

Pumpkinfest *Submitted by Carlene Makawski*

The 22nd Annual PumpkinFest celebration at the Pony Express National Museum opened Friday, October 12, 2018. Once again the anticipated lighting of Pumpkin Mountain drew a large crowd. And the predicted rainy weekend was only one of many bumps in the road to getting the mountain erected. First, due to the previous rains, many of the pumpkins exploded, rotted or just plain fell apart, leaving us with a severe pumpkin deficit. Thus, many additional pumpkins had to be purchased and the carvers worked with haste. But by Friday night all was well and Pumpkin Mountain lit up to the ooh's and aah's of the crowd.

Saturday was a good day. Visitors enjoyed the many offerings of the festival...the Petting Zoo, the Pony Rides, the new Panning for Gold event, the children's activities, mouthwatering food and the excellent entertainment.

The children's Parade was a success despite the weather and every year it seems the costumes get cuter and cuter. Kids of all ages, as well as adults, pondered their purchases at the little Pumpkin Shoppe where great bargains were to be found.



Loading pumpkins at Whistle Creek Farm



2018 MWSU softball team volunteers carving pumpkins



Striking it rich at Panning for Gold event

Prior to Pumpkinfest, many attended the Patrons Party, where good food, fun, and an exciting auction were offered. But perhaps the highlight of the evening was watching artistic competitors in a game of Pony Express Pictionary.

The whole concept of PumpkinFest could not be attained without the hard work and support of our volunteers and sponsors. Our thanks to each and every one of them and to the local students who painted the small pumpkins at the base of the mountain.

The end came for PumpkinFest on Sunday (early closure due to weather). But...Monday morning revealed something that has never been seen before...SNOW ON PUMPKIN MOUNTAIN! The Sunday rain had changed to snow and dusted the pumpkins on the mountain.

Once again, the Pony Express has made HISTORY! Carlene Makawski a.k.a. The Imperial Pumpkin



Pony Express Pictionary Game at Patrons' Party

Neither rain or snow can stop these Ladies from finishing the mountain!!!



A fun activity at the Children's Tent



Family Category Parade winner



Lil' Pumpkin Shop volunteers hard at work!



Matching Charitable Grant Received Annex 1 (formerly Redmond Produce Building)

Submitted by Dick DeShon & Cindy Daffron

We were so pleased with the response from the donors and members for our 2018 Year End Appeal. Your funds allowed us to receive a matching charitable grant so our dream of a new roof on Annex 1 has become a reality! We will be doing some wall repairs allowing us to have a pitched roof on the entire building instead of the partially flat roof. We use the building, which is currently full, for storage. In 2019, the building will be a completely dry storage area where we can store anything that we need to. Your generosity is, once again, allowing the museum to move forward.



Redmond building before the roof project



Work in progress



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ANNUAL REPORT - PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL MUSEUM • WINTER 2018-2019

Rotary International President, Ian Riseley, visits St. Joseph and Pony Express Museum

Submitted by Staci Thornton

On May 30th, 2018, the President of Rotary International was the guest of three rotary clubs from St. Joseph and one from Andrew County. Although Rotary is best known for its international goal of eliminating polio Worldwide, President Riseley, who hails from Australia, had made it a personal goal of planting a tree for every Rotarian in the world, which numbers over one million members. This day began when he planted trees at the newly opened Buchanan County Convention and Tourism Bureau. At the same time he was planting those trees, Rotarians from all clubs in conjunction with the St. Joseph Parks and Recreation Department, planted over 150 trees along our historic parkway.

When he finished planting the trees he then went to the museum where he was given a tour by Executive Director, Cindy Daffron. An outgoing and good natured President posed on a mochila and ended up at the new "Hall of Riders Exhibit". A team of East Side Rotarians led by Ryan Dowell had volunteered to take the old Buffalo Bill exhibit down and help build the new Hall of Riders exhibit. He then greeted around 150 Rotarians and posed with many Rotarians who wanted to share this "Moment in Time".

