



THE TELEGRAPH KEY

THE OFFICIAL DISPATCH FOR THE MAJOR THOMAS J. KEY CAMP #1920
KANSAS DIVISION, SCV • JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS

Vol. 22, No 8

August 2021

The Confederate's Corner

By Rick McPherson

Major Thomas J. Key

Camp Officers

Commander

Matt Sewell

1st Lt. Commander

John Weir

2nd Lt. Commander

Dan Peterson

Adjutant

Lawson Rener

Chaplin

Walt Schley

Newsletter Editor

Rick McPherson

Greetings to all compatriots and friends of the **Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920**. This will be issue number two from me and I want to thank those who offered up your compliments on the July issue. In an effort to remind ya'll of our next meeting as well as solicit volunteers to upcoming events, the newsletter is now going to go out prior to each meeting. Your involvement is vital to our Camp success so we want you to be "in the know" and ready to help.

Thursday's presentation will be given by **Compatriot Lane Smith** on the Trial of Jefferson Davis.

Davis was captured and incarcerated in May 1865. Federal authorities intended to charge him with the crime of treason, place him on trial, convict and hang him. The trial never took place and Davis was quietly released. Why was he never tried? This month's program will be a reenactment of that trial to determine the guilt or innocence of Davis and to determine if he did indeed commit treason.

Special thanks go out to **Compatriot Gary Foster** for his contribution to this month's edition.

Deo Vindice!

Rick

Attending the 126th Annual National Reunion July 21-24 in Jefferson Parrish Louisiana were Compatriots Tim Peterman and Walt Schley.

The SCV Heritage Luncheon featured a guest speaker that spoke on the Life of General P.G.T. Beauregard.

Attendees enjoyed tours of the Confederate Memorial Hall Museum, a plantation tour, the Beauregard-Keyes House, the awards luncheon and the Grand Ball and Banquet.

And of course the guys got their picture with a cardboard cut-out!



Compatriots Tim Peterman and Walt Schley

Must we forget our Confederate ancestors?

Like most of you, I have both Confederate and Yankee ancestors in my genealogy. In fact when I am asked if I favor one side or the other I always explain that I honor the courage and service for all who served. I never had ill-will toward either side.

As a young boy I played with toy "Civil War Soldiers", that naturally just happened to come in two different uniform colors. I never consciously valued one side or the other more or caused one to constantly win or lose. It didn't occur to me that I should. I

just never felt that one toy soldier was more honorable than the other.

Both of my Dad's great-grandfather were in the Union army, one in the Kansas Cavalry and the other in the Missouri State Militia. Interestingly, most of the rest of his family, living in Arkansas, Virginia and Tennessee fought for the South. As a boy my grandmother M^cPherson gave me a Union officer's hat that I wore whenever I played soldier. Even now I keep hats of both

sides as well as framed pictures of my famous Civil War kin, Union Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson and General Robert E. Lee, on display in my office.

Mother's side was all Confederacy. Her maternal grandfather was in the 2nd Mississippi Infantry and was the guy I joined the SCV as a descendant of. Mom probably influenced my interest in Civil War history the most because of her Southern upbringing. She was so wrapped up in her heritage that upon entering hospice care at the end of her life, she was asked two questions that I think revealed her unwavering feelings. When asked if she spoke a language other than English and she replied, "Yes, I also speak Southern" and, when her preacher asked her if there was anyone that she had not forgiven she promptly replied, "Sherman".

Throughout nearly seven decades of life I never felt compelled to denounce any of my relatives. For all I can tell, none of them did

anything to cause themselves dishonor. In fact, like some of you, I joined organizations that celebrate the heritage of both sides. With all I have been in contact with throughout my life, not one had ever brought up the "R" word to me until this past year. But now it seems there have been a few that have tried to denigrate my Southern side of heritage.

So what is it they wish for us to do? Forget or renounce one of our ancestors? Isn't there a way to honor their memory and the vastness of their sacrifice without having to dwell on the politics of the fight?

