

Plainsmen Respected Code of Ethics

The author is a Kansas City free-lance writer.

By Cornelius Ashley

"While I am in the employ of A. Majors I agree not to use profane language, not to get drunk, not to gamble, not to treat animals cruelly and not to do anything else that is incompatible with the conduct of a gentleman. And I agree, if I violate any of the above conditions, to accept my discharge without any pay for my services."

Today it is scarcely believable that anyone would sign such an agreement. But men did, by the hundreds, during the period 1848 to 1867.

These were not soft men but hardened plainsmen of the Santa Fe and the Oregon trails. They were wagon-bosses and teamsters working for Alexander Majors.

The proposal to restore the Majors home at 8206 Wyoming as an official bicentennial project focuses attention on the man who owned the house, built in 1856.

Alexander Majors was nationally known as a member of the freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell which carried goods over the Santa Fe and the Oregon trails. He also was connected with the Overland Stage and was a part owner of the famed Pony Express.

Natural Leader

Alexander Majors was a remarkable man. He was physically and mentally courageous. He was a natural leader who inspired the respect of the men under his direction. He was a devout Christian who abhorred profanity, drunkenness and cruelty. He believed in keeping the Sabbath.

In 1848, when he was 34 years old, in an attempt to provide a better living for his growing family, he decided he would leave the farm and try his hand at hauling freight to Santa Fe.



ALEXANDER MAJORS

He assessed the hazards of hostile Indians, accidents and weather to be encountered on the Santa Fe trail. He determined to take the risks.

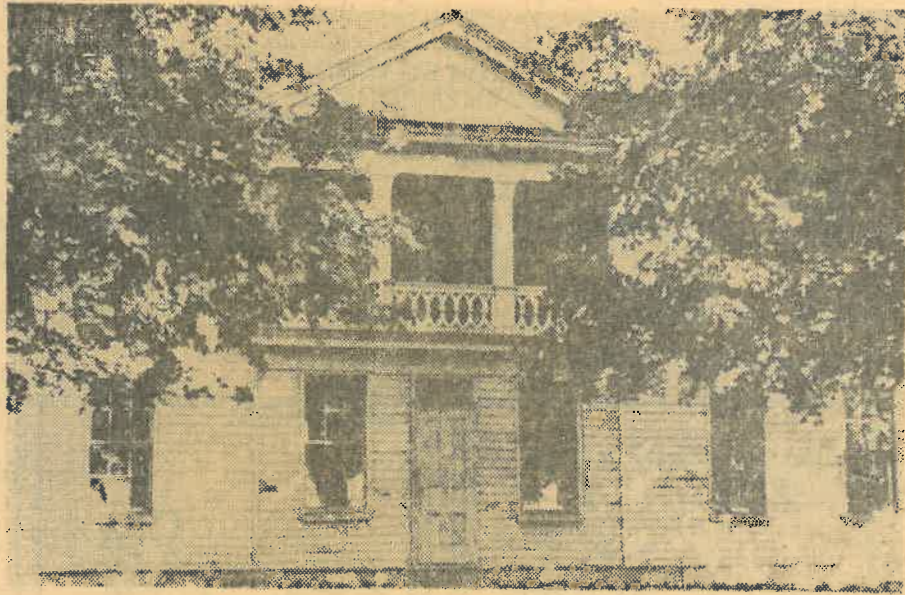
But one thing worried him as much as the risks. He knew that most of the men he probably would want to hire would be hardened, profane and given to gambling and drinking.

Finally, after considerable thought, he decided his employees would have to abide by his standards.

He bought six wagons and the necessary number of oxen to pull them. Then he drafted the code related above to which all who worked for him had to agree.

Record Time

To his relief the necessary number of teamsters was hired. On Aug. 10, 1848, the wagons were started on their long trip to Santa Fe. The trip was successful. The round trip was made in 92 days, a record, and Majors cleared \$1,500. He continued in the freighting business until 1866, part of the time working indi-



Historic Home

Trees frame the front of the Alexander Majors home, located between State Line and Wyoming at 82nd. Restoration of the home, which served as the office of Russell, Majors and Waddell, pioneer freighting firm, has been proposed by the Missouri American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.

vidually and part as a member of the firm, Russell, Majors and Waddell.

In his book, "Seventy Years on the Frontier," published in 1893, Majors wrote he did not remember having to discharge any of the men without pay. This is most remarkable for at one time some 4,000 men were employed by Russell, Majors and Waddell.

W. F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody attested to the truth of this in his preface to "Seventy Years on the Frontier." Cody wrote: "Severe in discipline, he was yet never profane or harsh and a Christian and a temperance man through all; he governed his men kindly and was wont to say that he would have no one under his control who would not promptly obey an order without it was em-

phasized with an oath.

"In fact he had a contract with his men in which they pledged themselves not to use profanity, get drunk, gamble, or be cruel to animals under pain of dismissal, while good behavior was rewarded. Every man from wagon-boss and teamster down to rustler and messenger seemed anxious to gain the good will of Alexander Majors and to hold it."

Buffalo Bill's statement was not based on hearsay but on actual experience. He was one of Majors's messengers who delivered dispatches between wagon trains.

As a matter of fact Majors gave Buffalo Bill his first regular job when the boy was only 9 years old. Cody had come to Majors seeking work after the death of his father.

Cody rode with the wagon trains to Santa Fe. He knew the men on the trail.

Code Updated

Majors later said he could not have drafted a better code of rule from a moral standpoint.

One of the main reasons the men kept the code was the example Majors set. He believed that only necessary work should be done on the Sabbath. Accordingly, the wagon trains of Russell, Majors and Waddell rested on the trail each Sabbath. Furthermore, the men were paid for their day off—an unheard of thing at that time.

When the Civil War started, Majors added another condition to the working agreement. The men must pay true allegiance to the United States government.

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Pioneer People

ALEXANDER MAJOR

An Early Leader in Labor Relations

by Charles S. Stevenson

Freighter, frontiersman, friend and enemy of the Indians, and mentor of William F. ("Buffalo Bill") Cody, pioneer Alexander Majors was as rugged an individual as any who ever hit the trail to the west in the golden days of the 1850's.

In today's space age, he undoubtedly would have been an astronaut as his exploits, for his time, were almost as risky and as hazardous as those of today's heroes.

It was Majors, who, with the help of two other men, created and developed the noted Pony Express, an organization which carried the mail from nearby St. Joseph to San Francisco. They had to conquer hills, mountains, sand, wind, water, and more than a few Indians to finish their trek. Once in San Francisco, the mail was routed to the few adjoining western states, and to such mystic far off places as Hawaii, India, Japan and China. These couriers rode partially, but not specifically, on the legendary Santa Fe Trail.

Then, like modern day entrepreneurs, he and his companions began to expand by organizing the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company, an express and stage line. A New York writer who was sent West to write about this new kind of project, estimated that the convoy was composed of "375 prairie schooners and was pulled by 2,000 mules and herded by some 500 mule skinnners." Another even more startling figure from a different source says that at the height of their operation, they used 6,150 wagons, 7,500 oxen and horses and an appropriate number of cowboys, drivers, cooks and others. Another story is that the operation included 5,000 men, 4,000 wagons, 40,000 oxen, and 1,000 mules. These are almost unbelievable figures. Purists may not accept all these statistics, but many events of history are similarly questioned.

