

The Happenings

October 1993

St. Joseph Museum

Pony Express National Memorial

3rd ANNUAL VOLKSWALK HUGE SUCCESS!



Rich Nolf, Georgia Hathorne, Frances Cramer and Helen Caton register volkswalkers at the Pony Express National Memorial.

Over 200 men, women and children enjoyed a beautiful fall day on October 2 for the third annual historic St. Joseph volkswalk. The walk was cosponsored by the St. Joseph Museum and the St. Joseph Family YMCA. Combining the efforts of the two organizations makes this an interesting experience for the participants. Walkers were getting physical exercise while seeing our historic city. Each received a map which included historical highlights of significant sites along the route.

Volkswalking began as a event in Germany, but in recent years has received international attention. The walk is designed to be a leisurely walk through a scenic, historic or interesting area over a pre-determined route. The walk is non-competitive and the participants can walk at their own



Volkswalkers approach the first checkpoint which was on Wyeth Hill.

pace, thus making it an excellent recreational opportunity for the entire family. A volkswalk is a great way to meet new friends and a fun way for individuals to exercise.

A big thank you goes to the United Missouri Bank, Holiday Inn, Bredeaux and the Bean, the Heartland Good Health Club, Naturalizer Shoes and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City for assisting in the volkswalk. Plans are underway for our fourth annual historic St. Joseph volkswalk!



Even after the strenuous climb to the Wyeth Hill checkpoint, experienced volkswalkers Rose and Gary Garey kept up a steady pace.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

With the opening of the Pony Express National Memorial (PENM), a whole new set of challenges has been thrust upon us. These new challenges were not entirely unexpected. We knew long before we started this expansion that significant changes would take place as a direct result of the expansion. Those of you who follow my column know that I have written about change on several previous occasions.

We all knew that the increased square footage would mean considerably more management and work. The old Pony Express Museum was 58' x 55' - about 3,200 square feet. The 70' segment that collapsed in the 1940s was reconstructed. That portion added on 4,000 square feet. We also added new construction in the form of a 50' x 60' community room. This space includes a link between the community room and the museum, an exhibition gallery, a kitchen, restrooms and a 35' x 35' meeting space. That all added an



Rich Nolf

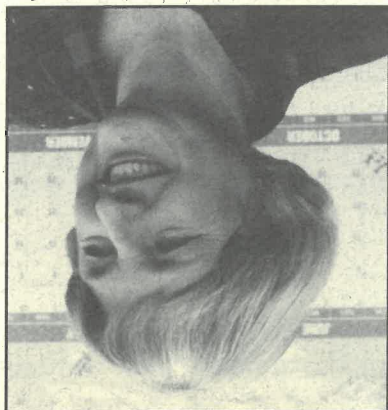
so that it now exceeds more than 10,000 square feet. In reality, we tripled our former space additional 3,000 square feet.

The expansion has created a lot of interest within the community as well as from far and wide. Our attendance has been spectacular. In fact, in the first six months since we opened on April 3, we have had more than 42,000 visitors. That number for six months exceeds our annual record! Our previous annual record was approximately 40,000. Some months ago while in a long range planning session, we envisioned a first year attendance of 65,000. Even though we are going into the slow months, I still feel 65,000 is a realistic and obtainable goal this year.

All of this increased visitor traffic has expanded the work load considerably. Although we could not be specific, we had anticipated these changes. We knew that the overall management of the St. Joseph Museum and the PENM would become more complex.

Several years ago I saw the need to de-centralize the administration. What I did was share the management with several of the senior curators. This expanded their responsibilities and made them a more integral part of the "decision making process." So, when the PENM became a reality, we were prepared.

