

Spring, 2023

OSS NEWS

Issue #60

Board of Directors

Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation

Jeanie Porter, President

Jan Primas, V. Pres

Kelly Howley, Sec.

Pam Barnabee, Treas.

Stephanie Nutt

Terry Primas

Dave Edie

Mark Zurbrick



Our Vision -

“to preserve its educational value for future generations.”

Visit our website:
www.oldstagecoachstop.org

We are ready to



into action!

We will be opening the Old Stagecoach Stop tour season on April 1, 2023!

Since last year we tried staying open through October with very good visitation results, we will again be open this year every Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm through October 28, 2023. Special tours are also available during the week by appointment only (depending on availability of tour docents). Call 573-336-3561 or 573-528-7150. Saturday tours are FREE, but there is a \$2.00 charge per person for special tours. We invite you to experience our amazing history of Pulaski County.



ON BOARD

The Old Stagecoach Stop is the oldest publicly accessible building in Pulaski County. Who owns the museum? If you're a member of the Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation, you're one of the owners. The Old Stagecoach Stop Board has eight directors that conduct the business of the museum. Those same eight people make up the majority of the volunteers who keep the building open on Saturdays, April thru September and for special tours and events. Without their dedication, there would be no Old Stagecoach Stop House Museum.

.....
SAVE THE DATES:

April 1 - **OSS OPENING DAY** -
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

May 6 - **FREEDOM FEST** -
11:00 am - 4:00 pm

July 29-30 - **OLD SETTLERS DAYS**

September 22-24 - **ROUTE 66 HOGS & FROGS FESTIVAL**

October 14 - **OKTOBERFEST**

December 7 - **CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE**

SPOTLIGHT ~~~~~

Volunteers from New Business "Cut" Item From OSS Wish List

Submitted by: M. A. Zurbrick

Every autumn, new members of the Waynesville-St. Robert Chamber of Commerce (CC) visit various locations and attractions in the area, as part of the CC's Leadership Pulaski County program. One of the stops, on this day-long excursion, is the Old Stagecoach Stop (OSS). After a tour of the historic building, chamber members sign the visitor register and say their goodbyes. This is often followed by notes of thanks from those who had enjoyed and appreciated the tour. The 2022 CC Leadership class was no different... with one exception.

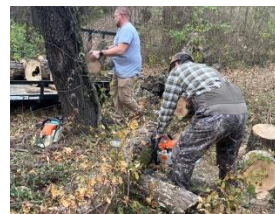
Matthew Ledbetter, who had been part of this year's tour, contacted OSS President, (and CC member) Jeanie Porter, asking about how he and other employees of Delphi Brands could help the OSS. The OSS keeps a perpetual "wish-list" of wants and needs with which we could use additional assistance. Matthew's enthusiastic offer to help caused one item to rise quickly to the top of the list.

In the wooded lot behind the OSS, between the McNeese building and Highway 17, two large trees had toppled during a storm a couple of years ago, and now prevented seasonal mowing of the park-like lot. Also, there were two dead, but still standing, trees that promised to be a problem in the future. We had been

told that the cost to have a professional service remove these troublesome trees could be more than \$700; a significant amount of money for our small, not-for-profit, organization.



In early December, Matthew and two fellow employees, Scott Gay and Aaron Spurgeon, arrived at the OSS along with a truck, trailer, and chainsaws. With the growl of saws and piles of sawdust, the trees were quickly reduced to firewood-size chunks that were heaved onto the trailer and hauled away. During the loading of this wood, Matthew, Scott, and Aaron shared interesting stories and informative facts about their backgrounds and current work at the state-of-the-art cannabis cultivation facility located at the Waynesville Industrial Park.



The Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation has been supported substantially and consistently by local businesses, and we gratefully thank and happily welcome the folks of Delphi Brands to our community, a community that has helped the foundation preserve and showcase the 160+ year-old tourist attraction for nearly four decades.

Where Did They All Come From?