Majors was the CEO, in to-



day's parlance, in that he ran both projects. William H. Russell handled the financing and William B. Waddell the purchasing. It was Majors, though, who set up the rock and adobe "home" stations where the personnel stopped for rest, and who hired all the help, and established the wing stations for the changing of horses.

As telephone lines to the west were built and trains were beginning to run in the same direction, the company could not compete and lost government contracts. These circumstances resulted in bankruptcy for Majors' operation.

Majors was an innovator and an activist in the full sense of the words. As an example, he had labor contracts with each member of his staff. It provided that there be no drinking on the job, no gambling, no profanity, no mistreating of horses and the like. He invented a more efficient mail pouch and built three different types of wagons when the old current ones wore out.

Majors is buried in Union cemetery here but the antebellum home he built about 1856 at 8145 State Line still stands. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970.

Editors Note: Watch monthly for Mr. Stevenson's articles on some of our Pioneer People.

Album

by John J. Doohan

1900

A showhouse on State Line Road



During the Civil War, when residents of Jackson and other counties in Missouri were ordered by a Union general to leave their homes and report to military stations in Kansas, the owner of this 1856 farmhouse near 82nd Street and State Line Road was reprieved. He was Alexander Majors, operator of the Pony Express—the entity credited with saving California and its gold supply for the Union.

After Mr. Majors died in 1900 at the age of 86, his home was sold. The woman pictured here is said to have been one of the owners. Later the house became a school, and then it stood empty.

In the 1930s, Mr. Majors' great-granddaughter, schoolteacher Louisa P. Johnston, began buying back the family home. She lived there until her death in 1979, spending her later years promoting the restoration of the house and urging that a museum and park occupy the site.

Now the property of the Alexander Majors Historical Trust, the house has been renovated as this year's Designers' Showhouse, a fund-raising project of the Junior Women's Symphony Alliance. The house remains open through next Sunday, after which the park land will be developed and the home opened for limited showings.

John J. Doohan was a reporter and librarian for The Star.

KANSAS CITY PAPER

Historic House Became Her Life

Pony Express Founder's Great-Granddaughter Waged Long Fight for Museum

By Howard S. Goller
A Member of the Staff



MISS LOUISA JOHNSTON
... in her younger days

She was a wiry old woman, phoning councilmen, congressmen, even presidents, from the corner of an old house packed with files of old newspapers in piles only she could identify.

A former schoolteacher ordering her words carefully into sentences, she spoke firmly of her dream—for hours at a time. But people grew to expect that, and they listened because they knew that what Miss Louisa Johnston had to say was history.

She was the great-granddaughter of Alexander Majors, co-founder of the Pony Express, and she lived nearly 40 years in the low-gabled white-frame farmhouse that Majors built more than a century ago on the state line at 81st. In later years, however, her collections of newspapers and magazines became so numerous in the house that she was forced to move to a little cottage out back.

The latter half of her 88 years—and until her death—she made a name for herself at the city halls in Leawood

and Kansas City, urging officials to make the property, which straddled the state line, a national museum and park in honor of Majors.

Miss Johnston died just before 9 a.m. on March 10. The day before, low on money and unable to cope any longer with the cost of home-care attendants, she told her closest friend, "I can't cope with it any longer. You'll have to do what you have to do." About 20 people attended the funeral service that week. Her body was cremated.

It took death to separate Miss Johnston from the house she had clung to so dearly for years. During her lifetime, not even some of Kansas City's most powerful men could talk her into parting with it.

Many times she came close to accepting the offers of historical associations to buy the house, but each time she reneged for fear they would exploit the house that meant so much to her.

Now, in her will, Miss Johnston has left the property to an as-yet-to-be-created foundation devoted to researching the life and times of her

March 1979

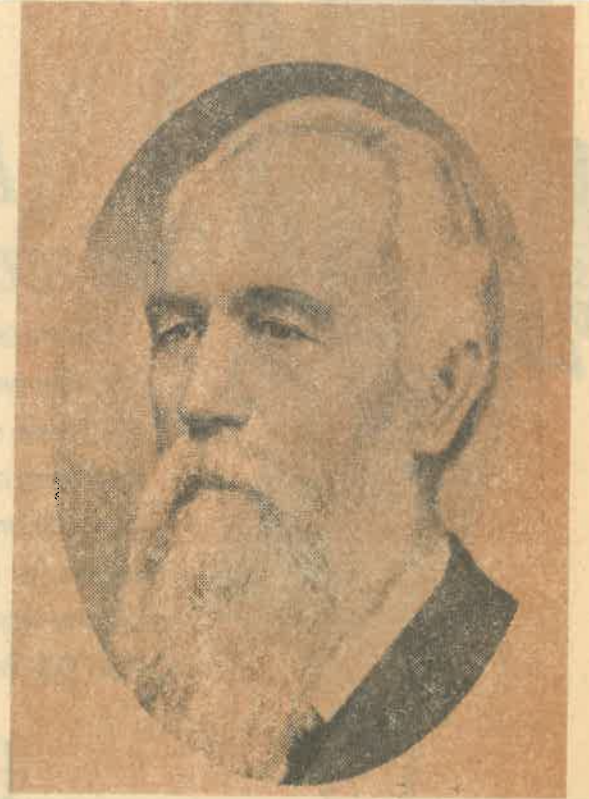
great-grandfather. Still, efforts are under way among several civic leaders to make the house the museum she always wanted.

Left for the probate courts to decide will be whether the Russell, Majors and Waddell National Historic Association, currently in operation, qualifies as the recipient of the property in her will. Not long before her death Miss Johnston dropped out of the association, and in her will she designates that the property go to a research foundation to be created under the same name.

Hopeful that the court will rule in their favor, members of the association are at work clearing the land and cleaning out the house, loading old newspapers and magazines into a trailer. They hope also to build a park on four adjoining acres south to 83rd Street, according to Tyson W. Whiteside, lawyer for the association.

Already the recipient of \$125,000 in federal matching funds and the promises of many potential contributors,

See LOUISA, Page 11A, Col. 1



ALEXANDER MAJORS
... her great-grandfather

(Remainder not sent to us)

JANUARY 15, 1900

PAGE 8

MAJORS, THE PIONEER, DEAD

IN THE '50'S HE WAS A GREAT TRADER OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL.

THE FIRM OF RUSSELL, MAJORS, AND WADDELL OWNED 3,500 YOKE OF OXEN AND 1,000 MULES AND HORSES.

BUFFALO BILL'S FRIENDSHIP FOR HIM.

CHICAGO, JANUARY 15. ALEXANDER MAJORS, A PIONEER IN THE FREIGHTING BUSINESS OF THE WEST IS DEAD. HIS BODY WAS SENT LAST NIGHT TO KANSAS CITY FOR BURIAL. HE WAS 86 YEARS OLD. MAJORS ESTABLISHED THE FIRST PONY EXPRESS AND THE DAILY STAGE LINE BETWEEN DENVER AND SALT LAKE CITY. THE FIRM OF RUSSELL, MAJORS AND WADDELL AT ONE TIME HAD 3,500 YOKE OF OXEN AND 1,000 MULES AND HORSES. UPON THE COMPLETION OF THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD, THE OVERLAND FREIGHT BUSINESS WAS RUINED AND THE PARTNERSHIP OF RUSSELL, MAJORS, AND WADDELL WAS DISSOLVED. RUSSELL AND WADDELL HAD BEEN DEAD MANY YEARS.

