

LES PETITES COTES TRAIL

10 Mile Circular

Rated for: Webelos, Scouts, and Venturers

About the Trail

Les Petites Cotes Trail is a circular ten-mile urban trail operated by the St. Louis Area Council, BSA. The trail is located in historic St. Charles, Missouri, the first capital of Missouri. Les Petites Cotes is French for "the little hills". It was the name originally given to St. Charles by the first settlers of the area. Les Petites Cotes is pronounced "lay petite coat".

Capsule History of St. Charles

St. Charles was the first permanent white settlement on the Missouri River. Louis Blanchette, a French Canadian fur trader and hunter, visited the area in 1764 on a hunting and exploration trip. Returning home to Canada, he petitioned the Governor of Upper Louisiana for permission to establish a trading post at the site of the present day St. Charles. Permission was granted, and Blanchette recruited fur traders and gathered supplies. He returned to the area and established a trading post near where Blanchette Creek empties into the Missouri River. Blanchette called the settlement Les Petites Cotes. He became the first Spanish Commandant of the new settlement.

Under Blanchette's leadership the settlers erected log houses, a log church, and a gristmill. Blanchette established a successful fur trading business and served as Commandant until his death in 1793. He was succeeded as commandant by Don Carlos Tayon, who remained in office until succeeded by James McKay in 1801.

In 1791 a new church was erected in the village of Les Petites Cotes, and St. Carlos Borromeo was selected as patron saint of the church. The name of the village was changed to San Carlos in honor of the new Patron.

In 1800 Napoleon forced the King of Spain to return the Louisiana Territory, which had been ceded by France to Spain in 1763, to French rule. No formal transfer of possession was made, so Spanish officials remained in charge until the Louisiana Territory was sold to the United States by Napoleon in 1803 for \$15,000,000. On March 9, 1804, the people of San Carlos saw the Spanish flag lowered, the French flag raised briefly and then lowered again, after which the flag of the United States was raised. San Carlos was now part of the United States of America. To reflect the change, the village changed its name to St. Charles, the English equivalent of San Carlos.

Information for Leaders

The trail begins and ends at the north end of the Katy Trail Parking lot on the riverfront at the foot of Boonslick Drive. This is a large parking lot that serves the Show Boat (it may be moved), an excursion boat, the Katy Trail State Park, and the Lewis & Clark Boat House and Nature Center which is currently being constructed at the time of this trail brochure revision. (November 2002) To reach the trailhead, take I-70 to St. Charles. Take the first exit west of the Missouri River, which is the Fifth Street exit. Go north on Fifth Street to Boonslick Drive. Turn right on Boonslick Drive, following Boonslick Drive past Main Street and Riverside Drive to the Katy Trail Parking lot. There are three replicas of the Lewis & Clark Expedition boats at the northeast end of the circle drive.

After viewing the replicas of the Lewis & Clark Expedition boats, proceed to the trailhead which is at the northwest corner of the parking lot on the west side of the circle drive. There are two approximately four feet high by five inches in diameter concrete posts at the start of the trail that crosses a bridge to Kister Park.

There are restrooms in the log cabins at the First Capitol parking lot, also below the gazebo at the foot of the Tompkins Street, as well as at the far end of the circular drive through Blanchette Park, in the Public Library at Elm and Dushesne, and from April through October at the end of the loop in McNair Park. Please use only public restrooms.

The trail has been routed so that it can be hiked on sidewalks for most of the trail. Please use the sidewalks instead of walking in the street. Where it is necessary to walk in the street because there is no sidewalk, walk single file on the left side facing traffic so you can get off the street when vehicles approach. Obey traffic signals, walk together as a group, do not trespass on private property. Wear your uniform. **This trail should not be hiked after a heavy snowfall as sidewalks will likely not be passable.**

Answers to Questions:

1. 1804 – This answer is found at the Lewis & Clark Historical Marker!
2. 1821 – 1826 – This answer is found in the Historic State Capitol buildings at 206-214 S. Main
3. State Capital is the (city/location) Jefferson City, MO in which the State Capitol (building/place) is housed.
4. Les Petites Cotes (pronounced “Lay petite coat) is French for **the little hills.**
5. Louis Blanchette
6. Read the sign at Watson & Kingshighway

The Trail Route and Points of Interest

Points of interest to be seen on the hike (and including the stop on the way in at the MKT depot) are described below.

