

# ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF TOURISTS TO THE MISSOURI OZARKS

- HOW MUCH THEY SPEND
- WHERE THEY COME FROM
- HOW LONG THEY STAY
- HOW MANY IN PARTY

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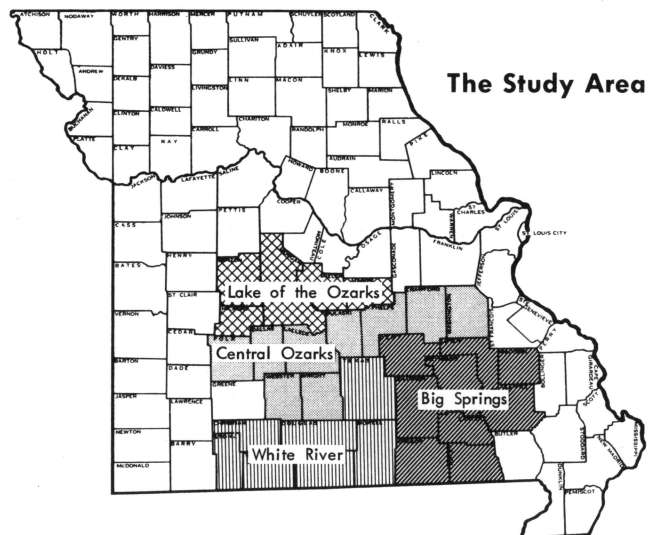
## CONTENTS

<b>Lake of the Ozarks Area</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>White River Area</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Big Springs Area</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Central Ozarks Area</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Tourist Expenditures in Thirty-One County Area</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>12</b>

## PREFACE

The data reported in this publication were obtained in 1960 by interviewing 10 percent of the operators of all retail and service establishments in 31 counties of the Missouri Ozarks. More detailed information on this study is contained in the University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletins 798, "Where Ozark Tourists Come From and Their Impact on the Local Economy," and 799, "Contributions of Tourist Trade to Incomes of People in the Missouri Ozarks."

Cover photo: Lake Taneycomo—by Walker; Missouri Commerce.



# ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF TOURISTS

BY RONALD BIRD AND COY G. McNABB\*

■ Within the Missouri Ozarks are many recreational resources to satisfy the wants of different types of tourists. Large lakes, numerous springs and caves, and historical sites such as pioneer settlements and Civil War battlefields are scattered throughout the area. There are also comparatively primitive sections where clear, rapid-flowing streams, relatively unchanged by man, meander through the wooded hills.

The tourist industry has a sizeable potential for increasing incomes of people in the Ozarks. However, little factual data has existed regarding the contribution of this activity to the local economy or the characteristics and origin of the tourists visiting the different areas.

Such information is valuable to local groups or individuals in determining where the advertising dollar can best be spent, and in planning or investing in the additional facilities or businesses catering primarily to the tourist. The study reported in this circular was made to supply some of this information.

Because of the variation in recreational resources in different sections of the Ozarks and the apparent ability of each to attract certain types of tourists from different places, the region was divided into four recreational areas for the purposes of this report.

Some counties included in each area did not possess many tourist attractions. However, the traffic flow went through these counties toward the focal points that attracted people, so they were included as part of the recreational area. The major areas designated were as follows.

Recreational Area	Counties
Lake of the Ozarks	Benton, Camden, Hickory, Maries, Miller, and Morgan.
White River	Christian, Douglas, Howell, Ozark, Stone, Taney, and Texas.
Big Springs	Carter, Dent, Iron, Madison, Oregon, Reynolds, Ripley, Shannon, and Wayne.
Central Ozarks	Crawford, Dallas, Laclede, Phelps, Polk, Pulaski, Washington, Webster, and Wright.

\*Ronald Bird, agricultural economist, Farm Economics Division, Economic Research Service, Department of Agriculture; Coy G. McNabb, Extension associate professor of agricultural economics, University of Missouri.

# LAKE OF THE OZARKS AREA

Grand Glaize scene—by Massie; Missouri Commerce.

■ This area is in the northern part of the Missouri Ozarks. The most distinct feature is the lake for which it is named. This lake was created by the Union Electric Company in 1931 when it built Bagnell Dam across the Osage River. The lake is 129 miles long and has 1,375 miles of shoreline. Approximately 50,000 acres are inundated. The impounded waters follow the meandering course of the Osage River and its local tributaries. The shoreline is characterized by irregular coves that extend back into wooded hills on either side of the lake. This pleasant setting provides beautiful and restful surroundings for those who wish to relax at the lake.

Many facilities have been constructed to serve the tourist. By 1960, more than 500 resorts and motels had been built in the area.

## AMOUNT SPENT BY TOURISTS

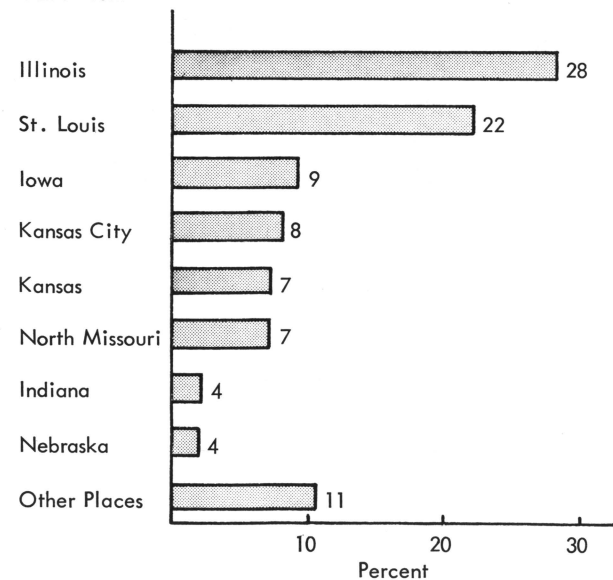
Tourists spent \$13,750,000 in the Lake of the Ozarks area in 1959. Operators of retail and service establishments in the Lake of the Ozarks area stated that 27 percent of their total business in 1959 was obtained from the tourist trade.

