

# Consequences of Peaceful Actions:

Political Decisions  
of the Illinois Indians,  
1778–1832

BY GERALD ROGERS

As the Virginia governor, Thomas Jefferson, sat down to meet with Jean Baptiste Ducoigne in 1781, he did not know what to expect from the chief of the Kaskaskia who traveled to Virginia from the Illinois Country. The Americans had limited but peaceful contact with Illinois Indians. Ducoigne approached this meeting as many of his ancestors had when they first encountered Frenchmen in the Great Lakes region over 100 years before.

He began the meeting with an exchange of gifts and the smoking of the calumet. Jefferson gave Ducoigne a medal as a gift, while Ducoigne offered painted buffalo skins. These were not simply diplomatic procedures for the Kaskaskia chief, but instead the gifts and rituals symbolized the opportunistic nature of the Illinois Indians as well as their longstanding policy of forming alliances with European powers. The painted buffalo skins exemplified how proficient the Illinois Indians had become at not only hunting the buffalo but also transforming it into art.

From an American perspective, Jefferson was trying to extend his friendship by showing that his people were not like the British; they were willing to work with the Kaskaskia, much like the French did. Jefferson left this meeting with a sense of how a successful alliance with the Illinois could later open up inroads into the Illinois Country or at least quell fighting among other Native Americans in the region. Jean Baptiste Ducoigne left this meeting with a very different mindset. Much like his ancestors, Ducoigne hoped to forge a mutual alliance with the Americans to promote trade and strengthen his people's position in the Illinois Country.

The Illinois Indians were an opportunistic group, and the Illinois experience in the eighteenth century must be coupled with their experience with the Americans to explain why the Illinois felt an alliance with the United States was their best option. This article will not only show why the Illinois Indians chose to side with the Americans,

but also the consequences of their actions. The decision to align with the United States caused both internal and external problems for the Illinois Indians. Internally, it led to the splitting of the Peoria from the Illinois, while externally it resulted in constant attacks from other Native American groups. Together, these problems made it increasingly difficult for the Illinois to negotiate favorable treaties with the United States.

To understand the Illinois Indians' decisions, it is crucial to recognize their motives. The very nature of the Illinois' coming to the Illinois Country illustrates their resourcefulness and adaptability when faced with unstable conditions. The Illinois were relative newcomers to the region and were not descendants of the large city-state of Cahokia. Instead, they were an Algonquian speaking people who moved west into the Illinois Country from the Ohio Valley during the 1600s. The Illinois left the Ohio Valley as it was suffering from climate change that made agriculture difficult. The struggle for resources caused a period of violence and warfare that made it quite difficult for these Algonquian groups to survive.<sup>1</sup> Small settlements survived by trading with the Oneota people who moved into the Cahokia region after the city-state's demise. In the 1500s, the Algonquian groups of the Ohio Valley and the Oneota people in the Illinois Country began to trade prestige items and other goods across a trade network that spanned modern-day Indiana.<sup>2</sup> It is here where we can see small pieces of a distinctive Illinois culture coming together. For example, the calumet pipe, a diplomatic tool used by many of the western Siouan-speakers, came into the Algonquian culture through this trade. The Illinois Indians used the calumet extensively, and they were able to blend several aspects of Algonquian and Oneota culture to form an Illinois culture that differed from many other Great Lakes people the French would encounter.<sup>3</sup>

The Illinois also took advantage of a large-scale movement of bison into the Midwestern grasslands from

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A view of Monks Mound, Cahokia, Illinois. (Image: Gerald Rogers)



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Left-View from Fort Kaskaskia overlooking the Mississippi River and where the Kaskaskia village was located. (Image: Gerald Rogers)

Population Estimates for the Illinois			
Kaskaskia		Peoria	
Years	Total Population	Years	Total Population
1675–1677	5,950–6,250	1673	8,000 in 3 villages
1707	2,200 includes Tamaroa	1707	3,000
1750	900 includes Michigamea and Cahokia	1750	1,000
1800	100	1800	400

