



THE TELEGRAPH KEY

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

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September 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 August 4, 2022, our 228th meeting.



Our guest speaker, **Sean Winn** from Patriot Features addressed the members present. This program tells the stories of combat veterans at the web site www.patriotfeatures.org where their videoed stories are archived for generations to come. Compatriot **Schley's** incredibly moving story is among those that appear on this site.

The Key Camp welcomed 14 members and 4 guests, including Betty Allen, Donna Brooks, Bill Stoker and Parker.

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

Meeting Recap

 **Lt Commander Peterson** opened the Camp meeting in lieu of Commander **Sewell**'s absence with the Pledge of Allegiance, Salute to the Confederate Flag, the reading of The Charge and a welcome to our guests.

 Those who would be assisting the camp at the Mine Creek Heritage Day signed up to attend. Those that signed up were **Allen, Foster, Manfredi, McPherson, Peterson,** and **Smith.**

 Compatriots **Schley** recapped the SCV National Convention activities held in Cartersville, Georgia. Two members, **Schley** and **McPherson** attended.

 The annual camp picnic will be held on Saturday September 17th 11:00 am at Shawnee Mission Park, at Shelter #2. All Key Camp members, spouses and guest are invited to attend. This will be a BBQ and each family is invited to bring a dish to share.

 Information for embroidered polo shirts was presented. The vendor screenmastersart.com will be developing a web page for future orders for the Key Camp. Ten members placed an order for shirts. Those wishing to order a shirt are encouraged to contact **Rick McP.** A 2nd resource is looking at producing a t-shirt and/or hat for our consideration.

 Numerous members were recognized for their years as members of the SCV. Two of the longest tenured members were presented certificates including **Peterson** (20 years) and **Edwards** (36 years).

 Hits to the **Key Camp Web Page** from 7/27 to 8/2 were +39. YTD total hits are 479



Mine Creek Heritage Day

At Mine Creek and along the 40-mile battle route, civilians care for the wounded, because Union doctors did not arrive until the next morning. On October 25, 1864, more than 20,000 soldiers were engaged in combat for approximately 22 hours. The Battle of Mine Creek was the most decisive defeat of Price's Army of Missouri during the entire two-month campaign and is one of the largest cavalry battles of the Civil War.

On Saturday, August 6th, members of the Major Thomas J Key Camp participated in the annual Mine Creek Battlefield Heritage Day held near Pleasanton, Kansas. Compatriot Lane Smith portrayed General RE Lee in a skit he performs with General Grant while numerous camp Compatriots answered presented history, recruited and displayed various weapons and artifacts to interested visitors.



Back Row: McPherson, Smith, Durbin, Foster, Allen

Front Row: Manfredi, Peterson, Thorman



Some of the sights of the activities from the Mine Creek Battlefield Heritage Day.

Top: Compatriot Smith portrayed Gen. RE Lee, Top Center: Compatriot Allen tries on a cool hat, Top Right: Commander Sewell brought to kids out to enjoy the activities. Bottom: Key Camp artifacts on display.

Membership Recognition



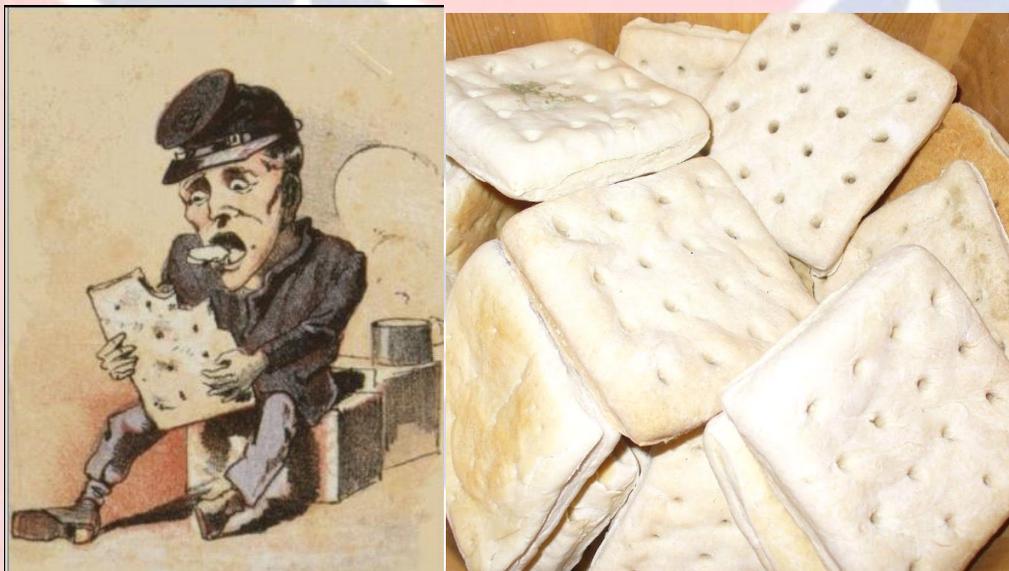
Two members were recognized for their milestone membership accomplishments at the August Meeting. Compatriot **Edwards** joined the SCV in 1986 (36 years) and Lt Commander **Peterson** joined exactly 20 years ago in August of 2002.