## WHERE THEY CAME FROM--

The State of Illinois and the City of St. Louis furnished half of the overnight visitors who stayed

at motels in the Lake of the Ozarks area in 1960. About 9 percent came from Iowa, eight percent from Kansas City, and 7 percent from the State of Kansas. Northern Missouri supplied 7 percent of the visitors and Indiana and Nebraska about 4 percent. The remaining 11 percent came from other parts of the United States.

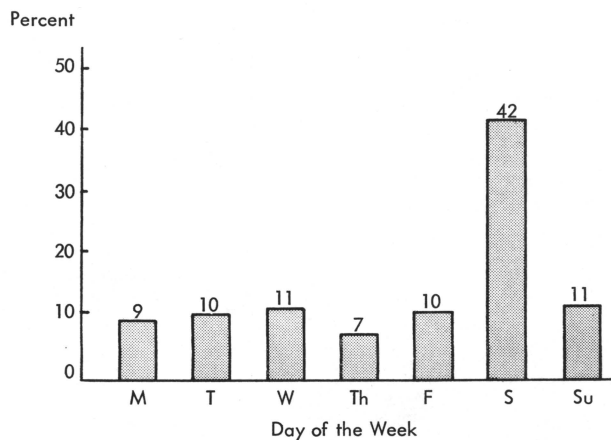
Where Tourists Came From--



Where Tourists Came From Who Stayed at Motels in the Lake of the Ozarks Area in 1960.

## WHAT DAY THEY CAME

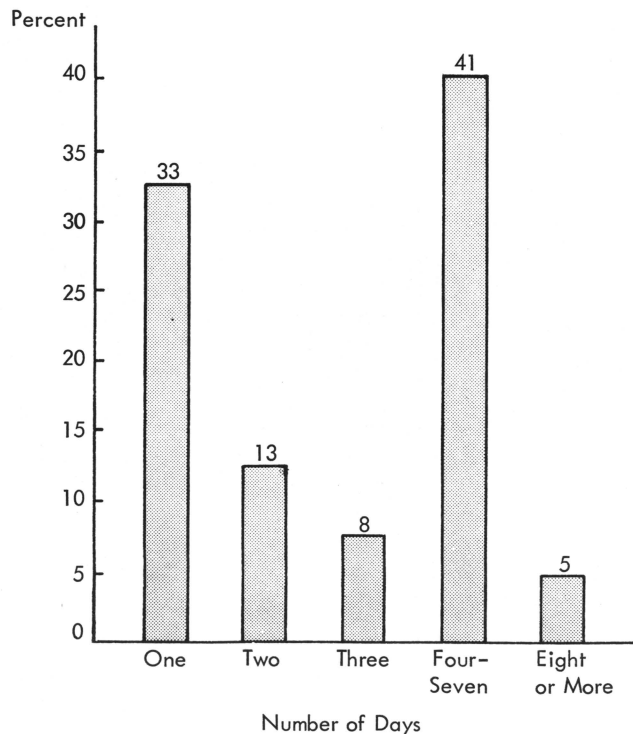
Saturday was the "big" day for registration at motels in the Lake of the Ozarks area. Slightly more than two out of five (42%) guests checked in on this one day. There was little difference in the number registering other days in the week.



**Day of the Week When Tourists Registered at Motels in the Lake of the Ozarks Area in 1960.**

## HOW LONG THEY STAYED

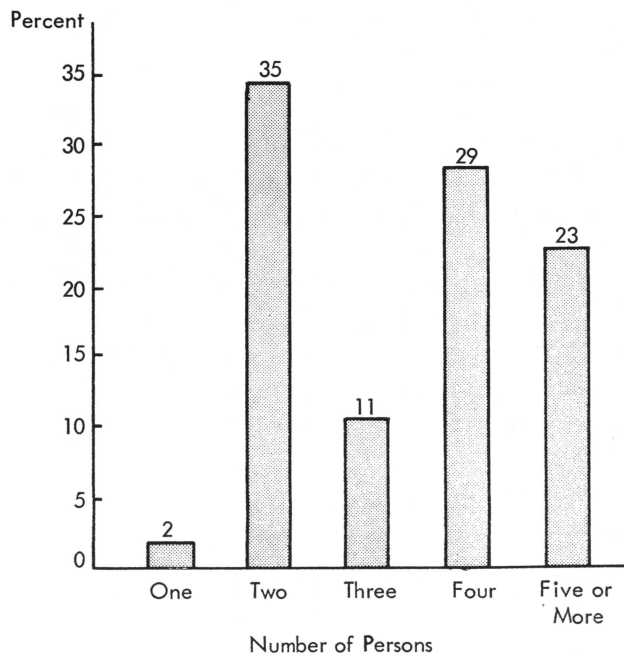
While almost one-third of the guests at motels stayed only one day, the remaining two-thirds stayed two days or longer. In this area it is also significant that over one-half of the guests stayed three days or longer. About 5 percent stayed more than one week.



**Number of Days Tourists Stayed at Motels in the Lake of the Ozarks Area in 1960.**

## HOW MANY IN PARTY

The Lake of the Ozarks area appears to have considerable attraction for families, since 63 percent of the registrations showed three or more persons in the party. Ninety-eight percent of the guests at motels were in parties of two or more.



