This marker, located just east of the 13th street Bartle Hall Convention Center underpass, on the gray area below Barney Allis Plaza, contains a sign regarding the general location of all the prominent historical French sites and activities that took place in and within a 75 mile radius around Kansas City. This includes the nearby farm of Clement Lessert, the French interpreter for the Kansas. Proceed west on 13th street to Washington, then north to 11th & Washington.

Stop 2. St. Francis Regis Church Marker • 11th & Washington Street

The little log Church of St. Francis Regis and its Rectory, built around 1835, were situated on the south side of the intersection of 11th and Pennsylvania, one block west of this marker. This was the centre de la ville, the center of the village of Chez les Conses or “Chouteau’s”. Services were mostly in French and French songs were sung, including the favorites Cantique de noel at Christmas and La Guignolée at New Years.

The cathedral has an original Catechism book with text in French printed in 1817, which was used in St. Francis Regis Church. The original bell which called the French parishioners to church is still preserved at St. Teresa's Academy, as well as a Chalice dated 1688. The Cathedral also possesses part of a log from the French church, and the parish birth, marriage, and death records in Latin and French. In front of the church ran the main trail up from Peter Rolly's ferry on the river. Proceed west on 11th Street, to the southeast corner of the intersection of 11th and Jefferson.

Stop 3. French Cemetery Marker • 11th & Jefferson (at DST Bldg. Expansion)

This was the western edge of the French cemetery which fanned out in a rough semicircle behind (south of) the Church of St. Francis Regis at 11th and Pennsylvania. All of the burials were thought to have been removed to St. Mary's Cemetery and a roll of their names deposited there, when the French cemetery became full after a cholera epidemic in about 1870. However, construction excavation in late 1986 unearthed 16 burials on this western edge of the old cemetery revealing many old religious medals and crucifixes, a number of which are shown in photographs made by the cathedral. All of the remains were carefully reinterred elsewhere. No one, however, has ever unearthed the valuables of the parishioners of the old French church which were buried in the cemetery late one night by their priest to escape the ravages of the Civil War, and which he could never relocate. Proceed north to Jefferson & 10th Street.

STOP 4. French Bottoms Marker • Jefferson & 10th Street

This vantage point at the stone entrance to Case Park overlooks what is still frequently called the “French Bottoms” (now the Central Industrial District). The first French farmers who settled permanently in Kansas City in 1830 cleared small corn plots in the French bottoms and built their cabins along the then Turkey Creek (now diverted into the Kansas River at a point further south). Father Bernard Donnelly, priest at St. Francis Regis Church near the end of the French period, said that in the early years one could stand on a clear night on the bluff just west of where you now stand and hear the songs and fiddles and laughter of the French as they held their “balls” in the little cabins in the French bottoms. After the great flood of 1844 swept away all of the French cabins, many of the young men from the French families moved on to the mountains abandoning the farms. Father Donnelly said the only evidence that then remained of the French were the little clearings, and the only sounds were those of the birds and the squawking geese.

Proceed two blocks north to the large traffic circle at Clark (Bourgmont) Point overlooking the Missouri River.

Stop 5. Clark (Bourgmont) Point Circle Bourgmont Marker • West of 611 W. 8th

French Trappers on the Missouri River

Unnamed Frenchmen passed here in the late 1690's enroute to the Kansas or the Pikes, or overland to attempt trade at Taos and Santa Fe. The first known explorer was Etienne Veniard, Sieur de Bourgmont, (shown on the cover) who came upriver on a moccasin expedition in 1713 very close to this point. Bourgmont later established Ft. Orleans near Brunswick to the east of Kansas City, in 1723, for the Company of the Indies. From Ft. Orleans, accompanied by the first doctor, the first priest, the first engineer, and the first musician - a military drummer - to visit Kansas City, Bourgmont traveled past the present Kansas City and far out on the plains. On October 18, 1724, he held a great powwow in western Kansas with the Comanches and other major tribes. He signed a treaty allowing passage of the French traders to Santa Fe - the first formal recognition of the Santa Fe trail! Later, Ft. Cavagnial (1744-1764) was established by the French under Louis XV over the horizon to the northwest, just north of Ft. Leavenworth. The principal activity at Ft. Cavagnial was to trade for the high-quality beaver pelts to make the fur hats first made fashionable by King Louis XIV at Versailles. Kansas City's eventual settlement by French traders and trappers was simply a continuation of the mercantile activity which started with the beaver trade. Before leaving this higher elevation, notice the way the blocks north of Interstate 70 are oriented parallel to the river in the old world fashion, following Chouteau's trails.

Stop 6. The French and the Lewis & Clark Expedition • 8th & Jefferson

This marker overlooks the actual route of Captains Lewis & Clark, their troops, and their French boatmen, guides, hunters and interpreters (whose families had been going up the Missouri River for over 100 years before 1804). The Verendryes, traveling overland, had reached the vicinity of the headwaters of the Missouri in 1742. The Mid-western French-speaking community greatly facilitated the Voyage of Discovery by providing skilled personnel, supplies, boats, and maps. Sacagawea's papoose, Jean Baptiste
Chouteau, lived for a time in KC as a youth, on the west bank of the Missouri, within sight of this marker. Notice the magnificent Lewis & Clark statue grouping in the center of the Clark Point circle.