The Major Thomas J Key Camp also welcomed Compatriot's **Garstang** and **Langemeir**, both who are long time Key Camp members. We enjoyed their joining us and look forward to their continued participation.

Question: What if there were no hypothetical questions?

Not Your Fathers Oreo

58 years ago, "The Cracker Line" was bringing in supplies to Chattanooga. So what were the crackers referred to here? The army bread of the US army in the Civil War had many names, hardtack, crackers, and biscuits, all named for a large square piece of flavorless rock hard bread. Soldiers had a love-hate relationship with it, hating it when they had it and missing it when they didn't. Many contractors produced it for the US army, and you would think that something that was so hated by soldiers, when not starving, would fade away after the war, but at least one company is still with us, the National Biscuit Company, or as well call it today, Nabisco



It's unknown how this "hard tack cracker" made its way into Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park's museum collection, but this is a piece of food that is well over 150 years old. It was baked up to four times which made it so hard that it was thought to be able to stop a musket ball. This three-inch by three-inch cracker was a big part of the American Civil War soldier's rations. It would sometimes be stored for very long periods of time. Soldiers sang a song to the tune of Stephen Foster's song "Hard Times Come Again No More" but they sang it as "Hard Tack Hard Tack Come Again No More".

The hard tack was merely stored in wooden boxes which allowed insects to invest the food. Soldiers would soak the hard tack in coffee softening the cracker which allowed the weevil larvae to float to the top. The soldiers then would skim them off the top and continue eating and drinking. Also, the soldiers would break the cracker into fine texture; add hot water, brown sugar, and whiskey to make a pudding. Finally, some of these crackers were made by the North American Biscuit Company. Does that company name sound familiar? We call it Nabisco.

Let's Mingle

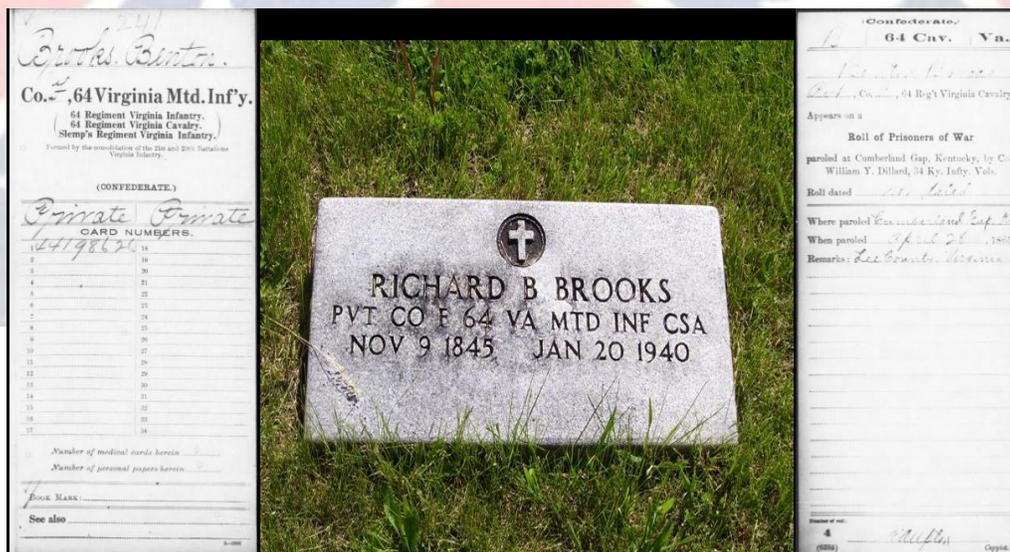
At this past month's meeting we welcomed back a couple of familiar faces. It is important that we make them feel welcome and that they feel they are an important part of our camp. The following is a "re-print" written by past Commander "Spike" Speicher, found in a newsletter written in 2004.

"When you come to a monthly meeting, look around and find someone new that you don't know. Go to that person and introduce yourself and invite them to sit with you. It is especially important to introduce and welcome a guest or guest speaker. We are a special group of people so please be sure everyone that joins us is made to feel at home. We want to grow our group and it is up to each of us to make our meetings a welcoming event".

