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Fighting for Family: French Kin Networks and the American Revolution in the Illinois Country, 1780-1781

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**Fighting for Family: French Kin Networks and the
American Revolution in the Illinois Country, 1780-1781**

Steven P. Stuckey

M.A., History, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2010

B.A., History, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2007

**A Thesis submitted to The Graduate School at the University of
Missouri-St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree Master of Arts in History**

August 2010

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Thesis Abstract
August 2010

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**“Fighting for Family: French Kin Networks and the American
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“Fighting for Family” exposes an often overlooked and incomplete history behind the Battle of St. Louis in 1780, and the retaliatory raids on Fort St. Joseph in 1780-1781. Scholars have long interpreted these events as minor skirmishes of the American Revolution, or focused on Spain’s motives in trying to lay claim to the Great Lakes in postwar treaty negotiations.

However, this thesis adds a crucial new perspective regarding those events. Utilizing genealogical records and personal correspondences, “Fighting for Family” argues that the vitality of French kin networks in the Illinois Country, which included members of key Indian nations, played a more compelling role than previously acknowledged. The French familial ties between the inhabitants of the Mississippi River Valley and Lake Michigan region defied British policies, eroded their trade, confounded their military maneuvers, and ultimately ruined British efforts to dominate the West in the late stages of the American Revolution. Drawing on connections between family members around Fort St. Joseph and those in St. Louis, “Fighting for Family” proves that the widely-dispersed residents of French descent—people without a country—used family ties to impact political events on *their* frontier in the 1780s.

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Introduction

For the past 235 years, the creation story of the United States has remained a romantic epic of abused English colonists declaring their freedom from the “absolute Tyranny” of the British Empire.¹ Popular history continues to praise the roles of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin as national icons, while memorializing the many bloody battle sites on the East Coast as sacred ground. But by emphasizing the trials and tribulations of the American colonists along the Atlantic seaboard, historians have obscured revolutionary events elsewhere—especially the long-ignored war in the West.

This thesis will concentrate on the little-known campaigns in the Illinois Country—specifically the British-led Indian attack on the French citizens of Spanish St. Louis in May 1780 and the retaliatory raids of St. Louisans and their Indian allies against Britain’s Fort St. Joseph near present-day Niles, Michigan in late 1780 and early 1781. Those battles on the western frontier reveal the vital role of Indian participation in the decisions of dependent Europeans; provide more of a global context to the American Revolution, in which Spanish participation has been ignored; and, above all, demonstrate the significance of kin connections among the French living in all parts of the Illinois Country.²

¹ Declaration of Independence, final draft, July 2, 1776, adopted by Congress on July 4.

² For the remainder of this thesis, the term “Illinois country” will encompass the Mississippi River Valley, eastern Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, southern Wisconsin, and southern Michigan.

Recent scholarship has begun to address the neglect of that last point, but most historians still overlook the extensive genealogical connections between the French families of St. Louis and Fort St. Joseph, which were far better indicators of loyalty and predictable behavior than the foreign flags of Spain and Great Britain that flew above those francophone towns. I will argue that the “hidden history” of French kinship networks, which linked the Mississippi River Valley and Lake Michigan region, defied British policies, eroded their trade, confounded their military maneuvers, and ultimately ruined English efforts to dominate the West in the late stages of the American Revolution.

Chapter 1

Background to Revolution in the Illinois Country

The Illinois Country experienced revolution roughly a dozen years before shots were fired at Lexington and Concord in 1775. At the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, France's North American empire was dismantled, with Great Britain claiming Canada and the entire trans-Appalachian region. British America's new western borders included the old French Creole villages along the Mississippi River in present-day Illinois. To ensure that England did not gain control of the trans-Mississippi West (what the Americans would later call the Louisiana Purchase Territory), France ceded the rest of the traditional Illinois Country (*le pays des Illinois*) to its Bourbon ally, Spain, in the 1762 Treaty of Fontainebleau.³ Despite that move, Britain still doubled the size of its North American possessions and gained an abundance of commercial resources in the process.

Although the European diplomats who met in Paris to redraw the international boundaries of North America did not consider the Illinois Country as valuable as either Canada or the Caribbean islands, that region had long been an integral part of the French Empire in the New World. Lying between the fur-rich Great Lakes and the plantations of the Gulf of Mexico, French Illinois was a north-south connecting point along the Mississippi

³ France's territorial claims in North America were called New France, and the Treaty of Fontainebleau served as a defense measure against the expansion of British power, but also as a reward to Spain for their efforts and losses in Europe during the Seven Years War. Treaty of Paris 1763, Art. IV, XX; Carl J. Ekberg, *Francois Valle and His World: Upper Louisiana Before Lewis and Clark* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 17.

River, serving as the bread basket of New Orleans, with its grain exports complementing a mixed economy of fur trading, lead mining, and salt manufacturing. Founded between 1699-1730, the Illinois villages of Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Fort de Chartres, St. Philippe, and Prairie du Rocher featured dual settlement with the Algonquian tribes of Tamoroa, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Metchigamea, and Peoria Indians—a model of multicultural cooperation in a common pursuit of cultivation, commerce, and conversion rarely achieved in the later British Empire. Between 1732-1752, French Illinois enjoyed its best years, with large wheat exports increasing the value of rich riverine fields from 10.8 livres to 14.4 livres per arpent.⁴ In those same decades, the French fur trade also expanded at St. Joseph, Green Bay, Michilimackinac, and smaller posts throughout the western Great Lakes north of Illinois, with 2,000 horse packs in 1730 increasing to 2,250 by 1757.⁵

Whether through permanent cohabitation with farming Indians along the Mississippi or by frequent visitation of Indian hunting grounds in the rest of *le pays des Illinois*, the French were the first (often only) Europeans to respect “Native Ground” in pursuing their agricultural and commercial goals.

⁴ Livres were the Spanish currency during the 18th century, while arpents were measurements for plots of land. Ekberg, *Francois Valle*, 12, 15.

⁵ Horse pack was the term used to quantify the amount of goods being traded, and was standardized throughout the Illinois Country. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 123.

They quickly realized that, as outnumbered outsiders, they had to deal with dominant Indian populations on a “Middle Ground” of mutual negotiation in order to enjoy peace and prosperity along distant frontiers. The Canadian government had initially restricted licensed French fur traders to two canoes in the hinterland, thus limiting the amount of goods and personal items they could carry. As a result, those French frontiersmen developed a dependency on Indians for food and shelter, while Indians valued European imported merchandise even more because of its scarcity. Diplomatic reciprocity—French gifts of practical, or symbolically significant, items in exchange for Indian sustenance and military support—resonated with Native cultural patterns and allowed the fur trade to flourish as a mutually desirable enterprise. The development of later trading towns and forts near major waterways encouraged more prolonged and necessary multiethnic interaction. Over many generations, French and Indian peoples merged their worlds into hybrid creations through cross-cultural marriages and métis bloodlines, thus placing a heavy emphasis on multiethnic kin networks for both social stability and economic security.⁶

⁶ Kathleen Du Val, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2006), 3-12; Tanis C. Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996), 65; Susan Sleeper-Smith, “Furs and Female Kin Networks: The World of Marie Madeleine Reaume L’archeveque Chevalier,” in Jo-Anne Fiske, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and William Wicken, ed., *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1995* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1998), 53, 56-57; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 41; Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 26.

When Great Britain seized control of that multicultural landscape, its expectations of a fur trade bonanza were shattered by an immediate and violent reaction from France's long-term Indian allies. In what became known as Pontiac's war, uprising, or "conspiracy," an Ottawa leader of that name demonstrated that a few hundred Indian warriors from several Algonquian nations could thwart the plans of the mighty British Empire. Although Pontiac sacked all the forts with the exception of Niagara, Detroit, and Fort Pitt, his uprising lost steam, and by 1765, the British army regained complete control.⁷

Pontiac's bloody campaigns made British officials realize that their power, Protestantism, and arrogant behavior toward many Indians had alienated old French settlers and their Native allies. The Proclamation Line of October 1763, which prohibited Anglo-American colonists from encroaching on Indian territory beyond the Appalachians, was a step in the right direction. But how was Britain going to reap the benefits of a vast fur frontier so suffused with hybrid cultural traditions of the long-term French and Indian partnerships? The Board of Trade in London drafted a new policy—the (Sir William) "Johnson Plan"—to implement in the Illinois Country. To minimize the risk of attacks upon vulnerable British traders and forts on distant frontiers, Indians were now required to travel to the major bases at Michilimackinac and Detroit to trade their peltries. Though this new policy had long been the practice in the East, Indians in the Illinois

⁷ White, *The Middle Ground*, 269-314.

Country were not accustomed to traveling long distances to trade their furs. Rather, the French traveled to their villages, which was conducive to both sexual and commercial intercourse. As such, the new British policy seemed exclusionary and even racially prejudicial, in addition to being inconvenient. The dictates of bureaucrats across the sea hindered the concept of “Middle Ground” negotiations that respected “Native Ground” in furthering mutually desirable commerce.⁸

Just across the Mississippi River, within two miles of the British Empire in Illinois, a new group of Frenchmen were expanding into the West. There, vast numbers of powerful Indian nations had a bounty of furs to trade. Without knowing about the 1762 cession of western Louisiana to Spain in the all-too-secret Treaty of Fontainebleau, the last two French governors in New Orleans—Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlerec, and Jean Jacques Blaise D’Abbadie—granted a trading monopoly along the Missouri River to Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent and Pierre Laclede and Company. In December 1763, Laclede and 14-year old Auguste Chouteau found the ideal location for their fur trade enterprise near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. Then, on February 15, 1764, Chouteau’s crew of thirty workmen began building the first permanent French town in the West that was

⁸ Clarence Edwin Carter, *Great Britain and the Illinois Country, 1763-1774* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 79; Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women*, 61-62.

entirely devoted to the Indian trade, without military or missionary motives.⁹ Laclede named his new settlement St. Louis after the crusading king, Louis IX, patron saint of the then French king, Louis XV.

From the outset, St. Louis was a fur trade “Mecca,” attracting Indians such as the Missouris even before the original buildings were complete. The women and children of that tribe helped dig the cellar for Laclede’s own house and trading headquarters, which revealed not only a congenial relationship but also the popularity of a new center of fur commerce that was French rather than British.¹⁰ A host of French fur traders quickly moved across the river from Illinois residences near Fort de Chartres and Cahokia to access a booming business with equestrian Siouan hunters who had been starved of European merchandise during the long French and Indian War. This exodus from Illinois was reflected in the St. Louis census of 1772, which recorded “399 whites of both sexes, and 198 slaves”—for a total population of 597—when only a decade earlier, all of Spanish Louisiana between the Arkansas and Missouri rivers had but 891 inhabitants.¹¹

St. Louisans succeeded in creating a safe, affluent town because they welcomed all friendly Native nations for trade and diplomacy, although the populous, powerful Osages were the essential allies who guaranteed the economic stability and military security of Laclede’s settlement. They visited

⁹ Although Maxent and Laclede’s original license was revoked in 1767, Maxent was granted a similar permit from Spanish Governor Antonio de Ulloa in 1768. A.P. Nasatir, “Indian Trade and Diplomacy in the Spanish Illinois, 1763-1792” (PhD diss., University of California, 1926), 6-7; Thorne, *Many Hands*, 68.

¹⁰ Thorne, *Many Hands*, 70.

¹¹ Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri: From the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State into the Union* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1908), vol. II, 29.

three or four times a year to trade huge quantities of deerskins, but French St. Louisans also entertained the Osages' Sauk and Fox enemies because their maple sugar and pecans were desirable delicacies.¹²

French traders conducted business their own way for nearly six years before the first Spanish lieutenant governor established residency in St. Louis. Prior to that, in 1769, a temporary official, Francisco Rui, discovered that merchants ruled the town. Many opposed Rui's restrictions on their freedom of movement, sharing licenses and merchandise, trading with off-limit tribes, and especially his prohibition against "going on the East Side of the Mississippi" to trade with Illinois Indians now in British territory. Even though the old French Creoles resented Rui's threats to send offenders "in Irons to Pensacola," they were not interested in "exciting the Savages to commit Disturbances" against Spanish rule.¹³ Later lieutenant governors proved much more lenient, and the leading French traders were usually able to purchase permits for conducting business almost anywhere along the lower Missouri River, often for years at a time. For example, Eugene Poure, Pedro Montardi, and Charles Cardenal were licensed to trade exclusively with three

¹² Abraham Nasatir, "The Chouteaus and the Indian Trade of the West, 1764-1852," 15, in Throne, *Many Hands*, 70.