MKT Depot – The Missouri, Kansas, and Texas (Katy) Railroad reached St. Charles in 1892. The depot was constructed in the mid 1890's.

Lewis and Clark Marker – From May 16-21, Captain Meriwether Lewis, Lt. William Clark and members of their military expedition assembled at St. Charles, where final preparations were made for a journey to explore the Louisiana Purchase Territory and to map an overland route to the Pacific Ocean. The explorers were welcomed by the townspeople, who gave a ball in their honor. On Sunday, expedition members attended mass at the St. Charles Borromeo Church. On Monday morning, May 21, the expedition left St. Charles by boat for a journey into the unknown, a journey which was destined to become one of the great exploratory trips of history and which earned everlasting fame for the participants. Forty-two of the forty-three persons who started on this epic journey returned to St. Louis on September 23, 1806. One expedition member, Sgt. Charles Floyd, died of "the bilious colick" (probably cholera) and was buried near the present day Sioux City, Iowa. His name lives on in the nearby Floyd River, named after him by Lewis and Clark.

Question 1 – In what year did the Lewis and Clark expedition leave St. Charles on its momentous journey?

206 – 214 South Main – First Capitol – At the 1820 Constitutional Convention held in St. Louis, it was voted to establish the state capital at St. Charles. These building served as the state capitol until the state capital was moved to Jefferson City.

The capitol complex consisted of three connected two-story brick buildings. The second floor of the north building was rented to the State as the Governor's Office and Committee Room. The second story of both other buildings were used by the State, one for meetings of the senate and the other for the house of representatives. The yard area is landscaped to approximate its 1821-1826 appearance. The buildings are furnished with antiques of the period when St. Charles was the capital of Missouri.

Question 2 – In what years did these buildings house the State government?

Question 3 – What is the difference between the state Capital and the state Capitol?

101 South Main – St. Charles Market and Fish House – This building was built by William G. Pettus in 1823 as a public market and fish house. To the right of the front entrance there was a bulletin board where notices of public sales were posted. To the left of the entrance there was a public scale. This public scale was a meeting place for men from all walks of life who were interested in trading their produce and wares.

At this point the trails turns left on Jefferson.

131 Jefferson Street – First Free Public School – This building is one of the oldest public school buildings still standing in the State of Missouri. It was established in 1822. One teacher was

employed to teach all grades at a salary of \$30 per month. The building was used as a public school until 1867.

N.W. Corner of Jefferson and Second Street – Courthouse Grounds – On this corner a bronze marker on a granite boulder commemorates a trail first marked by Indians and followed by trappers and hunters to salt springs in Howard County.

Question 4 – By what name did this trail come to be known?

117 North Third Street – St. Charles College – At one time this was the main building of the St. Charles College, the first chartered Methodist college west of the Mississippi River. It was founded by Catherine Collier and her son George in 1831 to train young men for the Methodist ministry. The building was used as a prison and hospital during the Civil War.

206 North Third Street – American Legion Home – This building was originally the home of Captain George Denker, prominent in the early history of St. Charles. The home has stained glass windows made by German glass makers who came to St. Charles in 1835.

Turn right on Monroe; one block to Second Street. Turn left and proceed north on Second Street. The next point of interest will be between Clark and Decatur Streets.

619 North Second Street – Academy of the Sacred Heart – First convent of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in America, established in 1818 by Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, who came to Missouri with four other nuns to teach the Indians. Mother Duchesne's name heads the list of "Pioneer Women" inscribed on a bronze tablet at the Missouri State Historical Society headquarters in the Jefferson Memorial Building in St. Louis. She was sainted by Pope John Paul II in 1988. Mother Duchesne died in 1852 and her remains are entombed in the Duchesne Shrine on the Academy grounds.

Continue north on Second Street to Morgan.