Marilyn Taylor



ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM & PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL MEMORIAL STAFF

PROGRAM

Rich Nolf, Director
Jackie Lewin, Curator, PENM
Marilyn Taylor, Curator of Ethnology
Robbie Sipes, Curator of Exhibits
Bonnie Watkins, Curator of Collections
David Mead, Curator of Natural History
Kathy Reno, Gift Shop/Membership
Reva Fish-Rocha, Customer Service Coordinator
Sarah Elder, Curator of History

SUPPORT

Gail Rose, Executive Secretary
Susan Noland, Bookkeeper
Scott Koch, Exhibits Technician
Clint Sims, Graphic Artist
June Swift, Secretary
Carol Willis, Secretary
Mary Knab, Research Assistant
Chris Fisher, Maintenance Technician
Avis Batsell, Receptionist
Lanell Mead, Receptionist
Kem Mills, Receptionist
Camille Grable, Receptionist
David Rich, Receptionist
Helen Matthews, Receptionist
Barbi Rich, Receptionist
Kim Bryson, Receptionist
Erika Vento, Receptionist
Ida Caw, Receptionist
Richard Hill, Receptionist

ADJUNCT

Mike Fisher, Archaeological Research Associate
Jim Feagins, Archaeological Research Associate
Esther Kreek, Historical Music Coordinator
Russ Mooney, Saddle & Tack Consultant

Pony Express National Memorial Funding Update

The Happenings is published monthly by the St. Joseph Museum, Inc., and Pony Express, Inc., not-for-profit corporations, 1100 Charles Street St. Joseph, Missouri, 64501-2874 (816) 232-8471. ©1993 St. Joseph Museum, Inc.

Robert Bunn
MA-GA Equipment Partnership
Parkway Elementary School
Mrs. Beverly Pitt

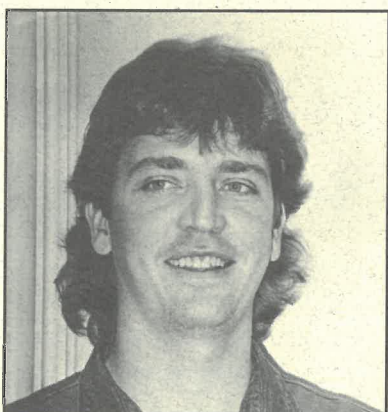
As a result of a focus study following the expansion, the board directed the staff to meet and develop an organization/management structure for the museums. I won't go into the whole structure now, but will touch on one small segment. I have appointed site administrators at each of the institutions. Serving as co-site administrators at the St. Joseph Museum are Marilyn Taylor, who has been Curator of Ethnology for a number of years, and Robbie Sipes, who is Curator of Exhibits. Jackie Lewin, who for many years carried the title of Curator of History, was made Curator, Pony Express National Memorial and site administrator of that facility. Kathy Reno, who is responsible for the gift shops and memberships, was made assistant site administrator at the Pony Express National Memorial.



Jackie Lewin

Those who have been members for many years know Marilyn, Robbie, Jackie and Kathy. However, for those of you who have not had the pleasure of meeting them, I would like to introduce them to you.

Marilyn has been with the museums for twenty-two years. She started as Curator of Collections and was deeply involved in the relocation of the collections which was so desperately needed for their preservation



Robbie Sipes

and care. She is a very quick learner and when computers became a part of our environment, she quickly excelled — even though she had no prior experience. Her organizational and writing skills are excellent, and she was often given *special projects* to coordinate.

In the last eight years or so, she has collaborated with Jackie in historic research. The two of them have become an exceptional team. One of the many benefits that came from this team was the book "St. Joe Road." This was original research and the first published work on this famous California Trail segment. As Curator of Ethnology, Marilyn is responsible for the interpretation of the ethnographic materials held by the museum.

Jackie has been with the museum almost twenty-one years. She has a very strong academic background having earned her masters in American History with honors. She taught high school history for several years before coming to work at the museum. As I indicated earlier, she is an excellent researcher and possesses a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Pony Express. One of the skills that makes Jackie special is her ability to relate the Pony Express to the entire American scene during those early years of our country's development. Both Jackie and Marilyn are voracious readers and have wonderful retention abilities. Jackie is very highly organized and often has been the lead curator on complex projects. It was Jackie who managed Prairie View Festival and it was Jackie who developed the story line driving the Pony Express exhibits.

