The Fighting Joe Wheeler Dispatch

Volume XLVI, Issue 10 October, 2026

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Commander: Spencer Harris
1st Lt. Commander: Barry Cook
2nd Lt. Commander: Joe Payne
Adjutant: Dave McCombs
Chaplain: Tim Whitfield
Color Sergeant: Pat Acton
Quartermaster: David Knight
Sergeant At Arms: Pat Acton
Camp Surgeon: Dr. Rick Price
Dispatch Editor: David Fisher
Commander Emeritus: Dr. Ira West

Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372,
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Please send articles or other information for inclusion in **"The Dispatch"** to
David Fisher
810 Saulter Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35209
Or e-mail fisherda@mac.com

Tuesday, October 13, 6:00 pm

Longstreet: Hero or Trailtor?

Speaker: Rik Carden

!!! NEW MEETING TIME 6:00 PM !!!

This Month During the War Between the States (1861-1865)

October 3, 1861	The Battle of Greenbrier River, Va. (now W. Va.)
October 21, 1861	Battle of Ball's Bluff (Leesburg), Va.
October 3, 1862	Battle of Corinth, Mississippi
October 8, 1862	Battle of Perryville, Ky.
October 18, 1862	Garrison captured at Lexinton, Ky. in Morgan's Raid
October 14, 1863	Battle of Bristoe Station, Va.
October 17, 1863	Lincoln calls for 300,000 additional volunteers to join the army
October 5, 1864	Battle of Allatoona Pass, Ga.
October 30, 1864	Skirmish at Muscle Shoals, Alabama

http://www.fightingjoewheelercamp.org

SCV Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372 FJWCamp1372@yahoogroups.com

Alabama: We Dare Defend Our Rights

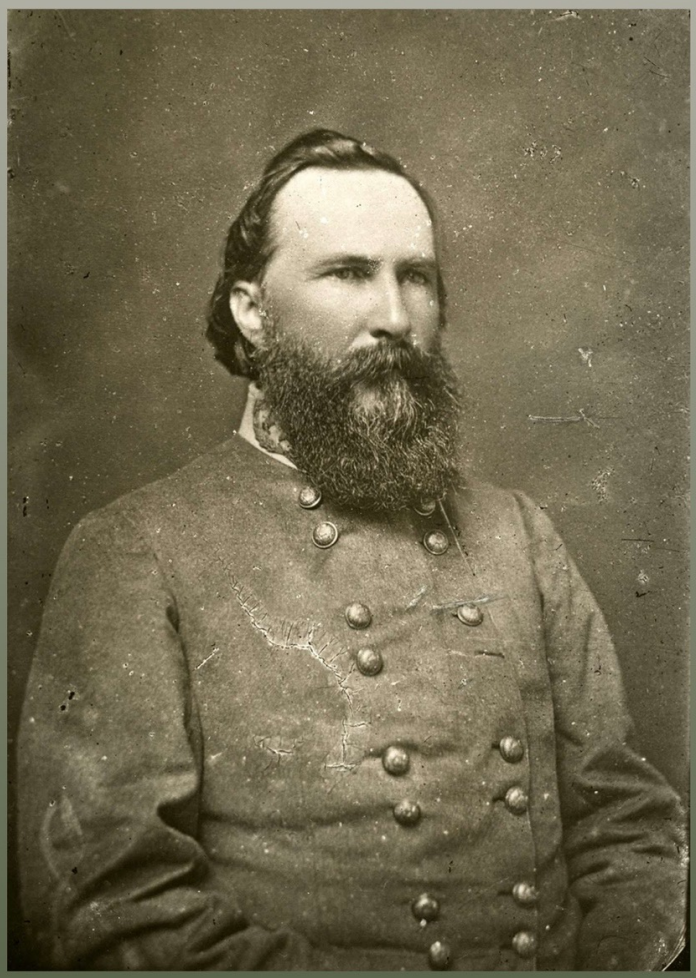
"The principal for which we contended is bound to reassert itself, though it may be at another time and in another form." - Jefferson Davis, May 1865