¹³ "Regulations Made By Captain Rui to Govern the Traders on the Missouri, 1769," in Louis Houck, ed., *The Spanish Regime in Missouri* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1909), vol. 1, 35; Gage to Hillsborough, Aug. 17, 1768, in Great Britain, Colonial Office 5, 291, in Paul Chrisler Phillips, *The Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 598.

groups of Pawnees, which, in the right circumstances, provided long-term stability for St. Louis's Indian relations.¹⁴

Leading merchant families, such as the Laclede-Chouteaus, Cerres, and Gratiots shared bloodlines as well as business ties to create a strong oligarchy that lasted decades. They had the family connections with both Europeans and Indians to undertake trade themselves or to monopolize the merchandise that was extended on credit to other traders, at a huge markup.¹⁵ Despite British and Spanish prohibitions, such dominant merchants controlled fur trading along both banks of the Mississippi as a profitable contraband industry. Before Laclede's death in 1778, he policed the west side of the Mississippi River looking for, and sometimes finding, illegal British traders along the Missouri. English officials became increasingly upset that the Spanish officials were unable (and most of the time unwilling) to control the contraband trade in Illinois, while protecting St. Louis from interlopers. Garrisons such as Fort de Chartres, which the British occupied in October 1765, proved to be too expensive, given their ineffectiveness in preventing contraband commerce. An English officer there summarized the dilemma: "Inhabitants [of the Illinois Country] have continued to Send their Peltry to New Orleans, which is shipped from thence for old France, and all the Money that is laid out for the Troops and Savages, is immediately sent to New Orleans, for which Our Subjects get

¹⁴ Poure traded with Stabaco village, Montardi with Topage village, and Cardenal with Panimaha village, all of which belong to the Pawnee nation. Nasatir, "Indian Trade," 25.

¹⁵ Thorne, *Many Hands*, 85.

French Manufactures; the Crown of Great Britain is at all the Expence and that of France reaps the Advantage.”¹⁶

While the British harassed French residents on the east side of the Mississippi River, illegal French commerce flourished on the Spanish side by flaunting restrictions. The fur trade in St. Louis increased so dramatically, the British complained, that the majority of the peltry from “His Majesty’s Dominions in America” was shipped through the “Mississippi [to be] carried directly to Foreign Markets contrary to the Laws and Policy” of England. General Thomas Gage, commander of the British forces in North America, estimated that France gained some £80,000 sterling from the furs shipped from St. Louis and the Illinois Country.¹⁷ What was becoming apparent was that not even troops of the great British Empire could prevent traditional ties of local French and Indian kinship from determining the nature of trade relationships. French merchants such as Joseph Roy and Nicollas Marchesseau utilized their families’ intercultural connections with Indians on both the British and Spanish sides of the Mississippi to obtain trade goods as much as “30% cheaper.” And the French connection with Spanish New Orleans provided the opportunity to ship their peltries there, where peltries “bore prices ten pence per pound higher than any British market.”¹⁸

According to a British official in 1773, “as long as the Commodities of the

¹⁶ Capt. Forbes, Fort de Chartres, Apr. 15, 1768, in G.B. CO5, 86/301. Forbes again wrote on Jan. 1, 1769: “...more French than English manufacturers were consumed in the Illinois.” G.B. CO5, 87/67, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 598.

¹⁷ Capt. Forbes to Gage, Jan., 1769, in G.B. CO5, 72/237; Gage to Shelburne, Jan. 17, 1767, in G.B. CO5, 84/54, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 600.

¹⁸ Thorne, *Many Hands*, 86-87.

Mississippi bear a better Price at New Orleans than at a British Market; and that the Merchants of that Place can contrive to Sell their Goods at lower Rates than the British Traders,” then the fur trade “tended more to the Benefit of New Orleans than of Ourselves.”¹⁹

Between 1763-1768, England lost approximately £9,144 sterling due to the decrease in beaver exports from the American colonies, and another estimate claimed that the British lost revenue from 500 to 1,000 packs of fur annually from the Illinois Country alone. By 1770 it was apparent to London officials that the “Johnson Plan” had created an economic nightmare for British traders, who risked their livelihoods by not visiting Indian villages and risked their lives if they pursued illegal commerce too far from the protection of forts. After four years, the old policy was abandoned, but the damage to Indian goodwill and trader confidence would be hard to redeem. In its place, British officials required traders to apply for restrictive licenses from fort commissaries and to pay a bond to guarantee compliance with strict trading regulations. In addition, traders had to charge fixed prices for goods, which caused many to seek higher profits in contraband trade with the French, even if England’s economy suffered.²⁰

By 1770, the British fur trade in the Illinois Country was in dire straits, because London had alienated both Indians and their own merchants

¹⁹ Gage to Dartmouth, May 5, 1773, in G.B. CO5, 90/290, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 601; Carter, *Great Britain*, 77-102, in Thorne, *Many Hands*, 71.

²⁰ Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women*, 62-63; Carter, *Great Britain*, 94; Carter calculated the annual value of furs exported from the colonies to Great Britain alone as follows:

1764 - £28,067 1765 - £27,801 1766 - £24,654 1767 - £20,262 1768 - £18,923

with over-regulation, while the French prospered through their old, and still viable, Native alliances based on personal trust.²¹ Great Britain's occupation of the Illinois Country had failed to win the hearts and minds of the French and Indians, and English officials on both sides of the Atlantic grappled with increasing frontier crises in addition to trade issues.²² Some English traders had intentionally addicted Indians to alcohol in order to cheat them out of their lands as well as pelts. English colonists in the South had breeched the Proclamation Line of 1763, and their invasions of Indian territories led to the extermination of valuable animals for both Native subsistence and trade. But they remained as permanent and defiant squatters on tribal homelands, which further enraged populous tribes. Since the British government had trimmed the budget, frontier officials were scarce, only able to patrol "Lakes and Waters of Communication," while leaving the rest of the land open for whites who sought free farms without the legalities or expense.²³

Violent Indian retaliations and recurring frontier vigilantism inevitably followed. Between 1773-1774, Creeks and Cherokees in the South killed many white "squatters;" Potawatomies in the North murdered several "thieving" traders; and the Shawnees and other Native nations along the Ohio River fought pitched battles with Virginia frontiersmen in Lord Dunmore's War.²⁴ When the British tried to collect the £9,000 needed to

²¹ Hillsborough to Gage, Feb., 1770, in G.B. CO5, 88/95, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 601-602.

²² Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 4.

²³ Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 611-622.

²⁴ Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 622.

provide for additional frontier defense, outraged colonial governments refused pay.²⁵ “As the Colonies do not seem disposed to concur in any general Regulations for that purpose [of Indian trade],” wrote Lord Dartmouth, “I am at a loss to suggest any mode by which this important service can be other ways provided.”²⁶ General Thomas Gage proposed a military solution, calling for “1,000 soldiers to the West, [to] build new and stronger posts” on the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, and Wabash Rivers, but there were few funds for that. The idea of bribing hostile Indians with increased quantities of premium merchandise was also rejected as too costly. As Gage observed, “Indian expences at Illinois are intolerable and they ask more than the trade amounts to.”²⁷ The ideal solution, some Londoners suggested, would be to conquer Spain’s entire Louisiana territory, but that was the most expensive proposition of all.

The British government was in no position to provide such extensive military resources at an enormous cost, since the Atlantic colonists were already protesting increased taxes for “imperial defense and Indian trade.”²⁸ William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, conceived the Quebec Act in 1774 as a radical, but necessary, solution to the dangers and debts that the British had experienced in the turbulent trans-

²⁵ The Northern Department required £5,000 annually, while the Southern Department required £4,000 annually. Instructions to Botetourt, Aug. 3, 1768, in Great Britain, Colonial Office 5, 1368: 461, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 616, 621, 612.

²⁶ *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York*, VIII, 348-349, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 621-623.

²⁷ Gage to Shelburne, Mar. 12, 1768, in Great Britain, Colonial Office 5, 99, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 598-599.

²⁸ Gage to Hillsborough, November 10, 1770, P. R. O., Am. and W. I., vol. 126, Hillsborough to Gage, July 31, 1770, P. R. O., Am. and W. I., vol. 126, in Carter, *Great Britain*, 101, 102.

Appalachian region since 1763. That legislation turned governance of the entire territory over to Quebec, recognizing the defects of the Proclamation Line by giving the area more of a “French feel.” By expanding Roman Catholicism and French legal traditions between the mountains and the Mississippi, the British acknowledged the primacy of French Quebec in reestablishing traditional trade relationships with the Indians. Quebec merchants had no problem funding a renewed fur trade without trying to settle on Indian homelands, which perfectly aligned with the Crown’s goals to expand export profits while minimizing the expenses of a military frontier.²⁹

While the Quebec Act seemed to be a boom for fur traders and Indian hunters within and beyond the Illinois Country, it aroused the ire of powerful English colonies, such as Virginia, that were more interested in creating a settler empire in the West than in furthering the mercantilist goals of the mother country or catering to their old French and Indian enemies. Colonists along the Atlantic coast were angered at being required to pay for frontier posts such as Fort de Chartres, while Canadian merchants reaped the profits. Would English farmers in the East, who desired to move onto cheaper lands in the West, really benefit from keeping suspicious Indians well armed with the latest trade muskets on their homelands that would block access to the trans-Appalachian region? Enraged by the Quebec Act and other “intolerable acts” passed by Parliament in 1774, the thirteen colonies convened the First Continental Congress and planned to boycott British imports unless the

²⁹ Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 625.

offending legislation was reversed within the year. “The non-importing Resolutions of the Merchants and Inhabitants” created a scarcity of Indian trade goods and inflated the prices for merchandise to more than 40 percent. But given the political, constitutional, and economic crises that caused colonial militiamen and British regulars to exchange lethal fire at Lexington and Concord, such concerns about distant frontiers seemed trivial indeed.³⁰

The War for American Independence in the East was the ultimate response to failed British policies in the West, which had imposed additional taxation on the thirteen seaboard colonies, limited economic opportunities, attacked political freedoms, and restricted the territorial expansion of their residents. While the British and Continental armies warred along the Atlantic, two important fur trade centers in the Illinois Country—St. Louis and Fort St. Joseph—also became pivotal targets on “contested grounds.”

³⁰ John Stuart to Botetourt, July 12, 1770, in Great Britain, Colonial Office 5, 1348:259, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 627.

Chapter 2

The Revolutionary Role of St. Louis, 1776-1780

“What a horrible spectacle,” wrote Fernando de Leyba, Spanish lieutenant governor of St. Louis, as he recounted the bloodbath in his town to Governor-General Bernardo de Galvez in the Louisiana capital. “It was an affliction and general consternation, to see these poor corpses cut into pieces, their entrails arrachez [thrown out], their limbs, heads, arms and legs scattered all over the field.” Clearly, Leyba was “very deeply grieved with great pain” about the British attack against St. Louis on May 26, 1780.³¹ His emotional words reveal the profound significance of that event for locals, in contrast to the trivialization of that “mere skirmish” by historians whose main focus was the Revolutionary War in the East. What was happening half a continent away, however, would eventually affect the Mississippi River Valley.

