



SAINT JOSEPH MUSEUMS

Our Foundation, History, and Future



*Orrel Andrews and Junior College Students
Started the Museum in 1927.*

Founded in 1927, the museum was a project of the Natural Science Club of St. Joseph Junior College. Miss Orrel Andrews, club sponsor, served as the first director of the museum which was called the Children's Museum of St. Joseph. Originally housed in one room in the Board of Education Annex to the public library, the museum rapidly expanded into several rooms. William Goetz was elected president of the board of directors in 1927 and served until his death in 1954.

The institution's name was legally changed in 1939 to the St. Joseph Museum, and a new director Roy Coy was hired in 1940. Needing more space for its growing collections, the museum moved to a local historic

home in 1941. The collections continued to grow, precipitating another move to larger quarters – a 43 room, Victorian-era Wyeth-Tootle Mansion which housed the museum from 1948 onwards. Also in 1948, the citizens of St. Joseph passed a tax levy for the support of the Museum. At this same time, the St. Joseph Museum board deeded the Wyeth-Tootle Mansion to the City of St. Joseph.

In 1959, the museum provided exhibits for the new Pony Express Museum, and in 1960, the St. Joseph Museum became custodian of the Pony Express Museum, a stewardship that was to last until 1989 when a new board was created to facilitate impending expansion at the Pony Express site.



*19th and Felix Home of the St. Joseph
Museum from 1941-1948.*



Wyeth-Tootle Mansion

Director Rich Nolf was hired in 1968. Under his leadership, programs were updated and expanded, making possible the museum's accreditation in 1972 and reaccreditation in 1983. In 1989 a new board was formed with a nucleus of St. Joseph Museum trustees to oversee the expansion of the Pony Express Museum. The staff of the St. Joseph Museum was intricately involved in all phases of the expansion which culminated on April 3, 1993, with the grand opening of the Pony Express National Museum. In 1997, with the need to fundraise as a

separate entity, the Pony Express Museum officially separated from the St. Joseph Museum. Today, a very good working relationship exists between the two museums and the staffs cooperate on projects.

In 2001, the director of 33 years retired and the St. Joseph Museum went through some major changes. In 2003 the St. Joseph Museum incorporated the Black Archives Museum and in 2004 the Glore Psychiatric Museum. The administrative offices moved to 3406 Frederick Avenue and the St. Joseph Museum name changed to St. Joseph Museums, Inc. Native American and Archaeology exhibits were relocated to the Frederick Avenue site and the process of changing the Wyeth-Tootle Mansion to a historic home began. Director Jackie Lewin was hired in 2006. Lewin navigated the Museums through the incorporation of the Society of Memories Doll Museum in 2011 and Reaccreditation with the American Alliance of Museums in 2013.

The Mission of the St. Joseph Museums, Inc. is to provide a gateway to the past by collecting, preserving, interpreting and exhibiting items that reflect the interests and history of the St. Joseph area and its citizens. The Incorporation serves as the Municipal Museum for the City of St. Joseph. It operates two locations - 3406 Frederick Ave. and the Wyeth-Tootle Mansion at 11th and Charles St. The St. Joseph Museums, Inc. cares for over 200,000 collections as well as archives, photos, and books supporting its mission to preserve and interpret the stories of St. Joseph and its citizens. Current exhibits include, but are not limited to, history, natural history, anthropology, art, architecture, mental health, and civil rights.

The St. Joseph Museums, Inc. collaborates with Missouri Western State University through internships and programs such as Super Science Saturday. It partners with Mosaic Life Care, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Mount Mora Cemetery, and many other organizations in St. Joseph to create quality public programming for our citizens and visitors. As we move into the future, we envision a participatory museum integrated into the community creating events, exhibits, and learning experiences across all ages and backgrounds.



3406 Frederick Avenue - Current Home of the St. Joseph Museums, Inc., the Glore Psychiatric Museums, Black Archives Museum, Doll Museum and Nancy Hampton Library and Archives featuring the Eckel Architectural Collection.