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Author(s): Robert Michael Morrissey

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Kaskaskia Social Network: Kinship and Assimilation in the French-Illinois Borderlands, 1695–1735

Robert Michael Morrissey

IN 1738 Jesuit priest René Tartarin wrote a spirited letter to Louisiana officials in New Orleans from his station in the remote Immaculate Conception mission in Illinois country. His letter was a kind of manifesto. In it, Tartarin defended a controversial practice that had defined community life in his colony since the late 1690s: intermarriage between Frenchmen and Indian women. Even as Louisiana officials frowned on and tried to ban the practice, and even as several Louisiana observers issued strongly worded complaints against intermarriage in colonies such as Illinois, Tartarin argued that these marriages and the mixed-race families they created served to assimilate Indians into French village life.¹ Describing the intermarried couples in Kaskaskia, which had officially been placed under the jurisdiction of New Orleans in 1718, Tartarin even suggested

Robert Michael Morrissey is an assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The author thanks Gerry Cadava, Carl Ekberg, Jake Lundberg, Karen Marrero, Sarah Pearsall, the members of the Early Modern Reading Group at UIUC, and anonymous *William and Mary Quarterly* readers for helpful comments. He also thanks Steve Hindle, Tracy Leavelle, Ken Loisel, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and Jennifer Spear for comments on earlier versions of this paper.

¹ René Tartarin's 1738 defense of intermarriage is in C13A, vol. 23, fols. 241–43, Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM), Aix-en-Provence. For examples of Louisiana's decrees and protests against intermarriage, see Edme Gatien de Salmon to Minister, July 17, 1732, C13A, vol. 15, fol. 166, ANOM; C13A, vol. 20, fols. 83–93, ANOM; Perier to unknown, June 25, 1732, C13A, 14, fols. 68–69, ANOM. Indeed, secretary for the colonies Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux de Maurepas tried to officially ban the practice in 1735: "Marriages between Frenchmen and savage women become frequent in the Illinois . . . such alliances are dishonorable for the nation, they can have very dangerous consequences for the colony's tranquility . . . [and] the children born from these unions are more libertine than the savages." Comte de Maurepas to Governor General Charles de Beauharnois, 1735, B, vol. 63, fol. 88, Archives nationales de France, translated by Saliha Belmessous, in Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 2005): 322–49 (quotation, 344). See also Jennifer M. Spear, "Colonial Intimacies: Legislating Sex in French Louisiana," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 60, no. 1 (January 2003): 75–98.

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that the community provided a working example of the “Frenchification” of Indian people; it was a success story of assimilation. Mixed-race families were “fixed among the French.” The offspring of the families were “able to marry into French families and thus . . . completely lose the tendencies that their original birth has given them.” Indian wives had fully “left behind their [Indian] families.” Their children were raised as “true Creole Frenchmen and Frenchwomen [véritable creol françois et françoise].”²

Historians have been skeptical of these kinds of claims about the mixed-race families of the fur trade societies of the *pays d'en haut* and Upper Louisiana. As several have argued, marriages were not a means for Indian women to enter into a French world, assimilate, or “marry out” of their own culture. Rather, they were quite the opposite: very often it was through such marriages that Frenchmen entered and were incorporated into an Indian kinship network and an Indian cultural space, or *habitus*. As historians such as Susan Sleeper-Smith have argued, Frenchmen sought to establish kinship ties to women such as Marie Madeleine Réaume L'Archêveque that could facilitate connections to important actors in Native villages. They sought marriages to improve their access to furs and cultural influence, and they then used the institution of godparentage instrumentally to extend their kin networks and increase access to resources in the trade. For their part, Algonquian women skillfully used their authority in supposedly “matrifocal” families to assert control over these networks. The resulting extended families were at the heart of the fur trade economy. But, importantly, according to this interpretation these kinship ties did not reorient Indian identities to a French cultural sphere. Rather they did the opposite: they created the kinship identity necessary for French people to operate in what remained very much an Indian *habitus*. As Sleeper-Smith concludes, Frenchmen such as Tartarin were naive, for these mixed-race households in fact “remained rooted within indigenous society,” and Indian wives of Frenchmen “retained their Indian identity.”³

² Tartarin's 1738 defense of intermarriage, C13A, vol. 23, fols. 241–43 (quotations, fol. 242), ANOM. All translations from manuscript documents are my own. For good discussions of French colonial policy on intermarriage and Tartarin's position, see Jennifer M. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore, 2009), 40–41; Guillaume Aubert, “‘The Blood of France’: Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World,” *WMQ* 61, no. 3 (July 2004): 439–78. See also Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (Urbana, Ill., 2007), 27–28.

³ Susan Sleeper-Smith, “Women, Kin, and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade,” *Ethnohistory* 47, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 423–52 (“marry out,” 424, “matrifocal,” 429, “retained,” 426); Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst, Mass., 2001), 4–7. The concept of a “*habitus*” comes from Pierre Bourdieu. See Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 168 n. 10. For Bourdieu on kinship, see Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, 1977), 33–38. On “*habitus*,” see *ibid.*, 78–87.

And their French husbands, as Kathleen DuVal summarizes recent scholarship, “became more and more like the Native Americans with whom they resided and married.”⁴

So why then was Tartarin so confident about intermarriage and the growing network of French-Indian families of Illinois? Certainly there is little chance that Tartarin, who spent many years of his life in this frontier, was oblivious to the importance of kinship relationships and how they functioned in the French-Indian fur trade world. Rather, his confidence probably stemmed from the fact that Tartarin, writing in the 1730s in Kaskaskia, was describing an exception: a community in which the institutions of marriage and godparentage, as well as the functions of kinship networks, had been incorporated into, or reembedded in, a new context of a largely French agrarian habitus. Of course it was true that in Kaskaskia, just as in the fur trade world of the larger pays d'en haut, kinship was extremely important in defining the identities of people in the village. But in Illinois, especially by the 1720s, kinship increasingly tied individuals not to the world of the trade but rather to an increasingly French Catholic, agrarian way of life. Though scholars such as Sleeper-Smith have admirably focused attention on the role of kinship in community formation as well as on the agency that Indian women exercised in their relationships, they have misunderstood and oversimplified the function of these marriages over time and the communities and identities they sometimes created.⁵

⁴ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), 80, quoted in Kathleen DuVal, “Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana,” *WMQ* 65, no. 2 (April 2008): 267–304 (quotation, 268).

⁵ René Tartarin arrived in Illinois in 1728 and knew the Illinois language well. His understanding of the world of the Illinois was probably very strong. See “Letter from Father du Poisson, Missionary to the Akensas, to Father * * *,” in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791* . . . (Cleveland, Ohio, 1900), 67: 277–325, esp. 67: 277, 342 n. 43. I take the idea of “embedding” from James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, “Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic,” *WMQ* 68, no. 2 (April 2011): 181–208, esp. 184. On the importance of kinship for structuring identities, see Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 42–43. For the best treatment of the Algonquian Indian context, see Heidi Bohaker, “Nindoodemag: The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600–1701,” *WMQ* 63, no. 1 (January 2006): 23–52. In the fur trade world, the best treatment of kinship remains Jacqueline Louise Peterson, “The People In Between: Indian-White Marriage and the Genesis of a Métis Society and Culture in the Great Lakes Region, 1680–1830” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, 1981). Other recent scholarly treatments of kinship in Native societies of this period include Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800–1860* (Lincoln, Neb., 2011), 33; Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia, 2012), 11. For emphasis of new identities and ethnogenesis, see Tanis C. Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia, Mo., 1996). For different cases showing

Previous studies of kinship and marriage in the pays d'en haut have focused largely on individuals, and especially on conspicuous women such as Marie Rouensa and L'Archêveque and their extended families. Scholars such as Jennifer S. H. Brown, Carl J. Ekberg, Sleeper-Smith, Sylvia Van Kirk, Richard White, and others have provided valuable life histories that have examined the family ties and kinship networks of key individuals in the pays d'en haut and Upper Louisiana. Using family reconstitution techniques to construct elaborate family trees centered on these important individuals, they have shown how certain people—particularly Indian women—connected themselves by marriage and kinship to other important actors. Several have then argued—quite reasonably—that the relationships that these individuals created in the fur trade were *functionally* advantageous and even opportunistic, allowing Indian women to act as intercultural brokers, to extend their influence over other people, and thus to profit economically or politically.⁶ These instrumentalist arguments about the

the importance of kinship on early American frontiers, see James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2002); Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2007). For overviews of kinship in Native American societies, see Raymond J. DeMallie, "Kinship: The Foundation for Native American Society," in *Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Russell Thornton (Madison, Wis., 1998), 306–56; Jay Miller, "Kinship, Family Kindreds, and Community," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden, Mass., 2004), 139–53.

⁶ This literature is extensive. For examples especially relevant to the present study, see Peterson, "People In Between"; Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Norman, Okla., 1983); Carl J. Ekberg and Anton J. Pregaldin, "Marie Rouensa-8cate8a and the Foundations of French Illinois," *Illinois Historical Journal* 84, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 146–60; Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York, 1991), chap. 2; Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Norman, Okla., 1996). The term *family reconstitution* is associated with the demographic histories pioneered by Etienne Gautier and Louis Henry, *La Population de Crulai, Paroisse Normande: Etude historique* ([Paris], 1958), and later developed into a sophisticated method by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. It is actually a much more exhaustive historical technique than ones typically followed by historians of the fur trade. Methods pursued by Susan Sleeper-Smith, White, and others have typically been effectively genealogical and have stopped at the point of ego-centered family trees. Though useful and intensive, this work does not allow a comprehensive examination of fur trade networks. For other family-centered techniques, see Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 75; Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis," *Ethnohistory* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 41–67, esp. 60 (fig. 2). For a more network-centered approach, see Trudy Nicks and Kenneth Morgan, "Grande Cache: The Historic Development of an Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, ed. Peterson and Brown (Lincoln, Neb., 1985), 163–81, esp. 166. Peterson, in "People In Between," 71, writes, "Such women appear to have been motivated by what marriage to a high-ranking European trader offered as an outlet for the expansion of their talents and influence both within and outside tribal society." See also Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 8.

function of kinship networks in the fur trade have become the accepted view among historians for several reasons. First, they make good intuitive sense. It is easy to imagine, for instance, how godparenthood—a practice that both resonated with kin-based societies of Native Americans and was familiar to the Catholic culture of New France—helped to facilitate relations in the new political and economic context of the fur trade. Second, these instrumentalist arguments about the function of kinship and marriage are politically attractive. As DuVal has pointed out, focusing on the important roles that individual Indian women played in extending kinship networks “allows historians simultaneously to acknowledge Indian women’s importance, note the continuation of precolonial economic and diplomatic practices, and demonstrate that Indians often set the conditions of trade with Europeans.”⁷

But while scholars have studied and speculated how individuals within fur trade communities used kinship to extend their influence while preserving Indian identities, until now no scholar has done a long-range or exhaustive study of French-Indian kinship networks themselves. Though we have learned how certain individuals and families were connected to others, we have little sense of how these people were actually situated in larger networks, whether well-studied individuals such as L’Archêveque were actually typical, or even who the most important members of these networks were. To be sure, this is partly because such questions are difficult to answer: kinship networks forged in the French-Indian fur trade extended all over the pays d’en haut, and records over such a vast space survived inconsistently. In Illinois country, however, a relatively rooted community based in Indian-French marriages took shape beginning in 1695. Extensive (though not complete) baptismal and marriage records from Kaskaskia make it possible to study this community in some depth from its foundation all the way through 1735. Using a technique called social network analysis, it is possible not only to demonstrate how individuals created their particular family connections but also to reconstruct the overall web of connections to which these belonged.⁸ Furthermore, thanks to an extensive span of records

⁷ DuVal, *WMQ* 65: 269 (quotation). Importantly, DuVal argues that marriages between Frenchmen and Indian women were often not really about facilitating trade and that intermarriage rarely helped to create diplomatic and fur trade ties in French Louisiana. I agree with DuVal’s conclusion for the Illinois country, one of the longest-lasting *métis* communities of North America, but for reasons different from those stressed by her.

⁸ Previous studies have focused simply on the number of connections that certain individuals such as Marie Rouensa made and then assumed that these connections increased these individuals’ agency. But what if we want to study these connections in relation to the larger social network itself? For the distinction, see Robert Hanneman and Mark Riddle, *Introduction to Social Network Methods* (Riverside, Calif., 2005). Because network analysis is concerned more with the networks themselves than with any

from 1695 to the 1730s, we can even perform a diachronic analysis and trace how kinship networks changed over time. And then, from empirical evidence rather than intuitive guesswork, we can also sketch out some surprising hypotheses about the function of these networks, their most important actors, and their overall social effects.

A thorough understanding of marriage and godparent networks in Illinois reveals that in Kaskaskia, while kinship remained important for creating social identities through the 1730s, it functioned in exactly the opposite way from how so-called fur trade marriages are generally understood to have worked. The most important actors in the network of godparents in Kaskaskia were not the fur trade impresarios and the border-crossing Frenchmen seeking to acculturate to Indian ways of life. Nor, apparently, were they Indian women whose goal it was to mediate between their fur-trading French husbands and their Indian kin.⁹ Rather, the most influential actors in Kaskaskia networks were those most solidly situated within an

given individual, the technique makes it possible to examine the shape of communities and observe social phenomena that cannot be understood by focusing solely on a particular person. For instance, since certain individuals may be connected to an unusually large number of people in a given network, their social capital can be investigated and analyzed. If networks seem to contain cliques and divisions, such patterns can be investigated in light of other social outcomes. Ibid., introd. For an excellent primer on the power of network analysis, see Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives* (New York, 2009). For overviews of social network methods in history, see Bonnie H. Erickson, "Social Networks and History: A Review Essay," *Historical Methods* 30, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 149–57; Michel Bertrand, Sandro Guzzi-Heeb, and Claire Lemerrier, "Introduction: Où en est l'analyse de réseaux en histoire?" *Redes: Revista hispana para el análisis de redes sociales* 21, no. 1 (December 2011), <http://revista-redes.rediris.es/indicevol21.htm>. See also Charles Wetherell, "Historical Social Network Analysis," in *New Methods for Social History*, ed. Larry J. Griffin and Marcel van der Linden (Cambridge, [1999]).

