

C French and Spanish Archives, 1763-1841
2965 23 rolls of microfilm

MICROFILM

INTRODUCTION

The French and Spanish Archives is a collection of documents from the St. Louis area dating primarily from the colonial and territorial periods.

DONOR INFORMATION

The archives were filmed by the city of St. Louis in 1962. The original records are at the Missouri History Museum in St. Louis and are called the St. Louis Archives. The microfilm copy of these records was purchased by the State Historical Society (Accession No. 888).

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The following information came from a letter from Peter Michel, Curator of Manuscripts at the Missouri Historical Society, February 10, 1986. The original is in the information folder for this collection.

"Yes, we have the original documents that were filmed by the City in 1962. We call this collection the St. Louis Archives and the numbers ("instrument numbers") correspond to those in the microfilm copy. These records were at one time in the Recorder of Deeds Office, where they were recorded into record books and indexed. These records were known in that office as the French and Spanish Archives. As with any record recorded by the Recorder's Office, the original is not of primary concern, most originals are returned to the owner. If the owner does not take the original the Recorder will, essentially, throw it into a box in the basement. Fortunately the official government records which the Americans found when they took over the civil administration (and set up the Recorder's Office) were kept even after they had been recorded into a series of record books (in 5 volumes) which are separate from the regular series of record books still in the city's Recorder's office. The French and Spanish archives were indexed by a WPA project at which time, apparently, they found their way here. I suspect that the instrument numbers were assigned by Oscar Collet, when he copied the originals into the record books in the 19th century and made his index."

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The French and Spanish Archives consists of approximately 3000 documents concerning personal property sales, including Black and Indian slaves, houses, lands, and mills; estate transactions; inventories and public auctions; wills; marriage contracts; deeds; powers of attorney; partnerships; mortgages; leases; indenture; apprenticeships; early litigation; contracts and obligations; quittance discharges; trade and agreements; transfers and exchanges; tutors; gifts and donations; and other miscellaneous transactions.

The bulk of the collection dates from 1766 to 1816. The documents were microfilmed in "instrument number" order and appear to be roughly arranged by type of document. The "instrument number" usually appears on the docket side of a particular item. Some documents are made up of several pages so it is sometimes difficult to find the number. A calendar of the

documents follows this inventory. The volume and page numbers included in the calendar probably refer to the five volume register kept in the Recorder's office in St. Louis. Following the 2991 numbered documents are approximately 200 unnumbered documents dating from 1763 to 1841 and consisting of litigation and miscellaneous documents.

Rolls 1-3 consist of the index done by the WPA in the 1930s. Names of individuals are not spelled consistently. Missing documents are so indicated on the film and in the calendars. Many of the documents are written in one language and have notes of the recorder in another. Generally the two languages are French and Spanish although a few documents after 1801 are in French and English.

DOCUMENT LIST

- #1-1389 Sales, exchanges, agreements, and adjudication (awarding) of property, 1766-1804
- #1390-1451 Miscellaneous documents relating to donations, gifts, and grants, 1769-1803
- #1452-1500 No documents
- #1501-1783 Obligations, agreements, and mortgages, 1766-1804
- #1784-2006 Quittances and discharge statements by attorneys for estates, 1768-1804
- #2007-2162 Marriage contracts, 1766-1804
- #2163-2293 Wills, 1768-1802
- #2294-2497 Inventories of estates, 1766-1804
- #2498-2598 No documents
- #2599-2669 Auctions, 1784-1802
- #2670-2826 Powers of attorney, 1770-1808
- #2827-2991 Mortgages, agreements, sales, leases, 1766-1810

- Unnumbered Litigation, Miscellaneous, 1763-1841