



**National Historic Event Presentation  
The Battle of Fort San Carlos  
(Located at Saint Louis, Missouri)  
The most western battle of the American Revolution**

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The leadership of MOSSAR and the MOSSAR Chapters respectfully request that the Annual Commemoration of the Battle of Fort San Carlos in Saint Louis, Missouri be approved as an annual NSSAR National Historic Event. The Commemoration is held on the Sunday in May closest to the date of May 26<sup>th</sup>. -- **NOTE: On September 27, 2013, NSSAR approved the Annual Commemoration as an annual NSSAR National Historic Event.**

**Set forth herein is the Missouri Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (MOSSAR) response to each of the five criteria as set forth by the NSSAR Historic Sites & Celebrations Committee.**

**Criteria 1**

**1) Confirmation that a recognized Revolutionary War battle or event occurred at or near the planned event location.**

The Battle of Fort San Carlos was an unsuccessful British-led attack on Saint Louis in present-day Missouri on May 26, 1780 during the American Revolutionary War. Saint Louis was a French settlement in Spanish Louisiana on the western side of the Mississippi River that had been ceded by France to Spain in 1763 and had about 900 inhabitants. The strategic importance of Saint Louis covering the western frontier for the Americans and its unofficial but real assistance as a supply base for the opposition of the British was of much concern to the British.

Spain, an ally of the Americans, declared war on Britain in June of 1779. In retaliation, Canada's British Governor, General Frederick Haldimand, was instructed to attack and take the tiny town of Saint Louis. In addition to serving as retaliation it would serve the purpose of taking control of the west bank of the Mississippi River to prevent the Americans from access to the Mississippi River, and to keep the Americans from advancing to the western part of the continent. If successful, the British would control the Mississippi River and the land to the west. The Saint Louis defenders, mostly local militia (French and Americans) under the command of the Lieutenant Governor of Spanish Louisiana, Captain Fernando de Leyba, had fortified the town as best they could and successfully withstood the attack and, thus, were successful in keeping the British from controlling the Mississippi River at St. Louis. Captain de Leyba had very few Spanish soldiers to defend Saint Louis. He had to rely on the local militia and men who lived in the general area, including Americans. Captain de Leyba was working with George Rogers Clark who was on the eastern side of the Mississippi River.

Many books and articles have been written that identify this battle as the most western battle of the American Revolutionary War.

The location of Fort San Carlos was at the present-day site of the intersection of Fourth and Walnut streets of St. Louis, Missouri. It may be considered that some portion of the attack occurred within a twelve (12) mile radius of the Gateway Arch. The present facility for the commemoration is within about five (5) miles of the Gateway Arch. The Gateway Arch is located at Walnut Street and South Memorial Drive.

## **Criteria 2**

### **2) Documentation of an established history of an SAR chapter or state society sponsoring a commemoration over time.**

For many years the commemoration ceremony for the Battle of Fort San Carlos was conducted by VFW Post No. 8888. Many other organizations participated in the commemoration. The first documentation of the SAR's participation was in 1993 by the Spirit of St. Louis SAR Chapter. After the 2005 commemoration, the VFW Post 8888 due to declining membership was not going to continue the annual commemoration. In 2006 members of the St. Louis area DAR and SAR Chapters were instrumental in forming the "Commemoration Committee for the Battle of Fort San Carlos", which was incorporated with the Secretary of State of the State of Missouri. The annual commemoration has continued under the direction of this Commemoration Committee.

The Commemoration Committee's Vice President at the time of incorporation in 2006 and during the succeeding years, and currently, is a member of the Spirit of St. Louis SAR Chapter and is a Charter Member of the Fernando de Leyba SAR Chapter. Some members of the Spirit of St. Louis SAR Chapter, Fernando de Leyba SAR Chapter, and M. Graham Clark SAR Chapter are members of the Commemoration Committee.

## **Criteria 3**

### **3) Evidence of participation in the commemoration by multiple SAR chapters and societies as well as other organizations.**

In conjunction with the commemoration, a program is annually presented at the Missouri History Museum located in St. Louis. MOSSAR Color Guard Members and other MOSSAR SAR Members from the Spirit of St. Louis, Fernando de Leyba, Alexander Majors, Allen Laws Oliver, Harry S Truman, Independence Patriots, Ozark Mountain, Christopher Casey, Ozark Patriots, and the M. Graham Clark Chapters and a member of the KSSSAR Delaware Crossing Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution have participated in and/or attended the annual commemoration. All the DAR Chapters in the greater St. Louis area and other organizations participate in the annual commemoration. Some members of the Commemoration Committee are descendants of the people who participated in the Battle for St. Louis at Fort San Carlos. Members of the Commemoration Committee belong to such organizations as the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), the Sons of the Revolution (SR), the National Society of New England Women, Daughters of Colonial Wars, Daughters of the American Colonists, and the Landmarks Association. Several members are active or retired teachers of history, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Societe Francaise.

