

# An 'Expert' Corrected

Some times an "expert" is not such an expert. Miss Diana West of Portland, Ore., considers herself an expert on the Pony Express. In a letter to The Oregonian in Portland she noted that she had received two medals and a letter of commendation for her study of the Pony Express from the Pony Express History and Art Gallery in San Rafael, Cal.

She then took the editor to task for an article that appeared in the July 5 issue of The Oregonian concerning Jim Rikhoff's "re-enactment of the famed Pony Express mail service." Miss West said that the

route given was erroneous. According to her the mail service originated at Kansas City, Kan., and at Julesburg, Neb., split into two routes one going to Denver and the other to Fort Laramie. She said that a map drawn by W. R. Honnell showed this route when it was printed in The Kansas City Kansan Aug. 22, 1935.

A copy of The Oregonian containing Miss West's letter was sent to Mayor Douglas A. Merrifield who turned it over to Richard Nolf, director of the St. Joseph Museum. Mr. Nolf has answered Miss West's letter.

He points out that a copy of Mr. Honnell's map presented to the St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums shows St. Joseph as the eastern terminus. He further explains to her that St. Joseph was the western terminus of the first cross-state railroad line, the Hannibal and St. Joseph, west of the Mississippi River. It would have been illogical to have transported the mail from the train south to Kansas City and back northward adding at least 100 miles to the overall distance.

Mr. Nolf enclosed a complimentary copy of the Museum Graphic which was devoted entirely to the Pony Express. He hopes that reading it will present factual information to Miss West in her research on the historical mail route.

## Pony Express

### memento

*Handwritten: Mrs. Victor Gehrs, Gladstone, formerly of St. Joseph and the daughter of the late Phil J. Welch, who was mayor of St. Joseph, and Mrs. Welch, have an unusual souvenir of the issuance of the Pony Express commemorative stamp here on April 3, 1940.*

The souvenir is a framed sheet of the stamps, signed in green ink by the late James Farley, who was postmaster general at the time of the issuance which marked the 80th anniversary of the start of the pioneer mail service. The sheet had been given to Welch by Farley at the first-day stamp issuance event here. Mrs. Gehrs also has a first-day cover stamped here that day and addressed to "Mayor, St. Joseph, Missouri."

ST. JOSEPH, MO., NEWS-PRESS, SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 1980

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## Turning Back the Pages



40 YEARS AGO, March 9, 1940 — A statue, "The Rising Woman," one of the major works of George Gray Bernard, has been given to St. Joseph by John D. Rockefeller Jr. through the efforts of Mrs. W.B. Norris, who recently returned from an Eastern trip and who has worked to obtain the gift since 1928. The exact value of the statue, which is listed in the Encyclopedia Britannica, is not known, but undoubtedly it will be one of the finest art treasures in this part of the country . . .

Filming of incidents in connection with the first day's sales of Pony Express stamps will be undertaken by the St. Joseph Stamp Collectors Club, said member L. D. Blunt. The stamps will be placed on sale April 3, the 80th anniversary of the starting of the Pony Express, in St. Joseph and in Sacramento, the western terminus. It is expected to be one of the busiest days in history at the local post office . . . The Pioneer Zephyr, the Burlington Railroad's first streamlined train, will be replaced by the company's newest streamliner, the Silver Streak, about April 15 on the run through St. Joseph . . . John Pooley Wright from St. Joseph, who is now working in Washington with the war department, is a member of the producing group of the Washington Civic Theater. He was formerly with the St. Joseph Little Theater and was outstanding in dramatic and public speaking activities during his Benton High School years.

25 YEARS AGO, March 9, 1955 — A new route from the Pony Express viaduct to the stock yards is necessary because King Hill avenue can no longer adequately carry the traffic load, St. Joseph representatives today told the state highway commission in Jefferson City. The new route would lead from the viaduct to the yards area and then connect with Highway 59 south of the city . . . England's Princess Margaret, 24, intends to marry 40-year-old RAF group Capt. Peter Townsend this fall, an informant in touch with the royal family said today. She is expected to renounce her right of accession to the throne to smooth

the way for her wedding to a commoner . . . Construction of the new swimming pool at Noyes Field is nearly completed. It and the one being constructed at Hyde Park are considerably smaller than the 27-year-old pools they replace . . . Business and professional men, religious and social leaders, union labor officials and people from many other pursuits attended services this morning for Joseph E. Corby, who had worked in so many phases of community life, including erection of St. Joseph's largest building . . . John Waris of Christian Brothers is the St. Joseph high school basketball scoring champion in the all games department, although Central's Ray Sisson, second in all games, has wrapped up the City League scoring title . . . Expected to provide running strength for Benton High School's track squad, according to assistant coach Pat Zuchowski, are Jim McLaughlin, Joe Hamilton and Erly Polk.

