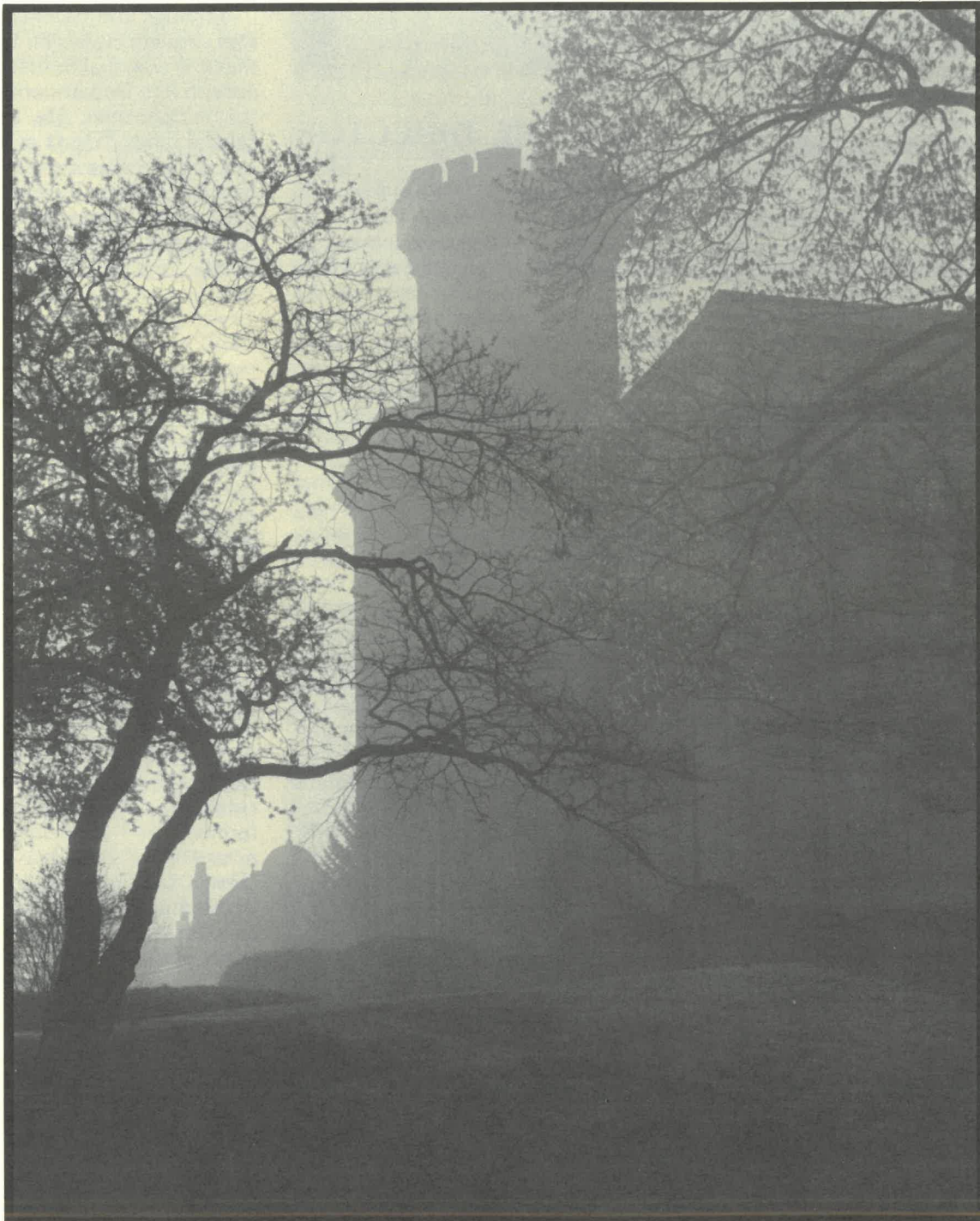


The

Happenings

May - June 1989
Volume 16, Number 3

ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM
PONY EXPRESS MUSEUM



STAFF

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 Jackie Lewin, Curator of History
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 Stanley Novak, Assistant Receptionist
 Margaret Hlatt, Assistant Receptionist
 Avis Batsell, Assistant Receptionist
 Mary Packard, Staff Assistant

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Senior Editors:

Rich Nolf and Marilyn Taylor

Content:

Jackie Lewin and Bonnie Watkins

Layout and Design:

David Mead and Robbie Sipes.

