



THE TELEGRAPH KEY

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

Volume 24, No. 5

May 2024

Major Thomas J Key Camp Officers



Commander - *Walt Schley*



1st Lt. Commander- *Dan Peterson*



2nd Lt. Commander- *Paul Allen*



Adjutant- *Lawson Rener*



Chaplin - *Walt McKenzie*



Communications- *Rick McPherson*

The Compatriots Corner

By Rick McPherson

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

The May 2024 meeting was attended by fourteen members,
and four guests. This was the 244th regular meeting of the
Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920



Col. Matt Archambault, US Army Ret. presented "A Different Take on Shiloh" to the Key Camp during the May meeting.

His presentation included four phases of the war, beginning in 1860-1862 before the reality of the war set in: Fort Sumter to Shiloh, Vicksburg to Gettysburg, Gettysburg to Atlanta and Atlanta to Appomattox.

He begins by pointing out that West Point was primarily for Engineering training and not for war strategy and that they did not actually provide combat training, only learning how Napoleon had fought battles.

He also pointed out that at the start of the war, Lincoln was frustrated with his Generals and that the early fighting resulted in very few casualties, and that in fact, little was accomplished in the first year of fighting, even after 53 battles had been fought.

Archambault described the levels of battlefield experience in which many of the Civil War generals experienced, particularly during the Mexican American War, including Stonewall Jackson, George Meade, George McClellan, George Pickett, Joseph Johnston, Braxton Bragg, Henry Heath, Winfield Scot and most famously, Robert E Lee and Ulysses S Grant. The Mexican American War provided these men with vital combat experience they could not receive in a classroom at West Point.

Dues Renewal Time

Meeting Recap



The **Key Camp** meeting opened with an opening prayer, Pledge to the Flag and the Salute to Confederate Flag as well as the reading of *The Charge*.



Prayers and Concerns expressed for **Susan Peterson**. Also, **Compatriot Walt McKenzie** was welcomed back after his brief illness.



Adjutant Lawson Rener reported on the Camp's treasury and, in his role of **Division Commander**, **Rener** reminded members of the upcoming **Division Reunion** to be held in Topeka on June 15th and to send in their registrations by June 10th.



Commander Schley recognized those who participated in the **Mine Creek Park Day**, by helping spruce up the monument area, trimming, mulching, and raking. He also gave a brief report on some recent vandalism upon the monument.



Adjutant Lawson Rener reported that **Camp Dues notices** will be sent out in June and should be returned in July. Dues are \$35 made payable: Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920



Compatriots recognized for their help in the **Mine Creek Park Day** were to **Walt, Rick, Matt, Larry, and Ms. Elsa**. Thank you to all for giving your time and effort.



Trivia: What were the bloodiest battles of the War? **Answer:** Gettysburg - 51,116 casualties in three days; Antietam - 22,726 casualties in one day; and the Seven Days Battle where 36,463 men lost their lives.



Key Camp Web Page hits 49 YTD, 34 in last 30 days

Camp Activities

Key Camp members go to Baxter Springs

Members of the **Key Camp** visited the **Riley Crawford Camp** in Baxter Springs, Kansas at the invitation of **Commander Michael Freund** in support of **Compatriot Lane Smith** who presented *The Trial of Jefferson Davis*. Joining Lane was, **Rick McPherson**, and **Monet Kietzman**. Prior to the event they visited the soldier's graves in the beautiful National Cemetery outside of Baxter Springs.



Civil War Tour



In 1870-71, the victims of the attack on Fort Blair and the Battle of Baxter Springs were disinterred from a site near the fort and reinterred in this newly designated national cemetery plot, officially National Cemetery #2.



Kansas Division Reunion June 15th - Topeka Kansas

Send in your registrations today or bring to Thursday's camp meeting.



State Commander Lawson Rener and officers; invite you to attend the 25th Annual Kansas Division Sons of Confederate Veterans Reunion on June 15th, 2024, 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard. 125 SE Airport Drive, Topeka, Kansas 66619.

Our guest speakers are **Compatriots Lane Smith** and **Chris Edwards**.

A catered lunch will be served.

