



# NATIVE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

December 2011

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

## Outstanding Kansas Citian Julia Irene Kauffman Honored at the Kauffman Center

The Outstanding Kansas Citian event was held at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts on Tuesday evening, October 25, 2011. The event honored Julia Irene Kauffman.

The Native Sons and Daughters honored her distinguished service and historic civic achievements in promoting the general welfare of the greater Kansas City community through the development and completion of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.



*Julia Irene Kauffman, 2011 Outstanding Kansas Citian.*



*Seating at the Outstanding Kansas Citian event at the Kauffman Center*

This year's event was an innovative experience for us. We set out to accomplish three objectives:

- Increase revenue to our organization so that our budget is balanced and there is not the need to use money in our endowment for annual operations.
- Increase the visibility of the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City with a

prestigious event that would attract a large number of participants.

- Increase membership in the NSDKC through an event that is exciting and exceedingly visible.

The success of this year's event met all of the above objectives:

- More than 323 attended the event at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.
- Net income of more than \$23,000 more than balanced our budget.

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*From left, Ashley Biggs, Jim and Christie Biggs, and Norm Besheer, 2011 President of NSDKC. Christie is Norm's daughter, and Ashley his granddaughter.*

# President's Letter

To my fellow members of the Native Sons and Daughters:

It has been an exciting year so far. We have had some great membership meetings, outings, Meet & Greets and a fabulous Outstanding Kansas Citian dinner event, honoring Ms. Julia Irene Kauffman at the new Kauffman Center. Dr. Chuck Eddy and his committee did a tremendous job and NSDKC was put on the map with significant media and TV coverage. There were more than 300 people in attendance, a record for our organization. We hope to garner a number of new members from that event as well.

We will soon be having our annual Holiday Brunch on December 10 at the Indian Hills Country Club. We anticipate having our usual excellent meal and entertainment from Dan Sturdevant and Dr. Bruce Prince-Joseph! I hope ALL of our members can be there to enjoy our Holiday Feast. At the brunch we will also introduce our new board members as well as our new 2012 officers.

I wish to emphasize that in order for our members to stay in touch with each other and keep abreast of our activities during the year, it is necessary for us to open and read all email messages from our organization! Of course, it is a known fact that some of our members do not have internet access, but for those of us in the majority who do have email access, please read your emails! The board has recently passed a resolution that starting in 2012 our quarterly newsletters will be sent to our members by email, rather than by USPS. However, each member will have the opportunity to opt out of this method and continue to receive their newsletters by USPS if they notify our office of their wishes. Sending newsletters by email will save our organization significant costs.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our Holiday Brunch! In the meantime, please enjoy the Thanksgiving and Winter holidays!

My very best wishes,

*Norman O. Besheer, 2011 President*

# Union Cemetery Historical Society Report

Union Cemetery is located east of Main Street in Kansas City, Missouri at 27th Street. The site is on twenty-seven acres established in the late 1850's. The cemetery is owned and maintained by the Kansas City, Missouri, Parks & Recreation Department.

Budgets in the department have been trimmed, causing delays in road maintenance, tree removal, trimming, and less frequent mowing. This year mowing intervals improved when the Parks & Recreation awarded a bid contract. Parks & Recreation has also planted approximately twenty trees in the last few years and provided trees for the Arbor Day events with the Union Cemetery Historical Society (UCHS).

The UCHS is under the guidance of the Parks & Recreation department. The society was established in 1984. The offices are located in the Sexton's Cottage on the cemetery grounds.

Our small membership of less

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## Fall Meet and Greet at Strang Line Car Barn

The Native Sons & Daughters held our fall Meet & Greet on Thursday, October 6 at the Strang Line Carriage House in historic downtown Overland Park.

Twenty-seven members and prospective members attended. We enjoyed an informative presentation by Florent Wagner, President of the Overland Park Historical Society. Mr. Wagner discussed the formation of the Strang Line and the development of the city of Overland Park.

Look for an Evite for the spring Meet & Greet in April 2012.

*John Hess, Jr., Membership Chair*



*Florent Wagner, president of the Overland Park Historical Society, and the presenter for the Fall Meet and Greet. Photo by Michael Morgan*

## Alexander Majors Site Hosts Orientation for New Members

Topics related to the history and operations of the Native Sons and Daughters were discussed at the September 8 orientation meeting for newer members and board nominees. Gary Hicks, immediate past-president, led the event.

The orientation, held in the barn of the historic Alexander Majors House and Museum, included a review of administrative functions of the organization by Hicks. Daniel Creasy gave an entertaining review of the history of the organization and John Hess, Sr., brought several historical documents to share with attendees. Louise Hicks and Dot Benner provided a delicious table of drinks and snacks.