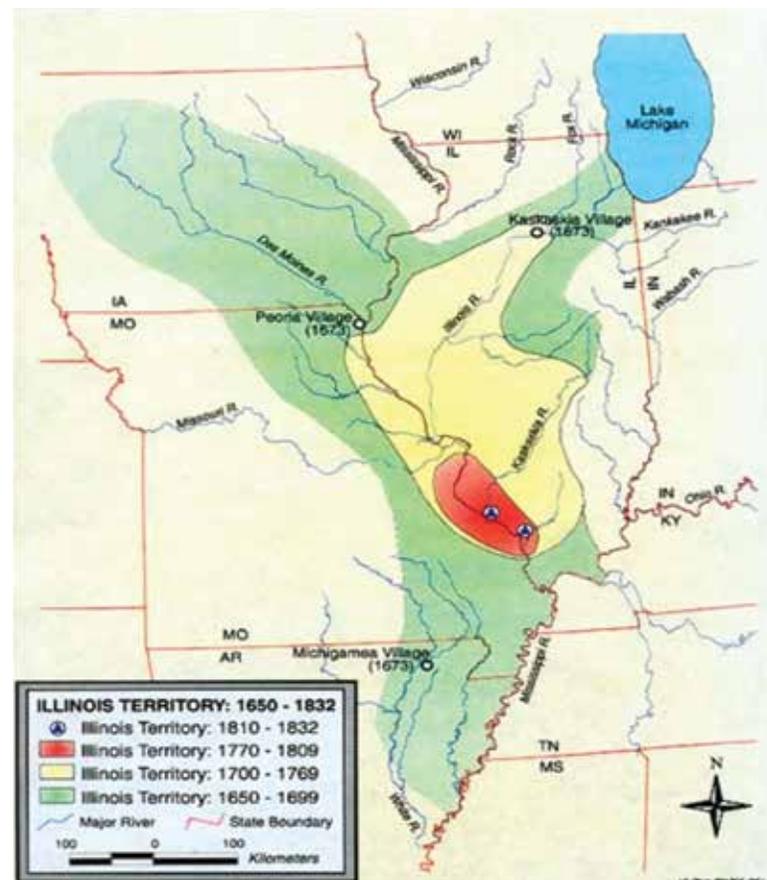
By 1832, the combined population of the Kaskaskia and Peoria was reduced to a single village of 300. (Figures from Emily J. Blassingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians Part 2," *Ethnohistory* 3, 4 (Autumn 1956): 362–72.)

the west. Between 1500 and 1800, an influx of bison brought tremendous change to native life in the Illinois Country, and the Illinois took full advantage of this situation. The bison transformed the grasses of the prairie from a farming nuisance into a productive source of calories. Bison changed the Illinois into the only bison-based Algonquian group, which emphasized the Illinois' ability to adapt and take advantage of their surroundings.<sup>4</sup> A shift from an agricultural source of calories quickly shifted to a hunting- and animal-based diet. One archeological study suggests that when Europeans began to enter the Illinois Country, the majority of meat in the Illinois diet was from bison.<sup>5</sup>

Bison hunting began to shape the Illinois way of life and demanded a communal form of hunting that varied drastically from the solitary style of deer hunting. Robert Michael Morrissey argues that this style of hunting helped to form a more unified and cohesive society, a way of life that required larger villages which stayed together throughout the year. Instead of breaking into small villages to chase deer and bears like many Algonquian groups, the Illinois came together in large villages, especially during the summer and winter months, to hunt bison.<sup>6</sup> Bison hunting helped make the Illinois prosperous by allowing them to have an abundance of food and engage in other artistic endeavors. For instance, hide painting became an important medium that the Illinois employed well into the nineteenth century. Even upon contact, Jesuit explorer Father Jacques Marquette (1637–1675), noticed how the Illinois "use the hides for making fine Robes, which they paint in various Colors."<sup>7</sup> The Illinois' commitment to the bison illustrates an additional way in which they made the most of their situation while forming a distinct Illinois culture.

The Illinois Indians opportunistically settled the Illinois Country and strategically positioned themselves as middlemen between the Algonquian- and Siouan-speaking people. Their mixed cultural traits and positioning between these two worlds helped them thrive in one very large aspect of their culture: the slave trade. Like many other Algonquian groups, kinship played a

prominent role in the Illinois culture and was a crucial factor in the Illinois slave trade. Establishing a broad kinship network often meant gaining status or power in trade, warfare, and politics.<sup>8</sup> The centrality of kinship networks to the Illinois and other Algonquian groups



Contraction of Illinois Indian territory, 1650–1832. Map by Robert E. Warren and James S. Oliver, Illinois State Museum. (Image: Robert E. Warren and John A. Walthall. 1998. *Illini Indians in the Illinois Country, 1673–1832. The Living Museum*, 60(1): 4-8.)

