

H. Hile  
[Ste. Genevieve]

A GUIDE TO  
STE. GENEVIEVE

---

---

WITH NOTES ON ITS  
ARCHITECTURE.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

SECOND EDITION

100 COPIES, FEBRUARY, 1940.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
JEFFERSON NATIONAL EXPANSION MEMORIAL

C O N T E N T S

1. FOREWORD
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
3. NOTES ON THE FRENCH HOUSES
4. COMPARISON OF THE FRENCH CANADIAN AND MISSOURI HOUSE
5. FRENCH WROUGHT IRON DOOR LATCHES
6. CONTRACT FOR THE BOISLEDUC HOUSE
7. MAP OF A PART OF STE. GENEVIEVE
8. POINTS OF INTEREST IN STE. GENEVIEVE TODAY
9. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING STE. GENEVIEVE

---

This study is presented by authority of the Historic Sites and Buildings Act of Congress, approved August 21, 1935.

## F O R E W O R D

In an investigation of the old Creole village of St. Louis, which once outlined the site of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, the architectural research staff of the National Park Service has made an extensive search in the source materials which remain. While documentary evidence is rich (there are 2503 documents in the St. Louis Recorded Archives, many of which contain architectural information), it has been necessary to recreate a dead vocabulary to understand it. This process involved a correlating study of Eighteenth Century documents and existing buildings. The last of the French buildings of St. Louis disappeared two generations ago. Only in Ste. Genevieve can the comparison be made today.

Unfortunately for the architectural investigator the official record of titles to Ste. Genevieve land has not been extended beyond the confirmation of ownership in 1803 (time of the Louisiana Purchase). Presumably all or nearly all of the necessary data lies in the Ste. Genevieve Archives held by the Missouri Historical Society

By the courtesy of the latter organization over one hundred selected documents from the collection have been transcribed and examined, but they are a mere beginning. Obsolete words, peculiar spellings, obscure handwriting, missing papers and the substitution of nicknames for proper names each contribute to make this a slow work. To date it has not been possible to learn the year of erection of a single structure of the colonial period, although the writer believes that eventually many of them can be determined, at least between limits.

The organization of this material began as a guide for a field trip of the William Clark Society on June 4, 1939. All historical material was built around the buildings of the town, which were represented on a map. The printing (mimeograph process) was a small one and soon exhausted. This new edition, enlarged and corrected, brings the Guide up to date with current studies of the National Park Service. Additional data which can be documented will be gladly considered for any future editions which may be forthcoming.

Charles F. Peterson

St. Louis, February 14, 1940.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The colonization of the Mississippi Valley began at the end of the Seventeenth Century--first from Canada and then by way of the Gulf of Mexico. Following the proclamation of LaSalle the French claimed this vast land for nearly three quarters of a century and administrators at Versailles, Quebec and New Orleans for a time dreamed of a vast empire extending from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf Coast. But Quebec fell in the war with England, and in 1763 title to the lands on the East Bank of the River went to the conquerer and that on the West to Spain.

It was some years, however, before the full impact of the Anglo-American expansion from the Atlantic Seaboard Colonies was felt in the Creole settlements of the "Illinois Country",<sup>1</sup> and after a century and a half the physical remains of their unique culture can still be found. Isolated parts of Missouri have retained distinctive colonial characteristics. The search for and study of these things offers abundant reward to the antiquarian, for they comprise a subject comparatively untouched by systematic and definitive research.

In the Illinois Country there were at one time or another some forty Creole missionary, fur trading, farming, mining and military establishments. Of these none has retained more of its ancient appearance than the present town of Ste. Genevieve. The oldest settlement of the group on the Mississippi River--Cahokia, Illinois, founded in 1698--has suffered heavily from the floods and the neglect of the English and Virginia governments. Kaskaskia (founded 1703)<sup>2</sup> was entirely washed away after nearly two centuries of existence by a change of the river's course. What was left of colonial St. Louis disappeared during the fire of 1849 and the riverfront development of the Steamboat Era.

Next to New Orleans, probably more relics of the French period can now be found in Ste. Genevieve than any other town or city of the Mississippi Valley.

---

1.

The "Illinois Country"--named after the Illinois Indians--included parts of what are now the States of Illinois and Missouri.

2.

Palm, Sister Mary Borgias, The Jesuit Missions of the Illinois Country, 1673-1763 (1933), p. 41.

## THE OLD TOWN (Poste de Saint Joachim, etc.)

The beginnings of Ste. Genevieve are still obscure; no contemporary account of its founding has yet come to light. It has been quite generally agreed that the settlement was started about the year 1735 on the river bottom some three miles below the present village. Some writers would like to place the date earlier to coincide more nearly with the beginnings of lead mining in the back country, but it is not shown on the map of de Lery files (1733),<sup>1</sup> which portrays many details of the vicinity, as does that of Broutin (1734).<sup>2</sup> Had Ste. Genevieve been in existence at those dates its location would undoubtedly have been indicated on both.

Ste. Genevieve is thus the eighth known white establishment in Missouri, having been preceded by the Des Peres River settlement of the Jesuit missionaries (1700), the Cabanage à Renaudiere (c. 1720), the Mine La Motte (c. 1723), the Mines of the Meramec (1723), the Fort d'Orleans (1723), the Mine à Renault (c. 1724-5) and Vieilles Mines (c. 1726).

In the earliest years the village was probably no more than a suburb of Kaskaskia, the little metropolis of the Illinois Country. The development of the salt springs on Saline Creek and the lead mines in the Ozark hills were undoubtedly important factors in the spreading of the settlement on the West Bank of the Mississippi. Probably a careful examination of the Kaskaskia Manuscripts, which go back to the first quarter of the Eighteenth Century, will provide the missing information.<sup>3</sup>

One Baptiste LaRose was the first settler according to sworn testimony recorded many years later. The oldest grants for the west side bottomlands of which the title papers have been discovered are for

- 
1. Service Hydrographique Bib. 4040 C.19 (Paris)
  2. Archives Nat. O.<sup>11</sup> a 126v<sup>o</sup> 47 D. (Paris)
  - 3.

This amazing collection of several thousand documents is preserved in the Randolph County Courthouse at Chester, Illinois. The National Park Service began the microfilming of this material in February, 1940 to make it more generally accessible. Prints may be secured through the office of Region Two at Omaha.

1752, and were executed by Macarty, the commandant at Kaskaskia.<sup>1</sup> In the same year Macarty reported that there were 27 inhabitants of Ste. Genevieve holding 93 arpents (nearly three miles) of frontage on the river.<sup>2</sup> In 1759 the place is referred to as the "Poste de Saint Joachim", in the first records of the parish.<sup>3</sup> Notarial records begin in 1766 under Spanish rule. Prior to that time the French Fort de Chartres had been the local seat of government; the separation probably resulted immediately from its occupation by the English in 1765.

