

The Happenings

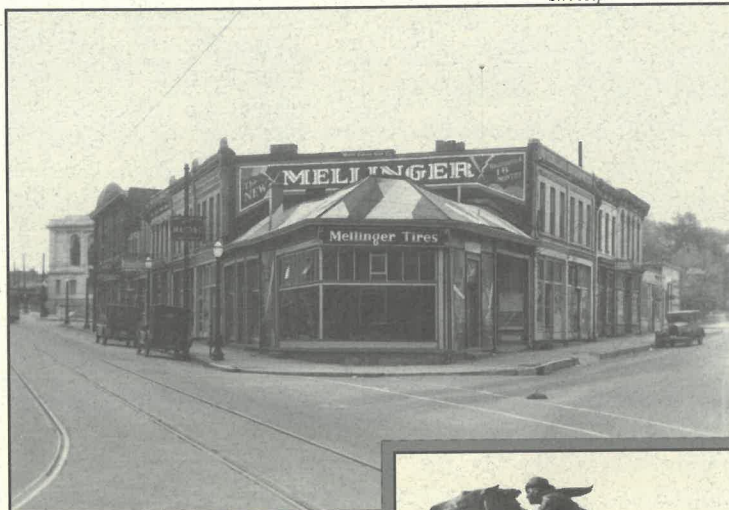
January 1993

St. Joseph Museum

Pony Express Museum

A TOUCH OF HISTORY...

St. Joseph Museum Archives



The above photo, taken in the late 1920s, shows the site where the Pony Express Statue now stands (photo to right). The location is Frederick Avenue between 9th and 10th. The view is to the northeast with Francis street crossing Frederick at an angle. In the 1920s, the Mellinger Tire Company was the prominent business on the triangular block which is now the Civic Center Park. Notice the new (built 1927) St. Joseph City Hall in the background. Among the businesses in the block were Mason's Restaurant, Moreland Used Cars, Prawitz Jewelers and Central Auto Service.

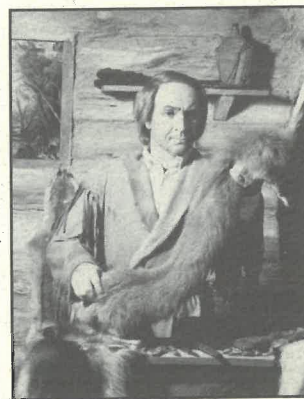


Rhonda Clem

In the 1930s, the buildings were torn down to be replaced by the Civic Center Park and the Pony Express Monument. The monument was unveiled on April 20, 1940, the 80th Anniversary of the Pony Express. The 35th Company of Sea Scouts and Jessamine Wallace helped with the unveiling. The four-ton bronze statue was sculpted by Hermon A. MacNeil.

Recently some improvements have been made to the area surrounding the statue, including a concrete viewing patio, iron picket fence, landscaping and four plaques. Dr. Larry Watts and Womens Health of St. Joseph are primarily responsible. Dick Crowl should also be recognized for his donation of labor to the project. Thank you all, for the beautification process!

SEARCH FOR POST TO BEGIN



Rhonda Clem

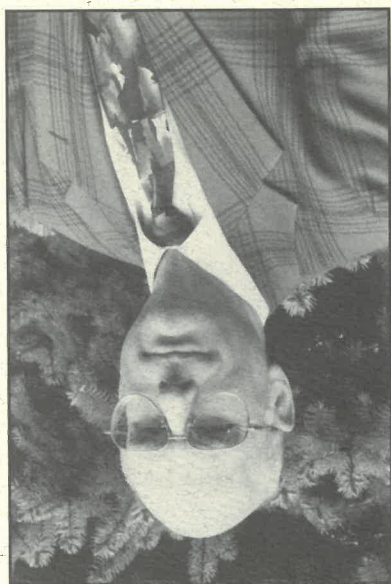
The exhibit of Joseph Robidoux's fur post at the St. Joseph Museum.

On the evening of Monday, November 30, Jackie Lewin and Marilyn Taylor spoke to nearly 40 members of the St. Joseph Archaeology Society. The subject of their presentation was their search for the location of Joseph Robidoux's fur post. *The Happenings* of January/February 1989 features a story with the details of the search.

Of primary interest to the listening audience was the announcement that an archaeological dig will take place at the fur post site in the spring of 1993. The dig will be sponsored by the St. Joseph Museum under the supervision of adjunct staff member Mike Fisher who is also president of the local archaeological society. The site is on land owned by the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department, and the dig was made possible through their cooperation. Garry Chegvidden is the department's district engineer for northwest Missouri.