explains how slave raids helped to replace the deceased members of these kinship networks. Captives could be adopted into the family to replace the dead. A Jesuit in the Illinois Country explained this practice as “resuscitating the dead.” He stated, “When there is any man to be resuscitated, that is to say, if any one of their warriors has been killed . . . they give to this cabin one of the prisoners, who takes the places of the deceased; and this is what they call ‘resuscitating the dead.’”<sup>9</sup> However, only true strangers could take the place of the dead. Algonquian-speaking captives were often useless because they would have to be adopted into a kinship network where they already had ties. For the Algonquian people of the Great Lakes, the Siouan-speaking groups from the west made excellent candidates for slaves because they had no kinship ties to the Algonquian world. Since strangers were needed to replace the kinship networks, the Illinois had a strategic advantage when it came to the slave trade.

Situated between the Great Lakes and the Siouan-speaking tribes of the west, the Illinois displayed their opportunistic nature by becoming middlemen along this slave-trade route. Throughout the 1600s, the Illinois were engaged in wars with several groups in the Missouri Valley to obtain slaves. The Pawnee, Osage, Missouri, and other smaller groups to the south and west bore the brunt of Illinois slaving raids. The Illinois viewed these groups as a convenient and vulnerable source of slaves for the Indian slave trade that thrived in the Great Lakes region.<sup>10</sup> The Illinois even engaged in war with both the Iroquois to the east and Siouan tribes to the west at the same time. While the Jesuit priest Claude Allouez (1622–1689) saw this as a reckless act, it was actually an example of the Illinois being opportunistic in the slave trade.<sup>11</sup> The Illinois were resourceful enough to realize that their position in the Illinois Country was an advantage.

When Marquette first arrived at an Illinois village in 1673, he was greeted by a dance featuring the calumet pipe, treated to a feast of bison meat, offered belts and garters from Illinois Indians wearing buffalo skins, and even presented with a slave.<sup>12</sup> This routine is strikingly similar to the gifts and procedures of Ducoigne’s visit with Thomas Jefferson. There is a sense of continuity and similarity of mindset between the two visits that cannot

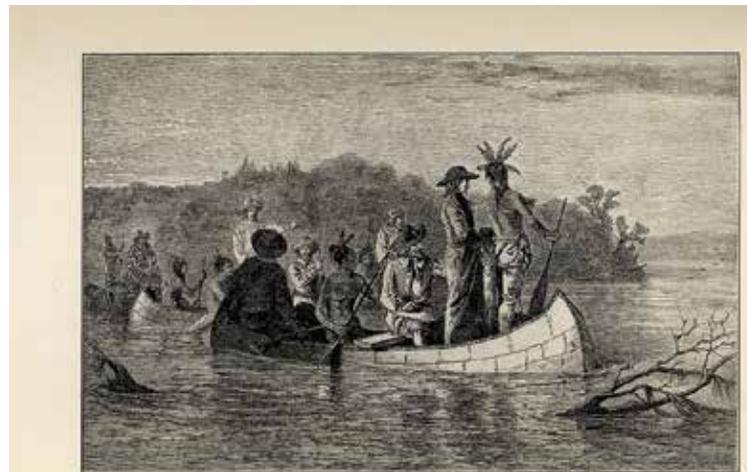


The lower Illinois Country as the Kaskaskia understood it in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. (Image: Edward S. Ellis, *The History of our Country: From the Discovery of America to the Present Time*, 8 vols, 1910)

be overlooked. These offerings highlight the fact that the Illinois took advantage of their proximity to and the resources of the Illinois Country to forge a unique culture that blended both Algonquian and Siouan cultures. By using the bison and optimizing the slave trade, the Illinois positioned themselves favorably in the Illinois Country and were often feared by their Native American neighbors. The Menominee warned Marquette before he arrived with the Illinois to not travel any further south than the Fox River. Beyond the river lived the Illinois, who were “ferocious people.”<sup>13</sup> The Illinois colonized the Illinois Country through aggression, fear, and trade. They continued to employ these same techniques well after contact and into negotiations with the United States. The political structure of the Illinois before European contact has been debated by historians, but the word “confederacy” is useful when examining Illinois political decisions.<sup>14</sup> Each village within the confederacy was equal and relatively autonomous, but

they met together regularly to reach important political decisions as a cohesive unit. The Illinois had strong

A depiction of Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet at the village of Kaskaskia at Starved Rock in 1673. Painting done by artist Robert Thorn for the state’s sesquicentennial in 1968. (Image: Northern Illinois University Archives)