**Number of Persons in Party Registering at Motels in the Lake of the Ozarks Area in 1960.**

# WHITE RIVER AREA

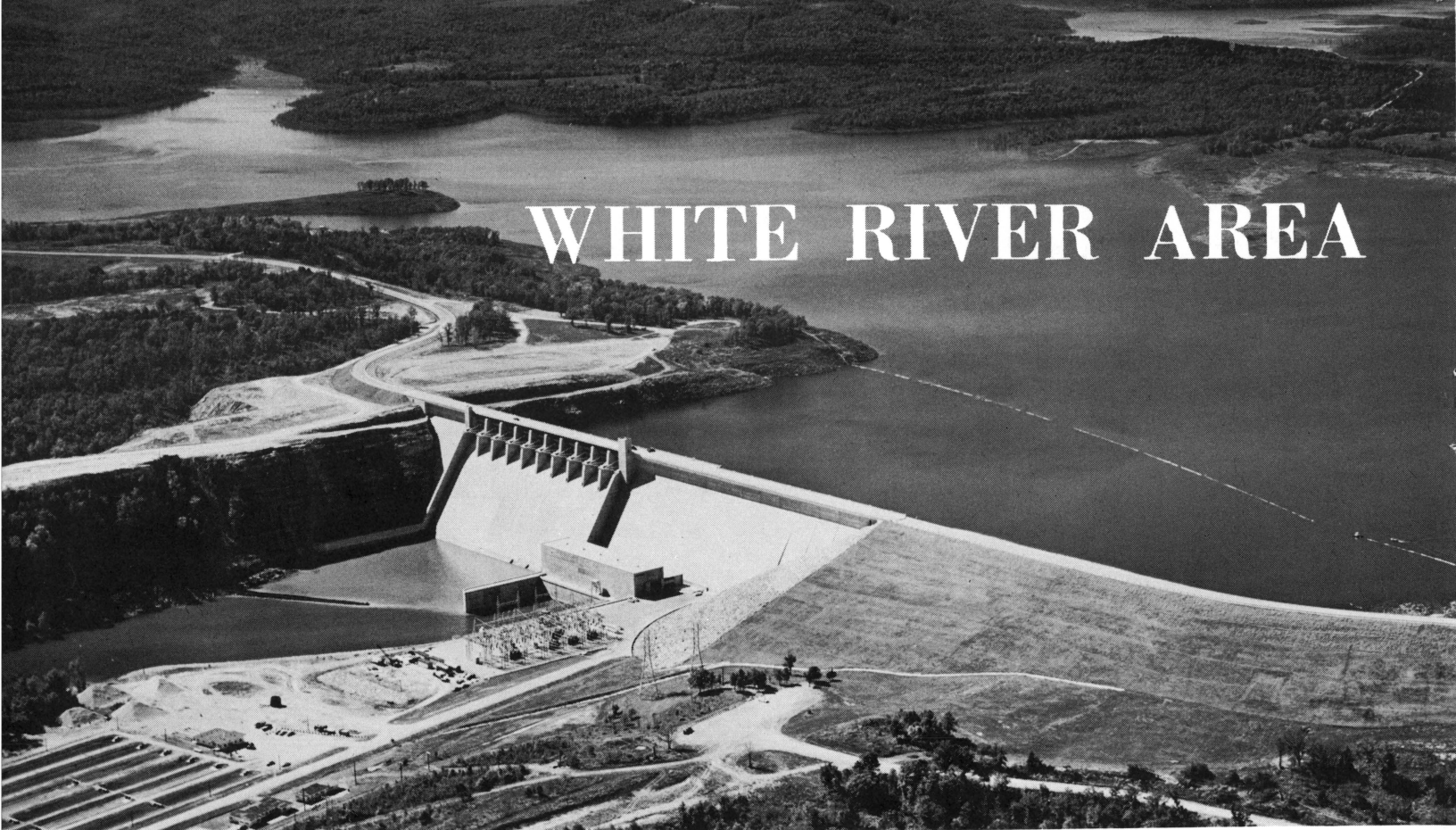


Table Rock Dam—by Walker; Missouri Commerce.

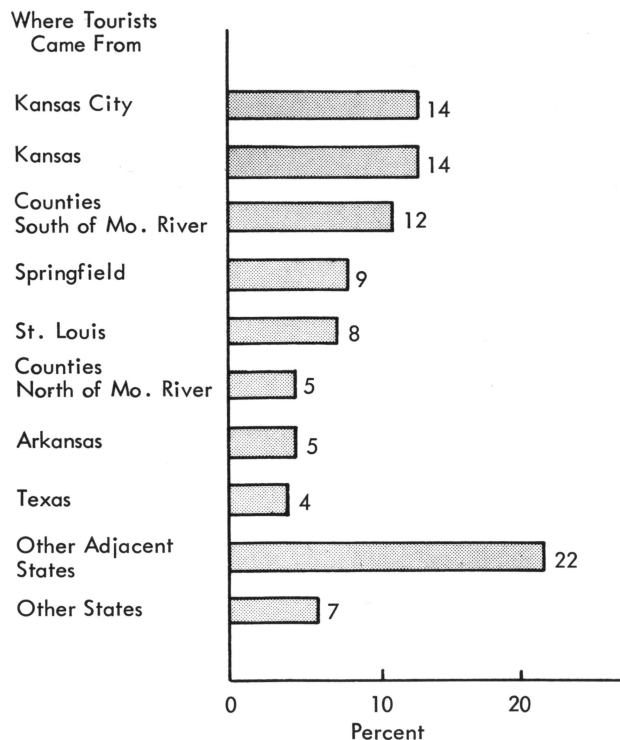
The White River runs through the southwest corner of the Missouri Ozarks. The area includes the counties in which White River is located and adjacent counties through which traffic flows to the area. During World War I, Lake Taneycomo was formed by the construction of a private power dam on White River. During the late 1940's, Bull Shoals Dam was completed, and in the 1950's, Table Rock Dam was built. The latter two were constructed by the U. S. Corps of Engineers.

