

Deo adjuvanti non timindin (With God's help, we need not fear)

THE DIXON BLUE LIGHT NEWS



Lt. George E. Dixon Camp #1962
Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV)

www.scvcamp1962.org

Editor: Johnny Kicklighter Email: Johnnywkick@gmail.com



DECEMBER 2024



PROGRAM INFO FOR NEXT MTG, 19 DECEMBER

PRESENTATION: Christmas Dinner & Music Program

PRESENTER: Several members

REFRESHMENTS: The Camp



CAMP MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and are, except as announced, held on the third Thursday evening of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the:

Shiloh Assembly of God Church
4035 Lebanon Avenue
Shiloh, Illinois 62221

We try to have an informative program with a speaker or film of interest at all meetings. Anyone with a Confederate ancestor or just having an interest in Civil War history is invited to attend.

Questions? Call John McKee, 618-491-9472

CAMP MISSION

The camp accepts its covenanted responsibility to maintain and preserve the Christian principles held by the Southern people that led them to their decision to defend the right of constitutional self-government. We strive to educate ourselves first and then the public to a fuller and more complete understanding of the true history of the period of the War Between the States. We seek to preserve the memory and honor of the noble Confederate soldiers, sailors, public servants, and loyal citizens.

CAMP MEMBERSHIP

Is available to all male (12 years or older) descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate military. Direct or collateral kinship to a qualifying veteran or civil servant must be documented for full membership. We will help with genealogical assistance for documentation. For those who have not yet proven their kinship or just have an active interest in what we are doing, we offer camp membership through our auxiliary, The Knights and Ladies of the Golden Circle.

WE CARE! PLEASE CALL JOHN OR MIKE AND KEEP US NEWS-INFORMED ... if you or a family member is ill, has an emergency, health or family issue, a family death, or needs assistance. Adjutant John McKee, 618-491-9472 Chaplain Mike Biekert, 618-972-8190

Lest We Forget

KEVIN DUFFY

January 6, 1940-October 15, 2010

PAT DORAN

May 31, 1939-September 7, 2011

BRETT WARNER

September 29, 1960-March 21, 2012

JAMES BENEDICT

July 18, 1947-October 27, 2012

RON DORAN

July 14, 1940-March 24, 2015

BILL BEASLEY

December 4, 1942-April 17, 2015

C. F. MARLEY

April 9, 1921-February 17, 2016

JOE LOPER

June 6, 1941-March 18, 2016

VERNON DeSELMS

October 9, 1941-August 14, 201



HARRIS YOUNG

November 9, 1924-September 29, 2017

RONNIE OTTINGER

August 3, 1951-November 8, 2018

SAM BOOTH

December 28, 1942-February 24, 2019

BOB HARDY

July 18, 1928-June 15, 2019

GREG KRIEG

October 2, 1946-September 11, 2020

WELLINGTON "HAM" LEMMER

February 17, 1947-February 17, 2021

MARCUS PATTON "PAT" BOOTH

November 1, 1941-February 5, 2022

JOHN BOSTON MASSEY

August 6, 1947-December 1, 2022

JIM CONN

October 4, 1953-March 17, 2023

GORDON HAYES
September 7, 1938-July 4, 2023

FROM THE COMMANDER

ATTENTION TO ORDERS: Greetings to all loyal and faithful members of the Lt. George E. Dixon SCV camp. The officers of your camp would like to wish each member and their families a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. We are looking forward to meeting with you at our monthly muster this December. We have a very special program this year. We will set up tables, a few decorations and a slide show on the big screen of Christmas scenery. A very brief meeting to recognize our guests held, then socialize and enjoy each other's company over a Christmas dinner. The camp is taking care of the Ham and Turkey. We will have two large crock pots of Cheesy Grits and Hot Apple Cider just to name a few of the items. John and Jane McKee will have Christmas decorations for the tables, and we will hang some flags. Plans are to move the pews to the sides and set up tables and chairs. We'll ask members to announce their Ancestors name and regiment and ask Brother Biekert to offer a Christmas blessing for our Ancestors.



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CAMP DIXON MEETING MINUTES

The members and friends of the Lt. George E. Dixon Camp # 1962, S.C.V., conducted their monthly muster at 6:38 p.m. on 21 November 2024, at the Shiloh Assembly of God Church, Shiloh IL; this being the 11th Muster of the year.

CALL TO ORDER: Adj McKee.