Following the luncheon, President Riseley challenged all Rotarians to continue providing "service above self" and thanked the clubs for participating in such a historic day. Each club president responded with great appreciation of his willingness to come to St. Joseph and assist in the tree planting.

Club Presidents: Melissa Koch - Eastside, Dr. Mike Lane - Downtown Club #32, TJ Sampson - Southside, and

Philip Frank - Andrew County VP, each spoke about their clubs and projects they had done throughout the year. It has been several years since the RI President has come to St. Joseph, so all clubs wanted to tell their stories of service. East Side President elect Ryan Dowell then talked about how all clubs came together for the tree project.

A highlight followed when all Paul Harris fellows were presented with commemorative medallions by President Riseley. Paul Harris fellows made a minimum \$1,000 donation to Rotary International. Some fellows have contributed many thousands of dollars. Historian Robert Crouch estimated the fellowships have totaled in excess of \$300,000 over a period of years.

To commemorate the historic visit, the museum presented the President with his own horse shoe and he nailed it to the "Keep the Legend Kickin" wall. President Riseley then joined several Rotarians taking a tour of St. Joseph to see the trees each club planted. Stops included the new YWCA in the North Shoppes, Ashland Boulevard, and Bartlett Park. Riseley then made a quick trip over to Atchison, Kansas for a tree dedication with their Rotary Club.



President Riseley planting trees at the CVB



Having a little fun!



President Riseley with the 4 area Rotary Club presidents: Eastside, Downtown Club #32, Southside, Savannah (Andrew County), and District Governor Don Gladhart



Ian is nailing his horseshoe to the wall.



Rotary Club luncheon in the Pony Express Community Room.

Mark your Calendar now for the 2019 Tuesday Night Talks Series:

January Dates 15, 22, 29 • February 5, 12, 19

2018 MUSEUM STATISTICS

January 1 - December 31 by Guest Frequency

Top 6 States Top 6 Missouri Counties

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Missouri: 7,242 | 1. Buchanan: 3,227 |
| 2. Kansas: 1,304 | 2. Andrew: 429 |
| 3. Iowa: 928 | 3. Jackson: 390 |
| 4. Washington: 605 | 4. Nodaway: 302 |
| 5. Texas: 528 | 5. St. Louis: 284 |

Top 6 Countries

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Canada: 265 | 2. France: 62 |
| 3. Germany: 44 | 4. Australia: 42 |
| 5. Austria: 23 | 6. Ireland: 22 |

Top Comments from Visitor Surveys

"A nice surprise; we were not expecting such a first class museum."

"Love the museum; a treasure to find while in Saint Joseph!"

"Big improvements over the years, thank you."

"Really like the stories and the truth behind the Pony Express adventure."

"Very impressed with all the bronze statues, the amount of history that was saved and all the information regarding the riders. Very hands on!"

HIGHEST ATTENDANCE DAY OF 2018

Smithsonian Day - 1022
Family Day - 576

ATTENDANCE RECORD FOR DAY CAMP

Day Camp for Two Weeks: 110 Students
(Week 1 & Week 2)

12 different school districts and 4 different states!

HIGHEST ATTENDANCE MONTH

July: 3,342

As of Dec 30th, we have an attendance of 41,662!

Dear Friends of the Museum,

In 14 years, we have completely moved the museum forward in exhibits, events, and interpretation. We wish to thank our donors and membership for the generous support gifted to us through the years. Your unwavering dedication sustains our mission at 914 Penn Street. So, please enjoy our Annual Report as we tell you the new and exciting stories of where we are now and where we were then. Please know that all of our volunteers say they "feel like family to us" as they share their stories with museum visitors. Looking forward to what the future has in store for the Pony Express Museum!

Your Pony Express Executive Director,
Cindy Daffron

Community Room Success Story

Submitted by Kelsey McCrary

On November 23rd and 24th, West World Tours Inc. visited the Pony Express Museum with a total of 160 visitors. They enjoyed Spanky & Buckwheat's delicious BBQ before touring the museum. Michelle Jones, Admissions/Gift Shop Manager, worked with them for 9 months prior to their visit, as we were a brand new attraction stop for the tour group.



