



NATIVE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

May 2010

Dedicated to the recognition, preservation, and restoration of Greater Kansas City's unique heritage

Alexander Majors House Project Changes Hands, Faces Challenges

Following the death of long-time Alexander Majors Historic Foundation trustee and President Terry Chapman in January, the future of the Alexander Majors House and Museum remains uncertain. Located at 83rd and State line, in Kansas City, Missouri, the house is one of the oldest in the metro area, dating to pre-Civil War. It was built in 1855-56



Alexander Majors House at 83rd and State Line, Kansas City, Missouri

by Alexander Majors, the freighter on the Santa Fe Trail in the 1850's and cofounder of the Pony Express. He purportedly was the first millionaire in Kansas City, and became one of the most influential men in the western expansion of the 1850's-1890's, and in Kansas City.

The President of the Foundation is now Joe Huber, CEO of Huber Construction, and member of the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City. We are working with Joe and other Foundation directors to find the means to effectively support the renewal of long-term operations of the site. The house is on the registry of National Historic Places, *continued on page 3*

McDonnell Announced as 2010 Outstanding Kansas Citian

The Outstanding Kansas Citian Award candidate for 2010 is Thomas A. "Tom" McDonnell. Tom, a member of the Native Sons and Daughters, is chief executive officer of DST Systems, Inc. He has contributed significantly to the Kansas City area with his civic, philanthropic, and economic work. He is known for his work with the historical preservation of downtown Kansas City. The awards ceremony is scheduled for the fall.



National Archives Tour

Fifty toured the National Archives, Saturday, February 27.

Guides took us behind the scenes to receiving areas and file stacks containing 50,000 cubic feet of original records from over 90 Federal agencies in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. They described the archiving process used at the National Archives.

The National Archives' current exhibit, *Mapping Missouri: Maps from the Collection of the Missouri State Archives*, features examples of 19th-century land surveys and maps and identifies historically significant places.

We lunched at the Over-There Café in the Liberty Memorial World War I Museum. Past-President Dan Sturdevant led us in singing the WWI classic, "Over-There". Dave Baumgartner shared a delightful tale of how ingenuity authorized Kansas City to build the first bridge across the Missouri River. President Gary Hicks facilitated a brief program. Helga Pennington received enthusiastic applause for applying for membership. We welcomed guests, and complimented our Program Committee for planning an inspiring cure for cabin fever.

Louise Hicks, Program Chair

President's Letter

Remember to connect with the Native Sons and Daughters' web site at www.nsdkc.org and to open your NSDKC email announcements regularly. We appreciate those who receive our newsletter online rather than on paper. Doing so saves money for our organization which can be used for projects.

Our web site displays current programming, announcements, and other vital information regarding our work and activities. Technology helps to keep our membership informed and better prepared to participate in our various activities and programs, and serves the needs of the organization.

We appreciate the 75% of our members who have provided email addresses. We look forward to having more of them actually opening our NSDKC email on a regular basis.

Our organization finds strength in the active participation of its members. Your membership is NSDKC's most valuable resource, and also benefits our community.

We pledge to continue moving our organization forward by keeping members informed and developing programs. You can contribute to this goal by reading email from NSDKC, visiting our web site and staying informed about Native Sons and Daughters programs.

Ashley Marker Dedication

A marker dedication on May 21st will commemorate the efforts of James G. Ashley, Jr., and Pamela C. Ashley to preserve the 1870's railroad right-of-way in Brookside as a walking, jogging, and bicycling trail for Kansas Citians.

The marker will be located at 55th and Brookside Blvd in Kansas City, Missouri. The dedication will be held at 3:00 p.m., Friday, May 21st, at the southeast corner of 55th Street and Brookside Boulevard., on the west side of the Aixois restaurant.

Please join us, the Ashley family, local dignitaries, and members of the KCATA Right-of-Way Association for this dedication.

Members in the News

One of our members, Arthur H. Stoup, is having a courtroom named after him at the UMKC School of Law on Friday, April 30. Art is a past President of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association and as well as a past president of The Missouri Bar.

The April issue of *The Best Times* featured an article about Native Sons and Daughters board member Ross Marshall. The article focused on his interest in historic preservation and involvement as the President of the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS). Ross stated the trails sum up the saga of the westward movement of the American people. For 20 years, the PNTS has aimed to connect Americans to their diverse history, landscapes, and cultures.

New Members

Phil Lainhart
Helga Pennington
Bryan Perott
Jim Stilley

Obituaries

Robert Benson
Harry Mueller

Meet and Greet at the Nelson-Atkins

Thirty members and guests toured the Nelson-Atkins Museum April 8 for our spring Meet & Greet.

It was a spectacular evening of modern and classical artwork, described by our three knowledgeable docents.

