

The Happenings

May/June 1994

St. Joseph Museum

Pony Express National Memorial

MR. "BOBIDOUX" - Who Are You?

Where Were You?

One hundred and ninety years ago about this time of year, the Lewis and Clark "Corps of Discovery" passed the future site of St. Joseph, Missouri, on its way to the Pacific Ocean. The exact date was July 7, 1804. In a journal entry, William Clark mentions passing St. Michael's Prairie, the area where St. Joseph would be established in 1843. He wrote, "... passed Some Swift Water, which obliged us to draw up by roapes, a Sand bar at the point; opposit a butifull Prarie on the S. Side calld St. Michul, those Prairies on the river has verry much the appearence of farms from the river." There is no mention of Joseph Robidoux here at this time.

The explorers did meet Joseph Robidoux on their way back down the Missouri River two years later in 1806. However, that meeting did not take place in the area where St. Joseph would develop. This article will tell you the results of our current research into the location of that meeting.

Several earlier writers have named the mouth of the Wolf River (about 30 river miles northwest of St. Joseph) as the location for that 1806 meeting.

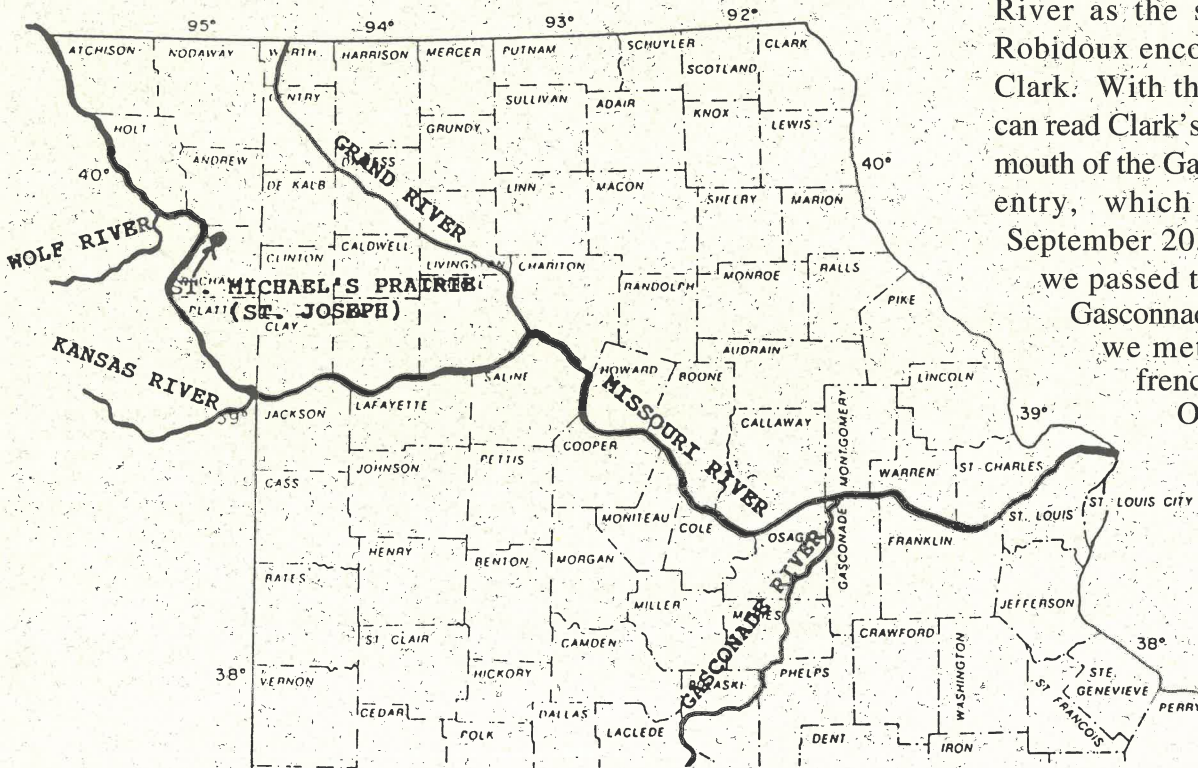
But, in their journal entries, Lewis and Clark make no mention of meeting anyone at the mouth of the Wolf River on their way down the Missouri River.