⁹ It is impossible to know the goals and intentions of Indian wives in most cases. The sources are silent on these subjects. Nevertheless, a key characteristic of recent scholarship about kinship and the fur trade has been scholars' tendency to assign motive and intent to Indian women in the fur trade. Historians use words such as *strategy* in telling the stories of these intermarried women and their kinship "choices." Good examples of scholarship assigning strategic motivations to Indian women who married Frenchmen in the *pays d'en haut* include White, *Middle Ground*, 74; Sleeper-Smith, *Ethnohistory* 47: 434. In fact, often the sources really do not supply much insight into the women's actual intentions, the identity of those making the decisions, or the explicit logic behind kinship choices. This article casts doubt on these narratives of strategy and intention by showing an implicit logic behind the kinship structures that is not consistent with existing narratives about strategy. In other contexts, such as colonial New Orleans, scholars have been more successful in demonstrating the ways in which female Catholic converts made choices about godmotherhood, although without the same instrumentalist logic that scholars have assigned to women in the fur trade. See Emily Clark and Virginia Meacham Gould, "The Feminine Face of Afro-Catholicism in New Orleans, 1727–1852," *WMQ* 59, no. 2 (April 2002): 409–48.

emerging Catholic and agrarian culture. Historians in recent generations have dismissed concepts such as assimilation and acculturation for their failure to capture the complexity of cultural exchange and identity formation in early American borderlands, and they have instead insisted that early borderlands witnessed mutual cultural invention on the metaphorical terrain Richard White described as the middle ground. Certainly these views of culture, ethnogenesis, and identity formation in early America have taught us much, opening up a much more complex and multisided view of history in which many people shared agency in shaping dynamic and innovative borderlands cultures. But an analysis of the Kaskaskia records brings to light a surprising exception. Empirical data from Illinois, a community that should have been as fluid and hybrid a middle ground as any other place in colonial America, suggest that kinship in this particular place instead worked to embed Indian women into a strongly “French” culture and to define insiders and outsiders in an exclusive, and hardly hybrid, community.¹⁰ Further, social network analysis of kinship in Illinois forces us to discard the old instrumentalist logic about women and the fur trade. Indian women in Illinois did not opportunistically use kinship networks to advance their influence in an indigenous habitus, nor did kinship orient their husbands toward the Indian cultural sphere. To the contrary, marriage and kinship networks in Illinois assimilated and embedded Indian women into a French, Catholic, and agrarian habitus. So go ahead, Father Tartarin: call it Frenchification.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING of New France, colonial officials dreamed of assimilating Indians into the colonial population. And, conspicuously, officials saw intermarriage between Frenchmen and Indian women as a major means to achieve this goal. The founder of Quebec himself, Samuel de Champlain, declared to local Indians his hope that “our young men will marry your daughters, and we shall be one people.”¹¹ Importantly, this plan was predicated on the assumption that European culture and “civilization” would overwhelm and transform the “savagery” of Indian peoples. As the

¹⁰ To be sure, it may be meaningless to call this culture French, as early modern cultural characteristics were by no means well-defined, let alone uniform. I use the term advisedly, recognizing that cultural characteristics belonged on a spectrum of similarity and difference: certain assumptions about life and culture were shared within a group of people whose origins were diverse and yet who all spoke French, participated in a more or less singular religious tradition, and held basic social and legal assumptions in common. See Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, “Always Discontinuous/Continuous, and ‘Hybrid’ by Its Very Nature: The Culture Concept Historicized,” *Ethnohistory* 52, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 179–95.

¹¹ Samuel de Champlain’s words appear in Paul le Jeune, “Relation of What Occurred in New France in the Year 1633,” 1634, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 5: 77–267 (quotation, 5: 211).

French originally believed, following a strikingly nonracialist logic, culture was what supposedly made Indians inferior to Europeans, and not biological characteristics inherited at birth. According to this thinking, Indians could be improved by civilization and thus could assimilate as full members of the French colonial community. Aspects of New France's original legal culture reflected this understanding, since the charter of the Company of New France defined Indians as full subjects, on the same legal footing as European-born colonists of New France.¹²

The program of assimilation was part of an almost utopian vision in the minds of many French colonial planners in the seventeenth century. Louis XIV's minister of the marine, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, was particularly optimistic about this plan. As he wrote, "To increase the colony . . . it seems to me that, instead of waiting to benefit from the new settlers who could be sent from France, the most useful way to achieve it would be to try to civilize the Algonquins, the Hurons, and the other Savages who have embraced Christianity; and to persuade them to come to settle in a commune with the French, to live with them, and educate their children in our mores and our customs."¹³ As Colbert said in his most famous line on the subject, intermarriage between Indians and French people would before long produce a single community—"one people and one blood."¹⁴ Significantly, before he left New France for Louisiana, Governor Pierre Le Moyne, sieur d'Iberville, sought permission "to allow the French who will settle in this country to marry Indian girls."¹⁵ All over New France, as well, Colbert's dream was put into action. After 1665 the government even gave endowments to those French colonists who chose to marry Native women to make up for the lack of dowry. And so Frenchification through intermarriage was seriously pursued.

It was not long before the plan proved ineffective, however. As Saliha Belmessous has argued, the conditions were not right in New France for such a cultural assimilation policy. First, the French were never so numerically superior that they could easily absorb Indian women. Second, Indians of the Northeast did not suffer a weak consciousness of identity, even in the midst of the demographic crises of the early colonial period. And third, and

¹² As Saliha Belmessous has argued, this belief reflected a fundamental "absence of an idea of race in the minds of French officials." Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 328. For the legal status of intermarried Indians, see W. J. Eccles, *France in America* (East Lansing, Mich., 1990), 41.

¹³ Colbert to Jean Talon, Jan. 5 and Apr. 5, 1666, in *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec pour 1930-31* (Paris, 1931), 45, translated by Saliha Belmessous, in Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 328.

¹⁴ Colbert to Jean Talon, Nov. 13, 1666, CHA, vol. 2, fol. 332, ANOM.

¹⁵ Pierre Le Moyne, sieur d'Iberville, quoted in Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Interracial Societies: The French Colonies, Canada," in Jacob Ernest Cooke et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of the North American Colonies* (New York, 1993), 2: 170-71, quoted in Spear, *WMQ* 60: 85.

most importantly, most Indians proved unwilling to be assimilated.¹⁶ As Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, sieur de Cadillac, observed in 1696, Indian brides of Frenchmen often did not stay with their husbands or in French communities but rather returned to their own villages, refusing to adopt the newcomers' patriarchal culture. Cadillac wrote, "One must regard them like wild birds who don't at all love their cages, and who, still feeling the libertine inclinations of their relatives, are made uneasy by the frightening idea of four walls of which they will not go out during their lives."¹⁷

What Cadillac thought was an inclination to flight was actually probably the result of northeastern Indians' expectations about marriage and kinship. Indeed, one obstacle to Frenchification among Iroquoian- and Algonquian-speaking peoples around New France was that many of these groups had matrilineal kinship organizations and practiced matrilineal descent. That is, in cultures such as that of the Hurons, into which many French traders married in the early 1600s, it was typical for husbands to join their wives' families, not vice versa. What is more, children of these marriages normally assumed identities of the mothers' family or clan. So while the ideal of Frenchification was that Indian women would assimilate into French society and assume their husbands' identities within patriarchal homes and a patriarchal culture, Indian brides had the opposite expectation. According to fur trader and diplomat Nicolas Perrot, it was the husband who had to adapt: "As the ties of marriage and alliance are so strongly knit together, each man considers himself as a member no longer of the village where he was born, but of that one in which he has settled."¹⁸ In this context intermarriage created opportunities for Frenchmen to join Indian communities, but rarely did Indian women join French communities and assimilate. Annual reports from leaders in New France included dismal accounts of Indian brides and their children, many of whom did not learn to speak French, did not dress in French fashion, and did not even remain in French villages.¹⁹

¹⁶ Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 337.

¹⁷ "Réponse de Lamothe rendue sur le-champ," 1696, in Pierre Margry, ed., *Découvertes et établissements des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale, 1614-1754* (Paris, 1879), 5: 158 (my translation).

¹⁸ Nicolas Perrot, in Emma Helen Blair, ed. and trans., *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes. . . .* (Lincoln, Neb., 1996), 1: 140. Matrilineal and matrilineal descent practices were typical among Iroquoian and certain northeastern Algonquian groups, such as the Delawares. Matrilineal kinship was also practiced in the Southeast, among the Choctaws for example. See Bruce G. Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15, *Northeast* (Washington, D.C., 1978).

¹⁹ See for instance the 1679 report of Intendant Jacques Duchesneau, who tried to raise some Indian children in the French fashion and then lamented when they left him. See Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 337.

Perhaps owing to matrilineal patterns among northeastern Indian groups, then, the program of Frenchification was failing by the late 1600s, and many colonial administrators expressed pessimism about its continuation. Administrator after administrator in the late 1600s said the same thing: intermarriages and the blending of French and Indian kinship structures were only serving to pull Frenchmen toward Indian ways of life, not vice versa. According to Governor Jacques-René de Brisay de Denonville in 1685, "those with whom we mingle do not become French, our people become Indian."²⁰ By 1699 Colbert's great dream of Frenchification looked like a failure, and in that year Intendant Jean Bochart de Champigny lamented, "It happens more commonly that a Frenchman becomes savage than a savage becomes a Frenchman."²¹ As another French official wrote in 1715, "Although there are several examples of Indian women who have contracted such marriages . . . it is not because they have become Frenchified, if one may use that term, but it is because those who have married them have themselves become almost Indians, residing among them and living in their manner, so that these Indian women have changed nothing or at least very little in their manner of living."²²

Thus the policy of Frenchification through intermarriage, initially favored by most of the officials in New France, lost support. Many despaired that assimilation was totally impossible, as Belmessous has argued, and increasingly began to believe that the differences between Indians and French people were rooted more in biology than culture.²³ But even among those who continued to hold out hope that Indians could adopt French ways, there was little support anymore for intermarriage as a fast track to assimilation. As Antoine-Denis Raudot wrote in 1709, "We would need infinite work and time to free those peoples and to be able to reduce them to take our ways and our customs . . . I assure you that this work will last several centuries."²⁴

²⁰ Quoted in Peterson, *Ethnohistory* 25: 47. Fur traders who married Indian women "live[d] like savages" and "[went] about naked and tricked out like Indians."

²¹ "Sentiments du Sr de Champigny sur le Mémoire du Sr Lamotte Cadillac," Oct. 20, 1699, C11A, vol. 17, fol. 101, ANOM, translated by Saliha Belmessous, in Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 337. Mixed-race marriages, according to one official in 1710, have "not caused any great change at all in the Indians but [rather in the] Frenchmen [who] would lead with these wives a life as nomadic as before." D'Artaguet to Pontchartrain, June 20, 1710, in Dunbar Rowland and Albert Godfrey Sanders, eds. and trans., *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1701-1729: French Dominion* (Jackson, Miss., 1929), 2: 55-59, esp. 2: 57-58 (quotation, 2: 58).

²² Duclos to Pontchartrain, Dec. 25, 1715, in Rowland and Sanders, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 2: 205-9 (quotation, 2: 207). See also Spear, *WMQ* 60: 85-86, which pointed me to this quotation.

²³ See Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 341-47. See also Aubert, *WMQ* 61: 439-78.

²⁴ Intendant Antoine-Denis Raudot [wrongly attributed to P. Antoine Silvy, S.J.], *Relation par lettres de l'Amérique Septentrionale (années 1709 et 1710)*, ed. Le P. Camille

IF THE EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM of assimilation and Frenchification was proving a failure in places such as Quebec, the heart of French colonial activity in North America, the remote pays d'en haut probably seemed even less promising as a site for assimilation in the mid-1600s. Indeed, Jesuits founded the first missions at Illinois specifically to escape the influence of French fur traders and the policy of Frenchification. Here they would make an ideal primitive Christianity where Indians would "honor our Lord among themselves in their own way." In fact, as one Jesuit would later write, cultural assimilation was not even supposed to be part of the agenda here. Whereas missionaries once believed that "we must first make men of them, then work to make them Christians," now Jesuits in Illinois preferred to keep Indians' cultures intact.²⁵ "The best mode," one Jesuit later wrote, "was to avoid Frenchifying them."²⁶ For all these reasons, combined with the small numbers of Frenchmen in remote places such as Illinois, there was certainly no indication in the earliest years that Illinois would witness the success of Jean-Baptiste Colbert's dream. Ironically, however, there were conditions in Illinois that made Frenchification and cultural assimilation likelier prospects there than in the heartland of the Hurons and Iroquois.

As mentioned, two obstacles in the way of assimilation by intermarriage among the Hurons and Iroquois were the matrilineal social arrangements and matrilineal kinship patterns that characterized those groups. Importantly, social organization among the Illinois was different. As was the case for many Algonquian Indian groups of the western Great Lakes, Illinois families were patrilineal, not matrilineal. As Charles Callender writes, the Illinois were organized into patrilineal exogamous clans that were primary components of corporate and individual identities. These kinship structures were probably similar in many ways to the Doodemag clans of the Anishinaabe and Ottawa peoples of the upper Great Lakes. In this system kinship identities passed

de Rochemonteix (Paris, 1904), letter 23, 61–62, translated by Saliha Belmessous, in Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 346.

²⁵ Claude-Jean Allouez, "Of the Mission to the Ilimouec, or Alimouek," in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 51: 47–51 (quotations, 51: 51); "Preface to Vol LIX," *ibid.*, 59: 11–21, esp. 59: 19; "Of the First Voyage Made by Father Marquette toward New Mexico, and How the Idea Thereof Was Conceived," *ibid.*, 59: 87–163, esp. 59: 123; "Of the Mission of Saint François Xavier," *ibid.*, 58: 265–71, esp. 58: 267. For Jesuit efforts to avoid Frenchification in Illinois, see Robert Michael Morrissey, "I Speak it Well': Language, Cultural Understanding, and the End of a Missionary Middle Ground in Illinois Country, 1673–1712," *Early American Studies* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 617–48.

