



Ste. Genevieve by O.E. Berninghaus, (cropped image of mural)

Ste. Genevieve Special Resource Study

The National Park Service is beginning a Special Resource Study to evaluate the eligibility of resources in Ste. Genevieve for possible inclusion in the national park system. As part of the study, the National Park Service will host a public meeting on Tuesday, August 10 from 5-8 pm at the Ste. Genevieve Community Center. This newsletter provides more information about Ste. Genevieve, the study process and how you can participate.

Ste. Genevieve

Ste. Genevieve was founded c.1750 by French Canadian *habitants*, most of who came from earlier settlements just across the Mississippi in present-day Illinois. The French made trips to the area to extract salt and lead, but depleted soils on the east side of the Mississippi galvanized the permanent settlement of the west bank of the river at Ste. Genevieve. The *Grand Champ*, or Common Field, a large agricultural field with narrow long lots, still exists today. After a great flood in 1785, the town was moved inland approximately three miles. Some buildings were constructed anew, others were moved from the old town.

At first, Ste. Genevieve was primarily an agricultural settlement, but soon it also became a hub of trade. During the late 18th century, Indian tribes in the area began trading and developing personal relationships with the residents. Approximately one third of Ste. Genevieve residents were enslaved African Americans, but the community was also home to free blacks. Following

the Revolutionary War, there was an influx of Anglo-Americans and then in the early 19th century, German Americans were the next major group to settle in the town. Eclipsed by St. Louis for dominance in the region, Ste. Genevieve retains many of its historic buildings and community characteristics.





The Bequet-Ribault House, HABS 1936

Ste. Genevieve is unique for its French vernacular, or traditional, vertical log buildings. While most of the buildings were constructed after the period of French exploration and settlement, they are representative of French colonial architecture and found in Ste. Genevieve in the highest concentration in the United States. The footprint of the community is well preserved and later Anglo-American and German-American historic buildings enhance the earlier resources and provide an understanding of the town's development.

Ste. Genevieve Special Resource Study Launched

Ste. Genevieve's unique collection of vernacular architecture, community design, and rich history prompted the passage of the Ste. Genevieve County National Historic Site Study Act of 2005, directing the National Park Service to study the resources at Ste. Genevieve for possible inclusion in the national park system. With the sponsorship of Missouri Congressional Representatives Russ Carnahan and Jo Ann Emerson and Senators Christopher Bond and James Talent, the Act became part of Public Law 109-319 on October 11, 2006. In response, the NPS formed a Ste. Genevieve Special Resource Study Team to conduct a Special Resource Study of the historic properties in the City of Ste. Genevieve and Ste. Genevieve County. The NPS will use the Special Resource Study process to answer four questions:

Is Ste. Genevieve nationally significant? The criteria used to determine whether or not a property is nationally significant enough for inclusion in the national park system are the same as National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria. A portion of Ste. Genevieve was designated an NHL district in 1960 for its association with French colonial architecture. For this study, the assessment will not be whether or not Ste. Genevieve is nationally significant, but instead will provide additional information about important resources, update

information about the historic town, and determine the boundaries of the study area.

Is Ste. Genevieve suitable for inclusion in the national park system? The suitability assessment will involve comparing the study area to other units already in the national park system or comparable places that are protected by other federal or state agencies, localities or private entities. If the study team finds that preserving and interpreting Ste. Genevieve would not duplicate comparable efforts elsewhere, then it will be found suitable for potential inclusion in the national park system.

Is Ste. Genevieve feasible for inclusion in the national park system? According to the management policies that govern the National Park Service, an area must be "(1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment, taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries, and (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost."

If the Ste. Genevieve study area meets the above criteria, what is the best framework for management of the resources? Is there a need for direct management by the National Park Service? A range of management alternatives to preserve and interpret the resources will be developed. Alternatives will be presented to the public for feedback, and evaluated in terms of costs, benefits, and environmental impacts in order to determine how to most efficiently and effectively manage significant resources. Unless direct NPS management of resources in Ste. Genevieve is identified as the clearly superior management alternative, the Service will recommend that another organization (for example, state, local or private entities or another federal agency) assume a lead management role.



