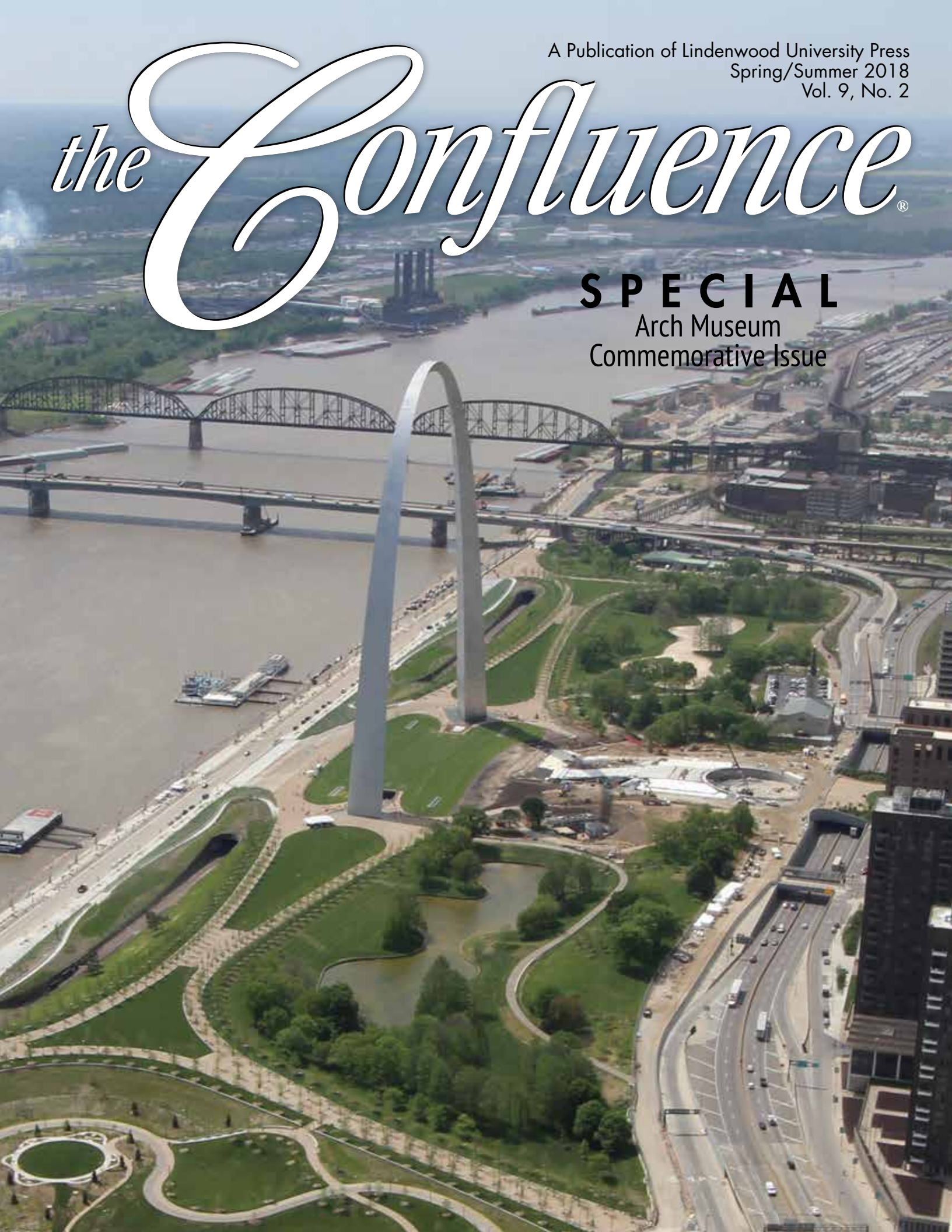


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the Confluence[®]

SPECIAL

Arch Museum
Commemorative Issue



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The Confluence is a regional studies journal published by Lindenwood University and dedicated to the diversity of ideas and disciplines of a liberal arts university. It is committed to the intersection of history, art and architecture, design, science, social science, and public policy. Its articles are diverse by design.

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FROM THE EDITOR

It's been some eight decades since the federal government cleared the Mississippi riverfront to make room for a westward expansion memorial, and more than five since the completed Gateway Arch stood on those grounds. Almost overnight, the Arch became a nationally recognized symbol and one of the most readily recognized works of public art in the United States. I see it from two perspectives—from the car driving by every day en route to campus, and from the riverfront bike trail that separates it from the Mississippi River. I never fail to marvel at it.



As you may know, the museum under the Arch closed for renovation and reopened in the summer of 2018. We're so pleased and honored to be partners with the National Park Service and the Gateway Arch National Park staff to publish this series of articles that expand on some of the new exhibits. Bob Moore's introduction gives a good sense of the extensive thinking that went into the shaping of the experience of visiting the museum. Other articles speak to the particular place. Jennifer Clark's exploration of the process of selecting a design for the memorial—and choosing Saarinen's Gateway Arch—suggests the rich variety of creative approaches that the committee had to choose from. Don Booth offers an interpretation of the material culture of a sort of snapshot in time of St. Louis. Underneath the Arch grounds sat a cistern that predates the 1849 fire, which held a treasure trove of artifacts documenting the everyday lives of people in St. Louis before mid-century.

Two other articles center on topics that will be new to many readers. Tom Farmer and Fred E. Woods focus on the Mormon migration in St. Louis and the number of Saints living in the city in the 1840s and 1850s. St. Louis was, of course, a rapidly growing city in those decades, and Mormons were part of its economic growth. Ironically, St. Louis was considered a "Mormon-friendly" city against the backdrop of efforts to forcibly chase the Saints from western Missouri in the 1830s, when they relocated to Nauvoo, Illinois. Jennifer Clark's look at Titian Peale's journey west and his artistic documentation of the trip takes us inside the mind of a largely forgotten nineteenth-century man of science. It was fairly common for government-supported expeditions like this one to take along artists to document the flora, fauna, people, and geography of these trips; Peale was among those. The Memorial owns a collection of Peale's artifacts from the trip, featured here. And yes, he's named for the sixteenth-century painter; his father, Charles Willson Peale, named all his children for noted artists—Rubens, Rembrandt, Titian, Angelica, and so forth.

It's been a privilege and a joy to be partners with the Gateway Arch staff. We hope you enjoy these articles.

Jeffrey Smith, PhD
Editor

Re-Interpreting Westward Expansion on the Arch Grounds

Foreword and Overview of the Goals for the New Exhibit

BY BOB MOORE





The new museum beneath the Gateway Arch chronicles 200 years of history and tells the story of St. Louis' role in the westward expansion of the United States. The awesome responsibility and massive amount of work behind that simple statement has consumed my life, and the lives of many other people, over the past six years.

Renovations to the Gateway Arch as part of a collaborative project between the City-Arch-River organization and the National Park Service required the removal of the Museum of Westward Expansion, designed by Aram Mardirosian and opened in 1976. St. Louisans fondly remembered the old museum—it was in place for nearly 40 years. Because the space was going to be gutted, planners decided to create an entirely new visitor experience. Plans for the new museum focused on expanding the story of the Gateway Arch and its symbolic meaning.

The firm Haley Sharpe Design of Great Britain was chosen as the design firm to create the new museum. It had a great deal of experience in the United States, designing the Jamestown Visitor Center in Virginia, the Fort McHenry Visitor Center in Maryland, and several large exhibitions for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. As the site historian, I suggested themes, stories, and general directions for the new exhibits, as well as potential artifacts from the park's collection, including some from the old museum and others never before shown to the public.

The first question as planning began was, what story or stories should be told? The old Museum of Westward Expansion told a story of a triumphal march of Anglo-Saxon pioneers over the Appalachians, through the Mississippi River Valley, and into the far West. But is that what actually happened? In a series of meetings, I convened a group of academic and public historians, exhibit designers, and park rangers—some nationally known, some local—to discuss and debate our park themes and to put together matrices for use in creating the new exhibits. It was a diverse group, with members of several American Indian tribes, African American and Hispanic American historians, experts on St. Louis, and experts on the greater West.

(Above) A craftsman from the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Training Center puts the finishing touches on window openings for the restored Old Rock House façade in the new museum at the Gateway Arch. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

(Left) A photomural depicting the St. Louis levee c. 1852 was painted especially for the exhibit by artist Michael Haynes. The multicultural aspects of the community are reflected in the faces and clothing types worn by an array of arriving and departing passengers, plus the free persons of color who owned the drayage businesses that kept the levee operating. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



As a result of these conferences we set a course for changing our exhibit themes to mesh with a more modern approach to the story of the American West. In addition, we felt that the former museum gave visitors little idea as to why a 630-foot Arch was built in St. Louis. What did it commemorate? We felt that our approach should be not only to discuss the national issues of westward expansion, but also to tell why St. Louis was important and central to that story. The 90 acres of the National Park Service site along the riverfront were where Lewis and Clark prepared for their journey west, where the Upper Louisiana Purchase was transferred in 1804, where a significant portion of the American fur trade was centered, and where a territorial capital for the Spanish and for the Americans stood.

All of this resulted in the idea that these exhibits should do what the National Park Service does best nationwide: give the public *place-based interpretation*. For example, when you visit a historic site on the Civil War, you don't experience a museum covering the entire war, but rather one that covers the story of the battle or the event that happened on that site. Yes, there is information about cause and effect, how the war began, and the results of the war, but the meat of the exhibit tells the story of the site. The former museum attempted only to tell a national story of westward expansion while eliminating the St. Louis connection.

Second, we wanted to be sure that the individual parts of the park were tied together through the exhibits, so that visitors would understand how the Arch is connected to westward expansion, St. Louis, and the site.

Third, we wanted to be sure that we incorporated a multicultural perspective in the exhibits, and that the story was not one dominated solely by "great men" of the past. Modern scholarship has shown that the old triumphal histories of the West, whose lead characters were white men wearing coonskin caps, are flawed and myopic versions of a history involving a rich tapestry of people, places, and events. There are few places in the nation better than St. Louis to tell the story of the West in an inclusive way. When Americans arrived in St. Louis in 1804, they found a village already inhabited for 40 years by American Indian, French, Spanish, and African men *and* women. They entered a region where mound-building Indians developed a rich culture, and where French-speaking colonials enjoyed prosperity beginning in 1699. We wanted to emphasize that when St. Louis was founded in 1764, it was part of a cultural milieu dominated by French-speaking people and their customs.



The east façade of the Old Rock House was reconstructed using all of the surviving original elements and the windows and shutters from the 1943 restoration. The exhibit will outline the building's use as a fur warehouse, a sail loft catering to western pioneers, and its years as a tavern and nightclub where African American artists performed blues music. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



A 15 x 15-foot French vertical log house is the centerpiece of the Colonial St. Louis gallery, which describes the first 40 years of the city's existence and the changes brought by the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The replica house, with two sides completed and the other two left unfinished to reveal building techniques, is the same size as several of the smallest homes in the early town. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

The committee felt that the exhibit should provide an understanding of why the memorial site is historic and why St. Louis was an important center of the westward movement, the fur trade, exploration, and western commerce; how slavery in the West led

to the Dred Scott case and Civil War; and how all of these things were caught up in a wave of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century memorialization, tribute, and nostalgia leading to the establishment of a riverfront park in St. Louis.

The new museum will be different from the old not only in terms of the artifacts displayed and the technology utilized, but also in terms of the story told and the themes explored. We hope that it will be a museum worthy of repeat visits and that it will stimulate important conversations about the nation's past, present, and future.

This issue of *The Confluence* is meant as an introduction to the overall ideas for the new exhibits as well as an amplification of four stories told within. Museum exhibits are, by design, long on displaying objects and images and short on descriptions and historical details. The stories in this publication provide background detail on some of the most fascinating new themes and objects we will have on display.

The first article details an archival collection of architectural drawings submitted for the 1947–1948

competition which resulted in the Gateway Arch. These drawings will be displayed on a rotating basis in the new exhibit. The next story is about a serendipitous archaeological find—while the museum was being planned and the site prepared, artifacts from the past were uncovered that were worthy of display in the exhibits, and the design was changed to accommodate them. An article detailing the life and career of an almost unknown American man of science, Titian Peale, underscores the importance of the large collection of instruments and clothing that will be displayed by the park that were used by him on the Long Expedition of 1819–1821. Lastly, a neglected theme within the story of Westward Expansion, the Mormon exodus, has surprisingly strong ties to St. Louis which are explored in an article as well as within the new museum beneath the Arch.



The immensity of the levee in the early 1850s, when St. Louis was the third busiest port in the nation, was best represented in a model that could show the scale of the operation. The HO scale model, painstakingly researched and laboriously hand painted, includes five city blocks, twelve steamboats, and 520 human figures. The bustling levee is depicted piled with goods being transferred from boat to boat. A subtle lighting change from day to night every few minutes will bring up the lights within the buildings and the boats, emphasizing that the levee was a place that never really slept during its heyday. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

Beautiful Dreams, Breathtaking Visions:

Drawings from the 1947-1948
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Architectural Competition

BY JENNIFER CLARK



The seven-person jury seated around a table in the Old Courthouse with competition advisor George Howe in 1947. The jury met twice to assess designs and decide what the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial would look like. The designs included far more than a memorial structure. A landscaped 90-acre park, various structures, water features, a campfire theater, museum buildings, and restaurants were also part of the designs.
(Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

Today it is hard to conceive of any monument that could represent so perfectly St. Louis' role in westward expansion as the Gateway Arch. The city's skyline is so defined by the Arch that it seems impossible that any other monument could stand there. However, when the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (JNEM) was created by executive order in 1935, no one knew what form the memorial would take. In 1947, an architectural competition was held, financed by the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Association, a nonprofit agency responsible for the early development of the memorial idea.

The competition took the world of architecture by storm due to the freedom it granted designers to create a landscape punctuated with museums, restaurants, galleries, historical recreations, and a monumental structure of some kind. The memorial's prominence alongside the Mississippi River and on the St. Louis skyline, coupled with the generous prize money to be awarded, generated great excitement in the architectural community. The competition was restricted to American citizens and attracted interest from throughout the country: current and soon-to-be-famous architects, partners, friends, and even in one case, father and son, competed against each other to create a lasting memorial. It was the first large competition to arise after World War II.

Perhaps the most exciting collection in the archives of JNEM consists of 193 of the original competition entries detailing alternative dreams for the memorial, created by such luminaries as Louis Kahn, Walter Gropius, Charles and Ray Eames, Minoru Yamasaki, Edward D. Stone, and of course, Eliel and Eero Saarinen.

The idea of holding an architectural competition for the memorial was announced in 1945, and the following year Luther Ely Smith, the man who originally proposed the riverfront memorial, asked George Howe to be the advisor. Howe was a well-known Philadelphia architect who was later the Chair of the Yale School of Architecture. He was a modernist with strong ideas about how to create a living memorial that would best serve the public interest.

Howe went to work, recruiting the members of the jury, which consisted of seven men: S. Herbert Hare, the only landscape architect on the jury, who had studied with Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr.; Fiske Kimball, director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Louis LaBeaume, a St. Louis architect who had long been interested in the project and helped to develop the program; Charles Nagel, Jr., director of the Brooklyn Museum, who was later director of the

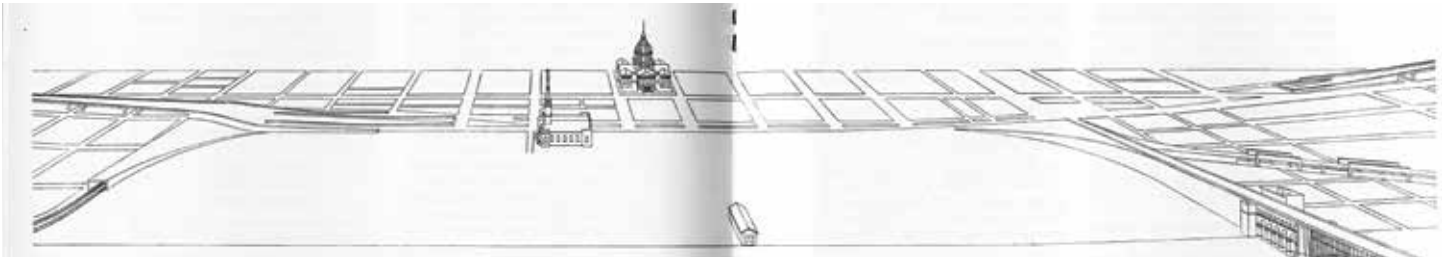
Saint Louis Art Museum; Roland A. Wank, the chief architect of the Tennessee Valley Authority; William W. Wurster, dean of architecture at MIT; and Richard J. Neutra, a well-known modernist architect. George Howe was present for the jury's deliberations and made comments, but he had no vote.

LaBeaume created a detailed booklet for the competition to illustrate the many driving forces behind the memorial and the different needs it was intended to fulfill. Concerns included adequate parking, the ability of the National Park Service to preserve the area as a historic site, and the unusual provision that the architects create a "living memorial" to Thomas Jefferson's vision. The ultimate goal, in the words of the program booklet, was to "develop an historic metropolitan area to the greatest advantage of the citizenry of the world at large," and any perceived conflicts inherent in the various and disparate competition criteria were a "conflict only in the best democratic sense. It is a conflict over means, not over ends."¹

The booklet provided a general overview of the memorial, specifics about the competition and the jury, and the rules and schedule for the competition. It included a line art image in the centerfold with a very basic view of the 90-acre memorial site, identifying the three historic structures that were to remain in situ and be included in the design—the Old Courthouse, the Old Cathedral, and the Old Rock House. The booklet also included a great deal of information, both written and visual, about the history and uses of the site that, it was hoped, would be integrated into the final designs. Yale University Archives has preserved Eero Saarinen's copy of this booklet, including his early sketches of arches in the margins of the text—a fascinating artifact showing that he decided upon an Arch as his central feature very early in the process. The competition was conducted anonymously in two stages to ensure that the strength of the individual designs was weighed without the influences of name recognition.