One of the chief concerns of Ste. Genevieve seems to have been the shipping of lead, which was brought down from the hills after smelting. Schoolcraft said long ago: "From the earliest time . . . the French inhabitants of St. Genevieve had all been more or less engaged in the storage, purchase and traffic of lead. Every dwelling house thus became a storehouse for lead . . ."<sup>4</sup> Like the neighboring settlements it also furnished foodstuffs for New Orleans grown on the rich bottomlands. As late as 1782 St. Louis was also dependent on Ste. Genevieve for food.<sup>5</sup> French Canadians, largely of Norman derivation, who had settled first on the East Bank of the river, formed the greater part of the population.

Captain Philip Pittman of the English Army, who was in the Illinois Country in 1766, stated that the village was then "about one mile in length" and contained seventy families.<sup>6</sup> The unusual length of the settlement--considering its size--suggests that it was strung out along a main road like many of the old villages along the St. Lawrence River in French Canada. The Spanish census of 1772 gave Ste. Genevieve a population of 404 whites and 287 slaves, a total of 691 persons.<sup>7</sup> In 1782 the place was described as being too scattered to make its defense practicable.<sup>5</sup>

Back of the town lay the long narrow fields of the inhabitants, at right angles to the river, Canadian fashion, and reaching to the hills. This pattern of ownership can be recognized even today.

---

1. Guibourd Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

2. Found by Miss Natalia Belting in the **Vaudreuil** Manuscripts.

3. Yealy, Francis J., S.J., Sainte Genevieve: The Story of Missouri's Oldest Settlement (St. Louis, 1935), p. 24.

4. Schoolcraft, Henry R., A View of the Lead Mines of Missouri (New York, 1819), p. 121.

5. Minutes of a council of war held at St. Louis, July 9, 1782. Original in the Bancroft Library, Berkley, California.

6. Pittman, Capt. Philip, Present State of European Settlements on the Mississippi (London, 1770: reprinted, Cleveland, 1906), p. 50.

7. Houck, Louis, The Spanish Regime in Missouri (Chicago, 1909), I:235.

## THE NEW TOWN (Petites Cotes, etc.)

After repeated damage from floods, especially that of the spring of 1785,<sup>1</sup> the town moved to its present site on high ground where the three branches of Gabouri Creek come down from the hills. This moving did not take place all at once and the notary's register<sup>2</sup> does not indicate a sudden rush of real estate transactions. Threats by the river had begun earlier. As early as 1778 a Ste. Genevieve house owned by Joseph Couture had been described as "about to be destroyed by the river".<sup>3</sup> In 1787 thirteen inhabitants of the new village petitioned to have their fields in LeGrand Champs divided from the others<sup>4</sup> and "Petites Cotes" (Little Hills)<sup>5</sup> appears as its name. As late as 1796 Collot found at the old village "still a few huts remaining, inhabited by the traders".<sup>6</sup> The location of the church was not changed before 1794. By that time the town had increased considerably in size, largely because of the lawless conditions on the East Bank of the river which drove a large part of the inhabitants to the Spanish side. The French population had already been augmented by a number of Spaniards, Anglo-Americans and Germans, who had come for trading, mining and land speculation. As the lands began to fill up for the first time, hunting became difficult and the Indian trade dropped off. Many of the French moved back to the mining country or to advanced posts like St. Charles.

After the moving of the village the Grand Champs continued to be used for farming. In the following years other smaller outlying tracts were also cultivated, such as the Point à Pichet Fields on the river north of Maxwell's Hill, petitioned for in 1793 by six inhabitants and the "Grand Park Common Fields" on high ground west of the new village.

---

1. Letter, Miro to Galvez, quoted in Houck, Spanish Regime, I:235.

2. Ste. Genevieve Archives (hereafter referred to as STEGA), Misc. Bound MSS No. 1.

3. St. Louis Recorded Archives (hereafter referred to as STLRA), II:1:166

4. STEGA, Misc. Petitions No. 22.

5. See also STEGA, Misc., Churches No. 34. St. Charles, Missouri was also called "Petites Cotes", and its location on the Missouri River was often specified, apparently to avoid confusion. Ste. Genevieve was also nicknamed "Misere" or "Misery" by the early French, who had similar sobriquets for neighboring villages.

6. Collot, Victor, "A Journey in North America", reprinted from the English edition of 1826 in Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society for the Year 1908 (Springfield, 1900), p. 294.

There seems to have been no "Commons" (Commune) established as was customary in neighboring villages. Outlying settlements were the French Royalist colony of Nouvelle Bourbon and the Peoria Indian village, both of which were nearby to the south. When Upper Louisiana became an American possession in 1804, Ste. Genevieve, according to Amos Stoddard, contained one hundred and eighty houses.<sup>1</sup>

It was inevitable that the town should change. Of his visit six years later Brackenridge says:

" . . . As I approached the rocky stream which winds round one side of the village and the common field of vast extent between it and the river, it was pleasing to find that the place had not undergone an entire change, although the appearance of a different style of building intermingled with the old abodes, showed that Americans had already set their feet in it. There was enough left to answer to the landscape preserved by memory, and which I had dwelt on so often, that it was as familiar as 'household words.' The large dwelling of the commandant, Monsieur Valle, was still there; the inclosures of pickets, the intermingled orchards and gardens, still gave a character distinct from the American villages; while cattle, horned and without horns, were the chief occupants of the streets and highways . . ."<sup>2</sup>

The end of the slave economy, which supported the leading families, and the influx of a large number of Germans in the middle Nineteenth Century have been important factors in the change and growth of the village. Accessibility by the new highway will only accelerate the process. The Creole language is fast dying out and many of the old houses have disappeared in recent years. Nearly all of the French furniture has been sold to out-of-town antique dealers and even its style has been lost to memory.

Parts of the town do, however, retain a unique flavor even to this day and if precautions are taken to retain it there is a fair chance that the place will become better known and much enjoyed by travelling Americans.

---

1.

Stoddard, Major Amos, Sketches, Historical and Descriptive of Louisiana (Philadelphia, 1812), p. 216.

2.

Brackenridge, H. M., Recollections of Persons and Places in The West (Philadelphia, 1868), p. 199.



## NOTES ON THE FRENCH HOUSES

With the exception of a small wooden fort described by General Collot, a wooden church and possibly a jail, there were no public buildings in this new town. Two watermills, a horsemill and a pottery kiln are the only structures of industrial character recorded. At some distance from the town cattle ranches or dairies (vacheries), sugar camps (sucreries), saltmaking plants and lead mines were established. Many of the inhabitants or their slaves worked in the mines in the winter when the farms could be left for a few months. With the coming of the Americans, projects for rope-walks, distilleries, shoe factories, etc. were announced, but how many were actually realized is not known.

Houses and their dependencies made up the town. Of the latter the barn, the stable (étable, écurie), the shed (hangard), the hen house (poulailler), the corn house (cabanne à mahis), the oven (four) and the well (puits) seem to have been the most common. The outside kitchen, the slave quarters (cabanne à nègres) and the bakehouse are also encountered in the records. In colonial days the outbuildings outnumbered the houses of the town, but they have all disappeared, presumably because they were not kept in repair. Three examples of the well-heads of stone with windlasses and peculiar wooden tops like pup tents remain in the town.

