

# Pioneer Philippine Lands in Saint Louis

August 22 to September 1, 1818

# Co-Founders of St. Louis

<https://www.distilledhistory.com/category/colonialstlouis/>



Auguste Chouteau



Pierre Laclède

# Saint Louis 1764



Painted by August Becker, this mural in the Old Courthouse depicts the arrival of Auguste Chouteau and his men

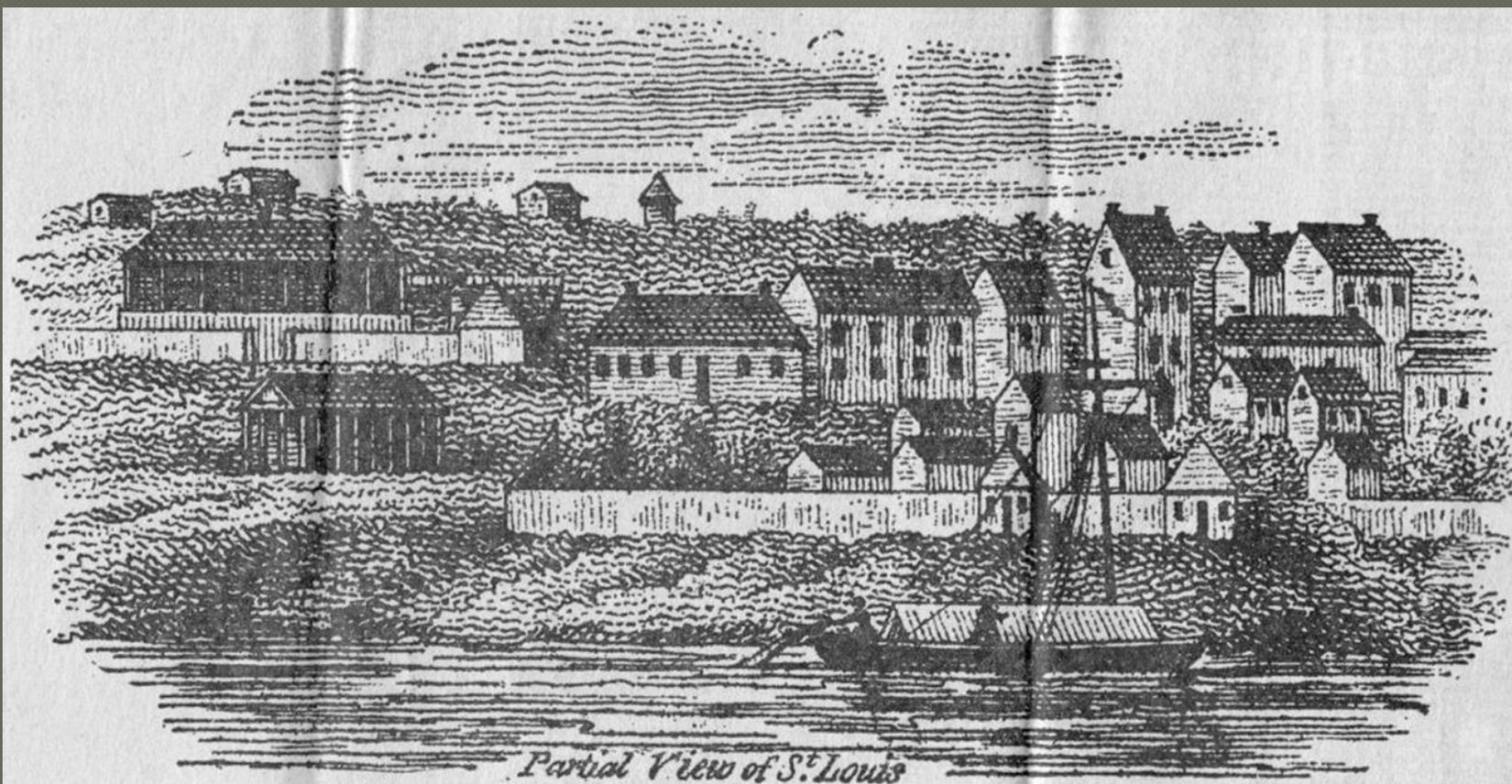
“On February 15, 1764, Auguste Chouteau pulled to shore at the head of his charge. As he instructed some of his men to begin clearing land the next morning, he instructed others to build necessary storehouses and living structures. Auguste Chouteau then began to plot out Laclede’s proposed street grid on the same land that now sits beneath the Gateway Arch. That day, February 15, 1764, is the moment the city of St. Louis came to be.” ”



