

HAPPENINGS

September/October 1995

St. Joseph Museum

Pony Express National Memorial

LEAH SPRATT PARK DEDICATION



Mayor Larry Stobbs speaks at the dedication of the Leah Spratt Park. Miss Spratt is seated in the wheelchair in the center of the picture.

The Leah Spratt Park was dedicated on Thursday, October 19. Leah Spratt was honored as well as those donors who had met her challenge to raise funds to purchase and remove the apartment buildings to the east of the Pony Express National Memorial. The area has been landscaped with flower beds and trees. The most recent addition is a monument made of quarried sandstone which designates the park as Leah Spratt Park. Hanging from the monument is a metal-cast horse and rider donated by the United Missouri Bank.



Dick DeShon, Pony Express, Inc., president, thanks Miss Spratt and the other donors who made the project possible. L. to R.: Rich Nolf, director; Mayor Stobbs; Dick Rochambeau, trustee; and Dr. Eugene Mockabee, who gave the invocation.

Following the dedication, dinner was served to those who attended the ceremony. Dick and Joyce Rochambeau provided the dinner. The staff of the Pony Express National Memorial and the St. Joseph Museum hosted the event. 🐾

Photos by Clint Sims



At the left of the photo, Miss Spratt pulls the rope to unveil the monument. She is assisted by Jackie Lewin, curator of the Pony Express National Memorial. The unveiled monument is pictured on page 5.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Sunday, September 24, 1995, marked the death of Stanley Novak. He had fought cancer for the last two and one-half years. Stanley had been a staff member of the St. Joseph Museum for over 25 years, initially in a full-time position and then, for a few years after his retirement, on a part time-basis.



Rich Nolf

When I came to St. Joseph as Curator of Natural History on April 1, 1965, Stanley was one of those people who took me under his wing. He was the custodian/maintenance engineer. But that wasn't all he was. He was everything that you needed him to be. He never backed away from work, he never backed away from helping someone, and he never backed away from promoting the St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express Museum.

As I reflect upon Stanley's impact on my life and the lives of other staff members, I think of him as setting the "bench mark for work ethic." He was always working. He had a constant routine, and when a project came up that caused a deviation to that routine, he would respond to that need and then go back to the routine.

It was a small staff in the 1960s and '70s, and many of us had to work long hours to keep things going. The words "can't do" was a challenge for him "to do." When something had to be built, or there was work to be done, Stanley was there. He was very thrifty and made do with what was available to work with. He firmly believed that the best cleaning agent was "elbow grease."

Stanley had a love for kids and a devotion to his family, as well as a love of his work at the museum. He retired once from the museum and couldn't stand it and came back to work on a part-time basis. He later retired from his part-time position, and several months later when I asked him if he knew of someone to fill a position, he said, "yes." He wanted to come back to work again since he missed us!

ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM & PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL MEMORIAL STAFF

PROGRAM

Rich Nolf Director
Jackie Lewin Curator, PENM
Martlyn Taylor Curator of Ethnology
Carol Willis Curator of Collections
David Mead Curator of Natural History
Robbie Sipes Curator of Exhibits
Sarah Elder Curator of History
Kathy Reno Museum Shop Manager
Clint Sims Graphic Artist
Dee Phillips Director of Marketing & PR

SUPPORT

Susan Noland Bookkeeper
Sawya Polaski Secretary
June Swift Secretary
Scott Koch Exhibits Technician
Chad Lawhon Exhibits Technician
Dale Britzending Maintenance Technician
George McClain Maintenance Technician
Albert Bingham Maintenance Technician
Mary Knab Research Assistant
Kem Mills Curatorial Assistant/Receptionist
Georgia Brooks Receptionist
Jerome Goolsby Receptionist
Marcelene Green Receptionist
Marylys Hauglie Receptionist
Helen Marthews Receptionist
Allana Smith Curatorial Assistant/Receptionist
Amy Glogner Receptionist
Leonard Elliott Receptionist