The first of the required elements was a monument or monuments that would serve as a central feature of the design. The monument could assume any shape, but originally it had to have sculptural elements illustrating or symbolizing some of the following themes:

- The Signing of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty
- The Transfer of Upper Louisiana Territory to the United States at New Orleans
- The Transfer of Upper Louisiana Territory to the United States in front of the Spanish Government House in Old St. Louis



Centerfold, Competition Booklet, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. This view of the 90-acre park showed the buildings that were to remain—the Old Courthouse, the Old Rock House, and the Old Cathedral, with the rest of the area left blank to fire the imaginations of entrants. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)

- The Outfitting of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in Old St. Louis
- Trapping and Fur Trading
- The Pioneer Movement
- Life and Traffic on the Mississippi

The Old Cathedral (which is an active Roman Catholic parish belonging to the Archdiocese of St. Louis) was not to be touched. Inclusion of the Old Courthouse without changes was mandatory. Inclusion of the Old Rock House (as it stood, renovated by the National Park Service, which had removed elements extraneous to the 1818 fur trade warehouse) was desirable, but not mandatory.

Other than a general warning about St. Louis' climate and the problems of maintenance, landscaping was at the discretion of the architect. The inclusion of a campfire theater, a popular feature of many parks in the West where rangers presented programs, was encouraged. The design needed to include a large museum, but the nature of the space for educational purposes was left to the creativity of the architect.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the program was the call for the park to include a living memorial to Thomas Jefferson's vision. The exact nature of this living memorial was only vaguely defined as something instructional, educational, and cultural, contrasted with "activities as carried on in stadia, baseball parks, sports palaces, auditoria, concert halls, and other such facilities."²²

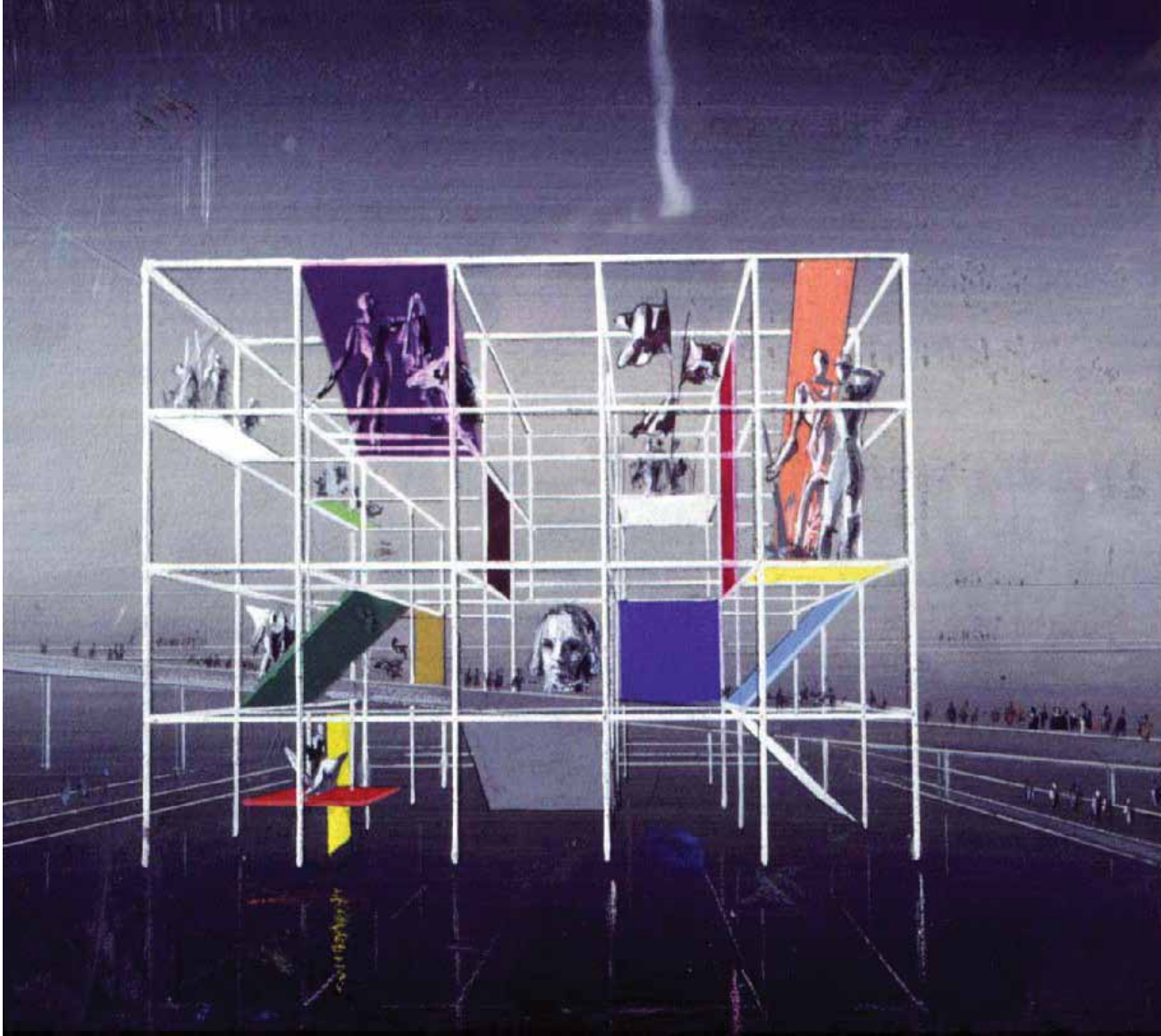
Entries were to be submitted in the form of two drawings measuring approximately 36" x 48". The first drawing was to be a plan showing all the elements of the design, an elevation as would be seen from a vantage point across the Mississippi looking back at the park, and a cross section. The second sheet could be more informal and "the Competitor is to think of himself as talking to the Jury over the drawing board, pencil, pen or brush in hand, making freehand sketches to explain and amplify any ideas, features, compositions, or details he may think especially worthy of their consideration or necessary to clarify his thought."²³

The booklet described in detail the process by which the jury would select five finalists who would proceed to a second round, submitting a set of amended designs. The sealed envelopes revealing the names of the architects that accompanied each entry were opened only after the selection of the second stage finalists. The identity of the second stage competitors remained a secret known only to advisor George Howe and the president, the treasurer, and the chairman of the Competition Committee of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Association.

The records of the jury, also preserved in the JNEM Archives, indicate that the idea of second-round anonymity was hotly debated. George Howe felt that perhaps the rules had been too strict to mandate complete anonymity in the second round. He proposed the possibility of releasing the names of

Detail of Frederick Dunn's entry showing a giant waterfall feature along the riverfront, pouring over a high masonry wall. Dunn was a St. Louis architect known for several beautiful Art Deco-style homes and later in time the Lewis and Clark Branch of the St. Louis Public Library. Charles Nagel, who was a juror, had been in an architectural partnership with Dunn prior to World War II. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)

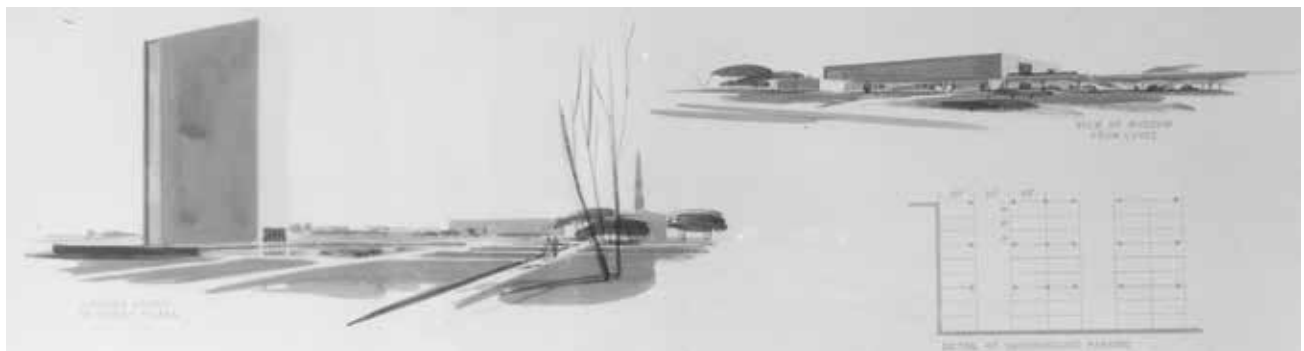
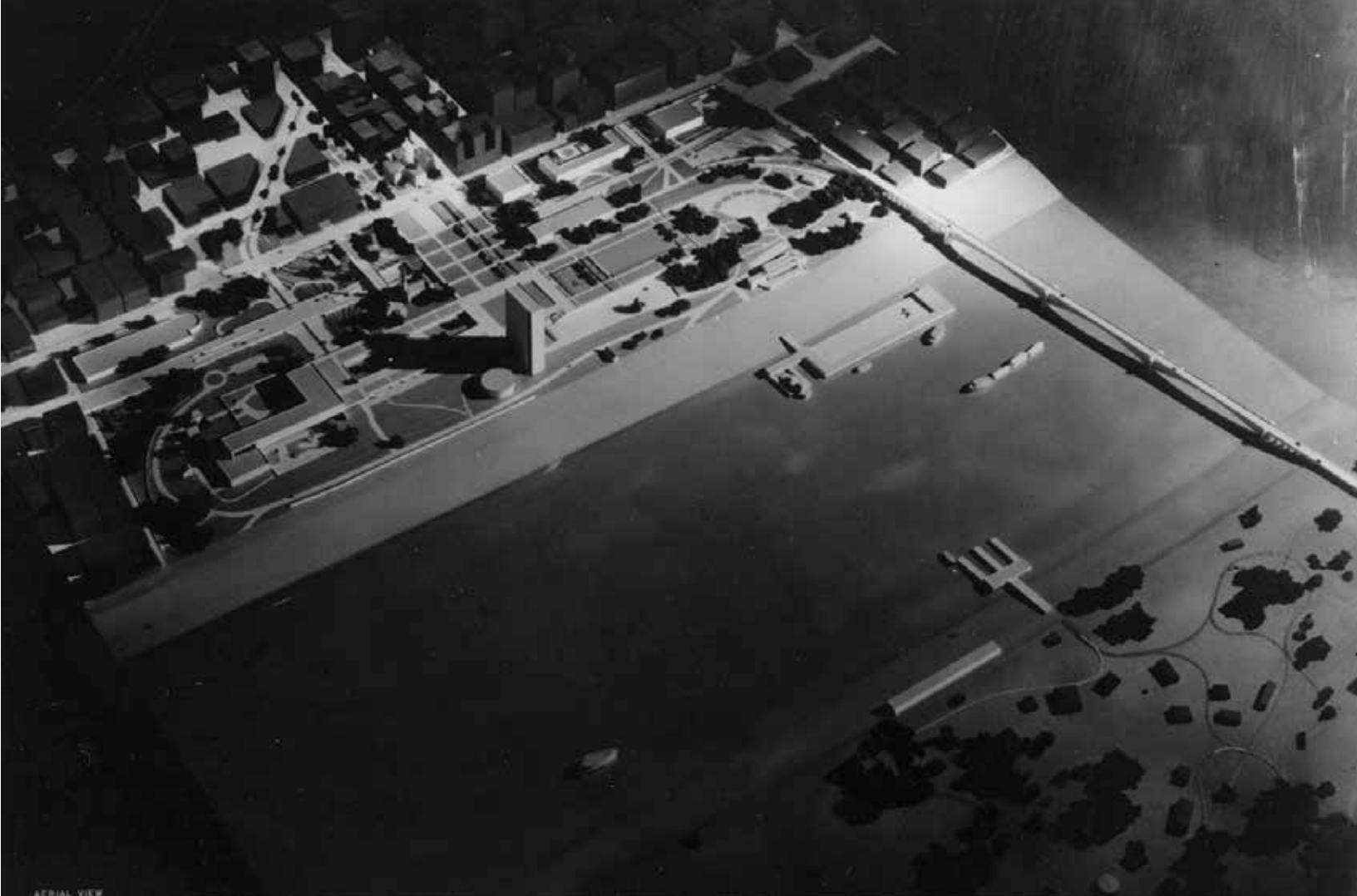




A detail of Walter Gropius and the Architect's Collaborative plan showing an abstract design feature of their memorial concept. As one of the originators of the modern movement and the founder of the Bauhaus in Germany, Gropius was one of the most famous entrants in the 1947 competition. He entered as an unnamed member of the Architects Collaborative firm because he was not an American citizen (the competition was open only to U.S. citizens). (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)

the five semifinalists and their designs for publication as soon as possible after the judging, provided all the competitors agreed to this departure from the competition rules. Louis La Beume felt strongly that the competition booklet had laid out clear rules and the jury was beholden to follow them, even if they personally felt that they were not the best choice. The jury decided to consult with a lawyer, who advised that the terms could not be modified without the unanimous consent of all parties concerned. La Beume “still considered any attempt to modify the conditions of the program at this late hour unwise, and apt to result in unpleasant repercussions.”⁴ La Beume stated that he would resign as a jury member if the terms of the question were modified to any degree. La Beume won his point, and the rest of the competition was conducted as indicated in the competition booklet.

After the announcement of the competition, 235 teams of architects, artists, and designers stated their intention to compete, but only 172 actually sent in submissions. As each entry arrived in St. Louis, it was assigned a chronological number. Harry Richman, an architectural student at Washington University at the time, was hired as an intern to unpack the drawings and arrange them on easels on the second floor of the Old Courthouse for the jury to view. In an oral history interview with historian Bob Moore, he described the sensation of pulling out Eero Saarinen’s drawing of the Gateway Arch: “It wasn’t until I had the luck of opening up Eero Saarinen’s entry that I realized that this was different, an entirely different departure, a major breakaway from the type of entries that I had been looking at. And I called Bob [Israel, the other student helping to unpack drawings] over and told Bob I thought this would certainly be,



Details from the Smith, Hinchman, Grylls and Yamasaki competition entry. Minoru Yamasaki left the Smith, Hinchman and Grylls firm in 1949, and went on to design many well-known structures, including the original twin towers of the World Trade Center. In St. Louis Yamasaki designed the main terminal at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, the original Military Personnel Records Center on Page Avenue, and the Pruitt-Igoe housing project. (Images: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)

I would think up to this point, a winning entry, and Bob agreed with me.”⁵

When the jury met to judge the first-round entries, they inspected them on their easels. Their focus was to find the right architect or team to take on this project—the vision of the entry was more important than the particulars of the design. After the initial assessment, they set aside 62 submissions

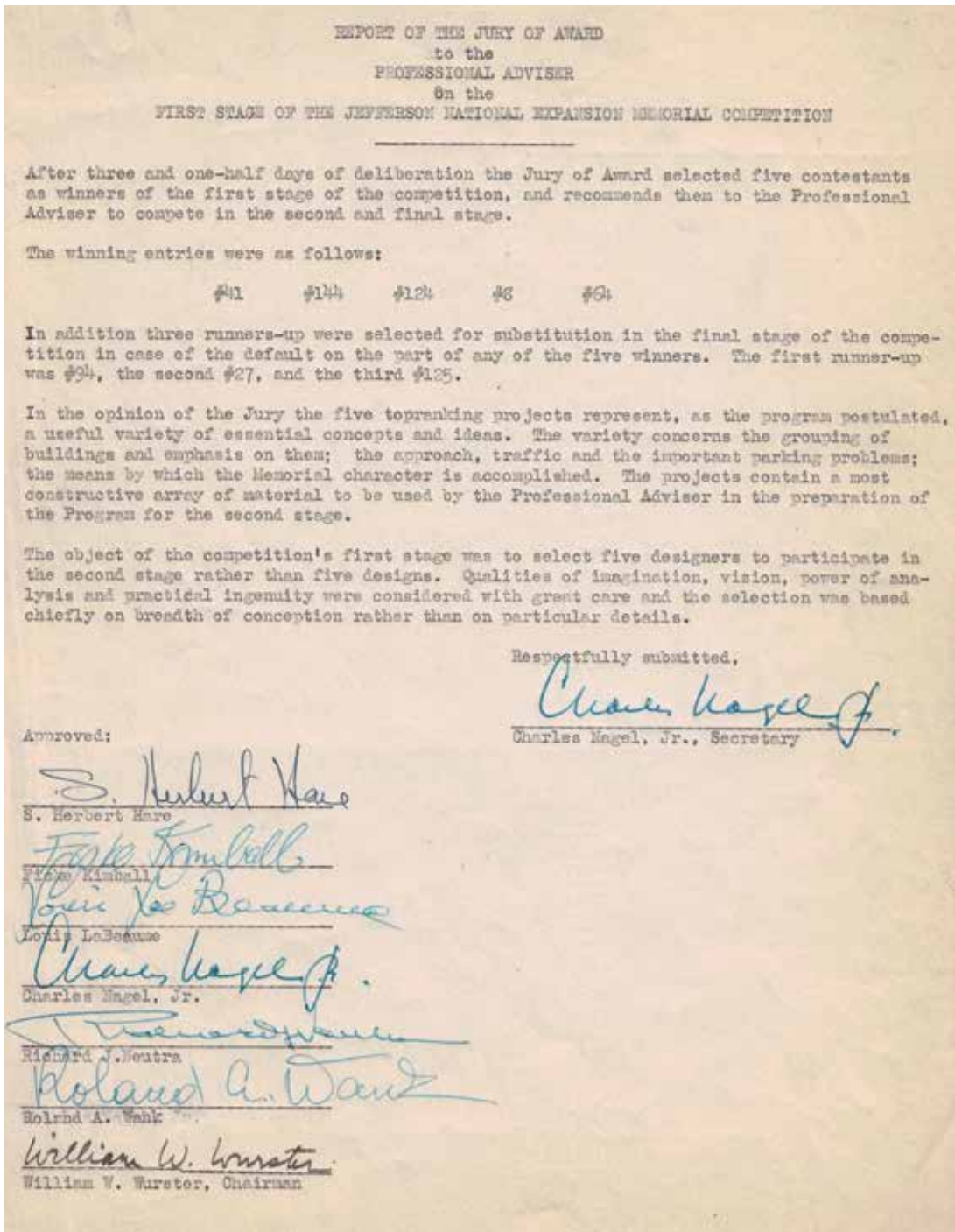
as “ineligible for prizes” for various reasons.