"These images were published in the Sunday edition of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 16, 1964, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of St. Louis by Pierre Laclède and August Chouteau. Represented are some very common names in today's St. Louis: Pratte, Berthold, Smith, Lisa, Labadie, Papin, Clark, Gratiot, McKnight, and Brady.

This newspaper article came from a collection given to me by Marguerite Boulicault Foster who lives in San Antonio, Texas. When she and her husband moved from St. Louis her Uncle Willis saved everything he could about St. Louis to send to her to keep informed on things happening in her home town. Thanks Marguerite."

<https://stlouis.genealogyvillage.com/oldest.htm>

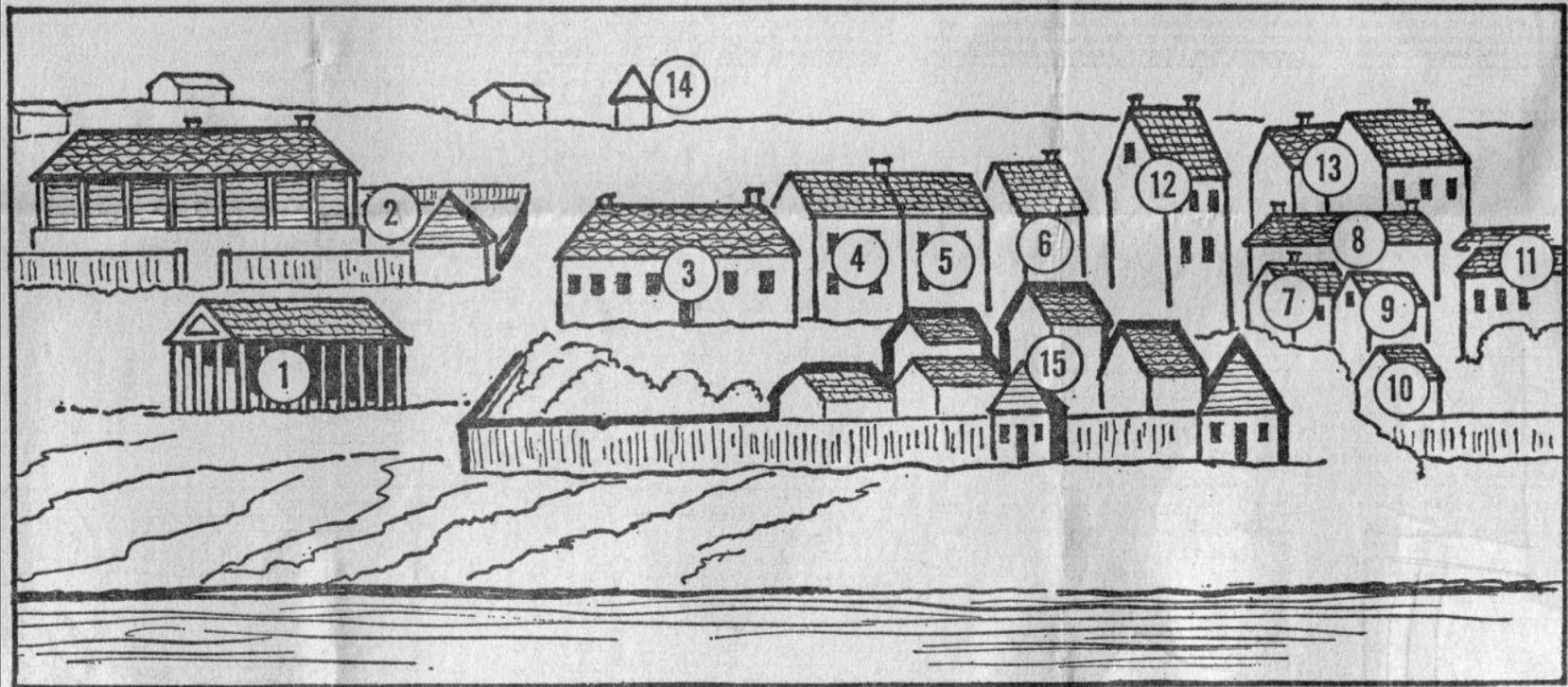


## Oldest Known Picture of St. Louis

This picture is believed to show the fur trading post as it was in 1814 and is from an engraving on a \$10 bank note issued by the Bank of St. Louis in 1817. It is from the collection of St. Louis attorney Eric P. New-

man. The view is of the riverfront from the present Walnut to Pine streets. A keel boat is shown moored to the bank. Building at left on skyline is at approximate site of log cathedral but has not been positively identified.