The Greentree Tavern

Ste. Genevieve: A History of Preservation and National Recognition

Currently, the resources of Ste. Genevieve are owned and preserved by a mix of state, non-profit, and private entities. The stewardship of properties by many private citizens and entities over the years has provided residents and visitors rich cultural and historic resources to learn about and enjoy. Study and documentation of the resources by the federal government dates back to the 1930s, when a team from the newly created Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) photographed and documented the historic properties in Ste. Genevieve.

In 1960, the Ste. Genevieve Historic District was officially listed as a National Historic Landmark, among the first properties to receive the new designation. Ten years later, the Louis Bolduc House was individually listed as an NHL. These are part of approximately 2,500 National Historic Landmarks nationwide.

In 1949, the Louis Bolduc House (c.1788-93) was acquired by its present owners and stewards, the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Missouri. The house underwent restoration in 1956-57, and the garden was carefully restored after study. The Colonial Dames operate both the Bolduc House and the neighboring Bolduc-LeMeilleur House (c.1820) as an historic site.

The Foundation for the Restoration of Ste. Genevieve was formed in 1967 to promote the preservation and restoration of buildings representative of Ste. Genevieve's early history. The group maintains and interprets La Maison Guibourd-Valle (c.1806) and the Kiel-Schwent House (c.1813).

The Felix Valle House (also known as the Jacob Philipson House, c.1818) was donated to the State of Missouri in 1970, and opened to the public as Felix Valle State Historic Site in 1981, interpreting the commercial, architectural, and social history of Ste. Genevieve. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the State purchased the Dr. Benjamin Shaw House and accepted donation of the Kern House and the Bauvais-Amoureux House.

In the 1980s, the HABS program returned to Ste. Genevieve to do additional documentation, and surveys were conducted by the University of Missouri. Archaeological investigations and efforts to update the National Historic Landmark documentation have taken place in recent decades. In 2002, a larger district, including historic resources in Ste. Genevieve as recent as 1950, was added to the National Register of Historic Places. We will be drawing on the work of these groups and scholars as well as your comments as we begin our study of Ste. Genevieve.



The Bequet-Ribault House

How to Participate in this Study

Public involvement is a critical part of this study process. We invite you to participate in the process and encouraging your feedback about key issues we should consider as we complete the study.

There are three ways to provide feedback at this early stage:

1. **Send comments through our study website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>.** Once at this site, click on the "plans/docs" tab and then select "Special Resource Study" for the plan type and scroll down to "Ste. Genevieve."
2. **Send in the enclosed, postage-paid comment form.**
3. **Attend the public meeting to learn more about the study and offer comments.**

Once we develop a range of management alternatives, we will issue a second newsletter asking for your specific feedback on them. In the meantime, please check our website for project updates. Questions about this study can be addressed to:

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**Please join us for the public meeting on
Tuesday, August 10, 2010
from 5-8 pm
at the**

**Ste. Genevieve Community Center
21390 Highway 32
Ste. Genevieve, MO 63670**

Presentations will be made at 5 pm and at 6:30 pm.

*Please feel free to come to either presentation
at your convenience.*

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Special Resource Study

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TIME FRAME	PLANNING ACTIVITY	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
<i>Spring/Summer 2010</i>	Begin the Study Gather team members to visit the site, become familiar with related work affecting it, and make preliminary significance, suitability, and feasibility determinations.	Attend the public meeting and share your thoughts and ideas. You can also use the postage-paid response form in this newsletter or send a note through our website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/
<i>Spring 2011</i>	Develop Alternatives Draft the Special Resource Study using public comment and feedback to develop proposed management alternatives.	Attend the public meeting to share your comments on alternatives. You will receive another newsletter that describes the alternatives and includes a comment form.
<i>Fall 2011</i>	Analyze Alternatives and Produce Draft Study Using feedback from the public on alternatives, analyze their benefits, cost, and impact to identify the most efficient alternative. The result will be a draft of the study, including an environmental impact statement or assessment if necessary.	Provide comments on the draft study.
<i>Summer/Fall 2012</i>	Finalize the Study and Submit to Congress	