

Spring, 2024

OSS NEWS

Issue #62

Board of Directors

Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation

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Jan Primas, V. Pres

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Matthew Ledbetter



Our Vision -

“to preserve its educational value for future generations.”

Visit our website:
www.oldstagecoachstop.org



Old Stagecoach Stop Opening Day is April 6, 2024!

The Old Stagecoach Stop will be open every Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm through October 26, 2024. 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 always FREE, but there is a \$2.00 charge per person for special tours. If you've lived in this area all your life but have never visited our amazing museum, we invite you to experience this wonderful history of Pulaski County. If you do not live in this area, please plan your travel time to include a visit to our museum. In 1983, this history was almost lost when the building was

condemned by the city and scheduled to be torn down. As we frequently mention, we are forever grateful to Maxine Farnham and the original members of the Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation who worked so hard to save this very historic building for us and for future generations. Thank you, also, to Pulaski County Tourism who keep us on their site to bring travelers from all over the world to visit.

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SAVE THE DATES:

April 6 - **OSS OPENING DAY** -
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

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

July 27-28 - **OLD SETTLERS DAYS**
OSS only open July 27

September 7 - **ASYMCA PATRIOTS DAY**
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

September 20-22 - **ROUTE 66 HOGS & FROGS FESTIVAL**

October 12 - **OKTOBERFEST**

December 5 - **CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE**

Old Stagecoach Stop Activity

There are two ways to keep abreast of the Foundation's activities. We have a website and a Facebook page that are active and have current news/events. The website also has the current and all past issues of the *Old Settlers Gazette* available for reading/research. Articles are alphabetized for easy searching. www.oldstagecoachstop.org

Virtual Tour – A Special Feature

A special feature on our website is a virtual tour where visitors can start a guided tour or click on a map of the building and explore each room, floor by floor. Thank you, Terry and Jan Primas for your hours of work creating this tour.

Podcasts on the website:

Tune in to hear Dru Pippin, Jaretta Laughlin, Robert Lee Bates, Pearl Brown Wilson, Louise Skaggs, Jiggs & Dorothy Miller, and Irene Mitchell Morgan tell stories from the "old days!"

Our Facebook page is listed as: Old Stagecoach Stop Museum and Foundation or go to [Facebook.com/oldstagecoachstop](https://www.facebook.com/oldstagecoachstop) if you do not have a Facebook page.

Old Settlers Gazette –

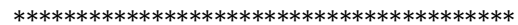
ISSUE 42 of the *Old Settlers Gazette* is currently in progress. This is a group effort, led by our author/editor **Terry Primas**. The board members do the difficult job of ad sales and delivery. The entire proceeds are put back into the building, allowing us to make improvements and maintain the building. We appreciate all of the businesses and individuals who place an ad in the *Gazette*. The board members will soon be out and about to procure the ads for this next exciting edition. If you would like to place an ad for your business or as an individual, please contact one of the

board members as soon as possible.
Gazette ad sales end June 1, 2024.

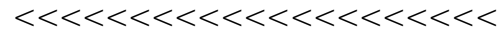


ON BOARD

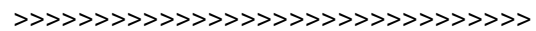
The Old Stagecoach Stop is the oldest publicly accessible building in Pulaski County. Who owns the museum? If you're a member of the Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation, you're one of the owners. The Old Stagecoach Stop Board has nine directors that conduct the business of the museum. Those same nine people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



The OSS no longer holds an Annual Meeting of the Foundation membership. **The Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation Annual Report** is available each year on our website in January.



Christmas on the Square is by far the most popular of all the annual events we do each year. This year we were thrilled to host 777 visitors who streamed through between 6:00 and 8:00 pm to enjoy the food and drinks provided by OSS Board members.



