



Kansas City, Mo., 29, 1931

To NATIVE SONS of KANSAS CITY, MO:

The undersigned members of a special committee, herewith issue a call for a meeting to be held at the MUEHLEBACH HOTEL, Wednesday at 8:30 P.M., JANUARY 20, 1932, for the purpose of organizing A NATIVE SONS' SOCIETY, of men from 40 to 75 years of age.

Kindly sign and give address with telephone number, we are

SPECIAL COMMITTEE:		
D. Ralston Spalding	3900 Baltimore Ave.	WE8048
Dr. Emmitt J. Craig	44 W. Concord Ave.,	HI 0117
Beverly C. Platt	Fairfax Bldg.	HA 1268
Henry E. Long,	201 W. 5th St. 206 Land Bank Bldg.	Lo 2939
James B. Lapsley	2640 Forest Ave. Gr.	4512
Barron J. Fradenburg	42 W. 58th St. Terr.	HI 0995

Part of the invitation announcing a meeting to form the Native Sons of Kansas City to be held at the Muehlebach Hotel on January 20th. Native Sons collection, The State Historical Society of Missouri.

Kansas Citians, along with the rest of the country, were mired in the Great Depression. The city was locked in the grip of a corrupt political machine that dominated all branches of the government. Ironically, two of the key players were not even from Kansas City. T. J. Pendergast, who ruled from an office near 20th and Main streets, hailed from St. Joseph, Missouri, and H. F. McElroy, the wayward city manager who



A Native Sons' marker at 14th Street and Grand Boulevard, between the Sprint Center and The Kansas City Star's Press Pavilion, designates a historic site in the midst of urban development. Personal photo.

controlled City Hall with an iron hand, came from Dunlap, Iowa. Pendergast and crime family henchmen soiled the social fabric of the community with wide-open gambling, prostitution and all-hours boozing.

documented the city's history, built memorials, preserved threatened landmarks and recognized historic sites. These early efforts quickly became traditions.

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As the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City, we continue these traditions with our efforts to preserve and to create awareness of our unique and rich heritage. Funding for our efforts comes from a variety of sources, including membership dues. Noteworthy is the revenue generated from our annual Outstanding Kansas Citian event, celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2013.

Descendants of Kansas City's Founders Launch Historic Preservation

The Kansas City Star and the Kansas City Journal-Post headlines in 1932 announced a meeting to establish a new organization to preserve the history of the city -- the Native Sons of Kansas City.

On January 15th the Star wrote "the lore of Kansas City's pioneer families is to be preserved." Six days later the Journal-Post reported that "about 100 native sons of pioneers [gathered] at the Hotel Muehlebach. Much of the session was devoted to reminiscences on the part of the members, many of whom had been born on what now are important sites in the downtown district."

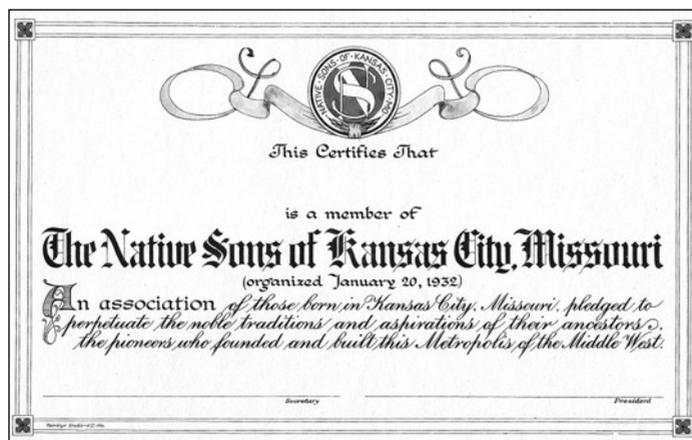
What a time it was for Kansas City in 1932.



Postcard image of City Hall at Fourth and Main Streets. Personal postcard collection.

What a time it was for Kansas City in 1932. A year earlier Jackson County voters had approved a \$40 million bond program to finance replacement of the old City Hall near the City Market with a new building at 11th and Oak Streets. The bonds also underwrote a new Jackson County Courthouse, a new Municipal Auditorium and paid for the expansion of other public amenities.

With the loss of political control and the demise of many of the town's significant architectural icons, the native pioneers must have felt an acute need to collect and preserve the history of Kansas City. And collect and preserve they did. Those second and third generation pioneers archived and documented the city's history, built memorials, preserved threatened landmarks and recognized historic sites. These early efforts quickly became traditions.



Membership certificate with a pledge to "perpetuate the noble traditions and aspirations of their ancestors, the pioneers, who founded and built this Metropolis of the Middle West." Native Sons collection, The State Historical Society of Missouri.

