Seasonal Occupation Patterns in Illinois History: A Case Study in the Lower Illinois River Valley

Duane Everey

The Lower Illinois River valley is one of the richest archaeological areas of the Midwest. Yet, treatments of historic-period occupations in Illinois have been largely neglected by historians. The paucity of written records about the area's history, exacerbated by an apparent lack of written documentation, has led to an underappreciation of its potential for archaeological research. This lack has significant implications for post-contact archaeology in Illinois. The cultural processes responsible for these "anomalies" are examined and their archaeological ramifications explored. Reinterpreted patterns from contemporary documents are discussed. Points of research in the American Indian history of Illinois are presented.

In the midwestern United States, that portion of the archaeological record where written documents are available to supplement other sources of information about the past begins in the 15th century. Once available, documentary sources of historical period events have become a primary source of information about the past. However, written records, as they are interpreted, supplement the information available from a wide variety of sources on the past.

Historians working to portray trends and events in time and space, and archaeologists working to portray aspects of cultural lifestyles from preserved archaeological remains, need to interact and use each other's data to present the full possible picture of the past. However, scholars need to exercise considerable caution in such interactions.

In the course of organizing a base corpus of historical documentation to provide a framework for interpreting the historic period archaeological record of the lower Illinois River valley, we find no evidence to support the idea that historical events are related to the secure soil or lack of soil.

Archaeological and Historical Research in Illinois

The American Indian in the central part of Illinois from the earliest written documentation (c. 1790) to the middle of the 19th century were the Illinois Indians. For purposes of this paper, the term "Illinois Indians" is used. The Illinois Indians lived in the central part of Illinois, south of the Great Lakes, and west of the Mississippi River.

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are used to refer collectively to the various tribes or subtribes which make up what has been erroneously called the Illinois Confederacy (for organization and component parts of the Illinois Indians, see Brown 1978:225-235; Catherwood 1978:67; Hassler 1978:129-132; the component tribes of the Illinois Indians are as follows: i.e., the Pocat, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, etc.).

After the middle eighteenth century, the central part of Illinois was occupied by the Piankashaw and the Kaskaskia/Monacoutne until a virtual flood of Euroamerican immigrants filled the state (ca. 1820-1850). A number of other tribes occupied peripheral parts of Illinois during this period, but the Illinois Indians, Piankashaw, and Kickapoo/Monacoutne dominate the history of the central part of the state.

The locations of archeological evidence of Illinois Indian occupations in Illinois have been found to be in general agreement with two broadly defined regions delineated by mainstream historical documentation. Illinois Indian activities are well documented in the upper and central Illinois River valley region, the Starved Rock and Lake Peoria areas, respectively. Two other primary loci of Illinois Indian occupations are historically documented in the southern and southeastern areas of the American Bottom region of the Mississippi Valley to southwestern Illinois (specifically, the Cahokia/Tamaroa area and the Kaskaskia/Fort de Chartres area, respectively).

The Kickapoo occupied Illinois inhabited residences in the expansive prairie to the west of the Illinois Valley, while the major Shawnee villages of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were located in the central and upper portions of the Illinois River. The upper and central Illinois River and the American Bottom were also primary locations of French and English colonial and American territorial activities in Illinois.

Occupational locations of American Indians and Euro-Americans in these two geographic areas are prominently covered in all historical, ethnological, and archaeological summaries of Illinois history (e.g., Alvord 1926; Bassar 1978; Blasingham 1976; Brown 1976:225; Catherwood 1978:67; Hassler 1978; Temple 1966:36-44). Directly between these two areas is the lower Illinois River valley (defined by confluence as the lower 115 km of the river, or from the river to the mouth of the Mississippi) as much as 100 km long, which is occupied in its position between the upper Illinois River and the American Bottom. However, this paper shows that the lower Illinois River valley was the site of repeated American Indian, Colonial European, and Americans territorial activities and occupations throughout the Historic Period. This is an aspect of Illinois history reflected in only a very small number of specialized ethnological research papers (i.e., Jeffrey 1974; Stout 1974; Vogeis and Blasingham 1974).

Many of the villages of the Illinois Indians were occupied repeatedly or for long periods by populations as high as several thousand individuals. Archeological remains corresponding to the locations of the various major Illinois habitation sites in the region both north and south of the lower Illinois River valley have been relocated by archeologists (e.g., Brown 1976; Catherwood 1978:67; Hassler 1978; Nelson 1977; Vogeis and Blasingham 1974), with the exception of those in the Pocat and Cahokia urban areas (Eisenger and Mausher 1991; Pluske 1991; Nicas 1984:9-12). Likewise, the movements and primary
Figure 1. "Marekis du Nord qui vont en chasse d'opos avec leur famille." (Mammals of the north who go on the winter hunt with their family) (DePauw 1774:147)

range of seasonal activities of Historic Period Indian groups, it is important that archaeologists maintain an awareness of the biases that account for this oversight.

First of all, there are certainly biases in the initial records created by the observers describing the "Indians of Illinois' Historic Period. For a variety of reasons there are far fewer accounts of American Indian activities during the winter than the summer. 

Secondly, the importance of the winter season in American Indian life may be less noticeable to the observer because it is characterized by greater homogeneity in activity and less visible differences in daily life. Unlike the summer season, which is marked by a wide range of activities including hunting, gathering, and subsistence activities, the winter season is primarily characterized by the need to maintain and build upon the foundation laid during the summer season. The focus on winter activities by archaeologists is therefore important to our understanding of the daily lives of American Indians in Illinois.

In addition, the use of winter as a season of survival and preparation for the upcoming summer season is well-documented in the historical records.

Many winter activities that are important to the subsistence economy of American Indian groups in Illinois include preparing food for winter use, building and maintaining shelter, and hunting for subsistence. These activities are crucial to the survival of the group and are therefore important to study.

Finally, the winter season is often associated with significant cultural and social activities that are important to the identity and well-being of the group. These activities include ceremonies, gatherings, and social events that are significant to the group's collective identity and well-being.

In conclusion, the winter season in American Indian life is an important period that is characterized by specific activities and cultural practices. The use of winter as a season of survival and preparation for the upcoming summer season is well-documented in the historical records.

The omission of "permanent" sites by historians relates to the differing goals of mainstream historical enquiry and archaeology. In fact, the primary interests of historians in documenting site locations might be to provide a geographic framework for discussing specific events, to illustrate the history of a town, region, or to facilitate the examination of evolving historical trends. It is not necessary to discuss documentation for each site to achieve these goals. Examples of syntheses of Ethnohistory literature that contain such considerations and also have been heavily depended upon by archaeologists are Alvard (1982a, 1982b); Bocciarelli (1978); and Temple (1986). 

Archaeologists also put faith in the comprehensiveness of syntheses presented by historians in introduction to selections of primary historical documents (e.g., Alvard 1982b; Hoven and Jensen 1981; or Therrien 1982, 1986).

Ethnohistorical studies most closely address the goals and interests of archaeologists in terms of a primary goal being to elucidate settlement and subsistence behavior. Examples of those ethnohistorical studies pertaining to the Historic Period occupations of the Illinois River valley are Callender (1978); Callender et al. (1978); Clifton (1978); and Hoven and Jensen (1981). Yet, ethnohistorians are still apt to compile only those specific references pertinent to their questions of interest, and to provide general background information as necessary. The concept of ethnohistorical studies is that of a process in which certain documents from a specific time period are analyzed to provide a better understanding of the culture of that period. This process involves the use of primary and secondary sources to gain insight into the daily lives of people from that time period.
Documentation of Historic Occupations and Activities in the Lower Illinois River Valley

An attempt to locate all references to the lower Illinois River valley between 1848 and 1850 has yielded documentation for a very specific pattern of the American Indian, Colonial European, and early American activities in that region (Table 1). It is immediately evident that the great majority of lower Illinois River valley Historic Period activities refer to the winter months. From earlier references to the nature of the habitation activities, the most common terms used were “wintering,” “village,” and “winter camp.” The terms “winter quarters,” “hunting village,” “village and pirogue,” are also used, all are references to more casual encounters.