The year 1993 is an especially appropriate time for the dig since it is the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph's founding. The city grew from the Blacksnake Hills Trading Post established by Robidoux in 1827. Robidoux preempted the land around his fur post and established the town of St. Joseph. The city, named for Robidoux's patron saint, was incorporated in 1843.

FROM THE DIRECTOR...



David Mead

The Pony Express Museum, housed at the original Pony Express Stables location, 914 Penn Street, was temporarily closed Monday, December 21, for reconstruction and renovation. The museum will reopen as the Pony Express National Memorial on Saturday, April 3, 1993. This date was chosen because it is the anniversary of the first ride of the Pony Express.

We had originally hoped that we would be able to remain open during the expansion of the museum. The plan was to have construction taking place in one area at a time so that visitors would be able to watch the development of the project. However, it has become evident that construction will be going on in all areas of the building making it impossible to safely have visitors in the facility. This was a little disappointing to us at first, but we quickly realized that this will make it possible for us to truly have a "grand opening" to show off our new exhibits.

Visitors to the expanded facility will find that the first exhibit, "Moment in Time," sets the stage for a ride into history. The life-size sculpture portrays young, wiry, Johnny Fry mounted on his horse, Sylph. The pair are poised and ready to dash from the Stables on the first celebrated run of the Pony Express, April 3, 1860. The sounds of the excited crowd outside, waiting for the mail train to arrive, are re-created on tape for this exhibit.

The centerpiece exhibit will be an 80-foot diorama, winding half the length of the museum. It depicts, in miniature, the Pony Express Trail winding through the Missouri River bottom, prairies, plains and mountains between St. Joseph and the West Coast. The diorama curls around a full-scale replica of a relay station, which still stands in Nevada. Visitors can rest a spell—as the riders did—inside this crude shelter, or try their hand at transferring the mochila (mailbag) between saddles. Visitors will even be able to pump water from the stable well.

These and many other interactive exhibits will be complete when the Pony Express National Memorial opens this spring. We will keep you updated on plans for the big day. We hope to see you there!

PONY EXPRESS DESCENDANT CONDUCTS WORKSHOP

On December 2 and 3, Dwight Ritter of the Ritter Company coordinated a long-range planning workshop for board and staff members of The Pony Express National Memorial. Dwight Ritter is an international corporate consultant on marketing and management with offices in Boston and Dublin. He volunteered all of his time and travel expenses to make this planning session possible.

Dwight is the great grandson of Pony Express rider, George "Boston" Scovell. In fact, a wonderful link was discovered recently. His great grandfather "Boston" passed the mail on to Billy Fisher who was the great grandfather of Dr. William Fisher! Dr. William Fisher, a retired NASA astronaut, was in St. Joseph this spring for the premier showing of The Pony Express video in which he played a featured role.

Wednesday's workshop, which was an intensive all day session involving twenty people from the Pony Express board and staff, focused on the next ten years. On Thursday morning, a small group of six individuals met and condensed the preceding day's work. Thursday afternoon Dwight met with the curatorial staff and helped work out key areas of responsibility for individual staff persons. Everyone involved, staff and board alike, was very impressed with Dwight's skills. A lot was accomplished in those two days.

THE 1992 NEW YORK MARATHON ON BEHALF OF THE PONY EXPRESS

by David Oliver

NATIONAL MEMORIAL



photo courtesy of the author

Finally the bridge loomed in front of me. Bald Eagle and Snow Turkey were ahead. They knew I was slowing down. The steep climb to the midpoint almost did me in. I had to walk part of the way.

I joined my friends on the downside and we picked up the pace as we rounded the corner onto First Avenue. Television cameras were everywhere, and our support team (our wives) were there to

greet us with hugs and kisses. What a great lift this was. The crowds were five and six persons deep and balloons arched their multiple colors over the famous boulevard urging us forward. Although 10 miles remained, I felt like it would all be over soon. And then it happened...

I felt a twitch in both calves. Oh no, I thought, it is too early to get cramps. I smeared some more "icy hot" on my legs, slowed down a bit, and apologized to my friends. At the 19 mile mark I knew I was in trouble. I crossed over to a first aid station, but the runners there were wrapped in blankets. Through pale faces and blank stares they could only weakly acknowledge that the race was over for them. I quickly ran back into the street and picked up the pace again. I wasn't ready to throw in the towel. The Pony Express needed me to go the distance, and I wanted to go the distance. A group of ten or so nuns and several priests were standing along the curb and encouraged me, "you can do it!" I asked them to pray for God to give me "strength." They did.

