



NEWS



SUMMER 2025

from The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City

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

NSDKC Picnic at Harris-Kearney House



Above are two pictures of the two-story Harris-Kearney House at 4000 Baltimore Avenue on the east side of Westport in Kansas City.

NSDKC held a Picnic Event there at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2025 under the leadership of Program Committee Member **Marsha Daley** and Committee Members **Paul Christiansen** and **Steve Platt**. The picnic consisted of Brats (cooked on site by **Steve**), sauerkraut, potato salad, a vegetable tray, chips, drinks and desserts (furnished by **Marsha** and **Pam Delaney**). It was a fun evening of food, history and good conversation!

The Harris-Kearney House is the oldest surviving two-story brick home in the City, built in 1855. Originally

owned by Col. John "Jack" Harris and his wife Henrietta, it served as a local social and business center. It was originally on a five-acre lot at the corner of Westport Road and Main Street. In 1922 it was moved to its present location. It took four months to move the house. Imagine moving this two-story house then! When the house was moved in 1922, it quickly became a commercial space over the next 50 years after failing at the first and very brief attempt to make it a museum.

In the early 1800s, Westport was a separate city from the city of Kansas City and was a "jumping off" place for wagon trains heading west to Santa Fe, Oregon and California.

Continued on page 6 ➡



Dear Members:

We had some weather problems at the first of the year, but everything worked out and we had our NSDKC event on May 29 at the Harris-Kearny House (see the article in this newsletter). It was a very nice event with a picnic on the back porch and then a tour of the house.

I would like to thank the entertainment committee for a wonderful job well done. A double thanks to Marsha, Paul, Pam, Steve and Tom for donating food and drinks for the event. We had around 30 people in attendance and we may even have gotten a couple of new members.

Hope everyone is having a great summer.

 **Christy Chester**
2024 President



Christy Chester
2025 President

CONTENTS

Picnic at Harris-Kearney House	1
President's Message	2
Annual Meeting At Piropos.....	3
Ensorfest '25	4
National Trails Day Event	5
Picnic at Harris-Kearney House	6
NSDKC Board Meeting	7

NEW MEMBERS

Sheila Christiansen
Debra Schmidt-Gerken



OFFICERS & STAFF

Christy Chester
President

Michael Gerken
Vice President

Nancy Elder
Treasurer

Paul Christiansen II
Secretary

Linn Mills
Event/Programs Chair

*A list of all committees and
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MISSION

The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City, Inc. is dedicated to the historic preservation of the unique and rich heritage of the greater Kansas City metropolitan area, both in Missouri and Kansas, through advocacy, education and restoration. It also seeks to preserve and maintain archives of historical interest relating to the development of the Kansas City region and to recognize individuals who have resided therein and contributed to such development.





Annual NSDKC Meeting At Piropos April 23

Pictured above are most of the 30-some attendees in the wonderful meeting place of Piropos Restaurant at Briarcliff Village at 4141 N. Mulberry Drive in Kansas City, MO.

This Special Event was sponsored by Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City. Most of our officers and board members were there plus several husbands and wives and guests.

It was a Wine Tasting and Guest Presentation Event for current NSDKC members and recent past members, plus their guests, to join in an evening honoring the history of the Rotary Youth Camp, celebrating 101 Years Serving KC Youth!

After enjoying the wonderful food, drinks and fellowship, we were privileged to hear a presentation by **Laurie Mozley**, (standing above at far right in a green shirt), who is the Camp Director for the Rotary Youth Camp. Assisting **Laurie** was our NSDKC President **Christy Chester**, (standing next to her above in the black shirt). The camp has served the Metro Area for 101 years. Our attendees had the opportunity to ask questions about the Camp's past and its plans for the future.

The Camp is located at 22310 NE Colbern Road in Lee's Summit, MO. on 40-plus acres of land in the southeast corner of Jackson County, Mo. In 1923 Mr. and Mrs. Robert

Gees owned the land and wanted to create a camp experience for the underprivileged and disabled youth who would not be able to go to camp. Rotary Youth Camp now serves 3700 + campers that use the camp each year, an average of 2500 campers in the school year. They serve groups for neurological, emotional, physical, and financial disabilities and many more. The camp is free to the campers, food is provided and there is a staff of 25 during the summer. Generous community members provide the \$400,000 to \$450,000 cost each year to maintain the camp.

