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The Development of the Architectural Styles of New France

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The Development of the Architectural Styles of New France

Introduction:

During early European exploration in America, France imposed itself as a colonial power in Canada and continued to expand into the Louisiana territory. While France’s Ancien Régime\(^1\) would last into the eighteenth-century, it became a model for political and societal structure in New France, a term generally used to define the early French settlements in Canada. French royalty struggled to retain the Ancien Régime in France, facing a series of frondes\(^2\), ultimately leading to revolution. While France would enter into the Age of Enlightenment, New France would remain traditional and subject to the old style of centralized power. New France established a hierarchy based on ownership of land, economic and geographic advantages. Although the new settlements would continue to differ from the old country, we witness similarities through the ability of New France to establish French traditions in language, religion and the modeling of dwelling styles, monuments and church architecture. In studying the architecture of those who inhabited New France, we are able to analyze how the society lived and worshipped in their particular communities.

Traditional French architecture began with The French Royal Academy of Architecture established in 1671\(^3\) and the later Académie des beaux-arts. Roman Basilicas had influenced Church architecture after Italian invasion in 1494. The gothic style dominated French architecture in the medieval period and would become a favorite for important cathedrals found in New France. The gothic style was characterized by the pointed arch as seen in the interior of

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1. A medieval structure of centralized power in France from the 15\(^{th}\) century until the 18\(^{th}\) century in which aristocratic privilege ruled until the French Revolution and storming of the Bastille in 1789.
2. Series of civil wars in France between 1648 and 1653 in response to the growing power of royalty.
3. The Académie royale d’architecture was an arts society began by Louis XIV and Jean-Baptiste Colbert.
Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and the high vaulting, flying buttresses, and enlarged windows of Notre Dame Cathedral. The flying buttress helped extend the size of the structure by allowing additional vaulted ceilings to extend its height. This is what allowed for the magnificent height and appearance of grandeur in cathedral construction. These cathedrals in France were prototypes whose stylistic elements can be traced to New France. While gothic architecture was predominantly utilized in cathedral construction, baroque architecture was most commonly found in the post medieval château, which Louis XIV would incorporate in his creation of
Versailles. The château of Versailles demonstrates the ornamentation of Italian Baroque while retaining symmetrical proportions. Ornamental and intricate Greek revival sculptures decorated monuments or stood alone in gardens. This style then influenced a simpler structure in the province; a village-like country house was created specifically in the northwest of France. This rustic dwelling can be traced to Normandy. The Norman *colombage*\(^4\) structure was essential to the development of dwelling styles in New France just as elements of the gothic cathedral would continue to be replicated in cathedral styles in New France.

\(\text{\footnotesize Fig. 3. Jennifer Brazier, Chateau de Versailles, Ile-de-France.}\)

\(\text{\footnotesize Fig. 4. Charles E. Peterson, Building a Creole Capital.}\)^5

\(^4\) Half timbered.
\(^5\) An Eighteenth Century example of a Norman dwelling style found in Rouen on the Seine. This style utilized timber and was filled with stone (*pierrotage*).
In this paper, I will explore the impact of multiple cultures, climate and available resources on the architecture of New France. I will begin with early settlements of Nova Scotia and Québec, and follow the Mississippi River down to New Orleans. These early French settlements in the new world struggled to retain their identities in the face of English and Spanish control. Although Canadian territories were affected by English possession, they were the most successful in retaining a French influence. Even today, French is the official language of Québec, and the Catholic religion remains an important part of everyday life in ceremony and tradition. Québec is known as a central Francophone territory in North America with French architectural tradition still incorporated in new building techniques. While French architectural remnants can still be seen from past settlements along the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans, the former predominant styles have long died out in society leaving only a historical reference to a time that has passed.

**History of French America:**

Although the influence of the old country was evident, New France was worlds away in terms of development. Traditional France contained its historical chateaûs and intellectual ideals and New France in contrast was a wild and primitive land. Early accounts of French migration to western colonies were viewed with opposing attitudes. Some romanticized the rural landscape and native culture as something of a paradise, while others described it as dangerous without order and of a sinful nature. In 1755 when “Rousseau published *Le Discours sur l’Origine et les Fondements de l’inegalite* denouncing the inequalities in modern society in an idyllic vision of primitive communities, Voltaire ridiculed the idealization of the savage in *L’Ingenu*” (Royot, 134). Although there were accounts of vulgarity and treacherous landscapes, there was no shortage of those still willing to travel across the ocean. “Early adventurers of New France came
from the maritime provinces of Normandy, Brittany, Anjou, Poitou and Charente. The Bretons had long led a rugged life on a damp, windswept peninsula as fishermen and peasants. The Normand Vikings had also been used to cattle breeding and dairy farming. These settlers usually lived on a riverfront with a permanent view of paddling trappers and Indians” (Royot, 18). The transition from France to New France did not prove difficult to these new settlers since they were used to the harshness of the natural environment in New France’s maritime areas of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The early settlers cultivated friendly relationships with Indian tribes such as the Algonquins, who would host French traders for an entire winter, offering lodging, food and sometimes young women\(^6\). Assimilation with the natives was somewhat challenging for those who were sent to study and interpret their foreign linguistics. Jesuit priests established seminaries often in an effort to teach religious conformity to nearby Indian sauvages. In an attempt to convert the Indians to the French language and religion, many

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\(^6\) “Champlain, Québec’s founder, encouraged Frenchmen to trade and live amongst the Indians until Québec was stormed in 1629 by the British” (Royot, 20).
of the French countrymen living outside of the settlements of established communities conversely converted to Indian practices.

The political structure in New France replicated France’s Ancien Régime in which “Canada was divided into three districts: Québec, Montréal, and Three Rivers. Each district had a governor and military commander. Officers were appointed by the king upon recommendation of the governor who was under the pressure from influential aristocrats” (Royot, 24). Inequality prevailed in the social structure of New France in which the population was dominated by a few noblemen, missionaries and wealthy merchants who had easy access to Indian communities for trade. The fur trade lured the labouring class as independent woodrunners, or coureurs de bois who were legally bound to New France until after their three-year contract expired. Land grants were provided for the purpose of land cultivation and houses could be built. This labouring class was able to bypass poverty by attaining monetary success through their trade profits. This opportunity held a large appeal to those who would have otherwise been subjected to poverty and low status in their province of origins. They could evade the government as coureurs de bois and establish their own set of trade rules, while earning substantially more than someone of similar circumstances working in agriculture.