²⁶ Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix, *History and General Description of New France*, trans. and ed. John Gilmary Shea (New York, 1870), 4: 198. For more on the Jesuits' downbeat view of Frenchification, see Belmessous, *American Historical Review* 110: 335. Also see James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York, 1985), chap. 5.

from fathers to children, rather than from mothers to children. Wives were expected to accommodate their identities to their husbands' kin groups.²⁷

In addition to being patrilineal, the Illinois were also most likely patrilocal (though it is possible that they were neolocal, meaning that newlyweds set up a new, independent household). Evidence is thin, but the available sources suggest that after an initial postmarriage period in the house of the wife's family, a newlywed Illinois couple lived permanently with the husband's family or on their own.²⁸ Indeed, while Sleeper-Smith has argued that Illinois and other Algonquian women of the Great Lakes region did not "marry out" but rather lived in "matrifocal households" that they, their sisters, and their mothers controlled, the evidence supports a different conclusion.²⁹ For instance, some of the clearest evidence comes from fur trader and diplomat Nicolas Perrot, who observed marriage patterns among Great Lakes Algonquians in the late 1600s. He noted that after the marriage ceremony itself, wives went to live with their husbands' families. Pierre-Charles de Lette, a commandant at the early French outpost at Pimétoui (near modern-day Peoria, Illinois) who provided the most detailed eyewitness account of marriage practices among the Illinois in particular, agreed with Perrot. After a ritual lasting several days, during which both husband and wife lived temporarily with each other's family, finally the wife went to settle permanently with the husband's kin. Other evidence suggests that the couple set up a new household, for which the wife provided the materials.³⁰ One eyewitness of Illinois marriage practices noted

²⁷ Charles Callender, "Great Lakes-Riverine Sociopolitical Organization," in Trigger, *Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast*, 610–21, esp. 610; Bohaker, *WMQ* 63: 23–52; Michael Witgen, "The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 639–68. As Heidi Bohaker writes, "women generally married in from other families," into their husbands' *nindoodem*. "In this cultural tradition, people inherited their *nindoodemag* identities from their fathers; they conceived of themselves as related to and having kin obligations toward those who shared the same other-than-human progenitor being." Bohaker, *WMQ* 63: 35 ("women generally"), 25–26 ("In this cultural tradition"). Almost all sources agree that the Illinois were patrilineal. Callender, "Illinois," in Trigger, *Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast*, 673–80, esp. 676; Margaret Kimball Brown, *Cultural Transformations among the Illinois: An Application of a Systems Model* (East Lansing, Mich., 1979), 237–39. One piece of evidence is in kinship terminology. In Illinois kinship structures, parallel cousins on the father's side were all called "brother," suggesting that they were raised within the same patrilineal descent system.

²⁸ Brown, *Cultural Transformations*, 237; Callender, "Illinois," 675–76.

²⁹ Sleeper-Smith, *Ethnohistory* 47: 424 ("marry out"), 429 ("matrifocal households").

³⁰ Nicolas Perrot described the entire wedding ceremony, noting that when it was finished the wife "lives with her mother-in-law, who has charge of her." See Perrot, in Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley*, 69. In another passage Perrot noted that the husband lived with his wife's family for a period of time before setting up his own independent household. Perrot's observations do not suggest matrilocalism.

that the wedding ceremony ended with the bride and groom going to “his home,” where they gave the wedding feast, and another mentioned how, after a successful courtship, “the parents of the girl take her in the evening to the hut of the groom.”³¹ Little evidence suggests that Illinois men lived for long periods of time in the households of their wives’ families.³²

If the Illinois were not matrifocal, they did have one characteristic that resembled matrifocal households such as those among the Iroquois or the Hurons—they practiced sororal polygyny. Many eyewitnesses agree that it was common in Illinois for sisters to marry a single husband and then to live together in his house. But if this practice hints at a kind of female-centered kin world, it also points to another reason why Illinois women approached marriage to Frenchmen differently than in other places. In Illinois, sources suggest, marriage to a Frenchman possibly was a means to escape unwanted polygamous marriages, oppression, and violence. If it is true, as Belmessous argues, that a precondition for cultural assimilation is the desire to assimilate to a new culture, evidence about the condition of women in contact-era Illinois suggests that such a desire may have been strong among certain young women.³³

Commandant Pierre-Charles de Liette observed this patrilocal residence pattern in his detailed account of Illinois marriage practices in the 1690s. But his account also suggests the possibility of neolocality. See Liette, “Memoir of De Gannes (Deliette) Concerning the Illinois Country,” in Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner, eds., *The French Foundations, 1680–1693*, vol. 1, French ser., vol. 23 of *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Springfield, Ill., 1934), 302–96, esp. 332–33.

³¹ André Pénicaut, in Margry, ed., *Découvertes et établissements*, 5: 491–92 (“his home,” 5: 492, my translation); Diron d’Artaguiette, “Journal of Diron d’Artaguiette, 1722–1723,” trans. Georgia Sanderlin, in Newton D. Mereness, ed., *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York, 1916), 17–92 (“parents of the girl,” 73).

³² The only ambiguity on this score are the terms in the Illinois language from the Gravier dictionary (ca. 1700) that refer to coresident son-in-law, or *nahaankana*. But since the language also contains the term *nahaankanekwa*, denoting coresident daughter-in-law, this does not resolve the question of matri- or patrilocality.

³³ For evidence of Illinois polygamy, see Louis Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Chicago, 1903), 1: 167, 2: 482; Nicolas de La Salle, *Relation of the Discovery of the Mississippi River. . . .*, trans. Melville B. Anderson (Chicago, 1898), 295; Liette, “Memoir of De Gannes (Deliette),” in Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*, 355; “Letter by Father Jacques Gravier in the Form of a Journal of the Mission of l’Immaculée Conception de Notre Dame in the Illinois Country,” Feb. 15, 1694, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 64: 159–237, esp. 64: 193; “Letter from Father Sébastien Rasles, Missionary of the Society of Jesus in New France, to Monsieur his Brother,” Oct. 12, 1723, *ibid.*, 67: 133–229, esp. 67: 175. The Illinois language had many terms for plural wives, and even a specific kinship term for sisters married to the same husband. According to Jacques Gravier, the term was *ninch88i8arata achiminti8ni* (Gravier, “Kaskaskia-to-French Dictionary,” MS, p. 346, Special Collections, Trinity College Library, Hartford, Conn.). According to Pierre-Charles de Liette, the term was *nirimoua*. As Liette says, several different relations were classed as “sisters” by the Illinois, including certain aunts and nieces and probably parallel cousins. Liette, “Memoir of

All sources agree that Illinois Indians practiced polygamy, and many sources suggest that the practice had downsides for women. This practice may have been relatively new, or at least newly widespread, at the start of the colonial period, owing to the population imbalance caused by destructive wars with the Iroquois in the 1660s. The shortage of men in Illinois villages may have produced the impetus for polygamous relationships. In any event, the evidence is strong that these relationships were normal and common. To be sure, Jacqueline Louise Peterson argues that polygamy had some functional advantages for Indian women, giving them opportunities to find a stable family life when there were not enough husbands for monogamy.³⁴ But for many women, there were also strong disadvantages to the practice, as sources indicate.

Polygamous households among the Illinois seem sometimes to have generated great tension. Words in Jesuit dictionaries from the early mission period suggest the nature of these relationships. For instance, according to terms in Jesuit missionary Jacques Gravier's Illinois-language dictionary from the 1690s, one wife in a polygamous household was "the best loved wife," and one was "the wife who is the master of all the others." One word in the Illinois language, "ensam8eta," referred to "jealousy" and alluded to conflict, such as "she prevents him from going to her rival, to his second wife."³⁵ In short, polygamous households may have produced enough tension that certain women wanted to escape or avoid them if they could.³⁶

De Gannes (Deliette)," in Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*, 355. For a good discussion of the Illinois kinship system and its language, see David J. Costa, "The Kinship Terminology of the Miami-Illinois Language," *Anthropological Linguistics* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 28–53. To be sure, it is well known that many European observers of Indian cultures had self-serving motives and possessed strong motivations for painting Indian cultures in a negative light. It is also true that many European observers sometimes blatantly misunderstood Indian cultures when they observed them. Nevertheless, and even with these caveats strongly in mind, the weight of the evidence suggests that many Illinois Indian women were under stress within this crisis-ridden culture.

³⁴ See Peterson, "People In Between," 70–75. Polygamy was actually widespread among Algonquian cultures of the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley—French observers noted it commonly. See Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 28.

³⁵ Gravier, "Kaskaskia-to-French Dictionary," MS, pp. 223 (kitachi8eata: "best loved wife," "master of all the others"), 31 ("ensam8eta"), Special Collections, Trinity College Library. Other entries containing similar concepts can be found in this manuscript dictionary at 37, 335, 346, 394, 509. Also see a published edition: Carl Masthay, ed., *Kaskaskia Illinois-to-French Dictionary* (Saint Louis, 2002). Similar language appears in the dictionary by Jean Baptiste Antoine Robert Le Boullenger from a later period. For instance, "nikitassie8o: the first wife who is the most beloved." See Le Boullenger, French and Miami-Illinois dictionary, MS, John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R.I.

³⁶ Given this tension, it is not surprising that Jacques Gravier observed the widespread interest in the Catholic teachings on monogamy among Illinois women. As Gravier observed, "There has not been one with a little knowledge [of Christianity] who did

In addition to polygamy, sources indicate that some Illinois women endured oppression and even violence in their relationships. Although certainly some of the sources on these matters are unreliable, the most reliable eyewitnesses of early contact-period Illinois culture support a conclusion that Illinois women endured particular difficulties. Many sources agree that women in Illinois had very little control over their own sexuality. According to Liette, brothers made marriage arrangements on their sisters' behalf, and the women sometimes had little say in their future mates.³⁷ One of the most well-informed eyewitnesses of Illinois culture in the late 1600s, Father Julien Binneteau, put it this way: "According to their customs, [Illinois women] are the slaves of their brothers, who compel them to marry whomsoever they choose, even men already married to another wife."³⁸ To be sure, Binneteau was trying to celebrate the fact that some of his converts resisted this treatment, and also to cast his own missionary actions as a form of rescue of these oppressed women. But he was not the only observer who noted women's powerlessness in controlling their sexuality. As Louis Hennepin noted, parents frequently pressured their daughters to use their sexuality for material gain.³⁹ Liette, who wrote a long description of Illinois culture in this period, explained how Illinois women were also pressed into prostitution by their fathers and brothers. Brothers even used their sisters to cover wagers "after having lost all they had of personal property."⁴⁰

If women could not choose their mates or avoid unfavorable polygamous marriages, they also endured a double standard when it came to fidelity. Several French eyewitnesses to Illinois culture noted that men were perfectly free to have sex with other women but that women were expected to remain faithful and chaste. An Illinois man reportedly could "repudiat[e] the wife at the first whim."⁴¹ Some Illinois husbands abandoned their wives, and several

not know that God forbids those who marry to espouse a man who already has a wife." "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 64: 193. See also DuVal, *WMQ* 65: 283.

³⁷ See Liette, "Memoir of De Gannes (Deliette)," in Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*, 332–33, 337, 356. See also Raymond Hauser, "The *Berdache* and the Illinois Indian Tribe during the Last Half of the Seventeenth Century," in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500–1850*, ed. Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell (New York, 2000), 119–36, esp. 128.

³⁸ "Letter of Father Julien Binneteau, of the Society of Jesus, to a Father of the Same Society," [January] 1699, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 65: 65–77 (quotation, 65: 67).

³⁹ Hennepin, *New Discovery*, 2: 480–81.

⁴⁰ Liette, "Memoir of De Gannes (Deliette)," in Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*, 352; see also Hauser, "*Berdache* and the Illinois Indian Tribe," 129. Liette had none of the self-promotional agenda that clouded the Jesuits' descriptions of the Illinois. Indeed, he was an explicit opponent of the Indians' religious conversion and did not seem to value the mission to Christianize Illinois Indians.

⁴¹ Robert Cavalier de La Salle, *Relation of the Discoveries and Voyages of Cavalier de La Salle from 1679 to 1681: The Official Narrative*, trans. Melville B. Anderson (Chicago, 1901), 295.

terms in Jesuit dictionaries reflect the pain of a scorned wife. For instance, Gravier listed words to express, "I believe that he loves another; [said by] a wife who suspects him of loving a woman other than his wife." Another term meant, "I believe that he wants to leave me. I believe that he loves another woman."⁴² In Jesuit Jean Baptiste Antoine Robert Le Boulenger's Illinois dictionary from the 1720s, the term *aramih8a* meant, "The second wife of a man who spurned his first."⁴³ Because these descriptions and terms surely contain the biases of Europeans who judged this culture according to a monogamous norm not necessarily shared by the Illinois themselves, we cannot be sure their husbands' infidelity was such a painful burden for Illinois wives. Violence, however, almost certainly was.

Many sources agree that some Illinois women experienced violence at the hands of their husbands and in their relationships. Numerous independent sources from the early contact period describe violent punishments and other abuse that Illinois women received for extramarital relations. Several eyewitnesses noted mutilation, including the cutting off of noses and ears, inflicted by "jealous" husbands on adulterous Illinois women.⁴⁴ Among the Illinois, Jacques Marquette wrote in the 1670s, "a man boldly kills his wife if he learns that she has not been faithful."⁴⁵ Louis Jolliet's immediate impression of the Illinois after his first encounter was that Illinois men "strongly restrained" their wives and also mutilated their faces.⁴⁶ In the most dramatic account from the contact period, Liette described a gang rape of an Illinois woman who was caught having an extramarital relationship; he suggested it was a regular practice. Liette also claimed that "since I have been in this country more than a hundred women have been scalped" for infidelity.⁴⁷ As one French observer from this period wrote, these patterns of violence made the Illinois distinctive: "Perhaps no nation in the world scorns women more than these savages usually do."⁴⁸

⁴² Gravier, "Kaskaskia-to-French Dictionary," MS, p. 13, Special Collections, Trinity College Library.

⁴³ Le Boulenger, French and Miami-Illinois dictionary, s.v. "femme," MS, John Carter Brown Library. The entry also contained words meaning, "I marry the wife of another" and "He has changed wives."

⁴⁴ [Jacques] Marquette, "A Discovery of Some New Countries and Nations in the Northern America," in Hennepin, *New Discovery*, 2: 636–67 (quotation, 2: 651); La Salle, *Relation of the Discoveries and Voyages*, 145.

⁴⁵ "Letter from Father Jacques Marquette to the Reverend Father Superior of the Missions," [1669], in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 54: 169–95 (quotation, 54: 187).