Production:
 Pat Kruse

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Cover: Saint Joseph Museum.
 Photo by David Mead.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



DAVID MEAD

As you remember from my last note, we are deep in expansion plans. This whole process has been very interesting. It's fun and exciting to be a part of the expansion and to look ahead into the future. However, the work load on each staff person and board trustee has increased. What doesn't register immediately is that the everyday work must continue. In some cases, it's almost like taking on a second job!

We have become a large staff and with two facilities to operate, a Monday - Friday crew, a Tuesday - Saturday crew and some of the staff part time, it is rare to get all together at one time. (Although we do manage for parties and fish fries!) Recently, Marilyn reminded me that we needed to assemble the entire staff because it had been a while since we'd had a fire extinguisher drill and some of the more recent staff had not been oriented. I agreed and Marilyn set up two training sessions with Jim Diffin from the St. Joseph Fire Department (SJFD). They were really good sessions, and we've set them up to occur annually. We hope we never have to use that training, but it's still important to know. We have always been very happy and pleased with the tremendous cooperation we receive from the SJFD and this time was no exception.

Two sessions were required so one Jim Diffin made some introductory site was the concrete top of a cistern. The test out in back of the museum. The test the other practiced. Each group gathered group could staff the museum while

comments and explanations about fire extinguishers and their use. He then proceeded to fill a pan with gasoline and set it on fire. Each staff person operated the extinguisher in order to become familiar with the "feel" of the procedure. It was really interesting to hear the comments:

"I've never used a fire extinguisher before."

"Is this in my job description?"

"It sure went out fast."

"Look at all that white powder."

"A piece of cake."

Although the training was basic, it was very effective. Jim Diffin stressed that it is essential to first notify the St. Joseph Fire Department and then use the extinguisher. He also repeated several times, "Don't ever use the extinguisher and not call the St. Joseph Fire Department." I must repeat that I'm just really pleased by the tremendous cooperation we get from the fire department.

Spirit of St. Joseph

Michelle Byers of the Robidoux Riverboat Company, which operates the "Spirit of St. Joseph", contacted the museum in the middle of June to set up reciprocal staff visits. The staff of the "Spirit of St. Joseph" are constantly being asked by their passengers about things to do and see in St. Joseph. Michelle felt that the riverboat staff needed to visit each of the museums in town so they could give knowledgeable answers to their passengers' questions.

The staff of the St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums was pleased to welcome the riverboat personnel to our facilities, and even more pleased to accept their invitation to a cruise on the "Spirit." On Wednesday, June 28, seven of the museum staff went up the Missouri River for an hour and a half afternoon cruise. On June 30, the seven who had "manned" the museums on Wednesday took their turn on the riverboat. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and we sincerely appreciated the opportunity offered by the Robidoux Riverboat Company. We are also pleased by the interest shown by the riverboat staff in promoting all areas of tourism in St. Joseph.

Back

ARCHAEOLOGY EXHIBIT 23BN171

The completion of the archaeology exhibit on second floor in October, 1988, marked a proud moment for the St. Joseph Museum. The exhibit was special for more than one reason. It was the result of a collaborative effort between staff and volunteers. It was also completed very quickly in terms of the museum world, since it was less than two years from its conception to its completion. This is something of a minor miracle in a world where exhibits are often researched and planned for years ahead of time. Because of the expertise of the volunteers on this project, the research time needed was minimal.

