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**The Changing Illinois Indians under European Influence:
The Split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria**

Gerald A. Rogers

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ABSTRACT

The Changing Illinois Indians under European Influence: The Split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria

Gerald A Rogers

The Illinois Indians are generally studied as a prominent group in the Illinois Country that continually became more dependent after increased European Influence. This study looked at the split within the Illinois Indians, particularly between the Kaskaskia and Peoria. The fracturing of the Illinois Indians was a prominent point in the decline of the group. Under European influence, many Kaskaskia became Christians and moved their village closer to the French. Alternatively, the Peoria challenged the Christian religion and remained in the Lake Peoria region. By using primary and secondary literature on the topic, the split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria was examined as one of main reasons as to why the Illinois Indians are seen as becoming more dependent after European contact. This study concludes that while many factors contributed to the decline of the Illinois Indians, such as disease, war, etc., the division between the Kaskaskia and Peoria needs to be included to the list of causes as to why the Illinois Indians lost their influence in the Illinois Country.

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Introduction

The Illinois Indians were a force within the Illinois Country during the seventeenth century. With their large population and skillful warriors, the Illinois Indians achieved great success in the region. However, this trend did not continue into the eighteenth century. French and later British influence on the Illinois Indians caused these people to become more of a dependent group. A split within the Illinois Indians between the Kaskaskia and Peoria over how exactly to receive these European ways of life caused the fracturing of these once mighty people. The Illinois Country changed drastically for both the Kaskaskia, who remained in the region only to become more dependent, and the Peoria, who migrated out of the region only to become remembered as a nomadic group after being displaced.

The Illinois Country is a term that refers to the territory south of the Great Lakes, east of the Mississippi River, west of the Ohio Country, and north of Louisiana. Essentially, the term refers to all of present day Illinois while including some parts of the present-day surrounding states. The French were the first Europeans to recognize the strategic value of this area by sending Robert La Salle to explore this region in the late seventeenth century. A French colony in Illinois meant a link between the colonies in Canada and Louisiana. La Salle made an attempt in 1680 to form a settlement near present day Peoria, but a poor location and lack of water forced the abandonment of this site. By the end of the century though, Catholic missionaries were successful in establishing permanent colonies at Cahokia and Kaskaskia, which became the center of French influence in the Illinois Country. When fur traders and settler families began to emigrate from Canada in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, the permanency of the French settlement was assured.¹

¹ Alvord, Clarence and Clarence Carter, *The Critical Period 1763-1765* (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Historical Society, 1915), xxix.

Before 1763, the Illinois Country was the vital but often overlooked cog of the French Empire in North America. Not only was this area essential for the connection it provided between New France in Canada and Louisiana, but the Illinois Country also became a center for agriculture and the expansion of French culture.² In order to protect this valuable asset, the French aligned themselves with several different groups of Native Americans. The Illinois Indians, or Illiniwek Indians, was one of the most prominent communities of Native Americans in the Illinois Country.³ This was a tribe of between five to sixteen different villages or bands of people who shared a common language and culture.⁴ By far the two most prominent and powerful bands within the Illinois were the Peoria and Kaskaskia Indians.⁵ However, these two bands had very contrasting ways of adapting to the influx of European people and ideas. The two divergent paths of the Peoria and Kaskaskia people led to a fracturing of the Illinois that would severely cripple the once powerful people.

The presence of French culture and trade triggered two big differences to form that accelerated the divide between the Kaskaskia and Peoria. The biggest factor that led to this split was the varying degrees of acceptance towards Christianity. The French had a strong religious

² The term culture will be used throughout this paper as meaning the totality of all products produced by human work and thought. This includes social patterns, arts, beliefs, religion, and institutions.

³ The term Illinois Indians will be used when referring to the entire tribe. This term is especially prominent before 1700 when both the Kaskaskia and Peoria were living together in proximity. During the earliest of accounts it is difficult to distinguish between bands because most accounts only refer to the Illinois Indians as a whole. The term Illiniwek is the word that the term Illinois is derived from, and this term means “men” in the Illinois language. After the French penetrate the Illinois Country, the specific terms of Kaskaskia and Peoria will be used more frequently to specify the differences between the two.

⁴ The sixteen different villages that comprised the Illinois, even if only for a brief time, were Kaskaskia, Peoria, Tamaroa, Cahokia, Michigamea, Negawichi, Moingoena, Tapouara, Coiracoentanon, Chinkoa, Chopoussa, Maroa, Michibousa, Ispeminkia, Amonokoa, and Omouahoa. Only the first five of these villages became recognized units of the Illinois in the 1830s. Margaret Kimball Brown, *Cultural Transformations Among the Illinois: An Application of a Systems Model* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1979), 227.

⁵ The term band will be used to show a community of either Peoria or Kaskaskia people. While the villages were the largest political entity among both the Peoria and Kaskaskia, these villages often changed locations due to raids or the hunting season. For instance, even the semi-permanent village of Kaskaskia moved at least three times during the French presence in the Illinois Country. For this reason, the term band will be used to collectively describe these mobile villages.

presence in the Illinois Country, especially with numerous Jesuit missionaries in the region. The Jesuits had the most success with the Kaskaskia people, and this translated into a very close relationship comprised of shared indigenous and French ideas. On the other hand, the Peoria were more reluctant to accept the idea of Christianity or missions. Even when missionaries were present among the Peoria, they were mostly there to facilitate trade in the region.

Christianity was a prominent factor in the divisions among the Illinois Indians, because religion helped to introduce European culture and material goods. The missionaries were the first people to make contact, trade, and share French traditions with the Illinois Indians. The first Jesuit missions in the Great Lakes region established not only places of worship but also places of trade. Saint Esprit was a mission on the southern shore of Lake Superior in 1665 and attracted even members of the Illinois Indians to trade, socialize, and exchange information.⁶ With the Kaskaskia people more receptive of Christian values, it was easier for them to accept other cultural aspects of European society as well, such as the domestication of livestock or the cultivation of wheat. The Kaskaskia became the preferred people of the Illinois by the French, and they were even described as the “true Illinois.”⁷ However, the Peoria people were more reluctant to accept this new religion and in turn were less reliant on the French.

The second major difference that occurred between the Kaskaskia and Peoria because of French influence was the geographic distance that formed between these two bands. Prior to French contact, both the Kaskaskia and Peoria lived in the same village near Starved Rock, north of Lake Peoria. The first mission among the Illinois Indians was established in the Starved Rock

⁶ JR 51: 47-51. (All Jesuit Relations documents will be referred to simply as JR followed by the volume number and page number throughout the rest of the paper.)

⁷ Pierre Margry, “Decouvertes et etablissements de Français dans l’ouest et dans le sud de l’Amerique septentrionale (1614-1754)” (Volume 2 Paris), 201.

region by Fathier Jaques Gravier in 1689.⁸ The village of Starved Rock became essential to French and Illinois relations in the seventeenth century. Beside the establishment of a mission this village, which contained not only the Kaskaskia and Peoria but a wide range of other Indian nations and Illinois villages, became a focal point of trade. The French established a fort at Starved Rock for protection and trade, but this site was abandoned due to a lack of water around the fort. The emerging French Empire that spanned from Canada to Louisiana forced the French to seek a more central location for a fort and village in the Illinois Country.

The French found an alternate site for their center of trade and culture in the Illinois Country with the establishment of Kaskaskia in 1700. This village was located on the west bank of the Mississippi near present day St. Louis. However, this village only lasted three years until it moved farther south to the Kaskaskia River near the confluence of the Mississippi River in 1703. The second site of the Kaskaskia village evolved into the epicenter of trade and culture in the Illinois Country that the French imagined. The village was aptly named Kaskaskia, because the Kaskaskia band of the Illinois left the Starved Rock region and moved over two hundred miles south with the French. The Kaskaskia band of the Illinois established their village, also named Kaskaskia, just a few miles away from the French village. This proximity led to increased contact between the Kaskaskia and French through trade and the establishment of a mission in the Kaskaskia Indian village. While the common links of Christianity and proximity brought the Kaskaskia and French closer, the Peoria had less French influence due to their more northern village location. The Peoria that did convert to Christianity had to make the long trek to

⁸ Ekberg, Carl J, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 31.

Kaskaskia to receive religious instruction and absolution after the relocation of the village in 1703.⁹

Christianity was a major aspect of the cultural difference between the Kaskaskia and Peoria. Missionaries were often the first contact that the Illinois had with the French. Chapter one accordingly deals with how the Kaskaskia and Peoria both differed in their views of Catholicism. This chapter looks at how Christianity affected the Kaskaskia and Peoria from contact with the missionaries until roughly 1720. During this time the missionaries established a loyal following among the Kaskaskia, while the Peoria continually defied the missionaries and their teachings. This acceptance of Christianity made it much easier for the Kaskaskia to adapt and accept French cultures. This improved relationship between the French and Kaskaskia made it much easier to see why the Kaskaskia left the Lake Peoria region.

Chapter two examines the differences between the Kaskaskia and Peoria in regards to location and warfare. This chapter begins by looking at the geographical separation between the Kaskaskia and Peoria. In 1700 the Kaskaskia moved out of the Peoria village and followed the French farther south to the banks of the Mississippi River. This move had far-reaching effects on the Kaskaskia and Peoria. Culturally, the Kaskaskia became close to the French, while the Peoria maintained a friendly but distant relationship. This distance also helped to drive these two bands farther apart, especially militarily. With the Kaskaskia aligned with the French, they were often utilized by the French to raid southern and eastern tribes, which were not traditional enemies of the Illinois Indians. This left the Peoria alone to fight against the northern and western tribes, particularly the Sioux and Fox. Militarily, the Kaskaskia and Peoria achieved great success when they worked together to fight a common enemy. However, with the

⁹ Tracy Neal Leavelle, "Geographies of Encounter: Religion and Contested Spaces in Colonial North America" *American Quarterly* (56.4 2004), 931.

influence of the French, the Kaskaskia and Peoria began to fight their own battles without the assistance of the other.

The third chapter begins with the British entering the region in 1763 after the Seven Years' War. When the British finally moved into the region, the policies they enacted were quite different from previous French policies. For instance, the British suspended the practice of gift giving to the Illinois, and they maintained garrisons of soldiers in the region instead of trading posts. At this point the Kaskaskia were so beaten down by depopulation from disease and warfare that they accepted these British policies and remained in the region. However, the Peoria, despite being weakened themselves, maintained their sovereignty by moving west of the Mississippi into Spanish territory. This move out of the Illinois Country by the Peoria marked the final straw in the separation of the Kaskaskia and Peoria. After this point, the two bands became completely separated and even entered into separate treaties with the American government following the Revolutionary War.

The preferred treatment of the Kaskaskia by the French not only helped to divide the Illinois but weakened the Kaskaskia as well. The increased reliance on the French caused the Kaskaskia people to become less independent, but the Peoria moved in the opposite direction by becoming more independent and opposing strong European control. While the demise of the Kaskaskia people due to an increased European reliance is not a new idea, the Peoria are often overlooked and forgotten, despite the tribe still surviving to this day. The Kaskaskia were only a part of the Illinois Indians who declined due to Catholicism and a reliance on the French. The true demise of the Illinois Indians came from the split between the Peoria and Kaskaskia peoples, which were determined by the separate cultural paths they chose.

Historiography of the Illinois Indians

Three main historians have contributed greatly to different areas concerning the history of the Illinois Indians after European contact. The most inclusive study done on the Illinois Indians was compiled by Emily J. Blasingham. She uses a well-researched historical account of the Illinois to support her reasons for why the depopulation of the Illinois occurred. Blasingham's argument is that there were many contributing factors to the depopulation of the Illinois including: war, disease, monogamy because of Christianity, liquor, and the formation of splinter groups.¹⁰ She concludes that disease and alcoholism were the two main contributors to this decline, which is similar to many other Native American groups. However, Blasingham sets herself apart by also linking this depopulation to the arrival of Catholicism, as well as hinting to, but not expanding on, the idea of a fracture among the Illinois. The writings by Blasingham are integral to my research, because she provides a thorough and exhaustive account of the movement of the different Illinois bands between French contact and the American treaties that moved the Illinois to Kansas and later Oklahoma.

While Blasingham's exhaustive account of the migration of the Illinois is invaluable to my research, this paper will expand upon one of her causes of depopulation. In her research, Blasingham mentions the formation of splinter groups, which could be considered the split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria. However, she only spends three pages on this crucial change in the Illinois way of life. This paper will illustrate how the split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria was a much more prominent factor in the demise of the Illinois Indians. There were many reasons why the split between these bands occurred, and Christianity was certainly a contributing factor to this divide.

¹⁰ Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 1" *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 3, No. 3. (Summer, 1956), 193-224. and Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 2, Concluded" *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 3, No. 4. (Autumn, 1956), 361-412.

Tracy Neal Leavelle elaborates on Blasingham's stance on the impact of Christianity by focusing on how differences in language caused the Illinois to adapt a unique form of Christianity.¹¹ By concentrating on the differences in the meaning of words used by early missionaries, Leavelle shows that Europeans were never completely able to change the culture of the Illinois. He connects the intricacies of the Illinois language to specific religious terms that missionaries used when trying to explain Christianity to the Illinois. This helps to illustrate how the Illinois grafted their own religion onto the beliefs of Christianity instead of completely adopting the new religion. Leavelle also translates the prayers and hymns that missionaries used on the Illinois Indians. By doing this, Leavelle argues that many of the concepts dealing with Christianity were lost among the Illinois because of a language barrier. This helps to aid our understanding of the development of a complex mixture of the physical beliefs held previously by the Illinois and the French Catholic faith.

The work done on the Illinois language by Leavelle shows how prominent the Christian religion was to the Illinois, especially the Kaskaskia. Leavelle demonstrates how influential Kaskaskia individuals, like Marie Rouensa, were able to modify Christianity so that it worked for the Kaskaskia. This assimilation of Christianity, even if it was different from the European concept of Christianity, caused the Kaskaskia in particular to move closer to the French, both physically and culturally.

Raymond Hauser looks at these adaptations by the Illinois in a different light than Leavelle. Hauser focuses on why the Illinois in particular went from a self sufficient group of

¹¹ Tracy Neal Leavelle, "Geographies of Encounter: Religion and Contested Spaces in Colonial North America" *American Quarterly* 56.4 (2004) pp 913-943; Tracy Neal Leavelle, "Bad Things and Good Hearts: Mediation, Meaning, and the Language of Illinois Christianity" *The American Society of Church History* 76:2 (June 2007) pp363-394; Tracy Neal Leavelle, "Why Were Illinois Indian Women Attracted to Catholicism, 1665-1750?" *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000* Volume 11 Number 2 (June 2007).

villages to a dependent tribe (Hauser insists on calling the Illinois a tribe rather than a nation).¹² By focusing on how the systems of authority changed within the Illinois after European contact, Hauser shows how the Illinois were different from other Native Americans in the area. The Illinois altered their horizontal authority structure and implemented a more vertical authority organization with a Great Chief.

Hauser provides a reason for why the Kaskaskia became more dependent than the Peoria. Hauser shows that with the acceptance of a vertical system of authority, a close relationship with European culture was needed. The Kaskaskia accepted this idea of a Great Chief more so than the Peoria, because the Great Chief was always chosen from the Kaskaskia. Europeans elevated the power of the Great Chief above the chiefs of other villages. This caused the Kaskaskia to move closer to the French while the Peoria continually fought to overcome this stigma. Hauser also incorporates this idea of vertical authority in the use of warfare by the Illinois. The Illinois initially used small raiding parties but transitioned into more communal warfare. It was in this communal warfare that the Illinois struggled with the vertical authority system in the French military.

Despite the contributions of these three authors, no single work specifically looks at the split between the Peoria and Kaskaskia. In order to illustrate the paths that were taken that lead up to this split, a combination of the secondary and primary documents are needed. The major primary source used for this project was the accounts made by missionaries who were in the Illinois Country.¹³ Missionaries such as Claude Allouez, Claude Dablon, Jacques Marquette, Gabriel Marest, and Jacques Gravier, provided a wealth of documentation in the form of letters

¹² 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), 127-38; Raymond E. Hauser, "Warfare and the Illinois Indian Tribe During the Seventeenth Century." *Old Northwest* 10 (1984-1985), 367-387.

¹³ Reuben Gold Thwaites, "Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791" *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* Vol. 54-70 (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers 1899).

and correspondences to other missionaries and politicians in France. These invaluable documents have been reviewed in conjunction with other accounts from the period by traders and military personnel.

By combining these primary documents with the ideas in the secondary literature by authors such as Blasingham, Leavelle, and Hauser, the split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria emerges as a prominent factor in the demise of the Illinois Indians. The Kaskaskia become a more dependent band in the eighteenth century while the Peoria are forced to move out of the region in order to preserve their independent demeanor. The different paths chosen by the Kaskaskia and Peoria lead to an overall weakening of the Illinois Indians. In order to understand how the Peoria and Kaskaskia ended up on different cultural paths after European contact, it is necessary to look at the basic structure, location, and culture of the Illinois Indians. The split between these two Illinois bands was far from instantaneous and occurred over several decades. From missionary contact in the 1670s until the Illinois left the region in the 1830s, the lifestyles of the Peoria and Kaskaskia took two very different courses. The fracturing of the Illinois would inevitably come from the growing rift over the cultural differences of the Kaskaskia and Peoria. These bands within the Illinois tribe sealed their fate as a weakening power in the Illinois Country by not collectively uniting either for or against the Europeans.

Chapter One: Similar People with Different Paths: The Fracturing of the Illinois Indians

Structure, Location, and Culture

Before European contact the Kaskaskia and Peoria live a very similar lifestyle. Combined these bands form two parts of the powerful Illinois Indians. With the introduction of European ideas and culture, especially religion, these two bands move farther away from each other. The Kaskaskia integrate the ideas of Christianity into their religion while the Peoria openly defy the missionaries and their practices. The Illinois Indians began to fracture when the Kaskaskia and Peoria varied in their acceptance of the missionaries.