ADJUNCT

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

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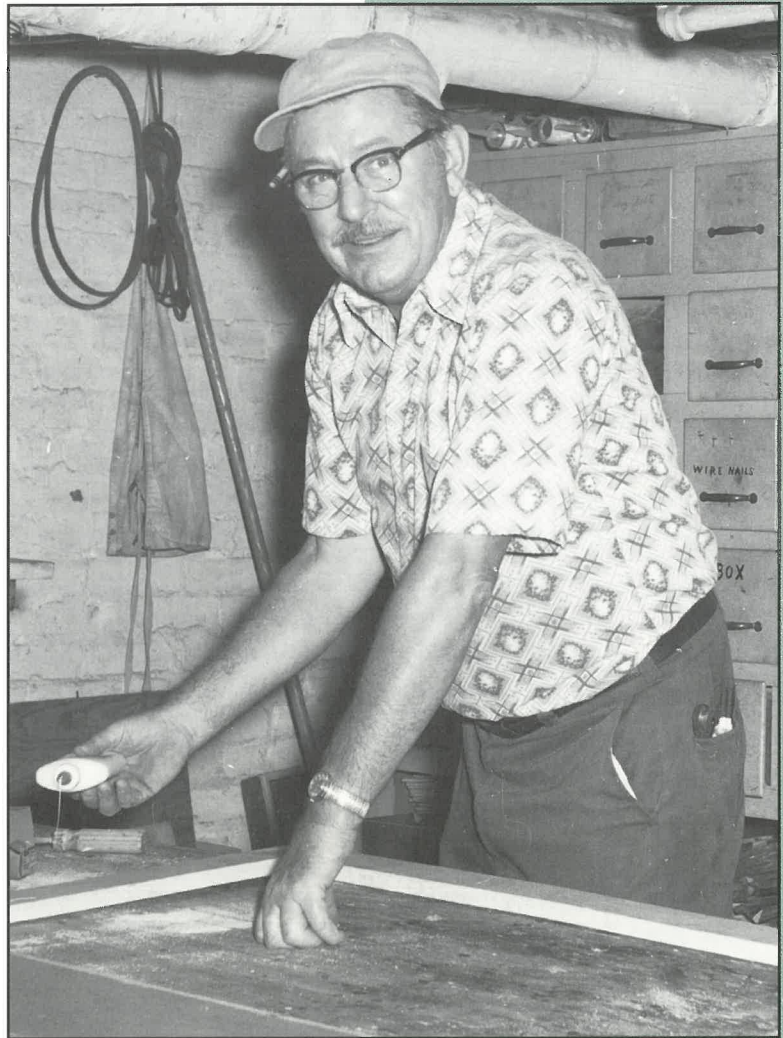
When he said he was going fishing — he went fishing! He didn't talk about it. He did it. He had that intuitive ability to know where to go and what to use as a lure or bait. Mike, his youngest son, came up to me after the funeral and shared with me what one of Stanley's old fishing buddies had told him. "The fish are sleeping easier these days!"

I remember some years ago when we had a retreat. Our staff had expanded to about 12 or 14, twice what it was when I became director. As a part of this retreat, each staff person shared what their jobs were since we were becoming more segregated in our work and some were not clear about what others were involved in. When it was Stanley's turn, he identified himself and what he did: "If it's dirty, I clean it; if it's broke, I fix it; and if it's lying around, I pick it up!"

Stanley had a lot of mechanical skills and among those was that of a welder. I found out that during World War II he had welded together LSTs (Landing Ship Tanks) in a midwest shipyard. While I was in the Navy, I served aboard an LST for two and a half years. I often wondered whether I might have had an early connection with Stanley. Perhaps Stanley had worked on my ship.

After his full-time retirement and in between his part-time retirements, he would frequently come in to the museum to have coffee, chat with his friends, and ask how things were going. We all miss Stanley, but he sure left a legacy. It's an intangible legacy, and one that does not deteriorate. He made a real impact on my life, the life of the museum, and the lives of those he worked with. It has been my sincere privilege and honor to have known and worked with Stanley Novak.