My Confederate Ancestor

Richard Benton Brooks was a Private in Company F, 64th Virginia Mounted Infantry and appears on the Roll of Prisoners of War and paroled at Cumberland Gap, Kentucky on April 26, 1865.

Private Brooks was an ancestor of Compatriot **Larry Brooks** and was born in 1845 in Lee County, Virginia and was a great grandson of a **Revolutionary War Soldier** from Virginia. He is buried in the Soldier Cemetery in Soldier, KS NW of Holton, KS.



A Soldier's wounds

We tend to think that a soldier wounded in a Civil War battle was an immediate death sentence, but is that truly the case? Here are two examples that break that rule (Warning, these are graphic and not for the faint of heart), and stand as incredible instances of survival.

Sgt. Thomas Scott of the 25th Illinois Infantry, on September 19, in the fighting at Vineyard Field:

"Scott was in the very front where the firing was hottest and his comrades, without his knowledge, during his excitement had retreated leaving him alone as a target. The bullets flew around him like driving rain and soon he was struck in the side with a ball, felling him to the ground. His blood flowed freely from what he feared was a mortal wound, but calming himself and bracing his mind for the inevitable, he struggled to his feet to seek a place of safety. He had almost reached a ravine when the sound of what appeared to him a thousand rifle shots echoed in his ears and simultaneously he again fell pierced by a dozen Rebel bullets. With his life's blood coursing from 13 wounds, he lay helpless upon the battleground. His right arm was the only limb not disabled.

During the night, four of his comrades found him, tenderly conveyed his prostrate form in a blanket to camp, where the surgeon intimated that his case was hopeless. He however extracted some of the balls and dressed his wounds. Besides his first wound, two balls had entered his hip, another broke his collar bone, another took away his right heel, another in the leg above the knee, and others lodged in different parts of his body. His belt was also pierced on the left side, the ball coursing around his body to the right side, cutting his shirt and waist band but making no mark upon his body. The following day, the hospital was captured; hence Mr. Scott received better treatment, it being believed he had no chance

to live. Thirteen days later, he was exchanged and the want of medical treatment had about completed the work so nearly accomplished by Rebel lead. Already maggots had found a lodging place in his gaping wounds. He was carted across the mountains in an ambulance to Bridgeport some 90 miles- a four day trip- exposed to a Southern sun and the miseries he endured cannot be truthfully described in language." Scott survived the war and lived until 1902.

On the Confederate side, another soldier's ordeal was so incredible that it was published in a Confederate Medical Journal. Again, be warned, it is not for the faint of heart. A Surgeon reported Corporal Marcus Brown, 24th Alabama was wounded on September 20:

A "ball passes through abdomen; passed fecal matter from both orifices for fifteen days; finally both healed, and feces passed naturally; no peritoneal symptoms; sent to rear, in safe condition, October 31." Remarkably after a length stay in several hospitals he returned to duty in April of 1864 and survived the rest of the war.

So, we cannot always assume a gunshot wound was fatal, even when it was as great as these, and to live by the old adage to never give up.



Random Pictures from the Past



MANNING THE RECRUITING TABLE AT McLOUTH
Standing: Compatriots Jim Thornton, Jim Tucker, Mike Smith
Seated: John Weir

Photo from 2013

Recruiting is very important to the success of any organization. The best recruit is the one that has been a member but has not been participating in recent times. If you know someone that has been missing for a while, reach out to them and invite them back.



Lone Jack History Day in 2015

Several Compatriots from the Key Camp are shown here at the Lone Jack History Day even from a few years back.

Included are Compatriots **Allen**, **Smith**, **Thorman**, **Crawford**, **Tucker** and **McKenzie**.

Key Camp Picnic

The annual “Key Camp” picnic is coming up on **Saturday September 17th**. This will be a BBQ lunch where friends and family are invited to join us at **Shawnee Mission Park**.

11:00 am start time at Shelter #2

Let's have a great turnout again this year!

Mark your calander now!