Mike Fisher, past president of the Missouri Archaeology Society (MAS) and president of the local St. Joseph chapter, offered a tremendous amount of background information on which to draw. Ed Barlow, who joined the exhibit team in 1988, was a trustee of the MAS and vice-president of the local chapter. As you can see, these men were not picked by accident. They were chosen for their volunteer positions because of their extensive archaeological backgrounds. Their knowledge eased the way, from the limited research needed by the team, to choosing artifacts for the exhibit, and finding places that had the color and texture of dirt needed. The exhibit is definitely the result of Mike and Ed's efforts added to those of the museum.

Work on the Archaeology Exhibit officially began in January, 1987, when Rich Nolf requested that Bonnie Watkins, who is an amateur archaeologist, and Mike Fisher meet with him. Rich wanted to discuss the possibility that these two could form a team that would produce an exhibit on archaeology. Bonnie would bring to the team her knowledge of the museum's archaeological collections. Mike would bring his wide expertise of the field in general. The exhibit team created here proved to be a very productive one.

Over some months, Mike and Bonnie were able to define the basic concepts they wanted to present in the exhibit. They came up with three goals for the exhibit to meet. The first was to showcase the museum's very fine archaeological collections that were then in storage cabinets in the basement. The second goal of the team was to illustrate

an archaeology dig in progress. (Very few people have the opportunity to observe a dig while the excavators are still at work.) The third goal was to limit the exhibit to material found in Northwest Missouri. Other museums have archaeology exhibits, but this one is very specialized in that it shows only what one would find in a dig in our own area.

With the basic concepts specified, other ideas began to fall into place. It was decided to use, if possible, both the vertical and horizontal profiles of the dig. This would enable the team to illustrate such features as postholes, a hearth and a pit. These are all items which are indicated in a dig mainly through a change in soil color. Even a rodent run, something one would normally come across in a dig, could be attempted if the vertical profile was utilized. The horizontal profile would enable objects to be placed within the individual squares in a manner similar to that in which they are actually found. Objects are often left "in-situ," or in place, as one digs around them, resulting in a sort of pedestal effect. This could also be illustrated in the exhibit.

The next area to be researched was the density and texture of the foam itself. Specifically, Bonnie and Mike wanted to discover if the foam rubber would hold artifacts of varying sizes in

both vertical and horizontal positions. This was necessary because the items placed in this exhibit would be there for years. One must logically be able to expect them to stay where they are put.

To this end, models were constructed. A piece of foam was glued to a board for support and then covered with dirt. Artifacts were then placed on top of it, extruding from the sides a little or a lot - whatever was necessary to give the appearance of points, pottery, pots, herds, etc. just discovered in the dirt. This was done in both horizontal and vertical formats. The team anticipated that the vertical format would not hold as well as the horizontal. In this they were incorrect. Everything held very well; so well, in fact, that some items had to be cut out of the foam to be removed. They could not be merely pulled loose. Why this occurs is unknown. Perhaps a chemical reaction occurs between the foam and dirt and water that makes the whole into a type of glue. Since no glue of any kind was used, this is the only hypothesis they could come up with. At any rate, the team did ascertain that this foam environment was very stable.

It was now time to construct the exhibition case itself. After several starts and stops, the case which was started in May, 1987, was completed in October, 1987. The entire museum staff, plus



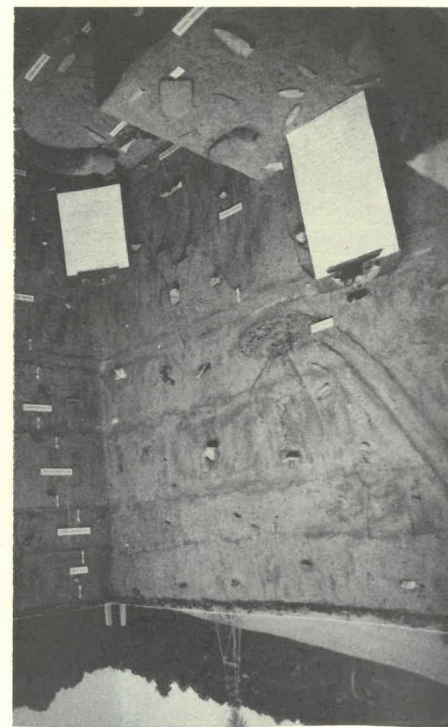
The exhibit team from left to right: Mike Fisher, Bonnie Watkins, Ed Barlow.

last, that he has volunteered himself in this manner. Another exhibit in the same room as the Archaeological Exhibit more fully showcases the wealth of his talent. In this case, however, the museum, and especially the exhibit team, are indebted to him for the painting over the dig which shows a farm meadow receding into the background. The exhibit is much more life-like because of Bobby's contribution.