A specific mention of a Robidoux occurs in the September 16th entry, while the corps is between the mouth of the Kansas River and the point where the Grand River empties into the Missouri River. William Clark's journal entry on September 16, 1806, read: "at 11 A. M. we met young Mr. Bobidoux with a large boat of six ores and 2 canoes. ..." Could this be our Joseph Robidoux (who would have been 23 years old at that time), or was it another member of the Robidoux family?

Through research, we found an article written several decades after the meeting and a number of years before Robidoux died. It clears up most of the confusion.

In the article, the writer (who had interviewed Joseph Robidoux) names the mouth of the Gasconade River as the site where Joseph Robidoux encountered Lewis and Clark. With this information, one can read Clark's entry made near the mouth of the Gasconade River. This entry, which was written on September 20, 1806, reads: "...

we passed the enterance of the Gasconnade river below which we met a perogue with 5 french men bound to the Osarge Gd. village. the party being extremely anxious to get down ply their oars very well..."



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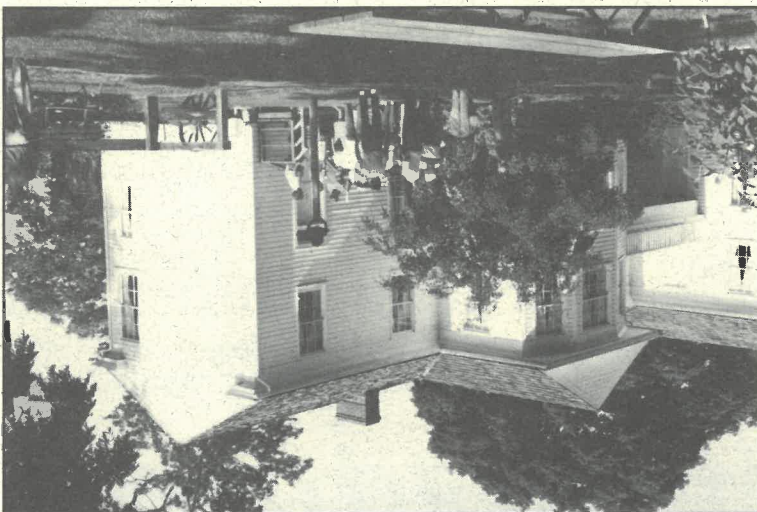
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SANTA FE TRAIL TRIP

