

Little Rock, Ark.

Sometimes you meet a town that you only have time to shake hands with, even though you'd like to know it better. Little Rock, Ark., is one of those towns.

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

I had dinner here, high above the river, at a place called Restaurant Jacques and Suzanne. It is on the 30th floor of the First National Building downtown and has won both Travel Holiday awards and the coveted four-star rating from Mobil Travel Guide.

Nobody can rate a restaurant on the basis of one meal, but I could easily die of pleasure and obesity if I spent much time in a place like that.

In the line of duty, I joined a group of other people in trying at least one bite of several things on the menu: snails served out-of-the-shell in herb butter, turtle soup floating with cream, veal liver and onions, filet of sole bonne femme, chocolate-brandy mousse, Grand Marnier soufflé.

That's one part of Little Rock I would like to shake hands with again. While I was researching that meal, several friends were down at Union Station Square, which is still used by Amtrak but is primarily an old railroad station full of new restaurants.

Busters, Pinball and beer at Slick Willy's. Dinner at Track's Inn. A little after-dinner exercise at the Sidetrack Disco.

All of this is across the street from a big yellow building called Victory Square and the old Terminal Hotel, all of which are being renovated as part of a renewal project in downtown Little Rock.

THERE ONCE WERE cable cars running from the station to the downtown area, and tourist officials hope that they will run again for tourists by the time this refurbishing is completed in 1981.

The second thing I did while passing through Little Rock was tour the Quapaw Quarter and some of the special buildings along its edges. This is the luxurious heart of old Little Rock, and like many other deteriorating inner city areas it has been rediscovered and is being restored.

There's a walking tour of some of the grand old houses. You can take guided tours of the Old State House with its colonnaded front. But the best stop is in MacArthur Park, named for Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who was born in the old arsenal building here in 1880.

The arsenal now houses the city's Museum of Science and History, next door to the Arkansas Art Center. Children love the Yellow Space Place, designed for them, and the Children's Theater.

I'm told that the Arts Center's Vineyard in the Park serves some of the best food in town on weekdays.

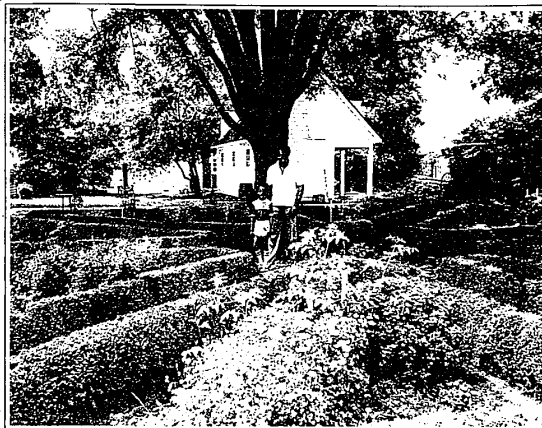
One of the things I like to do when I am passing through a town, on the way to other destinations, is to identify places worth coming back to. One of those is the Arkansas Territorial Restoration, one of the earliest restoration projects in the country.

I've seen pictures of what this area looked like in 1839. A dilapidated old city block full of rotten siding, rusty signs, billboards and junk. Any bulldozer would delight in knocking it down, and one almost did.

A woman called Louise Loughborough, a descendant of the last Territorial governor, saw something else: three original buildings from the early 19th century, the oldest houses in Little Rock.

TODAY THOSE HOUSES stand restored in white clapboard and red brick in a fenced-in area next to a large visitor's center. A fourth house was moved from across the street, and a fifth (a rural log cabin) is under construction nearby.

It is one of the finest small examples of



The gardens throughout the Arkansas Territorial Restoration at Little Rock provide a father and son time to discuss whatever. The restoration project contains 13 original structures dating from the 1820s to the 1840s and once was a dilapidated city block of rotten siding, rusty signs and junk.

restored Americana that I have seen. The home of Jesse Hinderliter has an authentic 1826 kitchen building, original floors and log walls in one of the two residential rooms, and the furniture from a grog shop and retail store that were also part of the building.

One of the things I learned on my way through the grog shop is that grog is watered-down rum.

The print shop, with its flat-bed press, was the site of the Arkansas Gazette in 1824. Little Rock was a forest with a few cow tracks in those days. There were about 60 buildings in the town.