After installing the painting, the team started cutting and gluing the foam rubber for installation in the case. They took two four-inch thick pieces of foam measuring 60" x 80" and cut them with an electric carving knife into four two-inch pieces 60" x 80". These four pieces were then glued to the wooden panels of the interior and became the background and foreground vertical profiles. The marks made by the carving knife in the foam resemble closely those made by shovels and trowels in the dirt. The same was done for the horizontal squares, only on a smaller scale, and the pieces glued to the wooden framework. The interior of this case was covered with foam before the task of applying the dirt was begun.

In an actual archaeology dig, different colors of dirt designate different levels and periods of occupation. This was the effect that the team wanted to duplicate. To this end, five or six colors and textures of dirt had been collected, some from as far away as Nebraska. The dirt varied in color from light tan loess soil to the dark black loam from Mike's garden. The dirt was mixed with water to form a kind of mud. They had already discovered that too little or too much water would prevent the mixture from sticking to the foam. Then some time was spent making sure the mixture was correct, and adding dirt or water if it was not. When the right consistency and color were attained, the team began applying the dirt to the foam.

They started at the top with what would have been the plow zone in an actual dig. This area extended all across the top to a depth of about six inches or less of foam. The next period down was Proto-Historic. It was a slightly different color, so a whole new batch of dirt had to be mixed up for it. As soon as the right consistency for this level, the team applied it to the area directly below the plow zone. The top square was covered, as well as four or five inches of foam across the back profile. The project continued in this manner. Each time period, and there



Interior of the Archaeology Exhibit

basic research into working with foam rubber on a large scale. They visited various businesses in the area that worked with foam rubber on a daily basis. Since these businesses were very willing to share their expertise in this area, the results of the visits were very beneficial. The team learned that the professionals cut foam rubber with an electric carving knife—very elucidating. They glue the pieces together with a special glue made by 3M especially for this purpose. The team also was able to ascertain the cheapest supplier of these materials and actually picked up some supplies with which to investigate. Luckily, everything needed was right here in St. Joseph and nothing had to be ordered.

In January, 1988, Bonnie and Mike were joined by Ed Barlow, the other volunteer who was mentioned earlier. The next step in the process was to assemble the case interior. It was also confirmed by now that the case needed a landscape painting at the back. However, there was no money allocated to hire someone to paint one. There is an artist on staff, but his busy schedule was already overbooked. The exhibit team was attempting to come up with alternative backgrounds when, much to their relief, a solution presented itself. Bobby Sipes, an amateur artist, heard of the problem with the landscape and volunteered his talented brush in order to help the museum. This was not the first time, and hopefully not the

Bonnie and Mike contributed to its construction. Its exterior measurements are 13'8" (long) x 35" (wide) x 6'10" (high). This is one of the larger cases attempted in recent history. Being so large, it was mostly constructed right on the spot, the northcentral room of the second floor of the museum. This was one of the few places large enough to contain these activities. The entire case is made of wood, both interior and exterior. A wooden framework was added to the inside for support of the foam rubber pieces. Wooden panels were utilized as supports for the foam at the back of the case and the sides.

The exhibit team also wanted to show each of the time periods represented in Northwestern Missouri archaeology. They are as follows, from oldest to most recent:

Paleolithic	12,000 BC - 7,000 BC
Archaic	7,000 BC - 1,000 BC
Woodland	1,000 BC - 900 AD
Mississippian	900 AD - 1550 AD
Proto-Historic	1550 AD - 1725 AD

At this point in the project, the team met with Rich to make certain the exhibit was fulfilling the goals of the museum. This was actually done at frequent intervals throughout the entire project. During these meetings, Rich added his ideas and/or suggested alternative ways of doing things. Much discussion went back and forth at these times. You should remember that neither Bonnie nor Mike had ever attempted more than a small case, so Rich's suggestions and expertise were very much needed.