Although Great Britain remained very much invested in the western fur trade, the intensive military activity in the thirteen colonies necessitated some dramatic changes in policy. The British rerouted frontier trade through Montreal and recalled the troops serving in the Illinois Country, leaving old Fort de Chartres empty and abandoned. Even without troops, the English influenced the trade in the West because of the strategic placement of Detroit

³¹ “De Leyba to the Governor,” St. Louis, June 8, 1780, in George P. Hammond, ed., *New Spain and the Anglo-American West, Historical Contributions Presented to Herbert Eugene Bolton* (Lancaster, PA.: Lancaster Press, Inc., 1932), vol. 1, 247.

and Michilimackinac in the Great Lakes region and Montreal's access to them and the St. Lawrence River route to the Atlantic. The availability of British goods and the Crown's willingness to pay a premium for pelts reassured several western tribes, in contrast to the rebellious colonies, whose limited financial capabilities and shortage of imports practically ended their trade ties with many interior Indians.³²

With the steady flow of trade goods, British traders were able to maximize profits in the Illinois country. In 1777, half of the furs exported from Montreal came by way of Detroit, while Michilimackinac merchants expanded their sources of credit.³³ In 1778, David McCrue, John Kay, Peter Barthe, and Charles Gratiot, merchant partners at that "Gibraltar of the North," agreed to pay six percent interest on funds and trade goods provided by William and John Kay of Montreal.³⁴ But the good times were cut short when Governor-General Guy Carleton enacted a law allowing only vessels in the "service of the Crown to navigate the Great Lakes," thus reducing the trade volume between the St. Lawrence River and the western frontier for the remainder of the American Revolution.³⁵ Carleton's actions forced many merchants to divert pelts from Michilimackinac and Detroit to St. Louis and New Orleans.

³² Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 628-629.

³³ "Memorandum on trade of the Upper Country, 1777," in Wis. Hist. Soc. *Coll.*, Vol. XII, 41, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 629.

³⁴ "Agreement for the Indians Trade Between David McCrue and Company of Michillimackinac and William and John Kay of Montreal, April 6, 1778," Toronto Public Library, Quebec Papers, B 75, 168, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 631.

³⁵ Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 630.

With that influx of English goods, French St. Louisans were able to increase their gifts, and thus their influence, with the dozens of tribal delegations that visited the town each year. Many merchants in the British zone of the Illinois Country, like Gratiot and Key, relocated their business to the “Spanish side” at St. Louis in the late 1770s in order to enjoy uninterrupted trade while war raged in the East. Others, however, chose to pursue illegal trade along the Missouri River. Jean-Marie Ducharme, a rogue trader from Montreal, lost \$4,000 to \$5,000 worth of merchandise and furs when Laclede and a St. Louis posse captured his boats.³⁶

Free of the fear of an imminent British invasion by the removal of their troops, and largely free of interference from Spanish officials in New Orleans, who were now engaged in war with England along the Gulf Coast, St. Louis appeared to be the rock of stability and consistency in the West. Retaining some political influence over Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes, the British were committed to keeping the Indians at least neutral, and if possible, to gain them as allies. They recognized that it would have been “impossible to keep the Indians out of the fight,” but “surely the presents [the Indians] receive will prevent their acting against us.”³⁷ While the British and Spanish empires across the Mississippi River from one another tried to maintain a status quo of non-violence, the most de-stabilizing element came

³⁶ Wis. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, Vol. III (1857), 231, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 634-635.

³⁷ Andrew McFarland Davis, “The Employment of Indian Auxiliaries in the American War,” *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (Oct., 1887): 709-728; Letter of Lieut. Governor Abbott to Sir Guy Carleton with Enclosure: Declaration of Monsr. Montbrun, June 8, 1778, in Kathrine Wagner Seineke, *The George Rogers Clark Adventure in the Illinois and Selected Documents of the American Revolution at the Frontier Posts* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1981), 244.

from the American colonists, who sought to stake their claim in the Illinois Country. From the opening of the war, the Continental Congress contemplated expeditions against the British forts at Niagara and Detroit, which were not feasible because of the government's limited capital and military capabilities.³⁸ The Virginians, however, were ready to act on their own.

Aware of their ancient royal charter that gave them "sea to sea" boundaries, and motivated by an immediate desire for land and fur profits, Virginians grabbed the initiative in conquering the Illinois Country under the guise of furthering the American Revolution. Governors Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson successively supported General George Rogers Clark and his "Illinois Regiment" of Virginia "Long Knives" in attacking Britain's vulnerable old French villages along the Mississippi River. Clark's small frontier army surprised the residents of Kaskaskia on July 4, 1778. He divided his "little Army into two Divisions [and] ordered one to surround the Town," while the other "broke into the Fort, secured the Governour . . . [and] in 15 minutes had every Street Secured." He then "sent Runners through the Town, ordering the People on the pane of Death to keep Close to their Houses, which they observ'd, and before daylight had the whole disarmed."³⁹ Clark went on to capture Cahokia, Prairie du Rocher, and Vincennes by mid-August, but his ultimate objective was Detroit, which would have inflicted

³⁸ U.S. Continental Congress, *Journals*, IV, 308, 318, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 638.

³⁹ Clark's letter to Mason, dated Louisville, Falls of the Ohio, November 6, 1779, was penned while events at Kaskaskia were still fresh in his mind. Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 261.

severe economic and military damage to England's cause in both theaters of war.⁴⁰

Clark's sudden attacks and easy victories forced an urgent British reappraisal of how they could hold—or regain—control over the Illinois Country and the role it might play in their war strategy. Uncertainty about Clark's objectives and the “route the rebels would take next” thrust the “whole country in the Greatest Confusion.” British merchants feared that the Virginians could now “plunder” their trade goods and ruin them financially.⁴¹ Since the fur trade was vital for funding the war and securing Indian allies on the frontier, St. Louis and the Americans were aligned in a common cause against both the mercantile and military assets of Great Britain. On a national level, France and Spain would soon be official allies of the United States while Governor Galvez in New Orleans was preparing for aggressive campaigns against the British throughout the Gulf of Mexico. Funds from Virginia purchased supplies in that southern capital and were sent up the Mississippi to a “Continental [Army] Store at St. Louis,” which supplied Clark's men encamped across the river with knives, ammunition, food, wine, and brandy.⁴² On a personal level, General Clark found a trusted friend in Commandant de Leyba. He was a “gentlemen [who] interested himself much

⁴⁰ Clark to Gov. Patrick Henry, in “George Rogers Clark Papers,” Ill. Hist. Soc. *Collections*, Vol. VIII, 32, in Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 642.

⁴¹ Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, Aug. 31, 1778, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 279.

⁴² Letter of G.R. Clark to Governor Henry, Sept. 16, 1778; Lt. Girault's Account of Stores Withdrawn from St. Louis, Sept. 17, 1778, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 290-291; John Francis McDermott, ed., *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 354-360.

in favor of the States” and even offered to send militiamen to help hold Clark’s conquests in Illinois.

But St. Louisans were making a “deal with the devil” that would have immediate and long-range consequences. Could they afford to challenge Great Britain so openly? As an English commandant wrote to Governor Galvez, the St. Louisans had committed a most serious “impropriety” by “affording an Asylum to Rebels” who were “then in Arms against their sovereign” and providing “supplies of gun powder and other stores.” Poaching Illinois furs was one thing, but the French Creoles across the river should think twice about engaging in war with the redcoats. The moment of decision was at hand for choosing “how they are to act—whether as friends or Enemies to the British Empire.”⁴³ Secondly, would the long-term future of St. Louis be better with the Americans or the British in control of the Illinois Country? Clark’s expeditions unleashed a torrent of American settlers flooding the “empty countryside” along the Mississippi River. Real estate speculators formed land companies almost overnight and began encouraging immigration by offering “Chief Settlers or Heads of Families” who came to Illinois “Five hundred of said Lotts free from purchase Money or rent,” with each “Lott” consisting of 100 acres.⁴⁴ The western expansion of the United States was now in full swing.

⁴³ Hamilton’s Retained English Draft of His Letter to Gov. Galvez at New Orleans, Jan. 13, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 344.

⁴⁴ Proposals for Settling at the Illinois by the United Companies of Illinois and Wabash, Mar. 27, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 364-365.

Before St. Louisans had time to assess the future, they found themselves in the cross-hairs of a British military offensive. In December 1778, Henry Hamilton, lieutenant governor of Detroit, recaptured Vincennes before losing it, again, to Clark's forces. The Virginians sent Hamilton to imprisonment in Williamsburg like a common criminal, because he had done the unthinkable—paying Indian “savages” to kill and scalp whites. Frederick Haldimand, governor-general of the newly expanded Quebec Province, had originally suspended British trade in the Illinois Country, but that only depressed the economies of Michilimackinac and Detroit as well as alienated Indian allies.⁴⁵ In order to maintain Native allegiance, which was vital, given the lack of British troops, the Crown assumed the “considerable additional Expence” of providing Indians with provisions. At Detroit, Major Arent de Peyster distributed gunpowder and clothing to Sioux, Winnebago, and Menominee warriors because it was of the “greatest importance to Secure these people in our interest before the Rebels make any impression on them.”⁴⁶ Indians were the “only Barrier” against American, French, and Spanish assaults on territory and trade, but using them in battle had ethical implications in the context of “civilized” European warfare. Atrocities would almost certainly occur, but the British were determined to utterly destroy the “crops and the habitation of all the advanced Settlers” in the Illinois Country.

⁴⁵ Letter of General Haldimand to Major de Peyster, Apr. 18, 1779; Letter of General Haldimand to Major de Peyster, May 20, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 371, 380.

⁴⁶ Letter of Major de Peyster to General Haldimand, June 1, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 382-384.

The British counteroffensive was timed to deal with two issues that weakened their position south of the Great Lakes. One was international, since the dynamics of the American Revolution changed in the spring of 1779, when Spain signed the Treaty of Aranjuez with France and then joined the French in declaring war on Great Britain.⁴⁷ Spain's entrance into the war thrust the Illinois Country into the middle of a global contest for continental control of territory, trade, and the Indians that were central to both. The second catalyst was more local and immediate, since Clark was planning to build a fort at the mouth of the Ohio River to help stabilize the American presence in the Illinois Country. It would "immediately become the Key of the Whole Trade of the Western Country" by supporting American fur traders and protecting navigation from British attacks along both the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.⁴⁸

In June 1779, Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, ordered Governor Haldimand of Quebec to attack the Illinois Country with the goal of eventually capturing New Orleans.⁴⁹ The British plan, proposed by Major de Peyster of Detroit, called for the Wabash Indians to attack Clark while he was preoccupied with building his new fort. Sinclair

⁴⁷ The Treaty of Aranjuez was signed on April 12, 1779 with France agreeing to help capture Gibraltar and the Floridas in exchange for Spain aiding France with fighting the British. Subsequently, the Spanish never officially entered into a formal treaty with the united colonies, but fought their mutual enemy, the British Empire. For a more detailed account of the Treaty of Aranjuez, see Paul Chrisler Phillips, *The West in the Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1913), chapter 5, 91-107; Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1888), 145, n. 1.

⁴⁸ Copy of George Rogers Clark's Intercepted Letter to Thomas Jefferson, Sept. 23, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 400.

⁴⁹ Lord George Germain, 1st Viscount Sackville, was appointed as the Secretary of State of the Colonies in 1775, succeeding the tenure of Lord William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth.

at Michilimackinac would coordinate Sioux, Winnebago, and Menominee war parties in a southern advance to capture Vincennes, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and cross the Mississippi “as if going to war against the Osages of the Missouri, and thereby surprise” the St. Louisans.⁵⁰

Sinclair succeeded in convincing his forces, both white and Indian, that this was a trade war. Experienced British fur traders would command Native warriors they knew well, and everyone would share in the booty taken in the Illinois Country and at St. Louis. Sinclair counted on Wabasha, a chief of “very singular and uncommon abilities,” and his Dakota/Minnesota Sioux, who were a “warlike people undebauched.” Two British Indian agents, Joseph Rocque and John Key, were assigned to Wabasha as interpreters and commissaries. The other major Indian components were Ottawas under chief Matchekewis, as well as Winnebagos, Potawatomies, Sauks, Foxes, Iowas, Mascoutins, and Kickapoos. Commanding those warriors were two veterans of the French and Indian War—Charles Michel de Langlade, who had fought for France, and Emanuel Hesse, a veteran of an American regiment serving the British. To aid in convincing the uncertain Sauk and Fox to do their duty, Sinclair also assigned two fur traders, Jean-Marie Ducharme (whose trade Laclede had ruined) and Joseph Calve.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Portion of a Letter of Major de Peyster to General Haldimand, Nov. 20, 1779; Letter of General Haldimand to Major de Peyster, Feb. 12, 1780 in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 408, 421.

