



# THE TELEGRAPH KEY

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

Vol. 23, No. 10

October 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

## 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 September 1, 2022, our 229<sup>th</sup> meeting.*



Our guest speaker, **Stephen Sullins** presented to those assembled the "Pinkerton Agents during the Civil War". In it, he spoke about the plot to kill Lincoln prior to him becoming President and about Kate Warren's role in that attempt and how the agency began.

**The Key Camp** welcomed 24 members and 7 guests filling the room with our largest attendance of the year. Thanks to all that attended. We hope to see you all again at our October meeting.

**Compatriots are reminded that spouses, guests and especially prospective members, are always welcome to our meetings.**

# Meeting Recap



**Commander Sewell** opened the Camp meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, Salute to the Confederate Flag, the reading of The Charge and a welcome to our guests.



**Compatriot Allen** gave a report from the Higginsville Cemetery Assoc. in which he has recently agreed to serve on the board and **Compatriot/Adjutant Rener** spoke of the upcoming re-internment of a Confederate soldier whose remains have recently been identified and will be laid to rest in the Fayetteville Confederate Cemetery. An update will be forthcoming for those interested in attending that event.



Three upcoming events were announced, the Annual Key Camp picnic, the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary program for the Ladies of the Plains-UDC Chapter and the Shawnee Mission Indian Festival (Oct 8<sup>th</sup>).



Those accepting nomination for officer positions in the November elections are: Compatriot's **Schley**- Commander, **Peterson**-1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, **Allen**- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, **Rener**- Adjutant and **McKenzie**-Chaplain. Anyone interested in one of these positions may contact **Commander Sewell** to express their interest in serving.



Numerous members were recognized for their service at recent camp activities including the Mine Creek Heritage Day and the Camden Point Memorial service. As these are activities that the Key Camp participation has been committed, it is important to thank those who helped make these events a success. Thank you!



**Compatriot Martinez** was presented a certificate in recognition of his 21 years as a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.



Hits to the **Key Camp Web Page** from 8/31 to 9/30 were +37. YTD total hits are 515.



# A Big Thank You!



The participation in camp activities is vital to our success. Through the years, everyone has done their part to ensure the camp not only continues on but also prospers. The above Compatriots were recognized during our September meeting for their recent participation at the Mine Creek Heritage Day or Camden Point Memorial Service (or both). Pictured above are L-R (Parker, representing his grandfather Carl, Jim, Walt, Gary, Rick, Dan, Hoss, Paul and Larry. Seated is Lane. (Not pictured-the "other" Walt and Matt).

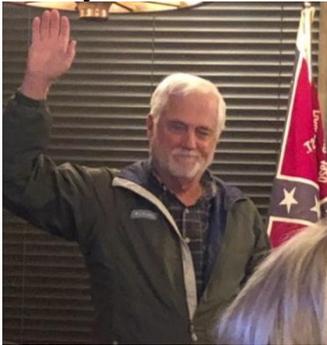
Thanks to all!



*Our unsung hero is **Compatriot** and Camp **Adjutant Lawson Renner**. Not only does he serve as the Kansas Division Commander but his list of duties as our camp Adjutant is long. Let's not forget all the time and work **Lawson** puts in on our camp's behalf. A hearty thanks to you Lawson!*

# The John Brown Trial & Execution

By Lane Smith



I recently vacationed with my older brother from Pittsburgh, Pa. The trip was twofold – I wanted to drive West Virginia, which we did, traveling over a thousand miles, on two lane highways, in five days with many tourist stops, to include Ft Necessity, Monticello, Harpers Ferry, a coal mine museum in Beckley, WV, the capitol of WV at Charleston including the capitol museum, and an oil & gas museum at Parkersburg, WV. West Virginia is a beautiful state to travel.

However, I also wanted to visit Charles Town, WV to see if there was historical data concerning the trial & execution of John Brown.

The Jefferson County courthouse (pic included) where the trial took place was built in 1836 and is located on the northwest corner of the main intersection of Charles Town. On the southeast corner of that intersection was the location of the jail that incarcerated Brown. Today, a post office and an historical marker (pic included that describes Charles

Washington, brother of George Washington, as the founder of the community), are located on the original grounds of the jail. Because of wounds suffered at Harpers Ferry, Brown had to be assisted daily as he was moved back and forth from the jail to the courthouse during the trial.

