



# THE TELEGRAPH KEY

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

Vol. 23, No 1

January 2022

## Major Thomas J. Key

### Camp Officers

#### Commander

Matt Sewell

#### 1st Lt. Commander

Vacant

#### 2nd Lt. Commander

Dan Peterson

#### Adjutant

Lawson Rener

#### Chaplin

Walt Schley

#### Newsletter Editor

Rick McPherson

## The Confederate's Corner

By Rick McPherson

*Merry Christmas* and greetings to all compatriots and friends of the **Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920**.

*Recap of camp business of December 2, 2021, the 221<sup>st</sup> regular meeting.*

***Commander Sewell** brought the meeting to order and offered reminders of the upcoming Wreaths Across America at Fort Leavenworth and the January Lee-Jackson banquet as well as the memorial service for **Spike Speicher**.*

*Compatriot **Lawson Rener**, who has assumed the duties of the Kansas Division Commander, briefed the Camp about recent developments. Compatriot **Walt Schley** will become our Camp's nominee for Lt. Commander, a position that will be filled by a determination of the Division Executive Committee.*

*Compatriot **Gary Foster** brought a motion for the Key Camp to submit a letter of support to the "Save our Grave Marker in Fairview Cemetery in Liberty, Missouri".*

*Commander **Sewell** informed the members that Compatriot **Lane Smith** would be portraying General R.E. Lee to the United Daughters of the Confederacy on December 4<sup>th</sup>*



The annual wreath laying for **Wreaths across America** was held December 18<sup>th</sup> at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery.

The **Key Camp** was represented by Compatriots **Gary Foster, Walt Schley, Rick McPherson, and Dan Peterson.**

**Walt** was also a ceremonial wreath presenter

December's Presentation presented by friend of the SCV **Bill Stoker**



**Bill Stoker**

Charles Whilden, flag bearer of the 1st South Carolina Infantry of McGowan's

Brigade, A. P. Hill's 3rd Corps, Army of Northern Virginia.

Whilden, from a family with a "proud martial tradition," had epilepsy, but he nonetheless entered first the South Carolina militia, then the Confederate army—until he suffered an epileptic attack. Every time he had an attack, he was discharged, but he kept enlisting. That went on until 1864, when the Confederates needed every man who could fight, and they kept him in.

Whilden's dreadful time came on May 12, 1864 at the battle of the Bloody Angle. He was feeling weak as McGowan's Brigade was running to attack the Angle, and his stooped figure was visibly distressed by the exertion. A friend took the flag for him until they were fired upon when reaching a traverse at the battle trenches. Many of

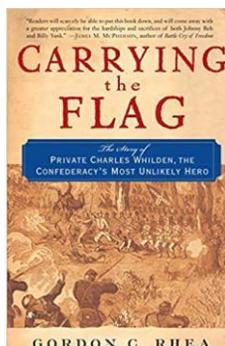
their officers were killed or wounded, including General McGowan. One rebel stated, “It was plainly a question of bravery and endurance now.”

Charles grabbed the flag with both hands and climbed to the top of the trenches and bravely led his regiment toward the Bloody Angle. Leading at the top, carrying the flag made him a conspicuous target. There was nowhere to hide in the tremendous fire and hand-to-hand combat in a driving rainstorm.

None of the 1st South Carolina expected to be alive during this charge. Charles was still suffering from seizures, but he led men from South Carolina and Mississippi to take the Angle. When Federals shot the flag staff to pieces, Charles wrapped his regiment’s battle flag around himself, becoming a human flagpole. He suffered one wound: a bullet “gouged out a trough of skin along his left shoulder.”

After the battle, he was hospitalized, and then discharged from the army because

of epilepsy. He kept the battle flag. Charles died after the war, on a rainy day in Charleston. While taking a walk and splashing in puddles, he had a seizure and drowned in a mud puddle.



## Memorial Service for Col. James L. "Spike" Speicher held Dec. 4th



Col. James L Speicher



Compatriot Paul Allen



Fmr Cmdr Jim Thornton

Speaking at the memorial service for "Spike" Speicher was Compatriot Paul Allen, who worked with Spike. Also Past Commander Jim Thornton, both of whom Spike recruited to join the Key Camp.



At the December camp meeting, the banner representing the Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920 was on display. Serving as a Commander of a battery at the battle of Murfreesboro, TN., Thomas Key won fame for his bravery and leadership that would lead to a promotion to Captain and eventually to Major following the "hundred days" fight.



