



# In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



## Hello to Family & Friends

Another day dawns on the road to Houston.

The Gateway Arch National Park. This is actually my second stop of the day. My first was at a Flying J truck stop for propane. I knew it was low before I left home, but I doubted I would find anyplace on a Sunday to fill it up. I was sure it was out when the furnace stopped working during the night and I woke up to 52 degrees in the RV. Just a touch on the chilly side. While I was there I checked the overnight temps along my proposed route and they all looked to be above freezing, so I filled up the water tank also. Well, not really, only two thirds, and that took about 30 minutes. They had the water pressure set to a trickle.

My next challenge was to find a parking space for the RV in downtown St. Louis. Not an easy task, although my search did allow me to see some odd sights.

According to my research there was parking right along the Mississippi, adjacent to the Arch, at the Lewis & Clark Memorial parking lot. What I found was a lot of off-duty and on-duty cops, a SWAT vehicle, and no parking. There must have been some kind of police run about to take place, because the SWAT team piled out of the truck wearing shorts and t-shirts, held up a SWAT flag and posed for pictures in front of the truck. No pictures of that unfortunately.

A couple on-duty officers advised me to try over on 4<sup>th</sup> St. I tried 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, made way back east towards the park and found two open spots in-line, big enough for my RV with max 30 minute parking. I paid for 30 and hoped for no ticket.

## Day 2

Monday  
November 4th

*On my way to Houston to  
visit Morgan & Matt*

Weather  
*40's and 50's Cloudy*

## In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allen Poe

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—  
This knight so bold—  
And o'er his heart a shadow—  
Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—  
'Shadow,' said he,  
'Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied,—  
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



I made my way into the park, consulted a map plaque, and headed into the visitor center.

Below is pretty much the highlight of the day. Outside of the theater was this bas-relief mural made with three dimensional bricks.



Ok, I talked to a ranger about this mural while I was standing there admiring it. He told me some facts, which I didn't bother to memorize, since I thought I would just bring it up online, read about it and pass the information to my readers. Unbelievably, I can find nothing but a couple photos. I thought this mural was fantastic. The entire mural (this is a panoramic photo) is about 30-35 feet long and 10 feet high; made with individual 4"x8" bricks; each brick is a single mold, no two alike; the artist lives in Nebraska or Kansas; each brick was fired there, numbered, wrapped in plastic, and shipped to the Arch for assembly. I find it hard to believe they don't make more of this than they do.



I bought my ticket to watch the movie and take the tram to the top - \$13 with the \$3 pass discount.

I am going to need a little help here. This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> time visiting the Arch. First time was back in 1968 I think, on our way to Texas (ironically) and Mexico, but I don't remember riding the tram to the top. Gpops? Did we ride to the top of the Arch? Second time was the late 90's - Erin? Morgan? Do either of you remember riding to the top? Because I don't remember this tram ride and I think I would if I had done it before.

Waiting to board our tram car. I am ridding in #7.

