

South Facade of St. Joseph's City Hall during Its Construction.



St. Joseph Museum Collections

This photograph shows the structure before the porch and terraces were finished. The young girls in the foreground are standing on Jules Street which ran directly in front of the uncompleted structure. Jules Street was vacated in front of City Hall, and the former roadbed was graded and incorporated into Civic Center Park.

According to a July 7, 1927, *St. Joseph News-Press* article, "Formal Opening of City Hall Tonight," the "cost including the land, approximates \$1,000,000." The article continued:

"The ceremonies at the new hall on the south side, will be short. Mayor Louis V. Stigall will preside. Ten minute talks will be made by Congressman Charles L. Faust, Federal Judge Merrill E. Otis, and Probate Judge A.B. Duncan. Then the keys to the new hall will be presented to George W. Akers, President of the Board of Public Works. The closing prayer will be given by Doctor C.M. Chilton of the First Christian Church. After that the doors will be opened to the public."

Three thousand people attended the opening to watch city officials march from the old City Hall at 2nd and Edmond Streets to the new structure.

HAPPENINGS

St. Joseph Museum

September/October/November 1998

Over the years the *Happenings* has undergone several format changes. Our first issues were mimeographed and stapled in the corner. (Younger members may not know what a mimeograph machine or stencil is!) One year ago we decided to develop a completely new and distinctive format for the *Happenings*.

We received many comments from our readers about the change. Some members really liked the new format, but others did not, so we decided to do a formal survey. The results of that survey are in and they are diverse, but not as much as we had expected.

Just over 16% of our members responded, providing a pretty good cross section. There were six questions:

- 1) What is most important to you in a membership newsletter?
 - 2) Rate the *Happenings* as:
 - a) informative, b) cover picture, c) content, d) pictures, e) timeliness.
 - 3) What do you most like in the *Happenings*?
 - 4) What do you least like?
 - 5) How frequent should it be published?
 - 6) How long have you been a member?
- Informative articles were the priority for 44% of the people while 30% preferred upcoming events. Eighty percent felt its informative

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New Director of Marketing and Development for Museum

Laura Bodicky has been hired as Director of Marketing and Development. She replaces Kristy Hill who accepted a position in the Communications Department of Heartland Regional Health Center. Welcome, Laura, and good luck, Kristy.



Thank you all for responding and guiding us in our decision. After all, it is your newsletter and we want to please our audience.

- 1) Making it quarterly to hold the cost down.
- 2) Increasing size to 8 pages in order to include more informative articles.
- 3) Using a cover picture, (not folded!)
- 4) Adding more pictures with the increased size.
- 6) Keeping the 4-color to enhance the pictures.

So, with all of that information we are:

Best liked were the cover pictures followed by the articles. Very few responded to the least liked question. One person, to the best liked question, responded: "the art.", and to the least liked they said: "you told the art." More responses indicated they preferred a quarterly publication, and the majority of our members have been with us over 10 years.

74% thought it was timely.

76% rating the pictures as excellent or good.

good. Content was 72% excellent or good with the cover picture was 66% excellent and 19% value was excellent or good. The response on

The St. Joseph Museum is giving visitors a look back at the California Gold Rush with their new exhibit scheduled to open in March 1999. The exhibit will tell the story of the California Gold Rush from St. Joseph to the mines in California. Exhibit cases about the gold rush will be set into the rock-like walls.

The first exhibit features a mini-diorama of St. Joseph in 1849 with newspaper clippings and diary entries to tell about St. Joseph's role in the gold rush. Next, visitors will be able to choose a date to leave for California. Once a date is selected, a lighted map and voice-over will let them know how far along the trail they would have traveled. This interactive exhibit illustrates the narrow window emigrants had for beginning their journey to California.



Robbie Sipes plasters the walls of the Gold Rush exhibit. The completed walls will resemble the rock walls of a mine.



Robbie Sipes and Chad Lawhon construct reading rails for the Gold Rush exhibit.

An authentic diary of an emigrant's journey from St. Joseph to California will also be displayed. A mini-diorama will show visitors the emigrants' mining destinations in California and discuss the various mining techniques used. The fifth exhibit element will test visitors knowledge about gold. They will be asked to choose real gold from fool's gold and a variety of precious metals.

The gold rush exhibit will be opened to the public March 7, 1999. A private opening for members is scheduled Thursday, March 4. Commerce Bank, Heartland Heath System, Altec, the Bradley Trust, Hillyard Inc., Missouri-American Water Company, St. Joseph Light & Power, and American Family Insurance are sponsoring the exhibit.

