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Contact: Sarah Bader-King
(816) 444-1858
director@wornallmajors.org

NAMES OF THOSE ENSLAVED BY ALEXANDER MAJORS DISCOVERED

(Kansas City, Missouri)—Wornall/Majors House Museum (WMHM) is pleased to announce that new research has revealed the names of nine individuals enslaved by early Kansas Citian Alexander Majors.

These nine people have been identified as Amos, 45 years old, Henry, 45 years old, Sarah, 32 years old, Charles, 30 years old, John, 25 years old, John, 21 years old, Thomas, 21 years old, Little John, 18 years old, and Milly, 12 years old. The names were found during a research project of property deeds related to Alexander Majors. In 1860, Majors entered a deed of trust with Alexander Street, placing his real estate and other property with Street as he paid off debts due to bankruptcy. The nine enslaved people enslaved by Majors were enumerated as “personal property.”

Majors built the Alexander Majors House – located at 8201 State Line Road, Kansas City, Mo. – in 1856. His company Russell, Majors & Waddell held a virtual monopoly on freighting for the United States Army west of the Mississippi from 1855-1860. The three partners were also co-founders of the Pony Express. Much of Majors’ success was due to the difficult and dangerous work undertaken by enslaved men and women. Twenty-five-year-old John was a blacksmith, a highly valued skill for an enslaved man. John most likely repaired the wagons and forged mule and oxen shoes that would have been crucial for Majors’ businesses.

Majors most likely enslaved at least 22 people between 1850 and 1860 – possibly more. WMHM staff will continue to research the lives of those enslaved by Majors and to incorporate new information into public tours of the Alexander Majors House.

About the organizations:

Wornall/Majors House Museums manages two of Kansas City’s most significant and dynamic historic structures: the John Wornall House (built 1858) and Alexander Majors House (built 1856). The two homes merged in 2011 to form one non-profit organization that preserves and protects these two local landmarks. The museums serve as the dynamic backdrop for events and community gatherings and tell an inclusive and accessible story about American mid-nineteenth century history.