The houses themselves are very interesting, though in every case there have been alterations made and most of the examples have little enough left to indicate their original appearance. In most cases the attics and basements are more likely to reveal the original design of the house than any other parts.

The French house of Ste. Genevieve is closely related in general form to that of Canada and Normandy. The greatest innovations are the porch that has been wrapped around it and the wood shingles which cover it. The porch (locally galerie) seems to have come up from lower Louisiana and the West Indies, where it was an adaptation to hot weather and a protection to plastered walls. The shingle (bardeau) was largely a North American innovation to the French. In France slate, tile and thatch were most commonly used for roofing because of the scarcity of wood. Many of the earlier houses built by the French on the Mississippi--particularly on the East side--were thatched,<sup>1</sup> but the dry Middle Western climate probably made straw roofs a great fire hazard and with the passing of years they are mentioned less and less frequently.<sup>2</sup>

1.

Various MS in the Kaskaskia Manuscripts, Private Papers.

2.

The roof of the St. Genne-Amoureux house still carries a few of the thatching strips similar to those used on Norman houses.

There were four types of house construction used by the local French of that time. The Eighteenth Century terms in local usage were:

(1) The maison de poteaux en terre (literally, "posts in earth") is a "palisadoed" house built of timbers set upright in the ground, fastened together only at the top. Above grade the timbers or posts were squared and when built of rot-resisting cedar they made a sound and permanent structure. This type, once the most common of all, is represented by three examples still standing in Ste. Genevieve. It is very old, having been used in the earliest days of Biloxi (founded 1699) and New Orleans (1718) and was probably a method taken over from the early Spanish settlements on the Gulf Coast.<sup>1</sup> The type is unknown in France and Canada.

The maison de pieux en terre was also found here. This was built of posts entirely in the ground, a cruder method first mentioned for Missouri at the Fort d'Orleans in 1724.<sup>2</sup> At Ste. Genevieve it was used mostly for outbuildings.

(2) The maison de poteaux sur solle<sup>3</sup> (literally "posts on sill"), is a frame house, though a very massive one because of the large size of the timbers and their close spacing. The sill was supported on a stone foundation, or occasionally, as farther south, on wood blocks, keeping the frame away from the dampness of the ground. This type of structure requires more skill to build but is in general more durable.

In the types just described the walls were filled between the posts with clay and grass (i.e. houzillées) or with stone and mortar (i.e. pierrotées). The former method of filling is common in Louisiana, where Spanish moss was used, the latter in Normandy. In nearly every house these walls slope inward on all four sides to a marked degree. This characteristic, noted to be common also in Canada, has not been explained.

(3) The maison de pierre or stone house was brought from France and Canada to the Upper Mississippi settlements at an early date. However, the type does not seem to have "caught on" in Ste. Genevieve. The old stone house (date unknown) near Mill Creek on what is now the St. Mary's Road may have been built in the colonial period but its character has been changed by alterations.

---

1.

Palisadoed houses were used in certain English colonies on our Atlantic coast in the 17th Century, but there seems to be no inter-relationship.

2.

Paris, Archives Coloniales, C13 C,4:117-125-I.

3.

"de poteaux sur solle" was apparently synonymous with "en colomage" and "de belle charpente" frequently seen in contemporary phrasing.

(4) The maison de pieces sur pieces (literally "timbers on timbers") or horizontal log house is not mentioned in the Ste. Genevieve records, though it has been commonly used in Canada since early times.<sup>1</sup> Only a few small outbuildings seemed to have been built in that way. The Creole apparently did not like the type. Towards the end of the colonial period there is ever increasing mention of the maison en boulins. This was apparently the Anglo-American cabin of round, or unhewn, logs.

As to floor plan: there seem to be at least two different types--the very old arrangement of a single row of rooms end on end, and a more compact scheme two rooms deep. In certain examples like the Bolduc house the building is divided into sections which do not communicate by interior doors. Small sleeping rooms or cabinets were once used here but they have disappeared. The lean-to (appentis) is frequently mentioned in the early records, but none have survived, unless the stone kitchen of the Bolduc house may be considered an example. Porches were found on one, two, three or four sides of these buildings. The Bolduc and J. B. Vallé houses retain the best evidence of the porch completely surrounding the building. These porches varied in width from four feet to twice as much. Most of them were floored, though some were not.

Above the walls rose the roof frame--a massive hewn affair composed of Norman trusses arranged to support a hip roof. Originally these were made very steep to shed water from the thatching. In this region the trusses were continued for some time as a matter of habit after thatching was discarded. In late transitional examples like the Janis-Ziegler house the economy of the American roofing system has gained the upper hand and the picturesque trusses of Old France have been omitted.

Except for a few interior doors practically all French interior woodwork, if there was ever any of note, has disappeared. Some crude panelling found lying in the attic of the Bolduc house is practically all that has been noted. Examples of fine French panelling are known in Canada and since skilled joiners were present in 18th Century Missouri it is not impossible that some of the more pretentious buildings were so decorated at one time. Some of the early Ste. Genevieve houses otherwise French in character show Anglo-American mantelpieces and trim such as can be found in 18th Century Virginia buildings. The present town was put up after the first Americans had arrived in the place and their influence can be seen in many of the oldest houses.

---

1.

The oldest wooden houses of Canada are made of carefully hewn or sawed timbers of heavy dimensions laid horizontally and mortised into upright timbers at the corners. Another type is dovetailed at the corners (en queue d'aronde) "Saddle notching" and "square cut" notching have not been observed by the writer in Quebec Province.

Glass was probably expensive in Ste. Genevieve during the colonial period, since it had to be imported from Europe. Most of the humbler houses probably used paper at the windows as in Canada<sup>1</sup> or linen as in Lower Louisiana.<sup>2</sup> Collot's engraving, "Typical Habitation of the Illinois Country", probably sketched by Warin during his visit of 1706 shows a small house without window sash. However, some glass was used at Kaskaskia before the founding of Ste. Genevieve<sup>3</sup> and mention is made of window glass in St. Louis in 1767.<sup>4</sup> The oldest record for Ste. Genevieve is in a contract for a house for Simon Huberdeaux in 1769.<sup>5</sup> Probably the better houses of the village always had glass windows. The Guibourd house still has two pair of casement windows similar to those of Canada and Louisiana.

Shutters (contrevents) were often mentioned in the records and several examples of the interesting dove-tailed (en queue d'aronde) type known in France can be seen in Ste. Genevieve today. The original exterior doors of Ste. Genevieve were probably solid wood "sheathed", as well as single doors with nine glass lights above and two wooden panels below, as in several examples still to be found in the town. Double-glazed ("French") doors were known to have been used in the Torraine-Lisa House in St. Louis (before 1799). They are still common in Louisiana and were probably used to some extent in Ste. Genevieve. Interior doors seem to have been simply made of "board and batton" construction.

Hardware and nails were imported into this region from an early date. Three wrought iron door latches found in the town show a close affinity to those of Quebec. Some strap hinges are similar to those of the Atlantic Seaboard, but others have characteristic French shapes as the fish-tail end of those on the Bolduc House kitchen shutters or the split and curled decorations on those from the old wooden church.<sup>6</sup> While no iron mining was done in Missouri during the colonial period, iron was common enough for the general use of nails--spikes, lath nails, shingle nails and other types being frequently mentioned in the records.