MAJORS MADE AND LOST SEVERAL FORTUNES IN HIS 70 YEARS ON THE PLAINS. HE HAD GIVEN WILLIAM F. CODY (BUFFALO BILL) HIS FIRST JOB AS A BOY, HAD TAUGHT HIM TO READ AND WRITE AND CODY HAD BEEN ONE OF HIS FREIGHTERS. ABOUT 8 YEARS AGO, COL. CODY MET MAJORS IN DENVER. HE HAD NOT HEARD OF HIS OLD EMPLOYER FOR YEARS. HE FOUND MAJORS WAS WITHOUT MONEY AND HAD HARDLY ENOUGH TO EAT. CODY WENT TO MAJORS' CABIN AND FOUND THE FLOOR COVERED WITH MANUSCRIPTS. THE OLD MAN WAS WRITING THE STORY OF HIS LIFE ON THE FRONTIER.

"IF YOU'LL FINISH YOUR BOOK," SAID COL. CODY, "I'LL GET IT PRINTED FOR YOU AND I'LL PAY YOUR EXPENSES UNTIL ITS READY."

CODY PAID THE CABIN RENT FOR 6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE AND GUARANTEED IT INDEFINITELY AND INSTRUCTED A GROCER TO GIVE MAJORS UNLIMITED CREDIT. THEN HE WENT TO EUROPE FOR A YEAR WITH THE WILD WEST SHOW. WHEN HE RETURNED, HE FOUND MAJORS HAD WRITTEN ENOUGH FOR SEVERAL BOOKS. SO HE HIRED AN EDITOR AND THE MANUSCRIPT WAS TRIMMED AND PUBLISHED. PRENTISS INGRAHAM, BUFFALO BILL'S BOSWELL, WAS THE EDITOR.

THE IMAGINATIVE EDITOR

"THE ONLY FAULT I FIND WITH COL. INGRAHAM," REMARKED MAJORS, "IS THAT HE WILL STRAY AWAY FROM FACTS DESPITE MY MOST EARNEST ENTREATIES. IF I SAY '3 INDIANS' HE STICKS IN 5 AND WHERE I SEE ONLY 200 BUFFALO, HE FINDS 2,000. I KNOW HE MERELY WISHES TO BE PICTURESQUE, BUT I AM DICTATING HISTORY AND AS A TRUTHFUL HISTORIAN I CANNOT COUNTENANCE GROSS EXAGGERATION, EVEN IF THE BOOK DOES NOT SELL A COPY."

"THE TROUBLE WITH COL. MAJORS," SAID COL. INGRAHAM, "IS HIS EXTREME MODESTY. HE IS SO FAR FROM BEING A BOASTER THAT HE HUGS THE OTHER SHORE ALTOGETHER TOO CLOSELY AND WILL NEVER LET ME GIVE HIS NARATION THE BENEFIT OF A DOUBT. FORTUNATELY, I HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING WITH HIS PUBLISHERS AND AM ENABLED TO CORRECT THE PROOFS AFTER THEY LEAVE COL. MAJORS' HANDS."

THE BOOK DID NOT MAKE MAJORS A FORTUNE AND LATER BUFFALO BILL SENT HIM TO NEBRASKA TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE RANCH.

HIS HATRED OF PROFANITY

ASIDE FROM HIS FREIGHTING BUSINESS, THE THING THAT MAJORS WAS MOST NOTED FOR THROUGHOUT HIS LONG CAREER IN THE WEST WAS HIS DEVOTION TO RELIGION. HE ALLOWED NO PROFANITY AMONG THE MEN HE EMPLOYED - AT LEAST NOT IN HIS PRESENCE. BESIDES HE GAVE EACH MAN A POCKET BIBLE. OCCASIONALLY, ON HIS TRIPS, HE WOULD MAKE AN INSPECTION. IF A FREIGHTER COULDN'T SHOW HIS BIBLE, MAJORS GAVE HIM ANOTHER.

IN SPEAKING OF MAJORS' INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS MEN ABOUT PROFANITY, AN EARLY SETTLER SAID: "IT WAS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT MAJORS STARTED EVERY WAGON TRAIN OFF WITH A PRAYER SERVICE. BUT HE DIDN'T ALWAYS GO WITH HIS MEN. NOW, IF A MAN'S VOICE COULDN'T BE HEARD FOR A HALF A MILE, HE WASN'T ELIGIBLE TO BE A BULL WHACKER. OUR HOUSE WAS 2 MILES FROM THE RIVER AND WE COULD PLAINLY HEAR THE REMARKS MAJORS' FREIGHTERS MADE WHEN THEY WERE GETTING A TRAIN ACROSS THE RIVER. MANY OF THE FREIGHTERS WERE SPANIARDS, BUT IT WASN'T NECESSARY TO HAVE A LEXICON TO KNOW THAT THE DRIVERS WERE COMMENTING ON THE CHARACTER OF EVERY ANIMAL IN THEIR TRAIN."

MAJORS WAS BORN NEAR FRANKLYN, KENTUCKY, 86 YEARS AGO, AND IN 1818 HIS FATHER MOVED THE FAMILY TO MO., CROSSING THE MISSISSIPPI AT ST. LOUIS ON A FLAT BOAT, PROPELLED BY 3 FRENCHMEN. ST. LOUIS WAS AT THAT TIME A TOWN OF ABOUT 4,000 PEOPLE MOSTLY HALF BREEDS AND TRADERS. THE FERRY BOAT WAS ONLY LARGE ENOUGH TO CARRY 1 WAGON AT A TIME AND THAT WITHOUT THE TEAM. MAJORS IN TELLING OF IT SAID: "MY FATHER FIRST SETTLED IN LAFAYETTE COUNTY, BUT IN

1825 HE MOVED TO WHAT WAS CALLED 6-MILES-SQUARE, WHICH HAD BEEN THE RESERVATION OF FORT OSAGE IN JACKSON COUNTY, BUT WAS OPEN FOR SETTLEMENT ON THE REMOVAL OF THE MILITARY POST TO FORT LEAVENWORTH ABOUT 1822 OR 23. FORT OSAGE WAS AT THAT TIME THE FATHEREST WEST THE U. S. TROOP WERE STATIONED. THE TOWN OF SIBLEY NOW OCCUPIES ITS SIGHTS."

"IN JUNE, 1825, A TREATY WAS MADE WITH THE OSAGE INDIANS AFTER WHICH WE BUILT A CABIN 5 MILES EAST OF WHERE INDEPENDENCE NOW STANDS. I WAS THE FIRST WHITE BOY ANYWHERE IN THE REGION. THE LAND WAS VERY FERTILE AND WAS TIMBERED 5 OR 10 MILES BACK FROM THE MISSOURI RIVER, WALNUT TREES FROM 4 TO 6 FT. IN DIAMETER WERE ABUNDANT, AND THERE WERE A GREAT MANY DEER, ELK, BEAR AND OTHER LARGE GAME, EXCEPT BUFFALO, WHICH WERE ONLY FOUND FURTHER WEST. I HAVE KILLED MANY A BEAR WHERE KANSAS CITY NOW STANDS. THE TRAILS THROUGH THE WOODS WERE NEARLY ALL MADE BY BEARS. DOGS WERE THEN AS IMPORTANT TO THE SETTLERS AS HORSES AND NEARLY EVERY MAN KEPT FROM 3 TO 6. MY FIRST TRIP UP THE KAW WAS IN 1849. I LOADED SOME GOODS IN KANSAS CITY AND TOOK THEM TO SOME POTAWATOMIE TRADERS WHERE ST. MARYS NOW STANDS. I CROSSED THE WAKARUSA RIVER NEAR THE SITE OF LAWRENCE, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING AT ALL AT KANSAS CITY OR AT TOPEKA. THERE WAS NEARLY TWICE AS MUCH WATER IN THE KAW THEN AS THERE IS NOW.

