



THE TELEGRAPH KEY

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

VOL. 17, NO. 8

SEPTEMBER 2016

Major Thomas J. Key Camp Officers

Commander

James D. Thornton

1st Lt. Commander

John Weir

2nd Lt. Commander

James L. Speicher

Adjutant

Steven Crawford

Communications Officer

Steven Crawford

Historian and Scrapbook

Dan Peterson

Web Master

John Weir

Newsletter Editor

John Kirchmeyer, Jr.

Camp Chaplain

Carl Linck

Cadet Member Coordinator

Lee Crutchfield

The Commander's Corner

Thomas J. Key Camp Commander, Jim Thornton

Big city and metropolitan area versus small town and rural area. Of course we all know and can describe the obvious differences. But recently, I had time to reflect on the other, more subtle differences that we don't tend to think of. And this is due to the activities our camp has taken part in over the past year.



In the smaller towns away from the big metropolitan areas and suburbs, we have not been shy about displaying the Battle Flag and clearly stating who we are and what we represent. We are accepted without any backlash and we do not suffer the discrimination caused by "political correctness." The Sons of Confederate Veterans are invited and welcomed by these communities to take part in their events and interact with their citizens. They reach out to us and INVITE us to take part in their community events. Year after year. The Ottawa Veterans Day parade

and salute, Mine Creek Heritage Days, Lone Jack. We are welcomed at all. And we usually display the Battle Flag and proudly discuss who we are without repercussions.

But I have sadly realized the opposite is the norm here in the Kansas City metropolitan area. With very few exceptions, our flags and symbols are not welcome. We are discouraged from displaying anything related to our organization, our heritage, or our cause. We have been kicked out of parades (Brookside) and dis-invited for future events. From what I have been told by long-term camp members, we have been refused participation in other community events in the past and no longer even try to participate. As I have written previously, my own personal experiences reflect this attitude of the larger, big city environment.

Why is this? What is the difference in the mind-set of big city residents versus small town residents? I wish I knew the answer. You really can't say it is the education since all of that is now structured and

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Next Camp Meeting: October 6, 2016

The Key Camp will meet on Thursday, October 6, at Zarda Bar B-Q on the southwest corner of 87th and Quivira in Lenexa, Kansas at 6 p.m. for dinner and conversation with the official meeting at 7 p.m.

Our featured speaker for the evening will be Mr. David Baumgardner, who will be presenting on "The Battle of Westport."

Join us for camaraderie, dinner, and education. As always, your wife or significant other is welcome.

Don't forget to bring a prospective recruit!

The Commander's Corner

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standardized by the government. Maybe it has to do with the lifestyle itself. In the smaller, rural communities, people still get together just to talk and reminisce. This keeps history alive and also the unwashed, non-politically correct version of that history. Passing down the truth from generation to generation and not relying on the government standardized, book-learned, cleansed version. In the small town, people actually talk with each other and communicate. They are not relying on "social media" and "electronic communications."

It's so refreshing to visit these small, rural towns and take part in their community events; to be accepted for who we are and to be welcomed. Our recent event in Edgerton, Missouri for their Pioneer Days really made me stop to realize the differences just discussed and to pause and think about it. For those of you who have taken part in our activities, I ask you to take a moment and reflect on how we are accepted by the smaller towns and communities.

Kind of makes me rethink where I would like to live if and when I retire in a few years.

An Urgent Message From the Commander

Compatriots of the Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920,

It is my duty to inform you of the crisis the Key Camp has recently avoided. This camp has just avoided being dissolved due to a lack of leadership and officers. We have just had a 30 day window for the nomination of men to assume the four major officer positions to lead the camp for the next two years. Within that 30 day window, I had a grand total of five (yes, five) nomination forms returned to me. Among those nominated and those that I reached out to contact on my own, no one, not a single compatriot, was willing to step up to lead our organization. I called for men to consider nominating themselves; and only one man was willing to discuss

and consider it. Even after I made it clear that I did not wish to continue as commander for personal reasons.

