

HUMANITIES STATEMENT: GARY L. HICKS

1. Humanities Information:

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Mr. Hicks served 45 years in the engineering profession in the Kansas City area as a civil / structural engineer, retiring in 2013 from Black & Veatch's Federal Services Division as a 'Project Cost Estimator'. Mr. Hicks grew up in Kansas City, Kansas and has been a resident of Overland Park, Kansas since 1972. Mr. and Mrs. Hicks enjoy history, nature and traveling to State and National Parks, historic sites, and now pursue archeology interests in the State of Kansas. With a goal of visiting all 50 U.S. State Capitols, they are now at 38 after 24 + years of marriage. As a sports enthusiast, Mr. Hicks has competed nationally in softball, winning (2) national titles and a World Championship. He is actively engaged in historic preservation, advocacy, and education, and is a member of the following historic associations:

- President - New Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation. It is the mission of the Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation (JCKHF), in partnership with the public and private sectors within our community, to establish and implement a substantial, sustainable and perpetual funding program to support historical and cultural preservation, education, and advocacy within Johnson County, Kansas, thus preserving the valuable heritage and history of our community, and to preserve and guard our County's heritage for present and future generations.
- President - Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association (KCAHTA). For over 20 years, this association has identified and marked the routing of the historic frontier trails in the Kansas City region, particularly Johnson County, Kansas. KCAHTA's 350-plus 'brown' signs are easily recognizable, and located at hard points (section lines) identifying historic trail crossings with modern road or thoroughfares.
- Past-President (2010) of The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City (www.nsdkc.org). Since 1932, the (NSDKC) has been in the forefront of historic advocacy, education, and preservation in the greater Kansas City metropolitan region, including sites such as Ft. Osage, Union Cemetery, and the 1856 Alexander Majors House.

NSDKC is currently in the process of constructing a monument to the history and heritage of our greater Kansas City region. The monument will be erected in Ilus Davis Park, 10th & Oak Street, KCMO. The conceptual design of this monument were developed by Mr. Hicks.

- Member – Life member Overland Park Historical Society
- Member - 'Trails Head' Chapter, OCTA (Oregon-California Trails Association)
- Member – 'Missouri River Outfitters' Chapter (Santa Fe Trail Association)
- Member – 'River Bend' Chapter (Lewis & Clark National Heritage Trails Foundation)

- Former Member - Corps of Discovery Re-enactment Expedition, St. Charles , Missouri (in Sept., 2012, re-enacted expedition's MO River journey from Kaw Point to Ft. Osage)
- Member- *Blackjack Battlefield Historic Site (Baldwin, Kansas)*
- Honorary Member - *Simpson County Kentucky Historic Society.....(located at Franklin, Kentucky, birthplace of Alexander Majors, the 'Great Freighter of the West').*
- Member – Kansas Historical Society and Kansas Anthropological Association (KAA).

2. Humanities Perspective:

In 2012, Mr. Hicks created a first person characterization of 'Alexander Jackson Majors' (1814-1900), known as the 'The Great Freighter of the West' and "Christian Freighter of the Frontier". Mr. Hicks has presented first-person talks to many organizations, including the following:

- *National Santa Fe Trail Association* rendezvous on Sept. 21, 2012 in Larned, KS.
- Dedication of narrative panels at new 'RED BRIDGE' (KCMO), on the historic Blue River Crossing of the Independence Route of the Santa Fe Trail; July 31, 2012
- Simpson County Historic Society; City of Franklin, Ky. 'Pioneer Day' ; October 6, 2012 (commemorating Majors date of birth of 4Oct1814)
- Simpson County Historic Society; City of Franklin, Ky. 'Pioneer Day' ; October 4, 2013 (Dedication of historic marker commemorating ALEXANDER MAJORS)
- SAR - *Alexander Majors Chapter, KCMO*
- Gateway Chapter of the Oregon-California Trail Association (OCTA), at the *Pony Express Museum, in St. Joseph, MO.* ; April 2013
- '*Home on the Range Cabin*' October 4, 2014 rededication (Smith Center, KS);
- *Western Auto Retirees Club; KCMO*
- *Christ-The-King Church; KCMO*
- *P.E.O. Kansas Chapter H.E., Johnson County, KS*
- *DAR – Lafayette -Lexington, Missouri Chapter*
- *SAR– Delaware Crossing Chapter; Monticello Chapter; Alexander Major Chapter*
- *Shawnee Chapter of Kansas Anthropological Association (Topeka, KS)*
- *Sons of the Confederacy – "Key Camp" Chapter*
- *Westport Historical Society*
- *Battle of Westport Museum (Swope Park, KCMO)*
- *Monticello Chapter of the SAR*
- *P.E.O. Missouri Chapter H.N.,*
- *Overland Park Historical Society*
- *Dole Institute (Lawrence, Kansas) -----Monday, March 12th, 2018 !*
- *And, many other groups in greater KC region!*

Mr. Hicks' portrayal as MAJORS are typically 40-45 minutes in length. Time for questions at the end of the presentation are encouraged. Following is a synopsis of the life of Alexander Majors:

Alexander Majors' contributions were profound to the advancement of Christian civilization during the western expansion movement of our nation in the middle 1800's. Throughout most of the 19th century Majors was influenced by, and greatly influenced, the growth and development of a new nation expanding westward, emerging forth with the promise of freedom and opportunity. Some perhaps remember Alexander Majors as the co-founder of the famed Pony Express, yet Majors' name is readily associated as a partner in the great freighting firm of Russell Majors & Waddell (RM&W). His life in the 1800s touched many aspects of historic proportion in our Nation's trek westward of which we benefit today!

Mr. Hicks offers (2) distinct programs focused around the life of MAJORS as follows:

Program No. 1 (Alexander Majors and the Course of the Nation): – This program presents the life and times of Majors and the numerous contributions he made to the western expansion movement of our Nation in the 1800's. As Majors, Mr. Hicks reflects the life of Major's and the challenging times in which he lived. Topics typically include faith; family; business ventures such as homesteading; freighting; stage lines; Pony Express, silver mining, personal acquaintances, and writing his memoirs. The look back on Majors' life reveals the prominent historic figures he influenced, some profound life experiences, including today's memorials to the life of Alexander Jackson Majors.....

As Majors life evolved in its 86 years, he witnessed a maturing nation through most of the 19th century to the turn of the 20th century. Mr. Hicks' presentation is intended to offer insight into the character and nature of 'Alexander Majors', introducing his remarkable life and contributions to our nation, revealing a perspective of his legacy which is an example to emulate. History reveals Majors as a man of destiny, who from his humble beginnings, placed a distinctive mark on the 19th century, which remains today on the industries of transportation, commerce, trade, communications, manufacturing, and livestock.

Program No. 2 (Political intrigue and the Pony Express): – With this program, Mr. Hicks' draws from his research of Alexander Majors, his partners, and the political times preceding the Civil War, to provide an intriguing perspective on the creation and operation of the famed Pony Express, which ran from April 3, 1860 to October 30, 1861.

Presenting as 'Alexander Majors', Mr. Hicks explores the nation's desire in the 1850's for a faster overland mail service to California on the west coast. Mr. Hicks offers his personal perspective (thru Majors) how pre-Civil War politics may have influenced the creation of the PONY. It is proposed the primary force behind the creation of the PONY was a subversive tactic intended to benefit a political cause, and not to benefit the business interests of Majors' firm [the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company (COC)], which was the parent company of the Pony Express, following the reorganization of the firm RUSSELL, MAJORS & WADDELL in January, 1860.

This presentation does not diminish the challenges and courage of the riders and operators of the Pony Express which proved that a fast, overland mail service was possible between Saint Joseph, MO to Sacramento/San Francisco, CA. The PONY made its run typically in 10-days between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento-San Francisco before the telegraph connected the east coast to the west coast in October of 1860. The contribution of the Pony Express to our nation's history is profound, and should be further appreciated by this program.