They proceeded to call out the numbers that were assigned to the drawings and vote for those they wanted to retain. Submissions having a no vote were removed—shockingly, including entries by George Matsumoto, Gyo Obata, Harrison and Abramovitz, Harry Weese, Mackey and Murphy, and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.⁶

The remaining entries were shuffled according to the number of votes received, resulting in 41 contenders. Submissions with one vote included those by Louis Kahn and Charles and Ray Eames. Submissions with two votes included those by Walter Gropius, Aduchi Kazumi, Frederick Dunn, Raymond

Maritz, Eliel Saarinen, and Robert Elkington. Hugh Stubbins and Roger Bailey got three votes. At four votes, some of the finalists began to appear: T. Marshall Rainey, Wishmeyer and Lorenz, Percival Goodman, and Phillips and Eng. Harris Armstrong and Pilafan & Montana received five votes. Only

Jury Statement, Record Unit 104, Box 29, Folder 16, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Archives. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)





T. Marshall Rainey (#8) was one of the few architects that had actually studied the early U.S. expansion period, making sketches of historical scenes centered on his home town of Cincinnati. His design had no real "central feature" or monument. It included a large museum complex fronted by an elaborate series of ponds and fountains, a major transportation center involving busses and helicopters, and also a Jefferson Institute complex where issues of world peace would be discussed. *(Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)*



Honorable Mention: Harris Armstrong (#41). A judge commented, "[I] approve of the breadth and simplicity of the terrace along the levee . . ." Roland Wank commented, "the concept is as clear and simple as any of the entries, and the use of the plow and furrow as a monument seems highly poetic. On the other hand it gives the juror the impression that the competitor is a talented but high-handed artist." Armstrong was one of the most respected practitioners of the mid-century modern style in the St. Louis area. His best-known buildings are the Ethical Society (1962) and the Magic Chef Building (1946). He designed many residences as well as commercial buildings. *(Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)*



Second Prize: Gordon A. Phillips, William Eng and Associates. One of the judges commented, “[I] approve the simplicity, even the leanness, of the main idea.” Roland Wank stated, “the concept is the simplest of all, and in some respects the most brilliant.” Despite the order of the names on the design, the principal architect of this entry was William Eng. Born in China in 1919, Eng emigrated to the United States and served during World War II in the U.S. Army. He was a student in the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign when he entered the competition. He later worked in the office of Eero Saarinen and became a professor of architecture at his alma mater. Eng’s design featured a large amphitheater on the south, a museum-restaurant complex on the north, and a series of seven identical pylons set in a reflecting pond as its central monumental feature. *(Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)*



Third Prize: William N. Breger, Caleb Hornbostel, George S. Lewis and Associates. Juror Roland Wank’s comment on this entry was that “the concept is broad and simple.” The central design feature was one of the few that rivaled the Arch in its scale and audacity. The twin sculptural towers would have been about 475 feet tall. The three architects on this team had widely varied backgrounds and were never in partnership with one another. Breger had been an assistant to Walter Gropius, Hornbostel had attended the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Lewis had worked for Marcel Breuer and contributed to the design of the United Nations Secretariat Building. It is not known how the three men met or decided to collaborate on this design. *(Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)*

Eero Saarinen and the Smith, Hinchman, Grylls and Yamasaki team got six votes.⁷

The jury proceeded to cast ballots to narrow the field to five finalists. Somewhere in that process Smith, Hinchman, Grylls and Yamasaki dropped out of consideration and did not make it to the final round. The finalists were: #41 (Harris Armstrong), #144 (Eero Saarinen), #124 (Gordon Phillips and William Eng), #8 (T. Marshall Rainey), and #64 (William Breger, Caleb Hornbostel and George S. Lewis). The competition awarded significant prize money, \$10,000, to each of the five finalists, which could help cover expenses to compete in the second round.

George Howe created the second-stage addenda to the program of the competition, and in doing so he changed much of the focus. In this stage, the competition became more realistic, and it included the demands and restrictions imposed by the Department of the Interior. No helicopter or railroad terminals were allowed, and all designs had to be restricted to be within the federal borders of



Boyd's Department Store windows downtown featured a theme honoring the memorial competition in 1948. The latest men's shoes and suits of the day were displayed with the winning Saarinen design in the background, including a picture of the dapper Saarinen himself in his natty suit and bow tie. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)



First Prize: Eero Saarinen and Associates. Herbert Hare's notes on Saarinen's entry state that "there is considerable question in my mind whether the arch suggested is practical." Another judge commented "easily one of the most facile, and most imaginative offerings submitted. The author shows skill and sureness of touch...The great parabolic arch is impressive in conception and scale, but doubt its ultimate realization." Charles Nagel commented, "imaginative and exciting monumental arch – an abstract form peculiarly happy in its symbolism." Roland Wank stated, "the monument seems to be beautiful and relevant; perhaps inspired would be the right word. I think it would remain so, even though budget limitations would require a reduction in size." Actually, the size of the Arch was increased before it was built, from 590 feet to 630 feet. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)

the memorial site. The levee could not be altered—this had the most impact on Harris Armstrong’s design, which dramatically altered the shape of the levee in the first-round version. Perhaps most significantly, the plans for a Living Memorial to Thomas Jefferson’s vision—the aspect of the design that was to be instructional, educational, and cultural—was dropped. Instead, the focus was on “The Architectural Memorial . . . [which was] to be conceived as a striking element, not only to be seen from a distance in the landscape but also as a notable structure to be remembered and commented on as one of the conspicuous monuments of the country. Its purpose should be to attract the interest of the multitude as well as that of the connoisseur of art. The development of a suitable symbolic form is left to the Competitor. It is to be essentially non-functional, though its interior, if any, may of course be accessible.”⁸

In historian Sharon A. Brown’s *Administrative History of Jefferson National Expansion Memorial*, she noted that “there apparently existed a breakdown of anonymity and rumored identification of some or all of the first stage winners. Other complaints centered around ‘unexplained knowledge of certain solutions.’ None of the rumors could be traced to authoritative sources, and the National Park Service tried not to fuel them.” Howe’s second-stage addenda certainly read as a very apt description of the Gateway Arch.⁹

The five semifinalist teams returned to their drawing boards and produced revised versions of their first-round entries. Some of the changes were significant, and others barely altered their concepts. Harris Armstrong had to change one of the most dynamic features of his first-round design, the reimaged levee, and as a result basically started from scratch to create a completely different plan. Saarinen changed the cross-section of the Arch from a rectangle to a triangle at the suggestion of sculptor Carl Milles, and in conjunction with landscape architect Dan Kiley he opened up the forested area between the Old Courthouse, the Arch, and the river as the judges had suggested.

The procedure for the jury in reviewing these revised designs was significantly less complicated than in the first round. First, William Wurster read part of the program to point out important elements to consider, including a tree-shaded park, the central monumental feature, the buildings both modern and reproduction, and the possible future development of the site. Howe recommended the jury keep in mind the importance of a memorial “of striking design and monumental character.”¹⁰

After the members had an opportunity to view all the second-stage entries and make comments, a trial vote was taken by secret ballot to see how opinion was running. In the very first vote the jury unanimously selected Eero Saarinen’s design as the winner, making further balloting unnecessary. Saarinen’s vision of the Gateway Arch easily won the day, though in their comments some of the judges expressed reservations that such a monument could be built as shown. They proceeded to discuss and award the rest of the prize winners. The two runners up received an additional \$2,500; third prize, \$10,000; second prize, \$20,000; and first prize, \$40,000.¹¹

After the competition ended, the original plan was to select a group of the entries for an exhibition, while the remainder would be returned to the creators. Howe selected 64 drawings to retain and planned to return 103. However, after 51 were returned, one of the architects complained that after spending the time and effort to create the entry for the competition, they were entitled to a share of the publicity and attention that would come from any exhibition of the entries. Howe agreed, offering to pay for the return of the drawings that had been sent back. However, only ten of those that had been returned were shipped back for display, so the park’s collection does not include the majority of those returned to the competitors, including Charles and Ray Eames’s entry and that of Eliel Saarinen.

After the competition was over, public interest in the results was extremely keen. The May 1948 issue of *Progressive Architecture* was largely devoted to the competition results and showcased all the finalists’ entries. In St. Louis, Boyd’s Department Store displayed copies of the drawings alongside fashionable men’s clothing. (See p. 16)

The drawings were displayed in the Old Courthouse from February through March 1948, with finalists on the first floor in the Rotunda and other entries on the second floor in the north wing. Most of the drawings still in the possession of the park were shipped to New York for a show at the Architectural League from May 20 to June 12. (J.W. Burt’s entry was deemed too delicate to travel, and another entry was slightly too large for the crate). Then, the drawings were sent to the American Institute of Architects’ Annual Convention in Salt Lake City from June 22 to 25. Fifty drawings were sent on a tour across the country by the American Federation of Arts and were shown in San Francisco; Los Angeles; the University of Illinois in Urbana; the Cranbrook Museum in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; Howard University in Washington, D.C.; Syracuse

University; and then Harvard University. A planned book of images of the designs never materialized. The design submission boards were returned to the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, where they were stored in the Old Courthouse and have been viewed only selectively on rare occasions since.¹²

This collection of drawings from some of the greatest architectural minds of the midcentury modern period of architecture has been a challenge to preserve and maintain. They were created solely for the purpose of winning the competition, and after seventy years many have not aged well. They were created with glues destined to fail and stain, stored in ways detrimental to the paper, and at every stop on their tour across the country “touched up” with rubber cement and other un-archival materials.

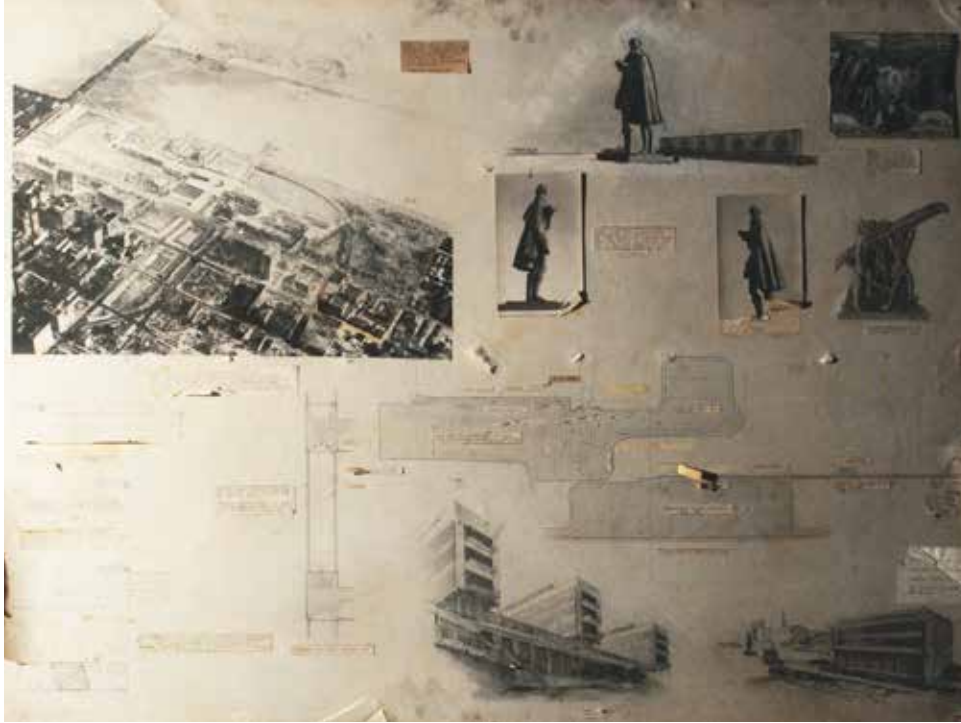
A memo to the park superintendent in 1963 stated that the museum curator had inspected the collection, which had been stored in the third-floor attic under poor conditions, and found damage from dirt, dust, moisture, and insects. The collection was moved into secure storage as a result. Later, the drawings were encapsulated in Mylar envelopes to try to stop more damage from occurring and to contain all the pieces and images that were flaking off the boards as glue lost its adhesion.¹³

For the last 21 years, drawings in the collection have been undergoing extensive conservation. Nancy Heugh of Heugh Edmondson Conservation in Kansas City has conserved 63 of the drawings and completed a survey of the collection to determine priorities for future conservation. The report notes the difficulties which will be part of the conservation effort. Competitors used whatever materials they desired to create their entries: backings of Masonite, plywood, Upson board, and corrugated cardboard. The range of techniques is very broad, from the delicate colored pencil of Saarinen’s final board by J. Barr to the photo manipulation techniques of T. Marshall Rainey. Many included elements of collage, painting, and stenciling. Some had significant amounts of text, while others relied mostly on the visuals to showcase their plans.

Heugh has spent years delicately cleaning the soot off the surface of each board, reattaching pieces that came unglued, eliminating stains and adhesives, removing insects and other surface adhesions from the materials, and even floating the drawings off the substrate and reattaching them to safer archival alternatives. After the initial conservation work was done, she created a polyester overlay to protect each item and a custom archival enclosure. The collection is stored safely in appropriate museum-quality units in a climate-controlled area, but the work to conserve

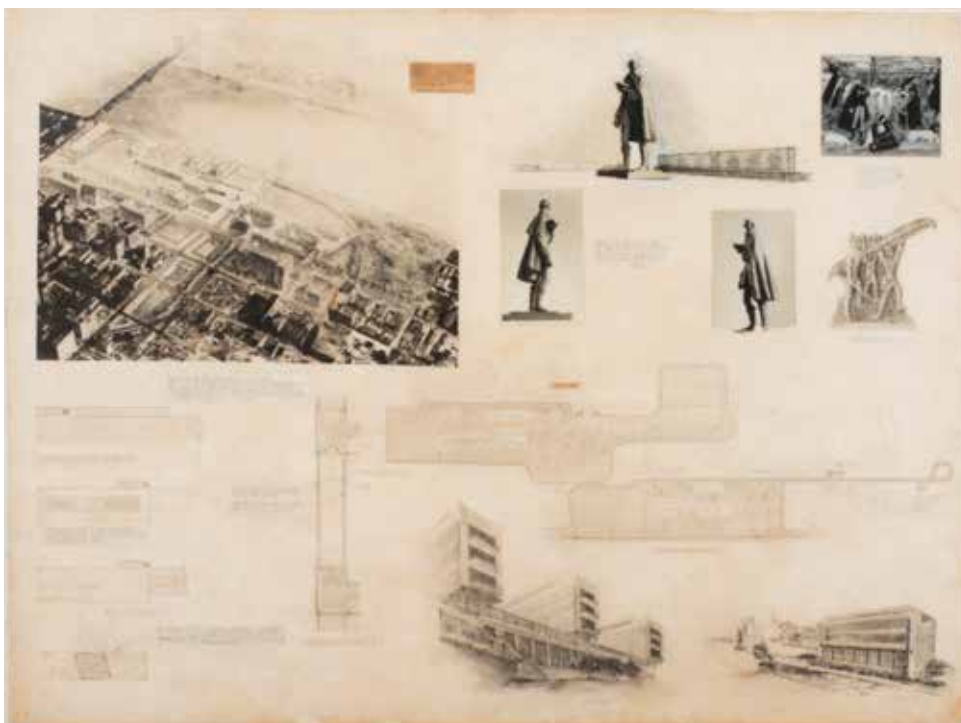
the drawings will undoubtedly continue for many years.

The chance to share some of these amazing works of art and imagination with the public for the first time in many years is extremely exciting and will undoubtedly spark new interest in this collection. A rotating exhibit of the original competition boards will be part of the new museum beneath the Gateway Arch. Each board is expected to be on view for a few months before it is switched out for another, thus saving the boards from excessive light exposure but also giving the regional public a chance to see a number of these designs in succession. Reproduction photos of the drawings are available to view in the park library, and the park archivist can be contacted for an appointment for those who wish to view specific originals.



The Gordon W.G. Chesser entry as photographed before restoration. Chesser was an architect from Philadelphia whose entry was not one of the top selections of the competition. As with all of the entries in the collections of the memorial, it is being conserved as an exemplar of an era of architecture and as part of an inventory of the various solutions architects created to the design challenges of the memorial. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)

Gordon W.G. Chesser entry after restoration by Nancy Heugh. Repairs have been made to ripping and fraying paper, and applied elements have been re-adhered to the surface. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park Archives)



E N D N O T E S

- ¹ Jefferson National Expansion Memorial competition booklet, 1947, p. 4, JNEM Archives.
- ² *Ibid.*, 23.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ⁴ Proceedings of the Jury of Award for the Architectural Competition, JNEM Competition, Record Unit 104, Box 29, Folder 17, JNEM Archives.
- ⁵ Oral history interview with architect Harry Richman conducted by historian Bob Moore on Dec. 10, 2001, JNEM Archives.
- ⁶ Proceedings, Box 29, Folder 17.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ Judgement, Second Stage, Record Unit 104, Box 29, Folder 20, JNEM Archives.
- ⁹ Sharon A. Brown, *Administrative History Jefferson National Expansion Memorial*, June 1984, 84–85.
- ¹⁰ Judgement, Second Stage, Record Unit 104, Box 29, Folder 20, JNEM Archives.
- ¹¹ Summary of Comments of the Jury of Award of Winning Designs, Record Unit 104, Box 29, Folder 20, JNEM Archives.
- ¹² Plan and Scope Committee, Architectural Competition, June–December 1948, Record Unit 104, Box 30, Folder 7, JNEM Archives.
- ¹³ Memo from Frank B. Sarles, Jr., Chief Park Historian to Superintendent H. Raymond Gregg, Oct. 31, 1963, Record Unit 104, Box 30, Folder 8, JNEM Archives.



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Archaeology

a t t h e A r c h

BY DON BOOTH





(Left and above) Archaeologists from SCI Engineering carefully excavate a cistern feature on the Arch grounds. The feature was discovered as a new storm sewer line was being prepared in 2014. (Image: Don Booth and SCI Engineering)

As the archaeologist removed a layer of charred material from the brick cistern, fragments of ceramics began to appear. The Gateway Arch was gleaming in the sunlight hundreds of feet overhead. Who might have guessed that just yards away from the famous St. Louis icon, deep underground, a treasure trove of artifacts awaited discovery. As items emerged from the black material where they had been buried more than 160 years, the archaeologist contemplated how the various objects and fragments would have no value to collectors or those looking for gold or precious metals. These were the type of artifacts that were valuable to archaeologists and historians because they told vivid stories of the past. As the dig continued, it was certain that it would reveal a great deal about St. Louis' past.

