

Archaeological crew gets to bottom of things

There was a time when St. Joseph's water supply came from rivers, streams and springs, followed by wells and cisterns. Sometimes these long-abandoned wells and cisterns show up in present times in strange ways and places.

When I was investigating some property to buy in town, the ground suddenly gave way beneath my feet. I found myself hanging from the side of a cistern.

Prior to the renovation of the Pony Express Museum, an archaeological dig was conducted behind the building. A well no one knew existed was uncovered.

The archaeological crew excavated the well to a depth of 22 feet and determined that the well was conveniently located for watering horses within the original Pony Express stable. The well, with a platform and pump attached, is now a hands-on exhibit in the newly renovated Pony Express Museum.

Research revealed that city water was piped down 10th Street and into the



Jim Watkins of St. Joseph helps clean out the well that was discovered at the Pony Express Museum just before the museum was renovated.

Pony Express Stable in 1880. Apparently, shortly afterwards, the occupant of the building at that time took

advantage of running water and used the well for an ash and trash receptacle, because underneath the debris

at the bottom of the well was an 1881 penny.

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