The newcomers, mostly from Normandy and Anjou, fled their native provinces due to poverty and religious persecution. The most successful of the freelance traders had their connections in villages in the backwoods where they waited for the returning canoes and paid for their contents with goods bought on credit. They transported the furs on rivers, sometimes over rapids, to deliver them to a bourgeois licensed merchant. As the woodrunner needed to buy articles to trade, he received an advance from the trader who protected himself with a contract drawn up by a notary. The articles to barter were bought at a higher rate, earning twice as much as a laborer in Québec (Royot, 35-36).

This was a lucrative practice that lured them farther down the river away from accountability.

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7 A fur trader who went into the woods to find fur and trade fur with the First Nation natives.
Numerous outposts were established for trade down the Mississippi River. Before English control, some voyageurs remained in Montréal or went down the river, took squaws and lived in cabins near Indian dwellings. Fort and fortresses were built along river outposts in order to protect the *coureurs de bois* in their trade operations. “The demand for furs was such that authorities were losing control over dozens of individuals scattered throughout Indian country. Tribes also initiated young whites into hunting over long distances and what had remained an aristocratic privilege in France was now common in the colony” (Royot, 52).

Acadians, who were the earliest occupants of the northeast corner of the Maritime Provinces, most specifically Nova Scotia’s Grand Pre, created a tight knit community embracing colonial life and arriving at a unique culture of their own. This independent spirit brought about a self-sufficient community based largely on hunting, fishing and agriculture due to the abundance of forestry. Also, blacksmithing, boatbuilding, lumber mills and fur trading became a form of commerce in the community with trade amongst neighboring Indians such as the Mi’kmaq. Lumber mills, for which lumber could be cut and planed was used in the making of homes and churches. The Catholic religion remained intact in the Acadian culture as Jesuit priests were sent to guide and direct the new inhabitants in their beginnings. This culture is represented in early works devoted to the Acadian cultural spirit. Even today historical facts are widely taught in the form of legend and folklore as in Longfellow’s *Evangeline* and Antonine Maillet’s *Pelagie*. Both of these works emphasize the struggles the Acadian people endured to retain their newfound culture during *Le Grand Derangement* or *The Great Deportation* during the Seven Years’ War when the English forced the Acadian neutrals from their land.

The Acadians typically remained detached from the local government as *coureurs de bois* while also crafting an efficient and unique agricultural system to create a living. They were able
to remain peaceful with their native neighbors, but once the English controlled the laws of the area, their peaceful life corroded as they searched for safe place to rebuild their lives. Their way of life cultivated through agriculture, fur trading and home building is what kept them cohesive ensuring their survival in new locations.

They engineered dikes that created arable land from the tidal rivers around Port Royal. Families and neighbors labored together to shape the earthen walls, which were supported by logs sunk in the mud, and punctured by aboiteaux – valves that closed with the incoming tide, and opened with its ebb to expel rainwater that slowly desalinated the fields. Though this efficient practice allowed the Mi’kmaq to retain traditional hunting grounds even as the Acadian population swelled, the two peoples drifted apart as the eighteenth century approached and farming replaced the fur trade as the Acadians’ principal means of subsistence. The fracture was deepened further by consistently hostile relations between the Mi’kmaq and the English, whose legal authority the Acadians were increasingly forced to recognize (Farmer, 14-15).

![Fig. 6. Musée Canadien des Civilisations. Drawing of an Acadian aboiteaux.](http://www.civilization.ca/virtual-museum-of-new-france/daily-life/vernacular-architecture-in-new-france/)

Their use of the aboiteaux would be re-engineered to be later used in Mississippi Valley regions and even Louisiana. Although the local French government did not approve of the coureur de bois practices, it is only once the Acadians were forced to become accountable for fur trade practices with the Indians and crop production to the English that their commerce began to be threatened. Their accountability led to legal suits from government officials to whom they were
Legal documents from 1802 for the case of Jacques Chauvin vs. Jacques d'Eglise in the territory of Louisiana involving Fur Trading rights.

Fig. 7. 1. Order for Jacques Chauvin to check the status of a claim of trade between Jacques d'Eglise and the Maha Nation.

Fig. 7. 2. Request for Order to stop unlawful trade.
Fig. 7. 3. Request to stop suit due to findings of trade taking place lawfully between Jacques d’Eglise and the post of Joseph Robidou and Benoit of Illinois.

Fig. 7. 4. Record entry disposing of suit between Jacques Chauvin and Jacques d’Eglise.
forced to prove their trade practices in order to demonstrate that they were lawful in not extracting a larger personal profit. These regulations cut the large profit margins that had been a common practice with the neighboring Indian tribes. Once they were forced hastily off of their land and their accustomed way of life and thrown into English colonists in the northeast, many began migrating south to Louisiana and some eventually headed back to the Maritime regions of New Brunswick, Cape Breton and Québec. This displacement rendered the Acadians a status not much better than slaves as they were met cruelly by the American colonies with hatred and without aid in their integration process. Maryland deemed to be the most helpful in that its population was largely of Irish Catholics willing to help house and feed them in the name of religion’s sake; however, with knowledge of Louisiana as a French territory, many headed south to find a welcoming homeland.

As we witness in Ben Farmer’s novel, *Evangeline*, the war is depicted with two trappers stopped by a soldier informing them that the land in which they are trapping can no longer be used for commerce. He states, “I’m compelled to inform you that you are not allowed to trap for furs on the boundaries of His Majesty’s colony of New France. I can offer you full pardons for enlistment” (Farmer, 49). Those neutrals or independent *coureurs de bois* that were not willing to enlist were rounded up in Québec’s walled fortress to be shipped away; however, British troops infiltrated the area capturing them and taking them away to boats leading them from their homes burning and confiscating property and livestock. One of the protagonists expresses, “They are trying to take our homes, our faith, and our pride. Where do you draw the line? What life do you preserve if you run from your home at a whispered rumor of danger?” (Farmer, 96). This is the way in which many were removed with families separated and taken to separate locations. In the message delivered from the King of England, we are to believe that the evacuation was done
peaceably and with as little cruelty as possible. The reality is much harsher than presented and conditions in the English colonies led to many of the French bonded out to work for a wage in cotton or tobacco fields in the American south. “Word that French allies, the Choctaw, had captured some of the English on the Mississippi, gave many of the displaced French hope for safety” (Farmer, 314). Upon their traveling they found comfort in the “passing copper plates blazoned with fleur-de-lis, hammered into trunks to be visible from the water” (Farmer, 339). This signified that they were amongst their own and found a French settlement. It is also seen in custom as shown in Evangeline, when the traveling priest demands a baptism for luck. “A voyageur’s baptism is a necessity any time you reach the headwaters of a river you’ve never traveled before. It’s an ancient custom we’re bound to follow if we hope for success,” as stated by the priest (Farmer, 337). They traveled through the settlements we learn to be of Illinois known as “Fort Defiance, and the mounds of the Shawnee and Attakapas Indians found in
Louisiana” (Farmer, 356-57). It is also stated that the churches are prominent throughout all the settlements as a safe haven and place of replenishment and renewal. On approach to Louisiana, “they diked the turgid water to protect their fields in as close an approximation of their Acadian farms as they could engineer in the swamp” (Farmer, 315). They struggled to replicate the environment which they had back in Acadia now in this new location. Their farming technique demonstrated they were trying to retain cultural traditions despite their location.