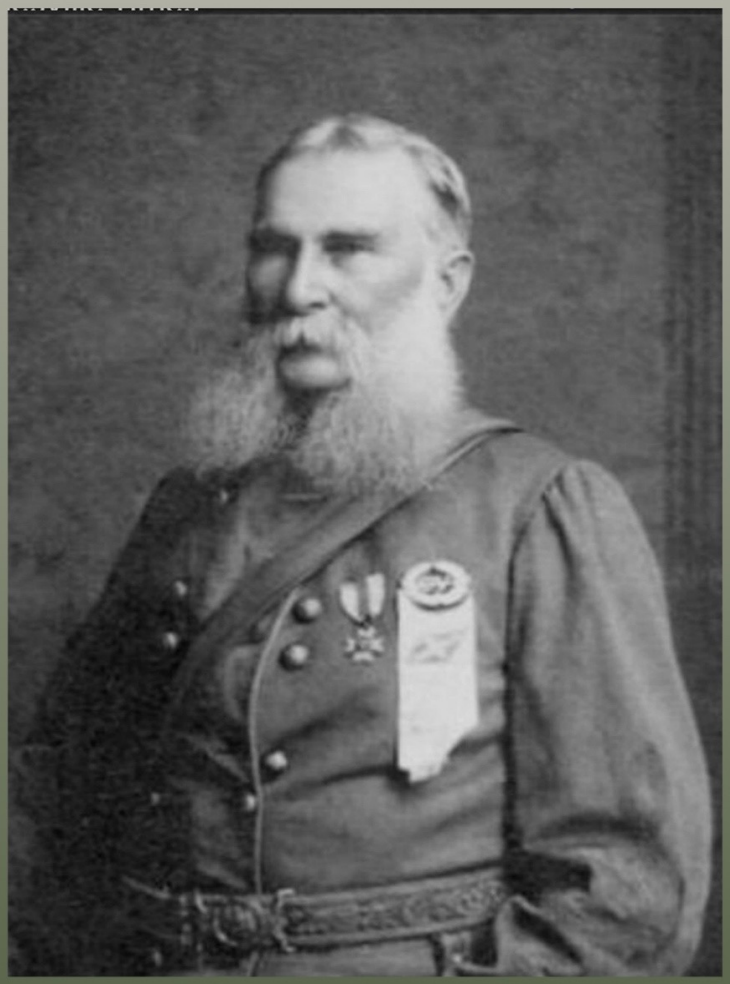
The Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp presents

Longstreet: Hero or Traitor?

by

Rik Carden





October 13, 2026
New Merkel House
6:00pm

Commander's Report

October 2026

Brothers, Friends, Compatriots,

It's hard to believe that we are heading into October already. The year has flown by. This morning on my daily prayer walk I swapped shorts and a T shirt for sweatpants and a hoodie because the temperature had dropped so fast. Finally feels like Fall.

Our own Rick Carden is speaking this month and is speaking on Longstreet. The title of his topic is Hero or Traitor.

We also have our last big recruiting event of the year coming up on October 10th and 11th. If you haven't participated in this in the past, it's a great way to get the message out about our camp as well as the overall message about preserving Southern Heritage.

We have a growing list of speakers for next year. If you are interested in speaking, then please give me a call and I'll get you on the schedule.

Thank you all,

Deo Vindice

Spencer Harris
Commander Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372

Chaplain's Report

Luke 10:27-29 *27 "Love your neighbor as yourself." 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. 29 But the man wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

In Luke Chapter 10 Jesus is speaking with a man that quoted Old Testament scripture. Jesus saw that he did not consider people different from him as his neighbors. So, Jesus responded by telling the parable of the "*Good Samaritan*" where a Priest, then later a Levite (both high up in Jewish society) bypass a robbed and severely beaten Jewish man lying in a road. A Samaritan, generally looked down on by Jews in the region, then comes along, does the neighborly thing and helps the Jewish man in need.

Moving to modern times the parable of the "*Good Samaritan*" is still relevant because so many people are neighborly only to people they agree with rather than being neighborly to <u>everyone</u>. Leading up to a recent college football game played September 11, 2026 between neighboring Missouri and Kansas the University of Kansas promoted this game with a video proclaiming the "*Kansas-Missouri Border War*", highlighting the strife in the region leading up to the Civil War. The video proclaimed pro north Kansas as the righteous "good" while insinuating the neighboring visitors, the University of Missouri were the evil 'bad' Confederates.