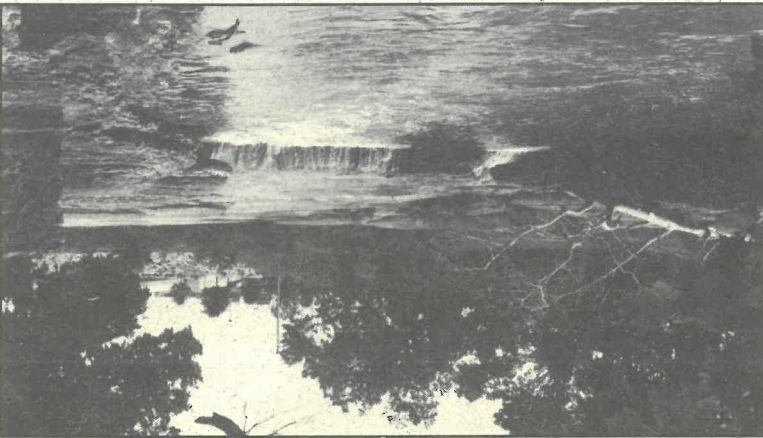
June 7, 1994

Clint Sims



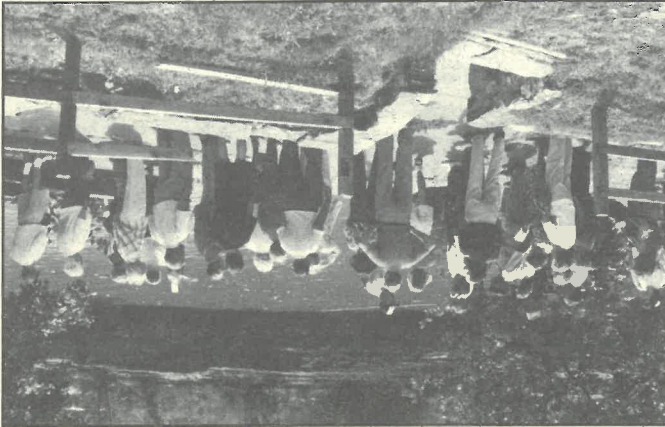
The Alexander Majors Home was the first stop on the Santa Fe Trail trip. Ross Marshall, director, and two volunteers gave tours of the house. Ross then got on the bus and accompanied our group to the site of the Fitzhugh Mill.

Clint Sims



Indian Creek in present-day southwest Kansas City. This was the location of the Fitzhugh Mill (a Santa Fe Trail site) in the mid 1800s.

Clint Sims



Field trip participants listen as Ross Marshall (facing the group) talks about Fitzhugh's Mill.

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAIL CLASS

The Oregon-California Trail and the emigration of the mid-1800s were the topics of a graduate course for 20 teachers of the St. Joseph area. The St. Joseph Museum, Pony Express National Memorial and the Missouri State Teachers Association offered the class through Northwest Missouri State University. Marilyn Taylor and Jackie Lewin taught the class with special assistance from Dr. Francis Peniston and Richard Nolf. All are members of the Gateway Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association. Sue Wagner, teacher in the Gifted Program at Skaith School, coordinated the class.

Class sessions were held in the community room of the Pony Express National Memorial in mid-April. That time was chosen to coincide with the time of year that wagons left from St. Joseph. Marilyn Taylor and Jackie Lewin gave an overview of the trail - why the route was chosen, history of early travelers, the purpose of the migration, who the emigrants were and what it was like to travel the trail. Francis Peniston presented an in-depth look at illnesses along the trail. A later session dealt with how the trail has been marked and commemorated - beginning with Ezra Meeker and the American Pioneer Trails Association and up to the

The highlight of the class was a 12 hour bus trip along the St. Joe Road. The teachers crossed the Missouri River, climbed the bluffs and rode out onto the prairie. The first pause was at Mosquito Creek which was also

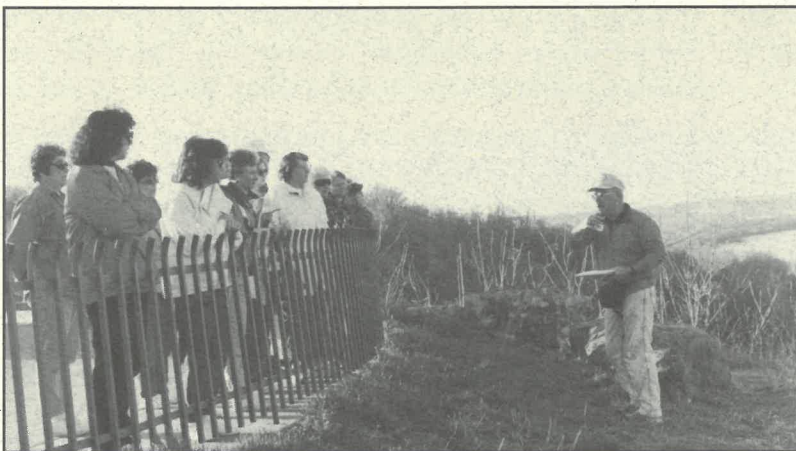
Jackie Lewin



Teachers from St. Joseph, Missouri, schools gather around the monument which marks the junction of the St. Joe Road and the Independence Road.

usually the first campsite for the emigrants. Next, the tour went on to the Wolf River crossing. At the Iowa, Sac and Fox Mission, the teachers stopped for a tour of the site. Other points of interest visited were Prairie Spring Campground, the Nemaha River crossing, Alcove Spring and the Big Blue crossing, Hollenberg Station, the junction of the Independence and the St. Joe Roads, and the historical marker at the Kansas and Nebraska border. The focus for emigrant quotes during the tour was the 1844 migration since that was the first year that emigrants jumped-off from the St. Joseph area.

