

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 2025



PROGRAM INFO FOR NEXT MTG, 18 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 Bickert, 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

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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 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 a large crock pot of Cheesy Grits and Hot Apple Cider just to name a few of the items. Plans are to move the pews to the sides and set up tables and chairs. We'll ask Brother Bickert to offer a Christmas blessing for our Ancestors.





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 20 November 2025, at the Shiloh Assembly of God Church, Shiloh IL; this being the 11th Muster of the year.

CALL TO ORDER: Cmdr John Stanton.

INVOCATION: Chaplain Mike Biekert.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND SALUTE TO CONFEDERATE FLAG: Cmdr John Stanton

ROLL CALL: 11



GROUP PHOTO (L-R)

Back row: Johnny Kicklighter, Steve Wilson, Mary Biekert, John Stanton, Mike Biekert, Phil Tate

Front row: Eric Funkhouser, Dale Rice, Janice Beasley, R. E. Lee, Ron Bright

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: N/A

TREASURER'S REPORT: None

COMMUNICATIONS: Johnny Kicklighter discussed the details of a phone call had with Gale Red.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Camp Christmas Dinner on December 18. Mary Biekert will email everyone about food.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Johnny Kicklighter motioned for elections at the December meeting. Nominations are Mike Biekert for Adjutant and Phil Tate for Commander. Steve Wilson suggested we should solicit volunteers for the other positions. Johnny Kicklighter will send out an email to camp members.
- B. Johnny Kicklighter motioned we purchase a \$100 gift card for food and \$100 at Walmart for a family in need during this holiday season. Steve Wilson seconded.
- C. Johnny Kicklighter motioned we spend \$150 on Wreaths Across America. Three will be given to Steve Wilson, and three to John Stanton.

REFRESHMENTS: Janice Beasley.

PROGRAM: Steve Wilson gave a presentation on Colt Revolvers.

NEXT MEETING: 18 December 2025

BENEDICTION: Chaplain Mike Biekert.



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 an 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

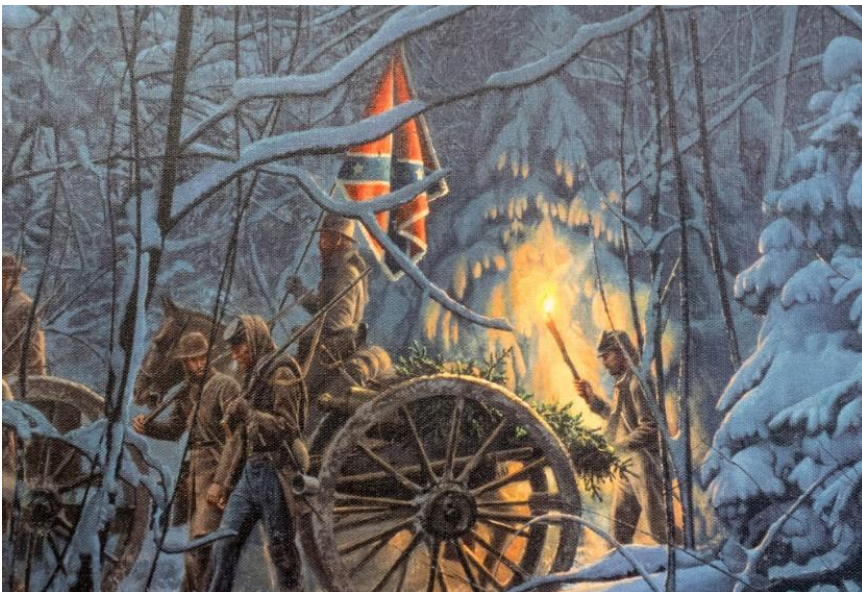
gave enslaved people passes to marry, provided food and alcohol, and gave gifts. Though enslaved people managed to create some of their own Christmas traditions, many of which incorporated traditions from Africa.

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 increasingly 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.)

