

# Pony Express Memorial planning to erect monument

Using a little bit of this and a little bit of that, the Pony Express National Memorial is building a new monument.

On Oct. 19, the museum will dedicate its park on the east side of the building at 914 Penn St. The green space will be named in honor of Leah Spratt, a major contributor to the museum since it began its renovation project in 1992.

Dick DeShon, chairman of the board, said the memorial will feature a limestone "doorway" supporting a steel relief sculpture of a Pony Express rider. The limestone is newly quarried from Kansas, while the sculpture once hung on the side of the United Missouri Bank at 36th Street and Mitchell Avenue.

In December 1993, Mrs. Spratt instigated the museum's park



## JOETOWN

By PRESTON FILBERT  
Features Editor

*N-P 10-8-95*  
project when she contributed \$50,000 toward the purchase and demolition of a row of flats on the east side of the stables. Mr. DeShon said the donation was offered as a challenge grant, and the museum then set about raising another \$100,000 from 42 oth-

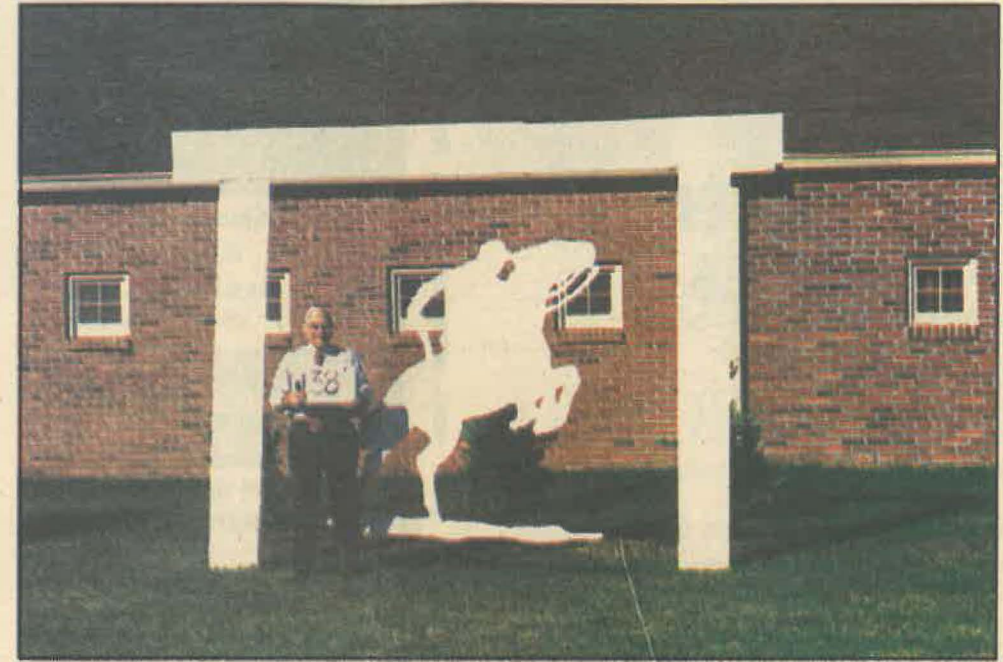
er contributors.

Over objections from some city historians, the museum demolished the 100-year-old flats in 1994, at a cost of about \$140,000. Another \$10,000 has been spent on clearing and redeveloping the lots around the museum.

The idea for the limestone doorway came from board member Dick Rochambeau when he saw a similar structure while driving through central Kansas.

"It looks like Stonehenge," he said. "A little Stonehenge."

In fact, the doorway will stand between 9 and 10 feet tall and weigh several tons. Already placed in the park are several old limestone fence posts, some with petroglyphs scratched in the stone sometime over the past 100 years, and all scored by the barbed wire that was once strung between them.



This mock-up shows the design and scale of the Pony Express monument that will be built near the Pony Express Memorial.

