

White Cloud statue to recognize historical

By **SCOTT LAUCK**

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St. Joseph News-Press

11-17-03

One hundred and sixty-seven years after the Iowa and Sac and Fox nations gave up their land in what is now Northwest Missouri, St. Joseph plans to dedicate a statue to the chief who helped make it possible.

On Sept. 17, 1836, Chief White Cloud of the Iowa Nation joined 26 other tribal members in signing the Platte Purchase, which ceded the present-day counties of Platte, Buchanan, Andrew, Holt, Atchison and Nodaway to the state of Missouri. The tribes moved to reservations in Northeast Kansas.

As legend has it, White Cloud

climbed to the top of what is now King Hill in St. Joseph's South Side to pray before signing the document. He saw that the hillside was covered in plantain weed, which the Native Americans believed grew wherever white people settled. White Cloud took it as a sign that the area was meant for the whites, and the land changed

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Importance of King Hill

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needs to be told.

► Bill McKinney,
parks and recreation director

The

private project would be city-approved — Mr. McKinney said he expects to take the proposal before the City Council this month. However, most of the \$35,000 project would be privately funded through a donation from the Bradley Family Trust.

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hands peacefully.

The life-sized bronze statue of White Cloud planned for Hyde Park would, as parks and recreation director Bill McKinney noted, "tell people about the Platte Purchase and why we're living here."

"It's a saga that needs to be told," he said.

Statue to honor historical importance of King Hill

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David Bradley, editor and publisher of the *News-Press*, said the project would be the trust's first project on the South Side.

"We like to participate in these things that help the looks and appearance of the whole community," he said.

Mr. McKinney said about \$500 of the project's cost will come out of the Friends of the Park fund.

The city is working with Utah-based artist Claudia J.H. Packer, who specializes in American Indian sculpture.

Mr. McKinney said the statue should be in place by late spring or early summer of 2004, in time for next year's Lewis and Clark commemoration.

"Although that's not part of Lewis and Clark, it would be another amenity to show people," he said.

The project is encouraging South Siders to make their own contributions. A committee of

the South Side Progressive Association hopes to place a sculpture of a tepee in Hyde Park, next to the White Cloud statue.

Earl Atlakson, an association member heading up the committee, said the tepee, like the statue, would commemorate the importance of King Hill.

"It's a historic place and I don't understand why it's never been established as such," he said.

Mr. Atlakson noted that the tepee is still in the planning stages and hasn't been approved by the city, although Mr. McKinney has been working with the group.

Jack Teegarden, a committee member of Blackfoot tribal descent, has been working to make sure the design is historically accurate, although he hasn't contacted the Iowa tribe for its input yet.

The tepee, intended to be about 24 feet high, would sit behind the statue and would be large enough for people to walk inside.

"Rather than poles, we'd use pipes," Mr. Teegarden said. "Rather than skins, we'd use metal."

Although both projects would recognize King Hill's historical importance, neither would actually sit on the hill, which is privately owned and has been altered in shape since White Cloud's time.

Robert Myers of the city's historic-preservation division noted that while King Hill could go on the National Register of Historic Places, that designation wouldn't necessarily protect the hill from further change.

"When you're dealing with archaeological sites or overlooks, it's much more difficult," he said.

Nonetheless, he noted that both projects would provide "long-overdue recognition" for the hill, particularly as a sacred place for numerous native tribes.

"We're just the newest group here," he said.

• Michael Fisher scans a screen for artifacts as he sifts through dirt excavated more than 30 years ago from an American Indian midden — garbage dump — on King Hill.

ERIC KEITH
St. Joseph News-Press



Dirt yields clues to Ki

By JOE BLUMBERG
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St. Joseph News-Press

It's not every day an 80-year-old man gets to play in the mud. It's even less common to find people eager to sort through 300-year-old trash.

Both happened atop Museum Hill on Friday, as staff members

and volunteers at the St. Joseph Museum, 11th and Chestnut streets, cracked open 80 box dirt from a bygone archaeological dig at King Hill, which place more than 30 years ago.