**Stop 7. K.C.'s Vieux Carre or Old Square Marker**
3rd & Grand at Arabla Museum

(Parking available, east side of square off Grand)

This old city square and surrounding market area is literally the Kansas City equivalent of New Orleans' riverfront Vieux Carre or old square. In the early French days, Prudhomme's farm and other tracts backed up to this open area, which thus became a sort of undeveloped common fields for grazing and pasturing of stock. The nearby cabins were almost all along the river front, just as they were along the St. Lawrence in Quebec. As Kansas City developed this general area was kept open for community use. Notice that the streets here follow the riverfront northeast-southwest orientation along Chouteau's old riverfront trails, rather than the precise north and south orientation of the Yankee surveyors. Look back south at the downtown skyscrapers and you can easily see the difference. Thus, Kansas City's Vieux Carre or old square is laid out on the bias in the old world fashion. Incidentally, Madame Berenice Chouteau's last home was at the intersection of 3rd and Grand just to the northeast.

On the rocky ledge at the foot of present Grand Avenue (which you can see from the corner of 3rd and Grand nearby) the French established the first West Port. It wasn't the Westport of today (platted further inland) but rather it was literally the westernmost port on the Missouri. Just to the east was the cabin of Gabrielle Prudhomme, on whose farm (stretching from Broadway to Troost and south to 13th Street) the original Town of Kansas was platted. Prudhomme was an early day entrepreneur and had licenses for a tavern and store. It is thought that he operated the "Frenchman's Tavern" just to the west near the waterfront on Delaware. He was killed in a bloody free-for-all fight among the French in 1831, and his widow had to sell the farm to make ends meet, Kansas City simply spread out to the south over Prudhomme's farm. He left many descendents in Kansas City. The Rois' and the Rivards established their ferry here. Peter Roi improved the roadway from the River to the south, which eventually extended through the new Westport, the present Country Club Plaza area, out Wornall Road many miles south to the French trading posts of Pappinville and Ft. Carondelet in Missouri, and the Chouteau's "Trading Post" in Kansas, all in Osage country.

**Stop 8. The Old Chouteau Trading Post**
3rd & Grand near Old Square Marker

(Parking available, east side of square off Grand)

A considerable distance down river from Market Square in a rather remote area near the south end of the Chouteau Bridge, is the site of the first Chouteau Trading Post, the genesis of Kansas City, established in 1821 by Francois Chouteau of the St. Louis Chouteau dynasty and his wife Berenice (Menard) Chouteau, Pierre Chouteau, Jr. first

peened the name *Chez les Canases* (meaning at the village of the Kansas) in writing to those at Kawsmouth, but after the Post was built, the community became known as "Chouteau's". The Trading Post was relocated further upriver and higher on the riverbank after being swept away by successive floods. Kansas City's first church services were probably held there and the first burials made outside the Post. Francois suffered a very untimely death in 1838, but Berenice carried on, raising 9 children, founding St. Francis Regis Church, baptising children of all races there, and ministering to them as they (and two of her own) died of cholera. She tore up her linen and silk wedding gown for their shrouds. Her home in later years was at 3rd and Grand near Market Square, possibly at the western edge of the last Chouteau Post tract. She died in 1888 at 87, the revered Grande Dame of Kansas City. The Chouteau Society has erected a marker at Market Square commemorating the old Chouteau Trading Post. The actual location to the east makes it virtually inaccessible to the public, and the Society feels that the popular and frequently visited Market Square near Madame Chouteau's home provides an appropriate location for such a marker.

**Stop 9. French Settlers Preceded**
1600 Genessee (Take 12th St. viaduct west to Genessee, turn left. Parking in Golden Ox lot)

Here in the old French "French Bottoms" the early day French speaking settlers and their mostly Blackfoot wives, from the upper Missouri, cleared small strips of land around 1830. Their little enclave was the beginning of what was to grow into the metropolis which is present-day Kansas City.

Small clearings are thought to have been patteded off the old French "aupent" or "Paris vine" and some of their cabins probably were of French "poteau-en-terre" (posts in the ground) construction with thatched roofs. An 1840 map (in French) by the parish priest, Fr. Nicholas Point, shows the location of the French farms, and from it we are able to compare the locations of the American Royal buildings with those of their predecessors two centuries ago. Nearly 200 years ago the fabulous agricultural riches of the trans-Missouri West had their origins where we now celebrate that largesse with the American Royal Agricultural Show.

**Stop 10. The French and the Santa Fe Trail**
Southwest corner of Westport Road and Pennsylvania.

(Parking available on lot South of marker)

This marker, appropriately situated on the busy Westport branch of the Santa Fe Trail, highlights the pioneering efforts of the French in the seventeenth century to open up trade with the Spanish at Santa Fe and with the Pueblo Indians at Taos. The French eagerly filled the trading void left in the 1680's when the Pueblo Indians revolted and drove the Spanish entirely out of New Mexico. The French used two routes: the overland route so familiar to us, Southwest across the central plains, and the water route up the Missouri to the Platte, up that river to the South Platte, and on to Santa Fe. The marker notes that "Rap" Charbonneau, Sacagawea's papoosee during the Lewis & Clark expedition, was a resident of what is now Kansas City as a youth, and became a premier guide on the Santa Fe Trail.

**Stop 11. The French and the Osage**
Loose Park Pond, South of 51st & Wornall

The colonial French had been interested in the tall, proud Osage since the mid-1600's. Osage warriors from the KC area joined the French in defeating British Gen. Braddock in 1755 in western Pennsylvania. Ferry operator Peter Roi improved Wornall Road to the south in the early 1800's to facilitate trade with the French-speaking enclaves among the Osage in Southern Missouri. Except for the brief interregnum of the Spanish (Ft. Carondelet) and American (Ft. Osage) control of the Osage trade, the French-speaking traders, and particularly the Chouteau mercantile dynasty, dominated commerce with the tribe for over 100 years. This trade centered in the watershed formed by the river with the lovely French name "Marais des Cygnes" or marsh of the swans (which became the Osage River downstream).