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THE HISTORY OF HERMON SAMUEL MAJOR, M.D.

Hermon Samuel Major was born September 10, 1876 on a large farm seven miles south east of Pleasant Hill, Missouri, in Cass County.

Prior to King Henry VIII in England all of the members of the Major family were Catholics. King Henry VIII organized the Episcopal Church and then they were all Episcopalians down to the time of his great grandfather, John Major of Culpepper, Virginia. He married Miss Euphrates Sleet of Culpepper, Virginia, and she was a strong Baptist, so he went into the Baptist church with her, and their oldest son, John Sleet Major, was a Baptist minister. When his son was eight years old, John Major sold his plantation at Culpepper, Virginia, and bought a farm on the Pike Road nine miles from Frankfort, Kentucky, where Dr. Major's father, William Weeden Major, was born October 21, 1838. In 1850 Reverend John Sleet Major sold his farm near Frankfort, Kentucky, and brought his family, his negroes, and everything he had by steamboat and landed at Liberty Landing which was just across the Missouri from what is now known as Kansas City, Missouri. He went over into the Kearny, Missouri neighborhood in Clay County and when he got there he thought that all the good land had been taken up – along the creeks where there was plenty of water – so he bought 400 acres of prairie land just west of the depot in Kearny, Missouri, and he paid 12 1/2 cents an acre for it and in 1950, just 100 years later, that 400 acres sold for \$150.00 an acre.

Dr. Major's father, William Weeden Major, was in the Confederate Army in the cavalry under General Sterling Price and General Joseph Shelby. He was in the Battle of Lexington, Missouri, the Battle of Lone Jack, the Battle of Westport here in Kansas City, Missouri, and they used the Wornall home here in Kansas City as a hospital and Dr. Major's father helped carry the wounded soldiers to the Wornall Home. He was in the Battle of Wilson Creek near Springfield, Missouri, and the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas. He met Miss Lucinda Catherine Hulse of Oil Trough, Arkansas, who was born in Oil Trough, Arkansas and they were married August 14, 1864.

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When the Civil War was over they moved back to Missouri and Reverend John Sleet Major bought 1,000 acres of land seven miles south east of Pleasant Hill, Missouri for his son, William Weeden Major, for 12 1/2 cents an acre and that is where Dr. Major was born. He had three brothers and three sisters.

Joseph Smalley Major was born July 12, 1866. He married Gertrude Davenport in Seattle, Washington, May 17, 1906, and they had one son, Eugene Major, who is married and lives in Detroit, Michigan. Joseph Smalley Major died July 29, 1950 and was buried in Seattle, Washington, and his wife died a few years later.

Joseph Sleet Major was born February 23, 1870 and he married Miss Blanche Mauldin March 15, 1905, and they had one daughter, Helen Major, who died when she was three years old. Mrs. Blanche Major died several years ago and John Sleet Major died December 26, 1958. He was buried in El Paso, Texas.

William Hardin Major was born June 4, 1874 and he died October 7, 1874.

Miss Annie Louise Major was born January 22, 1869, and she married Mr. M. B. Pitt of Arkansas. They had no children and Mr. Pitts died several years ago and was buried in Arkansas. Mrs. Annie Louise Pitts died several years ago and was buried.

Dr. Major's mother died July 3, 1906 and his father died August 31, 1921, and they were buried in Artesia, New Mexico.

Susan Belle Major was born January 14, 1873. She married her first cousin, Mr. James C. Davis of Kearney, Missouri, and they had two sons and one daughter; Albert Callatin Davis who died several years ago out West, and William Hermon Davis who is married and lives in California and has one son, Mark Davis. Her daughter, Kathryn Davis married Roy McLaughlin and they had two daughters, Georgia and Virginia McLaughlin. Kathryn McLaughlin died several years ago. Mr. James C. Davis died several years ago and is buried in Artesia, New Mexico. Mrs. Susie Davis is still living and is in the Ingleside Home, 521 Huntoon, Topeka, Kansas.

Miss Lillian Katherine Major was born July 29, 1879 and died January 18, 1950, in Los Angeles, California, and was buried in Artesia, New Mexico.

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Dr. Major was named for his uncle, Dr. Hermon S. Major of Kearney, Missouri, who was the grandfather of Dr. Ralph Hermon Major of Kansas City, Missouri, who was formerly professor of internal medicine at the University of Kansas Medical School. Dr. Major's great, great, great grandmother was born in Scotland and her maiden name was "hermon," and that is where the name of Hermon in Dr. Major's name originated.