---

1. Benson, Adolph B., ed., Peter Kalm's Travels in North America (New York, 1937), Vol. II, p. 460

2.

Letter, Richard Koch of New Orleans to the writer.

3.

Kaskaskia Manuscripts, Commercial Papers, Vol. I, 1723.

4.

STLRA, IV:3:525

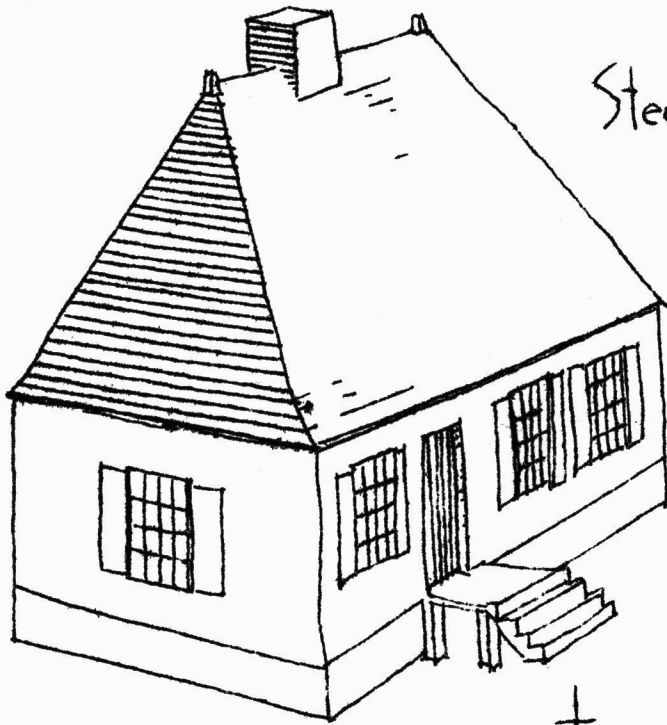
5.

STEGA, Contracts, #20.

6.

Collection of Mr. Vion Papin, Ste. Genevieve.

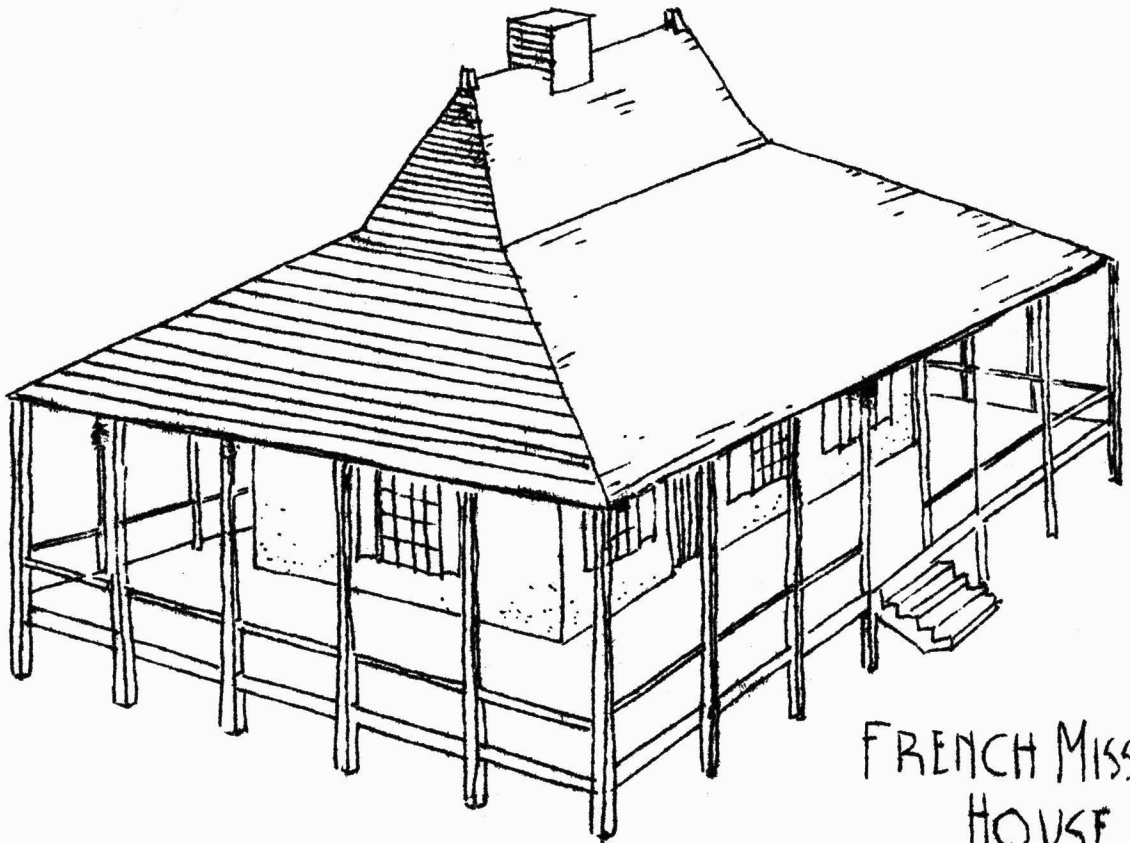
Inside the house walls were plastered and whitewashed, but the ceilings were left open showing the beams and attic flooring. Paint was practically unknown and the woodwork was probably left in its natural state. Heating was effected from fireplaces leading into stone chimneys and lighting by candles. Stoves and lamps do not seem to have arrived in Missouri until the end of the Eighteenth Century, when they are mentioned in the St. Louis Archives.