As 80-year-old Michael Fisher sorted through the dirt one pile at a time, he told the story of its

It was carried to King Hill glaciers in the last ice age

Dirt excavated 30 years ago yields clues to King Hill's past

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that archaeologists from the University of Missouri studied in 1966. It also was studied by the University of Nebraska in 1972.

The dirt from the last dig was bagged, tagged, boxed and stored in Lincoln, Neb., for 30 years, until the school asked the St. Joseph Museum if it wanted the dirt back. Mr. Fisher and Andy Meyer, head of security and maintenance at the museum, brought the dirt back from Lincoln in June and waited for cooler weather to sift for artifacts.

Cool weather finally came Friday and Mr. Fisher, Mr. Meyer, museum curator Sarah Elder and volunteer Calvin Lewman set up shop in the back yard of

the museum.

The painstaking process of sifting through the dirt was made easier by smooth cooperation and friendly, sometimes comical, competition.

Mr. Meyer and Mr. Lewman made several fish-story-like claims that they found the biggest and best artifacts.

Oblivious to their goading and the water splashing onto his sweatshirt, Mr. Fisher eagerly washed away the dirt and deliberately sorted through what was left in his screen.

In each pile, he would find a few clues about the people whose garbage he was looking through.

The prized items were tiny beads, copper rings and bracelets used for trading. But there also were charred corn kernels, shells of hickory and

walnuts, beans, fish and animal bones, and watermelon seeds.

Mr. Fisher said watermelons aren't native to the continent, but moved westward faster than settlers through inter-tribal trade.

The findings are proof that the tribe cultivated crops, hunted, fished and traded during its brief stay on the South Side.

Archaeology has been a lifelong hobby for Mr. Fisher, who said he began finding artifacts as an 8-year-old boy, and he hates to miss a dig. He said he took time off from work to volunteer during the King Hill excavations of 1966 and 1972.

"It's something that we just didn't want to walk away from," he said. "We had to check it out to see what was there."

City prepares to go it alone on trail funds

9-11-02
By **PATTY SCULLY**
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St. Joseph News-Press

After relying on federal grants to foot 90 percent of the bill for miles of urban trails, the city of St. Joseph is preparing to go it alone.

A citizens committee this spring recommended the city spend \$1.5 million to build a path from Commercial Street to Mansfield Road — the final link in a system of hike-and-bike trails running from Krug Park to Hyde Park.

The City Council scotched plans to construct this leg of the trail with federal funds more than three years ago, citing the high cost of meeting handicapped-accessibility rules. The terrain is so steep that multiple switchbacks would have been required to meet incline specifications. If the city pays the freight, however, the slope doesn't have to meet federal guidelines.

Andy Clements, assistant public works director, also said the city wouldn't have to do an archeological survey to determine whether American Indian artifacts may be disturbed by the project around King Hill.

King Hill was the sacred burial hill of the Missouri Indians, whose village was located at its base in the early 1800s. According to legend,



EDITOR'S NOTE:

This is part of an ongoing series of articles about the Nov. 5 referendum to extend the St. Joseph Capital Improvement Program half-cent sales tax another five years. The series looks at the citizen committee's recommended projects as well as how money from previous CIP sales taxes was spent.

City prepares to go it alone

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Chief White Cloud went to the top of King Hill to pray for guidance before signing the Platte Purchase Treaty in 1836. The following year, the Pottawatomie tribe, the Sac and Fox band, and the Ioway tribe were relocated west and the land was opened for settlement.

Mr. Clements assured the committee that "the city will do the right thing" if construction unearths any Indian artifacts.

The \$1.5 million would come from a five-year extension of a half-cent sales tax for capital improvements.

Voters will decide the fate of the capital improvement program Nov. 5. The tax generates about \$5 million a year.

