

Colonialism, Consumption, and Control:
The Illinois Country Liquor Trade, 1750-1803

**A Thesis Submitted to the College of
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Abstract

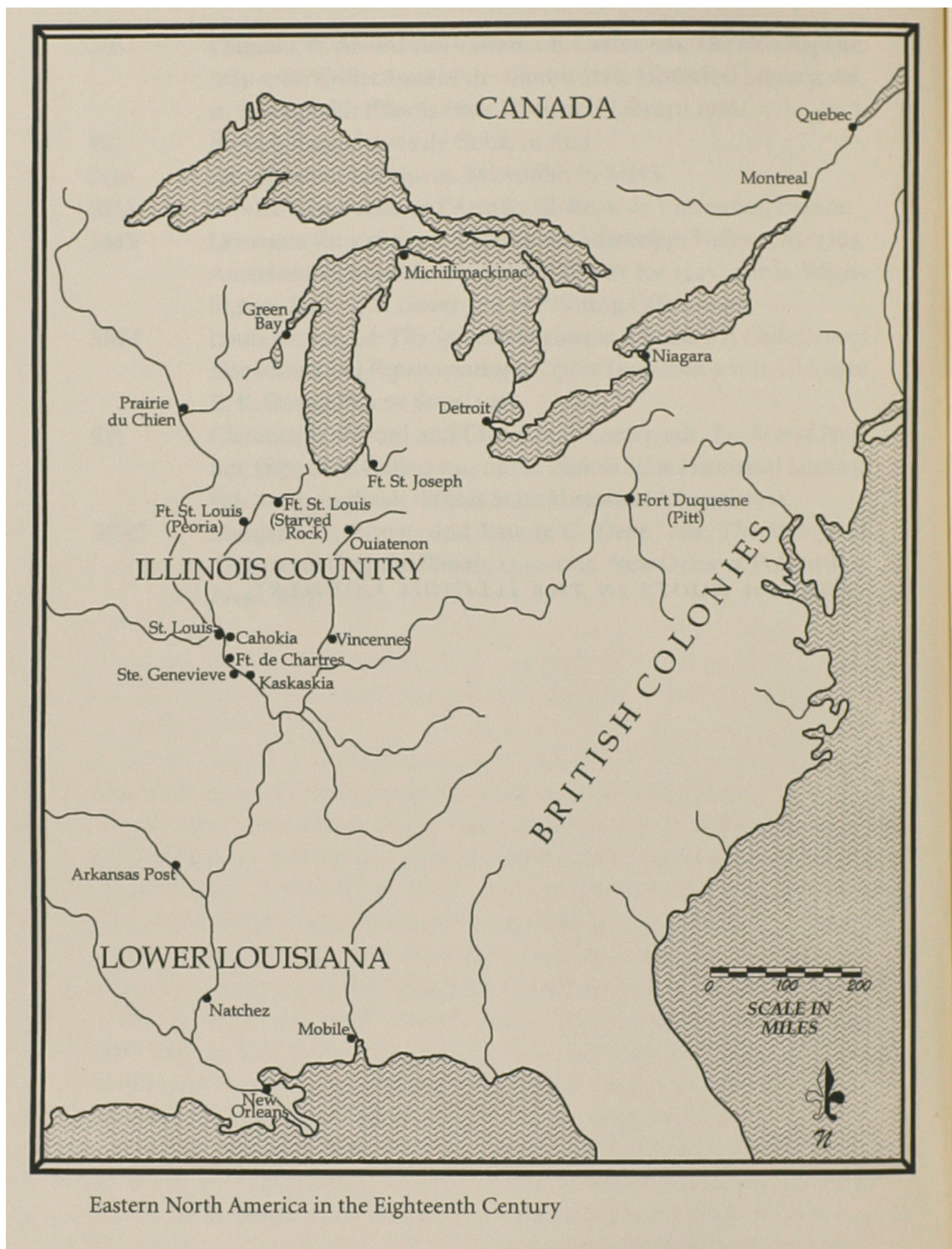
The liquor trade has been a popular topic of study for many historians examining colonial North America. Due to the detrimental impact alcohol had on Indigenous societies, this historiography has focused on the relationship between Indigenous drinking, cultural degradation, and demographic destitution, which contributed to the establishment of European hegemony in North America. Breaking away from this Euro-centric narrative, this thesis uses liquor as an analytical lens to re-evaluate how colonial society functioned on the ground over the Illinois Country's successive French, Spanish, British, and American regimes between 1750 and 1803. This examination of the liquor trade reveals that despite colonial discourses of superiority, colonial authority was restricted in the Illinois Country. Colonized Indigenous and French Creole inhabitants retained the power to shape the Illinois Country's organization and development over the region's four colonial regimes.

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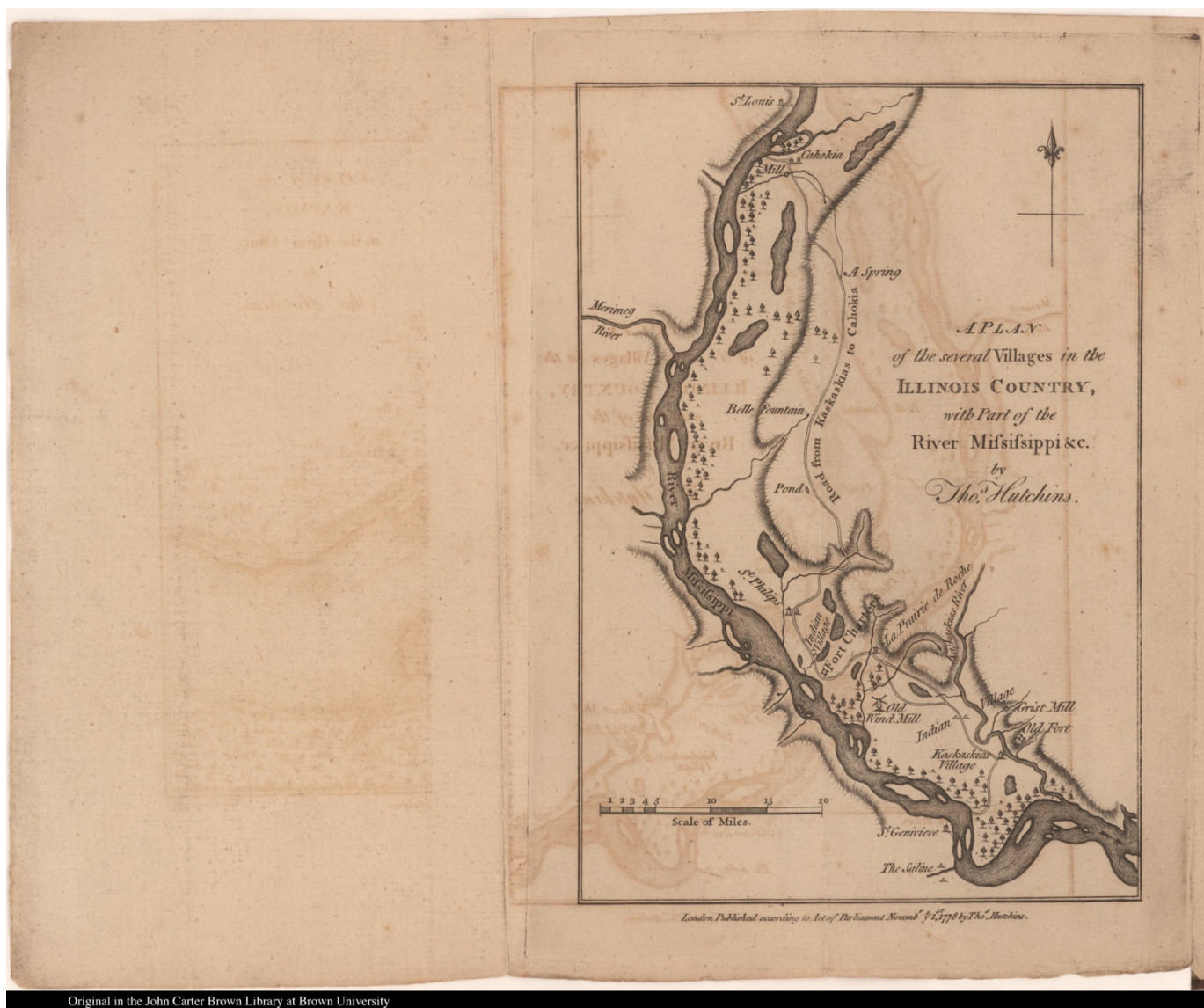
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Map courtesy of Carl J. Ekberg's *French Roots in the Illinois Country*.¹