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

Directions

From I-35, Exit 3 for 87th Street

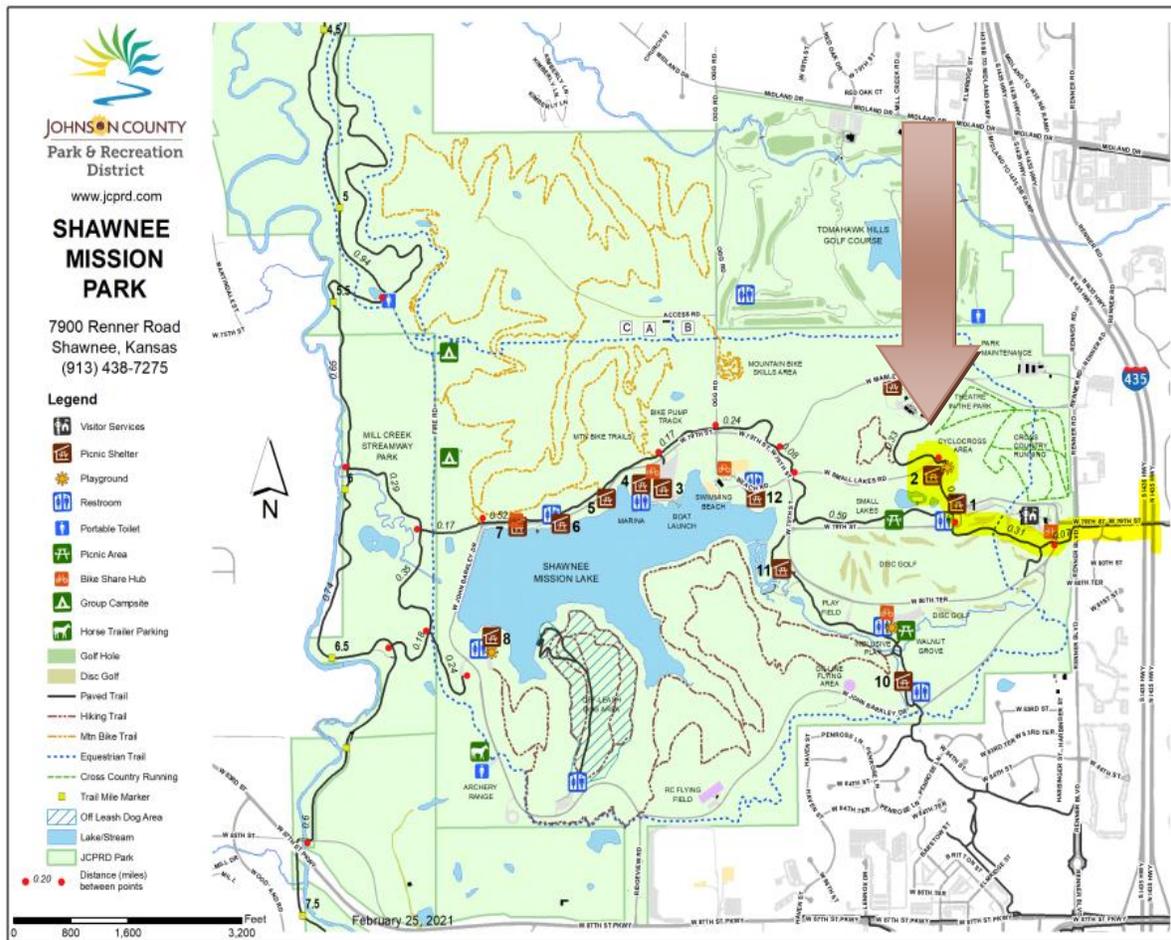
Take Renner Road to John Barkley Drive in Shawnee

Turn left onto W 87th/W 87th St Pkwy to Renner Rd

Turn left onto 79th St

Turn right onto John Barkley Dr

Shelter #2 will be on your left



I-435

You are invited

The Ladies of the Plains 2696, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Kansas Chapter has extended us an invitation to join them for their 10th Annual State Conference to be held September 10th at the Monticello Library, 2435 West 66th Street in Shawnees, KS.

The schedule is as follows:

10:00 – 10:30 lecture by Robert Jones, historian from Kennesaw, Georgia. He will lecture on South Carolina's role during the Civil War.

10:30 – 11:00 break

11:00 – 12:00 Chapter meeting

They have a registration form to fill out. They will be available at our meeting September 1st. However, they ask that you send in a registration form by August 31st. Please see Matt Sewell's email of 8/14/2022 to print off and mail in a copy before their registration deadline requested.



A Civil War general who deserves to be better known

The Civil War, by far our nation's most deadly armed conflict, used up men so fast that some officers became generals in their 20s. One was the Confederacy's Thomas Lafayette Rosser, who became a major general at 28, mirroring the same achievement — at only 25 — by his fellow West Point student and Federal foe George Armstrong Custer. Rosser compiled an impressive if checkered career as a cavalry officer and, as this interesting biography demonstrates, deserves to be better known.



