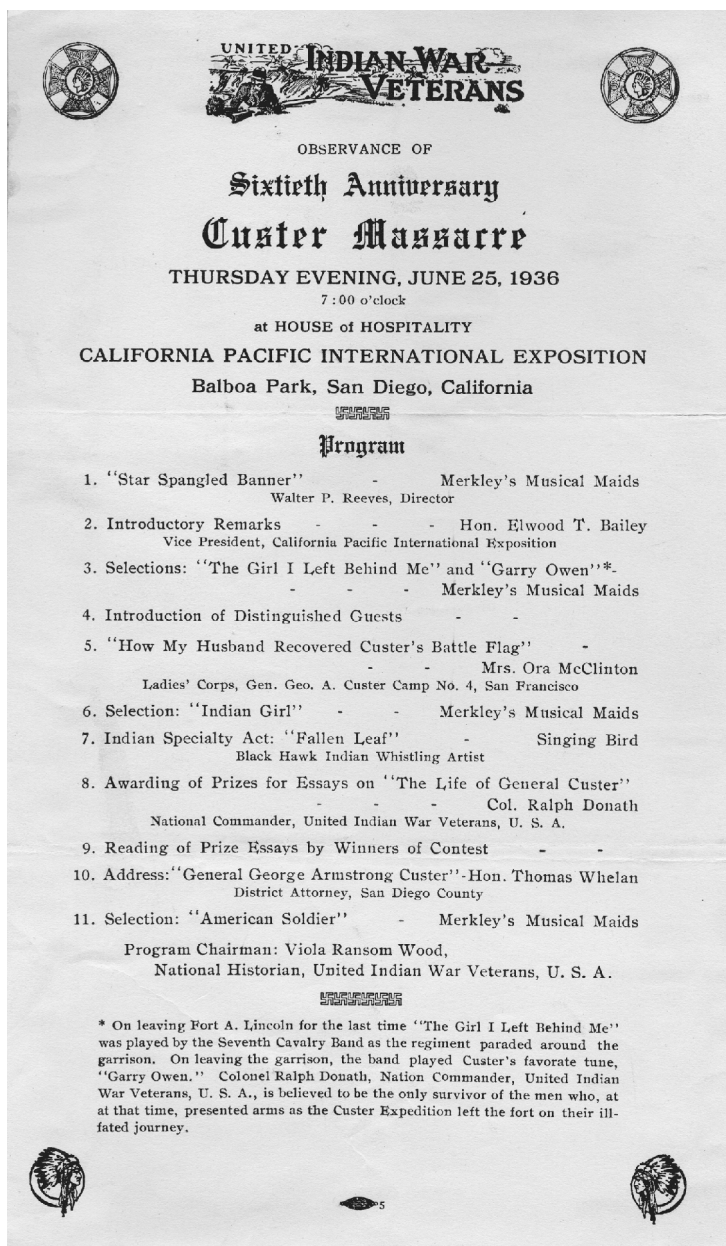
22 Pertinent news clippings from the *St. Joseph News Press*, October 11, 1928, and the *St. Joseph Gazette*, October 11, 1928; State of California, Department of State, Articles of Incorporation of the United Indian War

war veterans as a relatively small group had long advocated, and that had been vital to fostering pension reform, became effectively lost as the two national groups, each with declining memberships based on attrition, individually competed for the same objectives.

Following the splintering off of the UIWV, the old San Francisco NIWV camp founded in 1912 became Gen. George A. Custer Camp No. 4, United Indian War Veterans, U. S. A., and became the nucleus around which the new organization evolved. The group's slogan, "There's Only a Few of Us Left," belied the state of the UIWV, which thrived for decades as the last of the Indian wars veteran groups. The primary objectives of the body were:

To cultivate a spirit of harmony and comradeship amongst those whose services in our country were identical or similar in its nature, and to perpetuate the memory of such service in future generations of our descendants, and