29 Years of Old Stagecoach Stop Visitors

By Mark Zurbrick

On a rocky slope near a creek of clear cool water, wood chips flew off an oak tree. As the long-bearded man swung his ax, what was passing through his mind? Would he finish the double pen cabin before the weather turned bad? Could he gain a contract with the new stagecoach company? Would he be appointed as postmaster of the relatively new community named in honor of a war hero? Would he and his family be able to avoid the dark clouds of war looming on the horizon?

While standing on that Ozark hillside, one thought that probably did not cross W.W. McDonald's mind, was of the multitude of people who would travel from near and far, from the smallest hamlets to the largest cities, to visit his simple abode and place of business.

How was he to know that what started out as a single-story cabin of square-hewn logs, would become a two-story clapboard building still hosting visitors and travelers more than a century and a half later?

Could he have possibly imagined that this building would be owned by more than a dozen people over the coming decades and used not only as a tavern and a place to rest weary horses and riders, but also as a hospital, hotel, dentist office, restaurant, and apartments? What he may not have

imagined back then, has become the reality today... known as the Old Stagecoach Stop, hereafter referred to as the OSS.

Still surrounded by oak-covered hills near the trout-filled waters of Roubidoux Creek, the white-painted museum in Waynesville, Missouri has hosted more than 1,300 programs, activities, and community events and welcomed tens of thousands of visitors from all over the county, the state, the country, and even the world, since opening to the public in July of 1994.

How, you ask, can we claim more than a thousand days happily entertaining and educating tens of thousands of visitors? Well, it's all recorded in a series of visitor registers that has been kept since the first day the museum opened. Let's open the pages of our guest books and take a look at who took the time to write their name and where they lived.

While nearly 30,000 individuals, families, and groups have been recorded in these registers, the reader should keep in mind that this number represents the minimum number of folks that have visited over the years. Many who came through the building simply forgot, or were unable to sign the guest book. For example, three years ago, we counted more than 640 people entering the garland-draped cabin room door during the annual Christmas on the Square event. Yet, at the end of the evening, less than 70 guests had signed the register before walking through the candle-lit tavern room and out the door. Kind of hard to sign a register when you have a cup of

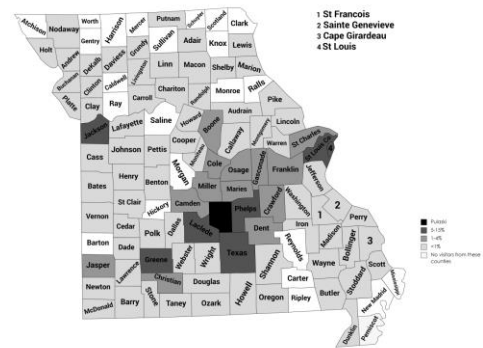
hot chocolate in one hand and a plate full of homemade cookies and cakes in the other!

While not noted on paper, we do know that our guests have ranged in age from infants in their parents' arms to grandparents well into their 80s or 90s... maybe even a centenarian or two. By looking at the given names written on the pages, we find that more females than males visited the OSS. Might it be that women are more interested in history than men? Or are they simply more willing to take the time to sign the register? While we do not have an answer to that question, we are happy to share history with visitors, regardless of age or gender.

So where did all these people come from? Let's first look close to home. Approximately half of all our visitors live or lived in Pulaski County, of which about two-thirds reside in Waynesville or St. Robert. Another 15% live on Fort Leonard Wood, about 15% came from the railroad towns of Dixon, Richland, and Crocker, while the remaining 5% hailed from places such as Laquey, Devils Elbow, Swedeborg, Buckhorn, Big Piney, and the author's favorite, Hooker.

Missourians living outside of Pulaski County comprise about 20% of the OSS's visitors. We have hosted folks from more than 300 Missouri towns and cities, and 91 of the state's 114 counties. Looking at the map of how many visitors came from other counties reveals a couple of trends. First, the closer to the museum that a person lived, the more likely they were to give us a visit, as shown by the darker gray-shaded counties that

share borders with Pulaski County. Nearly 40% of these nearby visitors lived within 50 miles of the OSS, including our neighboring county to the east, Phelps, home to the largest contingent of "Show-Me" visitors living outside of Pulaski County.