Main number: 271-8500

ST. JOSEPH NEWS-PRESS

e-mail:

## Pony Express silhouette to honor public servants

The Pony Express silhouette, on a hillside adjacent to Interstate 229 near the St. Joseph Avenue exit, will be dedicated to the memory of all public servants who have been killed in the line of duty, including St. Joseph police officer Bradley Arn.

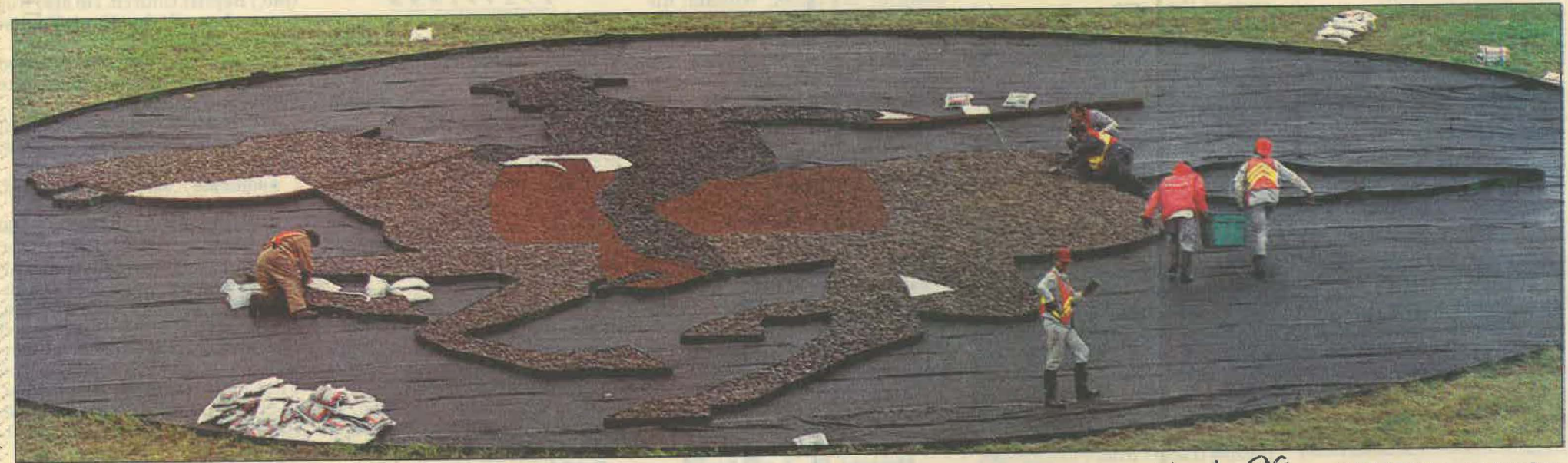


The Missouri Department of Transportation has announced that residents can take photographs of the silhouette at 10 a.m. today, weather permitting.

For more information, call the MoDOT public affairs department at 387-2353.

