

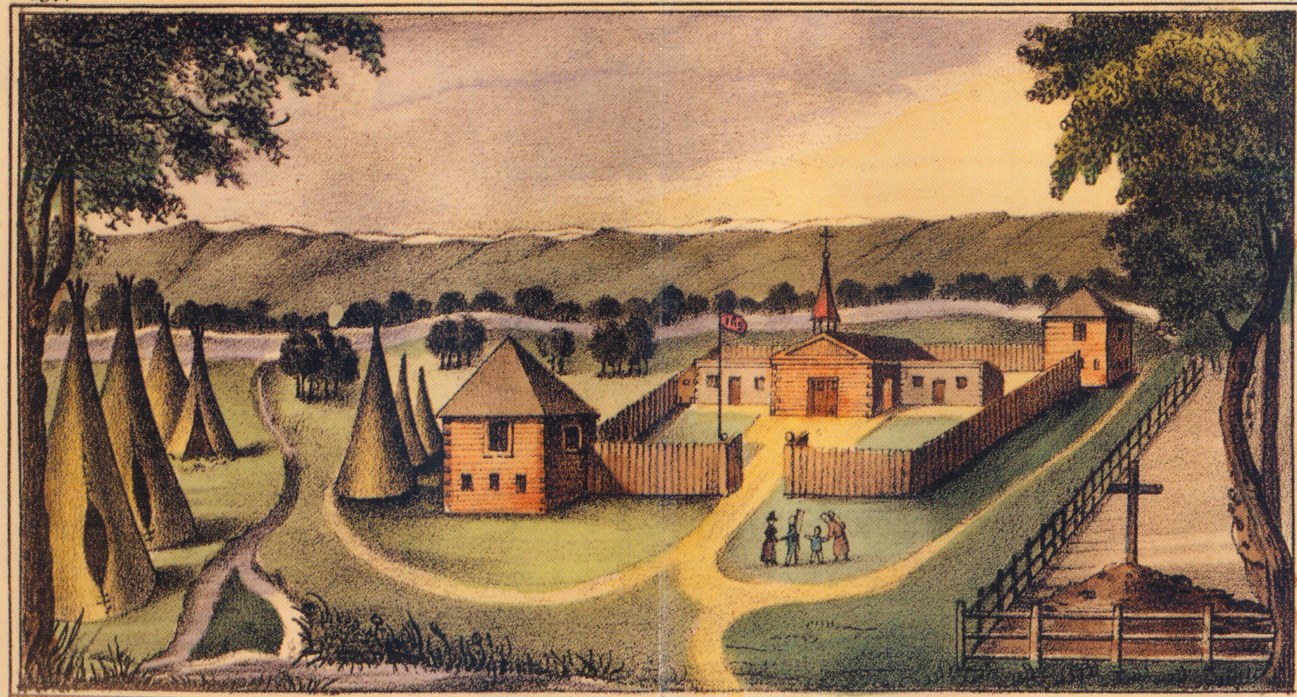
Collection Highlights:

- The Robert Campbell Collection; which comprises over fifty linear feet of ledgers, business records, letters, and account books for all operations of the various fur company, outfitting, and banking firms which Campbell, himself a famous mountain trapper of the 1830's, was partner or owner. The collection consists of ledger books, copy books of business correspondence, checkbooks with copious expenditure notations, business reports and legal papers. The largest concentration of material dates from 1835 to 1882. The collection offers a glimpse of the trading network which Campbell developed in later life across the West. This extraordinary material includes Campbell's original 1832 ledger related to the fur trade rendezvous of that year in the Rockies, as well as ledgers of the Missouri Fur Company and William Ashley. Original and microfilm.
- The fourteen page fragment of Auguste Chouteau's Journal in his own hand; recording the early events surrounding the establishment of St. Louis as a trading post in 1764. This document is the original source for the exclusive trade privilege of Maxent, LaCledé and Company for the fur trade in the Mississippi Valley and the Missouri River valley. Original and microfilm.
- The Chouteau Manuscript Collection; original letters dated from 1787-1818 which document the wide