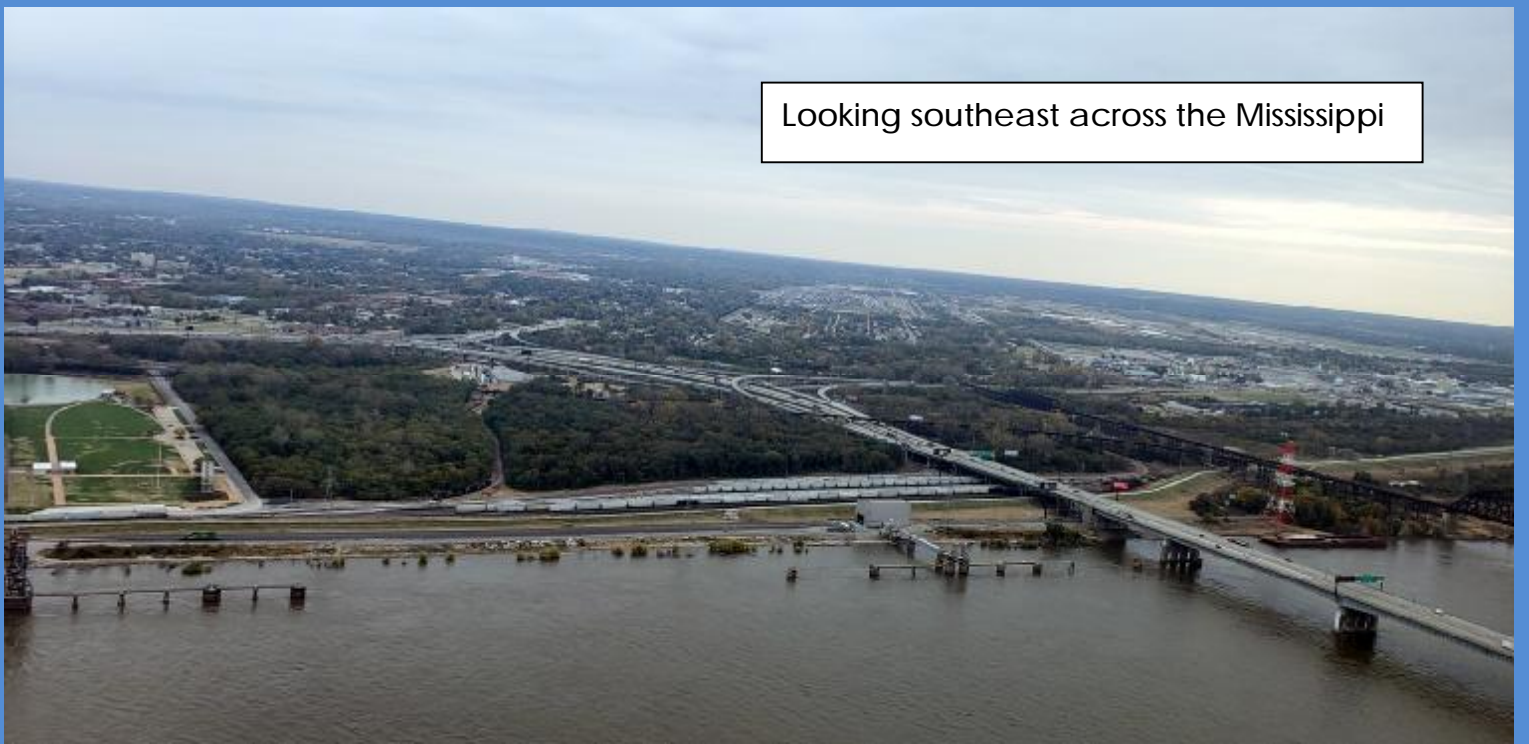


This is the view out of the door (window) of the tram, looking at the inside of the Arch. 1076 steps if you want to climb them, but then you'd end up in jail because it's against the law, unless absolutely necessary of course.