The team had one very pressing problem to solve. They needed to use something on the interior of the exhibit that would appear to be dirt. Mike came to the rescue here with the ingenious idea of using foam rubber covered with real dirt for the basic design. He had utilized this technique once before for a small scale exhibit, and it had worked out very well for this purpose.

Since Bonnie and Mike knew the Archaeology Exhibit would be over ten feet in length, they decided to do some

were five, needed a different color of dirt. The team tried to keep samples of each type of dirt used in the exhibit, in order to be able to correct any mistakes discovered later on in the project. Just try to talk co-workers into not throwing away coffee cans full of mud! The features (such as the hearth, storage pit and postholes) in an actual dig were caused by digging in the earth by prehistoric men. In order to duplicate these areas in the exhibit, the team was required to add further alterations to the dirt. In the hearth, ashes and fire-reddened limestone were added. In the pit, ashes and many broken bone and flint artifacts were required. In the postholes, small bits of carbonized wood were the only things needed.

After the dirt was applied to one time period, such as the Woodland, artifacts were added to the area while the dirt was still wet. Through the research mentioned earlier, it had been deduced that this was the simplest way. Artifacts were used in each time period which best illustrated the special qualities of the era. To this end, the team had gone completely through the museum's archaeology collections – drawer by drawer. The artifacts chosen had been set aside to be viewed later to make certain that each one represented exactly what was needed. Models of each square in the exhibit had been made out of brown paper. This allowed the team to place every artifact with thought and precision. Notes were made on the paper as to what went where.

Artifacts were placed so that some sat on the dirt while others projected out at odd angles, just as you would find them in an actual dig. Artifacts also extruded out from the sidewalls in no apparent order, again as you would come across them in a dig. To keep the exhibit interesting, however, more artifacts were used than you would normally find in a dig. The main label states, "It is unlikely that all these types would be found in one dig and that concentrations would be as high as they are in this display."

With the artifacts in place, the next area of attention was the labels for the exhibit. This is one area that is often overlooked by the non-professional. The labels need to explain the exhibit clearly but succinctly, and many hours are often required to make this seemingly simple thing come to fruition. Several different types of labels were considered for the Archaeology Exhibit. The final ones are in outline form. The

team felt this form to be the most easily and quickly understood.

The labels are intended to be viewed as notes made in the field. To make this more realistic, they were handwritten by Ed. He was chosen for this important position because his handwriting was the most legible. After Ed finished the labels, each one was attached to a clipboard and set in the appropriate time period. Each label relates the following information:

- Name of time period
- Dates of the period
- Food sources
- Characteristics
- Tools used: with drawings of the points most often used

These outlines relate a great deal about each period in a very brief format.

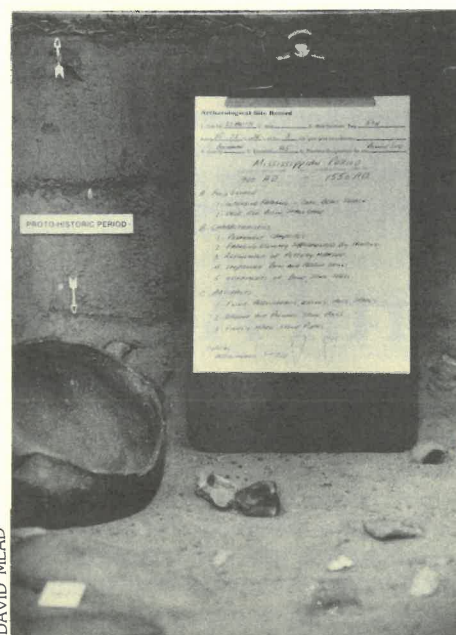
The completion of the interior labels all but finished the interior of the case. Paneling was used on the exterior of this case, to match the other cases in the room in order to add an air of uniformity. Sliding glass doors were one of the final additions to the exhibit. The team had been wrestling with the problem of how to let the viewer see the interior and still allow access to the inside of the case. This access also had to lend itself to the security measures to keep the public out. The answer to all these questions was the sliding glass doors, one of Rich's best ideas. They provide an excellent window and yet allow almost immediate access to the staff.