The trial commenced on Oct 27, 1859. One of the witnesses for the prosecution was Colonel Lewis Washington, great grandnephew of George Washington. Washington had been captured by Brown and forced into the fire house with other captives. Robert E. Lee was commander of the forces that were assigned to capture Brown and his associates. Lee assigned Lt. James Ewell Brown “Jeb” Stuart to negotiate the surrender of Brown. When at the door of the fire station and with negotiations taking place, Lee knew Washington well and recognized his voice when he yelled, “never mind us, fire!” Lee quietly responded to those near him, “the old revolutionary blood does tell.”

The trial concluded on Nov 2, 1859, with the verdict of guilty of treason and sentence of execution by hanging, which was carried out on Dec 2, 1859, at Charles Town.

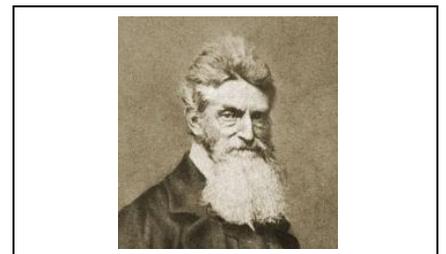
The hanging took place in a vacant pasture (see pic of historical marker) five blocks from the jail. A house now sits on that pasture lot.

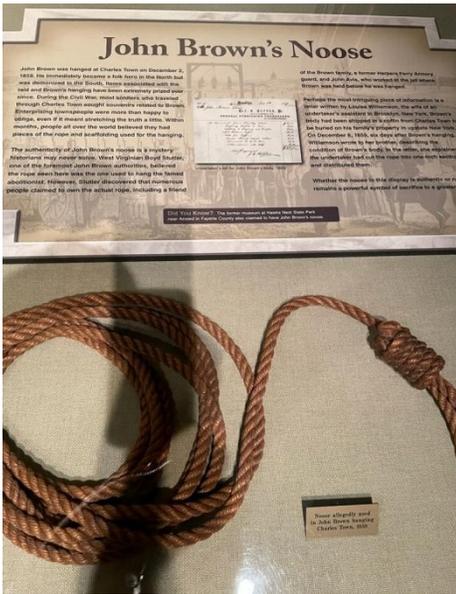
Brown was transported, handcuffed, and collared (see pic of both now displayed in the state museum at Charleston;

also, the alleged rope that hanged Brown, although this rope is very questionable), to the gallows in a wagon that also carried his casket that Brown sat on during his movement to the execution (see pic - this wagon displayed in the Jefferson County library museum one block from the courthouse)

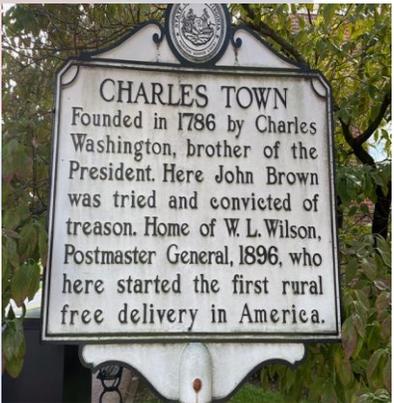
No one may have understood better than Brown what the future would hold. For Brown’s last message read, “I John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.” His prophecy would have horrendous results in the war that would soon follow.

The community was packed with onlookers and journalists during the trial and at the execution. To be sure the execution would not be interfered with, 800 militiamen stood guard to prevent any attempt to free Brown. Also in attendance was a contingent of cadets from the Virginia Military Institute, led by Thomas J. Jackson, to provide additional security. Among the onlookers was rabid secessionist Edmund Ruffin who would fire one of the first shots at Fort Sumter and also an actor by the name of John Wilkes Booth.