French colonists worked hard to retain an identity of their own through the challenges of rural life in America and Canada. They were able to keep their language in under-populated regions; however they faced different issues and awareness. As conveyed in Pelagie, cultural rituals are what create cohesiveness in a society, not necessarily the location. Maillet’s uses of tall tales describe the metaphor of the mouth of the Acadian aboiteaux (The one-way valves in a dike that once characterized the shores of Acadie). It symbolizes the trickle of people surviving (in 1755), exile and return (in 1764) and a century of silence before being recognized as a people at “le premier congres” in 1881 such that there are now over 300,000 Acadians in Canada. The gap at the center aboiteaux constitutes the space where change occurs: fresh water becomes salty; a weak trickle becomes the strength of the tide. The gaps represent the space in between in which cultural change may occur. This exile and pilgrimage represents a time of ambiguity and change, and due to the fact that the Acadians are constantly changing in their locations we can argue the meaning of what is “authentically old” (Maillet, 68). The Acadians who took the long journey back to their homeland may have been slightly altered such as those who had settled in other locations with the English and Spanish, although through tradition, they still kept their heritage. “Those Acadians who assembled along Pelagie’s cart to travel north were in a state of ambiguity” (Maillet, 37). They were constantly changing their identity as their homeland
changed, forcing them to invent their identity anew. With their land now belonging to the English, their experience would not be much different from those re-creating their lives in other territories further south; however, the influence of environment would be different.

Many French Canadians felt they could be more profitable in the Mississippi Valley region in the early 1700s when tilled land and cattle changed the landscape. “The Illinois territory became a point of migration to French Louisiana in 1717. Fields across the Mississippi were cultivated by Kaskaskia, Fort de Chartres and Cahokia communities. A score of salt workers, hunters, and traders gathered in the new township of Sainte Genevieve” (Royot, 65-66). Canadian migration in the mid-eighteenth century contained a small community in which many were black and of Indian descent. “In 1746, three hundred whites lived in Illinois along with six hundred black slaves. There were four villages in this Illinois territory: Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, Sainte Philippe and Cahokia numbering in all about a thousand whites and 350 slaves” (Royot, 68). Few inhabitants were located at Fort de Chartres and Sainte Genevieve on the Missouri side. They all grew some corn but were mostly engaged in hunting and fur trading. The government relied more on the high birthrate than on immigration to increase the number of colonists. With the Louisiana territory extending along the Mississippi River from Louisiana up into Canada in the early 1800s, the majority of those settled near the river were French Acadians or those who moved south involved in fur or agricultural trade. Many French settlers migrated around St. Louis since it became a central post between New Orleans and Montréal with the protection of Fort de Chartres and the river serving as an effective transportation system.\footnote{“Of the French in and around St. Louis who engaged in the fur trade the more prominent were of Canadian stock, such as Francois Valle, Charles Sanguinet, and Joseph Robidoux, all from the province of Québec. Many inhabitants of the newly conquered territories in the French West were the peasants of the former seigneuries, long acquainted with Indian culture and adapted to the harsh conditions of the wilderness” (Royot, 88-89).} The upper Louisiana area was spared from Spanish regulations following the Louisiana Purchase,
making the area by the Mississippi River in Missouri and Illinois an ideal area for French settlers to live and work. The work styles as well as dwelling style development would be carried over from practices developed in early Canadian settlements.

**Architecture of Canada: Dwelling and Religious Cathedral Adaptations**

Throughout all of the changes the French colonials endured, they were always able to adapt to their surroundings. Before a new community could begin however, inhabitants needed to create dwellings that would survive the climate from available materials within their financial constraints. The terms *colonial* and *creole* are often used to describe the houses in New France, but, in fact, their characteristics varied according to period, social class and location site. In Canada, wilderness and marshes provided the earliest rustic examples of architectural sites of those traveling from their native regions in France.

![Drawing of early hut construction.](image)

Fig. 9. Stuart K. Dicks, *Les Canadiens*: from Tamped Clay and Saltmarsh Hay @ 1976 reprinted by permission of the University Press of New Brunswick. Drawing of early hut construction.

The earliest rustic model transferred to New France was a sunken hut structure originating from northern Europe. The simple construction was partially dug into the ground with inserted postholes. This new technique of building with posts in the ground was termed *poteaux en terre* and was a common rustic dwelling. This temporary structure could be built quickly and cheaply, making this a good choice for early settlers in New France. They could set
up in temporary locations and move around easily and quickly. With only one room containing a fire, an additional room would be added serving as a bedroom or storage area. This basic construction would then give way to the mixed dwelling or byre house. This was more advanced architecturally with its introduction of a partition separating sections of the house with a ceiling. This type of dwelling would become important for the peasant farmers and families of New France. New France utilized the seigneurial system emulated from Old France\(^9\) in which peasant farmers live in these modest homes. The building materials of their homes varied regionally according to environmental availability of timber and stone.

One of the oldest dwellings of European origin to have been revealed was discovered on the Côte-de-Beaupré, in the St. Lawrence Valley region. It belonged to the Petite-Ferme farming operation, built in 1626 on the orders of Samuel de Champlain and destroyed two years later. A dig revealed a few walls of timber-frame construction whose posts had been embedded in the ground and in-filled with rammed earth, an architectural form closely akin to that of Normandy (Côte, Helene).

More advanced than the sunken hut, timber-frame construction incorporated a timber frame with a fill of stones, brick or earth. The walls were then insulated by lime or earth plastering.

\(^9\) “Under the feudal system in France, land was granted by the king to seigneurs, or lords. They made smaller grants to peasant farmers in return for rents and services” (Dicks, 15).
Mixture of earth would vary, because both wattle-and-daub\textsuperscript{10} and “bousillage”\textsuperscript{11} were used.  

*Bousillage* was a construction technique believed to be employed by both French and Native Americans. As we know these two groups lived peaceably in close proximity and most likely worked together in their construction of these mud walls. Timber would be laid either vertically or upright. A unique attribute of this technique was the use of Spanish moss in the mixture in Louisiana. Straw was used in northern areas.