A similar orientation is planned for 2012.

## September 10th Three Trails Tour

The NSDKC fall bus tour was held September 10. The fall day was very pleasant as we traveled the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails through Jackson County, Missouri into Johnson County, Kansas. The group visited many sites that have been set aside and interpreted for the public in just the last decade.

The tour visited the new Wayne City Landing Park overlooking the steamboat landing on the Missouri River that brought thousands of travelers to the trail over 150 years ago. The tour then looped around the historic Jackson County Courthouse Square that supplied all the wagon trains and paid a brief visit to the National Frontier Trails Museum.

We followed the trail south and paused at the 1844 Rice-Tremonti House at 66th and Blue Ridge Boulevard where many wagon trains camped. After lunch, we walked along the dramatic swales at Minor Park worn by thousands of wagons.

We visited Lone Elm Park in south Olathe where countless wagon trains camped and has several interpretive panels describing the site as well as a spectacular *Rendezvous* shelter house.

We strolled around the new Gardner Junction Park just southwest of Gardner, Kansas, which interprets the junction of the Independence and Westport Routes and also marks where the Oregon-California Trail departed from the Santa Fe Trail.

Please watch our newsletters and the website for more tours next year!

*Ross Marshall*

## Welcome Our New Members

Glenn G. Higley, Robert Larry Meeker, Mary Ann Meeks, James M. Stacy, Jane Holland Stacy, Samuel Stepp, Florent William Wagner

## Obituaries

Frances Thomson Dillingham, mother of member and past-president John Dillingham

## Why a *Victory Highway* in Kansas City?

The Wyandotte County Museum and Historical Society honored Joe Vaughan with the 2010 “Historian of the Year” Award for his research and documentation of the history of the Victory Highway. It was the first hard surface transcontinental highway built in the 1920s to honor Americans who died in World War I. As a memorial, it was to be called the Victory Highway. Vaughan was recognized at the organization’s annual meeting last summer.

After winning the war, the soldiers returned home to a country in the beginning stages of a post-war economic boom. The dirt and gravel roads that had served the nation in earlier decades were no longer adequate with more and more people owning cars and goods and services being shipped by long-haul trucks. The railroads could not absorb the huge volume.

A blue ribbon panel was appointed by the U. S. Congress to chart an east-west route that would connect the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean in one, continuous paved highway. If this road succeeded, the plan called for more highways to serve the growing demand. Soon, such roads as the Victory Highway crossed the-then 48 states until new growth after the Second World War led Congress to pass the Federal Interstate Highway and Defense Act of 1956.

Construction on the first transcontinental highway began in New York City in 1922. The route went southwest through Camden,

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***Holiday Brunch at Indian Hills Country Club, December 10.***

Don't miss the Native Sons and Daughters Annual Holiday Brunch December 10th at Indian Hills Country Club. The brunch begins at 11:00 a.m. with cash bar cocktails, followed by a bountiful holiday buffet at 11:45 a.m.

Music by Dan Sturdevant, Dr. Bruce Prince-Joseph, and Tiffany, along with video from the Outstanding Kansas Citian.

The cost is \$22.50 per person. Space is limited, so make your reservations as soon as possible. We look forward to seeing you.

Effective with the first newsletter of 2012, members with email addresses will be notified via email when the latest newsletter is ready to download. Changing to an email only newsletter will save us postage and printing costs, as well as give you an expanded version of the newsletter online.

If you wish to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please contact Susie Hughes, Executive Secretary, at 816.926.9397.

## **Make a Bequest to the Native Sons and Daughters**

Including the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City, Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax exempt Missouri corporation, offers members the opportunity to make a gift which will support our efforts to preserve and promote local history for years to come. A legacy may be granted to a Native Sons and Daughters projects as designated for use in future projects to be established and approved by the board of directors.

For more information, please contact Norm Besheer, 2011 President at [president@nsdkc.org](mailto:president@nsdkc.org)

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## Victory Highway *continued from page 5*

New Jersey; Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore and Washington, D.C., before heading west to Vandalia, Illinois. The route then went through St. Louis and passed through Kansas City on the Inter-City Viaduct, now known as Lewis & Clark Viaduct since 1965. The route continued west to Denver and Salt Lake City and then made a straight shot to end of the route in Sacramento, California.

Victory Highway brought a broad range of economic development to the cities and towns it passed through. Motels, filling stations, restaurants, and cafes opened first, and subdivisions and apartments sprang up in what would become early signs of suburban living around big cities.

The few remnants of the Victory Highway in 2011 are mostly in rural America and still connect small towns, and are usually not connected to the interstate system. In Missouri and Kansas, U. S. Highway 24 is the existing highway traveling the path of the Victory Highway.