*N-P 11-20-98*

## Stamp of history



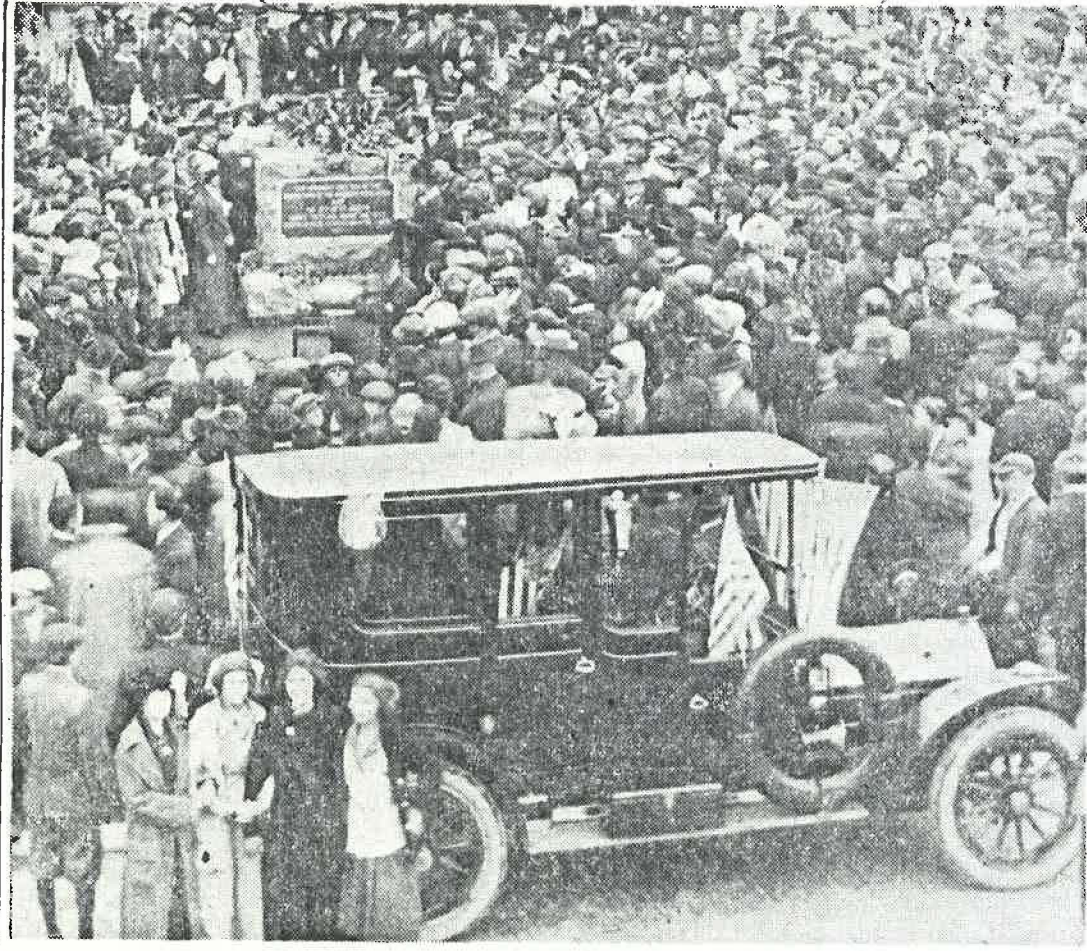
Missouri Department of Transportation employees and work release prisoners from Western Reception, Diagnostic and Correction Center work on a new symbol for St. Joseph on Saturday morning. It lies on the west side of Interstate 229 just north of the Frances Street entrance ramp. About 48 tons of rocks will make up the design. Four colors of rocks will be used, including 30 tons of white marble chips, which will make up most of the

*11-1-98*  
design, along with black obsidian, brown glacial median and tan sponge tuff. The Pony Express rider is based on a 3-cent postage stamp owned by the Pony Express Museum. The idea for the project began in a coffee room at the Department of Transportation and ballooned into this result months later, with help from local groups to finance it. It should take a couple of days to finish the project if good weather prevails.

ERIC WELCH/St. Joseph News-Press



(March 29, 1953)



# Pony Express Marker Unveiled at Patee Park 40 Years Ago Friday

Forty years ago Friday a Pony Express rider and a widow of one of the founders of the Pony Express unveiled the marker in Patee Park which commemorates the start of the pioneer mail service between St. Joseph and Sacramento, Cal., on April 3, 1860.

Even the fact that Governor Elliott Major, who was slated to make the principal speech at the dedication of the granite marker, failed to appear did not dim the enthusiasm of the 2,000 persons who witnessed the ceremony.

The rider who participated in the unveiling was the late Charles Cliff, then 68 years old. Mr. Cliff, who operated a feed store at 1413 North 4th street, recalled that he rode the 80 to 85-mile stretch between St. Joseph and Seneca, Kan., using seven horses to cover the dis-

tance in eight hours or less. Mr. Cliff who was 17 when he carried the mail in 1861, said he knew only one other rider, George Town, who picked up the mail at Seneca. Even that acquaintance, he recalled, didn't amount to much because all he did was hand the mail to him.