Based on these references and our knowledge about the patterns of seasonal residence among the Indians inhabiting Illinois (as discussed above), we may conclude that the term “wintering,” winter camp, winter quarters, village, and hunting village all refer to seasonal occupations. Specifically, when the Indians are repeatedly described as being “at their winter homes” or “at their winter fire,” 20 degrees above the mouth of the Illinois River, it is reasonable to assume that several thousand people are spending the fall and winter months of their year (October through March) in various sized villages in that area. These occupations were perhaps more ephemeral than those of the larger villages to which the conglomeration of tribes returned for the other half of the year, but the degree of residential stability indicated for these winter villages is nonetheless considerable.

In order to put into perspective whether this pattern of occupation can be implied to hold for the many intervening years in which there was no documentation of winter village locations, Table 2 provides citations to other documented locations of winter residences for the various groups listed in Table 1. Without knowing any specific information about occupations in the specific undocumented years, it is obvious that the lower Illinois River valley was a temporary and primary location for winter occupation throughout the historically documented time of the American Indian groups in Illinois. Table 3 outlines the usage of several key place names repeatedly associated with the lower Illinois River valley occupations. A discussion of the seasonal round and the specific activities recorded for various winter occupations illustrates the probable nature of these winter villages.

The Nature of Winter Occupations

The Seasonal Round

All of the tribes of the Midwest during the Historic Period practiced a well-documented annual pattern of activities that revolved around planting, hunting, harvesting, and social activities. Hauser describes this pattern among the Illinois Indians.

The seasonal Illinois economic cycle begins with the assembling of the tribe into summer agricultural villages early in the spring. With proper ceremonies, the people planted various crops in fields located fairly close to the village. Then the entire tribe embarked upon a summer communal buffalo hunt (see Penn and Warren 1854:340 or Quivey 1847:222 for those group months).

Table 1: Documented American Indian, Colonial European and Early American Occupation and Activities in the Lower Illinois River valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
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<td>Wintering</td>
</tr>
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Table 2: Locations of winter occupations in the Lower Illinois River valley

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Table 3: Key place names associated with the lower Illinois River valley occupations

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Table 4: Summary of winter occupations in the Lower Illinois River valley

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</tbody>
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Table 6: Summary of winter occupations in the Lower Illinois River valley

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<th>Year</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadra</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>Wintering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year (Month)</td>
<td>Source (Reference)</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1791 (Nov)</td>
<td>R. P. McColl (ibid: 1791, not 1792)</td>
<td>Sappers are kiclapo and others of the Pouch &amp; Turf. DIY: 1791 and 1792.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Month)</th>
<th>Source (Reference)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>Clark Parke (ibid: 376-377)</td>
<td>DIK in the Forest. DIY: Sappers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Month)</th>
<th>Source (Reference)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>A. LaFren Parke (ibid: 1890, Dec. 4)</td>
<td>Sappers were found at the southern end of the Pouch &amp; Turf. DIY: 1890.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<th>Year (Month)</th>
<th>Source (Reference)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>313 (Nov)</td>
<td>T. Forpy (ibid: 313 Nov)</td>
<td>No mention of Sappers. DIY: 313 Nov.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Continued.
<table>
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### Table 2: Examples of Other Water (Occasionally, 1773-1774, for the Santa Cruz of Encuentro in Table 1.1)

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<thead>
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*Notes: Additional information and references are available in the primary source document.*
members excepted from this hunt. This summer hunt, a relatively recent addition to the annual economic cycle, was the most important community effort by the tribe each year. . . . The Illinois then returned to their more substantial agricultural villages in time to harvest crops and prepare food caches for the latter tenant of the year.

The tribe abandoned its summer agricultural villages for a second time early in the fall. The tribe moved to smaller winter villages...for the purpose of hunting to better advantage. They occupied these villages for six or seven months of the year. The first three to five months of this period they devoted to communal hunting activities; but these expeditions were...much smaller operations than the summertime village hunts. The Illinois derived the last months of the winter to even smaller hunting campaigns...Individual hunters or small groups of men hunted for deer or bear, and spent the rest of the time in playing, dancing, and sing-song...Even during these few days at the end of winter, however, women [were] continually occupied. The tribe's migratory outfit continued a full cycle during the early spring when the various activities abandoned during winter villages and filtered back to the larger summer encampments. While they prepared their fields for the new growing season, the people subsisted on foods they had cached the previous fall (Nies 1975:97-92).

According to Pierre Charles Declam's war parties were sent out from the winter camps in beginning in February (Pepin and Werner 1914:93). Likewise, late winter (late January through early March) was also the major making season, when seasonal camps were set up in the maple groves of the Midwest (e.g., Fetting 1914:35-37; Dept and Fast 1978:70). The only account we have of Illinois Indians making maple tar to the Pacific tallow trees is in January (Fetting 1914:108).

Duration of the Winter Occupation

For the Illinois, Indians, the move to the winter quarters took place between late September and late October. Various documented dates of departure are September 26 (Thwaites 1900:645), September or early October (Thwaites 1900:685), sometime after October 4 (Charbonneau 1763:207), October 10 (Pepin and Werner 1914:74), "the beginning of October" (Thwaites 1900:649:19) and "after October 27" (Pepin and Jessee 1942:752).

The return from the winter villages to the summer villages typically took place between late February to early April. Documented dates of their return are February 18-19 (Williams 1772), "mid-March" (Thwaites 1900:627:19), March 21-24 (Williams 1772), "the end of March" (Thwaites 1900:623:19), April (Pepin and Jessee 1940:450-452, 509-510), September 1900:603, 657-75. Thus, the period of occupancy for both summer and winter villages was approximately equal. Each were at times nearly completely abandoned for communal hunts. The summer hunt was a major episode lasting from three to six weeks (Pepin and Werner...
The winter boom hunt could last from soon after the people arrived at their winter villages until about Christmas, that is, about two months. After this, the men went out alone or in small groups from their winter villages "five or six miles to hunt for deer or bear." (Hauser 1973:71; Truth 1900:321-23).

The winter quarters could be distant or quite close to the summer village. Typical distances away from the summer villages might be 25 to 50 leagues. For instance, in late 1710, Father Manet visited three winter camps of the Kaskaaki. These extended along the Mississippi River south of the Kaskaaki River for at least 40 leagues (Truesdell 1900:64-259). In 1750, Father Vijat indicated that the various Illinois Indians in the American Bottom region did their winter hunting 40 to 50 leagues from their village (Truesdell 1900:69-147). In early 1700, the Cahokia winter quarters were 25 leagues from their village (Dewey 1989:226). Obviously, one primary concern in selecting the winter quarters would be to locate in a region where resources were not depleted by previous or current village inhabitants. The location of winter quarters would also have been subject to other influences, such as access to goods or the necessary state of defense to be maintained. For example, most of the Cahokia tribe, then living in a large summer village in the northern American Bottom, were reported in February 1790 as "at winter quarters twenty or twenty-five leagues . . . up the Mississippi." (Fortier 1909:236). But in the fall of 1790, after the establishment of the Seminole mission at "the Tamaska," the Cahokia went into winter quarters only four leagues above their village and the St. Croix Indians lived two leagues below the village (Truesdell 1900:58-101). In the winter of 1790-1791, some of the Kaskaaki, Cahokia, and other Illinois Indians were wintering at "Pointe de l'Orme" (Elm Point), "Pointe a l'Hearst," and other unspecified locations near Fort de Chartres (Pere I and Iremont 1940:434, 468). The next fall, after the devastating raid on the Mackinaw village, these Illinois tribes went into winter quarters with the Peoria as the lower Illinois Valley (Pere I and Iremont 1940:554, 574). In the winter of 1768-1769, the greatly weakened Peoria, living at Cahokia wintered within sight of the mouth of Fort de Chartres (Delawar 1744:268, Wilkes 1772:1).