305 Morgan (S.W. Corner of Third and Morgan) – Weeke Home – Christopher Weeke built this home in 1865. To the right of the home was a large flourmill. A nearby spring and millpond provided waterpower for the mill. The home originally had a large cupola and a widow's walk from which boat traffic on the Missouri River could be observed.

Turn left on Morgan and go three blocks to Fifth Street. Then turn right on Fifth Street four blocks to Randolph. Go left on Randolph to Pine. Enter Blanchette Park. There are comfort stations at the far end of the circular drive through the park.

Question 5 – Whose name appears on the granite pedestal supporting the statue at the park entrance?

Turn right on Randolph Street when you leave the park. Continue on Randolph to the next point of interest, Borromeo Cemetery.

Borromeo Cemetery – Please refrain from entering the cemetery. Louis Blanchette and his Pawnee Indian wife are buried here. Blanchette, who died in 1793, was originally buried alongside his wife under the floor of the first Catholic Church on Main Street. In 1854, he and his wife were reinterred in Borromeo Cemetery. Another well-known personage buried in this cemetery is Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable, the founder of the City of Chicago. Du Sable was the son of a Frenchman and a free black woman. After the death of Du Sable's Potawatami Indian wife, Catherine, he followed his son, Jean, to St. Charles and spent the rest of his life here. A 22-cent U.S. commemorative stamp was issued to honor Du Sable in 1987.

After passing the cemetery, go right one-half block to Elmwood, turn left on Elmwood to Elm and turn left on Elm. Follow Elm to Duchesne. (There is a comfort station in the Public Library at Elm and Duchesne. If locked, ask for a key at the desk). Continue on Duchesne to Droste. Turn right on Droste to McNair Park. (There is a comfort station in the park, open April through October.) Return via Droste and Duchesne to Sibley, turn right on Sibley to Gamble, right on Gamble to Watson, then left on Watson. For the next four blocks you will be walking alongside the Lindenwood College campus.

Lindenwood College – This college was established by the Presbyterian Church as a liberal arts school for women. The first buildings on the campus were a row of log buildings built in 1831 by George and Mary Sibley, cofounders of the college. Their "Linden Wood" estate was at the time a mile out of town and considered to be a healthful place for a school. Lindenwood now has 23 buildings and a staff of about 90 teachers.

Question 6 – In what year was Lindenwood College established? (Hint: See the sign at the corner of Watson and Kingshighway),

Now cross Kingshighway into Jefferson.

1067 Jefferson Street – Orear Home – This is the oldest one-story log cabin still standing in St. Charles. It is now covered with clapboards. The cabin was built in 1830 by Major Nelson Orear, St. Charles manufacturer and editor of the St. Charles Chronotype. The floor plan of this home is the same as that of the home of Stephen Collins Foster, now at the Ford Museum at Dearborn, Michigan.

620 Jefferson Street – Atkinson House – John Atkinson, owner of the Atkinson Dry Goods, built this fine home in 1885.

Sixth and Jefferson (S.W. Corner) – Immanuel Lutheran Church – Built in 1867 on the site of an earlier "Old Stone Church built in 1849. The church bells are known as the "Silver Tongue Bells" of St. Charles because they contain silver from coins and jewelry donated by members of the congregation.

Sixth and Jefferson (N.W. Corner) – Powell Home – This three-story 12-room Greek Revival style brick house was built in 1838 by Dr. Ludwell Powell, the first mayor of St. Charles. The bricks used in the home were made by slaves. The home was designed by Stephen Hill, architect for the 1840 Missouri Capitol. An underground passage once lead from the main house to the slave quarters and to a large storm cellar.

Turn right at Fourth Street. Proceed to McDonough and turn left on McDonough to Main Street. Turn left at Main Street.

903 South Main – Tiercerot-Krekel Home – This French-style home was built in 1830. The second floor is reached by an outside stairway. The third floor had a “crows nest” from which the Missouri River could be seen. Directly in the rear of the home is a brick building that served as a kitchen for the home and as the slave quarters. A second building behind the main home is a brick smokehouse. Arnold Krekel, who owned the home in 1855, served as a colonel of the St. Charles County Union Home Guards during the Civil War.