¹ Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), xiv.



Map courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.²

² Thomas Hutchins, "A Plan of the several Villages in the Illinois Country, with Part of the River Mississippi &c.," *A topographical description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina, comprehending the rivers Ohio Kenhawa, Sioto, Cherokee, Illinois, Mississippi &c.* (London J. Almon, 1778), 40-41.

Introduction

In the summer of 1786, Father Pierre Gibault returned to Fort Vincennes on the Wabash River tired and disheartened after a long journey. The priest had travelled through the Illinois Country, as he had done often in the last sixteen years, to preach the word of God in the territory's settlements that were scattered across the fertile low-lying plains of the Mississippi River Valley and surrounding tributaries.³ Appointed the Vicar-General of the Illinois Country in 1770, Gibault was tasked with spreading Catholicism in the region.⁴ On this most recent trip, the futility of his attempts to indoctrinate the Illinois Country's populace was evident. Gibault blamed alcohol for his failure. "I should be well enough pleased with the spiritual condition of the people, were it not for this accursed trade in *eau de vie* [brandy] which I cannot succeed in uprooting," he wrote to the Bishop of Quebec, Louis-Philippe Mariauchau d'Esgly.⁵ Like Gibault, American officials opposed the liquor trade because alcohol consumption incited Indigenous violence and poisoned intercultural diplomacy.⁶ However, despite imperial attempts to prohibit the liquor trade, alcohol remained a prominent part of everyday life in the Illinois Country. Gibault wrote derisively about the region, explaining that "In Canada all is civilized, here all is barbarous . . . Wantonness and drunkenness pass here as elegance and amusements quite in style."⁷

³ "Father Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec," in *Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790*, ed. Clarence Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1909), 537-539; For a description of the Illinois Country's geography see M.J. Morgan, *Land of Big Rivers: French & Indian Illinois, 1699-1778* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010).

⁴ Clarence W. Alvord, *The Illinois Country, 1673-1818* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1965), 271-273, 366-367.

⁵ "Father Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec," 535-536. *Eau de vie* ("water of life") was a fruity liquor similar to brandy. These terms are used interchangeably by French and Anglo-American peoples in the Illinois Country.

⁶ See "Proclamation by Clark, December 24, 1778," in *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781* ed., James Alton James (Springfield: Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, 1912), 8:91-92; "Court Record, November 1785," in *Cahokia Records, 1778-1790* ed., Clarence W. Alvord (Springfield: Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, 1907), 215; "Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia, July 5, 1789," in *Cahokia Records*, 607.

⁷ "Father Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec," 542-543.

As Gibault's commentary suggests, liquor was simultaneously a popular and polarizing trade good in the Illinois Country. Many colonial officials and missionaries opposed the liquor trade because Indigenous drinking endangered the region's inhabitants and disrupted the Illinois Country's economic as well as spiritual development.⁸ However, located far from centres of imperial power, colonial governments struggled to assert control over the Illinois Country.⁹ Imperial ordinances prohibiting the liquor trade were largely ineffective, and alcohol remained a fundamental aspect of the Illinois Country's exchange economy due to the social, economic, and spiritual importance Indigenous and Euro-American inhabitants ascribed to liquor.¹⁰

This thesis examines the trade and consumption of alcohol in the Illinois Country over the territory's successive, French, Spanish, British, and American regimes. The study begins in 1750, the high point of French colonization in the Illinois Country, and ends with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the final geopolitical change the region experienced, which ceded the west bank of the Illinois Country and a vast territory in the trans-Mississippi West to the United States.¹¹ Using alcohol as an analytical lens, this thesis deconstructs colonial discourses of

⁸For select historical examples of the opposition to the liquor trade amongst imperial officials and local inhabitants in the Illinois Country, see "Proclamation Concerning Liquor Traffic, September 6, 1779," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 117-118; "Plan for Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, July 10, 1764," in *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, ed., Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter (Springfield: Trustees of Illinois state historical library, 1915), 273, 276; "Magistrates to John Todd, May 21, 1779," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 91-93.

⁹ See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), xxvii, 52. Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 190.

¹⁰ See Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 29-84; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 53, 70-72, 85-86, 223. For primary source examples, see: "Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department," in *The Critical Period*, 333-334; "Macarty to Vaudreuil, December 7, 1752," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War, 1747-1755*, ed., Theodore Calvin Pease and Ernestine Jenison (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1940), 762; "Jackson's Opinion of Western Plans, November 1766," in *The New Régime, 1765-1767*, ed., Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter (Springfield: Trustees of Illinois state historical library, 1916), 422-423.