Please send your **reservations/checks \$30** to Dick Croft, 111017 S 151st St. West, Clearwater, KS 67206



See us on Facebook - Enter - Major Thomas J Key Camp

Civil War defined Kansas like no other state

One hundred sixty years ago, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union forces at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. The war that began four years earlier, on April 12, 1861, cost hundreds of thousands of lives and changed the course of a nation. And it defined Kansas like it did no other state, said Deb Goodrich Bissel, a Kansas historian from Topeka. “We became a state at the beginning of the war,” Goodrich Bissel said. “Our formative years are during the Civil War. The era of Bleeding Kansas led up to the war and set the tone for what the war would be in the entire nation.



Indeed one of the war's early sparks was John Brown, who led members of his family and followers from Kansas in the fall of 1859 to attack the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va. His goal was to incite a national slave rebellion. His plan failed, and he was hanged for his actions. But his radical fervor added to the growing tensions between North and South. “We are always, always at the center of the war,” Goodrich Bissel said. “... We are the quintessential American because of the trial by fire we went through in becoming a state. All those issues come to a head and are decided here.”

And when those issues were decided and war-weary veterans began returning home, many decided to start their lives over in Kansas. “I'm thinking about when the war is over and all

these people are coming home,” said Kansas historian and filmmaker Ken Spurgeon. “Here they went from trying to kill each other to becoming neighbors again. They went to church and school together. “There was a tremendous amount of healing that had to be done.”

The Civil War took a toll on Kansans with its ferocity and violence. William Quantrill's most infamous raid occurred on Aug. 21, 1863, when he and his Confederate raiders sacked Lawrence. On his orders, they aimed to kill “every man big enough to carry a gun.” Raiders killed 150 abolitionists, all of them men. But Quantrill would make more raids into Kansas, one of which resulted in the Baxter Springs massacre of Oct. 6, 1863.



Gen. James Blunt and about 100 men, a wagon train and regimental band were en route from Fort Scott to Fort Smith, Ark. Blunt was preparing to stop at a Union encampment at Baxter Springs when Quantrill took him by surprise. Because several hundred of the Confederates were wearing different shades of blue, Blunt mistook Quantrill's approaching riders as Union soldiers. Quantrill and his men began rapidly firing on the Union troops, overpowering them and killing 101 Union soldiers. “This was the most brutal and barbaric area of the war,” contends Civil War historian of Fort Scott.



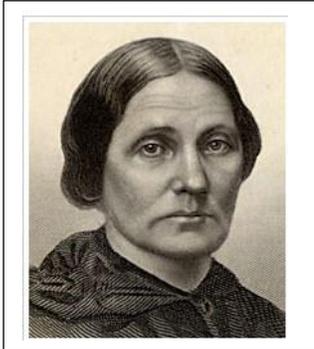
“Why? Where was the American frontier in 1861 and during the Civil War? The frontier was basically the Kansas-Missouri border and Indian Territory. Traditionally, the frontier has a much more violent and brutal way of life than you have in those more civilized areas.” The end of the war on April 9, 1865, didn’t mean the end of the war in Kansas, Scholfield said.

“January through March of 1865, the people in eastern Kansas don’t know the war is going to be over,” he said. “Then, all of a sudden, this news - boom - it’s over in the East.

“That doesn’t mean it ends out here. In what is called the Indian Territory, the war is still going on. ... By 1865, the border is still a very dangerous place.”

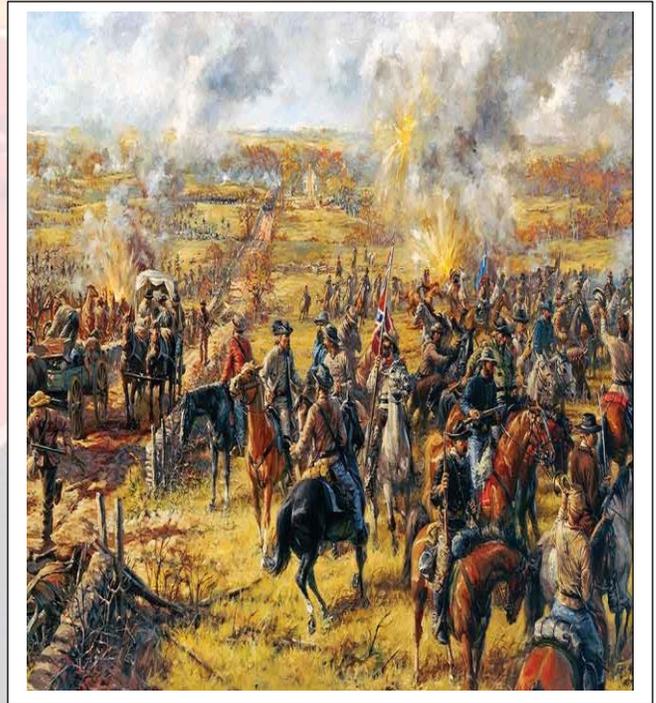
THE SOLDIER STATE

Mary Bickerdyke was among those who came to Kansas after the war. She served as a nurse on 19 Civil War battlefields following the Union battle line through Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and Georgia. On those battlefields, she established laundries and kitchens, dressed wounds and chastised Army surgeons for their uncleanliness.

