

Pony Express, Inc. - A National Memorial



Architectural rendering of completed restoration and expansion of the Pony Express Museum. The Pony Express Stables is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Pony Express, Inc., is a private not-for-profit organization created in 1990 to interpret, preserve, promote and enhance the legend and legacy of the Pony Express as it originated in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Pony Express, Inc.'s, major mission is to operate, maintain and expand the Pony Express Museum located in the original Pony Express Stables. Hundreds of spectators gathered to celebrate the departure of the first Pony Express rider from this site on April 3, 1860. It was the scene of a singular American event recorded in the annals of history as a symbol of the spirit, determination and freedom upon which the United States were founded.

Notwithstanding its national significance, the Pony Express Stables stood abandoned and deteriorating in the first half of the twentieth century. Fortunately, St. Joseph citizens responded to the urgent need to preserve this irreplaceable American legacy. Through the grassroots fund-raising efforts of the Chamber of Commerce, the corporate philanthropy of M. Karl Goetz, and the professional assistance of the St. Joseph Museum, the Pony Express Stables was saved and opened as a public museum on May 3, 1959.

Pony Express, Inc.'s, second mission is to endeavor to acquire, house, care for and interpret the definitive collection of artifacts and sites relative to the history of the Pony Express.

The Pony Express Museum is recognized nationally and internationally as one of the foremost repositories of Pony Express history. The Stables and exhibits interpret the legend of the world-renowned horseback express mail service as no other facility can. Yet, even here, the story is incomplete. Why? Because the back half of the Stables collapsed before it could be saved. Because artifacts in the museum collection are kept in storage due to exhibit space

limitations. Still other artifacts, which could shed light on the lives of the daring, young Pony Express riders, lie undiscovered in the attics of their descendants.

By the year 2000, Pony Express, Inc., will transform the Pony Express Museum into a National Memorial. To this end, the organization is advancing an ambitious, two-phased restoration and expansion project. Phase One, slated to begin in 1992, will restore the Stables to their original size while doubling museum exhibit and program space. Phase Two aims to create a new wing to house living history exhibits, visitor facilities, offices and the growing collection of Pony Express artifacts.

Pony Express, Inc.'s, third, and most important, mission is to serve the educational, cultural and recreational interests of the city, state and nation.

The Pony Express has universal appeal. Millions of visitors have passed through the doors of the Pony Express Stables since it opened as a public museum. Young and old alike come to experience the adventure, excitement and romance of the Pony Express. Whether they are school children, senior citizens, foreign businessmen or American journalists, most visitors are astounded to learn that the Pony Express lasted only eighteen months and was bankrupt at its demise.

In spite of its fleeting existence, the Pony Express stands for the principles upon which America was founded: ingenuity, resourcefulness, daring and vision. The legend and legacy of the Pony Express glorifies the risk-taking spirit of the American entrepreneur; the courage, endurance and loyalty of the individual riders and, the resourceful teamwork which contributed to an informed and enlightened citizenry.

Pony Express, Inc., holds that the qualities exemplified by the Pony Express continue to inspire and sustain the human spirit. Now, more than ever, it is time to commemorate the achievements of the Pony Express and preserve this legacy for future generations of Americans.

Pony Express, Inc., invites you to join in the effort to establish a National Memorial commemorating the legend and legacy of the Pony Express. For more information please contact:

Curator of Development
P.O. Box 244
St. Joseph, MO 64502-0244
816-232-8471

PONY EXPRESS MUSEUM

A NATIONAL MEMORIAL



The First Ride of the Pony Express oil by Charles Hargens

**914 PENN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI**

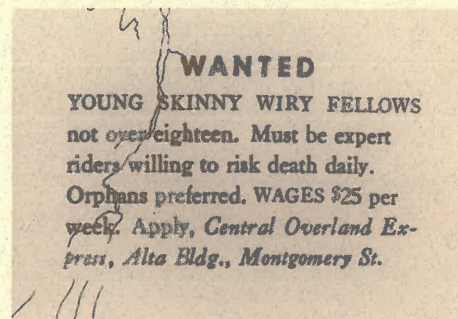
Museum Hours:

Summer: (April - September)		Winter: (October - March)
Mon. - Sat. 9-6, Sun. 1-6		Mon. - Sat. 9-5, Sun. 1-5

**Closed Thanksgiving Day
December 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1**

**Museum Phone: 816-279-5059
Business Phone: 816-232-8471**





Pony Express advertisement, 1860.

THE DARING PONY EXPRESS

On April 3, 1860, a lone rider on horseback left from in front of one of St. Joseph's most historic landmarks - the Pony Express Stables. The leather saddlebags he carried were destined for Sacramento, California, nearly 2,000 miles away. His was a race against time, the elements and hostile Indians. One purpose was to cut in half the time it took for messages to reach California. The other objectives were to prove the feasibility of a year-round central route to California and to secure the mail contract from the United States government.

