

ideas, however erroneous, upon any subject-matter whatsoever — ideas that they have perhaps imbibed from their childhood, coming down to them with the authority and prestige of parents to children, particularly of occurrences that transpired before their day, and which have reached them through tradition alone, with its manifold errors and exaggerations ; and the almost useless task one undertakes in endeavoring to correct these erroneous impressions. This I shall not endeavor to do, but will simply present the facts in all cases as I found them, derived from the original official Spanish and French documents, most of them translated by myself, some of them yet in the archives, and others placed in my possession by descendants of the original participants therein.

Much of the information I have gathered relating to St. Louis I have obtained from certain works on Illinois and Indiana, the materials for a reliable history of the early days of the settlement of this upper country on the other side of the river, now Illinois, Indiana, etc., being much more abundant and authentic than those of this side.

From the time the English received possession of that side in 1765, during the thirteen years they held it, and subsequently when taken by Clark for the Virginians in 1778, down to the date of the transfer of the country on the west side of the river to the United States in 1804, a period of nearly forty years, courts had been established and records kept, from which a reliable, although but a brief, history could be produced. But not so with the country on this side, which dates its settlement only from the time of that transfer to the British, and to which cir