The word “Illinois” comes from the term “Illiniwek,” which the Illinois called themselves. The term is derived from “illini” meaning man, “iw” meaning is, and “ek” being a plural ending. Some of the first Frenchmen into this region changed the term Illiniwek to Illinois, but this did not alter the meaning. According to the Marquette Journal, “When one speaks the word ‘Illinois,’ it is as if one has said in their language, ‘the men’—As if the other Savages were looked upon by them as merely animals.”¹⁴ It would take a long time for the Illinois to drastically alter their culture (to some extent they never did), but they always believed that they were superior to the surrounding Native groups.

Before the 1650s, the Illinois occupied the upper regions of present day Illinois, north of Lake Peoria. However, by the end of the 1650s, the Illinois had moved permanently southward and westward into the interior, close to and perhaps west of the Mississippi River. This move was most likely prompted by a series of raids by surrounding Sioux and Iroquois warriors.¹⁵ In

¹⁴ Mary Elizabeth Good, *Guebert Site: An 18th Century, Historic Kaskaskia Indian Village* Central States Archaeological Societies, Inc. 1972, 1.

¹⁵ Kathleen L. Ehrhardt, *European Metals in Native Hands: Rethinking the Dynamics of Technological Change 1640-1683* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2005), 87.

general, the Illinois shifted their villages depending on the season. Even after making this move southward, the Illinois continued their tradition of having large summer agricultural villages as well as smaller winter villages for hunting or war parties.¹⁶

With this shifting population, it is difficult to precisely count the number of Illinois at any one time. The most comprehensive estimates put the Illinois population in 1670-1680 at 10,500. By 1700, the Illinois population had decreased by forty percent to between 5,800 and 6,200. The next sharp decline in population took place in 1736 from 6,000 to a little more than 2,500. By 1763, the population was leveling off around 1,900 individuals. Once sovereignty passed from the French to the British, many Peoria moved across the Mississippi River into Spanish territory while the Kaskaskia remained in their village under British control.¹⁷ This move by the Peoria away from the Kaskaskia successfully severed any relationship that was left between the two bands. It was after the move out of the Illinois Country that the Peoria became more nomadic and detached themselves from the Kaskaskia.

In order to fully understand the Illinois, one must recognize that the village was the largest unit among these people. The term Illinois Nation or Tribe was applied to these people by Europeans and after their move to reservations. However, the village was the most prominent and meaningful component to the Illinois. Villages acted as the largest political entities in such practices as the calumet (peace pipe) ceremonies, “la crosse” games before a buffalo hunt, and in formal sanctions on behavior during the hunt.¹⁸

While these villages formed a loose confederacy and the elders of each village did meet to discuss primarily military decisions, no village forced another village into a decision. For

¹⁶ Margaret Kimball Brown, *Cultural Transformations Among the Illinois: An Application of a Systems Model* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1979), 228.

¹⁷ Emily J. Blasingham, “The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 2, Concluded” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 3, No. 4. (Autumn, 1956), 361-412.

¹⁸ Brown, *Cultural Transformations* 235-237.

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. This type of situation occurred in 1751 when the Peoria were left to fight the Potawatomi, Mascouten, Menominee, and Chippewa alone.¹⁹ The weakness of this confederacy between Illinois bands made the villages the strongest political unit.

Even though the Illinois recognized a chief, they cannot be considered a chiefdom because their chief did not have the powers associated with a chiefdom. The position of Grand Chief or Great Chief among the Illinois, while it may have been hereditary in lineage and held some prestige, does not refer to a specific multiplicity of rights or obligations.²⁰ Information on the function and importance of the Grand Chief of the Illinois is limited, but during the eighteenth century, it appeared that the chief's main function was to represent the Illinois to foreign groups. Jesuit priests commented that the chiefs' rights and obligations as leaders were little known outside of their obligations to give feasts.²¹

The village structure represented a formalized community arrangement for the Illinois. Each village constituted a particular ancestry with ritual functions connected with this lineage, and each of these villages originally represented single clan villages.²² The recognition of these villages as all Illinois was probably based on cooperative rituals. For instance, one of the most important links between these villages was the calumet dance and its performances. The calumet ceremony was a means of obtaining unity within as well as forming alliances with other villages

¹⁹ Stout, David B. and Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, "Indians of Illinois and Northwestern Indiana" (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1974), 363.

²⁰ Brown, *Cultural Transformations* 234.

²¹ JR 66:221.

²² Harold Hickerson, *The Chippewa and their neighbors: a study in ethnohistory*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), 45.

and groups.²³ Later the practice of calumet dances was extended to the French as a sign of a continued alliance as well as friendship. Not only was the calumet dance held between villages to show a shared cultural identity, but the practice was also used to convey peace with the French. While villages came to identify bands of Illinois Indians, the family or clan was often the most important structure for an individual.

There are limited first-hand accounts of Illinois clans, but it is believed that these clans distinguished themselves by distinct hairstyles and clan names. One example of a distinct hairstyle of the Illinois is “short and erect” hair with a “long lock on the side of each ear.”²⁴ There are no specifics about clan names and habits, but a list was written to distinguish the tribes of the Illinois in the 1690s. Among the significant names in the 1690s are Buck, Buffalo, Wolf, Sun, Earth, Water, Woman, Child, and Girl. Another list in 1736 gives the names of the clans as Crane, Bear, White Hind, Fork (possibly Thunder), Tortoise, and an unnamed device.²⁵ These lists differ so much that it is difficult to determine the exact names of the Illinois clans. However, it is known that a man who went to war would identify with his own clan as much as the clan of his wife. A warrior never married a woman who carried the same clan membership as himself.²⁶

The structure and culture for both the Peoria and Kaskaskia were very similar before European contact. This does not mean that there was not underlying tension between these two groups before and especially after the French presence in the Illinois Country. The Peoria always had a numerical advantage over the other bands of Illinois; yet the Peoria were still

²³ Brown, *Cultural Transformations* 234.

²⁴ Kathleen L. Ehrhardt, *European Metals in Native Hands* 117.

²⁵ Wisconsin State Historical Society (WSHS), *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* Volume 17 (Madison Wisconsin 1855-1931), 250.

²⁶ *Ibid* 252.

believed to be descendants of the Kaskaskia.²⁷ The Peoria were the band of Illinois that was farthest north, which allowed them to be the first to interact with the Jesuit missionary Father Marquette in 1673, the initial contact by the French. In spite of this, Marquette was taken to a second village, Kaskaskia, where he was told the Grand Chief lived.²⁸ Even though this position had little influence on the other bands of Illinois, this was one reason why the Peoria were seen as inferior to the Kaskaskia.²⁹

The French initially based the importance of Illinois villages on their perceived political authority rather than demography or other factors. While the Peoria had more warriors, which benefited the French militarily, the Kaskaskia held the advantage of being more politically connected to the French. At the outset, the French did not need a strong military presence in the region, so the larger population of the Peoria was overlooked. Instead, the French focused on the Great Chief of the Kaskaskia in order to gain an ally in the fur trade. Even though the Great Chief held little real power among the Illinois, the French treated the Great Chief as equal to royalty and often played off of this vanity. For instance, when the French needed an ally to move farther south along the Mississippi River in 1700, they used the Great Chief's pride in order to obtain their way. Rouensa, the Great Chief of the Kaskaskia during this time believed he was a Great Chief among the French, because Father Marest often reiterated this point to him.³⁰ By winning over the most politically powerful village, the French envisioned gaining a prominent and close ally, especially economically.

During the seventeenth century, the Illinois focused a great deal of their time and energy on commerce. Trading opportunities probably drove the Illinois westward away from the Great

²⁷ C.C. Towbridge, *Occasional Contributions* 7 Museum of Anthropology, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1938), 12.

²⁸ JR 59: 119.

²⁹ Brown, *Cultural Transformations* 235.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 230.

Lakes. With the French center of trade established around the Great Lakes, the Illinois moved southwest of this area to establish themselves as middlemen in the fur trade. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Illinois began to incorporate European trade goods such as brass kettles and metal objects into their daily lives well before French explorers or missionaries entered the region.³¹ The Illinois served as middlemen in trade with the French, and at first, they seemed more interested with commerce than warfare. For instance, in 1667 groups of Illinois traveled to Chequamegon Bay at the southwestern end of Lake Superior to trade directly with the French.³²

To solidify their role as middlemen for the French, during the middle decades of the seventeenth century, the Illinois made peace with traditional enemies such as the Dakotas and Winnebagos in order to secure safe passage to French trading posts on Lake Superior.³³ The Illinois were protective of their role as middlemen in the region so much that they would even risk angering the French to keep this position. When Robert Cavelier sieur de La Salle publicized his intentions of building a fort in the Illinois Country in 1680, the Illinois were ardently against this plan.³⁴ With a French fort in the middle of their lands, their control over trade with other tribes would be threatened. If the French could use their own traders in the region, the role of middlemen for the Illinois might be eliminated.

While the influence of the Illinois in regards to trading would diminish in the early eighteenth century with the growth of French settlement, the Illinois were still active in other capacities. For instance, French traders depended on the Illinois as guides and to introduce them

³¹ Thomas Emerson and James Brown, "The Late Prehistory of Illinois," in Walthall and Emerson, *Calumet and Fleur-de-Lys*, 169-170.

³² JR 54:127.

³³ Ibid, 54:191.

³⁴ Moyse Hillaret, "Declaration faite par devant le Sieur Duchesneau," in *Decouvertes et Etablissements des Français dans l'Ouest et dans Le Sud de l'Amerique Septentrionale* vol. 2, ed. Pierre Margry (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1876), 108-109.

to tribes west of the Mississippi River. The connection by Illinois traders with the Osages and Caddos provided a significant number of horses to the Illinois Country, both for the Europeans and Illinois settlements. Additionally, Illinois hunters continued to scout and supply European inhabitants with turkey, bison, and venison.³⁵

Before European contact, tensions between the Peoria and Kaskaskia were relegated to rivalries in “la crosse” games and hunting related activities. With the arrival of Marquette and his action of elevating the Kaskaskia people to the head of this loose confederation, the rift between these two bands widened significantly. Initially the French sought the friendship of the Kaskaskia primarily because of their perceived political superiority. However, despite the fact that the Grand Chief came from the Kaskaskia people, this position held no power over the other villages. It was only after European contact that this position started to be looked at as the “leader” or “chief” of the Illinois as a whole. Once the role of economic middlemen began to change for the Illinois, other cultural aspects continued to draw the Kaskaskia closer to the French, while the Peoria were often left looking in from the outside. There is little doubt that the teachings of Catholicism made the Kaskaskia more important to the French, which enlarged this division even more.

Catholicism Before 1693 and Illinois Religious Beliefs

The first establishment of a mission among the Illinois occurred in the 1670s, and for the next two decades minimal progress was made in converting Natives to Christianity. The Kaskaskia and Peoria both accepted missionaries into their villages, but there was a strong

³⁵ Andre Penicaut, “Relation de Penicaut,” in *Decouvertes et Etablissements des Français dans l’Ouest et dans Le Sud de l’Amerique Septentrionale* vol. 5, ed. Pierre Margry (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1883), 489-490.

inclination to stick with previously held Illinois religious beliefs. During these two initial decades, the missionaries tried to spread Catholicism through the villages. Even though the missionaries praised many aspects of the Illinois religion, which translated well into Catholicism, only small steps were made to convert both the Kaskaskia and Peoria.

The Roman Catholic Church was the national church of France and was seen as one of the foundations for a civil society. Missionaries were often involved in colonization, local administration, and the fur trade. While this often put them at odds with the government of France, the Jesuits, in particular, were able to make great inroads in New France and the Illinois Country. Their royal objective was that the colonial church should grow in the image of the metropolitan church in France.³⁶ Despite the fact that this did not occur completely in the Illinois Country, many of the first Jesuit missionaries in the region felt that the Illinois in particular were well suited for Christianity.

The biggest reason for many missionaries, including Claude Allouez (who established a mission on Lake Superior) and Claude Dablon (who was the superior of Jesuit missions in the Great Lakes), to think that the Illinois were good candidates for Catholicism was their considerable population and established belief of a supreme being. As noted earlier, the population of the Illinois Indians as a whole declined significantly after European contact. However, during this time period their numbers were still in the thousands, which made them a formidable force in the region. Allouez was quite optimistic that the conversion of many of the Illinois could be possible. He stated that “They honor with a very special worship one who is preeminent above the other, as they maintain, because he is the maker of all things.”³⁷ This supreme god that was the most important among the Illinois was the Sun. Dablon was also

³⁶ Cornelius J Jaenen, “The Role of the Church in New France” (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1985), 4-5.

³⁷ JR 51: 47, 49.

confident that once the Illinois were “instructed in the truths of our Religion, they will speedily change this worship and render it to the Creator of the Sun, as some have already begun to do.”³⁸

Also appealing to many of the early French in the region was the civilized demeanor of the Illinois, which was thought to have occurred because of similar religious practices. Dablon stated that “These people (the Illinois) showed us such politeness, caresses, and evidences of affection as will scarcely be credited; and this is especially true of the chief of that Illinois Nation [Grand Chief of Kaskaskia].” He then commented about the great honor that was shown by the men of the Illinois in receiving him to their village.³⁹ These similar cultural virtues are attributed as a reason why the Illinois practiced several religious ceremonies that were similar to Catholicism. For example, when the Illinois danced and used their sacred calumet, a religious pipe, afterwards they could be seen drinking out of a communal cup, which is similar to the French custom of sharing wine in church.⁴⁰ The Illinois were also accustomed to the practice of fasting. For instance, when a girl of the Illinois started to menstruate, they were usually forced to not eat or drink anything in order to see visions.⁴¹

Obviously, the similarities between the religious styles were not the only reason for the Illinois to accept the missionaries into their villages. Various wars with other tribes, such as the Sioux, Fox, and Iroquois, devastated the Illinois and forced them to look for other advantages. An alliance with the French provided this advantage by not only adding a military ally but also by increasing their trade and wealth. The Illinois also believed that this French trade and increased knowledge could provide them with protection as well as increase their power. They

³⁸ JR 55: 207-219.

³⁹ JR 51: 47, 49.

⁴⁰ JR 55: 207-219.

⁴¹ Excerpt from Antoine Denis Raudot, “Memoir Concerning the Different Indian Nations of North America” (1710), in *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes 1615- 1760*, ed. W. Vernon Kinietz (1940; reprint, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1965), 392.

believed that this power could be associated with the Christian God. If they worshipped him, then he would aid them in war, bring peace to their country, and stem their depopulation. For all intents and purposes, the Illinois were hoping that a French alliance and this new God could rejuvenate their society.⁴² The Illinois were not simply accepting this religion in order to gain a military ally or the benefits of trade. Instead, the Illinois took pieces of Catholicism and incorporated them into their own religion. This was not simply a ploy by the Illinois in order to gain more power in the region. This was the beginning of a shared culture.

This transformation of culture did not mean that the Illinois completely abandoned their religion or way of life. Despite the belief in one single, supreme being, the Illinois made little distinction between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. Every worldly object had the potential to be a spiritual object, and this drastically affected how the Illinois viewed Catholicism.⁴³ The Illinois never did overcome their “superstitions” as Gabriel Marest commented to Father Germon in 1712. “All of their [Illinois] knowledge is limited to the knowledge of animals, and the needs of life, so it is to these things that all their worship is limited.”⁴⁴ The problem as the French saw it with the Illinois understanding of religion was that their foundation was in the physical world, and this is best portrayed by their belief of manitous.

Manitous referred to the Illinois relationship with spirits. A manitou resided in everyday objects, such as animals, trees, stars, etc. These manitous were believed to be the cause of all phenomenon as well as guiding the Illinois to their place in the environment. Manitous could also be people or shamans who were used in spiritual ceremonies and performed the

⁴² Bilodeau, Christopher, “They Honor our Lord among themselves in their own way: Colonial Christianity and the Illinois Indians” *The American Quarterly* 25.3. (2001), 353.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 353.

⁴⁴ JR 66: 233.

practices of a doctor. For the French, another peculiar aspect of Illinois culture and religion was the presence of berdaches and their status among the Illinois.

The berdache was a male Indian who assumed a female role in the society, particularly during the last half of the seventeenth century. Berdaches dressed in female clothing, assumed the female occupations, and pursued sexual relationships with both males and females. These particular individuals were neither honored nor despised, but many of the Illinois feared them because of the power they wielded as shamans or manitous.⁴⁵ Marquette even observed that berdaches “pass for Manitous, --That is to say, for Spirits.”⁴⁶

The role of the berdache among the Illinois was closely associated with their religious traditions. Even though the sources do not directly state that berdaches were shamans, they were spiritual and healing specialists. The berdaches held a contentious spot within the Illinois community, because they were considered useful for their supernatural power but not necessarily privileged.⁴⁷ However, the actions of many berdaches were looked down upon by Europeans because of the act of sodomy. Antoine Denis Raudot, a joint intendant of New France, commented on how the Illinois raised boys for the purpose of sodomy. Raudot observed that once a boy was old enough to use arrows but declined, they let his hair grow and covered him with cloth from waist to knee.⁴⁸ This was the beginning of the life of many berdaches, because this lifestyle was chosen by the group very early in life for many of the Illinois.

The decline of the berdache from Illinois society occurred rapidly after the seventeenth century. The two main reasons for this phenomenon were the shrinking numbers of the Illinois

⁴⁵ Raymond E. Hauser, “The Berdache and the Illinois Indian Tribe during the Last Half of the Seventeenth Century” *Ethnohistory* 37: 1 (Winter 1990).

⁴⁶ JR 59: 129.

⁴⁷ Raymond E. Hauser, 52-56.

⁴⁸ Excerpt from Antoine Denis Raudot, “Memoir Concerning the Different Indian Nations of North America” (1710), in *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes 1615- 1760*, ed. W. Vernon Kinietz (1940; reprint, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1965), 388-389.

and European hostility towards this aspect of Illinois culture. Since the berdaches were chosen in childhood, the absolute number of them were bound to decrease when the population of the tribe diminished by more than forty percent between 1680 and 1700.⁴⁹ Secondly, the tribal effort to accommodate the French may have discouraged potential berdaches from living this lifestyle.

