

Upholding the trust—safeguarding St. Joseph's past for future generations

Since 1927, the St. Joseph Museum has been entrusted with its community's heritage. It is the museum's mission to uphold this trust by caring for the items that have been given into its custody. Using these collections, the St. Joseph Museum serves the public by educating through exhibits and programs; promoting research; and encouraging the appreciation and understanding of St. Joseph's heritage.

St. Joseph Museum Hours

Monday-Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday and Holidays, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION EVERY SUNDAY

1100 Charles Street

St. Joseph, Missouri

(816) 232-8471

Visit our website at

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49er Families



Compiled by the
St. Joseph Museum

with help from the
49er Descendants
in commemoration of the
150th anniversary of the
California Gold Rush
celebrated during
Trails West! 1999

August 22, 1999

RUSSELL

*Rosanna Gaul
Gary Gilmore
Jeanette Straight
Rick Gilmore
Larry Gilmore
Lary Goerlitz
John Spencer
Charles Spencer
Sheila Ann Thompson
Charles W. Russell
Helen Polaski
Margaret Osborn
Harlan Osborn

SANDY

*Carol Ann Page

SCOTT

*Rev. Scott C. Hall

SHERIDAN

*Sheridan Logan
Sheri-Ann Loyd
John Sheridan Roundy

SOLLARS

*Jerry Sollars
*Geoffrey Sollars
Billie Faye Sollars
Bernice Sollars
Norma Sollars
Jack Sollars
David Sollars
Richard Sollars
Dr. Eric Sollars
Cynthia Paden
Jennifer Levelady

WAGENBLAST

*Lucille Wagenblast Ford

WALDEN

*Craig Powell

WALKUP

*Helen Hessemeyer

WEDDLE

Bette Weddle Waltemath

WIGLESWORTH

*Marilyn Tunks McMillen
*William John Tunks
*Leona Goucher Tunks
Eric McMillen
Scott McMillen

WONDERLY

*Nancy Clilsbee
Bob Fitzpatrick
David Fitzpatrick

ZEPP

*Thelma McWilliams
Joan Lang

ISLAUB

*John Luchsinger

JONES

*Dr. Larry Alan Jones
Charles F. Jones
Charlene Jones Russell
Dr. Pam Nelson
Adam Nelson
Mathew Nelson

KARNS

*Cindy Weaver
Sam Karns
Jenny Weaver-Tudor

KEMPER

*Charles K. Richmond
Ann R. Kirmil
Mary Hinde
Charles K. Richmond, Jr.

KING

*Anna L. Martin
James Paden

KNAPP

*Roger Knapp

LEWIS

*Keith Williams
Bryce Williams
Marjorie Williams
Joseph Williams
Jared Williams
Mallory Williams
Jacob Williams
Milo Williams
John Williams
Helen Lewis Williams

MC MINDES

*Virginia Landis
Linda Sue Perry

MC DONALD

*Dr. Wallace McDonald

MC CALLAN

*Charles Walker
*Jacqueline Lewin
Bruce Clark
Joe Clark
Keith Clark
Kent Clark
Walter Clark
Mary Karrasch
Katherine Kowitz

MARKER

*Keith Williams
Bryce Williams
Marjorie Williams
Joseph Williams
Jared Williams
Mallory Williams
Jacob Williams
Milo Williams
John Williams
Helen Lewis Williams

MOSELEY

*Robert T. Cook

NELSON

*Mary Nelson Guilmette
*Mrs. Roy (Mary) Nelson
Carol Grace Cox
George Nelson
Kristin Nelson
Petis Nelson
Mort Nelson
Dan Nelson
Katherine Nelson
Jane Nelson Thompson
Bettie Weddle Waltemath

William Henry Acord

William Henry Acord was born in Ohio on October 1, 1826. At age 20, he moved with his family to Daviess County, Missouri. In 1849 he caught gold fever and headed for California. To make money along the journey, he carried 500 gallons of good water in wooden barrels in his wagon. In California William tried gold mining for a while but found that it was more profitable to take supplies to the miners by pack mule. After a year in California, William had accumulated \$300 in gold dust. He spent \$100 of this for passage on a steamer to return home via the Isthmus of Panama. Upon reaching New Orleans, he secured passage by boat up the Mississippi and Missouri River. He returned home to Daviess County and lived near Union Star until he died in 1907 at age 81.