### Widow of Founder there

Mrs. Alexander Major, the widow of one of the founders of the pioneer mail service was the other person who took part as a principal in the unveiling.

During the ceremony, at which Mayor Charles Pfeiffer presided, Mrs. William B. Norris Sr. presented the marker to the city and Congressman W. P. Borland, Kansas City, spoke. The unveiling followed a parade from Hotel Robidoux in which several companies of firemen, a platoon of police and the drill team of the Moose Lodge participated.

After the unveiling 500 school

children sang "Missouri" as Maupin's band played the accompaniment.

### Recalled First Rider

Among those present at the ceremony was Mrs. Annie Patee, whose husband, Elijah Patee, had been manager of the Patee House, now the H. D. Lee Manufacturing Co. She stated then that the first rider was Samuel Frye and that he actually rode a horse from a stable located south of the Patee House to the post office, which was uptown, to pick up the mail. She had witnessed the start of the Pony Express 53 years before.

On the evening preceding the dedication the chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which donated the marker to the city, staged a banquet at Hotel Robidoux. At that event, Judge John F. Philip of Kansas City spoke and Mrs. Major and Mr. Cliff were guests.



June 5, 1970

Mr. Kenneth Townley, Dist. Engineer  
Missouri State Highway Department  
3602 North Belt  
St. Joseph, Missouri 64506

Dear Mr. Towhley:

Pursuant to our June 4 conversation relative to the possibility of relocating the St. Joseph Historical Marker from its present site south of Carr Town on Highway A to Patee Park: On June 5 we called on our Parks and Recreation Director, Mr. Byron Baker. He stated that he would consider the historical marker a fine addition to the already historic quality of the park and would be most happy to cooperate. No specific location within the park was discussed, nor much discussion of the long term spot lease that you mentioned. Mr. Baker has, however, shown special interest in Patee Park due partly to its exposure to the traveling public, and said that he thought any legal aspects of the proposed move would present no problem even if an ordinance were required. Mr. Baker will look forward to hearing from you and discussing the matter with you at your convenience.

We sincerely hope that this fine historical marker can be placed in Patee Park where I feel sure it will do a much better job of presenting our area's history to the public. The St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express Stables Museum will be ready and willing to assist in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Don L. Reynolds, Asst. Director  
St. Joseph Museum  
Pony Express Museum

DLR:js

JACK STAPLETON, SR., *Chairman*  
Stanberry 64489

ROY E. MAYES, SR., *Vice Chairman*  
P.O. Box 718  
Carthage 64836

A. C. RILEY, *Member*  
701 Davis  
New Madrid 63869

ROGER R. LINSIN, *Member*  
5841 Hamilton  
St. Louis 63136

W. R. LOGAN, *Member*  
Silex 63377

JOSEPH H. BRUENING, *Member*  
305 Dwight Building  
Kansas City 64105

MISSOURI  
STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION



Box 287  
St. Joseph, Missouri 64502  
June 15, 1970

M. J. SNIDER, *Chief Engineer*  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

R. A. CURRIE, *Ass't Chief Eng.*  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

L. V. McLAUGHLIN, *Ass't to the Chief Eng.*  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

ROBERT N. HUNTER, *Ass't to the Chief Eng.*  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

ROBERT L. HYDER, *Chief Counsel*  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

MRS. IRENE WOLLENBERG, *Secretary*  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

MAINTENANCE AND TRAFFIC: Roadsides  
Historical Marker  
St. Joseph Marker  
Buchanan County

Mr. Don L. Reynolds, Assistant Director  
St. Joseph Museum  
Pony Express Museum  
Eleventh and Charles Street  
Saint Joseph, Missouri 64501

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

We are agreeable to your proposal of relocating the Buchanan County Historical Marker as per your letter of June 5, 1970.