## Identification Chart for Buildings in the Previous Engraving



Identification chart for buildings in the engraving: (1) Market House built in 1812; (2) Laclède-Chouteau House with stockade and warehouse, built by Laclède Liguest in 1764; (3) Bernard Pratte stone house, built before 1782; (4) William Smith store and residence, built in 1812; (5) Bartholomew Berthold store and residence, built in 1812; (6) Manuel Lisa brick house, built in 1813 (Lisa, a fur trader built the Old Rock House in 1818);

(7) Silvestre Labadie Jr. stone house; (8) Labadie family mansion, built 1770 by Joseph Papin; (9) Labadie outbuilding; (10) Labadie stable; (11) house of William Clark, the explorer; (12) Charles Gratiot house; (13) McKnight and Brady store with bearding house above; (14) stone tower, Fort San Carlos, at Fourth and Walnut streets; (15) fur storage sheds where the trappers' pelts were stored.

1817



ST. LOUIS RIVERFRONT - FUR TRADING POST from engraving on bank note issued in 1817. This is the way St. Louis looked on the arrival of Mother Duchesne and companions in 1818. The Fort near center of skyline was at 4th and Walnut Streets. House in middle of picture was home of Bernard Pratte family where nuns were cordially welcomed during their brief stop-over. The riverfront is the present site of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

Reproduction, courtesy of:

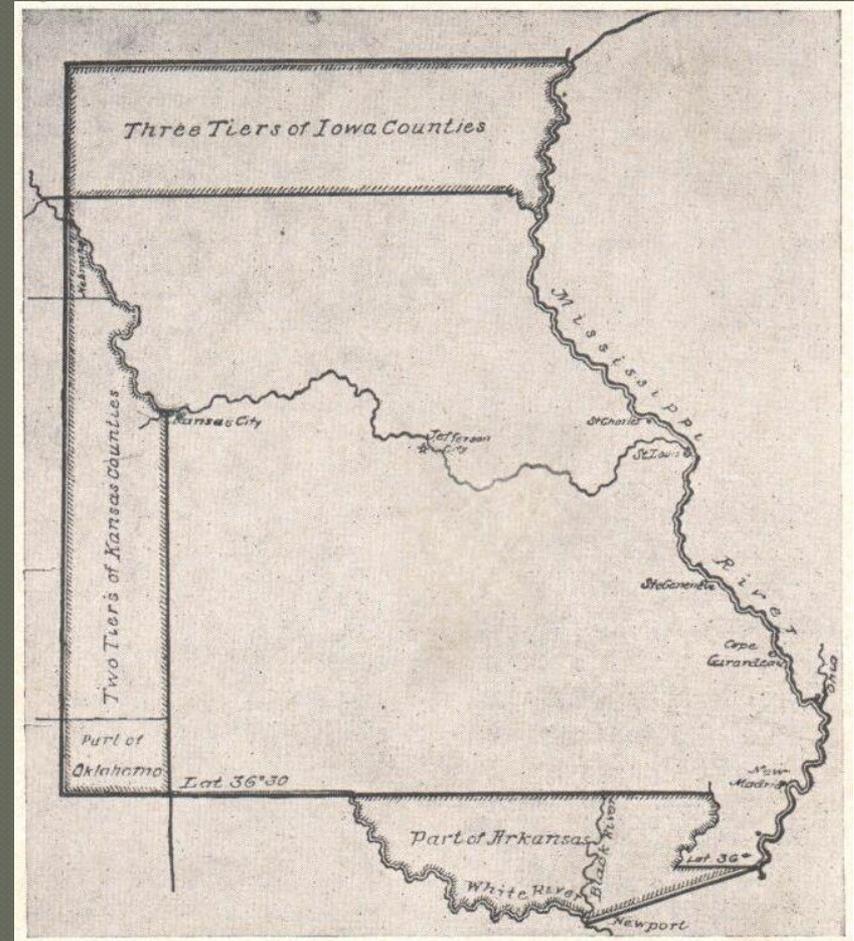
Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society