A winter village consisted of the compound of the large summer village. Under normal conditions, a large winter village could contain two or three hundred people (Hauser 1973:73). The number of cabins (or "cabin") structures that were smaller than the longhouses of the summer village was such that winter village was highly variable. For instance, the six winter camps of the various Illinois tribes that St. Croix described in late 1648 ranged from five to 50 cabins (Balling 1973:542-551). The smallest Kaskaaki winter village visited in late 1700 by Manet was made up of three cabins, while another was described as "a good number of cabins which formed a sort of a village" (Truesdell 1900:65-259).

Unfettered, fear of attack could be responsible for some winter villages being larger than usual.

"Permanence" of Winter Villages

Because European concepts of habitation and land tenure were transmitted to agricultural activity, there are numerous and detailed accounts of the winter village. In reality, the European conception of these winter villages as a single social and political unit was largely an illusion, at least as these villages were made up of a number of smaller, but more important, kin-based social units (Hauser 1973:259). In all probability, these subgroups and their component parts made up the winter camps. It is difficult to determine whether the winter villages were occupied from year to year. Certainly, particular winter villages were frequently occupied, but locations may also have changed over time. Because accounts of contemporary winter villages (e.g., writers for 1659, 1700, and 1772) generally cannot be considered exclusive of each other, we do not even know whether winter villages changed location many, or less often than the summer village locations. Sometimes, the "winter quarters" of certain bands of the Illinois simply indicate permanent places where people went to hunt them, e.g., "Pointe a l'Hearst" (Pere I and Iremont 1940:436, 468), but few statements regarding the persistence of individual winter villages from year to year can be made.

Structures

Structures used for winter occupation contain significantly with the large, multihouse, bark-covered longhouses of the summer village. Dion D'Astorg, who visited the American Bottom in late April 1723, gave a generic description of Illinois Indian houses that has been interpreted in typical of the winter villages (Hauser 1973:252; Menno 1961:72; also see Schriewall et al. 1921:149). D'Astorg said the Illinois houses were "oval or in shape, surrounded and covered . . . of rushes on both the搬运, at which they are built not at least seven months of the years." According to Le Seigneur, the houses of the Illinois lasted only three years (Hauser 1973:253), but the figure likely refers only to the summer longhousesh.

Appendantly, there was little change through time in this structure type (Hauser 1973:252-256). D'Astorg's description corresponds well with later accounts of structures built by the American Bottom type (Hauser 1973:252-256).
for a family of eight or ten persons would be about 12 by 16 feet in size. Small
sleights would be cut and set fairly in the ground, log ends down; three
feet apart, all around the plan—then to be enclosed. Then the limber tops of
the poles would be brought together and lashed with heavy wattles or strips
of leather. Then small poles would be laid lengthwise in the slats, making
a cross-beamed floor for the house. The whole would then be covered with a
heavy matting that had been woven—... from the cotton swiggs—... found
on the bottom beds—... An opening was left for a doorway and the was
protected by a blanket. A pit two by three feet in size and eight or ten inches
days would be dug in the center—... for a fireplace, and there was an opening
at the top for the smoke to pass through. They usually sat on packages of
skim or sacks of feathers (Ross 1899:6-55).

Frey (1912:227-228) describes a very similar winter structure for the Sack
and Fox in the early nineteenth century:

Their winter lodges are made by driving long poles in the ground in rows
nearly at equal distances from each other, bringing the tops axially to overlap
each other, then covering them with mats made of... a kind of rushes or
flaps, a basken generally serves for a door, which is suspended at the top
and hangs down, when divided if it not unlake an oven with the fire in the
center and the like limits then the top (Frey 1911).

The Archaeological Importance of Winter Occupation Sites

Archaeological sites are sometimes considered important because of the
historical events that took place there. Yet archeologists must continually be
aware of the entire occupatio-nal history of any such historically significant
location. For instance, in thinking of the Zimmermann site near Starved Rock as
the "Grand Village of the Kickapoo" in the 1840s, it is easy to overlook the fact
that the documents indicate that this exact location could also have been occupied by
200-250 people in the fall of 1600, one of the "lucky" bands of the Potawatomi between at least 1711 and 1712, an undisclosed number of Illinois in the
summer of 1780, several in the 1790s, and other occupations documented and undocu-
mented throughout this century. Even without considering the additional undocumented occupations at such a site, discrete archeological deposits for any specific occupational event can be expected to be a challenge to locate and identify.

Winter village locations may have been occupied only a single season or used
repeatedly for decades. They also may well have hosted occupations decades apart. Yet, because of the occupation by fewer people, the presumably restricted range of activities, and the possible lesser permanence that characterized winter villages, archaeological deposits would tend to yield discrete data sets and functionally discrete i-formation. In short, although winter village sites can be much more difficult to locate than summer villages, they can be expected to contain significant archaeological information not easily recovered elsewhere.

Habitation and History of the Lower Illinois Valley: 1673 to 1820

The references in Table 1 have been overlooked, deemed unimportant in the
larger scheme of research on Illinois history, or interpreted in alternative modes
basing on the assumption that the reference to "at the Perrot" were indicators of location as well
as ethnohistory. Because some of the references in Table 1 have not been discussed in main-
stream historical syntheses and others have been interpreted in alternative ways, it is important to Illinois and defend them here. Because of the habit of occupational locations still cannot be presented.

As indicated above, the primary assumption behind these interpretations is that the
winter depots, in spite of often being referred to as "huts" still contained a legitimate
occuptional presence in the sense that small villages were set up and occupied for
approximately one-half of the year. Both winter and winter villages were temporarily
abandoned for a semi-annual blow hunt and the winter depots were specifically organ-
ized around the wider-ranging collection of fish and game in the less abundant winter
subsistence resources. There is every indication, however, that winter villages were, in fact,
"winter occupations" in the sense with which the term is used by archeologists.

Early Illinois Indian History—Prior to 1673

Prior to the early 1670s, the locations of even the summer villages are not
entirely known. From at least 1640 to the visit by Marquette and Jolliet in 1673, most of the
Illinois Indians were probably resident in either central Illinois or the adjacent
portions of Iowa and Missouri. Jolliet (1969:47-54) gives the best account of contemporary evidence for the activities and locations of the Illinois Indians during this interval.

The early-christian debate over the location of the 1673 village visited by Marquette and Jolliet has only recently been settled. Beginning in 1992, excavations at a site near the confluence of the Des Moines/ Mississippi rivers in Clark County, Missouri have verified the presence of a major Illinois village that fits all of Marquette's descriptions (Schwartz and Cormier 1994; Grandstaff 1995). While the location of this major Illinois Indians village was verified, archaeological information on pre-1673 winter occupa-
tions may eventually be obtained, but there is little or no contemporary documentation
on that subject.

Winning the War: The Grand Villages—1673 to 1677

Between 1675 and 1677, the majority of the Illinois who had been living beyond
the Mississippi River relocated to the Illinois River. Allamini (2000:40-45, 159-160) quoted a huge summer village of the Illinois Indians ("the Grand Village of the Kickapoo") in April 1677, after crossing an Illinois winter camp near Lake Michigan. He reported to the Grand Village for the next two consecutive years (2000:46,167), we have no
other information regarding the specific pattern of Illinois Indians residential mobility for other sections regarding the specific pattern of Illinois Indians residential mobility for other sections.

Unfortunately, there appears to be no earlier references to the village during these years, rather than an account test might shed light on winter occupations of the Illinois Indians.

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With the establishment of a full-time French trading presence among the Illinois in the winter of 1679–1680, documentation improves. First of all, it is important to clarify that the Illinois Indian village at Pontiac (Lake Pocat) first visited by LaSalle’s party in the winter of 1679–1680 was a winter village. This village was occupied by only a small part of the (80 canvas) Illinois Indians whose aggregate summer village (400 lodges) was at that (19:53:1) and others, and is validated by the fact that the Pontiac village moved to the winter village as a year-round or summer occupation has not been explicitly recognized in most historical or archaeological discussions (e.g., Emerson and Mantingh 1991:150; Temple 1966:21). Some of the Illinois from the Grand Village were also documented as wintering at Pontiac in 1681–1682 and probably 1686–1687 (Table 2).