Veterans of the United States, November 5, 1928. Original copy, along with cited clippings in Scrapbook No. 1, Fensch Scrapbooks; Program, *First Annual Convention, United Indian War Veterans, U. S. A.*, Sept. 15, 16, 17, 1929 (copy in editor's possession). The charges against Webb apparently centered on the belief "that the St. Joseph Camp No. 11 was exercising more power than it was entitled to have at the convention. As editor of the publication *Winners of the West*, Webb was alleged to be able to dominate the convention. "He has been president [National Commander] for two years." Clipping from an unidentified St. Joseph newspaper in Fensch Scrapbook No. 3. Another charge against Webb was "that he had sought to control the organization by enrolling distant veterans in St. Joseph Camp No. 11." Clipping from the *St. Joseph Gazette*, October 12, 1928, in *ibid*. Webb was re-elected commander of the NIWV following the walkout by the rebels, while St. Joseph was voted as the "permanent national headquarters" of the NIWV. *Ibid*. A prospectus for a history of the United Indian War Veterans in 1931 enumerated and perhaps exaggerated the causes culminating in the breakaway from the NIWV as "the struggles against the exploitation, graft, racketeering methods for selfish gain, and maladministration into which it [the NIWV] had fallen prior to the 1928 . . . reorganization." Fensch Scrapbook No. 3. In the organization into UIWV departments, four camps of Utah Indian War Veterans joined the Department of Nevada and Utah under commander Brigham Jarvis, while the Kansas organization amalgamated into the Department of Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri, under Luther Barker. The Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast merged into the Department of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska, under William Murphy. *Prescott Evening Courier*, September 15, 1931; "Annual Convention, Encampment, and Reunion United Indian War Veterans, U. S. A. Our Old 'Winners of the West,'" *Yavapai Magazine*, 21 (August, 1931), p. 7.



Program for the United Indian War Veterans' observance of the sixtieth anniversary of the "Custer Massacre" on June 25, 1936, in Balboa Park, San Diego, California. During the exercises, Mrs. Ora McClinton offered a telling of "How My Husband Recovered Custer's Battle Flag" at the Little Bighorn. *Editor's collection.*

To use all and every proper means of bringing about recognition by our government, of such services equal to that accorded those who participated in other wars in which our country has been engaged, the results of which were not of greater value than those attained by our own struggles against its foes.

During ensuing years the UIWV proliferated along the West Coast with three camps and a like number of associated ladies' corps units. The bitterness with the NIWV continued, with UIWV National Adjutant General Albert Fensch privately branding Webb "the St. Jo bandit," and his paper the "Losers of the West." "I think the Webb outfit is gradually disintegrating," wrote Fensch in the early 1930s. "His 'convention' was a farce, so we heard, and his many 'strong' camps are all in his head and in his 'rag' of a paper."

As of 1931, the UIWV claimed twenty-four camps nationwide "of which only about 16 are really active," with total membership at "between 1400 and 1500." (It was estimated that of 17,000 then-surviving Indian war veterans—all of those who had served in the West, 1865-98—less than one-third were on the pension rolls.)²³

Like the NIWV, which it survived by more than twenty years, the UIWV promoted pension legislation favorable to the Indian war veteran class while providing fellowship among its aging constituency. The organization also helped members prepare and file individual pension claims. Officers were elected annually at conventions held usually in Los Angeles or San Francisco, but occasionally at places like Prescott, Arizona, where in 1931 Governor George W. P. Hunt welcomed the body at its banquet and was made an honorary member. A resolution approved at the Arizona meeting sought to raise invalid pensions for "aged and infirm" Indian war veterans from \$50 to \$100 per month (claiming that disabled Spanish-American and World War veterans received as much as \$157.50 per month).

23 *Winners of the West*, December 30, 1935; *Program, Eighteenth National Convention, United Indian War Veterans, U. S. A., and the Ladies Corps, San Francisco, California*, October 16-17, 1948. Excerpts of the constitution and by-laws of the UIWV appear in *Program, Twenty-fourth National Convention, United Indian War Veterans, U. S. A., San Francisco, California, October 15-16, 1954*; *Program, Twenty-ninth National Reunion, United Indian War Veterans, U. S. A., and the Ladies Corps, San Francisco, California, October 13-14, 1960*; Albert Fensch, "The Policies of the United Indian War Veterans," clipping in Scrapbook #2, Fensch Scrapbooks (quote); Fensch to Lieutenant Colonel Willis Metcalf, U. S. Army, ca. December, 1931 (quote regarding Webb). Transcribed copy in editor's collection; *Prescott Evening Courier*, September 15, 1931.