Just about everyone knows of the legendary and romantic stories surrounding U. S. Highway 66, but few people are aware that the Victory Highway existed and the significant role it played in interstate commerce and consumer convenience in another era. As the 100th anniversary of World War I draws nearer, the story of the Victory Highway will see more interest and attention.

## Elders Chair Elmwood Cemetery Service Committee

President Norm Besheer proposed to create a closer alliance with Elmwood Cemetery, at 4900 Truman Road, in Kansas City, Missouri. The board approved in its November 9th meeting. Ray and Nancy Elder are the new co-chairs of the Elmwood Cemetery Community Service Committee. We have similar arrangements with the Harris-Kearney House, Union Cemetery, Fort Osage, Wyandotte County Historical Society, and the Alexander Majors House. NSDKC has a Community Service Committee and a representative to each of the boards.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Elmwood Cemetery opened in 1872. The grounds were designed by landscape architect George Kessler, the creator of Kansas City's parks and boulevard system. Elmwood Cemetery is the resting place for over 36,000, including many of Kansas City's founders. Perhaps a dozen of the founders of the Native Sons and Daughters are interred in Elmwood.

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## NSDKC Applications Scanned for the Archives

More than 260 applications and supporting documents have been scanned to provide a digital backup of the original materials. The scanning project had been under review for several years with a focus on building a database of the applicant information. After discussions with David Boutros, Associate Archivist with the State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center–Kansas City (formerly the Western Historical Manuscript Collection–Kansas City) and a member of the Native Sons and Daughters, it was determined that current resources could not support the development of a database.

The Communications Committee chose to proceed with a simplified scanning project that would provide a copy of the documents if the originals should be damaged or destroyed. A copy of the scans will be kept with the originals at the Kansas City offices of the State Historical Society. A second file will be kept with the administrative files of the NSDKC. This scanning project included applications and documentation from the past few years. Plans are underway to scan earlier applications archived at the State Historical Society Research Center in Kansas City.

*Frank McMillian*



*From left to right, Gary Hicks, David Baumgartner, Norman Besheer and Frank McMillian (not shown) met October 15 to review the procedures and scan more than 260 documents*

# Union Cemetery Committee Report *continued from page 6*

than twenty strives to:

- Maintain records of those known to be buried in the cemetery. This includes updating the card file system to a computerized system which is a very slow process.
- Provide tours and help interested parties locate grave sites.
- Assist in the preservation of gravestones and sites in the cemetery.
- Produce the *Epitaph* newsletter quarterly.
- Plan events at the cemetery on Memorial Day, Arbor Day, and other occasions. The most recent event was the George Caleb Bingham 200th anniversary celebration last March and John Calvin McCoy in October.
- Organize events to generate recognition and income. There have even been ghost sitting evenings!

This year the UCHS received a substantial donation to help their cause. Would you like to donate too? Please contact me at 816.942.1882 or [bellevuewcc@prodigy.net](mailto:bellevuewcc@prodigy.net)

*Jeff Davis, UCHS Committee Chair*

## Outstanding Kansas Citian

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- We passed out hundreds of NSDKC fliers and invited all to consider their involvement with the NSDKC. Our President invited all to consider becoming a member.
- We had media coverage by four TV stations, mentioned in the Kansas City Star, and discussed on radio.

The committee worked hard all year to plan and execute the activities for a successful event.



*R. Crosby Kemper III, Executive Director of the Kansas City, Missouri Public Library interviews Julia Kauffman at the Outstanding Kansas Citian event. Photo by Louise Hicks.*



*Susie Hughes, left, and Linda Dillon, right, at the registration table*

A special thanks to Dr. Charles A. Eddy, Chair; Norman O. Besheer; Dorothy T. Benner; Ross Marshall; Gary L. Hicks; Carl J. DiCapo; Whitney E. Kerr, Sr.; John A. Dillingham; our staff assistants Susan Hughes and Linda Dillon; Keith Krieger; and River City Staff Frank Armato and Christel Gollnick.

We are so pleased with this year's Outstanding Kansas Citian event. We are eagerly looking forward to the 2012 Outstanding Kansas Citian event.

# Communications Committee Report

The purpose of the Communications Committee is to facilitate the making of timely reports to the membership and on any matters deemed of interest. The Committee provides oversight in the manipulation and ongoing development of the membership database; the production of the roster, the website, newsletter, mail, and email to the membership.

The Communications Committee is chaired by the First-Vice President. Four meetings were held in 2011 at various venues: the conference rooms in Alexander Major's Barn, Leawood Baptist Church, Platte City Methodist Church, and Trezo Mare Restaurant. Approximately eighteen members, who represent our ten county membership, were in attendance.



