Our membership is made up of people from all over the world who share a respect for James Longstreet and wish to see his reputation restored. The remaining portion of his Piedmont Hotel is our headquarters and includes a museum room, a Civil War and local history book library and a Great Room which hosts lectures, school visits, book groups, community meetings etc.

History lines the walls of the hotel including rare photographs and documents and an antique copy of the Longstreet portrait by H.C. Christy. We offer presentations to Civil War and community groups, host a free annual community picnic and help maintain the General’s grave.

Our premier annual event is a weekend-long seminar that takes place on a battlefield central to Longstreet’s Civil War years. Each seminar features tours, lectures and presentations by renowned historians and an annual dinner and our silent auction.

Funding comes from membership dues, donations and merchandise sales. All members receive a membership card and the exclusive Longstreet Society News which is published six times a year. Members also receive discounts to the seminar.

Please consider becoming a member or volunteer. Volunteers help with special events, give hotel tours (training available) and assist with hotel maintenance. Go to www.longstreet.org to learn more, to join or to contribute.

We are a 501-C3 organization and 100% volunteer run.
On June 13, 1876 the Piedmont Hotel opened for business with the General and his family actively involved in managing the property. The General owned the hotel until he died in 1904.

The Piedmont was Longstreet’s political base throughout his career during which time he served as Ambassador to Turkey, Gainesville Postmaster, US Commissioner of Railroads and US Marshal for the Northern District of Georgia. Hotel guests included editor/author Henry Grady, known as the Voice of the New South and Joel Chandler Harris, author of the Uncle Remus Tales. Gen. Joseph Johnston stayed at the hotel too, as did Union General Daniel Sickles. Future US President Woodrow Wilson and his wife were frequent guests and their daughter Jesse was born here.

The General was noted for his love of children and the story is told that in his later years he ran up three flights of stairs to take an apple to a young guest. He often walked down to the train station to drum up business for his hotel and dining room. Even after his death, locals claimed that when the night train stopped at the station, a figure resembling General Longstreet was seen standing in the locomotive’s steam but when the steam cleared, no one was there.

The Piedmont Hotel was famous in its day for serving varied and delicious chicken dishes. An Executive Director of the Georgia Poultry Federation recently made the claim that the Southern batter fried chicken we love today was first served at the hotel.

In 1918 the family decided to raze the now rundown building. A last minute decision saved the ground floor of one wing as a home for some family members. In 1994 the newly formed Longstreet Society purchased the home and restored it. The building serves as our headquarters and houses a museum room, library, the Wilson Room and a community room.

James Longstreet was born January 8, 1821, in South Carolina and grew up near Augusta, Georgia. In 1842 Longstreet graduated from West Point and served in the Mexican War and on the frontier. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Longstreet left the U.S. Army and joined the Confederacy.

Longstreet was appointed Brigadier General in July of 1861 and was praised for the manner in which he inspired his men. He was promoted to Major General under Joseph E. Johnston and to Lt. General by Robert E. Lee who wrote that “Longstreet was the staff in my right hand.” Longstreet fought in the Army of Northern Virginia’s major battles including Chickamauga, Fredericksburg, The Wilderness, Manassas and Williamsburg. He also commanded General George Pickett’s unsuccessful charge across the fields at Gettysburg. Late in the war Longstreet was wounded and returned to the army in October 1864 and was assigned to protect Richmond. He was at Lee’s side at Appomattox when Grant suggested that it was time for Lee to surrender. "Not yet" Longstreet advised Lee. On April 9, 1865, however, Lee was forced to surrender the Army of Northern Virginia.

After the war, Longstreet’s advice to reunify the country, accept reconstruction, his acceptance of political appointments, his command of Black troops during a political uprising in New Orleans and criticism of Lee’s leadership at Gettysburg made him the target of the “Lost Cause” movement which sought to explain the South’s loss of the war. He spent the rest of his life trying to restore his reputation.

Longstreet published his memoirs, From Manassas to Appomattox, in December 1895. In September, 1897 he married 34-year-old Helen Dortch who was well-educated and accomplished in her own right. She defended Longstreet’s name until she died in 1962. James Longstreet died on January 2, 1904, just days short of his 83rd birthday. He is buried in Alta Vista Cemetery in Gainesville, Georgia on the military crest of a hill and surrounded by family.