Don’t miss the Annual

_Holiday Dinner & Membership Meeting_

2:00 p.m.,
Sunday, December 9, 2012

At Roger & Sandy Slusher’s Home
1421 South Street, Lexington, MO

Bring a salad, side dish or dessert plus any family members and prospective MRO members.

To find the Slusher’s house, take I-70 to the Route O Lexington exit, go north on O, then Business 13 past first light to first stop sign, and go right to 1421 South  OR

Take US 24 to Lexington then north on Business 13 to first stop sign, then right to 1421 South.
President’s Message………
By Larry Short

Another eventful and successful year has passed for the Missouri River Outfitter Chapter (MRO) of the Santa Fe Trail Association (SFTA). We have added new stone markers at the Mahaffie Stage Coach Stop & Historic Farm and at the site of the original town of Franklin, Missouri (1816-1828). You can read further accounts of the Mahaffie posts in related articles within this newsletter.

One of the things that I want to continue during this next year is to hold our board/membership meetings at various significant sites along the trail. It is important for our members to understand the importance of each of these sites and how they significantly impacted the Santa Fe Trail.

We recently held our board meeting at the Raytown Historical Society Museum in Raytown. This site is one of the certified sites by the National Park Service and is located at 9705 E. 63rd Street in Raytown, Missouri. The Raytown Historical Society was incorporated in 1966 by a group of local teachers, historians and business people. In 1982, through generous donations and many fundraisers, the Society purchased the building that was originally built as Raytown’s Fire Station #1 in 1944. Many dedicated volunteers gave time and materials to rehabilitate the building and turn it into one of the finest small town museums in the state. A replica of the William Ray Blacksmith Shop was put into place along with an 1880’s General Store. Additions over the years have provided new space for additional exhibits. Today the museum continually alternates various exhibits throughout the year to offer their visitors a new experience each time they come to the museum.

One of the many assets of the museum is their “school years” room. This area of the museum contains copies of every yearbook of both Raytown High School and Raytown South High School. Also there are many, many class photos of every Raytown School going back as early as the 1890’s. Each fall many alumni from the Raytown Schools come back for their homecoming visits. Part of their time is spend reminiscing at the museum looking over all of the pictures of their past. As a result of these visits they have garnered many fine stories about growing up in Raytown as remembered by these residents and former residents.

As the caretaker of our past and saving it for our future, the Raytown Historical Society holds an Ambassador’s Monday meeting open to the public on the first Monday of each month. At these meetings they tell the story through PowerPoint presentations of various families, businesses, the school system, etc. Through these meetings they gather many photos and stories which are then made available to the public in our research area of the museum.

I would encourage all of our trail enthusiasts to visit this wonderful resource and wealth of information. You can find more about The Raytown Historical Society & Museum by visiting the website at: www.raytownhistoricalsociety.org

KANSAS CITY TRAILS SYMPOSIUM
By Mary Conrad

Three Kansas City area trail groups (Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, Missouri River Outfitters of the Santa Fe Trail Association, and Trails Head Chapter of Oregon-California Trails Association) planned a joint trail symposium for Saturday November 10, 2012. The Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop site and the Daughters of the American Revolution joined with the three sponsors for a full day of activities at the Mahaffie Heritage Center and the next-door historic site in Olathe.

KCAHTA began the day at 9:00 a.m. with an hour-long executive meeting. Next Trails Head held its annual business meeting. Then the Missouri River Outfitters began dedication of two Mahaffie stone posts with comments from both the MRO and SFTA presidents, plus from the SFTA association manager. After these short talks, MRO President Larry Short finished the dedication by unveiling one of the stone posts.
As the activities of the morning drew to a close, those gathered ate a barbeque lunch catered by Smokin’ Joe’s of Olathe. After time for visiting, Tim Talbott of the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Kevin Corbett of Olathe Parks Department spoke about two developed Olathe historic trail sites, the Lone Elm Park and the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm, as well as the Mahaffie Heritage Center (a museum and meeting place). The participants then watched a film on the history of the Mahaffies and their property. Before the afternoon activities began, many took the opportunity to peruse the Heritage Center exhibits and the gift shop.

The afternoon began with three talks. Pat Traffas and Shirley Coupal traced the history of the Kansas DAR Santa Fe Trail granite markers from their inception in the early 1900s through their restoration of recent years. Greg VanCoevern outlined the use and styles of Army Civil War ambulances before the participants followed him outside to see and to hear about the life-sized ambulance wagon that VanCoevern has reproduced. Talbott gave a history of oxen from Egyptian times to the present, while centering on use of oxen in nineteenth century America.

