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The Japanese garden in the Missouri Botanical Gardens in St. Louis is a pleasant spot for a large city. (Photos by Micky Jones)

'Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis' — arch and all

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

The week of the Republican National Convention seems like a good time to talk about St. Louis.

Fifty years before the Republican Party was formed in Jackson, Mich., President Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Territory for \$15 million, a political decision that permanently changed the map of the United States.

Lewis and Clark didn't know where they were going when they left St. Louis, near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, to explore the land west to the Pacific.

Wagonloads of pioneers didn't know where they were going either when they left this gateway city to cross the plains to the mountains and the sea.

Tourists have the same problem. St. Louis is a good stopping place for travelers heading west, but few of us know how to tackle a city that has so obviously lost its royal crown and is so obviously struggling for renewal.

Most of us are still whistling "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis," and we still pronounce it *Low-ie*, to rhyme with

You can also buy a hamburger from the McDonald's sternwheeler, complete with tiny golden arches. They resisted duplicating the great arch nearby only because the city insisted upon it.

"oo-ee" instead of *Low-ie* to rhyme with 'oo-ee.' Conversations go like this:

"It was founded as a French city and the French say 'Loo-ee' don't they?"

"I know, I know, but the people who live here don't think that has any class, and we're tired of that old Judy Garland movie anyway. We're also tired of the arch. Why don't you write about new things like the Magic House and the Laumeier Sculpture Park and Laclede's and . . ."

WHAT YOU TALK ABOUT in St. Louis depends on whether you live in the city or the county of St. Louis.

When the city was the territory of the elite, it drew a line around itself to keep out the uncultured farmers of the country in the late 19th century. Now that the city is in trouble and many of the elite have moved west to the county suburbs, the county doesn't easily forget how it was snubbed.

To be fair about it, county dwellers love the Missouri Botanical Gardens, the museums of Forest Park and the restored riverfront, but they are frankly tired of seeing pictures of the arch.

OK, I promise I'll visit the Magic House and the Laumeier Sculpture Park, but first I must go up in the arch, even if I am afraid of heights.

The Gateway Arch is part of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, built on the riverfront of the original fur-trading city by the National Park Service. On old city maps, this was a decaying inner city, with a few historical buildings hidden in the middle.

Nowadays, from the promenade above the riverbank, you can see through the great stainless steel splendor of the arch across a grassy field west to the restored Old Court House, which dominates downtown.

YOU CAN LOOK downriver to the tiny jewel of the Basilica of St. Louis, dated 1764, and upriver to the restored shops and restaurants of Laclede's Landing, site of the old fur-trading post, and to Eads Bridge, the 19th century engineering marvel that brought the railroad west.

You can also look east through the arch to Mark Twain's river and the paddlewheelers parked beside the levee. The sternwheeler Admiral, last tour boat on the river, is drydocked for repairs this summer, but you can still dine at riverboat restaurants, listen to funky riverboat jazz or turn-of-century operettas on the boats.

You can also buy a hamburger from the McDonald's sternwheeler, complete with tiny golden arches. They resisted

duplicating the great arch nearby only because the city insisted upon it.

The great hidden treasure here on the riverfront is the Museum of Western Expansion, literally under the ground from which Eero Saarinen's arch rises 630 feet towards the sky. Voices are muted in the great underground rooms, where visitors experience 300 years of American history; while waiting to ride one of the two arch elevators skyward.

You pass a statue of Jefferson and an old wall-sized explorer's map to the film room that tells you the story of Lewis and Clark, and of the pioneer movement west. There are no explanations on the old sod house, the trading post, the skin boat or most of the other out-of-the-floor exhibits.

"THE PIONEERS didn't know where they were going or what it all meant, and we want you to have the same feeling of discovery," a guide said. It works very well.

The closed capsules that lift you to the top of the Arch work very well too, although they may scare you when they lurch slightly around curves. Be prepared to wait in line. From the top, where you lean to look through slits, you see a world that Lewis and Clark never dreamed of.

There's Busch Memorial Stadium below and the Anheuser-Busch Brewery to the south. Missouri Botanical Garden, a National Historic Landmark founded in 1859, is blooming away to the near southwest, and Forest Park, site of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, is straight ahead.

That's Highway 40 going straight west toward St. Louis County, and beyond that you can imagine the canoe and the riverboats following the Missouri River and the wagon wheels making ruts west across what was known as the Great American Desert.

THERE'S LOTS of undiscovered tourist territory out there yet, even if you don't leave the metropolitan area: the art museum, zoo, municipal opera theater and a greenhouse called the Jewel Box are all together in the 1000 acres of Forest Park, bought by a far-sighted city council in 1870, when it was way out in the country.