Steep hip roof

FRENCH CANADIAN  
HOUSE

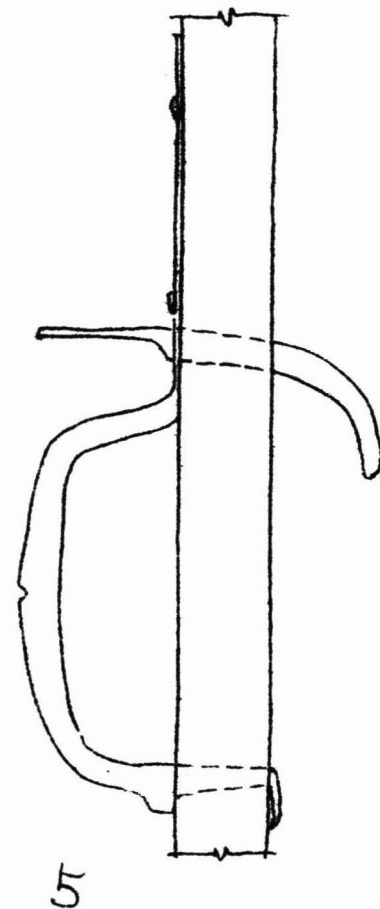
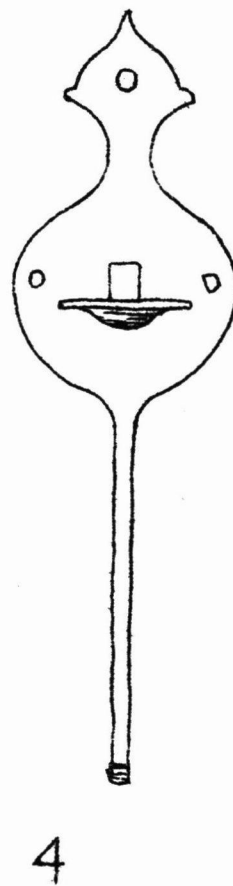
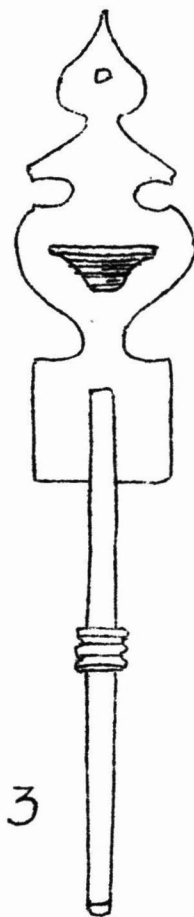
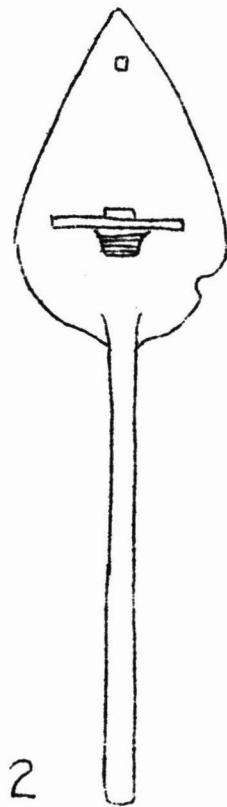
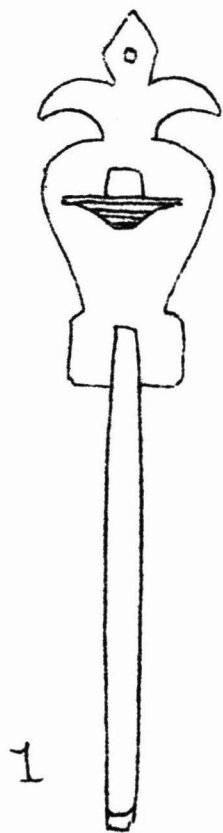
+ PORCH =



FRENCH MISSOURI  
HOUSE

OLD FRENCH-AMERICAN EXAMPLES OF  
WROUGHT IRON DOOR LATCHES.

1. From house demolished 1939, Isle d'Orleans, P.Q.  
Coll.: C. E. Peterson.
  2. Excavated at Guibourd House, Ste. Genevieve, Mo.  
Coll.: Jules Valle.
  3. Ribault House, Ste. Genevieve, Mo.
  4. From Bolduc House, Ste. Genevieve, Mo.  
Coll.: Mrs. Obermueller.
  5. Section of No. 4. (Latchbar and keeper missing)
-





CONTRACT FOR BUILDING THE BOISLEDUC  
HOUSE.

---

The following record<sup>1</sup> relating to a proposed house at Ste. Genevieve in 1770 will give the reader a general idea of such agreements. The involved nature of this contract between Boisleduc the farmer and Boulet the carpenter reveals a characteristic French love for bargaining. Neither party could write and the argument was simply brought indoors where it was set down by Robinet the clerk more or less as he heard it:

"Before Monsieur Valle', Judge and Notary at Ste. Genevieve and his Clerk, the undersigned, was present Sieur Louis Boisleduc who has agreed to the following:

"Sieur Louis Boulet contracts to build for the said Boisleduc a frame house [maison sur solle] 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>' x 26' roofed with shingles and with floors and ceilings of dressed cottonwood boards, the ceiling boards on the porch to be whitewashed on one side. The remainder to be tongue-and-groove 1" thick, the floors with square joints 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" thick.

"To be included are tongue-and-groove wooden shutters 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>' high and 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>' wide, the material to be of seasoned walnut furnished to the said contractor. There will be three windows and two doors 6' high, likewise of walnut (or other wood) the boards tongue-and-groove, like one which the said Boisleduc will furnish the contractor [as a sample]. Boisleduc will also furnish the necessary ironwork, the nails and proper tools for the construction of the said house.

"In addition, the contractor will be provided with two black or white workers to assist him, their board included, along with the board and laundry of the contractor during the period of construction.

"The said Boisleduc agrees to have sawn and delivered the shingles necessary to roof the said house.

"The house shall have a galerie 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>' wide, without floor, all around it.

---

1.

STEGA, Agreements-Contracts #5, translation by the writer. The wording has been slightly shortened in translation, and divisions into punctuated sentences and paragraphs have been introduced.

"The sills of the said house as completed are to be supported on blocks three feet high unless the said Boisleduc decides to have a masonry foundation, which the contractor is not obliged to build. The said Boisleduc will deliver all the proper and necessary timber for the said house and [for this purpose] will use only one of the men above mentioned contractor's helpers while the wood is being hauled.

"The said house is to be completed according to the conditions herein stipulated and open to the inspection of experts without argument on the part of either party. As soon as the undertaking is completed the said Boisleduc binds himself to pay to the said Sieur Boulet the sum of 350 livres in hard dollars [piastres gourdes] valued at 5 livres each, or in beaver pelts or deerskins at the current rate. The said house is to be ready for delivery September 30, 1771.

"The said Boisleduc will be entitled to the services of these two hired men without interruption for the work of the farm, that is, during the planting and harvesting time of French grain and corn, and also for putting up hay. This has been agreed to, in the customary form, promising & contracting & waiving &.

"Done and delivered in the office, June 11, 1770, in the presence of the undersigned witnesses, after a reading, at the said Ste. Genevieve. The said Boulet and Boisleduc have stated that they know not how to sign.

"Accepted, examined and countersigned.