There are only a few clues as to where the remainder of the Comal Village Illinois were wintering in 1679–1680. The same day (February 28 or 29, 1680) that Father Franquelin and Michael Accueil began their descent of the Illinois River from Pontiac, they met “several parties of Illinois returning to their village with their canoes or canoes loaded with meagre” (107:7). Seven days later, two lodges from the mouth of the Illinois River, they found 200 families of the Tamias, who wanted to take them to their village “lying west of the river Colbert [Manitouque], six or seven leagues below the mouth of the Steepkey [Mississippi] River” (108:59:1–59:4).

This large settlement of Tamias were probably just entering their winter occupation. It may very well be that the location where Pontiac and Accueil met the Tamias is along the Illinois River two or three leagues above the mouth, rather than two or three leagues below it. This would be in accordance with location where the Tamias set up their winter village, the following November after being assured by the voyageurs that they were safe (e.g., Temple 1966:26; LaSalle visited this December 4, 1679 after the missing massacre (M'argny 1673–1686:5:1). He described it in June, 1679 in a letter to the governor of the Illinois (M'argny 1673–1686:154:3)) to which Kirby refers. "After deposing at L'Isle aux Coudres about the 9th of February, [LaSalle] went to the shore of the Illinois to 20 leagues below Pontiac, where he met the Tamias, who had just returned from making a voyage to the mouth of the Illinois River. They had been in the Illinois River for 100 leagues below Pontiac and La Rocque and the Tamias are very good people."

In February 1686, Kirby found the Illinois Indians at a winter village 30 leagues below Fort St. Louis at Starved Rock.13 Monac (1903:160) apparently published this from an August 24, 1686 letter to the secretary of the Marine (M'argny 1673–1686:553:1) in which Kirby recounts "After deposing at L'Isle aux Coudres the 9th of February, in which Kirby refers to the Illinois Indians in the 20 leagues below Pont St. Louis at La Rocque and the Tamias are very good people." Kirby gives this same figure at 1679 (French 1682:220) the indicated location would be roughly 50 leagues above the mouth of the Illinois River, a location that was to be documented as a wintering site repeatedly in the coming century.

In September, less than two years later, Jouhde’s party did not describe any occupation along the Illinois River until they reached some abandoned camps near "Les Deux Mammelles."14 More winter camp sites were noted at Pontiac (1686:16–17:401–426). Unfortunately, details of the Illinois River portion of Jouhde’s summer and winter occupations in the version published in England (French 1686:185). Jouhde had complained of the change made to his journal when it was first edited in 1713 (Guilfoile 1904:230), but the only full account is the published by Margny.

St. Croix’s Voyage (1679–1680) and "Woman Chief’s" Winter Village

The letter of St. Croix describing a voyage down the Illinois River in the winter of 1688–1689 is the best known and most explicit description of Illinois Indian winter villages (Klappir 1974:75–91). The major summer village of the Illinois at this time was at Pontiac and several of these winter villages were probably in the lower Illinois Valley. In the fall of 1679, when Father Bisseaux, who remained in one of these winter villages ("Woman Chief’s" village), wrote an account of the winter occupation, and upon leaving this village, visited the winter village of the Cahokia at the mouth of the Illinois River before returning to Pontiac for the winter, we have three accounts of Illinois Indians wintering practices that season (Table 3).

With the first edition of 1713 (Guilfoile 1904:230), but the only full account is the published by Margny.
1996:199). Most of this huge Illinois occupation consisted of Lake Peoria (Pentagon) for their summer occupations from spring 1891 until fall 1790. With the rise that took place between the Illinois tribe and the Peoria and other Illinois tribes (c. 1681-1716) in late 1700, the largest concentration of Illinois groups at Lake Peoria broke up. From this time on, documentation of Illinois Indian occupation in the Illinois Valley diminished markedly. Most accounts (Blaugrund 1962:29; Below 1974:137-159; Temple 1965:6-43) have identified the summer village of the Peoria and other small Illinois groups (hereafter referred to as "the Peoria") that remained in the Illinois River valley after 1700 as being at Lake Peoria continuously from 1691 until the spring of 1722, with a fictional village (the "Lafayette" village) forming at Starved Rock after 1712 and persisting until the summer of 1723. The question of the continuity of the summer village at Peoria throughout this period and a determination of the initial date of occupation for the Lafayette village are currently intertwined with what is interpreted here as documentation for occupation in the lower Illinois Valley during the winter of 1713-1714. In other words, the locations and periods of occupation of the summer settlements during this time must be closely scrutinized and reinterpreted in order to understand the 1711 reference to the winter occupation in Table 1.

After 1706, when an attempt was made on Father Giraud’s life (Thwaites 1906:66:53-63), the Peoria tribe was without a reservation until 1712. Between Giraud’s departure and Maverick’s two visits to the Peoria (Thwaites 1906:66), we have no account of their activities. Exactly where (or in what villages) that Maverick visited was has seldom been examined critically (e.g., Alvord 1929:13; Blaugrund 1962:29; Brown 1979:220; Stone 1976:36; Mooney and Blaugrund 1976:39). When the location of the village is mentioned at all, Maverick’s April 1811 visit to the Illinois River and August 1713 visit descending the river he had been usually been blended together, and it is generally stated (or the impression given) that the only village was at Lake Peoria (Brown 1979:164-145; Temple 1965:27) or within the Cahokia (1969:49). However, Foin (1945:43) has argued that the split at Lake Peoria village leading to the formation of the Lafayette village at Starved Rock took place in 1703, in effect calling into question Maverick’s 1711 account of two villages in Cahokia.

Since there is documentation of a Peoria village occupied at Starved Rock the year after Maverick’s visit (Thwaites 1906:289), most historical discussion has focused on when the Lafayette village was formed and several other accounts more closely the interpretation that there was any kind of summer village at Lake Peoria in 1711 is unexplored.

On “Friday of Easter week” in 1711, Father Maverick left Lake Peoria on a journey to Michilimackinac, intending to stop enroute with the Peoria. Maverick’s party arrived at the "Village of the Tamawacs" (the vicinity of present-day Cahokia, Illinois) on the second day after he left Kaskaskia (Thwaites 1906:65:26-26) and departed the next day to go to the "Péorias." This voyage was slow and cautious, as there were traces of war parties in the area and Maverick’s party became very sure. After considerable danger and difficulty, they reached the Illinois River. Maverick stated “having reached the Illinois River, and being only twenty five leagues from the Peorias” they went ahead for help. Maverick struggled along for two days, then was saved the rest of the way by some Frenchmen in canoes who had come from the Peoria village to retrieve them.

Maverick remained at this village for a fortnight. He had hoped that he could then accompany the Frenchmen who had been staying in this village when they went back at about that time to their destination (Michilimackinac). Since no one had yet fallen, it was not possible for them to go to river so Maverick proceeded on an overland route (Thwaites 1906:66:275-279). When Maverick returned from Michilimackinac in August 1711 and began to descend the Illinois River, he soon came to the Peoria village (Thwaites 1906:66:287-289). He described it as adjacent to “The Ford,” which is a marsh or as its next to the river” 150 leagues from Cahokia (temple added).

Maverick’s account unexceptionally states that the Peoria village he visited in April 1711 was 25 leagues from the point he was reached the Illinois River. This seems to imply that in April, the Peoria were 25 leagues above the mouth of the Illinois, but might possibly be interpreted to mean that Maverick’s party traveled overland and struck the Illinois River 25 leagues below the Peoria village. Because other Illinois Indian winter camps are so often specifically described as being 20 to 25 leagues above the mouth of the Illinois (i.e., 1706: 1797, 1797, 1797), it seems most likely the April 1711 village was in the lower Illinois River valley.

