

A BRIEF OLD MINES CHRONOLOGY

A note on sources: Most of the material included here is based on readily-available information found in a variety of sources (with almost all information being found in more than one source). The works consulted for the compilation of the chronology are listed in the Bibliography at www.oldmines.org.

- 1673: Jolliet and Marquette travel down the Mississippi as far as the Arkansas River and back.
- 1682: La Salle travels entire length of Mississippi, claiming the region for Louis XIV and naming it Louisiana.
- 1695: First children born of French-Indian marriages in region.
- 1699: French settlement of Cahokia established.
- 1700: Father Gravier, Jesuit priest travelling through the region, mentions lead being found on the Maramec River.
- 1703: Establishment of new settlement at Kaskaskia.
- 1712: Antoine Crozat is granted exclusive commerce in the region by Louis XIV; begins mineral explorations in area.
- 1715: La Motte Cadillac, governor of Louisiana Territory, leads an expedition to region in search of minerals, hoping to find silver.
- 1719: Philippe de la Renaudière mines lead in present Washington County, building cabins that are known as "Cabanage de Renaudière." Some believe this might have been the beginning of the settling of Old Mines.
- 1720: Philippe François Renault arrives to serve as director of the lead mining operations in the Illinois Country. He brings with him from France a team of miners, and some slaves purchased in Saint Domingue.
- 1720: First Fort de Chartres constructed upstream from Kaskaskia.
- 1723: Philippe François Renault receives the grant for mining in present-day Missouri (as well as for land east of the Mississippi, where he establishes a settlement near Fort de Chartres). The exact location of Renault's grant in the Old Mines area is not known for sure. There is ongoing debate as to whether the settlement was seasonal or continuous. Renault will remain in the region until the early 1740's.
- 1735: Year traditionally mentioned for earliest settlement of Ste. Genevieve (in fact, undoubtedly later).

- 1748: First written record of Old Mines as village, found in parish church of Ste. Anne in Fort de Chartres, when Pierre Vivarenne and his wife, Marie Anne Rondeau, “habitants du village des Mines,” travel there to have their baby baptized.
- 1750: Father Vivier writes about the mines and individuals exploiting them.
- 1753: Construction of new stone Fort de Chartres begins.
- 1763: End of the French and Indian War. France cedes the territory east of the Mississippi to England. Many French leave to escape British rule, crossing to west side of Mississippi, now under Spanish control.
- 1760-80: Mine à Breton first exploited. New village named for François Azor dit Breton. Exact date is debated.
- 1764: Founding of St. Louis.
- 1778: After American War of Independence, French settlements in Illinois fall under American rule; Illinois Country annexed to Virginia.
- 1796: Families living in the area of Old Mines apply to the Spanish governor to recognize land grants.
- 1797: Moses Austin arrives from Virginia and begins mining, sinking the first regular shaft, among other modern techniques.
- 1800: Louisiana Territory returns to French rule in secret treaty.
- 1803: Louisiana Purchase concluded.
- 1803: Concession awarded of 13,400 arpents to residents of Old Mines. The concession resembles a long rectangle, with Old Mines Creek passing through diagonally. The concession is divided into 31 parallel long lots.
- 1804: Arrival of John Smith T. Begins mining in 1805 in the Old Mines area. American interest grows as mines become more productive and lucrative.
- 1819: Schoolcraft lists mines and manufactories as of February 1819, including 38 lead mines, 34 lead furnaces, 16 grist mills, 8 saw mills, 10 distilleries. He describes French as being almost exclusively used in many settlements.
- 1820: Henry Pratte of Ste. Genevieve builds the first log church at Old Mines. Baptismal records date back to 1820.
- 1820s: Decline of lead mining at Old Mines as richer mines are discovered elsewhere.
- 1821: Missouri becomes a state.

- 1828: Creation of St. Joachim Parish. Construction of church begins with cornerstone being laid in 1829.
- 1831: Consecration of St. Joachim Church.
- 1836: U.S. government finally recognizes original 31 land grants of Old Mines concession.
- 1851: Father John Cotter is the first diocesan priest assigned to Old Mines. He is killed when his horse throws him, and he is buried under the St. Joachim sanctuary.
- 1852: The church is enlarged to its present size.
- 1857: A parish school is built with funds donated by Mme Louise LaMarque.
- 1858: A bell purchased by Madame LaMarque is blessed for use in the church.
- 1861-65: American Civil War; lead is in great demand.
- 1870-90: Barite (tiff), previously discarded during lead mining, becomes an important resource, largely due to its use in the petroleum industry.
- 1893: Last mass read in French in Ste Genevieve (may be 1895).
- 1905: Missouri law makes education compulsory until age of 16; many one-room school houses are built. The language of instruction is English, a factor in the demise of the use of French in public.
- 1914-18: World War I. Many men go off to war.
- 1920s: Mining companies own or lease a large portion of the land. Company houses are built for employees; many residents continue to live in log cabins.
- 1920s: Hwy 21 is built, passing through Old Mines.
- 1930s: Researchers visit the area to study the French language and culture of the region.
- 1935: Tiff miners go on strike demanding an increase in the price paid for tiff.
- 1939: Joseph Carrière writes that there are 600 French-speaking families in Old Mines area, but that the language is threatened by public schooling, the modernization of transportation, radio, and talking pictures.
- 1940s: Barite mining is modernized, putting many laborers out of work; unemployment is a major issue.
- 1949: Hwy 21 is paved, making travel to St. Louis much easier, and encouraging commuting and migration out of the area.
- 1949: Rural Parish Workers of Christ the King established in Fertile.
- 1973: The 250th anniversary celebration is held at the St. Joachim Church grounds.