John Allanson

John Allanson immigrated from North Yorkshire, England, when he heard about the gold rush to California. He wrote to his family from New York and again from the plains of Nebraska. After that, not another letter was received. Did he become ill and die along the trail, or did he begin a new life in California?

Elijah and Susan Harrington Best

Elijah and Susan Harrington Best moved from Clay County, Missouri, to a farm just south of Fillmore, Missouri. They were the first settlers in the area. They were raising eight children when Isaac Best decided to go to California in 1849 in hope of increasing the family's fortune. After reaching the gold fields, he became ill and died of "erysipelas" (contagious strep infection). His widow Susan continued to live in Andrew County until she died in 1892 at age 76.

James and Ursala Flannery Bunten

James Bunten was born in 1816 in Bloomington, Indiana, and Ursala was born in 1820, probably in Virginia. They were the first couple married in Rush Township, Buchanan County. The land they settled on later became the site of Rushville. James served as Rush Township Justice of the Peace. The couple lived in Rushville until his death in 1875 and her death in 1883.

John Byrne

John Byrne was born in 1790 in New York Harbor on board ship as his family immigrated from Ireland. The family settled in Virginia where his father worked as a ship builder. John was sent to school in Ireland. During the War of 1812 he was returning home from school when his ship was stopped by a British war ship and John was impressed into the British Navy. During a later battle, John jumped ship and swam to an American vessel. He was then able to return to Virginia. John Byrne began moving west and in 1826 took advantage of the Mexican offer of a 5,000 acre land grant in Texas. He stayed for 10 years until Mexican hostility was unbearable. Soon after, he brought his family to Buchanan County and purchased a farm just north of Rushville.

Hezekiah and Martha Clanton Campbell

Hezekiah Campbell was born in 1821 in North Carolina, and his wife Martha was born in 1821 in Illinois. In 1846, the family moved by wagon to a new home in southern Buchanan County. The land originally settled by the Campbells is still farmed by the descendants.

The following names were submitted as descendants of 49er Families. The asterisk (*) identifies the submitter.

ACORD

*Dolores Acord Reeder
*Jerry Acord
Jody Acord
Edward Curtis Acord
Lawrence Acord

ALLANSON

*Rev. Scott C. Hall

BEST

*Thelma Harrington Fuller

BUNTEN

*Franke Lu Bunten Long

BYRNE

*Sheridan Logan
Sheri-Ann Loyd
John Sheridan Roundy

CAMPBELL

*James Truman Campbell

CAPLES

*Rose Marie Caples

CHENOWITH

*Sue McQueen

COYL

*Connie Coil-Trice
Robert F. Coil

CROWLEY

*Ben Crowley

DEPPEN

*Thelma McWilliams
Joan Lang

DITTEMORE

*Mary Jo Sprague
Shirley Williams Dreier
Annabel Downing
Wilfred Hawley Sampson
Carol Ann Page
William A. Brunner

FANCHER

*Bobbye Bunch

FLANNERY

*Franke Lu Bunten Long

GIBSON

*Eugene Kerber
David Gibson
Eugene Gibson
Leonard Kieser

HAUCK

*Louise Hees
Albert Kost
Jennifer Hoecker
Robert Mosiman
Rev. Michael Mosiman
Nshan Erganian
Kristin Lemon
Colin Lemon
Paige Lemon
Carol Kost Laurent

HEADLEY

*Marcia Dungen

HOUX

*Joseph K. Houts, Jr.
Joseph K. Houts, III
Katherine M. Houts

Frederik Weddle

Frederik Weddle was born in 1829. He was living in Buchanan County when he learned of the gold discovery in California. In 1849 he joined Nels and George Nelson, his brothers-in-law, in a journey down the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers where they boarded a steamship. Their route to California was by boat around Cape Horn. Frederik stayed in California for a while and worked for the Danish Consulate. He died in 1901.