15 YEARS AGO, March 9, 1965 — More than 2,000 Negroes massed today at a church in Selma, Ala., and began organizing an immediate right-to-vote march to the Alabama capital despite a court order and a presidential appeal for restraint. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., central figure in the long, violence-marked Negro drive, met with other civil rights leaders to decide a course of action . . . District Judge Joe B. Brown in Dallas granted a defense motion and set March 29 as the date for a sanity trial for Jack Ruby, condemned killer of presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald . . . The Johnson administration submitted to Congress a bill that would make it a federal crime to assassinate, kidnap or assault the president of the United States . . . The justice department asked Congress today to add arson to the list of federal racketeering crimes — a proposal aimed at fighting increasing interstate "fire for hire" operations . . . The Lake Contrary School board last night called a special election for March 24 for school district residents to vote on a proposal to be annexed by the St. Joseph school district . . . It cost \$382,934.19 to remove snow from Northwest Missouri highways during 1964, according to the state highway department, and based on snow removal operations during the first 10 weeks of this year, the 1965 cost may be even higher . . . "My Fair Lady" has won the Screen Producers Guild award as the year's best movie, making it the odds-on Oscar favorite . . . Perennial NBA scoring champion Wilt Chamberlain is averaging 34.9 points per game, but is being pressed by Cincinnati's Oscar Robertson and Los Angeles' Jerry West. (Compiled by Darrel Huber)

## Pony Express story in works

An illustrated article on the Pony Express Trail, including the St. Joseph beginning of the trail, is soon to be published in National Geographic Magazine.

According to the May-June "Happenings" publication of the St. Joseph Museum, National Geographic photographer Craig Aurness and his wife, Daphen, were in St. Joseph late last month.

Aurness was taking photographs to illustrate an article being written by Rowe Findley for National Geographic on the Pony Express Trail.

The story will include the history of the Pony Express days, showing the trail as it is today and describing events which happened along the trail. Aurness photographed the St. Joseph end of the trail while here and did research to help in photographing the western trail.

After leaving St. Joseph, the photographer planned to follow the trail picking up places he had not gotten earlier, including ranches in the Utah desert and Nevada.

Among photos already taken for the article was one of a black powder riflemen's meet at Court House Rock and Jail House Rock in Nebraska where wigwams were set up and marksmen were dressed in traditional garb.

A pony rider in a blizzard in the high Sierras also caught the camera's eye for the story. The pony rider was a state trooper writing tickets to motorists without chains.

Among other articles illustrated by Aurness' photography was a story on Saskatchewan in the May 1979 issue of the geographic publication. The publication date for the Pony Express story has not yet been released.

# THE PONY EXPRESS RIDERS.

By MABEL LOVING.

[Reprinted from The News-Press, April 3, 1913.]

(The first west-bound courier of the Pony Express left St. Joseph, Mo., on the evening of April 3, 1860. At the same time the first rider on the eastward journey started from Sacramento, Cal.)



The city was decked in beauty,  
Crowds gathered to watch him start,  
Triumphantly flags were floating  
And music made glad each heart.

A cannon roared forth the signal  
That eventful April day,  
And the jet-black horse and his rider  
Sped forth on their westward way.

In far-away Sacramento,  
Throngs honored by word and deed  
The rider who first sped eastward  
On his wiry, milk-white steed.

We can see those noble riders  
Dash o'er the lonely way,  
As they proudly broke the record  
For speed in that far-off day.

They rode through the storms of summer,  
Through tempest and hail and rain;  
When the blinding snows of winter  
Swept valley and hill and plain.

Through the dense, primeval forest,  
And o'er the burning sand,  
When savages fierce and hostile,  
Roamed the wild, unconquered land.

Though comrades were scalped and murdered,  
Though outlaws oft-times lurked high,  
They were true to the call of honor,  
Inspired with a courage high!

The perils of day unheeded,  
The terrors of night defied,  
They sped o'er plain and mountain  
On their dangerous, lonely ride.

When we call the roll of heroes,  
When deeds of daring are told,  
We'll sing of the pony riders  
In those stirring days of old!

No page of our nation's history  
Glow's brighter in deeds of worth,  
Those riders are shined forever  
With the brave and noble of earth.

Aye, proudly we carve their triumphs  
On the deathless scroll of fame!  
In letters of light undying  
We blazon each hero's name!