Rededication of a marker followed the talks. Fourteen Kansas DAR members rededicated a bronze Mahaffie plaque that originally had been placed by a flagpole when that pole was in front of the historic home.

Fourteen of the 50-plus attendees stayed for the last event, an optional tour of the oxen pen and the Mahaffie house, both conducted by Talbott. The Scouts and their leaders who were camping on the Mahaffie grounds joined this tour that ended at 4:15 p.m.

The full day of activities provided an excellent opportunity for learning and for networking. Many local trail followers now have a keener awareness of the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop on the Westport Route of the Santa Fe Trail in the later years of trail usage.

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PLEASE RENEW YOUR MRO AND SFTA MEMBERSHIPS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. FORMS ARE ATTACHED.

(Don’t forget to include your email address.)

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DEDICATION OF MAHAFFIE STONE POSTS

During the mid-morning of November 10, 2012, dedication of two MRO stone posts began inside the Mahaffie Heritage Center. MRO President Larry Short emceed the program. He said the two stone posts to be dedicated are the first MRO markers to be placed on the Westport Route. SFTA President Roger Slusher sees the Mahaffie site as a valuable resource since this living heritage farm interprets the era of stagecoaches on the trail. SFTA Association Manager Joann VanCouvern sees the Mahaffie site as a valuable place for trail networking. She also spoke of the SFTA and National Park Service program that will provide signage so persons can follow the routes of the Santa Fe Trail through counties from central Missouri to Santa Fe. Such signage eventually will route persons by many trail sites, including the Mahaffie site.


Everyone then went outside to the stone post to the south of the Mahaffie Heritage Center for MRO President Short to unveil that post. The other new post is to the west by the parking lot in front of the historic Mahaffie house.

Each Mahaffie post has a plaque that reads:

In 1858, Indiana emigrants James Beatty Mahaffie and his wife Lucinda established a farm on this property adjoining the Santa Fe Trail. Here they operated a wayside inn and later a stop for stagecoaches.

These two markers are the first MRO stone posts placed in Kansas.
TALKS AT NOVEMBER SYMPOSIUM

Planners of the November 10, 2012 trail symposium scheduled three afternoon talks. Shirley Coupal and Pat Traffas recounted their personal experiences involving the DAR Santa Fe Trail red granite markers, first placed across the state of Kansas in 1906. When Coupal was the Kansas DAR state regent, KC trail historian Ross Marshall contacted her. Marshall and the late John Leamon had found some of those 1906 markers were missing, some had been moved, and some were damaged. This was the impetus for Coupal and Traffas to begin a survey of all the Kansas markers and to restore them. They surveyed the markers in the 1990s and again between 2007 and 2010. A few markers were illusive, but they finally located all of the original markers, many of which had been moved. Conservators have worked on the markers across the state. While this project of many years is largely completed, the Kansas DAR still wants to move some of the markers to their original locations.

Greg VanCoevern who has created a life-sized model of a Civil War ambulance explained the variety of models of Civil War ambulance wagons. Most of the models of the 1850s likely were the wagons of doctors since the Army did not establish the Ambulance Corps until 1862. Due to frequent breakdowns, the Army quickly learned that stronger wheels were needed. While designers intended for ambulance wagons to be pulled by four horses, use of only two was common. Only ambulance corpsmen, not soldiers, could remove the wounded from the battlefield. While the ambulance wagon was designed to carry six wounded men if they could sit, the space in a wagon could situate only two if those two had to be left on stretchers. Ambulance wagons continued to be used through World War I.

Tim Talbott, the Mahaffie historic site manager, gave a history of use of oxen. As the head of the Mahaffie living farm, Talbott handles Buck and Tip, two oxen that now are 2200 pounds each. The term “oxen” does not refer to a breed. To become oxen, male bovines are castrated when young before training begins. These trained steers become oxen at four years of age. The handlers of oxen on the Santa Fe Trail were called “bullwhackers” even though oxen are not bulls. Oxen were the most common work animals on American farms until the Civil War when the advent of farm machinery of that era required the additional zip horses could provide. During the early years of nineteenth century trail times, oxen provided 98 percent of the trail power. Mules and horses required higher quality of food than oxen so horses and mules became more common only after more stops with the feed developed along the trails. This is just one of the many issues involved in whether trail travelers used oxen, mules, or horses. Mules and horses could travel downhill safer than oxen, but oxen were cheaper. Horses required use of harnessing while the oxen did not. Horses could be shod when lifting each foot, but oxen had to be placed on their backs. In the U. S., working oxen now are seen at living history farms like the Mahaffie historic site.

All of the above speakers imparted some ideas new to many of the attendees who continued to converse about these ideas after the talks.