MARQUETTE AND JOLLIET DISCOVERING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER



George Catlin, Pah-me-cow-ee-tah, or Man Who Tracks, a Peoria Illinois Chief, 1830. (Image: Illinois State Museum)

ethnic and cultural bonds well before European contact. For instance, when Marquette arrived at the village of Peoria in the 1670s, he asked to whom he was speaking and the answer was, “We are Illinois.”<sup>15</sup> This collection of groups identified ethnically as Illinois, but there was also a political side to the term “Illinois.” The Illinois confederacy had a great chief, and Marquette made note of this fact when he was taken to Kaskaskia where he was told the great chief lived.<sup>16</sup> Despite this position of a great chief, the Illinois did not form a chiefdom because the great chief did not have a great deal of power. Instead, the great chief was a hereditary position held by the chief of the Kaskaskia, and his primary function was to regulate meetings between the bands rather than to monopolize power. The Illinois confederacy met periodically to go to war as a unit, decide the fate of slaves captured in battle, negotiate for trade items with other Native Americans, and discuss possible alliances both with Europeans and other Indians. During these meetings, the chiefs of all the villages would gather for feasts and resolve political issues under the direction of the great chief. The confederacy, then, was one of mutual support and collective decision-making.

The relative autonomy of various bands within the Illinois confederacy provided them the flexibility to adapt to Europeans in divergent ways. As the eighteenth century progressed, the localized autonomy of some bands strengthened, eventually fracturing the Illinois confederacy. The political and cultural differences among the bands allowed divisions to occur that weakened and eventually supplanted the larger Illinois confederacy. The individual bands chose to dissolve their confederacy as a way to protect their way of life. From the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, the bands among the Illinois confederacy prioritized local decisions over the goals of the larger confederacy. Factions within the larger Illinois confederacy formed and gained autonomy from the confederacy to create separate political and cultural entities. The local autonomy allowed for some bands to alter their culture and political structure much more drastically than other bands, while the internal policies of the Illinois confederacy shifted to adjust to, align with, or reject the various incoming European nations.

For the Illinois confederacy the eighteenth century was a major turning point because some bands were simultaneously coming together while others began to fragment. This dual process of coalescence and fragmentation occurred differently for each band. Some smaller factions of the Illinois confederacy became absorbed into larger groups, but at the same time there was a pivotal split occurring between the Kaskaskia and Peoria that pulled the Illinois confederacy in different directions. The smaller bands slowly gravitated toward either the Kaskaskia or Peoria and eventually combined with them. The Cahokia, Michigamea, and parts of the Tamaroa followed the Kaskaskia strategy of aligning themselves with a European nation to promote trade, seek protection, gain material goods, or disseminate the Christian religion. The Peoria, on the other hand, chose to use a strategy that often distanced them from Europeans while outright rejecting the Christian religion. By the end of the eighteenth century, it is clear that the bands had become autonomous entities, and the Illinois confederacy collapsed. Instead of uniting to preserve the culture of the Illinois, the local autonomy of the bands allowed the different groups to diverge in order to preserve their respective vision of an Illinois culture. The localized structure of the Illinois confederacy gave them a mechanism to survive in a way quite different from most groups. Instead of coming together to preserve the larger group, the Illinois endured by separating into smaller, localized groups.

In addition, the geographical distance between the Kaskaskia and Peoria often strained the limits of the confederacy and helped to promote local decisions. Before the eighteenth century, the Peoria and Kaskaskia lived relatively close to each other in the Starved Rock region on the Illinois River in present-day northern Illinois. In the fall of 1700, the Illinois faced a split with the Kaskaskia, moving southward to the west bank of the Mississippi River. Three years later the Kaskaskia moved again, 50 miles further south near the mouth of the Kaskaskia

River.<sup>17</sup> With a heavy reliance on European goods, the Kaskaskia moved southward to be close to the Louisiana Territory. Father Jacques Gravier (1651–1708) believed that the only thing that stopped the Kaskaskia from entering the Louisiana Territory was their strong Catholic ties to the mission.<sup>18</sup> This left the two main areas of Illinois concentration near Lake Peoria and the mouth of the Kaskaskia River.