John and Mariah Wiglesworth

John Wiglesworth, born in 1825, and Mariah, in 1831, were from Kentucky. Soon after their marriage, they moved to Buchanan County and settled near the river in the southern part of the county. During the winter of 1849, John and Mariah outfitted two wagons in preparation for a journey to California. They left St. Joseph on April 26, 1850, and reached Hangtown (today's Placerville) on September 3. They prospected on the Feather River while raising cattle to sell to the miners. Their return east was made by steamship via Panama and up river to St. Joseph. The Wiglesworths eventually moved to Alta Vista, Missouri, where they engaged in the mercantile business.

Joseph and Frances Wonderly

Joseph Wonderly was born in 1794 and his wife, Frances, in 1805. Soon after the birth of their son John in 1832, the Wonderlys left their home in Germany and immigrated to America. They first settled in Ohio, but were in Buchanan County by 1840. They homesteaded land in Marion Township near today's Easton.

Charles, Joseph, William, Kinsey, and Jacob Caples

Charles and William Caples were brothers of an Ohio family that decided to move to the frontier of Missouri in 1839. They eventually settled in Andrew County near the site of today's Amazonia. Soon after, they were joined by brothers Kinsey, Joseph and Jacob. Charles laid out a town on the Missouri River which he called New Boston. It grew to be a thriving community. Just to the east, they laid out another town, Nodaway City. Their purpose was to establish a river landing and trading point. It was from this landing that one of the first wagon trains to Oregon left in 1844. (James Marshall, whose discovery of gold in 1848 set off the California gold rush, crossed the river at Caples Landing in 1844.) During the gold rush years, Caples Landing was a popular river crossing site when the ferry lines in St. Joseph became overcrowded. Due to changes in the river channel, the Missouri River is now 1 ½ miles from their river landing. However, Caples Creek still runs through Amazonia.

William Chenoweth

William Chenoweth left his home in Pike County, Illinois, along with his brother Arthur. They were among the thousands of California emigrants gathered in St. Joseph in April 1849 waiting for their turn to be ferried across the Missouri River. In a letter to his wife Sarah, dated April 19, 1849, William noted that his party was camped two miles north of St. Joseph. He wrote, ". . . we have laid in all of our provisions and everything for an outfit and my traveling expenses and provisions has cost me about \$40.00 and I have a little over fifty left. . . I will now say too, that they have some cholera in St. Joseph, 3 persons died with it the night before we passed through but it seems to create no alarm." William only made the journey as far as Salt Lake City where he died of measles in July 1849. His brother returned to Illinois but a year later started for California again, only to die there the following winter. Both men left widows and children in Illinois.

Simeon Coyl

Simeon Coyl was born in 1811 in Estill County, Kentucky. In 1838, he came to Jackson Township, Buchanan County.

George Crowley

Born in 1825, George Crowley came to Andrew County, Missouri, with his family in 1837. His father was the first judge of Andrew County and assisted in locating and laying out the town of Savannah. When the gold excitement came in 1849, George and his brother John, headed for California. John died on the trail near the Green River in today's Wyoming. George later returned to Andrew County where he lived until his death at age 79.

Isaac Deppen

Isaac Deppen moved west from Pennsylvania with his family to Missouri in 1841. At first the Deppen family settled on the bluffs close to the Missouri River but found the land was too rough for farming. They finally settled and farmed land near today's Bessie Ellison School.

Adam Dittimore

Adam Dittimore was born in 1799 in Greene County, Tennessee. In 1840 Adam's family along with the families of his two nephews settled just south of the future St. Joseph. He farmed several truck crops, but he was most well-known for his sweet potato farm. In the 1854 Buchanan County Fair, he won first prize for his crop.

Alexander Fancher

Alexander Fancher was born in Overton County, Tennessee, in 1812, and later moved to Carroll County, Arkansas. He made three trips to California. His last trip was as a captain of 140 emigrants

brothers, Jacob, Chris, and John, crossed the plains. Jacob and John later returned to the farm, married, and raised families. Chris remained in California to be joined by another brother Gottlieb in 1855. Many descendants of the Wagenblast family still reside in the area.

