

STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION OF KANSAS

Topeka, Kansas

September 28 1940

Dear Mr Simons:

This will answer your letter of September 24.

It would be presumptuous of me to make any suggestions to you in the matter of public speaking, whatever the occasion. I asked the Kansas Historical Society to furnish you with whatever material they thought would be of interest to you. This was done only in case your own opportunities for research might be limited by lack of time.

I hope this occasion is as interesting as have been the others which I have attended. It is one of five already set for October, a number that should be increased by two by the end of next week. The happy combination is Black Jack, however, is that the marker commemorates an highly significant incident and is located at one of our best roadside parks.

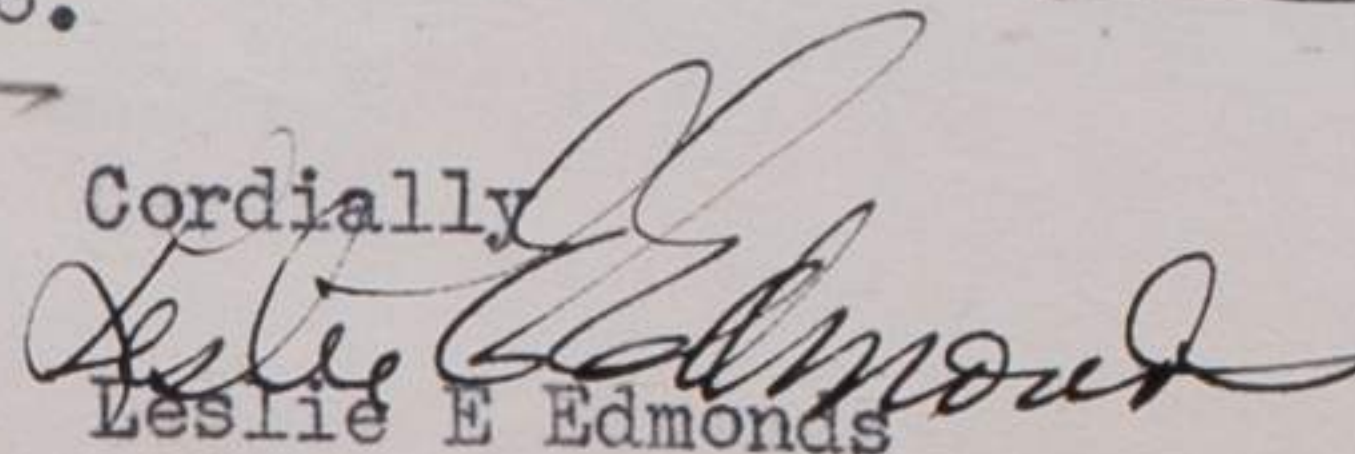
It is my understanding that Russell Hays, who donated the land for the park desires to have the gift regarded as one by the entire Hays family. I understand also, that a great-granddaughter of the original Hays will actually unveil the marker. This you can confirm with Mr, Robert C. Rankin.

It is advisable that the Kansas State Chamber of Commerce and The Kansas Historical Society be given credit for their preliminary work in connection with this marker campaign. It was begun by the State Chamber in 1934 when Roy Baily was president. It has been carried on by a committee of which Fred Brinkerhoff was chairman. Fine work by those two and Kirke Mechem resulted in Governor Payne Ratner's giving favorable consideration to the project this summer after it had been almost dormant for six years. It should be regarded not as an expense but as an investment. I am certain that when most of the available sites are marked that Kansas will soon achieve further reputation for save, comfortable and interesting highways. Increased travel by our local residents and by guests from other states should result in an increase in gasoline taxes sufficient to offset the expense.

Under the present schedule the Black Jack marker which was constructed more than two years ago will actually be third in erection. Preceding it are the markers at Shawnee Friends Mission near Merriam, and the Pike Pawnee Village near Scandia. It should be understood that the marker is not necessarily on the exact site of the incident which it commemorates. The location of that site is described in the inscription. Incidentally, a stone marker, one of several placed to outline the old Santa Fe Trail, has been moved to the site of the Black Jack marker. The Santa Fe Trail stone was placed originally in 1906.

Mr W C Simons
Lawrence, Kansas

Cordially


Leslie E Edmonds

Information Section