Robbie, who has a delightful wit, has never admitted that there may be some things we can't do! He went to Missouri Western State College and has a background in journalism. His ability to construct exhibits and work with people and his eagerness to experi-



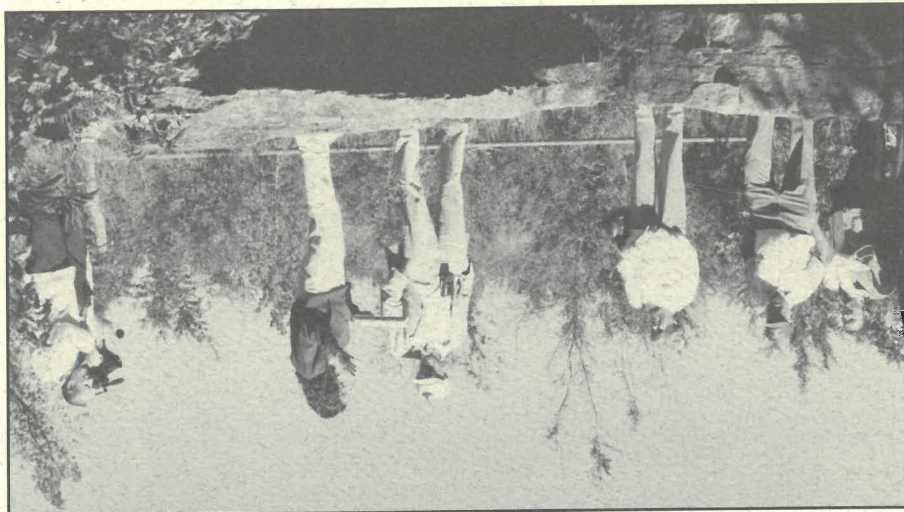
Kathy Reno

ment make him an excellent exhibits person. Several years ago, he went to the University of Iowa for an intensive museum studies program at the Museum of Natural History. That museum studies program is highly recognized within the museum community and is the oldest museum studies program in the country. (As a footnote, I am a graduate of that program.) Robbie is what you would call a "jack of all trades" and a "doer." Give him a project and he will get it done.

Kathy was hired directly from a retail sales position nine years ago. She had extensive experience prior to her employment with the museum. Income from museum sales has been a major contributor to the operating budgets of both museums for several years. We do not charge sales tax in our gift shops so the proceeds must go directly into operations. That earned income is a very necessary part of our operating budget. When I started decentralizing the administration several years ago, I made Kathy responsible for securing and managing those who work in the gift shop and admission areas. Because of our long hours, we have a fairly large number of part-time employees in these areas. Kathy, by virtue

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THE ST. JOE ROAD: A HILL-TOP EXPERIENCE



Rich Nolf

Jackie Lewin describes some of the physical features of Alcove Spring.

As we rode along, Jackie and Marilyn read excerpts from the diaries and journals of many of the emigrants who had traveled the road, described how the emigrants viewed what we were seeing, and told of their experiences along the way. Adding to the feeling that we had 19th century guides aboard was Rich's reading of the men's journals.

Our longest stop was at the Iowa, Sac and Fox Presbyterian Mission, now a museum. Here we learned that we needed a replacement for our bus. But, our wait was a hill-top experience of another kind as we enjoyed coffee and cookies on the tree-canopied lawn, explored the museum, and then gathered in the 1846 chapel for an enlightening question/answer session. When the replacement bus arrived, we were considerably behind schedule, so we wasted no time getting to Marysville, Kansas, our lunch stop.

After a delicious lunch at the Koester House, we headed south, leaving the St. Joe Road to touch briefly on the Independence Road. We visited Alcove Spring, a site near a campground on the Big Blue River that was a favorite spot for many emigrants. This peaceful place must look today much as it did in the 1840s: trees and vines shading the layered rocks and crystal water flowing from the rocks to form a pool. Another level of rock forms a partial roof over the pool, thus the "alcove." Many emigrants carved dates and their initials in the rocks, but a member of the historic Donner-Reed party claimed in his diary to have named the spring.