Dr. Hermon S. Major always wanted to be a doctor and when he was a small boy on the farm near Pleasant Hill, Missouri, he played games with the other children and he would play like he was a doctor and give them bread pills. There was really no way for him to escape being a doctor, as he had five uncles and twenty cousins who were doctors.

Dr. Major went to Public School in the old Brown School House about 1 1/2 miles nor east of his home. In the fall of 1892 he entered the Pleasant Hill high school and he graduated in the spring of 1896. In the fall of 1896 he entered Scarritt Collegiate Institute in Neosho, Missouri, and he went to school with Will Rogers. The initials of the College was S. C. I. and Will Rogers said the S. C. I. stood for Sugar Coated Idiots and that was what all of us were.

In the Spring of 1897 Dr. Major lived in the home of Senator and Mrs. Thomas Benton in Neosho, Missouri, and he milked the cows and did the chores for his room and board. Their son, Thomas Hart Benton, was about seven years old and he was always drawing pictures on the board fence in the back yard and his mother would scold him for drawing pictures on the fence and I would have to wash them off. If Senator and Mrs. Benton were living now, they would be very proud of their son as he has become a very famous artist.

In the spring of 1898 Dr. Major attended Teachers Institute in Garden City, Mo. and he then taught school in the old Brown School House where he went to school as a boy and some of his pupils had gone to school with him but he got along nicely and he had no trouble with them. They all called him "Mr. Hermon."

In the summer of 1900 Dr. Major worked in Kansas City, Missouri and sold the British

Encyclopedia and he sold a set to Dr. Elmo Sanders who had an office in the Rookery Building at the south west corner of 12th and Grand Avenue. Dr. Sanders asked him what he was going to make of himself and he said that he would like to be a doctor but he

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did not have the money and Doctor Sanders asked him, if he had \$5.00 and Dr. Major handed him a \$5.00 bill, and he asked Dr. Sanders what he was going to do with it, and Dr. Sanders said, I am going to matriculate you at the University Medical College where I graduated in the spring of 1900.

Dr. Major told him he could not go to school because he did not have the money to pay for his room and board, so Dr. Sanders said, "young man you can sleep right here in my office and eat at some of these restaurants where you can eat a meal for 15 or 20 cents, so I entered the University Medical College at 913 East 10th Street in Kansas City, Missouri on September 1, 1900.

The University Medical College was founded in 1880 as the medical department of the University of Kansas City by the father and uncle of Dr. Jabez N. Jackson. The first class was graduated in 1882. A few years later it became a three year school and in the fall of 1900 it became a four year school and it was a class "A" medical school from the time that it was organized in 1880. It was first located on West 8th Street and was moved to 913 East 10th Street.

In the spring of 1900 there were 110 graduated from the school and the University Hospital was just a little west and about one half a block south of the college.

In June, 1901, Hermon S. Major attended the Teachers Institute in Harrisonville, Missouri, as he decided to stay out of Medical College in the fall of 1901 and teach school, so he could make some money.

On June 3, Miss Cora Kyle of Harrisonville, Missouri, who was attending the Teachers Institute said, "if you want to see a pretty girl, just wait until a friend of mine named Miss Aurelia Harris from Belton, Missouri, shows up." About 11 a.m. June 4, 1901, Miss Cora Kyle said, "there is my friend, Miss Aurelia Harris," and she was the prettiest girl that I had ever seen and I fell in love with her at first sight, and I kept in touch with her and we became engaged in 1903. She had two brothers.

Mrs. Major's grandfather, Mr. Jesse Tullis, was one of the earlier settlers in the Belton, Missouri, area. He owned a large farm a few miles west of the town on the north side of the road. He donated the ground for the Belton Cemetery, where he and his wife

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are buried, together with Mrs. Major's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Harris, her two sisters, Mrs. Rebecca Metheny, Mrs. Elva Barr, her two brothers, Mr. Jess Harris and Mr. William B. Harris - her aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. McManus and several cousins.

Hermon S. Major taught school at the German Town School about 1 1/2 miles south of hi

his parents' home. In the fall of 1902 he reentered the University Medical College. In 1902 Dr. Sanders moved his office to the Rialto Building at the southwest corner of 9th and Grand Avenue. When he became a junior in the Medical College, Dr. Sanders had him make calls for him to see some of his charity patients and Dr. Sanders said, "Hermon you look awfully young and I think that you should grow a beard," so Hermon S. Major turned out a full beard.