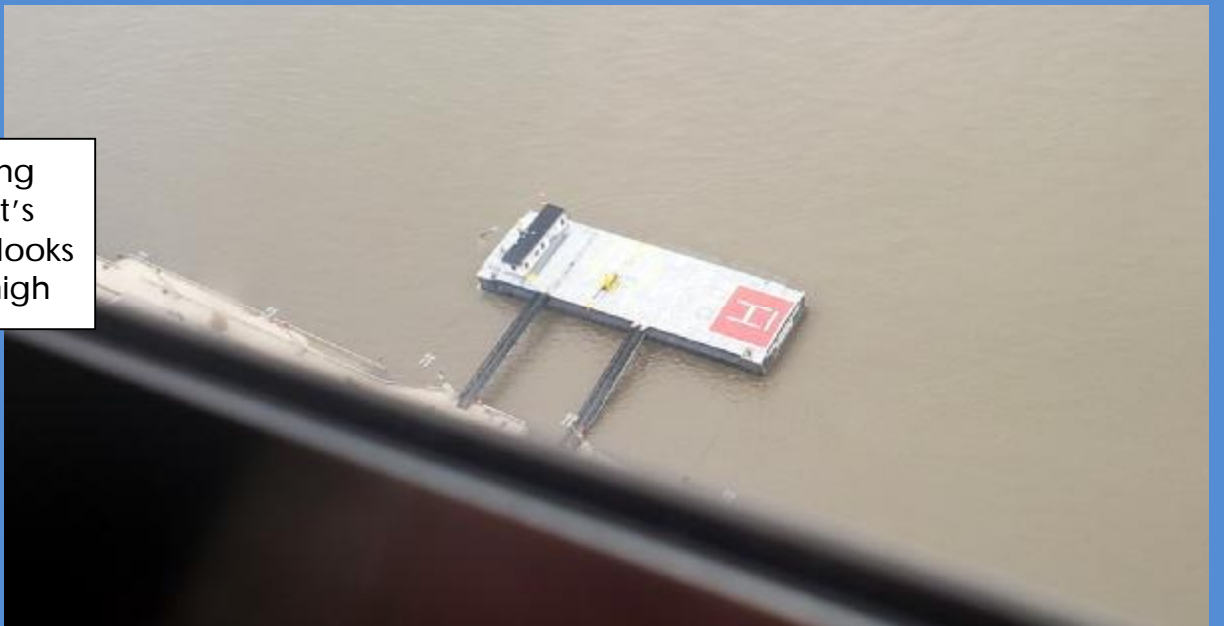
The windows at the top are about 7" x 21"