INVOCATION: Chaplain Mike Biekert.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND SALUTE TO CONFEDERATE FLAG: Adj McKee.

ROLL CALL: 13



GROUP PHOTO (L-R)

Back row: Randall Cheatham, JC Gideon, Mike Biekert, John Stanton, Dale Rice, Phil Tate

Front row: Jane & John McKee, friend, Janice Beasley, R. E. Lee, Johnny Kicklighter, Barb & Jim Luma

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Presented in the October 2024 Edition of The Blue Light News. Motion by Jim Lumma, 2nd:by Mike Biekert Passed

TREASURER'S REPORT: The general account balance is \$5,319.01. The charitable account balance is \$220.99. Motion: Phil Tate; 2nd: Jim Lumma Passed

REPORTS:

- A. Standing Committees: None.
- B. Special Committees: None.

COMMUNICATIONS: (messages from National, other camps, other organizations)

- A. Death of Bob Mohrman, member of Hecker Camp #443 SUCVW, with funeral.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Camp Christmas Dinner on December 19. List of those providing side dishes is available.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A. Gale Red was in a nursing home, but has returned home
- B. Those interested in forming an honor guard for funerals should contact Steve Wilson.
- C. Arranging a trip to see the Missouri Civil War Museum will also be considered.

GROUP PHOTO.

REFRESHMENTS: Janice Beasley.

PROGRAM: Adjutant McKee on Confederate Whitworth Sharpshooters.

NEXT MEETING: 19 December 2024

BENEDICTION: Chaplain Mike Biekert.



The Battle of Chehaw Station



View of the University of Alabama's Quad in 1859

The Battle of Chehaw Station is a forgotten conflict associated with the July 1864 cavalry raid through Alabama led by Union general Lovell Harrison Rousseau. Ordered by Gen. William T. Sherman, the raid aimed to disrupt Confederate operations in the area during the Atlanta Campaign. This skirmish holds a unique place in Alabama's history primarily due to the heavy involvement of conscripted teenagers and University of Alabama cadets, for many of whom it was their first combat experience.

Chehaw Station, a stop on the Montgomery and West Point Railroad, connected Alabama's capital to western Georgia—and, eventually, Atlanta. Near this station, Rousseau's rugged cavalymen encountered the largest Confederate force assembled to stop them from severing a vital section of the critical rail line. Rousseau's men had met only minimal resistance as they carved a destructive path through eastern Alabama, reaching Loachapoka by sundown on July 17. Early the next morning, Rousseau divided his forces into four detachments, assigning each to destroy sections of the Montgomery and West Point Railroad in the area before advancing to join the Federal army near Atlanta. Key targets included Confederate facilities in nearby Auburn, home to the East Alabama Male College, the precursor of Auburn University.

Confederate authorities in Montgomery scrambled to meet the crisis as best they could, hastily cobbling together a meager force of perhaps five hundred troops, most of whom were the untested teenagers of Lockhart's Battalion of the Sixty-Second Alabama Infantry Regiment. To supplement their numbers, Gov. Thomas Hill Watts called upon a small contingent of University of Alabama cadets (Alabama operated as a military school at the time), who happened to be staying in or passing through Montgomery at the time. Gen. Bryan M. Thomas was entrusted with the overall command of the little makeshift army and soon had it rattling along the tracks aboard a train to meet the invaders east of town.



Gov. Thomas Hill Watts

The Confederate force approached Chehaw Station on the morning of Monday, July 18, 1864. About a mile past the station, they encountered a Federal force under Maj. Absalom Baird. The Yankees fired the first shot, striking a railcar near one of the troops. The boys were hastily deployed, and the fight ensued. The opposing lines clashed across a half mile stretch of ground, with the Confederates anchored on a small ridge in a large field containing a gin house and the Federals positioned at the edge of a clearing a few hundred yards away. The two sides slogged away at each other intermittently for several hours as General Thomas directed the train to shuttle back and forth to the station, ringing its bell to create the illusion of reinforcements.



Chehaw Station

Already convinced he faced a force at least as large as his own, Major Baird sent a courier up the line to request reinforcements. When additional Union cavalry arrived, they stymied a tentative Confederate advance in the early afternoon. A Union detachment flanked the Confederate line under the cover of the railroad embankment, overwhelming the outnumbered and disorganized Southern troops. Thomas's thin line soon broke. Despite their success, Baird, believing he would need even more men to advance farther down the rail line, decided to pull back.

