

The Spectrum.

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Residents, descendants of WWI soldiers invited to Southern Utah commemoration

[David DeMille](#), The Spectrum Published 1:27 p.m. MT May 17, 2018 | Updated 10:36 p.m. MT May 17, 2018



{Photo: Submitted}

The Dixie Encampment of the Sons of Utah Pioneers has been studying Southern Utah's involvement in the larger war effort during World War I, and on Friday they're sharing some of that pieced-together history through the story of a local soldier who kept a diary of his time in the war.

Historian Allan Kent Powell, whose work includes the editing and publication of a journal kept by local soldier Nels Anderson, is the scheduled presenter for a World War I commemoration event, slated for 7 p.m. at the Bloomington Stake Center, 200 W. Brigham Road, St. George.

Anderson, who was homeless when he moved to the area, converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and started working on local farms. He then fought for six months in Europe. When he returned, he spent time seeking out other area veterans and organizing meetings. He would eventually author a popular book called "Desert Saints," according to Powell's work.

His journal from the war is a key document among Utah World War I histories. Powell's edition of the journal was published by the University of Utah Press in 2013.

Utah and World War I

April 2017 marked the centennial of the U.S. joining the first world war, and the [Utah Division of State History implemented a World War I Commission](#) to provide information and resources to the public about the state's involvement.

Powell is among the historians who point to the war as an important dividing line in state history, with Utah transitioning from its sometimes contentious relationship with the U.S. government during its fight to attain statehood into an active and patriotic participant of the country.

During the war, there were more than 21,000 Utahns in the armed forces — about 5 percent of the population at the time — and the [state was a vigorous supporter of the war effort](#), developing a network of defense councils and encouraging residents to buy war bonds, Powell said in a recent interview with the state history office.

Locally, there fewer than 100 men from Utah's "Dixie" who fought in the war. That was far fewer than the 1,000-plus who fought in World War II, but that was largely due to the nation's late entry into the war and a flu epidemic that killed or sickened many soldiers after they were first inducted at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, according to Dixie Sons of Utah Pioneers research.

Still, researchers have found 133 names of men buried at area cemeteries who served in the military at the time of the war, compiling a list of names and contacting descendants about joining Friday's commemoration events.

The search for Southern Utah descendants

Right now the Sons of Utah Pioneers is working to find more names, and reaching out to their descendants in an effort to learn more about the region's World War I connections and how involvement in the war helped shape local history, said Wayne Pace, a founder and past president of the Dixie SUP and professor emeritus at Brigham Young University.

Pace said researchers are asking the community to contact them with any information they might have, noting that many Southern Utah residents would likely be familiar with the surnames found among those 133 WWI-era service members.

Descendants of WWI-era veterans and others with information are encouraged to call Pace at 435-688-8114, David Peterson at 435-275-2495, or Mark Christensen at 360-798-6375.

For more information on the Utah World War I Commission, visit heritage.utah.gov/history/wwi.

Follow David DeMille on Twitter, [@SpectrumDeMille](https://twitter.com/SpectrumDeMille).

Southern Utah WWI veterans

The Dixie Encampment of the Sons of Utah Pioneers have analyzed Washington County grave sites and compiled a list of 133 service members who served at the time of World War I. The names identified so far are:

Leslie MacKenzie Abercrombie; Charles Erastus Allen; Moses Willard Andrus; Jerome Asay Jr.; John Peter Atkin; John Woodruff Averett; Andrew W. Baker; Alma Ross Barton, Alfred Hess Bateman; Henry Dwight Bean; Carl W. Beck; William H. Bennett; Arthur Ray Bentley; Mathew Mansfield Bentley; Robert Blood; Sidney Lindsay Burton; Milo Canfield; Ambrose Mason Cannon; Kenneth Mason Cannon; Don Smith Carter; William Carter; George Frederick Christian; Joseph Milton Cottam; LeRoy Henderson Cox; Warren Lee Cox; Wilford Fenton Cox; Albert Weston Craig; Bert Alphonso Dewey; Roscoe Robert Douglas; Robert Edmund Ellis; Levi Empey; Nelson A. Empey; William Albert Empey; John M. Ence; Henry Clay Foster; Harry Preston Fullerton; Rex Gardner; Henry W. Gerdt; William Henry Graff; Hyrum P. Gubler; Leland Hafen; Guy Hafen; Daniel Walter Hansen; Barney R. Hinds; James LeRoy Holt; John Steiner Houston; William H. Ingalls; Victor Moses Iverson; Harvey Albert Jackson; Alma H. Jacobson; James William Jolley; Alvin Alfred Jones, Clarence Amos Jones; William J. Jones; Frank Judd; Louis Paul Kastle; William A. Kearney; Daniel Lester Keate; Julius Ross Keate; Neal Dee Keate; Milo Kemp; Herman Krum; Albert Lang; Francis Searce Leany; Sherman Lamb; Reuben Larson; Josiah H. Leavitt; Guy E. Lowry; Gordan Wallace Mathis; Daniel Mathew McMurtre; Ezra Mervin McArthur; David Lindhurst McNeil; Frank Miles; Orson Pratt Miles; Richard W. Miles; William E. Miller; William Henry Miller; Vivian Milne; Marvin Young Mitchell; Alexander DeWar Moore; Clarence S. Moore; Claudis Newberry Morris; Leslie A. Morris; Leon Moss; Joseph A. Neilson; Vernal Neilson; Joseph Frederick Page, Jr.; George Hopkins Parris; Anthony Pendleton; John J. Phoenix, Jr.; Henry Pickett; Clyde Ira Powell; John Franklin Prince; John Franklin Pymm; Brigham Dyson Randall; Cleon J. Reber; Lorin Reber; Clyde Rosenberry; Napoleon Bonaparte Roundy; James Rossetta; Vincent Edmond Ryan; Alfred Alonzo Ruby; Walter Albert Schmutz; Frederick Lee Smith; Karl Nelson Snow; William John Squire; John Wallace Stewart; Edwin Stucki; Ether J. Stucki; Ferdinand Karl Stucki; Archibald Cleo Sullivan; Gordon Sullivan; Kenneth M. Taylor; Ezra Thompson; Harold Ira Thomson; Beatrice Timmins; Seven Wallace Turnbeaugh; James Edward Jackson Turner; Lorenzo Power Vincent; Frank Squire West; Ralph Westover; Erastus Goddard Whitehead; Morris Rennie Whitehead; Ralph Emanuel Whiney; Roscoe Rex Wilhoit; Harold Roger Williams; Kumen Davies Williams; Alvin Deliverance Wilson; Julius C. Wittwer; David Orin Woodbury; John T. Woodbury Jr.; Robert Worthen; Vernon Worthen.