The National Museum of Transport is out there, as well as the Magic House and the Laumeier Sculpture Park. More about that next week.

Right now, let's have lunch.



The Museum of Western Expansion is a popular tourist spot, with displays of Indian lore and wildlife.

travel log

Iris Sanderson Jones

contributing travel editor

Looking for a good place to eat? St. Louis has it, and plenty of hotels

It is as hard for Detroiters to find their way through the hotel-restaurant-shopping areas of St. Louis as it is for visitors to find their way in Detroit.

The rules for doing so are the same in St. Louis as they are anywhere else: Ask somebody who lives there.

Different people will give you a different list of eating places in St. Louis but the restaurant that is on everybody's list is Kemoll's, 4201 N. Grand Blvd. in the north area of St. Louis.

The hotel bellboy, about 18 years old, recommended Kemoll's. A young businessman in his late 20s suggested it. It was on the list given by the working woman and the housewife, and it was highly recommended by an older man. How can you miss with a five-star rating like that?

Dora Kemoll was born to first-generation Italian parents, and she married Joe Kemoll when he was the owner of a neighborhood ice cream parlor. They started at their present location with homemade sandwiches in 1927, and they have been growing in reputation ever since.

At the age of 72, Mrs. Kemoll still meets you at the door of her unpretentious restaurant on the north side, an area that has otherwise moved toward slumhood. The menu is quality Italian.

The restaurant has been recommended by Holiday Magazine and the Mobil Travel Guide, especially for its superb Gourmet Night menus.

Down town you will want to visit the renovated shop-restaurant-office area called Laclede's Landing, just north of the Gateway Arch. It is being rebuilt on the site of the old fur-trading post that started this city two centuries ago.

You'll find good hamburgers and salads at Chaplin's, and a fun kitchen at the Spaghetti Factory across the street.

Another renovated area called Soulards, primarily residential, has a few popular restaurants like the Grizzly Bear, a multi-storied old place with continental food, recommended by a

friend who also recommended Berger's.

Kennedy's is a favorite for Sunday morning food and music. Urban pioneers hang out at Mike and Mim's — no food but good booze and ambience. Irish lovers go to McGuirk's.

We had a tasty lunch at the Top of the Sevens Restaurant, high above suburban Clayton. We hear good things about Richard and Charles and the Pasta House, which are different names for the same kind of restaurant — five locations in all.

There is a Magic Pan in the Plaza Frontenac, an elegant new shopping center at the intersection of Lindbergh and Clayton Roads in St. Louis County west of the city. This corner also hosts the Clayton Inn, the Chateau Village shopping center, a gemmological German restaurant called Schallhorst's Hofamberg Inn, and another more everyday shopping center.

Another well-known shopping plaza is the Northwest Plaza, said to be the fourth largest in the country. Downtown shopping is bounded by Market, Washington, 4th Street and 12th Street.

The downtown hotels have familiar names like Sheraton, Hilton, Holiday Inn, Breckinridge and Soufflers. Chain hotels dominate the airport area. West suburban hotels, which would be similar to north suburban hotels in Detroit, include the Cheshire Inn and the Clayton Inn in Clayton, the Breckinridge Frontenac on Lindbergh, and many others. One unusual hotel mentioned often was the Chase Park Plaza, a distinguished old hotel remodeled south of Forest Park, about five miles north of the downtown area.

The St. Louis County government has reprinted a good restaurant list from St. Louis Magazine. It's called Critic's Choice.

tripping

YOU'RE IN MIAMI and suddenly the urge to visit Elizabeth and her brood strikes. What to do? Sir Freddie's Laker Airways is offering an inaugural and the riverboats following the Missouri River and the wagon wheels making ruts west across what was known as the Great American Desert.

All this to kick off the Miami-to-London-and-back-to-Miami connection. The eight-hour trips will be aboard widebody DC10-30s. For reservations, call 800-221-0374, or your travel agent.

OFF TO CHINA for a study tour is Jui-Hwa Lo Upshur, associate professor of history at Eastern Michigan Uni-

versity, and a gang of 12. Itinerary includes Peking, Xi'an and Luoyang, Canton, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. The tour runs Aug. 16 to Sept. 4. Price is \$2,495, from San Francisco. For information, call Upshur at 487-0066 or 665-4773.

AVAILABLE is the "Michigan Art Fairs and Shows Summer '80" schedule with more than 70 sites where Michigan artists will display and sell their wares. For a copy, send \$1 (check or money order) to the Communications Office, University of Michigan Extension Service, 412 Maynard St., Ann Arbor 48109.

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