Lakes with a water area of about 100,000 acres and shorelines of 2,000 miles were created. About half of the lake area is in Missouri and half in Arkansas. Lake Norfork was created by a dam constructed on the North Fork River in Arkansas during the 1940s. Only a small arm of this lake extends into Missouri.

## AMOUNT SPENT BY TOURISTS

The operators of retail and service establishments stated that 21 percent of their total business in 1959 was obtained from the tourist trade. This amounted to \$17,220,000.

## WHERE THEY CAME FROM

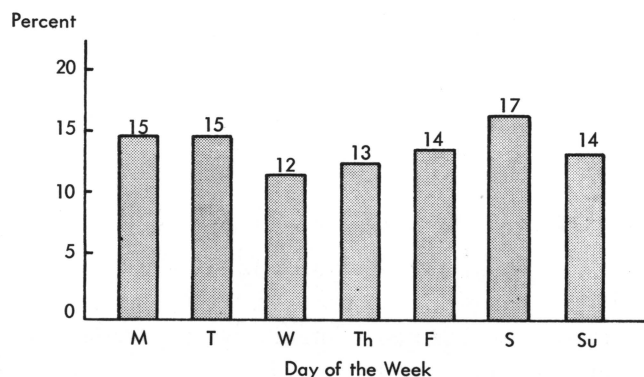


Residence of Guests Who Stayed at Motels in the White River Area in 1960.

Kansas City and the state of Kansas each furnished about 14 percent of the overnight visitors to the White River Area in 1960. Another 12 percent came from Missouri counties south of the Missouri River other than the metropolitan centers of St. Louis, Kansas City, or Springfield. Eight and 9 percent of the guests came from St. Louis and Springfield, respectively. About 5 percent came from Missouri counties north of the Missouri River. Another 5 percent came from Arkansas, and 4 percent from Texas. Other states adjacent to Missouri furnished an additional 22 percent. Seven percent were from states not adjacent to Missouri.

### WHAT DAY THEY CAME

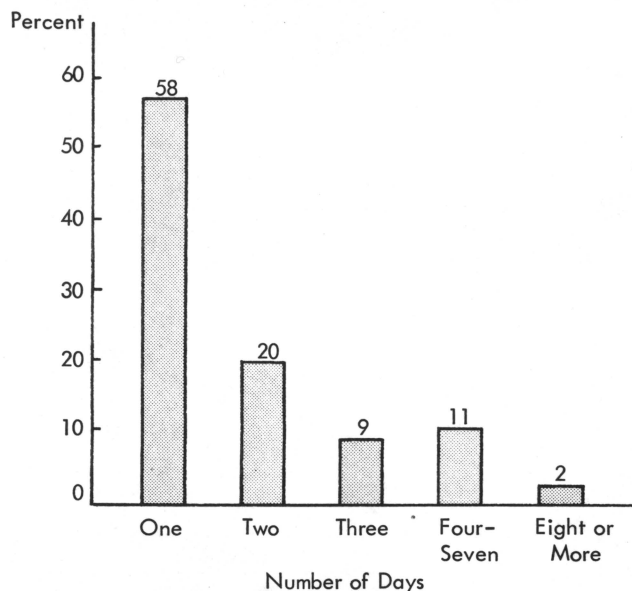
In the White River area, there was little variation in the number of registrations at motels for different days of the week. While the Lake of the Ozarks area had two out of five guests registering on Saturdays, in the White River area only one guest out of six registered on Saturday. The complete range for the White River area was from a low of twelve percent for Wednesday to a high of seventeen percent for Saturday.



**Day of the Week When Tourists Registered at Motels in the White River Area in 1960.**

### HOW LONG THEY STAYED

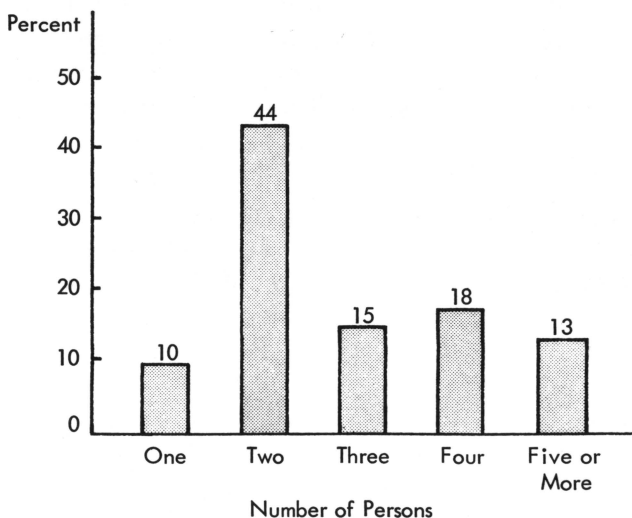
Fifty-eight percent of the guests at motels in the White River area in 1960 stayed only one day. This proportion compares with about 33 percent staying one day in the Lake of the Ozarks area. Twenty percent stayed two days, 9 percent three days and only 13 percent four days or more. Staying more than one week had little appeal for guests in this area; less than 2 percent remained eight or more days.