In 1937, the UIWV published a pamphlet of original poems to bring attention to their cause; they dedicated it to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and disseminated it to the congressional membership. In 1936, the camp in San Diego sponsored an observance of the sixtieth anniversary of the “Custer Massacre” at Balboa Park, the program including Seventh Cavalry band selections, the award of prizes for essays on Custer’s life, and a “Black Hawk Indian Whistling Artist.”

After World War II, with its membership falling, the UIWV focused more on fostering such social activities over improving pension benefits. During the 1950s, more than 300 surviving Indian war veterans, including many of the UIWV, were contacted for historical information about their service; questionnaires completed during the study are on file at the U. S. Army Military History Institute in Pennsylvania.

The UIWV sponsored its annual meetings into the 1960s, when three camps still functioned. Late in 1962, twenty-nine members assembled in San Francisco for their annual meeting, presided over by National Commander Edward Snider and Ladies Corps Commander Minnie Saunders, age 97. Six years later, only four veterans attended.²⁴

24 *Prescott Evening Courier*, September 15, 1931; *Prescott Journal-Miner*, September 16, 1933; *Prescott Journal-Miner*, September 17, 1931; *Los Angeles City News*, February 11, 1937. Some UIWV camps were located in the East, for example, the Gen. Adna R. Chaffee Camp of Washington, D. C. Pension news was disseminated to UIWV members via a mimeographed paper entitled *The War-Path*, published initially in 1939. The pamphlet cited was *Rimes and Chimes of the Mountains and Plains* (Los Angeles: United Indian War Veterans, U. S. A., 1937). Broadside regarding the “Custer Massacre” observance, “Thursday evening, June 25, 1936” in Fensch Scrapbook No. 4. Historian Don G. Rickey conducted the survey mostly in 1954, and assembled a body of questionnaires, personal letters, and interview materials. See the Rickey Papers, Manuscript Archives, U. S. Army Military History Institute, Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Based partly on this information, Rickey published *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay*. The final UIWV assemblies are recounted in clippings from an unidentified San Francisco newspaper, circa October 10, 1962, and November 13, 1968, in Fensch Scrapbook No. 5. The last two surviving Indian war veterans were Reginald Bradley, 105, who joined the Fourth Cavalry at Fort Bowie, Arizona Territory, in 1889, and died February 5, 1971; and Fredrak W. Fraske, 101, of Chicago, who died June 18, 1973. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 1967; *Washington Post*, February 6, 1971. For three terms, Minnie Saunders served continuously as National Commander of the Ladies Corps from 1930 through 1962. Before UIWV was organized, she belonged to the NIWV.

The survival of the UIWV into the second half of the twentieth century was remarkable. By the 1940s, to say nothing of the 1960s, a veteran of frontier service was something of an anachronism. Unlike Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I veterans, those survivors of the Indian campaigns had no single chronological block on which to focus their service for commemorative purposes. Theirs was sandwiched between major wars, did not respond to any particular national emergency, and was generally characterized more by routine activity that spanned several decades of postwar development only sporadically infused with campaigning and combat. Unlike those veterans of the nation's larger conflicts, the survivors of the Indian wars found it difficult to assemble for purposes of camaraderie, to say nothing of uniting to seek government benefits. That they nonetheless succeeded to some degree in both was due to a tenacity of spirit perhaps acquired years earlier under arduous conditions in forbidding climates during far-flung service on the plains and in the mountains and deserts against the followers of Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Joseph, and Cochise. As one of the old veterans averred in a closing poetic reflection of his time in the West, "And some of these days, it won't be long, Our names will be called and we'll all be gone. But so long as it lasts, let us never forget, 'Tis an honor to be an Indian War vet."²⁵

25 Albert Fensch, "By-Gone Days," in *Rimes and Chimes of the Mountains and Plains*, pp. 11-12.