Jackie Lewin



From the Wyeth Hill overlook, Richard Nolf talks about the Missouri River and crossing sites.

current Oregon-California Trails Association. The National Historic Trails system was discussed including the recent addition of the California and Pony Express Trails.

The main goal of the St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express National Memorial was to acquaint the teachers with the details of the migration and its significance to the St. Joseph area. They, in turn, can pass the information on to their students.

During the last session, the teachers wrote journal entries for their day on the trail. Also, they worked in small groups under the guidance of Sue Wagner to make "mind maps" of the St. Joe Road. The class will probably be offered again next spring.

By

Jim D. Reagins

Archaeological Research Associate

beans, squash, hazelnut, black walnut, pawpaw, wild plum, hickory nut, hackberry, grape and blackberry. Clearly hunting, farming and gathering were important means of subsistence for the people living in the village on King Hill.

The stone tools the Oneota people left behind include: small unnotched, triangular arrowpoints; end scrapers; bifacially worked knives (some are beveled); bipointed "pipe" drills; sandstone shaft abraders; grinding stones (for seeds); awl-sharpening stones; catlinite pipes; bone shaft straighteners; bison scapula hoes; antler projectile points; bone awls; worked deer phalanges (probably for the cup and pin game); a matting needle; and shell-tempered pottery. (The Oneota potters pulverized fired shell to add to moist clay before the pottery vessels were formed. The shell particles helped to keep the vessels from cracking during the drying and firing processes by reducing shrinkage.)

At the time the King Hill site was occupied, the Oneota people were beginning to receive some trade goods from other Indian groups and/or directly from French traders. The arrival of Europeans in the New World forever altered the Indians' way of life. The King Hill site contains a record of an ancient people who, unbeknown to them, were just beginning a period of tremendous cultural change. Among the trade materials found on the King Hill site were: Venetian blue glass beads, hundreds of tiny "seed" beads of various colors, metal tubes, tinkers, a finger ring, and scraps of brass or copper. The trade goods were chiefly items of decoration. No gun parts were found, that is until the recently discovered gun flint.

Because the Oneota (Kansa) did not have access to many trade guns during the early 1700s and no other gun-related material had been recovered from the site, I submitted information on this artifact to various experts on trade guns and gun flints. While I recognized it as a probable Indian-made gun flint when I first found it, I wanted to be cautious with this interpretation.

As I was bending down, looking among blades of grass and carefully studying the bare places on a vacant lot in southern St. Joseph, my eyes soon began to detect that which I was seeking. Here and there were broken pieces of ancient pottery, discarded animal bones, and flakes of flint-like stone that geologists call chert. These artifacts were left behind by the Indians who lived in a village on this blufftop area over 260 years ago. The most exciting find from the lot was what is interpreted to be a native-made gun flint (fig. 1). Before going into detail about the gun flint, perhaps I should explain why I was examining the lot!

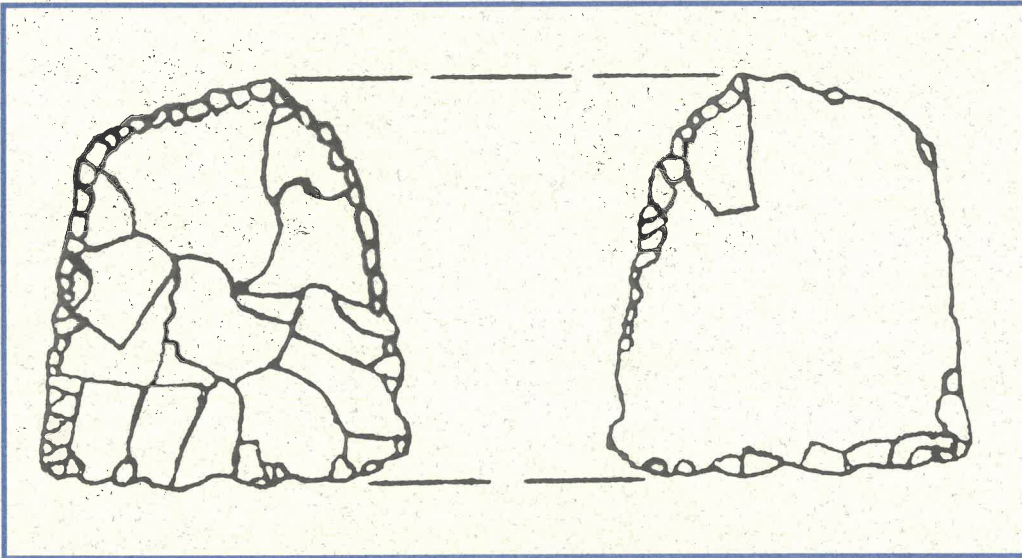
The lot is one of several that the St. Joseph Housing Authority proposes to purchase for residential construction. An archaeological assessment was requested by the housing authority, since the property is near a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1968. This listing was acquired because of findings from a 1967 joint archaeological excavation done by the St. Joseph Museum and the University of Missouri-Columbia. In the early 1970s, a second excavation was conducted by the University of Nebraska. During the two excavations, thousands of cultural items were uncovered.

Most archaeologists agree that the artifacts were left by people of the Oneota culture who are represented at this site by the protohistoric Kansa Indians. Their village was located on a portion of King Hill, during the first half of the 1700s, many years before Joseph Robidoux (the founder of St. Joseph) was born.

Research on some of those items (including over 47,000 bones and bone fragments) has resulted in two masters theses. In addition to analyzing the bone fragments to reveal what species of animals were present on the site, archaeologists studied the carbonized plant remains which had been preserved by charring in or near the ancient campfires. This showed that the diets of the Oneota people had included corn,

A flintlock gun could not function without a flint to strike the frizzen of the gun, creating the spark to ignite its powder. When a gun flint broke or wore out, it could be replaced by trade. The earliest gun flints were supplied by French traders in the Missouri River valley.

"It is thin, but it is surprising how much beating a flint can take in a lock. This looks like it is in mint condition. Judging from the back, it looks like a spall of European manufacture, but the face appears to be Indian. If you can identify the chert as being local, I would say it is of Indian manufacture, made for a trade gun and dates from the mid 1700's. Of course, it could have been made by a white man, but I imagine that it would be a long odd to bet on." (Hamilton, letter to Jim Feagins—April 8, 1994).



Indian-made gun flint recently found on King Hill.

At a later date (well after the Oneota had left this site), the flints were commonly supplied to the new world by the English.

With the Indians' heritage of flint knapping, it is no wonder that they often made their own replacements from the local cherts. This probably accounts for the presence of the gun flint recently found on King Hill. It was made from a medium gray chert, and it is of a size which suggests that it was intended to be used in either a rifle or pistol (pistols, rifles, muskets, etc. usually had different ranges of gun flint sizes). However, I suspect that the size of a gun flint was not a critical factor to the Oneota in determining the type flintlock with which it could be used. Its size and general shape corresponds nicely with other native-made gun flints with which I am familiar, but it is thinner than the majority. Ted Hamilton (a noted expert on trade guns) writes about this artifact from King Hill as follows:

Many questions remain concerning the availability of various trade materials and other aspects of the lives of the Oneota people who lived on the King Hill site. Although the site is on the National Register of Historic Places, its boundaries were

not specifically defined at the time of its nomination in 1968. With the recent finding of artifacts on the lot adjacent to the original excavation and after interviews with local residents, it is obvious that the scope of the King Hill site goes beyond what was foreseen in 1968.

It is hoped that in the near future additional research can be conducted on the residential lot from which the gun flint was obtained. There is still considerable information that remains to be learned about the people who resided so many years ago on this blufftop site in southern St. Joseph. Many mysteries about their lives have been solved. Many more can be solved with careful archaeological research. With potsherd and gun flint in hand, I realized anew that the legacy of this place and the real people it represents can still speak to those who are able and willing to listen to their ancient "voices" from the dust.

Both museum stores have new books that will be of interest to the cooks and cookbook collectors.