Membership Please remember to renew your membership. The form you need is included on the back page of this newsletter. We need the support and interest of the community to continue our mission. Questions about your membership status – email pamela.barnabee@gmail.com

SPOTLIGHT ~~~~~

by Terry Primas

The Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation

was formed in April of 1983 and bought the condemned building for \$40,000. A matching grant of \$13,200 was obtained from the Department of Natural Resources. With the grant, the exterior of the building was stabilized and restored to its 19th-century appearance. The original debt was retired in 1992 and interior restoration began.

The rest of the historic property, along with a small brick building, was acquired in 2003. Maintenance of the nearly 160-year-old building and continuing improvements consumed most of the Foundation's resources.

The Old Stagecoach Stop is the oldest publicly accessible building in Pulaski County. The rooms are restored to different periods and/or use, ranging from 1860 to 1960. The ten rooms reflect the history of the building. The house museum is open Saturdays, April through October, from 10 AM to 4 PM.

Museum Beginning

For ten years after the condemned Old Stagecoach Stop was saved from demolition and the Foundation was formed, the building sat vacant while the Foundation carried on a series of fundraisers to retire the more than \$50,000 debt. The building had been accessible for a few special events, such as the Lion's Club Christmas Parade, but tours for visitors were on an ad hoc basis.

The Old Stagecoach Stop opened with a regular and publicized schedule for the first time on July 2, 1994. It was open each Saturday morning thereafter and closed for the season on September 24.

There wasn't much to see yet in the embryonic house museum. The first and

only room restored at that time was the Dentist's Office.



That work was done by volunteers Gordon Scott and Warren Carney. Encouraged by the number of visitors who stopped by for that short trial tour season, the Old Stagecoach Stop Foundation Board voted to be open for visitors the next year from April through September. The 1995 tour season, during which the building was open from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. for 30 Saturdays, logged 423 visitors in the guest book.

With the increased traffic, further stabilization of the building was necessary, particularly the sagging floor of the dogtrot and the north log cabin floor above the partial cellar. The shaky second story floor was reinforced with additional floor joists. To the relief of everyone, water and restroom facilities were restored to the building after an absence of nearly 30 years. Restoration began in earnest with a plan to restore each room to a different period and/or use that would reflect both the history of the building and significant county events. Progress was steady but it took a decade to restore the ten rooms.

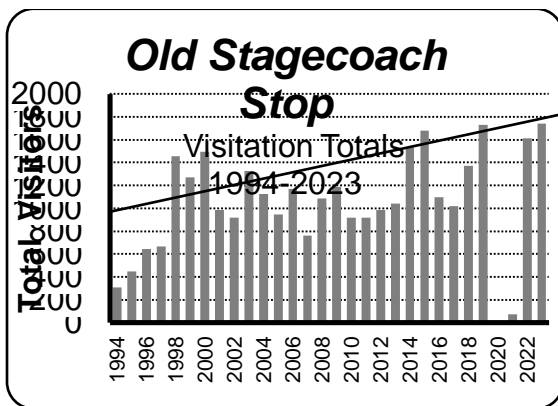
Tours continued during the restoration process. Interpretive tours conducted by Learning Enrichment and Acceleration (LEAP) students in period dress for 450 area fourth grade students began in 1995 and continued into 2004. Guides and guests sweated through summer tours the first four years. In 1998-1999, six window air conditioners were installed. Although cooler, tour guides then had to talk over the noise of the window units. It took until 2009 to accrue enough funds to install two central

Let's look at the 2023 totals for each category. This past year, 665 guests visited the OSS on "regular" Saturdays, setting a new record for this category!

While we hosted more special tours in 2023 than any year in the past, the 105 guests this year was not a record. One highlight was a group from Lions Club International containing individuals from nine different countries. The total number of visitors associated with special events was 968. While an impressive number, this special event total was slightly less than the totals noted in 2019 and 2022.

Christmas on the Square is by far the most popular of these annual events. While we were thrilled to host the 777 visitors that passed through the door during the three-hour holiday event, it was not a record turnout. That occurred in 2019, when 904 visitors enjoyed the museum's holiday decorations and food. So...adding these three categories totals together gives us a grand total of 1,741, **which is the highest number of visitors for a single year in the museum's 30-year history.**

Barring any unforeseen issues, we look forward to a 2024 season that will be even more interesting and rewarding for OSS visitors and volunteers alike!