West World Tours took a full guided tour of the museum after their dinner.



Tour members marked their home on the map! All the way from Skagway, Canada.

They were given rating sheets by their bus chap-erone to rate their experience while in the Gift Shop. Many could be heard saying "Giving the museum a 5+ rating!" Many said they wished they had more time to explore St. Joseph. This had been the first attraction stop West World Tours had taken part of in St. Joseph. We loved having them and are excited to have them back in 2019. Way to go, Michelle, Spanky & Buckwheat's, and tour guides! They truly enjoyed their visit with us! The Canadian Cowboys, part of the group who dressed in western attire, were very excited about the western appeal of our museum.

Smithsonian Visits the Pony Express

Submitted by Kelsey McCrary

On September 25th, the museum got a visit from the Curator of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. Lynn Heidelbaugh, who was attending the American Association for State and Local History Conference in Kansas City, met with Dick DeShon, Cindy Daffron, and Heidi Hornaday. Cindy and Heidi were able to give her a guided tour. Her first thoughts after going through the museum were, "It is so much bigger than it looks on the outside."

Heidelbaugh was quite impressed with the Messick Gallery exhibit The Hall of Riders. This exhibit showcases authentic artifacts and material from the riders' personal collections donated by their descendants. Heidelbaugh thought The Hall of Riders was wonderfully put together and she "loved the human touch with all the stories told," Heidi said. Telling the stories of Pony Express riders through their experiences is one new way to learn about the Pony Express showcased by the museum.

"2018 Postcard Story; A Marketing Success!"

Submitted by Cindy Daffron

Cindy Daffron, Executive Director, attended a Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area meeting and heard how tour operators look for Profile Sheets on websites for planning trips. Another presenter suggested mailing postcards about new events/displays instead of using email. Cindy took her suggestion to heart and designed "Hall of Riders" postcards. Michelle Jones, Gifts Shop/Admissions Manager, mailed out over 250 of these postcards. The response has given us 20+ new schools in addition to Rec Center groups and new tour bus travel agencies. West World Tours was one of the first to respond. Our buttons are popping off with the success and more mailings are planned for 2019!

Family Day Submitted by Dana Frizell

Our total visitor count for Family Day is 576! Many volunteers serve as docents in museum and Pony School. Sarah Elder loves interpreting the working well and saddle area during her volunteering on Family Day. "We so appreciate all of their generous volunteer hours at the Pony Express Museum. What can I say about Carlene Makawski? She is like the Energizer Bunny as she just 'keeps on going' to volunteer events, serving as treasurer of the board, and bringing candy treats to our museum functions," says Cindy Daffron. Way to go, Carlene! A very special thanks to ALL of our volunteers! Without your help, these events would not be possible!



"Love to tell people about our founders on Family Day!" - Annie Updegraff



Left to Right: Annie U., Barb Y., Sarah E. and Carlene M. enjoy their time sharing Pony Express information with visitors on Feb. 19th, 2018.



"Trading stories with Carlene is so much fun," says Ivanna. Ivanna Calhoun is one of our great museum volunteers on Family Day.



Jacey McCrary enjoys making crafts every family day.

Smithsonian Day Submitted by Dana Frizell

"Free Museum Day" on Saturday, Sept. 22nd was presented by Smithsonian Magazine. This is the 11th year the magazine has promoted this event. Many organizations in the Museum Association of St. Joseph will feature special exhibits, programs, and activities and the Pony Express Museum is a proud participant! Re-enactors were on site at 914 Penn to take guests on a visit through the era of the Pony Express and spend time in our 1860's Pony School with a school marm. Offering free admission and holding the event on Saturday makes it affordable for entire families to share the museum experience together. The pictures tell the best stories of the fun had by all at Smithsonian Day!