After the game Missouri's head coach Eli Drinkwitz said "*I'm glad this whole right vs wrong thing just got settled with our 38-21 victory. It's a football game. It's not any deeper than that. And I get there's a past, but why are they stirring that bullcrap up? I was embarrassed for them."*

The Priest and the Levite in the parable Jesus told should have been embarrassed for ignoring a neighbor in need. So too should those ignorant of Civil War history in 2026 be embarrassed for proclaiming the Yankee North as the virtuous "right", the neighboring Confederate South as the evil "*wrong*" and applying that flawed judgement on their modernday neighbors today.

Deo Vindice

Tim Whitfield,

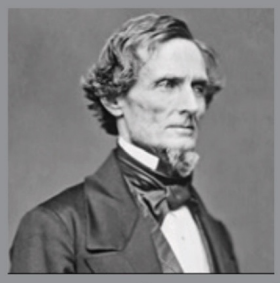
Chaplain FJW Camp 1372

Reader's Corner

The following pages show a pamphlet composed by Commander Spencer Harris and 1st LCDR Barry Cook to hand out at gun shows and wherever else is appropriate. It's called the Southern Writing Handout. It will be a bi-fold 4 ¼" by 11" pamphlet. It is very informative. Enjoy.

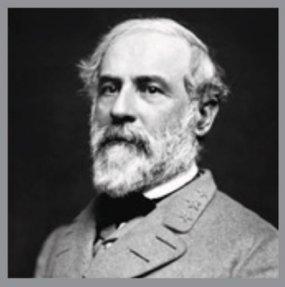
Reader's Corner

Alabama Division
Sons of Confederate Veterans



"We desire peace at any sacrifice save that of honor and independence."

Jefferson Davis



"The consolidation of the states into one vast republic, sure to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home, will be the certain precursor to ruin which has overwhelmed all those that have preceded it."

Robert E. Lee



"My religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it my overtake me."

T.J. "Stonewall" Jackson

Why Was There Ever a "Civil" War?

Confederate General Patrick Cleburne once warned: "Surrender means that the history of this heroic struggle will be written by our enemy; that our youth will be trained by Northern school teachers; will learn from Northern school books their version of the war; will be impressed by all the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors, and our maimed veterans as fit subjects for derision."

General Cleburne's warning has proven remarkably prophetic. Today, Confederate monuments are removed, historic names are erased from public institutions, and the men and causes of the South are frequently presented as unworthy of understanding or respect. Rather than encouraging an honest examination of history, modern narratives often reduce a complex conflict to simplistic conclusions and moral judgments. In the process, the experiences, convictions, sacrifices, and contributions of the Southern people have been increasingly marginalized.

History deserves more than slogans, sound bites, and political narratives. It deserves honest examination. To understand the conflict that divided America, we must be willing to look beyond popular assumptions and ask an important question:

Why was there ever a war between the states?

The term "Civil War" has become so ingrained in American history that few stop to consider whether it accurately describes what occurred in 1861. Unlike the civil wars that have occurred throughout history, the Southern states never sought to overthrow the United States government or impose their will upon the North. They did not march to Washington seeking political power; they chose instead to leave the Union and establish their own independent nation, in the same way that our forefathers left Great Britain to create 13 independent states. The Confederate States of America desired self-government, not conquest. As President Jefferson Davis and other Southern leaders repeatedly stated, the South wished only to separate peacefully and be left alone. It was the refusal to accept secession by Lincoln and the Federal Government that transformed a political dispute into a bloody conflict. After all, our forefather's told us in the Declaration of Independence that "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..." The war in effect was the Second American Revolution or the War for Southern Independence.

The purpose of this pamphlet is not merely to repeat familiar claims, but to encourage thoughtful consideration of these issues and to present a perspective that is often overlooked in modern discussions. We invite you to examine the evidence, consider the historical record, and decide for yourself what brought America to war in 1861.

Tariffs and Federal Spending

Most Americans today understand the frustration of excessive taxation and an ever-growing federal government. We watch as billions of dollars are spent on projects we may never see and policies, we may not support, while being told it is for the greater good. While the specific issues were different in the nineteenth century, many Southerners felt a similar frustration. They increasingly believed they were shouldering a disproportionate share of the federal burden while receiving comparatively little benefit in return.

