

French St. Louis: Landscape, Contexts, and Legacy, edited by Jay Gitlin, Robert Michael Morrissey, and Peter J. Kastor. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021. xii, 319 pp. Illustrations, graphs, notes, index. \$65.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Linda C. Jones is Professor of Language Area Studies at the University of Arkansas. Her research interests include New France and missionaries of the Lower Mississippi Valley. She is the author of *The Shattered Cross: French Catholic Missionaries on the Mississippi River, 1698–1725* (2020).

St. Louis has long been an important point of reference on the North American continent. Today we refer to it as the “gateway to the west,” hovered over by the great arch that signifies movement westward from the eastern United States. But in the eighteenth century, St. Louis was a hub of French colonization and oversight that provided a gateway to the south. *French St. Louis* superbly presents numerous topics relevant to the French history of this great city and provides clear evidence that this town was not a backwater French settlement but rather one that strove to establish itself as a commercial and global point of reference along the Mississippi River.

Arranged in four sections and presented through a multitude of voices, this book first examines the precarious nature of this town between frontier and empire. Vital strategies of collaboration and gender participation played significant roles in St. Louis’ early life. Collaboration was about building connections among the Osages, the French, and the Spanish as their varied oversight of the region evolved throughout the eighteenth century. This relationship of mutual respect and collaboration helped turn St. Louis into a vibrant, diverse community. Indeed, women played their own role in St. Louis’ early colonial years through commerce, farming, travel, and expansion of St. Louis’ culture. Even how one dressed played a key role in the development of St. Louis and the Atlantic trade network as one’s expression of identity and culture brought together old-world fashion with new-world materials. In short, St. Louis thrived as a European and Indigenous hub of activity until Americanization of the region took hold.

The text also examines the relationship between St. Louis and New Orleans and explores why the former more easily industrialized itself while the latter struggled despite its greater age and immediate access to the Gulf. As explained, St. Louis, “teemed with small and midsize commercial towns” (132) with multiple buyers that benefited from the resourceful hub, while New Orleans was dominated by big buyers and a plantation life that demanded enslaved labor. Indeed, beyond that last point of slavery, the text highlights the status of Free men and women and the extent to which they thrived within the St. Louis community.

The book is laden with the use of historical documents that not only unveils history but also helps visualize old St. Louis. With advertisements, letters, maps, and other historical documents, researchers masterfully used digital technologies to visualize this historic town prior to the Louisiana Purchase. And surveys completed on the eve of Napoleon's financial gain help one to "see" where things stood as the region fell into American hands. Despite the loss of European oversight, St. Louis remained French in spirit through newspapers, language, and organizations. Vibrant French shops and commerce continued to thrive well into the nineteenth century through immersion schools and Francophone activities to the point that a French presence still remains in St. Louis today.

French St. Louis offers readers insight into a wide variety of topics related to St. Louis during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The knitting together of various forms of archival material provides a new glimpse of this midwestern Euro-Indigenous-born city, a socio-cultural perspective that enriches our understanding of what life was like in the region. Though focused on the upper expanses of the French Mississippi, the book describes events that shaped trade, government, relationships, and cultural growth throughout the Mississippi Valley on into the *Pays d'en Haut*. Clearly, *French St. Louis* is a refreshingly new, captivating text that is vital for anyone interested in the presence of the French along the Mississippi and beyond.

Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America, by Michael John Witgen. Williamsburg, VA, and Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and University of North Carolina Press, 2022. xv, 366 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendix, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Patrick J. Jung, Ph.D., is a professor of history and cultural anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is the author of several books and articles, most recently, "American Indian Resistance to Settler Colonialism in the Western Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Valley, 1815–1832" (*Annals of Iowa*, 2022).

Michael John Witgen is one of a growing number of scholars (which includes Kathleen DuVal, Brett Rushforth, Robert Morrissey, Michael McDonnell, Jacob Lee, and David Nichols) whose research and writing are revolutionizing our understanding of Native-White relations in the Midwest. *Seeing Red* is the follow up to Witgen's earlier book, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (2012). Despite its title, Witgen's latest book does not take a broad, national view