Ed J.L. Robertson, a member of the committee, finishing the trail appeal to the campaign theme

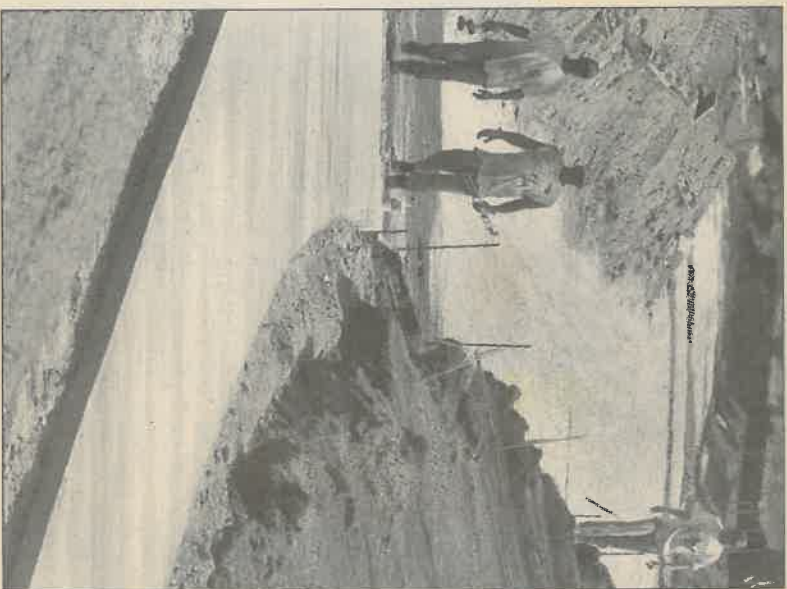
that the city keeps its promises. "We told you we were going to do it, and we did it," Mr. Robertson said.

When some committee members questioned the cost of the project, committee member Pat Lilly advised that it's "difficult to quantify" the benefits of urban trails.

Most of the committee considered the trail system a quality-of-life issue and therefore important to economic development.

The system was designed in 1995. Since then, the city has put more than \$2 million into design and construction, with most of the money coming from federal transportation grants.

The paths run parallel to the city's historic parkways, starting at the Northside Complex across St. Joseph Avenue from Krug Park, then wending along the



St. Joseph Fuel Oil & Manufacturing Co. employees Nathan Cox, left, Larry Funk, center, and Kerby Psota prepare to set forms for a new section of St. Joseph's urban hike-and-bike trail Friday afternoon near the intersection of 28th Street and Southwest Parkway.

TODD WEDDLE
St. Joseph News-Press

Northwest Parkway to Corby Pond and east to Ashland Avenue. Existing sidewalks link the trail south to Bartlett Park, where the path winds south with

the Southwest Parkway to Commercial and 22nd streets. Two years ago, construction was completed north from Hy Park to Mansfield Road.

New flag pole on King Hill Overlook to be dedicated on Sunday afternoon

Story by
Duane Thies

The flag pole on King Hill Overlook will be dedicated at 2 p.m. on Sunday, December 17.

And, once again, a flag will fly at that location, which is highly visible from many parts of St. Joseph and from Kansas.

Following a short speech, members of the South St. Joseph Progressive Association, which bought the new pole, will present it to the City of St. Joseph.

After "The National Anthem" by the Benton Singers, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6760 will raise the flag.

Boy Scout Troop 13 will provide programs at the event, and Father Vincent Rogers of St. James Catholic Church will give the blessing.

The dedication ceremony should last about 20 minutes, and churches of the South Side will provide van transportation to the Overlook.

"The City has a license agreement with Missouri-American Water Company for the pole," said J.L. Robertson, assistant chair of the Flag Pole Restoration Committee.

The pole which had been on the Overlook was blown down by a wind-storm last summer.

"We replaced the pole, the flag, and the cables," Robertson said, "and the pole was put up last week by Roderick Sign Company.



Julia Rupp

vandalism," Robertson continued.

Robertson was very pleased that the project was completed three months earlier than expected.

"The original goal was to be done by March 2001, with \$15,000 as the original amount of money we thought



J.L. Robertson

we would need," he said.

"We are very satisfied with the progress," Robertson asserted.

Robertson said that around \$26,000 was raised after a recent letter-writing campaign.

"The extra funds will be set aside

in a 50-year flag pole maintenance fund," he explained.

"We got help from the city attorney's office and Missouri-American Water Company," Robertson said.

"It took many hours for the attorneys to work out the details."

Julia Rupp chaired the Flag Pole Restoration Committee.