Voices from Kansas City's Past

J. Daniel Creasy

The 80th anniversary of the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City (NSDKC) provides us with a time to reflect on our organization and its founders. Think for a moment. In 1932 some of the members were either born before the city's incorporation in 1850 or were the children or grandchildren of the pioneers of Kansas City. Their primary motivation for starting the organization was to preserve a disappearing past.

In the 1930s one Native Sons dinner meeting a year was devoted to members reminiscing about 19th century Kansas City. The following vignettes of four of those leaders typify the personal stories of those early days.

W. O. Thomas (1857-1944)

His family moved to Jackson County from Kentucky in 1839. Their farm encompassed the area from present day 35th Street and Euclid Avenue to 55th Street and Lydia Avenue, west to the state line. In 1876, he was one of the early graduates of Central High School, then located downtown. Professionally he served as a judge on the Jackson County Circuit Court (1909-1921) and as a trust officer with City National Bank (1922-1944). In 1933 he became president of Native Sons while residing at 5733 Grand Avenue.

At a dinner meeting, Thomas recalled that in October, 1864, Frank Wornall, his boyhood friend, and he viewed part of the Battle of Westport from the top of the Wornall House, 62nd Street and Wornall Road. They also hid in the bushes to watch Confederate soldiers pass the house on the way to the battle site at what has become Jacob L. Loose Park.

James Anderson (1883-1967)

He served as Native Sons historian for twenty-nine years. His mother was the daughter of the The Reverend Thomas Johnson, founder of the Shawnee Indian Mission, now in Fairway. His cousin was Frank Wornall, the son of The Reverend Johnson's sister. In 1917, when Anderson built his home at 446 West 62nd Street, he took the fireplace mantel that had been at his grandfather's farmhouse at 35th Street and Agnes Avenue for his new home.

"Father came from Montgomery Ala about 1870. Mother was daughter of Rev Thomas Johnson who established the Shawnee Indian Manual Labor School southwest of Kansas City for the United States and Shawnee Mission for the Methodist Church . . ."

James Anderson
Membership Application, 1934

Anderson, an accountant with the Kansas City Southern Railway Company, assembled 17 notebooks from early Kansas City events. They are a prominent part of the Native Sons collection. Included are letters of Civil War Mayor Robert T. Van Horn, photos of James McGee's large home at 11th Street and Baltimore Avenue and a portrait of Mme. Bridget Saucier-Chouteau, whose husband participated in the first French fur trading company along the Missouri River. The James and Frances Anderson Urban Education Fellowship has been established at the University of Missouri - Kansas City to recognize their preservation efforts.



Native Sons of Kansas City meeting in the Council Room at old City Hall, March 1, 1937. Source: Native Sons collection

Woodson McCoy (1855-1934)

His father, John Calvin McCoy, moved to Westport in 1832 and established a trading post at present day Westport Road and Pennsylvania Avenue serving the needs of Shawnee Indians being relocated to the territory. The building now houses Kelly's Westport Inn.

McCoy grew up on a farm at present day Linwood Boulevard and Prospect Avenue. His neighbors to the south were The Reverend Thomas Johnson and family. He helped the Native Sons save the Union Cemetery in the 1930s. He is buried there along with his father and grandfather, John Calvin and Isaac McCoy.

In 1880, McCoy moved to Johnson County, Kansas, on a farmstead that he called Woodsonia. Woodson Road and the Woodsonia subdivision in Shawnee are namesakes from that homestead.

George Fuller Green (1887-1970)

His father, an Irish immigrant, arrived in Kansas City in 1882 and planned many of the residential subdivisions that, by the 1890s, became part of the "suburbs" in what is now the downtown area. His maternal grandfather was an implement dealer who introduced a steel plow that became popular with farmers throughout the United States.

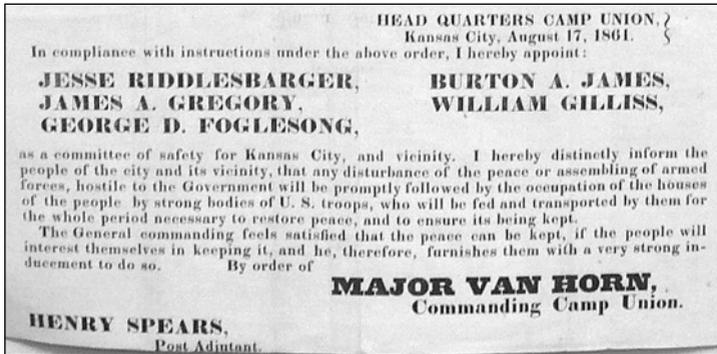
Green was an architect and real estate developer in the early 20th century. In addition, he was the Republican nominee for Kansas City mayor in 1907. His interest in history was heightened by meeting "Buffalo Bill" Cody in 1896, and came to fruition when he, James Anderson, Flavel Robertson and other Native Sons joined community leaders in the reconstruction of Fort Osage in the 1940s. After being president of the Native Sons in 1946 he negotiated the move of the organization's archives from the Municipal Auditorium to City Hall where they remained until the 1960s.