### One Confederate deserter was Mark Twain

Mark Twain's (Samuel Clemmons) career as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War, an event which led him to joining the militia in his native Missouri. A 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, he remained with the unit for two weeks before he deserted, fleeing to the west. He later wrote a fictional account of his brief period of military service, but he was considered a deserter, by himself and by others, for the rest of his life. Twain described his two week military career as a period in which he was, "hunted like a rat the whole time" and defended his desertion later in his life by describing the war and slavery as blots on the national character.

### Why we say: 'Your name is mud'

This past Monday, December 20<sup>th</sup> was **National Mudd Day**. If you have done something that makes you unpopular, disgraced, or discredited, it is said that, 'your name is mud'



The origins of the phrase may seem obvious: people's view of you is so low that you are no better than the mud beneath your feet. There is a much more interesting story linked to the phrase, however, although not necessarily the source...

Dr Samuel Mudd was a 19th-century American doctor from a small town in Maryland, USA, when he became embroiled in one of the most defining moments in the country's history. After John Wilkes Booth shot President Abraham Lincoln on 14 April 1865, he broke his leg while

escaping. He rode away from Washington DC and entered Bryantown, where he knocked on the door of Mudd's home at 4am. Mudd treated his broken leg, and let Booth stay the night.

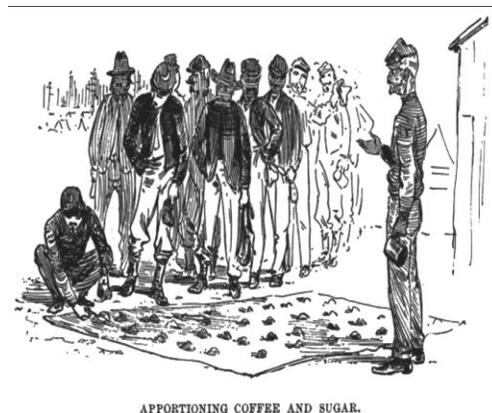
In the frantic manhunt following the assassination, Mudd was arrested as a conspirator, although many historians believe he did not knowingly involve himself in Booth's plot and was a victim of hysteria. He was pardoned in 1869 by President Johnson, but the damage to his reputation was done. So his name is still linked to disgrace even today, but attempts to redeem Samuel Mudd's reputation continue.

It's a great story, but sadly not the source of the saying. The phrase actually appeared years before Lincoln's assassination in *A Dictionary of the Turf* (1823) by John Badcock. He defines 'mud' as being, "a stupid twaddling fellow".

### Coffee Was Very Rare in the South during the Civil War

Both Union and Confederate soldiers liked their caffeine fix, but only the Northern men at arms had regular access to coffee made from real coffee beans. The Union blockade of the South made coffee a rare commodity in the Confederacy, so Southerners often had to do with substitutes. Rebels "jonesing" for a cup of joe brewed up chicory, peanuts, peas, rye, dried apples, acorns, dandelion roots, or just about anything they could get their hands on that could trick their senses into believing it was coffee. Confederate General J. E. B. Stuart described the use of potatoes as coffee substitutes:

*"Potatoes were peeled and cut into "chunks" about the size of coffee berries. The pieces were spread out in the sun to dry, then parched until brown, after which they were ground. The grounds were mixed with a little water until a paste resulted, after which hot water was added. When the grounds settled to the bottom of the coffee pot, the beverage could be poured and drunk".* Coffee beans became such hot commodities in the South during the Civil War that one Atlanta jeweler used them instead of diamonds in breast pins. A pound of coffee could run you upwards of \$1000 in today's dollars.



APPORTIONING COFFEE AND SUGAR.

Apportioning Coffee and sugar



**Billy Yank** and **Johnny Reb**  
and a cup of Joe- Real  
coffee was a rarity for Civil  
War soldiers

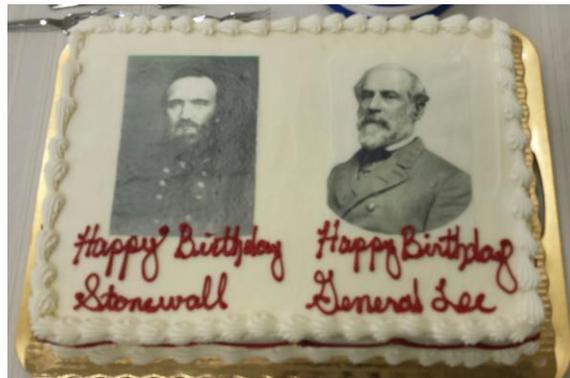
## COUNTDOWN TO LEE -JACKSON BANQUET 2022

We are a month away from the **20<sup>th</sup> Lee-Jackson Banquet**, sponsored by the **Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920** to be held at the Abdullah Shrine Temple in Overland Park, KS. An open cash bar will be offered with the proceeds offsetting the facility rental.