In order to clear the move, it will be necessary for the following to be forwarded to this office.

1. Agreement from Buchanan County Historical Society (letter will be sufficient).
2. Agreement from city allowing the placement and maintenance of the marker. (A letter from the mayor with a sketch showing the location in the park is sufficient).

We are assuming that Pattee Park is city owned and operated as the marker cannot be placed on private property or in an area operated or controlled by commercial interests.

After the above items have been received, we will present the proposal to the Highway Commission for their approval.

Yours very truly,

Handwritten signature of K. C. Townley in cursive script.  
K. C. TOWNLEY  
District Engineer

July 23, 1970

Mr. Kenneth Townley  
District Engineer  
State Highway Department  
3602 N. Belt Highway  
St. Joseph, Missouri 64506

Dear Sir,

This letter is to signify the approval by the St. Joseph Historical Society of the plan to move the historical marker concerning St. Joseph from its present location at the junction of Highway 169 and Route A to the proposed location in Patee Park, opposite the Pony Express Stables.

Sincerely,

Nancy Sandehn  
Recording Secretary  
St. Joseph Historical Society

cc: Mr. Don Reynolds  
St. Joseph Museum



June 24, 1970

Mayor William J. Bennett  
City Hall  
St. Joseph, Missouri 64501

Dear Mayor Bennett:

Enclosed you will find photographs of the historical highway marker now located at the south edge of our city on Highway A just south of "Carr Town." With the traffic and highway changes in recent years this very fine historical marker has been left apart from the mainstream of the traveling public and is isolated from most of our tourist visitors for which it was intended.

We feel that it would do a much better job if it were moved to Patee Park where it can better serve to help interpret our area history to the many thousands of tourists and students that come to the Pony Express Stables Museum area and the park each year. It would be a fine addition to the historic park.

In exploration I have discussed the possibility of this move with members of the local historical society and they agree. Mr. Kenneth Townley, District Supervisor for this area of the Missouri Highway Department, in a letter of June 15, 1970, (copy enclosed) also is agreeable. A letter of approval is needed from you to Mr. Townley after which he can present the plan to the State Highway Commission.

Mr. Byron Baker has also been contacted and it is his opinion also that the historical marker would indeed enhance the park area. After looking over the park with Mr. Baker it would seem that the most likely spot for placement of this sign would be about midway between the south edge of the park and the old stone fountain circle in the center. This would locate it midway also between 9th and 10th Streets where it would be plainly visible to City Route 29 tourist and local traffic on both of these streets.

A rough sketch of the proposed location within the park is enclosed. Mr. Baker has the details.