⁴⁶ Louis Jolliet, "Découverte du Mississipi: Par Louis Jolliet, accompagné du Père Marquette," 1674, in Margry, *Découvertes et établissements*, 1: 255–70 (quotation, 1: 265, my translation). Jolliet mentioned only a precious few specifics about the Illinois in this segment. The detail about treatment of women was one of them.

⁴⁷ Liette, "Mémorial de De Gannes (Deliette)," in Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*, 337 (quotation), 335.

⁴⁸ Unidentified Frenchman "J. C. B.," in Sylvester K. Stevens, Donald H. Kent, and Emma Edith Woods, eds., *Travels in New France, by J. C. B. [1750s–1760s]* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1941), 140, quoted in Hauser, "Berdache and the Illinois Indian Tribe," 129.

And these impressions persisted well into the colonial period. In 1722 French traveler Diron d'Artaguiette wrote of the Illinois, "The husband has full power and authority over his wives, whom he looks upon as his slaves, and with whom he does not eat." He concluded that the Illinois men "are more jealous than the Spaniards, [and] scalp [their wives] upon the least proof of their infidelity."⁴⁹ Around the same time, French traveler Lallement wrote a similar report: "on the slightest suspicion of infidelity they scalp [their wives]."⁵⁰ Even as we read these sources with a strong degree of skepticism, as we must, the pattern is clear: Illinois women in some cases probably had certain motives to find alternatives to their own culture's restrictive gender order.⁵¹

Of course, none of these patterns of oppression necessarily meant that Indian women would assimilate to French culture. But it is certainly true that this context—patrilineal kinship structures combined with a polygamous and sometimes misogynistic culture—provided some possible motivations and conditions for Illinois women to consider an exit. The first move in contact-era Illinois for many women was to adopt Christianity. Finding allies among priests who emphasized Christianity's message of chastity and monogamy, many young girls such as Marie Rouensa began converting in the 1690s. Under the tutelage of Fathers Jacques Gravier and Gabriel Marest, several Illinois women and young girls used Catholicism to support a lifestyle of celibacy and to avoid unwanted marriages arranged by their brothers.⁵² In the most famous case (although it was certainly not unique), Rouensa herself "resolved never to marry, in order that she might belong wholly to Jesus Christ." The priests' message surely resonated with women who felt forced or constrained into difficult marriages, since the priests emphasized women's freedom and autonomy. As Gravier wrote, Christianity empowered women to resist arrangements made by their male

⁴⁹ D'Artaguiette, "Journal," in Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies*, 73.

⁵⁰ A copy of a letter of Lallement, to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, dated from Caskaskias, Apr. 5, 1721, Kaskaskia Papers, box 207, folder 23, Chicago Historical Society.

⁵¹ Brett Rushforth argues that this misogynistic treatment was reserved for slaves and that Illinois women would not have been subjected to it, since they had protection from male relatives. See Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2012), 68. Though slave women were certainly vulnerable, evidence suggests that Illinois women might have been no better off, since their male relatives were often not protectors at all but rather part of their troubles. See for example Liette, "Mémorial de De Gannes (Deliette)," in Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*, 337, 353.

⁵² There are several examples. See, for instance, "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 64: 191; "Letter from Father Gabriel Marest, Missionary of the Society of Jesus, to Father Germon, of the Same Society," Nov. 9, 1712, *ibid.*, 66: 219–95, esp. 66: 249; "Letter of Father Julien Binneteau," [January] 1699, *ibid.*, 65: 65.

relatives and supported them in making their own choices: "God did not command her not to marry, but . . . she could not be forced to do so; . . . she alone was mistress to do either the one or the other, in the fear of offending God."⁵³

Predictably, these relationships produced tension, even physical violence, as women often converted to Christianity against the wishes of their male relatives, who then tried to prevent their interaction with Jesuit priests. By the mid-1690s, open tensions between the Jesuits in the mission and local men, particularly among the Peorias, made the situation even more volatile. While Christianized women, at the instigation of the priests, "mock[ed] at the superstitions of their nation," traditionalist men declared their disdain for Catholicism openly and eloquently: "[Gravier's] Fables are good only in his own country; we have ours, which do not make us die as his do."⁵⁴ By the early 1700s, this tension between male traditionalists and the Jesuits was so great that one Peoria Indian tried to murder Gravier. Several Indian women, however, remained committed to their newly adopted Catholic identities, even in the face of reprisals and threats.⁵⁵

Thus the Illinois country became a more bordered world—a middle ground of syncretism and mutual accommodation was eroding under the weight of controversy and a shared recognition of the differences between Catholicism and Indian spirituality. Stark divisions between non-Christians and Christians, Peoria and Kaskaskia, began to characterize Illinois Indian

⁵³ "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, *ibid.*, 64: 195 (quotations). Indian women such as Marie Rouensa sought in Christianity a means to resist Illinois marriages. As Gravier wrote, "The resolution she had taken to live always alone—that is, not to marry—was due to the aversion that she felt for all that she heard and saw done by the married people of her country." *Ibid.*, 64: 169. Julien Binneteau confirms that Rouensa was not alone, referring to "some among them who constantly resist, and who prefer to expose themselves to ill treatment rather than do anything contrary to the precepts of Christianity regarding marriage." "Letter of Father Julien Binneteau," [January] 1699, *ibid.*, 65: 66 (quotation). See also "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, *ibid.*, 64: 193. Overall, there is no way to ascertain precisely how many Illinois women converted in this period, or how many used Christianity in the ways that Rouensa did. Certainly a substantial number of Illinois women and girls were converts, especially among the Kaskaskia. On one dramatic occasion in the 1690s, at least thirty women stood up to the intimidations of an Illinois man who tried to close the church. For evidence, see "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, *ibid.*, 64: 169, 177–79, 185, 197–99, 209, and esp. 64: 217–19. Yet not all Illinois women, even among the Kaskaskia, converted. Meanwhile men—especially young men—were often less interested in, and even hostile to, Christianity. The Peorias in particular were hostile. *Ibid.*, 64: 189.

⁵⁴ Liette, "Memoir of De Gannes (Deliette)," in Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*, 361 ("superstitions"); "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 64: 173 ("Fables").

⁵⁵ See "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 64: 173–75.

life. Indeed, in 1700 the Kaskaskias, many of whom had converted, moved with the Jesuits to a new location on the Mississippi River, a hundred miles from the more anti-Christian Peorias.⁵⁶ The new mission at Kaskaskia on the Illinois River contained the now mostly Christianized Kaskaskia Indians as well as some Frenchmen and the Jesuits.

It was in this context that the Jesuits began to employ a new strategy to stabilize the community of women who had converted to Christianity: marrying them to Frenchmen. Having liberated Indian women from polygamous marriages, the Jesuits now sought a means of inculcating “the bonds of Christian marriage” within the community. In the early 1700s, Gravier wrote to authorities in Rome for permission to perform “marriage by a christian with an infidel,” which he viewed as “of the greatest importance for the strengthening of christianity.”⁵⁷ Of course, this move was an ironic reversal, since the priests had originally come to Illinois specifically to avoid the practice of Frenchification and to keep the Illinois mission separate from the influence of Frenchmen. Yet Jesuits such as Gravier had come to view intermarriage as a means to firm up the solidarity of the nascent Christian community in Illinois. In this divided world, Gravier hoped that intermarriage would settle Indian women and Frenchmen into a stable, Catholic, and French lifestyle, conquering what they called the “inconstancy” of Indian women and giving Frenchmen a means to create stable, domestic lives.⁵⁸ Importantly, the Jesuits built these intermarried families into a social network that would begin to shape the community in significant ways.

WITH THE MOVE to the new Kaskaskia mission and the beginning of the Jesuits’ intermarriage program, the community in Kaskaskia became permanent and started growing. Though many of the French fur traders in the Mississippi Valley had been recalled to Canada or Louisiana by the 1690s, there was still a population of Frenchmen who remained in Upper Louisiana—those “who married at the Illinois.”⁵⁹ For Father Gabriel Marest, who arrived in Illinois in the early 1700s, the new stability of this

⁵⁶ It is difficult to summarize the reasons for the Peorias’ disaffection from the Jesuits. For a partial explanation, see “Letter by Father Mermet, Missionary at Cascaskias, to the Jesuits in Canada,” Mar. 2, 1706, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66: 51–65, esp. 66: 51–57.

⁵⁷ “Letter by Father Jacques Gravier,” Feb. 15, 1694, *ibid.*, 64: 167 (“bonds”); “Letter of Father Jacques Gravier to the Very Reverend Father Michelangelo Tamburini, General of the Society of Jesus, at Rome,” Mar. 6, 1707, *ibid.*, 66: 121–23 (“marriage by a christian,” 66: 121).

⁵⁸ “Letter from Father Sébastien Rasles,” Oct. 12, 1723, *ibid.*, 67: 175 (quotation). See also Gravier’s use of “inconstancy” in “Letter by Father Jacques Gravier,” Feb. 15, 1694, *ibid.*, 64: 169.

⁵⁹ King Louis XIV to De Mury, June 30, 1707, in Rowland and Sanders, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 3: 50–60 (quotation, 3: 56).

community was attractive to a certain kind of “moral” French settler, and the population was bound to increase.⁶⁰ Importantly, whereas Frenchmen sixty miles upriver in Cahokia built a thriving fur trade economy, exporting some sixteen thousand livres’ worth of furs to Canada in the 1710s and engaging in an illicit Indian slave trade operation, in Kaskaskia things were turning in a different direction. The colony was becoming more agrarian. Louisiana officials learned in 1711 that the colonists in Illinois had begun to grow wheat.⁶¹ As traveler André Pénicaud noted, “Wheat grows there as fine as any in France, and all kinds of vegetables, roots, and grasses.” Pénicaud also noted the permanence of the agrarian installation in Illinois: “They have three mills to grind their grains,” he wrote, “namely, one windmill belonging to the Reverend Jesuit Fathers . . . and two others . . . owned by the Illinois themselves.”⁶² Marest noted the flourishing of livestock, chickens, and pigs in 1712.⁶³ In 1715, according to two travelers who passed by the colony, settlers in Kaskaskia were “living there at their ease; as grain thrives in that region they have built a mill, and have a great many cattle.”⁶⁴

In this emerging agrarian community, based on arable agriculture, the Jesuits’ program of intermarriage took root. Intermarriage in Illinois began in 1695, when Father Jacques Gravier performed the first marriage between a French fur trader, Michel Accault, and an Indian woman, Marie Rouensa, the teenage daughter of the local Kaskaskia chief. From 1695 to 1717, when the colony officially became part of the jurisdiction of Louisiana, the Jesuits married at least twenty-three more Frenchmen to twenty-five Indian women, reflecting their continued confidence in the

⁶⁰ As Gabriel Marest wrote, “It is this also which has brought many Frenchmen to settle here, and very recently we married three of them to Illinois women.” See “Letter from Father Gabriel Marest,” Nov. 9, 1712, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66: 231. Marest also made a careful distinction between the libertine fur traders of the pays d’en haut and the men who had been settling in the Illinois, whom he described as influencing the Indians through “their piety and by the strictness of their morals” (ibid., 66: 293).

⁶¹ For descriptions of fur-trading activity in Cahokia, see enumeration of the fur trade, 1717, CIA, vol. 49, fols. 309–11, ANOM; Antoine Denis Raudot, “Memoir Concerning the Different Indian Nations of North America,” in W. Vernon Kinietz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes, 1615–1760* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1940), 339–410, esp. 403. For evidence of the turn toward agriculture in Kaskaskia, see André Pénicaud, “Narrative,” in *Fleur de Lys and Calumet: Being the Pénicaud Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana*, ed. Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams (Baton Rouge, La., 1953), 136–37.

⁶² Pénicaud, “Narrative,” 137–38 (“Wheat grows,” 137–38, “They have,” 138). For the best history of French agriculture in Illinois, see Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana, Ill., 1998).

⁶³ “Letter from Father Gabriel Marest,” Nov. 9, 1712, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66: 255.

⁶⁴ “Letter of Ramezay and Bégon to French Minister,” Nov. 7, 1715, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, Wis., 1902), 16: 327–38 (quotation, 16: 332).

initially experimental strategy. By many accounts, these were successful and stable relationships, helping to root the transient fur traders and the “inconstant” Illinois women in the community. The resulting families gave birth to at least thirty-six children. This period from 1695 to 1717, then, constitutes the first phase of an interracial kinship network in the fledgling colony.

Following Catholic ritual, the Jesuits required that each child baptized in the Illinois country should have both a godmother and a godfather, a practice that created fictive kinship bonds linking individual families with people outside the nuclear families. Using the baptismal and marriage records from Kaskaskia from 1695 to 1717, it is possible to analyze the social networks that were developed through this custom in Illinois.⁶⁵ Importantly, the interfamilial links created by godparenthood resulted for the most part in a large, dense, and continuous network in Kaskaskia, rather than several small and isolated networks. These fictive kinship bonds left only a few isolated families, cliques, or major divisions in the community (Figure 1).