Reader's Corner

Tension over tariffs had existed for decades before the War. As early as 1832, South Carolina threatened secession during the Nullification Crisis when tariff rates rose dramatically. Although compromise temporarily resolved the dispute, the underlying issue never disappeared. At the time, tariffs were the primary source of federal revenue, as there was no federal income tax. Because the South's economy was heavily dependent upon exporting agricultural products and importing manufactured goods, Southern states generated a significant portion of the nation's tariff revenue. According to wealth data compiled from the 1860 Census, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia were the wealthiest per capita in the nation prior to the war. The Southern states created the 4th largest economy in the world at that time. (A Disease in the Public Mind, Thomas Fleming, ch. 18, pg. 204). The Smithsonian noted that New Orleans, the financial hub of the South, held more collective capital in its banks than New York City prior to the war. Charles Adams noted in his book, When in the Course of Human Events, that the south accounted for between 72 and 82% of all U.S. exports but relied on manufactured goods from outside. The protectionary tariffs, even when they were not directly paid by the South, forced the Southern people to buy more expensive imported goods or to spend their money in the North.

Many Southerners believed these tariffs were structured not simply to raise revenue, but to protect Northern industries from foreign competition. In effect, Southern consumers often paid higher prices for manufactured goods while Northern factories benefited from government protection. To many in the South, this arrangement appeared less like fair taxation and more like wealth being transferred from one region of the country to another.

The same concerns extended to federal spending. Southern leaders frequently argued that federal investments disproportionately favored Northern interests, particularly in transportation and industrial development. Railroad expansion, harbor improvements, canals, and other infrastructure projects were concentrated largely in Northern states. A glance at railroad maps from the period reveals a striking disparity in rail development between the two regions.

Jefferson Davis, while serving in the federal government before the War, advocated a southern route for a transcontinental railroad. Supporters argued it would be less expensive to build and less susceptible to weather disruptions than a northern route. Yet Southern proposals often found themselves defeated by political and economic interests centered in the North and often led by their attorney Abraham Lincoln. These repeated disputes reinforced a growing belief among Southerners that their region's interests were becoming subordinate to those of an increasingly dominant federal government. To emphasize this point it is best to go to the words of the people of that time, an article in the Chicago daily times written after secession of the Southern States began noted the following: "Let the South adopt the free-trade system, and open her ports to the commerce of the world, and New York would lose two-third's of her trade and her commerce would be reduced to less than one-half of what it now is." Alabama's own William L. Yancey, a secession commissioner and Southern Political leader, noted "that the South contributed between fifty to seventy five percent of Federal revenue while receiving far less in return.

Slavery and Abolition

Many Americans are taught that slavery was the sole cause of the War and that the conflict was fought primarily to free the slaves. While slavery was unquestionably an issue, the historical reality is far more complex.
Slavery was not a uniquely Southern institution, nor was it confined to the United States. It existed throughout much of the world and was already being abolished in many nations through legislative and political processes. In fact, there is no other instance in history where a population of white citizens took up arms against one another in a war over the abolition of slavery. The questions that divided Americans often centered not only on slavery itself, but on who had the authority to decide the issue and how any transition should occur.

It is also important to remember that America's involvement in the slave trade began in New England. The first American slave ship was built in Massachusetts, and the last known American slaver, also built and registered in Massachusetts, continued operating during the War For Southern Independence. Despite modern perceptions, slavery was not exclusively a Southern or even an American problem—it was a worldwide institution that existed among many peoples and cultures.

Likewise, opposition to slavery did not always follow the sectional lines often portrayed today. No Northern state enacted a law immediately abolishing slavery, and even during the war General Ulysses S. Grant owned slaves. These facts do not excuse slavery; rather, they illustrate that the issue was more complicated than the simple division of a virtuous North and a guilty South.

Many Southerners believed slavery would eventually disappear, as it had throughout much of the Western world. The disagreement often concerned how abolition would be accomplished. Some favored gradual emancipation and compensation, while others demanded immediate abolition. Jefferson Davis laid his plan out for the "High Road to Emancipation" in front of the U.S. Congress as a senator from Mississippi and Robert E. Lee also favored gradual emancipation to allow time for slaves to be educated and trained for a more practical assimilation into society. As tensions increased, the debate grew increasingly bitter, generating fear, mistrust, and hostility between the sections. Events such as John Brown's raid convinced many Southerners that their safety and way of life were under direct threat.