The other main aspect of the Illinois religion, which lasted well into European contact, was the use of the calumet. The calumet was the centerpiece of many Illinois ceremonies that was held in high regard. The calumet was a pipe made of red stone that is found in the direction of the Sioux. It has a very long handle, from which are hung several feathers painted red, yellow, and black. The handle was also covered in the skin from ducks' necks.⁵⁰ Not only was the calumet used in religious ceremonies, but it lasted well into French contact as a symbol of peace and friendly negotiations between the two groups of people.

In the beginning, the religions of both the French and Illinois seemed odd and out of the ordinary to the other group. Similar aspects of each religion as well as the adaptation of religious symbols helped to blend French Catholicism with the Illinois religion. However, this change did not come immediately. Missionaries worked diligently to convince the Illinois about the benefits of Catholicism; nevertheless, it was not until the missionaries converted a prominent Kaskaskia woman named Marie Rouensa that this blend of the two religions flourished.

Rouensa's Example Leads Kaskaskia

For the first two decades the missionaries did little to change the religious beliefs of the Kaskaskia or Peoria. During this time, the missionaries dealt mainly with the men of the villages

⁴⁹ Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 2, Concluded", 365.

⁵⁰ Pierre Deliette. "Memoir of De Gannes (Deliette) Concerning the Illinois Country" 390-391.

in order to spread their religious message. However, the true change in conversions did not occur among the Illinois until 1693, when women became prominently involved in the religion. This period also marked a distinct split among the Kaskaskia and Peoria. While the Kaskaskia women became more involved in Christianity, the Peoria became more openly opposed to the missionaries and their values.

The most prominent Jesuit missionary in the Illinois country before 1693 was Jacques Marquette. He was known for his choreographed ritual of exchange with the Illinois that demonstrated a mutual respect. This created a bond that lasted even after his death. When Marquette did pass away in the Illinois Country, his body was exhumed by the surrounding indigenous people and a funeral procession of thirty canoes led his bones to the church at the mission of St. Ignace at Missilimakinac.⁵¹ Nevertheless before Marquette's death, he spent the previous years traveling through the Illinois country to spread the Catholic faith. His main way of conveying this message was through the leaders of the Illinois people.

In 1673 when Marquette first journeyed through this region, he stopped at the "Village of the great Captain" of the Illinois. He was greeted by three old men, whom he perceived as the leaders. Marquette explained that a faith in Jesus Christ could restore peace everywhere, as the French did by subduing the Iroquois. The Illinois were quite pleased with Marquette and offered him a slave as well as a calumet, which was more valuable than the slave.⁵² The next year Marquette returned to establish the mission of La Conception among the Illinois. It was during this time that Marquette stated how he met on various occasions with the "Chiefs of the nation" and "with all the old men" before addressing the public in a general assembly.⁵³ Marquette incorrectly placed the males of the Illinois socially above the females of the village. However, it

⁵¹ JR 59: 201.

⁵² JR 59: 119-123.

⁵³ JR 59: 187.

would eventually be the women of the Kaskaskia who would increase converts and spread the new religion.

Catholicism emerged as a vital connection that both the French and Kaskaskia used to structure their relationships. After the 1690s, especially after 1693, Catholicism became a central component of Kaskaskia identity. When the village was relocated after 1700 to the west bank of the Mississippi River, missionaries relocated with the Indians.⁵⁴ This village developed into a valuable center for Catholicism in the Illinois Country largely due to strategic intermarriage.

Intermarriage played a crucial role in linking the French and Kaskaskia people and cultures. This was definitely the situation in the case of Michel Accault, a Frenchman, and Rouensa, a notable Illinois elder of the Kaskaskia people. Rouensa and Accault had little interest in Catholicism and were looking for a stronger trading relationship. However, Rouensa's daughter, Marie Rouensa, whom Accault married, was a devout Catholic. After refusing to marry Accault, Marie Rouensa finally consented in 1693 and also influenced her new husband to join Catholicism. Afterwards, Chief Rouensa and his wife declared their intentions to become Catholics with a large feast for men and a separate feast for women.⁵⁵ Marie Rouensa became one of the keys to a strong alliance with the French as well as among the Kaskaskia. She persuaded many of the Kaskaskia to follow her path, which put the village in a favorable position with the French.

Kaskaskia women used Catholicism as a tool of empowerment. By accepting this new religion, the women of Kaskaskia brought many French traders into Illinois villages. With these new traders came an increased abundance of French goods. Because of their ability to secure

⁵⁴ Tracy Neal Leavelle, "Geographies of Encounter: Religion and Contested Spaces in Colonial North America" *American Quarterly* (56.4 2004), 930.

⁵⁵ *Ibid* 928.

more abundant sources of French goods, Kaskaskia women elevated their status throughout the community. These intermarriages not only opened up economic opportunities, but they also forced many Kaskaskia men to practice Catholicism. With most of the Kaskaskia women converting to Catholicism after Marie Rouensa, the Kaskaskia males eventually did the same in order to satisfy their female counterparts, who desired to be married by the missionaries.

Rouensa was one of Father Gravier's more prominent female converts among the Kaskaskia, where the Jesuits converted more women than men. With the conversion of Rouensa and Gravier's enthusiasm for converts, the other young women of Kaskaskia were encouraged to speak out for their new found religion.⁵⁶ Many of these females used Christianity to challenge the traditional wisdom of the tribal elders, and several of them became known for "mocking the superstitions of their nation."⁵⁷ The status of Kaskaskia women was also hindered by marriage arrangements and the prevalence of polygamy.

The Illinois were a patrilineal society in which the brothers played an important role in the selection of a husband.⁵⁸ Marriage procedures were generally instituted when the man was absent from the village. During this time the male's father or uncle gathered a variety of goods to be taken by female relatives to the home of the desired bride. If the proposed alliance was not satisfactory, then the gifts were returned. If accepted, the girl's family then dressed her carefully and went with her to the man's home bearing gifts. This was done four times, and on the last time the bride stayed with the man.⁵⁹ However, the girl's brothers are said to have determined who exactly their sister was allowed to accept. The defiance of Marie Rouensa to marry a non-

⁵⁶ Susan Sleeper-Smith, "Women, Kin, and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade" *Ethnohistory* 47.2 (2000), 426.

⁵⁷ DeGannes, "Memoir of DeGannes Concerning the Illinois Country," in *The French Foundations, 1680-1692*, ed. Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner, *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Springfield, IL, 1934), 23: 361.

⁵⁸ JR 65: 67.

⁵⁹ Brown, *Cultural Transformations* 242.

Catholic Frenchman was not typical of Illinois society. However, her success at converting her husband and family, as well as her elevated position in society, allowed her to change the social status of Illinois women.

Before the arrival of French missionaries, the practice of polygamy was also encouraged among the Illinois. When a man was a good hunter, it was not unheard of for him to marry several sisters, aunts, or nieces as his wives.⁶⁰ The Jesuit priests looked down upon this sororal form of polygamy. A letter from Father Sebastien Rasles illustrated the frustration among the newly arrived French when they recognized the practice of polygamy. Rasles stated that:

There would be much less difficulty in converting the Illinois, if Prayer permitted them to practice Polygamy; they acknowledge that prayer is good, and they are delighted to have it taught to their wives and children; but, when we speak of it to them for themselves, we realize how difficult it is to fix their natural inconstancy, and to persuade them to have only one wife and to have her always.⁶¹

The practice of polygamy clashed considerably with the new religion of Catholicism that the Jesuits introduced to the Illinois. However, after the social rise of Maria Rouensa and other Illinois women, the practice of polygamy began to be looked down upon, particularly among the Kaskaskia.

Christian conversion enabled Rouensa to position herself as a teacher among the Illinois. She was able to translate Gravier's Christian message into her Kaskaskia language, and Gravier even loaned her books with pictures to supplement her Christian storytelling.⁶² "She explained the pictures on the whole of the Old Testament to the old and young men whom her father assembled in his dwelling."⁶³ Not only did she personally teach other Illinois in the ways of Christianity, but she helped spread the prayers and hymns, which were already translated into the

⁶⁰ Illinois State Historical Library, *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Volume 23 1903-1948), 355.

⁶¹ JR 67: 173.

⁶² Sleeper-Smith, 428.

⁶³ JR 64: 229.

Illinois language.⁶⁴ The breaking down of the language barrier was one of the first things that the Jesuit missionaries tried to accomplish when they entered the Illinois Country.

After Marie Rouensa converted to Catholicism, she became a very prominent member of the church as well as the community. She was so highly regarded after her death that she was even buried in the church under her pew.⁶⁵ Her status in the community also rose, especially with her relationships among the French. For instance, during Marie Rouensa's life she was able to amass a fortune worth over forty-five thousand livres and included several plots of land with livestock.⁶⁶ Despite the significant progress of Catholicism in Kaskaskia, Marie Rouensa's influence did not include the Peoria people. Conversely, the Peoria chose a very different path when it came to missionaries in their village.

“Are We Kaskaskia?”

The Peoria were similar to the Kaskaskia in many ways. The language and customs among the two villages were quite comparable, except the Peoria were more reluctant to modify their culture. With the help of Marie Rouensa, the French established a foothold of Catholicism in Kaskaskia. Without an influential elder or woman to lead conversions, the same acceptance of Christianity did not take place among the Peoria. Instead, the Peoria continued to follow their

⁶⁴ Father Allouez did extensive work in translating *The Credo* (Apostle's Creed), *the Pater Noster* (Our Father), and *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary) into the Illinois language. However, many of the translations could not be made completely, because many Christian concepts had no Illinois equivalent. For example, the Illinois had no good term for the word “sins,” so it was simply translated into “bad things,” which cause some difficulties. For further nuances of the religious language, see Tracy Neal Leavelle, “Bad Things and Good Hearts: Mediation, Meaning, and the Language of Illinois Christianity” *The American Society of Church History* (76:2 June 2007), 363-394.

⁶⁵ Excerpts from the Kaskaskia sacramental registers 1695-1792, in Marthe Faribault-Beauregard, ed., *La Population des forts français d'Amérique dans les forts et les établissements français en Amérique du Nord au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Montréal: Bergeron, 1982-1984), 2: 91, 94, 108, 122, 115, 140, 132, 146-149, 205.

⁶⁶ “Inventory of the Estate of Marie Rouensa,” in Carl J. Ekberg and Anton J. Pregaldin, “Marie Rouensa-8cate8a and the Foundations of French Illinois,” *Illinois Historical Journal* 84, no 3 (Autumn 1991), 158-160.

male leaders and the path of letting in minimal Catholic contacts. Similar to the Kaskaskia before Rouensa, the Peoria welcomed the missionaries in order to open up avenues of trade. However, the Peoria never progressed past this stage without an influential individual like Rouensa.

After Father Gravier's success among the Kaskaskia, it made perfect sense for him to address the Peoria about the concept of Catholicism. While Gravier saw the Peoria as polite and respectful, two of the same qualities that made the Kaskaskia prime candidates for the religion, he was surprised by the indifference to instruction that he observed among the Peoria.⁶⁷ The chief of the Peoria was one of the most prominent "jugglers," which was a derisive term that equated them with fraudulent performers and was often used by the missionaries. This particular chief of the Peoria was influential in forbidding his fellow people in listening to the sermons of Father Gravier. The chief stated that "It was important for the public welfare that no one should go to pray to God in the chapel anymore, until the corn was ripe and the harvest over; and that he would then exhort the people to go to be instructed."⁶⁸ It is possible that the chief was looking for a present to shorten this time frame, which was rather long, but it is more likely that he strategically picked this date because he knew the buffalo hunt began after harvest. The harvest marked the beginning of the annual buffalo hunt, which meant that a majority of the Peoria would be off hunting and unable to practice this new religion. Unlike Marie Rouensa, who used Christianity as an avenue to achieve prestige and wealth, the chief of the Peoria realized that any acceptance of Christianity would undercut what little authority he had among his populous village.

⁶⁷ JR 64:163-165.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 165.

Despite the Peoria being the largest band of Illinois Indians, it is clear that depopulation took its toll on this group as well. Like many other Native groups, disease from European contact devastated the community. However, the Peoria would often view this as being somehow caused by the fact that the missionaries in their village baptized their children. The death of some children who had been baptized caused the missionary's approach to be viewed with apprehension when he visited the sick. The Peoria often thought it was all over for the child when baptized by a missionary. This was apparent to Father Gravier in 1694 when he met a band of "weeping women lamenting over a dying child, who expired as soon as I tried to approach him."⁶⁹ After the child's death, the grandmother proceeded to throw a fit on Father Gravier, who baptized the baby a year earlier. Gravier was even violently pushed out of the dwelling. This would not be the last violent attack he would encounter among the Peoria.

However, not all Peoria were reluctant to accept this new faith. Some Peoria would convert and continue to practice Christianity. On three separate occasions, Gravier mentioned that some of the Peoria included themselves in prayer with the Kaskaskia. He referred to this segment of the Peoria as the more docile portion of the band.⁷⁰ However, it must be remembered that Gravier was speaking from a biased position when writing to other missionaries. Gravier's goal in the region was to convert individuals to Catholicism. Therefore, it was possible that he overestimated his support among the Peoria, especially since the Peoria chief swayed the majority of the band with a rousing speech. Gravier commented that the Peoria chief led his countrymen by proclaiming:

We do not thus despise thee; we have pity on thee, and thou shalt have a share in our feasts. Let the Kaskaskia pray to God if they wish and let them obey him who has instructed them. Are we Kaskaskia? And why shouldst thou obey him, thou

⁶⁹ Ibid, 165.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 199, 201, 235.

who art a Peouareoua [varied spelling of Peoria]? Since he has vexed thee, thou must declare publicly that thou abandonest prayer; that it is worthless.⁷¹

The difference between the Kaskaskia and many Peoria was their ability to blend the Illinois religion with the new ideas of Catholicism. For instance, the Kaskaskia revered Jesuit chapels as manitous of protection.⁷² Claude Allouez noted that the Illinois believed “that the house of God will protect them, and keep them safer than they formerly were.”⁷³ The Kaskaskia even began to consider other Catholic symbols, such as crosses and rosaries, and French missionaries themselves as manitous. Without a prominent support of Catholicism, the Peoria had a much more difficult time merging the two religions and stuck by their old religious practices.

Father Gravier was one of the most outraged by the “jugglers.” He was particularly taken aback by the practice of dog sacrifice in which a little dog would be hung on a pole. On one instance he even “pulled the pole out of the ground and flung it; with the dog, upon the grass, and continued [his] visits.”⁷⁴ However, Father Gravier was not the only person shocked by these religious beliefs. In 1699, Father Julien Binneteau spoke of how the “jugglers” talked to the skins of animals, claimed that medicinal herbs are gods, and sung songs to their manitous. He was even startled when these “jugglers” began to announce, “Where is the God of whom the black gowns tell us? What does he give us to induce us to hear them? Where are the feasts they give us?” These kind of remarks led Father Julien Binneteau to believe that the “demon’s party is maintained here.”⁷⁵ Binneteau was especially skeptical of how few of the young men relied on the exercises of religion.

⁷¹ Ibid, 171-173.

⁷² Christopher Bilodeau, 355-356, 361-362.

⁷³ JR 58:265-67.

⁷⁴ JR 64: 191.

⁷⁵ JR 65: 65.

Many of these “jugglers” were also medicine men or manitous who would lead religious or public ceremonies. As stated earlier, these individuals were neither honored nor despised, because for the most part they were feared. One account shows how these manitous evoked fear in Peoria as late as 1721. Pierre Deliette sat with one of these medicine men when he felt something stir under him, which he paid no attention to at first. When he felt it a second time, he asked the medicine man what it was. Deliette was sitting on buckskin that was tied into a sack and filled with rattlesnakes. He was assured by the medicine man that there was no cause for alarm because their teeth had been extracted. Deliette then proceeded to handle the rattlesnakes with little fear, and the medicine man told him about how the snakes were used in ceremonies. The medicine man would often let the snake run and pick them up in the presence of young men, who would look upon this act and regard him as a manitou.⁷⁶ The Illinois never did overcome their superstitions as Gabriel Marest commented to Father Germon in 1712.⁷⁷ The religious virtues of the Peoria took a turn for the worse in 1703, after the resettlement of Kaskaskia outside of the French village of the same name.

Once the resettlement was completed, Father Gravier returned to the Peoria determined to enlighten them in the Catholic way of life. However, a man, who felt slighted by the priest over the refusal to bury his brother by the church, wounded Father Gravier several times with arrows. The few Catholic women of the Peoria helped the wounded Gravier, but it took several Kaskaskias, sent by Rouensa, to rescue the missionary. The priest died two years later from a complication with the arrowhead, which remained embedded deep in his arm. After this event,

⁷⁶ Pierre Deliette, “Memoir of De Gannes (Deliette) Concerning the Illinois Country” *The French Foundations, 1680-1693* Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1934), 23: 372-375.

⁷⁷ Quote used on page 19 of this paper as well. “All of their [Illinois] knowledge is limited to the knowledge of animals, and the needs of life, so it is to these things that all their worship is limited.” JR 66: 233.

the Peorias successfully kept the Jesuits out of their village for five years. However, the Peoria finally invited the Jesuits back to solidify a trade embargo for much needed French products.⁷⁸

While the Peoria and Kaskaskia were strong allies, there was a distinct change after European contact. In 1712, Gabriel Marest stated that, Peorias and Kaskaskia live on good terms, but the manners are very different. “The former are brutal and coarse; the latter, on the contrary, are gentle and kind.” Marest also said that this distance between the bands proved to be difficult in the teachings of Christianity, which was inevitably one of the major causes of this split.