⁵¹ Carolyn Gilman, “L’ Annee du Coup: The Battle of St. Louis, 1780,” *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (April, 2009): Prt. 1, 142-145.

In February, Sinclair began outfitting the expedition by ordering Hesse to “collect all the Canoes and Corn in the country,” and gather his forces at Prairie du Chien at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. Sinclair sent out “nine large Belts” to various tribes depicting “two Indian figures with joined hands & raised axes in the Country” between Michilimackinac and the Mississippi River. All of the Indian auxiliaries were to meet Hesse at Prairie du Chien and not proceed down the Mississippi until Sergeant J. F. Phillips arrived with the order to march. The first target of the invasion was St. Louis because of its reportedly inadequate defenses consisting of “only 20 men & 20 brass Cannon.” If the capture of St. Louis proved successful, Hesse was to remain there while Wabasha attacked “Misere [Ste. Genevieve] and the Rebels at Kacasia [Kaskaskia].” Once those sites were under their control, the British would have adequate supplies and food for launching an attack against New Orleans.⁵²

While Sinclair was coordinating the resources for his expedition, Clark suspected that the British were up to something. “I make no doubt,” he remarked, “of the English Regaining the Interest of many Tribes of Indians and their designs against the Illinois” Country considering the “Immence quantity of goods” the British possessed. Because “bad Crops and the severity of the Winter hath Rendered it Impossible” for towns in the Illinois Country “to make any further supplies until next Harvest,” Clark was

⁵² Sergeant Phillips orders were written in Gaelic to prevent the Americans or Spanish from knowing about the invasion should the correspondences fall into their hands. Sinclair to Haldimand, February 17, 1780; Sinclair to Haldimand, May 29, 1780, in Thwaites, *WSHC*, 148-149, 152.

inclined to “Amediately Evacuate our present posts, and let our whole force Center at or near the Mouth of Ohio.” Clark thought it best to pull back and reorganize his forces so “in a few months” they could “act again on the offensive.”⁵³ But events moved quickly, and most of his forces were still at Cahokia when the British struck.

Believing that he possessed the element of surprise, Hesse headed downriver from Prairie du Chien on May 2, 1780, with some 750 men, “including Traders, servants and Indians.” But several informants were tracking his movements. In late March, trader John Conn warned St. Louisans of an impending British attack.⁵⁴ Because the town was “exposed...on all sides to the enemy without defense,” Lieutenant Governor de Leyba planned for four stone towers to be constructed, but only the west tower, which “dominate[d] the major part of the village,” was completed in time.⁵⁵ Leyba also ordered the dilapidated Fort San Carlos at the mouth of the Missouri River to be blown up so the enemy could not use it, while transferring its six soldiers and five cannon to St. Louis. Due to the “extreme poverty and misery to which the inhabitants have been reduced,” Leyba

⁵³ Portion of a Letter of G.R. Clark to Colonel John Todd, March, 1780; in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 429-430.

⁵⁴ “Documents Relating to the Attack Upon St. Louis in 1780,” *Missouri Historical Society Collections* (July 1906), 2: 45.

⁵⁵ A.P. Nasatir, ed., “St. Louis During the British Attack of 1780,” in *New Spain and the Anglo-American West: Historical Contributions Presented to Herbert Eugene Bolton* (Lancaster, PA: Lancaster Press, 1932), 243-244.

forced the town's affluent merchants to pay for most of the defensive preparations.⁵⁶

With St. Louis having but “a few troops and inhabitants,” Leyba sent a dispatch on May 9 to Ste. Genevieve, calling for support. Silvio Francisco de Cartabona, commander of the small Spanish garrison there, and Francois Vallé, captain of the town's militia, responded to Leyba's plea for help by sending thirty men. On May 13, Leyba also called in all the hunters and trappers scattered within twenty leagues of St. Louis. Within five days of his initial orders, Leyba had an additional 150 men—“all good shots”—to help finalize his preparations.⁵⁷

Leyba took the initiative and sent out scouting parties to spot the enemy. He ordered two separate detachments, one with “forty men in three pirogues . . . as far as ten to twelve leagues” up the Mississippi River. The other group was sent upriver in two canoes with orders not to return until they “might see the army of the enemy.” Meanwhile, Leyba ordered the inhabitants to dig two “Intrenchments” at each end of the village, both starting at the Mississippi and ending at the tower. In addition, he had a floor constructed in the tower and positioned all five cannon there, until it resembled “a platform Cannon with a Parapet thrown over a Stone House.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ McDermott, *Mississippi Valley*, 352.

⁵⁷ De Leyba to Governor, June 8, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 245; Carl J. Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier* (Gerald, MO: Patrice Press, 1985), 61-67.

⁵⁸ De Leyba to Governor, June 8, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 245-246; “Documents Relating to the Attack Upon St. Louis in 1780,” *Missouri Historical Society Collections* (July 1906), 2: 45.

When the attackers finally appeared before St. Louis on May 26, residents had been expecting them for three days. Approaching the town from the north, the Indians divided their forces and “scattered in the fields, massacring with all possible fury and barbarity the farmer and his animals.” The larger half stormed the fortifications and “advanced like madmen, with an unbelievable boldness and fury, making terrible cries and a terrible firing.” The speed of the warriors’ assault and their loud war whoops struck terror into the inhabitants of St. Louis. The “lamentable cries” of the women and children were heard above the musket and artillery fire.⁵⁹

During the exchange of hot lead between the defenders in the trenches and the charging Indians, Leyba and six other men hurried to the tower and started firing the cannon in the general direction of the enemy. Those booming blasts shocked the Indians, who did not believe that St. Louis had artillery, and prevented warriors from concentrating an attack on the weakly defended trenches. As a result, the Indians began to fall back and instead focused merely on “massacring several persons working in the fields who had not had sufficient time to take refuge” behind the trenches.⁶⁰ Most of the carnage occurred among civilians caught in the open, who were butchered along with “oxen, cows, horses, pigs, and hens.” Witnesses reported the gruesome sight of friends and family members inflicted with “the most unheard [kind] of barbarity”—“scalped, entrails opened, craniums crushed,

⁵⁹ De Leyba to Governor, June 8, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 246; McDermott, *Mississippi Valley*, 364.

⁶⁰ De Leyba to Governor, June 8, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 246; McDermott, *Mississippi Valley*, 364.

limbs mutilated, bathed in blood, and scattered here and there.” The Indians intentionally committed such atrocities in plain sight “in order to draw the Spaniards from such parts of the works as afforded them cover,” but their attempts failed to pull anyone away from the safety of the trenches.⁶¹

After five hours of fighting, the Indians finally withdrew and retreated toward the mouth of the Illinois River. They left in their wake 21 dead, 7 wounded, and 25 captured St. Louisans.⁶² The town was on high alert for the next several weeks, as Leyba was expecting Langlade to come down the Illinois River “with an army of savages to pounce . . . a second time.” But Langlade’s men were harassed by Spain’s Potawatomi allies, creating enough “dissension between the commanders of the party” to force the “abandonment of the plan.”⁶³

Although St. Louisans were on edge for weeks, expecting to be attacked “daily by the savages who have alarmed us so much,” Leyba agreed to furnish “one hundred Men With Botes arms Artilerey Amonition & provision” to help hunt down the attackers. The St. Louis contingent under the trained French officer, Pierre Picote de Belestre, joined American troops under Colonel John Montgomery of Clark’s army at Cahokia on June 14. The joint force was slow in forming and moving northward, and finding no

⁶¹ De Leyba to Governor, June 8, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 247; McDermott, *Mississippi Valley*, 364; “Documents Relating to the Attack Upon St. Louis in 1780,” *Missouri Historical Society Collections* (July 1906), 2: 46.

⁶² The number dead, wounded, and captured are found in De Leyba to Governor, June 8, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 249-251.

⁶³ De Leyba to the Governor, June 20, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 253; Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, American Historical Association, *Annual Report, 1945* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949), 2: 397.

Indians to fight, and returned after “burning a [Sauk] Town which had been Evacuated some days.”⁶⁴

During Montgomery’s expedition, fragments of Hesse’s forces trickled into Detroit and Michilimackinac and reported on their defeat. British officials could not believe that the small villages of St. Louis and Cahokia had prevailed, and they blamed the failed attack on leaked information, obviously given the time the Spanish had to construct a stone tower and trenches. Officials also pointed fingers at Calve and Ducharme and their Sauk and Fox warriors, who had “fallen back so early,” which prevented Wabasha’s Sioux and the Winnebagos from “storm[ing] the Spanish Lines.” The Sauks and Foxes had always been reluctant to attack St. Louisans, with whom they had long traded, but Sinclair blamed those traders of being distracted by a “little underhand commerce” instead of conquering St. Louis, which would have given them the entire “Trade of the Missouri [River Valley].” In reality, Sinclair was in no position to share the wealth of the West with such disreputable frontier traders. The British were so strapped for resources that they could not spare regular troops for the St. Louis campaign, and Sinclair had planned all along to ship captured merchandise to Michilimackinac.⁶⁵

The British had no monopoly on disingenuousness, for when the old and ailing Leyba died on June 28, much of the Spain’s friendly cooperation

⁶⁴ De Leyba to the Governor, June 20, 1780, in Nasatir, *New Spain*, 253; Letter of Captain John Rodgers to G.R. Clark, July 22, 1780, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 445.

⁶⁵ “Documents Relating to the Attack Upon St. Louis in 1780,” *Missouri Historical Society Collections* (July 1906), 2: 46; Sinclair to Bolton, June 4, 1780; Sinclair to Haldimand, July 8, 1780; Sinclair to Haldimand, May 29, 1780, in Thwaites, *WSHC*, 154, 156, 152.

with the Americans died too. Leyba's replacement, Lieutenant Governor Francisco Cruzat, who had held that position before, expressed his wariness of American intentions. "I cannot," he said, "cease to keep my eye open in regard to the movements and . . . ideas of my neighbors, the Americans."⁶⁶

Far upriver, along the shore of Lake Michigan, the skepticism and apprehension of British officials, regarding their "allies," was growing. The shocking news of their defeat at St. Louis only heightened British paranoia about the influence of French families over the Indians in the Illinois Country. In the months following their defeat, the emotional British lashed out against those French families whom they suspected of treason.

⁶⁶ Nasatir, *New Spain*, 254, n. 49; Houck, *Spanish Regime*, 1: 179.

Chapter 3

The Kinship Raids on Fort St. Joseph, 1780-1781

Most historians have interpreted the 1780-81 St. Louis attacks on Fort St. Joseph as part of Spain's efforts to incite an Indian war between tribes in the region, or to lay claim to the Great Lakes for leverage at the treaty table when the American Revolution was over.⁶⁷ But a stronger case can be made that the French St. Louis militiamen who risked their lives in two raids on that British fort did so to retaliate for the rough treatment of relatives and to retrieve personal property and other booty. The Fort St. Joseph raids revealed the vibrant French family networks in the Illinois Country, demonstrating the active role that the area's original European residents continued to play in the political, economic, and military destiny of the region.

Fort St. Joseph was constructed near the southeastern shore of Lake Michigan by Robert, Sieur de LaSalle in 1679 to protect France's fur trade in the Illinois Country. The French built several forts along the Illinois River watershed, but Fort St. Joseph helped defend a particularly strategic site—the key portaging areas near the confluence of the St. Joseph and Kankakee rivers. For several generations after LaSalle, the Michigan Potawatomi and Miami Indians visited and traded with the French at Fort St. Joseph.

⁶⁷ Lawrence Kinnaid, "The Spanish Expedition Against Fort St. Joseph in 1781, A New Interpretation," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 19, No.2 (Sep., 1932): 190-191; Paul Chrisler Phillips, *The West in the Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1913), 3-4.

