

Here in St. Louis, at the present day, in speaking of the old French and Spanish archives of the early village, we apply the term to the "*books*" in which a large portion of these early documents have been placed on record since the change of government.

The documents deposited in the archives of the French and Spanish days of St. Louis comprised concession or grants of lots and lands, deeds, leases, marriage contracts, wills, inventories, powers of attorney, agreements and many miscellaneous documents pertaining to individuals. These papers were always executed in the presence of the governor, or in his absence, in the presence of his official representative, and were left for safety in the custody of the government authorities ; and as far the largest portion of the inhabitants of that day could not read, much less write their names, but made their signatures with a cross, as is evidenced by an examination of them, they were deemed safer in the keeping of the government than in the possession of the parties to whom they mostly belonged. At the date of the execution of each of these papers no other record was made of it than to register it alphabetically under its proper head on a few sheets of foolscap paper loosely stitched together for the purpose, and at the close of the administration of each successive governor this alphabetical list of his official acts was certified to under his own signature, and together with the original documents them-