In 1856, James D. McNeely immigrated to St. Joseph from Ireland. He is listed in the 1860 *St. Joseph City Directory* as a partner in the McNeely and Bogle Family Grocers on the northeast corner of 5th and Messanie. He boarded with stone mason James Treacy who became his father-in-law when he married Ellen Treacy. James and Ellen McNeely had six children: Arthur, John, Annie Laurie, James, Minnie Dora, and William - all of which rode in the baby carriage shown below. James D. McNeely was successful and the family grocery developed into a wholesale grocery located at 521 South 5th. The family resided at 701 South 11th.

One of the sons who rode in the baby carriage, John D. McNeely, was a prominent St. Joseph attorney from around 1900 until his death in 1955. He also had a special connection to the St. Joseph Museum. Beginning in 1927 when the Children's Museum of St. Joseph was founded, he served first as the museum's pro bono attorney and then as a member of the board. As attorney, he helped create the corporation for the public and educational museum. After the museum's name was changed to the St. Joseph Museum, he was instrumental in securing the passage of state and municipal ordinances allowing the St. Joseph Museum and other museums and libraries in the state to be municipal entities.



James D. McNeely—original owner of the baby carriage.

Another of the McNeely children, Minnie, inherited the baby carriage and used it for her children. She married Dr. Frederick Gregg Thompson, listed in the *St. Joseph City Directories* of the early 1900s as a "country physician." They resided at 1124 Edmond, just about a block from the present location of the St. Joseph Museum. Their son, Dr. F. Gregg Thompson II, donated the baby carriage to the St. Joseph Museum in 1955.

Although carrying a number of babies in its lifetime of use, the carriage is in near perfect condition. Since both the McNeely and Thompson residences were so close to the site of the museum, it is probable that it was pushed past this building. Today, visitors may view the baby carriage in the Victorian Room exhibit on the museum's second floor.

Jackie Lewin



This baby carriage used by the McNeely and Thompson families is made of closely woven reeds with a handwoven cane bottom. The upholstery is tufted silk damask.

RECENT DONATIONS

Ms. Mary M. Allen, Ms. Elizabeth Allen, and Mrs. Dolores Allen Wells

- Several historical items including a lap throw, shawl, sunbonnets, apron, tintypes, photos, dolls, stereoptican, cane, silverware, and a Bible from 1872.

Tom Olmstead - A hand held fan from "Townsend Wyatt & Wall DG Co., St. Joseph, Mo."

Hank Heckman - A large, sculpted rug handmade by the donor. The rug features the St. Joseph Museum logo.

Marie Durant - A gold-filled wrist watch given to the donor in 1923 by her grandfather, Marquis Lafayette Durant; an Elgin watch given to the donor's great-grandmother, Minerva Jane Strock, in 1897; an Eastern Star pin which belonged to the donor's mother, Fannie Myrtle Nave Durant; and a Masonic-Eastern Star pin which be-

longed to the donor's father, Willis Booher Durant.

Bruce Douglas - Two photographs of the 353rd Infantry, 89th Division Reunion taken in 1919; a photograph of the Second Battalion Q.M. Motor Transport School, San Antonio, Texas, taken in March 1942; and a color photograph of the donor's grandfather in uniform taken March 21, 1929.

Jane Meriwether - A pair of heavily beaded Cheyenne moccasins from circa 1860.

Dr. Wallace McDonald - A book, *Charles L. Faust - Late a Representative from Missouri*, published by the United States Government Printing Office.

LIGHTING CEREMONY

The St. Joseph Museum Lighting Ceremony is just around the corner. The museum will kick off the holiday season on Thursday, December 3, 1998, at 6 p.m. Visitors will be able to see Santa and Mrs. Claus, enjoy refreshments, see beautiful decorations, and much more.

A highlight of the Lighting Ceremony is the bird carvings of Jim Dick. Jim, a native of St. Joseph, is retired from the Ornithology Department at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.



Ivory-billed woodpecker.

Jim Dick

Jim began his carving career with a pair of wood ducks in 1988. Since then, he has carved many birds and won over 50 awards for his work. The carvings on display at the museum will represent extinct, endangered, or threatened species. Among the carved birds that will be on display are an ivory-billed woodpecker, trumpeter swan, Eskimo curlew, and spotted owl.