Multicultural mating between the Indians and the French created a truly mixed society in that “Middle Ground” region and produced a unique kinship system that prospered by peaceful interactions. As cultural beliefs and knowledge were exchanged, separating “Frenchness” from “Indianness” became difficult. Historians have long misunderstood the cultural evolution occurring in areas such as the St. Joseph River Valley by assuming that Indians were assimilating to European civilization. On the contrary, it was the French who were strangers in the lands of Indian sovereigns and had to adopt behavior conducive to productive trading. The French had to “modify their own cultural practices and redefine their identities” to be accepted by the Indians, not the other way around.⁶⁸

Throughout the first half of the 18th century, the French and Indian community thrived in the St. Joseph area, alive with foot and boat traffic between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River. The furs were plentiful and the soil enriched by frequent flooding. In the Indian villages, women did the farming while men hunted, trapped, and traveled. Combining French technology with Native traditions created a hybrid agriculture that produced increased harvests of grain crops due to the use of oxen-pulled European plows and hay carts for feeding dairy cows. Many homesteads—whether a French-style *poteaux en terre* building, a frontier log cabin, or an Indian

⁶⁸ Sleeper-Smith, “Female Kin Networks,” 55, 56; Michael S. Nassaney, *Ethnic Relations at a French Colonial Outpost in the North American Interior*, <http://www.wmich.edu/walkerinstitute/Documents/NassaneyAnthropologyEthnicRelationsataFrenchColonialOutPost.pdf>, 3; Du Val, *Native Ground*, 1-12.

longhouse—also had chickens, pigs, and fruit orchards. A surplus of food supported transient traders and voyageurs who made the village a regular stop on their travels. The wealth from pelts provided imported merchandise, and as a supplement to agriculture, enhanced “the stability of the region.”⁶⁹

The congenial French and Indian world at Fort St. Joseph would never be the same after the area was ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. When the British assumed control, the French and Indians were reluctant to trust their authority. There was an increased level of paranoia rooted in the centuries-old dynastic and religious rivalries between Great Britain and France. The British felt that the French were to blame for all of their difficulties with the Indians and considered them commercial rivals in the fur trade. But the British failed to realize that their diplomatic and trade policies had long alienated Indians by showing little respect for Native traditions and territories. Unlike the British, the French were able to maintain their friendship with Indians through kinship. As blood relatives, the French and Indians facilitated respectful commodity exchanges based on trust and gift-giving. However, when the British took over, they disrespected

⁶⁹ Although corn was the main crop, other were grains were harvested. Fruits that were grown in the area included plums, crabapples, cherries, currants, huckleberries, gooseberries, and blackberries. James, A. Brown, *Aboriginal Cultural Adaptations in the Midwestern Prairies* (New York: Garland, 1991), 57, 60, in Susan Sleeper-Smith, “‘Ignorant bigots and busy rebels’: The American Revolution in the Western Great Lakes,” in David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, ed., *The Sixty Years’ War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 150; Sleeper-Smith, “Female Kin Networks,” 59.

the Indians by reducing the volume and value of diplomatic presents and confused alienating military coercion with willing commercial alliance.⁷⁰

Despite the distrust of their traditional foes, the British tried to exploit the special connection between the French and the Indians to help the fur trade prosper. A British commandant at Detroit noted that “the French Inhabitants and Indians are soe much connected that if you disoblige one of them, the other takes Part.”⁷¹ The British faced a conundrum: either trust their ancient enemies with valuable merchandise, or face incredible financial loss from a failed fur trade. Realizing the French had “great influence with the Indians,” the British had no other choice—for the moment—but to use the French to stimulate trade.⁷²

By the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Fort St. Joseph possessed only a fraction of the population that had resided there in the early 18th century. Many French families had moved in order to pursue better economic opportunities at a greater distance from British authorities. However, Louis and Marie Chevalier remained there, continuing to trade and influence affairs as the leading family in the community, including their relatives among the St. Joseph Potawatomes. In 1777 the Michilimackinac commandant, Major Arent de Peyster, observed that Louis Chevalier was “so

⁷⁰ Keith R. Widder, “The French Connection: The Interior French and Their Role in French-British Relations in the Western Great Lakes Region, 1760-1775,” in David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, ed., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 126; Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women*, 41.

⁷¹ Donald Campbell to Henry Bouquet, 26 April 1762, Henry Bouquet Papers, ADD MSS 21648: 122-23, reel 11, British Library, London, in Widder, “Interior French,” 128.

⁷² William Leslye to Jeffery Amherst, 16 September 1762, Papers of Jeffery Amherst, W. O. 34/49:116-17, in Widder, “Interior French,” 128.

connected with Pottawatamies that he can now do anything with them, having lived upwards of thirty years” with them.⁷³

De Peyster was so impressed by “that Gentleman” Chevalier’s relationship with the Indians, he appointed Louis the liaison between the British and the Potawatomies at Fort St. Joseph. He ordered Chevalier to “give the first in Intelligence of the Enemy’s motions on the Wabash” to prevent a surprise attack by the Americans, since Fort St. Joseph was the “pass to Detroit.”⁷⁴ But not all British officials liked Chevalier. Governor Hamilton had not “the least [bit of] confidence in him” because Chevalier was suspected of the “assassination of several [British] traders at St. Joseph” in 1773. “Whenever the means are in my hands to root out Mr. Chevalier,” Hamilton wrote, “I shall not let an opportunity slip by.”⁷⁵

Although there were many suspicions of Chevalier, British officials were in no position to remove him because of his ability to work with the Potawatomies. Their relationship with Chevalier had paid dividends when Clark invaded Kaskaskia in 1778, because he notified de Peyster that the “rebels were in possession” of the Illinois Country. Chevalier also informed the British that “some Spaniards were at a conference between some of the Indians from St. Joseph and the Rebels at Kaskaskia.” Chevalier reassured

⁷³ Mildred E. Webster and Fred Krause, *French St. Joseph: Le Poste de la Riviere St. Joseph, 1690-1780* (Decatur, MI: George Johnson Graphics, 1986), 311, 312; Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, Aug. 15, 1778, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 273. There were many different factions of the Potawatomi Nation, and for a further discussion of the whole tribe’s history see R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978).

⁷⁴ Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, Aug. 15, 1778, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 273.

⁷⁵ Sleeper-Smith, “Female Kin Network,” 59; Letter of Lieut. Governor Hamilton to Governor Haldimand with Two Enclosures, Sept. 5, 1778, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 284.

the British that the Potawatomes were still faithful to them, although the “bad hearts of the Rebels had corrupted some of the other tribes.”

Louis Chevalier’s talents placed Fort St. Joseph in the forefront of all political and economic operations in the Illinois Country, and although he promoted peaceful trading, he remained ambivalent about British military aims.⁷⁶ When Hamilton began mobilizing Indian forces to recapture Vincennes from the Virginians in the fall of 1778, Chevalier was requested to gather Potawatomi warriors as auxiliary troops. When Chevalier claimed that he was unable to “evaluate the situation” with the Potawatomes, an angry de Peyster sent a British trader and interpreter to order those Indians into action, as well as to spy on the French villagers. Finally “reconcil[ing] his Worship with his Duty,” Chevalier reported to Hamilton with fifteen Potawatomi warriors, who only came to protect him.⁷⁷ That was seen as an act of good faith by Hamilton, so that “his future behavior may efface his former misbehavior.” But Chevalier and the Potawatomes’ left Vincennes a month before Clark attacked and recaptured the town.⁷⁸

Chevalier continued to provide intelligence to the British, and his report that the “rebels have employ’d the [French] to purchase horses to mount their Cavalry in the neighborhood of Chicagou” was particularly

⁷⁶ Sleeper-Smith, “Female Kin Networks,” 60.

⁷⁷ Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, Sept. 21, 1778; Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, Oct. 27, 1778; Correspondence of Lieut. Gov. Hamilton to General Haldimand, Sept. 25, 1778, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 291, 299, 310.

⁷⁸ Letter of Lieut. Gov. Hamilton to General Haldimand, Nov. 1, 1778; Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, Mar. 29, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 329, 330, 366.

upsetting to de Peyster.⁷⁹ Additional information noted that Clark was going to attack Detroit with 700 men by way of the Wabash and 400 cavalry through Fort St. Joseph. De Peyster immediately dispatched a detachment of 20 soldiers, 60 traders, and 200 Indians under Lieutenant Thomas Bennett of the 8th Regiment of Foot, stationed at Michilimackinac, to intercept that force. Bennett placed most of his force at Fort St. Joseph, and sent scouting parties out in every direction in an attempt to locate the invaders, but finding no confirmation of the rumored attack, he headed back to Detroit while leaving a significant supply of goods at the fort under the safe keeping of Chevalier.⁸⁰ Clark heard about those large stores at Fort St. Joseph and made plans for a September attack, but the expedition never materialized because his “men complained that they had no shoes and would not go to St. Josephs.”⁸¹

The British, however, were well on the way to launching their invasion of St. Louis and Cahokia. Enough rumors were flying in all directions that Lieutenant Governor Patrick Sinclair of Michilimackinac suspected that the French along the lakes were leaking information to their relatives along the Mississippi River Valley.⁸² He specifically suspected the Chevalier family of sending word to their St. Louis kin, because of the frequency of “Letters from

⁷⁹ Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, June 1, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 383.

⁸⁰ Letter of Major De Peyster to General Haldimand, July 9, 1779; Letter-Journal of Lieutenant Bennett to Major De Peyster, Sept. 1, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 389, 396-398.

⁸¹ Copy of George Rogers Clark’s Intercepted Letter to Thomas Jefferson, Sept. 23, 1779, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 399-401.

⁸² Patrick Sinclair was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Michilimackinac after Major Arent De Peyster was relocated to Detroit. De Peyster took over for Henry Hamilton after Clark captured him in February 1779.

Pencour [St. Louis] and St. Joseph's." Sinclair believed that "Mr. Chevallier will certainly endeavour to introduce a French or Rebel party at St. Joseph's if our movements do take place before Autumn," and he proposed that a "Captain of Militia [be sent] to St. Joseph's" to be a "guard there."⁸³ Sinclair's suspicions only grew stronger after he learned the shocking news of the British defeat at St. Louis. Enraged, he blamed the failed offensive specifically on the French fur traders who had abandoned the expedition and, in general, on any French families who had either sent or received information about the "surprise" attack.

General Thomas Gage, commander-in-chief of the British North American forces, remarked that "it would be best to rout those villains [the French] out of all the small posts" so British influence could grow.⁸⁴ Haldimand declared that French inhabitants were the "most dangerous Enemies," and if any suspicions of disloyalty arose, they were to be "Seized" from their homes and sent to Quebec "in Irons."⁸⁵ In August 1780, Sinclair manipulated the situation to satisfy his own vengeance by deporting the Chevaliers and fourteen other French Fort St. Joseph families not to Quebec or Montreal as ordered, but to his post at Michilimackinac. Louis Joseph Ainsse, Louis Chevalier's nephew, was commanded to "bring in the Crew through favor and compulsion." Arriving with six canoes and leaving with

⁸³ Thwaites, *WSHC*, 11:152, 153.

⁸⁴ Thomas Gage to Gladwin, 28 March 1764, *Thomas Gage Papers*, American Series, 16, in Widder, "Interior French," 127, 128.

⁸⁵ Major Arent De Peyster to Lieut. Col. Mason Bolton, July 6, 1780, in *MPHS*, 19:540; Portion of a Letter of Gov. Haldimand to Major De Peyster, July 6, 1780, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 444-445.

fifteen families, Ainsse recorded a census of the inhabitants and then escorted his kin from their home. During his forced exodus from Fort St. Joseph, Chevalier petitioned Haldimand about his unfair treatment and requested reimbursement for the property he left behind, which included “ten houses, good lands, orchards, gardens, cattle, [and] furniture.”⁸⁶

The deportation of the Chevaliers backfired in dramatic fashion. Without their French friends nearby, the Potawatomies protested to de Peyster, demanding the “reason why all their Traders were forced from them.” He responded by claiming that he “will not withhold Traders from them, tho’ he may not think proper to send the same [ones] back.”⁸⁷ Shortly afterwards, British traders arrived at Fort St. Joseph to try to win over the Indians, but the Potawatomies were discontent with the loss of their “French Fathers,” and ignored them. An irate Haldimand lashed out and said that the Potawatomies “must be informed that whatever changes are made by my direction and calculated as well for their happiness and prosperity as for the good of the King’s service.” Additionally, Haldimand remarked that the Potawatomies needed to prove their loyalty because they “have had but the slight pretentions to [British] Protection.” By that point in the war, the British were especially strapped for funding, and to satisfy every Indian demand would have emptied the Crown’s already diminished treasury.