## **Criteria 4**

### **4) Evidence that the commemoration will be an ongoing event.**

The commemoration has been held in excess of 30 years. For many years the commemoration ceremony for the Battle of Fort San Carlos was conducted by VFW Post No. 8888. In 2006 members of the St. Louis area DAR and SAR Chapters were instrumental in forming the "Commemoration Committee for the Battle of Fort San Carlos", which was incorporated with the Secretary of State of the State of Missouri. The annual commemoration has continued under the direction of this Commemoration Committee. The Commemoration held on May 26, 2013 was held in the auditorium of the Missouri History Museum and was attended by approximately 400 people. Attendance has been strong over the years and is anticipated to continue. Members of 7 MOSSAR Chapters and 1 KSSSAR Chapter were in attendance.

## Criteria 5

5) **Written information on (1) the battle or event, (2) rationale for why it is important for the battle or event to be considered of national significance and (3) if necessary, additional information on why the battle or event was important if it took place in a state / territory not normally associated with the Revolution.**

**(1) Written information on the battle or event:**

Please see the information provided under Criteria No. 1 above. Many books and articles have been written that identify this battle as the most western battle of the American Revolutionary War.

**(2) Written information on rationale for why it is important for the battle or event to be considered of national significance:**

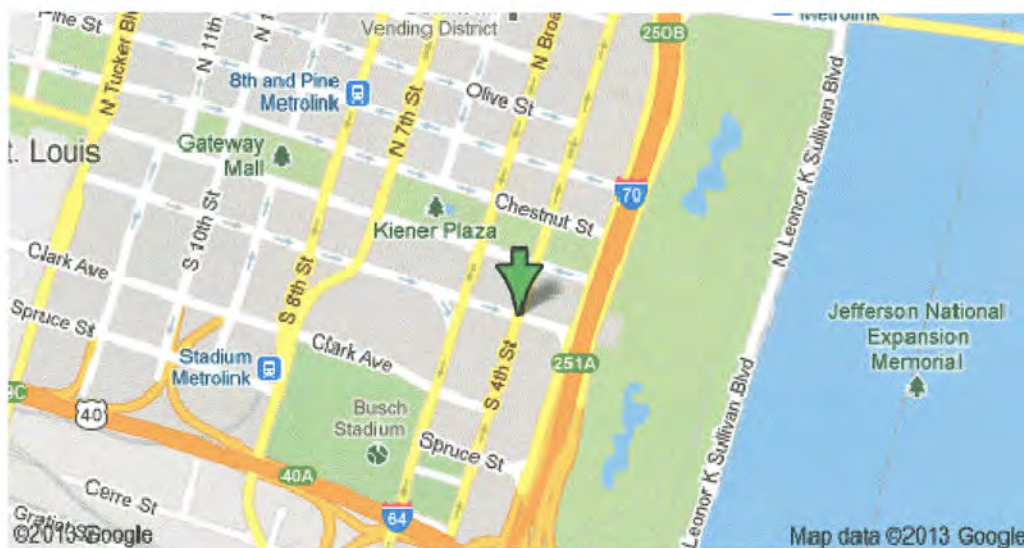
The strategic importance of Saint Louis covering the western frontier for the Americans and its unofficial but real assistance as a supply base for the opposition of the British was of much concern to the British. It was the intent of the British to take control of the Mississippi River and the western part of the continent; and prevent access by the Americans. The defeat of the British at the Battle of Fort San Carlos prevented the British from controlling the Mississippi River, from cutting off a supply base for the American Revolution, and from controlling the western part of the continent. The Battle of Fort San Carlos was very important to the American cause.

**(3) Written information on, if necessary, additional information on why the battle or event was important if it took place in a state / territory not normally associated with the Revolution:**