## Pony Express Film Has First Showing Here.



The above scene is from the screen entertainment, "The Overland Express," which deals with the establishment of the Pony Express route from St. Joseph to Sacramento, Cal., and which has its world premiere at the Electric Theater today, tomorrow and Tuesday. Buck Jones, famous Western star, is the hero of the film, playing the role of one of the first riders. Built around the development of the famous Western pioneer mail service, the picture weaves an exciting story of danger and romance.

# Pony Express still big in delivery

7-20-99

By GREG KOZOL  
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St. Joseph News-Press

As the chief executive officer of a West Coast holding company, Vic Nizic feels a certain kinship with the Pony Express riders of the 19th century.

That's because Mr. Nizic's company, SkyNet Holdings of Los Angeles, just purchased a modern-day version of the overland delivery services that galloped out of St. Joseph in 1860.

SkyNet bought Pony Express Delivery Services, an Atlanta company that handles 32 million packages a year through 100 offices in 22 states.

"It's the concept of service," Mr. Nizic said Monday during a visit to the Pony Express Museum in St. Joseph. "An item can be ordered and come from anywhere in the world. That's the Pony Express link."

Mr. Nizic and other executives from SkyNet and Pony Express of Atlanta toured the St. Joseph museum during a visit to company offices throughout the region. Pony Express Delivery has offices in Kansas City and St. Joseph.

The executives listened to museum Director Mac Burns describe the original Pony Express saddle and the bag used to carry mail across the overland route.

"This was the FedEx of its day," Mr. Burns said.

Mr. Nizic said SkyNet already has a global distribution system. The company plans to market the Pony Express name and integrate the Atlanta company with a Las-Vegas based delivery service.

The tour in St. Joseph was part of an effort to learn more about the origins of the original Pony Express.

Although the original Pony Express lasted less than two years, the name gives the modern-day delivery service an edge in the U.S. and worldwide markets, said Dick Williams, president and chief executive officer of the delivery service.

"The very concept is the exact same concept today," Mr. Williams said.



**CHARLES (BRONCO) MILLER**

DIED IN NEW YORK'S BELLEVUE HOSPITAL IN 1955  
94 YEARS AFTER HE RETIRED AS A PONY EXPRESS RIDER

## Pony Express Ad Appears in Book

4-11-69  
A new book, "American Historylands," issued by the National Geographic Society contains a copy of a classified ad for pony Express riders contributed by the St. Joseph Museum. The copy appears in the article titled "The Lusty West."

The ad reads, "Wanted—Young skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred. Wages \$25 week. Apply Central Overland Express, Alta building, Montgomery street."

## Who took the first Pony Express mail pouch?

### 2-25-07 Don't ask Wikipedia

By JIMMY MYERS

jimmym@npgco.com | St. Joseph News-Press

Gary Chilcote gives Wikipedia a solid B.

The director of the Patee House Museum and an authority on St. Joseph's history, Mr. Chilcote looked at three documents pertaining to Jesse James, Joseph Robidoux and the Pony Express to judge their accuracy. The documents came from the popu-

lar and controversial online encyclopedia called Wikipedia.

"Close friend of Belle Starr ..." Mr. Chilcote said reading aloud from the first paragraph of the Jesse James document before looking up to make a verbal correction: "There is no record he ever was friends with her."

The Wikipedia entry also claims Jesse joined his older brother, Frank,



**GARY CHILCOTE**  
director of the Patee House Museum and St. Joseph historian

Please see DON'T/Page A5

## Don't ask Wikipedia about Pony Express

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and Quantrill's Raiders in a killing spree in Lawrence, Kan. However, Mr. Chilcote said Jesse, just 16 at the time of the massacre, was probably not a part of that incident.

Absent from the Jesse James entry, which takes up nine pages of printed copy, is the 1881 train robbery in Winston, Mo., that led Gov. Theodore Crittendon to put a reward on Jesse's head.

Joseph Robidoux, founder of St. Joseph, has a much smaller

entry of about two pages. There also were fewer problems with the Robidoux entry than with Jesse's, Mr. Chilcote said. However, one sentence claimed that Mr. Robidoux "encroached" on American Indian land near St. Joseph, but Mr. Chilcote said he had permission.

The Pony Express entry also had a handful of minor errors, a couple of glaring mistakes and at least one contradiction. Perhaps the most obvious mistake was listing the location of the historic Pony Express sta-

bles on Pennsylvania rather than Penn street.

Another discrepancy is that a 9-year-old named Johnson William Richardson is credited in the Wikipedia entry as the first rider who took the mail pouch from the stables to the ferry. Mr. Chilcote said Johnny Fry was probably the one who made the trek from the stables to the ferry.

In the end, Mr. Chilcote was comfortable giving the entries a combined 85 percent accuracy rate.