James Madison Walden

James Madison Walden was serving as a Justice of the Peace in Carroll County, Missouri, when he caught gold fever. In 1850 he left his family and headed for California. However, he died in 1851 before he was able to return home. Letters written to his wife are now in the Western Manuscript Collection. He wrote on April 29, 1850, "I take this opportunity of addressing you a few lines to let you know where abouts we are we are 7 miles above St. Jo on the west side of the river we have been here two weeks waiting for grass on the planes." By December 28 he was in Custus Creek, California. A few days later he wrote, "If I live to get home I am certain I never shall leave you again until death separates us. I say to all who wants to come to California they had better stay at home for there is at least one third of the persons who come here that will return worse off. And when they start mining is the hardest work that any man ever done."

Phineas Walkup

Phineas Walkup was born in 1829 in Boone County, Kentucky. In 1843 his brother Joseph came to Buchanan County. In 1849, Phineas was caught up in the gold fever and traveled to California. No one in Phineas' family ever heard from him again.

suffering and starvation, and my mind would naturally run back to the old log cabin and the wife and children.” He worked as a carpenter for \$6.00 a day building cabins for miners. By September 1851 he had enough money to get home by steam ship via Panama. He said, “I then made up my mind to stay at home, even though it was a poor one.” William lived in Iowa until his death in 1910.

Solomon Neill Sheridan

Solomon Neill Sheridan was born in 1820 in Jeffersonville, Indiana, but grew up in Kentucky. In 1846 he brought his family to Missouri to join his wife’s father John Byrne and the rest of her family. Solomon soon purchased land from Joseph Robidoux and worked as a brick and stone mason. He was prominent in St. Joseph and in 1856 was elected sheriff and later served as county tax collector. The family home was at 1014 South 12th.

Elisha, John, Thomas and Henry Sollars

Four Sollars brothers left their home in Tennessee and came to settle at Blacksnake Hills between 1834 and 1836. They were Elisha, born 1798, John, born 1786, Thomas, born 1790, and Henry, born 1805. They homesteaded land close to Joseph Robidoux. In 1837, Henry Sollars’ son Thomas was the first non-native child born at Blacksnake Hills. Their home was a small log cabin near today’s Main and Jule Streets. The Sollars have many descendants still residing in Buchanan County.

The Wagenblast Family

In 1840 John and Gottlieb Wagenblast left their home near Stuttgart, Germany, and immigrated to America. They lived for a while in Pennsylvania but soon moved west to Missouri. Seven years later their father Michael brought all but one of the rest of the children to America. They homesteaded an area north of today’s Easton. During the California Gold Rush in 1849, three of the

from Arkansas. In September 1857, this party fell victims to Mormon hostility which ended in the Mountain Meadow Massacre in southern Utah. Alexander, his wife, and seven children were killed. Two children survived and returned to Arkansas.

John Flannery

James Flannery brought his family to Rush Township, Buchanan County, in 1839. Part of the town of Rushville would be built in 1847 on his land.

Arthur and Jane Moore Gibson

Arthur Gibson was born in Buncombe County, North Carolina, in 1803 and later moved to Indiana where he met and married Jane Moore. She had been born in 1811. In the spring of 1840, the couple and their children moved into the newly opened Platte Purchase Territory. They homesteaded land just west of present-day Gower. On their farm of 600 acres, the Gibson’s raised hemp, sheep, and cattle. Arthur died in 1853, but his wife lived in the area until 1884.

George Michael Hauck

George Hauck was lured by the tales of returning gold seekers to travel to California in 1852. He was successful in his search for gold and planned to stay in California. However, letters from his mother encouraged him to return to the Ohio home. Upon his return, he converted his gold dust into money at a 10% loss. The Haucks had come to Ohio from Germany, and in 1865, George moved to St. Joseph, Missouri. His brother, Jacob, had moved to St. Joseph in 1850. The two brothers operated the Hauck Flour Mill.

Ezekial Whitehead Headley

Ezekial Whitehead Headley was born in 1830 in Licking County, Ohio. Hearing stories about the gold mines in California, Ezekial and his brother William decided to see for themselves what was happening there. They crossed the Missouri River at St. Joseph on May 6, 1852, and began a five month journey that ended in Placerville, California. Ezekial kept a diary of this journey which is now at the Bancroft Library. After the gold rush Ezekial settled near Richmmond, Missouri, in 1859. By 1882 he and his family were living in Oregon, Missouri, where Ezekial died in 1917.