"Miss Kathy" shows the group what happens if you misbehave or do not follow directions while at Pony School. Sticking your nose on the circle on the chalk board could be the result and all children do not wish to have that happen.



"Montana (left) started as a camper and is now a tour guide and valuable volunteer, so from the beginning to now, she is a winner!" says Dave Buckles (right)



These students are certainly following the "School Marm" instructions on reading time.



Dwaine, Swink, Volunteer from Savannah, MO, talks about the relay station, fire-arms and history relating to the Pony Express.



"Thoroughly enjoy sharing St. Joseph/Pony Express stories on Smithsonian Day with visitors that come through. How about a pair of Buffalo Gals ready to dance by the light of the moon?" says Karen McClellan.

Tuesday Night Talks Celebrates 20 Years

Plat Map

The Plat map was acquired this year through funds from Tuesday Night Talks by chair Joseph K. Houts Jr. In 1843, the movement of Buchanan County seat from Sparta, MO to Blacksnake Hills was initiated. A committee formed to find a spot for a new courthouse. They selected as site owned by Joseph Robidoux. As a result, Robidoux commissioned a plat for the town, choosing the design of St. Joseph's first postmaster, Frederick Smith. Robidoux signed the map and sent it to St. Louis to be filed with the Court of Common Pleas, and on July 26, 1843, St. Joseph officials became a town.



Joe Houts, TNT Chair, has seen us through 20 years of TNT. Thanks, Joe, for your dedication in bringing us 121 top notch speakers and presentations!

Looks like standing room only at this TNT event! Guests reserve their spots, then head for the appetizers and refreshments!



Volunteer Luncheon *Submitted by Cindy Daffron*

On May 18, 2018, the Pony Express Museum celebrated the volunteers who give endless hours and are dedicated to the mission of “educating future generations”. Our theme for the day was “You Light Up the Pony Express Museum and the Pony School.” There were 36 people in attendance. Stephanie Gummelt was the featured entertainer for the event. “Thanks, Stephanie, for the music.”

Everyone enjoyed the slide show featuring all of the events from the previous year. The meal and cobbler were catered by Spanky & Buckwheat’s Smoke Pit. The museum provided ice cream, fruit, and toppings for a fun time of “sundae making.” At the end of the celebration, the museum presented each volunteer with a mini LED flashlight. The overhead lights were turned off, the flashlights were turned on, and the glowing faces of the volunteers truly lit up the room!

Special guests of the day were: Mike Allegri from Wells Fargo Bank, Kalynn Copenharve (MWSU student intern), and Ryan Dowell, East Side Rotary member.



We love to feed the volunteers!



The dessert was a high point of the meal.



Stephanie Gummelt, entertainment for the event.



“Look at the glow they made”

Museum Receives a Grant: Kiosk Project

Submitted by Jackie Lewin

In February, 2018, Cindy wrote a grant request for \$3,374.80 to the National Freedom’s Frontier Heritage Area. “The Pony Express National Trail: Historic Photos Kiosk Project” has been developed to share historic photos that were taken across the National Trail from the 1950s and 1960s and to highlight the work of one of the first employees of the Pony Express National Museum, Don Reynolds. With the completion of the project, our museum will continue to convey the story of the Pony Express through a photographic kiosk highlighting photos of the trail around the time of the centennial celebration of the Pony Express.

We were gifted nine slide carousels containing photos from Don Reynolds as he traveled the Pony Express Trail. MWSU’s Dr. Kaye Adkins and her Technical Documentation and Editing Class digitized all of the slides and assisted in cataloging them. Her students were divided into four teams: Scanning and Cataloging, Editing and Tagging, Writing and Project Management, and Multimedia. The students accomplished more than they expected to in the time allotted. They were very excited to be a part of something so significant to history. Once the slides were digitized, Cindy was able to view the photos for the very first time. After project completion, she attended a NFFHA meeting in Kansas City and shared her experience and excitement in working with the students and photos. She commented that she would really like to have a kiosk in the museum so the slides could be viewed by visitors. They encouraged Cindy to write a grant for the kiosk funding, which she did, and the result is a new exhibit for museum guests to begin experiencing in March, 2019.