# August 21, 1818

By 1818 the population of the area of which St. Louis was the chief town totaled more than sixty-five thousand and raised a national crisis when Missouri asked admission to the Union as a state in which slavery was allowed by law.

All this the nuns on board the *Franklin* had learned when the steamboat anchored for the night a mile below the foot of the Market Street landing on the evening of August 21, the feast of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.

The boat had been expected for several days and its cargo of merchandise had been advertised in the Missouri Gazette that very day, but the presence of the nuns on board was not presented as a news item.

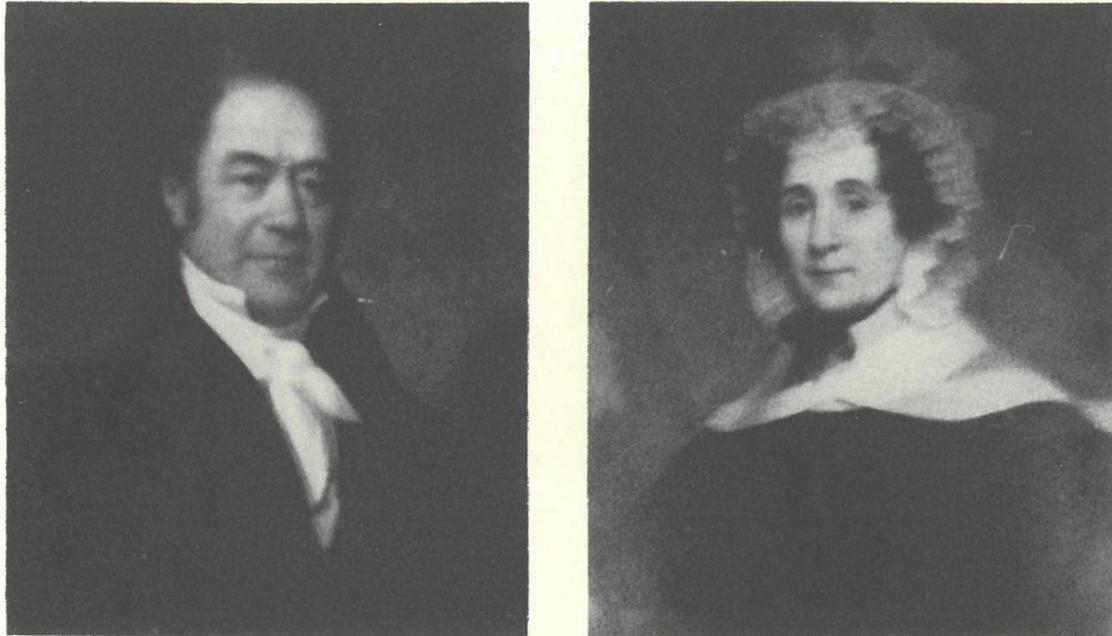


# August 21, 1818



The nuns are welcomed to St. Louis by Bishop DuBourg and invited to stay at the home of General and Mrs. Bernard Pratte, who are parents of two sons and five daughters.