In the spring of 1904 Nu Chapter of the Phi Beta (Pi?)/medical fraternity was organized in the University Medical College and Hermon S. Major was invited to be a charter member, but the cost was \$75.00 and he did not have the money, so he had to turn it down, but in the fall of 1904 he was elected to active membership and the cost was \$25.00, so he borrowed the \$25.00 and became an active member of the fraternity and in 1922 he was elected Central Praeter by the National fraternity and he called on all of the Phi Beta Pi fraternities in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and Michigan and all of his expenses were paid by the National Phi Beta Pi Fraternity. When he became a senior he took care of patients at St. Joseph Hospital which was then at 9th and Washington Street.

In 1903 his father sold his farm seven miles south east of Pleasant Hill for \$50.00 an acre and his parents rented a house in Pleasant Hill, Missouri, but in the fall of 1903 they moved to Artesia, New Mexico, where their son, John Sleet Major, was living and they took up several hundred acres of land at a very low price.

Dr. Major graduated from the University Medical College on February 7, 1905 with the degree of M.D.

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He bought the office equipment of Dr. Charles W. Gosnay in Hardin, Missouri, in Ray County, and he began general practice of medicine on February 28, 1905, in the horse and buggy days. He could not send statements to his patients because that was considered an insult. He charged \$10.00 for delivering a baby and fifty cents a mile for visits in the country and \$1.00 for visits in the town of Hardin. His patients paid him in eggs, chickens, hogs, potatoes and any kind of food.

On October 4, 1905, he married Miss Aurelia Clara Harris in Belton, Missouri in the Methodist Church at 12 o'clock noon and were served a nice wedding dinner in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harris, the parents of Mrs. Major. They left Belton on the train at 4 p.m. and stayed all night in a hotel which was located on 11th street between McGee Street and Oak Street in Kansas City, Missouri. They left Kansas City by train about 4 p.m. and were supposed to arrive in Hardin, Missouri about 8 p.m. but Dr. Major went to sleep and they went past Hardin and had to take a train back to Hardin and did not arrive there until after midnight. They went to the home of Mrs. Hudson in the west part of Hardin where they boarded for about two weeks. They rented a two story house about two blocks west of Main Street near the depot and they bought the furniture for their house and the father and mother of Dr. Major visited them in December, 1905, and it was the last time they ever saw Dr. Major's mother as she died in 1906.

Mrs. Major was born and reared in the Baptist Church but there was no Baptist Church in Hardin, Missouri, so she went into the Methodist Church with Dr. Major which was just two

blocks north of their home.

On February 7, 1907 at 4 a.m. their son was born and Mrs. Major named him Hermon Samuel Major, Jr.

In 1909 Dr. Major became a member of the Hardin Masonic Lodge. Dr. Major organized the Ray County Medical Society and was elected the first president. He attended the meeting of the Missouri State Medical Society in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, and was elected to membership and later on he became a member of the American Medical Association. He joined the modern Woodmen of America Lodge and took out a \$2,000. Life insurance policy.

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Dr. Major and Mrs. Major attended Church and Sunday School regularly, and Dr. Major served as superintendent of the Sunday School.

In 1906 they bought a two story brick house from Dr. Marvin Grimes and Hermon, Jr. was born in that house which was just about two blocks east of the down town area. Mrs. Shepherd lived just south of us and she was a splendid neighbor, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gosney and Mrs. Owen lived across the street north of us. Mrs. Major began doing some painting and she painted several very beautiful dishes which we still have.

October 27, 1910 our daughter was born and she was delivered by Dr. Marvin Grimes of Hardin, Missouri, and Dr. Major named her Aurelia Katherine for Mrs. Major and Dr. Major's mother. Dr. Major use to tell his neighbors that he would not take a million dollars a piece for their children but he would not give a postage stamp for another one.

In the fall of 1912 Dr. Major's cousin was elected governor of the State of Missouri and Governor Elliott W. Major appointed Dr. Major assistant superintendent and Clinical Director of State Hospital No. 1 at Fulton, Missouri; so Dr. Major sold his office equipment to a young doctor and Dr. and Mrs. Major and the children moved to Fulton, Missouri, June 10, 1915.