Half-timbered construction originating from France was the most common style to be modified in New France. Many examples of this construction can be traced back to Normandy.

Haute-Normandie, one of the principal historical regions of France from which many colonists originated, used a timber-frame and earthen rough casting construction, both for humble farms and manors of tenant farmers. In this region, dwellings did not originally have any upper storeys; the foundations were of stone, the spaces between wall posts were in-filled with wattle and daub, brick or cob, and the hipped gable roof, covered with thatch. The doors and windows were located on the south face of the house, as the northern face was nearly always blind (Côte, Helene).

Walls were usually made of field rubble, water worn stones, bedded deeply in lime mortar. To be stable, such walls had to be thick. We therefore find them from two to four feet thick according to the size of the building. Such walls give good protection. In the summer they are cool and in winter, once they are warmed, they hold heat for a long time. But problems occur if a rubble wall is exposed to the constant frosts and thaws of a Canadian winter. The mortar is forced out, the inside of the wall gets wet, and eventually the whole wall falls apart. To prevent this, it was a common practice to cover the outside of a stone wall with wood boarding, especially on the exposed north and east sides. The boarding kept the stone dry, and a dry wall would not be harmed by the frost. Due to the harsh Canadian winters, house construction of New France developed the full-timbered method or *pièces-sur-pièces*. This was an alternative to the half-

\textsuperscript{10} Technique using the space in between the timbers for a fill of mud. It then dries solid and is typically whitewashed with lime.  
\textsuperscript{11} Louisiana French term for walls made out of mud.
timbered construction since timber in New France was plentiful. This full-timbered house became the typical pioneer dwelling, a unique invention of the Canadians.

Fig. 11. Stuart K. Dicks, *Les Canadiens*: from Sainte-Marie among the Hurons. Half-timbered construction. Full-timbered or pièces-sur-pièces Construction.

The choice of building material was usually determined by wealth and status. “A pièces-sur-pièces cottage could be erected for less than 300 livres whereas the cost of a stone building began at around 450 livres and it easily attained 2000 or more livres” (Dicks, 17). The stonemason had become a builder-contractor and he employed, in turn, workers in other crafts as his subcontractors. Affluence could be shown in this choice of material as well as additions such as an extra storey, plastering the outer walls and a tiled or slate roof as opposed to the traditional thatched roof. It should be emphasized that the characteristics illustrating material affluence also

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12 The capital of early Acadia, located in Nova Scotia is a good example of the early full-timbered construction method.
existed in a large portion of Ancien Régime France, except for the multi-storey house, already present in Provence during the Middle Ages among all social classes.

However, between 1660 and 1727, in Québec City and in Montréal the respective proportion of stone houses was already 37 percent and 31 percent, although this type of house represented only 6 percent of all rural dwellings. By 1727 and 1760, the cities showed a strong increase in stone houses, notably in the walled city that the new construction standards of 1721 and 1727 concerned in particular (Côte, Helene).

![Map of the province of Québec](https://www.toursquebec.com/maps.php)

Fig. 13. Map of the province of Québec.

In the province of Québec, most heavily populated by French Canadians, three general styles of cottage homes line the landscape. These structures would define French communities of North America in the seventeenth century and beyond. Starting in the Montreal district, and as

![Ramsay Traquair, Château de Ramsay, Montréal](image)

Fig. 14. Ramsay Traquair, *Château de Ramsay*, Montréal. McGill University, 1925.
far east as Three Rivers we find cottages and farm houses showing the characteristics of the prairie “containing verandahs, with great stone end gables and double chimneys connected by a flat parapet, and the high stone copings supported at the wall head on moulded corbels” (Traquair). This is similar to the style of the country spaces; however it should be mentioned the greater use of stone over timber. Large houses of this type are two rooms thick in plan with a central wall with usually only one story. The Château de Ramsay pictured above is a well preserved example of such a large house of the XVII century. Here some attempt has been made to render the building fireproof. The main floor rests upon a large vaulted basement, and the attic floor is constructed of stone slabs laid upon heavy wooden beams. The windows are high in two vertical leaves opening inwards, the universal form of French districts.

![Image](image.jpg)

Fig. 15. Ramsay Traquair, *The Québec Style*. McGill University, 1925.

In the eastern parts of the Province, in the neighbourhood of Québec City, a different type prevails (pictured above). “The houses are one storey high with an attic; the roof is steep with verges to the gables and a very large bellcast, forming a snow shelter, to the back and front. The bellcast is not really suited to the climate, as it tends to collect the snow in winter and to form immense icicles” (Traquair). This bellcast was probably imported from old France as a part of
the traditional construction. In Québec it actually tended to increase in size. Posts were added to support it and so a verandah house was produced, very like the so-called “Dutch” houses of the Hudson Valley, though of quite independent origin.

![Image of a house on Île d'Orléans](image)

Fig. 16. Stewart K. Dicks, *Les Canadiens*: Stone house on the Île d’Orléans (still in use today as a restaurant). Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Québec H-8.

“Scattered through the Province is a third type of cottage with a steep roof hipped at both ends, as in this house pictured above. In the Ottawa valley and around Montréal many of the small houses have this form of roof, with a shallow gallery running round the house at winter snow level, sheltered by the broad bellcast” (Traquair). Double galleried houses occur, though not very common. The double pitched gambrel roof is very common in all French-Canadian villages, but it seems to have been introduced at quite a late date. Towards the end of the XVIII century the larger houses begin to show strong Georgian and Classic influences.¹³

The styles of the country prevail in the city areas of Québec, although once the English seized the area, the citadel was created in a walled stone fortress as in modern day below. Stone was used for the walls as well as for the city dwellings due to repeat fires from timber

¹³ These three types as studied by Ramsay Traquair are shown developed by carpenters brought from France who put up the earliest structures at Port Royal (1605) and Quebec (1608).
construction. Although houses constructed of *colombage*, upright pickets and other techniques using wood could be found in urban environments from the beginnings of the colony, stone soon came into use where the ruling classes, the higher clergy and the merchants lived. The earliest

![Fig. 17. Jennifer Brazier, Entrance to Québec City. Fig. 18. Helene Côte, The Guillaume-Estèbe House.](image)

large domestic buildings typically housed Jesuit clergy members. Of these, the old wing of the Ursuline convent at Three Rivers dates from the original foundation in the XVII century. The dignity of plain wall, the spacing of the shuttered windows, the large sundial and little statue niche, the simple verges and the fanciful little square louvre in the roof make this a beautiful example. Monastic buildings were created simplistically with good window spacing and proportion, the texture of the rubble masonry and the bronze green roofing tiles of tinned iron make them aesthetically pleasing and distinctive.

