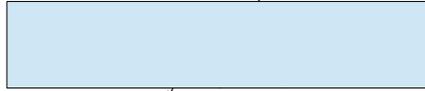


The history of



Laclede's landing St Louis, missouri

Colonial and Territorial St Louis: Clamorgan Era

In 1763, a French entrepreneur named Pierre Liguest Laclede, along with Auguste Chouteau, set out from New Orleans to explore the Louisiana Territory to establish a trading post. In 1764, he chose the west bank of the Mississippi River, north of the River des Peres and south of the Missouri River. Upon choosing the site for the trading post, Laclede declared that, "This settlement will become one of the finest cities in America."

Laclede's decision to expand the post was made and lots were assigned verbally to the first 40 colonists who had accompanied the exploration in 1764. French settlers from the east bank villages Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Prairie du Rocher, St. Philippe, and Fort de Chartres moved to the new settlement following receipt of news of pending British rule.

The settlement expanded rapidly into what came to be known as Laclede's village. However, the official name of St. Louis was given to the village by its founder in honor of the Crusader King, Louis IX of France. The original village contained three north-south streets, La Grande Rue (Main Street), Rue d'Eglise (Church Street) and Rue des Granges (Barn Street); now First, Second, and Third Streets. There were several narrower east-west streets including La Rue de la Tour, Rue de la Place and Rue Missouri; now Walnut, Market, and Chestnut Streets. In addition to a block for the post house, squares were set aside for a church and a public place. A fort was built on the hill overlooking the village, at what is now Fourth and Walnut Streets.

The custom of making land grants verbally continued until 1766, when Captain Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, the French Lieutenant Governor, arrived and established administration of the settlement's affairs. He required the land grants to be recorded in the "Livre Terrien" or Register of Deeds. This custom was continued after the Spanish obtained dominion over the territory in 1768 until the Louisiana Purchase in 1804. Louis Deshetres received a land grant on February 7, 1769 for the northwest quarter (120 by 150 French feet) of city block 26.

Louis Deshetres, a Native American interpreter and trader, arrived in St. Louis from Cahokia in 1764. He received grants of land in city blocks 32 and 64 from Laclede upon arrival and subsequently acquired property in the northwest quarter of city block 26. He built a small house of posts on the property in 1769. This early French log construction was known as *poteaux-en-terre*, where upright hewn logs were driven in the ground and the spaces between posts filled with stone and mortar chinking. Deshetres died in 1770, leaving no heirs. Portions of his property were sold at auction in 1771.

Philip Fine owned two 150 x 120 foot lots in city block 26 in the early 1780s. Philip Fine held the distinction of being the first Anglo-American to inhabit St. Louis. He arrived from Virginia and was married to twice widowed Maria Newby Gagnon in 1782. The two lots were enclosed by stakes of various kinds of wood and contained a 20x25 foot house of posts, a penthouse of posts in the ground covered with clapboards, and other various buildings. In February 1785, Philip Fine and Maria Neuvy sold the two lots of city block 26 to Don Santiago (Jacques) Clamorgan for \$800.

Jacques Clamorgan, a fur trader, merchant, financier and land speculator, was involved in the slave trade between Jamaica and New Orleans before arriving in St. Louis in the 1780s. Clamorgan, thought to have been of Welsh, Portuguese, Spanish and African heritage, began buying land and at one point owned about 850,000 acres. He received exclusive rights to trade with the Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri River from the Spanish authorities, and began in 1793 to plan trade expeditions to the Pacific Ocean to preserve and defend the Spanish land claims.

A Clamorgan contemporary quipped “He was endowed with a tremendous imagination, together with an illusive pen and a glib tongue. His ability to put vast dreams onto paper and persuade all of their reality was envied by all. This island ‘Creole’ managed his affairs in such a manner that even his enemies (and they were not few in number) could not fail to recognize his talents.”

The notorious Clamorgan never married, but was known for his numerous liaisons with mulatto women and shunned by polite Creole society. He had four children by three different women, some of whom he had purchased as slaves. The children were recognized by the French and Spanish governments, but were not legitimate heirs according to the American government.

Esther was a mulatto slave who was brought from Virginia 1784 by a man named Ichabod Camp. Camp had borrowed money from Jacques Clamorgan, putting up Esther as collateral. When her master defaulted on his loan, Clamorgan took ownership of Esther. She was about 31 years old in 1784 and said to be strikingly beautiful. She was soon living with Clamorgan as his mistress. Clamorgan also purchased Esther's daughter Sile so mother and daughter could remain together.

When Clamorgan organized the Missouri Company in 1793, he feared his holdings might be vulnerable to creditors. He granted Esther her freedom so she could hold some of his property in her own name. He used his influence with the Spanish Government to grant Esther the title to the western ½ of city block 26, the entire city block 67, a 40-arpent tract in the Common Fields, and an 80-arpent tract north of St. Louis. [Deed enclosed] Clamorgan also signed Ester’s daughter Sile over to her. Sile's son, named Edward Fitzgerald, was freed and became Clamorgan's ward. Sile later had two other children who were born free.

