

# HEY ... HOW DID THE MOUND CITY CARRIER GET ITS NAME???

I'm glad you asked. Pierre Laclede and his 13-year-old scout Auguste Chouteau, selected the site of St. Louis in 1764 as a fur trading post. Laclede and Chouteau chose the location because it was not subject to flooding and was near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Construction of a village, named after Louis IX of France, began the following year. Most of the early settlers were French; many were associated with the fur trade. St. Louis transferred to the Spanish in 1770, returned to France under a secret treaty with Napoleon and, following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, became part of the United States. According to legend, on the day of the transfer of the territory to the United States in 1803, St. Louis flew under three flags in one day — French, Spanish and American.

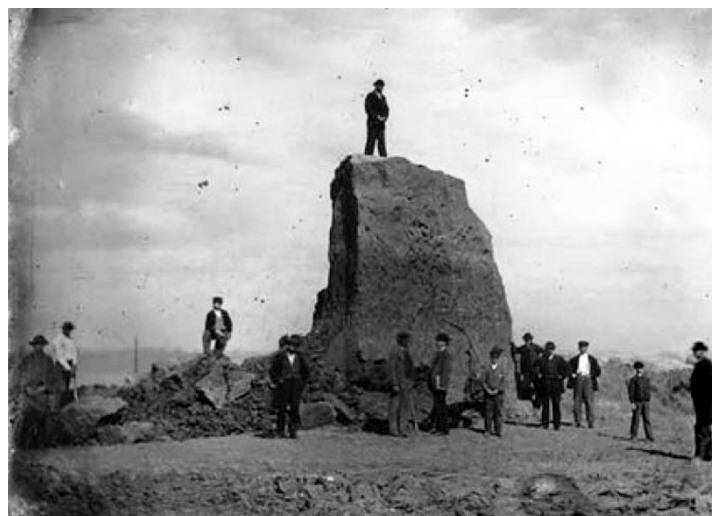
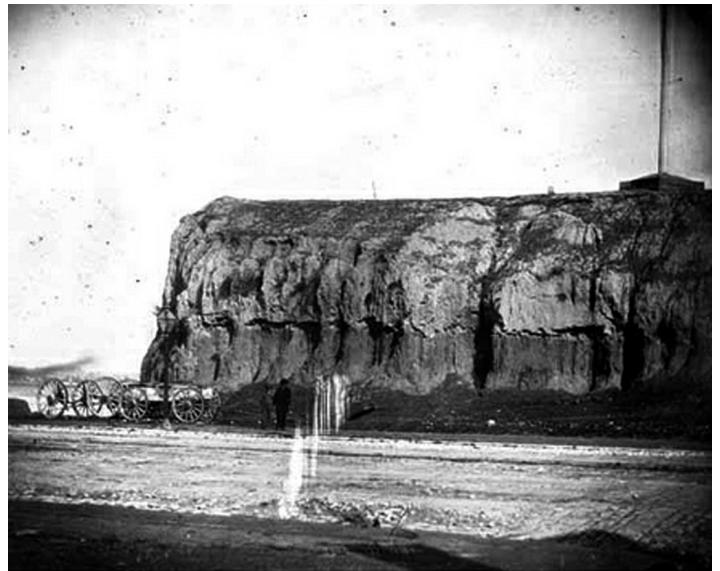
The area that would become St. Louis is located on the traditional, ancestral territories of a group of 12-13 Native American tribes in the upper Mississippi valley. At the time of the European contact in the 17th century, they were believed to number in the tens of thousands of people, with the Grand Village of the Illinois alone having a population of about 20,000.

The indigenous people in this area built numerous temple and residential earthwork mounds on both sides of the Mississippi River. Cahokia Mounds being the regional center. The many earthworks within the St. Louis boundaries earned the city the nickname "Mound City." These mounds were mostly demolished during the city's development, but in the 19th century riverboat pilots used the mounds as reference points along the Mississippi River heading north to the St. Louis riverfront.

When Auguste Chouteau first set his boots on the bank of the Mississippi at St. Louis, there were at least 27 mounds in the immediate vicinity, with many more throughout the area. Throughout the 19th century, these mounds were part of the geographical fabric of the city, although they were destroyed one by one by a growing population eager for land.

The moniker "Mound City" not only stuck but thrived in the late 19th and early 20th century. Small breweries, tobacconist, grocery stores, wineries, dance halls, all used the name Mound City.

Not surprising; in June 1950, the newly established Branch 343 union branch publication adopted the name: The Mound City Carrier in its inaugural issue. For some of those old timers, a few of the mounds still existed and seemed a fitting tribute to adopt the name for the new branch publication.



*(Photos courtesy St. Louis History Museum)*