Story continued on page 6

As we climbed out of the fog onto the bluffs north of Wathena, Rich explained that the trail had generally followed the hilltops and ridges to avoid creeks and gullies. We paused many times to have the old trail pointed out to us. It generally ran diagonally to the present "section" roads. We also saw the campgrounds and major crossing sites at Mosquito Creek, Wolf River, Nemaha River and the Big Blue. We paused at beautiful, well-kept cemeteries that were the final resting places of some of the less hardy emigrants.



Jackie Lewin

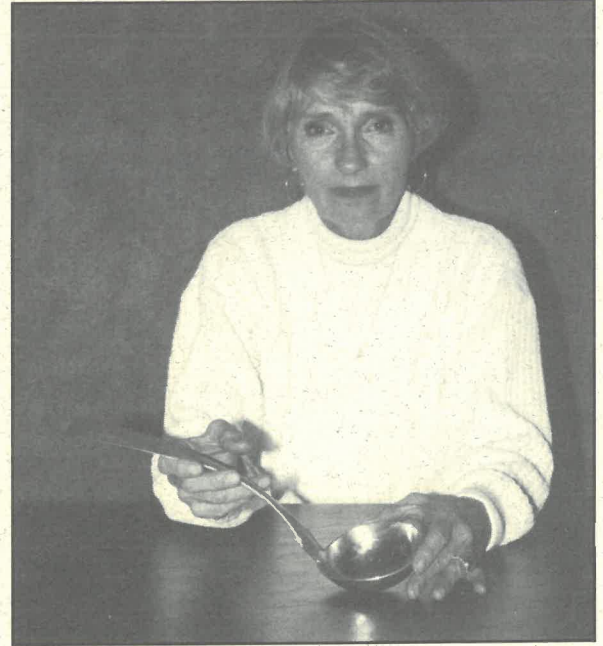
Field trip participants listen as Marilyn Taylor describes the experiences of the Donner-Reed party at Alcove Spring.

In the foggy dawn of September 15, Rich Nolf, Jackie Lewin and Marilyn Taylor greeted 31 sleepy-eyed passengers as they boarded the bus that would retrace the historic St. Joe Road. The St. Joe Road began in St. Joseph, crossed the Missouri River and angled across the east corner of present-day Kansas. In the 1840s, thousands of wagon trains followed this road, joining trains from Independence, Missouri, on a hill-top prairie northwest of what is now Marysville, Kansas. From this point, the road was called the Oregon or California Trail.

GREAT GRANDNIECE OF JOHNNY FRY VISITS THE PONY EXPRESS

David Mead

Mary Duncan, a resident of Kansas City, is the great grandniece of Johnny Fry and recently visited the Pony Express National Memorial. She and her husband, Fred Duncan, were searching for information about her famous ancestor who, on April 3, 1860, was the first Pony Express rider to leave St. Joseph. Mrs. Duncan brought with her a silver ladle which was originally given to her great-great grandmother, Mrs. John Fry of Rushville, Missouri, by her son Johnny Fry. Engraved on the handle of the ladle is JF. When Johnny Fry was killed during the Civil War, his mother decided that the treasured ladle should be handed down to the oldest daughter in each generation. It first went to Johnny Fry's sister, Sarah E. Fry Canter, in 1870. Mrs. Canter died in 1887 and the ladle went to her daughter, Cadie Lee Canter Cordonier. In 1924, Ada Cordonier Euler received the ladle. Ada Euler died in 1932. The oldest girl of the next generation was Mary Cordonier (Duncan) who was born soon after her Aunt Ada's death. In 1940, at age seven, Mary received the ladle and has had it ever since. Mrs. Duncan was able to add to the information that the staff has gathered about Johnny Fry and has agreed to keep us up-to-date on her further research.



Mary Duncan holds the ladle given by Johnny Fry to his mother.