Clamorgan assumed that Ester understood that she was but a straw party in the transactions and that he continued to control the property. Esther thought otherwise; she farmed the land, tended the orchard, and treated the property as her own. She began to resist putting her mark without question on every piece of paper he gave her to sign. Clamorgan was an abusive man, and when his behavior became too much for her to bear she left him in 1797, taking her deeds with her. Although the Spanish government upheld her right to the property, Clamorgan managed to get much of it back after the American takeover in 1804. The Americans required proof of ten years’ possession before they would certify Spanish land claims.

Clamorgan went to the recorder’s office and somehow managed to sign the deeds over to himself, backdate them to 1794, and forge Esther’s signature. He also threatened to take possession of Esther’s daughter and bring her to the New Orleans slave market.

Esther became aware of the fraud in 1808, when she was told by a rival of Clamorgan’s, and brought suit against him. However, Clamorgan used his influence to bargain with her representative, William C. Carr. Clamorgan ‘traded’ several tracts of valuable land to Carr in exchange for the transference of Esther’s deeds into Carr’s name. Esther’s suits continued after the death of Jacques Clamorgan on October 30, 1814. She solicited the assistance of Marguerite de Reilhe McNair, wife

of Missouri's first governor. McNair, daughter of an émigré royalist family driven into exile by the first revolution in France, who established the Female Charitable Society in 1824. The governor's son-in-law, Charles DeWard, was also involved as a surveyor in Esther's court proceedings. Esther eventually won all the deeds back in 1832 through a series of lawsuits involving the Clamorgan heirs and William Carr.

Following Esther's death in 1833, her 4 valuable tracts of land were divided as per her will: ½ to Marguerite St McNair and Charles DeWard, 1/8 to granddaughter Therese Spears, 1/8 to granddaughter Agathe Butcher, 1/8 to grandson Joseph Scavener, and 1/8 to M S. McNair in trust for grandson Francois. Esther's estate remained with her heirs until 1848, when they authorized William McElvoy as their broker to sell the land. [Deed enclosed]

Boom Town: Washington Foundry Era

Steamboats, introduced to St. Louis in 1817, provided regular service linking the Mississippi Valley to the Ohio River system. New wharves and warehouse concentrations blossomed along the river both above and below the old French village. In the decades following, the small town of St Louis was transformed from a frontier trading post into a cultivated commercial center of national significance.

In 1849, a major fire, started by an explosion of the steamboat White Cloud on the levee, destroyed much of the riverfront commercial area as well as much of downtown itself. That tragedy brought new ordinances and regulations governing the structural integrity of new construction that "required buildings to have slate, copper or iron roofs, stone or metal cornices, and have iron shutters on all buildings from the west side of 2nd to river." The foundling St Louis architectural iron industry was an important factor in the swift recovery of the commercial district; new iron foundries opened as some of the old French families turned their investments from the fur trade to iron mining acquisitions. One such foundry was established at the corner of 2nd and Morgan in 1850.

John T Dowdall entered into a 20-year lease agreement on January 1, 1850 with Isaac Walker for the property located at Clamorgan Alley and Morgan. He rented property at that site, as well as south along 2nd to build the Washington Foundry. In 1852, the St Louis Business Directory listed Washington Foundry, proprietors JT Dowdall & Co., as operating at the southeast corner of 2nd and Morgan. [Deed enclosed]

An 1855 Missouri Democrat advertisement lists Washington Foundry as "manufacturers of steam engines and boilers, saw and grist mill machinery, tobacco, oil and lard press screws, lard kettles, building castings, wool carding machines, etc."

John T. Dowdall came to St Louis as a machinist from Kentucky in the 1840s, possibly drawn by the newfound wealth and prosperity of the iron industry. He and his wife Lenora had 4 children born in St Louis; Addison in 1842, Francis or Frank in 1846, Lizzie in 1849, and Mattie in 1856. He was the only permanent partner of the Washington Foundry, which was in business at the corner of 2nd and Morgan for 20 years. There probably were many factors leading to the closing and demolition of Washington Foundry after 1870. Dowdall might not have been an insightful businessman, or the foundry might not have been extremely productive or prosperous, but in any case when Dowdall's property leases were up, the Washington Foundry came down. (see fire maps from 1872, 1874)

Post Civil War: Jessop & Sons Era

The construction of the Eads Bridge in 1874 brought another new era to downtown St. Louis - that of the railroad. As railroads took over as the primary method of transportation across the country, steamboat traffic declined, and businesses on the landing had to adapt to the changing demographics. New cast iron fronted buildings were constructed between 712 and 720 N. 2nd, utilizing the skilled ironworkers available from the Eads bridge site.