The Peoria protested this move by the Kaskaskia, but ultimately they could not force the Kaskaskia to stay. The geographical distance was over 100 miles and helped to ensure that these two bands would continue to develop in separate ways. The French established forts and towns in close proximity to the Kaskaskia, and the Kaskaskia began to adopt many of the European ways of life. For instance, the Kaskaskia established two mills for the production of wheat.<sup>19</sup> By 1763, there were also “two hundred acres of cultivated land, a very good stock of cattle, and a brewery.”<sup>20</sup> The structure of the confederacy allowed for strong localized bands with the ability to make many political choices on their own, and the Peoria were left to the north with a completely separate set of enemies from the Kaskaskia.

The Illinois confederacy allowed for individual bands to make a vast array of political decisions without the approval or consent of the other bands. One of the main reasons for the confederacy was to protect the similar culture of the Illinois bands. However, the bands were not obliged to protect the other bands during warfare, and no village could force another village into conflict. For instance, if the Peoria felt threatened by the Sioux, they could meet with the other villages and ask for their warriors’ help. However, if the elders of the other villages did not or could not provide help to the Peoria, then the Peoria fought the Sioux alone. There were several instances when all of the bands would provide warriors to fight off the Iroquois in the seventeenth century or the Fox during the early part of the eighteenth century. However, as time progressed the bands often began to favor more localized reasons for going to war. Instead of protecting a common culture or Illinois confederacy, they often chose to fight battles more relevant to their respective local politics.

The close alliance between the Kaskaskia and French often left the Kaskaskia making the decision to side with the French militarily, with the Kaskaskia joining them on several raids and battles against French enemies. For instance, in 1733 and 1736, the Kaskaskia participated in French-led expeditions against the Chickasaw. In the latter trip, more than 100 warriors from the Mississippi River villages took part in the expedition.<sup>21</sup> During the 1740s, Cherokee towns were even raided by French forces with the help of the Kaskaskia.<sup>22</sup> The Chickasaw and Cherokee were not local enemies for the Kaskaskia, but the Kaskaskia used their warrior population to help build a strong alliance with the French. While these decisions did strengthen this alliance, it often left the Peoria more than a hundred miles to the north to defend their territory by themselves.



Portrait of Jacques Marquette on the memorial stele in the St. Ignace Mission, St. Ignace, Michigan. (Image: Collections of the Chateau Ramezay)

The location of the Peoria also made them more susceptible to attacks from the Sioux. While the Peoria fought valiantly against these outside groups, they were beginning to waver in the 1750s after being attacked several years in a row. When the Peoria asked for help from the Kaskaskia or even for a French officer to be stationed among them, their request was not granted in time. The Peoria then lobbied the Cahokia and Tamaroa bands of the Illinois to join them at Lake Peoria, but to no avail.<sup>23</sup> The Peoria were truly left to defend their land for themselves.

The Peoria’s isolation did not mean that they were isolated from conflict and difficult decisions. After surviving numerous enemy attacks without much support from the other Illinois bands, the Peoria made the conscious choice to move west of the Mississippi River into Spanish Territory after the British began to enter the Illinois Country.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was not an ideal time for the Illinois Indians. Throughout their history, the Illinois resourcefully took advantage of everything from the buffalo of the prairie to their Native American neighbors they used for slaves. However, the tides began to change when the Illinois bands began to separate and elect for a peaceful relationship with the United States. Renewed violence with the Foxes in the

1770s helped to reduce the warrior population of the Illinois down to a mere 300 warriors.<sup>24</sup> While the Peoria sought refuge across the Mississippi River in Spanish Territory, the Kaskaskia stayed east of the Mississippi, either near Kaskaskia or further south with the Quapaw.<sup>25</sup> The Fox, Kickapoos, and Potawatomis continued to harass the Kaskaskia throughout the eighteenth century; with a decreasing population, Kaskaskia chiefs had to take this threat very seriously.

Ducoigne, the Kaskaskia chief, decided to support the United States over his Native American enemies who aligned themselves with the British. Much like previous chiefs, Ducoigne chose to go against his traditional Native American enemies, and the Kaskaskia even joined in the Revolutionary War on the side of the Americans. While most of their Native American enemies sided with the British, the Kaskaskia aided the rebels by hunting, scouting, and carrying correspondence. Forming an alliance with the Americans may seem like a reckless decision, but it was actually consistent with the Kaskaskia's longstanding policy to align themselves with a powerful foreign nation. For the opportunistic Kaskaskia, they sought a foreign ally who could help them regain their prominence in the region over their Native American neighbors. Ducoigne became a staunch ally of George Rogers Clark when he took over the Illinois Country, and he even served as an American emissary to promote peace among the Wabash tribes and later to the Chickasaws.<sup>26</sup>