Jackie Lewin, “Hall of Riders” Guest Curator, said “It has

been a pleasure to serve as Guest Curator for the Hall of Riders and be able to work with museum professionals Cindy Daffron and Heidi Hornaday. The computer kiosk of the Don Reynolds’ photos was particularly meaningful to me. I have seen Don’s photos many times and personally heard him tell about his adventures in traveling and researching the Pony Express Trail. Working on this project was like again being able to spend time with Don, one of my mentors, and his very lovely wife, Maudie.”

4-H Planting

Submitted by Cindy Wells

The Liberty Tree planted on the grounds of the Pony Express Museum is a living symbol of liberty, citizenship and community service. During the Revolutionary War, towns designated “Liberty Trees” in support of the resistance and these trees became symbols of American independence. The tree planted by the Buchanan County 4-H at the Pony Express Museum is a graft from the last original Liberty Tree, a tulip poplar, which stood on the grounds of St. John’s College in Annapolis, MD. Youth Specialist, Cindy Wells said “I could not think of a better location to place this historical symbol of American independence. This important piece of history can be enjoyed by 4-H and other youth as well as their children and future generations for years to come. The rich history of the Pony Express Museum and the Liberty Tree will serve to complement each other. Buchanan County 4-H is very appreciative and excited for this partnership with the Pony Express Museum.”



Front row right to left: Cindy Wells, Logan Cusick, Johnny Gertsema, Thomas Gertsema, Emmaline Gertsema, Elliot Gertsema, and Rebecca Gertsema. Back row right to left: Cindy Daffron, Mignon DeShon, Jim Lehr, Dan Hausman, Dick DeShon, and Gordon Robaska

Celebrating a Birthday *Submitted by Kelsey McCrary*

Patricia Dashiell and her daughter, Janet, celebrated Patricia’s 84th birthday by revisiting the Pony Express Statue. Patricia, who now resides in San Jose, California, had witnessed the unveiling of the statue as a child, almost 80 years ago.

Janet had asked her mother where she wanted to go to celebrate her birthday. Her mother responded with, “I want to go to St. Joseph, Missouri.” Beth Conway at the St. Joseph Convention and Visitors Bureau was the orchestrator behind this birthday celebration. They threw a birthday party for Patricia with attendees including members of local St. Joseph museums and Rep. Pat Conway.

Regarding the 1940’s unveiling ceremony, Patricia said “It was a big occasion and it was really something important for the citizens because it had speeches and bands and more speeches and then they unveiled the Pony Express rider. And I was very unhappy because I wanted the real thing and my mother had to take me home because I threw a tantrum. So, today, I promised my daughter I wouldn’t throw a tantrum.”

Patricia and Janet were gifted tours of several museums after seeing the statue, saying they wanted to see as much of St. Joseph as possible.



Janet Dashiell, daughter of Patricia Dashiell felt quite at “home” for the photo.

Pony Express Statue Unveiling *by Marshall White*

Herman Atkins MacNeil (1866-1947) became a noted American sculptor. One of his most famous sculptures is “Justice, the Guardian of Liberty”. It became the east pediment of the U.S. Supreme Court building.

His most famous piece of work became the “Standing Liberty Quarter” (1916-1930). The government minted some 30 million of these quarters.

In the midst of the Great Depression, St. Joseph raised \$35,000 and received another \$28,000 in federal money to pay for a Pony Express memorial.

The city’s Park Board conducted a national contest. MacNeil’s design of a rider in full gallop was accepted and he began work in December, 1938. Mounted on a pedestal of Vermont granite, the city officially accepted the statue on April 18, 1940. Two days later, Jessamine Wallace, had the honor of officially unveiling the statue in a public ceremony at 10th & Frederick Avenue.

This photo is from the Collections of the St. Joseph Museums, Inc.