Like the rings of a tree or the lines found in sedimentary layers of rock, every city has a physical history in its succession of built structures and landscapes. Some cities have been fortunate to preserve a few of their earliest buildings, or at least their original street grids. For others, like St. Louis, it is very difficult to discern the city's original physical appearance by looking at the contemporary streetscape or even by trying to match modern features with historic maps. No original structures dating to the first 40 years of the city's history survive within the street grid. The only antebellum buildings still standing downtown are the Old

Cathedral (1834), the Old Courthouse (1839–1862), the Field House (1845), the Campbell House (1851), St. Mary of Victories Church (1843), and several commercial buildings in Laclede's Landing. With so much lost or unknown physical and visual information, archaeology is one of the few ways in which the historic period of St. Louis can be investigated.

One of the chief impediments to an archaeological investigation of the earliest portions of St. Louis is the federal project known as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, inaugurated in 1935. Centered on Market Street and the site of the original colonial town, the project replaced the original street grid with park land. It resulted in the demolition of nearly every structure on 37 of the original 50 blocks of the city. Between 1963 and 1965 the Gateway Arch was constructed within the park, symbolizing St. Louis' role in the westward expansion of the United States during the nineteenth century.

Because the memorial is a National Park Service site, little archaeological work has been performed there since the Arch was built in the 1960s. Even prior to that time, only select areas of interest were investigated, most extensively by National Park Service archaeologist Zorro Bradley on the former site of William Clark's home and Indian agency in 1961. Since the inception of the Gateway Arch, the only archaeological work performed has been in areas where major construction projects were to take

The cistern feature as it looked before excavation, with some artifacts visible on the surface. (Image: Don Booth and SCI Engineering)



place, like the Gateway Arch Parking Garage in 1985 and the grounds maintenance area in 2000.

New opportunities for archaeological work arose with the major revitalization of the memorial proposed in 2009. After an international architectural competition in 2010 and a massive \$380 million fundraising effort by the City-Arch-River organization, work commenced in 2013 on several areas of improvement in the park. In a project of such size to be conducted within a National Park Service site, archeological concerns were immediately addressed. Although historical structures were removed in the early 1940s, there was always a chance that St. Louis' birthplace, with known habitation stretching back to 1764 for the French and at least a thousand years earlier for Native Americans, might yield archaeological artifacts or information. Federal law provided that test borings had to be conducted in areas of the landscape where construction would take place. With a negative finding of results, construction could proceed, with the caveat that any inadvertent discoveries of significance would be investigated by a contract archaeology firm. This scenario came to pass in

two instances during the 2013–2017 construction, and the exciting discoveries of several significant archaeological features has provided new material for historians of material culture to study, as well as fascinating artifacts for display in the new museum.

Working closely with construction contractors, the Midwest Archaeological Center of the National Park Service sent archaeologists to monitor construction in areas likely to yield archaeological deposits. If and when artifacts or structures were encountered SCI Engineering, Inc., was contracted to mobilize within 24 hours to begin excavations. In addition, contractors were bound to report suspicious deposits anywhere on site when an archaeological monitor was not present. This aspect of the project was effective, as archaeologists were called on numerous occasions to investigate.

Most of these calls proved to be false alarms, but in March 2014, during the machine excavation of a storm sewer near the north leg of the Gateway Arch, a remnant of a brick-lined cistern was revealed. Located in what would have been City Block 32, this cistern lay beneath the limestone foundation of a later building. An ink bottle with a patent date of April 13,

Artifacts as they appeared just after excavation, prior to cleaning. Note the turtle shell on the right and intact bowl and bottles in the center and to the left. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



1875, and a “Wetter & Mehrkens” soda water bottle from ca. 1875 were found in the uppermost layer, representing the most recent deposits in the cistern.

Deep holes in the ground, whether they were privy vaults, cisterns, or wells, provided handy areas of trash disposal for our ancestors. As soon as a feature was no longer usable, it was gradually filled in with trash. Privies, cisterns, and wells provide some of the most fertile areas for archaeological investigation, and such finds are approached with cautious anticipation by archaeologists. Most members of the general public who have never participated in an archaeological dig can imagine the challenges of physically removing the soil and carefully looking for evidence. Few think about the great amount of historical research that is conducted, sometimes under tight deadlines, to try to place the find in the context of the history of the site.

Research revealed that City Block 32 was completely destroyed in the Great Fire of 1849. The oldest detailed reference for this block was the 1870 Whipple Fire Insurance map, which showed the results of the rebuilding of the block that began around 1850. The map appeared to suggest that a limestone foundation was built atop the cistern sometime after 1850. It was assumed that the construction of the 1850s foundation resulted in the exposure of the older cistern and that the cistern remained partially open through at least the mid-1870s when the datable bottles were deposited.¹

Below the upper layer of material in the cistern (1850s through 1870s), the next deposit consisted of roughly one foot of charred wood, ash, and other burned debris. Below this zone of burned material, the cistern yielded a large collection of material dating to the 1840s. It is considered likely that the burned layer represented debris from the Great Fire of 1849. The contents of the cistern below the burned layer proved to be fascinating for what they revealed about material culture in early St. Louis. This was the treasure trove. With so many artifacts, there was a good chance that new understandings of the past might come to light.

Some of the less glamorous but more important artifacts were the slightly more than 1,300 animal bones recovered from the cistern. For the most part, these bones represented butchered domestic animals, with an occasional occurrence of wild animals like deer, fish, and turtle. There were also a large number of oyster shells.

The glass artifacts recovered contained a large proportion of wine and whiskey bottles and lead glass tumblers. The manufacturing techniques present on the bottles were typical of early to mid-



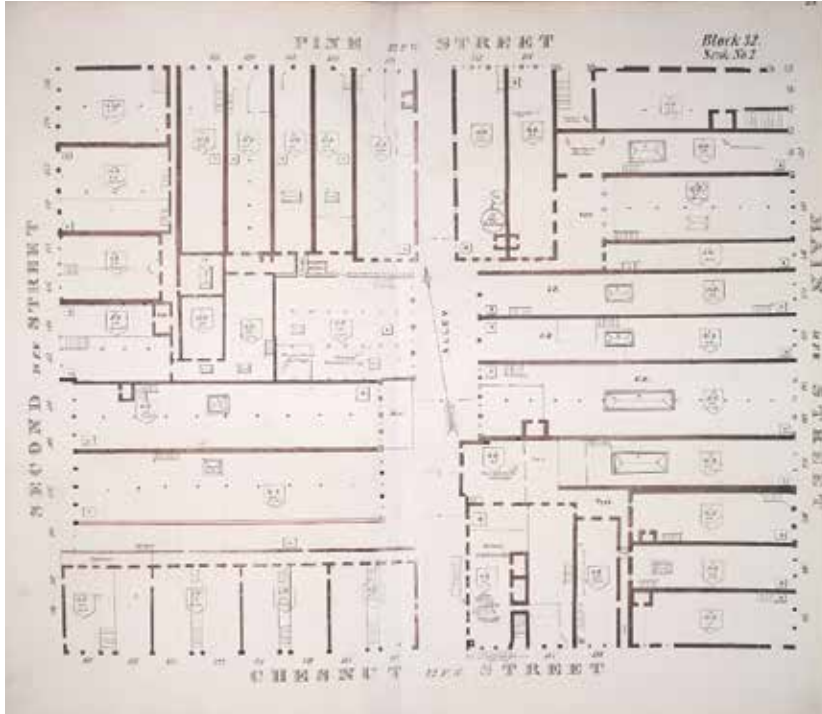
The cistern feature at the point when archaeologists had reached the bottom and removed all of the fill. (Image: Don Booth and SCI Engineering)

nineteenth century bottle production. The ceramics exhibited early to mid-nineteenth century decorative elements and maker’s marks. The bulk of these items was imported from the great ceramic production area of Staffordshire, England, and included plain whiteware, transferware plates with elaborate designs in several colors, and simpler hand-decorated items using simple lines, floral patterns, and cat’s eye motifs. None of the objects were extraordinary or unusual examples, but the condition of many, some nearly intact, was surprising.

The interesting aspect of the ceramic collection was the large number of matching ceramic vessels from the same manufacturer with the same decorative pattern. This is highly unusual in most historic archaeological sites. The implication of these shared features is that they represent sets of dishes. In individual households, broken plates, cups, and saucers were replaced as needed, resulting in a hodge-podge of differing designs and makers based on what was available at the time while, on the other hand, commercial operations often purchased their service pieces in bulk. In addition to the imported ceramics there were also locally manufactured utilitarian items of redware and yellowware, which included bowls, pitchers, and chamberpots.

Also present were a nearly complete yellowware chamber pot, a stoneware spittoon, a complete stoneware bottle, a complete mustard jar imported from Paris, France, and fragments of a Black Basaltware inkwell manufactured by Wedgwood. One surprise was the recovery of the majority of the metal portions of a Belgian brass pocket pistol.

Just as important as what was recovered from the cistern is what was not recovered. Lacking from the



A. Whipple & Co.'s Insurance Map of St. Louis, 1870, showing Block 32. These accurate fire insurance maps are one of the best resources in determining the placement of buildings in the city. (Image: Missouri History Museum)

collection were items commonly found in individual household sites. Things like buttons, straight pins, children's toys, and nails were notably absent in the material recovered from the cistern. Instead, items usually associated with social activities were dominant. Things like clay tobacco pipes; spittoons; tableware, including plates, platters, cups, saucers, and salt cellars; drinking glasses; flasks; and wine and liquor bottles all reflect the social context of the artifacts.

The large number of animal bones, the presence of a substantial quantity of liquor bottles and drinking glasses, as well as the evidence of entire sets of ceramic dishes led to the conclusion that the 3,812 artifacts recovered from the cistern were derived from a commercial operation—a tavern, an inn, or a restaurant. Documentary research revealed that a hotel was located on the northeast corner of Block 32 at the street addresses 42 to 44 North Main Street prior to the Great Fire of 1849. Originally known as Kibby's Washington Hall, this hotel was located in a three-story brick building built by John McKnight and Thomas Brady in 1816.² The first floor of the building contained two storefronts, while the second and third floors served as the hotel, comprised of sleeping rooms and a large hall for public gatherings. This structure, the seventh brick building built in



Archaeologist Don Booth (background) stands near one of three tables covered with the very best artifacts found within the cistern feature at the Arch. Many of the 3,812 artifacts recovered were in unusually good condition, some completely intact. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



An intact wine bottle (left) and a whiskey bottle (right).
(Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

St. Louis, was also noted as being the first building constructed specifically to serve as a hotel.³

Timothy Kibby began operating the hotel in the fall of 1816 and hosted the first observance of Washington's birthday west of the Mississippi in February 1817. By 1820, however, the hotel was

repurposed as a boarding house. Sometime before 1840, it became a hotel known as the Jefferson House, operated by Elijah Curtis,⁴ while by 1848 the name had been changed to the Papin House.⁵ The conclusions made by the archaeologists were that the 1840s materials recovered from below the burned layer in the cistern represented trash disposal from either or both the Jefferson House and Papin House inns.

It can be assumed that people passing through St. Louis, traveling to all points of the compass by steamboat on the inland waterways, stopped at hotels like this one for one or more days at a time. For this reason the items found in the cistern provide a window into the functions and the equipment available to important early commercial establishments in the city.

These objects, and the other artifacts recovered from the 1840s deposits, would have been items typically encountered by the local residents as well as those passing through the city on their way westward. They give us an idea of the types of materials available in St. Louis during the 1840s, with imports from many nations. They also provide insight into what materials were available in hotels and restaurants of the period. For this reason exhibit designers felt that it was essential to display the best of these items in the new, expanded museum under the Arch.

Another major archaeological deposit was uncovered by contractors installing new utilities along the north edge of Poplar Street on the southern boundary of the park in what would have been Block 39. The historic maps of the area demonstrated that when the park was built in the 1960s Poplar Street was moved roughly 100 feet to the north. That would mean that the deposits uncovered along the edge of

A Staffordshire brown transferware plate, front and back. The maker's mark on the back reveals that the plate was made by Ridgway, Morley, Ware and Co., which was in business between 1836 and 1842. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)





(Above and below) One of the most spectacular finds was a complete (unbroken) slip-decorated bowl imported from England and dating to the 1840s. The bowl exhibits decorations including wavy lines and a tri-color "cat's eye" motif. The lines were created by piping a thin slurry of colored clay onto the surface of the vessel before firing. The tri-color design was made with a specialized tool, which dispensed three different colored slips simultaneously. The cup fragment below on the left shows the effect of rotating the tri-colored tool when applying the thick, zig-zag line seen here. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

today's Poplar Street were originally in about the center of Block 39. These deposits turned out to be three wood-lined privies dating from the mid-nineteenth century. Unfortunately, during the first weekend after their discovery, looters disturbed two of these deposits, mixing their fills and leaving only six to eight inches of the privy deposits intact in each. In addition, these privies had been previously disturbed by the installation of utility lines along the northern side of Poplar Street.

Labeled F.1 through F.3, privies F.1 and F.2 were immediately adjacent to each other while F.3 was located roughly 40 feet to the east. F.1 and F.3 contained artifacts dating to the 1850s, while F.2 contained materials dating from the late 1830s or early 1840s. All three were similar in size and method of construction, with vertical wooden planks

lining the privy vault walls.

Historic documents indicated that these privies were likely associated with boarding houses and tenements that existed in Block 39. The contents were all somewhat similar, containing typical household debris. F.1 yielded 1,067 artifacts including 210 pieces of broken ceramics, 249 shards of bottle glass, fragments of lead glass tumblers and whiskey flasks, pieces from a pair of glass candlesticks, milk glass buttons, 180 pieces of animal bone, and several peach pits. F.2 contained 2,528 artifacts with the collection dominated by 789 shards of container glass. This assemblage was primarily bottles, but also present were examples of a demijohn, a handblown pitcher, lead glass tumblers, and whiskey flasks. Ceramics were well represented with 387 sherds collected. In addition to the 431



animal bones recovered, food items also present were oyster shells, watermelon seeds, pawpaw seeds, and peach pits.

Personal items included milk glass buttons, shoe leather, and children's marbles. Of special note was the recovery from F.2 of a Spanish Two Reale piece dating from the early 1780s. It was learned that this early coin, and other non-U.S. silver coins, were in active circulation into the 1850s. The excavation of F.3 resulted in the recovery of 1,577 artifacts. This assemblage included 359 pieces of broken ceramics and 388 shards of container glass, including lead glass tumblers and whiskey flasks. Items of a more personal nature included fragments of ceramic dolls, clay tobacco pipes, milk glass buttons, shoe leather, and a pocket knife.

The looting of F.1 and F.2 was unfortunate. From the remaining intact deposits of F.1 and F.2, fragments of four scroll flasks (whiskey flasks), 13 tumblers, and one shot glass were recovered. These numbers would not be considered unusual except for the fact that the mixed fill left from the looter's activities contained 21 more tumblers, three more scroll flasks, and an additional shot glass. This was a rather large collection of drinking paraphernalia and would seem to imply that at least one of these privies, F.1 or F.2, was associated with a drinking establishment.

Historically, this portion of the riverfront contained a number of taverns and brothels. Sadly, because the looters disturbed the deposits before archaeologists had a chance to properly excavate them, it will never be known with certainty if these privies were related to these establishments. In any event, the materials recovered from the intact portions of the three privies provided a glimpse into the material

culture of everyday life of the mid-nineteenth century inhabitants of this part of the city. They included more personal items than those found in the Jefferson House site, including a simple necklace cross and children's toys, like clay marbles, a toy plate and a porcelain doll's head—the things associated with the residents' everyday life—while a portion of an absinthe bottle, whiskey flasks, drinking glasses, and vaginal syringes were potential evidence of the commercial tavern/brothel life.

Despite the difficulties of conducting archaeological investigations while construction activities are ongoing, it can be said that the monitoring project at the Gateway Arch was quite successful. The primary lesson of the project was the fact that, despite decades of building, demolition, rebuilding, and extensive landscape modification, beneath the layers of rubble intact archaeological deposits associated with the early history of the city can still be found. Another success of the project, and likely more significant, is the fact that federal, state, and city entities, Native American nations, as well as special interest groups, contractors, and individuals came together to devise a plan to recover and preserve a small portion of the heritage of the City of St. Louis. This project will provide material for future study and some extraordinary artifacts for display in the new museum.

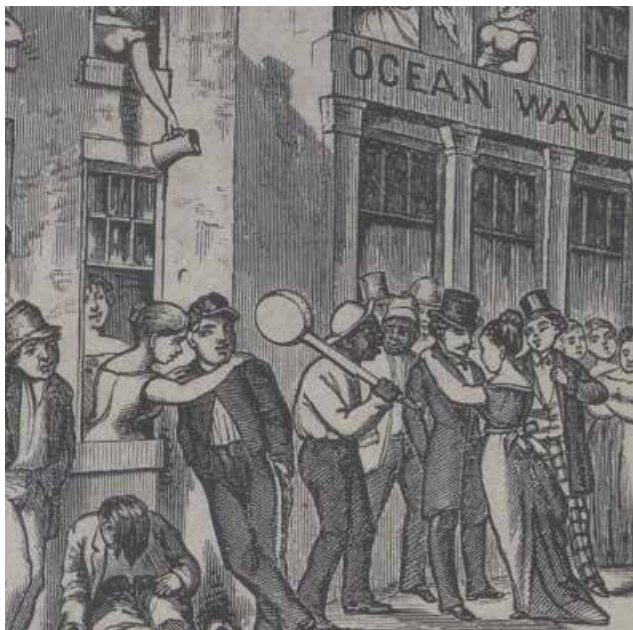
Mustard pot imported from Paris, France. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



Yellowware chamber pot likely of American manufacture. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



A conjectural reconstruction by Bob Moore of the Washington House Hotel at the corner of Main and Pine streets, as it may have looked in 1821, using the Sketchup 3D computer drawing program. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



Depiction of the Almond Street-Poplar Street brothel area in Dacus and Buell's 1878 *Guide to the City of St. Louis*. (Image: Missouri History Museum)



Staffordshire blue transferware bowl. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



Heavily corroded remains of a brass Belgian pocket pistol (below) along with a photo of an intact specimen (above). (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

ENDNOTES

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Outfitted for the Unknown

Explorer Titian Peale's Clothing
and Scientific Equipment

BY JENNIFER CLARK



Titian Ramsay Peale—a memorable name for a great American scientist, artist, explorer, museum curator, bureaucrat, and photographer—is a largely unknown figure today. Peale played a role in many exciting ventures of the 1800s and interacted with some of the most prominent people of his time. His adventures and discoveries never propelled him to the fame or fortune other explorers received, partly because of issues with publication of the results of his travels, but he participated in expeditions both to the West and around the world and created wonderful works of art documenting his trips.

