



# GEN. JOE'S DISPATCH



Volume 13, Issue 8

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### Coming Events

December 12, 2017 - **Regular Meeting of Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler Camp 863** - Masonic Lodge, Conyers, Georgia

January 20, 2018 - **Lee Birthday Celebration** - Milledgeville and **30th Annual Lee-Jackson Dinner** - Masonic Lodge, Conyers.

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## Christmas During the War Between the States

Article from [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org)



"Christmas Eve," an illustration by Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly, January 3, 1863

It can be difficult to relate to the men and women of the Civil War era. Despite the extraordinarily different circumstances in which they found themselves, however, we can connect with our forebears in traditions such as the celebration of Christmas. By the mid-19th century, most of today's familiar Christmas trappings — Christmas carols, gift giving and tree decoration — were already in place. Charles Dickens had published "A Christmas Carol" in 1843 and indeed, the Civil War saw the first introductions to the modern image of a jolly and portly Santa Claus through the drawings of Thomas Nast, a German-speaking immigrant.

Civil War soldiers in camp and their families at home drew comfort from the same

sorts of traditions that characterize Christmas today. Alfred Bellard of the 5th New Jersey noted, "In order to make it look much like Christmas as possible, a small tree was stuck up in front of our tent, decked off with hard tack and pork, in lieu of cakes and oranges, etc." John Haley, of the 17th Maine, wrote in his diary on Christmas Eve that, "It is rumored that there are sundry boxes and mysterious parcels over at Stoneman's Station directed to us. We retire to sleep with feelings akin to those of children expecting Santa Claus."

In one amusing anecdote, a Confederate prisoner relates how the realities of war intruded on his Christmas celebrations: "A friend had sent me in a package a bottle of old brandy. On Christmas

morning I quietly called several comrades up to my bunk to taste the precious fluid of...DISAPPOINTMENT! The bottle had been opened outside, the brandy taken and replaced with water...and sent in. I hope the Yankee who played that practical joke lived to repent it and was shot before the war ended."

For many, the holiday was a reminder of the profound melancholy that had settled over the entire nation. Southern parents warned their children that Santa might not make it through the blockade, and soldiers in bleak winter quarters were reminded, more acutely than ever, of the domestic bliss they had left behind. Robert Gould Shaw, who would later earn glory as the commander of the 54th Massachusetts, recorded in his diary, "It is Christmas morning and I hope a happy and merry one for you all, though it looks so stormy for our poor country, one can hardly be in merry humor." On the Confederate home front, Sallie Brock Putnam of Richmond echoed Shaw's sentiment: "Never before had so sad a Christmas dawned upon us... We had neither the heart nor inclination to make the week merry with joyousness when such a sad calamity hovered over us." For the people of

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# Our Commanders' Comments



By: Commander Mark Camp



Southern Ladies, and fellow Compatriots,

Where has the year gone? It will soon be Christmas, and then the New Year.

At our last meeting, we had the Honor of having as our Guest Speaker, Mr. Wes Freeman, THE Last Survivor of the Men who carved Stone Mountain. He spoke briefly about his service during the Vietnam War, then on to being hired to work on the mountain. A very good program to say the least. And this month we will have the Honor to have Mrs. Donna Faulkner Barren, the daughter of Roy

Faulkner, the Man who carved Stone Mountain. She will have her books for sale for \$20.00 each, detailing her Fathers work on the Mountain.

During the business portion of the last meeting, Grady Dukes spoke on the subject of the menu for our Annual Lee-Jackson Dinner. By now everyone should have gotten a email from Camp Adjutant Steve Camp with the choices we have. Please send your responses in as soon as you can, so that there is time to place the order for the food.

Some other things discussed during the meeting was nominations for Compatriot of the Year and Person of the Year. A nomination for each was made during the meeting. Nominations will be closed during our next meeting.

On Friday the 17<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Cmdr. Jimmy Chappell and Quartermaster Tommy Cook met at the Middlebrooks Cemetery and discovered some trees down. They did an awesome job on cleaning up what

they could and I want to Thank them for their hard work.

I also want to Thank all who came out to help clean-up the Middlebrooks Cemetery on November 18<sup>th</sup>. We met at 9:00 am. Thanks to Compatriot Jerry New for bringing the Chainsaw and to Compatriot Brent Boling for finishing cutting the grass. Chaplain Larry Cornwell and myself helped clear the debris. While there, we met Mr. Jimmy Middlebrooks, direct descendant of those buried there. He and his son also helped with cleanup.

During our next meeting, have your dinner choices from the menu and be thinking of any other nominations for Compatriot/ Person of the year. Nominations will be closed and we will call for a vote.

Until then,

For the Southern cause,

Mark Camp, Commander



# Christmas During the War Between the States

Article from [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org) (Continued from Page 1)

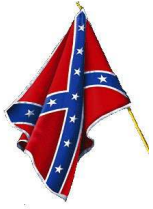


An illustration of Christmas on the home front by Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly, 1863

Fredericksburg, Virginia, which had been battered only a matter of days before Christmas, or Savannah, Georgia, which General Sherman had presented to President Lincoln as a gift, the holiday season brought the war to their very doorsteps.

Christmas during the Civil War served both as an escape from and a reminder of the awful conflict rending the country in two. Soldiers looked forward to a day of rest and relative relaxation, but had their moods tempered by the thought of separation from their loved ones. At home, families did their best to celebrate the holiday, but wondered when the vacant chair would again be filled.





# ***Your Invitation To;***



## **Major General Joseph Wheeler Camp 863**

### **30th Annual Lee-Jackson Dinner**

**January 20, 2018**

**Philologia Masonic Lodge #178**

**1005 Milstead Avenue**

**Conyers, Georgia 30013**

**7:00 pm**

**Catered by; The Masters Table**

Dress: Sunday Best or Period WBTS Military or Civilian

Wives, family and guest are encouraged.

Reservations must be received by Jan 12. No ticket sales at the door

**Guest Speaker: Georgia Division Commander Scott  
Gilbert**

**The cost is \$20.00 per person. Please send checks to;**

**Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler Camp 863**

**P.O. Box 82718**

**Conyers, GA. 30013**

For reservations please contact Commander Mark Camp at 770-540-7636 or by e-mail at JMCDLGC@aol.com or Adjutant Steve Camp at 770-480-3879 or by e-mail at confederatesteve1861@yahoo.com.

**MAJ. GEN. JOSEPH WHEELER CAMP #863,  
CONYERS, GA.**

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[www.campjoewheeler.org](http://www.campjoewheeler.org)

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## Lee Birthday Celebration Returns to Old Capitol City.

*By: Timothy F. Pilgrim*



Please mark your calendars for Saturday, Jan. 20, 2018. We will be back in Milledgeville and the

Old Capitol Camp #688 is working hard to make it a great day.

We will be having our parade which will start at 10:45, lineup is no later than 10:30. The parade will head to the First Baptist Church of Milledgeville at 330 S. Liberty St. The Church is blocks away from the historic landmarks in town and they have been gracious enough to allow us the use of their fellowship hall. It seats 150, I think we will have overflow and that will be great if it happens.

Our speaker is Sam Hood. You probably have heard of Sam, he is a collateral descendant of Gen. John Bell Hood.

Hope to see you there.

Timothy F. Pilgrim  
Georgia Division Adjutant