Maintenance & Repairs, 2023 by Mark Zurbrick

One might expect the list of annual maintenance and repairs to the 160-plus year-old building to be rather long; however, 2023's list was somewhat shorter than usual and thankfully comprised of relatively low cost (in materials and labor) tasks. Indoors, we replaced air filters and batteries in the HVAC systems. We also elected to try a new strategy when incandescent light bulbs burned out by replacing them with longer-lasting and more energy-efficient, LED bulbs. When not hosting visitors on Saturdays, youthful volunteer Joseph Chaney washed windows, oiled furniture, and swept floors. Outdoors, we power-washed the exterior of the building and cleaned the gutters, twice. Matt Ledbetter and volunteers from Delphi Brands spruced up the east side of the property by cutting up and hauling away a number of dead trees.

Unfortunately, we also had to deal with vandalism to the donor/supporter bricks in front of the museum.



While the culprit that had pushed a number of bricks completely out of the ground was identified with circumstantial evidence, we were unable to apprehend and prosecute the criminal...a mole. A bit of cement and wire placed under the bricks before resetting them will hopefully convince this worm-eating scoundrel to tunnel elsewhere.

Then and Now

by Mark Zurbrick

When Old Stagecoach Stop (OSS) volunteers share more than a century of the building's history with visitors, we often point out the cost of items and services "back then". Today, you cannot turn on the television, pick up a newspaper, or scan a news website without seeing or hearing the word INFLATION. So, let's go from room to room and review what things cost back then and what that same item or service might cost today.

William Walton McDonald bought a lot off the courthouse square and built a log cabin that was both his family's home and also a stop on the stagecoach route between Rolla and Springfield in the late 1850s. In addition to taking care of the stagecoach company's horses and passengers, W.W. also looked after the two-story brick courthouse across the street. When not being used for government business, W.W. could open the building up for religious services, free of charge. Folks wishing to have a "ball, dancing party, and exhibitory shows" could rent the courthouse for a fee of \$2.50. Today's courthouse has a room that can be reserved for community events, free-of-charge! If county officials decided to begin charging a fee for the use of this community room, today's inflation-adjusted price would be about \$88.

In 1859, South-Western Stage Company charged customers based on the distance to be traveled and weight of the passengers and/or freight. A 150-pound passenger was charged \$3.75 for the twenty mile, six hour, ride between Arlington and Waynesville. Today's inflation-adjusted price would be nearly \$140 for a 20 minute trip on I-44.

At the end of the American Civil War, a new nine-passenger Concord stagecoach along with four draft horses and harness could be purchased for about \$1,800.



If a person could still order such a vehicle today, they could expect to pay an inflation-adjusted price of more than \$36,000. Nearly 160 years later, a 400+ horsepower, nine-passenger, sport utility vehicle can be purchased for between \$30,000 and \$60,000, depending on features, accessories, and dealer markup.

In 1863, the Federal government paid a soldier, posted at the fort overlooking Waynesville and the OSS, \$13 per month which would be \$316 per month in today's dollars. Today, an E-2, Private, who has graduated from basic training at Fort Leonard Wood is compensated \$2,150 per month, plus a host of other benefits that were unknown to Civil War soldiers.

Today, a visit to the dentist for a single silver filling, might cost more than \$250. Someone wishing to flash a gold crown smile could expect to pay in excess of \$1,500. In April of 1905, the National Dental Co. placed an ad in the *Pulaski County Democrat* newspaper telling sore-toothed folks wishing to "Save Time" and "Save Money" that Dr. Spencer was going to set up shop at the Black Hotel for ten days that spring. The company charged two quarters (\$0.50) for a silver filling 119 years ago, which is half of the cost of a cavity-causing candy bar today. And how much could a Pulaski Co. resident get a gold crown for back then? Four bucks.

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