It is reasonable to conclude that the Peoria village Maverick visited in April 1711 (whether 25 leagues from the mouth of the Illinois or somewhere else) was a winter habitation. Although the preferred time for returning from the summer village was during March, remaining in winter quarters until April was not unusual. For example, during the severe winter of 1680-1681 the Illinois visited April 1711 to move from Peoria to Starved Rock (Temple 1966:22), in this, it is of interest that Maverick cited the lack of rain as a win: “the Frenchmen” were not able to ascend the river during April of 1711, in all probability, the same conditions restricted the Peorias from ascending the river to their summer village until after Maverick’s visit in April.

Maverick’s August 1712 Peoria village “by the fort” located 150 leagues from Cahokia was certainly a summer village adjacent to Starved Rock, although Temple (1966:37) noted the interpretation. Likewise, Blaugrund (1962:22, 22, note 95) refused to accept Maverick’s figure specifically because the distance was too great for Lake Peoria because of generally accepted distance to the Starved Rock from the mouth of the Illinois River (200 actual river miles) was 180 leagues (see discussion 1906:66:275-279). Distance from the Missouri River to Cahokia is given by Maverick in the same document (Thwaites 1906:66:270) as 250 leagues, then 150 leagues is a very reasonable estimate for the distance from a village at Starved Rock to Cahokia. Temple’s and Blaugrund’s interpretations that there was a Peoria village at Lake Peoria in 1711 appears to be unfounded.

Because it is clear that the summer Peoria village visited by Maverick was at Starved Rock, it becomes reasonable to question whether there was any Lake Peoria summer village at all between 1706 and 1717, the first time the Peoria village is solidly docu-

mented after Giraud’s departure. Since the Lurcheville village at Starved Rock documented by Maverick in 1711 was also documented in 1710, 1715, 1715, and 1717 (Antonomia 1718; Kelly 1711; Michigan Historical Collections 1860:505506; Temple 1965:278, 285, 324) and especially because comments by Joseph Kaubing referring to 1710 and Maverick referring to 1711 (Kelly 1711; Thwaites 1906:66:289, 285) imply that there was at that
time only one village occupied by the Peoria in those years, the existence of a Lake Peoria summer village for at least the first six years after 1706 is very doubtful. Reestablishment of the French garrison for the Peoria was in December 1715 (Thwaites 1802:255), supposedly at the location of "old Fort Crevecoeur." Although that garrison was not immediately occupied (Giraud 1742:356-351, 1793:175). A 1757 account between Pierre Delatte and Jean B. Dupre for trade at "Iloin Paso Pitsney" (Kellie 1792:427) also indicates a French presence at Lake Peoria in those years. Likewise, when it was observed in June 1720 that the garrison for the Illinois River had been withdrawn (Giraud 1742:484), it was specified that it had been at Pimatisi. To summarize, there is no documentation for any occupation at the Pimatisi summer village from 1736 through 1753:1754 and one may infer that only one summer village (at Starred Rock) was occupied by the Peoria in 1710 and 1711. By 1717, however, it is clear that there were summer villages at both Lake Peoria and Starred Rock, a situation that appears to persist until the end of the summer 1722 (see discussion below). In this context, Menen's April 1711 account described a winter occupation which was probably located in the lower Illinois River valley.

During the Fox War—Warriors in Illinois Valley, 1712-1730

Documentation of the various encampments of the Fox War (1712-1730) accounts for several references to the activities of the Illinois in the lower Illinois River valley. After 1700, the Kaskaskia joined their relatives, the Cahoumas, Tamacs, and Michigamas in the American Bottom region and generally wintered south of the Kaskaskia River along the Mississippi River. Nevertheless, there is continued evidence that some American Bottom Illinois groups continued to winter in the Illinois Valley at the end of previous decades. An account given in 1729 by a Michigama chief named Isoulad (Thwaites 1802:409) stated that in 1718 the Fox had killed "one of our people named Handwanacsaw" at "a place a fiche's distance" which is on the lower Illinois Valley. As noted, the French garrison at Pimatisi was withdrawn before June 1729.

Charlevoix (1761:2:205-215) found a Peoria village and four French Canadians, but no garrison at Pimatisi in the fall of 1721. We know that by May 1722, Fox attacks had caused the inhabitants of the Peoria summer village at Pimatisi to "make their village" with their relatives at Starred Rock (Paye 1845). The latter summer village was itself abandoned by April 1723 (Menem 1916:71). Typically, the abandonment of the Lake Peoria village had probably taken place with the seasonal dispersal in the fall of 1722 immediately after the departure of Charlevoix in early October. The inhabitants of Pimatisi had probably continued to "make their village" at Starred Rock at the end of the winter dispersal (that is, spring, 1723). The abandonment of the village at Starred Rock supposedly took place immediately after the Peoria were braved on Starred Rock sometime after June 1722. The Peoria are known to have been living in the American Bottom settlements at several times during the ensuing six or seven years (Temple 1964:41; Waldhall and Benedict 1967:8-9), but there has been very little discussion of the locations of their winter villages. Like in 1726 it is evident the Peoria were still spending their winters in the lower Illinois River valley. A party headed by French father Pierre Boucher, Seur at Boucherville visited a considerable winter village of the Illinois in January and March of 1729. This village, located on "the river of the Illinois, twenty leagues from the Mississipi," was composed of all the Peoria and unquantified contingents from several other Illinois tribes. In this winter village they were "keeping always on the watch and anxious for news of the Kickapoo." (Thwaites 1906:64-65).

Boucherville's 1729 visit to this Peoria winter village initiated a series of events leading to the most brilliant episode of genocide in the history of Illinois. Prior to very recently (Edmunds and Peyer 1983:126-127), this linkage has not been discussed (e.g., Blaesheim 1956:204, Temple 1966:61). Boucherville's journey to the 1729 Peoria winter village and the peace eventually concluded here between the Kickapoo and the Illinois Indians were pivotal in dismantling the Fox-Kickapoo alliance. This in turn led directly to the devastating defeat and massacre of the Fox little more than a year later (see Edmunds and Peyer 1983, Peyer 1987, Steffl 1992).

The actual location of the winter 1728/1729 Peoria village is discussed only in the ethnographical land claims literature (e.g., Jahnke 1976:174, Vosselin and Blaesheim 1974:174). Unfortunately, Stout (1974:175) regrets the details of Boucherville's document terribly, citing the various corruptions to conclude that the Kickapoo from their village on the Mississippi, all the Illinois, and all the French from the three American Bottom settlements were living in three villages along the Illinois River. Although Boucherville's location reference to the winter (1728/1729) village seems close in both context of previous and later winter villages (Table 1), the phrase "on the river of the Illinois, twenty leagues from the Mississippi" has been deleted as meaning either 20 leagues above the mouth of the Illinois River or on the Illinois River at that point where it is 20 leagues from the Mississippi. Vosselin and Blaesheim (1974:124) recount the site location as either near the mouth of the Lobstere River (50 mi north of the Mississippi River) or near "Plain Creek" (50 mi above the mouth of the Illinois River). Boucherville's phraseology for the former location is based on the assumption that Boucherville traveled southwest from the Mississippi to the Illinois, which is impossible to accept. Jahnke (1976:170) thereby concludes the village was in the lower half of that part of the Illinois Valley below present-day Peoria (i.e., no further upstream than about Mendocino).

Boucherville's mention of swan skin leat from walking in cold water and losing one's way certainly do not preclude a winter voyage by river. Boucherville specified that when he left the Kickapoo village in March, Father Guignas was awaiting "on the road," yet he departed in two French canoes and seven pirogues. Since this party was also met on the Illinois River near the Peoria's winter village by 60 Illinois corpses, interpreting this as a voyage overland from the Mississippi to thus a Peoria winter village "near the mouth of the Le-Moivre" seems unlikely, if not ridiculous. Additional proof that the Peoria's 1728/1729 winter village location was 20 leagues from the south of the Illinois, rather than further north, is Boucherville's mention in March that his journey from Fort Chouans from the Peoria was 40 leagues. This figure can hardly allow for the Peoria being village any more than 20 leagues up the Illinois River from its mouth.