The case has a main label, which is placed on the exterior. It is printed and gives an overall view of the exhibit to the visitor. The team decided to place tactile objects around the label and sidewall, to enable the visitor to both see and touch some tools used by the archaeologist. These include a screen for sifting the dirt, a shovel, a ruler and several trowels.

Many archaeology sites in the United States have a number so the exhibit team thought that their site should have one also. The label includes the site designation, 23BN171. The number 23 is the number for Missouri. In the early 1900s the Smithsonian devised a plan whereby each state was listed alphabetically and numbered 1 through 48. Alaska and Hawaii were added as numbers 49 and 50 when they were admitted to the Union. The "BN" portion stands for Buchanan County – each county has its own two letter identification. Normally sites are numbered within a county as they are

discovered. However, site 171 is a fictitious number. It actually represents the ages of the exhibit team added together. The team had a great deal of knowledge and expertise, but they also had a sense of humor.

The Archaeology Exhibit was officially completed in October, 1988. Over 1,000 hours, both staff and volunteer, had been relegated to it. However, this marks only one stage of development for the exhibit. Vandals have already struck, breaking off the handle of one of the trowels positioned on the outside. The trowel has been replaced, so the second stage for the exhibit begins – the maintenance. Just as with all the other exhibits in the museum, this one will need upkeep. ■



DAVID MEAD

Detail of the Archaeology Exhibit.

DONORS

Sheridan Logan – Book, **The Journal of Jonathan Alder**, autographed by author and donor.

Mrs. G. B. Bellis – Program from the "St. Joseph Pony Express Celebration," held Aug. 25 - Sept. 1, 1923.

United States Cavalry Museum – five black and white photographs of different views of the wedding of Douglas and Emma McCaskey, October 5, 1904.

Pauline Goodell – Woman's sunbonnet and cylindrical roll. Small doilies and table accessories were wrapped around this roll to avoid creases.

Stanley Novak – Medal from "Marie's Boudoir – Fanciest French Fillies – New Orleans, LA."

Marcus Eckhardt, Museum Intern

Since coming to the St. Joseph Museum in early March, I have been learning the joys of museology in its various forms. I wanted to work in a museum because I have many interests. In a museum I am able to be involved with the things that I want to do and best of all, eventually get paid for it.

While working in a museum may not pay well, it gives me opportunities not available to the general public. To me, it is exciting to see and hold in my hands various artifacts, to actually be touching a specific object from the past. Important information can be learned from understanding an object. When something is understood it can then be given a designated position within its originating culture or environment.

When I first got here I hoped to be working mostly with exhibits, but little did I know that they would only be a small part of my learning and laboring.

art!FACTS

One of the feature attractions at the Pony Express Museum is the mochila or the container which carried the Pony Express mail. Mochila (mo che'la) (upside down e) (also line over o and e) is Spanish for the word knapsack. As designed for the Pony Express, the mochila was a square piece of leather with four pockets called cantinas. These cantinas held the mail. Holes were cut in the mochila for the saddle cantle (upward projecting rear part of a saddle) and horn. The mochila was held in place by the weight of the rider. When the Pony Express rider reached a relay station, the mochila could then be quickly lifted off one saddle and placed on the next horse. Each of the four pockets, or cantinas, held five pounds of mail – twenty pounds total. Three cantinas, which carried through mail from St. Joseph to Sacramento, were locked and could be opened only at military posts. The fourth cantina containing non-through mail could be opened on route. It also held a way or time card.

Mochilas used on the eastern end of the Pony Express trail were made by Israel Landis, a St. Joseph saddlemaker in business at the time of the Pony Express.