Compatriots **Walt McKenzie** and **Dan Peterson** have been collecting items available to purchase through the evening's auction with those proceeds being the only source of camp fundraising for the year. So, bring lots of cash!

Commander **Matt Sewell** and his helpers are coordinating the evening's speaker, set up and caterer. The cost is \$30 per person. Be sure to mail in your RSVP form along with your check to **Lawson Rener**. If you have misplaced your invitation then you can print off the one included below and mail in.

No matter if you've been unable to attend some or all of the Camp meetings; we look forward to you joining us on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> for fellowship and food. Guests are welcome!



## DONATIONS REQUESTED FOR LEE-JACKSON BANQUEST CAMP AUCTION

The Lee-Jackson Banquet coming up on January 22, 2022 not only serves as an opportunity for us to gather in a formal setting, it also serves as the **ONLY** fund raiser for the **Major Thomas J. Key Camp**. Our fund raiser takes the form of an auction and in order to have an auction, you have to have items to sell. Guess what? It is up to us to provide those items. So, start cleaning out your closets, your garage, your basement, your storage lockers, anywhere you have stashed items no longer used or for which you no longer have a purpose. It does not have to be related to the Confederacy or the war. Anything you feel someone else could make use of or that someone else would treasure and value can be donated.

**Thank you in advance!**

To make arrangements for your donation, please contact a member of our Auction Committee. Committee members and their e-mail address are:

**Walt McKenzie:** [mounthaskins@icloud.com](mailto:mounthaskins@icloud.com)

**Dan Peterson:** [dpeterson4951@gmail.com](mailto:dpeterson4951@gmail.com)

*You are cordially invited to the 17th Annual Lee-Jackson Banquet*

*Sponsored by the Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920*

*Sons of Confederate Veterans*

6:00 PM, Saturday, January 27, 2018

The Abdallah Shrine Temple

5300 Metcalf Avenue Shawnee Mission, KS 66202

(Metcalf just south of I-35)

\$30.00 per Person – Cash Bar

Coat and Tie / Business Casual / Confederate Uniform / Period Attire

PLEASE SUBMIT RESERVATIONS BY JANUARY 18, 2022

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17TH ANNUAL LEE-JACKSON BANQUET

Sponsored by the Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920

Sons of Confederate Veterans Saturday, January 27, 2018 Reservation Confirmation

(Please Print Names – Use Reverse Side for Additional Names)

Compatriot Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Guest: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Guest: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Amount Enclosed: # attending x \$30.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail This Form and Payment To:

Adjutant **Lawson Rener**

4320 Wornall Rd

Kansas City, MO 64111

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Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920

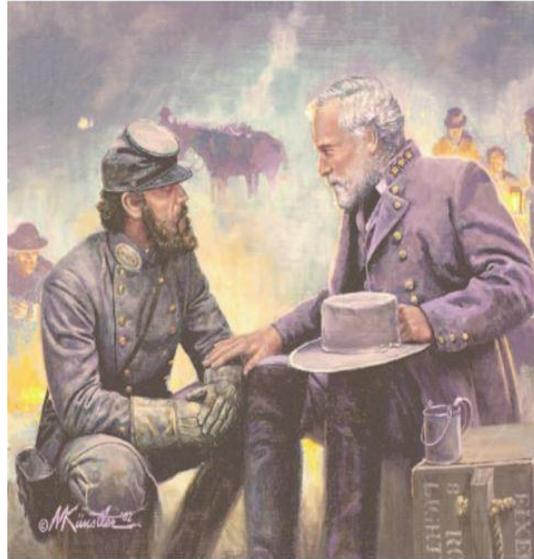


Major

# Thomas J. Key Camp

#1920

Johnson County, Kansas  
Camp Activities



### Lee – Jackson Banquet

January 22, 2022 7:00 pm

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\*\*\*\*\*

## Thursday January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Key Camp will meet on Thursday January 6th at Zarda's Bar B-Q on the southwest corner of 87th and Quivera in Lenexa, Kansas with the official meeting starting at 7:00 p.m. You are invited to arrive early (6:00 p.m.) for BBQ, conversation and camaraderie.

The Telegraph Key is a newsletter published for the Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). The SCV is a non-profit organization with a patriotism historical and genealogical orientation and is not affiliated with any other organization. Opinions in this newsletter reflect the views of the writers and contributors 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.

**SCV National:** [www.SCV.org](http://www.SCV.org)

**Facebook:** Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920