IN THE FREIGHTING BUSINESS

MAJORS SOON WENT INTO THE FREIGHTER BUSINESS FROM FORT LEAVENWORTH TO THE SOUTHWEST TO THE SANTA FE TRAIL. HE BEGAN WITH 6 WAGONS, BUT THE BUSINESS GREW UNTIL THE FIRM OF RUSSELL MAJORS

AND WADDELL WAS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CONCERN WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

"DIDN'T THE INDIANS BOTHER YOU A GOOD DEAL IN THOSE EARLY DAYS OF FREIGHTING?" MAJORS WAS ONCE ASKED.

"THEY ANNOYED US SOME," HE REPLIED, "BUT THE OUTFIT WAS NEVER ATTACKED WHEN I WAS ALONG. I WAS ALWAYS EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS, NEVER TOOK ANY CHANCES OF SURPRISE AND WAS CAREFUL TO TREAT THE INDIANS WELL ON ALL OCCASIONS WHICH MAY ACCOUNT FOR THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD ME. I REGRET TO SAY THEY WERE NOT SO CONSIDERATE WHEN I WAS ABSENT, FOR MANY A GOOD TEAM MASTER LIES BURIED ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL AND IN THE PLAINS BETWEEN MISSOURI AND THE OLD FORT LARAMIE WHOM THE SAVAGES SHOT FROM AMBUSH."

WHEN GEN. ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSON WAS SENT WEST TO QUELL THE MORMON INSURRECTION, MAJORS HAD THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACT TO FURNISH JOHNSON'S COMMAND WITH SUPPLIES. THE FREIGHT RATE FROM THE MISSOURI RIVER TO SALT LAKE WAS \$21.60 FOR 100 LBS., BUT THE RISK FULLY WARRANTED THE CHARGE. AT ONE TIME THE CONTRACTOR LOST 1,000 BEEVES IN A BLIZZARD AND ON ANOTHER OCCASION 75 OF HIS WAGONS WERE CAPTURED BY GEN. DANIEL WELLS, THE MORMON LEADER, TOGETHER WITH THE STOCK. PART OF THE STOCK WAS RECOVERED, BUT THE WAGONS WERE A TOTAL LOSS.

A FEW YEARS AGO, A MAN, J. F. WELLS OF SALT LAKE, CALLED ON MAJORS IN CHICAGO. "DO YOU REMEMBER THE 75 WAGONS YOU LOST IN THE VICINITY OF GREEN RIVER BACK IN '56," HE ASKED. "I RECKON I DO," WAS THE ANSWER. "THEY WERE CAPTURED BY LOT SMITH, WHO WAS SERVING UNDER GEN. WELLS."

THE MORMONS USED THE NAILS

"YES," ADDED THE VISITOR, "MY FATHER AND, BY THE WAY, I WANT TO TELL YOU A LITTLE INCIDENT CONNECTED WITH THAT RAID. NAILS WERE WORTH 60¢ A POUND IN SALT LAKE THEN, AND WHEN THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED OF THE CAPTURE AND BURNING OF THE WAGONS, A LOT OF US BOYS WERE SENT OUT WITH AXES, HAMMERS, AND CHISELS, TO BREAK UP THE WAGONS INTO STILL SMALLER FRAGMENTS AND EXTRACT EVERY NAIL WE COULD FIND. BUT THAT ISN'T ALL; THE NAILS WE EXTRACTED FROM YOUR WAGONS WERE AFTERWARDS USED IN THE ROOF OF THE TABERNACLE WHICH WAS THEN UNDER CONSTRUCTION."

MAJORS HAD SEVERAL NARROW ESCAPES FROM INDIANS. AT ONE TIME THE APACHES CAPTURED HIM NEAR THE WAGON MOUNDS ON THE OLD SANTA FE TRAIL AT A POINT WHERE A YEAR LATER A STAGE COACH WAS SURROUNDED AND THE 10 PASSENGERS IT CARRIED WERE MASSACRED BY THE APACHES.

RETURNING FROM A TRIP AFTER STRAY CATTLE, THE "COLONEL" AS HE WAS CALLED WAS SURPRISED WHEN ONLY 6 MILES FROM CAMP AND DESPITE A VIGOROUS RESISTANCE, DURING WHICH HE WOUNDED 2 OF THE INDIANS THEY SUCCEEDED IN TAKING HIM PRISONER AND LED HIM INTO THEIR CAMP. PENDING A POW WOV TO DECIDE UPON THE METHOD OF HIS DEATH, HE WAS TIED TO A POST AND LEFT TO MEDITATE, WHILE THE BRAVES SET IN A CIRCLE AND CONGRATULATED THEMSELVES UPON THE CAPTURE.

THE SQUAW SAVED HIM

AFTER A LONG TALK THEY MADE A DECISION AND AROSE, WHEN A TALL AND GRIZZLED SQUAW STEPPED INTO THE CIRCLE AND BEGAN HARANGUING THE BRAVES. AT FIRST THEY GREETED HER REMARKS WITH LOUD GRUNTS OF DISAPPROVAL, BUT PRESENTLY SHE GREW ELEGANT, AND PLEADED EARNESTLY

FOR THE LIFE OF THE PRISONER, AT WHOSE HANDS SHE HAD AT SEVERAL TIMES RECEIVED CHARITY.

FROM HIS POSITION AT THE STAKE MAJORS COULD READILY SEE THE CIRCLED INDIANS, AND ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT HEAR A WORD, HE KNEW BY THE GESTURES OF THE WOMAN AND THE LOOKS DIRECTED TOWARD HIM AS SHE WAS PLEADING FOR HIS LIFE. AFTER A PARLEY, THE APPEALS OF THE SQUAW PREVAILED AND PRESENTLY A BRAVE CAME UP, LOOSED HIM FROM THE STAKE AND LEADING HIM TOWARD HIS HORSE THAT STOOD SADDLED AND BRIDLED, MOTIONED HIM TO RIDE OFF.

"YES, AND DON'T YOU FORGET," CHIPPED IN COL. MAJORS - WHO WAS LISTENING TO THE STORY, "I DID NOT LET THE GRASS GROW FOR I WAS MORTALLY AFRAID THEY WOULD REPENT THEIR ACTION BEFORE I COULD GET BEYOND THE VILLAGE. BUT I WAS NOT MOLLESTED AND MANAGED TO GET BACK TO CAMP THAT NIGHT, ALTHOUGH IN A MOST DEMORALIZED CONDITION. I OFTEN TRIED TO SEE MY DUSKY PRESERVER AFTERWARD, BUT TO NO PURPOSE."