With no names to place on the election ballot, I did not know how to proceed. So, I reached out to those who could advise me on this situation and received very shocking words of guidance. I was advised that, should a camp have no one willing to lead and no one to fulfill the duties of the required officer positions, the camp would be dissolved and the compatriots would be free to transfer to another camp of their choice or to HQ Camp. Camp funds would be transferred to HQ or to a Confederate Fund of our choice. The Major

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An Urgent Message From the Commander

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Thomas J. Key Camp #1920 would cease to exist on January 1, 2017.

This became very distressing to me. Too many good men enjoy the camaraderie, fellowship, and activities of the camp. Our camp is by far the strongest voice in the State of Kansas for defending the honor of the Confederate Soldier and protecting his good name and it must not be silenced.

After deep prayer, contemplation, and lengthy discussions with my wife, I have decided to continue as commander if the camp will have me. But there needs to be changes made for this to be successful. Certain functions will be delegated and committees formed as the needs arise.

I need people to step up and assist in writing articles for the newsletter. I have been writing the entire newsletter (with a very few exceptions and contributions) for the last two years. I will require someone to step up and be the auction coordinator for our annual banquet and oversee the donation and collection of items for the auction. Someone will be needed to plan the Lee-Jackson Banquet and coordinate the caterer for the dinner. A volunteer would be nice to take on the planning for our summer

picnic and do the grocery shopping for it. I would like to request someone take on the job of event coordinator to organize our participation in the various parades and activities, including Mine Creek and other sites.

No one person should be expected to perform all of these tasks, plus plan, organize, and preside over monthly meetings; but I have been handling the majority of these tasks for the past two years. With a full time job with a variable schedule, I can no longer continue spending such significant time away from my family to coordinate, organize, and implement all of this for the Key Camp.

I have been in communication with John Weir and he has agreed to continue as 1st Lt. Commander with the same stipulation that changes are made and he is given assistance by the membership in arranging our programs and speakers. I will be forming a "Program Committee" with John as the committee chairman. James Speicher has agreed to continue as 2nd Lt. Commander and Steve Crawford will continue as Adjutant.

The Key Camp was within 90 days of folding and being dissolved. Let us hope the election situation is much different in two years.

Thomas J. Key Camp #1920 Officers for 2017-18

The Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920, Sons of Confederate Veterans, will move forward with the same slate of officers for the next two years, 2017-18. No election will be forthcoming as there are no candidates to decide between. Nominations were very few and those that were nominated were unable or unwilling to accept.

For 2017-18, the Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920 officers will be:

Commander: Jim Thornton

1st Lieutenant Commander: John Weir

2nd Lieutenant Commander: James Speicher

Adjutant: Steve Crawford

Key Camp Receives Invitation to Pioneer Days Festival

Edgerton, Missouri Event Celebrates History Community, Platte County

On Saturday, September 10, members of the Key Camp took part in the Pioneer Days Festival in Edgerton, Missouri. The Sons of Confederate Veterans and our camp had been invited by the community to participate in their parade and provide a display of Civil War relics and artifacts. Commander Jim Thornton, 1st Lt. Commander John Weir, 2nd Lt. Commander Jim Speicher, Compatriots Carl Linck, Jim Tucker, and Cameron Weir represented the camp during the festivities.

It was soon obvious this would be a good day and a good experience—unlike an earlier parade back in March. The first thing participants noticed was a huge Battle Flag proudly flown from a flag pole across the street from the school, which was the parade staging area. Can you believe it? A Battle Flag flying across the street from a school! It was noticed by a couple of the men that there were several Battle Flags around town; this seemed to be Confederate Territory.

During the parade, Commander Thornton, 1st Lt. Commander Weir, Compatriots Cameron Weir and Jim Tucker formed a color guard carrying the Army of Northern Virginia Battle Flag and the U.S. Flag. They were followed by Compatriot Linck driving his 1983 Johnson Presidential Rumble Seat Roadster, which was adorned with multiple Battle Flags. The color guard— and Carl Linck with his car— were very well received by the community along the parade route. The parade progressed from the school through town and ended at the city park where the festival was taking place.