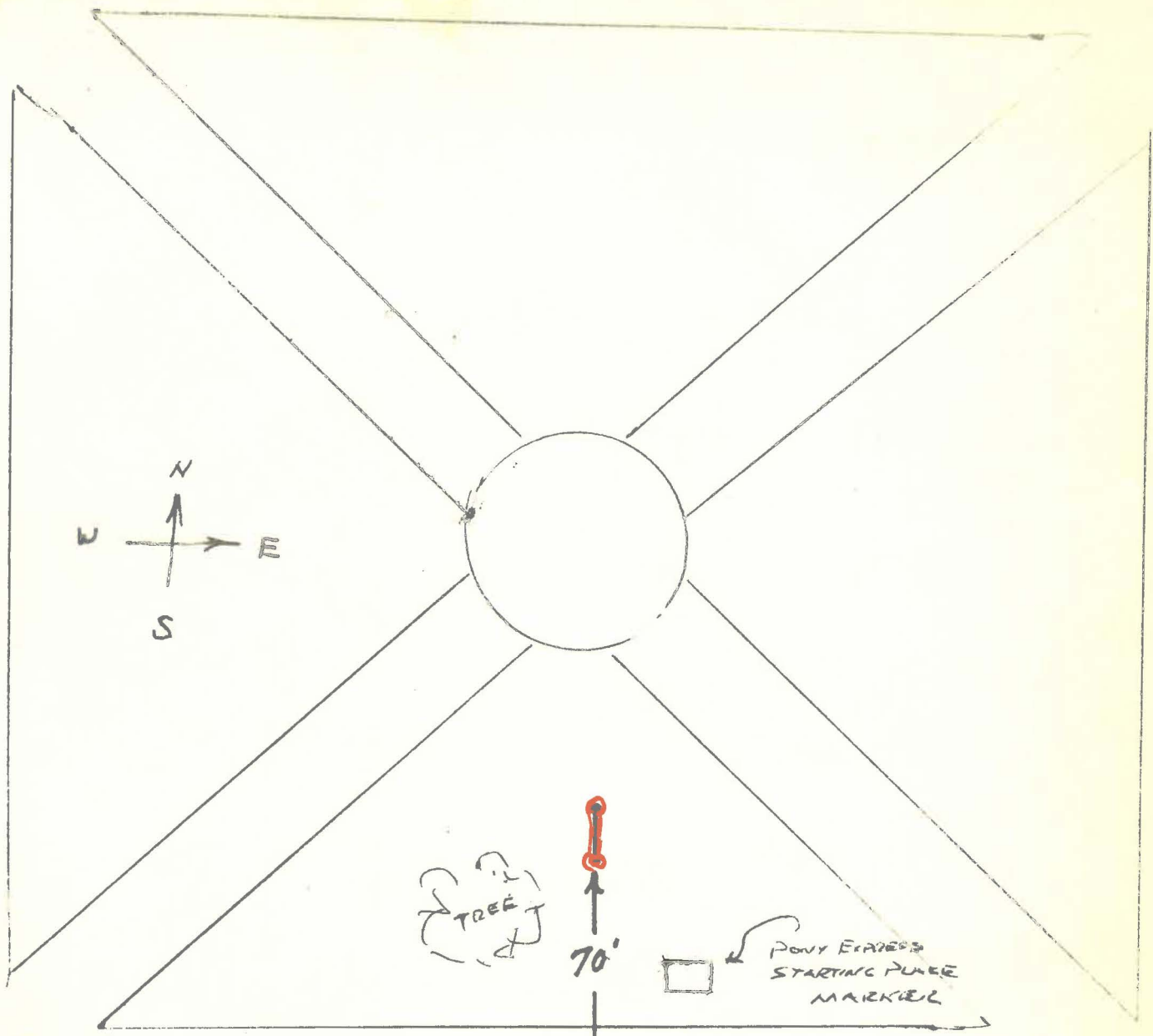
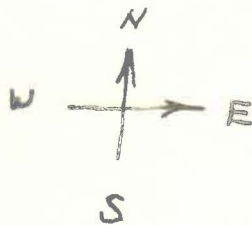
Mayor William J. Bennett  
June 24, 1970  
Page 2

We feel that to get such a fine historical marker for the park at practically no cost would be extremely good fortune. We ask for your assistance and offer our services in the matter.

Sincerely,

Don L. Reynolds, Asst. Director  
St. Joseph Museum  
Pony Express Museum

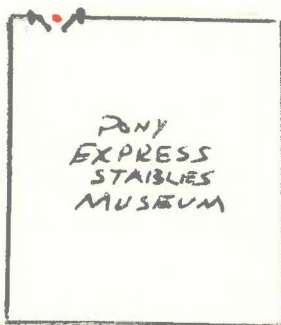
DLR:js  
Enc.  
cc: Mr. Byron K. Baker



✓ PROPOSED LOCATION IN PATER PARK FOR ST. JOSEPH HIGHWAY MARKER

PLACED IN LINE WITH NORTH-SOUTH DIRECTION SO THAT IT WILL BE PLAINLY VISIBLE FROM BOTH 9th & 10th TRAFFIC.