HIGH POINTS FOR RUSSELL, MAJORS, AND WADDELL

1. Russell, Majors, and Waddell furnished the West with a great transportation system; a vast network of freight trains, an overland stage over the central route (now Union Pacific) after Congress and the army engineers had said it could not be done, and they provided through the Pony Express the only air mail, telephone and telegraph of the day.
2. The country would have been out in two during the Civil War if it had not been for the Russell, Majors, Waddell central overland stage and pony express, as the only other stage line to the west over the southern route was destroyed when the Civil war broke out.
3. These lines were laid without government subsidy and operated successfully after the war department engineers had reported in 1855 the ~~line~~ ^{route} impracticable.
4. The fast communication of the Pony was largely responsible in saving California and its gold to the Union by thwarting a proposed California secession. (Few people realize how seriously California contemplated secession. The Lecompton Convention, the governor, and both United States Senators had declared publicly for secession and the formation of a Republic of the Pacific. History of California, Z. S. Eldredge, V. 4, p. 213)
5. The Russell, Majors, Waddell stage line brought the California gold to Washington for carrying on the war. If this line had not already been in operation, a new line could not have been established quickly enough, as it took a year to establish the southern line. "(California's mines helped notably to support the nation's credit. Had the gold and silver mines in the coast states during the years 1861-1865 been turned into the treasury of the Confederacy...the whole result of the war might have been different. The total value of the precious metals shipped out of the coast states during the years 1861-64 incl. was \$186,012,460...." (History of California, Z. S. Eldredge, V. 4, p. 213.
6. This timely, indispensable, unsubsidized service to the government brought ruin to Russell, Majors, and Waddell.
7. The firm took the soldiers and supplies to Utah in 1858 to put down the Mormon rebellion.
8. Their great organized freight lines, carrying millions of tons of supplies to all the western forts, made an orderly settlement and development of the West possible.
9. These men died, declaring the government owed them more than a million dollars for their work in carrying the soldiers and supplies to Utah and other forts.
10. This contention was upheld in a dissenting opinion of the Supreme Court in as near a split in the court as could be accomplished, a 3 to 4 vote. "Finally, we further maintain that the facts devolve upon the United States an obligation thus to settle the account, which obligation should be enforced by this court, the court having all proper authority by statute to enter upon such investigations, in that respect, as justice and the rights of the parties shall require." Wallace Reports 74-7, Supreme Court of the U. S., Dec. Term, 1868- Vol. VII.

11. As this sum of money with interest would be very large today, justice demands that so great a service and sacrifice be at least recognized with a memorial park.

12. The Pony Express was America's international link in its day. Diplomatic messages could be sent faster from the Orient to Europe via the Pony Express. So important did it become in its international service that the London Illustrated News carried a column "Via Pony Express" and sent a correspondent from London to St. Joseph in those days of little European travel to report on the pony to its readers.

13. The freighting and overland stage of Russell, Majors and Waddell achieved national fame in their day. Leslie's Weekly of New York sent a correspondent to Nebraska City to report on the freighting in January of 1859 and Horace Greeley of the New York Herald Tribune came West in the summer of 1859 to report on the overland stage.

14. Russell, Majors and Waddell probably furnish the greatest lesson in free enterprise which the country produced. Congress had refused for ten years to vote either a stage or railroad over the central route because they had considered it impracticable for the winter months, the army engineers concurring in this opinion after a survey. A letter from the Kansas City Chamber of Congress by Col. Van Horn in 1857, pleading the route's practicability and eloquent appeals of Senator Thomas H. Benton did not change their point of view and they voted the stage line over the southern route in 1858 when California pressure could no longer be postponed. But in 1859 Russell, Majors and Waddell put a stage line over the central route and in 1860 a Pony Express, proving the route practicable. As a result in 1862 after the outbreak of War, Congress voted the railroad over the central route with over \$45,800,000. subsidy for the railroad and many free acres of land, but they gave the mail contract for the central stage route to the competitors of the southern route, Wall street men, thus ruining Russell, Majors and Waddell.

15. The memorial would be a memorial to the whole of the freighting, overland stage and pony express period and an effort would be made to collect in this memorial all material and information obtainable on this period.

16. The memorial should be national instead of state because all the work was inter-state.

17. The Majors' house has brought the only two national historical organizations to Kansas City that it has; The Oregon Trail Memorial, now the American Pioneer Trails Association, and the National Old Trails Road Association. Majors' picture is one of fourteen in life size bust, color, in the dome of the Denver Capitol; a victory ship was named for him; monuments to Russell, Majors and Waddell have been erected at Lexington, Missouri, and Nebraska City. The Oregon Trail Memorial Association has marked the Pony Express route and many monuments along the way have been built where old stage and pony stations once stood. There are 16 in the state of Utah alone. Majors was declared father of the pure-bred cattle industry in Wyoming because he introduced the first pure-bred cattle there, and his testimony with one other man before the Congressional committee considering the admission of Utah, was able to overcome the objections of a large group of lobbyists. The Pony Express has twice been commemorated with a government stamp, 1869 and 1911.

18. The social and moral contribution of the firm alone is worthy of commemoration as the pledge required of their employees against the use of intoxicating liquors, profanity, gambling and mistreatment of animals constituted the first prohibition and humane society in America. The giving to each employee of a Bible to carry on his westward journey, on which Bible the employee took his pledge under oath, literally carried the Pilgrim Fathers' Mayflower Compact to settle America "for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith."

19. The high Christian ethics of Russell, Majors and Waddell constitute the type of pioneers by which America should be remembered, rather than the hard drinking, shooting, swearing and gambling men so frequently depicted by the movies.

20. The site for the memorial park consists of about 45 acres in Kansas and the Majors' house across the line in Missouri. The site is especially appropriate because the formation of the Russell, Majors, Waddell partnership necessitated its selection. Majors had 100 wagons at that time the partnership was formed and the immediate increase to 350 wagons with 12 to 16 oxen for each wagon, made imperative more ground than his 820 acre farm southeast of the city (78th and Holmes) afforded and forced him to move to the State Line where the Kansas prairie offered unlimited space for the cattle and wagons. Freight trains were made up here and only a few yards from the house stood the pony express relay barn where the ponies were brought from grazing grounds near Lees Summit to be broken for the saddle and sent to St. Joseph for use in the mail and express service.

21. There are many national monuments on the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts, but none in the Middle West until you get to Scott's Bluff, Nebraska, with the exception of the Jefferson Memorial at St. Louis which marks the

Louisiana Purchase and the period of exploration. The period of settlement of the West with the freighting, overland stage and pony express that made it possible, centers around Kansas City and nearby Kansas territory. It is as important that the period of settlement be nationally recognized as the period of exploration. Russell, Majors and Waddell with their freight trains, overland stage and pony express are to the period of settlement what Lewis and Clark were to the period of exploration.

22. The transportation lines of Russell, Majors and Waddell were responsible for establishing many towns along their routes to the West:

Kansas City:

The Kansas City Star in an article of January 17, 1927, credited Majors with being the commercial founder of Kansas City. It stated that Majors got the Secretary of the Interior to sign the order for the government boats to stop at Westport Landing, a point at which most boats whistled and went by, and in the year following Kansas City gained a supremacy over neighboring towns which she retained. Spalding's Annals show that within the one year the population sprang from 2,000 to 6,000 and that nine additions were added.

Leavenworth

In his Overland Journey in 1859 Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, came west to visit the overland stage and the gold of Denver. He said of Leavenworth, "Russell, Majors and Waddell's transportation establishment between the fort and the city is the great feature of Leavenworth. Such acres of wagons! Such pyramids of extra axle trees! Such herds of oxen! Such regiments of drivers and other employees! No one who does not see, can realize how vast a business this is nor how immense are its outlays as well as its income. I presume this great firm has at this hour 2,000,000 of dollars invested in stock, namely oxen, mules and wagons. They last year employed 6,000 teamsters and worked 45,000 oxen."