Looking southeast across the Mississippi

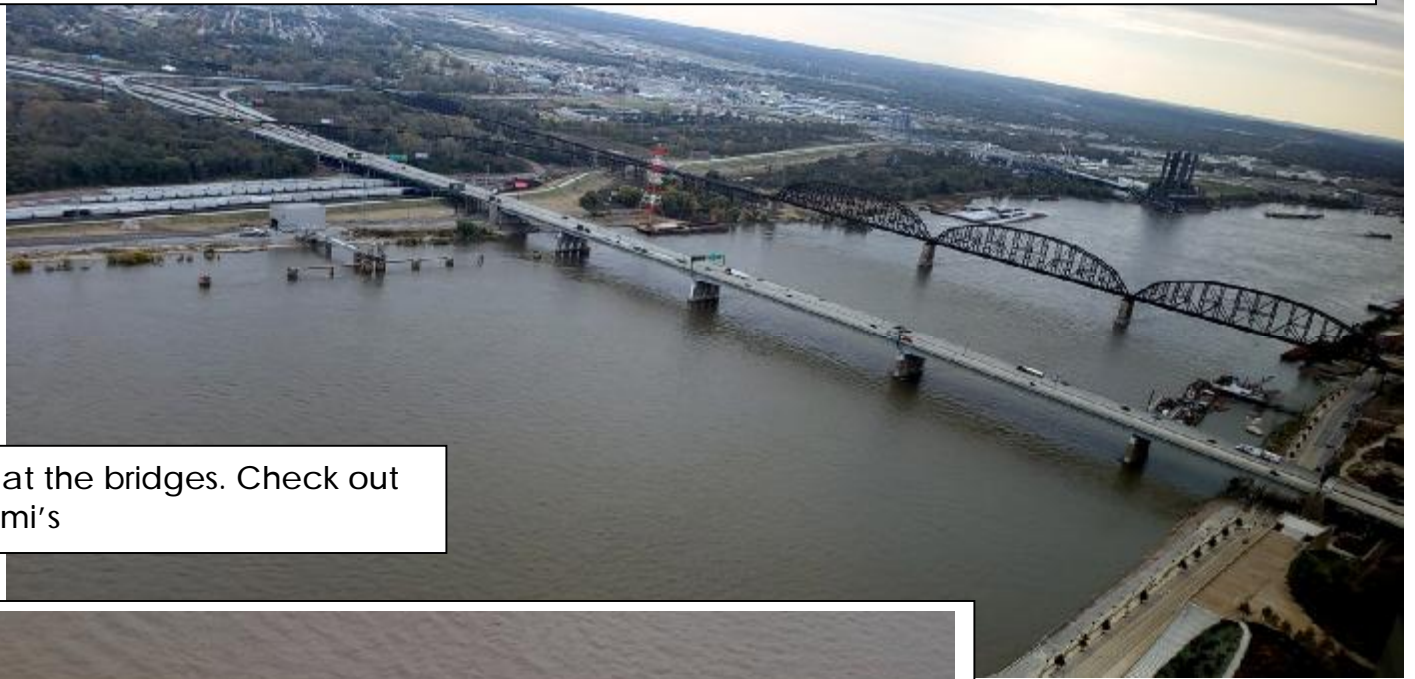


See that yellow thing on the barge? That's what a helicopter looks like from 630 feet high