Literally born in the family museum in Philadelphia when it was located in Philosophical Hall, Titian Peale grew up surrounded by one of the foremost natural history collections of its day. Titian's father, Charles Willson Peale, was a talented artist and scientist who founded the nation's first museum. Peale served as an aide to George Washington during the American Revolution and painted famous battle scenes of the conflict. His museum displayed these along with portraits of most of the founding fathers of the United States, a collection of mounted animal and bird specimens, and the first fossilized skeleton of a mammoth to be exhumed and preserved. Thomas Jefferson sent two grizzly bear cubs to Peale after they proved too wild for the White House (they were too wild for the museum as well, and they had to be put down after menacing the family). Peale named his children after famous artists he admired, and Titian was the youngest in a family whose collection also boasted Rembrandt, Raphaelle, Angelica Kauffman, and Rubens. Most of the boys took up the family professions of painting and natural history.¹

Peale started to practice as an artist and naturalist quite young, and his early work with caterpillars, butterflies, and moths started a lifelong interest in those creatures and led to his election to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia when he was only seventeen. His first major collecting trip, to Georgia and Florida, was made with family friend Thomas Say and other members of the academy.

In 1819, young Peale's proven talent for painting animals, birds, and insects, and his experience in taking care of biological specimens in the Peale Museum won him a position as assistant naturalist on a major western expedition of discovery. Major

(Left) In a self-portrait, Charles Willson Peale, Titian Peale's father, raises the curtain on his museum on the second floor of Independence Hall. The museum moved to Independence Hall from Philosophical Hall when Titian was three years old, in 1802. Note the mastodon skeleton on the right. (Image: *Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*)

Stephen Long assembled a team of scientists, including Peale, to accompany Col. Henry Atkinson's Yellowstone Expedition. The expedition's major goal was to establish a military outpost at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, but it also included a scientific corps led by Long to explore and record information about the region. The group included a geologist, a botanist, Peale's friend Thomas Say as the zoologist, Stephen Seymour as the artist, and Peale as assistant naturalist. Peale's role was to collect specimens, draw them, preserve the skins, and sketch geological features of interest.²

Portrait of Titian R. Peale by his father, Charles Willson Peale, 1819. (Image: *Private Collection*)



The journey was long and dangerous, including travel up the Missouri further than any steamboat had passed before. Prior to the departure of the expedition, Charles Willson Peale painted their portraits, including this one of his son, above—partly to console the adventurers' loved ones if they didn't survive the journey.³

Samuel Seymour was the expedition's official artist, tasked with producing sketches of landscapes as well as portraits and sketches of the American Indians they encountered. However, Rembrandt Peale, Titian's older brother and arguably the best-known artist of the second generation of Peales, advised Titian to work somewhat beyond his

official role. He suggested that Titian make notes on everything and paint the Indians he encountered in their native garb, as well as their lodges.⁴

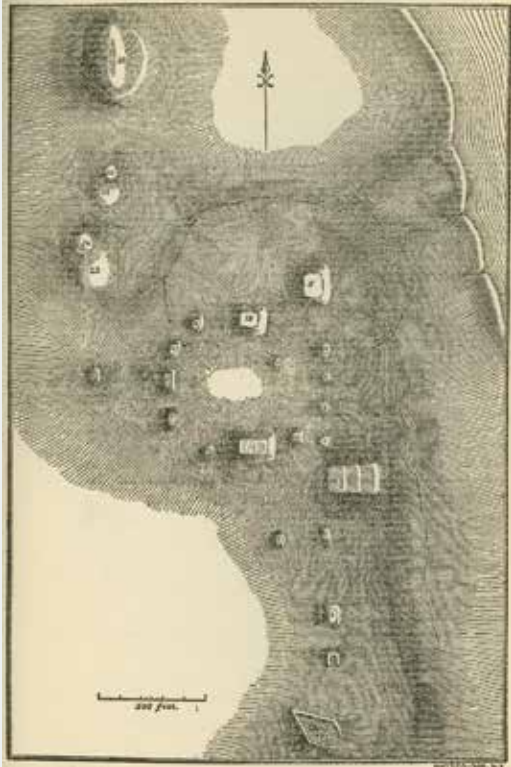
The Long contingent of the expedition traveled in a steamboat called *Western Engineer*. Built in Pittsburgh, “it was furnished with two propelling wheels placed in the stern, one of which bore in large letters the name of James Monroe, and the other that of John C. Calhoun. The President of the United States and the Secretary of War were thus represented as the propelling power of the expedition.”⁵ The bow was carved to look like a giant serpent, and steam from the boilers was vented through its mouth,

creating quite a singular sight. In his journal Peale wrote, “It will give, no doubt, to the Indians an idea that the boat is pulled along by this monster.”⁶

Travel on a steamboat down the Ohio River in 1819 was slow, with many stops for wood for fuel. The naturalists took advantage of these opportunities and explored the area along the river, documenting the wildlife they encountered. A long delay in Cincinnati gave them time to visit Drake’s Western Museum. Although small, it was one of the city’s major attractions. A 33-year-old artist and exhibit preparer was working for Drake, and although Peale did not mention him, John James Audubon recalled

A watercolor painting from one of Peale’s sketchbooks from the Long Expedition, 1820. This type of painting was actually the domain of Samuel Seymour, another member of the expedition, but Peale did a few watercolor paintings of the scenery and the people they encountered, like this study of the expedition on horseback being observed by American Indians. (Image: Yale University Art Gallery)





The 1819 Peale and Say map of the St. Louis mound group as engraved for the *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of The Smithsonian Institution, 1862*. The distance between the smaller mounds and the big mound on the north (number 27) was foreshortened on this map.

The Peale and Say map as redrawn for the St. Louis City Engineer's Office; *St. Louis Plat Map Book A, Page 23a*, c. 1840, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Land Survey, Rolla, Missouri. This map clearly shows the Big Mound in an inset in the upper right-hand corner. Note: the map is orientated with north to the right.



Investigations of the St. Louis Mound Group

During their layover in St. Louis, Peale and Say became fascinated with the Indian mounds to the north of the then-settled portions of the town. They spent time examining and documenting them, measuring the height of each and the distances between them. Say noted:

Tumuli and other remains of the labors of nations of Indians that inhabited this region many ages since are remarkably numerous about St. Louis. Those tumuli immediately northward of the town and within a short distance of it are twenty-seven in number, of various forms and magnitudes, arranged nearly in a line from north to south. . . It seems probable these piles of earth were raised as cemeteries, or they may have supported altars for religious ceremonies. We cannot conceive any useful purpose to which they can have been applicable in war, unless as elevated stations from which to observe the motions of an approaching enemy; but for this purpose a single mound would have been sufficient, and the place chosen would probably have been different.¹

Although incorrect about the number of mounds—there were twenty-six, the twenty-seventh being the old Spanish-era bastion at the northwest corner of the town—the report made by Peale and Say, accompanied by a detailed survey drawing of the mounds, provides scholars with the most important single piece of evidence about them, since they were so little altered when the survey was made. Very few investigations into Indian mounds had been made prior to 1819, which makes this report stand out and puts it on the cutting edge of research during that era.

Just a few years later the St. Louis street grid was extended northward, and new construction obliterated many of the smaller mounds. Later in time the larger mounds disappeared as well, with houses built on some, one turned into an outdoor entertainment venue, and another hollowed out to form the city's reservoir. The largest mound, called by the French the "Grange de Terre," or earthen barn, was demolished in 1869 to use the dirt it contained for a railroad bed. This wanton destruction was lamented by some even at the time.

Peale was not one to forget about past research, and after finding the report of the mounds among his papers forty years after it was written, he had it published in the Smithsonian annual report. Apparently, the map of the mounds was known in the interval, however, for a draftsman in the St. Louis engineering office copied the map sometime around the year 1840 for the city's records.

END NOTE

¹ T.R. Peale, "Ancient Mounds at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1819."

that “Messrs. T. Peale, Thomas Say and others stared at my drawings.”⁷⁷

The expedition arrived in St. Louis on June 9 and was “received with a salute from a 6 pounder on the bank and from several steam boats along the town.”⁷⁸ In St. Louis they enjoyed greater hospitality than they expected, and Peale encountered a familiar face:

The day after our arrival the citizens gave us a dinner at which the officers of the 5th and 6th regiment, the rifle regiment, and all the captains of the steamboats in port were invited, that I never expected to see here. We were entertained by the band of the 6th regiment while dining. There are several

Titian Peale’s buckskin shirt, jacket, and overalls, c. 1819. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



Osage Indians in town among them an old chief whose portraits Rembrandt painted in Philadelphia some years since.⁹

It is not known when Peale commissioned a suit of clothing for himself to wear during the rigors of the expedition. It consisted of a hunting jacket, shirt, and overalls, all of buckskin. This clothing has survived and will be among the items displayed in the museum beneath the Gateway Arch. Peale may have commissioned it in any of the larger towns along his route—Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, or St. Louis. William L. Brown, former National Park Service historian and expert on early men’s clothing, identified these items as having been made for Peale over the winter of 1819–1820, probably by an American Indian woman from one of the nearby tribes. This may be true of the jacket, but the shirt and overalls are constructed in the European manner, and the overalls have a stamped maker’s mark.¹⁰ Brown described the jacket as a combination of buckskin tanned in the fashion of American Indian tribes and buckskin tanned in the commercial, European manner. The hunting shirt was a simple, practical article

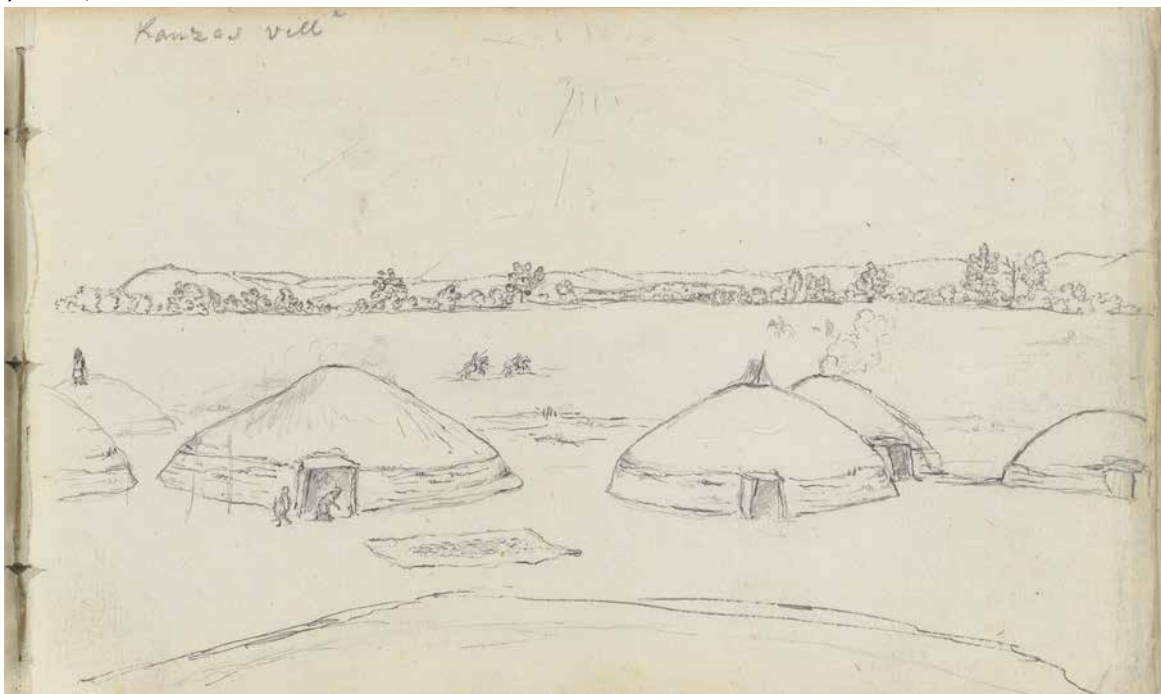
of clothing that descended from a simple peasant smock.¹¹

The shirt features small buttons for closure and is cut round at the waist, without tails. The sleeves have drawstring closures. The overalls have a button fly and drawstrings at the ankles; the waistband is augmented with linen cloth. Each of the parts of both the shirt and the overalls is cut just as a cloth garment would have been made, except the material is finely tanned buckskin. Peale probably valued the toughness and durability of this clothing as the expedition set off for the frontier from St. Louis on June 21, 1819.¹²

By October 11 the *Western Engineer* had reached its furthest point in traveling up the Missouri River in the vicinity of modern Omaha, Nebraska. The naturalists made a winter camp they called “Engineer Cantonment,” while Long traveled back to Washington to report on the progress made and to attempt to secure more funding for the expedition. The naturalists kept busy making observations and sketches and interacting with the local Indians. It was at Engineer Cantonment that Thomas Say classified the coyote for science as *canis latrans*, with Peale providing the illustration. Apparently, Peale was handy at building traps and was also a crack shot; at one point it was noted that he “killed two deer with a single shot.”¹³

When Long returned to the cantonment in early

A sketch of a Kansa earth lodge village from one of Peale’s sketchbooks kept on the Long Expedition, 1820. Peale usually made pencil sketches of his subjects in these smallish journals that could be easily transported. (Image: Yale University Gallery of Art)



1820, he carried a completely different set of orders. A financial crisis and shifting political and funding imperatives ended the Yellowstone Expedition and changed the objective of Long's scientific work. The group's new mission was to venture out to the Rocky Mountains, and on the return trip to explore and document the Red River, now a vital waterway that formed part of the border with Spain, according to the Adams-Onís Treaty between the United States and Spain settled in 1819. Long replaced a few members of the team, adding Edwin James, a botanist, geographer, and geologist who was tasked with writing the account of the expedition for publication.¹⁴



The snow petrel—one of only three birds that only breeds in Antarctica—as drawn by Titian Peale. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

Peale meticulously documented his sketches and detailed drawings, assigning numbers to each to match them to the specimens captured in the field. As the scientific work of the expedition began once more, Peale used the supplies and items he brought with him to aid his field work.¹⁵ Since much of his work centered upon entomology, an insect collection kit would have been extremely useful. The kit Peale used in 1819 survives and is part of the collection displayed in the new museum. It consists of a leather box that held a glass vial, folded papers to store specimens, a dissecting needle, some wooden tweezers, a card labeled “Titian Ramsay Peale,” and two pencils. Two insect collecting nets that look a bit like tennis racquets hinged together were known as “forceps nets” or “flappers,” and also constituted part

of his equipment. One of Peale's butterfly drawings contains an illustration of this type of net. “It was used for taking insects from foliage; the frames were closed upon the specimen, which was then transfixed with a pin inserted through the gauze.”¹⁶

The expedition ventured across the Great Plains, exploring along the Platte River to the Rockies. James described the prairie as “desolate” and “disgusting.”¹⁷ Peale collected specimens, and he and Seymour continued to paint and sketch their surroundings. They encountered “prairie dogs, pronghorns, black-tailed jackrabbits, wapiti, badgers, prairie wolves, golden eagles, white-tailed deer, ravens, great horned owls, even the crustacean inhabitants of transient pools.”¹⁸ They marveled at the abundance of wildlife on the plains. When they reached the Rockies, Edwin James and two other members of the team ascended Pike's Peak—something Pike had been unable to do himself thirteen years earlier.