Slavery is rightly gone, and few today would argue otherwise. Yet to understand the causes of the War, one must look beyond modern assumptions and recognize that slavery was only one part of a much larger conflict involving economics, political power, constitutional questions, and competing visions of the future of the United States.

The citizen-soldier who fought for the Confederacy personified the best qualities of America. The preservation of liberty and freedom was the motivating factor in the South's decision to fight the second American Revolution. The tenacity with which Confederate soldiers fought underscored their belief in the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. These attributes are the underpinning of our democratic society and represent the foundation on which this nation was built. Today, the Sons of Confederate Veterans is preserving the history and legacy of these heroes, so future generations can understand the motives that animated the Southern Cause.

CONFEDERATE SONS OF VETERANS 1896

Reader's Corner



States Rights and Secession

At the heart of the secession debate lies a simple question: Who possesses the ultimate political authority – the states or the federal government? For Southerners in 1861, the issue was not whether they had sufficient reason to leave the Union, but that they possessed the right to do so.

From the earliest days of the Republic, secession was widely discussed as a constitutional and political possibility. New England leaders threatened it during several national controversies, including the War of 1812, and the subject was openly debated throughout American history. Many documents, including the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions authored by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, asserted that states retained the right of secession.

To Americans of the period, the Union was a voluntary compact among sovereign states. The states had chosen to join the Union and therefore retained the right to withdraw from it. Had the states believed they were entering an arrangement from which there was no lawful exit, it is doubtful that any would have ratified the Constitution in the first place.

This understanding was closely tied to the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence, which states that governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed," and that the people possess the right to alter or abolish a government that no longer serves their interests. To Southerners, secession was simply an application of the same principle the American colonies invoked when separating from Great Britain in 1776. It was the concept of government resting upon the consent of the governed—the same principal Abraham Lincoln would later eloquently describe as government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," as he violently disregarded these principles.

Whether secession was legal was never conclusively determined in a court of law. Jefferson Davis spent nearly two years in prison awaiting trial on charges of treason, yet the federal government ultimately refused to bring the case before a jury. Many Northern leaders feared that Davis could successfully defend the legality of secession. Even Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase advised against prosecution for fear that Davis might prevail. Consequently, the constitutional question was never settled by the courts. Instead, it was decided by force of arms, leaving all Americans as subjects and not citizens of the new consolidated Federal Government.

For Southerners, the invasion of their home states represented a violation of the very principles upon which the nation had been founded. They believed that a government deriving its powers from the consent of the governed could not rightfully compel states to remain in the Union by force. Thus, the central issue was not rebellion against constitutional government, but the right of a people to determine their own political future. Secession was settled by force of arms, and with that outcome came a fundamental shift in the balance between state sovereignty and federal authority. Now 5 people, out of the 9 supreme court justices, decide what is right or wrong, overruling the states right to govern themselves.

Society and Religion

Europe encompasses roughly the same land area as the United States, 3.9 million acres vs. 3.8 million, and is composed of 44 to 50 independent nations, each with its own customs, traditions, language, culture, and system of government. America, like Europe, was established as independent and sovereign states that banded together to earn, and maintain, their independence. Given the vast size of the country and the diverse backgrounds of its people, it's not surprising that different regions developed distinct cultures, values, and visions for government. In 1860, most Southerners viewed themselves as citizens of their home state. The question of self-government and independence was therefore neither unusual nor unprecedented.

From the earliest years of the Republic, two noticeably different societies emerged. The North developed an increasingly industrial economy centered around factories, commerce, and growing urban populations. The South remained largely agrarian, with economic and social life revolving around farms, land ownership, and rural communities. These differing economic systems shaped more than commerce; they influenced how people viewed government itself. Northerners generally tended toward a stronger centralized government capable of managing an increasingly complex industrial society, while Southerners placed greater emphasis on local control, state sovereignty, and individual liberty.

Religion further reinforced these cultural differences. Following the Great Awakenings, many Northern religious and intellectual movements began incorporating ideas influenced by the Enlightenment, including rationalism, humanism, universalism, and other reform-oriented philosophies. In the South, however, a more traditional and Biblical worldview remained dominant. These differences often extended beyond theology and into politics, education, and social policy.