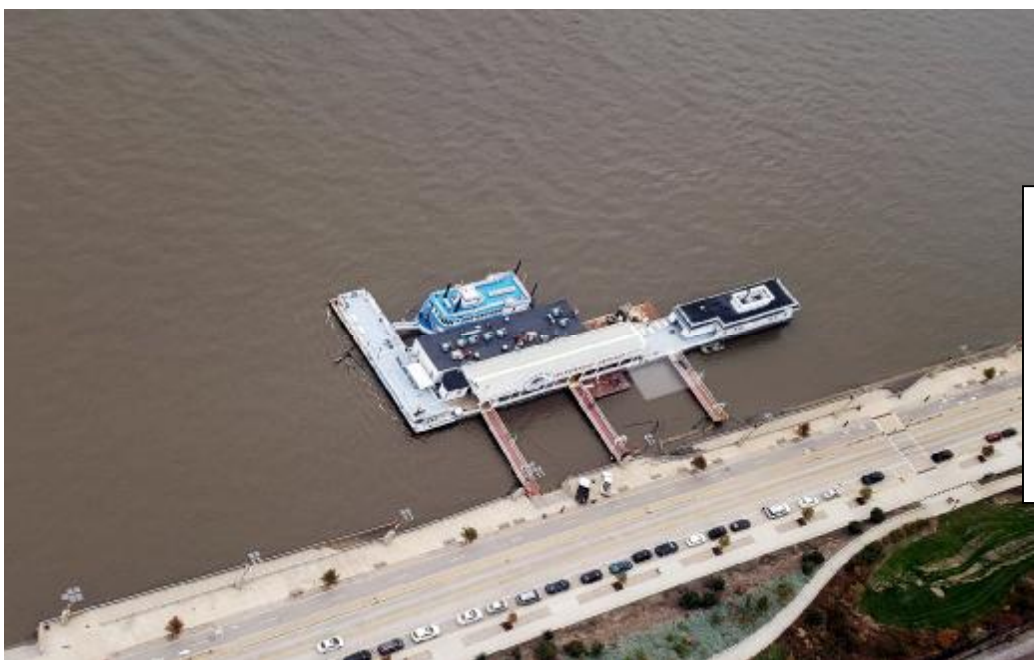




Pretty much straight east to Illinois and the Casino



South at the bridges. Check out the semi's

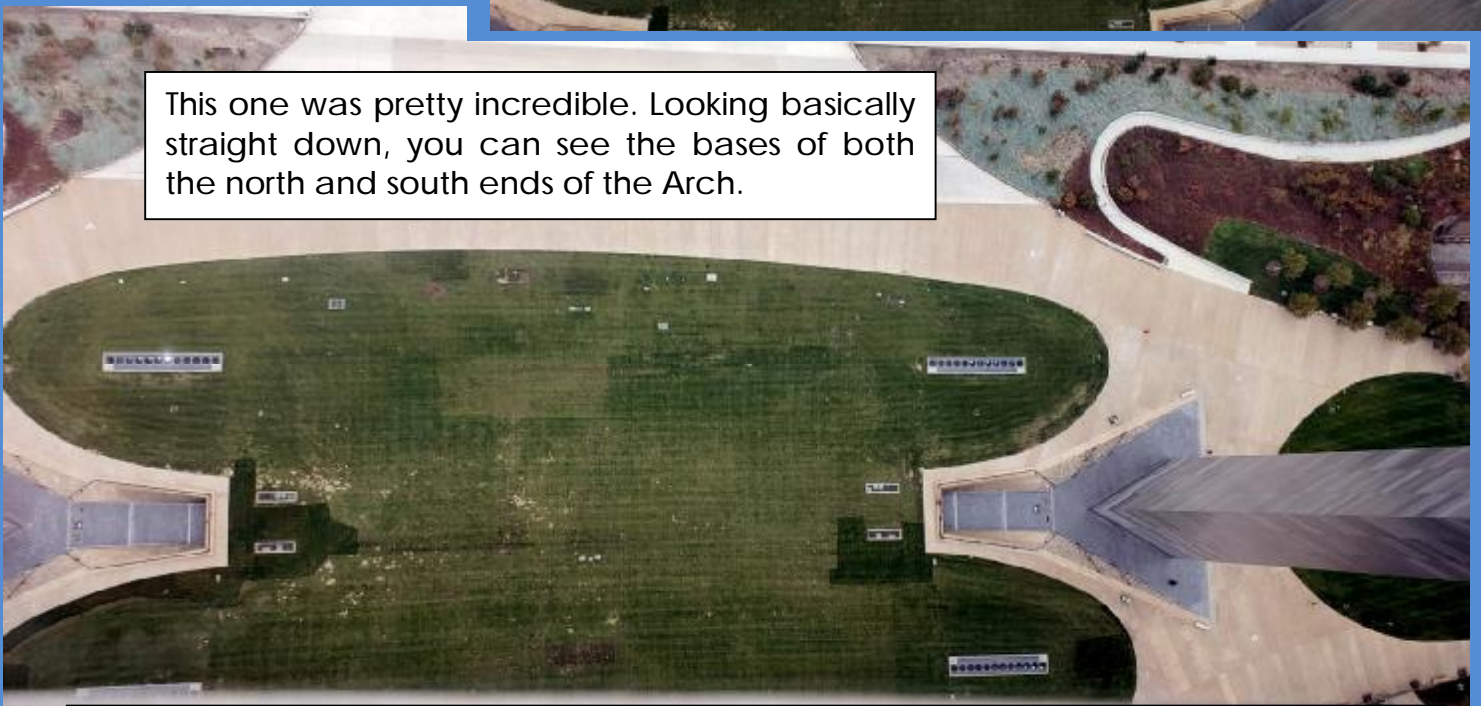


The Riverboat Cruise barge, and the riverboat.  
The road you see is the one I was trying to park on when I ran into the SWAT Team.

The park and the road again



This one was pretty incredible. Looking basically straight down, you can see the bases of both the north and south ends of the Arch.