Missionary does no great good to the Savages unless he live with them, and continually watch their conduct; without this they very soon forget the instructions that he has given them, and, little by little, they return to their former licentiousness. This knowledge that we have of the fickleness of the Savages afterward gave us great uneasiness about the condition of the Mission of the Peouarias; our distance from this village, which is the largest one in these quarters, prevented our making frequent journeys to it.⁷⁹

The distances as well as the attack of Father Gravier make the Peoria begin to look much less docile than the Kaskaskia.

The Peoria discontent with the French culture was much deeper than simply the refusal to accept Catholicism. Since the missionaries and French explorers arrived in the Illinois Country, the Kaskaskia were perceived as the most favored among the Illinois. While this title initially referred to the perceived political position of the Kaskaskia, the term developed to encompass almost every cultural aspect, not just politics. Thus, if the Peoria welcomed the French missionaries into their village, then they would be accepting an inferior position among the Illinois. With a greater warrior population and a great sense of pride, the Peoria refused to

⁷⁸ JR 66: 50-65.

⁷⁹ JR 66: 265.

accept this secondary position. By constantly rejecting the French missionaries, the Peoria asserted their place among the Illinois as equals to the Kaskaskia.

The split between the Peoria and Kaskaskia over the influence of Catholicism significantly impacted their respective relationship with the French. Both the Kaskaskia and Peoria served as middlemen in the fur trade for the French. However, the Kaskaskia initially succeeded in this role to a greater extent because of their acceptance of Christianity and their perceived role as more politically significant. The Kaskaskia became the favored band of the Illinois while the Peoria were relegated to a minor position. Even though the Peoria had larger numbers than the Kaskaskia which would make them better military allies, the French viewed Kaskaskia as the main village and people of the Illinois. When the French established themselves permanently in the region, the role of middlemen in trade would change significantly for the Illinois Indians. Instead of openly trading with other groups of Native Americans, both the Kaskaskia and Peoria found themselves at war for French causes, such as trade. The role of middlemen by the Illinois would transform their way of life significantly.

Chapter Two: Different Paths Due to Distance and Warfare

Illinois Warfare in the Seventeenth Century

Religion was not the only aspect that drove the Kaskaskia and Peoria away from one and other. The distance between the two bands even increased with the arrival of Europeans to the Illinois Country. Before contact the Kaskaskia and Peoria lived in the same region. However, the French eventually persuaded the Kaskaskia to move away from the Peoria and establish a village along the Mississippi River. This geographic distance had permanent repercussions, especially in warfare. With a larger geographical distance between the Kaskaskia and Peoria, these bands began to fight separate enemies instead of combining their forces to be more effective.

The appearance of the French during the summer of 1673 marked a significant change for the Illinois Indians. While none of the Illinois leaders knew the exact opportunities or dangers that would occur from an alliance with the French, they were quite aware the meeting portended change in their world.⁸⁰ The Illinois were once the dominant power in the region between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi Valley, but this control would be threatened by the intensified colonial warfare during the eighteenth century. The Illinois found themselves sharing the heart of their country with a relatively large and commercially prosperous colonial population.⁸¹ When the Illinois population was large and intimidating, this shared territory was not as menacing for the Illinois, because they always had a numerical advantage over the Europeans in the area. However, with the declining population of the Illinois, influence with their European allies dwindled.

⁸⁰ JR 59: 129-37.

⁸¹ Alan G. Shackleford, "The Illinois Indians in the Confluence Region: Adaption in a Changing World," in Edmunds, R. David. *Enduring Nations: Native Americans in the Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 15.

With the help of the Illinois the French quickly capitalized on the fertile soil and geographical significance of the Illinois Country. These factors lured many French traders and settlers to the region, which transformed the Illinois Country into an essential link between Canada and Louisiana. With the influx of settlers into the region, the economic prominence of the Illinois diminished. However, the Illinois were called upon as French military allies for years to come.

Initially for the Illinois, trade was the main interest in relations with the French. One aspect of being middlemen to the French in this period was to provide Europeans with a steady supply of slaves. For this reason the Illinois sometimes traded or went to war with the tribes of the Missouri Valley, such as the Iowas, Missouriias, and Otoes. The geographical proximity of these tribes made them valuable trade partners and allies. If these tribes did not exclusively use the Illinois as trade partners or as the object of slave raids, then war was the next option. Mostly the Pawnees, who lived farther west, bore the brunt of Illinois slaving raids. The Pawnees were not potential rivals for the militarily superior Illinois. Instead, the Pawnees were a convenient and vulnerable source of slaves for the Indian slave trade that thrived in French communities in Canada and Louisiana.⁸²

With the changing economic opportunities presented by the influx of French into the Illinois Country, the Illinois Indians had to reconstruct their warfare practices. Even before European contact, the Illinois viewed war as a normal element in intertribal relations. Peace could only obtain a short and temporary armistice with the smoking of a calumet pipe. After this ceremonial ritual, a period of recovery occurred for the warring parties. Even though the Illinois

⁸² 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*, ed. Russell Magnaghi (Marquette: Northern Michigan University Press, 1982), 43-53.

had several traditional enemies, they only went to war with a few of their enemies at any given time because of these armistices.⁸³

The male role in Illinois society was driven by this emphasis on war and hunting. Shortly after the French entered the region, Father Sabastien Rale commented, “Among the Illinois the only way of acquiring public esteem and regard is...to gain the reputation of a skillful hunter, and still further, a good warrior.”⁸⁴ During these early years of interaction with Europeans, French missionaries commented on intertribal wars between the Illinois and Sioux. In an account of events of 1642, Father Lalemant discussed how the Sioux were engaged in “continual wars” with the Illinois.⁸⁵

The fighting with the Sioux would continue intermittently until the 1680s. It was also during this time that the Iroquois began to venture into the Illinois Country. After the Iroquois killed the women and children of a small Illinois village in 1653, men ran for assistance from other Illinois villages. Over the next two years the Illinois engaged the Iroquois in battle until the Iroquois were defeated by the Illinois. This early encounter between the Illinois and Iroquois probably initiated a period of hostile relations that continued intermittently until the close of the seventeenth century.⁸⁶

These early attacks on the Sioux and Iroquois were socially devastating rather than numerically, because a different approach to warfare was used by the Illinois Indians. These small raiding parties were destructive in the sense that when a person was lost, the warriors would often invoke revenge upon their attacker and the cycle of warfare would continue. During

⁸³ Raymond E. Hauser, “Warfare and the Illinois Indian Tribe During the Seventeenth Century.” *Old Northwest 10* (1984-1985), 368.

⁸⁴ JR 57: 171.

⁸⁵ JR 23: 225-227.

⁸⁶ Emma Helen Blair, *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes* (Cleveland, 1911) 2 Vols. 153-157.

the encounters between the Illinois and the Sioux or Iroquois, small raiding parties were sources of great significance to the social order of the Illinois. As stated earlier, the male role in society depended on his ability to hunt and succeed in battle. These small war parties made it easy for war to become very personal to the individual. Every warrior was eligible to lead a war party because all of the members of the expedition were volunteers. The leader's success or failure determined how long he would lead the party.⁸⁷

These small raiding parties would be used by the Illinois until new economic motives would force them to use different methods of warfare. With the intensification and growth of trade in the Illinois Country after European contact, the small raiding parties were replaced by communal warfare, or general-march offensives, that involved nearly all of the men in a village.⁸⁸ While small raiding parties were stealthier, the larger communal offenses gave the Illinois a greater opportunity to either impose their position of power on neighboring tribes by capturing slaves or to use their numerical advantage to hunt for more pelts.

At first this shift to a more communal style of warfare did not change the Kaskaskia or Peoria population. During the seventeenth century the entire population of the Kaskaskia and Peoria combined was around 6,000, with the Peoria holding a slight numerical advantage.⁸⁹ The Kaskaskia and Peoria both offered the French a sizeable communal war party. These large war parties helped the French, Kaskaskia, and Peoria at first, because these groups combined to fight a common enemy in the Iroquois, Sioux, or Fox.

This changing style of warfare was illustrated best by the prolonged wars with the Iroquois between the 1650s and 1680s. The Iroquois first made inroads into the Illinois Country in the 1650s, but they were defeated by the Illinois quite convincingly. However, during the

⁸⁷ Hauser, "Warfare and the Illinois Indian Tribe" 369-370.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 370-375.

⁸⁹ Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 2, Concluded", 372.

1670s, the Iroquois would return to the area to gain a greater control over the pelt trade. Similar to how the Illinois would exploit the lands west of the Mississippi River as hunting grounds, the Iroquois sought to use the Illinois Country as a place to obtain pelts.⁹⁰

The biggest difference in the use of hunting lands was that the Illinois used the lands west of the Mississippi for their own personal gain. On the other hand the Iroquois did not necessarily want to use the Illinois Country so that they could hunt on this land. Instead, the Iroquois would often persuade other tribes in the Illinois Country and Great Lakes region to give a portion of their pelts as tribute to the Iroquois in return for peace with those tribes. For instance, one account by a man named La Potherie shows that an Iroquois war party of approximately eight hundred was on its way to the Green Bay region of Wisconsin around 1675. However, this party turned its attention towards the Illinois when the Miami, Mascouten, Kackapoo, Fox, and other tribes around Green Bay presented the Iroquois with presents of beaver pelts. This group of Iroquois then captured or killed nineteen Illinois who were returning from trading in the region.⁹¹ This incident sparked a revival of the Iroquois/Illinois wars that had raged a couple of decades earlier.

The Illinois became successful middlemen for French trade in the Illinois Country, and the Illinois did not want anything to jeopardize this lucrative position. However, the Iroquois soon did everything they could to achieve a greater presence in the Illinois Country. The Iroquois would again raid into the Illinois Country between the years of 1678-1679, but the Illinois would once again push them out of the region. It seems as though these raids were relatively infrequent and ineffective against the Illinois until the 1680s.⁹² It was during 1680 that

⁹⁰ Joseph Jablow, *Indians of Illinois and Indiana: Illinois, Kickapp, and Potawatomi Indians* (New York: Grand Publishing Inc. 1974), 74.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 80.

⁹² *Ibid*, 83.

the Illinois were at odds once more with the Sioux. With a significant number of warriors on an expedition against the Sioux, the Iroquois were able to attack the Illinois with a considerable force of several hundred men, including some Miami warriors who aligned themselves with the Iroquois.⁹³ The coalition of Iroquois and Miami warriors successfully managed to force the remaining Illinois to evacuate their village and send their families down the Illinois River to the Mississippi River.

The main reason for these continued incursions into the Illinois was to force the Illinois to bring their beaver pelts to the Iroquois. In turn the Iroquois would then trade these pelts with the English. By raiding the Illinois, the Iroquois intended to not only gain beaver pelts from the Illinois but intimidate the other tribes in the area to make them do the same. The role of middlemen for the Iroquois played a prominent role in their desire to control trade in their region, possibly because the Iroquois hunting lands did not contain as many beaver pelts as the English required for trade. During the period around 1685, the Five Nations had few or no beavers in their own country, and this was the reason why they needed to travel a great distance to hunt or obtain these beaver pelts.⁹⁴ Even La Salle noted when he traveled through the region before the attack of 1680 that there was a great desire for trade by the Iroquois, who had a great passion for the beaver pelt.⁹⁵

The war against the Iroquois was taking its toll against both the Kaskaskia and Peoria. Since these bands wanted to be involved as middlemen for the French in the fur trade, they did not back down after the Iroquois forced the Illinois families down the Mississippi River. Instead, the Kaskaskia and Peoria worked together in the seventeenth century to defend themselves

⁹³ Ibid, 89-92.

⁹⁴ Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Nations* (Ithica, 1958), 57.

⁹⁵ Jablow, 94.

against common enemies, such as the Iroquois. Since the Iroquois were a prominent power in the region, the combined efforts of the Kaskaskia and Peoria were often not enough.

The Illinois turned to the French for help against the Iroquois. In return the French established Fort St. Louis at Starved Rock to help protect the Illinois. The construction of the fort began in 1682 and was complete in 1683, but the presence of Fort St. Louis was not a sufficient deterrent. In March of 1684, two hundred Iroquois warriors besieged the fort for six days. After the sixth day the Iroquois were repulsed by the Illinois, but this did not end the harassment by the Iroquois into the Illinois Country.⁹⁶

The Iroquois would continue their raids into the Illinois Country throughout the rest of the 1680s. However, early in the last decade of the seventeenth century, the Iroquois fury against the Illinois diminished. The Illinois held the advantage of distance over the Iroquois. The Iroquois were constantly traveling long distances to raid the Illinois Country, while the Illinois did not have to endure this long journey.⁹⁷ It also seems that the Illinois, as well as the other neighboring tribes of the region, were successful at harassing the Iroquois to the extent where it was not worth the trouble of raiding the area for beaver pelt.⁹⁸ The French also strengthened their alliance with Hurons and Algonquians in the Pays D'en Haut to help contain Iroquois expansion.

When the major Iroquois threat was subdued during the last decade of the seventeenth century, the Illinois enjoyed a decade of relative peace within their region. This does not mean that the Illinois did not go to war with surrounding Native Americans, because the Illinois still engaged in raids to obtain slaves. However, during the first decade of the eighteenth century the Illinois Indians lacked a constant outside threat that threatened their villages and hunting

⁹⁶ Ibid, 103-105.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 58.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 106.

grounds. Despite this lack of militant activity, this first decade changed the entire Illinois Indians' culture and way of life. It was during this time that the Kaskaskia began to accept Catholicism, which culturally moved them away from the Peoria. If this one difference was not enough, the French were successful in persuading the Kaskaskia to move away from Lake Peoria and establish their own village on the Mississippi River.

Distance between the Kaskaskia and Peoria as well as the Fox Wars

After the establishment of Fort St. Louis, the Illinois decided to move from the Starved Rock region down to Lake Peoria. According to Deliette, this relocation was made without French influence and was a logical move for the Illinois. The Lake Peoria region was a traditional wintering area for the Illinois that was rich in game, fish, and vegetation. Compared to the limited resources of the Starved Rock region, Lake Peoria was a much easier place to subsist. The Starved Rock region was primarily chosen because it was close to the French, who established a fort there that was easily defensible. Lake Peoria, however, was better suited for survival and communication.⁹⁹ While this move probably benefited the French by increasing their fur trade in the Illinois Country, the move also made complete sense for the Illinois Indians.

From the time that Fort St. Louis was established until the eighteenth century, the Kaskaskia and Peoria lived in proximity to each other near Lake Peoria. It was also in this area that other bands of the Illinois joined the Kaskaskia and Peoria.¹⁰⁰ It was during this time that Father Gravier mentioned that both the Kaskaskia and Peoria left together to go on their hunt in

⁹⁹ Ibid, 111-112.

¹⁰⁰ Father Gravier speaks of four Illinois villages during this time while Deliette speaks of six Illinois villages. Both of these men included the Kaskaskia and Peoria. Brown, Margaret Kimball, *Cultural Transformations Among the Illinois: An Application of a Systems Model* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University. 1979), 229.

1694. He also stated that the Kaskaskia returned sooner than the Peoria, probably in January or February.¹⁰¹ This proximity for the Kaskaskia and Peoria was significant, because these were the two most prominent bands of the Illinois Indians. By living in a combined village, they extended their influence to the point where the smaller bands also moved into the Lake Peoria region. The seventeenth century saw the Kaskaskia and Peoria living in relative peace with each other and fighting only their common enemies. However, this arrangement would change when the French sought to open up trading routes farther south in the Illinois Country. In order to achieve this goal, the French called upon the Illinois to move their settlement.

Originally when exploring the region, La Salle had plans of opening the lower Mississippi Valley to French trade and settlement. This plan did not come to fruition until a Governor of Louisiana named Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur d'Iberville conceived plans which "like that of La Salle contemplated an extensive rearrangement of the native tribes."¹⁰² In a "Memorandum on the settlement of Mobil and the Mississippi," Iberville's idea was to persuade the Illinois to settle on the Ohio River to counter the English and the Iroquois alliance. In order to persuade the Illinois to move farther south along the Mississippi, Iberville planned on establishing a French post in this area. This post would be used to extend the fur trade to Louisiana more so than extending the fur trade of Canada. Iberville also noted that "the Illinois should be informed that they must not expect to trade with Canada in the future, but must do their trade with the posts on the Mississippi."¹⁰³

Iberville viewed the Illinois as perfect candidates for this move to the lower Mississippi, because this area was traditionally part of their hunting grounds. At the very least, the Illinois were quite familiar with this area, which was enough for Iberville to put his plan into motion.

¹⁰¹ JR: 64: 227, 233.

¹⁰² Jablow, 127.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 127-129.

During 1700 there was considerable disagreement among the Illinois at Lake Peoria regarding this plan from Iberville. The Kaskaskia went along with the plan of Iberville and moved to the lower Mississippi Valley, while the Peoria were unresponsive to the idea. In September of 1700, Father Gravier was able to placate the Peoria, who were violently opposed to the move of the Kaskaskia.¹⁰⁴ Father Marest and Rouensa led the Kaskaskia out of the Lake Peoria region in 1700, much to the dismay of Father Gravier and the Peoria. Marest may have worked on Rouensa's vanity by continually referring to him as the "Great Chief." The Kaskaskia left the Peoria on bad terms, and Gravier felt that he might have been able to pacify the situation. He stated that:

I do not think that the Kaskaskia would have thus separated from the Peouarououa and from the other Illinois of the Strait, if I could have arrived sooner. I reached them at least soon enough to conciliate their minds to some extent and to prevent the insult that the Peouarououa and the Mouningouena were resolved to offer the Kaskaskia and the French when they embarked.¹⁰⁵

This move by the Kaskaskia was not instantaneous and required a great deal of thought. This is evident, because Gravier goes on to state that there will come "no good from this separation, which I have always opposed."¹⁰⁶ However, this did not make it any easier for the Peoria, who had to be restrained from lashing out against the French or Kaskaskia for this move. The Peoria had been enjoying the benefits of living so close to the Kaskaskia, who often attracted trade and gifts from the French because of their perceived power. With the Kaskaskia moving close to the French and away from Lake Peoria, the Peoria were relegated to a secondary position in the eyes of the French.

