

Book Reviews and Notices

A French Aristocrat in the American West: The Shattered Dreams of De Lassus de Luzières, by Carl J. Ekberg. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2010. xix, 236 pp. Plans and maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$44.95 cloth.

Reviewer Thomas J. Lappas is associate professor of history at Nazareth College. His Ph.D. dissertation (University of Indiana, 2003) was "‘A Victim of His Own Love’: Sébastien Racle, Native Americans, and Religious Politics in Eighteenth-Century New France."

Carl J. Ekberg, scholar of the colonial and early national Midwest, has produced a two-part volume on Pierre-Charles de Hault de Lassus de Luzières (1738–1806). Part one is a brief biography of De Luzières. Part two is a collection of 36 documents by or about De Luzières, which Ekberg compiled primarily from archives in France and Missouri.

The biography tells the story of a monarchist who fled France in 1790 with his family in the midst of the French Revolution in order to make a new fortune in land speculation and commercial agriculture. He settled in the Ohio Valley, ultimately moving west of the Mississippi and founding New Bourbon in 1793 in Spanish Illinois. There he attempted to create an agrarian paradise in the valley by introducing European farming techniques, establishing mills to process grains, and even constructing a boat yard for river-going vessels to ship the produce down to New Orleans. He attempted, with some success, to recruit Americans to come and populate the settlement. He also dreamed of attaining a respectable place in the political hierarchy of a royal colony. He fulfilled that goal, ultimately being appointed commandant of the New Bourbon District in 1797. Unfortunately for De Luzières, history was against him. The Spanish transferred Louisiana to Napoleon, who, in turn, sold it to the republican government of the United States. The political experiment that forced him from his homeland eventually caught up with him, and he died under the type of government that he had always despised.

His personal story is one of disappointment and declining fortunes; as told by Ekberg, however, the story provides a narrative through which the reader learns about important but often hidden themes of the early national period in the midwestern United States. We learn of the diversity of the French habitants, Indian relations before and after

the watershed conflict of the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, and the opportunism among noble families who crossed national lines in their quest for survival, wealth, and positions of authority in the New World.

The documents that Ekberg has collected, translated, and edited are a welcome gift for those interested in the history of the Midwest. They are invaluable for understanding the social and political history of the Illinois Country, revealing the material conditions and culture of settlers in the region, the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans, and the role of slavery in the territory.

One quibble with the book is that in the biography portion Ekberg resorts to Wikipedia for some background information and even one quotation (16 n.16; 82 n.26). Although the information is likely accurate and verifiable in other more academically accepted sources, these citations will likely be jarring to those readers who have been conditioned to be suspicious of the site.

William Clark's World: Describing America in an Age of Unknowns, by Peter J. Kastor. Lamar Series in Western History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. ix, 360 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

Reviewer David A. Walker is professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. This fall he is teaching an undergraduate seminar: Exploring the American West.

William Clark is emerging from the historical shadow of Meriwether Lewis. Since 2004, readers have seen, among others, two biographies, a study of Clark as Indian diplomat, a compilation of letters to his brother Jonathan, and now a book that places Clark in the forefront as Americans learn more about the trans-Mississippi West.

According to Peter Kastor, an initial key to understanding the West was the 1814 publication of Clark's hand-drawn *Master Map of the North American West*. It was based on a review of existing maps, his expedition field notes, his surveying and celestial navigation skill, and conversations with native people. "The result was a map of unprecedented detail and technical accuracy that continues to amaze cartographers to this day" (151). Sources describing the West, in addition to maps, included travel narratives, regional histories, and portrait and landscape paintings. The descriptions influenced federal land policy, Indian relations, and decisions of individual settlers.

The highly accurate work of colonial surveyors and mapmakers showed topography, county boundaries, and land grants along the eastern seaboard. Kastor points out that depictions of the trans-