

3 Flags Festival

March 10-14, 2004 - St. Louis, Missouri

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE BICENTENNIAL

*France Train
America*



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United States Mint to Publicly Release New Nickel at International Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Event in St. Louis

*Three Flags Festival to Commemorate the Transfer
of the Upper Louisiana Territory from Spain and France to the U.S.*

St. Louis – Beneath the famous Gateway Arch in St. Louis, the nation will commemorate the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial during the Three Flags Festival March 10-14, 2004. This bicentennial event is the grand finale of the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial and is the only national “Signature Event” devoted to the Purchase.

To commemorate its significance, the United States Mint will publicly release the new Jefferson nickel, the first in the *Westward Journey Nickel Series*, in St. Louis during the Festival. Nickels will be available to the public during that time. The United States Mint has not released a new nickel since 1938.

United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore said, “This is an important moment for our nation as we mark the historic significance of the Louisiana Purchase. This is the first coin of the Westward Journey Nickel Series and it celebrates both the vision of President Thomas Jefferson and the spirit of our young United States of America.”

The recently unveiled nickel design commemorates the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase. The final transfer of the Upper Louisiana Territory in 1804 made it possible for Lewis and Clark to begin their journey west. Before the now modern 11 states in the Upper Louisiana Territory became part of America, the Spanish administrators had forbidden the explorers to cross the Mississippi River. The Three Flags Festival is the third national “Signature Event” of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial and the first to take place in Missouri.

Elizabeth Gentry Sayad, co-chair of the National Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Committee, said, “St. Louis has long been known as the Gateway to the West.

(more)

1804

1904

2004

This festival commemorates the reasons for that moniker, including the final ceremony of the Louisiana Purchase and the starting point for the Lewis and Clark Expedition. It's a perfect setting for the public release of the new Jefferson nickel."

Activities at the Three Flags Festival range from a scholarly symposium and exhibits of significant art, artifacts, and historical documents to family-style festivals, religious ceremonies, a variety of concerts and a tour of the historic Creole Corridor in Missouri and Illinois. The festival will culminate with the Three Flags Ceremony on the banks of the Mississippi on the grounds of The Gateway Arch. Noted historian and author Dayton Duncan will emcee the ceremony. Dignitaries and performers from around the world will participate.

The Native American Osage Nation will play an important role in the festival. The Saint Louis Art Museum will open its acclaimed exhibit "Art of the Osage" during the festival. Osage participants will offer an Opening Prayer Ceremony at the Three Flags Ceremony, and Principal Chief James Gray will represent the nation in all formal ceremonies and events.

"In many ways, St. Louis is as significant to our nation's history and identity as is Philadelphia or Boston," said Sayad. "We are certainly honored that the United States Mint as well as our European and Native American friends will be part of our celebration."

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Note to Editors: More information about and photos of the nickel designs are available at www.usmint.gov. More information about the Three Flags Festival is available at <http://louisianapurchase.umsl.edu>.