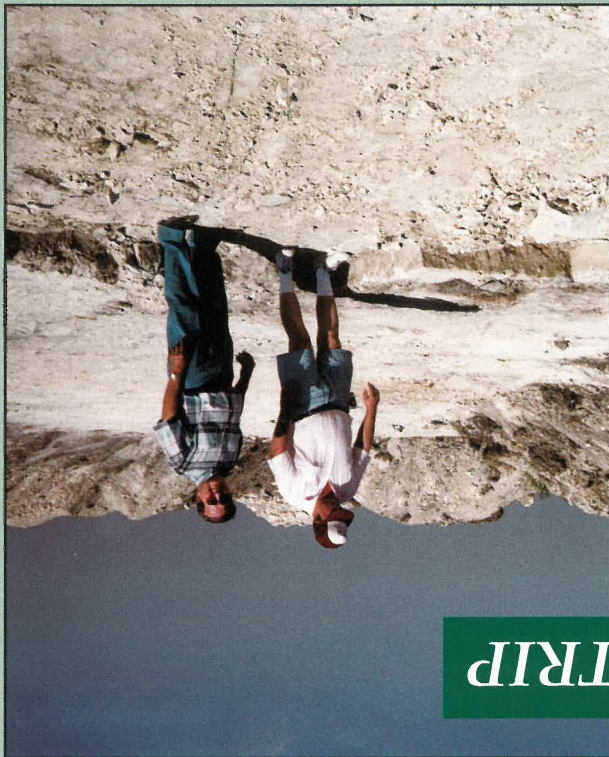
Rich Novak



Stanley Novak, a man of many skills and many friends. This picture was taken in 1976.

THE KANSAS QUARRY TRIP

Rich Noll



Jack Driscoll and Dick Rochambeau at site of Green-horn limestone quarry. Note the 8" to 9" thickness of the deposit.

sediment deposits forming the limestone were laid down around 70-130 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period.

Early ranchers discovered that where erosion cut through the landform and exposed this thin bed of rock, it could be split off in sections and used as fence posts. Using a team of horses and a bucket, they would scrape the surface dirt away, exposing the top of the limestone. A series of holes would be drilled some 8 to 9 inches back from a straightened edge, and a section of rock would be split off using special wedges called "feathers and wedges." Most of the fence posts were about 5 and a half feet in length. This is about all two men can handle! The fence posts were usually set in the ground about 18 to 20 inches leaving some three and a half feet on which to string barbed wire. All of those that we brought in for the curbing are old historic post rocks and clearly show the grooves cut by the barbed wire. The grooves indicating the use of



Those who have visited the Pony Express National Memorial recently will note the curbing that has been laid on both sides of the alley behind the memorial. You will also note the large triangular flower bed in the south parking lot and the two post rocks set in the ground in the middle of Leah Spratt Park. Pony Express National Memorial Trustee Dick Rochambeau initiated the idea of using the old post rocks. Before this project, I was aware of stone fence posts, but I didn't really know much about them - how they were quarried, how they were formed, or where they came from.

Post rocks, as they are called, come from north central Kansas. LaCross, Kansas, is considered to be the post rock capital of the world. When the first load came in, it was composed of soft limestone which surprised me. The only limestone quarries I had seen have deposits many feet thick and are quarried for construction gravel. These post rocks were a much softer limestone.

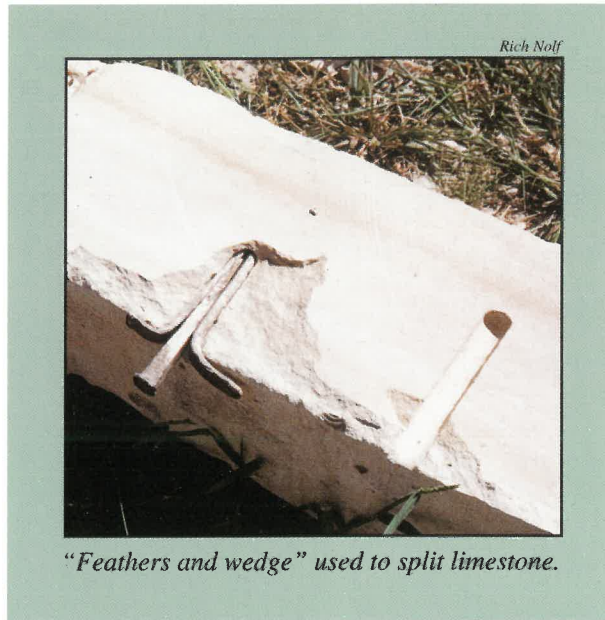
Dick encouraged me to go with him to Russell, Kansas, just north and east of LaCross, where a man by the name of Jack Driscoll has been quarrying this limestone for a number of years. Dick was working with Jack to obtain some very large pieces for a monument to be placed in the pocket park east of the Pony Express National Memorial. The pocket park was being designed to recognize Leah Spratt for her contributions to the memorial.

Dick and I had a pleasant trip going out and back, but the most memorable part of it was actually seeing the quarry and the stone cutting machinery. It was entirely different from what I had expected. Post rock comes from a deposit of limestone 8 to 9 inches thick and is close to the surface. The post rock area covers about five thousand square miles. The

three strands of barbed wire are very obvious. One of the post rocks that came in even had an insulator attached since its owner had taken advantage of technology and converted it to an electric fence.