**Number of Days Tourists Stayed at Motels in the White River Area in 1960.**

### HOW MANY IN PARTY

Ninety percent of the registrations at motels in the White River area were of two persons or more in 1960. The number of single registrations was five times higher than in the Lake of the Ozarks area. Parties of three or more made up 46 percent of registrations in the White River area, compared to 63 percent in the Lake of the Ozarks area. One explanation could be that there were relatively fewer families vacationing here than in the Lake of the Ozarks area.



**Number of Persons in Party Registering at Motels in the White River Area in 1960.**



# BIG SPRINGS AREA

*Current River Float—by Massie; Missouri Commerce.*

The Big Springs area includes some of the most rugged and densely forested land in the Ozarks Region. It is also the most inaccessible. Distinct features are the many large springs, the narrowness of the river valleys, and the ruggedness of the terrain. In many places, the rolling, wooded hillsides drop rapidly 300 to 400 feet to the narrow river valley below. The streams formed by the mammoth springs flow to the south. These large rivers flowing through rather remote areas have encouraged the use of "John-boats," which are adapted to float fishing along the streams. As a result, the rivers are fished mainly by local people and those who enjoy "roughing it," by spending the day floating down the streams, cooking meals over camp fires and sleeping in tents or in the open.

In general, the accommodations that accompany intensive recreational development are lacking in the Big Springs area. There are few motels with swimming pools, air-conditioned restaurants, or other facilities, except those suitable for people who want to camp. In 1960, only 91 motels were found in the

nine-county area. They could accommodate about 791 families for an overnight visit.

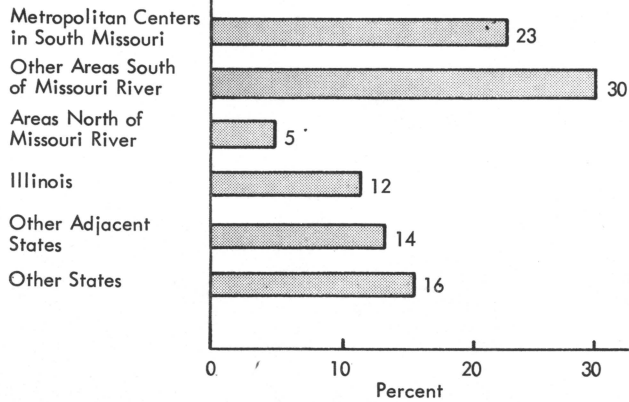
## AMOUNT SPENT BY TOURISTS

The operators of retail and service establishments stated that 20 percent of their total business in 1959 was obtained from the tourist trade. This amounted to \$9,810,000.

## WHERE THEY CAME FROM

The Big Springs area is in marked contrast to the areas previously discussed in that 53 percent of the overnight visitors at motels were from Missouri counties south of the Missouri River. Thirty percent of all visitors were from counties in south Missouri outside the metropolitan centers of St. Louis, Kansas City, and Springfield. Twenty-three percent of the visitors were from these three cities. Only 5 percent were from counties in north Missouri, and 12 percent from Illinois. About half of the remainder came from states adjacent to Missouri and the rest from states farther away.

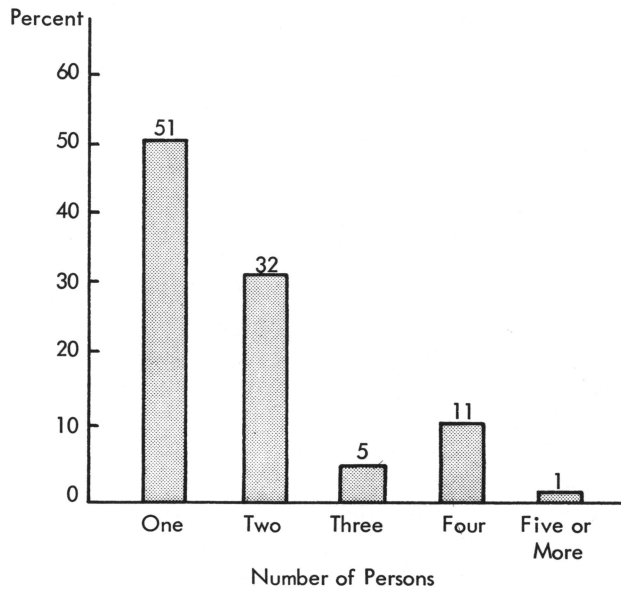
**Where Tourists Came From--**



**Residence of Guests Who Stayed at Motels in the Big Springs Area in 1960.**

**HOW MANY IN PARTY**

More than half of the guests registering in motels in 1960 were alone. In comparison, only 2 percent of the guests at motels in the Lake of the Ozarks area were alone. Thirty-two percent were in parties of two people. Thirty-two percent were in parties of two people. Only 17 percent were in parties of three or more.

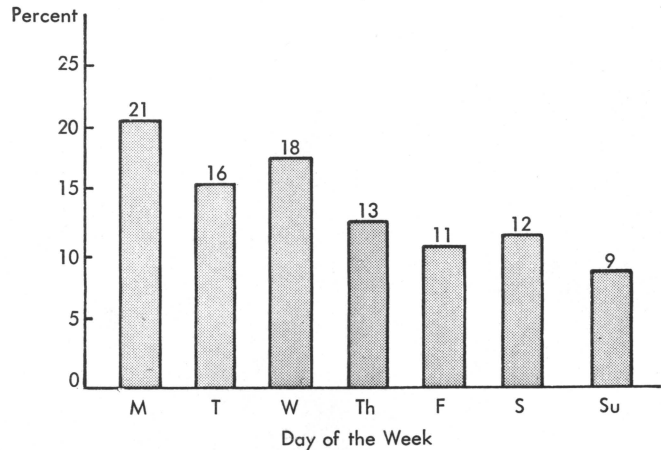


**Number of Persons in Party registering at Motels in the Big Springs Area in 1960.**

**WHAT DAY THEY CAME**

More visitors registered on Monday than any other day of the week (21%) and fewer registered