⁸⁶ Sinclair to Haldimand, July 8, 1780, in Thwaites, *WSHC*, 11:157; Sinclair to Ainsse, July 7, 1780, in *MPHS*, 10:434-438; The Census of 1780 and the Petition of Louis Chevalier can be found in *MPHS*, 10:406-407, 13:58-59, 10:438-400, 13:61; Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 354-355.

⁸⁷ Major De Peyster to Lt. Col. Bolton, July 6, 1780, in *MPHS*, 19:540.

Haldimand realized that the St. Joseph Potawatomies “wish to protract the War” to extort as many presents as possible. So when the Potawatomies demanded explanations for Haldimand’s actions, he became angry, and ordered Sinclair and de Peyster to “mutually inform each other of what passes,” and devise a plan to “regulate their conduct.”⁸⁸

By fall of 1780, the Illinois Country was more unstable than ever, and many tribes, such as the Milwaukee Potawatomies, Sauks, and Foxes, were shunning British traders. Reports were being sent to Sinclair and de Peyster that Indians were “not behaving in a proper manner,” with many having “taken up the Hatchet against [the British].” Around Fort St. Joseph, the Potawatomies had almost completely cut off trade with British, hindering attempts to control their community.⁸⁹ Furthermore, rumors were circulating that a French colonel was organizing volunteers for an expedition against Detroit. Augustin Mottin de la Balme, the rumored colonel, arrived at Vincennes in late August, and was warmly received by the inhabitants. La Balme had come from France to fight the British, serving as a cavalry inspector for the Continental Congress on the east coast from 1777-1778 until he proposed to attack Canada from Detroit. Congress acknowledged La Balme’s plan, but was unable to support him with troops and supplies. As a

⁸⁸ Gen. Haldimand to Lieut. Col. Bolton, *MPHS*, 19:558; Portion of a Letter of General Haldimand to Major De Peyster, Aug. 10, 1780, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 450.

⁸⁹ Sleeper-Smith, “Female Kin Networks,” 61; Capt. Mompesson to Major De Peyster, Sept. 20, 1780, in *MPHS*, 19:575.

result, La Balme left the Atlantic coast and headed towards the Illinois Country to recruit an army on his own.⁹⁰

When La Balme arrived in Vincennes, he spoke of a large French army coming in the spring to “drive both the Americans and English out of the Country.” He sent out war belts to the “Shawnee and other Nations” to solicit their support for the restoration of their “French Fathers.”⁹¹ Many French and Indian residents supported La Balme’s plan to sack Detroit and expel the British, Spanish, and Virginians from the region. The inhabitants of Vincennes rallied to his cause, while supplies were shipped from Cahokia and Kaskaskia.⁹² La Balme excited the French people to rally volunteers and fund the expedition while he used the “French Flag for protection against the badly intentioned Indians.”⁹³ He set out from Vincennes in late October, and arrived at Miamis Town on November 3. La Balme and his motley crew raided the empty village and the British warehouse, facing no resistance because the Indians were out hunting. Weighed down by “100 horses laden with supplies and gifts” for the Indians, La Balme set out for Vincennes. The

⁹⁰ Petition of the Inhabitants of Kaskaskia to Governor Jefferson, May 4, 1781, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 477; Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Policy of France Toward the Mississippi Valley in the Period of Washington and Adams,” in *The American Historical Review* 10 (October 1904-July 1905): 255 n. 2.

⁹¹ Clarence Walworth Alvord, ed., *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, vol. III, George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1912), 448; hereafter cited as *Papers*; Letter of Thomas Bentley to Gen. Haldimand, Aug. 17, 1780, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 454.

⁹² Account of the Goods Furnished by Kaskaskians for De La Balme’s Expedition, Oct. 2, 1780; Two Letters of Officers at the Illinois to Colonel John Todd, Oct. 14, 24, 1780, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 461-465.

⁹³ Petition of the Inhabitants of Kaskaskia to Governor Jefferson, May 4, 1781, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 477-481.

Miami victims of his theft, however, quickly pursued and killed him and several of his men.⁹⁴

News of La Balme's defeat sent shock waves throughout the Illinois Country, "filling all of the settlements with general anxiety." The Spanish in St. Louis believed that La Balme's failure would antagonize the British to attack them again in the spring. Lieutenant Governor Cruzat was convinced that St. Louis "shall be attacked next year" by those "tenacious and barbarous enemies."⁹⁵ The people of Vincennes, in particular, were fearful that an immediate assault would come. They petitioned Clark for protection and supplies because the expedition had "thrown [the town] into a good deal of consternation, for there is a great scarcity of provisions and ammunition."⁹⁶ The British naturally interpreted La Balme's defeat as a victory for their influence and intentions. However, Haldimand was apprehensive that La Balme's raid signaled the beginning of a larger offensive in northern Illinois, and to some extent, his fears were justified.⁹⁷

An attack did come—at Fort St. Joseph. In December 1780, men from Cahokia, under the leadership of Jean Baptiste Hamelin, a fur trader, and Thomas Brady, sacked the fort while the Indians were out hunting. They captured British traders and took fifty bales of goods before heading towards Chicago. They were intercepted by Lieutenant Dagneaux Du Quindre, a

⁹⁴ Letter of Francisco Cruzat to Don Bernardo de Galvez, Nov. 21, 1780, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 467-468; Major De Peyster to Gen. Watson Powell, Nov. 13, 1780, in *MPHS*, 19:581.

⁹⁵ Letter of Francisco Cruzat to Don Bernardo de Galvez, Nov. 21, 1780, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 468.

⁹⁶ J. M. P. Le Gras to Clark, Dec. 1, 1780, in Alvord, *Papers*, 469-470.

⁹⁷ Portion of a Letter of Gov. Haldimand to Major De Peyster, Jan. 6, 1781, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 471.

British officer stationed at Fort St. Joseph to keep an eye on the Indians, and several Potawatomes from that site. Quindre and his men killed four, wounded two, and captured seven of Hamelin's men, while scattering the rest. When de Peyster heard of the treasonous raid by men from British controlled Cahokia, he called the Potawatomes to a council at Detroit to pay them "merit for their loyalty" to the Crown.⁹⁸

Several weeks after Hamelin's raid, another band of men picked up where he left off, making a more serious and large-scale assault on Fort St. Joseph on February 12, 1781. Marching under the Spanish flag, Eugene Poure, Charles Tayon, and Louis Chevalier junior led a company of 65 men from St. Louis, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, plus 65 Indians, to attack Fort St. Joseph. Commandant Cruzat of St. Louis authorized Poure's expedition to demonstrate to his Milwaukee Potawatomi allies—Chief Naquiguen and Chief Siggenake—Spain's power to "terrorize the surrounding nations" and to compel other Great Lakes nations to side with His Catholic Majesty.⁹⁹ Outfitted with guns, ammunition, and supplies from Cruzat, the small army of Frenchmen and Indians marched six hundred miles over tough terrain in harsh winter weather to punish the British for abusing their relatives.¹⁰⁰ When his force arrived at the fort on February 11, Poure negotiated an agreement with the Potawatomes to split half of the booty if they left his

⁹⁸ Letter of Major De Peyster to Gov. Haldimand, Jan. 8, 1781, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 471.

⁹⁹ Naquiguen and Siggenake were chiefs of the Milwaukee branch of the Potawatomi. Gilman, "L'Annee," pt. 2, 195; Franciso Cruzat to Don Bernardo de Galvez, Jan. 9, 1781, in Kinnaird, "A New Interpretation," 19: 188-189.

¹⁰⁰ Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 319.

men unmolested. His speech to the Indians “urged them to have confidence in their Spanish and French brothers and to eschew the evil English.” With the Indians standing aside and no British troops in proximity, the St. Louisans ransacked the empty fort and searched the houses of their relatives. During the plundering, Poure raised the Spanish flag to replace the British banner, which he later presented to Cruzat. After retrieving everything of value and giving the Indians their share, the St. Louisans burned Fort St. Joseph to the ground and headed home.¹⁰¹

Shortly after Poure’s departure, Du Quindre returned and tried in vain to “assemble a sufficient Body [of Indians] to pursue” the attackers. However, the Potawatomies were persistent in requiring a council with de Peyster at Detroit.¹⁰² When they finally met in March, de Peyster questioned their commitment to their “British Father,” and wondered why they were unable to prevent the attack. The Potawatomies responded that the attackers “came to St. Josephs at a time that all the Indians were yet at their hunt, excepting a few young men who were not sufficient to oppose” the enemy force. Upset with their dubious loyalty, de Peyster scolded the Potawatomies, telling them that the Virginians and the Spanish wanted their land, and would stop at nothing to obtain it. Shortly after the start of the council, de Peyster realized that his reprimanding was useless since the Indians had accepted Spanish

¹⁰¹ Joseph L. Peyser, ed., *Letters From New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 219-221; Houck, *Missouri*, 2:42-43; Beau Soleil’s Speech Sent to General Haldimand, Feb. 12, 1781, in Seineke, *Clark Adventure*, 474; Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 321.

¹⁰² Major De Peyster to Gen. Watson Powell, March 17, 1781, in *MPHS*, 19:600-601.

gifts of “bracelets and gorgets decorated with southwestern turquoise.”¹⁰³

The British did not realize that the raids were not just attacks on their outpost, but also attempts to destroy their influence in the upper Illinois Country completely.

¹⁰³ Sleeper-Smith, “Ignorant bigots,” 158; Indian Council, March 11, 1781, in *MPHS*, 10:453-454.



Source: Keith R. Widder, "Effects of the American Revolution on Fur-Trade Society at Michilimackinac," in Jennifer S. H. Brown, W. J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman, ed., *The Fur Trade Revisited: Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 311 (adapted).

Sinclair's ignorant and aggressive treatment of the French inhabitants of Fort St. Joseph reinforced the connection between kin, and within four months of their deportation, members of Chevalier's family attacked the fort and captured the British merchandise stored there. What Sinclair ignored was that Louis Chevalier and his wife, Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque, had considerable influence with not just the Potawatomies, but also extensive family connections that stretched to Michilimackinac, Green Bay, Detroit, Montreal, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and St. Louis. And all French-Americans, without a nation to call home, gave allegiance to blood ties, traditional customs, and a strong Catholic faith so that their unique culture could persevere in a British realm dominated by Protestants.

Historians have often interpreted the raids on Fort St. Joseph as a part of La Balme's expedition or a defensive attack by Spanish officials to prevent another British invasion of St. Louis. On the contrary, both Hamelin's and Poure's raids were family matters, similar to clan battles in Scotland. Thus, the powerful, persistent kinship connections among French residents of St. Louis, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Fort St. Joseph explain both expeditions. More research by expert genealogists and archival historians is needed to provide all of the details, but the following distribution of French relatives—especially documented militiamen—who lived at the sites most relevant for the 1780-1781 battles reveal striking patterns that are more than merely coincidental.

