

# The Jean-Baptiste Valle House

Built ca. 1794, the J.B. Valle House was built with a style of timber framing called *poteaux-sur-solle* (post on sill), in which closely spaced posts rest on a timber sill. The basement may have been used as rented quarters for the Spanish garrisons. The stone pillars and wooden beams are original, while other modifications were made later (such as the flooring).



J.B. Valle house in 1934  
Library of Congress

After Jean-Baptiste Valle died, Anthony LaGrave purchased the property and made several significant alterations in the mid-nineteenth century. The hip roof was altered to make way for a second floor and replaced with Anglo gables. Parts of the galleries were enclosed for a kitchen, pantry, and sun room.

The interior decorations including the trim and mantels were changed to a Greek

revival style, a more popular look for the time period. LaGrave owned the house until 1867 when he sold it to Leon Vion. Eventually, the house made it's way down to their granddaughter, Vion Papin Schram. This family held the property for a little over 140 years. In January 2020, the house was donated to the National Park Service by the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Missouri. Today, it serves at the park's first headquarters.



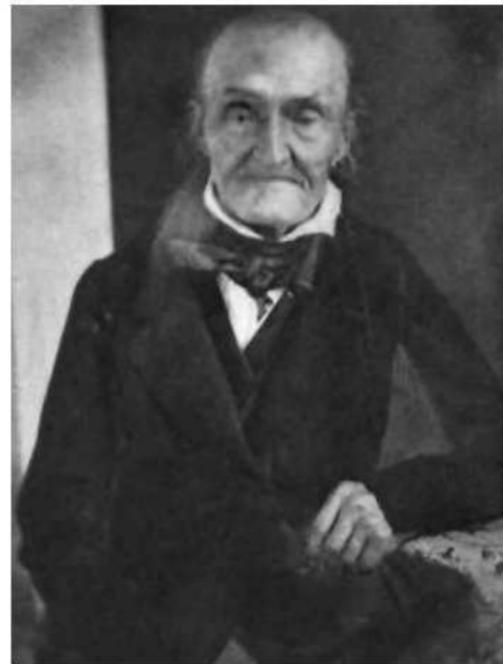
J.B. Valle house and rose garden taken in 1931  
Library of Congress



# Jean-Baptiste Valle House



## Jean-Baptiste Valle



Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Valle  
Missouri State Parks

Jean-Baptiste Valle served as the first American commandant of Ste. Genevieve following the death of his brother, Francois II, in March 1804.

In a letter to Captain Amos Stoddard, dated March 19, 1804, Jean-Baptiste wrote one of his most famous lines, "We are now all Americans."

## Rose Garden

It is rumored to be the first formal rose garden west of the Mississippi.

A letter written in 1811 references roses, lilacs, and plum trees being sent to Madame Valle from Mme. Chouteau.



Rose Garden outside of the house  
NPS



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Historical Park  
Missouri

# Ste. Genevieve

Ste. Genevieve was the first permanent European settlement in what is now the state of Missouri. Established by 1750, French Canadians migrated across the river from neighboring Kaskaskia in search of more fertile farmland, lead to mine, and salt springs. Ste. Genevieve was built adjacent to 7000 acres of lowland fields called Le Grand Champ. After a series of devastating floods in the 1780's, the town relocated to its present location on higher ground approximately 3 miles to the northwest of its original site.



# A Rare Cultural Treasure

Built in 1792, by Jean Baptiste St. Gemme Beauvais Jr., the house is situated along what is now known as St. Mary's Road. It sits directly across from *Le Grand Champ*, the common agricultural field.



**Poteaux-en-terre style architecture visible in cellar HABS**

Porches were added and 12 feet of the west end of the house was removed, possibly due to fire damage. The ceiling beams are original, as well as the fire place and mantel in the parlor. The floor "floats" upon stone pillars, leaving it unattached to the walls. The original "Norman" style trusses are still in place.

The house exhibits a French colonial, *poteaux-en-terre* (post in ground) style construction. Instead of a foundation, the hand-hewn, red cedar logs are placed directly in the ground. Only five *poteaux-en-terre* structures are known to still exist in the United States.

**Interior of attic showing Norman trusses. HABS**



In 1852 the house was purchased by Benjamin C. Amoureux, son of a French immigrant.

Benjamin's wife, Pelagie, was of mixed ethnicity and was born to an enslaved mother. Benjamin and Pelagie's first child, Felix, was born in 1831, while Pelagie was still enslaved. Pelagie, along with Felix, gained their freedom in 1832. Benjamin and Pelagie had five more children. Benjamin died in 1878 and Pelagie in 1890.

# Amoureux House



## A Rare Cultural Treasure cont.

The Amoureux children and descendants continued to live in the house until 1923 when it was sold to William Gisi.

From 1963 to 1992 it was owned by local preservationists Norbert and Francis Donze, who ran it as a historical house museum.

After the Flood of 1993 threatened the house, it was purchased by the French Heritage Relief Committee. In 1994, they donated it to the State of Missouri to become part of the local state historic site.

*Les Amis* (the friends) was created to help finance operating costs.

In 2019, the State of Missouri donated the house to the National Park Service, making it the first official property of Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park.



**Amoureux family on porch  
amhouse.org**

## Plan Your Visit

Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park is located at 99 S. Main St., 1.1 miles off of Ste. Genevieve Dr. (MO Hwy 61)

Hours are 9 am to 5 pm daily; closed Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. Admission is free.

The Welcome Center, located across the street from the Jean-Baptiste Valle house, has an information desk, theater, exhibits, sales area, restrooms, and a park office.

For weather delays or closures, call 573-880-7189. For a full list of regulations, including firearms information, visit the park's website.

**More Information**  
Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park  
99 S. Main St.  
Ste. Genevieve, MO 63670  
573-880-7189  
[www.nps.gov/stge](http://www.nps.gov/stge)

Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. Please visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