At first the Kaskaskia did not go as far south as the French or Iberville had anticipated. In 1700 the Kaskaskia halted their migration near the present city of St. Louis and lived there

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 130.

¹⁰⁵ JR, 65: 101.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 103.

from 1700 until 1703. This settlement was on the west side of the Mississippi River near the north bank of the De Peres River. The village consisted of thirty cabins, suggesting that a population of approximately four hundred made the migration south. If the population around 1698 is correct in stating that the Kaskaskia had a population of about seven hundred and fifty, then the entire Kaskaskia group did not leave the Lake Peoria region with Rouensa. The group that left with Rouensa probably included the more devout Christian followers among the Kaskaskia. Rouensa also attempted to influence the Tamaroa, another band among the Illinois, to join the village on the west bank of the Mississippi River. Some Tamaroa are believed to have moved to this newly established village with the Kaskaskia, but this village would soon move again.¹⁰⁷

In 1703 the Kaskaskia village moved farther south to the banks of the Kaskaskia River in present day Randolph County. This location is about five or six miles upstream from the confluence of the Mississippi River. The location of the Kaskaskia village would increase in size with the addition of the Michigamea, who joined the Kaskaskia in 1716. With the establishment of Fort de Chartres, a growing number of French inhabitants were moving into the region. The population of this village became so large that the commandant of Fort de Chartres, Boisbriant, decided to divide the village in either 1719 or 1720. The French remained in this village while the Kaskaskia moved upstream about five miles. This was the fourth different village location for the Kaskaskia in the past two decades. Conversely, the Peoria remained in either the Lake Peoria or Starved Rock region during this time with only some interruptions.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Brown, 230.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 230.



Figure 1. THE ILLINOIS COUNTRY.

These interruptions in either hunting patterns or village location for the Peoria are credited mostly to the Fox Wars that would begin around 1710 and last until 1730. With the Kaskaskia move to the Mississippi River, the Peoria were left to fight common enemies from the north alone. While the Kaskaskia did offer some assistance in the form of warriors, the Peoria were closer to the Fox and took the brunt of their raids. This constant fighting by the Peoria and minimal assistance by the Kaskaskia enlarged the rift that formed after the Kaskaskia left the Lake Peoria region.

By 1710 the Fox, assisted by the Kickapoo, were entangled in hostilities with the Illinois, of which the Peoria took the brunt of the fighting. Despite the relocation of the French, the Peoria seemed to be angry with only the Kaskaskia and remained allies of the French. The inception of the Fox Wars was sparked by an Ottawa attack during the winter of 1712 upon a Mascoutin village along the St. Joseph River. The Illinois became embroiled in hostilities with the Fox chiefly because of persistent loyalty to the French. The Illinois were among the six hundred warriors who saved the French and their allies from extermination by the Fox at Detroit in 1712. It was also an Illinois chief who spoke on behalf of the French and criticized the Fox.¹⁰⁹

The French became very concerned with their position in the Illinois Country during the Fox Wars. The Fox, especially with their Kickapoo allies, posed such a threat to the French that they urged the Illinois and Miami tribes to enter in an alliance. This shaky alliance would provide the French with roughly fifteen hundred warriors to combat the attacks of the Fox.¹¹⁰ The alliance was complete in 1715, but this did not stop the Fox from continually pursuing the French and their allies. In response to these Fox threats, Commandant Boisbriant of Fort de Chartres established the first Illinois militia companies shortly after his arrival in the Illinois

¹⁰⁹ Jablow, 145.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 146.

Country in 1720.¹¹¹ That same year the Fox, Kickapoo, and Mascoutin were still engaged in warfare with the Illinois, and the Peoria were clearly being harassed by the Fox.¹¹² In 1722 the Peoria at the Lake Peoria village defeated some Fox warriors and left to join the Peoria village at Starved Rock. In retaliation for this event, the Fox sent two hundred warriors to besiege the Peoria, which forced the village at Lake Peoria to retire to the village at Starved Rock. Despite this retreat, the Peoria were able to gain two victories against the Fox, killing nine the first time and twenty-eight in the encounter before the siege.¹¹³

In 1728, the decision was made to launch a major effort against the Fox. The French assembled a thousand allies and five hundred French. The Illinois and Miami were most likely the two largest participants in this campaign. However, this endeavor was a failure, because it only succeeded in burning a Fox village and some crops. The true victory came later that year when the Illinois and French combined to take action against the Kickapoo and Mascouten after their unsuccessful drive against the Fox. By January of 1729, the Kickapoo and Mascouten entered peace agreements with the Illinois. This arrangement clearly marked the end of the Fox, Kickapoo, and Mascouten alliance. There was a falling out between these tribes in 1727, but the peace agreements with the Illinois severed the alliance for good.¹¹⁴

When the Kickapoo and Mascouten aligned with the Illinois and French, the Fox sought refuge with the Iroquois. At this point, the Fox were in the upper Illinois Country apparently harassing the Peoria of Starved Rock. In 1730 St. Ange, commandant at Fort de Chartres, was informed by the Cahokia “that the Renards [Fox] had taken some of their people prisoners and had burned the son of their great chief near le Rocher [Starved Rock] on the River of the

¹¹¹ Carl J. Ekberg, “Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country” (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 34.

¹¹² Wisconsin State Historical Society, Collections 1855-1931. Vols. 1-31. Madison 16:393.

¹¹³ Jablow, 158-159.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 168-171. Does not indicate if the Kaskaskia were involved or not.

Illinois.”¹¹⁵ The Fox intended to leave this area to join the Iroquois, but the information provided by the Kickapoo and Mascouten helped St. Ange to assemble a force of one hundred French and four hundred allies (including Cahokia, Peoria, and Missouri).¹¹⁶

St. Ange confronted the Fox on August 17, 1730, and he was soon joined by de Villiers, whose force consisted of Potawatomi, Sac, Miami, Kickapoo, and Mascouten. These forces surrounded the Fox, and at a general council of the allies it was decided unanimously to destroy the enemy. After holding out for twenty-three days against the combined forces of the French, the Fox tried to escape at night during a severe rainstorm. They were pursued by the French and allies, who killed or captured anywhere from eight hundred to one thousand individuals (men, women, and children.)¹¹⁷ After this event, the Fox threat was almost completely eliminated for the time being.

The Fox Wars marked the first time that the French heavily influenced an Illinois military affair. While the French did provide some help against the Iroquois in the seventeenth century, the Kaskaskia and Peoria maintained a strong bond throughout this period. However, during the Fox wars the two bands were often disjointed militarily because of their geographic distance from one and other. When the French persuaded the Kaskaskia to relocate their village along the Mississippi River, the military strength of the Illinois as a whole was cut in half. The Fox wars marked a time in the history of the Illinois where the Kaskaskia and Peoria raided a common enemy separately or fought separate enemies all together. With the influence of the French in the military endeavors of the Illinois, the Kaskaskia and Peoria began to fight separate military opponents.

¹¹⁵ Wisconsin State Historical Society, 17: 110.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 17:110, 115.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 17: 112-113, 115, 117, 130.

Kaskaskia Discontent and the Rejuvenated Fox Wars

After 1730 and the end of the Fox Wars, the French should have been elated over their expanding position of power in the Illinois Country. However, this was far from the case. Instead the British began to make inroads into the region. By playing on the concerns of an increased French military presence and the careful distribution of gifts, the British convinced many tribes that the French thirsted for their lands. During this time the Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Natchez became relentless foes of the French. In turn, the Kaskaskia around French settlements (not the Peoria) found themselves aligning against these tribes for protection. For example, in 1730 during a trip to New Orleans to visit Governor Perier of Louisiana, Manantouensa, a chief of the Kaskaskia, asked the French for their “heart” and their “protection.”¹¹⁸ At this point the Kaskaskia especially were declining in population and power, which made them vulnerable to outside agents. For the next few decades the Kaskaskia would continually try to balance their alliance between both the French and the British.

The French problems in the Illinois Country were further complicated with the growing disenchantment among the Illinois Indians.¹¹⁹ After the defeat of the majority of the Fox, the Illinois, the Kaskaskia in particular, felt confident that they no longer needed French aid. The British were quick to recognize this rift and throughout the 1730s emissaries from the Cherokee or Chickasaw would slip into the Illinois villages of the lower Mississippi and stir the embers of discontent.¹²⁰ It was only grudgingly that the Illinois gave their help against “our enemies” in

¹¹⁸ JR 68:205.

¹¹⁹ From 1700 to 1730 the Kaskaskia sustained a relative consistent population which helped them resist French aid. However, a census in 1736 shows that the population of the Kaskaskia significantly decreased from war and disease, which hindered their ability to defy the French. On the contrary, the population decline became so dramatic that the Kaskaskia were forced to become even stronger allies of the French. The population of the Illinois as a whole in 1700 was approximately 6,250. In 1736 this number fell to about 2,500, most of which were Peoria. Emily J. Blasingham, “The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 2, Concluded”, 367-368.

¹²⁰ Charles E. Orser Jr. and Theodore J. Karamanski, “Preliminary Archaeological Research at Fort Kaskaskia, Randolph County, Illinois” (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University, 1975), 9.

the French fight against the Chickasaw in 1731. Shortly after this incident in 1732 the French prompted Illinois hostilities against the Natchez. The French were worried about the position of the Illinois, because a revolt by this nation might be regarded as a mortal blow to the colony since the ties between these two were so long-lasting.¹²¹

During this same time the French used the Illinois in campaigns against these tribes, in particular the Chickasaw. During the winter of 1734 and into 1735, two Illinois war parties captured thirty-six Chickasaw, which was only a precursor to the larger campaign that followed in 1736. Three villages of Illinois contributed to the fight in 1736: the Kaskaskia, Cahokia-Tamaroa, and Michigamea.¹²² However, this army took flight when they saw themselves outnumbered by the Chickasaw and their allies. The small army put together by the French was due partly to the fact that the Peoria did not contribute to this endeavor against the Chickasaw. Much like the Fox wars where the Peoria fought alone, the Kaskaskia were drawn into a war by the French without the assistance of the Peoria.

After these French inspired campaigns, the Kaskaskia became more amicable with the Miami and tried to distance themselves from the French. In a report on the state of affairs in Canada for the year 1736, it stated that:

There is no doubt, had Sieur d'Arnaud continued his march, but these Indians would have been advised thereof by the Miamis, their allies, and have retired to the Peanguichias or Islinois [Illinois], who are equally their allies, so that besides being unable to wreak vengeance on the Ouiatanous, it would be declaring war against other nations, among whom they would certainly have found an asylum, and stopping the path to the Mississippi on ourselves.¹²³

Not only does this paragraph indicate the strong ties between the Miami and the Illinois, but it also illustrates the precarious position of the French. The French were aware that their position

¹²¹ Jablow. 181-182.

¹²² Ibid, 186.

¹²³ Wisconsin State Historical Society, 17:243.

in both Canada and Louisiana depended greatly on the Illinois Country. However, the English threat on the trade and Indians of the Illinois Country posed a serious threat to French dominance in the area.

Despite the increasing English presence in the region, the French continued to hold on to their relationship with the Illinois. The Kaskaskia continued to help in the French fight against the Chickasaw, until a peace in 1740. This was a short-lived peace, and the French asked for help against the Chickasaw again. However, in 1741 the Governor of Montreal indicated that the Illinois were in no position to give much help to the French in this renewal of warfare because they were forced to contend with attacks by the Fox, who were assisted by their Sioux allies.¹²⁴ By this time the Kaskaskia warrior population was in serious decline, so it is safe to assume that the “Illinois” which the governor refers to were the Kaskaskia. Since the Peoria were not involved in any other previous incursions with the Chickasaw, the Kaskaskia were most likely the band that could not offer any warriors to this French cause. As mentioned in the excerpt, the Peoria were again engaged with the Fox, who aligned themselves with another traditional enemy of the Illinois, the Sioux.

The Fox-Peoria hostilities began to heat up again around 1741 when the Fox killed two Illinois, which sparked retaliation by the Peoria. Before the Peoria could respond, in May of 1741 one hundred Sioux and Fox engaged in an offensive against the Peoria at Lake Peoria. However, this was a fruitless endeavor, because the Sac had forewarned the Peoria of the impending attack. Not long thereafter, in the summer of 1741, sixty Peoria set out against the Sioux, but instead attacked the Fox at the mouth of the Wisconsin, killing four and wounding one.¹²⁵ The Peoria continued to fight the Sioux and Fox well into the 1750s. During this time

¹²⁴ Jablow, 189-190.

¹²⁵ Wisconsin State Historical Society, 17:336-337, 362, 365.

the Peoria warrior population declined from the continued fighting, but as a whole this band remained as a considerable force in the Illinois Country. The Peoria remained loyal to the French during this period, when the Kaskaskia wavered significantly in their alliance with the French. Increasingly during the eighteenth century, the only military connection between the Kaskaskia and Peoria was the French. Throughout much of the eighteenth century the Peoria were left to fight the enemies north of the Illinois Country, while the Kaskaskia assisted the French in their endeavors against tribes south of the Illinois Country.

During the 1740s, the French settlements in the Illinois Country, particularly Kaskaskia, became essential to linking the French Empire in North America. This was especially the case for New Orleans, which depended on furs and food from the Illinois Country. This is one reason why the French became so distraught during 1747 when their alliance with the Kaskaskia began to deteriorate. This relationship became so uncertain that the French sent three Illinois chiefs to visit New Orleans in order to gain time to determine the disposition of the Illinois.¹²⁶

As early as 1746, the changing attitude of the Illinois, in particular the Kaskaskia, was manifested by their lack of cooperation in the execution of the French war against the Chickasaw. This lack of assistance could be due to the declining population of the Kaskaskia, as well as a sense of apathy for fighting the Chickasaw merely for French reasons. The Governor of Louisiana, Pierre Francois Rigaud de Cavagnol, Marquis de Vaudreuil, expressed his displeasure at the time by threatening “to cut off their presents if they continue to remain inactive and to give us as sole proofs of their friendship, mere promises to behave better to us in the future.”¹²⁷ While the Illinois probably had a general feeling of loyalty and compassion for the French, especially the Canadians with whom they intermarried, the Kaskaskia were reluctant to

¹²⁶ Ibid, 17:479-489.

¹²⁷ Illinois State Historical Library, Collections (Springfield, Illinois: Vols. 1-32, 1903-1950) 29:9-10.

take up arms against the Chickasaw. It was also in 1746 that the commandant at Fort de Chartres, Bertet, asked the Illinois to carry out raids against the English toward Philadelphia. The Kaskaskia never responded to this question, but the Cahokia and Peoria finally agreed to offer their assistance in 1747. Both the Cahokia and Peoria accepted wampum belts from Bertet and came to the French in order to sing the war song to him.¹²⁸

Despite this strong show of allegiance to the French by the Peoria, the English were still trying to gain the loyalty of as many tribes in the region as possible. Having already gained a commitment of alliance from the Miami, the English sent LeDemoiselle, a Miami chief, to rouse the Illinois against the French. The temptation was great to join LeDemoiselle and the English because of the significantly cheaper merchandise that could be offered. Despite these attempts to lure the Illinois, the Peoria disregarded this request by not responding to LeDemoiselle.¹²⁹

The Peoria might have disregarded this request because they were still loyal to the French as well as being embroiled in fighting with tribes to the north of the Illinois Country. While the Peoria were fighting the Shawnee in 1750, a combined party of Potawatomi, Mascoutens, Menominee, and Chippewa went to attack the Peoria. This combined effort was in response to the death of a Potawatomi who was killed passing a Peoria village.¹³⁰ After this attack on the Peoria, three Potawatomi and one Mascouten were captured by the Peoria. Instead of torturing these captives, which was not out of the ordinary, the Peoria sent them back unharmed with the message:

Why do you want to trouble the earth for a madman who has been killed? What reason can you have to come to such an extremity? We have had some of our people who have been killed in your villages and who were married there, but we have never taken up arms to avenge them. Moreover if you come to attack us we

¹²⁸ Theodore Calvin Pease, "Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War 1747-1755" (Springfield: Illinois, 1940) *Vaudreuil to Maurepas, March 22, 1747* 12-13.

¹²⁹ Jablow, 195-196.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 197.

shall avenge ourselves and the land will be upset and the paths stopped up through your own fault.¹³¹

This effectively quelled the uprising against the Peoria by the Potawatomi, Mascoutens, Menominee, and Chippewa. This not only showed the effectiveness of the Peoria to stand on their own without European assistance, it also illustrated that the Peoria were still a significant military force within the region. The Peoria even rejected another offer by the Miami to join the English and trade with them in 1751.¹³² While the Peoria successfully stopped an attack by threatening an opponent as well as rejected several offers from the English, the Kaskaskia were in a much more precarious situation.

By the 1750s the Kaskaskia became quite dependent on European goods as well as struggled to cope with a shrinking population. When the Miami began to trade almost exclusively with the British, the French became suspicious early in 1751 that the Kaskaskia had begun to trade with the English as well. Vaudreuil explained that the Illinois “complained that the French traders carry their best goods to the Missouri tribes, and as this discrimination is one of their chief grievances against us.”¹³³ It was also in September of 1751 that the Miami chief, LeDemoiselle, came to the chiefs of the Kaskaskia to speak very highly of the English.¹³⁴ Vaudreuil was also concerned that some of the Illinois, most likely the Kaskaskia, “have been the carriers of English messages and belts among all Missouri tribes, and others on the upper Mississippi.”¹³⁵ Only two months later in December of 1751, Vaudreuil’s suspicions about the Kaskaskia were proven true. An agent in the Illinois Country named Macarty sent for the Kaskaskia chief in 1751, and it was here that he admitted to trading with the British in the spring

¹³¹ Pease, *La Jonquière to Rouillé, September 25, 1751*, 360.

¹³² *Ibid*, 366.

¹³³ Illinois State Historical Library, 29: 313.

¹³⁴ Pease, *La Jonquière to Rouillé, September 25, 1751*, 367.