Events

BASKET WEAVING WORKSHOP

Events

The Native American Heritage Museum and the St. Joseph Museum recently co-sponsored a basket weaving workshop. The session was held at the St. Joseph Museum from 1:00 to 5:00 on Sunday, October 4. Each participant made a cracker basket out of rushes. By 5:00, everyone had a hand crafted basket to take home. Jacques Biester of Valley Falls, Kansas, was the instructor. Additional workshops will be offered in the spring.



Jackie Levin

L. to R.: Kathy Moppin concentrates on the final steps of weaving her cracker basket while Jacques Biester shows Dorothy Smith how to finish the rim of her basket.

STORYLIVING

Nineteen ninety-nine will be the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the gold rush to California. The St. Joseph Museum will be celebrating St. Joseph's role in this historic event through Storyliving, a new program for our local schools.

Storyliving brings the classroom into the story. During dynamic, two-hour sessions, third and fourth graders will travel back in time to become people who make decisions that change their lives and help create the future. Students have fun participating as active learners and using their imaginations.

Our Storyliving program is called "Jump Off at St. Joe." Students learn about James Marshall's discovery of gold. In the spring of 1849, thousands of gold seekers gathered in St. Joseph to "jump off" for California. The students become those early gold seekers, find out what it was like to make the long journey to California by wagon, and what it was like to be an 1849 citizen of St. Joseph.

Team members consist of museum staff as well as musicians. Music is an important part of

the program, and Phil Vandel and Jason Riley were recruited as skilled musicians. Storyliving will be available to third and fourth grades in St. Joseph from January through mid-May in 1999.

Storyliving is funded in part by Walgreens Drug Stores and the Taylor Trust Fund. We would like to extend a very special thank you to them.



Carol Willis

L. to R.: Staff members Kristy Hill and Jackie Lewin create a "frozen picture" illustrating an incident on the trail.

Features

MEMBERS NEW and RENEWED

Mary F. Adams
Dr. Edward Andres
Noble I. Ayers, Jr.
Jerre Anne Cafeteria and Bakery
Allison Bailey
Dr. and Mrs. Paul Beck
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Brunner
McAndrew Burns
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clisbee
Mrs. John S. Creal, Sr.
Mrs. R. K. Dickens, Jr.
First Bank of Missouri
Edward M. Hirsch
Alex Horvath

Brian and Debra Jamison
James F. Lawson
Lehr Consulting Company, Inc.
Ms. Avis Lindley
Regina Lorenz
Dr. Eugene Majerowicz
Ms. Diane Moran
Mr. and Mrs. James H. McCord, III
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Optican
Pony Express Neighborhood Network
Dain Rauscher Investment Services
Margaret Richter
Marcia Rogers
Mr. and Mrs. Simon Rositzky

Dr. and Mrs. John Rushin
George and Waltraud Smith
Mrs. John T. Smith, Sr.
Clydia Spurgeon
Mildred Stewart
Craig Sumner, C.P.A.
Robert M. Swift
Donald H. Walton
John and Diane Watson
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh D. Welch, Jr.
Ronald F. Worley
Mr. and Mrs. Lewis B. Wheeler

DONATIONS

Altec
Heartland Health Systems
Hillyard Inc.
Hillyard Industries

CONTRIBUTIONS

In memory of Margot "Cricket" Reck.

From:

Mrs. Walter Bartlett
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bayer, Jr.
Martha Nichols
Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Orr
Patricia Wright

Memberships and donations received after October 31 will be recognized in the next issue.

MEMORIAL/DONATION FORM

My gift is in memory of _____.

My gift is in honor of _____ on the occasion of _____.

Gift Amount: _____

☐ My check made payable to the St. Joseph Museum is enclosed.

☐ Please charge my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please clip out and return to the St. Joseph Museum:

St. Joseph Museum
PO Box 128
St. Joseph, MO 64502-0128

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **November 26—Thanksgiving**
The St. Joseph Museum will be closed.
- **December 3—Lighting Ceremony, 6 to 8 p.m.**
The bird carvings of Jim Dick will be featured at the Lighting Ceremony.
- **December 19—Children's Christmas Ornament Workshop, 9 a.m. to noon.** Cost for members - \$10.00 and nonmembers - \$12.00.
- **December 24 and 25**
The St. Joseph Museum will be closed.
- **December 31 and January 1**
The St. Joseph Museum will be closed.

Call **232-8471** for more information.



St. Joseph Museum
1100 Charles Street, P.O. Box 128
St. Joseph, Missouri 64502-0128
Monday through Saturday 9-5 p.m.
Sunday & Holidays 1-5 p.m.

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