¹¹ As historian Robert Englebert argues, the Louisiana Purchase marked the end of the Illinois Country's colonial period. The cession of the Louisiana to the United States, and the Lewis and Clark expedition, combined to initiate a new wave of American settlement of the Illinois County, which drastically altered the Illinois Country's demographics. Robert Englebert, "Merchant Representatives and the French river world, 1763-1803," *Michigan Historical Review* 34, no.1 (Spring 2008): 62-64; Robert Englebert, "Beyond Borders: Mental Mapping and the French River World in North America, 1763-1805," (PhD Diss., University of Ottawa, 2010), 46-50. The trans-Mississippi West refers to a vast area between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean.

control and examines the inner workings of Illinois society. Ultimately, this study of the liquor trade reveals that despite imperial assertions of sovereignty, colonial authority was restricted in the Illinois Country. Colonized Indigenous and French Creole inhabitants retained the power to shape the Illinois Country's organization and development over the region's four colonial regimes.¹²

This thesis is divided into three thematic chapters that contrast imperial perceptions of control with how Illinois society functioned on the ground. Applying the theoretical works of Edward Said and other post-colonial scholars to the Illinois Country, Chapter 1 examines how colonial discourses surrounding alcohol consumption informed imperial perceptions of the area's inhabitants. Based on Indigenous, French Creole, and Euro-American divergence from European drinking conventions, colonial officials constructed discourses of superiority over their colonial subjects that justified formal assertions of imperial control. Chapter 2 examines the relationship between colonial discourse and liquor laws in the Illinois Country, arguing that the ineffectiveness of liquor regulations demonstrates that imperial power was limited in the Illinois Country. The final chapter uses the liquor trade to evaluate how power was distributed in the Illinois Country over the territory's four colonial regimes. The liquor trade illustrates that colonized Indigenous peoples determined the form and content of intercultural diplomacy and fur

¹² Following Jay Gitlin's definition, the term French Creole is used in this thesis to refer to French-speaking individuals living in the interior of North America from the Great Lakes to New Orleans during the colonial period. See Jay Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier: French Towns, French Traders, and American Expansion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 191 n. 2. The term colonial regime is used to describe the eras of French, British, Spanish, and American rule in the Illinois Country. Although not the common terminology used to describe the western expansion of the United States, as historian Freida Knobloch suggests, agricultural settlement (like in the Illinois Country) was a form of American colonization over the west, because colonization is fundamentally about expanding into new regions, changing land use practices, and forcing many people off the land. See, Freida Knobloch, *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 1-16, 52; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 78-87.

trade transactions, while French Creole and Euro-American inhabitants adapted to Indigenous demand to carve out influential positions in the Illinois Country's exchange economy.

History of the Illinois Country

In 1673, Jacques Marquette, Louis Jolliet, and a small corps of voyageurs became the first documented Europeans to navigate the Mississippi River and explore the Illinois Country.¹³ Although *coureurs de bois* and missionaries established a French presence in the Mississippi Valley over the next two decades, no formal colonization was initiated because the French government was reluctant to establish another costly colony in North America.¹⁴ Encompassing the confluence of the Illinois, Missouri, Wabash, and Ohio Rivers with the Mississippi, the Illinois Country occupied a strategic position in the continental transportation network.¹⁵ This location on the Mississippi River also made the Illinois Country a key entrepôt in the continental fur trade. The region was a bridge between western hinterlands and distant colonial centres.¹⁶ The Mississippi Valley's fertile alluvial soil supplemented the region's economic potential.¹⁷ Once the Illinois Country's strategic importance and economic capacity became apparent, royal

¹³ Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 1-2; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 64; Craig, "French-Speakers, American Citizens," 3-5.

¹⁴ The term *coureurs de bois* refers to unlicensed French fur traders in North America. Alvord, *Illinois Country*, 74-75; Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 46-47; Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 3, 33, 109; Craig, 4.

¹⁵ See Cécile Vidal, "Le Pays des Illinois, six villages français au Cœur de l'Amérique du Nord, 1699-1775," in *De Québec à l'Amérique française: histoire et mémoire*, ed. Thomas Wien, Cécile Vidal and Yves Frenette, (Quebec: Presses Université Laval, 2007), 126-127; Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 81.

¹⁶ Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women*, 1-2; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 69-73, 169-189. It is important to note that the Illinois Country was not a distinct colony. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Illinois Country was connected to various other administrative regions, but functioned largely autonomously. In technical jurisdictional terms the Illinois Country was formally a part of Louisiana after 1719 (called Upper Louisiana). When Spain gained title over the Illinois Country's west bank in 1762, the Illinois Country remained part of Spanish Upper Louisiana. Under British control, the Illinois Country's east bank was technically a part of Indian Territory after the Royal Proclamation of 1763, but retained a local government due to the settler population present in the Illinois Country. Following Clark's conquest of the Illinois Country in 1778, the region was officially part of Virginia, known as the County of the Illinois. Due to this complex political history of the Illinois Country, throughout this thesis the Illinois Country is referred to as a region or territory, rather than a colony.

¹⁷ Morgan, *Land of Big Rivers*, 1-9, 10-42, 69-118.

officials began to support settlement of the middle Mississippi Valley.¹⁸ The foundation of a mission at Cahokia in 1699 inaugurated a new era of French colonization in the Illinois Country.¹⁹

In three waves of settlement (1699-1718, 1719-1732, 1733-1752), French merchants, *habitants*, and missionaries migrated to the Illinois Country.²⁰ French missionaries and colonists interacted and intermixed with the region's Indigenous peoples, spread Catholicism, and began to exploit the area's economic potential through the fur trade and agricultural development.²¹ By the 1750s, a small but stable French population resided in the Illinois Country. The majority of the region's French inhabitants lived in a series of colonial outposts situated in the Mississippi Valley between the Illinois and Ohio Rivers, such as Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and St. Geneviève.²² The Illinois Country also included Vincennes, Peoria, and Ouiatenon located along the Wabash and Illinois Rivers.²³

After over a half century of French colonization, the Illinois Country entered a tumultuous period of geopolitical change. The Seven Years' War (1754-1763) pitted imperial rivals France and Britain against one another in a battle for supremacy in North America. At the end of the war, the Illinois Country was split in two. In 1762, Spain took possession of New

¹⁸ Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 74-75.

¹⁹ Carl Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 3; Morgan, 2; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 98-119; Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 46.

²⁰ Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 47-50.

²¹ Ibid; Robert Michael Morrissey, "The Terms of Encounter: Language and Contested Visions of French Colonization in the Illinois Country, 1673-1702," in *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630-1815*, ed. Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 44; Morgan, 1-3; Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 1-4; Eric Hinderaker, "Definitions of Value" in *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 87-133; Carl J. Ekberg, *François Vallé and His World: Upper Louisiana before Lewis and Clark* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 8; Robert Michael Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration: Indians Colonists and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 7-8, 40, 50-51, 69, 83, 97-98, 128-130.

²² Founded in 1764, St. Louis became another important settlement in the Illinois Country during the Spanish Regime.

²³ Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 47-50, 52, 56, 144; Craig, 4-5; Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 82-84.