⁶⁵ For a treatment of godparenthood and social networks in early modern Europe, see Jürgen Schlumbohm, “Quelques problèmes de micro-histoire d’une société locale: Construction de liens sociaux dans la paroisse de Belm (17e–19e siècles),” trans. Diane Meur, *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 50, no. 4 (July–August 1995): 775–802. Jesuits also created social networks through the actual practice of marriage by requiring each couple to bring witnesses to endorse the marriage. Unfortunately, the marriage records for Kaskaskia survived inconsistently, and we do not have detailed marriage records before 1724, but we do have a surprisingly complete run of baptism records that reveals how marriage and mixed-race families created relationships between individuals and with the larger community. The analysis in this article rests on a database of seventy-two intermarried French-Indian families as well as several French families who joined the network from 1695 to 1735. The database was constructed using all available demographic information in censuses, baptismal records, and, in some cases, notarial records. The entire database, including all known baptisms in Kaskaskia in this period, contains 123 baptisms, some 315 individual actors, and 2,786 connections. For the best set of published marriage and baptismal records from Kaskaskia, see Marthe Faribault-Beauregard, ed., *La population des forts français d’Amérique (XVIIIe siècle): Répertoire des baptêmes, mariages et sépultures célébrés dans les forts et les établissements français en Amérique du Nord au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Montreal, 1982). For this article, I relied on Faribault-Beauregard as the main source for all analysis of baptisms. Other demographic data was taken from Renald Lessard, Jacques Mathieu, and Lina Gouger, “Peuplement Colonisateur au Pays des Illinois,” pts. 1 and 2, *L’Ancêtre: Bulletin de la Société de Généalogie de Québec* 14, no. 6 (February 1988): 211–25; 14, no. 7 (March 1988): 226–78. Census data comes from G1, 464, ANOM. Other scattered demographic data comes from the microfilm edition of the so-called Kaskaskia Manuscripts, the extensive notarial records from colonial Illinois. See Laurie C. Dean and Margaret Brown, eds., *The Kaskaskia Manuscripts, 1714–1816* (New York, 1975–81). In my larger study, I have performed the more extensive network analysis including marriage witnesses in the 1720s and 1730s, adding another one thousand ties to the database, along with several more individuals. The results of that larger analysis are consistent with the findings in this essay, demonstrating the importance of agrarian households in the kinship and fictive kinship networks of Kaskaskia. Note that the spelling in all of these early church records was inconsistent. Spelling in this article has been changed for consistency and clarity, and a uniform spelling has been adopted for the name of each individual.

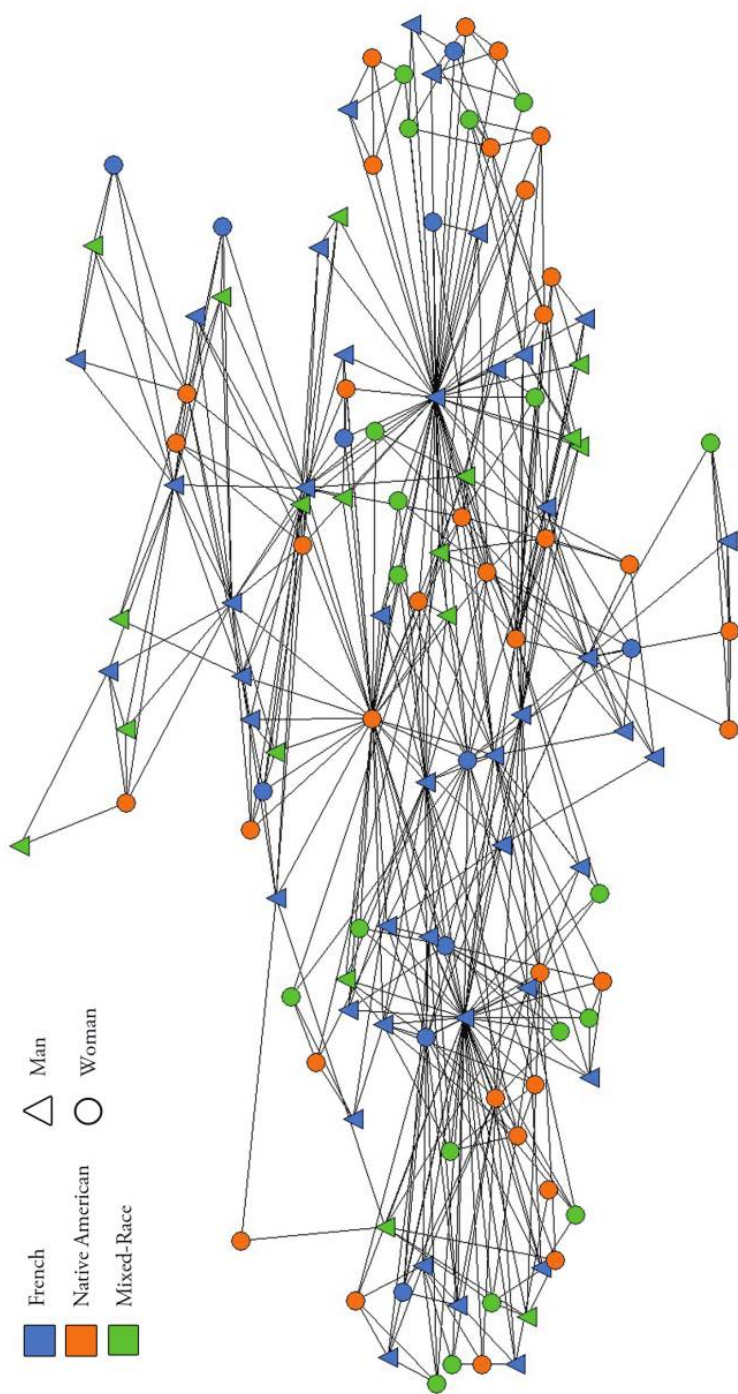


FIGURE I

Marriages and godparents in Kaskaskia, 1695–1717.

Figure I depicts the network of married couples and godparents in Kaskaskia, with each link representing one of these two kinds of relationships. Every married couple is joined by a link. In the case of a baptism, the child, parents, and godparents are all joined to each other by links.⁶⁶ The network created by godparenthood and marriage in Kaskaskia through 1717 linked eighty-five men and women together, leaving just a handful of people outside the main, continuous network. Furthermore, within the network, though some individuals were connected to just one other individual, many were connected to multiple others, reflecting a relatively dense social network. By standing as godparents to one another's children, Indian women and Frenchmen connected their families together into a tight and stable community.

Clearly, the figure demonstrates relatively high cohesiveness in the network. Beyond this point, we can make a few more speculations. There is little evidence that families in this network chose godparents for instrumental reasons related to expanding or securing access to the fur trade. For example, if godmothers were selected for instrumental reasons, we would expect that certain women would have been selected more frequently than others and that they would be the ones with the strongest positions within fur trade society, through their husbands or other male relatives. We might also expect to find different factions within the network, as rival groups of families competed for access to merchandise and furs. Yet the reality of the network did not reflect these patterns; for the most part, it was cohesive, without factions. Additionally, only a few women played conspicuously more important roles in the network than others (in social network language, they had a strong degree of connectivity). Furthermore, an examination of the women who did demonstrate relatively high and low degrees of connectivity in the network does not support the theory that kinship networks were all about the fur trade.

To make this last point clear, consider two individuals in the early network of godmothers (Figure II). In Figure II the arrows indicate that these relationships were directed; that is, the arrows represents the action of godparenthood and thus point to the mother or father of the baptized child, the receiver of the action of godparenthood. One of the relatively well-connected women was Catherine 8abanakic8e, who was connected out by godmotherhood to four other women in the network. Interestingly, there is little evidence to suggest that her role in the network was correlated to her

⁶⁶ All graphs were made with the software package UCINET, developed by Steve Borgatti, Martin Everett, and Lin Freeman. Note that, for visual clarity, the links on the figures produced in this article are simple, unweighted links. That is, even though some nodes have more than one link between them (i.e., an individual may have served as godmother to another's child more than once), the graph only includes a single line linking them together.

power as an actor in the fur trade. Her husband, Jean-Baptiste Guillemot dit Lalande, was most definitely an emerging farmer in the 1710s, as evidenced by the fact that he was one of the single largest slave owners and cattlemen in Illinois by 1726 and that he was involved in land leasing even in the earliest records from the 1720s.⁶⁷ The people to whom 8abanakic8e was connected, meanwhile, included women such as Marthe Atchica, wife of future pig farmer Jean Olivier, and Suzanne Kerami-Pani8assa, wife of Antoine Bosseron dit Léonard, among the largest landholders and slave owners on the 1726 census and an emerging farmer. 8abanakic8e's strong connections seem to suggest not a group seeking to expand and consolidate access to the fur trade but rather an emerging group of families dedicated to sedentary, agrarian life.

Meanwhile, consider a woman such as Domitille Ch8ping8a, who was linked by godmotherhood to just one other family and was peripheral to the main kinship network of Kaskaskia. Ch8ping8a, importantly, was the wife of Jacques Bourdon and the widow of Antoine Baillarjon, who were two of the most prominent—and indeed illegal—fur traders in early Kaskaskia.⁶⁸ If the kinship network was supposed to function instrumentally to solidify fur trade relations, a woman such as Ch8ping8a should have had many connections. But she did not.

If all of these observations suggest that the network of godparenthood did not function instrumentally to create advantageous relationships for the fur trade, what, then, was its social purpose? One clue comes from the most highly connected individual in the early network, Rouensa. Like those of 8abanakic8e and Ch8ping8a, Rouensa's connections do not fit the premise that godmother connections were made to solidify fur trade relations or create access to the Indian habitus of the fur trade. Conspicuously, although she was one of the wealthiest people in the colony, the daughter of a Kaskaskia chief, and the wife of two traders successively, very few individuals invited Rouensa to be godmother to their babies.⁶⁹ Rouensa had

⁶⁷ GI, 464, ANOM.

⁶⁸ For Domitille Ch8ping8a's life, see depositions in the Jacques Bourdon estate case, Sept. 11, 1723, in Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 23:9:11:1. Evidence for Bourdon's prominence in the fur trade can be found in the series of documents from the years around his death, including his will, which includes an impressive list of debts he contracted in his fur trade enterprise as well as the valuation of his property. Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 23:6:25:1. Importantly, by the time of his death, Bourdon had become a farmer whom Diron d'Artaguiette chided as a simple plowman. But by this time he had remarried and his new wife, Marguerite 8asckin8e-8assicani8, was well connected in the network, serving as godmother twice, in 1715 and 1717.

⁶⁹ Susan Sleeper-Smith suggests that, according to the typical logic of the fur trade, a person such as Rouensa would be called to be godmother fairly frequently, since Frenchmen generally chose women such as her and Marie Madeleine Réaume L'Archèveque to be godmothers for their babies. See Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 47.

a prominent place in the network, but only because she herself had many children and invited many people to be godmother to her children (or, in the language of social network analysis, she had a high in-degree). She seldom served as godmother (and her out-degree was only average). Few sought to connect to her, while she connected frequently to others. And though we cannot know the motives behind her selections, her invitations do not support the idea that Rouensa had the goal of improving her access or power within the fur trade. She avoided centrally connected women and women married to important traders; instead, she picked women such as Sympherosa Meri8etap8i8e, Maria-Jeanne Avis, Domitilde A8canic8e, and her own daughter Agnès Philippe to serve as godmother to her children. Of these women, Meri8etap8i8e, Avis, and Philippe were still unmarried in the 1710s, while A8canic8e was married to an obscure farmer called François Xavier Rolet, who owned just five arpents of land. Importantly, the only high-status women that Rouensa did pick to stand as godmother for her babies were two of the earliest Frenchwomen in Kaskaskia (about whom more later). Indeed, Rouensa's importance in the network seems related less to her prominence in the fur trade than to her role in helping to connect the Indian women of Kaskaskia to a French world of Catholicism and agrarian life. As the most important Catholic convert in the colony and the woman whom the Jesuits considered a model Christian wife, her prominence in the network may have functioned to root the larger early kinship network in a Catholic, French sphere.

For the Illinois women in this kinship network in early Kaskaskia, life featured both change and continuity. The Illinois practiced patrilineal descent and patrilocality, so the Illinois wives of Frenchmen expected to live within their husbands' patriarchal and single-family households, as evidence suggests they did from the early 1700s. Illinois women's previous roles in agriculture likely continued too, but they now shared this labor with their French husbands in Kaskaskia. Rather than traditional Illinois-style mound cultivation, the French and their wives used plows and draft animals in Kaskaskia. By 1711 Pénicaud noted that all of the Illinois Indians in the vicinity of the village were using plows.⁷⁰ Animal husbandry—previously unknown to the Illinois Indians—was in wide use too. The Jesuit Marest noted that Indians—presumably including women—had learned to “raise chickens and pigs, in imitation of the Frenchmen who have settled here.”⁷¹ Most Frenchmen in Kaskaskia were farming by the 1710s.⁷²

In 1712 Marest wrote to reflect on the changes that had taken place among the Indians of the Kaskaskia mission in recent years, noting his

⁷⁰ Pénicaud, “Narrative,” 137.

⁷¹ “Letter from Father Gabriel Marest,” Nov. 9, 1712, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66: 255.

⁷² Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 174.

impression that Frenchification was happening. "The Illinois are much less barbarous than other Savages; Christianity and intercourse with the French have by degrees civilized them. This is to be noticed in our Village, of which nearly all the inhabitants are Christians." Meanwhile, formerly transient fur traders settled down in Kaskaskia to live more sedentary, Christian lives. As Father Gravier remarked about fur trader Accault, "he has admitted to me that he no longer recognizes himself" because his life was now so rooted and well-ordered.⁷³ One observer of Illinois in this period noted that former fur traders had even lost their skills at woodland travel, after years of "*goad[ing] oxen in the ploughing*."⁷⁴ This community was not like the fluid middle ground that characterized so many fur trade settlements. In fact, it was becoming unusually agrarian and fixed, its culture solidly conforming to European expectations of a farming village. According to Julien Binneteau, another Jesuit, "There are also [Illinois] women married to some of our frenchmen, who would be a good example to the best regulated households in France."⁷⁵ The Jesuits were so optimistic about their project, one observer wrote, they increasingly believed that Indians were fully assimilating. They thought that "there is no difference between a Christian Indian and a white woman."⁷⁶ The growing community, bound together in a social network of Catholics and farmers, was on a solid footing as it looked forward to the most important population influx in its early history.

IN 1717 THE NEW GOVERNMENT at New Orleans officially took control of the Illinois country settlements, just as the colony experienced the most important growth spurt in its entire history. By 1726 fully 214 distinct individuals had migrated to the colony since the 1690s. Importantly, at least 51 of these were Frenchwomen.⁷⁷ A majority of the women on Illinois censuses were ethnically French by 1732, and they outnumbered Indian brides on the census that year. Other changes followed this shift to a more "French" world. In 1719 the first provincial government arrived in the colony and officially separated the Indian village of Kaskaskia from the French

⁷³ "Letter from Father Gabriel Marest," Nov. 9, 1712, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66: 231 ("much less barbarous"); "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, *ibid.*, 64: 213 ("he has admitted").

⁷⁴ D'Artaguiette, "Journal," in Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies*, 32.

⁷⁵ "Letter of Father Julien Binneteau," [January] 1699, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 65: 69.