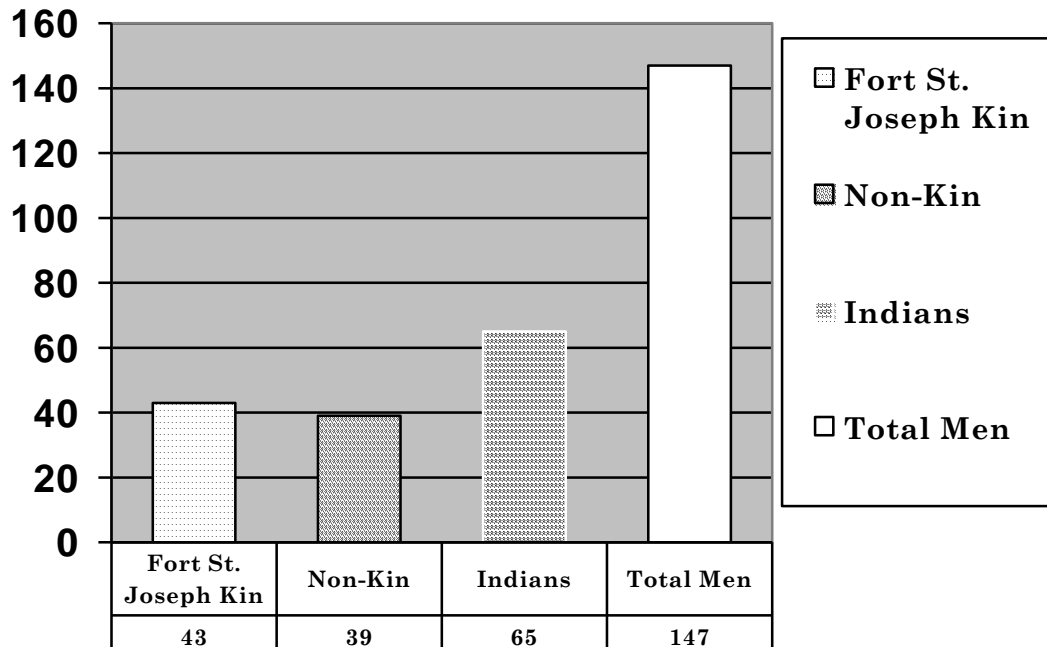


Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of the total number of men for December 1780 and February 1781 Fort St. Joseph raids. Indians comprised the majority of the participants (44 percent), while Fort St. Joseph kin (29 percent) and non-kin (27 percent) made up the rest of the raiders.

The Fort St. Joseph family of Louis Thérèse Chevalier and Marie Madeleine Reaume L’archeveque was the most influential link of all. Their son, Louis Chevalier junior of St. Louis, was born, baptized, and raised in the St. Joseph River Valley, becoming “well versed in the language of the [Potawatomi] Indians” living around St. Joseph. He served Spanish St. Louis as an Indian interpreter and was listed on the St. Louis militia roster for

1780 as a sub-lieutenant under Poure. It was he who translated Poure's proposal to the Potawatomes to share the booty from the fort.¹⁰⁴

Louis Chevalier senior also had several siblings living near his son in St. Louis. His sister, Marie Madeleine, married Jacques DuMay, and lived in Cahokia with her son, Jean Baptiste. Another one of Chevalier's sisters, Marie Joseph, also resided at Cahokia with her husband, Pierre Locat. Joseph Maurice Chevalier, Louis' brother, had a home in Kaskaskia along with another sister, Marie Charlotte. Marie Charlotte Chevalier married Antoine Deshetres and had two sons, Louis and Jean Baptiste. The senior Chevalier's brother, three brothers-in-law, and five nephews may have joined his interpreter son on Poure's expedition to avenge the deportation of the family patriarch and to recover personal property.¹⁰⁵

The large and widely dispersed L'archeveque clan of Chevalier's wife also suggests linkages to the St. Joseph raids. Augustin L'archeveque was a fur trader who married Marie Madeleine Reaume. They had six children, all of whom settled in various parts of Canada and the Illinois region. Marie Joseph Esther L'archeveque, daughter of Augustin and Marie, lived her

¹⁰⁴ Roster of St. Louis Militia Companies in 1780, Dec. 22, 1780, in Houck, *Spanish Regime*, 1:185, 191, n. 36; Houck, *Missouri*, 2:42-44; Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 125; Rev. George Pare and M. M. Quife, "The St. Joseph Baptismal Register," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Sept., 1926): 223.

¹⁰⁵ John Francis McDermott, ed., *Old Cahokia: A Narrative and Documents Illustrating the First Century of Its History* (St. Louis: The St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1949), 168; Clarence Walworth Alvord, ed., *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, vol. II, *Cahokia Records, 1778-1790* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1907), 626 n. 32; Natalia Maree Belting, *Kaskaskia Under the French Regime* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1975), 118; Houck, *Missouri*, 2:191 n. 33, 67 n. 141; Clarence Walworth Alvord, ed., *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, vol. V, *Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1909), 419 n. 55; Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 199; Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women*, 187 n. 33.

entire adult life in Cahokia. She and her first husband, Jacques Lamarche, had four children: Etienne Joseph, Louis, Marie Joseph, and Angelique. Her second marriage to Charles Le Boeuf dit Laflamme produced another son, Philippe, who was living in Cahokia in 1780-1781. Marie's third husband was Thomas Brady, the co-leader of the December 1780 raid. Marie's daughter, Angelique, married Joseph Giroux, and they were resided at Cahokia in the 1780s. The other daughter, Marie Joseph, married Joseph Languedoc in 1772 and Louis Lecompte in 1775. At least a few of those men would likely have joined Brady out of family pride.¹⁰⁶

Antoine St. Francois represented other St. Louis family ties to Fort St. Joseph. He married Charlotte L'archeveque, sister of Augustin and sister-in-law to Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque, and one of his daughters, Marie Magdalen, married Gregoire Kiercereau, who was a member of a leading St. Louis family (formerly of Fort de Chartres) since 1764. Francoise, Gregoire, and Gregoire's brother, Paul, were all listed on the St. Louis militia roster in December 1780. Gregoire and Paul Kiercereau's sister, Re'nee, married Louis Portier, who was also a member of the St. Louis militia. One of the sub-lieutenants on that list, Charles Tayon, was the brother of Paul Kiercerau's wife, Marie Joseph Michel dit Tayon, from another of St. Louis's first families. In addition, Marie Catherine, Francois' second daughter,

¹⁰⁶ Records indicate that Lecompte was also spelled Lecomte and Leconte. Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 189-190; Alvord, *CR*, 147, 624 n. 6, 627 n. 40; McDermott, *Old Cahokia*, 272, 259, 128; Houck, *Missouri*, 2:87.

married Nicholas Lecomte, and he, along with his brother Guillermo and nephew Joseph, were all members of the St. Louis militia.¹⁰⁷

Several of Augustin's siblings also resided at Fort de Chartres before moving to St. Louis. Brother Francois wed Elizabeth Sorel at Fort de Chartres in 1750, and moved with their daughter Helene to St. Louis. She eventually married Pierre Hubert Lacroix at St. Louis in 1767. Elizabeth's godchild was Elizabeth Martigny, daughter of Jean Baptiste Martigny, an officer of the French militia in Illinois prior to 1764 and a member of the St. Louis militia in 1780.¹⁰⁸

Antoine Beauvis married Marianne Viger and was godfather to Joseph Jutras, son of Marie Catherine Reaume L'archeveque. Marie Catherine was one of the daughters of Augustin and Marie Reaume L'archeveque. Beauvis was a magistrate in Kaskaskia during the 1780s.¹⁰⁹

Jean Baptiste Hamelin, one of the leaders of the December 1780 raid, had three sons (Ignace, Francois, and Joseph) and two brothers (Laurant and Francois) living in Cahokia during 1780-1781. He was connected with Fort St. Joseph through his sister, Agathe Hamelin Normand, who had two daughters and a son baptized at the St. Joseph's Mission in 1768. Laurant Hamelin's two sons, Louis and Joseph, also resided there at Cahokia when

¹⁰⁷ Roster of St. Louis Militia Companies in 1780, Dec. 22, 1780, in Houck, *Spanish Regime*, 1:187, 188, 194, n. 108, 196 n. 135, n. 139, n. 140, 190 n. 12, 105 n. 20, 194 n. 107, 90 n. 17, 184 n. 21; Houck, *Missouri*, 2:10, n. 23; Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 125, 201; Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 61.

¹⁰⁸ Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 109, 103; Roster of St. Louis Militia Companies in 1780, Dec. 22, 1780, in Houck, *Spanish Regime*, 1:196 n. 141; Houck, *Missouri*, 2:21; Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women*, 186 n. 24; Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 194.

¹⁰⁹ Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 188; Alvord, *CR*, cvii; Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 84.

the raids took place. The Hamelin family could have sent as many as eight men on one or more of those expeditions.¹¹⁰

Claude Caron was linked to Fort St. Joseph as a godparent to Marie Charlotte Longval, daughter of Jean Baptiste Francois Longval and Marie Amable L'archeveque—another daughter of Augustin and Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque. Caron owned farmland at Kaskaskia and sold his flour in St. Louis, where he and his two sons, Joseph and Jean Baptiste, served as militiamen in 1780. Besides Jean Baptiste Francois Longval's direct connection to Fort St. Joseph through his wife, Marie Amable L'archeveque, he was also the godfather of Felicite St. Germain, whose father, Pierre, also suffered deportation by the British. Longval's brother, Louis, lived in Kaskaskia, married Marie Louis La Course and fathered three sons: Polite, Louis, and Joseph.¹¹¹ Jean and Marie Longval's daughter, Marie Charlotte, married Louis Gaut and resided in Cahokia. Their three sons, Louis, Joseph, and Jean Baptiste, may have participated in the raids.¹¹²

Fur trader Jean-Baptiste Baron lived at Fort St. Joseph with his first wife but relocated to Fort de Chartres and married Domitilda Rolet. Their four children were Joseph, Suzanne, Jean-Baptiste, and Gabriel—and the last three all were living at Cahokia in 1780-1781: Suzanne and her husband,

¹¹⁰ Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 203; Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 97; Alvord, *CR*, 87-89, 630 n. 76.

¹¹¹ Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 194; Pare, "Baptismal Register," 231; McDermott, *Old Cahokia*, 168, 274, 280; Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 83; Alvord, *KR*, 415 n. 13.

¹¹² Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 194; McDermott, *Old Cahokia*, 19, 16, 168; Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 116; Alvord, *CR*, 628 n. 57; Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women*, 47.

Joseph Clermont; Jean-Baptiste with his wife, Marie Poupard; and Gabriel with his wife, Marie Louise Buteau.¹¹³

The St. Louis raids on Fort St. Joseph revealed the ability of generation-old French kin networks' to impact international affairs in the Illinois Country, even a century after the French had first colonized the region. The British committed a fatal mistake in bullying and deporting the influential Chevalier-L'archeveque family. That forced removal, which was similar to the earlier British deportation of the French Acadians in the 1750s and 1760s, cost the English dearly. The wrath of French relatives to the south, which resulted in two attacks in a three-month period, revealed the weakness of the British military, eroding Indian confidence and trust. The dismal financial state of the Crown further strained Indian relations because the flow of Indian gifts was inconsistent, and warriors were not interested in risking the safety of their villages without receiving merchandise in return. Additionally, in late spring of 1781, rumors were circulating that Clark was planning an invasion of the Illinois country. Panic and anxiety further destabilized the region, as British officials and Indians alike were fearful of the Virginians. Reports that Clark was "meditating some blow against the Upper Posts" caused the British to retract into a

¹¹³ Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 100; Alvord, *CR*, 23, 133, 629 fn. 60; Pare, "Baptismal Register," 236; Webster, *French St. Joseph*, 120, 203.

defensive mindset and shift large quantities of supplies, intended for the Indians, to their warehouses at Michilimackinac and Detroit.¹¹⁴

With British authorities on full alert, trading throughout the region suffered. Complaints of the incidents at Fort St. Joseph warranted the merchants' concern about the lack of protection from the British military. Montreal merchants petitioned Haldimand to protect shipments going to Michilimackinac and Detroit, warning him that if he could not secure their merchandise, then the whole province would face a "considerable loss" of some "£30,000 sterling." Haldimand responded that "Troops being sent for the protection of one or a few Traders is out of the question" and they would have to go into the wilderness "at their own risque [and] . . . take the consequence."¹¹⁵ Once it became clear that the British had no extra funds or troops for protection, their ability to control the Illinois Country was certainly at an end.¹¹⁶

For the remainder of the Revolutionary War, constant rumors of invasion from British, Spanish, French, and/or Americans rippled through the Illinois Country, but none occurred, because few Indians could be found to do the fighting.¹¹⁷ The Native nations were caught in between the European

¹¹⁴ Gen. Powell to Gen. Haldimand, April 7, 1781, in *MPHS*, 19: 616.