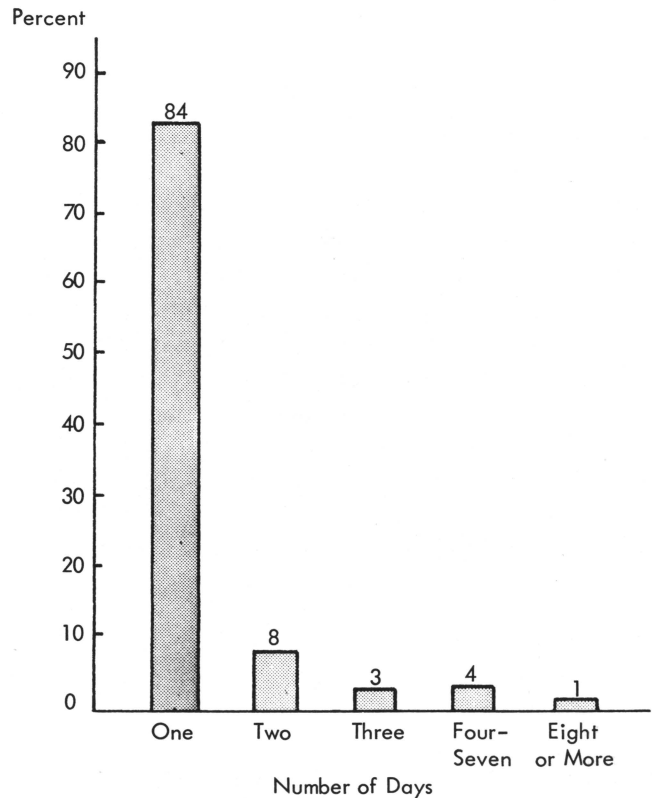
on Sunday (9%). Fifty-five percent registered on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and 45 percent registered on the other four days of the week.



**Day of the Week When Tourists Registered at Motels in the Big Springs Area in 1960.**

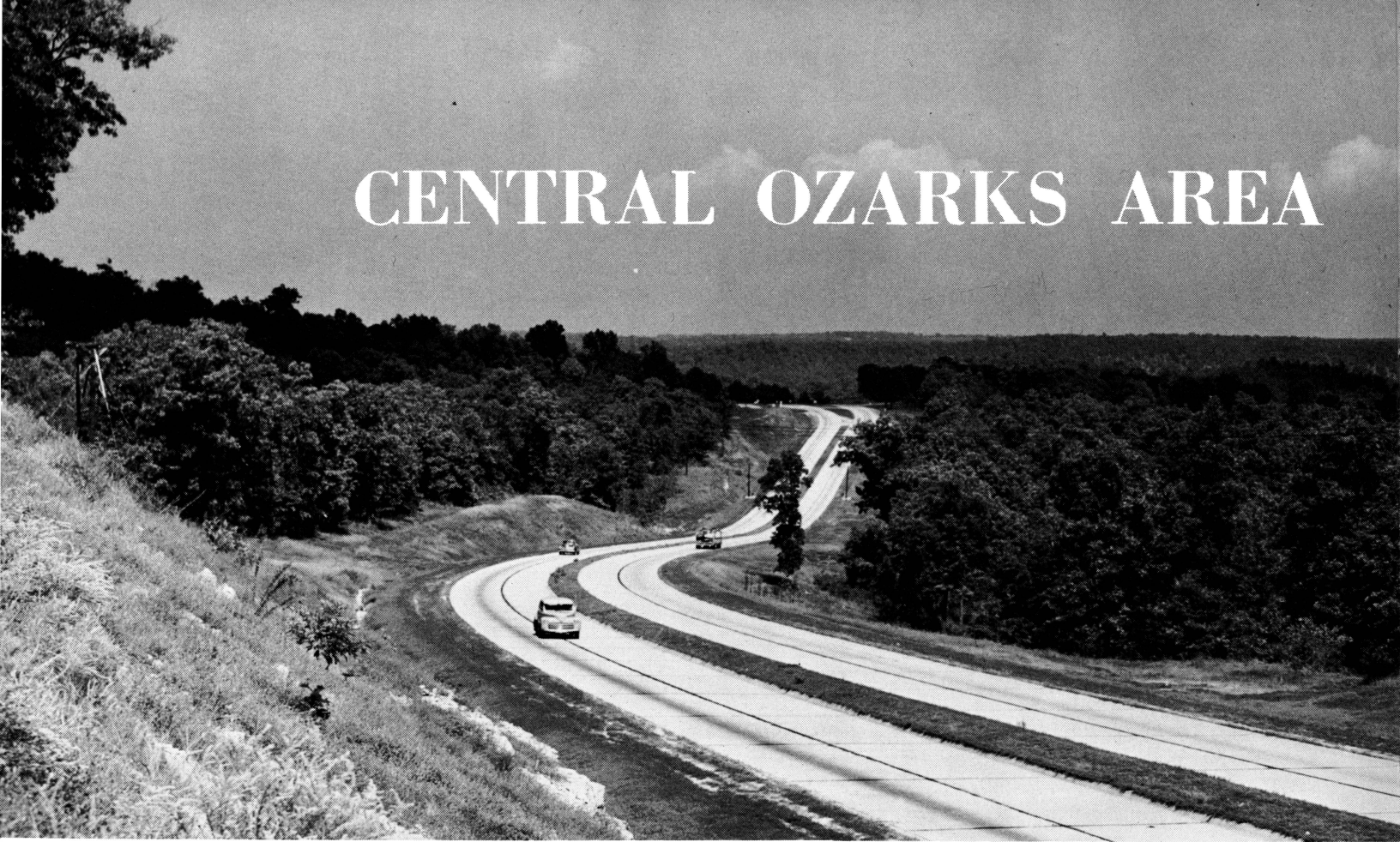
**HOW LONG THEY STAYED**

Eighty-four percent of the people who visited the Big Springs area stayed only one day; another 8 percent stayed two days. Only 8 percent stayed more than three days.