Jessamine Wallace, the little girl standing in front of the Naval Cadets, unveiled the Pony Express statue. She would later marry Roger Hegarty. Their oldest son, Cort Hegarty, is president of Nodaway Valley Bank and a past Pony Express Museum board member.

Westward Gateway Chapter International Grant *Submitted by Karen Foley*

Westward Gateway applied for the 2018 International Preservation and Restoration Grant to preserve and restore fourteen pieces of art currently hanging at the Pony Express National Museum. The grant was received in May, 2018 at the International Convention in Kansas City.



Tom Duggins, Frame Station, replaced the mat and resealed and replaced glass on both of these works of art.

Tom Duggins of the Frame Station has reframed two-thirds of the pictures and the project should be completed by March, 2019. All the artwork involved will be preserved using a new material called Optium Museum Acrylic.

The Quester Organization is an International study organization founded in 1944. It aims to stimulate the appreciation of antiques through study and to encourage the preservation of historical landmarks. There are five chapters in St. Joseph and 14 in the state of Missouri. Kathy Hill-Bahner was responsible for writing the grant. “The Pony Express Museum is truly honored to be receiving this type of restoration grant for the photos hanging at the Museum. It has been my dream for many years, so a big thanks to the club from us,” says Cindy Daffron. She added, “One day in the museum, I overheard visitors remarking how beautiful the paintings looked and how they were going to take a closer look to see who the artist was. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, never in my 14 years plus at the museum have I ever heard anyone comment on those paintings. So proud of Tom’s work on this project and the support of the Westward Gateway Chapter #1066 Questers on a much needed preservation work.”

Eleanor Roosevelt Unveils “Pony Express Map” at Hotel Robidoux

Submitted by Dick DeShon

On October 15, 1938, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt unveiled “The Pony Express Map”, a mural by George Gray, for the Hotel Robidoux in the Crystal Ball Room. In speaking of the mural, she said, “The real value of the historic painting will not be realized for some time as something as complete as this mural needs perspective to appreciate its true worth.” She loved the warmth of color used by the artist and pointed out it should be of great worth as a collection of data in studying the history of the pioneer group of the West. General James Leslie Kincaid, President of the American Hotels Corporation, of which Hotel Robidoux was a unit, was the father of the idea to make a permanent record in paint of the historic trails through the middle west. After becoming President of the American Hotels Corporation, he obtained the services of George Gray to depict military and civic history of the United States by the means of 233 murals placed in the chain of hotels.

Besides the Pony Express Trail, the mural shows the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, Old Spanish Trail, the Northwest Passage of Lewis and Clark, the Butterfield Route and numerous other routes done by explorers to reach various points in the United States and Japan.

Mr. Gray explained the months of research required for every mural and the verification required for authenticity. On this mural he was assisted by Professor Frank S. Popplewell, an instructor at the St. Joseph Jr. College, and other historians in St. Joseph, MO, Columbia, MO, Washington, D.C. and Rochester, NY. In 1952 - 1954, I attended St. Joseph Jr. College and took every history course taught by Professor Popplewell. For one course, I was the only student and sat outside a classroom and took every test for the course under Professor Popplewell. I later received a B.A. from Arts and Science, majoring in History, from the University of Missouri.

Mr. Gray was also commissioned to paint 3 other murals for the Hotel, all of which decorated the walls of the Pony Bar in the Hotel Robidoux. The other murals were: The Platte Purchase Centennial, World War I Memorial, and Jeff Thompson Memorial.

In 1996, the Hotel Robidoux was blown up to make way for a new bank office building. Prior to the demolition of the hotel the murals had been moved to the new Holiday Inn. When the bank building was completed, “The Pony Express” mural was moved to the trust department of the Mercantile Bank (American National), today the U.S. Bank.

