

## **Nauvoo exhibit highlights national, local journey stories**

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NAUVOO, Ill. -- A phone call more than a year ago set Nauvoo on a journey into part of its past.

The results go on display this week against a national backdrop curated by the Smithsonian Institution.

The Smithsonian's "Journey Stories" Museum on Main Street exhibit opens Saturday along with local exhibits highlighting Nauvoo's Mormon, Icarian, German and Catholic populations along with the Des Moines Rapids. The exhibit continues through Nov. 10 at the Kraus Furniture showroom, 1285 Mulholland, and the Nauvoo Tourism Office, 1295 Mulholland.

"Everybody has a journey, but I think Nauvoo is very unique with its people that have come and gone and some who stayed," said Ron Yockey with the tourism office. "They all have stories."

The Illinois Humanities Council contacted the tourism office last summer about the Museum on Main Street project, which partners with state humanities councils and other institutions to bring Smithsonian traveling exhibitions to small towns, and the Journey Stories exhibit focused on immigration, migration, innovation and freedom.

The next step involved talking with businessman Dan Kraus about possible space for the exhibit along Mulholland, Nauvoo's main street. Kraus' storeroom next door to the tourism office had enough square footage, and he was agreeable. Yockey then talked with Kim Orth, now tourism director, about whether the project was doable.

"She thought so. She's got a lot of contacts, and it started from there," Yockey said.

Orth said the project generated a lot of interest from local residents wanting to share their story and help put together the exhibit.

A core group of people -- representing the Nauvoo Historical Society, Nauvoo Tourism Office, Historic Nauvoo, Community of Christ and Sts. Peter and Paul Church -- along with several "independent volunteers" met twice a week to plan the local portion of the Journey Stories exhibit featuring photographs, written information and artifacts. Orth said the volunteers are "historically minded" and "we would not be able to pull this together without them."

Panels in the local exhibit feature at least three representative families from the German, Catholic, Mormon and Icarian populations, said volunteer Gene Shurts, who helped gather images and maps used in the local exhibit and researched the dam and rapids.

"The whole process was a journey story itself," he said. "The story that's come out of this is the story of us doing our own journey, how we had journeyed ourselves in preparing this presentation."

The Mississippi River and the rapids played key roles in Nauvoo's past, a story that's been somewhat forgotten over time.

"With the Des Moines rapids there, it was virtually impassable to boats hauling things up and down the river. The dam has been in place 100 years next year, so people have forgotten what it was like pre-dam," Orth said.

"I learned a lot more than I ever thought I needed to know about the rapids ... and the money they would spend shipping things out on land or eventually on the railroad," Shurts said. "It cost extra money. It affected commerce."

Yockey said volunteers will go to Glen Carbon on Tuesday to pick up the exhibit, then assemble it on Wednesday. A representative from the Illinois Humanities Council will present a workshop for volunteer docents on Thursday, and the first program tied to the exhibit will take place on Friday night before the grand opening on Saturday.

"What's fun about it and exciting is this week we're seeing it all come together," Yockey said. "Nauvoo people will be proud of the local exhibit. They're proud to have the Smithsonian choose Nauvoo to come and display their exhibit."

Orth said plans call for developing a passport program "to encourage visitors to the exhibit to go see where more of the story is told -- the two Historical Society museums, the Weld House and the Rheinberger House, the visitors centers, the Nauvoo Hotel and Baxter's vineyards," Orth said. "We highlighted places with a lot of historical things to see, things people might not know."

The Journey Stories project has been made possible by the Illinois Humanities Council and is part of the Museum on Main Street program, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Illinois Humanities Council. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the U.S. Congress. Support for the Illinois Humanities Council has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Illinois General Assembly.

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## JOURNEY STORIES

A ribbon cutting ceremony of the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit, Journey Stories, will be at 1 p.m. Saturday at 1285 Mulholland in Nauvoo.

Exhibit hours will be 1-6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 1-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday through Saturday, Nov. 10. The exhibit will be open to area schoolchildren by appointment at other times.

Ron Yockey with the Nauvoo Tourism Office said the Museum on Main Street website has an educational function to help teachers develop lesson plans to make the walk more meaningful.

Three free special events will be presented in Nauvoo during the exhibit:

° Journeying Through Music: Nauvoo in Hymns and Song -- 7 p.m. Friday at Sts. Peter and Paul Church

° Icarian Furniture Making -- 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 20, at Nauvoo-Colusa Elementary School gym

° Nauviews, a multimedia art presentation, at 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, at the Historic Nauvoo Visitors Center

More information is available by calling the Nauvoo Tourism Office at (217) 453-6648.

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