We thank Past President **Linn Mills** for planning and hosting this event!

Ensorfest '25

ON the afternoon of May 10, 2025, the historic Ensor Park & Museum held its 2nd annual Ensorfest event in which KCAHTA was invited once again to participate! This free community event was open to the public, and consisted of tours of the historic farm house and outbuilding, a Chautauqua presentation, classic automobiles, along with the presence of a local Corvette Club and food truck!!!

Having participated in Ensor's 2024 inaugural event, KCAHTA was invited back to this year's event. Participating in this year's event were Executive Committee members **Bob Courtney, Ross Marshall** and **Gary Hicks**. KCAHTA had its table-setup just at the main pedestrian entry to the event! Great location!

Ross and **Gary** are past presidents of NSDKC and provided insight and information to visitors regarding historic frontier trails in the Johnson County area and beyond! Several new KCAHTA memberships were signed up for! On display were mounted copies on easels of KCAHTA's original 1997 historic frontier trails and our 2024 trails map. Several copies of each were also sold! The important thing was KCAHTA received valuable exposure with the Johnson County community!

Bob Courtney participated in Ensor's Chautauqua event, presenting the story of the route of the historic Jefferson Highway. Prior to the 1920s, this road was an automobile highway stretching through the central United States from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada, which passed through the City of Olathe. As one of Olathe's leading historians, **Bob** served on a



North side of Ensor Farmhouse

committee working with the City to map the route of the historic highway through Olathe. This resulted in the placement of new signage to mark the historic route through Olathe! For example: a new shield sign for the Jefferson Highway historic route, at the intersection of North Ridgeview Road and East Kansas City Road near the Olathe Community Center.

Located two miles east of U.S. Highway 169 out of Olathe, KS, the historic Ensor farm is now the property of the City of Olathe, and home to an Amateur Ham Radio Club which was organized as the **Marshall Ensor Memorial Organization** (MEMO) in tribute to Mr. Marshall Ensor, educator and renown Ham Radio operator. This 1892 farm house displays antique furniture, utensils, clothing, quilts and ham radio equipment. Also on the site are several historic 1980s barns filled with period items, including early HAM RADIO equipment.

Visiting the Ensor Park & Museum is a great day of fun, history, and entertainment. This 1892 farm house includes 1890s barn displays, antique furniture, utensils, clothing, quilts and ham radio equipment. For further information see <https://www.ensorparkandmuseum.org/m-e-m-o-amateur-radio-club> or (<https://www.ensorparkandmuseum.org/visit-the-ensor-museum/>)

Note: The Ensor site is now an affiliate member with the Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation (see www.JCKHF.org).



South side of Ensor Farmhouse
(Barn is to the right out of site)



Gardner Junction Park



Historic Markers

National Trails Day Event Held June 7, 2025

The event on National Trails Day was sponsored by OCTA Trails Head Chapter and Missouri River Outfitters (MRO).

The meeting was first held at Gardner Junction Park (above), on 183rd Street about one mile southwest of Gardner, KS with over 20 attendees to dedicate the four new replacement markers pictured below. The man in the dark shirt under the roof was MRO President **Larry Short** who led this meeting and had led the placement of the four new markers that replaced the old ones that were placed here about 25 years ago.

We took time to walk by all the markers.

The markers described the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Historic Trails that went through this site starting in 1821 as they began their wagon train trips to south and western lands to trade goods and return with some money.

The trails started mainly from Fort Osage, Independence, Kansas City and Westport, Missouri and split about a mile west of this Junction.

The group left this location at about 10:00 and traveled eight miles east to Lone Elm Campground Park located on 167th Street in south Olathe.

We parked and entered the Lone Elm Park Shelter

(below) and had some time for fellowship with the 30 or so attendees. Note the people entering.