The number of cabins or huts/each of this large village of "several tribes gathered together" was not given. In the same data, Boucherville estimated the total number of Illinois men in their three villages was 600 (7th annui 1806:55), but it is unclear what proportion of the American Bottom Illinois were present as the winter village on the lower Illinois River. That the village was of substantial size is supported by it having at least 60 pirogues. In any case, the point is that there were winter occupations in the lower Illinois.
Valley during this very tense winter, then there is every reason to assume that these were winter encampments these throughout the Fox Wars. The relocation to winter villages was not an
enforced strategy reserved for times as it was convenient, but an essential component of the Illinois Indian economy and culture.

Foxen Rescuer of the Valley—The 1730s and 1740s

By any measure, the 1730s and 1740s are poorly documented decades in the history of the Illinois Indians. It is generally accepted that the Peoria had abandoned their summer villages in the Pinemus and Starved Rock regions during late 1722 and reestablished their summer villages in the American Bottom during the remainder of the Fox Wars (e.g., Blasingham 1956:378; Temple 1966:43). Although Brown (1791:250) placed the Peoria back at Pinemus and Starved Rock in 1722 and 1723, she was in error (in each case). Her 1723 reference was the date that Father Rale finally wrote an account of his voyages among the Illinois (Thwaites 1900:67:127), but his tenure at Pinemus was actually during the 1690s (Thwaites 1900:67:185-197). Brown’s (1791) statement is based on her interpretation that Boucherville visited the Lake Peoria summer village, rather than a Peoria winter village in the lower Illinois River valley, as discussed above.

The actual date of the Peoria’s reoccupation of the middle and upper part of the valley for summer villages is difficult to assess. It has generally been assumed that the Peoria were in permanent residence in the American Bottom from late 1722 until it was safe to reoccupy the Illinois River valley. In this view of thought, the massacre of the Fox in the summer of 1720 would have been the pivotal event leading to their eventual reoccupation of the Illinois River valley. Palm (1951:98, Footnote 42) and Thwaites (1900:165) the separate documents indicating the Peoria were relatively living at Pinemus and Starved Rock by 1733. Jelliff (1974:182-183) and Thwaites (1900:172-174) provide documentation that some of the Illinois were back at the Starved Rock area late in 1722. Because Temple (1966:43, Footnote 170) and Schaller (as cited in Fieldbody and Hendrick 1987:8) cite evidence that implies the Peoria were still settled at Cahokia in the summer of that year, it has been assumed that they renewed their occupations in the Illinois Valley in the fall of 1722.

If the Peoria had no summer villages in the Illinois Valley from 1722 until after the end of the Fox Wars, it would seem strange that a sizable force of the Illinois were in the vicinity of Starved Rock in the summer of 1720. Yet, when the hostilities that culminated in the massacre of the Fox began, the “Illinois of La Roche” were on location to work with the Kickapoo and Mascoutin to “make themselves masters of the paque” on the northern side of the Fox to prevent their escape (Thwaites 1900:111). Gwinnard and Pryor (1993:17) identify these “Illinois of La Roche” as the Cahokia and document the establishment of their village at Starved Rock in the spring of 1720. Edmonds and Pryor also imply that another Illinois village was present at Lake Peoria the same summer. The most likely scenario of Illinois Indian reoccupation of the upper part of the Illinois Valley would have the Peoria moving back to their summer villages in the spring of 1729 or 1730 following the provisional conquest of peace between the Kickapoo and the Illinois, which substantially weakened the threat of violence from the Fox.

A passage from a French military communication in February 1732 has previously been interpreted to mean that the Peoria had not yet returned to Pinemus in 1731. That passage reads thus:

Saw Peter by his letter of the fourteenth of the month last May has rendered an account to the effect that Michmac, a chief of the Peoria Indians, one of Illinois Indians, had a request made to him to grant him some Frenchmen to go and settle with his people at Pinemus from which they had been driven by the Foxes. He wrote that without waiting for orders he will grant him this request amount to this will settle communication between Canada and the Illinois but that he will not grant any troops until he has received orders from his majesty or Marquis de Beulharnais . . . (Rowland and Sanders 1922:54-56).

Temple (1966:43) interprets this passage as an order to be received from Michmac that he and his people will be allowed to leave Kaskaskia, which seems overly hostile. However, since we already know that some of the Illinois have been documented in the upper part of the valley in the summer of 1720 and the lower valley in the winter of 1728/1729, this request should be interpreted as being only for the presence of French soldiers and/or traders at their summer village at Pinemus. It does not preclude an interpretation that the Peoria had already reoccupied the valley.

Once the Peoria tribe reestablished their summer villages in the Illinois Valley, they became even less well documented than they had been before the Fox Wars. The known activities of the Peoria during the next two decades are limited to a handful of references to repeated skirmishes with northern tribes and Peoria participation in raids against the Chickasaw as an offshoot of the French (e.g., Blasingham 1956:204-205, Temple 1966:43-45). No explicit references to their winter villages during this time are known, but it seems likely that, as well as some of the Illinois in the American Bottom, they continued to winter in lower Illinois Valley throughout the 1730s and 1740s.

A 1750 Peoria Village and French Post in the Lower Illinois Valley

Father Vivier, who resided at Kaskaskia, mentioned the Peoria indirectly in two 1750 letters. In a summer 1750 letter, he described the five French and three “sauvages” villages in the American Bottom and then mentioned a fourth village of the same nation (necessary-}

ally referring to the Peoria tribe) “sightly leagues” from here (Thwaites 1900:85:45-49). In a November 1750 letter, Vivier described the missions at Kaskaskia and Cahokia and then mentioned that a third mission (the Peoria) is 70 leagues “from here.” Apparently missing from Kaskaskia, where he was stationed (Thwaites 1900:85:203). If Vivier spoke of the distance from Kaskaskia to Lake Peoria, then 70 leagues is by far the shortest figure ever given. The distance from Kaskaskia to the mouth of the Illinois had been conceived of as over 30 leagues by Manuel in 1715 (Thwaites 1900:85:203), and Brucholff’s conservative estimate of the distance from Fort Chambly to the 1708/1729 Peoria winter village 20 leagues up the Illinois River was a total of 17 leagues. If the Peoria village mission Vivier described was the Peoria village at Lake Peoria, an estimate of at least 100 leagues would have been in order. If Vivier were referring to a Peoria village 20 leagues up the Illinois River, an estimate of no more than 50 or 60 leagues from Kaskaskia would be in order. The
problem of Vivier’s ambiguous distance figure could easily be discussed were it not for a series of maps made at this time and the fact that other researchers verify that there was certainly a major village of the Peoria present in the lower Illinois Valley during the early 1790s.

As early as the 1730s map by Henry Popple (e.g., Belin 1991:155; Buissiere 1991:61; Temple 1979:Plate LXXXII), there was a dichotomy indicated between "Piancaou" and "Peoria." Amida, considerable confusion, Popple’s map shows village symbols labeled Piancaou and Peoria separated by some distance on the Illinois River. Given the secondary nature of information and the plethora of other errors on this map, no real credence could ordinarily be attached to this dichotomy. Yet, on a 1788 map (Figure 2), the foot of a series of Great Lakes/Illinois Country maps produced by Jacques-Nicolas Bellin (Buissiere 1991:49), this dichotomy is repeated, with the geography of the Illinois River being much clearer. From upstream to downstream, the prominent features along the Illinois River are "La Fourche" (the Kaskaskia/Osage juncture), "Le Rocher" (Harved Rock), a village symbol labeled "Village Illinois" (presumably Piancaou), two eastern tributaries, and then a village symbol labeled "Pouariou."