- fur trading interest of the Chouteau family for decades. Correspondents include William Clark, James Wilkinson, James Monroe and Lord Selkirk, and including the Baron Carondelet's Commission granting Auguste Chouteau exclusive trading rights with the Osage in 1794. Original and microfilms.
- General Daniel Bissell papers; consist of correspondence of the builder and commandant of Fort Bellfontaine in old St. Louis, precursor to Jefferson Barracks in the same city when General Bissell was military commander and customs officer of Upper Louisiana Territory. These papers deal with a time of unrest in the territory for settlers, Indian relations, as well as trade and commerce in the region. Original, website version and microfilm.
- Early Missouri and Illinois newspapers; including hard copy and microfilmed versions of the Edwardsville and Kaskaskia papers, the earliest extant, as well as the *Missouri Gazette* and other ante-bellum newspapers such as *St. Louis Reveille* which document commerce, travel and exploration on the frontier, often in first hand accounts.

These sources are coupled with maps, plans, prints, photographs, special and rare book collections at the Mercantile Library, such as popular novels, early sporting and hunting texts, early documents, city directories and local St. Louis publications.

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St^e Marie aux Têtes plates

Facilities, Systems, Services & Access

Access to the collections is available free of charge for all inquiries connected with personally conducted research. The Library catalogues its collections on OCLC, the national bibliographic database. Finding aids and guides to the collections are available to researchers, interlibrary loan. Infopass and on-line database searching and Internet services are also available. The Mercantile Library sponsors internships, symposia, lecture series and exhibitions on its history and on its collections. Further programs continue to be developed. Optional membership allows holders borrowing privileges for circulating materials.

The St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri – St. Louis

The St. Louis Mercantile Library Association has played an important cultural and social role in the community for over a century and a half. From its beginning, the story of the Mercantile Library has been one of education and service. It has updated its mandate while remaining true to the dreams and aspirations of its founders. Its collections and focus on service make it a unique treasure, one that has enriched the lives of generations of St. Louisans. Our new home on the campus of the University of Missouri – St. Louis marks a renewed commitment to the future, as well as to our local community and the research world at large.

A Special Collection within the ST. LOUIS MERCANTILE LIBRARY

at the University of Missouri – St. Louis
(Thomas Jefferson Library Building)
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Hours:

7:30am – 10:30pm – Monday – Thursday
7:30am – 5:00pm – Friday
9:00am – 5:00pm – Saturday
1:00pm – 9:00pm – Sunday

Rare Book and Manuscript Reading Room,
Intercession and summer school hours vary from the above.

Phone: 314-516-7240

Email: mercantile@umsl.edu

Website: www.umsl.edu/mercantile/index.html

Fees: Annual \$35 Membership (Student \$15.00) in the Library allows for certain reduced fees (i.e. photocopying – 15 cents per page; 30 cents non-member); other service fees may be charged depending on the nature of research, such as photographic duplication, and the amount of staff time involved.



Opportunities for Researching Fur Trade History



"The Trapper's Return" by Baraliet after A. Wilson
(*The Port Folio*) Feb. 1810.

St. Louis Mercantile Library
at the University of Missouri St. Louis

**St. Louis and the Fur Trade:
A Commerce which
Developed a Continent**

*To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things, that own not man's dominion,
dwell.*

*And mortal foot hath ne'er, or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock, that never needs a fold.
Alone o'er steeps and foaming fall to lean;
This is not solitude, 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms and view her
stores unroll'd"*

*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, reprinted in Ein
Ausflug nach den Felsen-Gebrigen im Jahr 1839 von
F.A. Wislizenus "A Journey to the Rocky Mountains"
(St. Louis, 1840)*