Following the parade, the Key Camp provided a display of a portion of 2nd Lt. Commander Speicher’s personal Civil War museum. Several display cases of relics and artifacts along with artillery shells were available for patrons to view. Also displayed were replica firearms— both rifles and pistols— for the patrons to examine and handle. The display tent was watched over by 2nd Lt. Commander

Speicher, Commander Thornton, and Compatriots Tucker and Linck. A large number of people stopped by during the course of the day to visit with the camp representatives and ask questions.

Commander Thornton received an email from festival coordinator, Jordan Keefhaver, on Monday thanking the Key Camp for participating: “We loved having you here, and had positive feedback about your display and parade color guard! Thank you for taking part in our Pioneer Days. We hope you will consider joining us again!”

Oh yeah, one more thing about the day: it seems Commander Thornton won a raffle of some sort sponsored by the Edgerton Mason’s Lodge during the festival. Something to do with a Henry Rifle. You’ll have to ask him about it.



Volunteers Needed for Upcoming Events

Compatriots Encouraged to Step Forward and Volunteer

The Key Camp has several upcoming events on its calendar and requires some men to step forward and volunteer to serve the camp and promote the Sons of Confederate Veterans. These are annual events that help keep the camp visible in the community and promote the mission and ideals of the SCV.

First up, and coming up very quickly, is the Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival which is held on the grounds of the old Shawnee Indian Mission Historic Site located at 3403 West 53rd Street in Fairway, Kansas (right behind Bishop Miege High School).

Each year, the organizers invite heritage organizations such as the SAR, DAR, and SCV to set up information and recruiting booths. We are very fortunate in today's political climate to still be invited to this event. The festival will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on October 8-9. We will be setting up on the south side of the "North Building," located at 53rd and Mission Road and will need men to arrive at 9 a.m. to set up the pop-up canopy with our display. Men will also be need throughout both days to watch over our displays and to promote membership in the SCV.

Second on the calendar is our annual fall work day at Mine Creek Battlefield Historic Site, scheduled for Saturday, October 22, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The site director, Tami Neal, has become quite fond of the Key Camp and the support we have shown her and the battlefield site.

For our fall project, she has asked us to apply a weather-proofing and water-resistant treatment to the benches used outside the visitor center for programs and presentations. Tami will provide the water sealer for us. If anyone has a compressed air or power sprayer that can be used with the water sealer, that will make the project go much faster. Tami has also asked for us to install brackets (which she will provide) in the garage for hanging and storing her tools. These work days at Mine Creek keep us in the good graces of the Kansas Historic Society and the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation. We do have a very good time during these work days. Please join in the fun and help preserve the only Civil War Battlefield in Kansas.

Next up for the Key Camp will be the annual Ottawa Veterans Day Parade and Salute to be held in Ottawa, Kansas on Saturday, November 5. We have been taking part in this event for several years and are always welcomed by the community. The Key

Camp, along with the 3rd Missouri Light Artillery, provide a float (cannon on the trailer) and color guard in uniform for the parade through town. Following the parade, the artillery unit sets up in Forrest Park to provide firing demonstrations, which sometimes includes a small mock battle against a Union force. The parade organizers provide a free lunch for those taking part. We typically gather around 9:30 to 10 a.m. to line up for the parade. This is always a great event and cannot be recommended enough. It's so much fun!

These are awesome opportunities to get out and have fun with rest of your compatriots of the Key Camp outside of our monthly meeting.

Sure, we enjoy our monthly get-togethers for dinner and fellowship, but these community events serve as a chance to promote and grow our organization. So come on out and join in. What else would you be doing on these weekends? Raking leaves?





New Key Camp Member

The Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920 would like to welcome our newest compatriot, Mr. Walter H. Schley, Jr., CWO-5 USMC (Ret).

Please join us in welcoming Walter to the camp!

