



Sesquicentennial Coach Run

The Sesquicentennial Coach Run was the brainchild of several creative and talented drivers of Dairyland Driving Club to commemorate the 150th Birthday of the Statehood of Wisconsin. It was thought to drive a Coach and Four from Madison to Prairie du Chien (Villa Louis), following and stopping at original routes and coaching stops along the 120 mile route.

Suzanne Gillespie and Ingrid Krause went on *many* road trips mapping out a safe and winding route.

Dean Achenbach, Ned Hahn, Howard Kietzke, Wes Licht and Mary Ruth Marks all had teams of 4 horses that rotated so that each team had 2 legs of the Coach Run. Roger Houk was a relief driver. The teams would be

changed for each leg which was 8 to 10 miles. Ned Hahn's

Roof Seat Brake was used as the official vehicle by all the teams. The last 10 miles we were lucky to have a Stagecoach pulled by Dean Achenbach's team of Standardbred horses, especially "Frog". There were a couple pairs of horses that accompanied the official teams just for fun — including pairs driven by Kirk Gillespie and Boydean and Astrid Sannes

Bob Bean was our Horn Blower and wore a red coat. He would blow the carriage horn to announce our coming and going — typical of stagecoaches of the 1850s and earlier. There was actually a special tune used for entering a city, village or coach stop and a different tune used to let everyone know the stagecoach was leaving.

Nearly every stop included an educational component by having the Coach stop at schools and senior centers along the way. School children and sometimes seniors from nursing homes would gather around and listen to presentations on horse care and Coach Runs of early settlement days in Wisconsin. A large amount of instructional materials were used daily. Samples of horse feed, harnessing demonstrations, shoeing, bits and their uses and how to drive were some of the topics shared. The senior centers were the most fun as seniors were eager to share their stories of horses and driving in the "good ol' days". An authentic Stagecoach, owned by Dr. Jeffery Menn, was hauled on a flatbed along the route by Skip Maletzke. Children were able to get in the Stagecoach and be "bounced" by the leather strapping used on bumpy roads to even out the ride.

It was a tremendous undertaking — at "stops" horses needed to be changed safely, places to rest weary heads and bodies were found, in addition to locating stabling and transporting everything required.

The Sesquicentennial Coach Run was a success — safety was the main focus of the trip and there were no mishaps. We surely had fun and made memories never to be forgotten.



Wes Licht with his four — ready to begin a leg of the Coach Run



Ingrid Krause talks about the different parts of harness while her son, Sven, provides assistance. He was a 4th grade student at Sunset Ridge Elementary School where this demonstration was given.



Bob Hathaway demonstrates horse shoeing on a gentle pony named "Kristy Love" owned by his wife Mary who is assisting.



Skip Matetzke sits on the wagon and opens the door to the stage. Jeffery Menn for the demonstration at schools and nursing homes presented a bit of history at the time of statehood. The demonstration was given at Sunset Ridge Elementary School in 1998, the first day of the



Boydean & Astrid Sannes drove the entire route with their pair of chestnut Arabs.



the driver's seat. His wife Ann
 ge coach loaned by Dr.
 onstrations given at
 es along the route. Skip
 y about the use of coaches
 This presentation was
 ementary School on Oct. 8,
 Coach Run.



Sesquicentennial Coach Driver Wes Licht tells Middleton elementary children and their teachers about why carriage drivers wore lap robes when they drove horses. The children walked to the Stamm House restaurant where the first stage ended. Wes and his team of Half-Arabians took over the next stage.



Sharon Makurat giving a talk to schoolchildren on an extensive display of driving bits.



The Committee

Suzanne and Kirk Gillespie, with help from Mary Ruth Marks, wrote the successful grant application to the State Sesquicentennial Committee which funded this project with a \$10,000 grant. Carol Pasbrig was the President of Dairyland Driving Club at that time.

Seated L to R:

Wally Pasbrig, Annie Randall, Ingrid Krause, Suzanne Gillespie, Kirk Gillespie.

Standing L to R:

Carlo Krause, Mary Hathaway, Bob Hathaway, Sharon Makurat, Wes Licht, Jane Licht and Carol Pasbrig.



The Drivers

Pictured L to R:

Wes Licht, Ned Hahn, Dean Achenbach, Mary Ruth Marks and Howard Kietzke

Wes drove his team of Morab horses; Ned Hahn drove his Saddlebreds; Dean Achenbach had Standardbred horses; Mary Ruth Marks' team was made up of Arab-crosses and Howard Kietzke's Morgans were used along with a spare Morgan belonging to Ed Thielbar.