

# Frenchtown neighborhood

**French influence in** St. Charles is strong and long-standing. From street and place names to building styles, it's easy to see the city was once part of a territory of France. Homes of French Colonial design are common in the Frenchtown neighborhood. Look for raised basements, thin wood columns, and front gallery porches.

Many Frenchtown residents worked for the St. Charles Car Company building trolleys and railroad cars. In 1899 a merger among car companies created American Car & Foundry (AC&F). Until the car plant closed in the 1960s,

AC&F was a major employer in St. Charles. AC&F built passenger railroad cars, refrigerated cars, hospital cars and tanks in World War II, and even New York subway cars.

About 25 blocks of the Frenchtown neighborhood became a historic district in 1991. The district is at the edge of the St. Charles Ecopark: north of Clark St., south of French St., and roughly between N. Fifth St. and the river.



THE AMERICAN CAR AND FOUNDRY CO.'S PLANT, ST. CHARLES, MO. PAUL W. CHAI, F. WOOD, BRUNNEN



**Top to bottom:** American Car and Foundry factory. Luxury train car built at AC&F. Typical Frenchtown home with raised basement. Frenchtown Heritage Museum located in restored 4th Ward firehouse. **Background:** North Second St. in 1909, looking north from 900 block.

**Image credits:** St. Charles County Historical Society (1,2), Frenchtown Heritage Museum and Research Center (background)