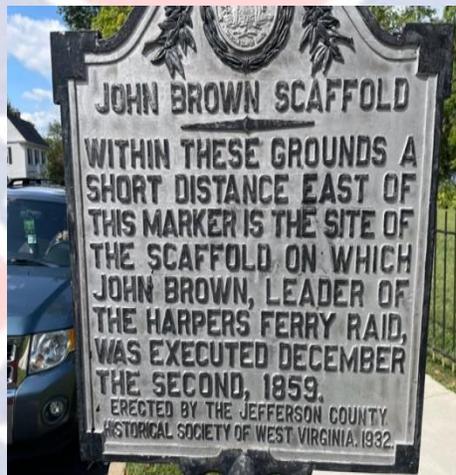




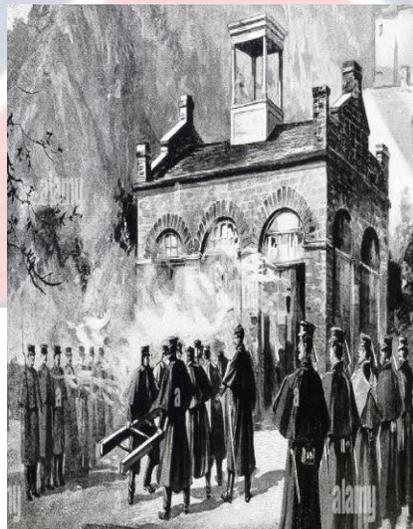
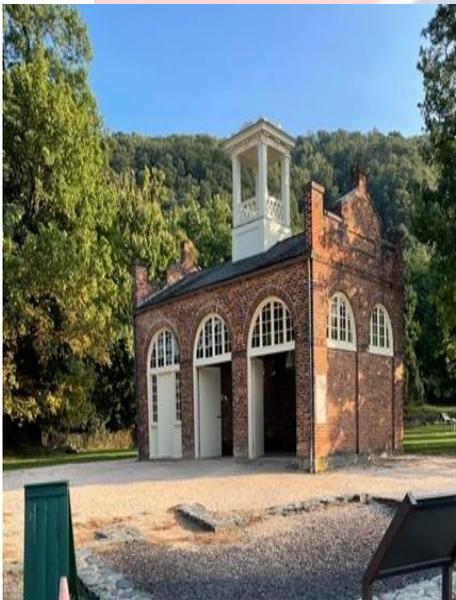
On the left: John Brown rode from the jail atop his own coffin to the gallows in a “criminal’s wagon as more than 1,000 troops lined the route in Charles Town, Va.



Jefferson County Courthouse



The handcuff's and collar worn by John Brown to the gallows.



The old government engine-house, now called John Brown's Fort at Harper's Ferry where he was captured October 15, 1859. Led by Colonel Robert E Lee and Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart, marines battered down the door, captured the insurgents and wounded John Brown. His sons Watson and Oliver were mortally wounded and a son Owen, was among 5 that escaped. John Brown was hung December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1859.



**Compatriot Eric Martinez** receives a congratulations and a certificate, commemorating his 20+ years as a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. **Eric**, along with his wife **Carrie** and son, **Compatriot Jacob Martinez**, have all been the driving force behind the Camden Point Memorial celebration. The Key Camp congratulates **Eric** for his continued contributions to the Camp.

# Enfield Rifle-Musket

The British Pattern 1853 Enfield Rifle-Musket was the most widely used firearm of the Confederates during the Vicksburg Campaign. Enfield rifles were smuggled into the South though the Union navy's blockade, and they were very well liked by the troops lucky enough to be issued them.

The 3rd Louisiana Infantry was issued the Enfield during the Siege of Vicksburg, and William Tunnard, a sergeant in the regiment, wrote that they "Began a brisk fire in their eagerness to test their quality." The Union soldiers receiving this fire noticed the improved accuracy of the Rebels and "Wished to know where the devil the men procured these guns, and were by no means choice in the language which they used against England and English manufacturers." The Enfield was 55.3 inches long, weighed nine pounds, and used a .577 caliber minie ball.

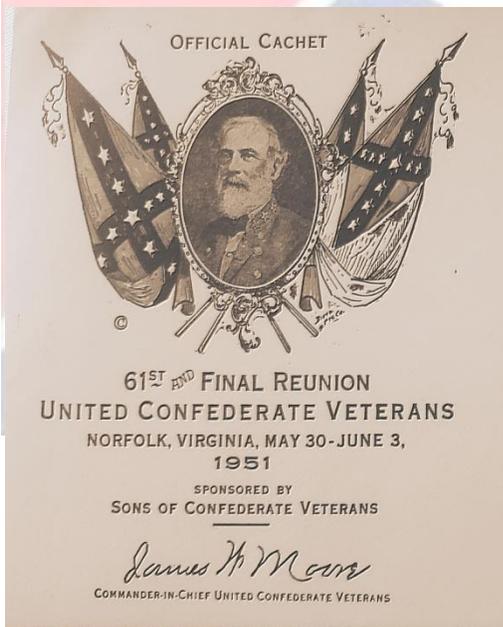




**The United Daughters of the Confederacy's, Ladies of the Plains-Topeka Chapter** held their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Saturday September 10<sup>th</sup> at the Monticello Library in Shawnee, Kansas. Their guest speaker was Robert C Jones who presented the role of South Carolina in the War Between the States. Pictured on the left are **Monet Keitzman**, Robert Jones, **Linda Curtiss** and **Bridget Ward**.