Unfortunately, the return trip was fraught with missteps and problems. Three of the soldiers deserted while the party was still on the Great Plains, taking with them not only horses, but also scientific specimens and journals, none of which were ever recovered. The remaining members of the expedition made an error in navigation and traveled back along the wrong river—the Canadian, the largest tributary of the Arkansas River—instead of the Red River, which they were tasked with exploring. This failure, coupled with their portrayal of the Great Plains as a “desert” incapable of becoming useful land, made the expedition look like a failure. They simply couldn't imagine that this land could become a place for agriculture based on the techniques in use in their time.¹⁹

In terms of biological research, the expedition achieved much, collecting and documenting many different species. Over the course of the expedition Titian Peale collected numerous specimens and executed 214 drawings and paintings.²⁰ His diary from the period after the group passed Fort Osage in western Missouri is lost, but it was obviously available to Edwin James when he wrote the final report of the mission. Many of Seymour's images were also lost, but many of Peale's sketches from this period survive. His deep interest in all living creatures, especially insects and birds, kept him busy making a record of the wildlife they encountered. Seymour and Peale also recorded many of the earliest western images of American Indians—more than a decade before paintings by George Catlin and Karl Bodmer.²¹ They influenced literature as well: James Fenimore Cooper mined the account of the

expedition for details about the land and people that he used in his book *The Prairie*.²²

After the expedition, Peale had a long and varied career. He continued exploring and illustrating—he worked as artist for Charles Lucien Bonaparte, nephew of the Emperor Napoleon and a well-known ornithologist. Peale produced ten plates for Bonaparte's *American Ornithology* after traveling to Florida to observe the birds in their natural habitat.²³

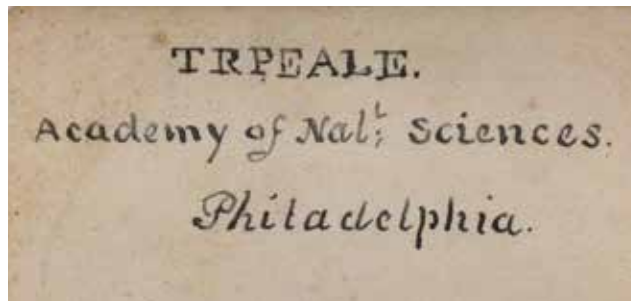
He traveled to Colombia, drawing and collecting butterflies. In 1833 he planned to publish a work by subscription to consist of one hundred plates of *Lepidoptera* (butterflies and moths). The subscription to his work was to have been published in groups of four plates every two months and costing ten dollars a year. Sadly, only one number of this planned project was ever published, with only twenty-eight subscribers enrolled.²⁴

Titian Peale became curator of his father's museum after Charles Willson Peale died in 1827 at the age of 86. Titian Peale joined another major expedition, the United States Exploring Expedition of 1838–1842 (known as either the U.S. Ex. Ex. or the



Titian Peale's paintings of Wilson's Phalarope, Piping Plover, and Schinz's Sandpiper from Charles Lucien Bonaparte's *American Ornithology, or, The Natural History of Birds Inhabiting the United States, Not Given by Wilson: with Figures Drawn, Engraved, and Coloured, from Nature*, 1833. (Image: Biodiversity Heritage Library, scanned by the Smithsonian Institution)

Wilkes Expedition) as the chief naturalist. A wildly ambitious venture, the expedition consisted of six ships and 346 men—including nine scientists and artists. The expedition circumnavigated the globe and explored portions of the coast of Antarctica, visiting Fiji, Australia and New Zealand, the Philippines, Hawaii, the Cape of Good Hope, and the northwest



Peale's card from the collection of his scientific equipment. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

coast of the United States, including the Columbia River.²⁵

Though it included a scientific corps—and this may be the voyage's greatest legacy—the expedition's purpose was as much to produce navigable charts as scientific inquiry. This led to conflicts between the leader of the expedition, Charles Wilkes, and the scientific team. Though frustrated by Wilkes' leadership, Peale still had amazing opportunities for research. On this voyage Peale and two of the artists in the group used a new tool, the camera lucida—a device that projected an image of an item that could be traced on a piece of paper to make sketches and drawings. Peale was the only member of the scientific group who traveled through the South Polar Sea for the first sighting of Antarctica.²⁶ In 1841, Peale suffered a devastating blow to his research as many of his specimens and notes were lost when the ship on which he traveled, the U.S.S. *Peacock*, ran aground in the Columbia River and sank. In spite of this loss, the expedition produced 4,000 artifacts—Peale alone collected 2,150 birds, 134 mammals, and 588 species of fish.²⁷

Major disagreements between the scientists and Wilkes over the production of the reports and the sheer inability of the young nation to handle the scope of the collections meant that it took many years for publication of scientific data and for the specimens to find permanent homes. The newly formed National Institute of the Promotion of Science took over the collection and created an exhibit in the Patent Office Building in Washington, D.C., in 1842.²⁸

Peale's fortunes continued to fall, both personally and professionally. In 1849 his wife and daughter both died of tuberculosis. That same year, the Philadelphia Museum failed, and the natural history collections were sold, some of them to P.T. Barnum, who had opened a museum nearby that had helped to drive the Philadelphia Museum out of business.²⁹ Due to fires and subsequent sales, it

is difficult to trace the history of where the natural history specimens ended up, though a few went to the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University—perhaps five bird specimens from the Long Expedition.³⁰ However, due to Peale’s careful specimen preservation, many of the actual butterflies and moths collected by Peale on the U.S. Exploring Expedition (U.S. Ex. Ex.) are still extant at the Academy of Natural Sciences at Drexel University. They are housed in the innovative bookish cases he designed and constructed, allowing the viewer to see both sides of the specimens. This amazing resource, one of the oldest natural history collections in America, was conserved and photographed by the Academy of Natural Sciences and is viewable online.³¹

The Collection of the Exploring Expedition became wildly popular. Over the course of the next decade, more than a hundred thousand people made their way each year to the Patent Office to view the exhibit, Charles Dickens and Ralph Waldo Emerson among them. Peale’s explorations once again found their way into the literature of the day. In addition to Cooper, Herman Melville also mined Wilkes’s *Account of the United States Exploring Expedition* for material for his book. Despite this, it was difficult for Wilkes to secure funding to prepare the multitude of reports. Wilkes argued with Peale over the zoology report, and few copies were printed, with most of those burning in a fire at the Library of Congress. Wilkes took Peale off the payroll in 1848, and the final zoological report was written and published in 1853 by another scientist. No report on entomology emerged, and Peale’s research on *Lepidoptera* on the expedition was never published.³²

This conflict with Wilkes hurt Peale’s professional reputation, and with the museum closed, he had to turn to another profession to support himself, taking a position at the U.S. Patent Office.³³

It seems too wild to be coincidental that Peale found a position with the U.S. Patent Office, the very organization whose building was the home of the U.S. Ex. Ex. Exhibit; perhaps he chose the position to be close to the collections. He worked for the Patent

Office for 25 years, first as an assistant examiner and then as principal examiner in the Division of Fine Arts and Photography. The U.S. Ex. Ex. Collections went on to become one of the founding collections of the Smithsonian, the official National Museum of the United States, and were displayed there. Peale tried to obtain a position at the Smithsonian, but he lost the opportunity to a younger man.³⁴

During this period, Peale adopted a new medium as an artistic outlet, turning to photography in the early days of the art and becoming one of the first well-known photographers in America. He took the image of the Statue of Freedom, below, in 1863 shortly before it was placed atop the U.S. Capitol Dome along with many other images in the District of Columbia, now held by the Photographic History Collection at the National Museum of American History. His hundreds of images of the nation’s capital in the 1850s and 1860s produced a valuable record of this period of construction of many of the landmarks of democracy, including very early images of the National Mall.³⁵

Peale never attained national fame or recognition for his work. In retirement, he worked on his *Lepidoptera* again, but failed to publish. He continued to collect specimens and reworked some of his early sketches—including some from the Long Expedition—into oil paintings. He published a treatise on the mounting of *Lepidoptera* for the *Smithsonian Institute Annual Report* of 1863. By the time of his death, his work “had passed from natural history into the world of art.”³⁶

Perhaps the time has come to finally recognize the impact of the work of Titian Peale—130 years after his death, his masterwork, *The Butterflies of North America*, was published in 2015 by the American Museum of Natural History, showcasing his beautiful color plates.³⁷ It seems entirely appropriate that a collection of artifacts belonging to a man whose life was spent in, around, and collecting for museums should have his insect kit and exploring garb on display for the public at the Gateway Arch in St. Louis.

Peale’s photograph of the Statue of Freedom before it was placed atop the United States Capitol Dome. Peale’s photographs document many of the iconic structures of Washington during their construction. This statue was designed by Thomas Crawford and cast in bronze by Clark Mills. One of Mills’ skilled workers on this project was an enslaved laborer named Philip Reid. During the course of casting the statue, Reid earned his own freedom when Lincoln signed an Emancipation Act that released certain persons held to service or labor in the District of Columbia in 1862. (Image: Library of Congress)



ENDNOTES

- ¹ Robert Cushman Murphy, “The Sketches of Titian Ramsey Peale,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 101:6; *Studies of Historical Documents in the Library of the American Philosophical Society*, Dec. 19, 1957, 523–31.
- ² Maxine Benson, *From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains: Major Stephen Long’s Expedition, 1819–1820* (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum, Inc., 1988), 8.
- ³ Howard Ensign Evans, *The Natural History of the Long Expedition* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 24.
- ⁴ Charlotte M. Porter, “The Lifework of Titian Ramsey Peale,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 129: 3 (September 1985), 301.
- ⁵ T.R. Peale, “Ancient Mounds at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1819,” *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 1862.
- ⁶ A.O. Weese, ed., “The Journal of Titian Ramsey Peale, Pioneer Naturalist,” *Missouri Historical Review* 41:2 (January 1947), 149.
- ⁷ Evans, *The Natural History of the Long Expedition*, 31.
- ⁸ Weese, “The Journal of Titian Ramsey Peale, Pioneer Naturalist,” 159.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.
- ¹⁰ Although difficult to decipher because the brand or stamp is sporadic in its clarity, the maker’s mark seems to say “A. WRIGHT, Buckskin, Skin, & Glove Manufactory.” The final line is so far undecipherable—it may contain the name of the place of manufacture. A search of city directories for Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Boston for 1819 failed to turn up a Wright clothing, tailoring, or buckskin tannery business. St. Louis did not publish its first city directory until 1821, and the firm likewise does not appear there. Any leads on a location for this business would be very helpful to the National Park Service.
- ¹¹ William L. Brown III, “19th Century Buckskin Hunting Shirt/Jacket,” *Smoke Signals* (May/June 2011), 2.
- ¹² Weese, “The Journal of Titian Ramsey Peale, Pioneer Naturalist,” 162.
- ¹³ Evans, *The Natural History of the Long Expedition*, 72.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.
- ¹⁵ Today, Peale’s sketchbooks are in the collections of Yale University Art Gallery, while other drawings are housed at the American Philosophical Society. Kenneth Haltman, *Looking Close and Seeing Far: Samuel Seymour, Titian Ramsey Peale, and the Art of the Long Expedition, 1818–1823* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008), 113.
- ¹⁶ R.S. Wilkinson, “Cover Photo: A Note About Nets,” *The Michigan Entomologist* 1:3 (December 1966).
- ¹⁷ Benson, *From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*, xi.
- ¹⁸ Richard G. Beidleman, “The 1820 Long Expedition,” *American Zoologist* 26 (1986), 309.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 312, and Benson, *From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*, xv.
- ²⁰ Neal Woodman, “The Stephen H. Long Expedition (1819–1820), Titian R. Peale’s Field Illustrations, and the Lost Holotypes of the North American Shrews *Sorex Brevicaudus* Say and *Sorex Parvus* Say (Mammalia: Soricidae) from the Philadelphia Museum.” *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, March 2009, 120.
- ²¹ Benson, *From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*, xvii, and Evans, *The Natural History of the Long Expedition*, 24.
- ²² Benson, *From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*, xviii.
- ²³ Porter, “The Lifework of Titian Ramsey Peale,” 302.
- ²⁴ John V. Calhoun and David M. Wright, “Remarks on the Recent Publication of Titian R. Peale’s ‘Lost Manuscript,’ Including New Information about Peale’s *Lepidoptera* Illustrations,” *Journal of Research on Lepidoptera* 49, 21–51.
- ²⁵ Nathaniel Philbrick, *Sea of Glory: America’s Voyage of Discovery, The U.S. Exploring Expedition, 1838–1842* (London: Penguin, 2004).
- ²⁶ Antony Adler, “From the Pacific to the Patent Office: The United States Exploring Expedition and the Origins of America’s First National Museum,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 23: 1 (May 2011), 49–74.
- ²⁷ Philbrick, *Sea of Glory*, 77–78 and 332.
- ²⁸ Adler, “From the Pacific to the Patent Office,” 49.
- ²⁹ Woodman, “The Stephen H. Long Expedition (1819–1820), Titian R. Peale’s Field Illustrations, and the Lost Holotypes of the North American Shrews,” 125.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 125–26.
- ³¹ “The Historic Titian Peale Butterfly and Moth Collection,” Images of the Peale Butterfly and Moth Collection, The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, 2004, clade.ansp.org/entomology/collections/peale/.
- ³² Philbrick, *Sea of Glory*, 332–42, and Adler, “From the Pacific to the Patent Office,” 55–58.
- ³³ Porter, “The Lifework of Titian Ramsey Peale,” 303–4.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 348–50.
- ³⁵ Angela Modany, “Titian Ramsay Peale: Washington, D.C., in Collodion,” National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, 21 Feb. 2012, americanhistory.si.edu/blog/2012/02/titian-ramsay-peale-washington-dc-in-collodion.html.
- ³⁶ Porter, “The Lifework of Titian Ramsey Peale,” 310.
- ³⁷ Calhoun and Wright, “Remarks on the Recent Publication of Titian R. Peale’s ‘Lost Manuscript,’” 31.

Sanctuary on the Mississippi!

St. Louis as a Way Station for Mormon Emigration



BY THOMAS L. FARMER AND FRED E. WOODS



A Mormon artist, Frederick Piercy, chronicled his journey to Utah in beautiful drawings and sketches. Piercy made this view of St. Louis in 1853 on his way to Utah. (Image: History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints)

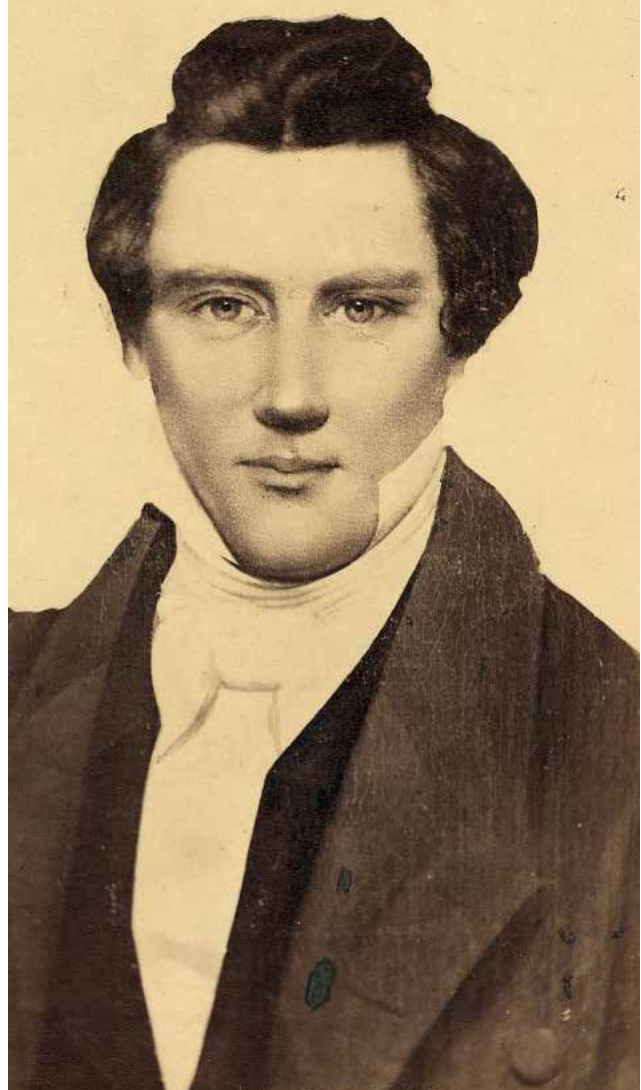
When people study Mormon interactions with the State of Missouri, they often encounter only negative information—the expulsion of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) from the Independence area and Missouri governor Lilburn Boggs’ 1838 “extermination” order that forced thousands of Mormons to flee from northwest Missouri to Illinois for safety. But there is another aspect of the story, one that is documented on a commemorative marker on the side of the Missouri Athletic Club in downtown St. Louis.¹ It is a story that includes a welcoming attitude toward Mormon emigrants and a safe haven for the thousands who used St. Louis as a way station on the trail to Utah. A few of the Mormon emigrant families who resided in nineteenth-century St. Louis included the Udalls, Romneys, Marriotts, and others whose descendants later played significant roles in the history of the United States.

St. Louis was first introduced to Mormons in 1831 when church leaders passed through the city on their way to Jackson County in western Missouri. Upon arrival, church founder and president Joseph Smith, Jr., received a revelation that Independence, Missouri, was to be the center place of Zion, a Latter-day Saint gathering place, a “New Jerusalem.” Members of the church from the eastern states migrated west to populate the new community.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was a brand-new faith at the time. Smith organized the church on April 6, 1830, in upstate New York. It was based on a vision Smith had of God the Father and his son, Jesus Christ. Smith reported that an angel named Moroni later appeared to him on numerous occasions, eventually leading Smith to a place near Palmyra, New York, called the Hill Cumorah. There, Smith said he



Commemorative marker on the side of the Missouri Athletic Club in downtown St. Louis, placed by Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville historian and Mormon Trail scholar Stanley B. Kimball in 1975. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)



Joseph Smith, Jr., prophet and organizer of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Image: National Park Service, Gateway Arch National Park)

unearthed a set of golden plates that he later translated into what became known as the *Book of Mormon*, which he considered to be a companion scripture to the Bible. Smith was a charismatic figure, and the church grew and flourished, acquiring many converts, who in turn were encouraged to become missionaries.

The common Missourians felt threatened by the rise of the church and its transplantation to their state, however. Not only were most Mormons from the northeastern U.S. and opposed to slavery, but also they had a different form of worship, tended to be clannish, and represented a formidable voting bloc. In 1833, the local population forced the Mormons out of Jackson County by mob action. The Mormon refugees eventually settled in the new counties of

Caldwell and Davies, designated for their use by the Missouri legislature in December 1836. After a short truce, friction between the old-time Missourians and



C.C.A. Cristensen, *Saints Driven from Jackson County, Missouri, 1833*, part of the Mormon Panarama, 1878. (Image, Brigham Young University Museum of Art)

Mormons heated up once more, culminating with the so-called Missouri Mormon war. Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs called out the state militia and issued an extermination order on October 27, 1838, declaring: “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and *must be exterminated* or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good.”²

The St. Louis community was opposed to this action and defended the Mormons in the press in 1838. During this period of persecution, church members sought employment and protection in St. Louis. Moreover, John Corroll, a member of the Missouri legislature, brought a petition to state officials from the Saints requesting security for the Mormons. Henry S. Geyer of St. Louis, one of the few representatives who spoke in favor of the Saints, “staunchly defended the Mormons and claimed he would leave the state if the exterminating order issued by Governor Boggs was carried out. After much controversy and angry disputation in the Legislative Hall at Jefferson City, Missouri, only a minority spoke in favor of the Saints, but among these were all the members from St. Louis.”³

During the winter of 1838–1839 Saints driven from western Missouri were forced to cross the Mississippi, congregating in Quincy, Illinois. In a meeting on March 9, 1839, it was decided “that all the Saints in St. Louis, or such of them as the committee may think proper, be called upon to assist them.”⁴ Not only did the St. Louis members offer support, but the St. Louis press also expressed sympathy for the suffering emigrants. Although Governor Boggs’ order was enforced in northwest Missouri, no Latter-day Saints were expelled from St. Louis, and St. Louis citizens held several fundraising

meetings to aid the Mormon exiles in their dire condition.⁵

To provide a more permanent haven for the exiles, a failed speculative community, Commerce, Illinois, was purchased and renamed Nauvoo, meaning “beautiful” in Hebrew. Within seven short years of its founding, Nauvoo topped Chicago in population as it grew to be the largest city in Illinois.⁶ Mormon missionaries were successful in the British



Daguerreotype of the Mormon Temple in Nauvoo, Illinois, c. 1846, taken after the Mormon exodus. (Image: History Library, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*)

Isles, and by 1840 a massive immigration of British converts began arriving in Nauvoo by way of ships sailing from Liverpool to New Orleans, and then by steamboat up the Mississippi. These converts often stopped briefly in St. Louis. The Latter-day Saints periodical *Times and Seasons*, published at Nauvoo, stated of St. Louisans: “We have often heard reflections cast upon St. Louis . . . many of our best brethren have gone there, according to counsel, to obtain employment. They have in all times of trouble been ready to stand by us, and to lend a helping hand, both personal and pecuniary.”⁷

A St. Louis branch⁸ of the church was organized to minister to a growing St. Louis Mormon population of about 400.⁹ Meanwhile, persecution of church members continued in Illinois as it had in northwestern Missouri. Smith and his brother Hyrum were arrested and charged with the destruction of the Nauvoo anti-Mormon newspaper called *The Expositor*. On June 27, 1844, they were killed at the Carthage, Illinois, jail while being held with a guarantee of safety from Illinois governor Thomas

Ford.¹⁰ After Joseph Smith's death, Brigham Young, president of the council of twelve apostles, was sustained as the church's new leader in August 1844.