MUSEUMS OF ST. JOSEPH STAFF GATHERING

Approximately 50 individuals from the staffs (paid and volunteer) of all of the Museums of St. Joseph recently had the opportunity to meet. The St. Joseph Museum and the Fire Fighters Local #77 co-hosted a social gathering which provided those attending the chance to meet their counterparts from other museums. A good time was had by all.

The Fire Fighters told the group about the plans for their museum which will open in the spring of 1994. The Fire Fighters Museum will be at the southwest corner of 11th and Penn Streets. We wish them success in their endeavor!

Thank you to **Isabel Bush** for the donation of bronze plaques for the four Benton Clark paintings on exhibit at the Pony Express National Memorial. The plaques enable the visitor to read the artist's name and the title of the work. Her support of the museum is greatly appreciated.

Story continued from page 3

of her position, is constantly meeting the public and has an excellent pulse on what the public wants.

Marilyn, Jackie, Robbie and Kathy are all "people oriented" and work very well with each other and with the rest of the staff. In a lot of ways, this arrangement of two site administrators at each of the museums is not much different than before the expansion. All four persons had similar responsibilities, it's just that they have been more refined and formalized.

As for me, I find that this works well because it frees me to assist in all of the areas as a "doer" or "advisor." It also allows me to work with the boards and with the complex fiscal responsibilities of the whole operation. I truly believe that I am blessed by the staff that surrounds me. It has been a pleasure for me to share with you some of the many fine assets Marilyn, Jackie, Robbie and Kathy bring to the St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express National Memorial.

RECENT DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTIONS: ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM

Dwaine Geldbrandt — letter and envelope dated December 25, 1861, written by J.W. Reese to his sister. The letter discusses troop movements and happenings in St. Joseph during the Civil War. They were obtained in 1942 or 1943 by Mrs. Reese Elliot, a relative of the writer.

Claude and Helen Boner — several different tools, nails and other hardware. Given to him by his grandfather, they were in Mr. Boner's possession for 52 years.

Steve Boettcher/Trinklein — a video tape, *The Story of the Oregon Trail*, with traveler's guide included. It commemorates the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the trail. Copyright 1993.

PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL MEMORIAL

St. Joseph Public Library — letter written by Charles Cliff, Pony Express rider, to Purd Wright, a St. Joseph librarian. Handwritten and dated 1907. There are also notes discussing the Pony Express which were written by Agnes Cliff, daughter of Charles Cliff.

Ruth Ann Pixler — photographs of John and Mary Burlington. John Burlington owned the St. Joseph Transfer Company that was housed in what is now the Pony Express National Memorial. A photocopy of a newspaper article about Mary Burlington from the *St. Joseph News-Press* dated May 14, 1933. Newspaper clipping about the Pony Express Stables when it was Voltz Manufacturing and an article from *The Kansas City Star* about the well that was found behind the Pony Express Museum in 1991.

DID YOU KNOW

The Community Room at the Pony Express National Memorial is available for rent to organizations, agencies and groups. Since the expansion, the Community Room has served many different groups. For information about reservations, rates and schedules call Carol Willis at 279-5059.

Story continued from page 4

We also found the initials of James F. Reed, a leader of the Donner group, and listened to an account of the death of his mother-in-law, Sarah Keyes, that took place near this spot. As the description of her funeral was being read near a monument that was placed in memory of her (and all pioneer women) many of us felt a real kinship to these idealistic and brave people. I'm sure we all share the hope that this "desolate but beautiful wilderness" will remain forever as it was then and is now.

The afternoon sun was heading westward, but we pause-stopped at two more memorable places before heading home. The first was at the monument at the junction of the St. Joe and Independence Roads. At this top-of-the world spot, it was easy for us to imagine another time when these plains were crowded with wagons converging into one magnificent mass as the two roads flowed together.

The other pause was at the Hollenberg Station so well known to us at the Pony Express National Memorial as a station for Pony Express personnel, as well as a trading post for many emigrants. This was truly a thrill for those of us who talk about Hollenberg Station with visitors as they view our diorama at the Pony Express National Memorial. Our glimpse made us eager to revisit this site soon.