After our fellowship, OCTA Trails Head Chapter President **Mike Smith** greeted everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves to the group.

Larry Short then also greeted everyone and gave a review of the Gardner Junction meeting and also reviewed the history of the Lone Elm site. Lone Elm was a popular campsite for the trains of covered wagons back on the early historic trails.

We began having lunch at about 11:15.

At about 11:45, **Travis Boley** spoke about the historic trails and events of our area.

In the picture below with a white shirt, is **Garrett Seuser**, an accomplished avocational archeologist, who spoke for about 45 minutes about his research and artifacts on historic trails. A helper passed around lots of pictures and displays of his findings. Quite a presentation!

We had a hard rain about 12:00 that lasted about 15 minutes and then it was gone! We were all in the shelter, so no problem.

The event concluded about 1:30. Thanks to **Mike Smith** and **Larry Short** for their sponsorship!



Lone Elm Park Shelter



Garrett Seuser speaking

NSDKC Picnic at Harris-Kearney House

⇒ Continued from page 1

In the 1970s the house was purchased by the Westport Historical Society and after renovations to return it to the house when the family lived there, in 1982 the Society opened it as a historical museum, which it remains today.

It is a museum showcasing the early history of Kansas City and the Westward Migration.

The house recently underwent renovations again and reopened to tell the story of Kansas City's founding.

Pictured below are some of the attendees as they enjoyed food prepared on the site. The first two on the left are **Troy Wahlborg** and **Shirley Marshall**. On the right is **John Hess, Jr.** and **Christy Chester**.

Ryland Foster and **Marty Wiedenmann**, President of the Westport Historical Society, led us on tours of the house and its extensive decades of history. We had a short presentation on the current exhibit *The Priests of Pallas*, Kansas City's original harvest festival.

This was a terrific event! We were able to learn about the history of this historic location and its building, but we were able to visit, see and learn about both the inside and outside of the building.

And not only that, but our attendees enjoyed experiencing together the event and its location!

For an individual visit and tours, please call 816-561-1821 or email westporthistoricalkc.org.





NSDKC Board Meeting

Held Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Pictured above are the attendees of NSDKC's regular Board Meeting as they met at our usual location at the Carriage Club at 5301 State Line in Kansas City, MO. About 28 attendees were there as shown mostly above.

President **Christy Chester** called the meeting to order at 12:00. **Mike Gerkin** introduced **Dr. David Trowbridge** who spoke to us about CLIO which is a website and mobile application that serves as a guide to historical and cultural sites across the United States. It directs users to museums, landmarks and other points of interest.

While CLIO (which means to recount, make famous or celebrate) primarily focuses on historical sites, it also includes entries related to nature trails and may potentially cover events or locations of natural or environmental significance from the past.

Users can explore existing entries on the CLIO website or app, search for specific locations or keywords related to nature or the environment, or even create their own entries about places or events they find significant.

It helps residents and visitors pursue the history and culture across the nation including the Kansas City area.

David talked about our local history such as the 1951 flood, our libraries and museums, KC statues, the KC Airport, Union Station, historic trails, historical markers,

driving tours and organizations. An interesting presentation!

Christy called the Board Meeting together at 12:40 and reviewed the minutes of our last Board Meeting on March 19. She mentioned a new membership roster will be sent out.

President **Christy Chester** reported that **David McCaughey** has agreed to work on our Website Report and **Nancy** will help him.

Bob Denzel reported that we have chosen our 2025 Outstanding Kansas Citian honoree. That event will be held on November 11, 2025.

Governance Committee Chair **Mike Gerken** reminded that the Board has passed the model for renaming of the Committees in January.

Gary Hicks said that the wording for the Liberty Memorial Marker is nearly finalized.

On Saturday, May 24 **Gary** will be at Union Cemetery giving a talk on Alexander Majors.

John Hess, Jr. said we have two new members **Sheila Christianson** and **Debra Schmidt-Gerkin**.

Nancy said we have received a 'thank you' letter from Union Cemetery for our donation of \$350 for the beehive project. They have also been designated as an Arboretum through the State of Missouri.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:37 pm.