There were several advantages to using the post rocks: the source was readily available and once the posts were set, they did not have to be replaced. In addition, they will not dry rot, and the bugs would sure get a headache trying to chew on them! However, the making and the setting of the post rocks were very labor intensive. Steel fence posts have gradually replaced the old post rocks because they are much easier to manipulate.

Today Jack uses all power equipment and only exposes that portion of the rock that he is able to work up in about two weeks time. While underground, the rock remains fairly soft and can actually be cut, with limited success, with a pocket knife. It is referred to as "Greenhorn Limestone" of the Dakota formation. After it has been exposed to the air for several months, it becomes harder and, over time, cures. Jack uses a big bucket to lift up the edge of the deposit. Wherever it breaks indicates the weak portion of the deposit. The large segments are hauled into town where his stone cutting machinery is located. Over the years, Jack has provided a lot of



"Feathers and wedge" used to split limestone.

cut stones for construction. He took us around Russell and showed us all the buildings that he has supplied stones for. He learned the business from his father who was also a stone cutter.

Ultimately, Jack provided the three large pieces of rock for the Leah Spratt Park Monument. They are spectacular pieces. The two upright columns are 9 inches thick, 16 inches wide and 12 feet long. The top crown is 9 inches thick, trapezoid in shape, with the ends 16 inches high, the center 24 inches high, and the length 13 feet. That one piece alone weighs 3300 pounds, and I would estimate that the other two would weigh in the neighborhood of 2500 pounds each. These were all set to create a spectacular monument honoring Leah Spratt for her contributions to the Pony Express National Memorial.

Rich Nolf 



The Leah Spratt Park with its centerpiece monument featuring a Pony Express rider.

SHOP TALK

A new book by St. Joseph resident Charmayne McGee is now available in the St. Joseph Museum book store. *So Sings the Blue Deer* is a fictionalized account of the real-life efforts of the Huichol Indians to return balance to their environment. The Huichol, who have lived for centuries in the remote reaches of the Sierra Madre mountains, are one of the most purely preserved pre-Columbian cultures in North America. The reverence of the Huichol for the earth and life is based in their deep belief that everything is connected.

Ms. McGee's book uses the fictional character of 13 year-old Moon Feather to illustrate the story of the accomplishment of the Huichol Indians. In one ancient ceremony, the Huichol sacrifice a white-tailed deer as an offering of food to the nature-god spirits. In return, they believe, the spirits heal the wounds of the earth and keep nature in balance. In recent years, however, decimation of the deer by outside hunters and encroaching development meant that the Indians could not perform the ceremony. The Huichol believe that the nature spirits took revenge and wrought Mexico's environmental problems.

The Indians asked the Mexican government for one white-tailed deer to perform a ceremony they believed

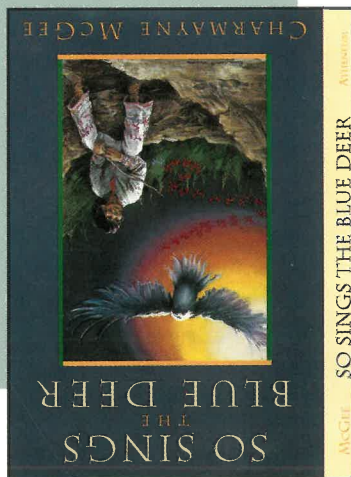
TREASURES OF THE CZARS

Forty-four members and friends of the St. Joseph Museum boarded a bus on October 12, bound for Topeka and the Treasures of the Czars exhibit. The tour reservations were quickly filled since Topeka was one of only two sites where the exquisite items from the reign of the Czars can be seen outside of Russia. It was an opportunity that many wanted to take advantage of.

After the tour, the group headed back toward St. Joseph, stopping for lunch at the Haderway House in Lancaster, Kansas. The delightfully decorated Victorian home was built in 1902. Lunch included a tour of the home. The last stop on the tour was the antique shops on the Atchison mall.

Charmayne McGee moved to Mexico in 1976 to study Spanish at the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende. She ended up staying for 17 years and discovered the story she has related for youth and adults in her book.