Deguire

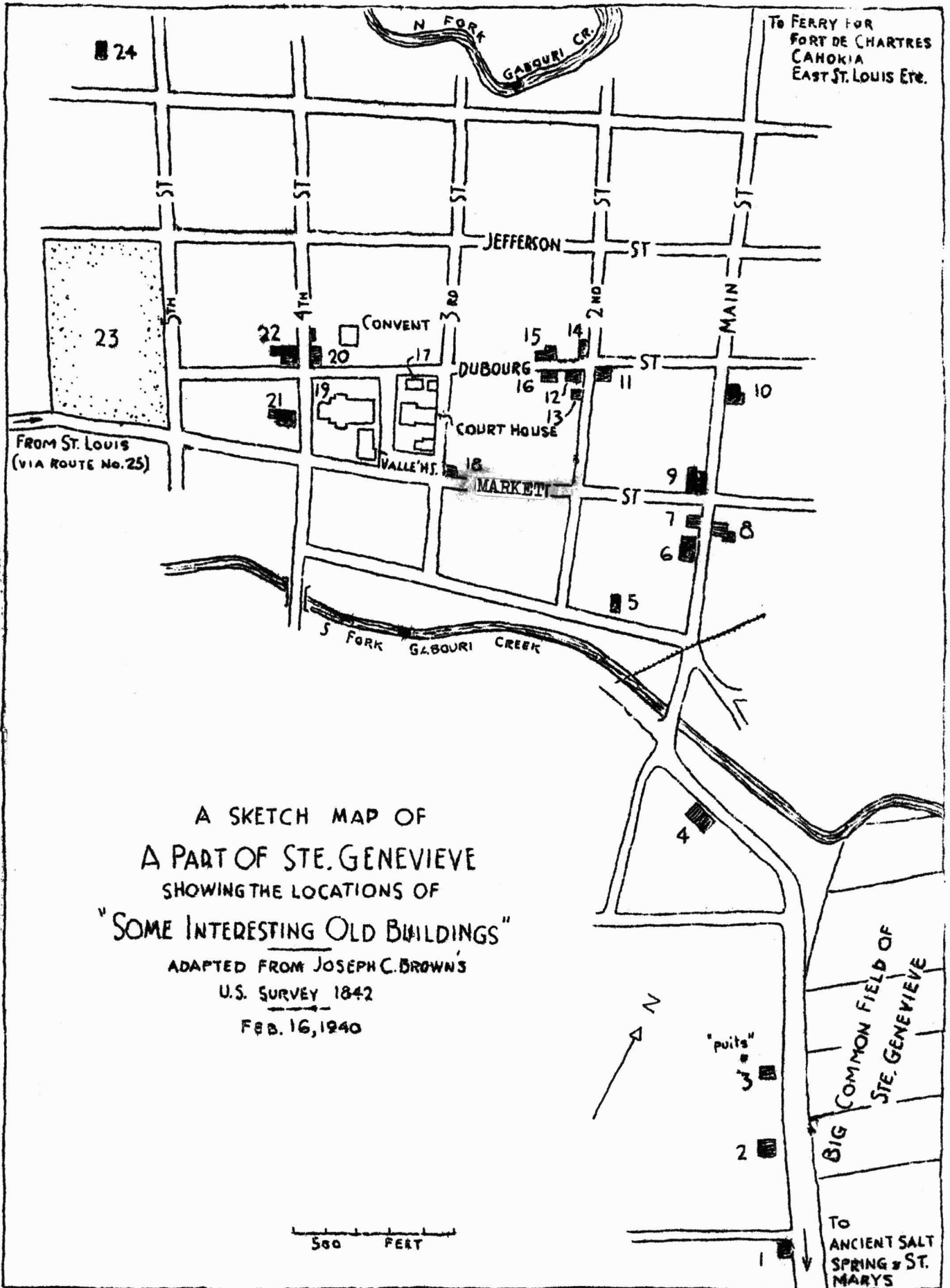
Vallé fils witness

Robinet, Clerk  
to the Judge."

Vallé

KEY TO MAP

1. Bequette-Ribault House
2. St. Gemme-Amoureaux House
3. Misplait House
4. Janis-Ziegler House
5. Francois Valle II. House
6. Bolduc House
7. Meilleur House
8. Wilder House
9. Jean Baptiste Valle House
10. St. Gemme Beauvais House
11. Phillipson-Valle House
12. "Mammy Shaw" House
13. "Indian Trading Post"
14. Rozier Bank
15. Senator Linn House
16. Parfait Dufour House
17. Museum
18. Price Brick Building
19. Ste. Genevieve Church
20. Pratte Warehouses
21. Gregoire House
22. Guibourd House
23. Old Burying Ground
24. Old Academy



A SKETCH MAP OF  
 A PART OF STE. GENEVIEVE  
 SHOWING THE LOCATIONS OF  
 "SOME INTERESTING OLD BUILDINGS"

ADAPTED FROM JOSEPH C. BROWN'S  
 U.S. SURVEY 1842

FEB. 16, 1940

## POINTS OF INTEREST IN STE. GENEVIEVE

### 1. Bequet-Ribault House.

This small structure is of special interest because of its peculiar wall construction of cedar posts planted vertically in the ground (known locally in the 18th Century as poteaux en terre) which have survived until today. They can be seen by looking over the fence and under the south end of the front porch.

The house originally had plastered walls and porches on all four sides, an arrangement typical of the colonial house of this region. In spite of changes, the house has preserved many interesting details, such as the en queue d'aronde shutters pegged with wooden pins. The house was recorded in detail for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1930.

### 2. St. Gemme-Amoureaux House.

Before the gables of this house were added the structure had a steep French Canadian hip roof. (In this case a 72° slope on the ends and 52° on the sides.) Roofing strips remaining in the attic seem to indicate that the structure was originally without porches and was thatched. Thatched houses were familiar in this region in the first half of the 18th Century. The original stone chimney top has been changed to brick in recent years.

Across the road from this house lie the "Big Common Fields" where the land is still farmed in narrow strips running from the bluffs to the river. It was formerly enclosed by a common fence maintained by the community.

### 3. Misplait House.

This interesting little house, which seems to have come to Basil Misplait from his parents in 1804, shows features characteristic of the early French buildings. Like many of the others the roof was hipped. Note the batter of the exterior walls, a familiar condition, the purpose of which has not been explained.

In the rear of this house is a stone well (nuits) with a tent-shaped wooden top and windlass. The form seems to be peculiarly French.

### 4. Janis-Ziegler House.

This attractive old house with its peach-colored walls and boxwood is a transitional structure and does not have the Norman roof trusses to be seen in some of the older houses. It is said to have been built in

1800 and later used as the "Green Tree Tavern". The signboard may be seen in the Ste. Genevieve Museum.

The boxwood growing here indicates about the northern limits of its range in Missouri.

#### 5. Francois Vallé House.

Facing South Gabouri Creek this unpretentious wooden building is all that is left of the house of Francois Vallé II., Civil and Military Commandant of Ste. Genevieve until his death early in 1804. In 1811 the improvements on the lot were: ". . . a large one story dwelling house a Kitchen & Stable . . ." (STEGA, Deeds #337).

The Vallé (original spelling Vallée) family came from Canada. Their old stone house at Beauport on the north side of the St. Lawrence below Quebec is still standing, though many changes have been made in later years. Francois II. was born in the Illinois Country in 1758. His father, Francois I. (1716-1781), was for some years commandant in the old village.

#### 6. The Bolduc House

This large structure is one of the least changed of the old French houses of Ste. Genevieve. It was the home of Louis Bolduc I. until his death in 1815. Bolduc, a prominent merchant and slave owner, was born in the Parish of St. Joachim, Canada, December 20, 1734. Miss Zoe Bolduc of the same family lives in the north end of the house today.

Tradition asserts that the frame of the house was moved up from the old town. If that is the case it may be one of the oldest houses in the Mississippi Valley.

The body of the house is built in two sections of identical size (26'x27'), which are not connected by interior doors. The stone kitchen on the rear is a picturesque feature. The attic (reached by stairway from the northeast room) is remarkable. The solid log ceiling of the south half of the building should be noted, as well as the fine large Norman trusses supporting the roof.