Orleans and France's territory west of the Mississippi River, which included the Illinois Country's west bank. The 1763 Treaty of Paris brought British dominion over New France and the Illinois Country's settlements on the east side of the Mississippi. Imperial neglect defined the region after the Seven Years' War.²⁴ In the absence of strong colonial governments, the interaction between autonomous Indigenous and Euro-American settlers shaped Illinois society.²⁵ When the American Revolutionary War reached the Illinois Country in 1778, the British Illinois Country and Spanish Upper Louisiana remained a series of small, predominantly French and Indigenous, outposts on the Mississippi.²⁶ In July 1778, Lieutenant-Colonel George Rogers Clark and a small contingent of Virginians and Kentuckians captured Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes, inaugurating American rule in the Illinois Country. The British Illinois Country was official ceded to the United States in 1783.²⁷ Twenty years later, the Louisiana Purchase marked the final geopolitical shift in the Illinois Country's history, as Spain transferred Louisiana back to France, who then ceded its claims to the trans-Mississippi West to the United States.²⁸ Beginning in the 1790s, and intensifying after the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition, Americans settlers flooded into the Illinois Country hoping to harness the

²⁴ Gilbert C. Din, "Empires too Far: The Demographic Limitations of Three Imperial Powers in the Eighteenth-Century Mississippi Valley," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 50, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 261-292.

²⁵ See Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 63-73; Calloway, 122-131; Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 194-223.

²⁶ Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 252; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 44. Spanish officials used the terms Upper Louisiana and Illinois Country interchangeably to refer to the Spanish settlements on the west bank the Mississippi River. However, Upper Louisiana referred to all Spanish lands and settlements north of New Madrid (located along the Mississippi River in present day Missouri), while the Spanish Illinois Country specifically referred to Spain's settlements in the Mississippi Valley between the Missouri and Ohio Rivers. Both terms will be used throughout this thesis. See Walter A. Schroeder, *Opening the Ozarks: A Historical Geography of Missouri's St. Genevieve District, 1760-1830* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 6-7.

²⁷ Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 252.

²⁸ After forty years under Spanish control, Spain officially returned Louisiana to France in 1802, who subsequently sold Louisiana to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase 1803.

agricultural potential of the Mississippi Valley and surrounding region.²⁹ By establishing an authoritative American presence in the Illinois Country in the early nineteenth century, these settlers altered the complexion of Illinois society. However, this Euro-centric narrative distorts the complexity of the Illinois Country's history during the eighteenth century. Geopolitical changes did not immediately or fundamentally alter how Illinois Country society functioned between 1750 and 1803.³⁰

Illinois Country Historiography

Clarence Alvord was the first historian to work extensively on the Illinois Country. In 1920, after two decades of work to translate and preserve primary sources pertaining to the region's history, Alvord published *The Illinois Country, 1673-1818* to commemorate the state of Illinois' centenary.³¹ Still the sole comprehensive treatment of the Illinois Country's history, Alvord examined the territory's development from the first French expedition down the Mississippi to Illinois statehood. Alvord portrays the history of the Illinois Country as a teleological movement towards American hegemony. In his introduction, Alvord argued, "Great nations have struggled for the possession of the Illinois Country"; however, "... the opportunity to develop its resources was granted to the United States."³²

Since the 1980s, influenced by the rise of social history and ethnohistory historians have focused on the agency of French Creole and Indigenous peoples in the Illinois Country, revising

²⁹ See Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 63-64; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 36, 43; Ekberg, *François Vallé and His World*, 18-19.

³⁰ Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 131.

³¹ For examples of Alvord's published collections of primary sources, see: Clarence W. Alvord, ed. *Cahokia Records, 1778-1790*. (Springfield, Ill: Trustees of the Illinois state historical library, 1907); Clarence W. Alvord, ed. *Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790* (Springfield, Ill: Trustees of the Illinois state historical library, 1909).

³² Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 1; Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 1-2. This narrative persisted in the historiography of the Illinois Country during the twentieth century, see: See Clarence Edwin Carter, *Great Britain and the Illinois Country 1763-1774* (Washington: American Historical, 1910); Theodore Calvin Pease, *George Rogers Clark and the Revolution in the Illinois, 1763-1787* (Springfield, Ill: The Illinois State Historical Library, 1929).

Alvord's story of predestined American supremacy. Historians Margaret Brown and Winstanley Briggs initiated this historiographical movement, arguing that French Creole inhabitants acted independently from imperial guidance and control during the French Regime in the Illinois Country.³³ Carl J. Ekberg's influential book, *French Roots in the Illinois Country* (1999), was a watershed in the Illinois Country's historiography. Widely viewed as a replacement to Alvord's work, Ekberg argues that French inhabitants of the Illinois Country developed a unique tripartite system of land usage and distinct *mentalités*, highlighting the local agency and autonomy French Creoles established in the Illinois Country during the French period and persisted after the fall of New France.³⁴ In the subsequent years, various publications, including Colin G. Calloway's *The Scratch of a Pen* (2006), Jay Gitlin's *Bourgeois Frontier* (2010), and Robert Michael Morrissey's *Empire by Collaboration* (2015), expanded the geographic, ethnic, and temporal scope of this historiography.³⁵ These works contend that local French Creoles and Indigenous peoples retained autonomous and influential positions in the Illinois Country, and North American interior, over the various geopolitical changes the territory experienced.³⁶

³³ Winstanley Briggs, "Le Pays des Illinois," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (Jan 1990): 30-56; Winstanley Briggs, "The Forgotten Colony: *Le Pays des Illinois*," (Phd diss., University of Chicago, 1985); Margaret Brown, "La colonisation française de l'Illinois: une réévaluation," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 39, no. 4 (1986): 583-591.

³⁴ See Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*. Ekberg is the most influential historian to work on the Illinois Country since Alvord. Ekberg has written various monographs and articles regarding the region's history. For additional examples, see: Carl J. Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier* (Tucson: The Patrice Press, 1985); Carl J. Ekberg and Anton J. Pregaldin, "Marie Rouensa-8cate8a and the foundations of French Illinois," *Illinois Historical Journal* 84, no. 3 (1991): 146-160; Carl J. Ekberg, "Agriculture," "Mentalités," and Violence on the Illinois Frontier," *Illinois Historical Journal* 88, no. 2 (1995): 101-116; Ekberg, *François Vallé and His World: Upper Louisiana before Lewis and Clark*; Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon K. Person, *St. Louis Rising: The French Regime of Louis St. Ange de Bellerive* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

³⁵ Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 122-131; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*; Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 87-133. For additional examples, see: Robert Michael Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration: Indians Colonists and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Englebert, "Beyond Borders"; Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 63-82.

³⁶ Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 131; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 26-45. The term "North American interior" is used in this thesis to describe the geographical region west of the Appalachian Mountains and east of the Mississippi River constrained by the Great Lakes in the North and the Gulf of Mexico in the south. Great Britain officially ceded control of this territory in the 1763 Treaty of Paris, and this region was later ceded to the United States in 1783.

Supplementing these works, the study of the liquor trade demonstrates that the colonized inhabitants of the Illinois Country did not just endure geopolitical change, but also shaped the region's development.