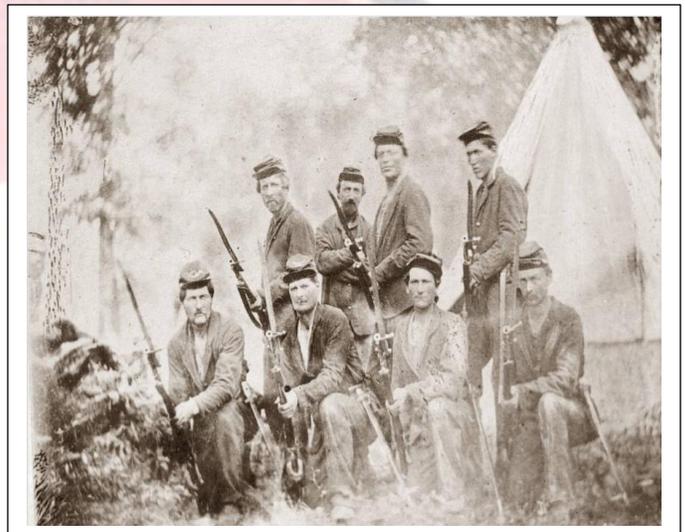


She also founded nearly 300 hospitals along the way to aid the wounded. Soldiers she tended adoringly called her “Mother.” At the end of the war, the Kansas prairie beckoned. It was a clean slate and it offered many a chance to start over with new land. Bickerdyke would help bring hundreds of Union soldiers to Kansas following the war, temporarily earning it the nickname “The Soldier State.” Many of those soldiers were returning home after signing up to fight. Their eagerness to defend the Union, which Kansas joined only months

before the war began, is another remnant of the war that still exists, Spurgeon said. “When the hour came, we had a very high rate of enlistment,” Spurgeon said of Kansas soldiers. “We were not fence-sitters. ... We didn’t need a draft in Kansas. People were ready to step up and fight. “I feel like that is our legacy of volunteerism. We are doers.”



Between roughly 1855 and 1859, Kansans engaged in a violent guerrilla war between pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces in an event known as Bleeding Kansas, which significantly shaped American politics and contributed to the coming of the Civil War.



Walt Visits Tunnel Hill

This past weekend, **Commander Walt Schley** traveled to Georgia to attend his grandson's High Scholl Graduation. While in the area he could not pass up the opportunity to visit one Civil War landmarks that has a direct connection to the namesake of our **SCV Camp, Major Thomas J Key**.



The Chattanooga section of the Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park consists of several disparate sections separated by over a century of urbanity. Two of the lesser-known parts of the park lie at the northern end of Missionary Ridge - the Sherman and the Pennsylvania Reservations. These two reserves remember the heavy fighting of 25 November 1863 on Tunnel Hill. Tunnel Hill, so-called for the railroad tunnel for the Chattanooga & Cleveland Railroad. Here, the better part of the Army of the Tennessee, led by Major General William Sherman, with additional troops provided by the division of Jefferson C. Davis and the Federal 11th Corps hit the northern flank of Braxton Bragg's Missionary Ridge position. The goal was to gain Tunnel Hill and roll up Bragg's position from that end.

Here, **Captain Thomas Jefferson Key** earned a reputation as an audacious battery commander, often running his guns up close to the enemy in advance of the infantry. Many reports and correspondence mention the incredibly fast loading and firing that characterized the Helena Artillery under **Key's** command. Area battles in which **Key's Battery** fought included the Battle of Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Ringgold Gap and Tunnel Hill as well as Hood's ill-fated campaign in Tennessee.