Matthias Houx

Matthias Houx was born in 1814 in Russellville, Kentucky, but in 1816 the family crossed the Mississippi River to settle in what would become the state of Missouri. After serving in the Mexican War, Matthias joined a group of '49ers going to California. While there, he was known as an expert hunter and on at least one occasion was involved in a battle with Indians. During the Civil War, Matthias joined the Confederate Army and fought at the battles of Wilson's Creek, Lexington, and Pea Ridge. In 1861, he joined Quantrill's guerrillas. Near the end of the Civil War, he was captured and paroled by the U.S. government. He returned to his home outside Centerview, Missouri, where he became a respected community member. He died in 1900.

Fred and Barbara Warner Islaub

Barbara Warner was born in Germany in 1829 and came with her family to the this area around 1839 - just after the Platte Territory had been added to the state of Missouri. Here she met and married Fred Islaub. The family home was at the foot of Prospect Hill.

the Missouri River. It looks grand as you approach it." In 1849 his two sons Nels Peter and George along with his son-in-law Frederik Weddle caught gold fever. Their route to California was by boat around Cape Horn to California. They considered themselves successful in their search for gold and returned to St. Joseph. George had his gold made into a wedding ring for his wife. Family members still live on the Nelson homestead on the southeast of St. Joseph.

Elijah and Allen Russell

Elijah Russell was born in North Carolina in 1782. In 1837, along with his son Allen, he moved to Buchanan County. When gold was discovered in California, Allen joined in the rush to the gold fields. He arrived in San Francisco in 1850. Becoming discouraged with gold mining, he decided to return home by steamship via Panama. Near Mazatlan, Mexico, the ship was wrecked, and he made his way from there back to Missouri by mule. He remained on the family farm until his death in 1883 at age 63.

Henry and Elizabeth Sandy

Henry and Elizabeth Sandy homesteaded a farm in 1848 in Buchanan County three miles north of present-day DeKalb. They came to this area from North Carolina. The first home on the 160 acre farm was a log cabin which was converted to a frame house by later generations of the family.

William W. Scott

William W. Scott was born in Alleghany County, New York, in 1819. In 1843 William brought his family to Calamus, Iowa. After gold was discovered William recalled, "I was taken with a severe attack of the California gold fever. . . and I started for California March 26, 1850. I reached the mines the first day of August. My outfit had cost me \$150, had spent four months of fatiguing travel,

Irving McMIndes

Irving McMIndes was born in 1838 in Jennings County, Indiana. By 1849, the family had moved to St. Joseph. Two of his young brothers died just 10 days apart from cholera which had been carried to St. Joseph by the river boat passengers. Many of these passengers were 49ers headed for California. During the Civil War, Irving was a first sergeant with the G Company of the 43rd Missouri Infantry. He is buried in the veterans section of Ashland Cemetery. Irving also worked as a stage coach driver and for the Terminal Warehouse. He died in St. Joseph in 1913.

Jacob Marker

Jacob Marker was born in 1808 in Germany. He immigrated to America and first settled in Ohio. In the late 1830s Jacob and his wife Catherine brought their children to Buchanan County. A brother Frederick Marker followed in the 1850s. The family settled about a mile and a half west of the Third Fork of the Platte River.

Cordelia Moseley

Cordelia Moseley was born in Washington Township, Buchanan County, on December 3, 1846. Her parents had moved to Missouri from Kentucky. After her marriage to William Cook in 1864, she lived on a farm near Hemple, Missouri. She raised six children.

Peder Nelson

Peder Nelson was born in 1794 in Norway. In 1847 he brought a group of 59 immigrants to settle on the frontier of Missouri. Their sea journey ended in New Orleans where they secured passage on the steamboat "Old Hickory." The boat brought them by river up to St. Joseph. Peder Nelson described St. Joseph in a letter to family in Norway: "St. Joseph is a four year old town at the edge of

Captain Peter Alan and Sarah Garton Jones

Peter Alan Jones was born in 1838 in Buchanan County, Missouri. His wife Sarah was born in 1845 also in Buchanan County. During the Civil War, Peter joined the Union Army. He served during the entire war and mustered out as a captain. During the war he married Sarah. After the war, the couple owned a farm of 204 acres in Buchanan County and raised nine children.