CORN



PONY EXPRESS STABLES MUSEUM

AS POINT OF REFERENCE FOR E-W LOCATION THE MARKER WOULD BE DUE NORTH AND IN LINE WITH THE CENTER OF THE WEST ENTRANCE DOOR OF THE PONY EXPRESS STABLES. (A GRASS LEVEL STAKE MARKS LOCATION OF THE SOUTH POST)

*Handwritten signature*

NOT TO SCALE —





### Marker in New Location

This St. Joseph marker, erected by the State Historical Society and the State Highway Department, has attracted more attention since it was moved several months ago from a location on Highway 169, just south of the city limits, to its new site in Patee Park, across the street from the Pony Express Stables. Standing at the far left is

Tony Domino, 1209 South 19th street, with his grandsons, Jeff Domino, center, and Mike Domino.

Motorists seldom slowed their vehicles to read the words on the marker when it was located on the highway. Now many persons read the legend as they also inspect the nearby Pony Express memorial.



Staff photo by PEGGY BAIR

### NEW ADDITION

*N-P 10-20-95*

Along with a crowd of contributors and well-wishers, Leah Spratt, right, unveils the limestone and steel Pony Express monument Thursday at a ceremony dedicating Leah Spratt Park next to the Pony Express National Memorial.

### Mayor likes Sollars idea for billboard about Pony Express

The proposal by City Councilman James W. Sollars to erect an informational type billboard on the city-owned triangle north of the Pony Express Statue at Tenth and Francis street has won the approval of the mayor.

Mayor William J. Bennett said today he favored the plan, noting the city wanted to keep the small triangular plot a green area. The tract is bounded by Tenth street on the north, Frederick avenue on the south and what was a north-south alley on the west.

Under the Sollars plan, the billboard would contain information about the statue across the street and also bear a map showing the route of the pioneer mail service between St. Joseph and Sacramento, Cal. The signboard would be lighted at night.

"Many tourists see the statue and fail to stop because they do not know what it represents," explained Sollars. "If we have a billboard there, they could stop and read a brief history of the Pony Express and be better informed. The sign could also direct the tourists to the Pony Express museum in the city."

Wyandotte county unsuccessful bid for the

### Seek Way to Spend \$50,000 in Excess Funds

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — The National Pony Express Centennial Association is looking for a suitable way to spend \$50,000 to \$75,000 in excess funds, Clarence A. Reeder Jr., Bountiful, Utah, the association's executive secretary, said Saturday.

One project being considered is the construction of permanent markets commemorating the west's famous mail route. It extended 1,966 miles between Sacramento, Cal., and St. Joseph, Mo. A rerun was conducted in mid-July.

Transcontinental telegraph lines put the pony express out of business in 1861, only 18 months after it was started.

Reeder said a committee was named to study possible projects.

Most of the money came from the sale of letters carried by the riders on the July re-run. The price for a single letter was \$100. Other funds came from the sale of medals. Nearly 5,000 silver medals were sold for \$40 each.

### Pony Express Markers for U. S. 36 Route

Installation of Pony Express memorial highway markers along U. S. 36 highway from the Missouri line west to a junction with K-15E highway south of Hanover, Kan., was a step nearer this week.

The Kansas highway commission approved the expenditure of \$1,080 for making the 216 signs that will be installed along the route. These will be 16 by 16 inches square and will be reflectorized so they may be seen at night. There will be approximately one sign each mile on alternate sides of the road and several through the towns.

They will show a Pony rider on his run that will be similar to one of the early drawings used to advertise the fast mail service from St. Joseph west to California.

Hanover is the site of Hollenberg station, only original Pony Express station left standing today in its original location. It is owned by the state of Kansas and contains a small pioneer museum.

Designation of the route as a memorial highway was made by the 1964 Kansas legislature under a concurrent resolution. The signs will be up in time for the 1964 tourist traffic this summer.

K C Man Killed