By positioning the Kaskaskia in an alliance with the Americans, Ducoigne made a calculated risk that the Americans would prove themselves to be more useful allies than their Native American enemies and that the United States could tip the balance of power back to the Kaskaskia. The same reasoning had been used to validate a French alliance in the beginning of the eighteenth century. However, this decision also made the Kaskaskia susceptible to Native Americans who openly opposed the United States. For example, in 1790 the Kaskaskia suffered heavy losses in battle with the Potawatomis, and in 1802 they were attacked by a series of Shawnee war parties.<sup>27</sup> The Kaskaskia continued to suffer attacks



Painted deer hide featuring arrowhead and broken diamond motif, attributed to the Illinois Indians, before 1796. (Image: Buffalo Bill Center of the West)

by other tribes for their alliance with the United States. In 1804 and 1805, the Potawatomis raided the Kaskaskia and took several prisoners. The Kaskaskia survived these attacks, but their weakened warrior population led Ducoigne to use a more diplomatic approach toward his enemies.

Ducoigne knew that with his declining warriors he could not oppose the Potawatomis in an open war. Instead, he tried to persuade them to join the Kaskaskia and oppose the Osage, against whom the Potawatomis often went to war. Ducoigne invited the Potawatomis chief Saugeenawk and his Kaskaskia wife to a friendly visit.<sup>28</sup> It was here that Ducoigne most likely unveiled his plan that the Potawatomis join Ducoigne and form a partnership against the Osage. In March of 1805, he threatened that 3,000 warriors were marching

from the Ohio Valley to punish the Osage for their raids and either destroy them or push them off their lands.<sup>29</sup> Ducoigne figured that if he could channel aggression away from his people and onto the Osage, he would be in a better position in the long run.<sup>30</sup> The war with the Osage never materialized, but small-scale raids against the Osage did increase dramatically. A short-lived peace treaty among the Osage, Delaware, Miami, Potawatomis, Kickapoo, Sac, Fox, Sioux, and Kaskaskia was eventually signed in October of 1805.<sup>31</sup> The increased pressure by Native American enemies forced Ducoigne to rely on foreign alliances, a trusted Kaskaskia tactic.

Ducoigne was a shrewd negotiator on behalf of his Kaskaskia people. At a meeting where Ducoigne led a delegation of western Indians, he addressed Washington on the encroachment of Kentuckians onto their land. Ducoigne stated at the meeting, "I am a Kaskaskia, and have always been a good American from my youth upwards."<sup>32</sup> Ducoigne stressed the fact that his people never once shed the blood of an American and maintained a strong alliance with the American people. After the United States' victory at Fallen Timbers in August of 1794, negotiations were held in Greenville, Ohio, the following year to settle the peace. While Ducoigne and his Kaskaskia people did not participate in the battle in

any way, they were still included in the Greenville treaty. They received a \$500 annuity and did not have to cede any land.<sup>33</sup> The Kaskaskia were being rewarded for their alliance with the United States.

This sense of elevated status would come back to haunt Ducoigne and his Kaskaskia people. The other Native Americans surrounding the Kaskaskia became increasingly hostile, especially after Ducoigne signed away thousands of acres of disputed land in an 1803 treaty. The land that Ducoigne ceded to the United States was an area that the Kaskaskia had used for hunting in previous decades, but by 1803 the Kickapoos were firmly established on this land. This action caused Ducoigne strife with the Kickapoos, but he avoided ceding the land where the Kaskaskia lived. Despite giving up hunting ground, Ducoigne retained enough land near the Mississippi River to sustain the Kaskaskia. Thus, instead of giving up his own land, Ducoigne sold out his enemies to strengthen his alliance with the United States. The signing of this treaty sparked some hostile exchanges between the Kickapoo and the Kaskaskia, and Ducoigne sought the protection of the United States. Governor Harrison wrote to the Kickapoos to say that the United States would not tolerate a war against the Kaskaskia. Harrison then told Ducoigne and his people to seek protection in the American village. These were minimal measures compared to what the Kaskaskia were used to from the French.