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14 Demonstrates a classically French wealthy urban residence of the first half of the 18th century.
The Ursuline Convent in the Three Rivers district demonstrates an early example of a dwelling with multiple spaces for living and training. “In 1668 Monseigneur de Laval founded two schools, one in the Seminary of Québec, the other at St. Joachim. These provided a general education, instruction in agriculture and in the ‘arts et métiers’ in which some were able to receive instruction in architecture. The training was based upon contemporary French work, and we must suppose that masters were brought from France” (Traquair). The general design is well proportioned and detailed. “The training and instruction continued into the XIX century in which the province of Québec ceased to have a school of native artists in training. The traditional style of Old Québec passed out of use around 1860. It was replaced by revivals, elaborate, unnatural and exotic. Many original buildings were destroyed by fire and not recorded. This is true of many buildings in the Maritime Provinces as well” (Traquair).

Church architecture had a large place in the Québécois lifestyle, and we can find many examples of original buildings today. Although parish churches were significant, mission and
devotional chapels can be seen built next to a larger original church. These smaller buildings allowed for Québécois construction techniques to be practiced. “Experience gained through experiment in these smaller chapels played a large part in developing those more indigenous techniques which were the necessary basis for the Québec tradition of church architecture” (Gowans, 71). Also, the act of building these structures represented a certain degree of piety. “In the eighteenth century, Canadian piety was more constructively expressed by the centering of social and political life around the parishes” (Gowans, 72). It was often expressed that the Canadiens were more devout than their counterparts in France. This can still be seen as true today as churches and cathedrals make up a large part of the landscape.

Fig. 20. Jennifer Brazier, Third church of Sainte-Anne de Beaupré – Built in 1676, now stands as a memorial chapel.

The Catholic society of Saint-Sulpice, who was dominant around Montréal had a large impact on church architecture in the eighteenth century. “The importance was embodied in ‘La Paroisse’ – Notre-Dame, the parish church of Montréal – begun in 1672” (Gowans, 76). It was built in stone with its date to be complete set in 1683 with only the bare essentials. “In the
eighteenth century, a programme for remodeling the façade was underway by a superior of the Sulpicians in Canada, Vachon de Belmont.\textsuperscript{15} The plan of this façade is of signal importance to the history of church architecture in New France. A Jesuit-type façade, as designed to ornament the gable and front of La Paroisse, was not new, but the twin towers flanking the façade were. Earlier buildings in New France may be cited which only had single towers – notably the Cathedral and the Jesuit church in Québec; but in them the tower seems to be reminiscent of medieval asymmetry, and there is no evidence that twin towers were planned. The case of the Paroisse was different; twin towers were apparently planned from the first. They had a great influence on subsequent parish church architecture, and therefore it is of consequence to suggest their source. It is possible that the source was the Sulpicians’ home church, Saint-Sulpice in Paris.


This design distinguished itself from earlier medieval construction techniques seen in Sainte-Anne de Beaupré modeled after the northern region of France. The independent spirit of New France, demonstrates a tendency for greater elaboration of architectural elements as seen in

\textsuperscript{15} Born in 1642, he was ordained in Canada in 1681. He died in 1732. From his youth he was interested in the fine arts, especially drawing and music.
Fig. 22. Ramsay Traquair, *Montréal Parish Church of Notre-Dame*. McGill University, 1925. Proposed appearance of the façade, as designed by Chaussegros de Lery. Drawing by John Drake, from the “Album de Jacques Viger.” (Inventaire de (Oeuvres d’Art).

Fig. 23. Jennifer Brazier, *Sainte-Anne de Beaupré*. 
the Montréal Parish Church of Notre-Dame. As the Québécois tradition matures, common exterior attributes include a finely carved door and many openings in the gable sometimes showing dormer windows in the roof, and a high clock tower. Exteriors and interiors tended to display elaborate workmanship found in wood crafting often with elements of wooden spires and alters along with hand carved doors. Through training from old French building techniques, a new Québécois style of construction is born with adjustments being made as a result of climate and material availability. There is also a particular pride in the uniqueness and art of their craft as we witness the emergence of an independent spirit in construction as well as a people in the development of their architectural craft.

Mississippi Valley Region: The Difference of City and Country Spaces

As we move into the Mississippi Valley region of French migration, we witness many of these early building techniques similar to their counterparts in Canada. The poteaux en terre is represented again for the poorer citizens of the area. There was also a poteaux en sole structure introduced which provided a heavier frame upon a foundation with walls filled. This would be comparable to the timber frame method of the Canadians since timber was widely available. Just as we view in Canada, stone was incorporated into building in the Mississippi Valley. “The French had built many stone houses along the St. Lawrence and the abundance of native limestone on the St. Louis riverfront gave them an opportunity to carry on the tradition” (Peterson, 5). Stone buildings were generally reserved for city headquarters but could also be found in residential areas. Due to the warmer climate in Illinois Country, the porch or galerie was a popular addition to these homes. Typically a rural Québec house was enclosed by this galerie on one or all sides. The galerie is most prominent in Lower Louisiana and the West

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16 Designed by Chaussegros de Lery in 1722. The two tower façade of Notre-Dame was reconstructed after 1830 due to the growth of its parish. Today it resembles the Notre-Dame cathedral of Paris.
Indies most likely accounting for its origins. The homes and buildings in the early Mississippi region remained isolated as they clustered along the river. “The complete isolation of these French settlements on the river accounts for the fact that their architecture was unique in the history of American settlements, as distinctive as their government, language and social customs” (Peterson, 5). The French were able to preserve this lifestyle until the growth and the migration of the English forced them to change language and government. This eventually led to the development of shared cultural elements and the disappearing of this preserved society.