Afterward, we socialized in the Museum Cafe' in the new Bloch building.

The evening concluded with remarks from Gary Hicks, President, about the history, structure, and organization of our organization. Thanks to all who attended.

We will have a summer event and an event in the fall. We look forward to having more opportunities to grow our organization and hope you invite your friends, family and colleagues to our upcoming events.



One of our private tour groups, from left, Bob Sigman, Dennis Owens, Dan Sturdevant, Cathy Owens, Matt Harris, Bryan Flanagan, and Joe Huber in front of Franz Kline's Turin at the Nelson-Atkins Art Museum.

Alexander Majors House Project

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and we wish to secure the site's permanence as a national historic treasure.

The Majors' house and site have been beautifully restored and maintained by the Foundation, under the leadership of Mr. Chapman. However, support for operations and maintenance is only available until early this summer. The immediate need is financial support. The Foundation is seeking to develop a substantial endowment capable of supporting and maintaining the site.

A business plan is currently being developed by the directors of the Foundation, with assistance from members of the Native Sons and Daughters. The business plan will guide operations of the site, and will present the critical need for funding support, whether public or private.

For years, the Native Sons and Daughters have been engaged at the site. This work included assisting Majors' great-granddaughter, Ms. Louisa P. Johnston, when she resided at the house and facilitating funding for acquisition of properties adjoining the site. In addition, along with Mr. Chapman, we worked to proclaim the legacy of Majors and his impact on the western expansion.

We are pleased to support the revitalization of operations at the Alexander Majors House, and to assist in reinvigorating the public's interest in the site. We are seeking ways to raise money and garner public and private support for this historical jewel. The Foundation is running out of resources to keep the House open, and needs fresh ideas. We welcome your interest in supporting operations at the Alexander Majors House as a sponsor or donor, or to be involved as a volunteer with its programming. Please contact Joe Huber at 913-341-4880, or Gary Hicks at 913-832-3200.

Grinter House Marker Re-Dedication

We invite you and your guests to participate in a family-friendly event at the Grinter Place Museum, Saturday, May 15, at 10:00 a.m. The event includes the rededication of the Grinter Place marker at 11:30 a.m. The marker was lost for 20 years, found in 2009, and now reinstalled.

This event includes a tour of the 1857 home, the oldest unaltered building in Wyandotte County. We'll have an optional picnic lunch and enjoy family-oriented outdoor games.



In 1831, Moses Grinter established a ferry on the Kansas River at a site named Delaware Crossing. His ferry served traffic on the military trail between Fort Scott and Fort Leavenworth, and to Santa Fe. The first civilian post office in Kansas was established there in 1850. In 1857, Grinter began building a home using brick, mortar, and lumber produced on the location.

Membership

Last year, our membership grew with 46 added members, increasing our roster to almost 275 members! We are on our way to having 300 members by the end of this year!

Have you invited a friend or family member to join our organization? To be eligible for membership, the applicant must be at least 21 years of age on the date of the application, either born within the Greater Kansas City area, and/or interested in the community and its history.

If you have a potential member to nominate, or would like more information about membership, please contact the Membership Committee chair, John Hess, Jr., at membership@nsdkc.org.

Bylaws Review

On May 4th, the Board of Directors is holding a special meeting to discuss proposed revisions and updates to the Corporation's Bylaws. This was the only item on the agenda. This allowed the Board to focus on reviewing the work of the Bylaws Committee over the past months.

The Committee's efforts involved updating the bylaws to reflect the environment in which the Corporation functions, and providing for edits within the bylaws. Where appropriate, new text was written for clarity and to enhance the bylaws.

The approved text of the bylaws will be presented to the membership at a special meeting to be held this summer for adoption by the Corporation.

The Bylaws Committee, chaired by John Dunnewind, met regularly since January. Other members include Jim Bernard, Dan Creasy, Norm Besheer, and Gary Hicks.

Upcoming Events

A milestone in the effort to commemorate the Town of Kansas site through a Native Sons and Daughters interpretive marker will be reached with the dedication of the Town of Kansas marker on June 3, at 2:00 p.m. Please join us at 1st & Main Streets, Kansas City, Missouri. We wish to recognize the 10-year effort of the Honorable Tom Sims in advocating for the commemoration of the Town of Kansas site, as well as his research to create a narrative for the marker. The placement of this marker identifies the birthplace of our city.

Find more news, information, and photos at <http://www.nsdkc.org>

Check your inbox!

Announcements, information, upcoming program invitations, and news that won't wait for the newsletter is coming to your inbox. The subject line will contain [Native Sons and Daughters] to help you find those messages more quickly. Please let us know your email address or if your email address changes.



Members at the February 27th tour of the National Archives



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