⁷⁶ Salmon to the minister, July 17, 1732, C13A, vol. 15, fols. 166–67, ANOM (quotation, fol. 166). For optimism, see "Letter from Father Gabriel Marest," Nov. 9, 1712, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66: 229.

⁷⁷ These numbers come from an extensive digital database of 478 migrants to Illinois during the colonial period, which I aggregated from all Illinois censuses (1723, 1726, 1732, 1737, and 1752) and other demographic sources as well as previous work by Lessard, Mathieu, and Gouger, *L'Ancêtre* 14: 211–25, 226–78.

village of the same name. In that same year, the new commandant, Pierre Dugué de Boisbriant, observed how solidly agrarian the French village had become. It was no longer a fur trade community, he wrote, because “everyone here is devoted to agriculture.”⁷⁸ In the midst of this increasingly French world, however, Indian women, connected by bonds of baptism and marriage to French Kaskaskia, remained with their husbands on the growing farms of the French village. Moreover, intermarriage between Frenchmen and Indian women did not cease. Indeed, at least thirty more Indian women married Frenchmen in the period from 1718 to 1735. From these marriages, forty-five baptismal records survive.⁷⁹ The data from these records, thousands of connections among individuals, can be added to the matrices developed for the period 1695–1717, allowing us to analyze how the local French-Indian kinship network—especially through the institution of godparenthood—changed and grew over this period. The evidence suggests that, in this period, kinship ties functioned even more clearly to connect French-Indian families increasingly to a French, Catholic, and agrarian habitus.

The primary effects of this transformation are especially easy to see when we look again at godmothers (Figures III–IV). Figure III represents how the network of godparents developed from 1718 through 1733. In this period some things remained constant. Serving as godmothers to each other’s children, women in mixed-race families in the Illinois country created bonds of solidarity that linked nearly every one of the mixed-race families into a single, continuous, and relatively dense social network, with only a few isolates and cliques. Even more so than in the founding generation, key Indian women were now particularly prominent in the network of mixed-race families, connected to an unusually large number of other individuals by the bonds of godmotherhood. Among the most well-connected now were Suzanne Kerami-Pani8assa, Catherine 8abanakic8e, Marie Tetio-Tel8kio, and Dorothee Mechiper8eta. Importantly, evidence suggests that these women were solidly placed in the emerging French agrarian habitus. For example, Kerami-Pani8assa was the wife of Antoine Bosseron dit Léonard, among the most successful farmers in the early mixed-race community. On the 1726 census, Bosseron possessed one hundred arpents of cleared land, seven black slaves, and two Indian slaves as well as much other capital. When Kerami-Pani8assa remarried in 1728 upon Bosseron’s death, the inventory of their property demonstrated considerable agricultural wealth and the kind of material culture that reflected their important position in the French world. Likewise, Mechiper8eta’s husband, Louis Turpin, was

⁷⁸ Pierre Dugué de Boisbriant, 1724, C13A, vol. 8, fol. 447, ANOM. See also Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 174.

⁷⁹ For data, see Faribault-Beauregard, *La population des forts français*. Together with non-mixed-race baptisms, we have a total of seventy-six baptisms from 1718 to 1735.

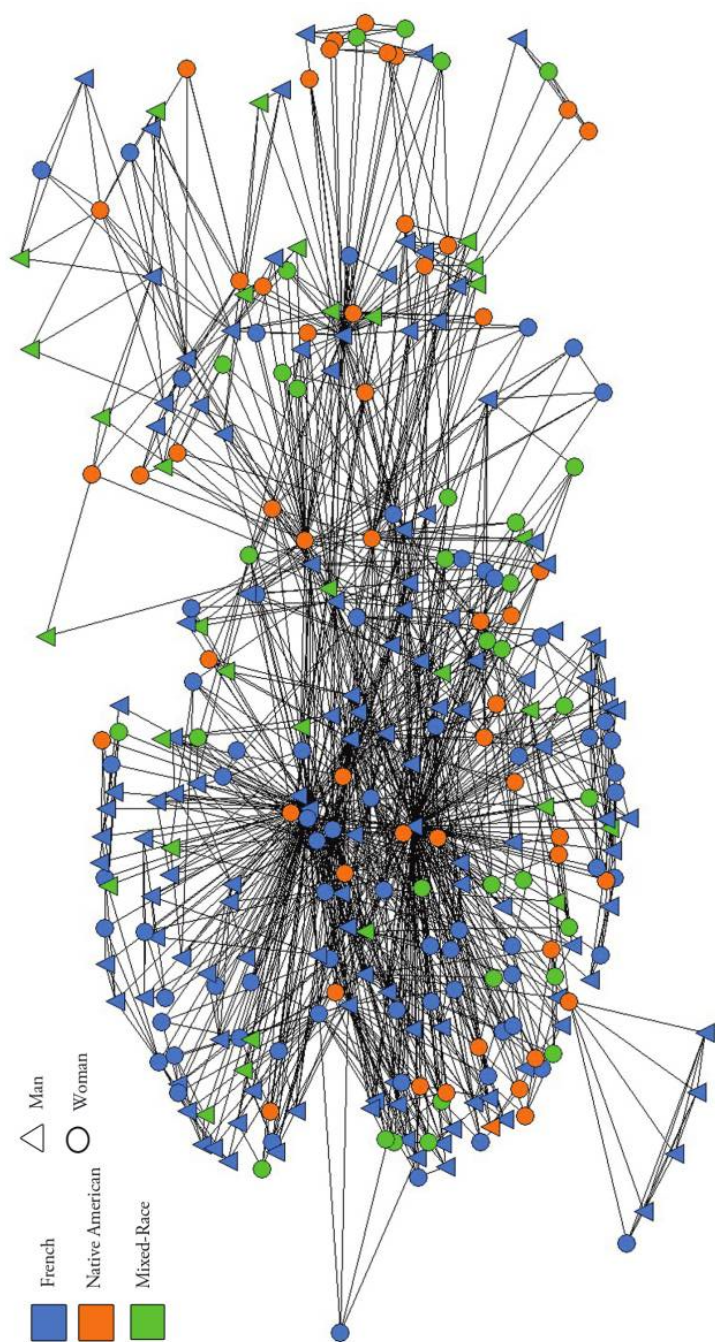


FIGURE III

Godparents and spouses in Kaskaskia to 1733.

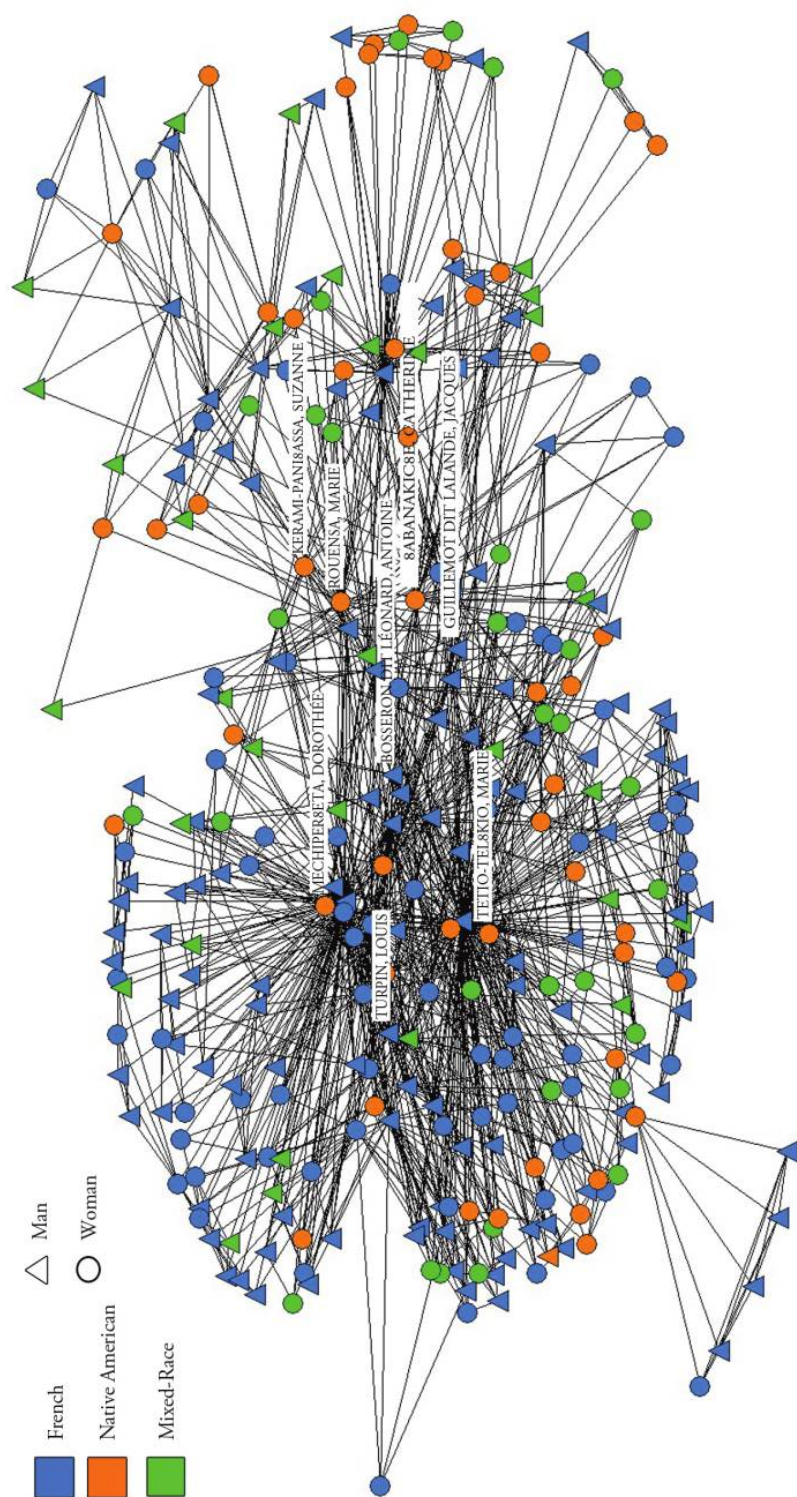


FIGURE IV

Highly connected Indian women and their husbands, 1718–33.

a wealthy farmer, in possession of thirty arpents of land, four slaves, and nine head of cattle in 1726. By 1732 he had cleared one hundred arpents of land. Tetio-Tel8kio and her husband, Jacques Guillemot dit Lalande, the captain of the militia, owned a farm of fifty acres along with five slaves in 1726. And finally, as mentioned, 8abanakic8e was the wife of Jean-Baptiste Guillemot dit Lalande, the wealthiest farmer in Illinois in the founding generation.⁸⁰ All of these women's positions in influential farming and Christian families surely reinforced the "Frenchifying" effect of the kinship network in the Illinois country, given their prominence and high connectivity in the network.

Clearly the network seemed strongly oriented toward these Indian women who were members of leading agrarian families. But after 1717 an even more important influence was exercised in the network by a new group: Frenchwomen. Interestingly, as French families migrated into the region in the 1720s, Frenchwomen themselves began participating in the godmother network of Kaskaskia. Rather than segregating themselves into a new, all-French network, the newcomers integrated themselves into the existing community. Examining the network of godmotherhood in the 1720s reveals a conspicuous trend: a large number of newly arrived Frenchwomen served as godmothers to Indian women's children or invited Indian women to stand as godmothers to their own children. Thus the kinship network helped to incorporate this already-existing community into the newly emerging French colonial habitus.

All of the figures after 1718 reveal how Frenchwomen entered into the existing community network in the Illinois. From 1716 to 1721, there were twenty-seven baptisms of children born to mixed-race parents in Illinois. Notably, in seventeen of these twenty-seven baptisms (63 percent), a Frenchwoman stood as godmother to the child. Meanwhile, in nine cases Frenchwomen invited Indian women to be godmother at their children's baptisms. By 1730 twelve different Frenchwomen were incorporated into the network of fifty-five Indian women.

An important pattern emerges when we examine the identities of the Frenchwomen in this social network. Conspicuously, the Frenchwomen who joined the godmother network were from the most prominent and most powerful households in the emerging French agricultural community. They included women such as Françoise La Brise, who from 1715 to 1730 served as godmother for Indian women six times and invited two Indian

⁸⁰ The 1726 census shows Antoine Bosseron dit Léonard's possessions. For the property inventory at Bosseron's death, see Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 28:6:7:1. For the census, see G1, 464, ANOM. For the transactions involving Suzanne Kerami-Pani8assa's estate, see Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 28:6:7:1, 28:6:8:1. By 1732 Jacques Guillemot dit Lalande had added another ten acres of arable land to his estate. Jean-Baptiste Guillemot dit Lalande had 150 acres of property, 12 slaves, 16 head of cattle, and much else. G1, 464, ANOM.

women to be godmother to her own children, and Marie-Magdeleine Quesnel, who served as godmother five times and invited two Indian women to be godmother to her offspring. And then there was Elizabeth Deshayes, who stood godmother for two different Indian women and invited three Indian women to be godmother for her children. Significantly, each of these women belonged to one of the ten wealthiest households in Illinois, according to the 1726 census. The correlation cannot be accidental. With just one exception, each of the twelve Frenchwomen who entered the network of godmotherhood in Illinois in this period was the wife (or, in three cases, the daughter) of one of the most prominent farmers in the colony.⁸¹ By the bonds of godmotherhood, it seems, these Frenchwomen expressed their solidarity with Indian wives and their children, helped to reinforce the Indians' membership in the emerging agrarian culture of Illinois, and helped to include them within the "French" habitus. Rather than segregating the mixed-race families, the French colonial society in Illinois did what it could to further "Frenchify" them through fictive kinship (Figure V).

The same general trend holds true when we examine the role of godfathers. Here again it is clear that certain individuals were more highly connected than others through links of marriage and godparenthood. Conspicuously, these men were not the most important fur traders of Illinois. Rather, they fall into two main categories. Some of them, such as Jacques Guillemot dit Lalande or Bosseron, were the most important and wealthy farmers in the Illinois country. Others, such as Pierre Dugué de Boisbriant, were the most important military officers, provincial authorities, and landlords. In short, the men with the highest connectivity were not the renegade fur traders but rather the best representatives of an emerging French agrarian culture.

