



THE TELEGRAPH KEY

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

Vol. 23, No. 7

July 2022

Major Thomas J. Key Officers



Commander - *Matt Sewell*



1st Lt. Commander- *Dan Peterson*



2nd Lt. Commander- *Lane Smith*



Adjutant- *Lawson Rener*



Chaplin - *Walt Schley*



Editor- *Rick McPherson*

CAMP 1920 23, No 5
May 2022

The Confederate's Corner

By *Rick McPherson*

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

Recap of Camp Business of June 2, 2022



Lt. Cmdr. Dan Peterson opened the 226th meeting of the Key Camp, welcoming our guest speaker **Jim Edgington** presenting "Dirty Dan", the life of General Dan Sickles.

The Key Camp welcomed 11 members and 5 guests, including *Donna Brooks, Dick Cole, Linda Edgington, Bill Stoker and Carl Linck's grandson Parker*.



The Camp welcomed Compatriot **Carl Linck** back home and his attending the June meeting. He brought his grandson Parker along to spend the evening.

Welcome Parker. Glad you could join us.

Meeting Recap



Lt. Commander **Dan Peterson** conducted the meeting while Commander **Matt Sewell** was away.



Lt Commander Peterson reminded members of the July 13th flag rising at the Camden Point Cemetery honoring six Confederate soldiers who are buried there. Because this event will be held at 5:00 pm, we encourage those attending to bring something to share as we will hold a “light picnic” following the flag rising. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at our next meeting to list who intends to bring what.



The Kansas Division Reunion would be held June 17, 18 in Topeka as we support our own, **Lawson Rener**, Kansas Division Commander.



Compatriot **Walt Schley** was recognized as a recipient of the Quilt of Honor at a presentation held over the Memorial Day weekend. The Key Camp congratulates Walt and all our members who have served heroically for our country.



Compatriot **Rick McPherson** presented information on Key Camp, embroidered polo shirts that are available for ordering. Samples will be on hand at the July meeting as well as an order sheet.



The group expressed their color preference for the recruiting tent that will be purchased in July. The majority preferred a white canopy. The tent has been received and will be used at Camden Point on July 13th.



Hits to the **Key Camp Web Page** from 5/25 to 6/20 were +46. YTD total hits are 389



The Blessing of the Sword



It is a tradition passed on from days of knighthood. It is a chivalrous gesture. The ritual was performed among the Knights Templar, Romans, and others with elaborate pomp and circumstance. It is a ritual that was utilized in both homes of those men who wore blue and those who wore gray. It was the blessing of the sword.

As young men prepared to leave their loved ones and go to serve their calling, the family and friends gathered to wish him a heart-felt goodbye. They wanted the man in uniform to have something as a memento of home and a reminder of what he represented. A ritual was held at the home to pay homage to the young man departing for war.

The family and friends gathered and shared stories, warm memories, prayers were sent to heaven on the young man's behalf, and a toast was offered in honor of the bravery of his future service. After the accolades were given, a solemn ritual was performed. A ceremonial sword was presented in the following manner.

The young man stood in front of those gathered. Either the wife, father or beloved family member would take the sword and hold it out to the young man. The sword represented faith instead of fear. It stood for honor, courage, and protection. It symbolized hope in a safe return home and was never to be unsheathed in anger or vengeance. It signified a reminder of home, hope in his return safely, and a prayer of protection.

Upon handing the sword to the young man (sometimes standing or kneeling), the following words were spoken:

The brave at home the wife who girds her husband's sword 'Mid little ones who weep or wonder

And bravely speaks the cheering word, even though her heart be rent asunder

Doomed nightly in her dreams to hear the bolts of death around him rattle,

Has shed as sacred blood as e'er was poured upon the field of battle.

After the recitation, the sword is handed horizontally to the recipient. The young man bows in gratitude and either he or a beloved family member places the sword on his belt. He offers a promise to serve with dignity, honor, and faithful in the execution of his duties. He vows to return home carrying the sword or it will return absence the owner as a reminder of duty well done.