¹³⁵ Illinois State Historical Library, 29: 334

and winter of the same year. However, the Kaskaskia insisted that they still had “French hearts.” They simply needed to obtain goods from the British, because they were much cheaper to acquire. After this meeting, Macarty gave the chiefs of the Kaskaskia presents of powder and ball to finish their hunt. Nevertheless, shortly after this event the chiefs of the Cahokia and Michigamea came to Macarty professing their loyalty to the French, they also warned against the hostile attitude of the Kaskaskia.¹³⁶

The Cahokia and Michigamea were not wrong when warning the French of the Kaskaskia relations with the English. When the French agent, Macarty, met with chiefs of the Michigamea, Cahokia, Peoria, and Kaskaskia in 1752, he was distraught with the continued trade with the English by the Kaskaskia. Macarty was clearly angry when he chastised the Illinois, especially the Kaskaskia by stating:

My heart weeps when I think of you. Of what do you think, oh Illinois, when you ally yourself with the Miami. You are small, and your tribe few in number. Up to now the Frenchman has sustained you. The Foxes, Sauk, Potawatomi, Sioux, and many others ask to eat you up. You have no pity on your wives and children. You do not think. You say the French maltreat you; I punish you as I do my children when they are foolish. I chastise them, and when they are repentant I pardon them. You, chiefs, chastise your fools. I will watch it done and will say that you have good sense. You say you are not obeyed; that is why I wish to help you give wisdom to your fools. The Michigamea, the Cahokia, the Peoria stay quiet; you alone, you Kaskaskia, you lose your wits. You let yourself be led by silly old men, and you won't listen to those who are wise. That is what comes of your trade with the English.¹³⁷

Macarty hit on some prominent points in this speech. He pointed out that the diminishing population of the Illinois hindered them from severing their relationship with the French. He also successfully persuaded the Kaskaskia to stop their interactions with the British. It was not until after the Seven Years' War that the Kaskaskia again began to have a serious alliance with the British.

¹³⁶ Jablow, 206-207. Pease, *Macarty to Vaudreuil, January 20, 1752*. 446-447.

¹³⁷ Pease, *Macarty to Vaudreuil, March 27, 1752*, 542-543.

While the Kaskaskia developed a cordial relationship with the British, the Peoria remained loyal to the French. However, the Peoria never became the preferred band of the Illinois. It was relatively easy for the Peoria to maintain a stable relationship with the French while limiting their interactions with the British. Unlike the Kaskaskia, the Peoria maintained their distance from both of these European influences. While it was difficult to ignore the European control infiltrating the region, the Peoria maintained villages that limited this influence. The only exception to this was the presence of missionaries in Peoria villages during the first few decades of the seventeenth century, but this interaction would be limited after the death of Father Gravier.

For the Peoria, distance was a double edged sword. On one hand the distance made it easier to maintain an amiable relationship with the French while avoiding the British for the most part. However, this distance also isolated the Peoria within the Illinois. Often times the Peoria were left to fight their northern enemies alone, especially after 1736 when the other bands of the Illinois became significantly smaller in population. Even with the largest population among the bands of the Illinois, the Peoria were vulnerable after years of fighting alone.

Macarty mentioned that the Illinois were few in number, and this fact began to take a toll on the Peoria. The Peoria continued to fight several other tribes with very little help from the other bands of the Illinois during this period. For instance, in 1752 the Peoria had to cut their hunt short, because the Sauk warned them that five hundred Chippewa intended to attack the Starved Rock region.¹³⁸ It is not surprising that during this time the Peoria were more open to asking for French assistance with their constant military endeavors. In January of 1752, twenty-one chiefs and children of Peoria chiefs came to declare their sincere attachment to the French. It was during this meeting that the Peoria offered the French two calumets and eight strings of

¹³⁸ Pease, *Macarty to Vaudreuil, September, 1752*, 677.

wampum. Macarty later stated that the Peoria “seemed to me always to be well attached to the French.”¹³⁹

Despite this sense of attachment by the Peoria, the French did not provide an officer among the Peoria in 1751, when they begged for one. The Peoria wanted to establish a small garrison with a French officer to control the trade from Canada.¹⁴⁰ Depopulation was clearly taking its toll because it was only half a century earlier when the Kaskaskia and Peoria did not want a French fort in the region to rival their position as middlemen in the fur trade. However, the French helped the Peoria in their battle with the Fox. Macarty assisted in the negotiations of captives between the Peoria and Fox in October of 1752 to suppress the fighting around Starved Rock and Lake Peoria.¹⁴¹ The Peoria stayed in the upper Illinois Country until 1763, when they are mentioned as abandoning this region completely.¹⁴² The Peoria are briefly mentioned as being near the Michigamea village on the Mississippi River, but after this reference, only scattered material remains on the movement of the Peoria.¹⁴³

The culmination of these French influenced wars occurred during the Seven Years' War, when the British gained control over the Illinois Country. The loss of this war by the French meant that the Kaskaskia and Peoria had sided with the wrong imperial power. The struggle between France and Britain helped to force the Kaskaskia and Peoria to make a very difficult decision. Should they betray their French father and ally themselves with the British, or should they fight the British despite their weakened state? This was a very difficult decision to make, and ultimately, the Kaskaskia and Peoria would choose different paths during British occupation.

¹³⁹ Pease, *Macarty to Vaudreuil, January, 1752*, 453.

¹⁴⁰ Pease, *Order of Command for Macarty, 1751*, 317.

¹⁴¹ Jablow, 222.

¹⁴² Brown, 230.

¹⁴³ Jablow, 233.

At the end of the Seven Years' War, the French lost their influence in the Illinois Country. Most of the tribes in the region joined the English during the war, the lone exception being the Illinois Indians who remained loyal to the French. Despite the few years when the Kaskaskia traded with the English for cheaper goods, both the Kaskaskia and Peoria continued to preserve their alliance with the French. The Kaskaskia maintained this relationship due to their dwindling population and lack of warriors. On the other hand the Peoria continued to be a military force in the region up until the end of the Seven Years' War. It was during this time that the Peoria were finally forced from their traditional lands and joined the other bands of the Illinois in the lower Mississippi River Valley.

Chapter Three: The Illinois Indians and the Changing Illinois Country under the British

The Split Widens Under the British

The transfer of power to the British after the Seven Years' War was not a rapid and natural endeavor. The British policies differed greatly from the previous French policies and many surrounding Native American groups had a difficult time dealing with this transition. Even the Kaskaskia and Peoria differed in their views of the English. The Kaskaskia refused the English at first but soon realized that their weakened state left them little choice but to accept the British. The Peoria on the other hand asserted their independence and moved west of the Mississippi River out of the Illinois Country. This move by the Peoria marked the final split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria.

With the Peoria left to defend themselves and the Kaskaskia more dependent than ever on the French, the Seven Years' War and its results added to this widening gap between these two bands of the Illinois. The Seven Years' War (1756-1763) is the European counterpart to the French and Indian War, which began two years earlier in the American colonies. Early in the war, the French and their Indian allies were in complete control of the Ohio Country and Illinois Country. Raids on British settlements and forts in this region made it quite difficult to live in these regions. The war began to shift in favor of the British when William Pitt came to power in 1756 and concentrated on fighting the French by sending badly needed reinforcements of troops to North America. The war turned distinctively in favor of the British when the Six Nations broke their neutrality in February of 1760 and aligned themselves with the British. The increase in military aid from the Six Nations as well as an increased mobilization of the colonies allowed

for the British to impose their will on French Canada and the West.¹⁴⁴ This pressure began the assault that led the British to eventually defeat the French and their Spanish allies. The results of this war left Britain with a vast and expansive empire.

The Treaty of Paris, signed on November 3, 1762 and ratified by Great Britain, France, and Spain on February 10, 1763, officially ended the worldwide conflict. The Peace of Paris transferred vast territories from French and Spanish to British control. British control expanded to include all of France's North American possessions east of the Mississippi River, with the exception of New Orleans. The French retained control of the sugar islands of Grenada and the Grenadines and gained some fishing rights. The British also acquired Florida from Spain, while restoring Havana to Spanish sovereignty.¹⁴⁵ Even though it seemed like Britain was in complete control of North America after this war, the first several years under British control were extremely challenging.

While under British possession, the Illinois Country became a less influential area than it was for the French. This change was not instantaneous and the French continued to have a great influence in the region, especially right after losing the Seven Years' War. However, the French influence in this region would continue to dwindle, until the American Revolution when Britain lost control of the Illinois Country.

The policies of the British Empire culturally altered many of the Native American groups in the area, especially the Illinois Indians. The Peoria and particularly the Kaskaskia were both influenced by the French, and the British could not fully break this allegiance to the French. While the eventual split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria began with French influence, the policies of the British helped to break these two bands apart completely. During the British

¹⁴⁴ Fred Anderson, *The War that Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War* (New York, Penguin Group, 2005), 179-183.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 228-230.

control of the Illinois Country, the Kaskaskia remained in their village while the Peoria moved west of the Mississippi River. When the Peoria moved, they officially splintered the Illinois Indians. Up to this point, moves made by either the Kaskaskia or Peoria were within the Illinois Country on traditional hunting grounds. This move west of the Mississippi was a move into Spanish occupied territory that was traditionally not part of the Illinois Indians' territory. The Peoria also made this move due to changing policies in the area with the arrival of the British. The Peoria and Kaskaskia did not agree upon or accept the differences in British policies, which forced the Kaskaskia to remain in their villages and the Peoria to migrate west of the Mississippi River.

This fracture between the two most prominent bands of the Illinois Indians signified the different cultural paths taken by the Kaskaskia and Peoria. The British policies in the Illinois Country helped to foster this split between the Peoria and Kaskaskia bands of the Illinois Indians. The British did not cause the split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria, but their policies in the Illinois Country accelerated the rift between these bands.

Changing of the Guard 1763-1765

After the ratification of the Treaty of Paris, preparations were made for the Illinois Country to change to British sovereignty. As early as July, 1763, Governor Dabbadie of Louisiana sent dispatches from New Orleans to the Illinois Country advising Neyon De Villiers, commandant at Fort de Chartres, to begin preparations to evacuate the post.¹⁴⁶ During the same time, General Amherst, commander in chief of the British forces in America, prepared to send boats from Fort Pitt to the Illinois Country to transport four hundred troops to relieve the posts

¹⁴⁶ Alvord and Carter, *Journal De Mr Dabbadie Commissaire General de la Marine, Ordonnat a La Louisianne*, 163.

on the Wabash and Mississippi Rivers.¹⁴⁷ The British were successful at occupying many of the posts in the West as early as 1760, including forts Niagara, Venango, Sandusky, Miami, Detroit, and Michillimackinac. Fort de Chartres, in the heart of the Illinois Country, would wait almost three years for the British to physically take possession of the fort from the French. The delay occurred because of the confederation of Indian tribes that rose up in rebellion under the leadership of Pontiac.

On May 9, 1763 the Ottawa war chief Pontiac led an attack on Fort Detroit with the help of the Potawatomi and Wyandot bands that lived near the fort. Within two months, Pontiac and his allies seized all of the interior forts except for the ones at Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Niagara. Included in these attacks were raids on vulnerable frontier settlements in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Militarily, Pontiac's Rebellion achieved great success by capturing so many forts in such a short amount of time. This Indian insurrection was a coordinated uprising in a general sense that stemmed from the common grievances against Amherst's new British policies among native peoples.¹⁴⁸

General Amherst looked to cut expenses in North America and concentrated on trimming back the Indian department. In order to achieve this goal, he suspended the practice of distributing gifts to Indian allies in 1761, including ammunition. This longstanding practice had often been used by the French in order to facilitate trade and good will with their Indian allies. The British, Amherst in particular, decided to change this policy to curb their proclivity for idleness. Amherst tried to explain to Sir William Johnson, an influential Indian superintendent, that the elimination of gift giving would make the Indians more likely to barter as well as keep them occupied with their own means. He also advocated the idea of keeping the Indians with as

¹⁴⁷ Alvord and Carter, Bouquet to Gage, May, 27, 1764, 252; Bouquet to Amherst, February 12, 1763, 531; Amherst to Bouquet, May 23, 1763, 533.

¹⁴⁸ Anderson, *War that Made America*, 230-237.

little ammunition and alcohol as possible. The elimination of alcohol, Amherst believed, would increase the ability of Indians to be productive hunters but also curtail violence in their villages while improving the general character of the Indians.¹⁴⁹ The practice of limiting gift giving continued to plague the British throughout the west. For example, in January of 1763, Colonel Bouquet, commanding the Pennsylvania border, observed the discontent that was produced among Indians by the suppression of gifts in a letter to General Amherst. The commander in chief replied that he did not think it was necessary to give away bribes. He believed that if the Indians did not behave properly then they were to be punished.¹⁵⁰

To further complicate this situation, the British failed to establish trading posts in the interior and then withdraw their troops from the region, as they had promised. Instead, they continued to maintain garrisons of soldiers, which suggested permanent occupation. Fort Pitt alone was ten times the size of the French Fort Duquesne and built to house a thousand men. The British commandants had also encouraged white farmers to take up residence near the forts, because there was little means of transportation to feed the soldiers.¹⁵¹ These measures affected the western Indians enough for them to join together to push the British out of the Illinois and Ohio Countries. What made matters even worse in the first two years of British control was the fact that there was no clear-cut plan to settle or organize this region.

Ideally the Mississippi River represented an imperial frontier that many wanted to see strongly fortified and defended. General Amherst had defined the proper policy as “to erect forts early at the entrance of our dominion, and settle inward, instead of building them on the interior

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 233.

¹⁵⁰ Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, (Boston: Vol 1, 1851),181

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *War that Made America*, 233-235.

ports and settling outwards.”¹⁵² A pamphlet even came out in 1763 entitled *The Expediency of Securing our American Colonies by Settling the Country Adjoining the River Mississippi and the Country upon the Ohio, Considered*. This pamphlet stated that the French had to be met with force and eliminated. The pamphlet also advocated the cultivation of land in the Illinois Country in hopes of producing a great deal of produce.¹⁵³ Before the uprising by Pontiac, the British also set the number of troops needed in North America at ten thousand.

Pontiac’s Rebellion forced the British government to issue the only definite act regarding the West during this time period. On October 7, 1763, the British government released the Proclamation of 1763 which was issued hurriedly for the purpose of quieting the Indians and prohibiting settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains. There was very little enforcement of the movement of settlers west, so it is arguable that this proclamation was only issued to appease the Indians during their uprising.¹⁵⁴ During Pontiac’s Rebellion, the Kaskaskia did very little raiding due to their decrease in population. The Peoria participated more so than the Kaskaskia, but were also beaten down from years of fighting the Fox. In general, the Illinois were not looked upon as major participants in any of these raids.¹⁵⁵ However, Pontiac did stab a Peoria in 1766 and was later killed by another Peoria in the Illinois Country.¹⁵⁶ Pontiac’s Rebellion not only delayed all of the plans for the west, but it made the policies of Indian trade come under even more scrutiny than before with the elimination of gifts.

There is little doubt that the fur trade in the Illinois Country was the most lucrative and competitive issue among the French and British. Under the French, the western Indians and their

¹⁵² Theodore Calvin Pease, “George Rogers Clark and the Revolution in Illinois 1763-1787” (Springfield, Illinois: The Illinois State Historical Society, 1929), 6.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 6.

¹⁵⁴ Alvord and Carter, *The Critical Period*, xviii.

¹⁵⁵ This is illustrated by the fact that Pontiac was killed by a Peoria in the Illinois Country after these raids.

¹⁵⁶ Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, 249.

trade had been managed with a great deal of success. This was due largely to the policy of centralization as well as welcoming personalities of traders and missionaries that were established in the region for years. Conversely, the British managed their relations with Indians through the different agencies of the colonies. There was little cooperation between the colonies, because they often competed against each other for a larger share of the trade. This led to several different British policies, making it much more complex than the centralized French trade. Even Sir William Johnson pointed out that the British traders offered on the whole a most unfavorable example of the character of their nation.¹⁵⁷ The British planned to overhaul this system by repealing all colonial enactments on the subject, forcing traders to earn a license, and regulating their trade to specific posts under the supervision of two Indian superintendents. This costly plan was supposed to be funded with colonial taxation. It also came to fruition at the same time as the Stamp Act, which caused an outcry because of taxation.¹⁵⁸ In the end the plan was never adopted and officially abandoned in 1768.

To further complicate the issue of Indian trade, many French remained in the Illinois Country trading. The more information that reached Britain from America, the more complicated the Indian trade became. During the two crucial years before the British took control of Fort de Chartres, the center of the problem always seemed to be in the Illinois Country. Many of the French traders who remained in the region funneled the fur trade away from the Great Lakes and towards New Orleans, which was still under French control. In order to do so, the French established the settlement of St. Louis, which quickly became the center for trade on the western side of the Mississippi River. Despite the fact that the British technically gained possession of the Illinois Country, the French traders were still able to monopolize the fur

¹⁵⁷ Johnson to lords of trade, *New York Colonial Documents*, VII:929, 955, 960, 964, 987.

¹⁵⁸ Pease, *George Rogers Clark*, 7-9.

trade by openly defying British authority. They would often travel east of the Mississippi River in order to trade with the Indians or fuel the fires of disaffection.¹⁵⁹ Many of the British, including Sir William Johnson, believed that the French fabricated insidious stories to deter them from gaining any ground on the fur trade. Many of the stories also filled the Indians with the hope of assistance from the king of France.¹⁶⁰

Especially in the first two years of British control of the Illinois Country, it was evident that the British had limited power in the region. The British won control of the Illinois Country in 1763, but the French remained extremely influential in this area. The best example of this occurrence is the interactions with the Illinois Indians. During the time frame of 1763 to 1765 both the Kaskaskia and Peoria considered the French as their true father. Even though the Peoria were less influenced by the French than the Kaskaskia, both bands were affected by the presence of Europeans.