The city of St. Louis showed evidence of its French origins with its cast iron architecture found on the riverfront. Cast iron was incorporated in iron railings, balconies and columns. This is commonly seen near French settlements, such as St. Louis and New Orleans. An invention of architecture from France’s Second Empire during Haussmann’s renovation of Paris, wrought iron cresting rooftops of buildings could be found in the city environment of New France. The St. Louis valley dwelling shows a close similarity to the Canadian cottage. The building to the left in the photo shown above imitates the Chateaû de Ramszay style seen in Montréal with great stone end gables and double chimneys connected by a flat parapet, and the high stone copings.
supported at the wall head on moulded corbels. This building is alongside homes characteristic of the Montreal valley region displaying the steep pitched roof characteristic of French villages. This was typical of river settlements and continued along the Mississippi. “Through the chain of apprenticeship the masons and carpenters of St. Louis were linked to the craftsmanship of Canada, Louisiana, and old France” (Peterson, 48). The earlier styles defined by Ramsay Traquair in the *Old Architecture of Québec*, continue into the Illinois region.\(^\text{17}\)

Outside of the city of St. Louis but still in the St. Louis territory, areas of fields were arranged similar to the medieval European seigneurial system first found in French Canada. The French St. Louis valley consisted of dwellings. “Except for the church, the cluster of barns on the hill, and the fortifications, nearly all activities were housed in homes of private citizens or in small buildings on their lots” (Peterson, 24). The characteristics of these homes originated from a mixture of architectural ancestry in Canada and Louisiana. “These were the French hip roof and the porch or galerie used in the south. The pavilion roof of Normandy with steep sides was found in older country buildings of Québec and was brought from there into Illinois Country” (Peterson, 26). The tradition of exterior and interior whitewashing of homes continued into the Mississippi Valley region. French farmers and miners of the eighteenth century used this *eau de chaux* mixture of plaster and lime. Paint would not be introduced until later by Anglo-Americans. Below, both these homes are utilizing this whitewashing technique.

\(^{17}\) The French rural vernacular architecture in the St. Louis region and most specifically Ste. Genevieve is closely related to that of Canada, although the woodworking style as seen inside Canadian cathedrals is not carried into this region.
In the French adaption of the creole style country home, we witness the utilization of the poteaux en terre style supports, along with white washing of the timbers and a steep pitched roof. The home below preserved in the modern day, shows a stone structured frame upon which a full galerie is placed. This is a good example of this adaptation in the Mississippi valley region. The posts are raised high off of the ground due to flooding and the soft nature of the soil beneath it.

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18 This house of a wealthy merchant contains a separate structure for cooking, washing clothing and drying of herbs.
Fig. 27. Jennifer Brazier, *Preserved timber frame house as seen today in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri.*

The galerie around the entrance creates a breezeway for the utilization outside shelter away from the direct sun. Many homes in the Missouri area did not contain fireplaces for heating as we are used to in the Québec region; however in some of the wealthier families, such as the Beauvais in Ste. Genevieve, a fireplace is kept in a separate structure than that of the main house.

Fig. 28. Carl J. Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier.*
“The people of early Ste. Genevieve were mostly devout French who had come from Canada & settled first in Kaskaskia. With the threat of the English coming in, the French crossed the Mississippi River to the fertile ‘Le Grand Champ’ (the big field) where the community of Ste. Genevieve was first established. The parish of Ste. Genevieve was officially established in 1759” (Valle Catholic Schools). A log and stone church first housed the parish; however the parish could not accommodate its future growth. Today stands only a slight representation of French cultural roots in the original stone frame. The stone church, still intact inside the new construction, continued to be used as a place of worship throughout the building process. The pillars in the present church outline the walls of the old stone church of this Gothic revival style construction. Ste. Genevieve today is a largely Catholic society but was even more so during the colonial period. Religion and piety were taken seriously by settlers along the Mississippi River, similarly to their Canadian counterparts. In continuation of the tradition Louis XIV enforced: “Protestantism was outlawed in all French colonies” (Ekberg, 376). For the first century of the town, the parish chapel was most likely used for Jesuit missionaries. The first parish priest to occupy Ste. Genevieve would be father Pierre Gibault. He wanted to move to a European settlement as opposed to living in a predominantly English area. “Even though he took up residence in Ste. Genevieve, he was never canonical priest of the community” (Ekberg, 394). His main contributions were serving the needs of parishioners as well as serving the American cause of the Revolutionary War. At this time, there was much evidence that most with a European background found eighteenth century Illinois a less than favourable place due to the English presence. “The late 1780s and early 1790s saw a large migration of French Canadian families from Kaskaskia to the new town of Ste. Genevieve, for the American side of the Mississippi was in chaos” (Ekberg, 399). The Revolutionary War pushed the French settlers to safer areas on the

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19 Edict of Fontainebleau, 1685.
other side of the river. Through a series of parish priests, the townspeople of Ste. Genevieve showed their devotion to the Roman Catholic religion. “They demanded a priest to administer sacraments, which they deemed necessary for salvation; they wanted their children raised as Roman Catholics and taught the catechism; they believed in the intercession of the saints on their behalf” (Ekberg, 411-412). Even in a rustic territory, the people needed the religion of their origins as a basis for their way of life.


The French and native Indian tribes in the Mississippi Valley region lived and worked closely together with St. Louis being a common stopping point for coureurs de bois in trading and commerce. The town of Cahokia, on the upper Illinois side of the Mississippi River today is an archaeological site of the Cahokia Indian nations, who occupied the area when the French immigrated in the early eighteenth century. The Indian population was the largest of ethnic groups found in upper Louisiana besides the white European and blacks. According to Ekberg, “When Frenchmen first arrived in the Illinois country, they established outposts in association with client Indian tribes. Starved Rock, Pimiteoui (Peoria), Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Fort de
Chartres were all settlements at which various tribes of Illinois Indians lived in close proximity with Frenchmen” (Ekberg, 86). Illinois country provides numerous historical records of amicable relations between the Indian nation tribes with the white European Spanish and French inhabiting the area. The fur trade was an important part of commercial life and the aftermath of the French Indian War drew these groups closer together. The French and Spanish most likely found it in their best interest and more profitable to tolerate and associate with the tribes for commerce. A representation of the mix of cultures through commerce and agriculture as well as early exploration in the Mississippi Valley region was depicted in several forms of media. A famous Missouri artist by the name of George Caleb Bingham portrayed and celebrated this representation of cultural mixes and interactions. In his painting entitled *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, he creates a scene common to everyday life on the riverfront. The Metropolitan Museum of Art further explains Bingham’s representation in their exhibit of his work:

Bingham's image strives to realistically represent trade, settlement, the nation's north-south axis—the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers—and the issue of race. It can be read from left to right—from the native bear cub chained to the boat's prow, to the boy reclining on the pelts, to the man at the stern, a straight line from the beast to civilized humanity. Bingham himself called the picture "French-Trader—Half Breed Son," emphasizing its racial exoticism. However, the managers of the American Art-Union in New York, where
he sent it for exhibition, chose to show it under its present title, which transformed the trader and his son into generalized western types. The scene is most remarkable for its pervasive stillness, as native and foreign American inhabitants along the upper reaches of the Missouri drift toward the embrace of the modern, urbanized world (http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/33.61).