The ceremony was simple but profound in that it afforded the family a time to say farewell and cling to the hope of his safe return. It offers the carrier of the sword a reminder of the better times at home and the reason he has went to war. The sacredness of the sword was not in its design, but rather within the giving and blessing. The sword was usually a non-combative beautifully engraved sword representing the esteem held for the beneficiary by those left at home.



General Robert E Lee's golden sword, surrendered at Appomattox

My Confederate Ancestor

Compatriot Daniel L Peterson Jr.



Presley Groves

2nd great grandfather
1841 – 1915 Ofahoma, Mississippi

Corporal, Peague's Battalion of
Artillery
Army of Northern Virginia, C.S.A.

A.P. Hill's Corps; wounded at Cold
Harbor
Surrendered at Appomattox

Presley Groves was the 2nd great grandfather of Compatriot **Dan Peterson** and a Corporal in the Confederacy. His father's ancestors were of Scotch-Irish descent and his maternal grandfather was a brother of Greenwood Leflore, a Choctaw Chief.

Mr. Groves served four years as a Confederate soldier, serving first as a Private in Capt. Richard's Mississippi Light Artillery, enlisting April 1861, age 20, in Canton, Mississippi for the duration of the war. By age 21 he was promoted to Corporal and drawing pay of \$21 per month. Ordered to Virginia, the unit first served at Suffolk, then was assigned to W.T. Poagues's Battalion of Artillery, Army of Northern Virginia. It was active from Gettysburg to Cold Harbor, then fought in the Petersburg trenches in the Appomattox Campaign. The battery had 4 officers and 87 men at Gettysburg.

Following the war, Presley was admitted to the bar, served as a Justice of the Peace and was twice elected to both the State House of Representatives and State Senate. A Democrat, he was at one time a Presidential Elector in 1886 on the Bryan ticket.

Mr. Groves also engaged in farming and, along with his wife Mariah, raised seven children. In his later years, he devoted a lot of time to establishing his genealogical ties to the Choctaw tribe. He died in 1915 and was buried in Forest Grove Cemetery near Ofahoma, MS. A Confederate headstone marks his grave and service to the cause in which he believed in.

If you wish to tell about your Confederate ancestor, please submit their information to Rick McPherson and it will be published in a future newsletter.

See us on Facebook – Enter Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920

The following article is a re-print of one submitted in June 2020 with a just a few changes.

KEY CAMP TAKES PART IN ARKANSAS CEMETERY RE-DEDICATION

By Compatriot Rick McPherson

On the spectacular morning of Saturday June 4th, The Southern Memorial Association and the Military Order of Stars and Bars celebrated the 149th consecutive, Confederate Memorial Ceremony at the Fayetteville (Ark.) Confederate Cemetery. Guests enjoyed musical ensembles seated within the old park bandstand, playing a variety of Southern Classics including Amazing Grace, Dixie, and the Bonnie Blue Flag.



The setting for this Memorial service was one of the most beautiful settings in Fayetteville where more than 600 Confederate soldiers from Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Louisiana are at rest thanks to an original group of 40 women who, in 1872, organized the Southern Memorial Association. Within a year they were able to purchase just over 3 acres of land which would become the Confederate

Cemetery. The remains of those that fell at Prairie Grove, Pea Ridge and other battlefields of Northwest Arkansas were brought home to rest and when the monument was dedicated in 1873 more than 20,000 local citizens gathered to honor their fallen heroes.



History tells many stories of the men who fought to protect their homes and families, but it is the story of the women of the South for whom this day celebrated. In the stirring days of 1861, the women of the South were as active as the men. For the soldier, there was an invading army at their borders and there was nothing left for them but to go, but to the mothers, the sisters, and the sweethearts they could only say: "Go, God be with you until we meet again. And should the fate of war befall you and should that banner around which the cluster of bright hopes of the Confederacy go down, you shall ever live in the hearts of your countrymen."