**Number of Days Tourists Stayed at Motels in the Big Springs Area in 1960.**

# CENTRAL OZARKS AREA



Highway 66—by Massie; Missouri Commerce.

■ One of the most distinctive features of the Central Ozarks area is its location in the natural path of transcontinental travel. U.S. 66 is a four lane road from St. Louis to Springfield and is one of the major arterial highways leading from the midwest to southern California. It dissects a rather heavily wooded and hilly area of the Ozarks and provides a pleasant and beautiful setting for people who travel through Missouri. For those who wish to stop there are many unique tourist attractions, including numerous historical monuments, such as battle grounds of the Civil War and early travel routes to the southwest.

## AMOUNT SPENT BY TOURISTS

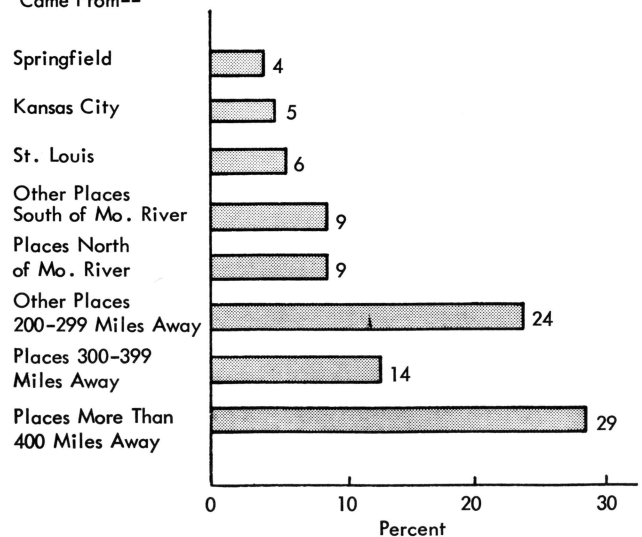
The operators of retail and service establishments stated that twenty percent of their total business was obtained from the tourist trade. This amounted to \$27,200,000.

## WHERE THEY CAME FROM

Fifteen percent of the guests at motels were from three metropolitan cities in Missouri (Spring-

field, Kansas City, and St. Louis). Another 9 percent were from other areas in Missouri south of the Missouri River. An equal number came from Mis-

Where Tourists Came From--

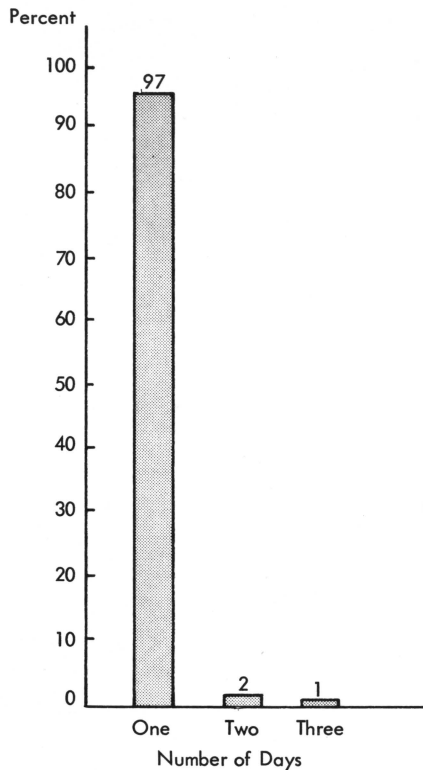


Residence of Guests Who Stayed at Motels in the Central Ozarks Area in 1960.

souri north of the river. About 24 percent were from other places less than 300 miles away. Fourteen percent were 300-399 miles from home, whereas only 29 percent were from places over 400 miles away. One-sixth of these were from California.

## HOW LONG THEY STAYED

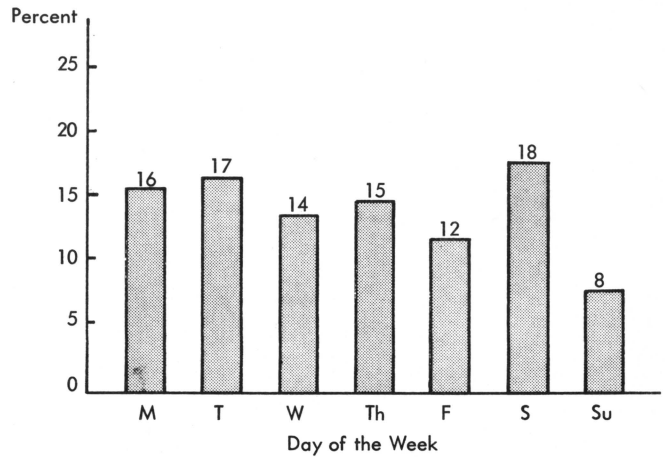
Ninety-seven percent stayed only one night in the Central Ozarks area. It appears that most of the guests at motels were passing through. They spent the night and moved on.