A nice modern addition to the Arkansas Territorial Restoration property is a collection

of Arkansas crafts for sale in the visitor center. I saw a hand-made king-sized quilt for \$100, which is considerably cheaper than what it would cost anywhere I have visited in Michigan.

Little Rock and North Little Rock are often used by travelers as launching-off places for trips west or south to Oklahoma, Texas or Louisiana, or for an Ozark Mountain vacation in the hot springs or mountain villages of the north and east of the state.

I moved on to Greer's Ferry Lake, a man-made lake now busy with water recreation facilities, and to the Ozark Folk Center at Mountain View to the north.

More on that next week.

Defense center tour possible

By DORIS SCHARFENBERG
COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — VIPs or special interest groups planning a meeting in this popular convention city can arrange a tour of NORAD, the North American Air Defense headquarters deep in the heart of nearby Cheyenne Mountain.

NORAD is the nerve center that will sound the alarm in case of aerial attack against North America. A computerized sentry station, NORAD keeps track of foreign aircraft, missiles or satellites that could threaten the U.S. or Canada.

It is staffed by American and Canadian forces, their Strategic and Tactical Air Commands, the Air National Guard, U.S. Navy and several civilian agencies and is in touch with the Pentagon, White House, Ottawa and major military checkpoints around the world.

THE HEART OF the complex is a theater-like room with balconies of computer consoles keyed into electronic conference facilities. Computer-drawn maps can be projected onto two 12-x-16-foot screens.

Instant-by-instant movements of unidentified missiles, aircraft and ships are superimposed on the maps along with all pertinent information needed to aid in a response decision.

You enter by bus through a 60-foot-high tunnel, part of a grid of enormous tunnels spreading through the mountain. Cameras and tape recorders are not allowed.

DEEP INSIDE are 15 connected steel buildings, from one to three stories high, mounted on shock-absorbing springs and standing completely away from the tunnel walls.

The first massive metal doors are only matched at Fort Knox. In an amazing pattern of stairs, hallways and small rooms, people monitor the weather conditions around the world, sunspots, space phenomena and earthquakes.

The effect of weather on military operations is known but the influence of solar patterns on radar and communications systems is only beginning to be understood.

Some facts collected along the way:

- At least 1,700 persons are on duty at all times and, in case of attack, the center could be sealed off for months without need of additional supplies.

- First warning of attack would come from space satellites.

- Land-based missile flight time from half a world away is about 30 minutes.

- The U.S.S.R. violates our airspace daily, mostly near Alaska.

Visitors are given slide talks showing radar installations around the country. In sobering and fascinating detail, they are even told how this fortress is nearly obsolete.

Unfortunately, not all corners are revealed, but a letter to the NORAD Public Affairs Office, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80914 may bring your group an invitation. Or call 1-303-635-8911.

tripping

Party on Little Traverse

Celebrate they will the summer that was during the Little Traverse Bay Historic Festival June 18-22 in Petoskey.

An around-the-turn-of-the-century remembrance in the north country will be the setting for events like a tug-war across 2 1/2 miles of water, Sousa concerts in the parks, dancing under the stars, barbershop singing, antique show and sale, ice cream socials, lumberjack demonstrations, moonlight excursions on the bay, a 10-kilometer race, and, of course, "some good old-fashioned hospitality, too," according to Joe McCarthy, festival director.

A train run will connect Petoskey and Mackinaw City twice-daily. Two refurbished coach cars and a reserved lounge car will carry passengers from Petoskey at 9 a.m. for the two-hour ride to Mackinaw City. Departing time from there is 7 p.m.

From Mackinaw City, the train will leave for Petoskey at 11:30 a.m. and make the return run at 4:30 p.m.

Onboard, food, beverages and entertainment. Tickets will sell for \$10 round-trip, on a first-come, first-served basis.

For information on any or all of the above, call 1-616-347-0200, or write Little Traverse Bay Festival, P.O. Box 180, Petoskey 49770.

• DUE SOUTHWEST

The Michigan Geology and Gemcraft Society will hold its sixth annual educational seminar from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, June 28-29, at Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor.

Scheduled are lectures and demonstrations on jewelry design, silver casting, filigree, paleontology, archaeology, mineral identification, faceting, etcetera. Cost is \$8 a day and advance registration not necessary. For information, write Kay Henderson, MGAGS Seminar, 173 Wallace Dr., Saline 48276, or call 1-429-7145.

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