The splitting of the Illinois Confederacy occurred during the second half of the eighteenth century, but we can begin to see the effects of this split in the treaties of the nineteenth century. The Illinois never had a formal treaty with the French, but it was an alliance based on mutual assistance. The French provided trade goods and formed kinship bonds to strengthen this relationship. However, with the Illinois separating into smaller bands, we can see a move toward a more local concern in treaties. For instance, in the 1803 treaty the Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Michigamea sought money for a priest in the region as well as funds to build a church. The Peoria never fully accepted the ideas of Christianity, so it is obvious they



Kaskaskia Indian. (Image: Engraving from a sketch by General George-Victor Collot, 1796)

were not involved in this treaty-making process. The Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Michigamea received land, monetary compensation, and, most importantly, a promise of protection from the United States against hostile incursions by other Native American groups.<sup>34</sup> This protection was needed for the Illinois, who had been living in a “barbarous” region that had been plagued with violence since the French left.<sup>35</sup> The Illinois Indians faced constant attacks during this period, and they desperately sought the protection that this treaty offered. However, article two of the treaty not only allowed for protection by the United States, but also implied a dominion by the United States over these Illinois bands. This is strikingly similar to article three of the treaties signed at Portage des Sioux in 1815. Those Native Americans agreed “to be under the protection of the

United States, and of no other nation, power, or sovereign, whatsoever.”<sup>36</sup> These treaties helped open the door for American expansion, as well as American authority over western tribes.

The Peoria signed a separate treaty with the United States in 1818 that confirmed their split with Kaskaskia. The Peoria, also decimated by a declining population, sought the protection of the other Illinois bands. Since the mid-eighteenth century, the Peoria had largely settled separately from the other bands, but years of warfare had taken their toll on them. This treaty stated that the Peoria lived apart from the other tribes and were not part of the previous treaty in 1803, so they did not reap any of the benefits of the annuities paid to the other bands.<sup>37</sup> In this treaty, the Peoria signed away the remaining lands south and east of the Illinois River that was not ceded by the Kaskaskia. In return, the Peoria received annuities from the United States in addition to the “immediate care and patronage” as well as the “protection” of the United States against other Indian tribes.<sup>38</sup> This language of care and protection runs through many of the Native American treaties of this region. However, the governmental reach of the United States often did little to protect the Illinois. This might be one reason why the Peoria amalgamated themselves back into the Illinois confederacy. Even

though the Illinois confederacy was a shell of its former prominence, there was still more protection to be offered from the kinship between bands rather than the distant United States government.

The Illinois began the eighteenth century as dominant players in the region by making strategic alliances with European nations. Over the course of a century, these two groups made decisions that would benefit local bands rather than the larger political entity. This emphasis on local autonomy ultimately led to the fracturing of the Illinois bands that would not be resolved until they were forced to unite in the nineteenth century to survive hostile

incursions. Peaceful overtures to the United States did not guarantee peace in the region for the Illinois, who suffered attacks from enemies who despised their decision to side with the Americans. The American treaties weakened the position of the Illinois and opened this region for later expansion. The peaceful action of negotiating with the United States opened up the Illinois to many unforeseen consequences that included violent outside attacks from rival Native Americans and the fracturing of the Illinois Confederacy.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> David S. Brose, “Penumbra Protohistory on Lake Erie’s Southern Shore,” in *Societies in Eclipse: Archaeology of the Eastern Woodlands Indians, A.D. 1400–1700*, edited by C. Wesley Cowan, Robert C. Mainfort, and David S. Brose (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 55, 61.

<sup>2</sup> Alan G. Shackelford, “The Frontier in Pre-Columbian Illinois,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 100, no. 3 (2007): 200.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Michael Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 253 n. 54.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–21, 257 n. 125.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Cardinal, “Faunal Remains from the Zimmerman Site—1970,” in *The Zimmerman Site: Further Excavations at the Grand Village of Kaskaskia*, edited by Margaret Kimball Brown, Reports of Investigations, Illinois State Museum No. 32 (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1975), 74–75.

<sup>6</sup> Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, “Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791,” in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, vols. 51–70 (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers, 1899), 59:111. All other references to this group of sources will be referred to as JR.

<sup>8</sup> Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), chap. 1.

<sup>9</sup> JR, 67:173.

<sup>10</sup> Russell Magnaghi, “The Role of Intertribal Slaving on the Great Plains in the Eighteenth Century,” in *From the Mississippi to the Pacific: Essays in Honor of John Francis Bolton*, edited by Russell Magnaghi (Marquette: Northern Michigan University Press, 1982), 43–53.

<sup>11</sup> JR, 51:47–51.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 59:111, 123.