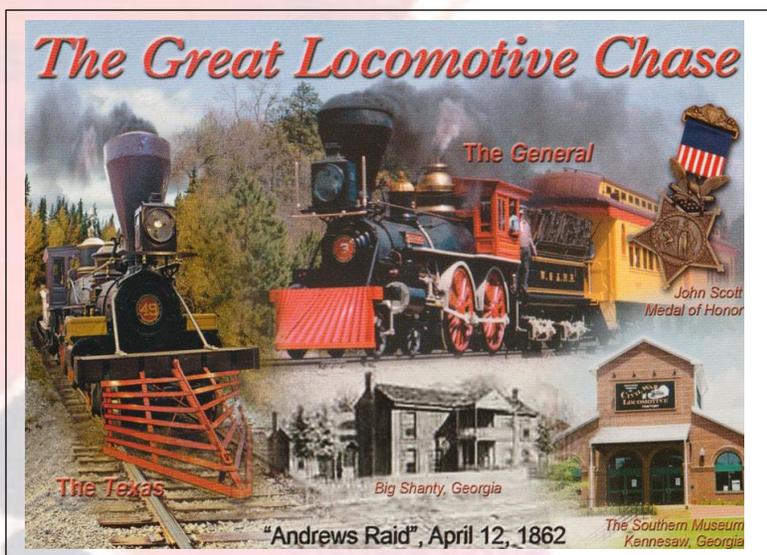
During the Atlanta Campaign, **Key's Battery** was assigned to the Hochkiss' Battalion, part of Major General Cleburne's Division. **Key's Battery** was the first to fire on a Union Brigade involved in the demonstration against Dalton, Georgia on February 25, 1864.

In the "hundred days" fighting between Dalton and Atlanta, Georgia, **he won the rank of Major** and was in the fiercest of the battles.



and the new town of Atlanta, Georgia was complete.

While in operation, the tunnel was controlled by both the Union and Confederate Armies at various times throughout the Civil War and even witnessed the “**Great Locomotive Chase**” in April 1862.



The Clisby Austin House (lower right) was constructed in 1848 alongside the Western & Atlantic railroad tunnel that passes through the Chetogeta Mountain. Originally named “Meadowlawn”, it was built by Reverend Clisby Austin as a farmhouse that grew to include 320 acres.

After Austin left the house during the Civil War, the house was used as an army field hospital. Officers and generals - like our famous guests John Bell Hood and William T. Sherman - slept and planned in the second floor bedrooms while doctors treated wounded soldiers and performed amputations in the kitchen and in outdoor tents. The Western & Atlantic Railroad was founded in 1836 to connect the Tennessee and Chattahoochee Rivers, however one barrier stood in northwest Georgia: Chetogeta Mountain. With scaling the mountain being out of the question, tunneling through was the only solution.

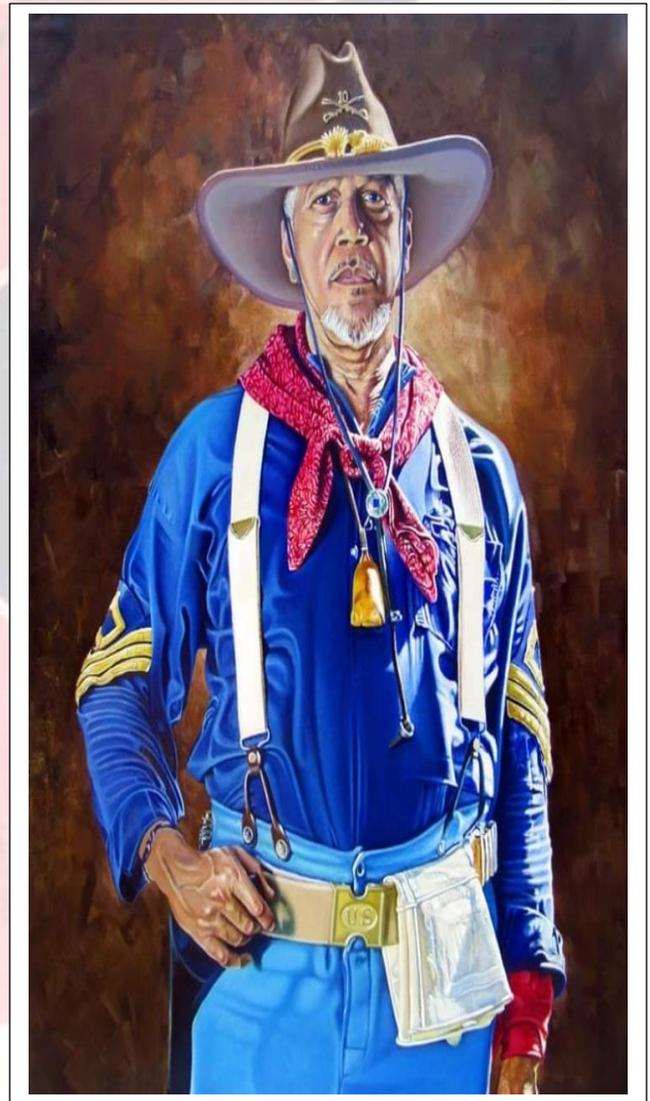
Construction on the tunnel began in the summer of 1848 and with it came an influx of workers. The tunnel, which spans 1,477 feet was completed in less than 22 months and on May 9, 1850, the first Western and Atlantic locomotive passed through the tunnel and the connection between Chattanooga, Tennessee



