

in certain sections there is a bit too much of this snarky tone, which may rub some readers the wrong way. It would be a shame for any reader to stop reading because of these uneven areas. The book is dense, filled with significant information supported by pages of footnotes and suggestions for further reading, and is therefore not to be missed. To my knowledge, there is no other work that has been this well researched on the subject of the twinned cosmos. Even though some critics have voiced concerns over these types of appropriations, few have elaborated so thoroughly how the binary system works on Turtle Island and demonstrated via source materials just how erroneous the Western understanding can be. Those interested in indigenous spirituality on Turtle Island should give *Spirits of Blood*, *Spirits of Breath* primary consideration.

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St. Louis Rising: The French Regime of Louis St. Ange de Bellerive. By Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon K. Person. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015. 326 pages. \$95.00 cloth; \$29.00 paper; \$26.10 electronic.

In *The Twenty-Seventh City*, a dystopian novel set in a futuristic St. Louis, Jonathan Franzen writes that “all cities are ideas, ultimately. They create themselves, and the rest of the world apprehends them or ignores them as it chooses” (24). Fiction or not, St. Louis has long been built upon a host of competing ideas, ideas that have blossomed and evolved and cascaded in upon each other over the centuries, ultimately becoming something of a founding myth, a narrative foundation upon which the inhabitants of the Midwestern entrepôt now regularly draw. The two heroes of this story, Pierre Laclède and August Chouteau, have been transmuted into the key players in the town’s rise from a desultory fur-trading fort to “The Gateway to the West.” Their efforts ring through the centuries, resounding today in plaques, memorials, and myths praising their foresight and sacrifice.

In honor of St. Louis’s 250th anniversary in 2014, Carl Ekberg and Sharon Person determined to revisit this founding narrative and, in doing so, to challenge it by wading into the morass of historical sources that so many have overlooked or misconstrued. The result is *St. Louis Rising: The French Regime of Louis St. Ange de Bellerive*, an archival *tour de force* that engenders a new view of the economic, cultural, and social development of both early St. Louis and the broader eighteenth-century Illinois Country. According to the authors, Chouteau and his stepfather, Laclède, emerged as products of their own self-promotional historical constructions: they—especially Chouteau, whose publications engendered the popular founding myth so many residents are familiar with today—had a stake in elevating their own roles, refashioning historical contingencies to bow to their narrative will. But for Ekberg and Person, the historical records point to an alternative founding duo, one that has all too often been silenced in subsequent narratives: Commandant Louis St. Ange de Bellerive and his royal notary, Joseph Labuxière.

St. Ange—hardly known outside of academia—is the beating heart of the book, and the authors spend much of the first half unraveling the baroque genealogical history of the Grotton-St. Ange family, whom the authors claim “was the most important political and military family in Upper Louisiana for the half century between 1720 and 1770” (11). After tracing the rags-to-riches upbringing of St. Ange’s father, French emigrant Robert Grotton-St. Ange, and brother, Pierre St. Ange, who was killed during the 1736 Chickasaw campaign, the authors detail the rise of Louis St. Ange, his transfers from Fort d’Orléans to Fort de Chartres to Vincennes where he spent nearly thirty years, until finally serving as the first governor of St. Louis, occupying that post from 1765 to 1770. The authors present St. Ange as a master of Indian diplomacy during this half-century, someone who maintained relative peace with an often bewildering mix of surrounding tribes and alliances in that era of continental turbulence that accompanied the Seven Years War. He is depicted as a quiet but capable governor of the early town of St. Louis, especially in comparison to the disorder, lawlessness, and “rogue colonialism” that plagued New Orleans at the time. Of course it is this reticence that cost him a more central role in subsequent historical narratives.

Written in a metanarrative style, the authors walk the reader through the archives and weigh the various possibilities, putting forth tenuous assertions as they strike down other obdurate myths where “[n]o solid evidence exists” (88). The overall structure, though, is unique, even disjointed, and it will undoubtedly put off some readers. The first half is relatively traditional and centers on eighteenth-century Illinois Country as viewed through St. Ange and his immediate family. The second half of the book, however, proceeds with a quite different mission: “to arouse in the reader’s imagination the warp and woof of village life” (5). There are essentially stand-alone chapters dedicated to architecture, law, slaves, domestic material culture, and the early fur trade in St. Louis, and they have the feel of many of the more specialized studies focused on material culture that one sees on the early Chesapeake and the work of Cary Carson, Susan Kern, and others. While providing an intriguing patchwork picture of early St. Louis, the narrative fragmentation will undoubtedly be disconcerting for less-specialized readers.

Beyond foregrounding the unfortunately overlooked St. Ange, another intriguing contribution this volume makes is to rethink broader continental developments in the wake of the Seven Years War by contrasting them with the local specificities of the Illinois Country. For instance, although Daniel Richter, among others, has claimed that the play-off strategy diminished for Indian peoples in the wake of the Seven Years War, Ekberg and Person argue that “precisely the opposite was true in Illinois Country, for British occupation of the east bank of the Mississippi provided surrounding Indian tribes with the perfect opportunity to play Spain off against Great Britain” (91). In consequence, by zeroing in on the village-level gears of French bureaucracy, the authors illuminate a further dimension to the more Anglo- and eastern-centered work of many previous scholars, in the process making a valuable contribution to eighteenth-century studies of Indian diplomacy.

In general, American Indian studies scholars may find that the this volume’s approach feels akin to an older, top-down diplomatic history. In this respect, it shares