Residents of Illinois who thought the Mormon problem was solved with the death of Smith were surprised when the church continued to grow. Tensions grew, and the Mormon leadership decided that the church would move west, outside the then boundaries of the United States to northern Mexico—an area that is now the State of Utah. The Mormons planned on abandoning their city in the spring of 1846, but after hearing rumors



Brigham Young, key architect of the western migration of the Latter-day Saints in the mid-19th century. (Image: Missouri History Museum)

that the federal army was headed to Nauvoo to stop a rumored counterfeiting operation, the city's evacuation began in earnest on February 4, 1846. This event was the beginning of the Mormon exodus/expulsion. By this time Nauvoo had a population of approximately 12,000. By the fall of 1846, Nauvoo was a ghost town, with approximately 5,500 Mormons scattered across the Iowa territory, 4,000 in Winter Quarters, Nebraska (just north of present-day Omaha), and approximately 1,700 in St. Louis.

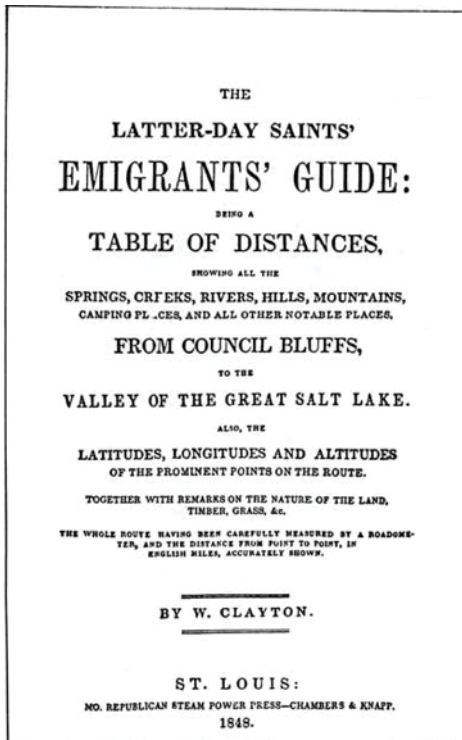
The "Saint Louis Branch Historical Record" for 1846–1847 offers the best account of the events in St. Louis during the Nauvoo exodus. On May 10, 1846, Joseph A. Stratton took charge of the St. Louis branch of the church.¹¹ He rented the Mechanics Institute where hundreds of Saints assembled. Church member James Palmer recalled: "On the sabbaths we assembled in public worship, and partook of our sacraments, while our numbers were continually increasing as of our Scattered poor came along, from time to time, till at length we could boast of a branch of the church containing 800 members."¹² President

Stratton remarked on the "many families of the Saints [who] were hurrying to St. Louis for refuge from the storm of persecution raging in and around Nauvoo and who present a deplorable appearance, having had to flee with their lives and sacrificing all their comfort and throwing themselves on the mercy and compassion of a Benevolent Public. . . ."¹³

St. Louis now emerged as city of refuge on the trail to Utah, a haven where Mormons could practice their religion without persecution. On April 5, 1847, a "pioneer company" of 143 men, three women, and two children, led by Brigham Young, set out for the West. Young decided against using the Oregon Trail, instead breaking a new road on the north side of the Platte River. By July 24, 1847, Young had led the advance company into the valley of the Great Salt Lake and decided that this was the place to begin his Mormon colony in the West. In 1848 Young led 1,200 more emigrants west, and by 1852 Mormon colonies had spread in a 300-mile radius from the Great Salt Lake, including more than 20,000 inhabitants. A planned Mormon state, called "Deseret," was to include parts or all of modern-day Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

The Mormon colonies grew so quickly because they were supplemented by thousands of converts from Europe. In 1849, the Perpetual Emigrating Fund was established to help these often-impoorished people on their journey.¹⁴ Agents secured passage on ships for Mormon emigrants organized in companies. Heading the companies were missionaries who had lived in Utah and already traveled the Mormon Trail at least once in each direction. A Mormon emigration agent met the inbound European vessels in New Orleans and then arranged for a secure passage to St. Louis. Finally, emigration companies were organized in St. Louis to travel the Missouri River to the overland trail head.

Church leaders chose St. Louis as the most logical "safety valve" city for emigrants from Europe. Emigrants who ran out of funds (and there were thousands) could easily obtain work in growing St. Louis until they could earn the money necessary to buy the wagons and other outfitting supplies needed for the journey west to Utah. For many years after the initial Mormon trek, the exodus of the Saints evolved into a highly organized mass migration with St. Louis as one of its most crucial hubs. The Mormon Trail passed through St. Louis and by steamboat up the Missouri River to various overland trail heads, which shifted from year to year. This altered route was influenced after the 1852 *Saluda* steamboat disaster at Lexington, Missouri, which claimed the lives of about two dozen Saints and



Above—Title page of *The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants' Guide*, printed in St. Louis, 1848. (Image: History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

injured others.¹⁵ In later years the trail head changed to Westport (1854) and Atchison (1855), but St. Louis remained a vital part of the Mormon journey to Utah until the threat of yellow fever and cholera along the Mississippi forced another change. Due to direction from Brigham Young, by 1856 the Saints began to use the eastern ports of Boston, Philadelphia, or New York,¹⁶ from which they rode the rails to Iowa City, the newly designated trail head for Mormon handcart and wagon companies. Handcarts were used up until 1860. With the coming of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 and its proximity to Salt Lake City, transportation by handcart and wagon was eliminated.

During the heyday of the Mormon exodus from 1848–1856, an essential tool in navigating one's way westward was a guidebook, and the Mormons produced one of the very best in St. Louis. William Clayton wrote *The Latter Day Saints' Emigrants' Guide* and had five thousand copies printed by the *Missouri Republican Press* in St. Louis in 1848. The guide was extremely

Below—Map showing the route of the initial Mormon migration from Nauvoo to the Great Salt Lake in 1846–47, and of the emigrants who passed through St. Louis and along the Missouri River between 1846 and 1855. (Image: National Park Service)



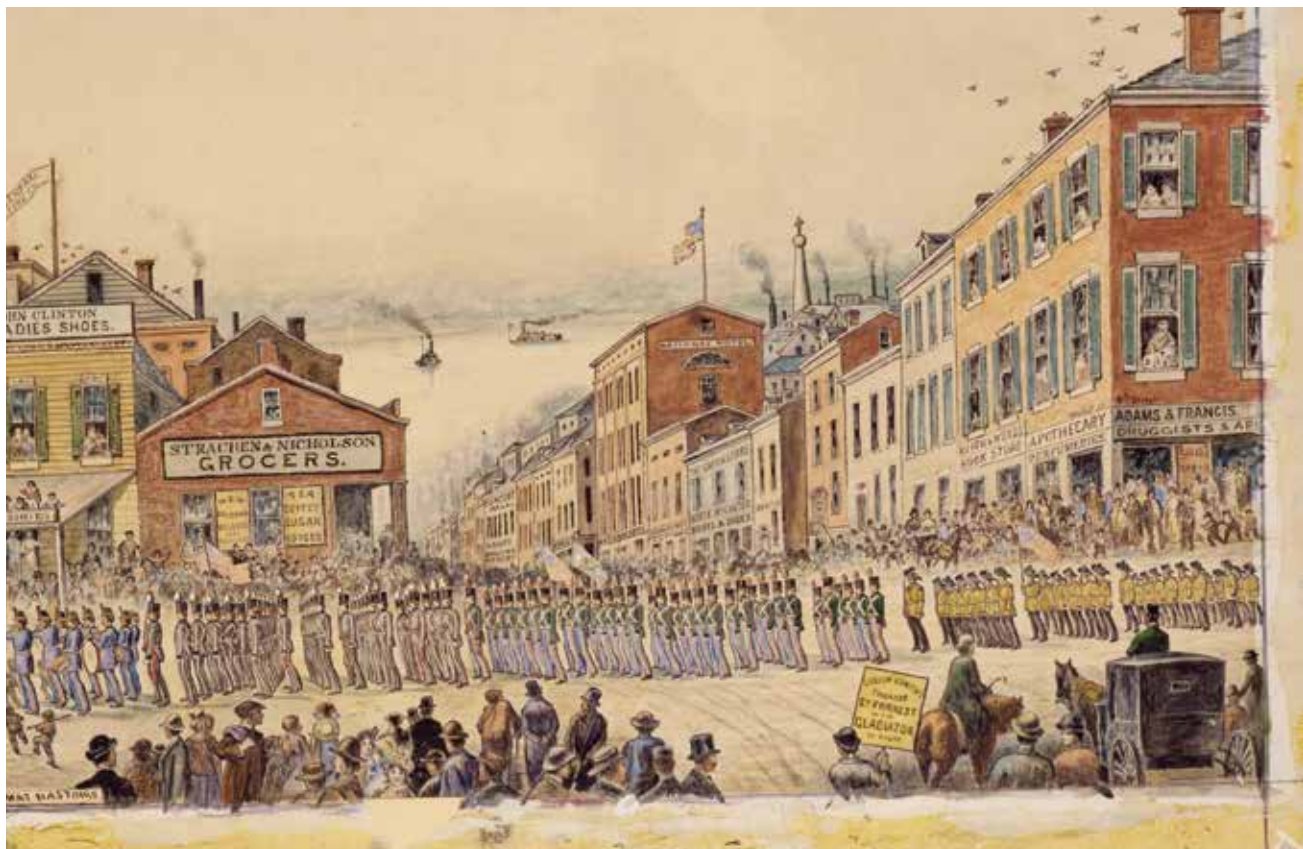
accurate because its distances were charted from actual odometer readings taken during the journey. Guidebooks told the immigrants what supplies they needed to bring in order to survive the months-long journey with few chances to resupply, what types of draft animals to buy, the locations of the best places to camp, and where dangerous places or routes existed. Clayton's guide was so popular that non-Mormon immigrants also began to use it, and other publishers plagiarized it.

Although the 1838 Missouri Mormon extermination order was not repealed until 1976, Mormons felt safe in St. Louis during the mid-nineteenth century. First, they were not planning on permanent residency; second, they were not a threat to the city's political powers; third, they were skilled workers; and finally, the general population was large, and the Mormons were dispersed throughout the metropolis. Approximately 22,000 Mormons passed through St. Louis between 1847 and 1855 on their way to Utah. For some, the stay in the city was only as long as necessary to transfer to another

steamboat heading up river to the Mormon overland trail head on the banks of the Missouri. However, others were forced to remain in St. Louis for months or even years, and a church organization was created to assist with both temporal and spiritual needs. The church procured housing in various sections of the city. Employment was found to enable the emigrants to earn the money they needed to pay for the overland journey to Utah. Local lay leaders were assigned to care for each church member staying in the city. Several meeting halls were rented over the course of a decade, including the Mechanics' Hall (between First and Biddle), the Concert Hall (at 56 Market, on the northern side of the Old Cathedral block), and finally the former Methodist Chapel (at 4th and Washington) in the autumn of 1854.¹⁷

Nathaniel Felt, a wealthy tailor from Salem, Massachusetts, coordinated church operations in St. Louis during the late 1840s. Felt planned to journey West with his family but "was stricken with fever and ague (malaria) on the frozen banks of the Missouri [Mississippi] River and unable to proceed."¹⁸ In his

St. Louis in 1843 by Mat Hastings. The view is from the courtyard of the Old Courthouse near 4th and Market streets, looking down Market to the river. Concert Hall can be seen midway between the National Hotel and the river on Market. Today, the KMOV Building stands where the National Hotel is depicted in the image; the steeple of the Old Cathedral can be seen to the right of the American flag, topped by an orb and a cross. (Image: Missouri History Museum)





This view of St. Louis was made by John Caspar Wild in 1840 from the roof of the Planter's House Hotel at Fourth and Chestnut streets. The building at the center of this cropped image is Concert Hall, where the Mormons met from 1851–1854. (Image: Missouri History Museum)

weakened condition, Felt was counseled to postpone his journey and brought his wife and two sons to St. Louis.¹⁹ On March 17, 1847 at a church council meeting at the Lyceum Hall, Felt facilitated the expansion of the St. Louis Branch to become the St. Louis Conference, with six church ecclesiastical units called wards.²⁰ A letter written on July 4, 1847, by John and Ellen Parker to their relative Samuel



The old Methodist Church, at 4th and Washington streets, was rented by the Mormons from November 1854 to June 1857. Erastus Snow lived at this site during this period, and the *St. Louis Luminary* was also printed here, 1854–1855. Today this is the site of the Missouri Athletic Club. (Image: Missouri History Museum)

Richards in Scotland demonstrated the plight of St. Louis Mormons, which Felt hoped to alleviate: “. . . the saints in this place is getting along as well as can be expected some keeps caring for the camp every few weeks and the majority of the saints would be glad to go if the [they] had the means.”²¹



Nathaniel Felt was the church president in St. Louis from 1846–1850. Felt facilitated the expansion of the St. Louis Branch to become the St. Louis Conference, with six church ecclesiastical units called wards. He also tended to the suffering during the cholera epidemic of 1849. (Image: Aaron West)

One of the committee's first steps was to secure lodging for the high volume of British immigrants passing through St. Louis. Minutes from a meeting held on May 3, 1849, indicated that many of the brethren “urged the propriety of procuring some place, as a rendezvous for the saints emigrating from Europe so that the Poor might have some place to put up at until they would be enabled to get Houses.”²²

At the same time, an even greater crisis arose in the form of cholera. One of the worst outbreaks in U.S. history spread through the St. Louis region in the spring of 1849. Causes and cures were unknown, and death was swift. A person could be healthy and eating breakfast in the morning and dead by evening. No one was immune to the ravages of the disease. John Martin, a passing Mormon immigrant, was an eyewitness to the devastating epidemic. Offered a job at the city hospital, he was responsible for transporting cholera victims in need of medical treatment as well as burying those who died. He described his circumstances in this way:

As I had got so far towards the gathering place of the Saints I was very desirous to get the remainder of the way. Yet I accepted the offer to run one of the city hospital vans and stayed until the cholera had died out. The death rate was very great for three months. Three of us were kept

busy running light wagons and we took two loads a day each and four dead bodies on each wagon at a time. As we took only such people known as paupers, this compared with the others filling more respected graves would make the numbers somewhat alarming.²³

In a church district high council meeting held on June 14, 1849, Nathaniel Felt prayed that the cholera epidemic might be arrested among the Saints in St. Louis. President Felt asked the branch presidents of the six wards to provide reports, which indicated the “assistants were faithfully discharging their duty, administering to the sick and comforting the hearts of the saints.”²⁴ President Felt counseled the Saints “to exercise faith in administering to the sick, and to comfort the afflicted &c.”²⁴ Former Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson recorded that during this period, Felt “was constantly called for by the afflicted people, and responded by visiting, administering [*sic*] to and comforting them, scarcely taking time to eat or sleep.”²⁵ Furthermore, a Felt family historian provided this vivid picture:

Every morning the “dead wagon” made its round, accompanied by the awful cry “bring out your dead.” Accompanying these wagons were immunes who would enter, take the corpses, sometimes without any preparation, to the vehicles, and then on to the cemetery where, due to the heavy death toll, the corpses were buried in trenches, hundreds at a time. Occasions like that required all the devotion, strength and love the Conference President possessed. He was called on constantly by the afflicted people. Hour after hour, without stopping sometimes to eat or sleep, President Felt visited the sick, administering to them, comforting them in their pain.²⁶

Notwithstanding his continual contact with this dreaded disease, Felt’s life was spared from the epidemic. By the end of the year, the cholera outbreak finally ceased, though it had taken 4,500 lives in St. Louis out of 63,000 city residents, about seven percent of the population.²⁷

One Mormon emigrant who was affected by the 1849 cholera epidemic was Temperance Westwood. She was born on August 19, 1839, in Worstershire, England, and after she and her family heard Mormon missionaries preach, they were all baptized into the church. The Westwoods sailed from Liverpool, England, to New Orleans and then on to St. Louis. Upon their arrival on April 28, 1849, the cholera epidemic was raging throughout the region. On May

1, 1849, Temperance’s mother, Ann, gave birth to her last child. On May 3 her father died; on May 4, her new infant sister followed; two days later her mother passed away. In the end, all that was left of the Westwood family were seven orphans.