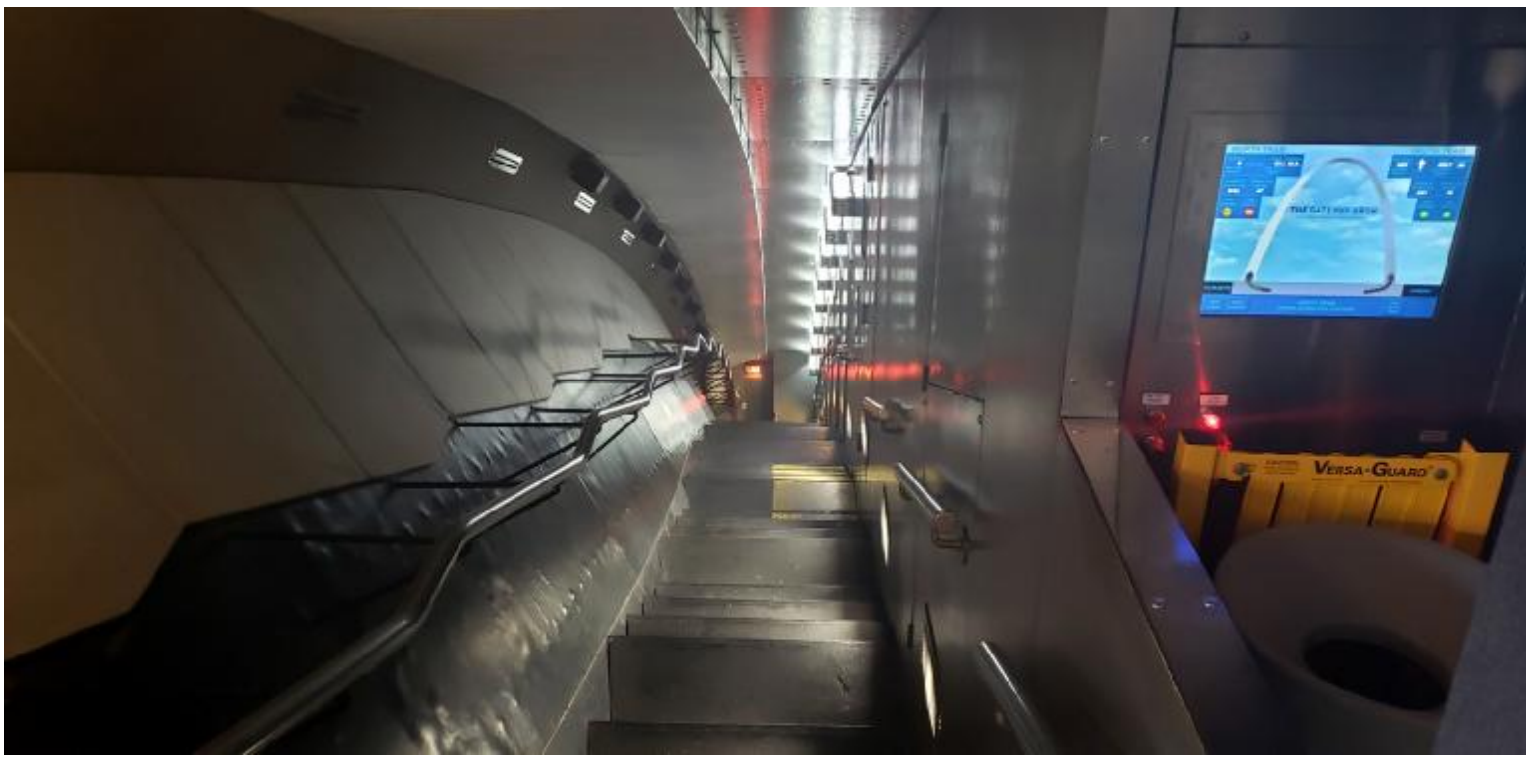


Looking directly west

Busch Stadium – Home of the Cardinals! BOOOOOO!!! I remember touring the stadium and the Clydesdales stable back in the 90's. If not for the round tower, I think we would be able to see the RV.



Ok, the entrance to the visitor center is in the circle structure below. Under the green grass is the visitor center, security stations, conference rooms, Tucker Theater, Arch Café, gift shop, information center, museum, mural and access to the trams. Paving is for foot traffic only.