The above individuals dedicated themselves to the preservation of Kansas City's history. They have passed the baton of responsibility to our generation. Now we must remember and preserve our past as we progress through the 21st century.

Were your ancestors early members of the Native Sons? If so, please share your stories with the Archive Committee. If you wish to do your own research on early members, you may visit the Native Sons collection at The State Historical Society of Missouri, Research Center - Kansas City by appointment.

The Archives: An Extraordinary Collection

J. Daniel Creasy



Military proclamation from Enlisted Missouri Militia Major [R. T.] Van Horn, who was elected mayor of Kansas City in 1861 and 1864. Native Sons collection, The State Historical Society of Missouri.

The original by-laws, adopted in 1938, stated the first mission of the Native Sons was “to acquire, possess, preserve, and maintain archives ... of Kansas City.” Since that time our primary objective has been to fulfill the assigned task.

There has been a long search for a depository to house our collection. It began by securing a room at the old Convention Center near present day Barney Allis Plaza. In 1937 they were moved to the “new” Municipal Auditorium. A decade later they had been transferred to City Hall and then in 1963 relocated to the Missouri Valley Room in the public library. Finally in 1990, after a five-year search, they were moved to their present day location on the University of Missouri - Kansas City campus as part of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection. In 2010 that organization merged into The State Historical Society of Missouri, Research Center-Kansas City.

The Native Sons collection is part of a larger preservation effort maintained by The State Historical Society of Missouri at that location. The Research Center’s staff has divided the Native Sons collection into three categories — Papers, Records, and Collections.

Papers are the personal writings and artifacts from an individual. The following are examples:

- Robert T. Van Horn’s (1824-1916) mayoral letters and declarations during the Civil War including military orders issued to secure Union control of the city,
- Artist George Caleb Bingham’s (1811-1879) collection of miscellaneous items including his early will and a portrait of George Lykins, an early mayor and friend,

- Clyde H. Porter’s (1889-1958) research notes on pioneer French families: Rivard, Charbonneau, Chouteau and Laliberte,
- Clarence Kelley’s (1911-1997) papers donated by his wife, Shirley, outlining his work as police chief in Kansas City, Missouri, and director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Records are private and public organizational gifts. The following are examples:

- Union Cemetery records including minutes, financial and legal documents, list of plot owners and photos,
- Northeast Industrial District development proposals, clippings and photos concerning the East Bottoms,
- Big Blue Baptist Church documents compiled by The Reverend John Bristol Wornall (1822-1892),
- Kiwanis Downtown Kansas City minutes and photos of meetings since 1918.

Collections are mementos, usually scrapbooks, assembled by individuals of events in Kansas City. The following are examples:

- James Anderson (1884-1967) original organizational invitations, news clippings, and photos assembled in seventeen scrapbooks,
- George Herbert Edwards (1860-1941) scrapbook of his mayoral years (1916-1918) in Kansas City,
- Robert Miller (founder of the Liberty Tribune) scrapbook containing autobiographical letters of post Civil War disenfranchised citizens in Clay County, Missouri,
- Portrait collection (1925-1926) individual Kansas City business leaders of the 1910s and 20s.

The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City continues the early effort to preserve all of these historical pieces, and continues to help those individuals or groups that wish to find a place to preserve Kansas City’s past for posterity.

The Native Sons collection is used frequently and has been cited in books written about the Greater Kansas City region.

From Native Sons to Native Sons and Daughters

In 2006 the membership voted to approve changing the organization's name to "The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City." At that time, women were given full membership in the organization and at that same event, Eileen S. Sullivan



The logo from a 1932 membership certificate.

was installed as the first female president. Sullivan was also the first second generation president. Throughout the years other changes have been made regarding membership, including requirements relating to age and place of birth.

[Editor’s Note] For historical clarification in this publication, we have referred to the era of Native Sons of Kansas City, as Native Sons. Subjects related to the era of Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City have been referenced by that name or simply, NSDKC.

Protecting and Preserving Kansas City's Past



Three Pioneers statue at Pioneer Park at Westport Road and Broadway Street, a cooperative venture between the NSDKC and the Westport Historical Society. Personal photo.