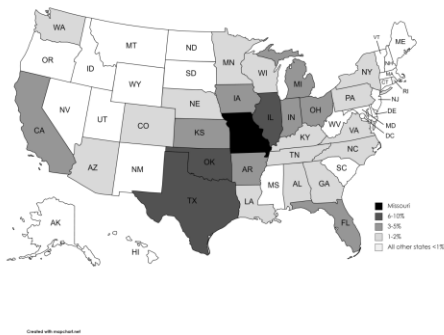


Secondly, the larger a county's population, the more apt the OSS is to get visitors from that county. This also shows up on the map, with St. Louis, Jackson, and Greene counties, home to the state's three largest cities, providing more than a quarter of all the state's visitors from outside Pulaski County.

More than a quarter of our guests traveled from other states to visit the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Out-of-state folks have taken a relatively short car trip from East St. Louis, Illinois, to a long day's flight from Hawaii, to visit the museum. In fact, we have hosted folks from more than 1,400 towns and cities scattered across all 50 of our United States!

A similar phenomenon regarding distance and population can be seen on a map of the nation, where the states that are either close neighbors to Missouri or have large populations, are the states that furnish the most

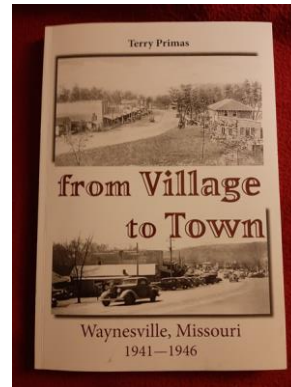
visitors. More than a third of our out-of-state visitors live in the eight adjacent states within about 500 miles of the OSS, with nearly three-quarters of out-of-state guests living in the 25 states nearest to Missouri. The six states with the largest number of citizens, such as California and Texas, account for a third of all U.S. citizens living outside Missouri that have taken a tour through time at the OSS.



While W.W. may have welcomed a few guests, who had made their way across the Mississippi River, into his home, it is doubtful than he would have ever imagined people crossing an ocean to visit his humble abode. Yet, in the past 29 years, his home-turned-museum has been visited by people from 62 countries and territories on six of the seven continents. (We have yet to have a visitor from Antarctica). We have welcomed folks hailing from countries as small in population and size as Slovenia and the West Indies, or as large as Canada and China, and a huge diversity of countries and cultures in between. Nearly, two-thirds of these foreign visitors came from Europe, with Germany alone making up more than a third of all visitors living outside the United States.



We hope that you will be inspired to join thousands of others planning to visit this “not-so-best-kept secret” in the Ozarks, and look forward to seeing your name on our guest register soon!



~ *Featuring:* Terry Primas’ new book **from Village to Town**. Quoting from the preface: “The construction of Ft. Leonard Wood was tumultuous for Pulaski County and the change it wrought was nothing short of transformative for Waynesville during World War II years of 1941-1945, which is the central time span of this book. Waynesville metamorphosed from a small Ozark village of dirt streets with no names to a town with municipal services and a robust economy. That is the story I have tried to tell.”

There are many photos, a trademark of Terry’s books and the story is an interesting one. They are available at the Old Stagecoach Stop as well as some of our local shops. Copies will also be available by mail for those interested

Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation Membership Application

The work of the Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation is supported by memberships and donations. We invite you to join the Foundation at any one of the membership categories listed below.

Complete this form and mail to:

Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation, P.O. Box 585, Waynesville, MO 65583

Please make checks payable to Old Stagecoach Stop.

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____

You may use my email address for:

(please check all that apply)

special event announcements

OSS Newsletter

membership renewal notice

Level of Membership:

Individual \$10

Family \$15

Patron \$25

*Sponsor \$100

*Life \$250

* Sponsor and Life members will be recognized in the Old Settlers Gazette. However, if you prefer to remain anonymous, please check here ____.

Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation

P. O. Box 585

Waynesville, MO 65583