In the aftermath of the battle, both sides claimed victory. The Union forces had clearly gotten the better of the fighting, but they had left Confederates in control of the battlefield as they departed to join up

with Sherman's army. Union casualties numbered about fifteen, while the Confederate losses ranged between 40 and 50. Among the Confederate casualties were two University of Alabama cadets, the first to be wounded in action during the war.

The Battle of Chehaw Station remains a significant yet lesser-known chapter in Alabama's Civil War history, illustrating the challenges and sacrifices faced by those defending the Confederacy. (Courtesy Blue-Gray org)



How the Civil War Changed Christmas in the United States



Christmas-eve - The Journal of the Civil War Era

As the Civil War's first Christmas neared, a pair of young lovers, Nathaniel Dawson and Elodie Todd, a Confederate soldier and his eventual bride, wrote to one another with increasing melancholy. They were separated by hundreds of miles, and their communication was often interrupted by delays in the mail and the desperation of the Civil War.

"I wish I could be with you at Christmas, the festal season, where age is rejuvenated and lives again in the merry carols of youth," Dawson wrote to Todd (sister of Mary Todd Lincoln) on December 22, 1861.

Dawson and Todd's lives changed dramatically during the war, as the Confederacy crumbled, and their personal lives stretched to their limits. But they were not alone in wishing they could celebrate Christmas together. As the fractured United States fought, the holiday took on new meaning. By the end of the war in 1865, Christmas had gone from a relatively unimportant holiday to the opposite—a day rooted in an idealized vision of home. The way Americans observed the holiday changed too, setting the stage for the more modern Christmas holiday we know today.

Christmas Had Not Been an Official Holiday

Before the Civil War, Christmas was not an official holiday in the United States. Nor was it celebrated uniformly across the country. In early New England, Christmas was looked down upon by Puritans and Calvinists, who felt the day should be observed for strict fasts and rituals, if it was observed at all. During the 17th century, Massachusetts imposed a fine on colonists who celebrated the holiday, and after it became a state, its businesses and schools did not observe the holiday at all. Elsewhere, Christmas was celebrated in a variety of ways, most depending on the country of origin of the immigrants who celebrated it. But by the mid-19th century, the holiday's importance—and distance from religious tradition—was already starting to grow. Songs and carols like "Jingle Bells" (1857) and poems like "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (1823) set the stage for a fun, secular holiday that revolved around gift-giving and celebration with food and drink.



The Confederate Christmas Card Collection

Christmas in the South

In the antebellum South, plantation owners used the holiday to show off their paternalism toward the people they enslaved, write historians Shauna Bigham and Robert E. May. During lengthy Christmas celebrations, they gave enslaved people passes to marry, provided food and alcohol, and gave gifts. Though enslaved people managed to create some of their own Christmas traditions, many of which incorporated traditions from Africa.

But the Civil War disrupted not just the relations between plantation owners and the people they enslaved, but those within families and communities. As both sides shifted their resources to war, the ability to give gifts and celebrate was dramatically curtailed. People cast their decision to have more modest Christmas celebrations as a patriotic one, and children got in on the act, too. Instead of giving and receiving store-bought gifts, they made

more humble gifts like popcorn balls or crude homemade toys. And they learned to temper their expectations of Santa. One Confederate family's children were told "not to expect a visit from St. Nick because the Yankees had shot him," writes historian James Alan Marten, "while other parents offered more sensitive explanations. As a Yankee, Santa would be held up by Confederate pickets or perhaps Union blockading vessels had interrupted his journey."

Meanwhile, those children's mothers, aunts, and sisters experienced Christmas as an agonizing reminder of the danger faced by men who had gone to war. Civil War-era diaries and letters document how many women felt anxiety, grief and depression around Christmas. In 1861, Margaret Cahill wrote to her husband, Thomas, a Union officer, that she felt so "nervous and lonely" that she could not write to him on Christmas. "Will you say? Why did you not write to me on Christmas [sic] Day" she wrote. "Well to tell you the truth I was not able." "Never before had so sad a Christmas dawned upon us," wrote Sallie A. Brook, a Confederate woman from Richmond, of Christmas 1861.

Christmas on the Battlefield

On the battlefield, men on both sides tried to celebrate Christmas by giving gifts, eating and drinking, and taking time off. In his memoir, James A. Wright, a sergeant in the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment, recalls eating beef soup and greeting his fellow soldiers on Christmas in camp. "The men had been allowed as much liberty as consistent with discipline and were 'circulating around' among their acquaintances in other regiments," he recalled. "I was frequently invited to 'smile,'" or take a drink. In 1863, a Confederate soldier from North Carolina wrote to his mother asking for a bottle of brandy and some sugar so he could make eggnog for his fellow soldiers.