# General Bernard Pratte



General and Mrs. Bernard Pratte, Senior

General Bernard Pratte and his wife gave hospitality to these first nuns who ever crossed a threshold in St. Louis. Their home stood at the corner of Main and Market Streets, a French colonial structure of the best frontier type, built of upright posts set on a stone foundation, two stories high, with a gallery extending around the four sides. There was the usual detached kitchen to the rear, and a roomy garden and orchard were neatly fenced in. Bernard Pratte and his wife had lived there since 1797.

# St. Louis Hospitality

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So Mother Duchesne and her companions were welcomed to the newly renovated home, and there they remained for three weeks in the midst of kindness and consideration that rivaled even the charity of the Ursulines.

The Prattes were a happy French Catholic family, presided over by a charming Creole mother, who had been Emilie Labbadie, and including two sons and five daughters.

They were related to “almost everybody in town,” as their maternal grandmother was Pelagie Chouteau, sister of the co-founder of St. Louis, and intermarriage had been frequent among the best Creole group in town.

# August 22, 1818



Mother Duchesne writing to her Superior General on the night of August 22:

“We had our hearts set on St. Louis, and it turns out to be another camping place. We are lodged in a comfortable home, where we are getting acquainted with the children who will be the first pupils in our boarding school. In a week we shall leave for St. Charles, where we are to begin our work in a rented house.”

Bishop DuBourg “regrets that he cannot keep us in St. Louis, but there is not a single room for rent in the town. He puts before us the great advantages St. Charles possesses. He thinks it will become one of the most important cities of North American, as it is situated on the Missouri River, along which the population is growing daily and which is about to give its name to a new state of the Union. No day passes without the arrival of four or five families with their belongings, who come to settle in a country which is making astonishing progress.”

# Obedience

St. Charles had been decided on, long before the nuns reached St. Louis, and after their arrival the Bishop gave no serious consideration to any alternative.

He listened to the arguments, suggestions, and generous offers of General Pratte, who doubted the wisdom of placing the nuns in an outlying district and was willing to put at their disposal a house in St. Louis.

He admitted the need for an educational institution in the town and the desire which many prominent Catholics had expressed with regard to the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

Yet he held to his first decision, and Mother Duchesne knew that soon she would have to say goodbye to St. Louis.



# Future Students



Mr. Pratte is going to entrust to us his five daughters in succession.

His wife is the most highly esteemed person in the city. Her five little girls, though dreadfully spoiled, have taken such a fancy to us that they want to come to our school, wherever it may be.

In season and out of season Celeste torments her parents at least four or five times a day to send her to school sooner than they planned.

A great number of their cousins, all delightfully well-mannered, have come to see us and want to be our pupils. One of them could not sleep for joy the night we arrived.

Emilie and Therese Pratte had obtained their father's solemn promise that they would be the first pupils of the boarding school, once Mother Duchesne and her companions were settled in their new home.

August 29, 1818

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Philippine  
marks her  
forty-ninth  
birthday.



# Packing Again

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September 1, 1818: The nuns pack their bags again after a seventeen-day stay with the Prattes in St. Louis.

The General reluctantly ordered a charette for the baggage, a carriage for the nuns, and saddle horses for the Bishop and Father Richard, to be ready early on Monday morning, September 7.

## What if Philippine Stayed in St. Louis?

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The if's of history furnish fascinating material for speculation. If General Pratte had had his way, the American life-story of Philippine Duchesne might have been quite different in many respects from the tale of struggle with poverty, anxiety, hardship, isolation, and suffering that stamped her thirty-four years on the frontier.

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Callan, Louise. *Philippine Duchesne: Frontier Missionary of the Sacred Heart*. Maryland:Newman, 1957. Print.