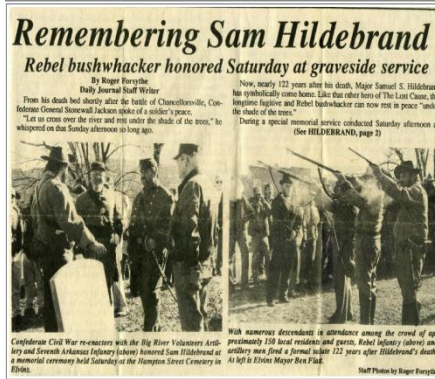
I think about the picture of former combatants at Gettysburg reaching across a stone wall to shake the hands of their battlefield foe and think, if they can get along, then why can't the rest of us? Our ancestors all lived *real* lives. They were not toy soldiers. We should never undervalue them as their lives are truly monumented within our own.

***Our blood is still our fathers,
and ours the valor of their
hearts.***



Sam Hildebrand, South East Missouri Guerrilla leader

Contributed by **Compatriot Gary Foster**



In popular imagination and histories, Civil War Partisan Ranger/Guerrilla warfare in Missouri reflexively focus on the western Border region and Quantrill and Anderson and other related infamous actors there. This area gets most of the attention but the entire State was caught up in the chaos of irregular warfare.

In the West, the numbers of those in Partisan Rangers could at times number in the low hundreds when needed for specific actions. In the East the numbers of participants were mostly small groups and often led by much less well known personalities.

South East Missouri and Northern Arkansas saw numbers of roaming groups wreaking havoc and death. Some of them

were no more than criminals taking advantage of the chaos and disorder to steal, rape and burn. They were usually small handfuls of miscreants spreading terror and suffering no matter who they attacked and no matter which side they were on.

In many cases, locals referred to them as Jayhawkers but any connection to actual Jayhawkers in Kansas were likely nonexistent.

Locals quickly formed local Militias and Ranger groups to provide some kind of defense against these very bandits and murderers. The group my own ancestor eventually joined in 1864 was formed as such a group that had been made a regular CSA Regiment around 1863.

Out of this turmoil, Sam Hildebrand became a noted figure in Southeast Missouri irregular warfare. The Hildebrand's were a well established pioneer family in the Missouri lead belt region. At the start of the war the family was Union sympathizers. One of the brothers served in the Union army. Sam himself claims to be mostly apolitical and uninterested in the conflict going on around them.

It was his brother Frank who was accused of horse theft and was arrested for it that caused the precipitating event that cascaded into Hildebrand's evolution into a Guerrilla fighter. Somehow Sam Hildebrand became involved and that led to him becoming something of an outcast against the local law abiding

establishment. As a result, several members of his family were murdered in reprisals and his families homestead was burned and the surviving family forced to flee.

Sam Hildebrand was a very tough customer. He was a crack shot. He was already known for being something of a bully and someone not to be trifled with before the war began. He began to move around in an effort to avoid capture and certain death. In a firefight he was shot in the leg and his femur was broken by the bullet. It was at this point that Hildebrand who had perceived his family's enemies as Unionists determined to join the southern cause and was carried south into Arkansas and Crowley's Ridge in Green County where regular Confederate units were encamped.

At this point Hildebrand made contact with General Jeff Thompson often called the "Swamp Fox". Thompson operated in the northeast Arkansas and south east Missouri area which was indeed very swampy. Confederate forces often wintered in areas in the swamps on high ground not easily accessible to the Federals.

General Thompson appointed Hildebrand a Major in the "Partisan Ranger Dept" and ordered him to reenter Missouri and kill Unionists and soldiers. At least, that is Hildebrand's version. He had an extended period of recuperation before leaving for his mission to the north. During this time he and several others established a base settlement there and this became a haven for local Partisans during rest periods. Family members came and crops were raised and somehow sustained themselves as the men were out on missions.

From this point on until the end of the war, Hildebrand roamed the broader SE quadrant of Missouri killing Unionists and Union soldiers as well as people he held a grudge against. It's clear that many of these killings were retribution for actions taken against his family some of which had nothing to do with the cause of the South. Considering that several brothers were murdered this is understandable.