Two key theoretical works regarding power on the periphery of North American empire guide the interpretation and analysis presented in this thesis.³⁷ Richard White's *The Middle Ground* (1991) initiated a theoretical discussion regarding the limits of imperial power on the outskirts of North American empire. Studying the *pays d'en haut*, White argues that neither European nor Indigenous actors were able to dominate the periphery.³⁸ "Creative misunderstandings" defined colonial encounters, which led to the formation of a hybrid European and Indigenous political, economic, and cultural environment.³⁹ In her 2006 monograph, *The Native Ground*, Kathleen DuVal tested the geographical range of White's middle ground. Evaluating how power was divided in the Arkansas River Valley, DuVal argues that in peripheral regions, Indigenous groups were more often able to determine the "form and content of intercultural relations than were their European would-be colonizers."⁴⁰ Applying White and DuVal's theoretical ideas to a new colonial environment, this thesis uses alcohol to examine the nature of intercultural relations and the configuration of power structures in the Illinois Country.⁴¹

³⁷ Additional works have also helped conceptualize how society functions on the periphery, including: James C. Scott, *The Art of not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy ed., *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, (New York: Routledge, 2002); Jack P. Green, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 1-24.

³⁸ White includes the Illinois Country within his definition of the *pays d'en haut*. He defines the *pays d'en haut* or Upper Country as the region around the North American Great Lakes, west of the St. Lawrence River, east of the Mississippi River, and North of the Ohio River. See White, *The Middle Ground*, xii-xiii, xxv-xxx.

³⁹ Ibid., xii-xiii, xxv-xxvii.

⁴⁰ Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 3-4.

⁴¹ Sociologist Michael Mann defines social power as the ability to pursue and attain goals by exercising influence over other peoples. Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: Volume I, A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1:6.

Alcohol in the Illinois Country

Introduced into the Illinois Country in the late seventeenth century, liquor rapidly became a coveted trade good. European and Indigenous peoples in the Illinois Country desired alcohol for its social, spiritual, and medicinal functions.⁴² Alcoholic beverages were a staple of European diets in the eighteenth century, and drinking was a common social pastime.⁴³ Wine was also an integral part of Christian religious ceremonies.⁴⁴ Colonists reproduced this European drinking culture in the Illinois Country and colonial North America more broadly.⁴⁵ Like their Euro-American counterparts, Indigenous peoples in the Illinois Country, and the North American interior, incorporated alcohol into their diverse cultural contexts. Some Indigenous groups valued alcohol because they believed inebriation brought them closer to the spiritual world, others adapted alcohol into hospitality and mourning rituals.⁴⁶ Despite the social importance that alcohol developed in the Illinois Country and the North American interior, many colonial officials, colonists, French Creoles, and Indigenous peoples opposed the liquor trade due to the dangerous, disruptive, and destructive effects alcohol consumption inflicted upon Euro-American settlements and Indigenous communities in the Illinois Country.⁴⁷ Colonial officials

⁴² Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 1-28, 55-57, 170; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 53, 71-72, 85-86, 223; Catherine Ferland, *Bacchus en Canada: Boissons, buveurs et ivresses en Nouvelle-France* (Quebec: Septentrion, 2010), 13-24.

⁴³ See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 14-28; S.V. Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); D.W. Conroy, *In Public Houses: Drink & Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Gregory A. Austin, *Alcohol in Western Society from Antiquity to 1800: A Chronological History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Information Services, 1985); Clark, 3-15, 20-38, 166-194; Thomas Edward Brennan, "Social Drinking in Old Regime Paris," in *Drinking Behavior and Belief in Modern History*, ed., Susanna Barrows and Robin Room (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 61-65. Thomas Edward Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1988), 9-10, 187. A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 5-6.

⁴⁴ Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 14-28.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 11-28, 55-57; Salinger, 83-158; William J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 25-27. For another discussion of cultural mobility see, Stephen Greenblatt ed., *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-28, 63-79, 170.

⁴⁷ See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 86-91, 101-128, 155-164.

blamed alcohol for igniting intercultural violence, inciting crime, disrupting Indigenous lifeways, and causing many other social problems.⁴⁸ As a result, each colonial government in the Illinois Country attempted to restrict and regulate the liquor trade.⁴⁹ Despite the widespread opposition to the liquor trade, alcohol's economic, diplomatic, and religious functions made liquor a salient feature of the Illinois Country's exchange economy during the eighteenth century.

Consumption theory dictates that due to the prevalence of material objects in society, influential trade goods illuminate, construct, and communicate the meaning of societal relationships and interactions.⁵⁰ Beginning with Harold Innis' staple thesis, historians have used commodities and trade goods as a lens to re-examine the history of North America.⁵¹ Over the last three decades, a historiographical movement has developed that has promoted the study of consumable goods to reassess and reconceptualise the history of colonial North America.⁵² In "Baubles of Britain," historian T.H. Breen argues that the discourse surrounding British trade goods created a collective national consciousness amongst Anglo-American colonists, which

⁴⁸ See Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 53; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 13, 20, 26, 63-64; Clarence W. Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics: A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1917), 1:184-186.

⁴⁹ For select examples, see: "Order of Command for Macarty, August 8, 1751," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 300-301; "Plan for Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, July 10, 1764," in *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, ed., Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Cater (Springfield: Trustees of Illinois state historical library, 1915), 273; "Court of Enquiry, September 11, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 39.

⁵⁰ John Brewer and Roy Porter, "Introduction" in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 1-3. 5-7. Jean-Christophe Agnew, "Coming up for Air: Consumer Culture in Historical Perspective," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*.

⁵¹ See Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930).

⁵² For additional examples from colonial North America, see: Christopher Parsons, "Natives, Newcomers, and *Nicotina*: Tobacco in the History of the Great Lakes Region," in *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630-1815*, ed. Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 21-42; Catherine Cangany, "Fashioning Moccasins: Detroit, the Manufacturing Frontier, and the Empire of Consumption, 1701-1835," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2012): 265-304; Shannon Lee Dawdy, "'A Wild Taste': Food and Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Louisiana," *Ethnohistory* 57 (2010): 389-414. For examples of this historiographical movement, see: Zheng Yangwen, *The Social Life of Opium in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture*; Bernard Cohn, "Cloth, Clothes, and Colonialism: Indian in the nineteenth century," in *Consumption: The History and Regional Development of Consumption*, ed., Daniel Miller (New York: Routledge, 2001), 2:405-430; Yulian Wu, *Luxurious Networks: Salt Merchants, Status, and Statecraft in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

incited the American Revolution.⁵³ In *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians*, historian Sophie White uses clothing to study racialization in colonial Louisiana. She argues that dress and appearance influenced and produced French perceptions of ethnic and racial identity in the colony.⁵⁴ Both Breen and White's work speak to the performative aspects of material culture. Wearing French clothing or boycotting British goods had meaning, which provides insight into the nature of intercultural and inter-ethnic relations in colonial North America. Similarly, historian Daniel Usner Jr's work examines the participation of Indigenous peoples, African-American slaves, and European colonists in the exchange of deerskins and foodstuff in Lower Louisiana to reveal new information about intercultural relations and the inner workings of Lower Louisiana society.⁵⁵ Building on these works and the diverse historic literature regarding trade goods and their social meaning, this thesis uses liquor to re-evaluate how colonial society functioned on the ground in the Illinois Country.

