

similitionist (usually called “civilized” by government officials) factions. He also assesses the impact of the 1857 Spirit Lake Massacre in northwestern Iowa led by Inkpaduta, a renegade Wahpekute Dakota chief. The Iowa incident caused many Dakotas and white settlers to worry that a broader conflict was inevitable. Interestingly, Inkpaduta and Little Crow were estranged. Little Crow was not only allied with a Wahpekute chief whom Inkpaduta bitterly opposed, but he also cooperated with the government in the abortive effort to apprehend Inkpaduta after the Spirit Lake incident.

Much of the author’s information about Little Crow has been published previously. However, Diedrich challenges the longstanding portrayal of Little Crow as a feckless leader undistinguished in battle. He supports his claim with evidence of Little Crow’s warrior exploits against the Dakotas’ Indian enemies and his activities and strategy during the Dakota War. Furthermore, he calls attention to a false chronology that was contrived by wartime Dakota agent Thomas Galbraith to shift blame for the war from his own malfeasance to Little Crow.

Although the book is generally lucid and well documented from a variety of sources, including many eyewitness accounts, it would have been enhanced by professional editing. Diedrich repeatedly uses “the fact that,” which invariably contributes to verbosity and redundancy. He also uses *capitol*, the word for a building, when he obviously means *capital*, the city (63). Likewise, an editor would have questioned the persistent identification of individuals, including a president, vice president, cabinet member, Indian trader, and historian, as Masons. The purpose of including that information is not apparent and will cause readers to be skeptical of the author’s objectivity, because he does not identify the fraternal affiliations of other men.

Nonetheless, I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in Indian culture in general and the greatest conflict in Dakota history in particular. It definitely contributes to our understanding of an important chapter in the history of the upper Mississippi region.

*From French Community to Missouri Town: Ste. Genevieve in the Nineteenth Century*, by Bonnie Stepenoff. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006. xiii, 232 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

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Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, is an eighteenth-century town on the west bank of the Mississippi River. France governed the territory when the

town was established; Spanish rule followed, then a short return to French domination; then in 1804 the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory, which included the land we know as Missouri. This tightly written volume examines the transition of Ste. Genevieve from a community dominated by French Creoles to an Americanized community in 1885. It is a vital and fascinating part of the story of the process of change in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys that began after the Revolutionary War and continued for much of the nineteenth century.

Professor Stepenoff begins to discuss those transitions by describing the culture of the town on the eve of the Louisiana Purchase. In the second part of the book, she examines legal changes that were a consequence of the imposition of the American legal system, especially with regard to the effects for women, freedpeople, slaves, and "miscreants." In part three she analyzes social change in families, work, customs, celebrations, and institutions.

Every community has its own character, but readers can see in this story of Ste. Genevieve the story of every community that existed in the trans-Appalachian West before the Revolutionary War, in the trans-Mississippi West after the Louisiana Purchase, and later in those lands taken by the United States after the Mexican War. In all cases, the process of Americanization was both blessing and curse, simultaneously liberating and constraining.

This book makes clear that a sophisticated society existed in Ste. Genevieve long before the territory became a part of the United States. Also apparent and well documented is the personal freedom that the people enjoyed under a monarchy, freedoms that were constrained under American rule. The newly American territory was by no means an empty land but had long been inhabited by Indian people and European immigrants who were predominantly French and Africans both slave and free. The author demonstrates that in Ste. Genevieve, as in other Mississippi and Ohio river towns, people were creating a culture that was a rich blend of European, African, and Indian traditions, a culture often at odds with the American vision of the future.

*From French Community to Missouri Town* is a solid contribution to our understanding of the merger of differing values and cultures in those areas of the West strongly influenced by the American Revolution and the Louisiana Purchase. Although the subject matter is specialized, this is an important book for anyone interested in Ste. Genevieve; but it is also valuable for those who would explore the consequences of the Louisiana Purchase for the people who were already there. More broadly, it is a useful account of the blending and clashing of cultures.