Not only was it common to see the French and natives working hand in hand, they lived in such close proximity that it was inevitable they would influence each other’s dwelling style. Ste. Genevieve was a desirable destination for agriculture until the great flood of the Mississippi River in the mid 1780s. The supple farmland drew a multicultural population seeking economic growth and less restrictive laws\(^{20}\) for labourers. Many of the French and Spanish inhabitants sought out higher ground or other nearby areas to settle. Even with the influx of immigration, Ste. Genevieve was able to retain the French language, culture and politics it was founded upon until the gradual inundation of American culture as seen today.

Problems began occurring when Anglo-Americans gained territory and independence. They took away land and Indian villages of the Iroquois, Cherokee, Shawnee, Chickasaw,

\(^{20}\) The sale of the Louisiana territory to Spain in 1762 allowed the lenient laws of this former French territory to remain to order to avoid French revolt and British takeover. When Napoleon acquired the land in 1800, he would sell it to the United States after a slave revolt in Haiti and an impending war with Britain.
Choctaw, and Loup tribes, even when these tribes came to the Lieutenant Governor in St. Louis in peace. These Indian tribes flocked west of the Mississippi. The first Indians to live in Ste. Genevieve were slaves of the white townsmen. Indian slaves were not recorded on census reports and were possibly treated worse than their black counterparts since they did not have the same protection under the Code Noir. Beginning in 1804 with the introduction of the Anglo-American into the area, the unfortunate extinction of many tribes began in the English attempt to conquer the territory. Multiculturism of French, Spanish, African, and Indian tribes was prominent in Ste. Genevieve as well as in other Mississippi valley agricultural areas that utilized slave labour for farming and crop production. Those in the area only had knowledge of farming that was minimal and medieval in practice, making this type of work hard and demanding. Ste. Genevieve’s commercial contacts existed through New Orleans, a port of French and Spanish mercantile practices where local products were exported. Religion also remained the traditional French Catholicism until “American Protestants arrived in the 1790s” (Ekberg, 457). Those in the area had not even heard of the Renaissance or the Enlightenment, which was integrated into the intellectualism of Paris. Their lives revolved around land and commerce; however, precise data of the founding of Ste. Genevieve could not be confirmed. One’s existence in this town was only kept in oral traditions. Society and government was rigid and a product of divine right monarchy. Those of high status got there through wealth as opposed to blood line. Social mobility was achievable even for slaves.

**Non-French Architectural Influences: The Development of Creole Style Taken from Spanish, African and Caribbean styles**

With the threat of American Protestants changing their society, “the commandant of Ste. Genevieve, Peyroux de la Coudrenière attempted to recruit Frenchmen, especially resettled
Acadians in France to join him in Spanish Louisiana. He managed to recruit some to Louisiana; however, Governor Carondelet was not pleased with the sort of immigrants he recruited (Ekberg, 462). The culture in France was producing intellectualism and creativity, a far cry from those living in primitive Louisiana territory. Protestants did continue to infiltrate the area but they did not have their own church until well into the nineteenth century and were still obligated to be married by Catholic priests. This time frame marked the destruction of the French tight knit community in the Mississippi valley. The early French, although merging with their American counterparts, were entirely different from the metropolitan French, “assuming a certain degree of softness and mildness, a characteristic described as paisible” (Ekberg, 470). Those emigrating from France found the Louisiana territory primitive compared to their native homeland. Adjustment had been difficult for many, especially the soldiers who found themselves without eligible women for marriage. In the novel, *Savage Lands* by Clare Clark, we learn of a young French woman’s quest for marriage in the new world. Many women of high moral character, raised in virtue and piety, were sent to produce fine stock from which to breed a new France in the New World. Also, these women had the moral obligation to teach “proper behavior” to the women of the local native tribes. The novel highlights the contrast between modern France and the primal land of Louisiana. The protagonist in the novel clings to her book of Montaigne’s *Essais*. This alerts the reader of the connection between the civilized and the sauvage. In Montaigne’s attempts to extract knowledge and understand human nature, he contemplates the morality of cannibals and the behavior of animals. This can be interpreted as a mission of the civilized man from France, sent to tame the wild animalistic sauvage of New France. The contrasts of the two are demonstrated by the arrival of trunks in Louisiana bearing gifts from

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21 He went to Philadelphia in 1792 in an attempt to make contact with Frenchmen to further his efforts.
22 In his letter to Peyroux, he stated the lack of those useful for farm work. He did not want actors, wigmakers or musicians; those of bad morals.
France. A scene is described of a hat being picked up by an Indian native and “set jauntily atop the sauvage’s oiled black hair, as the Indian leaped and spun, jabbering in his frenzied tongue, it made no sense at all” (Clark, 23). This native Indian had no use for the modern inventions of France. The image of a naked primitive man wearing a conservative hat seems almost preposterous, yet the primitive and civilized find a way to blend together in harmony. This mixture of cultures is reflected in the evolution of the early dwelling style in Louisiana.

*A Creole Lexicon* by Jay Dearborn Edwards explains this combination of styles by defining Creole architecture as “any distinctive architectural style or type historically derived from a synthesis of Western European and non-European architectural traditions in coastal West Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Louisiana, and the Gulf and Tidewater coasts of the southern U.S.” (Edwards, 77). The style below depicts a common peasant dwelling found in the lower Louisiana territory. With Louisiana’s slave population originating from Haiti, it is not

![Image](image-url)

*Fig. 32. Charles E. Peterson, Building of a Creole Capital. A thatched post house in Haiti.*

unusual to see this French-inspired hut like structure. This early peasant’s house consists of a wattle-and-daub on the exterior walls and a thatched roof. Osage Indian homes called *maisons cailles*, were constructed in a similar style; however they were typically covered with spotted

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23 These structures are still being built generally in North Haiti by descendants of French slaves.
skins. This style displays the use of natural materials in the surrounding landscape utilizing the soil and in Louisiana, its Spanish moss for thatching of the roof. The country farmhouse of Illinois below “constructed in *poteaux en terre* style can be traced farther south, in the French Carribbean and in Mayan territory on the mainland. *Poteaux en terre* houses of lighter construction are still being built” (Peterson, 108).

![Image](image_url)

*Fig. 33. Charles E. Peterson, *Building of a Creole Capital.* The Bienvenue House in St. Louis.*

We have seen the dwelling of the early inhabitant and the working class in Louisiana, now I will discuss the Creole manor house or plantation house. Two basic plans governed this type of construction: the Spanish base module and the Norman French module. The French influence is in the adorned galleries encircling the home and the dormer windows and hipped roof typical of the Norman style seen earlier in Québec. It appears to be an adaptation of French West Indian planters who brought the style to Louisiana. The interior floor plan reflects the Spanish practice of having a large central room with surrounding smaller rooms. This combined style created an elaborate plantation suitable for the wealthy landowners. English influences can also be seen as in this modern day example pictured below. The influence of Greek revival style is evident in the columns and embellishments found on the exterior. There is also a later
Georgian style added in the elaborate entrance typical of homes in the antebellum south. The plantation home shown below is a good example of this mixture of styles.