In a letter written to his mother by a young Confederate soldier, Sam Davis, on November 26, 1863, he writes: "Dear Mother (telling of his impending fate), I

have got to die tomorrow morning - to be hanged by the Federalists. Mother, do not grieve for me. I am not afraid to die. Mother, tell the children all to be good. I wish I could see you all once more, but I never can. Do not forget me. Think of me when I am dead but do not grieve for me." For many women of the South the last they saw of their young soldiers was as they marched off to fight.



SAM DAVIS

Few would return as more than 60% of Confederate soldiers would fall, their remains left where they fell. Those that died in the Union army would be recovered and interred in National Cemeteries with dignity, while if fortunate, the Johnny Reb's would be cast into mass graves if any, far from their home soil. Those they left behind wanted a way to fulfill that last request, that their loved ones be remembered. So, the women of the South joined together and raised funds by holding teas, concerts, dances, and old-fashioned quilting bees. Soon they were able to establish graveyards and to erect monuments to honor and perpetuate the names and the heroic deeds of the gallant officers and the invincible soldiers so that future generations might learn the truth, with the feelings of pride of the bravery and unequalled deeds performed by their Confederate soldier.

Within the grounds, one inscription to the fallen read, "These men, who power could not corrupt, whom death could not terrify, who defeat could not dishonor." Many among the 600 that lie at rest here are known but to God. Every marker had been cleaned and adorned with the battlefield flag while the grounds were impeccably manicured. Among those were common soldiers like Pvt. William Lollar who died March 1862 at age 21 of the 16th Arkansas killed at Pea Ridge. Also Pvt. Granville Miller, age 20 of the Arkansas Infantry who was killed at Prairie Grove.

So many, young men in their twenties deprived of all that life's promise of hope and prosperity. There was the old man, Brig, General William Yarrel Slack, age 45 who was born in Kentucky, who served in the Mexican-American War, was a Captain in the Missouri State Guard, fought at the battle of Carthage and Springfield, was wounded at Wilson's Creek and then returned to duty and was killed at Pea Ridge.



General Slack's great nephew, came from Houston, TX., making his first visit to the cemetery. He placed the above picture of Gen. Slack at his grave marker.

And there was Pvt. John Wells of South Carolina who enlisted April 1862 in the Alabama Infantry, was wounded in June 1862 in Mississippi, spent one year in the

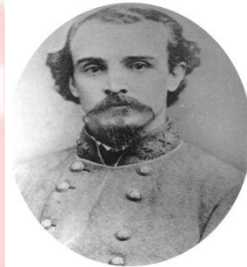
hospital recovering, rejoined his unit and was captured at Vicksburg in July 1863. After being paroled he returned to his regiment, fought at Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Pea Ridge, Resaca, New Hope, Buzzard's Roost, and the Battle of Antietam. Again, after being hospitalized in Mobile, Alabama with a sickness, he returned to fight again at Spanish Fort and the Battle of Bentonville. What incredible dedication, bravery, and resilience these young men and so many others displayed.



In a 1900 reunion of Confederate and Federal veterans, General George Washington Gordon of Tennessee, who was wounded and captured at the Battle of Franklin, rose in response to a speech given by the Union's representative that the Rebel Cause should not be taught and was a cause that was wrong. In his response, General Gordon stood atop the table at which he had been seated and with a strong and eloquent voice said, "When I saw the flag that I followed go down at Appomattox, my heart would have broken but for my faith in God. I love this country; I love every acre of it. In these veins runs the blood of the founders of this republic. When he tells me and my Southern Comrades that teaching our children that the cause we fought for and died for was all wrong, I must protest. In the name of future manhood, I protest. What are we to teach them? If we cannot teach them that their fathers were right, it follows that these Southern children must be taught that

we were wrong and that the cause of my people was unjust and unholy".

After pausing and with tight lips, he fought to continue. "We were fighting over principals that we had inherited from our fathers and our father's fathers. We were both right and when we meet in that great beyond, we shall both hear; Well done thou good and faithful servant".