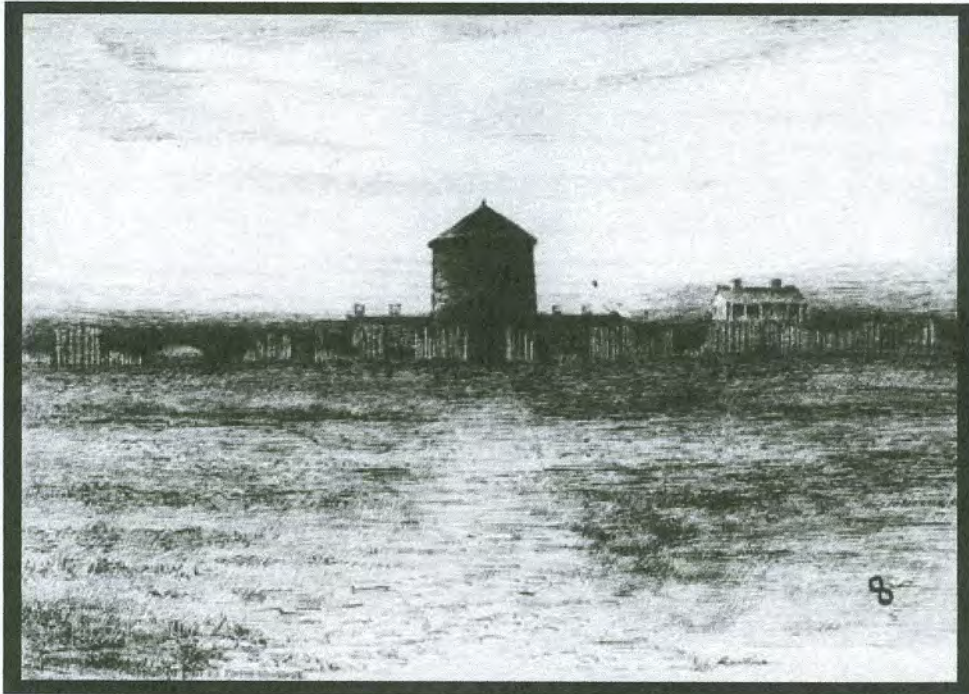
The Battle of Fort San Carlos in Saint Louis kept Saint Louis and the western territories from falling into the hands of the British. The Battle prevented the British from controlling the Mississippi River and from cutting off a major supply base for the American Revolution. Instead of the British controlling the Mississippi River and the western frontier, they returned to Canada.

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**Location of Fort San Carlos in Saint Louis, Missouri is shown below.**



An artist depiction of Fort San Carlos is shown below.