Hildebrand carried a muzzle loading rifle that could fairly be described as a Kentucky style rifle and he named it "Kill Devil".

He claimed to have killed around a hundred people, both civilian and Military. For each killing he notched the stock of "Kill Devil". There is a photo of that stock that was believed to be "Kill Devil" and has the approximately 100 notches on it.

It was through the support of Southern Sympathizers who supplied him and his men with food and horse feed and ammunition that he was able to accomplish what he did.

There were several cases where people claiming to be on his side betrayed him to the local Militia and Union forces and ultimately met a very unpleasant ending.

I must comment on this part of his actions. First, this was a noted feature of many different groups operating in this area. Union sympathizers committed a number of atrocities where women were raped and in some cases killed along with their children. In many of these cases the outrages were based on nothing more than suspicion and doubtless many innocent civilians were killed, and homes burned and property stolen. Then there were

common bandits who needed no reason at all.

From my years of research about the war in SE Mo. I know of no documented case or anecdotal recollection of CSA Partisan Rangers taking the war to women and children or burning anyone's homes and barns.

This was so bad in my ancestor's county of Ripley where the area known as "The Irish Wilderness" became completely depopulated due to the depredations. This area was part of Hildebrand's operational area as well as my ancestors Regiment, the 15th Missouri Cavalry CSA.

I comment on this because one SW Missouri historian doubts much of what Hildebrand wrote in his autobiography but pretty much everything Hildebrand describes were exactly the kinds of things that happened there. To me this lends a great deal of credence to what he claims he did.

Besides targeting pro Unionist civilians for retribution for various reasons, he also would ambush Federal patrols

and often was engaged by superior Union forces that surprised him. He had many difficult escapes and was pursued doggedly by the Union Army and local Militias.

Hildebrand was a marked man and was the terror of southeast Missouri and was widely feared. Large numbers of Army units were constantly in patrol searching for him and other Guerrilla units.

I should mention that there were many other groups doing similar work in the area. Many of them are lost to history as to who they were. Hildebrand worked cooperatively with some of them. In the area of my ancestor in Ripley County Missouri, he passed thru several times and when Price launched his raid into Missouri from Pocahontas Arkansas, Hildebrand was part of the forward units of the regular forces along with locals and rode upon Doniphan Missouri as it was burning having been set fire by fleeing Federal forces. He joined with local CSA units to pursue them to nearby Ponders Mill on the Little Black River where they were treated very roughly, many of them sent to hell at the hands of angry locals and Hildebrand's men. These

Federals belonged to the nemesis of my ancestors unit. They belonged to the 3rd Missouri Cavalry Militia (Union) That groups leader, Major Wilson, later suffered the consequences of his actions when captured at the Battle of Pilot Knob later in Prices campaign.

When the war ended Hildebrand found it difficult to transition back to regular peaceful Civilian life and turned to crime. In 1874 a local deputy in Pinckneyville IL shot him in the head while he was drinking at a bar.

A word of caution. Some of the things Hildebrand claimed to do cannot be substantiated by any documents and he clearly exaggerated to some degree as to his exploits. Having cautioned on the veracity of his own account, the things he described in his book were typical of the actions of the various groups of roving Bushwhackers on both sides. He had knowledge of the geography of particular areas he ranged through that reflect reality. So, when reading his Autobiography some skepticism is called for but my opinion is that much of what he claims certainly rings true.

Two years before he was killed in the mid 1870's he told his story to two journalists which was published as his "Autobiography of Sam Hildebrand". I recommend this highly and if you look

for it there are free PDF copies available online. A couple of closing anecdotes of interest. Jesse James son told his family that Jesse knew Sam Hildebrand. Later in life, one of Hildebrand's

daughters stated that every part of his book was true, the family standing by it fully. It's also interesting that Hildebrand almost always dressed in a Union uniform to deceive people he encountered.