Bellin subsequently produced at least three maps dated 1795 that show details of the Illinois River. One map of the Great Lakes entitled "Partie Occidentale de la Nouvelle-France ou du Canada" shows very little detail in the Illinois Country (Figure 3). Yet another map shows the entire Illinois River and has "Village Illinois" at Lake Piémont as the only habitation on that river. The other two 1795 Bellin maps are both entitled "Partie du Courant du Penne StLouis au Mississippi." (Figure 4) is a sketch map, the original of which is dated 1795 (Tucker 1942:8), that has handwriting corrections. This map portrays only that part of the Illinois River downstream from LeSalle’s old Fort Crevecoeur at Lake Piémont. One stray handwritten correction indicates "Pouariou" (and other illegible text) at a west bank location 22 leagues above the mouth of the Illinois River and downstream of the mouths of two eastern tributaries identified as "Sauge" and "Macopin." The third 1795 Bellin map (Figure 5) is the version subsequently published by Neyron de Villiers. It incorporates the corrections from Bellin’s correspondents. Since the original, uncorrected map was also dated 1795, this published version would necessarily date to after the copy had been corrected and returned to Bellin for printing (Tucker 1942:8).

On this map the Illinois River is shown only as far north as the lower of the two eastern tributaries (again labeled "Macopin"). Downstream of this tributary and on the west side of the Illinois River is a village symbol labeled "Pouariou" and "Village Sauage au Flute Francois" (Indian village and French post). The scale indicates that this post and village is 20 leagues from the mouth of the Illinois River. Because this map was apparently based on contemporary first-hand information out of the Illinois Country, because the other two 1795 Bellin maps assure that the Peoria village is clearly far downstream of Piancaou and below the two eastern tributaries of the Illinois River, and because the map has an accurate scale there should be little doubt that a French post and a Peoria village were indeed present in the lower Illinois River valley in the middle 1790s.

French administrative correspondence supports this conclusion. Beginning in the late 1740s, the encroachments of the English into the Illinois Country led to greatly increased attention to affairs in Illinois, which translated directly to increased documentation on the activities of the Illinois Indians. Although the Peoria had wanted a military
Figure 3. A portion of Jacques-Nicolas Bellin’s 1755 “Carte Occidentale de la Nouvelle France ou du Canada,” reproduced from an engraving in the collection of Historic Urban Plans, Museum, NY.

Figure 4. A portion of Jacques-Nicolas Bellin’s 1755 draft map “Carte du Cours du Fleuve St. Louis ou Mississippi” (Thayer 1962:Pl. XXI) with a handwritten correction indicating a Pottawattamie Indian village and French post on the lower Illinois River.
Figure 5. A portion of Jacques-Nicolas Bellin’s 1755 published map “Partie du Cours de Plaine St. Louis au Mississippi” (Alford 1930:154-155) showing “Plaine, Village Sauvage et Poste Francais” at bounce along the Illinois River.
The Last Years of the Peoria in the Illinois Valley: A Renewed History

The village of the Peorias, previously established 80 leagues up the river of the Illinois... on the shore of Lake Pemino, formed their villages three years ago (1795) opposite the mouth of this same river on the port side of the river. This change had no other object than that of withdrawing from the Siski, Sionas, and Foxes, their enemies.

From this we can infer that the Peorias had withdrawn at least their summer villages from the Illinois Valley by the mid-1760s. In this, they may be compared to previous interpretations, which placed them at Pemisco as late as the 1760s and 1770s. This letter, however, may reflect the first known reports of the Peorias' summer villages from Pemisco to escape their enemies. Before this time, the Peorias had been reported to be wintering near the Illinois River in what is now the Wisconsin-Minnesota border.

The only other credible reference to the Peorias in the Illinois Valley after 1755, prior to the winter of 1760-1761, the time of the two accounts of the Peorias' wintering grounds, is a letter written by David de Varies in 1761. This letter, however, is not specific enough to be certain that the Peorias were wintering in the Illinois Valley.

In 1763, when a Mr. Humbert visited the "Eper" ("Au Pe"), he described it as a French post of very little importance with an officer and five men, but noted that the area was not occupied by the Peorias. In this, he may be comparing the Peorias to the other Illinois tribes, which were beginning to move westward.

The Peorias were one of the last Illinois tribes to move westward, and their wintering grounds in the Illinois Valley were reported to be near the Wisconsin-Minnesota border. This letter from Mr. Humbert may be the first written evidence of the Peorias' wintering grounds in the Illinois Valley.

Summary: Illinois Indian Winter Occupations in the Lower Illinois Valley

To evaluate Illinois Indian winter use of the lower Illinois River valley region relative to their overall history of winter occupations, it is necessary to compare the references in the lower Illinois Valley in Table 1. Excluding metastropic, secondary, and fragmentary references, there are 18 references to Illinois Indian winter use of the lower Illinois Valley. Two of these are accounts of 10 separate Illinois winter camps in the lower Illinois River valley.

Allowing for the probability that there were no Illinois occupations in the Illinois Valley after 1763, Table 1 compares the occupations of winter use of the lower Illinois River valley. Two of these are the same wintering grounds that are occupied by the Peorias. This is the first recorded wintering ground for the Peorias, and it is the only one that is located in the Illinois Valley.

The Peorias were one of the last Illinois tribes to move westward, and their wintering grounds in the Illinois Valley were reported to be near the Wisconsin-Minnesota border. This letter from Mr. Humbert may be the first written evidence of the Peorias' wintering grounds in the Illinois Valley.
In the fall of other years, the winter occupations were in the lower Illinois River Valley. There is, of course, every reason to think that the documented pattern holds true for the entire third period, when there is no record of Illinois wintering activities. In sum, mention of Illinois winter occupations in the lower Illinois Valley are roughly as common as for all other regions combined.

Other Winter Activities in the Lower Illinois Valley: 1763-1820

Kickapoo, Mandan, and Potawatomi Winter Camps

After the end of Illinois wintering, Mandan presence in the Illinois Valley a pattern of winter occupations by the Potawatomi and the Kickapoo/Mandan commingles. In the period there is no less continuity over the locations of summer and winter villages.

The 1763 account of DeLorimier writing with the Potawatomi: "10 leagues away" appears to refer to distance from Fort de Chartres, but a difficult to ascertain because it is nearly 100 miles down the Illinois River from the documented Potawatomi summer village of that time. If this reference is valid, it was nearly 20 years before they were again wintering in this region (Table 2). Nevertheless, this reference is most plausible because there is little reason to believe that the Illinois were wintering anywhere on the Illinois River that year.

English and Spanish administrators received that latter day Illinois River Valley tributes from frequent visits to St. Louis and the American Bottom after the end of the French regime (Rice and Hayes 1918; Kienard 1944; Nasmyth 1952). After expanding their summer villages into the central Illinois prairie, the Kickapoo and Mandan began wintering on the middle and lower reaches of the valley by the 1770s - a pattern that persisted for the next 50 years. After the Potawatomi were forced out, Potawatomi groups progressively moved their summer villages down the Illinois River from the "forks" (Kankakee/Dekalb junctions), but they are not known to have continuously wintered south of Peoria until after 1810. Increased documentation of Indian activities in Illinois accompanied the invasion of the War of 1812. After that year, Potawatomi winter camps in the lower Illinois Valley appear to have been an annual practice (Table 2).

Within another decade, a flood of American immigrants into the east began to travel in the lower Illinois River valley. Their strong predilection for the land along the margin of the lower Illinois River valley and the lower reaches of the secondary streams in this area (Starr 1980, 1980c) would have had little impact on the winter occupations to which this region had traditionally been host. Likewise, after 1830, the large summer villages of the Potawatomi were forced out of the area above Late Peoria and the summer villages of the Kickapoo were forced from the Illinois prairie.

Conclusion

Historian of Illinois until a significant portion of the geographical and behavioral range of the state's historic Period Indian groups. Ethnologists, in studies partially correcting this situation, have not been aided, in part, or widely used by archaeologists. As a result, archaeologists have remained largely unaware that there were significant occupa-
This case study of the Illinois River valley has shown that frequent, and often considerable, occupations took place in a region generally considered as a little more than a corridor between areas whose more important aspects of history were played out. It may be assumed that a similar situation pertains to other regions of the Midwest. Archaeologists must use a careful and critical approach to document and interpret the historical/archaeological record in these regions. The ethnographic and historical studies completed for the Illinois Land Claims cases, which were attuned to aboriginal cultural practices and their geological-cultural correlates, are the best available guides to those primary documents, but original accounts themselves must be re-examined for the detail that are of specific concern to archaeologists.

