

New York

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In the R.A.C. Building 30,000 people are employed; underground they have restaurants and shops. A lift — the fastest in the world (90 feet per second) — takes you up to the Rainbow Restaurant and the Observation Roof, from where you can enjoy a beautiful view over the Plaza, with the flags of the United Nations and a grand panorama.

For a change, the Central Park is most welcome, as New York can be the hottest place on earth in August; the concrete vibrates and there is steam everywhere from the subways. The Central Park from 59th to 110th Street has many fine attractions: roller- or ice-skating, a free zoo, fine open-air restaurants, and splendid play-grounds for the children. I loved the Hans Christian Andersen and Alice in Wonderland Monument, near the pond. The enormous statue of Andersen is in bronze — the nose shines like gold where the children touch it when enjoying a climb!

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has lovely vistas over Central Park and is a real treat. This collection covers 5,000 years and ranges through Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, the Near East, the Far East and Europe from early Christian to present times. An entire wing is devoted to American decorative arts; one could spend days there (all free), and the restaurant with fountain sculptures by the noted artist, Carl Mills, is a great feature.

The Cloisters in wonderful Fort Tryon Park, overlooking the Hudson River, is one of America's unique museums. It not only houses one of the world's finest collections of medieval treasures, but in itself is an exhibit of great charm; it belongs to the Metropolitan Museum. The Frick Museum on Fifth Avenue, formed by Henry Clay Frick is a fine collection of paintings by European masters of the 14th to 19th centuries.

Radio City Music Hall has the world's largest indoor theatre. It features first-run motion pictures, big colourful stage shows, and a symphony orchestra of two hundred performers. When they came up and the grand Music Hall Organ appeared, I really felt *this is the showplace* of the nation, and well worth a visit to New York. One can see the famed "Rockettes", "Corps de Ballet" and Symphony Orchestra, from any seat one chooses, for only 95 cents if entering before noon. This vaudeville is a unique entertainment, a joy and a treat.

The Grand Central Terminal Station is one of the top sights in New York. It has fifty-seven tracks underground in several layers and sixty-six on the upper level. The number of people passing through Grand Central each year exceeds the total population of the United States. More than 550 trains arrive and depart daily. The terminal

building has great towers, and hotels flank it, connected by arcaded tunnels. A very busy hub of traffic and travel is the main section of the Grand Central, with information offices on upper and lower levels. The big clock in the centre is a favourite rendezvous.

Wall Street, the world-renowned financial centre, is perhaps the most famous quarter-of-a-mile in the world. In 1650 a wall was built to protect the small colony from attacks by Indians; later it was considered the finest residential section of that period. New York's Stock Exchange at Wall and Nassau Streets, is the largest organized securities market in the United States.

Greenwich Village, west of Washington Square, is the "Bohemian Quarter" of the literary and artistic world. Its many quaint streets, curio shops and picturesque outdoor art shows, have a continuous sight-seeing appeal. Chinatown is equally quaint and interesting.

Ever so impressive are the lovely Brooklyn Suspension Bridge and the George Washington Memorial Span (which is one of the world's largest suspension bridges, completed in 1931 at a cost of 60 million dollars). The one-mile crossing by night is like a fairy story.

Brooklyn's Botanic Gardens, with the famous flowering cherries, crab apple, and unique oriental gardens, are lovely.

The greatest surprise of all was "New Sterling Forest Gardens" near Greenwood Lake, about a 1½-hour bus drive from New York City. This 125 acres of woodland with lakes and streams was until a few years ago a swamp with several feet of water. The design represents the inspiration of Dutch landscape architects who worked with Americans on the Dutch Dam principle. The gardens were opened in the spring of 1960 and are one of the finest and most beautiful in the world, with floral displays similar to those of Keukenhof in Holland, Kew Gardens, the famous Tivoli Gardens in Rome, those at Versailles, and even the famous gardens of Japan. It is a wonderland of flowers and fragrance, with superb children's playground, several "Radio Guide Areas" (where one can switch on a hired radio and hear the story of the particular area in which one is standing), Flying Gardens, Refreshment Patios, Scenic Train-ride, and even a Music Circus.

I loved the very friendly people of New York, and everything there (except the terrific noise and frequent fire and police alarms), and only too soon came the "Good-Bye" at the great International Airport Idlewild. Our Jet had to make three attempts at starting, so I was able to see my friends and the beautiful park with the spectacular lighted fountain once more.

Hedy Blessley.

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