Dr. and Mrs. Major and their children lived on the third floor in the State Hospital Building and they had three rooms with a bath room. Dr. Major had no less than 800 or 900 women patients under his personal care and in those days the hospital was called the State Lunatic Asylum and the patients were called crazy or lunatics and a great many of the patients had a straight jacket on them in the day time and were strapped in their bed at night. Dr. Major told his nurses that he was going to do away with those straps and straight jackets and several of the nurses told him that they would quit working if he did, but he was able to talk them out of it. He had a woman patient who had been there for ten years and she had never had her feet on the ground as she was in a straight jacket during the day and was strapped in bed during the night. He had two or three nurses take her down in the yard and she laid down in the grass and rolled and it was the first time in ten years she had been in the yard.

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The proper way to handle a case like hers is to use psychology and help them to understand the delusions that seem real to them, and in a little more than one year she was well enough to

go to her home in Kansas City, Missouri and she has been there ever since but for more than ten years she had never had her feet on the ground.

In 1910 Governor Gardner granted a leave of absence to Dr. Major and he was sent to Camp Pike, Arkansas near Little Rock, and Mrs. Major and the children went with him and lived in Little Rock. Dr. Major was Assistant Chief of the Nervous and Mental Section, and he had the rank of captain but he did the work of a Major all the time and drew the salary of a captain. On October 1, 1918 he was transferred to Camp Joseph H. Johnson near Jacksonville, Florida, and he had charge of all of the Nervous and Mental work in the camp. Mrs. Major and the children went with him and they lived in Jacksonville, Florida.

The Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918 and the State Hospital at Fulton thought that Dr. Major would be discharged but the army refused to let him go, and on December 1st he was transferred to Camp Merritt, New Jersey near New York City and he had full charge of the Nervous and Mental work, and he examined the soldiers who were coming back from overseas and he had to write a full history on every patient of three or four pages.

Mrs. Major and the children went back to Fulton, Missouri to live and finally Dr. Major got his discharge on February 19, 1919 and he returned to Fulton, Missouri to his position at the State Hospital. He began writing a history on all of the patients of three or four pages. Prior to that time, all the history that we had was a small card with the patient's name and address, their age, whether they were married or single, the number of children and the date of their admission.

A few years later the National Committee for Mental Hygiene made a survey of the four state hospitals in the state. Hospital No. 1 in Fulton, Missouri, had the highest rating because it was the only state hospital in Missouri where a complete history was written on every patient but now a complete history is written on all of the patients in

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the five state hospitals in Missouri, but Dr. Major had the honor of writing the first history.

In September of 1921 Dr. James Y. Simpson was advised by Dr. S. Graves Burnett to visit Dr. Major at Fulton to see about selling him an interest in the sanitarium at 31st and Euclid Avenue. Dr. Burnett was professor of Neurology and Psychiatry, and Dr. Major was one of his pupils, so Dr. Major made a trip to Kansas City, Missouri and he bought a half interest in the furniture and the fixtures of the Southwest Sanitarium for the sum of \$12,500.00 and the name was changed to Simpson-Major Sanitarium.

Dr. Simpson was the superintendent and Dr. Major was the Medical Director. Dr. Simpson had been superintendent of the Keeley Institute and was not considered ethical so Dr. Major helped him to become a member of the Jackson County Medical Society, The Missouri State Medical Association and the American Medical Association. There were only eight patients in the sanitarium, so Dr. Major put an advertisement in the Bulletin of the Jackson County Medical Society and the Medical Journal of the State Association of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Iowa and Nebraska, and by January 1, 1922 they had a total of thirty patients.

In the month of January 1919 Dr. Major was initiated into Mecca Temple of the Shrine in

New York City while he was at Camp Merritt, New Jersey.

While in Fulton, Dr. Major became a member of the York Rite Masonic Lodge and he was Master of the Masonic Lodge. In the spring of 1921 he was elected to membership in St. Crystoston Conclave of the Red Cross of Constantine in Columbia, Missouri, which is the 33rd degree of York Rite Masonry. In the fall of 1921 he transferred his membership in the Shrine from Mecca Temple in Kansas City, Missouri.

In the fall of 1921 the Simpson-Major Sanitarium charged their patients \$25.00 a week and \$100.00 for a calendar month but prices of everything advanced so that in 1931 they charged \$50.00 a week or \$200.00 for a calendar month. Dr. Simpson's health failed in December 1936, so Dr. Major bought out his interest and in January, 1937 he changed the name to The Major Clinic. Dr. Major and his family have lived in the building at

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3100 Euclid Avenue since coming to Kansas City, October 5, 1921. The prices advanced so that by 1956 The Major Clinic had to raise their prices to \$100.00 a week or \$400.00 for a calendar month.