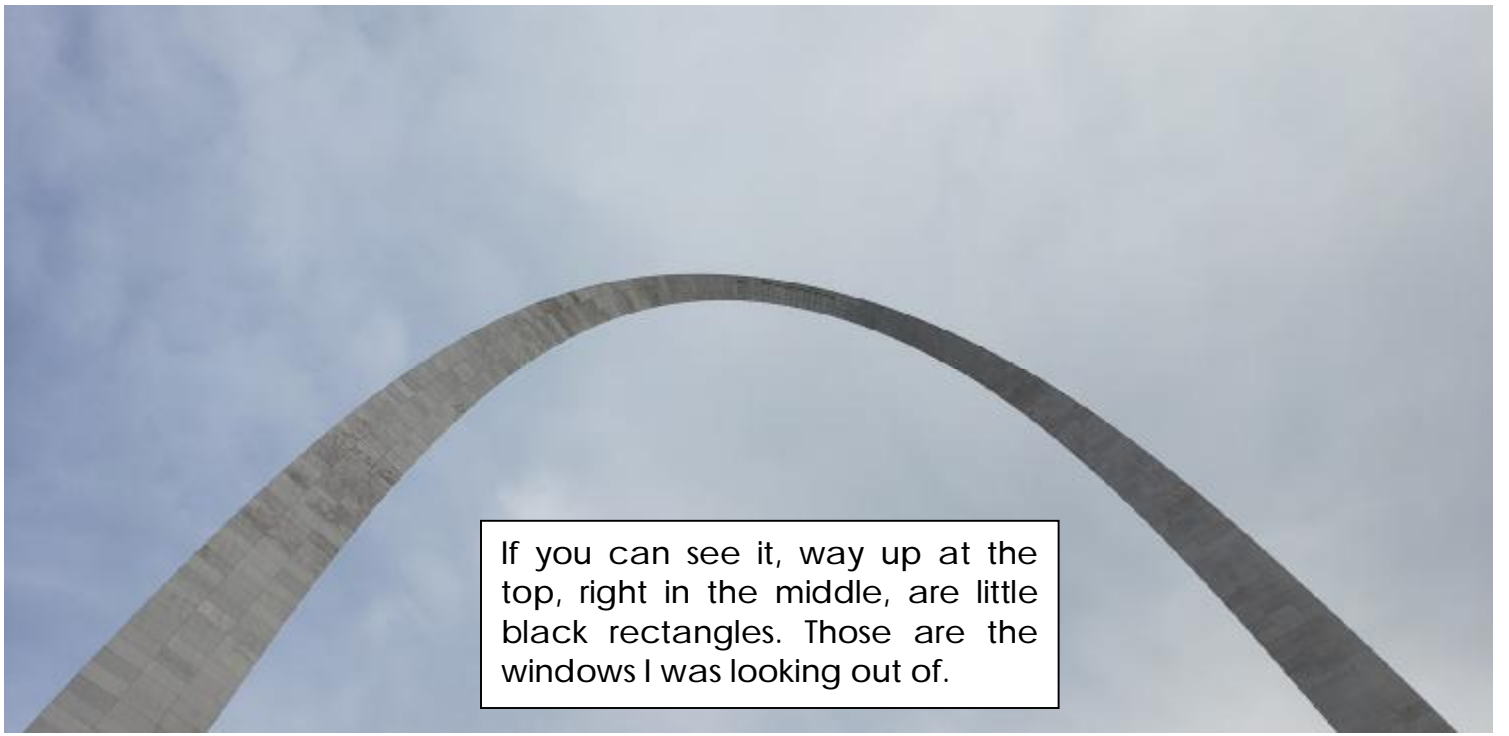


Above - An optical illusion. It looks like the steps are going up, but they're not. They're going Down, down to the trams.