724 South Main – McNair Home – This home, built in 1807, was owned by David McNair, the brother of Alexander McNair, who was the first governor of Missouri. David McNair came to St. Charles from Pennsylvania in 1800.

720 South Main – Western House – Renowned for the excellent care given to cattle and horses that passed through St. Charles on the Boon’s Lick Road. A large stable and wagon yard were located in rear. Fur, tobacco, beeswax, maple sugar and bear oil were traded here.

709 South Main – Custom House – The Custom House is mentioned in records as far back as 1801. Travelers were required to stop for inspection and a passport from the commandant if they were going more than 20 miles. The third floor was used by travelers who wished to spend the night. There was a large stable behind the Custom House.

700 South Main – Farmer’s Home – Built about 1805, this building was originally called the Farmer’s Tavern. Lodging was 25 cents a night. The tavern advertised good food ... “corn bread and common fixins, 2 bits (25 cents); white bread and chicken fixins, 3 bits (37 ½ cents)”. The only coin available in those days was the Spanish peso, which was cut evenly into four or eight parts that were called “bits” and used as small coins. Furs were also used as a substitute for money, as were tobacco, beeswax, salt, leathers, bear oil and other commodities.

625 South Main – Newbill-McElhiney Home – This home was built by Franklin J. Newbill, woolen merchant, in 1838. The home was later owned by Dr. Willam J. McElhiney, a prominent St. Charles physician who served as state representative in the Missouri legislature, 1841-1844. John James Audubon stayed for several months with his wife and child in another of Dr. McElhiney’s St. Charles area homes (Spring Bend) in 1839 while sketching birds of the area for his monumental Birds of America.

617 South Main – First Methodist Church – This church was built in 1829 by Cathering Collier and used for both church and school. It is believed to be the oldest Methodist church still standing west of the Mississippi River.

600 South Main – Timothy Kibby Home – Built in 1800 by Col. Timothy Kibby, major during the Revolutionary War and a militia colonel during the War of 1812. This is the oldest house still standing in St. Charles County. While the exact date of construction is not known, the house was damaged by the New Madrid earthquake in 1811. Aaron Burr is said to have stayed here while trying to enlist volunteers to carry out his plan to detach the Western territory from the United States. The Kibby carriage house (19 Pike Street) stands behind this house.

500 South Main – Mother-In-Law House (Kremer House) – This double house was built by Francis X. Kremer, a wealthy mill owner, in 1860. He designed and furnished the two sides of the house identically, one side for his family and other side for his mother-in-law.

420 South Main – Herman Kuhlman Home – An owner of a wagon factory built this home about 1930. It is a fine example of the small American home of the period. The wagon shop is behind the home.

401 South Main – Priest's Home – This home was built in 1818 by Father Van Quickinborn as a rectory for the Borromeo Catholic Church.

332 South Main – Dr. Jeremiah Millington Home – Dr. Millington, who came to St. Charles in 1799, was the first physician in the city. Dr. Millington and his brother Seth discovered coal near Harvester. The brothers helped to bring the state capital to St. Charles by promising free coal to heat the capitol building. The coalmine was abandoned in 1830 after a cave-in which several people were killed.

315 South Main – California House – This is the last two-story log house standing in St. Charles. Built about 1820, it was very popular in stagecoach days because of its good meals. It was a social and political center where news and opinions were exchanged. The west wing of this building was destroyed in the February, 1876 tornado. After the storm the logs were covered with clapboards.