At "the wall", the twenty mile mark, we entered the Bronx and I was fortunate to find a volunteer physician at the first aid station who massaged my legs. I was convinced that my torso and legs would become two parts at any time. The assistance helped as we rejoined the still thick throng of runners making their way into Manhattan with Central Park and the finish line only five miles away. As we ran through Harlem with signs of poverty and despair everywhere, my mind centered more on

me as far as I could see. Eight helicopters circled in the sky with their cameras focused on the mass. I could still see the fireworks and hear the cannons blasting their send off. Bands were playing, people were smiling and cheering, and I felt like I could run forever.

At the seven mile mark my endorphins were particularly active as I (White Cloud) reached out for Bald Eagle (Lee Minor) and Snow Turkey (Ron Riggs) my best friends with whom I had run this race in 1990. Expressing my appreciation for each of them, I knew I wanted to be nowhere else in the world than in this great city participating in this world event. In my "fanny pack" I carried the names of over 50 persons who were sponsoring me with financial contributions to the Pony Express National Memorial in St. Joseph, Missouri (their names are on page 4). Aware of their support, I was committed to "Go the Distance" for the Pony Express.

As my friends and I approached the "Crown Heights" area where Brooklyn and Queens come together, I could feel the tension in the air. The crowds were thick, and while a fight broke out among some of the spectators as we passed through, there were no serious incidents. My thoughts shifted to the halfway mark and to reaching the Queensboro Bridge for the cross-over into Manhattan. My feet and legs were beginning to tire and my hips were starting to ache. I began to worry. There was still a long way to go.

the spectators and less on me. Food kitchens, street walkers, the homeless, and one or two burning buildings gave a stark contrast to the affluent Fifth Avenue banking and investment institutions which could be seen on the horizon.

Before my legs would begin to cramp into what could be a race-stopping muscle tear, I could run for one-fourth of a mile, and occasionally up to one-half mile. In spite of the pain, Central Park was a welcome sight. Only three miles to go. The trees and leaves were spectacular, and the crowds were wonderful and so very encouraging.

I knew I would finish and cross the line with my friends. It was exciting, and the pain seemed to subside. And finally, after five hours of running, the stands full of spectators came into view. The official clock and lanes and race volunteers seemed to call out to us, "only 50 more yards." I cried as a young lady placed the medal around my neck. She handed me a rose, and I kissed her.

On November 1, David Oliver joined nearly 26,000 marathoners in New York City. In the November *Happenings*, David appealed to our members to "Go the Distance" for the Pony Express and many of you responded. The staff and board congratulate David on his athletic performance and those of you who inspired him to the finish line. Thank you all! A special thanks to those who helped David "Go the Distance," and raise over \$2,600.00 for the Pony Express National Memorial:

Sarah Akers
Tom Alderson
Bonnie Alsbury
Phyllis Baker
Lynn Beggs
Edward Blakeley
Bob Brown
Mary Ann Castle
Jean Conner
Mignon & Richard Deshon
Landis Downing
Donna Duckworth
Donna & Bob Eaton
Kathleen Everett
Don Fredericks
Jerry Gillig
Jim Gunsallus
Stanley Hall
Sylvia Hanson
Barbara Heath
Heidi and David Hornaday
Larry Jones
KOTV
Mayor Glenda Kelley
Rick & Christine Kerns
Lowell Kruse
Jeff Langdon
Clara Lash

Greg Lucas
Elsie Mazur
Thea McGaugh
Robin McLean
James McMillen,
Specialists of Internal Medicine
Mike Meierhofer
Janie Meriwether
Mr. & Mrs. Vander Molen
Gladys Nolf
Mr. & Mrs. Rich Nolf
Cynthia & David Oliver
Jim Parker
Don Paton
Mr. & Mrs. Charles R. Richmond
Gary Riepl
Chris Sass
Constance Saxton
Debrah Schoenlaub
Mark Shuter
Bob Simpson
Ray Sisson
Spiritual Health Services (staff)
Loah Stallard
Sandy Taylor
John Thompson
Steve Wenger
John Wilson

NEW AND REINSTATED MEMBERS

The board of trustees and staff of both the St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums would like to welcome the following new and reinstated members. We appreciate their interest in the museums and we are very grateful for their support.

Ralph & Patricia Grier
(Pony Express)
Gower Missouri

Robert Bunn (Pony Express)
Leawood, Kansas

PONY EXPRESS, INC.
FUNDING UPDATE
Pony Express, Inc., gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, businesses and organizations for their generous contributions to the Pony Express Museum Restoration and Expansion Project.