General Gordon

From the day the Confederate soldiers laid down their arms at Appomattox and stacked their guns at Greensboro, they believed the war was over and accepted the result. They had fought and lost and there-after, in good faith stood ready to defend the national flag and to uphold the laws of the United States. Sadly, the sincerity and candor of their declarations were then and still stand to this day, questioned by their countrymen of the North. Today, political campaign's parade the heroes of the South as rebels and traitors.

The monuments that survive today were built to honor the Southern soldier and to show the nation that there would always be an implicit trust to recruit its citizen soldier whose loyalty and courage can always be counted upon. The soldier's interred within the hallowed Confederate Cemetery overlooking the city of Fayetteville as well as in other communities across the South, deserve to continue to lay in peace and to be remembered. This was the only request they had asked of us.

What a glorious day it was, for all who stood among these heroes remembering the Confederate soldier. For now, a monument stands in their honor and God willing it will continue to still stand for future generations.



Representing the Major Thomas J Key Camp in Fayetteville, Arkansas were Compatriots **Lawson Rener, Rick McPherson** and **Walt Schley** attended the ceremonies at the Fayetteville Confederate Cemetery



Higginsville Confederate Memorial Day



Representing the Major Thomas J Key Camp at the annual Higginsville Confederate Memorial Day celebration in Higginsville, Missouri on Saturday were Compatriots **Jim “Hoss’ Tucker** and **Paul Allen**.

Jim and Paul; carried flags with other re-enactors with the Elliott’s Scouts during the posting of the colors. Compatriot **Chris Edwards** was the keynote speaker.



Higginsville Confederate Cemetery

The United Daughters of the Confederacy dedicated this monument to the 725 Confederate dead, buried in Higginsville, Missouri. The granite monuments of a lion and the Confederate shield, is similar to the sleeping lion monument that was removed from Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta in 2021.



Capt. Wm Quantrill

“Quantrill's friend took the skull to Mrs. Quantrill who identified it based upon a chipped tooth. Under cover of darkness, the entire box was stolen. Upon return to Dover, the bones were interred in the family plot in the Dover 4th St Cemetery minus the skull and various bones the unscrupulous friend had removed and kept. Some bones ended up at the Kansas State Historical Society and the skull to the Dover museum until buried in a separate container in the family plot. The stolen parts were repatriated by the Missouri Division of the Sons of Confederate Veteran's and are buried among his comrades at the Old Confederate Veterans Home Cemetery, Higginsville, Mo.” – **courtesy of Find a Grave**

Reminder for your calendar



Join Eric and Carrie Martinez and members of the Major Thomas J Key Camp as the Sterling Price battle flag is raised at the memorial to the six Confederate soldiers killed this day in 1864.

^^^

JOIN US ON JULY 13th AS WE ONCE AGAIN RAISE THE FLAG TO HONOR THESE MEN

Camden Point Activities

4:30 pm Gathering at the cemetery

5:00 Opening Prayer

Remarks

Raising of the Sterling Price Flag

Laying of Wreath

Honoring each soldier with a short biography and placing of an individual flag at each marker

Closing Prayer

Gun Salute

Playing of Taps

Cookout and refreshments

See us on Facebook – Enter Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920

History Lives – reprinted from July 3, 2014 Platte County Citizen

Camden Point commemorates 150th anniversary of Civil War battle

The sound of a cannon blast rang out, forcing **Eric Martinez** to take pause in the moment.

A member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, **Martinez** donates a lot of his free time to reenactments and special ceremonies. The chance to participate in the Battle of Camden Point's 150th anniversary remembrance proved especially poignant. The monument and six graves dedicated to Confederate soldiers killed just down the road fascinated **Martinez** during his childhood in this rural Platte County community. That added personal importance to this particular event. "It was a like a religious moment," **Martinez** said. "This is home. The same reason those men are dead there. They were just fighting for their homes. Same reason (I'm here), just a little different timeframe."