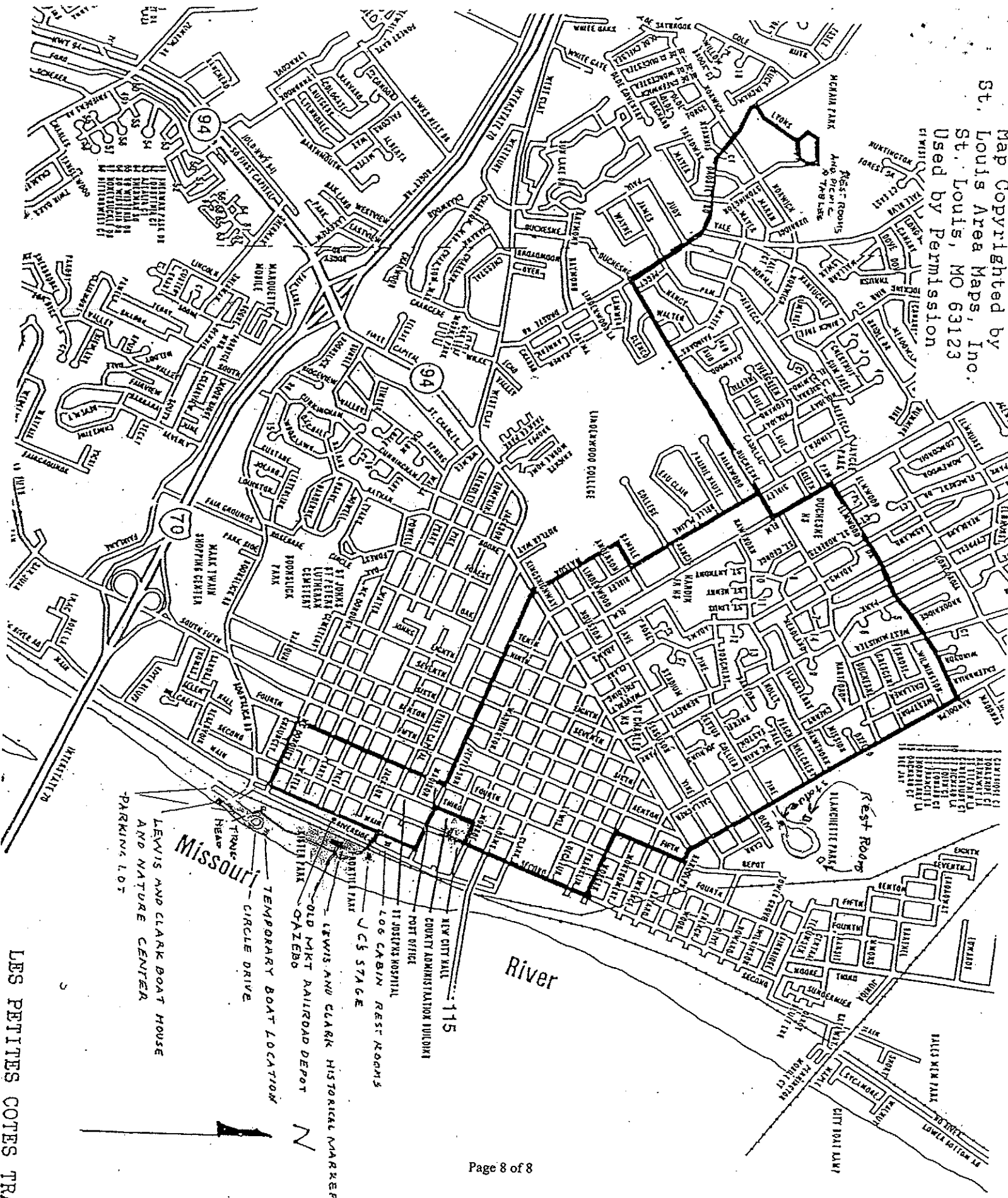
307 South Main – William G. Pettus Home and Office – William G. Pettus, who served as Missouri's second Secretary of State (1821 – 1824) and state senator (1832- 1834), built this home in 1821.

301 South Main – Seth Millington Home – This two-story brick home was erected by Millington, father-in-law of Elijah Lovejoy, the famous antislavery crusader. The home was the scene of an attack on Lovejoy by a mob after he preached in St. Charles on October 1, 1837 at the Presbyterian Church. Five weeks later Lovejoy was killed by a mob at Alton, the first martyr of the free press in the United States.

Continue on Main Street to First Capitol Drive and the end of the trail. Turn in answer sheets for the questions in this brochure to the hike leader.