THE PONY EXPRESS IS AN IMPORTANT CHAPTER IN AMERICAN HISTORY

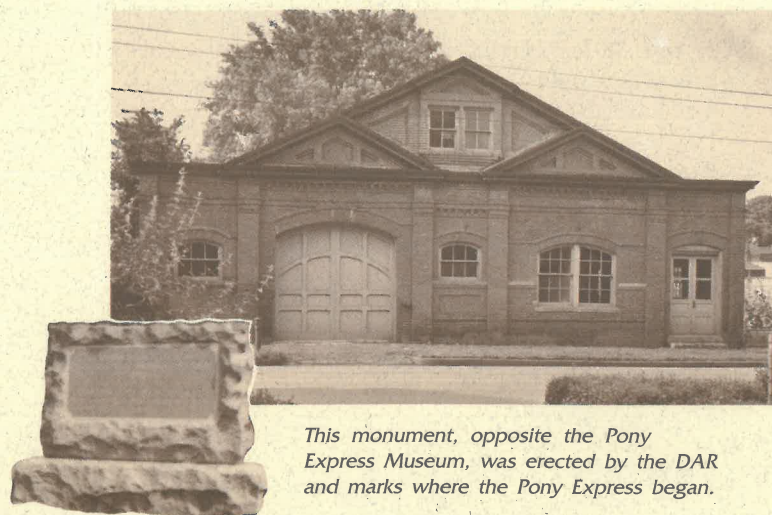
As 1860 approached, the country had just gone through a great migration due to the opening of the Oregon Territory for settlement and the discovery of gold in California.



Pony Express riders from St. Joseph. Johnny Frye, top right, was the first rider to leave St. Joseph.

Because of its location, St. Joseph served as the staging area and jumping off point for the West. The city served as the hub of numerous transportation and communication systems involving steamboats, stage and freight lines and telegraph and railroad terminals.

By 1860, numerous people had moved west of the Rocky Mountains, and it was neces-



This monument, opposite the Pony Express Museum, was erected by the DAR and marks where the Pony Express began.

sary to maintain communication with them. The fastest communicate took 25 days from "rail's end" to San Francisco and had to go through territories sympathetic to the Southern cause. The opportunity to provide a much faster, all-weather, year-round central route fell upon the Pony Express.

THE PONY EXPRESS IS A SYMBOL OF AMERICAN INGENUITY, DARING, RESOURCEFULNESS AND VISION

The creation, organization and operation of the Pony Express was under the skillful leadership of entrepreneurs Russell, Majors and Waddell, whose firm was the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Co. Knowing that war between the states was possible, they hoped that fast, reliable communication would help keep California in the Union in addition to securing the mail contract for their company.

THE HISTORIC STARTING PLACE BECAME THE PONY EXPRESS MUSEUM

In 1960, the St. Joseph Museum acquired the world famous Pony Express Stables and operated it as a satellite museum for 30 years. Pony Express, Inc. - A National Memorial was formed in 1990 to assume the administration of the museum.



Saddle and mochila - the saddlebags used by the Pony Express.

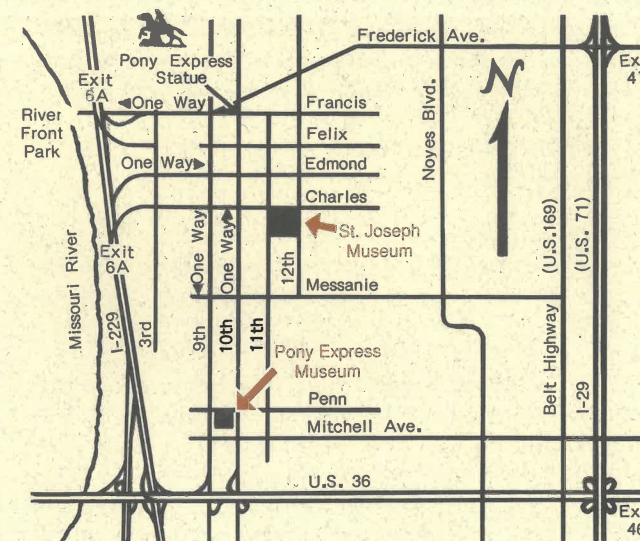


PONY EXPRESS MUSEUM EXHIBITS VIVIDLY SHOW THE HISTORY OF THIS DARING AND DRAMATIC VENTURE

The professionally executed exhibits illustrate the creation, operation, management and termination of the Pony Express. There are superb supportive exhibits such as fully equipped blacksmith and wheelwright shops of the period. Many years of research have provided a comprehensive photographic exhibit of the known trail and station sites.

THE LEGEND OF THE PONY EXPRESS IS EXPERIENCED HERE

Because of its historic significance, the Pony Express Stables is on the National Register of Historic Places. A visit to this museum is a must. The atmosphere that prevails and the starting place monument in front of the Pony Express Museum remind you that you are walking on historic ground. Come and visit. You will remember the experience for years to come.



Also visit the St. Joseph Museum at 11th and Charles Streets.