Rosser had the virtues and defects of some other young Civil War officers. He was brave and dashing, a fierce fighter, but sometimes showed a lack of judgment, found fault with his superiors, and took offense at imagined slights. In this thorough, well-researched biography, Sheridan R. Barringer of Newport News takes a clear-eyed look at the Confederate cavalryman and sums up his Civil War service: “He was an able regimental commander and an adequate brigade commander, but his leadership of a division was less effective. ... Rosser lacked the larger vision required of a successful division commander.” Still, he performed well enough to be called the “Savior of the [Shenandoah] Valley” and to be asked to assume command of all Virginia troops who could be mustered (only about 500) after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox.

Rosser was born in 1836 near Rustburg in central Virginia, the second of seven children. Because of legal and financial difficulties his father moved the family to Texas in 1849. Partly through Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, Rosser, a black-haired, brown-eyed young man who topped out at 6 foot 2, received an appointment to West Point and would have graduated in the spring of 1861 had he, like several dozen other cadets, not resigned to fight for the Confederacy.

As an excellent artillery officer in the Virginia theater, Rosser drew the attention of Brig. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, who recommended him for promotion to captain and then recruited him for the cavalry. Rosser joined the mounted branch in June 1862 and performed superbly as colonel of the Virginia 5th Cavalry. Although Stuart had acted as his patron, Rosser, eager for promotion to brigadier, blamed him in letters to his wife, Elizabeth “Betty” Winston Rosser, for not receiving advancement as soon as he thought he should. After Stuart died, he was succeeded by Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton. And again, Rosser — then in command of what he called the “Laurel Brigade” — blamed Hampton for his not being promoted to major general as quickly as he wanted.

Rosser did his best fighting in the Wilderness battle of Craig’s Meeting House, when, on May 5, 1864, his brigade successfully fought two Federal cavalry divisions, a force much larger than his own. Barringer calls this battle “perhaps Rosser’s finest hour as a cavalry commander.” He also fought well — and sustained another of several wounds — at Trevilian Station, capturing a number of Confederate prisoners from Custer and even some of Custer’s clothing.

But Rosser did his worst fighting that fall at Tom’s Brook, ignoring sound advice to retreat and allowing the Federals to flank him and drive him back for 10 miles in what the Unionists later called the “Woodstock Races.” After the battle “Tex” Rosser jokingly sent to “Fanny” Custer (they remained lifelong friends despite the war) a pair of the Federal general’s drawers captured at Trevilian Station, and Custer echoed the jest by sending to his own wife Rosser’s captured coat, which many years later she donated to West Point. Four days before the Confederate surrender at Appomattox, Rosser had the bad luck to sponsor the infamous “shad bake” that drew Confederate Maj. Gens. Fitzhugh Lee and George Pickett away from their commands shortly before the Federal attack at Five Forks, a lapse for which Gen. Robert E. Lee reportedly never forgave Pickett.

After the Civil War, Rosser worked in the U.S. and Canadian West as a railroad engineer and surveyor, using his knowledge of likely railroad routes to speculate in land and thereby make considerable money — much of which he later lost through land speculation in Virginia. He was one of four former Confederate generals to serve at high rank in the U.S. Army during the Spanish-American War, when, as a U.S. brigadier, he ably commanded a training camp in Georgia. Rosser died in 1910 while postmaster of Charlottesville and is buried there. His headstone names him as a general officer for both the Confederacy and the United States, a fact that perhaps should give pause to both sides of the current debate on the meaning of Confederate monuments.



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



Reminder: Membership Dues are due September 1st
UDC Convention, Sat Sept 10th 10:00 – Noon
Camp Picnic - Shawnee Mission Park – Saturday September 17th 11:00 am
Shawnee Mission Indian Festival – October 8th 10:00 am & Oct 9th
Elections of Officers – November 3rd 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 September 1st

Guest Speaker: Mr. Stephen Sullins

Subject: Pinkerton Agents during the Civil War

The Key Camp will meet on Thursday September 1st 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.

Deo Vindice!

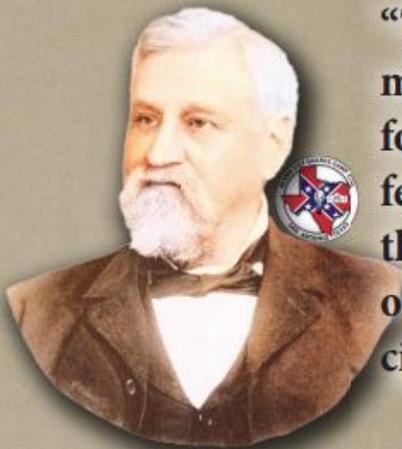


CAMP 1920

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



“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