More than a dozen re-enactors, including **Martinez's son Jacob**, came Saturday to Pleasant Grove Cemetery to share the story of a smaller Civil War battle in conjunction with Camden Point's annual Freedom Festival. A small, white stone obelisk stands in the middle of six marked graves on the front of a hill located just off Route EE — the second oldest Confederate memorial located west of the Mississippi River. Two of the soldiers buried there, including one officer, were killed as part of a small skirmish on July 13, 1864 between advancing Union troops and a small contingent of Confederates encamped in Camden Point. Four more were later executed.

In 1871, the town opted to move the remains to their current site at Pleasant Grove and place a marker there. The headstones were added in 2000, and because records didn't exist for which body had been placed in what spot, Lt. Alamarine Hardin's marker went at the far left with Pvts. Richard Alvis, Jasper Clements, Robert McCormick, Jesse Myles and Andrew Smith to his right in alphabetical order. The Camden Point Baptist Church, whose members spend time caring for the small cemetery plot, also recently

installed a historical marker at the entrance to help keep record of this event despite the negative perception of honoring Confederate history. “They are our veterans, Missouri veterans, and they fought for protecting their families and their community,” said Matthew Silber, a member of the Platte County Historical Society who helped organize Saturday’s memorial service. “And a lot of people sacrificed everything for family and community. Those are values the same as today. We care about our families and our community, so that’s what we’re honoring: men and women and children who gave up everything.”

Four of the re-enactors, including **Jacob Martinez**, led a procession to the monument at the start of the ceremony, placing a Camden Point Battle Flag replica, Confederate Flag, Camden Point flag and United States flag near the monument. Silber gave a brief history of the event based on his research, and a bio of each Confederate soldier killed was read aloud. The culmination came with a six-gun salute and the booming cannon blast in the deceased’s memory. “In the end, it is the men we honor today,” keynote speaker **James L. Speicher**, who spent 31 years in the U.S. Army, said during his address to the small assembled crowd. The Battle of Camden Point involved between 500 and 700 soldiers. Only one Union soldier died during the skirmish. After the executions and burning parts of Camden Point, the federalists advanced on to Platte City and burnt the town for a second time during the Civil War.

Stories like these exist for many small communities in the state. The oldest Confederate memorial in the state resides in Lone Jack, and many in this area have family ties to the involved soldiers. According to **Eric Martinez**, his great-great grandfather — a guerilla fighter during the Civil War — passed through Camden Point the day before the battle remembered in Saturday’s ceremony. “A lot of people are under the misconception the majority of the war was back east — Georgia and Virginia,” **Eric Martinez** said. “The war out here was a different kind of war. It started in at least 1854 and it had gone on. It was dirty fighting. “What it was out here were neighbors, brothers, families fighting each other.” Silber also grew up in Camden Point and his experiences as a youth near Pleasant Grove Cemetery helped spur his interest in history. He continues to spend time learning about this area and recently helped publish “Platte County’s History Illustrated,” which contains his original artwork. Although through his efforts and those of many others, the

Battle of Camden Point's story came to life Saturday, but there's always another chapter out there. "Being a young boy, you're fascinated by war, and you don't really understand until you're older the horror of it," Silber said. "There's a lifetime of learning all the stories of people that have gone on before." That could include even more details about the men buried at Pleasant Grove Cemetery, a unique chapter in Platte County's history not likely to be forgotten.



The Camden Point Battle Flag
"Protect Missouri Flag"

Kansas Division Reunion

State Commander **Lawson Rener** presided over the 23rd annual Kansas State Division Reunion, held at the Topeka National Guard Museum, June 17 - 18. Representatives of four Camps attended but the members of the Major Thomas J Key Camp made the event a big success. Members of the Key Camp attending were Compatriots **Lane, Schley, Peterson, Foster, Peterson, Linck** (with Grandson **Parker**), **Commander Sewell, M^cPherson, Edwards, Allen** (with **Betty**) and of course **State Commander Rener**. Congratulations to all of you who helped support the Kansas SCV and especially **State Commander Rener** for all your work and dedication to the success of the SCV.