During the first two years of British control of the Illinois Country, the policies of the British Empire were vastly different from the French who relinquished control. The policies of the British and General Amherst initially pushed all of the Indians in this region further away from the British and closer to the French. In particular the Illinois Indians stayed true to their French father well into 1765. Both the Kaskaskia and Peoria were reluctant to pledge their allegiance to the British. After both of these bands returned from winter quarters in the spring of 1765, they were welcomed by Mr. de St. Ange, a French commandant in the Illinois Country. Speaking on behalf of the English members present at the meeting, St. Ange welcomed several

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 8.

¹⁶⁰ Johnson to Amherst, July 11, 1763, *New York Colonial Documents*, 7:532.

members of the Illinois into his house. He sought their answer on a peace proposal that he extended to them before they left for their winter hunt.¹⁶¹

In this meeting at Kaskaskia, St. Ange addressed members from the Illinois bands of Kaskaskia, Peoria, Cahokia, and Michigamea, as well as chiefs from the Osage and Missouri. St. Ange was persistent at this meeting in stating that the English did not want to replace their French fathers, which showed the strong influence that the French still had in the region.¹⁶² Instead, St. Ange made the argument that since the English lived at peace now with their French brothers, they should do the same and make peace with the British. St. Ange pointed out that “only in doing it [making peace] that you will prove that you really love him [their French father].” Ange even singled out the Illinois Chief, Tamarois, and stated that, “You Illinois, how many times have you said you would always do the wish of your father? Show today that you did not lie. His will is that you make peace, do it then, since it is for your good.” St. Ange then turned back to all the chiefs and made one final attempt to win them over by stating that “this English chief has not come here with bad intentions; he has come to propose peace to you and to know your opinion.”¹⁶³

After this speech, Tamarois had the opportunity to speak, and he spoke to St. Ange “in the name of all my nation.” Both the Kaskaskia and Peoria were present at this meeting and approved of what Tamarois said to the English. Tamarois stated that he “held several councils with his nation about the matter, and I did not find anyone who was of the opinion that peace should be accepted.” Tamarois was distraught that he had to disobey his French father, because he promised to them that the Illinois would always comply with their will. However, Tamarois

¹⁶¹ Alvord and Carter, *The Critical Period*, St. Ange to Dabbadie, April 7, 1765 468.

¹⁶² The Illinois used the term father to refer to the French, because they saw the French as being able to protect and love the Illinois. On the other hand, the Illinois used the term brother to refer to the British. This is a much less affectionate term that does not include the notion of protection or even trustworthiness.

¹⁶³ Alvord and Carter, *The Critical Period*, St. Ange to Dabbadie, April 7, 1765, 473-475.

was quite clear that the Illinois would “continue the war as our brothers are doing, and that we will never receive the English on our lands.” He then urged the English to leave their lands as quickly as possible because they are not wanted by anyone in the Illinois Country. He stated that this was “the feeling of all the red men.”¹⁶⁴

Pontiac’s rebellion brought the Indians of the Illinois Country together against the British in the early years of their occupation of this region. A strong French influence in the region as well as the success of many raids against the British gave the Indians a sense that they could drive the British off of their lands. After this meeting, the British realized that the Indians living in the Illinois Country needed to be treated differently from the hard-nosed approach they implemented in their first two years of occupying this region. In order for the British to regain control of this situation, they needed to reevaluate their policies in the Illinois Country.

Shifting British Policies 1765-1767

After the rejection of peace from the Illinois and surrounding Indians, the British changed their policies to reclaim control of the Illinois Country. The first step to regaining the Illinois Country was an increased presence of troops to occupy this region. With the outbreak of Pontiac’s Rebellion, the British were left without any military personnel in the Illinois Country from 1763 until late in 1765. The policies of the British would only begin to change when William Johnson met with Pontiac in the summer of 1765. It was here that Pontiac “signified his willingness to make a lasting peace and promised to offer no further resistance to the approach of the British troops.”¹⁶⁵ This opened the door for Captain Thomas Stirling to leave Fort Pitt on

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 477-479.

¹⁶⁵ Alvord and Carter, *The Critical Period*, Macdonald to Johnson, July 24, 1765, 2:65.

August 24th with the order to take formal command of Fort de Chartres. St. Ange had left a month earlier, but Stirling did not arrive at Fort de Chartres until October 9, 1765, when the fort was officially turned over to the British.¹⁶⁶ Stirling remained in command until Major Farmar relieved him of duty on December 2, 1765, when he arrived in the Illinois Country with minimal supplies. Captain Stirling even noted how embarrassed he was by the lack of provisions, ammunition, and presents for the Indians that Major Farmar had brought.¹⁶⁷ The fort was supposed to be well stocked with provisions, but in reality, there were not a sufficient amount of supplies for the troops that were stationed there.¹⁶⁸

Upon arrival in the Illinois Country the British faced two challenges, which they overcame without much trouble. They successfully administered the oath of allegiance to the old inhabitants as well as established a military government without serious friction. The acceptance of new conditions for the old inhabitants of the Illinois Country was facilitated by the terms of the Proclamation of 1763. The most prominent feature of this document was a clause that granted the old inhabitants the right to freely exercise the Roman Catholic religion in the same manner as Canada.¹⁶⁹ When Captain Stirling arrived in Kaskaskia to post the Proclamation, Frenchmen of the village presented him with a petition asking him for an extension of nine months on the oath of allegiance. This gave the old inhabitants the time they needed to settle their affairs and decide whether they wanted to remain under the British government or withdraw to Louisiana. Stirling compromised and gave the villagers until March 1, 1766 as long as they took a temporary oath of allegiance and provided him with the names of the people who intended

¹⁶⁶ Alvord and Carter, *The Critical Period*, lvi-lvii.

¹⁶⁷ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Stirling to Gage, October 18, 1765, 109.

¹⁶⁸ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Letter of Eddingstone, October 18, 1765, 105.

¹⁶⁹ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, xvii.

to leave the Illinois Country.¹⁷⁰ This compromise was agreed upon and the British accomplished one of their goals with very little resistance.

The British also established a military government without much aggravation from the former French officials. When Stirling arrived in the Illinois Country, he found the local government under the French was so disconcerted that immediate action needed to be taken. The end of the war, as well as a weakening of authority, left only two civil officials. Joseph Lefebvre served as the judge, attorney general, and guardian of the royal warehouse, and Joseph Labuxiere was the clerk and notary public. Once Stirling arrived in the Illinois Country, even these men left and crossed the Mississippi River to join St. Ange and the French soldiers in St. Louis. Stirling then established a military government in which he appointed a judge and the captains of the militia judged petty cases, saw to the enforcement of decrees and other civil matters, and organized the local militia.¹⁷¹ These prompt changes by Stirling allowed the British to maintain some degree of control as soon as they arrived in the Illinois Country. However, the biggest problem that faced the British was their relations with the local Indians, including the Kaskaskia and Peoria.

Both Stirling and later Farmar were ill-equipped to provide the necessities for their troops. Fort de Chartres was a long way from Fort Pitt and required a trip down the Ohio River through hostile territory. This caused the fort to be inadequately equipped to provide the local Indians with gifts, a policy they had reinstated after failed attempts not to give presents by General Amherst. An assembly of three to four thousand Indians had been accustomed to gather at the fort each spring to receive annual gifts from the French. However, the British made no provision for such a contingency. With the recent hostilities by the local Indians and the

¹⁷⁰ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Stirling to Gage, October 18, 1765, 107-109.

¹⁷¹ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Stirling to Gage, December 15, 1765, 124.

weakness of the garrison, the British could not afford to heighten the animosity between themselves and the local Indians. Therefore, the British used their military stores to appease the Indians while looking to the French merchants to re-supply the fort.¹⁷²

The wealth of the colony was seriously impaired when a large exodus of the old French inhabitants moved west of the Mississippi River to the Spanish side and settled in areas such as St. Louis and St. Genevieve. With the people left the cattle, grain, and other profitable items of the Illinois Country.¹⁷³ This forced Stirling and later commanders to pay the exorbitant prices of the French merchants. The situation was so dire that in December of 1765, Major Farmar estimated that all of the provisions available were barely enough to last the garrison until July of 1766. The fort contained fifty thousand pounds of flour and twelve hundred and fifty pounds of cornmeal, a portion of which would have to be given to the Indians as gifts.¹⁷⁴ With the implication of gift giving to appease the locals, the British were left with inadequate provisions. The British were in desperate need of supplies to the Illinois Country, and one company from Philadelphia took on the challenge of supplying this distant region.

Three Philadelphia merchants took on the grand endeavor to get goods into the Illinois Country. The firm consisted of Samuel Wharton, John Baynton, and George Morgan and was given the name Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan. The success of this company was contingent on the efficiency of the transportation of their goods. The company began hiring wagons to haul their merchandise from Philadelphia to Fort Pitt, where they would then float their supplies down the Ohio River to the Illinois Country, in particular Kaskaskia and Fort de Chartres. Originally, the company wanted the boats to return with furs from the Illinois Country to Fort Pitt via the same route. However, the current in the river was too strong, and it was cheaper and quicker to

¹⁷² Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Stirling to Gage, October 18, 1765, 110.

¹⁷³ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Stirling to Gage, December 15, 1765, 125.

¹⁷⁴ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Farmar to Gage, December 16-19, 1765, 133.

send furs from Illinois down the Mississippi River to New Orleans and then by ship to Philadelphia.¹⁷⁵

This system went into operation throughout all its length in early spring of 1766. John Jennings left Fort Pitt with five boat loads of goods for the company store at Kaskaskia, where he arrived April 5, 1766.¹⁷⁶ Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan never achieved the riches they sought from this endeavor. In fact, the company was on the brink of bankruptcy several times. The logistics of the journey were too arduous to ever be truly profitable. However, although Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan were not successful financially, they were successful in supplying the Illinois Country with much-needed British goods. Despite the inefficiencies of the long journey, a fairly steady supply of goods came into the Illinois region. There was enough of a supply and demand to justify four company stores in 1768 at Kaskaskia, Fort de Chartres, Cahokia, and St Vincent's.¹⁷⁷

The increase of British goods into the region may seem like a minor point, but in reality, this was one of the main reasons that the rift between the Kaskaskia and Peoria widened during this time period. Kaskaskia was already a center for political meetings between the British, French, and Indian nations. The central location of Kaskaskia in relation to these nations made it essential as a meeting place. For example, on August 25, 1766, Kaskaskia was chosen as an ideal meeting place by William Croghan, Indian Superintendent, for chiefs and warriors from eight different Indian nations to meet, including deputies from the Six Nations who accompanied Croghan from Fort Pitt.¹⁷⁸ In turn, this made the Kaskaskia Indians more affected by to European influence.

¹⁷⁵ Max Savelle, "George Morgan Colony Builder" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 26-27.

¹⁷⁶ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Jennings' Journal, 176-177.

¹⁷⁷ Savelle, "George Morgan", 31.

¹⁷⁸ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Croghan to Johnson, September 10, 1766, 374.

The Kaskaskia, despite just two years earlier renouncing British authority, elected to stay at their homes in Kaskaskia in spite of the fact that the British were clearly in control of the region by this time. The Kaskaskias were the largest band of the Illinois that stayed east of the Mississippi during this period. Nevertheless, their population dropped drastically after the end of the Seven Years War from 2,400 to less than 800 by 1775.¹⁷⁹ This population decrease was a result of several factors such as disease, combat losses, and a changing way of life. For instance, the gradual economic transition of the Indian way of life paralleled the Illinois population decline. Before Europeans, the Kaskaskia practiced subsistence farming and a slash-and-burn style of agriculture.¹⁸⁰ When the Kaskaskia began to participate in the European fur trade, pressure was put on the expanded role of hunting, which caused a greater dependency of European goods like muskets, steel tools, and ammunition. With the Kaskaskia's population declining as severely as it did, their ability to hold onto farmland diminished as well. During the British presence in the Illinois Country, the Kaskaskia became so reliant on a more European way of life that they went back on their word and allied themselves with the British. The dependency of the Kaskaskia on the British was so severe that the Kaskaskia people came to believe that they needed colonial approval even to legitimize their own chiefs. In 1767 Kaskaskia leaders met with the British Indian Commissary at Fort de Chartres to have the British recognize their new chief, Jean Baptiste Ducoigne.¹⁸¹ It is clear by this point that the Kaskaskia completely reversed their anti-British stance they held a few years earlier. While it may not have

¹⁷⁹ Raymond E. Hauser, "The Illinois Indian Tribe: From Autonomy and Self-sufficiency to Dependency and Depopulation" *Ethnohistory*, Vol. V(1976), 134.

¹⁸⁰ In a slash-and-burn agriculture, fields are cleared by slashing and burning the vegetation in order to help fertilize the soil. After a period of years the fertility declines and the farmers move to a new area where the process is repeated. James H. Howard, "Shawnee! The Ceremonialism of a Native Indian Tribe and Its Cultural Background" (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 48-49.

¹⁸¹ Alvord and Cater, *The New Regime*, Edward Cole to William Johnson, June 23, 1766, and Cole to George Croghan, July 3, 1767, 321, 581.

been the path they wanted, their location and population losses forced the Kaskaskia to become more dependent on the British.

Population Estimates for the Illinois

Kaskaskia	Total Population	Peoria	Total Population
1675-1677	5,950-6,250	1673	8,000 in 3 villages
1688	3,800	1699	4,200
1707	2200 includes the Tamaroa	1707	3,000
1750	900 includes Michigamea and Cahokia	1750	1,000
After British occupation, the population for the Peoria became difficult to determine due to migration west.			
1765-1775	560-700 in British territory		
1775-1800	no more than 500		

Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians Part 2" *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Autumn, 1956), 362-372.

While the Kaskaskia were at the center of the Illinois Country for both the French and the British, the Peoria were secluded over one hundred miles north of Kaskaskia and Fort de Chartres, with no good transportation routes connecting the two regions. This isolation helped the Peoria maintain a greater sense of self-sufficiency, but this did not mean they were isolated from conflict and difficult decisions. The strong ties by Illinois Indians (mostly the Kaskaskia but to a lesser extent the Peoria as well) and the French exacerbated tensions with their Indian neighbors. This caused a decrease in the total warrior population of the Illinois. With the Kaskaskia dwindling in size, the Peoria took the most losses in terms of warriors.¹⁸² Even though they were the largest of the Illinois bands, the constant fighting, in particular against the Fox, led to the decision to relocate the Peoria tribe. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly why or when the Peoria left the Illinois Country and ventured west of the Mississippi River into Spanish territory. The exact reason for this exodus could be due to the fact that their declining warrior population forced them to move farther away from the Fox, or it is possible that a collective

¹⁸² Blasingham, Emily J, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 2, Concluded" *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 3, No. 4. (Autumn, 1956), 372.

decision was made to move farther away from European influence after seeing how dependent the Kaskaskia had become. Whatever the reason, the Peoria were present at the gathering at Kaskaskia in 1765, but after that point the Peoria were left out of almost all British sources. It is fairly safe to assume that the migration of the Peoria occurred sometime after 1765 when the British were gaining more influence in the region. A lack of sources for the Peoria during this time, and the fact that they had the ability to relocate their band shows that they were more self-sufficient than the Kaskaskia, who grew more dependent on the European way of life.

Even though the pressures of depopulation were forcing the Peoria ask for help and eventually migrate out of the region of the upper Illinois River to the banks of the Mississippi, the relationship with the Kaskaskia seemed to deteriorate. After the French lost control of the Illinois Country in 1763, there was a power gap that occurred. With the presence of the British in the Illinois Country, a permanent split occurred between the Kaskaskia and Peoria. The Kaskaskia were weakened by depopulation to the point where they needed a European ally for protection, and the British moved in to fill the void after the French left the region. However, the Peoria were slightly better off in regards to population and refused to live under British policies in the Illinois Country. Instead, the Peoria moved west of the Mississippi River into Spanish territory. During British occupation of the Illinois Country, the Peoria become known as a migratory band of Indians with no real home.

Three main areas in which Europeans and Americans changed the Illinois way of life were in the change to the traditional role of the chief, the practice of awarding medals as a sign of acceptance, and by disrupting the typical trade and economics of the Illinois. The traditional role of an Illinois chief was quite different from a European monarch. The villages normally had a council that was responsible for making important decisions that required collective action.

The chiefs typically served as the moderators at these council meetings. The chief was also the spokesmen for their village when it was necessary to work with foreign nations, either Indian or European. This type of system spread the power out among a wide variety of people and was quite different from the European model where an individual represents a larger group of people.¹⁸³ The French were so determined to change this broad-based sense of power that they implemented a system of rewarding medals to the Illinois.

The French borrowed the idea of rewarding medals from a European feudal tradition. The practice awarded medals to Illinois chiefs to secure their loyalty as well as the loyalty of the people they represented. This practice was later adopted by the British as well as the Americans to symbolize a sense of allegiance. Each nation took the time to replace the medals from the previous nation, which validated this practice as quite significant. Gradually, the Illinois themselves began to recognize these medals as representative of their authority.¹⁸⁴ When the Kaskaskia sought the British approval of their new chief in 1767, he was awarded a medal as a sign of allegiance.¹⁸⁵

To go along with the changing sense of authority among the Illinois, the economic system drastically changed under European control. The migratory pattern of the Illinois, with summer villages that were different from their winter homes, was disrupted with the introduction of European livestock, such as chickens and pigs. The introduction of fertilizer, wheat, milk cows, and the plow further disrupted the traditional summer hunting and farming activities.¹⁸⁶ Even more important was the fur trade, which took an enormous number of Illinois hunters away from their traditional economic roles in the community. For instance, in 1767 alone the Kaskaskia

¹⁸³ Ibid, 137.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 137.

¹⁸⁵ Alvord and Carter, *The New Regime*, Edward Cole to George Croghan, July 3, 1767 #2

¹⁸⁶ Hauser, *The Illinois Indian Tribe*, 137.

provided the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan company with four hundred packs of pelts, in comparison a 1767 estimate put the value of a pack of beaver and deerskin at a little over seventeen sterling.¹⁸⁷

Under British influence, the Kaskaskia and Peoria separated and splintered the Illinois Indians. Already being weakened by depopulation, the Kaskaskia accepted their role as a more domesticated society with a prominent Great Chief in order to gain the protection and allegiance of the European powers. Alternatively, the Peoria did not accept these new societal roles from European culture. In order to escape these influences, the Peoria migrated west of the Mississippi River and officially fractured the Illinois Indians.

