



LES AMIS

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 1, 2019 | 5:00 p.m. sharp! - 7:00

The St. Louis Racquet Club East

476 Kingshighway Blvd. | St. Louis, MO 63108

SELF PARKING

“LOG STRUCTURES OF MISSOURI”



Authors Jesse Francis (left) and Jack Luer (right) with Charles Peterson at the Amoureux House in Ste. Genevieve. Photo by Laura Johnson.

JESSE FRANCIS is Museum Curator for Faust Park Historic Village in St. Louis County where he oversees the rescue, relocation and preservation of historic buildings. He will present an illustrated program discussing techniques of building construction from the late 18th and middle 19th centuries, focusing on structures in the Middle Mississippi Valley in Missouri and Illinois. Jesse has been restoring and cataloging French structures in the Midwest since 1982. His work began on the Bequette-Ribault House in Ste. Genevieve while he was a historic preservation student at Southeast Missouri State University. Jesse soon became a sought-after historic construction expert and teacher as well as a hands-on restoration and reconstruction master craftsman. The book *Vanishing French Heritage* (2014), co-

authored by Jack R. Luer and Jesse Francis, has become an invaluable resource for understanding the French construction methods and materials used in this region.



Payment due in advance | RSVP by Thursday, April 25, 2019

Please hold _____ reservations @ \$25 per person.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Make checks payable and mail to: Kina Shapleigh | 29 Granada Way, St. Louis, MO 63124
Direct questions to Kina at 314-721-3439



The organization of the St. Louis Racquet Club, led by “Bert” Walker (grandfather of U. S. President George H. W. Bush), began in May 1906 with a group of young members in the University Club. Expected to be the “most swagger club in town,” the exclusive Racquet membership quickly reached its limit set at 250 men, many representing “the younger Smart Set” such as sportsmen Albert Lambert and Dwight Davis, but also including David R. Francis, Robert Brookings and others among older men of prominence. By December 1907, the new clubhouse on Kingshighway had been completed to designs from the partnership of John Lawrence Mauran, Ernest J. Russell, and Edward G. Garden. All three were charter members of the Racquet Club, and all had worked together in the prestigious Boston firm, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge (successor to H. H. Richardson) before opening their own office in St. Louis in 1900.

The club was the first in St. Louis to introduce the fast, strenuous game of “racquets” - a sport tracing its origins to 18th century England, and a game characterized by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1907 to be, “the favorite of the wealthy aristocracy of the Eastern cities and Paris.” The game was part of the 1908 summer Olympics; its growing popularity was evident in other purpose-built new clubhouses with indoor racquet courts and many other amenities that appeared in New York (1890); Detroit (1902); Boston (1904); Philadelphia (1907); Chicago (1923).

The St. Louis Racquet Club also broke new ground for local club life by choosing to custom build for its own needs rather than following tradition of converting private dwellings or other building types to club use. Both exterior and interior design showed progressive modernity with influence of Arts & Crafts aesthetic in the simplicity of forms, restraint in historic ornament, and strong interest in displaying the intrinsic natural beauty of materials such as brick. The Club took its place in a showcase of monumental early 20th century institutional buildings lining two blocks of Kingshighway in the heart of a fashionable enclave of residential private streets.