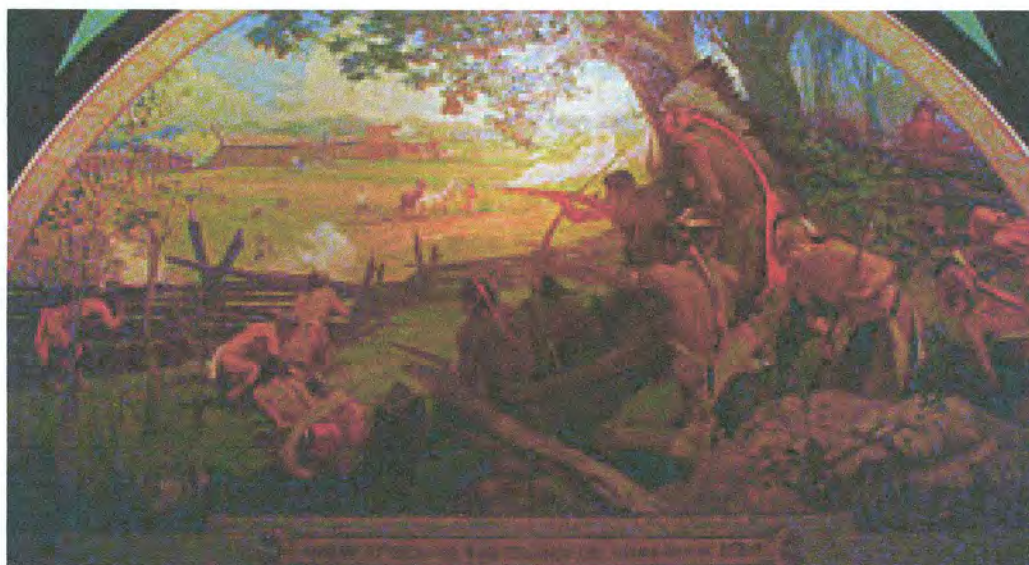


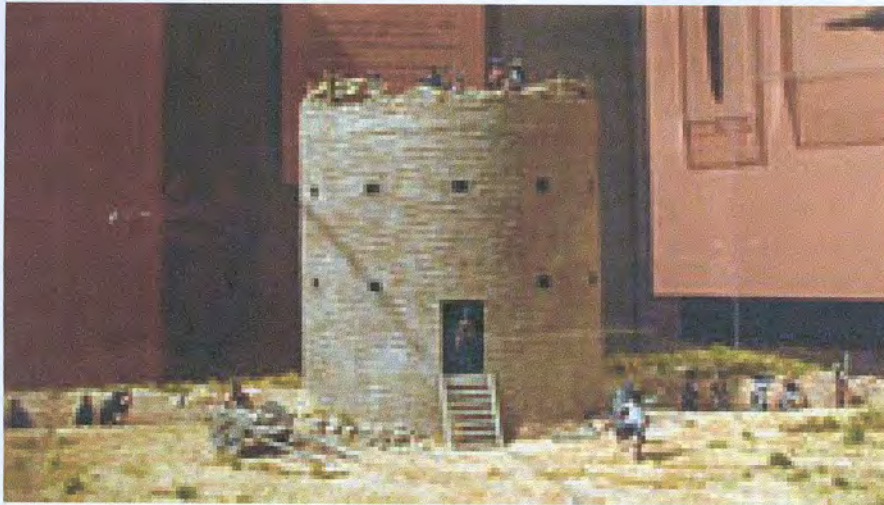
Shown below are two plaques presently placed at the general site of Fort San Carlos in Saint Louis.





There is a large mural of the Battle of Fort San Carlos by artist, Oscar Berninghaus, and a diorama depicting the stone tower (San Carlos) in the Missouri State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri. Photos are shown below.





In March of 2012 the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency, issued a grant in the amount of \$400,000 to the Missouri Historical Society to help fund a new exhibit entitled “The American Revolution on the Frontier” to open in the spring of 2014. It is intended to be an exceptional historical exhibit highlighting the Battle of Fort San Carlos, the western-most battle of the American Revolution. (See Congressman Wm. Lacy Clay’s press release below.)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 21, 2012**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**STEVEN ENGELHARDT (314) 504-4029**

**Clay Announces \$400K National Endowment for the Humanities Grant to**

**Missouri Historical Society to Help Fund Revolutionary War Exhibit**

***“The American Revolution on the Frontier” Will Open in Spring of 2014***

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Wm. Lacy Clay (D) Missouri announced today that the National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a \$400,000 grant to the Missouri Historical Society to help produce a groundbreaking new exhibit entitled, ***“The American Revolution on the Frontier.”***

**“I was very pleased to support this NEH grant that will help fund an exceptional historical exhibit highlighting the Battle of Fort San Carlos, the western-most battle of the American Revolution, and St. Louis’ key strategic role in maintaining control of the Mississippi River during the fight to win our nation’s freedom.”** said the Congressman. **“The Missouri Historical Society is an invaluable cultural institution that I am proud to represent in Washington. I am looking forward to the debut of this very important project in the spring of 2014.”**

According to the National Park Service, on May 26, 1780, between 1,300 and 2,000 British-led Sioux, Sac, Fox and Winnebago Indian warriors assaulted the unsuspecting French community of St. Louis, which then had a population of 900 people. The attack was repulsed, denying British forces control of the Mississippi River. The battle site was near where the Old Court House stands today in downtown St. Louis.



18 MOSSAR Color Guard Members plus 2 additional SAR Members participated in the Commemoration of the Battle of Fort San Carlos (Battle of St. Louis) event on Sunday, May 26, 2013.

Front Row: **Wayne S. Davis** - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; **William J. Jackson** - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; **Stephen M. Baldwin** - Fernando de Leyba Chapter, Alexander Majors Chapter, Allen Laws Oliver Chapter; **William L. Groth** - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; **Robert L. Grover**, MOSSAR Color Guard Commander - Harry S Truman Chapter, Independence Patriots Chapter, Ozark Mountain Chapter, & KSSAR Delaware Crossing Chapter; **Roy Hutchinson** - Harry S Truman Chapter; **John E. Rush** - Fernando de Leyba Chapter; **Charles L. Lilly**, MOSSAR Executive Vice President - Fernando de Leyba Chapter, Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; **James L. Scott** - Independence Patriots Chapter

Back Row: **J. Wayne Merrill**, MOSSAR Chaplin - M. Graham Clark Chapter; **Fred P. Kaffenberger** - Alexander Majors Chapter; **Robert J. Brindell** - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter; **Russell F. DeVenney** - M. Graham Clark Chapter; **Jack K. Quint** - Harry S Truman Chapter, Independence Patriots Chapter; **Earnest L. Mowry** - Christopher Casey Chapter; **Milan A. Paddock**, Spirit of St. Louis Chapter, Fernando de Leyba Chapter, Ozark Patriots Chapter; **Bryan P. Bradford** - M. Graham Clark Chapter; **William A.G. Grote** - Fernando de Leyba Chapter; **Alvin L. Paris** - Independence Patriots Chapter

Missing from the photo: **Douglas E. Neff** - Spirit of St. Louis Chapter.