Nebraska City:

The city built a \$100,000 wharf to receive the business of Russell, Majors and Waddell when the firm selected Nebraska City as its third base from which to operate its contract to take the soldiers and supplies to Utah for the Mormon rebellion. The city also agreed to close its dram shops and Majors built 500 government houses to accommodate the men who came there to work for the firm.

Denver

"That the company chose Denver instead of Auraria as a terminus was important. It marked the beginning of the elimination of Auraria and started Denver on the road to becoming the capitol and metropolis of the state. General Larimer wrote his son, John: "Russell's train changes the whole face of matters here. They are locating in Denver City. Denver is all o.k....Their monied influence will make this now the certain point...I shall sleep soundly tonight." Alvin Harlow, *Old Waybills*, p. 211.

McMasters History of the United States, p. 434, states:

"By 1859 Denver was a settlement of 1000 people. They needed supplies, and, to meet this demand, the firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell put a daily line of coaches on the road from Leavenworth to Denver. This means of communication brought so many settlers that by 1860 Denver was a city of frame and brick houses, with two theatres, two newspapers, and a mint for coining gold."

The following statement from Alexander Majors in his Seventy Years on the Frontier is pertinent: P. 166-167.

And it was very fortunate for the government and the people that such a line was organized and in perfect running condition on the middle route when the late war commenced, as it would have been impossible to carry mails on the route previously patronized by the government, which ran from San Francisco via Los Angeles, El Paso, Ft. Smith, and St. Louis for the Southern people would have interfered with it, and would not have allowed it to run through that portion of the country during the war ...

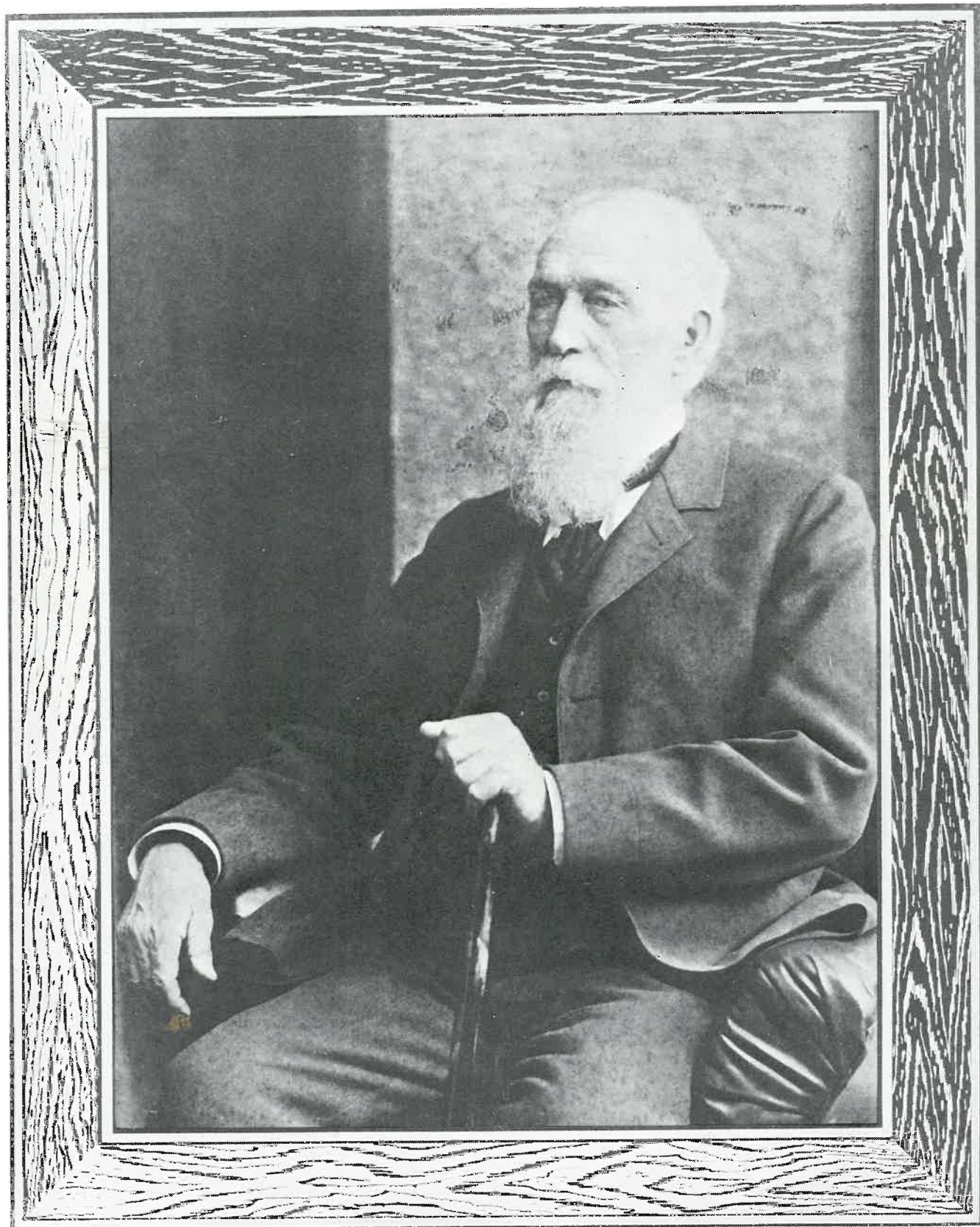
It so transpired that the firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell had to pay the fiddler, or the entire expense of organizing both the stage line and the pony express, at a loss as it turned out, of hundreds of thousands of dollars. After the United States mail was given to this line it became a paying institution, but it went into the hands of Holliday just before the first quarterly payment of \$100,000 was made. The government paid to (Holliday) \$800,000 a year for carrying the mails from San Francisco to Missouri, made in quarterly payments."

During the war there was a vast amount of business both in express and passenger traveling, and it was only available, practicable line of communication between California and the States east of the Rocky Mountains."

MUSEUM GRAPHIC

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SPRING, 1969



Back east, Majors' partner William Russell, had committed the firm to action and Alex Majors and his able assistants set about to carry out one of the most colorful and romantic ventures in the history of our pioneer west.

Majors knew the central route to California well. Fort Kearney, Fort Laramie, over the South Pass and the Wasatch to Salt Lake, Ruby Valley, on down to Carson and over the High Sierra to Sacramento. Much shorter, but what about winter? Members of congress and eastern newspapers scoffed. Someone called it the "great gamble" and others argued it couldn't be done. War department engineers in 1855 had said the route was impracticable. Majors had little time for misgivings. He—and his western associates—had but to do it.

In two months to follow, the operation was whipped into shape. Riders and station keepers were hired and relay stations were added all along the already established line to Salt

Lake City. New make-shift stations every 10 to 15 miles were hurriedly established and manned from there on out across the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada, the wildest of country yet. Watching with alarm were Utes, Paiutes, Gosiutes and the Bannocks. Of all the tribes that harassed the Pony Express, the Paiute was the worst. They were soon to burn many of the western stations and kill many of the keepers. These stations were rebuilt and the mail continued with eventual protection of troops from Camp Floyd near Salt Lake City and Fort Churchill on the Carson River.