![Plantation home](image)

Fig. 34. Jennifer Brazier, *A modern day Louisiana plantation home mixing architectural styles.*

Once into the city of New Orleans, we witness the French influence of the ever present townhouse. The French Quarter patio house or *porte-cochère* (carriageway) townhouse is argued to be Spanish style architecture; however, it was found to be designed by French architects. This style is similar to the *porte-cochère* house seen in eighteenth-century Paris and the surrounding countryside. This is shown by the semicircular arches over windows and doorways and the heavy double leaf shutters protecting the windows. Another characteristic is the narrow balconies supported on iron posts. These particular houses date to the early 1800s. They were first constructed for wealthy Spanish and French families and often contained a slave quarter “or *garçonnière* service wing running down one side and often across the rear” (Edwards, 166).
Fig. 35. Jennifer Brazier, *The French Quarter patio house or porte-cochère (carriageway) townhouse.*

Just like its northern counterparts, Louisiana was not at a loss for spiritual representation. “The St. Louis Cathedral on Jackson Square was established in 1727, starting as a home for colonists and a warehouse for food and supplies, it shortly became an established place of worship” (Huber, 5). This parish church was dedicated to Louis IX, sainted King of France. Later reconstructed, the first building was constructed of brick between posts, or *briqueté entre poteaux.* The St. Louis Cathedral was the only Catholic Church in New Orleans for more than a hundred years. During the regimes of France and Spain and for thirty years after the Louisiana Purchase, it was the center of Catholicism in the city. “It was not until 1833 that a Catholic church for English speaking people was established” (Huber, 22). During the first half of the nineteenth-century, the Cathedral served as a site of numerous burials. The beloved parish priest Père Antoine was laid to rest at the cathedral with thousands visiting to pay homage. This was even the site of a commencement ceremony of Napoleon Bonaparte’s death. Elaborate memorial services were also common at this time with memorials and mausoleums constructed in consecrated cemeteries. A dedication of allegorical figures and symbols draped the scene for a celebratory mass. Political and military events were commemorated in this fashion as well. “On
January 8, 1840, Andrew Jackson returned to the scene of his triumph against the British twenty five years earlier” (Huber, 25). The Cathedral served as the cultural center of those living in the city. “The archives show 136 large registers recorded of baptisms, marriages and deaths from colonial days to present. The entries are in French until 1777 and then Spanish and French until 1900. Notable civil and religious events are also contained in these registers” (Huber, 74). This information shows us the importance of the Cathedral in the community’s piety and devotion to religion and political triumphs in their daily lives.

The Cathedral and the prominent buildings beside it, the Cabildo and Presbytère, were constructed in the French tradition of containing the head of government and clergy in the most elaborately constructed buildings in the center of the city. Each building was constructed symmetrically displaying baroque ornamentation. This technique is similar to the model of the Chateaû de Versailles. Just as the Treaty of Versailles ending World War I was signed in the chateaû, the Louisiana Purchase was signed in the Cabildo.24 The Saint Louis Cathedral is the

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24 The Cabildo was the site of the Louisiana Purchase transfer to the United States. It served as the New Orleans City Hall until 1853 when it became the headquarters of the Louisiana State Supreme Court. The Presbytère, intended to house clergy, was also used by the Louisiana State Supreme Court. These are pictured on opposite sides of the Cathedral. Sketch by Gaston de Pontalba, 1849. (Louisiana State Museum).
oldest running cathedral in the U.S. named after the French king Louis IX, a symbol of piety and charity.

Conclusion:

In their journey to claim territory in the new world, the French lost much of their established territory to the English. However, in their settlement of Canada, we witness a successful formation of French culture in religion, dwelling style, and language. The large colony attracted adventurous spirits and those in the pursuit of a better life. New France was set up in the French *Ancien Régime* style with noblemen, missionaries and wealthy merchants. The *coueur de bois* were able to gain lucrative wealth in trading with Indian nations along the Mississippi River. They formed a tight knit community with the church playing an important part in housing early inhabitants as well as teaching spirituality and trades. The Ursuline Convent in Québec is an early example of the community centering their daily activities around the church. They began with humble dwellings of *poteaux en terre* styles with thatched roofs. As buildings became more complex with the addition of rooms and stories, stone was introduced for the wealthier inhabitants. In the city, the ornamental prevails, displaying some Greek revival and Italian influence, a popular style in France. These structures were usually made of stone, wall plastering and a tiled/slate roof. Canadian architectural style continued as the Canadians moved down the river due to British control. They found plentiful fields for agriculture along the Mississippi River. Trade with the native Indians continued to New Orleans as the river provided a transportation system for moving goods. As an American presence prevailed in the Louisiana territory, several French chose to move west of the river to Ste. Genevieve. They formed a much smaller settlement than those in Canada, and as the American presence spread, the united French culture began to unravel. Some from the Mississippi Valley began to migrate further south into
New Orleans, originally a French settlement where many French had arrived initially. Once under Spanish rule and eventually an American colony, New Orleans became a multicultural port area with the mix of African, Indian, Spanish and the French. These cultures would blend together, forming their own ethnic dialect and mergence of religious traditions and folklore. The creation of the Creole dwelling style would develop similar to the Canadian cottage and those found in the Mississippi Valley region; however, use of the *galerie* porch was widespread. This was an adaptation from dwellings found in warmer climates. The city style home was borrowed from Northern France similarly to the Québec style. Social and political life would continue around the church parishes as a way to build community cohesiveness.

Although the evidence of French settlements still exists in Canada, the Mississippi Valley and New Orleans, Québec is the only community retaining a culture most similar to that of old France. Its buildings, religion and language still resemble its origins in Northern France. This tradition follows into the Mississippi valley region; however the introduction of an American identity and an adaptation to a warmer climate and new agricultural techniques create a phasing out of French culture along the Mississippi River. Further down the river in New Orleans, French culture dissolves into a multicultural blend of French, English, Spanish, Indian and African ethnicities. This area celebrates a history of ethnic cohesion, developing its own persona. Although we can in fact still feel a slight presence and impact of colonial France in the present-day U.S., the purest French colonial spirit is still practiced and alive in Canada today.
Works:

Primary Sources:


Secondary Sources:


