

The Happenings

February 1992

St. Joseph Museum

Pony Express Museum

HUSTON WYETH 'S DREAM COMES TRUE

"The third lion which I killed was my prize. Capt. Hurst and I, accompanied by our gun boys and the usual porters, were on a lion hunt at the edge of the Crater. Capt. Hurst and I had dismounted, as I was tired and wanted to rest. Just below the hill on which we were resting was a stream, on the other side of which was tall grass and brush, in which Capt. Hurst thought it was probable some lions might be 'laying-up' for the day. He told his gun boy to take some of the porters, go down and make a half circle fire in this brush, so the fire would burn up the stream toward us, and if there were any lions concealed there, the fire would surely bring them out. They did this, and the fire had burned almost to the stream, but there were no signs of lions, and as I felt rested by this time, and was disgusted at our lack of success, I suggested we get on our mules and go home. Just as I was mounting, Ke-Tam-Boy (my gun boy) called out 'Bono Simbo'! 'Bono Simbo'!, which means Master Lion, and there in front of us, bounding up the hill,

Timothy J. Jones, News-Press Gazette



Museum staff workers remove the lion from the Wyeth building. He will be on exhibit at the St. Joseph Museum.

was an enormous lion." (Excerpt from Huston Wyeth's "When Dreams Come True - A Story of Africa")

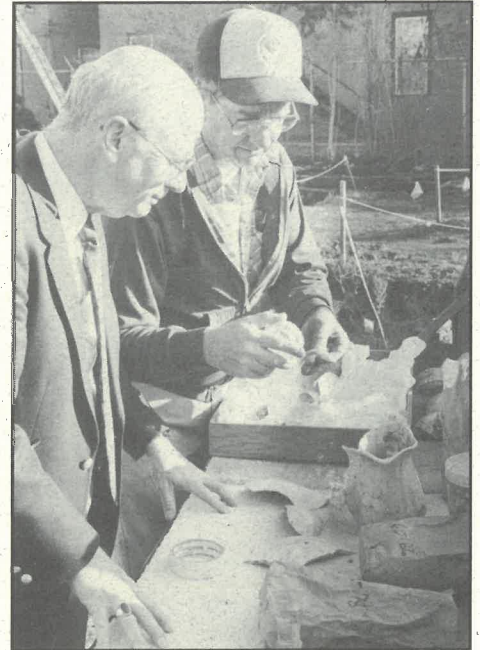
An exhibit at the St. Joseph Museum is being designed which will include accounts of the "big game hunt," the significance of the mount, the history of the Wyeth family and the Wyeth Hardware and Manufacturing Company.

A very special thanks to Huston's grandchildren, Shirley Wyeth Bradley and Stuart Wyeth-Campbell, for this magnificent contribution.

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL UPDATE: THE WELL

by Michael R. Fisher, Adjunct Staff
Archaeological Research Associate

Jackie Lewin



Rich Nolf, Museum Director, and Mike Fisher, Project Coordinator, study some of the artifacts found in the well.

From the time the Pony Express Museum was established in 1959 until October 1991, not much thought was given to the source of water for the historic stables (built in 1858). It was just taken for granted that it probably came from a well or cistern nearby. Needless to say, the volunteers who are conducting the archaeological investigation behind the Pony Express Museum were surprised when they discovered a well conveniently located inside of what would have been the original Pony Express Stables. The purpose of the archaeological investigation, which began in the summer of 1989, was to search for unrecorded descriptive details of the original Pony Express Stables and salvage artifacts (Fisher 90:4). Discovering the well was an important find.

Continued on page 5.

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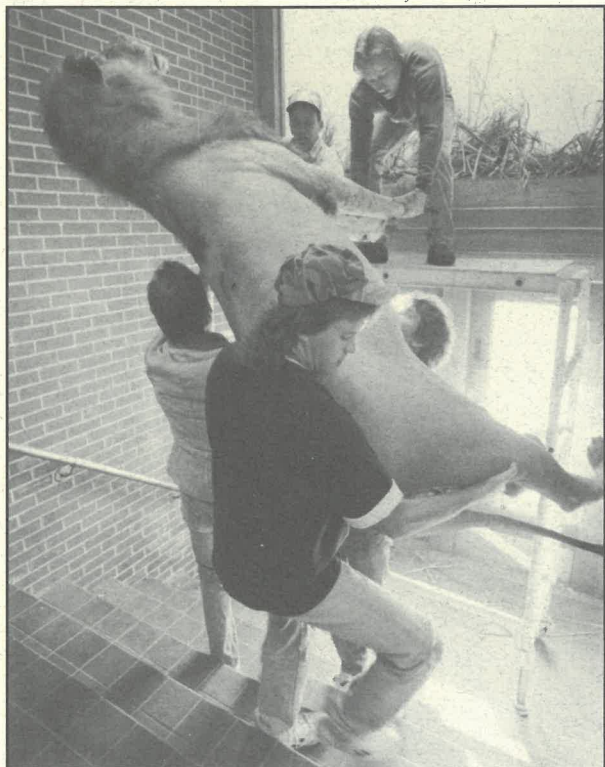
St. Joseph Museum

Pony Express Museum

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Continued on page 5.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 8 Audubon Society Meeting
- Owl Prowl

February 13 "Butterfly Gardens" by
Richard Heltzman, Audubon Society, 7
p.m., Missouri Western St. College
LRC102

February 25 St. Joseph Archaeological
Society Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Bank of St.
Joseph at Woodbine and Faraon Streets.
Questions: Mike Fisher 232-5738

Museum Hours

St. Joseph Museum

Monday through Saturday - 9-5 p.m.

Sundays and Presidents' Day 1-5 p.m.

Pony Express Museum

Monday through Saturday - 9-5 p.m.

Sundays 1-5 p.m., Presidents Day 9-5 p.m.

St. Joseph Museum

1100 Charles Street

St. Joseph, Missouri 64501-2874

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Pony Express Museum

914 Penn Street

P.O. Box 244

St. Joseph, Missouri 64502-0244

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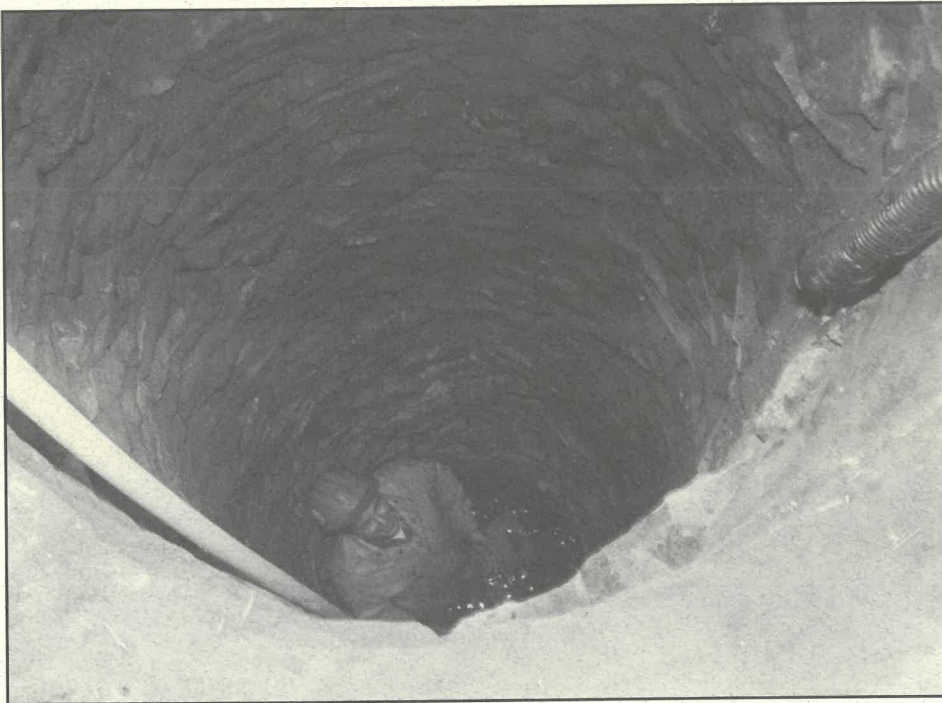
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Discovered the last part of October, the well is approximately 3'9" in diameter and 20'6" in depth from the present day surface of the ground to the bottom; the depth from the original Pony Express period grade would be somewhat less. Except for the top 18", which were lined with brick, the well walls were solidly faced with large limestone rocks. It took about three weeks to excavate the fill from the well. The excavating was done by 6" levels. At first the fill was hoisted up in buckets by hand. Later on, when this became too difficult, a rope and pulley were

returned to the 14 feet level. All the fill was screened through 1/4 inch shaker screens, which enabled volunteers to find small artifacts—brass straight pins, coins, etc.

A partial list of artifacts found in the well include: two horse shoes and a heavy concentration of children's miniature tea sets—with over one hundred complete pieces. Also found were broken ceramic and glass items such as water pitchers, a wash bowl, cups and dishes, saucers, bowls, plates and cake stands. There were enough fragments to completely restore many of these items. A bottle with a patent date of September 8, 1885, was found. A Carter's ink bottle

Jackie Lewin



Jim Watkins, volunteer, stands at the bottom of the well located behind the Pony Express Stables.

used. The water table was reached at 14 feet. The water was bailed out at first, but later on, as the bottom was neared, it was pumped out. From 14 feet on down, a shop vacuum was used to provide air in the well for safety reasons. After the digging was finished, the water

was uncovered; this type of bottle was manufactured between 1850 and the early 1900s (Covill:71:27). A druggist bottle embossed with Elfred Drug Co., was found. St. Joseph city directories date this business between 1880 and 1896. A broken bisque doll head, stone

marble, bone button, two square nails and an Indian head penny dated 1881 were discovered at the 20'6" level, or bottom of the well.

At this time, only a minimal amount of preliminary conclusions can be given regarding the well. It is possible that the well might have been there before the original stables were built and the stables were eventually built around it. However, the strategic location of the well within the foundation of the original stables seems to suggest that the well was dug to service the stables.

The St. Joseph Transfer Company occupied the stables from 1887-1901. It may be that the tea sets and glassware found in the well fill could have been damaged or lost identity shipments discarded by that company. After the well was abandoned, (city water was piped down Ninth street in 1880) it probably served as a cinder receptacle for the transfer company's heating system.

The archaeological project behind the Pony Express Museum brought out much significant information about the original structure and will be a great aid in the restoration of the Pony Express Stables. Items from the dig are on display at the Pony Express Museum.

References

Fisher, Michael R. "Archaeological Investigations at the Pony Express Museum" THE HAPPENINGS (Volume 17 Number 2) 1990:4

Covill, William R. INK BOTTLES AND INK WELLS 1971:27

Saint Joseph City Directory, printed by Ballenger & Hoyes 1880:135

Saint Joseph City Directory, printed by Hoyes 1896:178

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