Wanted: Male Descendants of Confederate Soldiers

The Key Camp is currently recruiting new members to honor and affectionately memorialize our Southern ancestors and their brave deeds. If you know of someone who may be interested in defending his ancestor's good name and heritage, talk to him about the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Key Camp Compatriots Garner Recognition *Awards and Medals Presented at Monthly Meeting*

At the September monthly meeting of the Major Thomas J. Key Camp, Commander Jim Thornton presented several awards and medals that were conferred upon members of the Key Camp during the 2016 National Reunion held in Richardson, Texas. These awards require submission of a nomination form to the Sons of Confederate Veterans International Headquarters for approval of the award or medal.

- The SCV Distinguished Service Medal is presented to SCV members for outstanding service in a position of responsibility. Nominees must have served the SCV in an outstanding manner for an extended period of time in a position of responsibility. This year's medal was awarded to 1st Lt. Commander John Weir.
- The SCV Meritorious Service Medal is presented for outstanding performance of duty to the SCV. This year's medal was awarded to Compatriot Scott Lalumondier.
- The SCV Commendation Medal is presented to members for meritorious service or achievement at the Camp, Brigade, or Division level. Key Camp Compatriot Lane Smith was awarded and presented with this year's medal.
- The SCV Superior Achievement Award is given to individuals in appreciation for superior services or achievement to the SCV. Nominees must have performed

exceptional service to the SCV for an extended period of time or on a specific assignment of great importance. This year's recipients were Compatriots Walt McKenzie, Mike Smith, Paul Allen, John Coney, Jack Poynter, and John Kirchmeyer.

- Along with the National Awards, the Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920 bestows its own Superior Camp Member Award in recognition for exceptional support of the local camp, and most of all, the defense of the good name of the Confederate Veteran. For 2016, the Key Camp recognizes Compatriots Lane Smith, Paul Allen, and Jack Poynter.
- Although not a National Reunion Award, the SCV Ladies Appreciation Medal was created to show appreciation to those ladies who have greatly assisted the SCV in carrying out its missions, such as organizing camps, recruiting new members, active support of camp functions, etc. During an earlier Key Camp meeting, the camp recognized Kristin Amaro and Betsey Owens for their outstanding support of the Key Camp and its activities with this year's medal.

Please offer your congratulations to these compatriots and ladies and extend your gratitude to them for everything they do to keep the Key Camp visible in our community and to keep our camp running smoothly.



The Telegraph Key

The Telegraph Key is a newsletter published for the Major Thomas Key Camp #1920 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). The SCV is a non-profit organization with a patriotic, historical, and genealogical orientation and is not affiliated with any other organization. Opinions in this newsletter reflect the views of the writers 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.

Email comments, article ideas, and suggestions to John Kirchmeyer at kirch16@hotmail.com.

Key Camp Website Resources

Key Camp: www.MajorKey1920ksscvc.org
 SCV National: www.SCV.org

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, October 4 • 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. • Lone Jack, MO

» *Lone Jack Civil War Day*

Lone Jack Battlefield
 301 S. Bynum Road
 Lone Jack, MO 64070

Saturday, October 8-9 • 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. • Mission, KS

» *Shawnee Indian Mission Festival*

Shawnee Indian Mission Historic Site
 3403 W 53rd St.
 Fairway, KS 66205

Saturday, October 22 • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. • Pleasanton, KS

» *Fall Mine Creek Battlefield Work Day*

Mine Creek Battlefield State Historic Site
 20485 K 52
 Pleasanton, KS 66048

Saturday, November 5 • 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. • Ottawa, KS

» *Ottawa Veterans Day Parade*

People's Bank Parking Lot
 5th St. and Walnut
 Ottawa, KS 66067

The Ottawa Veterans Day parade will begin at 10:45 a.m. and end at noon on Main Street in downtown Ottawa.

THE TELEGRAPH KEY

Major Thomas J. Key Camp #1920

Sons of Confederate Veterans

7325 Oakview Street

Shawnee, Kansas 66216

REMINDER!

Our next meeting will be October 6 at 7 p.m.

Bring a friend or prospective member.