The social prominence and influence of certain farming households becomes easiest to see when we use social network analysis to measure the degree of connectivity for some of these actors within the kinship networks. Using data from the matrix, we can score individuals by the number of connections that they had and thereby quantify their importance to the network. We can also measure the "betweenness" of certain actors, which is

⁸¹ Elizabeth Deshayes was married to Jean Brunet-Bourbonnais, the richest property owner in the colony. Marie-Magdeleine Quesnel's husband was Antoine Carrière, who owned eleven black slaves and eighty acres of cleared land. Françoise La Brise was married to Jean-Bte Pottier, who also had eighty acres and lots of livestock. For marriage and census data, see Faribault-Beauregard, *La population des forts français*. These twelve Frenchwomen who entered the godmotherhood network included Catherine Delamy, Helene Dany, Deshayes, La Brise, Marie Migneret, Pillet-Lasonde, and Quesnel. With the exception of Dany, all of these women were easily in the top 10 percent of landowning families in Illinois, with each of their husbands owning more than fifty acres of cleared land and other capital besides. Both censuses from 1726 and 1732 are found in G1, 464, ANOM.

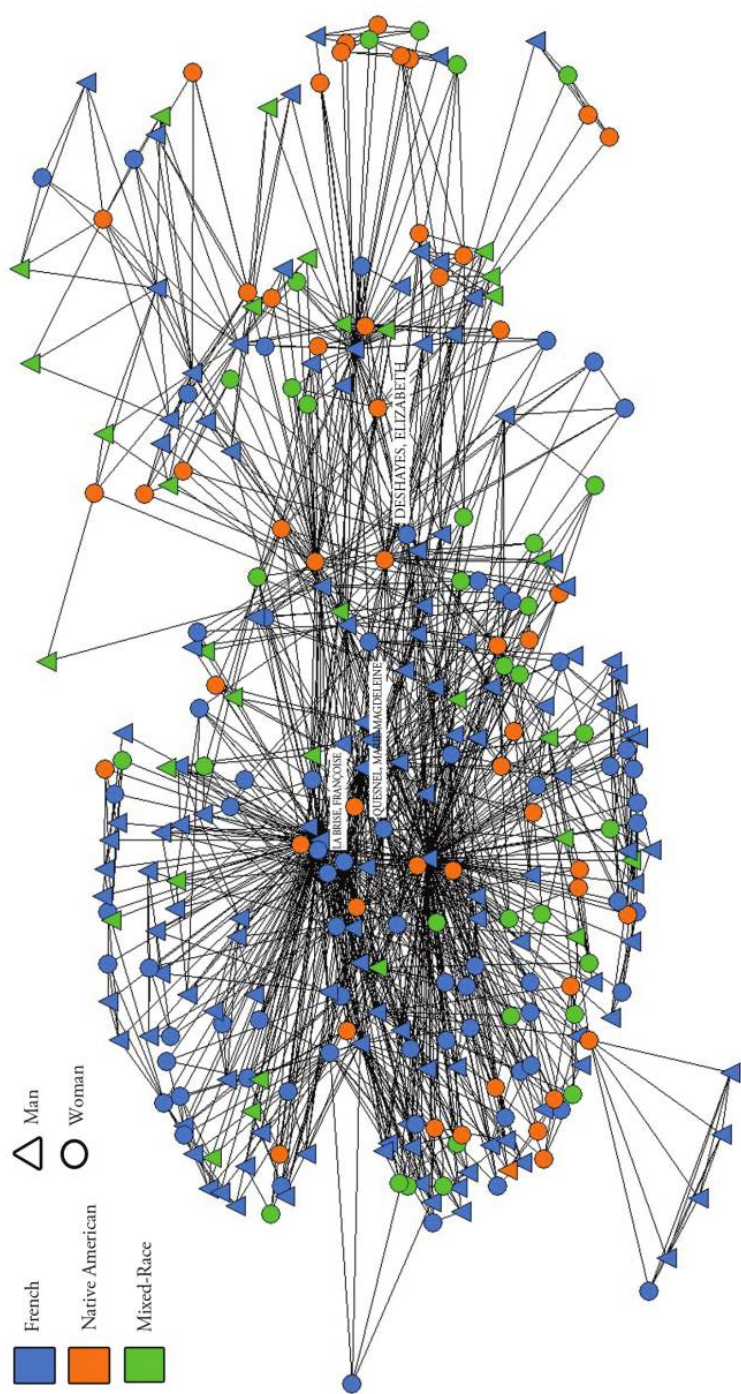


FIGURE V

Highly connected Frenchwomen in Kaskaskia godparent network to 1733.

a measure of how many people are connected through a certain individual.⁸² Of course, certain actors have high connectivity, and thus high degree and betweenness scores. Without question, the people with the highest degree scores in the network were generally from the most important agrarian households in Kaskaskia. In fact, if we look at the fifteen most strongly connected individuals in the network who also appear on the 1726 Kaskaskia census, it is undeniable that agrarians were the most highly connected and that the most highly connected individuals were agrarians. Of the fifteen most strongly connected individuals, almost all are in the top twenty agrarian families, and four are members of the top five agrarian households (Tables I–II). Figure VI demonstrates the point by showing the godmotherhood network with the size of each node proportional to the number of arpents under cultivation on each individual's farm.

In the end, then, the pattern is extremely clear. Whether Indian or French, the most highly connected men and women in the network were members of the wealthiest agrarian households, as measured by cleared land under cultivation. These families were the most solidly oriented toward a rapidly emerging agrarian economy; they possessed the most capital in slaves, livestock, and land; and they were clearly living a life that most observers considered "French," in contrast to the hybrid life of the fur trade. The fact that members of these families were the most important actors in the Kaskaskia kinship network suggests that kinship exerted pressure toward a French agrarian culture, rather than toward the indigenous world of the fur trade.

This function was present not only at the moment of baptism but also well after. Evidence, albeit thin, suggests that Illinois women regarded the institution of godparenthood seriously and treated the relations forged by godparenthood as real kin relations. For instance, Gravier noted how an Illinois woman took up her new role of godmother: "It gives her great pleasure to be chosen as Godmother. She herself brings the children of her relatives, as soon as they are born—in order, as she says, that they may at once cease to be slaves of the Devil, and become children of God."⁸³

According to Gravier, this same woman took it upon herself to instruct her godchildren and other baptized children in the Catholic faith. As for French godparents in Kaskaskia, they joined a long tradition of French people serving as godparents to mixed-race and Indian children in the missions. It seems that the bonds formed by godparenthood in Kaskaskia were lasting ones, and French godparents continued to play a role in the lives of mixed-

⁸² A rich historiography has developed recently around the figure of the "go-between" in early American history. One strength of the social network approach is the ability to study this phenomenon of "going between" in a quantitative and systematic way. See Eric Hinderaker, "Translation and Cultural Brokerage," in Deloria and Salisbury, *Companion to American Indian History*, 357–75.

⁸³ "Letter by Father Jacques Gravier," Feb. 15, 1694, in Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 64: 219.

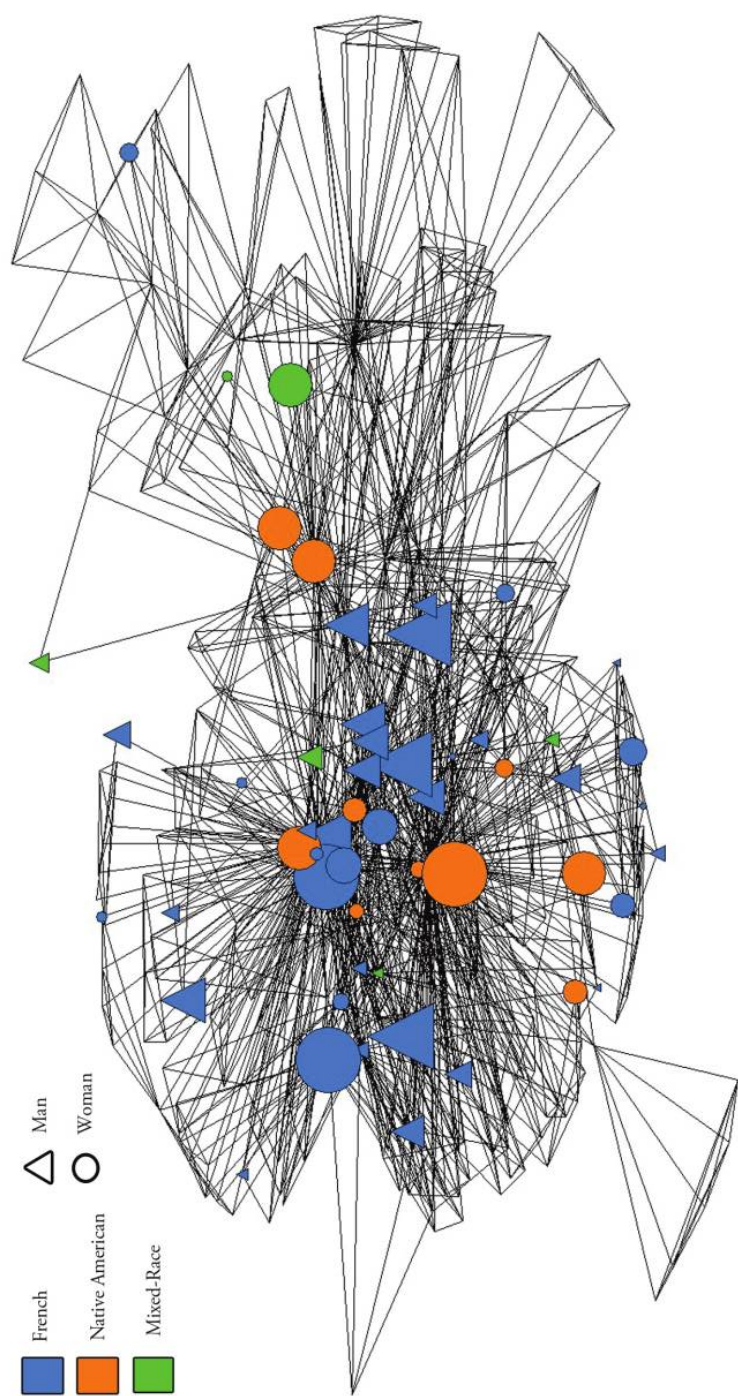


FIGURE VI

Highly connected individuals in Kaskaskia, with node size proportional to household acres under cultivation on 1726 census (G1, 464, Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence).

TABLE I
TOP-CONNECTED INDIVIDUALS, KASKASKIA, 1695–1733

	<i>Top-connected individuals</i>	<i>Degree centrality[#]</i>	<i>Betweenness score</i>	<i>Land in cultivation (arpents), 1726 census</i>	<i>Rank among agrarian households, 1726</i>
1	La Brise, Françoise	68	3321.242	80	Top 10
2	Pottier, Jean-Bte	47	1831.448	80	Top 10
3	Rouensa, Marie	40	5892.234	100	Top 7
4	8abanakic8e, Catherine	29	2478.701	150	Top 3
5	Quesnel, Marie-Magdeleine	29	614.809	80	Top 10
6	Girardot, J-Bte	28	608.647	35	Top 20
7	Étienne-Philippe, Michel	28	1385.622	100	Top 7
8	Tetio-Tel8kio, Marie	27	235.766	150	Top 3
9	Mechiper8eta, Dorothée	26	757.824	100*	Top 7
10	Guillemot dit Lalande, Jacques	24	427.682	50	Top 15
11	Turpin, Louis	24	582.342	30	Top 30
12	Chabot, Pierre	23	1735.522	—	—
13	Rivart, Marie-Françoise	22	894.043	150	Top 3
14	Bourbonnois, Elisabeth Brunet-	21	578.73	150	Top 3
15	Bourdon, Jacques	21	914.887	—	—
16	Philippe, Agnès	21	265.127	10	Top 50
17	Deshayes, Elizabeth	19	1073.342	—	—
18	Neveau, Thérèse	18	298.233	35	Top 20
19	Bourbonnois, Jean Brunet-	17	575.03	150	Top 3
20	Carrière, Antoine	17	280.156	80	Top 10
21	Mercier, Dorothée	17	362.816	24	Top 35
22	Olivier, Jean	17	286.281	—	—
23	8asckin8e-8assicani8, Marguerite	16	199.81	20	Top 35
24	Ako, Michel	16	1048.511	—	—
25	Danis, Charles	16	247.968	—	—
26	Juliette, Marie	16	560.225	—	—
27	Rabut, Françoise	15	464.261	—	—
28	l'Isle de Gardeur, Charles	14	171.582	—	—
29	Bosseron dit Léonard, Antoine	13	469.962	100	Top 7
30	Catois, Marie-Claire	13	44.153	35	Top 20
31	Hebert, Étienne	13	27.365	60	Top 15
32	Kerami-Pani8assa, Suzanne	13	432.198	100	Top 7
33	Mercier, Jean-Bte	13	221.207	40	Top 20
34	Robilliard, Adrien	13	440.627	—	—
35	Colon dit Laviolette, Jean-Jacques	12	1134.058	—	—
36	Delaunay, Louis	12	1852.22	—	—

TABLE I (continued)
TOP-CONNECTED INDIVIDUALS, KASKASKIA, 1695–1733

<i>Top-connected individuals</i>	<i>Degree centrality[#]</i>	<i>Betweenness score</i>	<i>Land in cultivation (arpents), 1726 census</i>	<i>Rank among agrarian households, 1726</i>
37 Lapointe-Simon, Augustin	12	197.737	20	Top 40
38 Meri8etap8i8e, Sympherosa	12	153.763	—	—
39 Apecke8rata, Marie	11	84.408	40	Top 20
40 Ch8ping8a, Domitille	11	244.717	30	Top 30
41 Lamy, Joseph	11	14.17	150	Top 3
42 Philippe, Étienne	11	103.303	—	—
43 Pottier, Guillaume	11	68.213	40	Top 20
44 Baillarjon, Pierre	10	75.661	30	Top 30
45 Barette, Marie	10	176.846	—	—
46 Bienvenu, Jeanne	10	30.098	—	—
47 Bisaillon, Pierre	10	393.064	—	—
48 Capsi8ek8e, Susanne	10	140.879	—	—
49 Chauvin, Louis	10	527.285	—	—
50 Gauthier-Saguingora, Jean	10	140.879	—	—

[#] “Degree centrality” is an individual’s total in-degree and out-degree connections in the network, as measured by UCINET.