The most important thing that I have learned about working in a museum, and this may be true of other professions, is that there is seldom enough time to do what you plan to do in a given day. Everyone here has a "persistence to underestimate" how long it takes to complete a project, even without interruptions. Just as you get started on a project, something always comes up that delays its completion. Among the many causes of delay are: assistance

In a museum, you rarely do the same thing day after day. Among the projects that I have been involved with here are: repairing the roof of the Pony Express Annex, remodeling the Sub Arctic Indians clothing case, Missouri's smallest prairie plot (David's weed patch), the "Bring Your Convention Home Show-case" exhibit, the great timber rattlesnake hunts with Bobby Sipes (we didn't see a thing), working on the American bison case for the Pony Express Museum, and continually, my part time work at the Andrew County Museum, in Savannah, with its many projects.

I believe that I am gaining valuable experience at the St. Joseph Museum from the competent staff. Not all of the things that I am learning can be listed or explained to someone else. ■

New and Reinstated Members

The St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums welcome the following new and reinstated members and thank them for their support.

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Slater
Esther Bond
Dagmar Boswell
The Trust Company of St. Joseph

side note from Russ Mooney is that when he was making a replica of an 1860 saddle tree for the mochila to fit over, he had to make the tree narrower than those currently in use. Due to better nutrition, today's horses are larger. An 1860 saddle would not fit a modern horse.

Visit the Pony Express Museum to see a mochila for yourself, and learn more about the Pony Express. ■



JACKIE LEWIN

Replica of the Pony Express Mochila

The Pony Express Museum has three mochilas on exhibit – all replicas of the original. There are no known original mochilas in existence today. All replicas were made from descriptions given by former riders or those who had seen mochilas in use. The Pony Express Museum's oldest replicas were made by the Wyeth Company around 1940. Israel Landis had worked for the Wyeth Company as a saddlemaker after the Pony Express period. Around 1940 Harry Sunderland, a saddlemaker at Wyeth's at the time, got instructions from a Pony Express rider on how to make the replicas. In 1954 Harry Sunderland taught Bill Mooney, of Bill's Saddletry in St. Joseph, the skill of saddlemaking. Bill, in turn, passed this knowledge on to his son, Russ. Several years ago Bill and Russ Mooney made a mochila for the Pony Express Museum, using 1860 tools in the process. The Mooneys also have made replicas which are in the Smithsonian, Wells Fargo Museum, Kansas Historical Association and the U.S. Information Agency. The Mooney replica at the Pony Express Museum is displayed so visitors may sit on it. It has proven to be a very popular "photo opportunity," especially for parents with young children. An interesting

St. Joseph Museum Prairie Plot

If you have visited the St. Joseph Museum recently, you may have noticed a "weed patch" near the south side of the carriage house. The "weed patch" is actually an experimental garden of native prairie plants, started by Jim Lehr, president of the museum's board of trustees. Several years ago, Jim seeded a small part of the lawn in native prairie grasses, including buffalo grass, big bluestem and switchgrass.



The grasses were somewhat forgotten until they grew tall and green during last year's drought, when the rest of the grass turned brown. This spring, encouraged by the grasses reemergence, David Mead planted more grasses and prairie wildflowers along the south side of the carriage house. Although the grasses are slow to take root, (they establish very deep root systems), most of the wildflowers have flourished and bloomed. Pale purple coneflowers, butterfly weeds, royal catchflies, blazing stars, rose verbenas and black-eyed Susans have all blossomed, creating a myriad of color. Invasions of non-native plants such as crabgrass, foxtail and pigweed compete with the prairie plants and make the garden difficult to maintain. There are plans to establish more native plants and provide interpretation for visitors, so please bear with our "weeds." ■

River Bluffs Regional Library Summer Reading Program

Heidi Hornaday, St. Joseph Museum volunteer, also volunteers at the public library. This summer she combined both roles for the River Bluffs Regional Library Summer Reading Program. During mid-June, Heidi gave five presentations, entitled "Trails West," to children involved in the summer reading program. Heidi's presentations centered around artifacts from the St. Joseph Museum collections which were items a family would have taken in a covered wagon along the Oregon and California Trails. The libraries where the program was presented were Carnegie, Washington Park, Savannah, Central and Belt. ■

MUSEUM NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Marilyn Taylor was the museum's representative at the June 14 and July 12 meetings of the Museum Hill Neighborhood Association held in Barbosa's Garden Room. The group reports that it is finalizing the work on Smith Park. It is anticipated that a dedication ceremony will be arranged to coincide with Prairie View Festival '89.

