



THE TELEGRAPH KEY

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

Volume 23, No. 10

October 2023

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 CONFEDERATE'S CORNER

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

The September 2023 meeting was attended by members and guests. This was the 240th regular meeting of the Major Thomas J Key Camp #1920



The **Key Camp** was blessed to listen to the music of **John Atherton** and Ken Shoemaker with **Ms. Elsa Sewell** adding her singing and dance. The songs were all favorites sung during the Civil War.



The KC Chiefs would be playing this night, so the Camp and several members decided to wear their Chief's gear including **SUVCW Commander Bill Stoker** who is shown here singing "Dixie".



News from the Meeting



Commander Walt Schley opened the meeting with the opening prayer by **Chaplain Walt McKenzie**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by **1st Lt. Peterson**, The Salute by **2nd Lt. Paul Allen** and the Charge led by **Compatriot Jim Thornton**.



The Key Camp welcomed 14 members and 6 guests. Guests **included Bii Stoker, Elsa Sewell, Monet Kietzman, Linda Edgington, and Donna Brooks**. Our guest musician was **Ken Shoemaker**. Welcome to all and thank you for your attendance.



Commander Schley called on the Camp's good thoughts of prayers for those dealing with health issues. We also learned that **Compatriot Dan Peterson's** mother has passed, and we send our thoughts and prayers while he is in Mississippi with family.



Business: We have 37 paid members with 9 pending. **Commander Schley** passed out several new name badges. Additional badges are on order and will be passed out as they are received.



The **Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival** will be held October 15th, and the **Key Camp** will once again share a tent with the **SUVCW Franklin Camp**. Members are invited to help man the tent for a few hours between 9am - 5pm.



Compatriot Lane Smith would be appearing at the Harris-Kearney House portraying General Robert E Lee. Attending from the **Key Camp** were **Commander Walt Schley** and **Compatriot Rick McPherson**.



Commander Schley passed out several certificates and medals to those that were not on hand at the previous meeting. Among them the Distinguished Service medal to **Compatriot Lane Smith**. Congratulations to all!



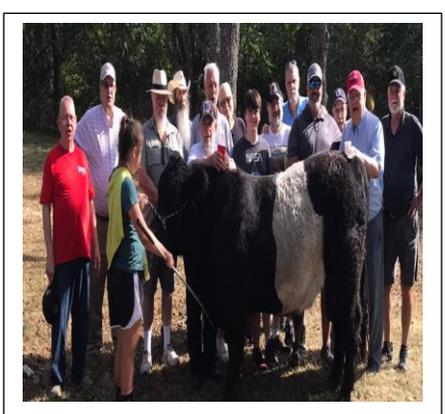
Speaking as the Lt Commander, Kansas Division, **Compatriot Rick McPherson** informed the Camp of the efforts to create a new camp in Baxter Springs, Kansas. The Camp was invited to attend a Historical event in Baxter Springs on October 7th in support of the new camp. More details will follow.



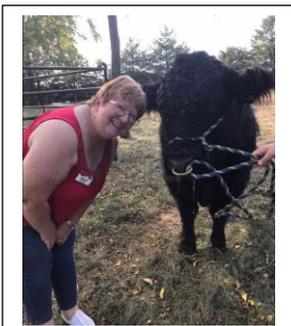
Key Camp Web Page hits for September +37, (YTD hits 466)

Camp Activities

1st Annual Jim "Spike" Speicher Picnic



The Key Camp held the **1st Annual Jim "Spike" Speicher Picnic** on Saturday September 9th at the rural home of Past Commander **Matt Sewell and Emily Sewell**. The annual picnic, this year, was named in honor of the camp's founder and long time Commander. Thirty members and guests enjoyed a beautiful autumn day as well as bbq served up by **Compatriot Matt Sewell**. Adding to the fun was **Ms Elsa Sewell** bringing her "show bull" over for the guests to pose with. **Ms Kathleen Sewell** went face to face with the bull but the ladies as a whole tended to be a bit tentative in their bull pose while the fellas, obviously used to "a lot of bull" cozied right up to the bull. Even **Compatriot Hoss Tucker** was comfortable enough to place his drink cup right upon its back.