*Dorothee Mechiper8eta was wife to Louis Turpin. Although Louis Turpin had just thirty arpents on the 1726 census, six years later he had cleared and was cultivating one hundred arpents, as indicated on the census of 1732. For the 1732 census, see G1, 464, Archives nationales d’outre-mer (ANOM), Aix-en-Provence.

Sources: The sources for this social network analysis include baptismal and marriage records extant from Kaskaskia, 1690–1735. The best published edition is Marthe Faribault-Beauregard, ed., *La population des forts français d’Amérique (XVIII^e siècle): Répertoire des baptêmes, mariages et sépultures célébrés dans les forts et les établissements français en Amérique du Nord au XVIII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Montreal, 1982). See also C. J. Eschmann, ed. and trans., “Kaskaskia Church Records,” *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* 9 (1904): 394–413. The census information comes from the 1726 census of Illinois, G1, 464, ANOM.

TABLE II
TOP AGRARIAN HOUSEHOLDS, KASKASKIA, 1726

<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Daughter or second wife</i>	<i>Black slaves</i>	<i>Indian slaves</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Horses</i>	<i>Land in cultivation</i>
Brunet-Bourbonnais, Jean	Deshayes, Elizabeth	—	2	5	21	3	150
Guillemot dit Lalande, J-Bte	8abanakic8e, Catherine	—	6	6	16	2	150
Lamy, Pierre	Rivard, Marie-Françoise	—	3	—	9	2	150
Étienne-Philippe, Michel	Rouensa, Marie	Philippe, Agnès	5	3	15	5	100
Bosseron dit Léonard, Antoine	Kerami-Pani8assa, Suzanne	—	7	2	15	4	100
Dugué de Boisbriant, Pierre	—	—	22	—	8	4	100
Jesuits	—	—	9	2	15	4	100
Pottier, J-Bte	La Brise, Françoise	—	1	2	11	2	80
Carrière, Antoine	Quesnel, Marie-Magdeleine	—	11	1	14	1	80
Renault	—	—	20	—	3	11	80
Mélisque, Pierre	—	—	—	1	4	6	70
Hébert, Etienne	Étienne-Philippe, Elizabeth	—	4	—	11	6	60
Pillet-Lasonde, Pierre	Bosseron, Madeleine	—	—	1	7	3	56
Étienne-Philippe Dulongpré, Joseph	Ma8ensa8a, Marie	—	2	4	13	4	50
Guillemot dit Lalande, Jacques	Tetio-Tel8kio, Marie	—	1	4	15	1	50
St.-Pierre, Cadrin dit	Hennet, Genevieve	—	2	—	9	3	50
Pottier, Guillaume	Apiche8rata, Marie	—	4	2	5	3	40
Delauney, Charles-Jos.	Brunet-Bourbonnais, Elizabeth	Delaunay, Catherine	—	2	8	—	40
Mercier, J-Bte	Baret, Marie-Madeleine	—	—	—	3	3	35
Girardot, J-Bte	Nepveau, Celeste Terese	—	1	1	3	2	35
Billeron-Lafatigue, Léonard	Catois, Marie-Claire	—	1	—	4	1	35
Baillargeon-Durivage, Pierre	Chacateni8a8a, Domichile	—	3	2	6	3	30
Turpin, Louis	Mechiper8eta, Dorothee	—	2	2	9	3	30
Nault, Charles	Chartier, Therese	—	—	2	6	—	30
Desvignes	Mercier, Dorothee	—	5	2	9	2	24

TABLE II (continued)
TOP AGRARIAN HOUSEHOLDS, KASKASKIA, 1726

<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Daughter or second wife</i>	<i>Black slaves</i>	<i>Indian slaves</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Horses</i>	<i>Land in cultivation</i>
Simon-Lapointe, Augustin	married but unknown	—	2	—	3	1	20
Pelletier de Franchomme, Nicolas	8askin8e-8assicani8, Marguerite	—	3	1	7	2	20
Buffreau Bellegarde, Nicolas	Bechet, Catherine	—	1	2	3	1	20
Cadrin, Frs.	Fafard La Frenaye, Marianne	—	1	1	10	3	20
Timonier	married but unknown	—	—	—	1	1	20
Clivet	married but unknown	—	—	1	7	3	20
Deslaurier	married but unknown	—	—	1	3	1	20
Biennout, Je Jeune	married but unknown	—	—	1	4	1	20
Hébert	married but unknown	—	1	—	1	2	15
Derene Melet, Pierre	Rabut, Françoise	—	—	—	1	2	12
Fafart-Boisjoly, Pierre	—	—	—	—	2	1	10
Chassin, Mic. Michel	Philippe, Agnès	—	—	2	7	2	10
Hennet Sans Chagrin, François	Charpain, Marianne	—	—	—	1	—	10
Robillard, Louis	Juliette, Marie	—	—	1	1	1	10
Hebert, Ignace	Dany, Hélène	—	—	—	3	—	10
Colet, Pierre	—	—	—	—	1	1	10
Laforest-Provencal	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
La Rigueur	—	—	—	—	—	1	10

Notes: Although Louis Turpin had just thirty arpents on the 1726 census, six years later he had cleared and was cultivating one hundred arpents, as indicated on the census of 1732. For the 1732 census, see G1, 464. Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM), Aix-en-Provence.

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race families well after the actual baptism.⁸⁴ These lasting relationships, then, pushed Indian women toward the French culture in Kaskaskia over the long term.

Of course, culture is not an either-or. Surely, these new mixed-race households could not help but include hybrid cultural expressions, patterns, and meanings. But to acknowledge the likelihood of hybridity is not to deny the strong evidence of assimilation. These Indian women lived in a French town, where domestic life was governed by the *Coutume de Paris*. If they had ever lived in matrifocal households, they no longer did by the 1720s; instead they lived in patriarchal, nuclear families. They raised their children to marry other French children. And if kinship was an important way of forming and reinforcing identity—and it surely was—they strikingly chose members of the most important agrarian families, not fur traders, as kin and as fictive kin. By these measures at least, they had assimilated. Evidence from notarial records, wills, and estates makes clear that Indian brides also became “Frenchified” in more subtle ways. To take one example, the inventory of Catherine 8abanakic8e’s material possessions at her death included silk dresses, pants, and other clothes. She lived in a French village and dressed in a European fashion.⁸⁵ As René Tartarin summarized in 1738, these women and their children were living a French life, and not looking back. “The greatest number of them,” he wrote, “truly leave their [Indian] families; the [French] education produces in them the desire to be esteemed as true creole Frenchmen and women.”⁸⁶

In her highly influential work, Susan Sleeper-Smith wrote that early fur trade marriages remained rooted in an indigenous framework and an indigenous sphere. But while this observation may have been true for the fur trade, Kaskaskia was becoming something different by the 1720s. In Illinois, Indian women did marry out of their culture. There is little evidence to suggest that they served as mediators between their home culture and the French. Further, the French made efforts to ensure that Indian brides did not feel entitled to move back and forth across the increasingly sharp cultural border (Figure VII).⁸⁷

⁸⁴ There is no systematic evidence to absolutely prove that godparents remained an important relation long after baptism. But impressionistic evidence comes from Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, and from marriage records in Kaskaskia, in which it is clear that godparents witnessed marriages for their godchildren or, more commonly, witnessed legal transactions for the women whose children they had stood as godparents for. A good example is the career of Jacques Guillemot dit Lalande, who served as godfather many times. In 1717 he stood godfather to the baby of Suzanne Kerami-Pani8assa. In 1728, when her property was inventoried at the death of her husband, Antoine Bosseron dit Léonard, Lalande was there. Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 28:6:7:1.

⁸⁵ Catherine 8abanakic8e’s material possessions were inventoried by the notary in September 1721. See Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 21:9:13:1.

⁸⁶ Tartarin’s 1738 defense of intermarriage, C13A vol. 23, fols. 241–43, ANOM (quotation, fol. 242).

⁸⁷ “Fur traders who married Native converts joined their wives’ households and complied with indigenous behavioral standards. . . . The behavior of the trader’s wife

French court at Kaskaskia also in one case confiscated the property of an Indian woman whom they suspected of possibly planning to abandon her husband.⁸⁹ In another case from the 1720s, the French prosecuted an Indian woman in Kaskaskia who allegedly left her French husband.⁹⁰ These legal actions underscored that these were not marriages of the middle ground, and they certainly did not take place on native ground. The legal actions reflected the norms and expectations that had been created in Kaskaskia: most Indian brides were embedded solidly on the French side of the border.⁹¹

IN 1725 SOMETHING IMPORTANT HAPPENED in Kaskaskia. Marie Rouensa, one of the founding mothers of the interracial community and wife to two successive Frenchmen, wrote her last will and testament and included a curious stipulation. Although she had six children, she stated that her property would go only to five of them. The sixth, her son Michel Aco, would be disinherited. Why? According to the will, it was because he had married an Indian woman and had “fled” to live “among the savage nations.”⁹²

Rouensa appears as the single most highly connected Indian woman in the entire kinship network of early Kaskaskia (see Figures I–VI). She was truly a central figure in Illinois. And, as her will makes clear, she had a strong sense of her identity among the French.⁹³

Robert Le Boullenger to Louisiana Superior Council, Dec. 18, 1728, in Edouard Richard, ed., *Report on Canadian Archives (Supplement)*, 1899 (Ottawa, 1899), 135. For more on this case, see Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 31.

⁸⁹ It is not clear whether the woman suspected of possibly planning to abandon her husband actually left. The woman was Marguerite 8assicani8, former wife to Jacques Bourdon, and in 1725 she was married to Franchomme. See Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 25:3:15:1.

⁹⁰ See Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 23:6:2:1.

⁹¹ Kathleen DuVal writes that this kind of assimilation happened in Lower Louisiana because Frenchmen often married slaves. In the Illinois country, most of the Indian wives were not slaves, whose status was always noted when they married. The evidence of strong assimilation in the Illinois country supports DuVal’s conclusion that the pattern of métis community formation typical of the Canadian fur trade in the pays d’en haut did not happen everywhere Frenchmen and Indian women married. See DuVal, *WMQ* 65: 271.

⁹² Marie Rouensa’s will is Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 25:6:13:1; the codicil to the will, in which Rouensa disowned her son Michel Aco, is Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 25:6:20:1. Seeking permission from the superior council for the action of disinheriting him, she explained that her motives were “as much for his disobedience as for the marriage which he has contracted in spite of his mother and his relatives.” Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 25:6:14:1. The codicil reserved the possibility that Michel Aco could be restored to his inheritance should he “return and repent.” For a good discussion of the case, see Ekberg and Pregaldin, *Illinois Historical Journal* 84: 155–57.

⁹³ Marie Rouensa had her will read to her in Illinois on her deathbed, which might mean that she or Father Le Boullenger doubted her French-language skills. Interestingly, the person who read her the text in Illinois was Jacques Guillemot dit Lalande, “who understands Illinois.” As already noted, Lalande was one of the wealthiest farmers

Social network analysis of godmotherhood in Kaskaskia suggests part of why and how she got that sense of identity. As many scholars have convincingly demonstrated, kinship functioned as one of the most important sites of identity creation in Algonquian-French contact zones. In the world of the pays d'en haut and Upper Louisiana, kinship often created a route for Frenchmen to gain access to an Indian habitus. In Kaskaskia, however, though kinship remained important as a route of incorporation and identity creation, the direction of incorporation changed. As the exceptional agrarian community of the pays d'en haut became more solidly agrarian, the bonds of kinship served to root Indian women into an exclusive and cohesive French cultural sphere. Kinship remained solidly important, to be sure, but in the opposite direction than in the fur trade societies previously studied by other scholars.

All of this analysis perhaps helps to explain why priests such as René Tartarin continued to defend intermarriage in Illinois, even long after the practice had been officially banned in Louisiana. It also supplies some context for understanding the travelers who came through Illinois, marveling at how intermarriage had produced such "French" families.⁹⁴ Intercultural families in this community were tied together in a strongly French cultural habitus by kinship bonds of marriage and godparenthood. Well-known anecdotal evidence has long been used by historians—especially Carl J. Ekberg—to argue that Indian women in Illinois assimilated to a French world to an unusual degree.⁹⁵ The social network analysis of godmotherhood gives some empirical weight to these claims as well. Kaskaskia was a great exception. As in other French-Indian contact zones, identities there were defined by kinship. But in Kaskaskia kinship defined social identities as increasingly agrarian, Catholic, and French.

Marriage and godmotherhood clearly were part of a process that created firm social distinctions and borders in French Kaskaskia. They made a cohesive community and separated a French agrarian village from the multicultural frontier around it. The social network created insiders and outsiders. Historians of early American borderlands often credit empires with the decisions and power to create borders and boundaries between colonial selves

in Kaskaskia. Even when they were speaking in Illinois, it was a French, agrarian affair. Dean and Brown, *Kaskaskia Manuscripts*, 25:6:13:1.

⁹⁴ Tartarin's 1738 defense of intermarriage, C13A, vol. 23, fol. 242 ("véritable creol François et française"), ANOM. The curate of Louisiana Henri Rouleaux de La Vente had made this point about the assimilation of Illinois Indian women in the 1710s in several well-known debates. See, most famously, Minutes of the Council, Sept. 1, 1716, in Rowland and Sanders, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 2: 218–19, esp. 2: 218.

⁹⁵ Carl J. Ekberg, the most important historian of colonial Illinois, has argued in several places that many Illinois women and their children effectively became French "for all intents and purposes" in the Illinois country. See for instance Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier*, 2d ed. (Gerald, Mo., 1996), 114. The evidence in this article suggests that he is correct and that kinship networks were an important reason why this was so.

and Indian others. For scholars following Richard White's model, 1730s-era Kaskaskia, in which the so-called empire amounted to a commandant and one hundred troops, should still have been a middle ground.⁹⁶ But it was not. Here colonists and Indians made their own borders, their own order. The Illinois country moved from borderland to bordered land in this period, as people defined themselves increasingly in exclusive categories of French and Indian. But empires had little to do with it. The colonists and their Indian wives and neighbors did it, as they did so many other things, not under the heavy hand of an imperial regime but on their own.

⁹⁶ According to Richard White's formulation, the "middle ground" lasted until empires became strong enough to enforce their agendas. Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron argue for a similar trajectory in Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999): 814–41.