Spreading Christmas Cheer



It has been the custom of the camp to assist a family by giving a monetary contribution to help them through the holiday season. This year the Camp approved the purchase of a \$100 gift card for food and \$100 at Walmart. The cards were given to a Mary Williams of Edgemont Bible Church. She is a recent attendee and is a single mother with one child. The gesture moved Ms. Williams to tears.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
2 Corinthians 9:7

A Civil War Veteran's Happy Ending in West Virginia

Donald Jones—The Uniformed Historian



Joseph Conley's gravesite in Charleston, West Virginia

Joseph Conley was born in Pulaski County, Virginia, on December 8, 1842, he enlisted in the 50th Virginia Infantry, Company I, at Wytheville, Virginia, on June 25, 1861. Corporal Conley soon fell ill but returned to duty in time to be wounded at the Battle of Lewisburg, fought on May 23, 1862, in Greenbrier County, WV. Also present at Lewisburg was George S. Patton, Sr., serving as an officer in the Confederate Army. His more famous grandson, Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., would later distinguish himself in World War II.

Conley and the 50th Virginia continued to serve in numerous Civil War engagements. The regiment was eventually commanded by Alexander Spotswood Vandeventer, who, at age 22, became one of the youngest colonels ever commissioned in the CSA. Conley survived the war, escaping capture when the regiment dispersed following Union Gen. George Custer's defeat of Gen. Jubal Early's Confederates at Waynesboro, Virginia, on March 2, 1865.

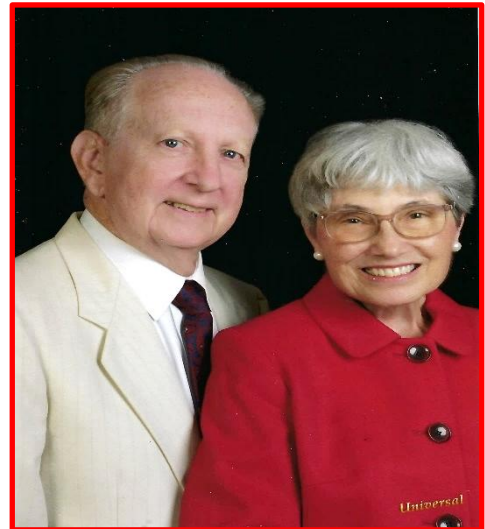
After the war, Conley returned home and operated a ferry on the Kanawha River for several years. In 1871, he married Mattie, and the couple eventually settled in Charleston, West Virginia. Financial hardship struck, however, forcing the Conleys to mortgage their home. Even with Mattie running a boarding house, the couple struggled to make their payments. On the brink of foreclosure and bankruptcy, Joseph faced the prospect of being sent to a soldier's home in Richmond, while Mattie was to be placed in a local ladies' home—until their many friends stepped in. Old friends and new took the situation in hand. In two days, a fund was well under way, not a charity fund, the sponsors let it be known—but in recognition of services the Conleys had rendered to the community in their younger days." Even the local radio manager put out a message over the airwaves, and long story short, the Conleys kept their home. Joseph Conley died at 3:30 a.m. on May 5, 1931. Mattie outlived him by 13 years, dying in 1944. Both are buried together at historic Spring Hill Cemetery and Arboretum in Charleston, West Virginia.

Wedding Anniversaries



Congratulations
On your 43rd 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 27th 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 57^h 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
15 CAMP MEETING
19 Robert E. Lee Day
20 Inauguration Day
27 Conversion of Paul the Apostle

FEBRUARY

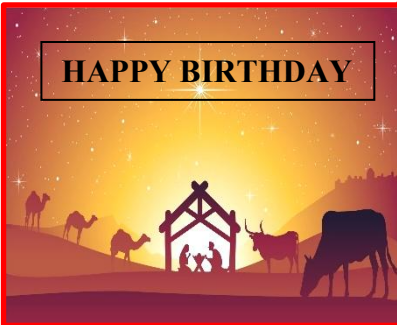
2 Ground Hog Day
6 Ronald Reagan Day
13 Friday the 13th
14 Valentine's Day
18 Ash Wednesday
19 CAMP MEETING

MARCH

8 Daylight Savings Time
15 Ides of March
17 St. Patrick's Day
18 Good Friday
19 CAMP MEETING
20 Vernal Equinox



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
John McKee
Johnny Kicklighter
Stephen Dean Wilson
Eric Jan Funkhouser

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