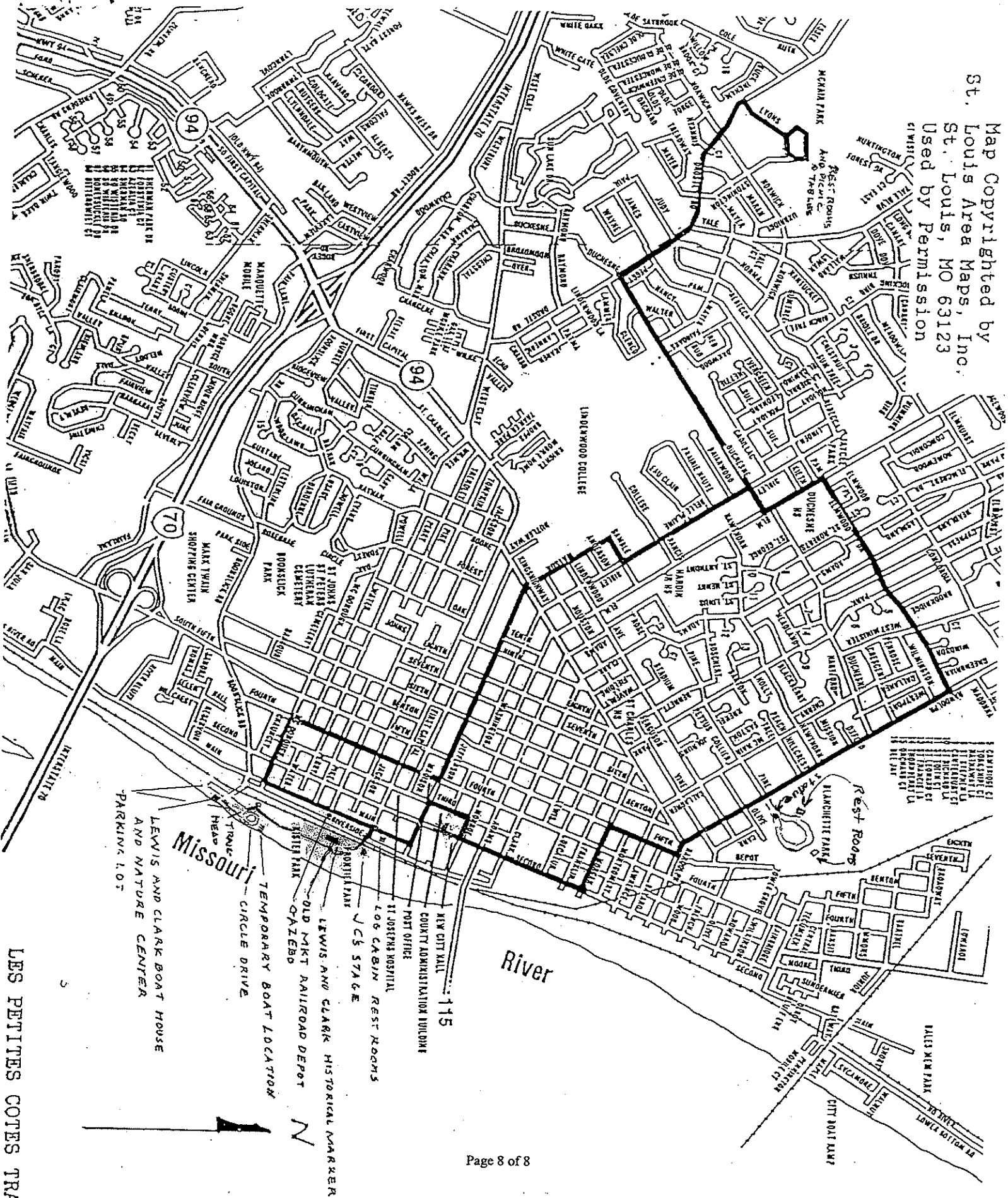
The Les Petites Cotes Trail was inaugurated in 1987. It combined the best features of the Les Petites Cotes Trail of St. Charles Troop 392 and a proposal of Eagle Scout Christopher Borgmeyer of Webster Groves Troop 335. The trail was revised in 2002 to include replicas of the Lewis and Clark boats and the First Missouri State Capitol Historic Site Museum.

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