At the Pony Express National Memorial store you will find an exciting new book called *The Original Cowboy Cookbook*. This collector's edition includes over 200 authentic recipes from as early as the 1840s ready for re-creating in the modern kitchen. Author Wes Medley credits cooks from the bunkhouse, trail drive, line shack and saloon for his collection of recipes and remedies. One recipe is for Pony Express gridle cakes. We made them in June during the museum camp for children.

The Original Cowboy Cookbook is more than just a cookbook. It's fun to read. Medley gives credit to the creators of his recipes and shares the legends of the west as well as anecdotes from western cooks he and his family have met while compiling this collection. In addition to Pony Express gridle cakes, recipes include station pot roast served in 1864 at Dutch Flat Railroad Station in Sacramento, California, and English pot stew

continued from cover page

Since Joseph Robidoux could not be in two places at once, and in his later years he indicated that the meeting took place at the mouth of the Gasconade River, the logical conclusion is that the "young Mr. Robidoux" encountered on September 16 between the mouth of the Kansas River and the mouth of the Grand River was one of Joseph's brothers. In fact in the September 16 entry, Clark continued, "we made Some enquireys of this young man and cautioned him against prosueing the Steps of his brother in attempting to degrade the American Charector in the eyes of the Indians."

Keeping in mind this last quote, you might conclude that Joseph was one of the "5 French men... being extremely anxious to get down..." He probably knew that the Americans were not too happy with him for "attempting to degrade the American Caracctor in the eyes of the Indians," and he did not want to stop and talk to the American explorers.

Pony Express National Memorial Park Update

The demolition of the apartments on the east side of Pony Express National Memorial was completed in early May. For many years the apartments had dwarfed and obstructed the view of the historic stable. With the help of recent rains, grass has begun to sprout on the new lawn to the east of the memorial. Future plans call for an attractively landscaped area which will not only provide an inviting walk for visitors, but also enhance the visibility and recognition of the Pony Express National Memorial to those approaching from the east or south.

Our deep appreciation and a very special thank you go to Leah Spratt for her vision of what could be at the Pony Express National Memorial and for initiating a challenge grant to the board. A second special thank you goes to the many donors who helped meet the challenge.

The St. Joseph Museum store has a new book called *Mixin's and Fixin's* which contains recipes from as far back as 1815. It is illustrated with advertisements from the 1800s and includes recipes for old favorites, as well as old-time tonics and beauty aids. This book will be of particular interest if you have a sweet tooth. As the author, Robert Anderson, puts it, "For some reason, most people think food planning is the responsibility of the cook, when that's really only half the story. I know some adult eaters who are bad planners. That is, they don't leave room for dessert. Kids know better".

Also new at the St. Joseph Museum store is a book titled *American Mail Order Fashions, 1880-1900*. This is a wonderful guide to the fashions of the period that includes everything from shoes to hats along with the advertising artwork and prices from the original catalogs.

served in 1886 at the Steerhead Saloon in Lewiston, Montana. Other selections were served in places such as the Lick Skillet Ranch and the Cattlemen's Hotel.

RECENT DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTIONS

ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM

Arlen Roach - Two black and white photographs of the Wyeth-Tootle mansion, now the St. Joseph Museum. They were taken in the winter, one from Sylvania, the other from Charles.

Andy Dodds - A red wool cape with a scalloped hem that is covered with decorative stitching in black thread, dated c. 1850. It belonged to the donor's great, great uncle.

Mrs. Lewis Weigel - Several St. Joseph newspapers, two of which are dated June 6, 1944, D-Day, with headlines reporting the invasion of Normandy. Also the Centennial issue of the *Kansas City Star*, dated June 4, 1950.

Boyd Frazer - Many newspaper articles and scrapbook pages dealing with events happening in St. Joseph and the surrounding area dating from the 1940s to the late 1970s. Also donated were numerous photographs taken of a variety of subjects: The Flood of 1993, Civil War battle re-enactments, Homes Tour, various museums in St. Joseph and Savannah, Missouri, and many others.

Maudie Reynolds - A book entitled *Dedicated to our Mom and Dad....* It is a history of the Brinton, Reece, Lawless and McCrary families.