Our June Speaker George Pettigrew

George Pettigrew grew up listening to his mother tell him stories about his great-grandfather, one of the original **Buffalo Soldiers** from 1867. Today, he is a Certified Oral Storyteller, a Certified Written Storyteller, a former presenting member of the Missouri Humanities Speakers Bureau, Instructor for Oral Storyteller Certification, Veterans Write Board of Directors, and a newly installed member of the Missouri Humanities Board of Directors.

George is also the Executive Vice President and Life Member of the Alexander/Madison Chapter of KC Buffalo Soldiers (the first and world's oldest Buffalo Soldier chapter), Life Member and Co-Chair of the Fort Leavenworth Museum Project Committee with the 9th & 10th (Horse) Cavalry Association and Chair of the Frontier Museum of the United States Army Foundation with a mission to fund, construct, and later support the Frontier Museum of the United States Army. A public/private partnership with the U.S. Army and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas on federal property outside the gates and fence of the fort. Upon completion the museum will be given to the Army and the Fort.



You don't want to miss George's presentation on Thursday June 6th beginning at 6:30 p.m.



Your Camp Calander

June

- 1 Southern Women's Historical Association - Fayetteville, Arkansas
- 1 Confederate Memorial Day - Higginsville, Missouri 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Services begins 10:30)
- 6 Camp Meeting - George Pettigrew, speaker
- 8-9 Group travel to Iowa Sprint Car Race w/ Jim Edgington Host
- 14, 15, 16 Battle of Carthage Re-enactment
- 15 Kansas Division SCV Reunion - Topeka, Kansas

July

- 11 **Camp Meeting -Date Changed to July 11th)** Lane Smith speaker.
- 13 Camden Point Memorial Service - Camden Point, Missouri
- 16-21 SCV National Reunion - Charleston, South Carolina

August

- 1 Camp Meeting - Jonathan James, speaker (Moonlit Mayhem)
- 1 Annual Dues
- 7 Mine Creek Historical Day - 10 AM to 3 PM and **Confederate Marker re-dedication**

September

- 5 Camp Meeting - Robt Jones (Failed attempt to steal the General)
2nd Annual **Spike Speicher** Camp Picnic
- 30 - Oct 4 Gettysburg Battlefield visit

October

- 3 Camp Meeting
Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival
Baxter Springs Encampment

November

- 7 Meeting/Key Camp Election of Officers
Leavenworth Parade

December

- 5 Camp Meeting
Wreaths Across America, Ft Leavenworth, Higginsville

Camden Point Memorial Service

Saturday July 13th 5:00 P.M.



Join us Saturday July 13th, 2024 at Camden Point (MO), for our annual memorial service and picnic. Festivities begin at 5:00 pm with the memorial service, followed by BBQ and fellowship.

Bring a lawn chair and a dish to share. (Please arrive by 4:30)



20th Anniversary Re-dedication



160 Years ago, the Battle of Mine Creek occurred on the 600-acre battle site near Pleasanton, Kansas pitting 2600 Federal troops of the Army of the Border, led by Frederick W Benteen and John F Phillips against 7,000 troops in the Confederate's Army of Missouri, led by John S Marmaduke and James F Fagan. While the Union lost approximately 110 soldiers, the Confederate loss was more than 1200 soldiers of whom most were left upon the battlefield.

This **August 3rd**, The **Key Camp** will hold a re-dedication ceremony at the marker placed near the battle site, twenty years ago in April 2004. Joining the **Key Camp** will be members of the **Riley Crawford Camp**, the **Livingston Camp**, and the **Campbell Camp**. This event will feature a Color Guard, re-dedication remarks, the Marmaduke Flag presentation, a gun salute and a Rebel toast.