Alcohol's prevalent position in Illinois society has largely been overlooked in the historiography of the Illinois Country. No detailed study of alcohol in the region has been undertaken.⁵⁶ That said, alcohol has been a popular topic of study for many historians examining

⁵³ T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century." *Past & Present* 119 (1988): 73-104; T.H. Breen, *The marketplace of revolution: How consumer politics shaped American independence* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵⁴ Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 1-20.

⁵⁵ See Daniel H. Usner Jr., "The Frontier Exchange Economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley in the Eighteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (April 1987): 165-192. Daniel H. Usner Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

⁵⁶ For examples of this historiography, see: Salinger, 1-7, 243-246; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, xi-xiii, 170-180. For additional examples of books about alcohol in Euro-American society, see: Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin, *Drinking in America: A History* (New York: Free Press, 1982); Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*; Conroy, *In Public Houses*. For examples various works regarding Aboriginal alcohol consumption, see: George Stanley, "The Indians and the Brandy Trade During the Ancien Regime," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 6, no. 4 (1953): 489-505; Robert C. Dailey, "The role of alcohol among North American Indian tribes as reported in the Jesuit relations," *Anthropologica* 10, no.1 (1968): 45-59; André Vachon, "L'eau-de-vie dans la société indienne," *Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada* 39, no. 1 (1960): 22-32.

colonial North America. Due to the detrimental impact liquor had on Indigenous societies, this historiography has focused on the relationship between Indigenous drinking and cultural degradation.⁵⁷ Peter Mancall's book *Deadly Medicine* was the first broad study of Indigenous peoples and alcohol in colonial North America. Mancall examines the cultural importance liquor gained within Indigenous society, arguing that alcohol consumption was a method of coping with European colonization.⁵⁸ By identifying various strategic ways Indigenous drinkers incorporated alcohol into their diverse social contexts, Mancall is able to expose the historical agency of Native peoples. However, *Deadly Medicine* concludes that Indigenous consumption hindered the ability of Native communities to prosper, reproducing the tragic narrative that has defined the historiography of alcohol in North America.⁵⁹ By examining the trade and consumption of liquor from a Cherokee perspective, historian Izumi Ishii's *Bad Fruits of the Civilized Tree* establishes an alternative framework to interpret Indigenous alcohol use. Ishii contends, "the history of alcohol among the Cherokees was not simply a narrative of conquest and destruction of Native society," Cherokee peoples autonomously and strategically adopted, used, abused, and regulated the consumption of alcohol.⁶⁰ Building on Ishii's work, this thesis uses alcohol to deconstruct colonial discourses and highlight the agency and autonomy of the colonized Indigenous, and later French Creole, inhabitants of the Illinois Country.

Sources and Methods

Published primary source collections were the principle source base used in the completion of this thesis. Sources were drawn from a diverse set of edited volumes, including

⁵⁷ George Stanley characterized alcohol as one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse for Indigenous peoples. Stanley, 489-505. For additional examples that proliferate a similar narrative of Aboriginal consumption see: Dailey, 45-59; Vachon, 22-32.

⁵⁸ Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, xi-xiii, 170-180.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 170-180.

⁶⁰ Izumi Ishii, *Bad Fruits of the Civilized Tree: Alcohol & the Sovereignty of the Cherokee Nation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

various collections published by the Illinois State Historical Library, Louis Houck's edited collection *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, and *The Jesuit Relations* edited by Reuben G. Thwaites.⁶¹ Containing a diverse set of colonial documents, such as colonial correspondence, court records, and local petitions, these collections provide a detailed image of alcohol's position in the Illinois Country over the region's four colonial regimes. Produced primarily by French, British, Spanish, and American officials, these documents reproduce European and Euro-American perceptions of the liquor trade. Using decolonizing methods, such as reading against the grain (analyzing colonial sources around the overt intentions of the author through a consideration of context, biases, and alternative perspectives), these sources illuminate, colonial, French Creole, and Indigenous perspectives regarding the liquor trade and provide new insight into the inner workings of Illinois society.⁶²

Conclusion

Using the liquor trade as an interpretive lens, this thesis demonstrates that a disconnect existed between European perceptions of control over the Illinois Country and the realities on the

⁶¹ For clarity and consistency some of the primary source quotations used in this thesis have been adjusted and updated to include modern spellings. For select examples, see: Clarence W. Alvord ed., *Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790*; Theodore Calvin Pease and Ernestine Jenison ed., *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War, 1747-1755* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1940); Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, (Springfield: Trustees of Illinois state historical library, 1915); Louis Houck ed., *The Spanish Regime in Missouri: A Collection of Papers and Documents Relating to Upper Louisiana Principally Within the Present Limits of Missouri During the Dominion of Spain* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons company, 1909); Lawrence Kinnaid ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, 3 vols, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946); Reuben G. Thwaites ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, (Cleveland: Burrows Bros. Co., 1896-1901).

⁶² For various works that discuss decolonizing methods and reading against the grain, see: Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 8-9; Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Rosalind Morris ed., *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections of the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 259; Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: a Native History of early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Natalie Zemon Davis, "Polarities, Hybridities: What Strategies for Decentering?" *Decentering the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective*, ed., Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 19-32.

ground. The study of the liquor trade shows that Indigenous peoples, French Creoles, and Euro-American colonists retained the agency and autonomy to shape the Illinois Country's economy, diplomacy, and development between 1750 and 1803. By placing local inhabitants at the centre of the Illinois Country's history, this thesis re-examines how society functioned on the outskirts of empire. By trading and consuming alcohol, Indigenous, French Creole, and Euro-American inhabitants of the region challenged colonial discourses of superiority and asserted their autonomy and authority in the Illinois Country, enabling a re-evaluation of the relationship between power, agency, and resistance at the periphery of empire.

Chapter 1

“I found in them many qualities that are lacking in civilized peoples”: Alcohol, Colonial Discourse, and Social Hierarchy in the Illinois Country

On 24 August 1779, Jean Girault, state’s attorney for the newly formed American government of the Illinois Country, wrote to the magistrates of the Court of Kaskaskia to advocate for the regulation of the liquor trade.⁶³ Due to the dangerous conduct liquor incited amongst Kaskaskia’s residents, Girault believed alcohol was a threat to the settlement’s safety and tranquility.⁶⁴ He used an evocative example to describe his concern.