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A final caveat is in order. This paper was primarily researched and written in 1992 and 1993 (Eassey 1992, 1993b). Subsequently, Zitomersky (1994) has published an important study on Illinois Indian history (see Eassey 1996). Although Zitomersky’s concern was to establish a population geography of the Illinois Indians, many of his conclusions are similar to those reached in this paper. If there were deemed necessary to revisit this paper to take into account Zitomersky’s painstaking research, my contribution has been far too important to omit reference to even at this late date.

Endnotes

1 A conversion of one league to 2.5 mi is favored by Raasomag (1956:219; Note 16) and Temple (1966, 1). Several documented usages confirm the apparent accuracy of this as a conversion in some Illinois country settings, while others support an even lower conversion. For instance, the 100 leagues of Illinois River below Starved Rock is 330 river miles and 48 leagues of Illinois River below Peoria is 166 river miles. Yet, as Zitomersky (1994a) points out conversions as high as three miles per league can also be supported. In fact, the actual variation in Illinois Country usage has been so considerable (Eikeng and Fowley 1989:29, Footnote 12) that it is clear scholars must always be ready to allow for

individual usage of leagues to vary from two to three actual miles per league. Quibbling over an exact form/conversion is thus futile, if still always entertaining.

2 "Les deux Stammes" (the two tribes) are the 7 m tall Middlewood Period Twin Mounds or Quiver Beach Mounds (A.D. 600-750) that stand on the edge of Quiver Lake and the Illinois River just above Havana. They were also mentioned as a landmark in Delafield’s 1722 journal (Page 1945:54). It apparently was easy to lose one’s way at this point, as both the Peoria and Delafield’s parties did, and the mounds were a useful landmark. The name “Les deux Stammes” was applied to some hills on the Mississippi side of the Illinois River near St. Charles and Pontiac de Souches as shown on the De la Perriere’s 1757-1758 map and the Victor Collot’s 1759 map (Chapman 1807: Plate 30). “Les Stammes” was also used as a place name in 1679 to 1680. Peggy’s Island (Delisle 1692: Plate 30). “Les Stammes” was also used as a place name in 1679 to 1680.

3 During the French Period, the place names Pierre’s la Plache (renowned) and Macavee Terre (bad land) were used to designate specific locations in the lower Illinois River valley. The location of Pierre’s la Plache was described in 1722, 1723, 1776, 1812 (Diles 3) Delisle’s 1722 clear that the river in this name is to 20 leagues upstream at the beginning of a free ford on the lea ford corresponds exactly with Nouan Edwards’ 1812 mapped location (Figure 7) of Pierre’s la Plache, as present day Flint Creek at Valley City (Illinois River Mile 61/62 km). Collot’s 1756 description of “Pierre’s la Plache” as an island and built is drawn directly from Patrick Kennedy’s 1773 journal (Hutchins 1894:204). Kennedy states “At one o’clock we passed an island named Pierre’s la Plache, or arrow- stone is gotten by Indians from the high hill on the western side of the river, near the above island.” This location certainly describes Big Blue Island and the ford running from Big Blue Creed to Flint Creek (a distance of approximately 2.5 mi/4 km).

There is also a probable correspondence between the described location of Pierre’s la Plache with the references to winter villages 20 leagues up the Illinois River. In this location should be evidence of substantial, although dispersed, Illinois Indian occupations dating from the late seventeenth through middle eighteenth century, a 1750s French post of intermediate nature, and subsequent Pottawatomies and Kickapoo winter occupations.

One notable aspect of this location is that, as one descends the Illinois River, these are the first outcrops of drift suitable for flintknapping to be found for over 100 mi (Eassey 1986). From here to the south, outcrops of Bardinon chert, a preferred chert in the Midwest for thousands of years, become common in the Illinois Valley. In all probability, today’s Flint Creek preserves a place name for this chert-procurement locality that has persisted through centuries, if not millennia.

The source of the term “wettering ground of the Peoria” can in each case it be traced directly back to Patrick Kennedy’s account of a voyage in 1773. It has been argued here that Kennedy’s information was several years out of date and that the Peoria had ceased wintering in the lower Illinois Valley by 1773. Calibrating Collet’s very small "indes" by the actual distance of other "other"-marked features places this wintering ground at 39 mi from the mouth of the Illinois River (Note 5). The "Porcas wintering ground" was thus in the vicinity of the mouth of the Apple River, which historically entered the Illinois at Mile 37/38 km and which corresponds well with the location indicated to the wintering grounds subsequently known as "Grand Pass."

4 Comte Vogel (1863:66), the term "Macavee Terre" (bad land) was used as the
name for a small creek on the east side of the Illinois River south of Naples until since the 1830s (Figure 6). Table 1 shows references to activities that took place at or near 1777, 1781, 1786, 1860, and 1861. Table 1 shows references to activities that took place at or near 1777, 1781, 1786, 1860, and 1861. The Kickapoo 1777 winter camps, Maillet’s 1780 away from Peoria in 1781 (which included a small French settlement), a 1785 remoteness transaction related to French Peoria, and the birth of Adeline Chandler at her father’s trading post in December 1860, all took place at Mauvaise Terre. It is notable that the European-American settlement of the mid-nineteenth century referred to parts of Scott County as “the Between” because of its growth of hardwoods and lowland and bottomland trees (Gulf 1924).

Another implication that Mauvaise Terre is downstream from Peoria in the Illinois River is contradicted by Callier’s 1796 account that the “Mississippi” River is “cured by the Canadians for French Mauvaise Terre,” as well as by the placement of Mauvaise Terre on all subsequent maps. Callier’s Mine River might be either McKee Creek or the LaMoque River, since it is a point tributary that becomes the Sangamon, but Edwards’ 1812 map identification of Mauvaise Terre on McKee Creek at 24 leagues from the river’s mouth downstream of the “Mississippi” River is quite definite.

Given the persistent historical associations with the mouth of McKee’s Creek and the presence of a cognate name (la mer) for the Scott County uplands to the east and south of Naples, it is highly probable that the high source along the Illinois River at Naples and directly across the river from the mouth of McKee Creek (at 105 km/65 mi above the mouth) is the site traditionally known as Mauvaise Terre.

There is persistent archaeological evidence of late seventeenth through early nineteenth century occupations in this location (Baker et al. 1941:30; Hendra, Ule, Rolfing 1967; Wadhams 1992). As Table 1 shows, and as been previously documented by Wadhams (1992) for surface ranges of these materials, site certainly are affiliated with various Illinois occupations. However, O’Gorman and Farnsworth’s (1965:12) suggested ethnic affiliation for ca. 1810–1850 materials from this site as “possibly Sauks” is beyond any credibility, since there is not even a single incident documentation Sauk presence in the lower Illinois River valley during the 1830s or any other time. As Table 1 demonstrates, Potawatomis or Kickapoo/Mauvaise Terre would be the most probable tribes responsible for these later materials, but it should also be kept in mind that there were also several disinterested Euro-American occupations and activities on this location between 1770 and 1860.

“Swamp Fork” historically runs to a large backwater lake just above the mouth of Apple Creek, 64 km or 40 mi above the mouth of the Illinois River. It is probable that the term, first seen in historical references in 1779 (Table 1), came to be used for the same locality as the “Peoria winter ground” once that terminology was no longer appropriate. Grant Peter Lake, Grant Lake, and the red toad Grant Peter on the U.S.G.S. topographic sheets almost certainly preserved the place name where the Kickapoo, Mauvaise, and Potawatomis were in conflict in 1779, 1811/1812, and 1813/1816.

Besides, Creek/Peoria is also applied to that portion of the Mississippi River bluffs where the Chensoqua River from Cahokia descends from the uplands to the river near St. Charles and Fort DeCharms in Randolph County, Illinois (e.g., see Wadhams 1992:Figure 6.13) and is the divide between the Mississippi River and Salt Fork drainage in Saline County, Missouri (Reveille 1990:117).

Delilah is a necessary title. The common usages of this name in Illinois are


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