MAHAFFIES AND THEIR HOUSE
By Mary Conrad

Beatty and Lucinda Mahaffie left Indiana in 1857. They already had five children and would have three more in Kansas, although one of those died at the age of one. The Mahaffies bought a lot with a small house in Olathe. When they purchased land a mile east of Olathe on the Westport Road, they had their Olathe house moved from town to the country with the pulling power of oxen. Later they built a stone house that may have been finished in November of 1865. A news account tells of a party held in the stone house in February of 1866.

The 1865 stone house remains standing, although some changes have occurred. In the 1890s, a major remodeling changed placement of the stairway that connected the first and second floors, a wing was removed, and a different wing was added to the back. No records tell of the original upstairs arrangement; but after the 1890 work, four rooms were on the second floor.

The 1865 stone house had two front porches, a lower one and one outside the upstairs. Many country inns of that time had double porches. The upper porch not only provided more space for activities, but also additional outdoor space for sleeping in the hot summer. The shaded lower porch served as an outdoor work place in the summer.
The Mahaffies would have had a formal parlor and an everyday living room, probably called a sitting room. A staircase from the sitting room to the basement remains. The family used that set of stairs to go downstairs to tend to the travelers of stagecoaches. A kitchen is at the end of the long room where travelers could sit at tables to eat what the Mahaffies had prepared. One could say the Mahaffie stone house was saved because of this kitchen, the place where stagecoach travelers consumed the Mahaffie fare.

In 2006 or so, the City of Olathe began a project to restore more elements of the house to the 1865 setting, although the city knows a complete undoing of the 1890 changes would be too expensive. Since a Mahaffie daughter had said a storage closet was on the north side of the kitchen, recent restorers extended a closet for storage most of the length of that room to cover up the 1890s staircase. The lower room now has more of the look that stagecoach travelers would have seen.

In 1865 stagecoaches on the Santa Fe Trail stopped at the Mahaffies. By 1866 the trailhead for the Santa Fe Trail had moved west to central Kansas so Santa Fe Trail stagecoaches ceased to stop at the Mahaffies. Nonetheless, local stagecoaches and north-south stagecoaches continued to stop at the Mahaffies for meals. The north-south stages often stopped at Spring Hill to change horses and at Paola for an overnight stay if the coach was on a long run. Short runs did not stop for the night at Paola. Local stagecoaches traveled on the Westport Road to Westport from Mahaffies in four hours, but those coaches stopped at the Shawnee Indian Mission before arriving at Westport.

Up to 100 travelers per day may have stopped at the Mahaffies. This large farm may have kept up to 1,000 horses at a time. The Mahaffies had quite a large farm. The average Johnson County farm of that era was valued at $2,000, but the Mahaffie land was valued at $6,000.

The Mahaffies were the first Johnson County farmers to raise more wheat than the family needed. When the family first moved to Kansas, the Mahaffies took their wheat to Wyandotte County for grinding and returned with the flour they were keeping.

Despite the Mahaffies accrement of wealth, they lived simpler than their means would have allowed.

When the Mahaffies built the 1865 stone house, they could have built a much more expensive house; but a mansion was not to their liking. Nonetheless, this 1865 house stands as the only remaining preserved public Santa Fe Trail stagecoach stop. Another intact Santa Fe Trail stagecoach stop still exists in Las Vegas, New Mexico, but that house is an active private ranch home.

BUCK, TIP, AND OXEN

The two oxen of the Mahaffie living farm in Olathe are named Buck and Tip. They are of the Durham breed that is primarily red, although some can be rhone (red and white). Durham replaced the first breed of cattle used by the American colonists for oxen.

Tip and Buck came to the Mahaffie site in May of 2007 at about six months of age. In the nineteenth century, oxen were considered old at the age of 10 because they were used so heavily. Now oxen can live 15 or so years.

During trail times, one oxen could have pulled the weight of a wagon, but use of two oxen provided endurance. Modern oxen in living history programs, such as Buck and Tip, are not subjected to the hours of extreme heavy work as was expected of oxen on nineteenth century trails.

DAR BOOK AVAILABLE

Kansas Daughters of American Revolution members Shirley Coupal and Pat Traffas have compiled a 129-page paperback titled The Century Survey of the Kansas Santa Fe Trail DAR Markers. These markers were first placed across Kansas in 1906. From 2007 through 2010, Coupal and Traffas surveyed the condition and placement of all those markers. The book documents this survey. Readers see the markers as they were in the early 1990s and the appearances of the restored markers.

If you wish to purchase a copy of this book for $10.00, contact Coupal at scoupal@kc.rr.com.