I call all you gentlemen to witness the things which take place daily at the house of one named Gerard, who is not satisfied with selling intoxicating liquors to all sorts of persons, without restraint and without permission; but who also permits the persons who are drunk at his house, to shoot and discharge guns frequently, the bullets from which pass through the yards and even the homes of several inhabitants who live near to this fatal house; and animals have already been killed and wounded, and it is to be feared that if this continues that persons will fare in the like manner. This is the reason, gentlemen, why I think it is my duty to inform you of this and your duty to put a stop to it.⁶⁵

Alcohol consumption was a lens through which imperial and colonial officials viewed their colonial subjects in the Illinois Country. Girault’s commentary illustrates that he categorized Kaskaskia’s residents based on their alcohol consumption. He presented the dangerous and reckless drunken conduct at Gerard’s house as a symbol of the debased character of Kaskaskia’s populace.⁶⁶ Local inhabitants’ deviation from what colonial officials deemed acceptable alcohol consumption reinforced imperial perceptions of superiority and justified social control.⁶⁷

⁶³ “Jean Girault to the Magistrates of the Court of Kaskaskia, August 24, 1779,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 111-113. After George Rogers Clark’s “conquest” of Kaskaskia on 4 July 1778, Virginian delegates established a new civil government in the settlement. See Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 329-336.

⁶⁴ “Jean Girault to the Magistrates of the Court of Kaskaskia,” 111-112. Comprised of six elected magistrates from Kaskaskia and representatives from surrounding communities, the Court of Kaskaskia was charged with presiding over civil cases in the District of Kaskaskia. The District of Kaskaskia included Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, Chartres village, and St. Phillippe. See Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 336-338.

⁶⁵ “Jean Girault to the Magistrates of the Court of Kaskaskia,” 112.

⁶⁶ For a discussion about how upper-class peoples exaggerated the social ills and issues brought on by lower class consumption see, Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London: Longman, 1983), 158-160; Peter Clark, “The ‘Mother Gin’ controversy in the early Eighteenth century.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38, (1988): 72.

⁶⁷ See, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1-25, 38-39.

Alcohol was at the heart of the social world of early modern Europe, and drinking conventions carried particular social implications.⁶⁸ In early modern England, drinking institutions reinforced class divisions. Elite members of society frequented inns and taverns, while the lower classes often drank at alehouses.⁶⁹ A social hierarchy of drink crystallized during the Gin Craze of the eighteenth century, when spirit consumption and drunkenness increased dramatically amongst the British working class.⁷⁰ Drunkenness had long been considered a vice of the “worst and inferior” classes in England, and the Gin Craze reinforced this perception amongst the bourgeoisie and aristocracy.⁷¹ In eighteenth-century France, excessive alcohol consumption was also considered a lower class issue and intoxication became a symbol of the degraded nature of the labouring classes.⁷²

In England and France, a distinction existed between private and public drunkenness. Elites perceived upper-class drunkenness as a private disease with few social consequences. At the same time, aristocrats and the bourgeois believed public intoxication was endemic amongst the working class, and interpreted alcohol consumption as the root cause of social ills, such as

⁶⁸ See Austin, *Alcohol in Western Society from Antiquity to 1800*; Gina Hames, *Alcohol in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 3-15, 20-38; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 1-28; Brennan, “Social Drinking in Old Regime Paris,” 61-65. Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture*, 9-10, 187. Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender*, 5-6. For a discussion of how drinking houses were microcosms of early modern European society, see: Beat Kumin, *Drinking Matters: Public Houses and Social Exchange in Early Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), 131, 147-171.

⁶⁹ Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 3-14, 124-125.

⁷⁰ See Jessica Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason* (New York: Random House Incorporated, 2003); Patrick Dillon, *Gin: The much-lamented death of Madam Geneva* (Boston: Justin, Charles & Co., 2004). For statistics regarding the increased consumption of spirits in Britain during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the reasons for this historical development, see: Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 39, 212-215, 239, 292-293; Jonathan White, “The ‘Slow but Sure Poyson’: The Representation of Gin and its Drinkers, 1736-1751,” *Journal of British Studies* 42, No. 1 (January 2003), 38; Clark, “Mother Gin,” 64.

⁷¹ See Jonathan White, 35-64; Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 108-115; Joan Kent, “Attitudes of Members of the House of Commons to the Regulation of ‘Personal Conduct’ in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England,” *Historical Research* 46, no. 113 (1973): 49; Robert Brink Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth Century England* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 7-8.

⁷² Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture*, 8-11, 25-75.

theft and violence.⁷³ Thus, drinking and drunkenness contributed to the construction and maintenance of a social hierarchy in eighteenth-century Europe.

This European drinking culture was recreated in France, Spain, and Britain's North American colonies. Across the thirteen colonies, British colonial governments stipulated how individuals should consume alcohol, and who could partake, establishing a social hierarchy of drink.⁷⁴ As historian Sharon Salinger outlines in her analysis of drinking culture in Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York, by determining who could drink and acceptable drinking patterns, liquor legislation was an act of governmental control that reinforced European cultural assumptions about hierarchical status, which stratified colonial society based on gender, race, and class.⁷⁵ Similarly, historian Catherine Ferland argues that in New France, imperial and religious leaders considered drunkenness a form of debauchery that elites attempted to avoid in order to separate themselves from the popular classes.⁷⁶ Lastly, historian William Taylor contends that due to differing European and Indigenous rituals of alcohol consumption in New Spain, specifically different definitions of moderation, colonial officials interpreted liquor

⁷³ For a discussion of public drinking in England and its social implications, see: Rapin, 466; Kent, 49, 62; Jonathan White, "Luxury and Labour: Ideas of Labouring-Class Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England," (Phd Diss., University of Warwick, 2001), 2. For a discussion of public drinking in France, see: See Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture*, 288-292, 295-299; Thomas Brennan, "Towards a cultural history of alcohol in France," *Journal of Social History* 23, no. 1 (1989): 78-82; A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Violence, and Disorder in Traditional Europe* (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2009), 131. In Europe, working class drunkenness was judged more severely than the drinking and intoxication of more affluent members of society, see: Clark, "Mother Gin," 81; M.M. Goldsmith, "Public Virtue and Private Vices: Bernard Mandeville and English Political Ideologies in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 9, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 493.

⁷⁴ Salinger, 83-150; Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 25-27.

⁷⁵ Salinger, 9, 21-24, 149-150. Salinger's argument runs contrary to David Conroy and Peter Thompson's assessments of the social conditions reflected in drinking houses. They argue that public houses were social spaces where indicators of social hierarchy were relaxed. However, Salinger's argument is more applicable to this chapter because she examines the intent and implementation of colonial liquor laws in great detail. For additional information, see: Conroy, *In Public Houses*; Peter Thompson, *Rum punch & revolution: Taverngoing & public life in eighteenth century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

⁷⁶ Ferland also argues that elite drunkenness was an issue in Canada. Canada refers to the series of French settlements and seigneuries along the St. Lawrence River from Québec to Montreal. See Ferland, 187-189, 195-196.

consumption as a sign of the uncivilized nature of Indigenous peoples.⁷⁷ Building on this historiography, this chapter examines how alcohol consumption influenced imperial and colonial perceptions of the Illinois Country and its inhabitants between 1750 and 1803.