Although we were near the road where many emigrants "saw the elephant," none of us saw one. If this statement seems puzzling to you, the reader, I will only say, "Read *The St. Joe Road*," or "Go on the next St. Joe Road field trip." For a real top-of-the-hill experience, I recommend both!

Lois Heimsoth, the author, is a volunteer interpreter at the Pony Express National Memorial.

NEW AND REINSTATED MEMBERS

The St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express National Memorial are pleased to welcome the following new members. We appreciate their interest in the museums and we thank them for their generous support.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Weeks
Daniel P. Matlack
Mr. and Mrs. Collin Guilmette
Arthur Randall
Mr. and Mrs. John Burnham

Dear readers, Mignon DeShon is looking for clothes to outfit cowboy mannequins. The following is a list of what she needs

Wanted

- 3 red underwear tops (shirts) -
- 3 old, worn cowboy-like shirts -
- 1 or 2 old brown or black wool or canvas-like jackets -
- 1 red and black wool shirt -
- 2 belts (old) -
- 2 cowboy hats, -

can be old and beaten up.

Call the Pony Express National Memorial, 279-5059, and Mignon will be glad to pick them up.

MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ New member ☐ Renewal ☐ Gift

Your Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone (____) _____

Gift membership for: (please fill in your name above)

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone (____) _____

Enclosed is a check for:
\$ _____

Please make your check payable to the St. Joseph Museum or Pony Express National Memorial and mail to:

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

Membership level:

___ \$1000.00	Patron	___ \$100.00	Donor
___ 500.00	Fellow	___ 50.00	Subscribing
___ 250.00	Sponsor	___ 25.00	Sustaining

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

Re-Create History and Reduce Your Taxes by 50%

The Pony Express Museum Restoration and Expansion Project is an authorized Missouri Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) Project.

Any person, firm or corporation in business in the State of Missouri is eligible to receive a NAP tax credit of up to 50% of the amount donated to the museum project.

Contributions of real estate, materials and equipment, stock, and personal time may qualify for tax credits, as well as cash donations.

Help Support The National Memorial

Capital Levels of Giving
One time gift or three year pledge

\$50,000	Capital Founders
\$25,000	Benefactors
\$10,000	Principals
\$ 5,000	Partners
\$ 1,000	Patrons
\$ 100	Donors

For more information contact: Gail Rose 816/232-8471

The Pony Express National Memorial 1993 Pledge Card

Yes, I would like to help support the National Memorial by making a tax-deductible capital contribution.

Name _____ Business _____

Address _____ Please send me information about the Missouri NAP tax credits.

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I would like to pledge \$ _____ I am enclosing today \$ _____ Balance to be paid _____ quarterly
_____ semi-annually _____ annually

Signature of Donor/Contact Person _____ (As it should appear on our contributor's list)

Make checks payable to Pony Express, Inc. - A National Memorial, P.O. Box 244, St. Joseph, Missouri, 64502-0244

Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 8 - YOU ARE THE DIFFERENCE - A CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TOURISM WORKSHOP. Open to anyone interested in learning about customer service, tourism and St. Joseph! Call the St. Joseph Museum to register.

November 9 - The Gateway Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association will meet at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be at Robidoux Row Museum, 3rd and Poulin Streets.

November 11 - Veterans Day - The St. Joseph Museum will be observing holiday hours - 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

November 25 - Thanksgiving Day - The St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express National Memorial will be closed.

November 22 - YOU ARE THE DIFFERENCE - A CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TOURISM WORKSHOP. Open to anyone interested in learning about customer service, tourism and St. Joseph! Call the St. Joseph Museum to register.

November 29 - The St. Joseph Archaeological Society will meet at 7:30 p.m. The location of the meeting will be the Pony Express National Memorial.

December 11 - Pony Express Christmas

December 21 or 22 - Third Annual Victorian Christmas Ornament Workshop (This year the children will take home all the ornaments they make.)

For more museum information call 232-8471

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