Michael and George Karns

Michael Karns was born in Bedford County, Virginia, and came to Missouri in 1837, locating first near the old Indian agency (now the town of Agency). In 1839 he acquired a farm in Washington Township where he raised hemp. Michael Karns died in 1847. One of his sons, George Karns, continued to live in Buchanan County and operate the family farm until his death in 1904. Two of his brothers, John N. and James C., left the farm and joined the thousands of emigrants headed to the gold field of California.

Anna Zug Zepp Kessler Kelling

Anna Zug was born in Hurlinger, Germany, and came to America in 1844 with her first husband John Zepp. John died shortly after the voyage. In the late 1840s, Anna was living in Marion Township, Buchanan County, with her second husband, Fidel Kessler, also from Germany. Anna later married a man named Kelling and lived in Buchanan County until her death at age 101.

Simeon and Jane Ann Kemper

Simeon Kemper was born in 1799 in Montgomery County, Kentucky, where he taught school. He married Jane Shortridge in

1835 and two years later decided to move to Missouri. They finally located near Blacksnake Hills in 1839 where they pre-empted 160 acres of land in the area of 22nd and Colhoun Streets. Simeon was the first city and county surveyor and offered one of the plans to Robidoux for his new town. Kemper's plan provided wide streets and parks, but Robidoux chose another plan following the European custom of narrow streets, leaving more land to sell in lots. Simeon Kemper later was one of the surveyors of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad and led in the development of the Kemper Addition to St. Joseph (17th to 22nd and Highly to Mulberry Streets). Kemper died in St. Joseph in 1883.

William King

William King came to Buchanan County from Virginia in 1839 at age 18 and purchased land from Joseph Robidoux. He owned several pieces of property in the area but lived on the bluffs between today's I-229 and Waterworks Road.

Adam Knapp

Adam Knapp was born in 1824 in Hessen Darmstadt, Germany. Disagreeing with the German policy of compulsory military service, Adam left Germany at age 22 and journeyed to America. In 1849 he joined a group of emigrants who jumped-off from St. Joseph bound for the gold fields of California. Adam was successful in his diggings, but lost part of his gold by theft. Eight years later, Adam returned to Germany, married, and bought a farm. Remembering the vast land available in America, he packed up his wife and four sons and sailed for America in 1865. They settled in Buchanan County and farmed land to the northeast of present St. Joseph. Adam lived to be 90 years old.

Edmond and Sarah Poindexter Lewis

Family records indicate that Edmond Warren and Sarah Poindexter Lewis were the first of the family to settle in Buchanan County. They came in the 1840s. During the Civil War their homestead, near today's San Antonio, was threatened by guerrilla skirmishes. To reach safety, the family made a cold, January wagon ride into St. Joseph for safety. A few days later Sarah and two of the children became ill with pneumonia and died at the Patee House.

James W. McCallan

James Wemys McCallan was born in 1817 in Ross and Cromarty, Scotland. As a young man he immigrated to America where he worked as a blacksmith. In 1846 he served as a private in Captain Hamilton's Company of the Santa Fe Battalion Mounted Volunteers. After gold was discovered in California, he went to the goldfields where he was somewhat successful. He returned east in the mid 1850s to settle in Kansas Territory just northeast of Troy. In 1859 he was granted 150 acres of land for his service in the Mexican War. His family's home was on the St. Joe Road that thousands had taken to California. He lived in Doniphan County until his death in 1872.

Dr. Silas and Sarah McDonald

Silas McDonald was born in Kentucky in 1812. In 1836 he visited Missouri, but returned east to attend the Cincinnati Medical College. By 1838 he was back in northwest Missouri and settled near Wallace. Sarah Donnell also came to Buchanan County in 1838 with her family. Dr. McDonald was the first doctor in the Platte Purchase area. By 1847 the McDonald family had moved to St. Joseph where he practiced medicine and operated a drug store. The family home was just west of St. Joseph Avenue. McDonald Street led to the home. He died in 1901 at age 89.