Below image, Commander Rener thanks **Jim Thornton** for his excellent presentation on Quantrill to the assembled members attending the Reunion.



State Commander Rener opens the State Reunion



Leavenworth's **Paul Hanley** mugs with UDC attendee's **Monet Kietzman** and **Linda Curtiss**



Major

Thomas J. Key Camp

#1920

Johnson County, Kansas
Camp Activities



July 13th 5:00 pm Camden Point Memorial
July 19 – 23 National SCV Reunion, Cartersville, Georgia

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 July 7th

The Key Camp will meet on Thursday July 7th 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

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.

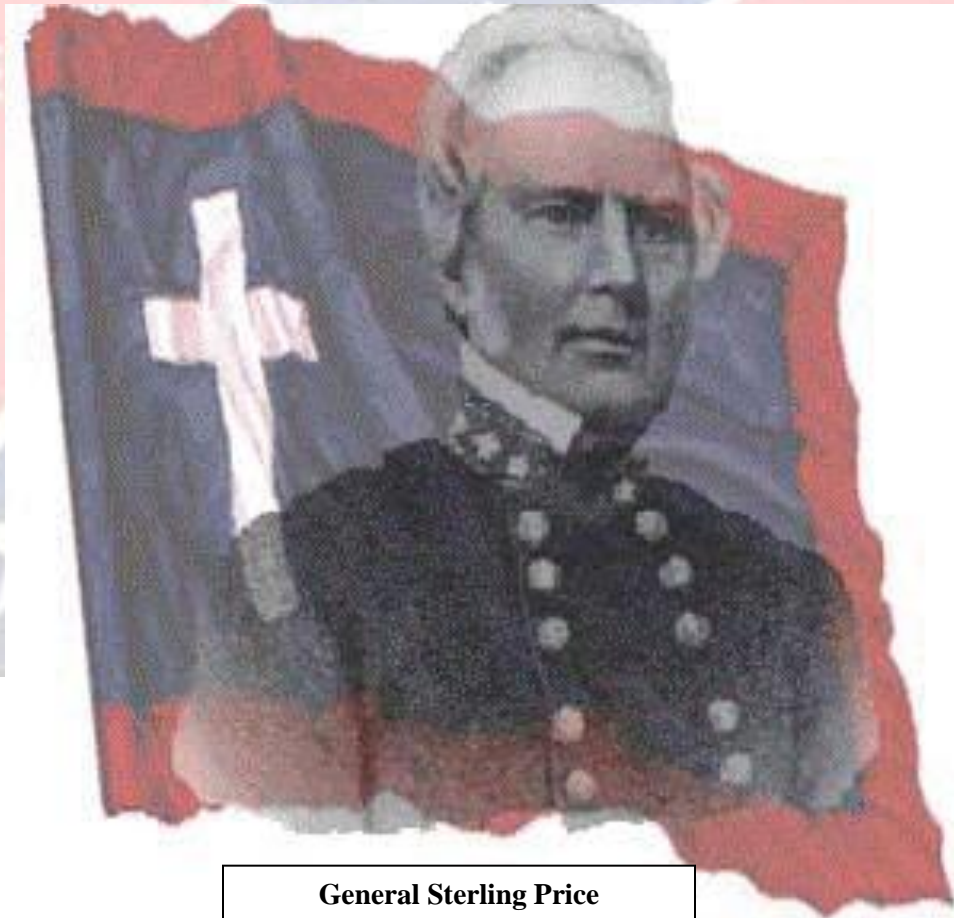


Key Camp Web Page:
www.majorthomasjkeycamp1920.com

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

National SCV HQ Web Page
www.scv.org

Charge to the Sons “To you Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will submit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier’s good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles he loved and which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.” General Stephen Dill Lee



General Sterling Price