The Last Roll



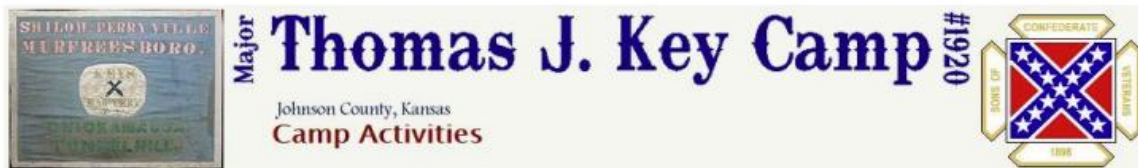
During the hiatus caused by the pandemic, one of our members passed away and we'd like to acknowledge him at this time.

William Carl Jowers, 69 of Fitzgerald, Georgia died March 24, 2021 in Joplin, Missouri after his battle with COVID-19.

Carl was a Veteran of the Vietnam War (Navy) and earned many decorations. He was a member of the Major Thomas J Key Camp and the Mechanized Cavalry, VFW and American Legion.

"We have but one flag, one country; let us stand together. We may differ in color, but not in sentiment."

--Nathan Bedford Forrest



With all the upcoming events (listed below), the **Major Thomas J Key Camp** would appreciate your participation and help. Please be sure and sign up to help at our next meeting or contact **Commander Sewell** and let him know you would like to help.

Heritage Day at Mine Creek Battlefield

Saturday August 7, 2021

20485 Kansas Hwy 52 Pleasanton, Kansas 66075

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The Battle of Mine Creek was a disastrous affair for Gen. Sterling Price's invading army. Fought in October of 1864, the battlefield is located just inside the Kansas / Missouri border.



*The Heritage Day event will feature cavalry, artillery and Civil War period demonstrations. Make the short trip down to Pleasanton and help represent the **Major Thomas J Key Camp**. Let **Commander Sewell** know you'll be on hand to assist in greeting guests and answering questions. It's just 52 minutes South of College Blvd on US-69 South.*

Lone Jack Battlefield Heritage Day

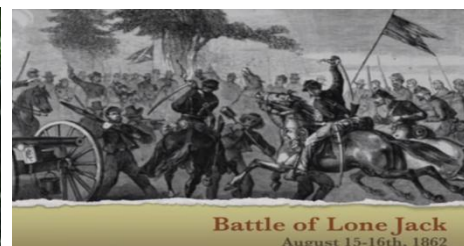
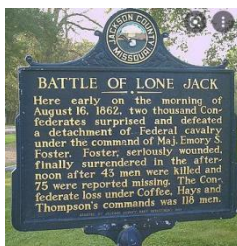
Saturday August 14

Lone Jack Battlefield

301 S Bynum RD. Lone Jack, MO. 64070

9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

*Volunteers are needed to help set up a display and to engage with visitors in conversation and education. Please contact **Commander Sewell** and let him know you can help.*



Major Thomas J Key Camp Annual Picnic

September 11, 2021

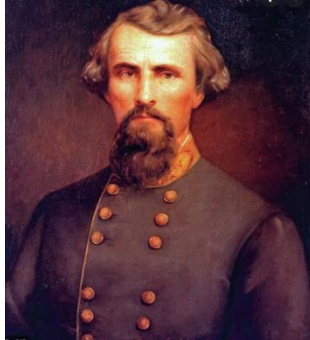
Shawnee Mission Park

More info coming soon

General Nathan Bedford Forrest Re-interment

September 17 - 18, 2021

**SCV Headquarters
Columbia, Tennessee**



Visitation will be from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM on Friday. Funeral Services will be Saturday at 10:00 AM. You will need to register for security reasons. The information is on the front page of SCV.org but for those who wish to register now, you go to the site by using the following URL code: www.cicscv76.wixsite.com/forrestfuneral

35th Shawnee Indian Mission Festival

October 9 – 10, 2021

Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site

3403 W. 53rd St. Fairway, KS 64070

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm. Saturday

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday

Lee – Jackson Banquet

January 2022

Abdullah Shrine Temple

5300 Metcalf Avenue

Overland Park, Kansas 66202

*As always, we encourage your participation in your Camp's activities.
Email **Commander Sewell** for more information on any events you are interested in assisting*

*******NEXT CAMP MEETING*******

The Key Camp will meet on Thursday August 5th at Zarda's Bar B-Q on the southwest corner of 87th and Quivera in Lenexa, Kansas with the official meeting starting at 7 p.m. You are invited to arrive early for dinner and conversation and camaraderie.