A mild controversy existed over ownership of the murals. Through the collaboration of Don Paden, Manager of The Holiday Inn, Bill Cole, President of the bank, and Sharon Evers, Vice President of the trust department, and with Dave Bahner’s later assistance, it was confirmed that ownership of the mural would be the Pony Express National Museum. Three of the murals are now exhibited at the Pony Express Museum. The fourth mural with the World War I theme is now in the Donnel Court Building.

In 1994, we learned the museum could get the mural if we could figure out how to get it out of the bank building. Five St. Joseph Questers groups, headed by Jeanie Burnham and Peggy Ifert, stepped forward and agreed to restore the mural. The local Questers raised \$5,000 and that was matched by Questers International. During the last week of January, 1995, the mural was rolled onto a giant spool for its trip to the Pony Express Museum. The mural was stretched out in the newly dedicated Messick Gallery and the cleaning and repair was undertaken by Tom Duggins of the Frame Station. Imagine cleaning and repairing a 56 year old mural that had originally been a backdrop in a bar! Although there is no documentation, it was rumored that Eleanor Roosevelt would not unveil the mural in the bar. The local Questers group paid for the total cost of restoration and reframing.

Rich Nolf, Director of the St. Joseph Museum, and his team of Jackie Lewin, David Mead, and Bonnie Watkins oversaw the total project. When it became apparent that the restoration was successful, a dedication was planned for April 2, 1995. The dedication was attended by Mayor Larry Stobbs, Congressman Pat Danner, and Kansas Governor Bill Graves.

A highlight of the dedication was the discovery that George Gray was located in New York and Bob Simpson volunteered to handle the expense and details of getting him here for the dedication. Less than three years later, George Gray would be honored on his 90th birthday by the National Arts Club for his murals. He was recognized for his years as the official artist of the United States Coast Guard and Chairman of the Coast Guard Art Program.

Photographs of the 1938 unveiling ceremony were gifted to our museum by Marshall White. This past year, Joseph Robidoux Questers #1029, chaired by Ms. Marilyn Griggs, provided funds for framing these photographs. This gift allows us to tell the whole story of Eleanor Roosevelt’s visit to St. Joseph for the unveiling of George Gray’s mural, “The Pony Express Map”. This Questers group was also involved in the 1993 preservation of the original mural. It is interesting to note that Tom Duggins will frame the photos, but he was also selected as the restorer and preservationist of this mural in 1993.

New Acquisitions for Pony Express Museum

Royal Manor Porcelain Plate

In December, a first edition of “The Pony Express” six-plate series was placed in the Hotel Robidoux display case. This first plate titled, “How the West Was Won” is No. 15,495 of an edition limited to 19,500. Issued under the sponsorship and official endorsement of the Zane Grey Museum, Helen Davis, Curator, Copyright LMI 1981. USA, it features a buckskin-clad rider with red bandana and cowboy hat on a galloping brown horse with white markings in the foreground. Additional riders and a band of Indians appear in the background. This plate was donated by Brent Blackburn. “We are excited to bring something out of our collections and place it in the Robidoux Hotel display case,” stated Cindy Daffron, Executive Director.

continued on page 5

New Acquisitions cont'd

Canvas and Leather Traveling Trunk

Joe Houts, Exhibits Committee Chairman says, “The Exhibits Committee has been very busy the last six months. The Committee has received several important artifacts. The most notable is a trunk used by Pony Express rider William Pridham. His name is printed on both ends with a sticker inside identifying it to 1873 Wells Fargo in San Francisco. After working as a Pony Express rider, William Pridham was employed by Wells Fargo for 50 years. Presently, it is being restored by a conservator and should be ready for display sometime in February. Acquisitions of this type are so important to the museum because much of its collection is on loan from the St. Joseph Museums.”



The trunk was gifted to the museum in November by Mrs. Frances Haywood of Cape Cod, ME. We are absolutely thrilled to acquire such an authentic artifact! Being a true “treasure chest,” it is something to look for in 2019!