Confederate Christmas - by Mort Kunstler

Popular media did its best to increase the morale of both soldiers and their families at home around Christmas. Harper's Weekly, the most popular periodical at the time, published a variety of Christmas stories and illustrations during the war. The most famous were drawn by illustrator Thomas Nast, who portrayed not just sad wives and husbands but happy Christmas Day traditions. He is credited with solidifying how the nation imagined Santa Claus with illustrations of a jolly, bearded St. Nick who handed out good cheer to soldiers and families alike.

Though individual traditions still varied, the upheaval of the Civil War made the holiday

seem more and more important to separated families. "The Christmas season [reminded] mid-19th century Americans of the importance of home and its associations, of invented traditions," writes historian David Anderson.

When the war ended, the magazines and newspapers that had underlined the importance of the holiday kept promoting it, and reunited families, devastated by the losses of the war, kept cherishing it. In 1870, in the aftermath of the war, Congress passed the first federal holiday law and made Christmas an official holiday. Four years of war had changed the holiday from a loose celebration to an essential one.

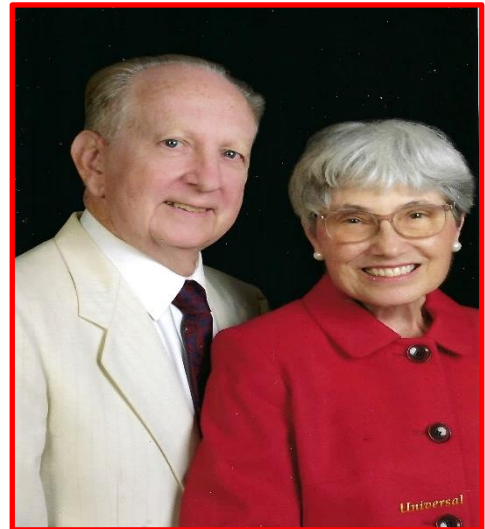
(Courtesy of the History Channel.)

Wedding Anniversaries



Congratulations
On your 42nd Wedding Anniversary
Compatriot Mike & Mary Biekert
(of Belleville IL)
December 17

Only the best of wishes for you on this special day. Hope you will have many happier & healthy years together!



Congratulations
On your 26th Wedding Anniversary
Adjutant Gale & Lady Sharon Red
(of O'Fallon IL)
December 19

Best wishes to a special couple on your Wedding Anniversary. Hope you have many more blessed times.



Congratulations
On your 56th Wedding Anniversary
Compatriot Dwight and Nona Moore
(of The Villages FL)
December 28

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

1 New Years Day
12 Lee-Jackson in Virginia
19 Robert E. Lee Day
16 **CAMP MEETING**
20 Inauguration Day
27 Holocaust Day

FEBRUARY

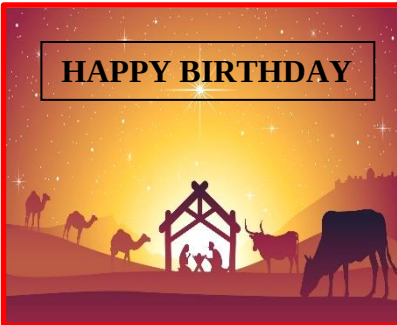
2 Ground Hog Day
2 Super Bowl Sunday
5 Ash Wednesday
14 Valentine's Day
17 Washington's Birthday
20 **CAMP MEETING**

MARCH

9 Daylight Savings Time
15 Ides of March
17 St. Patrick's Day
18 Good Friday
20 **CAMP MEETING**
29 Partial Solar Eclipse



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11 David Haake (Cheyenne, WY)
26 Jack Sandford (Brighton, IL)
26 Arthur Tulak (Ewa Beach, HI)
28 Drew Wilson (LeClaire, IA)



CAMP DIXON STAFF

Commander
Advisor to the Commander
Adjutant
Cardmaster
Chaplain
Program Chairman
Newsletter Editor
Sgt of Arms
Asst Sgt of Arms

John Douglas Stanton
Johnny Kicklighter
John McKee
Barbara Lumma
Walter Michael Biekert
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Johnny Kicklighter
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