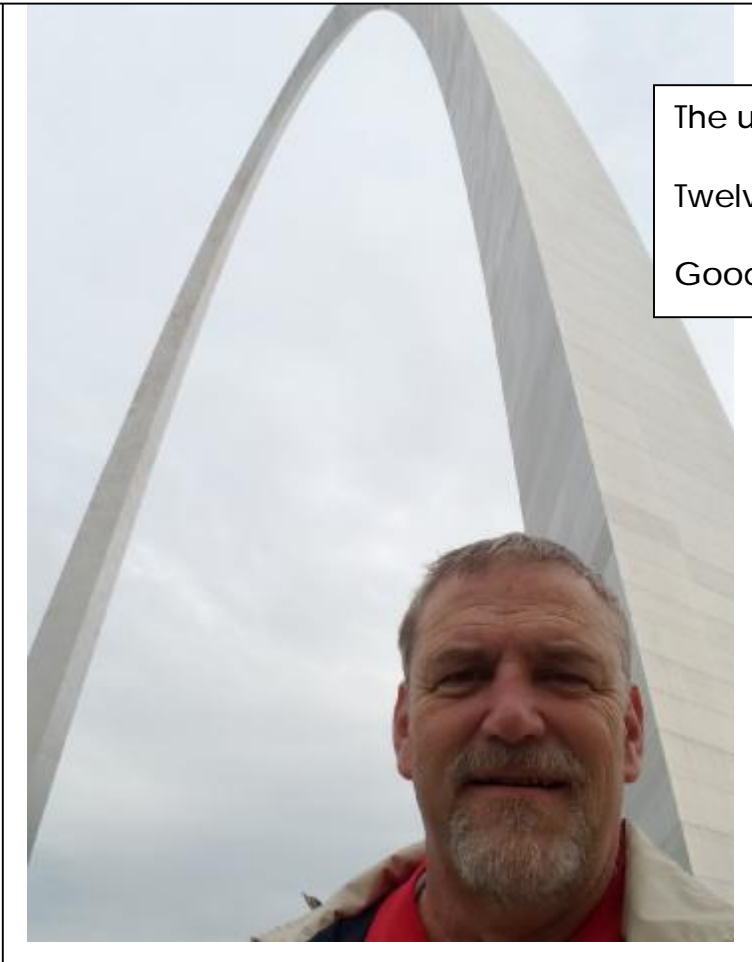
Below - A neat painted mural in the museum. Arrivals and departures from St. Louis







If you can see it, way up at the top, right in the middle, are little black rectangles. Those are the windows I was looking out of.



The ugly mug's selfie at the Gateway Arch  
Twelve miles to the Grant Historic Site.  
Good news - No parking ticket



## Vertical Log Construction

During the 1830s Colonel Dent enlarged the main house. He had a separate cabin built of vertical logs in the French Colonial style of architecture attached to the side of the home and covered with clapboard siding to match the original structure. A portion of the vertical log wall is visible to the right.

When Grant gave his caretakers permission to construct the first floor kitchen in 1868, the exterior vertical log wall became an interior kitchen wall. Workers removed the clapboard siding, nailed wood lathe strips over the logs, and plastered the walls to create a smooth surface.

Vertical log construction, as mentioned above, comes from the French. What more could you expect. The construction is fairly unique to the St. Louis area and down the Mississippi to New Orleans.



I was supposed to get a photo of the HOT & COLD water towers here in St. Clair, but daylight was getting scarce. It didn't turn out to be sunny as I had hoped. But it was a nice sign.

My original plan was to go back across the Mississippi to get a sunset photo with the Arch. But, as mentioned above, it was cloudy all day and really no sunset. So I continued west to St. Clair then on to Sullivan.

Is it odd that the WalMart here in Sullivan, where I stopped to do some shopping, seems oddly familiar? Like I've been here before? Good chance since it's not too far from Route 66. It's NOT because all WalMarts look the same. This one has height barriers at all the entrances. Which is a little odd since the bars are set at 9 or 10 feet, too low for me, and surely too low for the semis that have to deliver here? Maybe that's why a couple of them have been knocked down. Right now there are 6 semis, a fifth wheel, a travel trailer and myself parked here for the night.

I continue south tomorrow. Some of the sights on my itinerary seemed familiar, so I double checked and found them on the Route 66 Newsletters. I won't include them again.

Looking forward to some 'out of this world' fudge tomorrow.

Until next time.....