¹¹⁵ Memorial of the Merchants of Montreal, April 19, 1781; General Haldimand to General Powell, June 23, 1781, in *MPHS*, 621, 641, 642.

¹¹⁶ Phillips, *Fur Trade*, 1:586-610.

¹¹⁷ Reports of British Plans to Attack Spanish Illinois, July 8, 1782; Council of War at St. Louis, July 9, 1782, in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Translations of Materials from the Spanish Archives in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, American Historical Association, Annual Report for the Year 1945* (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1946-1949), Part 2, *The Postwar Period, 1782-1791*, 34-35, 39-47.

entities, and were apprehensive to join any side because no one group possessed sole control of the area. Native neutrality frustrated all sides, but the British especially. Indians constantly approached Sinclair and de Peyster with proposals to attack American and Spanish positions if they were supplied with the necessary provisions and incentives. Since the Crown was practically broke, however, the “vast expence of fitting [Indians] out would over Balance the advantage to be derived.”¹¹⁸

By November 1782, a preliminary peace agreement had been reached between Great Britain and the American colonies, and all post commanders were ordered to cease military operations. The initial treaty negotiations were a nightmare, as Spanish, French, British, and American diplomats disagreed over multiple boundaries and navigation rights on the Mississippi. The Revolution only ended officially when the Americans abandoned their French and Spanish allies and signed a separate treaty with their greatest enemy in 1783. Once again, the contributions of the French were neither recognized nor rewarded, and even as a new nation, the Americans would maintain their Anglo attitude.

¹¹⁸ General Haldimand to General Powell, June 23, 1781, in *MPHS*, 642.

Conclusion

During the American Revolution, the Illinois Country occupied a pivotal position in the contest between European and Native forces fighting over the political sovereignty and economic resources of the region. Two regional fur trade centers—St. Louis and Fort St. Joseph—became primary targets of attacks by multicultural forces because each controlled commerce and Indian alliances along strategic waterways. Most importantly, however, these two towns shared French cultural traditions—the same customs, language, and religion—as well as extensive interconnected bloodlines. Whether of European or métis ancestry, members of the same families lived in both places and valued kinship loyalty above all. The French had been the original Europeans in the Illinois Country for generations, and they alone possessed the manpower and acculturated frontier talents as guides, traders, hunters, interpreters, Indian diplomats, and militiamen that all the major powers needed to succeed in that theater of war. What the Spanish, British, and Americans all overlooked, however, were the extensive reach of a French kinship network that intersected, infiltrated, and often interfered with, national boundaries and imperial policies. Those French men and women without a country who had been “orphaned” by France in 1763 understood patriotism to mean loyalty to one’s own kin.

Previous histories have incompletely interpreted the influence of French kinships in the Revolutionary War. Clark’s invasion in 1778-1779

was less bloody than other major campaigns of the war because the French families in Kaskaskia, Vincennes, and Cahokia only offered minimal resistance, while their relatives in St. Louis actually supported it. Word of the British-Indian attack on St. Louis in May 1780 was transmitted through family networks between Michilimackinac and the Mississippi. As a result, Spanish officials had time to prepare the defenses that helped save the town. And the most compelling reason to attack Fort St. Joseph in 1780-1781 was to correct the wrongs done by the British to family members there. In those raids, Frenchmen asserted the vitality of their common and ancient roots in a homeland that now spread across the Illinois Country like so many branches. Pushed and pulled in many directions by all nations, French militiamen traveling to the village of relatives must have found those attacks cathartic.

Genealogical research illustrates how the French maintained their special cultural identity through kinship networks despite geographical distance and political domination by foreigners. The French had long persevered by clinging to their heritage and familial attachments, since none of the flags flying in the West was theirs. As scholars expose the depth of French roots in the Illinois country, our understanding of how kin networks impacted political events in the region will become clearer. Histories of events such as the Battle of St. Louis and the Fort St. Joseph raids will be considered from all perspectives, not just from an American or British point of view. Genealogy has only recently become a valuable tool of most colonial

historians, but personal genetic factors long ignored may provide a new appreciation for the French, since they, too, have remained hidden by the tidal waves of great powers who forgot that blood was thicker than water.

The End.

Appendix A

Partial Baron Genealogy

Jean Baptiste Baron = (1) Marie Catherine Sekioukoue¹¹⁹
 (a) Joseph Baron (1729 -?)¹²⁰
 (b) Suzanne Baron (1730 -?) = Joseph Clermont
 (c) Marguerite Baron (1739-1758)

= (2) Domitilda Rolet
 (a) Joseph Marie Baron (1749 -?)
 (b) Jean Baptiste Baron (1751-?)
 (c) Gabriel Baron (1752-1789)

Partial Hamelin Genealogy

Jean Baptiste Hamelin
 (a) Ignace Hamelin
 (b) Francois Hamelin
 (c) Joseph Hamelin

Agathe Hamelin¹²¹ = Joseph Normand
 (a) Louis (1768-?)

Louis Hamelin¹²²

Laurant Hamelin¹²³
 (a) Louis Hamelin
 (b) Joseph Hamelin

Francois Hamelin¹²⁴

Partial St. Francois Genealogy

Antoine St. Francois = Charlotte L'archeveque¹²⁵
 (a) Marie Catherine St. Francois (1753-?)
 (b) Marie Magdelaine St. Francois (1755-?)

(a) Marie Catherine St. Francois = Nicolas Lecompte (1738-?)
 (1) Marie Lecompte (1768-?)
 (2) Nicolas Lecompte (1770-?)
 (3) Louis (1772-?)

(b) Marie Magdelaine St. Francois = Gregoire Kiercereau¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Godmother to Marie Catherine L'archeveque. Webster, 123.

¹²⁰ His godmother was Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque. Webster, 123.

¹²¹ Jean Baptiste Hamelin's sister.

¹²² Jean Baptiste Hamelin's brother, who was the godfather of Louis Normand. Webster, 203.

¹²³ Brother of Jean Baptiste Hamelin.

¹²⁴ Brother of Jean Baptiste Hamelin.

¹²⁵ Sister of Augustin L'archeveque. Her godparents were Louis Paschal Chevalier and Angelique L'archeveque. Webster, 201.

Appendix B

Partial L'archeveque Genealogy

- Augustin L'archeveque = Marie Madeleine Reaume (1711-?)
- (a) Marie Catherine L'archeveque (1731-?)
 - (b) Marie Joseph Esther L'archeveque (1733-?)
 - (c) Marie Anne L'archeveque (1738-?)
 - (d) Marie Amable L'archeveque (1740-1793)
 - (e) Angelique (Agathe) L'archeveque (1744-?)
 - (f) Augustin L'archeveque (1746-?)
- (a) Marie Catherine L'archeveque = Jean Baptiste Jutras
- (1) Jean Baptiste Jutras (1761-?)
 - (2) Joseph Jutras (1763-?)¹²⁷
 - (3) Marie Joseph Jutras (1768-?)
- (b) Marie Joseph Esther L'archeveque = (1) Jacques Bariso de La Marche
- (1) Etienne Joseph La Marche (1750-?)
 - (2) Louis La Marche (1752-?)
 - (3) Marie Joseph La Marche (1753-?) = Louis Lecompte
 - (4) Angelique La Marche (1756-1790) = Joseph Giroux (1736-1786)
- = (2) Charles Le Boeuf dit Laflamme
- (5) Philippe Laflamme
- = (3) Thomas Brady
- (d) Marie Amable L'archeveque = Jean Baptiste Francois Longval¹²⁸
- (1730-1790)
- (1) Marie Charolette Longval (1761-?)
 - (2) Louis Longval
 - (3) Polite
 - (4) Josette
- (1) Marie Charolette Longval¹²⁹ = Louis Gaut (?-1787)
- (i) Louis
 - (ii) Joseph
 - (iii) Jean Baptiste
- Louis Longval¹³⁰ = Marie Louis La Course
- (a) Louis
 - (b) Joseph

¹²⁶ Gregoire Kiercereau's brother, Paul, marries Marie Joseph Michel dit Tayon.

¹²⁷ His godfather was Antoine Beauvis. Webster, 188.

¹²⁸ Godfather to Felicite St. Germain. Webster, 194.

¹²⁹ Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque was her godmother. Claude Caron was her godfather. Webster, 194.

¹³⁰ Brother of Jean Baptiste Francois Longval.

Appendix C

Partial Chevalier Genealogy

Jean Baptiste Chevalier = Marie Francoise Alavoine

- (a) Marie Charlotte Chevalier (1710-?)
- (b) Marie Anne Chevalier (1712-?)
- (c) Catherine Chevalier (1714, died 1714)
- (d) Michel Jean Baptiste Chevalier (1715-?)
- (e) Marie Joseph Chevalier (1718-?)
- (f) Constance Chevalier (1719-?)
- (g) Louis Thérèse Chevalier (1720-?)
- (h) Marguerite Josephe (1723-?)
- (i) Marie Madeleine Chevalier (1724-?)
- (j) Anne Charlotte Véronique Chevalier (1726-?)
- (k) Charles Chevalier (1727-?)
- (l) Joseph Maurice Chevalier (1728-?)
- (m) Louis Paschal Chevalier (1730-?)
- (n) Anne Thérèse Esther Chevalier (1732-?)
- (o) Angélique Chevalier (1733-?)
- (p) Luc Chevailier (1735-?)

(a) Marie Charlotte Chevalier = Antoine Deshetres

- (1) Louis Deshetres (1731-?)¹³¹
- (2) Marie Catherine Deshetres (1732-?)
- (3) Marie Anne Deshetres (1734-?)¹³²
- (4) Louis de Gronzague Deshetres (1736-?)
- (5) Antoine Hyacinthe Deshetres (1737-?)
- (6) Susanne Esther Deshetres (1743-?)
- (7) Jean Baptiste Deshetres (1745-?)

(e) Marie Joseph Chevalier = Pierre Locat

(g) Louis Thérèse Chevalier = Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque
Louis Chevalier (1752-1801)

(i) Marie Madeleine Chevalier = Jacques DuMay (?-1760)

- (1) Louis DuMay (1751-?)¹³³
- (2) Louis DuMay (1753-?)¹³⁴
- (3) Pierre DuMay (1755-?)¹³⁵
- (4) Joseph DuMay (1756-?)
- (5) Marie Joseph DuMay (1757-?)
- (6) Elizabeth DuMay (1758-?)

Jean Baptiste DuMay (1760-?)

¹³¹ Godmother was Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque. Webster, 127.

¹³² Her godmother was Marie Anne Chevalier. Webster, 127.

¹³³ Louis Chevalier was his godfather. Webster, 199.

¹³⁴ Louis Paschal Chevalier and Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque were godparents. Webster, 199.

¹³⁵ Marie Anne L'archeveque was his godmother. Webster, 199.

Appendix D

Partial Caron Genealogy

Claude Caron (1714-?) = Charlotte Lachenais
 (a) Elizabeth Caron (1760-?)
 (b) Marie Joseph Caron (1761-?)
 Jean Baptiste Caron (1763-?)

All of the genealogical charts were created from information found in the following sources:

Clarence Alvord's *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Society, Volume II: Virginia Series, Volume I: Cahokia Records, 1778-1790*

Clarence Alvord's *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Society, Volume V: Virginia Series, Volume II, Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790.*

Louis Houck's *The Spanish regime in Missouri; a collection of papers and documents relating to upper Louisiana principally within the present limits of Missouri during the dominion of Spain, from the Archives of the Indies at Seville, etc., translated from the original Spanish into English, and including also some papers concerning the supposed grant to Col. George Morgan at the mouth of the Ohio, found in the Congressional library.*

John McDermott's *Old Cahokia: A Narrative and Documents Illustrating the First Century of Its History.*

Natalia Belting's *Kaskaskia Under the French Regime.*

Louis Houck's *A History of Missouri: From the Earliest Explorations and Settlements Until the Admission of the State into the Union.*

Susan Sleeper-Smith's "*Furs and Female Kin Networks: The World of Marie Madeleine Reaume L'archeveque Chevalier.*" *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1995.*

Susan Sleeper-Smith's *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes.*

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