Majors knew horses and he knew men and he tried for the best of each. Young men, slight of stature, unattached and preferably orphans rode California mustangs and the finest horseflesh from Utah territory and Missouri pastures.

Always expected by Majors of his men was discipline and good moral conduct and everything was regulated by rules. Being a man of high

Christian ethics, he presented Bibles and required each of his employees to take an oath not to swear, drink, gamble or mistreat animals. Majors' young men with their solemn oaths and leather-bound Bibles rode the trail through hazard and hardship. They had their troubles with the Indians as expected, and with the wintertime as predicted, and so many more other troubles both large and small, that will never be known. They kept right on pounding along through daylight and darkness earning their hundred a month and keep.

Majors and his company **did** get the line established, it **did** carry the mail through those winter snows and desert sands from St. Joseph, Missouri to California. But it did not get the Government mail contract. The Pony Express did in fact practically go broke. Then, as now, the carrying of mail proved to be less than profitable, especially with such primitive methods under such hazardous circumstances. Mr. Majors' firm lost heavily in this and other

operations, and now with their backs to the wall their empire was falling. Losing money day by day, Alexander Majors and his partners, hoping all the while for assistance from Washington, D. C. to come through, tightened their financial belts and moved ahead with the operation that had become too much needed and too much a part of western development to be abandoned.

Late in the year 1860, the telegraph had been started on up river from St. Joseph, Missouri through Brownsville and Omaha to Fort Kearney. With each pounding hoof-beat the Pony Expressmen watched other nameless men feverishly stretching Edward Creighton's transcontinental telegraph line along the trail toward the Pacific. Heroes all, in such times. Surely even without

government aid or mail contract, the Pony Express could hold out till the key and sounder could tap out relief. By the grace of God, the lives of men, and the labor of horse flesh, it did. On October 24, 1861, the last connection was made at Salt Lake City and a slender strand of wire, the first transcontinental overland telegraph, took over the job of rapid communication between East and West. The Pony could now rest. A job well done.

The success of the Overland Pony Express of Russell, Majors and Waddell is measured not in dollars but in accomplishment. Through its collective efforts and at great financial loss to Alex Majors and his associates the feasibility of the Central route as the best mail route to California was demonstrated. The Pony Express is credited with helping to

save that Golden State for the Union and thereby removing fuel that might prolong this terrible conflagration or even change the course of the conflict.

Simply said, it filled a critical gap of time in history, when a faster exchange of messages was needed with a remote state, at a time when Civil War threatened and plagued our nation.

Alex Majors in later years must have spent many thoughtful hours recounting the times he spent on so many now historic trails to so many now historic places. He could recall, no doubt with disdain, the dust and odor of the bull trains, the whoop of Indians and the chill and heat of the plains. The wail of the coyote and the grunt of the buffalo were firmly impressed within the inner



Pony Express rider and the advanced telegraph. Original painting in Visitor Center, Scotts Bluff National Monument. Courtesy, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior.



The old Majors home at 8145 State Line in Kansas City, Missouri. Built in 1856 it still stands as a monument to the region's pioneer history. A landmark left from a glorious and thrilling era of pioneer westward expansion. Tentative plans are to restore it as a museum dedicated to the times of a grand old gentleman, Alexander Majors.

reaches of his memory. Also there surely came back to him vivid pictures of vast pure horizons without blight of civilization.

These horizons were indeed his business and as he moved toward his very last he recorded just some of those experiences for his book "Seventy Years On The Frontier." In 1886, he stood on the bank of the Mississippi River, where as a boy he had landed from the ferryboat in 1818, and gazed across at a city that had since sprung up in his tracks, St. Louis, Missouri.

Born in the year 1814 near Franklin, Simpson County, Kentucky, young Alex came to Missouri when his father Benjamin Majors moved his family to Missouri Country and settled in Lafayette County and later near Fort Osage in Jackson County. He wrote that elk and bear were to be found there and recalled killing bear where Kansas City now stands.

It was there in the beloved rolling hills of Northwest Missouri that he later chose to build a home and although he was called away to attend to the far-reaching company business and to move his family with him, he kept a fond place in his memory for the land of his youth. In the migration of his lifetime he was to live in many places among them Nebraska City, Nebraska; Salt Lake City, Utah; Denver, Colorado and Chicago, Illinois where he died of pneumonia in 1900. He is buried in Union Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri.

Alexander Majors, **Seventy Years on the Frontier**, Chicago & New York, Rand McNally & Company, 1893.

"Bibles for Bullwhackers" **Missouri Historical Review**, April 1934, Vol. XXVIII, No 3 pp. 211-213.

Arthur Chapman, **The Pony Express**, New York & London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932.

Raymond W. and Mary Lund Settle, **Empire on Wheels**, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1949.

Raymond W. and Mary Lund Settle, **War Drums and Wagon Wheels**, Lincoln, Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

"Majors, the Pioneer, Dead", **Kansas City Star**, Jan. 15, 1900.

"The Saga of the Pony Express", Wash. D. C., U. S. Post Office Dept., 1960.

Correspondence with Mrs. Orilla B. Poteet, Santa Rosa, California.

Interview with Miss Louisa P. Johnston, great-granddaughter of Alexander Majors.



The tombstone of Alexander Majors in Union Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri

COVER CREDIT — ALEXANDER MAJORS

This photograph of Alexander Majors was sent to the St. Joseph and Pony Express Stables Museums by Mrs. Orilla B. Poteet of Santa Rosa, California. It was passed along through her husband's father-in-law, John Poteet, from his father, Samuel Poteet, an assistant to Alex Majors in freighting days and was no doubt

given to him by Alex Majors himself. Samuel Poteet is described by Mr. Majors in his "Seventy Years on the Frontier" as "One of the most faithful of my men." So far as we know this photograph has not been previously published and is probably one of the last pictures ever taken of Mr. Majors. The photogra-

pher was W. T. Dole of Kansas City.

Miss Louisa P. Johnston, great-granddaughter of Alexander Majors, believes the picture was taken in December of 1899 when Mr. Majors, at age 85, came through Kansas City from the west on his way to Chicago where he died in January 1900.

EDITOR'S NOTE: McCliffe is Director of the Metropolitan Museum, and was formerly Assistant and Curator of His Joseph Museum when the article.

"Railroad Avenue roader once told me ter of a railroader's you could pawn your drunk, buy new clothes there so the call boy"

Railroad Avenue— in other railroad towns close to the railroad that was wide open hours a day. Line shops, with such names Louie's", "Square I", "Joe's Place;" a railroader pawn his watch and was short of money on pay day. Many of the sold there, rings given the wearer from the men's uniforms, and to make a hit with the waitress down at the ery." The "Uncle" main feature on Railroad but until Rule "G" men a bunch of saloons also did a business.

Typical of the time saloons, with swinging smell of cigar smoke rail along a mahogany, highly polished brass, huge glass of beer for free lunch at the railroad terms, places like house," "Whistle Stop Line," "The Switch even a place called the

Railroading in those twenty-four hour a day good call boy could crew in a hurry by the pedient of just looking saloons that lined the man he wanted was the saloons, the call boy one of the many boys that also lined the street

Canaan, N.Y.

12029

December 16, 1980

Dear Mr. Reynolds,

How can I thank you for all this wonderful material about the Pony Express! So much of the information is new to me.