On the right are Key Camp members **Schley, Stoker** and **M<sup>c</sup>Pherson** who were present to support the UDC and to congratulate them on their 10th Anniversary.

# The Final Reunion



The UCV was organized in 1889 and by 1898 1,555 camps had been established. However, by 1904 the UCV had reached its zenith when veterans began to die off and membership would go into a gradual decline.

Their reunions would attract fifty thousand visitors and soared to more than 103,000 in 1911 as they crammed into Little Rock, Arkansas- a city of less than half that size.

By 1951, the 61<sup>st</sup> and final reunion held in Norfolk, Virginia, just three members attended.

By December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1951, the last verified Confederate veteran, Pleasant Crump, died at age 104.

## Confederate Medal of Honor Major Lamar Fontaine



**Major Lamar Fontaine** was a larger than life hero. He first served with Samuel Clemens, (Mark Twain) and wrote about the misadventures they had together during Twain's brief service in the Confederate Army. During the Siege of Vicksburg he was able to sneak through Union line and bring supplies to the Confederate forces, a feat for which he earned a *Confederate Medal of Honor*. Taken prisoner in 1864 he became one of the "immortal 600". They were prisoners who were used as human shields for an attack on Fort Sumter. He is buried in Clarksdale Mississippi.

In his memoirs, he detailed an incident where, as a member of the 18<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Regiment, he and a few others were gathering peaches from an orchard, just outside of Manassas. While several of the boys were up in the trees gathering peaches, a Yankee cavalryman approached them and ordered them to get out. Major Fontaine turned to one of his fellow soldiers and said that they had as much a right to the peaches as the Yankee had and to mind his own business or he would send a bullet after him. The Yankee rode his horse right up to Fontaine and said: "What did you say?"

"I repeated my comment and he threw open his breast with both hands and said: "Shoot, you damn Rebel!" I did not hesitate. I raised my old Savage pistol and fired. My bullet sped true to the mark and he tumbled from his horse without a sound".

Some of the boys were indignant by his actions so Fontaine said, "I was only a soldier and that it was my duty to kill an enemy and defend my country. It was for this purpose that I enlisted and would so continue until a bullet from an enemy sent me to join the great band that had gone before to the shores of eternity."



# Real Daughter of the Confederacy

**United Daughters of the Confederacy Real Daughter and Rosie the Riveter, turns 98!**

**By Linda Scott Curtiss**

Ladies of the Plains 2696 Charter Member and Real Daughter, Reba Bishop Scott, has lived in Georgia since 1924. Mrs. Scott joined the UDC under her father, John Bishop, who served as a Private in Co F, 1st Regiment (Hagoods) Infantry for the State of South Carolina. She was born on May 26, 1924, in Sylvania, Georgia to John and Mattie Stewart Bishop.

Reba has many stories about growing up on a farm and how vegetables tasted so good when they were picked fresh from their garden. She said, "Times were hard, but we always had plenty of food." She remembers her dad sharing vegetables with neighbors in need and how much they deeply appreciated his kindness.

Before they owned a car, the family rode to church and into town in their wagon; until they upgraded to a "new pretty red buggy." The buggy rode much better than the wagon; the car rode much better than the buggy she says. However, like many other children, they walked to school even on cold days.

During WWII she and her two sisters, Alma, and Lucyle, worked at the Savannah shipyard where 88 Liberty Ships were constructed on a site east of the city. Reba has always been a diligent worker but it's hard for me to imagine her "tacking" sheets of metal together. Like other war production factories across the nation, both the Savannah and Brunswick shipyards hired a substantial number of women, since much of the male workforce was overseas. There she met and married a young dapper ship fitter, Wiley Scott.

She continued to live in the home her dapper ship fitter built for her and their three children in 1958 until a couple of years ago when she fell and broke her arm. At that time, she moved in with family. Currently she is in a rehabilitation center recovering from a recent fall; however, this time she fortunately did not break any bones.

Reba has seen many changes over the years. Not all good nor all bad. From being one of the youngest members of the family to being the family patriarch. She has traded her red buggy for what she calls her convertible, the one which looks vaguely like a wheelchair. Her convertible seems to work well for getting around in her new housing and visiting with her new neighbors. The vegetables are agreeing with her even though they are not fresh out of the garden.