Roll-Top Desk

In October, the museum received a donation from Lara and Paul Howells. They gifted the museum an oak and walnut roll-top desk that was made by A.H. Andrews & Co. The company was founded in 1865, but the date of manufacture is unknown. The desk belonged to Karen Janas (Lara Howells’ mother) who had purchased the desk in St. Joseph, circa 1968.

This all started as a phone call from Lara Howells, asking if the museum was interested in a desk. As the desk is in great condition, Cindy Daffron, Executive Director, was intrigued and said it would be a great addition that would allow us to update one of our exhibits. The Howells brought it in the next day!

The roll-top desk has been added to the “Risk Takers” exhibit. This exhibit includes the three founders of the Pony Express: Russell, Majors and Waddell. The founders exhibit had not been changed since 1993. The St. Joseph Museum helpers, Sarah Elder and Trevor Tutt, were at the museum to oversee the exchange, as we gave back the St. Joseph Museum’s letter writing desk which was on loan to us. Sarah and Cindy have properly cleaned the new roll top. It is now on display in the “Risk Takers” exhibit.

“We think this desk allows us to add more validity to the discussions the founders had in creating the Pony Express. We know that Waddell was the financial person among the founders, even though it went bankrupt. Not because the ride didn’t work, but because the founders were never paid and had to compete with the telegraph being built and the Union Pacific track to the West was being completed.” says Dick DeShon, Board President.



Note From Exhibits Committee Chairman, Joe Houts:

“As a special note, I want to thank Heidi Hornaday for her exceptional service the last 10 years as the Exhibits Committee Chair. She has served tirelessly in improving the collections and making the committee operate professionally. Just as important, she brought the collections documentation up to date. She will be sorely missed, but has promised to continue working on collections.”

Donations to the Collections – 2018 Submitted by Heidi Hornaday, Collections Manager

Sharon Gray – *Robidoux History* by Hugh M. Lewis. A comprehensive history of the Robidoux family. Copyright 1998 by Micki Robidoux Patterson.

Mrs. Frances Haywood – Canvas and leather traveling trunk with wooden wicker frame belonging to Pony Express rider William Pridham. Imprinted with his name, Wm Pridham, and location, Los Angeles, on exterior sides. Containing three stacking burlap-lined trays. After working as a Pony Express rider, Pridham was employed by Wells Fargo for 50 years. (See photo, page 5)

Joseph K. Houts, Jr. – Reproduction of first plat map of St. Joseph, Missouri, commissioned by Joseph Robidoux in 1843. On display near the archaeological dig.

Lara & Paul Howells – Roll-top desk made by A.H. Andrews & Co. office and school furniture manufacturers, 215-221 Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. On display in the Founder’s exhibit.

James Lehr – Metal tag from St. Joseph Transfer & Storage Company, “Pony Express.” Third and Charles Streets, St. Joseph, MO. Includes 1941 calendar on reverse. And a postcard depicting the Pony Express Bar N, Hotel Robidoux, St. Joseph, Mo., n.d.

Lida Lowe – Vintage Post Office mailbox section.

Joanne McDowell – Collection of books (34) and periodicals (5) about the Pony Express, acquired by the donor’s mother. This donation, which includes duplicates of books already owned by the museum as well as new titles, is a fine addition to the museum’s growing library.

Lisa Moser – Three books about the Pony Express.

Robidoux Row – Three items. First Day Cover signed by W. B. Richardson, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Pony Express, April 3rd, 1940.

Typescript titled “William B. (Billy) Richardson – First Pony Express Rider.”

Small reproduction of the Pony Express Map (mural) painted in 1938 by George Gray at the Hotel Robidoux. Printed compliments of the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, n.d. (Full-size original mural on exhibit in the museum).

Marshall White – Three items pertaining to the historic Hotel Robidoux; a china dinner plate, china saucer, and newspaper article, “Robidoux razed with explosives” published in the St. Joseph Gazette, Monday Morning, June 14, 1976. Items may be viewed in the Robidoux Hotel display case opposite the Gray mural.

Our thanks to all of the donors, who entrusted the museum with these objects and archival materials.