In 1930 Dr. Major was appointed Neuro-Psychiatrist for the Kansas City Southern Railroad and he was issued a pass on the railroad.

In 1932 Dr. Major was elected a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason, and in 1922 his son, Hermon S. Major, Jr. told his father that he would like to be a Mason, and Dr. Major told him that he had been waiting to hear him say that ever since he was 21 years old and his son said he could not understand why he had never invited him to join. Dr. Major told him that he was not allowed to invite any one to join the Masonic Lodge. Dr. Major asked Hermon, Jr. where he would like to belong and Hermon, Jr. said that he was a De Molay at Ivanhoe Lodge and that he would rather belong there, so Dr. Major transferred his Masonic membership from Temple Lodge at 9th and Harrison to Ivanhoe Masonic Lodge, so both of them are members of the York Rite at Ivanhoe, and later Hermon, Jr. became a 32nd degree Scottish Rite and also a member of Ararat Shrine with a life membership.

Dr. and Mrs. Major's daughter has two sons, and her eldest son got married when he was 18 years old and on November 28, 1954 his wife gave birth to twin boys who are identical twins, so now Dr. and Mrs. Major are great grand parents, and their eldest grandson will graduate from the Osteopathic Medical College in 1960, and his father is Medical Director of the Osteopathic Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri.

Their daughter and her youngest son who is 16 years old are living in Coffeyville, Kansas. We hope they will soon move back to Kansas City, Missouri. Dr. and Mrs. Major's son, Herman, Jr. is unmarried and lives in the home with his parents.

Dr. Major is just a young doctor as he was only 82 years young September 10, 1958. His father lived to be 83 and his grandfather was 97, so Dr. Major is expecting to live to be at least 100 years old.

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Dr. Major has had sugar diabetes for three and one half years, and about two years ago he attended the Staff Dinner and Meeting of the Neurological Hospital at 2625 West Paseo and they were all sitting at the table about 7 p.m. waiting to eat their dinner and they said that Dr. Major suddenly fell on the floor and passed completely out. So they took him upstairs and put him to bed and called Mrs. Major and she called Dr. A. Graham Asher and he made a reservation at Research Hospital at 23rd and Holmes Street, and Dr. Major was taken there in an ambulance. Dr. Asher said he had a diabetic coma. Dr. Major did not become conscious until the next morning, so he cannot eat any sweets, fats, starches, potatoes, or anything of that kind. About three years ago Dr. Major developed a cataract on his left eye and it is very difficult for him to see very well. As a result of his diabetic and cataract he has not had a patient in The Major Clinic since November, 1955, and there has been no one in the building except Mrs. Major, their son, and Dr. Major. Mrs. Major has had to cook three meals a day for them, so they have decided to sell the three story brick building with a full basement at 3100 Euclid. They have 15 rooms on the third floor, 15 rooms on the second floor, 11 rooms on the first floor and 9 rooms in the basement which is half way above ground - a total of 50 rooms. Then Mrs. Major will be able to take it easy and not have to work so hard.

There are 192 feet on 31st Street and 110 feet on Euclid with extra ground in the southwest corner where they have a two-car garage. In 1928 we bought the 5 story brick building from Dr. S. Grover Burnett at \$57,875.00, and in 1927 we bought 50 feet of ground west of the building for \$6,000.00 making a total of \$63,875.00. In 1938 we enclosed a large back porch and made several additional rooms, put a new roof on the building and the total cost was \$10,000.00 which brought the price up to \$73,275.00.

In 1950 Dr. Major bought a new Buick Dinaflow Sedan, but it was so wide that we could not get it up the driveway, so we had to widen the driveway and the garage and added some more rooms at a total cost of \$10,000.00 which brought the price up to \$83,875.00.

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We are asking \$65,000.00 for the building and ground, which is \$18,875.00 less than it cost us but we are anxious to sell it and will take a loss.

Dr. Major was examined by Dr. Asher several weeks ago and he was free from any sugar as he is adhering strictly to his diet. Dr. Kern Curran examined his cataract a few weeks ago and he told Dr. Major that he would not have to operate on the cataract and that he thought it would not be very long until he would be able to relieve him of his cataract.