Reba is proud of being a Real Daughter and Charter member of Ladies of the Plains 2696, UDC Topeka KS Chapter, and her work as a Rosie the Riveter. She said her dad would be proud of Ladies of the Plains for remembering and honoring our CSA ancestors. Who can ask for more?

*Submitted by a Real Granddaughter,*

**Linda Scott Curtiss**

Founder/Charter President United Daughters of the Confederacy Ladies of the Plains 2696 Topeka, KS

# Annual SCV Picnic



The annual SCV Camp Picnic was held Saturday Sept 17<sup>th</sup> at Shawnee Mission Park.

Burgers, dogs and brats were grilled and numerous side dishes were brought to share.

Entertainment was provided by John Atherton (who is also a prospective member).



"Tradition usually rests upon something which men did know; history is often the manufacture of the mere liar." ~Jefferson Davis~



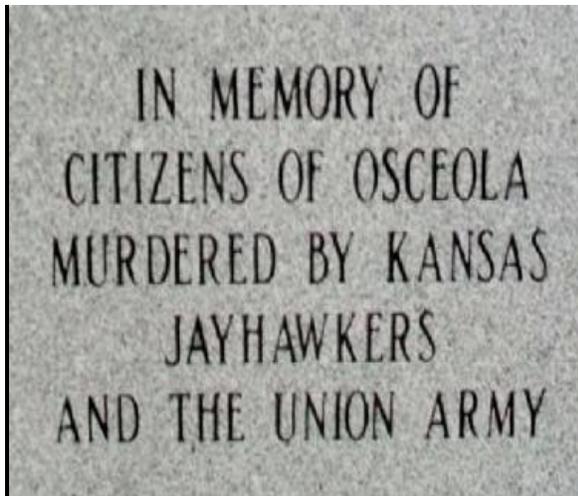
Children of all ages enjoyed the deserts, music and conversation.

Though we all had a great time, those who were unable to join with us were missed.

At this event, in 2021 we learned of the passing of our friend, Camp Founder and **Past Commander Jim "Spike" Speicher.**

We all remember and miss him.





**September 22nd, 1861**

The sacking of Osceola was a significant military engagement that took place during the early stages of the Civil War in Missouri. After losing the Battle of Dry Wood Creek near Fort Scott, Kansas, the Free-State leader, U.S. Senator and Brigadier General James Henry Lane guided his 3rd, 4th, and 5th Kansas Volunteers in the looting and sacking of Osceola, Missouri. A proud “jayhawker” and fierce antislavery supporter, Lane used his military status to impede the Confederate war effort in the border state.

Union General John C. Frémont originally ordered Lane and his men to cut off Confederate General Sterling Price and the secessionist Missouri State Guard north of Fort Scott, Kansas. Rather than personally pursuing Price and his Confederate troops after the Battle of Dry Wood Creek, Lane delegated Colonel Charles R. Jennison and some of his men to follow the Confederate general into western Missouri. Meanwhile Lane led his jayhawkers toward Osceola with intentions of raiding strong proslavery communities in the state.

Lane’s precise motivations for attacking Osceola are unclear. Local Osceola historian Richard Sunderwirth claims Lane targeted it because it was the home of one of his Confederate political foes, Missouri Senator Waldo P. Johnson. Other scholars, including Jay Monaghan, acknowledge the Johnson-Lane rivalry, but they assert that Lane’s chief purpose was to liberate African American slaves and squelch proslavery Missourians’ plans of secession from the Union. Indeed, before the sacking of Osceola, Lane stated, “Everything disloyal from a Durham cow to a Shanghai chicken must be cleaned out.”

Lane and approximately 2,000 of his troops arrived in Osceola, a port town on the Osage River, on September 22, 1861. In the early morning hours of September 23, Lane and his troops violently descended on the community. The so-called “Kansas Brigade” looted valuable goods and supplies from private homes, stores, the bank, and other businesses throughout the city, burning houses and buildings as they went. Lane and his men also “succeeded in capturing a heavy train of supplies destined for the armies of Generals [Gabriel J.] Rains and Price, together with \$100,000 in money.” When the raid began, Missouri State Guard Captain John M. Weidemeyer and 200 Missouri militiamen fired their rifles and cannons at Lane and his men in an effort to protect the town and its citizens. Severely outnumbered and outmatched, however, the Missouri troops were soon forced to retreat to safety.