Many Southerners came to believe that a spirit of moral superiority was developing among certain Northern reform movements. William Lloyd Garrison once wrote that, "The God of Nature, in his infinite wisdom, has made the people of New England excel every people that existed in the world." Statements such as these convinced many in the South that Northern leaders increasingly viewed themselves as morally obligated to reshape Southern society according to Northern values and priorities.

Meanwhile, religious revival swept through the Confederate armies during the War, resulting in over 150,000 conversions and baptisms. When these soldiers returned home, they helped establish churches throughout the South and contributed to a culture that would eventually earn the region the nickname "The Bible Belt."

By the time war erupted, the North and South had developed into two societies with markedly different economic systems, political philosophies, cultural traditions, and religious outlooks. As with Europe and Colonial America, Southern Independence was brewing for some time.

Reader's Corner

Conclusion

The purpose of this pamphlet is not to reopen old wounds or re-fight a war that ended more than 160 years ago. The South lost the struggle, and history cannot be changed. What can be changed, however, is our willingness to honestly examine the past and seek a fuller understanding of the men and women who lived through it.

As we have seen, the causes of the War were complex. Questions of taxation, federal spending, states' rights, secession, culture, religion, economics, and slavery all played a role in shaping the events of 1861. Yet beneath these issues lay a common principle: the belief that people have the right to govern themselves and to preserve the institutions, traditions, and values they hold dear.
Whether one agrees with the decisions made by the Southern states or not, it cannot be denied that hundreds of thousands of Southern men answered the call of duty as they understood it. They left their families, farms, churches, and communities to defend what they believed to be their homes, their liberties, and their way of life. Many never returned. Their sacrifices, like those of all American soldiers throughout our history, deserve to be remembered with dignity and respect.

The monuments, memorials, and markers that stand across the South are not merely stone and bronze. They are reminders of fathers, sons, brothers, and husbands whose final resting places are often far from home, and in some cases known only to God. They serve as a testament to courage, sacrifice, and devotion to principle—even in defeat.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans exists to ensure that these men are not forgotten and that future generations have the opportunity to learn their history for themselves. We are dedicated to preserving Southern heritage, honoring our ancestors, defending historical truth, and promoting the Christian principles and values that helped shape the South and our nation.

If you share an interest in preserving our history, honoring the memory of those who came before us, and ensuring that their story is not lost to future generations, we invite you to join us. Together we can continue the work of remembrance, education, and heritage preservation, passing on to our children and grandchildren the legacy entrusted to us by our forefathers.

Heritage. Honor. History.

Join the Sons of Confederate Veterans and help preserve the Southern legacy for generations to come.

"Fighting" Joe Wheeler is a very prominent and influential Southerner and namesake of our camp in Cahaba Heights, AL. Born in Augusta, Georgia; the grandson of Revolutionary War Brigadier General William Hull; Wheeler graduated West Point in July of 1859. After West Point he had a short stint in the U.S. Cavalry before Georgia succeeded.

Upon the secession Wheeler joined the Confederate States Army reporting to Maj. General Braxton Bragg. Major General Wheeler was wounded 3 times, had 16 horses shot out from under him, and lost 36 staff officers in his service to the Confederacy. Historian E. J. Warner noted that his calvary exploits were second only to Forrest.

After the War Wheeler settled in Alabama and in 1880 was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. He returned to military life in 1898 fighting for the U.S. in the Spanish American War and Philippine American War. In the Philippines he served as Brigadier General under Arthur MacArthur, the father of General Douglas MacArthur. Alabama, Georgia, and the U.S. Army have named parks, lakes, dams, wildlife refuges, high schools, counties, liberty ships and an Army base after him.



Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp
Sons of Confederate Veterans

When: 2nd Tuesday, Monthly, at 6:00 PM

Where: New Merkle Senior Center
Located in the lower parking lot of the Cahaba Heights Elementary School 4401 Dolly Ridge Rd. Vestavia, AL 35243

Contact: Spencer Harris, Camp Commander
205-577-3754 Spencer.l.harris@gmail.com

Visit the Sons of Confederate Veterans at WWW.SCV.ORG
Visit the Alabama Division of the SCV at WWW.ALSCV.ORG
Reach the National Office at 1-800-MY-DIXIE

Find the Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp at WWW.FightingJoeWheelerCamp.Org or on Facebook at SCV Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372.