Mrs. Nelson Hillix - A clipping from the *St. Joseph Gazette*. The headline reads "Formal opening of the Children's Museum Monday," dated May 19, 1929, and a membership card for the Children's Museum. The name Children's Museum was changed to the St. Joseph Museum in 1939.

Charles Turpen - Two replica handmade gold rockers. One is a "dry wash" the other is a "stream wash". The rockers were used to separate gold from other debris. A wheel measurer was also donated. It was used to measure wheels to make sure that they were all the same size.

Quentin Kathol, OSB - Three photographs: two of Herman's Brick Yard in St. Joseph dated September 19, 1912, the other of the old Union Depot.

Nancy Hampton - Books, *The Native Americans* and *Krug Park* - *St. Joseph's Crown Jewel*. A pamphlet, *Arts & Crafts of Missouri*, #V. Clothing. Tapa cloth that is medium brown, dark brown, and cream and covered with geometric designs.

PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Geraldine Jackson - A video tape entitled "Pony Express," starring Charlton Heston, Rhonda Fleming and Forrest Tucker. The movie premiered in St. Joseph in 1952.

True Davis - A carved longhorn mounted on a wooden base. The carvings depict different sites along the Pony Express Trail.

Laura Kufahl - An exhibit and accompanying paper that donor made for History Day competition in 1993. The exhibit placed third at the National History Day Project Competition.

Glenda Kelly - A commemorative envelope celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the start of the Pony Express. Addressed to A.C. Stewart, Toledo, Ohio. Postmarked April 3, 1935.

Tom & Jean Swafford - A wooden and leather plaque. The leather has been embossed with a scene of the Pony Express Museum. Plaque is signed by Tom Swafford.

David Rich - Two Missouri lottery tickets (pull-tabs). The front of each ticket depicts a Pony Express Rider.

Paul Wessler - Five wooden wagon bows used to support the canvas of a covered wagon.

NEW AND REINSTATED MEMBERS

The St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express National Memorial boards of trustees and staff are pleased to welcome the following new and reinstated members. We appreciate their interest in the museum.

The First Bank of Missouri

Susan C. Wagner

Eastowne Equipment Co.

Pearl H. LaJoie

Ferris and Marjorie Finley

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All contributions are equally divided between the St. Joseph Museum and Pony Express National Memorial unless otherwise specified.

Enclosed is a check for:
\$ _____

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ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM
1100 Charles Street
St. Joseph, Missouri
64501-2874

Your contribution provides a one-year membership for you and your immediate family. A majority of your membership contribution is tax deductible under 1994 IRS guidelines for charitable contributions. After receiving your membership, we will send you a receipt that includes further information on tax deductibility.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

A benefit dinner and performance at the Ice House Theatre was hosted by Don and Yvette Paton and Herb and Peggy Iffert on June 25. The event occurred after this issue of *The Happenings* went to the printers so the next issue will feature an article about the evening.

Proceeds from the dinner will go to support the Pony Express National Memorial. It is through events like this and supporters like the Ifferts, Patons and those attending that the Pony Express National Memorial receives funds for its operation and development.

Now through September - The St. Joseph Museum and the St. Joseph Archaeological Society are sponsoring a dig at the Robidoux fur post site located at the beginning of McArthur Drive. Everyone is welcome to come and dig on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 7 a.m. to noon. Call Mike Fisher, 232-5738, to let him know you are coming.

June 25 - Gateway Chapter - Oregon-California Trails Association meeting. All day field trip to Alcove Springs and Big Blue River crossing.

July 4 - Happy Firecracker Day! Holiday hours at the St. Joseph Museum, 1-5 p.m. Pony Express National Memorial hours are 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

July 18 - You Are The Difference - Customer Service and Tourism Workshop. Call the Convention and Visitors Bureau to register. The number is 233-6688.

August 8-13 Oregon-California Trails Association National Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah.

August 15 - You Are The Difference - Customer Service and Tourism Workshop. Call the Convention and Visitors Bureau to register. The number is 233-6688.

For more museum information call 232-8471

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