The cast iron fronts at [redacted] were designed and constructed by T.R. Pullis & Bros. in 1873. The firm's name is cast in the base of one of the building's front pillars. Thomas R. Pullis, first in partnership with his brothers and later with his sons, headed one of the earliest and most important architectural iron works in St. Louis. After the death of T.R. Pullis in 1878, the family firm continued to produce architectural iron work under the name Mississippi Iron Works for over 30 years.

Husband's Brothers commercial merchants and E.C. Hollidge machine depot were listed at [redacted] only for 1873. William Jessop & Sons, steel manufacturers from Sheffield England, were listed at [redacted] beginning in 1874. Sheffield has the distinction of being the cradle of steel production and Wm. Jessop & Sons might have followed fellow Sheffield native Henry Shaw to St. Louis hoping to capitalize on the United States steel market. Shaw, who amassed his fortune in the hardware business, and later founded the Missouri Botanical Gardens, owned a warehouse down the street at [redacted]

Until 1742, producing steel was a difficult task. The quality of the steel was often unreliable. The steel was made by heating iron bars, which were covered in charcoal. The heating was continued for up to a week. The material produced was called blister steel.

Blister steel was then turned into shear steel by wrapping blister steel bars up in a bundle and then heating them again before forging the bundle. The heat and the action of the forge hammer welded the rods together as they were hammered to the size required. This shear steel was used to make razors, files, knives, swords and the other steel items for which Sheffield became famous. No more than about 200 tons of steel were produced each year in Sheffield, using this process. Benjamin Huntsman's crucible steel process changed all that. He was the first person to cast steel ingots. The process produced uniform high quality steel in reasonably large quantities. M. Le Play, Professor of Metallurgy at the Royal School of Mines of France, wrote in 1846 that Huntsman's "memorable discovery advanced the steel manufactures of Sheffield to the first rank, and powerfully contributed to the establishment of the industrial and commercial supremacy of Great Britain." Within 100 years of the invention of the process, Sheffield was producing 20,000 tons of crucible steel a year, or 40% of the total amount of steel produced in Europe.

Wm. Jessop & Sons continued to distribute to the St. Louis area at [redacted] until 1923. Ezra H. Linley began as a representative of Wm. Jessop & Sons and established a railroad supply company in 1890. He occupied [redacted] with Wm. Jessop & Sons until 1903. E.W. Lansing & Co. of Memphis TN, were listed as wholesale liquor operators at [redacted] in 1880.

Post 1904 World's Fair, F.C. Papendick bought [redacted] and ran a commercial merchant business. George F Ricker was bookkeeper for the business and remained at [redacted] until 1920, when he entered into a poultry and produce business with C.V. Gregg. Ludwig Remedy Company and Griffin & Scholz Extracts operated out of [redacted] until 1923. Ludwig Remedy added a steel stack to [redacted] in 1922 for a cost of \$275.

A new round of businesses occupied the buildings in 1926; Francis Wholesale Produce Co at [redacted] until 1929, Malingly Automatic Valve Co. at [redacted] until 1929, and J.S. Fleming Co. produce commission merchants at 716 N. 2nd until 1936. Harry Coleman, box manufacturer, occupied [redacted] from 1929 to 1936, after which Floor Shine Pain & Varnish Co., Victor Major Co. paint manufacturer, and Klein Williams Paint Co. ran out of [redacted] until the early 1950s. Security Shoe Company was listed at [redacted] from 1929 to 1946, after which Reliable Screen Door Co. ran out of [redacted] until the early 1950s.

Western Expansion and Decline: Warehouse Era

As time passed and the mode of goods transportation shifted this time from the railroad to trucks and planes, manufacturers found it less of an advantage to be located near the river. Many of the once bustling warehouses were abandoned and the Laclede's Landing district was largely forgotten and the occupied and vacant buildings crept into disrepair.

The Central Pattern Company occupied [redacted] from the early 1950s to 1967, after which Williams Paper Company utilized the facility until 1971. The buildings were vacant for several years and then used as a warehouse for HiHo Hardware in 1974.

Rediscovery and renovation: Cast Iron Partnership

The Laclede's Landing Redevelopment Corporation was formed around a small group of people who saw in the Landing area the potential for a district that would not only provide entertainment and restaurants but also commemorate St. Louis' past as a center of river trade and commerce. In 1975, a redevelopment plan was adopted and renovation of the buildings was started.

In 1978, the Cast Iron Partnership, through the Landing Nominee Redevelopment Corporation, took on the task of renovating the Cast Iron Building at [redacted]. Headed by the architectural firm of Raymond Maritz Jr., they planned to restore the building to its former glory and make it one of the prime commercial developments in downtown St. Louis.

Boatman's Bank was the first tenant in the newly renovated Cast Iron Building. They realized the value of reestablishing a presence on the Landing, as the bank was founded in 1847 for Mississippi riverboat workers at #16 Locust St.

Other tenants of the Cast Iron Building in the 1980s and 1990s included the St Louis Business Journal, Security Leasing Partners, and the Jefferson Memorial Park Service.