This house has been measured in detail by the National Park Service. It appears in a diorama of Ste. Genevieve under construction for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

7. The Meilleur House (Old Convent) (built about 1815)

Rene Meilleur, son-in-law of Louis Bolduc, built this two story frame structure for a private dwelling. In 1837 (?) it was bought by the Sisters of Loretto for use as a convent. Its walls are "nogged" with brick. The Flemish bond brick building immediately to the north--now doing duty as a blacksmith shop--is said to have been Meilleur's store.

8. The Wilder House.

The north portion of this house (about 24'x31') is a French frame structure with Anglo-American work evident in the window trim and the mantelpiece. The house was bought in 1860 by the Wilder family.

9. The J. B. Vallé House.

This was the house of Jean Baptiste Vallé (1760-1840), last commandant of the district of Ste. Genevieve. The building is a frame structure on a stone foundation ("poteaux sur solle", like the Bolduc House). It was considerably modified in the 19th Century--particularly the roof and chimneys. The depth of the house suggests that it had a low West Indies type of hip roof like that of the Pierre Menard House<sup>1</sup> (c. 1800) across the river. The heavy tapered beams supporting the second floor are of great length.

The grounds of the house are attractively planted--the formal garden north of the house follows an old pattern.

10. The St. Gemme Beauvais House

This house seems to have been definitely identified as the boyhood home for several years of Henry Marie Brackenridge, well known early western writer, who described it thus:

"The house of M. Beauvais was a long, low building, with a porch or shed in front, and another in the rear; the chimney occupied the centre, dividing the house into two parts, with each a fireplace. One of these served for a dining-room, parlor and principal bedroom; the other was the kitchen, and each had a small room taken off at the end for private chambers or cabinets. There was no

---

1.

Maintained as an historic house museum by the State of Illinois--well worth a visit.

loft or garret, a pair of stairs being a rare thing in the village. The furniture, excepting the beds and the looking-glass, was of the most common kind, consisting of an armoire, a rough table or two, and some coarse chairs. The yard was inclosed with cedar pickets, eight or ten inches in diameter, and seven feet high, placed upright, sharpened at the top, in the manner of a stockade fort. In front the yard was narrow, but in the rear quite spacious, and containing the barn and stables, the negro quarters, and all the necessary offices of a farm-yard. Beyond this there was a spacious garden, inclosed with pickets in the same manner with the yard. It was indeed a garden, in which the greatest variety and the finest vegetables were cultivated, intermingled with flowers and shrubs; on one side of it there was a small orchard containing a variety of the choicest fruits. The substantial and permanent character of these inclosures is in singular contrast with the slight and temporary fences and palings of the Americans. The house was a ponderous wooden frame, which, instead of being weather-boarded, was filled in with clay, and then whitewashed . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The house originally extended farther to the north. The construction of the old part is of poteaux en terre with a log ceiling. The rear wing is modern and the roof has been changed.

#### 11. Phillipson-Valle' House.

This pretty little stone house seems to have been built between 1818 and 1824, when the property was owned by Jacob Phillipson. In the latter year it was sold to J. B. Valle'. It was measured in 1934 by the Historic American Buildings Survey.

The lines of this structure, with its modillion and dentil cornice are probably as attractive as can be found in any small American house. The general effect suggests Maryland or Virginia. The stoop which once gave access to the front door was removed some years ago and replaced by the present recessed doorway.

#### 12. "Manny Shaw House".

This house is of uncertain origin, but seemingly it is one of the older specimens in the town. The woodwork appears to be Anglo-American.

---

<sup>1</sup>Brackenridge, H. M., Recollections of Persons and Places in The West (Philadelphia, 1868), n. 21.



The large double interior doors are said to have come from a steamboat wrecked on the Mississippi River.

The name given this house is that of the widow of Dr. Shaw. It is used as a painter's studio at the present time.

13. "Indian Trading Post".

This little stone building is often referred to as an "Indian trading post", although no authority is known for the idea. It was measured for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1934.

14. Rozier Bank

In the winter of 1810-11 John James Audubon, the famous naturalist-artist, came to Ste. Genevieve with Ferdinand Rozier from Henderson, Kentucky. They had known each other as midshipmen in the French navy and had been in partnership for nine years in America. Audubon did not like Ste. Genevieve and returned to Kentucky soon afterwards. Rozier stayed to found a fortune.

This stone building has been the seat of a private bank for many years.

15. Senator Linn House.

Home of Dr. Lewis F. Linn, a Kentucky physician, who came to Ste. Genevieve in 1815. He served as United States Senator from 1833 until his death in 1843.

16. Dufour House.

This house stands on ground confirmed to "Parfait" Dufour after the change from the Spanish to the American Government. In 1789 Dufour owned a 10'x15' house of poteaux en terre differing from this structure both in size and type of construction.<sup>1</sup>

17. Museum.

This institution was opened in 1935 in connection with the Bicentennial of Ste. Genevieve's founding. It contains a collection of interesting objects--mostly post-colonial--and a library. Certain publications, including postcards, are available here. Admission ten cents.

---

<sup>1</sup>. STEGA, Estates #97.

18. Price Brick Building.

John Price, a Kentuckian,<sup>1</sup> was one of the first enterprising Americans in Ste. Genevieve. With his brother Andrew he was engaged in trade with Louisville and Frankfort in 1798.<sup>2</sup> In the same year he was granted a license to run the Ste. Genevieve-Kaskaskia ferry for six years.<sup>3</sup>

Price owned and probably built this brick structure, which he lost at a Sheriff's sale in 1806. It is early architectural evidence of the Anglo-American migration to Missouri. Brick were not used in the early French towns north of New Madrid for stone was easily available and answered the same needs. Farther down the river where stone was scarce, as in Louisiana, brick had been made from the earliest days.

The fat handmade brick of this building are laid up in Flemish bond as in buildings of the Atlantic Seaboard and Kentucky. The presence of smaller brick in common bond at the gables may indicate that the structure once had a hipped roof. The cornice is similar to that of the Phillipson-Vallé house.

19. The Church of Ste. Genevieve.

The first church in the old village seems to have been built about 1752. Two grants of land made in that year require the grantees to fell timbers for its construction. Nothing is known of its appearance. As early as 1778 a new church was under consideration and in the 1783 inventory of Francois Vallé's estate is mentioned a lot set aside for its construction. But the old church continued in use until 1794. Tradition says that the structure was moved bodily to the new site at that time.

Zenon Trudeau, "Captain of the Louisiana Regiment and Commanding Officer of the Western Part of the Illinois Country" and Father St. Pierre had held a meeting of the citizens on September 7, 1793 to consider the location and construction of a church in the new town as well as a chapel at New Bourbon.<sup>4</sup> The Messrs. Lachance, Pratte and Bolduc

---

1. "fils de Monsieur Jean Price et de Dame Sara Bowin son Epouse Demeurant a Fayette Contée En Kintucke province Des Etats Unis". STEGA, Marriages #113, 1799.