<sup>13</sup> JR, 59:14.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Raymond E. Hauser and Margaret Kimball Brown argue that the Illinois bands comprised a tribe

rather than a confederacy and were held together by cultural similarities. Hauser and Brown view the Illinois as a tribe with a “social-cultural-ethnic entity” and claim that the use of the word “tribe” did not mean the Illinois were a political organization. Hauser argues that the Illinois subgroups did not exhibit cultural, linguistic, or territorial differences associated with a true confederacy. By using the word tribe, it is easy to gloss over the political organization of the Illinois. While there were cultural similarities and kinship ties between the Illinois groups, the term tribe does not illustrate the political connections that bound the various groups together. The Illinois were made up of a confederacy of villages that, although relatively autonomous, came together to discuss political decisions of war, alliances, and trade. The political decisions of the Illinois confederacy often worked to protect the common good of all the groups. However, throughout the eighteenth century the structure of the confederacy started to break down when the individual Illinois groups began promoting local decisions over the views of the confederacy. Illinois villages became more independent of each other, especially in regard to the widening political and cultural gap that formed between the two major bands of the Peoria and Kaskaskia. Raymond E. Hauser, “The Illinois Indian Tribe: From Autonomy and Self-sufficiency to Dependency and Depopulation,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 69 (1976): 131; M.K. Brown, *Cultural Transformations among the Illinois: An Application of a Systems Model*, Anthropological Series, vol. 1 (East Lansing: Publications of the Museum of Michigan State University, 1973), 29–30.

<sup>15</sup> John Gilmary Shea, *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley: with the original narratives of Marquette, Allouez, Membre, Hennepin, and Anastase Douay* (New York: Redfield, 1852), xxx.

<sup>16</sup> JR, 59:119.

<sup>17</sup> Emily J. Blasingham, “The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 1,” *Ethnohistory* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1956): 201.

<sup>18</sup> JR, 65:101–3.

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- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., 70: 230-47.
- <sup>20</sup> Consul Wilshire Butterfield, *George Rogers Clark: Conquest of the Illinois and the Wabash Towns 1778 and 1779* (Columbus, Ohio: Press of F.J. Heer 1904), 604.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 204.
- <sup>22</sup> Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 94.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 527.
- <sup>24</sup> Joseph Jablow, *Illinois, Kickapoo, and Potawatomi Indians* (New York: Garland, 1974), 286.
- <sup>25</sup> Another band of the Illinois Indians, the Michigamea, previously left the Illinois Country and were adopted and absorbed by the Quapaw. It is possible that these kinship and trade networks also connected the Kaskaskia to the Quapaw. Stanley Faye, "Illinois Indians on the Lower Mississippi, 1771-1782," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 35, no. 1 (March 1942): 57-72, 58.
- <sup>26</sup> Owens, *Jean Baptiste Ducoigne*, 113.
- <sup>27</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 227.
- <sup>28</sup> Ducoigne to Lalime, Mar. 2, 1805, in *Territorial Papers of the United States*, edited by Clarence Edwin Carter, 13:103-4.
- <sup>29</sup> Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 184.
- <sup>30</sup> Owens, *Jean Baptiste Ducoigne*, 128.
- <sup>31</sup> Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 253.
- <sup>32</sup> Thomas Jefferson to Jean Baptiste Ducoigne, June 1781, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson Being his Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, Addresses, and other Writings Official and Private*, edited by H.A. Washington (New York: Riker, Thorne & Co., 1854), VIII:176-78.
- <sup>33</sup> Moses Dawson, *A Historical Narrative of the Civil and Military Service of Major General William H. Harrison and a Vindication of his Character and Conduct as a Statesman, a Citizen, and a Soldier with a Detail of his Negotiations and Wars with the Indians until the Final Overthrow of the Celebrated Chief Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet* (Cincinnati: M. Dawson at the Advertiser Office, 1824), 11.
- <sup>34</sup> "Treaty with the Kaskaskia, 1803," August 13, 1803 Proclamation, December 23, 1803, compiled and edited by Charles J. Kappler (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties/kas0067.htm>.
- <sup>35</sup> Gibault to Bishop, June 6, 1786, in Clarence Walworth Alvord, ed., *Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1909), 542.
- <sup>36</sup> "Treaty with the Sioux of the Lakes, 1815," July 19, 1815. Ratified December, 26, 1815. Compiled and edited by Charles J Kappler (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties/sio0113.htm#mn1>.
- <sup>37</sup> "Treaty with the Peoria, Etc., 1818" Sept. 25, 1818. Proclamation, Jan. 5, 1819, compiled and edited by Charles J. Kappler (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties/peo0165.htm>.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.