This event will coincide with both the 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Mine Creek but also the Mine Creek Heritage Day. Both the **Key Camp** and the **Franklin Camp** will be showing our Civil War replica relics inside the Visitors Center but will break to participate in the re-dedication ceremony.

Please, join us for this re-dedication service. Both the **Kansas Division SCV** and the **Missouri Division SCV** will be represented. As the originator and host of this event, we need every one of our **Key Camp** members to be there. Please mark this date on your calendar and plan on attending.

This marker was made possible through the efforts of our **Key Camp** founder, **Col. Spike Speicher**. It is our responsibility to maintain and commemorate it. As "The Charge" says, *Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.*



Major **Thomas J. Key Camp #1920**
Johnson County, Kansas
Camp Activities



Next Meeting - June 6th - Zarda's BBQ - 6:30 pm

Be There!

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

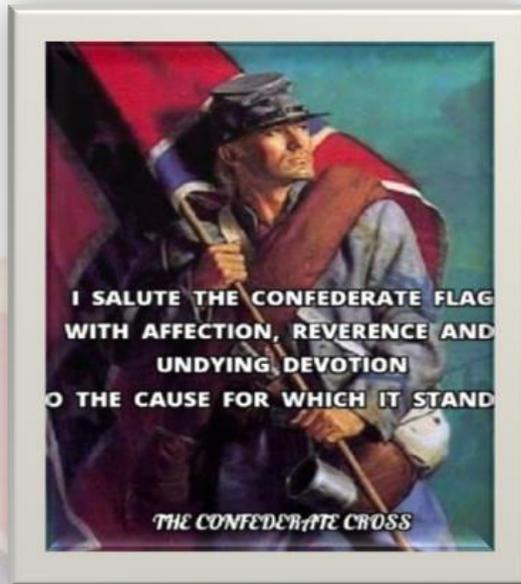
*******NEXT CAMP MEETING*******

The **Key Camp** will meet on **Thursday June 6th** at Zarda's Bar B-Q on the southwest corner of 87th and Quivira in Lenexa, Kansas with the official meeting starting at **6:30 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.



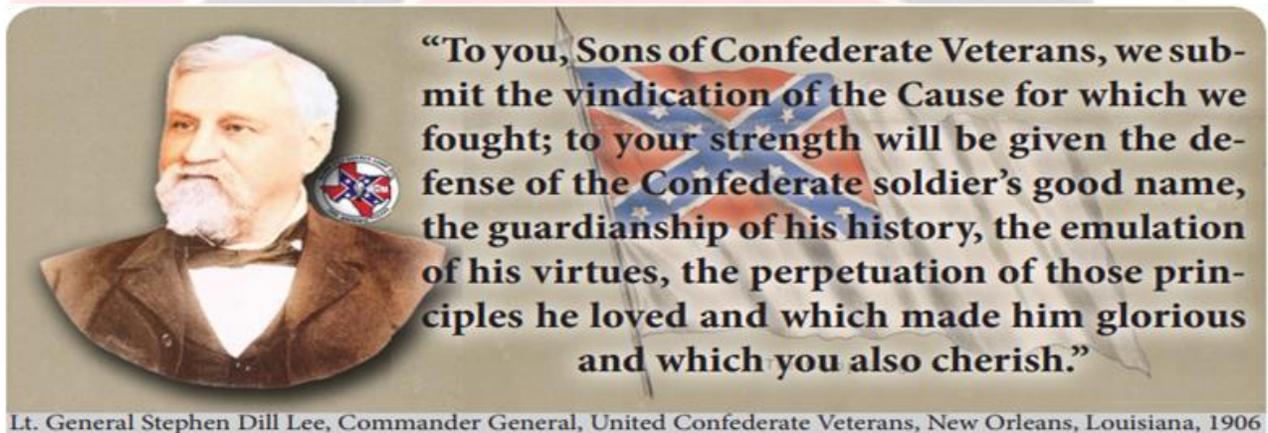


Key Camp Web Page: www.majorthomasjkeycamp1920.com

Email: Commander Walt Schley: gunnerschley@gmail.com

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

National SCV Web Page
www.scv.org



Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, Commander General, United Confederate Veterans, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1906

Individuals attending events hosted by the **Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920** and the **Sons of Confederate Veterans**, by virtue of their attendance, agree to the usage of their likeness in the Camp Newsletter, any **SCV/Camp** website and/or on any **SCV/Camp** Social Media outlet, or any other **SCV/Camp** material.