

Whirlwind Tour Of Europe Enjoyed By Mrs. McKeldin

"Now I've seen everything," said Mrs. Theodore R. McKeldin still thrilled with the trip she made with Governor McKeldin to Israel, and a number of European countries. "I've always wanted to visit the Holy Land, but never thought I would."

"My eyes hurt a bit," she remarked. "You know, I broke both pairs of my glasses while packing for the trip." Still wearing the excitement of seeing a hundred different places and meeting outstanding leaders of various countries, Mrs. McKeldin told of their arrival in Paris, on Palm Sunday. "We had luncheon with General and Mrs. Eisenhower," she said. "They have a lovely villa outside Paris—and the food they served was delicious!" Escorted by one of General Eisenhower's aides, the McKeldins toured the city and visited the Louvre. "We saw many things we wanted to see—even though we couldn't go shopping on Sunday."

Stop In Rome

Flying from Paris to Rome, where they arrived about midnight, the McKeldins found, with the heavy air traffic during the Passover Season, they had no seats to Tel Aviv, Israel. "As it turned out, we were delighted we were forced to stop over," said Mrs. McKeldin, "for we really enjoyed the two days sightseeing in the Ancient City." There the McKeldins also were given an audience with Pope Pius XII.

"I will always think of Israel when I smell orange blossoms," Mrs. McKeldin said. "We stepped off the plane at Lydda Airport, near Tel Aviv, and there was this wonderful fragrance everywhere, I asked what it was and was told it came from orange groves nearby."

On Easter morning, the McKeldins visited the Garden of Gethsemane and the Basilica Of the Agony. They saw the oldest of the olive trees, from which Gethsemane gets its name, signifying an "oil press." The tree, called the "Tree of Agony," is said to be that under which Christ prayed, and is known to be at least 900 years old.

Visit to Shrines

"The Shrines we visited made you feel humble" spoke Mrs. McKeldin, "like taking off your shoes—to walk on Holy Ground."

They also journeyed to Bethlehem and visited "The Church of the Nativity." "I couldn't help thinking of the song, 'Oh Little Town of Bethlehem,'" she remark-

ed. "It looked like I had always imagined."

Laughing, she recalled one of the more hectic journeys made about Israel. The McKeldins had decided to visit newly found copper mines at Elath, near the Red Sea. "We were told part of the trip would have to be made by jeep—and we were warned the road was pretty rough for ladies, but we didn't think too much about it," she said. Knowing they would be attending a tea immediately upon their return from the mines, she chose a navy blue sheer dress for the trip, and a hat with a brim that would afford some protection from the sun. "We sat on the jeep fitted with sideboards," she continued, "and there were no paved roads. I was never so hot in my life," she said. "as we bumped over 25 miles of sand, flying like we were being chased, and me trying to hold on to my hat and the jeep at the same time!"

King Solomon's Mines

As they passed what is reported to be the ruins of King Solomon's mines, on their way to Elath, the McKeldins collected pieces of slag that are said to have belonged to the ancient monarch.

"It is a colorful land," Mrs. McKeldin recalled as she told of Bedouins, the nomads of the desert with their flat black tents set up near Beerseheba. Always with the wanderers were their herds of camels and black goats. "In the towns, many of the streets are too narrow for autos," said she. "and you see mothers lined up with their children, bathing them in a community trough."

Afraid to drink much of the local water, "It was tea and more tea for Mrs. McKeldin," she chuckled, expressing no great relish for the Turkish coffee she chose on several occasions, saying "It was thick, with the sugar cooked right in it—but I managed to get it down."

Impressed With Housing

With hundreds of thousands of immigrants having been received by Israel, the governor's wife expressed admiration for the new country. "I was impressed with the Mabara" said she. That is the place where the new arrivals are housed in a community, first in tents, then in a house with one room. Mrs. McKeldin told of some of the older "residents" who had enlarged their rooms, which were neatly kept, and surrounded by pretty gardens.

"There is a lot of real culture in the Old Israel homes," she continued. "And they are a delightful people."

Pointing to the nation's courage and frugality, she told of visiting several factories. One, a shoe plant that manufactured approximately 3,000 shoes a day, employing only immigrants who were inexperienced, yet she was told the system was satisfactory. Another, an orange canning factory, canned the juice, then turned the oil from the peel into a base for perfumes, and finally, made the rind into fertilizer.

Visit Watch Factory

Governor McKeldin was presented with the first watch made in Jerusalem, while visiting a newly organized watch factory.

Loaded with many precious mementoes of their travels, including an Arab knife for Teddy, the McKeldins' son, an Arab coffee pot, a mammoth brass tray, beautiful inlaid boxes from Italy, and a number of things for Clara, their daughter, the McKeldins sailed from Haifa. They stopped at Naples, Geneva, Cannes, and Gibraltar on the 13 day journey back. "The weather was fine in the

Mediterranean" recalled Mrs. McKeldin adding ruefully. "But we hit rough water when we arrived in the Atlantic—and I'm a poor sailor!"

Arriving in New York Saturday aboard the SS Independence, Mrs. McKeldin said, "My biggest thrill was when I saw Teddy—Clara couldn't come—I missed the children."

Thoughtfully, she added, "None of us realize what we have here—I'm happy to be home!"