Some of the children were adopted and others found employment. Temperance’s older sister, Mercy, who was sixteen, found work as a cook for the Roswell Field family. In the early summer of 1850, eleven-year-old Temperance went to visit her sister at the Field house on South Broadway, and Mercy mentioned to Mrs. Field that her sister needed a place to stay. Mrs. Field replied, “I want you to stay here and take care of Eugene, who is getting to be a big boy.” (Eugene was nine to ten months old at this time.) With that, Temperance was given complete charge of little Eugene. In 1853, Temperance decided it was time to join the Saints in the West, and she and her brother immigrated to Utah. At about the same time, Eugene’s father, Roswell Field, began working on the Dred Scott case. In 1891, while living in Farmington, Utah, Temperance read the poems of a famous author named Eugene Field who lived in Chicago. She wrote to him and asked if by any chance he was the child she had taken care of in St. Louis, and he replied that he was. Many letters were exchanged between the two until Eugene died on November 4, 1895, at the age of 45.²⁸

Leaving for Salt Lake City from St. Louis after his formal release as the president of the St. Louis Conference, Nathaniel Felt gave his farewell address to the St. Louis church members on April 20, 1850: “He much regretted leaving so many with whom he had been associated for the last three years. Yet he hoped it would not be long before he met them all in the Valley. . . . there are some of the best. Some of the purest here in Saint Louis. Those that would shine in the Kingdom of God.”²⁹

In the spring of 1851, the *Missouri Republican* included an article about the Mormons in St. Louis:

Although we have no Mormon Church in St. Louis, and though these people have no other class or permanent possession or permanent interest in our city, yet their numerical strength here is greater than may be imagined. Our city is the greatest recruiting point for Mormon emigrants from England and the Eastern States, and the former especially, whose funds generally become exhausted by the time they reach it, generally stop here several months, and not infrequently remain among us for a year or two pending a resumption of their journey to Salt Lake. . . .³⁰

In the spring of 1852, William Gibson was appointed as the new St. Louis Conference President and by June 1 established a local Perpetual Emigrating Fund that specifically catered to the members in St. Louis and helped them to move west.³¹

Gibson recorded in his journal some of the duties required by his position:

Fall [1852] I received a letter from SW Richards in Liverpool saying that there would be a large Emigration next spring & he would need from 300 to 500 waggons & he desired me [to] look around & find out where they could be got best & cheapest[.] [T]he waggons before this had mostly come from Cincinnati so I wrote there to find out their prices now & having got that I went around to all the wagon makers in St. Louis & round about it[.] I found that the Cheapest best & most reliable waggons were made by Mr. Espenschied of St. Louis[;] they cost about ten dollars less each wagon than those from Cincinnati & to judge from those we had received from there were much superior wagons[.]³²

By April 1854, Brigham Young and other church leaders in Salt Lake City had designated St. Louis as a location where the “Saints might gather with approbation who were unable to go directly through to Utah.” Young chose Apostle Erastus Snow to journey to St. Louis, organize a stake,³³ preside over the region, and oversee general emigration matters in Iowa and Missouri. Prior to his arrival, Snow formulated plans to establish a Latter-day Saint periodical, which he called the *St. Louis Luminary*.³⁴ After setting up an office in the basement of a chapel at the corner of Washington Avenue and 4th Street, Elder Snow launched his publication on November 22, 1854. In an article appearing in the first issue under the heading “Our Paper,” Snow explained, “The world has been too long stocked with falsehoods, slander[,] misrepresentations about Mormonism and the people of Utah.” Further, “As there is another side to the question: they ask, may not that side be more favorable? We reply, it is, and the LUMINARY will be devoted to the exposition of the favorable side of Mormonism.”³⁵ In addition to his desire that the *Luminary* act as “a channel through which [Latter-day Saint] principles might be made known,” Elder Snow also intended the paper to be used as an emigration guide of sorts for the many scattered Saints, offering news from Salt Lake City, support, and instruction.³⁶

On February 3, 1855, an article entitled “The City of St. Louis: Its Advantages and Disadvantages in Reference to Both Saints and Sinners,” Snow editorialized: “The *St. Louis Luminary* was published from November 22, 1854, to December 15, 1855. It ceased publication due to the death of the newly designated editor, Orson Spencer, in the fall of 1855, when church leaders decided to consolidate the Mormon periodicals being published in New York and Washington, D.C.”³⁷

On November 4, 1854, Elder Snow organized the St. Louis Stake, the sixteenth in the church and one of two stakes outside the boundary of the Utah territory.³⁹ The church site for the stake was at 4th and Washington in the newly remodeled former Methodist Church. Church services in this building were conducted in English, French, German, and Danish. No matter what country the church members were from, St. Louis Saints adopted them into an existing church community. In the same church building was the residence and office for Elder



The Field House, 634 South Broadway, once part of a row of identical Greek Revival townhouses. The house is open today as a historic site commemorating “the children’s poet” Eugene Field, his father Roswell Field, a key attorney for Dred Scott in his famous freedom suit, and the importance of the row house in St. Louis architecture. (Image: Eugene Field House Museum)

Erastus Snow, and in the basement was the printing press for the *St. Louis Luminary*. Elder Snow was the ecclesiastical leader and general emigration agent for Missouri and Iowa. St. Louis Stake presidents included Milos Andrus, who served for only one year before he led an emigrant company of sixty-three wagons to Salt Lake, arriving in the fall of 1855, and James Hart, who led the stake until he and a large number of Mormons left for the Salt Lake Valley on June 11, 1857, due to the pending “Utah War” being discussed in the local press.

In June 1857, with emigrants being diverted to eastern U.S. ports due to cholera, the St. Louis Stake was disbanded. There were still St. Louis Mormon congregations meeting in members’ homes, but the message to those remaining in the city was to emigrate west as soon as possible. Just prior to the start of the Civil War, Mormon apostles were sent from Utah to call any remaining Saints in cities in the midwest and east to flee to the top of the mountains for safety. The few Mormons who remained were those who were too poor to move west or lukewarm in the faith. During the Civil War years, the St. Louis Branch had a membership of about 150 members.

Approximately 22,000 of the 70,000 early Mormon pioneers came west to Utah through St. Louis between 1846 and 1857. Historian Stanley Kimball stated that “throughout the Missouri and Illinois periods of the Church, up to the coming of the railroad to Utah in 1869 and beyond, St. Louis was the most important non-Mormon city in Church history.”⁴⁰ Though largely forgotten, save for the plaque at the Missouri Athletic Club, the remarkable story of the Mormon experience in St. Louis adds another layer to the city’s rich cultural history.



Erastus Snow was assigned to St. Louis by Brigham Young to organize the St. Louis Stake in November 1854. He also founded a newspaper in the city, the *St. Louis Luminary*, to defend the church and to report church news in Utah and the Midwest. (Image: History Library, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*)



For a little over a year, from 1854 to 1855, the *St. Louis Luminary* reported the news to the Mormon community in St. Louis. (Image: Missouri History Museum)



One of the most famous images of the Mormon migration was created by C.C.A. Christensen in 1900. It depicts a handcart company crossing a stream. Most Mormons traveled to Utah in covered wagons just like those used by Oregon and California migrants. But between 1856 and 1860 approximately 3,000 Mormons, or about 4.3 percent of the total Mormon migration, pulled handcarts to their destination. Due to lack of church funds for wagons and draft animals, Brigham Young devised a plan to use single-axle handcarts that enabled one or two people to haul up to 500 pounds per cart. This inexpensive option allowed many poor European converts to travel to Utah. (Image: Museum of Church History and Art, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*)

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The plaque reads as follows: “Site of First Mormon Meeting Place in St. Louis—On this site from 1854 to 1857 stood the building used as the first Mormon Church in the St. Louis area.—Beginning in 1831 and the difficult days of persecution that followed, St. Louis provided an oasis of tolerance and security and was an economic and cultural metropolis offering religious freedom and employment to thousands of local Mormons and convert-immigrants en route to western Missouri, Illinois and later Utah. This marker is erected in appreciation of the continuing kindness St. Louis has extended to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Mormons. Mormon Pioneer Trail Foundation, 1975.” Concerning the meaning of the word “exterminate” in the early nineteenth century, historian Alexander L. Baugh wrote:
- Contrary to popular belief by many Latter-day Saints and even some Mormon historians, the governor’s Extermination Order was not meant to give authorization to the state militia or its citizens to openly kill or eradicate the Latter-day Saint population. Although Boggs did not like the Mormons, he was not a butcher and did not condone the unnecessary taking of human life. In a report issued to the Missouri House of Representatives Boggs himself stated the order and call-up of troops was issued “to prevent the effusion of blood.” Significantly, the first definition of the word *exterminate* as defined in Webster’s 1828 dictionary reads, “to drive from within the limits or borders.” Given this definition, the order should probably be interpreted to read that “the Mormons must be exterminated [*or in other words*] driven from the State . . . for the public peace.” Thus, Governor Boggs was calling for the removal of the Mormons by the militia, not their death sentence.
- See Baugh, ““The Mormons Must Be Treated As Enemies,”” in Susan Easton Black and Andrew C. Skinner, eds., *Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2005), 292–93.
- ² Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1964) 3:175.
- ³ Stanley B. Kimball, “The Saints and St. Louis, 1831–1857: An Oasis of Tolerance and Security,” *Brigham Young University Studies Quarterly* 13 (Spring 1975), 494. In a footnote on this page, Kimball explains that continual coverage of the Latter-day Saints occupied the attention of the St. Louis press for the next decade, noting that he had collected 690 articles “for the period of 1839–48 alone.”
- ⁴ *Journal History*, March 9, 1839, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
- ⁵ Kimball, “The Saints and St. Louis,” 494. See also Kate B. Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1959) 5:439, on citizens holding meetings to gather assistance for the Saints.
- ⁶ A synthesis of non-census data indicates that the population of Nauvoo grew from a hundred in 1839 to about four thousand in 1842, then shot to about twelve thousand by 1844. These numbers are based on the best available demographic information and should replace the older assumed or previously estimated population figures for Nauvoo. Susan Easton Black, “How Large Was the Population of Nauvoo?” *Brigham Young University Studies Quarterly* 35, 1995.
- ⁷ “Encouraging,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 15, 1845), 810.
- ⁸ Branches are the smallest LDS ecclesiastical units, which generally have less than one hundred church members in a geographic region.
- ⁹ *Journal History*, June 19, 1844, Church History Library. During this turbulent period of persecution, the St. Louis Saints sent weapons and ammunition to Nauvoo for defense. See Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5; *Journal History*, January 15, 1845, Church History Library.
- ¹⁰ The *St. Louis Evening Gazette* characterized “these homicides as nothing else than murder in cold blood . . . so atrocious and so unjustifiable as to leave the blackest stain on all its perpetrators—their aiders, abettors, and defenders.” *Journal History*, July 10, 1844, Church History Library.
- ¹¹ Saint Louis Branch Historical Record, 1846–47 (May 10, 1846), Church History Library.
- ¹² James Palmer Reminiscences, 90, microfilm of holograph, Church History Library.
- ¹³ Saint Louis Branch Historical Record, 1846–47 (September 21, 1846), Church History Library.
- ¹⁴ According to Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard Cowan, eds., *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2004), the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF) for the *general* Church “was officially launched in the Fall of 1849 . . . to assist the poor in gathering west. The PEF derived its name from the fact that after the immigrants settled in the Great Basin, they were expected to pay back the fund, thus making it perpetual.” Further, “The program was successful in providing some financial assistance for nearly half of the 100,000 Saints who emigrated during its existence” (910).
- ¹⁵ The 1853 emigration season was unique in that for the first and last time, Keokuk, Iowa, was designated as a Mormon emigration frontier outfitting point. This change in route was made due to the *Saluda* tragedy. Keokuk was used only for a year, since the extra three hundred miles of wagon travel across Iowa made the change in route rather unappealing. For more information, see William G. Hartley and Fred E. Woods, *Explosion of the Steamboat “Saluda”* (Riverton, Utah: Millennial Press, 2002) and William G. Hartley and Fred E. Woods, “Explosion of the Steamboat *Saluda*: Tragedy and Compassion at Lexington, Missouri, in 1852,”

- Missouri Historical Review* 99 (July 2005): 281–305.
- ¹⁶ On August 2, 1854, Brigham Young issued the following letter to Elder Franklin D. Richards, the LDS British Mission president who oversaw Mormon emigration from Liverpool: “You are aware of the sickness liable to assail our unacclimated brethren on the Mississippi river, hence I wish you to ship no more to New Orleans, but ship to Philadelphia, Boston and New York, giving preference in the order named.” Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, August 2, 1854, *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* 16 (October 23, 1854), 684.
- ¹⁷ The St. Louis Branch Historical Record details the hall rentals and costs during this period. A May 23, 1853, entry in SLR 1852–1856 notes that “Jefferson Hall was tendered at the rent of \$18 per month allowing six Sunday [sic] evenings ‘free’ if required and 4 ordinary nights through the year at \$5 per night.” Apparently, the Saints were paying \$325 per year to use the Concert Hall, and in May of 1853 they requested “a reduction of the rent of the Concert Hall, to 300\$ per yr.,” yet Mr. Xuapi, the owner, refused this proposition and instead demanded that they pay an additional “25\$ per yr making the rent 350\$”—a great fee for the Saints in St. Louis at this time. In September 1853, the members temporarily moved from Jefferson Hall into “the large room over Alexanders livery stables in Chestnut St.” See SLR 1852–1856 (September 2, 1853), 110. Later, on September 5, 1854, during a Priesthood meeting held at “the mound market room,” the subject of using a vacant Methodist chapel “instead of the concert Hall” was addressed and “met with universal approval.” Moreover, a September 15, 1854, entry mentions that “it would cost about \$100.00 to put it [the chapel] in repair, but much would be saved by the voluntary acts of the brethren; several volunteered to render aid, in the shape of carpentry, glazing whitening &c.” See *St. Louis Record*, 1852–56 (September 5, 1854), 170, and *St. Louis Record*, 1852–56 (September 15, 1854), 174, Church History Library.
- ¹⁸ “Elder N. H. Felt,” *Deseret News* (February 1887), 44.
- ¹⁹ Orson Ferguson Whitney, *History of Utah* (Salt Lake City: G.Q. Cannon, 1892–1898) 4:549.
- ²⁰ The ward divisions were the six existing city political wards whose boundaries were drawn by community leaders. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., revised and enlarged (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 177, explains that by 1842 the Latter-day Saints began to use the word “ward” for an ecclesiastical unit or a geographical subdivision, which was probably based on the use of the term in various American cities to designate a political precinct. This term is still used by the LDS Church to refer to ecclesiastical units that usually consist of several hundred church members. “Minutes of St. Louis Branch Feb. 14, 1847 to March 7, 1848,” March 17, 1847, Church History Library.
- ²¹ John and Ellen Parker to Samuel W. Richards, July 4, 1847, Samuel W. Richards Papers, Church History Library.
- ²² Record of the Saint Louis Branch, 1847–50 (May 3 and June 2, 1849), Church History Library.
- ²³ Autobiography of John Martin, Church History Library, 32.
- ²⁴ Record of the Saint Louis Branch 1847–1850 (July 7, 1849), Church History Library.
- ²⁵ Andrew Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson Publishing Company, 1887) 2:382.
- ²⁶ “Nathaniel Felt,” in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage* 5:445–46.
- ²⁷ Charles van Ravenswaay, “Years of Turmoil, Years of Growth: St. Louis in the 1850s,” *Missouri Bulletin* 23, part I (July 1967): 303.
- ²⁸ Temperance Westwood Moon contributed her story to the *Relief Society Magazine* 14 (March 1927): 130–33. Other sources include *The History of Temperance Westwood Moon* by Helen Potter Severson, a granddaughter, which the author received from one of Temperance’s descendants, Louise Thibaud, from Valley Center, Kansas, and Richard Wesley Westwood, by Richard E. Westwood, a personal family history obtained by the author.
- ²⁹ Eli B. Kelsey, “Letter to the editor,” [November 29, 1849], *Millennial Star* (January 15 1850), 27. At this time, President Felt’s office was located at no. 16 3rd Street in St. Louis. See *Journal History*, January 26, 1850, Church History Library. Record of the Saint Louis Branch, 1847–1850 (April 20, 1850), Church History Library. Nathaniel Felt, his wife, and two sons left St. Louis together and joined the Edward Woolley Company at Council Bluffs on June 25, 1850, to cross the plains. Nathaniel served as a chaplain and was frequently called on to preach. Although cholera infected many emigrants as they crossed the plains, the only person who died from this illness in the entire company was Felt’s teamster. Felt’s company arrived in Salt Lake City on October 6, 1850.
- ³⁰ “Mormons in St. Louis,” *Missouri Republican* (May 8, 1851), 3.
- ³¹ *St. Louis Record*, 1852–1856 (June 1, 1852), 8, Church History Library.
- ³² Journals of William Gibson, Fall 1852, 108; Spring 1853, 112. Louis Espenschied was a German immigrant who opened up his St. Louis wagon factory at age twenty-two in 1843. His grandson, Lloyd Espenschied, in “Louis Espenschied and Family,” *Missouri Historical Bulletin* 18 (January 1962): 91–92, noted, “Strangely enough, it appears to have been a religious sect that gave Louis his first considerable business in ‘prairie schooners.’ When the Mormons sallied forth westward from Nauvoo in 1846, bound across the vast plains toward the Great Salt Lake, they were desperately in need of wagons. They themselves built most of them, it seems, but they were obliged to call upon others.” Further, the eldest grandchild of Espenschied wrote, “Grandfather had made wagons for the Mormons when they left Illinois, and had made a special box on the back to hold fruit trees ready to plant.” An 1855 letter written

by John Wardle and Elder Erastus Snow to Espenschied noted, “Paid \$2,000.00 to Louis Espenschied and Co., for Wagons.” Letters between President Brigham Young and Louis Espenscheid revealed that Young and Espenschied were in correspondence with each other as late as 1859. See outgoing letter from Young to Espenschied dated, June 1, 1857, and incoming letter from Espenschied to Young, dated August 29, 1859, Church History Library.

³³ Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 89–90, explain that the term “stake” began to be used by the LDS Church as early as 1832 in Kirtland, Ohio, to refer to a basic ecclesiastical unit of the church. The term is still used by the LDS church to refer to an ecclesiastical unit or geographic region where members of several wards reside (each ward usually consisting of several hundred church members) which make up a stake where usually several thousand church members live.

³⁴ Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 257–58.

³⁵ “The City of St. Louis: Its Advantages and Disadvantages in Reference to Both Saints and Sinners,” *St. Louis Luminary* (February 3, 1855): 42.

³⁶ “Our Paper,” *St. Louis Luminary* (November 22, 1854), 2. Richard D. McClellan, “Polemical Periodicals,” edited by Garr, Cannon, and Cowa, *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*.

³⁷ *The Seer* was edited by Orson Pratt and published from 1853–1854 in both Washington, D.C., and Liverpool, England. It was followed by the *St. Louis Luminary* (November 1854–December 1855), established by Erastus Snow; the *Mormon*, founded by John Taylor in New York City in February 1855; and the *Western Standard* of San Francisco, edited by George Q. Cannon, beginning in February 1856.

³⁸ The other stake outside the Utah Territory was the San Bernardino Stake in California, organized on July 6, 1851.

³⁹ Kimball, “The Saints and St. Louis,” 489.

A B O U T T H E A U T H O R S



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