Brigadier General Lane and his troops left Osceola on September 23, many of them in a drunken state. Having plundered and burned almost everything in sight, including all but three of the town’s 800 buildings, the unauthorized jayhawker attack left Osceola in

ruins. The October 11, 1861 edition of The Newark Advocate reported, "With his immense train of supplies, three hundred and fifty horses and mules, four hundred head of Price's cattle, large droves of sheep and swine, with as many 'contrabands' [200 slaves] as he could employ, he [Lane] made his way to West Point [Missouri] unpursued." Additionally, Lane stole 3,000 sacks of flour, 500 pounds of sugar and molasses, 50 pounds of coffee, and even the country records from the local courthouse. At least one of Captain Wiedemeyer's men was killed during the raid and Lane executed nine other Osceola residents after giving them a hurried mass hearing.

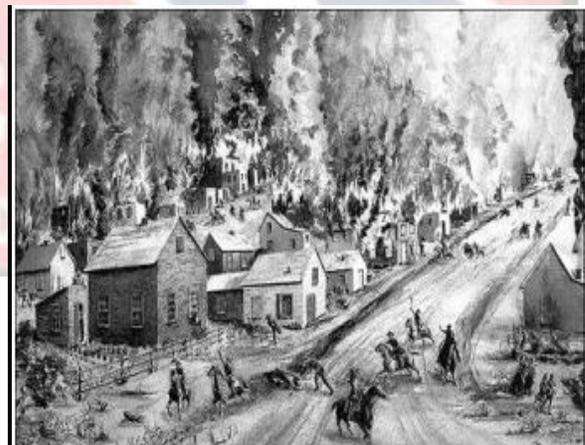
As the citizens of Osceola took stock of the extensive damage the Kansas Brigade had inflicted, many immediately called for revenge. John W. Fisher stated that the damage was "enough to make a man's blood boil. . . . Men are anxious to go to Kansas and retaliate, [and] if we are permitted to go the retribution will be awful. Lane's men were the destroyers and there will be no mercy shown them if we ever get a hold of them." The formerly thriving port town never fully recovered from the attack.

The long-term consequences of the Kansas Brigade's sacking of Osceola became evident two years later. On August 21, 1863, a group of 400 Missouri bushwhackers raided Lawrence, Kansas, killing between 160 and 190 men and boys and looting and burning much of the town. Commanded by William Clarke Quantrill, a proslavery guerrilla, the bushwhackers cited the sacking of Osceola as one of the primary justifications for their surprise attack on Lawrence. Brigadier General Lane was in Lawrence at the time of Quantrill's bloody raid, and he narrowly avoided the wrath of the

bushwhackers by running into a cornfield clothed only in his nightshirt.



James Henry Lane (1814-1866),  
Politician and Leader of the Free State  
Party of Kansas



# Shawnee Indian Mission



The Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival will be held Saturday October 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 6:30 pm. Come join the SCV and SUVCW groups who will share a tent, representing their common support for the history and respect, we as descendants, show for our Civil War ancestors.



Photos are from 2019



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



**Reminder: Membership Dues were due September 1<sup>st</sup>**  
If you have not yet paid, please contact Lawson Rener.

**Shawnee Mission Indian Festival – October 8<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am – 6:30 pm**  
**Elections of Officers – November 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting**  
**Lee- Jackson Banquet – January (TBA)**

*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 October 6th**

**Presentation:**

**“The man, who killed the man, who killed Lincoln”**

The Key Camp will meet on Thursday October 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**

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.

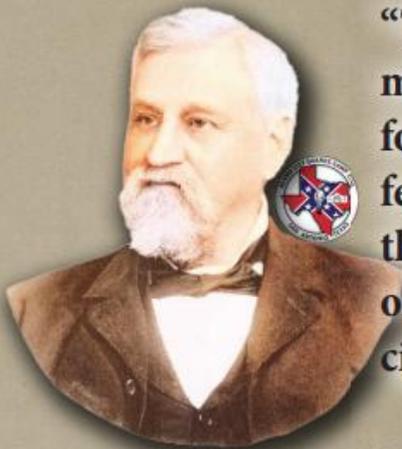


CAMP 1920

Key Camp Web Page:  
**[www.majorthomasjkeycamp1920.com](http://www.majorthomasjkeycamp1920.com)**

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

National SCV HQ Web Page  
**[www.scv.org](http://www.scv.org)**



“To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we 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.”

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