*Communications Committee members, from left, Gary Hicks, Bob Sigman, Norm Besheer, Dot Benner, Chuck Eddy, Susie Hughes, Ross Marshall, Dave Baumgartner, and Keith Krieger*

Recent work included a newly created Policy, Practices, and Procedures guidelines approved by the Board, and a motion to develop official membership packets for new members.

## New Board Members and 2012 Officers Elected

Members of the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City met November 9th at the Golden Ox for dinner and the annual membership meeting. Immediately following the membership meeting, the November meeting of the Board of Directors was held.

The membership voted on the election of new Board members and changes to the bylaws. Members elected to serve on the board beginning January 1, 2012, under new or renewed terms, are: Ray Elder, Joanne Collins, Mike Burke, Chuck Eddy, Jim Flanagan, Whitney Kerr and Mark Wasserstrom. In addition to electing board members for the new term, the membership approved a change in the bylaws moving the audit review date from April 1 to June 30.

The general membership was invited to stay for the board meeting. During the board meeting, 2012 officers were elected. The 2012 officers are President, Dot Benner; 1st Vice President, Chuck Eddy; 2nd Vice President, Ross Marshall; Secretary, Chris Sizemore; Treasurer, Jim Flanagan and Historian, Frank McMillian. In other business, the board exercised its right to appoint up to three members to the board by appointing Carl DiCapo to the board.



*NSDKC members Anita and Gerald Gorman, and Dick Fickle*

## Video Stories

As a benefit to our members, your Board of Directors has organized a convenient and inexpensive way to record a video or audio of you or any one or more people in your family—parents or children (but limited to 4 people) for your family on a DVD or CD. If you wish, as a benefit to the historical community, your recording may also be stored at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, a public repository. The records of the Native Sons and Daughters are stored there.

This videographer (or audio only if you prefer) project gives you an opportunity for a commercial videographer to make a video (or an audio) for 20 minutes in length. You receive a CD and an extra CD copy for your family. You may also request an additional copy of your video to be stored (at no extra charge) at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at UMKC and categorized under Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City—Members 2011 Video/Audio History Project.

Please watch for more information via email and the website at: <http://www.nsdkc.org>

# New Historical Markers in Progress

One of the key missions of NSDKC is the preservation and interpretation of Kansas City area historic sites. The Historical Markers Committee is charged with leading an important part of that effort. Our current members are Gary Hicks, Ray Elder, Frank McMillian, Chris Sizemore, Craig Crease, and Ross Marshall.

We have been working on a marker in Liberty commemorating an unheralded event of the Civil War, the Liberty Arsenal Raid of April 20, 1861. The raid was the first action in Missouri following the fall of Fort Sumter on April 14, and President Lincoln's call for troops on April 15.

Our research effort for this marker, led by Frank McMillian, and the final editing through our review process, is nearly complete. We anticipate a partnership will be forthcoming that will share in the cost of the marker as a result of fundraising efforts by committee members. The marker will be ready to order in December and will be dedicated sometime in the early spring. We'll announce the dedication in the newsletter and the website.

We are starting on a second marker, also in Liberty, commemorating the Platte Purchase of 1837. This added the six counties in northwest Missouri, perhaps the only time that territory has been added to an existing state.

The members of this committee are all new this year and it has been a joy to work with them. Each one brings an important skill to the committee's work.

*Ross Marshall, Chair, Historical Markers Committee*

## Elmwood Cemetery

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Elmwood Cemetery is owned and operated by the Elmwood Cemetery Society, a not-for-profit organization. The Cemetery receives no local, state, or federal support for its operations. A volunteer board provides oversight, and the site has no paid staff. The site is maintained by donations and volunteers.

The mission is to perpetuate the life stories of all who have chosen Elmwood as their resting place. The society is also charged with sharing the cemetery's history while maintaining a place of dignity and respect for the loved ones buried there.



Native Sons and Daughters members Nancy Elder and Hal Lowenstein serve on the Elmwood Board.

## Past President's Luncheon

The Past President's Luncheon was held November 29. Sixteen past presidents of the Native Sons and Daughters attended. Pictured, seated, left to right, A.J. Cameron, Dan Sturdevant, Dot Benner, 2012 President; and Norm Besheer, 2011 President. Standing, left to right, Ray James, Gary Hicks, John Mura, Dan Creasy, John Dillingham, Tom Sims, Dick Fickle, John Hess, Sr., Bruce Pennington, Ted Seligson, Joe Vaughan, Jr., and Tom Skates. Not pictured: Jim Bernard, Jr.