¹⁸⁷ Walter S Dunn Jr. *Opening New Markets: The British Army and the Old Northwest* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002),102.

Conclusion

How Dependency Occurred and the Presence of Americans

The village of Kaskaskia became a thriving area early in the eighteenth century. By 1719, the mission of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady at Kaskaskia had become so large that Jesuits believed the village outgrew its missionary stage. After this point a full registry of baptisms marked the opening of the church in Kaskaskia rather than a mission.¹⁸⁸ Religion was certainly the lynchpin that helped to form such strong ties between the French and the Kaskaskia. However, there were certainly other reasons for this complex relationship.

The declining population of the Kaskaskia, which were never the largest band of Illinois Indians, certainly played an important role in their alliance with France. While the population of the Peoria was declining as well, they were able to maintain a substantial warrior population for a longer period of time. This was due to the fact that Peoria always maintained the highest population among any of the Illinois villages. Warfare was a major part of this alliance, which proved costly to both sides. Where the Iroquois wars of the seventeenth century left off, the Fox wars began. The Fox, unlike most Central Algonquians, despised the French intrusion on their land. With Kaskaskia becoming increasingly influential with the French, the Fox began to associate the Illinois (all bands) as an enemy along with the French. During the winter of 1713-14, raids into Illinois Country began by Fox Indians from the Green Bay region. The French helped the Kaskaskia move against the Fox in several cases, but the raids persisted almost every year for close to two decades.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Natalia Maree Belting, "Kaskaskia Under the French Regime" (New Orleans: Polyanthos 1975), 21.

¹⁸⁹ Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 1" 202.

The worst raid for the Fox occurred in 1722. This was the same year that a good portion of the Peoria attempted to move back to the Starved Rock region of Illinois.¹⁹⁰ The Fox raided both the Kaskaskia near Fort Chartres and the Peoria at Starved Rock. The Peoria fared the best, even without French assistance, which arrived after the Fox retreat. They caused the loss of over one hundred and twenty Fox warriors. Even with this victory, the loss of twenty Illinois forced many of the inhabitants to leave the Starved Rock region. The Fox struck the region again in 1730 with greater success. During this raid, the Fox took several prisoners and burnt the son of the Great Chief of the Illinois.¹⁹¹ The Fox continued to raid the Starved Rock region until the 1740s, but the Peoria warrior population sustained consistent losses, which hindered their ability to defend themselves. However, the small population of the Kaskaskia devastated their ability to protect themselves.

With a decreasing population due to these frequent raids, the Kaskaskia were forced to seek protection with the French. The French often sent troops to help protect the Kaskaskia as well as offer them protection by letting them resettle around French trading posts and forts, such as Fort de Chartres. However, the French still expected a mutual relationship with the Kaskaskia. In return for this protection, the French often used the Kaskaskia to raid and fight other Native Americans in the area. With a declining population, the Kaskaskia were faced with the difficult decision of whether to sit back and be annihilated or to join the French and risk more losses.

The Kaskaskia decided to ally with the French and joined them on several raids and battles against French enemies. In 1733 and 1736, the Kaskaskia participated in French-led expeditions against the Chickasaws. In the latter trip, over one hundred warriors from the

¹⁹⁰ Mary Elizabeth, Good, *Guebert Site: An 18th Century, Historic Kaskaskia Indian Village* Central (States Archaeological Societies, Inc. 1972), 43.

¹⁹¹ Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 1" 204.

Mississippi River villages took part in the expedition.¹⁹² During the 1740s, Cherokee towns were even raided.¹⁹³ Vast distances were often covered in these raids and battles. For instance, the memoirs of a French soldier, “Jolicoeur” Charles Bonin, indicate in 1754 the presence of Illinois warriors at the battle of Fort Necessity in what is now Southwestern Pennsylvania.¹⁹⁴ He recalled that before this battle, “three hundred savage Illinois” arrived at Fort Duquesne to provide support for the expedition to Fort Necessity.¹⁹⁵ The Illinois Country became increasingly important during the French and Indian War as a source of food supplies and manpower. The expenditures of Fort de Chartres for eight months in 1757, at the height of the war, amounted to over five hundred thousand livres. This was due to the increased quantities of food and relief sent to Fort Duquesne.¹⁹⁶

Even the establishment of Fort de Chartres illustrated how the French preferred the Kaskaskia over the Peoria. With the Kaskaskia adapting to European culture, in particular Catholicism, it made sense for the French to establish a fort among these people. The fort signified an increased trading relationship with the Kaskaskia as well as a direct military presence in a Kaskaskia village. It also helped that the Kaskaskia were strategically located near the confluence of the Kaskaskia River and the Mississippi River. Nevertheless, the Kaskaskia still adopted many European ways of life in order to be more productive for the fort. For

¹⁹² Ibid 204.

¹⁹³ Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press 1995), 94.

¹⁹⁴ Bonin does not illustrate whether the warriors were Kaskaskia or Peoria. He simply states that they were Illinois warriors.

¹⁹⁵ Andrew Gallup, “Memoir of a French and Indian War Soldier: ‘Jolicoeur’ Charles Bonin” (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books 1993), 98.

¹⁹⁶ J.H Schlarman, *From Quebec to New Orleans* (Buechler Publishing Company 1929), 340-341.

instance, the Illinois established two mills in Kaskaskia for the production of wheat.¹⁹⁷ By 1763 there were “two hundred acres of cultivated land, a very good stock of cattle, and a brewery.”¹⁹⁸

Not only did wars and raids depopulate the Kaskaskia, but this dependence on the French seemed to change their entire demeanor. During the time when the mission at Kaskaskia officially became a church, the Kaskaskia men were described as being “laborious” while the women were “very neat-handed and industrious.”¹⁹⁹ However, just a half of a decade later the Kaskaskia seemed to be humbled on their journey to France to speak with French officials. Chicagou, of the Kaskaskia band, said in this speech that the land of Kaskaskia was ceded to the French so that they would allow them to remain masters of the lands where they placed their hearths. During these same meetings in France the Illinois attracted a significant amount of attention, because they were introduced by Father de Beaubois as being Christians.²⁰⁰ The dependence on the French became even more substantial as the years progressed. The severity of depopulation continued, especially among the rather small band of Kaskaskias. According to Louis Vivier, a missionary among the Illinois at Kaskaskia in 1750, the people of this village “lead a thoroughly idle life; they chat and smoke, and that is all. As a rule, the Illinois are very lazy and greatly addicted to brandy; this is the cause of the insignificant results that we obtain among them.” Vivier goes on to state that at one time missionaries were present at three different villages in the region. However, this number has been reduced to a single missionary. He also points directly to brandy and bad French influence in the decline of these people.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ JR 70:230-247.

¹⁹⁸ 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.

¹⁹⁹ Excerpts from Peirre-Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*, 1744, reprint ed. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), vol. 2, 222.

²⁰⁰ Excerpt from Richard N. Ellis, ed., and Charlie R. Steen, ed. and trans., “An Indian Delegation in France, 1725,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 67, no. 4 (September 1974), 393-394, 397.

²⁰¹ JR 69: 147, 149.

With a declining population, the Kaskaskia were forced to align themselves with the French. However, this was a mutual dependence, as seen by the use of the Illinois in fighting wars with the French. Even though the Peoria joined the French in this alliance, it was certainly not as strong as the connection the French had with Kaskaskia. In the end, this might be the reason why the Peoria survived for a longer amount of time in the Illinois Country.

The link between the Peoria and Kaskaskia was a loose confederation at best. While these bands had the same history and cultural practices, they became influenced by Europeans in very different ways. Both groups of people would stave off depopulation but by two different measures. As noted earlier, Kaskaskia's population declined to the point where they were forced to strengthen their alliance with the French in order to survive. While Peoria's numbers were not as large as other indigenous groups in the area, they maintained enough of a population to defend themselves from outside attacks. This lack of French reliance might have prolonged the presence of the Peoria in the Illinois Country, but this split between the Illinois doomed the group as a whole.

There are many reasons why the Illinois, and the Kaskaskia in particular, suffered extensive depopulation. However, the more relevant question is why did the Kaskaskia suffer to a greater extent than the surrounding Indian nations such as the Fox? The answer to this question was in the way that the Kaskaskia became dependent first on the French and then later the British and Americans. The Kaskaskia adapted to a wide variety of European cultural influences, such as Christianity, a different style of agriculture, and the idea of hunting fur for a profit instead of subsistence. Even the Peoria accepted the fur trade and some aspects of the new agricultural practices. However, these cultural accommodations left these bands more prone to

dependency than other Indians in the area who were less receptive of European influences.²⁰² For example, the Fox Indians survived this period and were far less dependent on the Europeans. The Fox were a much more militant group and were even targeted by the French at one point for extermination.²⁰³ The Peoria were the largest and most militant band of the Illinois, and this was another reason why they survived longer than the Kaskaskia. The policy of befriending the Illinois to keep them dependent was a deliberate tactic used by the French and later adopted by the British and Americans.

As early as 1680 the French refused to mediate a conflict between the Illinois and Iroquois, because they believed it would disrupt the fur trade. La Salle explained, “So long as it can be contrived to keep them dependent upon us, they may readily be held to their duty, and through them the more distant nations by whom they are feared.”²⁰⁴ While the French believed they could gain an advantage by making the Illinois more dependent peoples, the Illinois also believed they could gain a material advantage by cooperating closely with the Europeans. This close relationship would in turn lead to the modification of several distinct Illinois ways of life, which made them even more dependent on the Europeans.

The final collapse of the economic state for the Kaskaskia occurred when the Americans took control of Kaskaskia and the Illinois Country. Being weakened to an atrocious level, the Kaskaskia were forced to cling to the United States after George Rogers Clark, with a force of Virginia militia, established control over the area. With his promise of not practicing the

²⁰² Hauser, *The Illinois Indian Tribe*, 135.

²⁰³ Louise Phelps Kellogg, “The Fox Indians During the French Regime” *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 1907: 149 and 176.

²⁰⁴ Hauser, *The Illinois Indian Tribe*, 135.

“despicable prospect of plunder” and to “prevent the horrors of Indian butchery,” Clark was able to persuade the Kaskaskia to join the American cause.²⁰⁵

The Kaskaskia remained loyal to the Americans and even turned on the British. After the departure of the Peoria from the region, increased pressure on the Kaskaskia from the Potawatomis, Sauks, Foxes, and Kickapoos forced about three hundred Kaskaskias (including eighty warriors) under Chief Jean Baptiste Ducoigne to leave the Illinois Country in 1774. Under the leadership of Ducoigne, these Kaskaskia moved down the Mississippi River to Arkansas to live under the protection of the Quapaw Indians and the Spanish, while two hundred Kaskaskia remained in Illinois. During this time the Kaskaskia in Arkansas plundered so many British traders that the Spanish government actually granted them their own lands on the White River in eastern Arkansas in 1777. However, by this time Ducoigne’s people wanted to go back to Illinois, and the conditions now seemed more favorable under the Americans.²⁰⁶ These members of the Kaskaskia most likely returned around May of 1777, when Ducoigne’s two-year-old son, Jean, was baptized.²⁰⁷

The Kaskaskia were also active members of the Revolutionary War on the side of the Americans. While most of their traditional enemies sided with the British, the Kaskaskia aided the rebels, despite their small numbers. While forming an alliance with the Americans seems like a reckless decision, it was actually consistent with the longstanding policy of the Kaskaskia to align themselves with a powerful foreign nation. Ducoigne became a staunch ally to George Rogers Clark when he took over the Illinois Country. The Kaskaskia people helped to supply

²⁰⁵ 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), 616.

²⁰⁶ Robert M. Owens, “Jean Baptiste Ducoigne, the Kaskaskias, and the Limits of Thomas Jefferson’s Friendship,” *Journal of Illinois History* Vol. 5, (Summer 2002), 113.

²⁰⁷ Faribault-Beauregard, 177.

Clark's men with food and Ducoigne was used as an American emissary to the Wabash tribes and later to the Chickasaws.²⁰⁸

The Kaskaskia became such good allies to the Americans that they received praise from the Americans well after the American Revolution. Ducoigne traveled to Virginia in 1781 to meet with General Lafayette and later meet with the governor of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson. When the two were formally introduced they smoked a peace pipe and exchanged gifts. Jefferson also took this opportunity to give Ducoigne a medal for his loyalty, while Ducoigne returned the favor with painted buffalo skins.²⁰⁹ Ducoigne spoke of his friendship towards the United States and must have taken quite a liking to Thomas Jefferson. Ducoigne ended up naming his infant son Louis Jefferson.²¹⁰ Ducoigne was even chosen to journey to Philadelphia in 1793 to deliver speeches to President George Washington in order to keep Kentuckians off their lands.²¹¹ By this point the Kaskaskia were too weak to defend their lands by force and were relegated to seeking protection using diplomatic means with the United States.

The final collapse for the Kaskaskia occurred because of their continued allegiance and reliance on the United States. Even during the war of 1812 the Kaskaskia aligned themselves with the Americans against the British and were hated for this move by other Indians for "their steady attachment to and dependence on the United States." Nathaniel Pope, an official in the region, went on to include that the Kaskaskia could not hunt "because they are in danger from the hostile tribes, but still more from our own Citizens, who neither can nor will discriminate

²⁰⁸ Owens, *Jean Baptiste Ducoigne*, 113.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 115.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 114.

²¹¹ "Speeches of John Baptist de Coigne, Chief of the Wabash and Illinois Indians, and other Indian Chiefs" in H.A. Washington, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington D.C.: Taylor and Maury, 1854), 8:176-178.

between friends and foes when they meet an Indian in the woods.”²¹² The governor, Ninian Edwards, also had to take drastic measures to preserve the remaining Kaskaskia people. Edwards decided that it was “dangerous both to them and the people of the territory to permit them to support themselves by hunting and I am consequently compelled to support them at the public expense.”²¹³ As much as the Kaskaskia needed to be protected by the Americans, the Americans needed to protect the Kaskaskia because they represented the Jeffersonian ideal of a civilized Indian.

While the Peoria tentatively aligned themselves with the Americans as well, they were not as dependent on them as Kaskaskia. This was apparent in the eventual treaties that would be signed with this new nation. The split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria became official in 1803 when the United States made separate treaties, first with the Kaskaskia and then the Peoria. In 1803 the Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Michigamea signed all of their lands that were in present day Illinois over to the United States government. The Kaskaskia received land, a monetary compensation, and most importantly a promise of protection from the United States against hostile incursions by other Indian groups.²¹⁴

The Peoria signed a separate treaty with the United States in 1818, which confirmed their split with Kaskaskia. In this treaty the Peoria signed away the remaining lands south and east of the Illinois River that was not ceded by the Kaskaskia. The reservations established in 1803 and 1818 were relinquished in 1832 in another treaty with the United States. Under this treaty, a reservation was set aside in Kansas specifically for the Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Michigamea,

²¹² Nathaniel Pope to Benjamin Stephenson, October 20, 1814, in *The Territory of Illinois, 1814-1818*, Clarence Edwin Carter, The Territorial Papers of the United States, Vol. 17 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), 35.

²¹³ Ninian Edwards to John Armstrong, April 11, 1813, in *The Territory of Illinois, 1814-1818*, Clarence Edwin Carter, The Territorial Papers of the United States, Vol. 16 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 315.

²¹⁴ Charles J. Kappler, editor, “Treaty with the Kaskaskia, 1803” 13 Aug. 1803. Proclamation 23 Dec. 1803. Washington. Government Printing Office, 1904.

Tamaroa, and Peoria. This treaty also stated that the Peoria, despite being included in this treaty, had resided on separate lands in Missouri for more than sixty years. This corresponds to approximately the 1760s, which marks the split between Kaskaskia and Peoria. The remnants of the Illinois would be moved a final time to Indian country (now Oklahoma) and combined with the Miami Indians during the 1870s.²¹⁵ The once powerful Illinois had been reduced to a shell of their former prominence.

The fracturing of the Illinois Indians due to the split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria is a topic that is underdeveloped. A lot more work is needed to fully understand this rift within the Illinois Indians. A better understanding of the connections between the Kaskaskia and Peoria is essential to this story in order to illustrate how great the division was before European contact. More research is also needed on the Peoria once they migrated west of the Mississippi River. In order to show the perseverance of the Peoria, a better understanding of their band is needed after 1765. Despite these shortcomings, the split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria was a crippling blow to the Illinois Indians as a whole.

The loose confederation that aligned the bands of the Illinois doomed them to being susceptible to separate changes of culture. Without strong political ties, the Illinois were easily fractured into two separate groups: a heavily influenced Kaskaskia people and a more defiant group of Peoria. Unfortunately for the Illinois as a whole, they were located at a crossroad where many different European nations eventually came together to claim the land. The Kaskaskian chief, Jean Baptiste Decoigne even stated that he “enlisted under the flag of his fourth allegiance.”²¹⁶ Having dealt with the French and British before the Seven Years War, the Illinois now shifted their allegiance to Spain and later the United States of America. The French

²¹⁵ Emily J. Blasingham, “The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 1” 216.

²¹⁶ Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 43.

influenced Kaskaskia to such an extent that they were almost forced to support their Catholic brothers. However, the larger population, defiance of Catholicism, distance from a strong French presence, and ability to defend themselves caused the Peoria to essentially sever their relationship with the Kaskaskia. The Kaskaskia became known as a lazy band of Natives, while the Peoria were referred to as a migratory group of people.²¹⁷ The once great groups of the Illinois were forced to relinquish their power and adapt to a quickly changing world. The different cultural paths of the Peoria and Kaskaskia show the importance of the decisions made during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for each of these groups.

²¹⁷ Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 1" 210.

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