Be sure to read The Santa Fe Road in the Lost Township by Roberta Bonnewitz in the November issue of Wagon Tracks.
FOLLOW UP ON SFT MARKER
By Mary Conrad

In the October 2012 MRO newsletter, I wrote an article about the large Santa Fe Trail marker that stood for decades just west of Main Street and just south of Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri. That marker was just north of a dorm building that had been on the grounds of the old St. Marys Hospital. When the hospital and auxiliary buildings were torn down and a Federal Reserve Bank was built in recent years, the long-standing trail marker was removed.

Since the last newsletter was published, MROer Ross Marshall has talked with Kansas City Parks employee Jocelyn Ball about the removed marker. She confirmed the Parks Department is having the bronze plaques cleaned. Ball also confirmed the Department wants to reinstall the marker. Marshall told her the marker had been placed right on the path of the Santa Fe Trail and he hoped the plaques could be reinstalled nearby along the path of the trail. Marshall told Ball that placement of the marker west in Penn Valley Park would not be in line with the trail. He suggested placement to the north beside Liberty Memorial since the route of the national historic trail runs east of Liberty Memorial. Ball seemed amenable to this suggestion. Further, she said she hopes the Parks Department will be able to budget for the reinstallation in 2013. This is good news!

In the last newsletter, I wrote that this marker in question had been located on Penn Valley Park land right beside Main Street, even though many have thought the land belonged to St. Marys Hospital at one time. Since that article was printed, some have disagreed with my statement. Some do not think the marker had been located in Penn Valley Park.

I had taken my information from two secondary sources. Jane Mobley and Nancy Whitnell Harris authored the book A City Within a Park: One Hundred Years of Parks and Boulevards in Kansas City, Missouri, published in 1991. Mobley and Harris place the Santa Fe Trail marker in question south of Liberty Memorial Mall in Penn Valley Park (p. 102). The team of Janice Lee, David Boutros, Charlotte White, and Deon Wolfenbarger edited the book A Legacy of Design: An Historical Survey of the Kansas City, Missouri, Parks and Boulevards System, 1893-1940, published in 1995. This book says the bronze trail marker south of Liberty Memorial was placed in Penn Valley Park beside Main Street in 1906, even though the Main Street entrance to the park was not completed until 1909 (p.77).

Apparently one could become even more confused about the names of parklands in the vicinity of concern. The chapter on Penn Valley Park in the 1995 book states that Liberty Memorial and Liberty Memorial Mall are within the municipal park called Memorial Hill Park (p. 75), obviously a park adjacent to Penn Valley Park.

Thus a trail marker that was on the eastern edge of Penn Valley Park may be relocated to Memorial Hill Park, both KCMO parks.

Editor’s note: Of course, information in the two secondary sources could be in error, so further sources will be sought. According to the 1995 book A Legacy of Design, the 1893 Board of Park and Boulevard Commissioners deliberately proposed Penn Valley Park to be land through which the Santa Fe Trail had crossed. That book does not state where those commissioners thought the trail route had run. Nonetheless, the book does state the park board had to change the planned boundaries of the proposed park due to intense opposition (p. 77). I do not know the boundaries of the originally proposed park, so I do not know the relationship of the trail route to the originally proposed area of Penn Valley Park.

MRO NEWSLETTER TO BE DELIVERED VIA EMAIL IN 2013

Beginning with the first issue of 2013, the MRO Newsletter will be delivered by email to those for whom we have email addresses. If you prefer to also receive a hard copy, be sure to so indicate on your membership form.

Membership forms for both MRO and SFTA are attached. All members of MRO are strongly encouraged to join SFTA.

MRO and SFTA memberships expire on December 31.
Missouri River Outfitters
Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association
Membership Application for the year 2013

Name: ______________________________________

Street: ______________________________________

City, State ZIP: ______________________________________

Phone(s): ______________________________________

E-mail: ______________________________________

Newsletter via Email? Yes____, No ____

Dues: $10.00 per year
(Individual or family)
Make check payable to:
Missouri River Outfitters

Mail to: John Atkinson
Treasurer MRO
4706 Brookwood Terrace
St. Joseph, MO 64506

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Membership Application
Ruth Olson Peters, Treasurer
Santa Fe Trail Center
1349 K-156 Hwy
Larned, KS 67550

☐ Enroll me as a member for the year ________

Name(s) ______________________________________

Address ______________________________________

City, State, Zip ______________________________________

 Telephone (______) __________________________

E-Mail Address ______________________________________

All memberships expire on December 31. Please make checks payable to Santa Fe Trail Association.

“The Santa Fe Trail Lives On!”

—Dr. Marc Simmons, Keynote Address
Charter Symposium (Trinidad, Colo., 1986)
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MRO Newsletter
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