During her time in Mexico, Charmayne McGee studied fine arts and worked as a free-lance photographer covering several events including the excavation of the Aztec Templo Mayor. She is listed in the 1984 and 1994 World Who's Who of Women. She will be available to sign copies of her book at the St. Joseph Museum on November 18 from noon until 4 p.m. The St. Joseph Museum store will also have 1996 calendars of Huichol ceremonies and notecards of Huichol art available for purchase during her visit.



would correct the imbalance of nature. The director of the Mexico City Zoo offered them 20. The Huichol took them back to their mountain homeland and ensure that future generations could perform the ceremony and preserve the earth's balance.



Jackie Lewin

Lunch at the Haderway House. Built in 1902, the beautifully decorated Victorian home was called Haderway since the builder's wife had-her-way in the design.

RECENT DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTIONS

St. Joseph Museum

Bob Eisiminger - two *Central Annual* yearbooks, one from 1918 and one from 1920.

The American Legion - a book, *The American Legion - An Official History 1919 - 1989*, by James A. Rumer.

Mrs. Herbert C. Iffert - a tapestry with a floral design in the center which was started by Arduus Albrecht Beasley and then given to the donor to complete.

Pony Express National Memorial

Deaton Museum Services - a video tape of the Pony Express National Memorial showing exhibits and exterior of the building.

Hal Sutherland - a collage containing two posters and a picture all relating to the Pony Express.

Ken Payne - three bronze sculptures which are part of a four-bronze series called "Four Seasons of the Pony Express." The fourth sculpture has not been completed. Each statue is mounted on a pivoting, wooden base.

WANTED VOLUNTEERS

To work during the Pony Express Christmas Carnival at the Pony Express National Memorial on December 9. Please call

279-5059.



TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE FUTURE !

Join the
PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL MEMORIAL
and the **ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM**

Please indicate how you wish your
contribution to be directed.

☐ **Both, 50% SJM and 50% PENM**
Make check payable to either the St. Joseph
Museum or Pony Express, Inc.

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Make check payable to St. Joseph Museum

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Please check the membership category you wish.

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| ☐ | 100.00 | Donor |
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Your contribution provides a one-year membership for you and your immediate family. A majority of your membership contribution is tax deductible under 1994 IRS guidelines for charitable contributions. After receiving your membership, we will send you a receipt that includes further information on tax deductibility.

For processing, please send your
contribution to:

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

St. Joseph Museum Lighting Ceremony

On Thursday,
November 30,
1995, the St. Joseph Museum
will host a special

lighting ceremony. The staff has added hundreds of lights to the outside of the building to celebrate the festive season. The inside of the mansion will also be decorated to complement the beautiful woodwork. In addition to the lighting ceremony, the St. Joseph Museum will have a special opening of the newly renovated Victorian Room. The room is restored to about the time of 1910 and is designed to look as the room would have looked during that period.

Special activities will take place from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. that evening. There will be special items on display such as a beautiful organ clock and a restored carousel horse. Santa will be here to obtain the many requests of children. There will also be the opportunity to get a head start on some unique Christmas gifts in the Museum Shop.

The St. Joseph Museum would like to invite everyone to attend. There is no admission price, and refreshments served during the evening will be complimentary.

November 18 - Gateway Chapter of OCTA will host an Independence crossing site field trip. The group will meet at the Pony Express Barn in Marysville, Kansas, at 10 a.m. R.S.V.P. to Mary Knab at 1-800-530-8866 by November 15, 1995.

November 18 - Signing of the book *So Sings the Blue Deer* by the author Charmayne McGee, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph Museum.

November 18 - Mystery Dinner at the Ice House Theatre. Call the Pony Express National Memorial at 279-5059 for reservations and information.

November 24 - Thanksgiving. Both museums will be closed.

November 27 - The St. Joseph Archaeological Society will meet at 7:30 at the Pony Express National Memorial, 914 Penn Street.

November 30 - St. Joseph Museum Lighting Ceremony and Open House, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

November 30 - Victorian Room Opening, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph Museum.

December 9 - Pony Express Christmas Carnival from 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Pony Express National Memorial, 914 Penn Street.

December 20 - Christmas Ornament Workshop for children ages 7-12 at the St. Joseph Museum. From 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. For information call 232-8471.

December 24 & 25 - Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Both museums closed.

December 31 & January 1 - New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Both museums closed.

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.

Pony Express National Memorial

914 Penn Street, P.O. Box 244

St. Joseph, Missouri 64502-0244

Monday through Saturday 9-5 p.m.

Sundays 1-5 p.m.

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