Thanks to all that came out to join together, for all the great food and especially the friendship and conversation.





A Visit to *Bellefontaine Cemetery* in St. Louis to pay respect to an ancestor. A man who served on the “little thin line” that went steadily on.

By: **Kansas Division Commander and Key Camp Adjutant, Lawson Renner**

On a trip to St. Louis last year, I visited and wrote about visiting an ancestor buried in the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery who died at the infamous Gratiot Street Prison. This year, I made the visit to the very large Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis. This cemetery is the final resting place for over 86,000 who are buried there. A very large number of Civil War veterans, of both persuasions, are buried there.

One of the gifts my mother gave me was an incredibly large Southern family ancestry dating back to the settlement of Jamestown, Virginia. As I have traced my genealogy, in particular my Confederate heritage, I am always amazed at the stories I read about my ancestors.

I made my visit on an early Saturday morning in August. I had no idea where I was going other than “Robert McCulloch, Block 36 Lot 3278”. When I arrived, I was directed to an employee of the cemetery. When I told him the block and lot I was looking for, he asked, “what’s his name?”. I’m thinking, out of 86,000 people, you’re gonna know my ancestor by name?! I said, “Robert McCulloch”. He asked, “Civil War Robert McCulloch?”. Still not getting it, I said, “Yes, he was in the Civil War”. He said, “Come follow me, and I’ll take you there”. Sure enough, there was my ancestor and he’s a stop on their Civil War Cemetery Tour. A tour this cemetery employee participates in.

What I thought would be a quiet and quick selfie-moment at the headstone, became a 30-minute talk about the history of St. Louis, the cemetery, my ancestor, and Civil War in Missouri and who’s buried there from the war. He told me that Captain McCulloch was a “one poke”. I discovered that anybody left on the Gettysburg battlefield was “poked” by a bayonet. If the person moved on the first poke, then he was sent to the hospital. If there was no movement with the “first poke” then the bayonet was plunged all in to relieve the gas and bloating pressures that were building within the corpses in the July heat in Pennsylvania. This was a “two poke”. Much more than I ever anticipated.

Who did I visit?

Robert McCulloch was born September 15, 1841, in Osceola, Missouri to parents who settled from Virginia. He was orphaned early in life and moved to Virginia to be reared by family members. While in Virginia, as an adult, he enrolled at the Virginia Military Institute (where Lt. Gen. Stonewall Jackson taught artillery) and was a cadet until the war broke out in 1861. He, as many others, left the school to join the Confederate Army. He enlisted as a private in the Danville Grays in July of 1861, and was sent with VMI classmates to Richmond to help recruit and drill troops for the war. He was elected 2nd Lieutenant in October 1861, 1st Lieutenant in October 1862 and became a Captain on June 19, 1863, in Company B of the 18 Virginia Infantry when Capt. James D. Turner resigned on a surgeon’s certificate of disability. The 18th Virginia saw action from the beginning at First Manassas, the Seven Day’s battles, Second Manassas, and Gettysburg.

The brave souls of the 18th Virginia Infantry were on the front line of the assault in Pickett's Charge. He was wounded twice in the leg and left on the battlefield. Later retrieved as a "one poke", he was sent to a Union hospital and later to Johnson Island. Finally, on March 14, 1865, he was paroled and forwarded to Point Lookout for exchange. Aged 24.

He then returned to Rockbridge County, Virginia for a short time before relocating to St. Louis. He found work there and eventually became the superintendent of St. Louis's Street railway system and served on the Electricity Board. He died unexpectedly on September 28, 1914, of a cerebral hemorrhage and was buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis.

He was able to attend the 50th Anniversary of Gettysburg in 1913, with the men who wore gray and blue. He promoted a feeling of reconciliation and cooperation. Some men did not share this: some did. But we do know that men who 50 years earlier who were trying to kill each other, met on the same grounds but in the spirit of less hostility. Capt. McCulloch was championing "getting along" with fellow man from a past war.

This excerpt is from a speech that Capt. McCulloch gave at the 50th reunion in Gettysburg, 1913.

"...and now came the third and last day's fight, the only part in which I participated and the only part of which I had personal knowledge. Pickett's Division had been left at Chambersburg and made the twenty-eight-mile march on the second day of July. That night we slept beneath the star bedecked sky, fully dressed and the musket close at hand. As we lay on the ground, we could see reflected in the sky the campfires of the men we were to fight on the morrow. Now and then a shot and sometimes a little volley told us that the pickets on both sides were watching each other. Our confidence in them robbed us of all uneasiness, and we slept a sound, refreshing sleep. A bright, clear sunshine opened a glorious day on July 3. Our scanty morning meal was eaten with hearty relish and then each regiment was formed for inspection. A quadruple allowance of ammunition was issued to each man, and everything except arms, ammunition and canteen was piled in company lots."

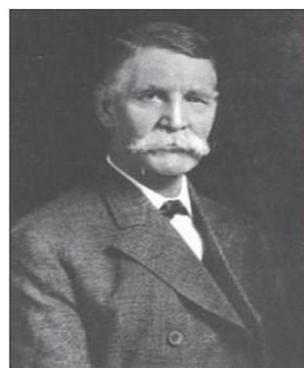
He continues, "We had a thin picket line on the crest of the ridge and now we marched in that direction, halting in line of battle perhaps 300 feet from the crest. Here we lay flat on the ground and soon our artillery began to take position on the hill crown, the pickets retiring to their places in line. The artillery did not once commence firing, but their appearance invited the attention of the enemy, and then ensued a desultory duel; finally, when all our guns were in place, there were nearly 150 cannons ranged in front of the fifteen Virginia regiments which constituted Pickett's division on that day, being the brigades of Garnett, Armistead, and Kemper. Midday had now come, and the sun was beaming straight down on us, though the heat did not seem to be oppressive, for we were hardened beyond that of sunstroke or exhaustion. Soon the pearls of thunder from our own guns became more frequent and this provoked a like answer from the other side, and for two hours nearly 400 guns of the largest size then known to field service belched forth streams of fire and whistling shot as fast as skilled gunners could serve them. The grandeur of that artillery duel has perhaps never been equaled in any battle in history. Capt. Linthicum, Gen. Garnett's Adjutant General, passed along our line and warned us that a cessation of firing by our guns would mean that the command forward would immediately follow. This was a caution that would enable us to act promptly and in unison."

“Now a hush came to our hot guns and then in clarion tones, as he stood erect in his stirrups, Pickett sang out “Forward”. Gen. Garnett repeated the command, as did each brigade commander, then each regimental leader echoed the same, and in turn every company commander. The men rose from the ground at once, and in another instant the word “march” set the division in motion, and a line of half mile long and as beautiful as if for dress parade marched gaily forward. We passed through the artillery and our comrades then uncovered their heads and uttered a farewell prayer for our success. We were now passing over the crown of the hill and the picture which we had not previously beheld was passing before us. Garnett and Kemper, with their ten regiments, a thin line, just two men deep, formed the front. Armistead, with five regiments, came behind as a reserve and this was our all. Before us a field of wheat ready for the sickle, fences, roads, and washes.

More than half a mile of this and then lines of infantry in blue, some having the protection of fences and of stone walls and others out in the open field. Behind them parks of artillery and up on the high ground, more artillery. The taskset to our little thin line was to destroy all this. There was no man in all our all our ranks who, had he stopped to think, would not have known that he was marching to his death, but there was no man amongst us who had not faced death many, many times before, perhaps with not such odds against us as this time; but we were flushed with many victories and with a confidence in our leaders that because they ordered us to perform a task we could perform it. Never hesitating, never faltering, the little thin line went steadily on. We were soon far enough down the slope that our own artillery could safely fire over our heads, and they followed us continually. The enemy’s big guns were now loaded differently, and they tore big gaps through our ranks, their infantry, too, had better rifles than we had to the left oblique, and then steadied and aligned under the galling fire which was constantly poured on us. And now we are within a range that our old guns will be effective and the order to fire is given.

Then men who are left close all the spaces to the center, they fight on without fear or even excitement, each one stringing for the front, and to load and shoot as rapidly as possible: and they pour well-aimed, deadly volleys into the faces of our blue-coated antagonists. Three volleys follow in rapid succession, and we drive line after line back from their positions and silence the first line of batteries. Garnett has been killed. Kemper has a leg shot away, and the command is all Armistead’s now, and smaller in number that had been his own brigade In the beginning; and our little thin line which only a little while ago marched gaily over the crest of the hill half a mile away and beyond the wheat field, has grown thinner and thinner, the survivors being just those whom the bullets and the grape and the cannister had not yet found. I was one of these until two bullets left me helpless beside a gun carriage”.

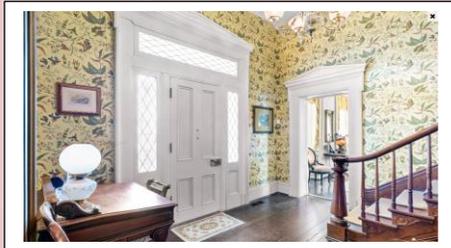
Rest in peace, cousin. I’m very proud of your service. I cannot imagine what you endured on those battlefields. **Deo Vindice**



Key Camp members represent Key Camp members represent



Compatriot Lane Smith once again was involved in the community with his portrayal of **General Robert E Lee**. This time, Smith was at the **Harriss-Kearney House** in Kansas City near Westport as part of the **Battle of Westport Historical Organization**. Attending in support of **Compatriot Smith** were **Key Camp Compatriots Walt Schley and Rick McPherson**.



Depiction of the Battle of Westport

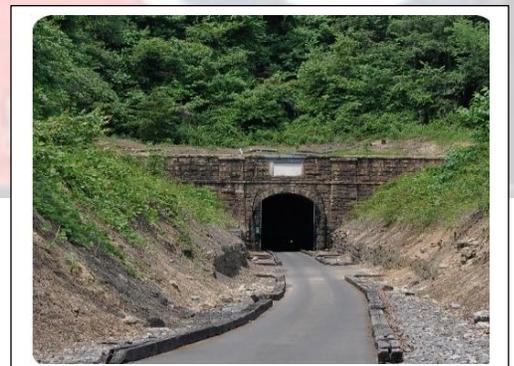
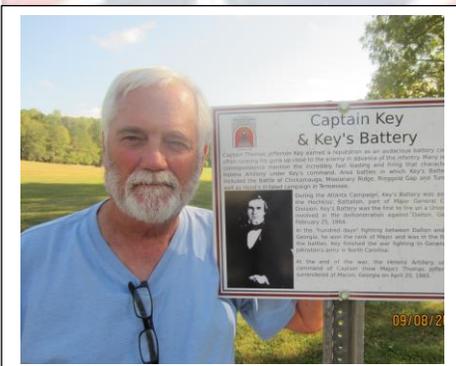
Lane found Major Thomas J Key

Do y'all remember who the "Key Camp" was named after? Kind of perhaps? **Thomas Jefferson Key** was born January 17, 1831 in Bolivar, Tennessee. At the age of 11 he was apprenticed to the publisher of a Tuscumbia, Alabama weekly newspaper, which he subsequently purchased. In his early twenties, Thomas Key sold that newspaper and moved to Kansas City, Kansas. There he began publishing a pro-southern newspaper. Despite being in the heart of the abolitionist Kansas Territory, Key edited his newspaper as he believed. He was instrumental in writing the pro-slavery state constitution in LeCompton. One written by the abolitionists later replaced that constitution. He soon discovered that the Southern element in Kansas was fighting a losing battle because of the tremendous wave of immigration coming from the north and east. Then, as a result of his beliefs, he received numerous threats on his life by the Kansas Free Staters. Eventually the newspaper failed and Key moved to Helena, Arkansas.

Key was 30 years old when the War Between the States broke out. He joined the Confederate Army as a private in the 15th Arkansas Infantry. However, his talents were quickly recognized and General Patrick Cleburne commissioned him a Second Lieutenant in the artillery. Serving in Calvert's Battery, he gained combat experience fighting in northern Mississippi, in Bragg's Kentucky campaign, and in the battle at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In that battle he commanded the battery that won fame as "Key's Battery". Promotion came quickly to the rank of captain. After the Battle of Chickamauga on September 19 and 20, 1863, Generals D. H. Hill, Patrick Cleburne, and Leonidas Polk all cited him for bravery stating that in the fiercest part of the fight he ran his battery to within 60 yards of the enemy line to increase its effectiveness. He later fought in the battles of Missionary Ridge, Ringgold Gap, Tunnel Hill, and Hood's ill-fated campaign in Tennessee. In the "hundred days" fighting between Dalton and Atlanta Georgia, he won the rank of Major, and was in the fiercest of the battles. He finished the war fighting in General Joseph Johnston's army in North Carolina.

After the war, Key continued in his career as a newspaper editor in Louisville, Kentucky and then in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1897 he moved his paper, the Southern Agriculturist and Home, to Nashville, Tennessee. He died there April 5, 1908, and was laid to rest in Spring Hill Cemetery, near Nashville. [Cause of death: a "second attack" of "paralysis". T.N.]

So, back in 2017, **Compatriot Lane Smith** visited "Tunnel Hill" north of Dalton, Georgia and took these pictures of the "Key's Battery" historical marker.





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



Next Meeting - October 5th - Zarda's BBQ - 6:30 pm

Compatriot Lynn Langmeier will be presenting "Pittsburg Landing".

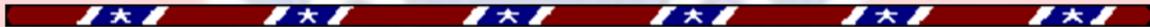
October 7th We are Invited to the **Baxter Springs** encampment, new Kansas SCV Camp

Fall Festival - October 14th 10: 00 am - 5:00 pm Shawnee Indian Mission

The Key Camp will be sharing a tent with our SUV friends from the Franklin Camp

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.*



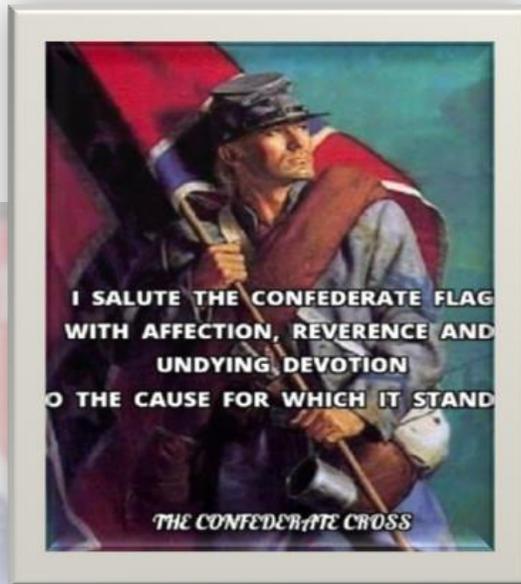
*******NEXT CAMP MEETING*******

The **Key Camp** will meet on **Thursday October 5th** 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.



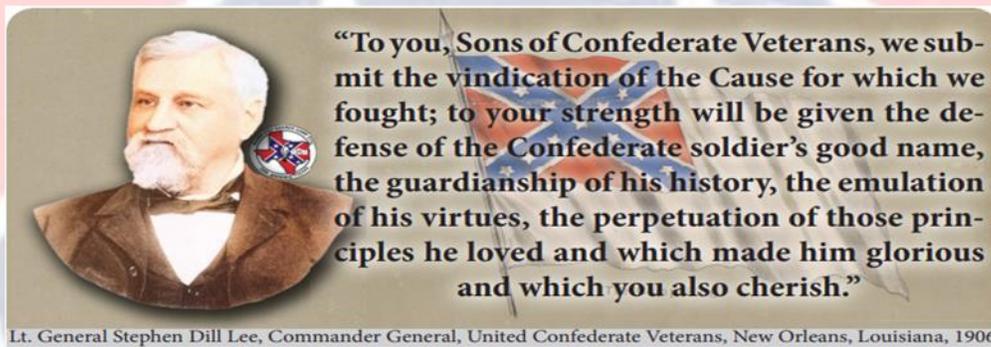


Key Camp Web Page: www.majorthomasjkeycamp1920.com

Email: Commander Walt Schley: gunnerschley@gmail.com

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

National SCV Web Page
www.scv.org



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 any Camp Newsletter, any **SCV/Camp** website and/or on any **SCV/Camp** Social Media outlet, or any other **SCV/Camp** material.