I am particularly grateful to learn where my grandfather is buried. I shall write to the public library there, as you suggest, you may be sure.

William H. Russell now has one grandchild (me), three great grandchildren and four great, great grandchildren living. All but me are in Scotland & England. All interested.

(He and his brother left Dunfermline, Scotland as young men, possibly just before Carnegie (sp?) left the same town. The two families knew each other there.)

Many, many thanks!

Sincerely,

Marie Russell Hakola

11/2/76

Betty J. Smith

361-0737

Great-great granddaughter of William Waddell
of Russell, Majors and Waddell

She visited the St. Joseph Museum in her trip to examine possibilities in St. Joseph for the placement of Waddell Smith's collection.

The heirs of the Waddell Smith Pony Express collection are considering placing it in St. Joseph, Mo. It is presently located in San Raphael, Calif. in the home of the late Waddell Smith. They are not satisfied with the Alta Telegraph Building (recently restored as the western terminus) because it is owned by Wells-Fargo. (Waddell Smith for years had a running feud with Wells-Fargo for claiming a part in the Pony Express). He also chastized Mr. Boder for printing this connection in Graphics.

They - Betty Smith and her mother from Kansas City - had already been to Patee House and the Stables.

The collection would be an outright gift to whoever in St. Joseph might be selected to receive it. She was not sure as to the extent of the collection nor the contents. Mentioned were books, documents, paintings, letters, etc. and artifacts.

They have been to the restored Sacramento waterfront district and have been offered a room in the restored Alta Telegraph Building but are not satisfied with it. Too small they say. (The building is owned by Wells-Fargo which may have something to do with their dissatisfaction).

I stated that we would indeed be interested in such a gift providing that what we have to offer in the way of care storage and display is suitable. I sympathized with their concern to place the collection in safe quarters where it would be displayed, appreciated and made available to the public and researchers. I explained that we probably do not at this time have ample room to display the collection in its entirety but do have tentative plans to double the size of the exhibit area at the Pony Express Stables. In the meantime we could display selected items in one or two cases in the Stables and the library and documents would be cared for at the main St. Joseph Museum in conjunction with its library. I explained that the Stables and St. Joseph Museum provide full security (police-fire and insurance) and that the library is open the year around while the Stables is open at present six months each year and is considering extending the open time.

In answer to questions concerning security at other historical museums in St. Joseph, I explained that while some would probably have ample room, they would not have adequate fire and security protection nor professional conservation and preservation methods, nor would they be open year-round so that the collection could be used year-round.

Ms. Smith was given brochures, Museum Graphics and historical folders to supplement the verbal information to be considered by the heirs in Kansas City and California. I asked, that if we are to be seriously considered, that we be sent a list of the items so that we could better calculate the area needed to do the collection justice.

I mentioned that if we here in St. Joseph are unable to provide suitable quarters for the Waddell Smith Collection, they might consider the Huntington Library, the Univ. of Wyoming, Utah or Nevada or possibly the museum at Carson City. (They seem to favor a museum) I explained that such a museum should have a library department to catalog and store documented materials so that they might be made available for research.

We are always most eager to acquire any additional information and artifacts relative to the Pony Express and would be honored to accept the gift historical papers, paintings and artifacts from the Waddell family.

My personal opinion is that she or they expect more than St. Joseph can provide in the way of a home for this collection. If, however, they have decided on St. Joseph as the ultimate home for this collection, the St. Joseph Museum would have a better chance than other museums here since it is more highly qualified being fully accredited and with professional care.

A letter should be forwarded to Ms. Smith at an early date to reiterate the statements made verbally.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Don R", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

← Called 4-20-10:30 AM
AR. apr. 1984

From: Anne Canfield and Beverly Haskins
Prime Time News Bureau

Special to UPI

(Majors)

HOME OF PONY EXPRESS FOUNDER

RESTORED IN KANSAS CITY, MO.

KANSAS CITY, Mo.--A historic white frame house built here in 1856 by a co-founder of the Pony Express is undergoing a \$1.4 million restoration and will be open to the public for the first time this spring.

Alexander Majors, who built the house, was one of three partners in the overland freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell. Credited with helping establish Kansas City as the gateway to the American West, Majors was skeptical at the outset about the wisdom of launching the Pony Express operation.

(the arch at St. Louis St. Joseph)

His reservations proved well-founded, because the previously profitable Central Overland Express freighting firm was thrown into bankruptcy about a year after the Pony Express made its debut.

But Majors, whose former home is the third oldest house in Kansas City, was above all a man of his word. When partner William Russell promised Sen. William McKendry Gwin of California that the firm would undertake a faster pony route to the west, both Majors and Waddell agreed to carry out the pledge made by one.

(The route was west, the best of the route was the route to the west.)

Within 60 days of the decision to proceed, the Pony Express was ready to run. St. Joseph, Mo., was the eastern-most point, with Sacramento, Calif., the western terminal. On April 3, 1860, the first rider set out on a 2,000-mile relay that was completed in a record nine days and 23

-- more --

Alex Majors

hours. That was less than half the time it had taken horse-drawn stage-coaches and freight wagons pulled by oxen and mules.

Historians agree that although the Pony Express was an operating success it was a financial failure, largely responsible for the demise of the Russell, Majors and Waddell firm in 1861. Other factors, which to some extent exonerate Russell, include the advent of the transcontinental telegraph and the national upheaval of the Civil War, including numerous border disturbances in the Kansas City region.

Majors's legendary code of ethics extended to the rough-hewn riders he employed for the Pony Express, who were required to sign the following contract:

"While in the employ of A. Majors, I agree not to use profane language, not to get drunk, not to gamble, not to treat animals cruelly and not to do anything else that is incompatible with the conduct of a gentleman. And I agree, if I violate any of the above conditions, to accept my discharge without any pay for my services."

A Bible was standard issue for Pony Express riders.

The Greek Revival-style home now being restored in Kansas City was situated on Majors's 800-acre farm. Bracketed today by Ward Parkway, one of the most prestigious of Kansas City's famed boulevards, and flanked by a shopping center to the south and Cadillac dealership to the north, the home once was surrounded by pastureland and orchards. Just west of the front portico extends the Missouri-Kansas state line, and visitors to the

home will be able to stand on the boundary, with one foot in Missouri and the other in Kansas.

The restoration is a project by the Junior Women's Symphony Alliance, in cooperation with the Alexander Majors Historical Trust and the Russell, Majors & Waddell National Historic Association. Major corporate contributors are Yellow Freight and Kroh Brothers Realty Co., both of which are headquartered in Kansas City.

The home, which had remained empty since the death in 1979 of Louisa Johnston, Majors's great-granddaughter, opens April 28 as the 15th annual Designers' Showhouse, in a 4-week benefit for Kansas City's symphony orchestra. More than 200,000 persons have toured the previous 14 showhouses, resulting in gifts of \$1.2 million to the local symphony.

The home will remain open daily through May 27, when furnishings provided by 23 Kansas City-area interior designers will be removed. Plans call for the home and 6-acre grounds, including 4.8 acres that have been deeded as a park to the city of Kansas City, Mo., to reopen in June or early July, complete with the addition of a gazebo, smokehouse, barn and well.

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ALEXANDER
MAJORS
OCT. 4, 1814.
JAN. 13, 1900.
HIS WIFE
KATHERINE
STALCUP
SEPT. 26, 1820.
FEB. 13, 1856.

MAJORS