Compatriot Lane Smith will be presenting, "The Trial of Jefferson Davis".

The Telegraph Key

The Telegraph Key is a newsletter published for the Major Thomas Key Camp #1920 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). The SCV is a non-profit organization with a patriotic, historical, and genealogical orientation and is not affiliated with any other organization. Opinions in this newsletter reflect the views of the writers and are not necessarily a statement of the views of the SCV, the Kansas Division, the Kansas Brigades, nor any other camp. Comments and articles are solicited.

Key Camp Website Resources

Key Camp: www.MajorKey1920ksscv.org

SCV National: www.SCV.org

Kansas Division: <http://www.ksscv.org/>



Please remember that the little wooden bucket in our meeting room is to help pay for the room's rental fee. Your support is greatly appreciated.



*If you have pictures/stories or both that you'd like to contribute to future issues of **The Telegraph Key**, please email to **Rick McPherson** at mcpersonsales@sbcglobal.net*

Walk back in time. Experience the bravery of the people that fought at the Battle of Mine Creek. Meet General Lee and General Grant. Hear their fascinating story of the Surrender. Talk to the Soldiers and craftsmen.



MINE CREEK CIVIL WAR
BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC
SITE

HERITAGE DAY

10 A.M - 3 P.M.
SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 2021

ADMISSION:
ADULT \$5
CHILDREN \$2

ARTILLERY AND INFANTRY
DEMONSTRATIONS
CIVIL WAR ARTIFACTS
LEATHER MAKING
BLACKSMITH

YOUR
STORIES
OUR
HISTORY

**KANSAS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

MINE CREEK
CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD
STATE HISTORIC SITE

KSHS.ORG

REPORT OF THE 126TH SCV NATIONAL REUNION, KENNER, LOUISIANA (JULY 21-24, 2021)

Camp 1920 members **Tim Peterman** and **Walt Schley** attended the National Reunion in Kenner, LA (suburb of New Orleans).

The Reunion was hosted by the Beauregard Camp No. 130. Their members did an outstanding job in making everyone feel welcome and at ease. All the meetings, tours, lunches, and dinners were well organized and attended. *There were no protesters.*

The business meetings followed their agenda and were orderly. Our Kansas Division and Camp didn't receive any awards.

SCV Commander-In-Chief highly encourages all SCV members to attend the re-interment of General Nathan Bedford Forrest at Elm Springs, Columbia, TN on Sep 17 & 18, 2021.

Day One Business Meeting was full of National Officers' Report. The number one takeaway was the Proposed National SCV Operating Budget numbers. The Budget was approved by the membership in attendance.

Day Two Business Meeting concerned Amendments.

Day Three Business Meeting concerned the (2022) 127th Annual Reunion to be held in Cartersville, GA and the preservation of Stone Mountain, GA Park. At the end of the day, was celebrated with a Banquet and Ball. Picture below.

Finally, the 2022 SCV Reunion will be full of Battlefield Tours of the Atlanta Campaign (Chickamauga, Resaca, Ringgold Gap, Dalton, Kennesaw Mountain, and Atlanta). Plus, there will be a personalized tour of the Cyclorama in Atlanta and the Confederate Cemetery in Marietta, Georgia. There will have an opportunity to see the famous locomotive "the General in Kennesaw, GA" who the invaders from the North tried to steal. See attached Brochure.

Note: the 2023 Reunion will be in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and the 2024 Reunion will be held in Charleston, South Carolina.





The iconic stained glass window is the focal point of the main exhibit hall at the SCV National Confederate Museum in Elm Springs Tennessee.