The strength of the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City (NSDKC) rests not upon its longevity, but on its commitment to action. It has been a busy 80 years with projects beginning almost from the inception of the organization and continuing to this day. Within six years of its formation, the Native Sons began work with the city to preserve and enhance Union Cemetery. This commitment continued for 25 years and today that work continues through the Union Cemetery Community Service Committee.

By 1940 one of the largest projects ever undertaken by the organization began with the restoration of Fort Osage. Although many other public and private groups provided resources to complete this project, the Native Sons was the catalyst. One of the strengths of the organization, is to initiate plans and work with public and private agencies to further the preservation of our history.

Through these efforts the organization has been a supporter of such projects as the expansion of the National World War One Museum at Liberty Memorial, the Alexander Majors Historic House and Museum, the Town of Kansas bridge and trail markers, and the creation of Pioneer Park at Broadway Street and Westport Road.

Kansas City will observe the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Westport in 2014. It will be fitting for the NSDKC to be a part of that program, just as it was in 1939 at the

75th anniversary of the battle. That year the Native Sons arranged both the anniversary observance and the dedication of the shelter house at Jacob L. Loose Park as a tribute to the generosity of Mrs. Jacob L. Loose.

Among the efforts that will forever preserve the heritage of Kansas City is our work to recognize the Town of Kansas. The Town Site Preservation and the Historical Markers committees worked together to place a historical marker near the site.

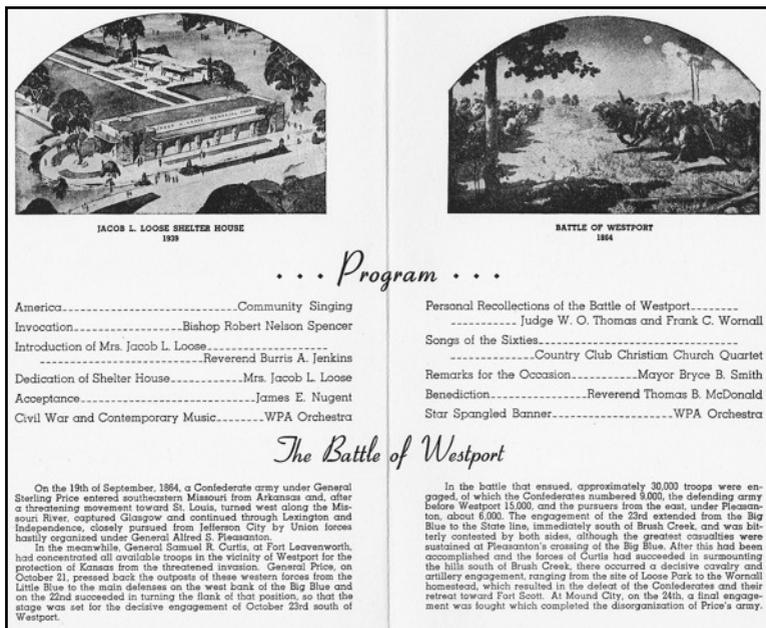
The organization has been a vocal supporter of other endeavors to commemorate the Town of Kansas. A pedestrian bridge overlooking much of the Town of Kansas was constructed by the Port Authority of Kansas City.

During the past year, a series of nine interpretive signs describing the early history of Kansas City were placed along the banks of the Missouri River. The signage, a joint effort of the Port Authority of Kansas City, Missouri, the City of Kansas City, Missouri, the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association and the National Park Service is accessible by the pedestrian bridge.

The NSDKC provided encouragement to these efforts and many of its members serve on the boards or are active members of the groups that made the bridge and interpretive signs possible.

In 2012, the organization placed a marker at the Liberty Arsenal, Liberty, Missouri, during a ceremony commemorating Missouri's first Civil War engagement against the United States government. As part of the Outstanding Kansas Citizen event a marker was presented to the American Jazz Museum. The NSDKC also participated in the rededication of the Daniel Morgan Boone Park, marking a long time effort by our members to preserve and protect that location.

75th anniversary of the battle. That year the Native Sons arranged



The inside page of the program distributed for the 1939 observance of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Westport and the dedication of the shelter at the Jacob L. Loose Park.

Native Sons collection, The State Historical Society of Missouri.



80th Anniversary of the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City

Members of the Archives Committee, which published this brochure, are shown with David Boutros (center). They are (left to right) Frank McMillian, chair, Joe H. Vaughan, Jr., Robert P. Sigman and J. Daniel Creasy.

A special thanks to the staff of The State Historical Society of Missouri, Research Center - Kansas City: David Boutros, Assistant Director and NSDKC member, and Nancy Bayless Piepenbring, Manuscript Specialist. Our appreciation also to Anemarie Mura, for her essay, "A History of the Native Sons of Kansas City, 1932 - 1991."