American Angus Association
Anonymous #4
Burnham, Simpson, Colman,
McMurray & Hatten
Christian Women's Fellowship
Wyatt Park Christian Church
Dwight Dannen
East Hills Merchants
Association
Mr. & Mrs. E. L. Fitzpatrick
Joseph K. Houts, Jr.
Norma Lindensmith
MA-GA Equipment
Partnership
Mercantile Bank
Jane J. Meriwether
Midwest Mobile Radio Service
Mobilpage, Inc.
Dr. & Mrs. Carlos Moya
Pony Express Questers 400
Jim Summers
Chuck & Norma Tadlock
Dr. & Mrs. Ron Wade
Westward Ho, Chapter 173
Dr. Virginia G. Young

SHOP TALK

Copies of the new second edition of *Indian America, A Traveler's Companion* by Eagle/Walking Turtle are now available in the St. Joseph Museum book store. This fully revised and updated guide to the world of the native people of America tells the traveler how and where to find the over 300 Indian tribes in the United States that welcome visitors. Included in this volume are the dates and locations for traditional ceremonies that are held each year. Some helpful hints on proper etiquette for various sites and occasions are given in the Visitor Information section for each tribe. For instance, cameras and other recording equipment are not always allowed.

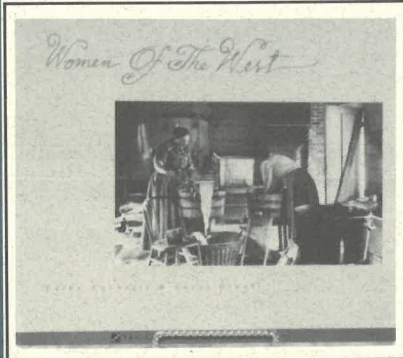


Rhonda Clem

On a different theme comes a book that is new to the museum book store called *Women of the West* by Cathy Luchetti and Carol Olwell. If you enjoy reading about westward expansion and the day to day challenges that faced those who made the journey, you are sure to love this book. Published by Orion Books in New York, this book includes an impressive collection of 150 documentary photographs, many of which have never been published before. The authors do not omit the role of minority women. Their focus on the human element gives this work of historical research an appeal not easily found in most history books on the settling of the west. From the humorous to the tragic, these stories tell of every aspect of the women's lives through the records they left behind.

Particularly interesting are the recorded thoughts of Mary Richardson Walker. Her journal spans fifty-seven years making her one of America's most prolific diarists. She possessed a scientific interest and a sharp wit. Born in 1811, she began putting her doubts and opinions on paper at the age of twenty-two.

Rhonda Clem



Mary was one month pregnant with the first of six children when she and her husband set out for Oregon. They traveled by horse nearly two thousand miles, from Westport, Missouri to Wailatpu, Oregon, spending 129 grueling days on the trail. She always managed to write at least a few lines about the trip each day. She leaves little to the imagination in describing the hardships and joys she faced during this journey and throughout her life in the west.

PONY EXPRESS TEAM REPRESENTS ST. JOSEPH

In November, The Pony Express National Memorial was selected to feature its activities as they relate to tourism at the Governor's Annual Conference on Tourism. Dick DeShon was the spokesman for the group. He talked about the development of the Pony Express National Memorial and showed the promotional video. The museum representatives were dressed in western attire including "Pony Express Stetsons." The impact was significant on the 300 plus people who attended the three-day conference.

Other participants who represented the city of St. Joseph were Bill Bassitt, Kerry Strahm, Rep. Millie Humphreys, Tom and Jacque Mann, Pat and Mary Conway and Don and Yvette Paton.

photo courtesy of the Missouri Division of Tourism



From left, Rich Nolf, Dick DeShon, Heidi Hornaday, Sandy Taylor, Mignon DeShon and (in front) Don and Yvette Paton.

**GATEWAY OCTA TO
OFFER PROGRAM ON
"THE ST. JOE ROAD."**

A slide program on the St. Joe Road of the Oregon-California Trail will be presented by Marilyn Taylor and Jackie Lewin at the meeting of the Gateway Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association on January 19 at 7:00 P.M. Marilyn and Jackie coauthored the book entitled *The St. Joe Road* published by the St. Joseph Museum. The meeting is open to the public and will be held on the first floor of the St. Joseph Museum.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

16 - Audubon Bird Watch at Ashland Cemetery.
For information call David Mead 232-5636

18 - Martin Luther King Day, museum on
holiday hours, 1:00 - 5:00 P.M.

19 - Oregon California Trails Association,
Gateway Chapter Meeting. See information at
left.

25 - St. Joseph Archaeological Society meeting.

For more museum information call 232-8471

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St. Joseph Museum
1100 Charles Street
St. Joseph, Missouri 64501-2874
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Sundays 1-5 p.m.
Closed New Years Day

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