2. STEGA, Litigations #205.

3. STEGA, Miscellaneous No. 2, #112.

4. STEGA, Miscellaneous, Churches #33.

were selected as the executive committee by majority vote. Apparently there was dissention regarding the arrangement since it became necessary for Trudeau in the following year to officially settle the choice of the site and warn any objectors that they would be immediately sent down to New Orleans at their own expense if they did not contribute their assessed share of the expenses of construction cost.<sup>1</sup> The new building was built in the new town.

The means of construction is described in two affidavits filed in connection with a lawsuit now in the Archives. Jean Baptiste Bequet furnished for Augustin Bertau his share consisting of 200 shingles, 25 laths, 2 planks 6'2" long, ditto 5' long, four days of labor (*corvé*) and one load of stone. Also mentioned is that he put *houzillage* between posts and set the planks listed. One Gravelle stated that he had furnished three posts, 108 shingles, a 10' plank,<sup>2</sup> a 5' plank, a 10' board, a half load of stone and three days of labor. If the old structure was actually moved to the new site it must have been extensively repaired or enlarged.

In time the wooden church was replaced by one of stone, begun in 1831 and consecrated in 1837.<sup>3</sup> This in turn gave way to the attractive Victorian Gothic brick structure begun in 1876 and dedicated in 1880. This, the present church, is the fourth to serve the parish of Ste. Genevieve.<sup>4</sup>

#### 20. Pratte Warehouses.

These old stone warehouses now standing on the grounds of the Sisters of St. Joseph are said to have belonged to Joseph Pratte, a merchant of Ste. Genevieve, who owned this property at an early date.

#### 21. Gregoire House.

This large brick house--the second occupied by the Gregoire family--shows Greek Revival influence. The Price-Viller-Gregoire house built about 1799 stood immediately to the north. It was demolished some forty years ago.

- 
1. STEGA, Miscellaneous, Churches #34.
  2. STEGA, Litigations, #25.
  3. Yealy, p. 111.
  4. Ibid., p. 135.

22. Guibourd House.

Jacques Guibourd, a slave holder of Santo Domingo, came to Ste. Genevieve at the end of the Eighteenth Century. In 1799 he was granted the land on which the present house stands. The concession makes no mention of a house on the property at the time.

The house has been put in excellent condition by the present owner. Among the most interesting features of this house are the framing of the attic and the two pairs of original French casement windows on the first floor. A brick kitchen of later date may be seen in the rear.

23. Old Burying Ground.

Many of the prominent early settlers of Ste. Genevieve are buried here. Mgr. Charles Louis Van Tourenhout lists the following: "Commandant Jean Baptiste Vallé, Felix and Odile Pratte Vallé, Jacques Guibourd, Senator Louis Linn, Ferdinand Rozier, Henry Janis, Vital Bauvais or Beauvais, Auguste St. Gemme, Famille la Grave, Nérée Vallé and Aglacé Chouteau, Hilaire Le Compte, John Bogg, J. B. S. Pratte, Charles Hypolitte Gregoire, Marie La Porte, Colonel Francois Vallé, Marie Villars and Walter Fenwick."

The work of preserving this old cemetery was undertaken about 1931 by the American Legion Memorial Park Association in preparation for the Ste. Genevieve Bi-Centennial celebration. Popular subscription began the work, which is now carried on by a special tax. Mr. Henry I. Rozier is President of the Association.

24. The Ste. Genevieve Academy.

In 1807 a secondary school was organized by a board of citizens and in the following year it received a charter from the Territory of Louisiana. The existing stone building, in Anglo-American style, was built for it on a hill back of the town about 1810. After a checkered career the Academy ceased to exist as a school during the War between the States.<sup>1</sup>

---

1.  
Yealy, pp. 124-28.

SOME PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING  
OLD STE. GENEVIEVE AND ITS HOUSES.

Dorrance, Ward A., "The Survival of French in the Old District of Sainte Genevieve" in The University of Missouri Studies (Columbia, April 1, 1935), Vol. X, No. 2.

Houck, Louis A., A History of Missouri (Chicago, 1908), Vol. I.

Peterson, Charles E., "French Houses of the Illinois Country" in Missouriana (St. Louis, September 1938), Vol. X, No. 10, pp. 9-12.

Petrequin, Harry J., Stories of Old Ste. Genevieve (Ste. Genevieve, 1935?)

Rothensteiner, Rev. John, History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis (St. Louis, 1928), Vol. I.

Schaaf, Ida M., "The Founding of Ste. Genevieve" in Mid-America, Vol. XV, No. 1, July 1932; reprinted in The Missouri Historical Review (Columbia, January 1933), Vol. XXVII, p. 115.

Yealy, Francis J., S.J., Sainte Genevieve (St. Louis, 1935).

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
JEFFERSON NATIONAL EXPANSION MEMORIAL  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

*Mr. [unclear]*  
*Mr. [unclear]*  
*Dr. [unclear]*  
*Miss Murphy*  
*Dille*  
*(under Ste. Genevieve, Mo.)*

JUL 1 - 1939



June 28, 1939.

Memorandum for the Director:

Attention: Branch of Historic Sites.

Enclosed for the files of the Historic Sites Survey is a copy of A Guide to Ste. Genevieve, with Notes on Its Architecture. This brochure was prepared by Mr. Peterson, chief architect of this office, on the basis of considerable detailed study of the history and architecture of this interesting old town. It should be of great assistance in evaluating this site under the Survey.

*Thomas M. Pitkin*  
Thomas M. Pitkin,  
Research Technician.

Enclosure 1138410

→  
Ste. Genevieve,  
Mo.

July 19, 1939.

Memorandum for Superintendent,  
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial:

Attention: Mr. Pitkin and Mr. Peterson.

Reference is made to your memorandum of June 28 transmitting a copy of A Guide to Ste. Genevieve; with Notes on Its Architecture prepared by Chief Architect Charles E. Peterson.

This brochure is an extremely valuable contribution to the history and architecture of this historic town. It will be very helpful to us in our study of eighteenth century French sites, the theme which will be presented to the Advisory Board in connection with the historic sites survey sometime during the coming winter. Preliminary work is now being done on this theme by the Washington Office.

Supervisor of Historic Sites.

cc: Regional Director, Region One

APS:ej

→ The Cash

Ste Genevieve,  
Miss. Missouri

Survey

April 20, 1940

**MEMORANDUM for the Superintendent  
Jefferson Expansion National Memorial**

Attention: Mr. Charles E. Peterson

Receipt of copies of Mr. Peterson's reports entitled "Notes Concerning Early French Houses at Ste. Genevieve, Missouri," and "Recommendations concerning the 'Old French Fort' at Pascogoula, Mississippi," is acknowledged. Mr. Peterson's suggestion that the "Old French Fort" be made a national historic site has been noted and this site will be presented to the Advisory Board when the report on 18th Century French sites is considered. His recommendations concerning Ste. Genevieve point out what should be done to preserve this interesting old village. These suggestions will be noted in our report to the Board on this site.

Ronald F. Lee  
Supervisor of Historic Sites

cc: Region 2

aps:mcb