David Mead attended the June 8 meeting of the Pony Express Neighborhood Network (PENN). Since this meeting was also PENN's annual picnic in Patee Park, David was accompanied by his wife, Susan, and daughter, Jessica. ■

Elderhostel

For the last several years, St. Joseph Museum staff members have been asked to be guest speakers for the Elderhostel class on St. Joseph history and architecture. Dr. Jane Nelson teaches the week-long class at Missouri Western State College (MWSC). This year the staff participation involved two sessions. Jackie Lewin spoke to the group of approximately 30 people at the MWSC campus. Her topic was the various trails through St. Joseph, with particular emphasis on the California Trail. Bonnie Watkins and volunteer Mike Fisher spoke to the group at the St. Joseph Museum. After a discussion of the King Hill dig and archaeological site, the group viewed the new archaeological exhibit at the museum, and they learned how a dig was conducted. In addition, the group also visited other historic sites in the city including the Pony Express Museum. ■

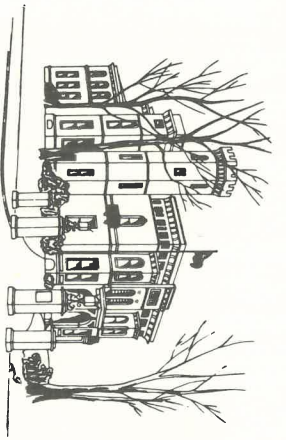
MISSOURI WESTERN STATE COLLEGE EDUCATION CLASSES

On May 2 thirty-six Missouri Western State College students working toward a teaching degree visited the St. Joseph Museum to learn about museum resources available to classrooms. Mary Jane Field, class instructor, scheduled the visit with the request that the students be familiarized with the various museum programs and how those programs could be utilized. After Rich Nolf welcomed the group, Marilyn Taylor explained how programs on Native Americans could be tailored to a specific age group and a particular area of study. Next, Jackie Lewin gave an overview of the Oregon Trail traveling exhibit. David Mead concluded the demonstrations by showing the group a live snake and discussing its habits.

It was explained to the group that there are many other areas where the museum staff can assist them including archaeology, local history, Pony Express history and museology. The students were told that upon request they could use the museum's library for research. Many in the class had already exercised one of the most popular museum services when they were elementary students themselves – classroom field trips. They were urged to make a classroom field trip to the museum a learning experience by preparing their students. As Rich, Jackie, David and Marilyn explained, some groups spend their time running through the building and really do not get any benefit from the visit. In other cases, especially when the teacher has visited ahead of time, the classes have "scavenger hunts" or questionnaires to complete, are well behaved and learn from the visit. ■

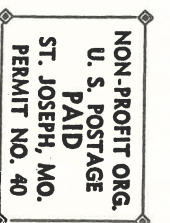
FIELD TRIP TO ARROW ROCK

On June 29, forty-four persons joined several museum staff members on a field trip to historic Arrow Rock, Missouri. After enjoying the scenic vista from atop Arrow Rock bluff and a stop at Santa Fe Spring, the group took a walking tour of the restored town, visiting various homes and commercial buildings. Following a delicious lunch at the Old Arrow Rock Tavern, the afternoon was spent browsing the shops and touring the tavern and other sites. Although the group returned home tired, everyone enjoyed themselves. ■



Saint Joseph Museum

11TH AND CHARLES STREET ST. JOSEPH, MO 64501-2874



Pony Express Museum

Extension of the St. Joseph Museum

ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI

