

REMARKS BY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, JR., AT  
CEREMONIES CELEBRATING COMPLETION OF THE GATEWAY ARCH, JEFFERSON  
NATIONAL EXPANSION MEMORIAL, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, OCTOBER 28, 1965

The late great Eero Saarinen, architect of this structure, once said of his profession that it should fulfill "man's belief in the nobility of his existence."

Not just an engineering marvel, or an architectural "great", the Arch reflects the impulse of the age it memorializes--westward expansion as "our manifest destiny."

It is not my intention to call the roll of honor of those who have been privileged to participate in the contemporaneous and visible dramatic phases of a project conceived more than three decades ago. As a public administrator, I know that the marvels represented here today are not all engineering, architectural, or physical.

For example, there was the inspiration of the idea itself, credited properly to the departed Luther Ely Smith.

Then there was the recognition of merit, and the translation of the idea into action. Former Mayor Bernard Dickman, who is here today, is the one who saw the merit and began the slow and tortuous, seemingly endless task of mobilizing the forces to make it a reality.

These forces were local, regional, and national. And ingenuity and innovation are as evident to the historian of government as they are to the student of the design and engineering features.

The very conception of "Jenny May" was a vital key. So was the insight which opened the way to a cooperative effort with the Federal Government. A Memorial Commission was created by Franklin Roosevelt; the vigorous Harold Ickes synchronized public works and national park objectives with the Memorial objectives; and we should never forget the incalculable influence of an extraordinarily able and unified Congressional delegation, headed so many years by the great Clarence Cannon.

The city as a political subdivision, and the city as a social and cultural organism were never out of phase--at least not for very long at a time. In recent years, particularly, this project has been closely related to the urban renewal effort, and the effort, in the President's words, to make the city a place where future generations will come, not only to live but to live the good life.

So once more, downtown St. Louis is turning its face toward the river, there to see the grace and beauty of Gateway Arch and the 85-acre Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Park.

Beneath the Arch will be constructed the Museum of Westward Expansion. Twelve galleries of some 240 exhibits will cover the major phases of the history of westward expansion, and two theaters will show documentary film on the subject. Smaller museums at the north and south river overlooks will treat of river and rail transportation in the development of the West. An over-all landscaping plan will provide a setting for the Gateway Arch jewel.

This Arch is special in many ways. I compare it with the spire, which, though it performs no work and carries no load, yet lifts the spirit of men.

"For a century," President Johnson said, "we labored to settle and subdue a continent." Our Arch reminds us.

"For half a century, we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people." Our Museum will recall these things.

"The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization."

The grace of this catenary symbol--which lifts our eyes in a pleasing way, responsive to the genius of Saarinen--evidences our commitment to this ideal. So does the harmony of the Arch with the city, and the unity of the site with its surroundings.

I think it does meet the challenge--it fulfills man's belief in the nobility of his existence.