In the late 1830's seemingly everyone in St. Louis was somehow engaged in the fur trade. The city was alive with traders, trappers, mountain men coming and going to the Rockies and back again. Soldiers, explorers, scientists, native Americans – travelers of all kinds and walks made St. Louis the crossroads to the West. The story of the fur trade in St. Louis is a tale of the reach of one city across the continent for furry wealth. It is a story of family companies and hard nosed, analytical business interests based in the burgeoning frontier town. It is also the continued narrative of the competitions between the Hudson's Bay Company and Astoria and the American Fur Company, of the Missouri Fur Company and the Rock Mountain Fur Company and of how these groups – some centuries old – planned, developed, claimed, and exploited two thirds of the North American continent – indeed, all of it.

The Mercantile Library, over a century and a half old, had been a witness to the last great burst



"The Peaceful Valley" by Alfred Jacob Miller, Lithograph (New York, 1855)

**TO
Enterprising Young Men.**

THE subscriber wishes to engage **ONE HUNDRED MEN**, to ascend the river **Missouri** to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years — For particulars, enquire of **Major Andrew Henry, near the Lead Mines, in the County of Washington, (who will ascend with, and command the party) or to the subscriber at St. Louis.**

Wm. H. Ashley.

February 13 — 1822

Missouri Gazette and Public Advertiser, St. Louis, Feb. 13, 1822

of this trade. In its beginnings, the Library was in part born, however, to extol the ending of the frontier as St. Louisans saw it, by celebrating the exceptional achievements of its "agents" in the West, the frontier business entrepreneurs who were the traders and trappers and the classic mountain men, most of whom went west but hailed always in their hearts from the mother city of Louisiana Territory and the Rocky Mountains. The modern St. Louis merchants of the mid-nineteenth century felt a library – a Mercantile Library – would be the best place to preserve the history of America as it related to their ancestral roots in trade on the frontier. Thomas Allen, one of the founders of the Pacific Railroad, and a successful banker in St. Louis had given a speech that was reprinted in the *St. Louis Reveille* in December of 1845 which voiced just these sentiments towards the grizzled mountain men of legend and lore, who were indeed, the spirit and the spiritual ancestors of the modern commercial interests of America, home grown, as they were, from St. Louis.

Art, poetry, natural history, travel and exploration, first hand accounts of geographical discovery, religious missions – all were preserved at the Mercantile in part to document how these related to the business heritage of the grand ventures of the trade in furs, and this collection has increased over the years to become a premier, colonial and Western Americana and Canadiana resource. The broader story of colonial interests in the New World is represented in this collection and is intricately tied to early sources of the age of discovery, reconnaissance, science and exploration world wide. The patterns of the old North American fur trade

reach a climax and denouement in the building of the transcontinental railroads and the establishment of trade routes to China and Japan. Thus opportunities for research and study are limitless at the Mercantile concerning these historical themes.

Writing in 1998 in *St. Louis in the Development of the American West* (St. Louis, Mercantile Library), the historian Howard Lamar stated "In the year 2004 the city of St. Louis will celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with ceremonies, parades, programs, exhibits ...the city will attract the attention of most Americans. In the twenty-first century it seems likely that St. Louis will once again be seen as a gateway to the historic American West". This gateway was profoundly dependent on the success for generations of the fur trade.

The Scope of the Collection

The Mercantile Library's fur trade collections comprise some of its rarest collections of Americana. Traders who put down their experiences to ink and paper often were the first to do so in a given region; books of travel and exploration of the New World alluded to the natural history and wealth implicit in the wilderness for a trade which lasted for centuries. Controversies with rival companies were evidenced in official government documents of both the United States and Great Britain. Companies themselves published much statistical material on the trade.

The Mercantile's holdings thus span four and a half centuries of Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch and English documents, thousands of maps and manuscripts, early newspapers, prints, paintings, and microfilm.



"The Beaver" *The Trapper's Guide*, (Oneida Community, 1867)