**Number of Days Tourists Stayed at Motels in the Central Ozarks Area in 1960.**

## WHAT DAY THEY CAME

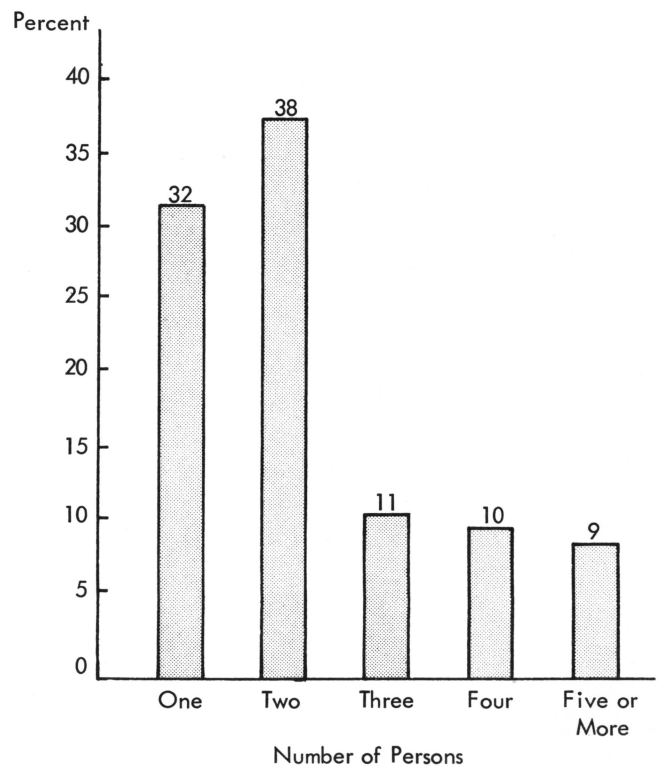
About the same percentage of visitors registered each night from Monday through Saturday. On Sunday, however, only half as many people registered as on the other days of the week.



**Day of the Week When Tourists Registered at Motels in the Central Ozarks Area in 1960.**

## HOW MANY IN PARTY

Seventy percent of the guests who stayed in motels were either alone or in parties of two persons.

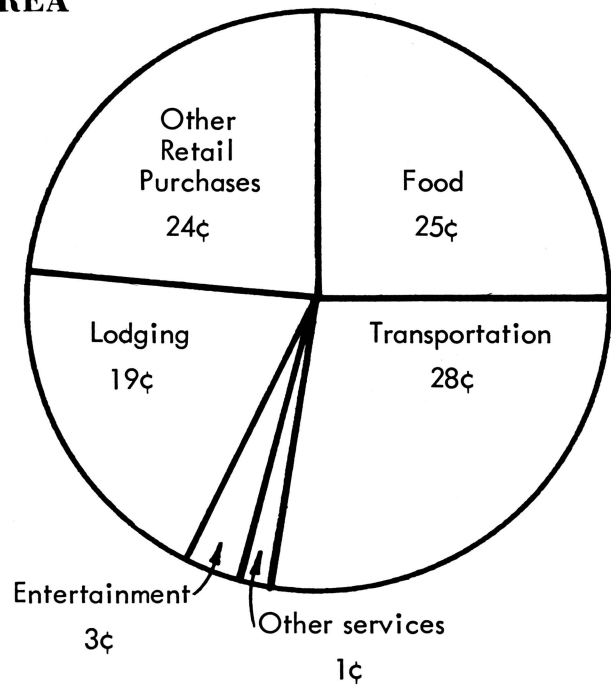


**Number of Persons in Party Registering at Motels in the Central Ozarks Area in 1960.**

## TOURIST EXPENDITURES IN THIRTY-ONE COUNTY AREA

In the 31 county Missouri Ozark area, tourists spent \$68,000,000 in 1959. This represented 21 percent of the total value of business done by all retail and service businesses in the entire area. Out of each dollar spent by the tourist, 28 cents went for transportation, 25 cents for food, 24 cents for other retail purchases, and 19 cents for lodging. Only 3 cents of the dollar went for entertainment and 1 cent for other services. The other retail purchases included items purchased at drug stores, clothing stores, home furnishings, and other durable goods.

Ninety-three percent of all operators in the 31 county area reported that some part of their business came from the tourist trade.



### SUMMARY

This study of the Ozark region shows that most of the visitors come from places less than one day's drive from the area. In 1959, they spent approximately \$68,000,000 for goods and services while in the area. Some areas, such as the Lake of the Ozarks and White River sections, offer a variety of recreational activities for their guests. The Big Springs area and the Central Ozarks area are more specialized.

Activity in the Central Ozarks area is associated with travel on U.S. Highway 66 and other primary roads. Most of the guests at motels stayed only one night. Apparently, most of these were businessmen calling on customers in the region, or interstate travellers.

Most of the people who stayed at motels in the Big Springs area were alone. They were either businessmen travelling in the area or fishermen seeking a little different setting than they had in their home areas. Accommodations that usually accompany in-

tensive recreational development are scarce in the area. Few motels have swimming pools, air-conditioned rooms, playgrounds, or other facilities found extensively in other areas. However, the area has a large number of camp grounds, appealing to different vacation tastes.

Ninety-eight percent of the guests at motels in the Lake of the Ozarks area were in parties of two or more persons and over half had more than four persons in the party. About 96 percent of the guests lived no more than a day's drive from the area and 75 percent within a half day's drive. Most of them were from St. Louis.

The White River area attracted guests from greater distances than did the Lake of the Ozarks and also had more appeal to the local residents. However, the area attracted fewer guests with children than did the Lake of the Ozarks area. More of the guests were from Kansas City than any other major city.



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