Although colonial officials reproduced European drinking cultures in North America, as historian Stephen Greenblatt suggests, cultural ideas take on distinctive local characteristics as they move into new regions.⁷⁸ After liquor was introduced into the Illinois Country in the late seventeenth century, colonial officials, colonists, and Indigenous peoples developed divergent cultural uses for alcohol.⁷⁹ This chapter focuses on imperial and colonial perceptions of the trade and consumption of liquor. For colonial officials, alcohol consumption became an indicator of difference between colonial elites and the Illinois Country's populace. Colonial discourses emerged regarding liquor that informed imperial and colonial perceptions of the Illinois Country's diverse inhabitants.

In his influential book, *Orientalism*, Edward Said examined how colonial discourses of European superiority over the Orient (Middle East) facilitated imperial dominance of the region.⁸⁰ An ideological accompaniment to imperial power, colonial discourses influenced how colonizers viewed their colonial subjects.⁸¹ Said argued, that by establishing the colonized

⁷⁷ William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 40-42.

⁷⁸ See Stephen Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility: an Introduction," in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1-23.

⁷⁹ For example, some Indigenous peoples used alcohol consumption, specifically intoxication, as a method of connecting with the spiritual world. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 63-84; Ishii, 32-33; Jerold Levy and Stephen Kunitz, *Indian Drinking: Navajo Practices and Anglo-American Theories* (New York: Wiley, 1974), 181-184.

⁸⁰ Said applied Foucault's idea of discourse to the Orient. Foucault defined discourse as a system of understanding by which dominant societal groups create a standard set of knowledge, disciplines, and values about a dominated group which becomes synonymous with truth. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 3-5; Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁸¹ Said, 32-49, 197; Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 38-42. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed., Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-13.

population as the “other” who is irrational, depraved, childlike, and inherently inferior, colonial discourses contribute to the construction of stereotypes that justify imperial control.⁸² Thus, ideas facilitate colonialism by developing perceptions of imperial superiority over the colonized.⁸³ By shaping colonial perceptions, defining racial hierarchies, and enacting moral judgements, colonial discourses inform imperial policy and enable settler colonialism.⁸⁴ However, it is important to note that a dialectic exists between imperial perceptions and colonial society on the ground, which influences the emergence and ongoing evolution of colonial discourses.⁸⁵ Applying post-colonial theory to the Illinois Country, this chapter analyzes the colonial discourses surrounding alcohol to illuminate how imperial and colonial officials viewed their colonial subjects, and justified their subjugation.

In the Illinois Country, colonial officials, colonists, and the colonized were judged based on how they consumed alcohol. Although all social groups drank, where alcohol was consumed, the quantity consumed, and the behavior of individuals while under its influence, shaped colonial discourses. This chapter argues that the adherence to, and divergence from, what colonial elites deemed acceptable forms of alcohol consumption led French, British, Spanish, and American officials to construct colonial discourses of imperial superiority over the Indigenous, French Creole, and Euro-American inhabitants of the Illinois Country, which justified and enabled assertions of colonial control.

Indigenous Drinking and Colonial Discourses

Over the course of four colonial regimes in the Illinois Country, the trade and consumption of alcohol informed imperial and colonial perceptions of Indigenous peoples.

⁸² Said, 38-41; Loomba, 98-99. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 67-74.

⁸³ Said, 3-5, 39; Stoler and Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony,” 11-13.

⁸⁴ Said, *Orientalism*.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

Ethnohistorian Michael Witgen argues that Europeans viewed Indigenous people through a “lens of discovery,” inherent cultural biases that influenced European perceptions of the North American colonial environment and the continent’s diverse Native groups.⁸⁶ Colonial officials classified Indigenous peoples based on observations of difference.⁸⁷ Historian Guillaume Aubert’s work regarding blood purity demonstrates that European theories used to formulate class divisions in Europe were adapted to construct racial and ethnic divisions in colonial North America. Aubert argues that French ideas regarding blood purity were used to distinguish between the aristocracy and the lower classes in France; however, when transposed to North America, French beliefs concerning blood purity took on an ethnic and racial dimension. The differences colonial officials observed between French and Indigenous physical features, cultures, and social behavior contributed to the French perception of racial superiority over Indigenous peoples. In the eighteenth century, imperial and colonial officials opposed French-Indigenous intermarriage to avoid diluting French blood lines with inferior Indigenous blood.⁸⁸ Similarly, European drinking cultures used to distinguish between the upper and lower classes

⁸⁶ Witgen argues that imperial and colonial officials positioned Indigenous inhabitants of North America on a spectrum between civilization and savagery. Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 17, 25-28, 36-39. Acknowledging the varied historic meanings of the term savage, or sauvage, for the purposes of this chapter, savage refers to backward and uncivilized people. For a discussion of the history of the terms “savage” and “sauvage,” see: Dickason, 63-70; Gordon M. Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), xiv-xvi.

⁸⁷ Gordon Sayre argues that French and English travel writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used the trope of negation to highlight Indigenous difference and inferiority and used the trope of substitution to explain the connection between European and Indigenous societies. Together, these tropes enabled Europeans to justify the subjugation of Indigenous peoples, despite the similarities they identified between Europeans and Indigenous peoples. Sayre, 81-82, 138-143. For additional discussions of European constructions of difference as a form of confirming superiority see: Saliha Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy,” *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 2005): 325-326; Witgen, 17, 25-28, 36-39.

⁸⁸ Guillaume Aubert, “‘The Blood of France’: Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (July 2004): 439-478. For a discussion of similar notions of ethnic difference in Spain and Britain’s North American colonies, see: Thomas N. Ingersoll, *To Intermix with our White Brothers: Indian Mixed Bloods in the United States from Earliest Times to the Indian Removals* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 3-5, 18-21, 28, 36, 39-40, 52-53.

were racialized in colonial North America. Colonial officials interpreted Indigenous divergence from European drinking conventions as a sign of the debased character of Native peoples. Excessive alcohol consumption and public drunkenness within Indigenous communities contributed to the construction of colonial discourses that confirmed and reinforced colonial perceptions of superiority over the Illinois Country's Indigenous population.⁸⁹

In 1750, Louis Vivier, a Jesuit priest, wrote multiple letters to a colleague describing the Illinois Country and the status of his mission to convert the local Indigenous population. Stationed at Kaskaskia, Vivier interacted closely with the Illinois and other Native groups in the surrounding region, developing an intimate knowledge of their communities and customs.⁹⁰ Complicating French stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, Vivier argued,

Nothing but erroneous ideas are conceived of them [Indigenous peoples] in Europe; they are hardly believed to be men. This is a gross error. The Savages, and especially the Illinois, are of a very gentle and sociable nature. They have wit, and seem to have more than our peasants— as much, at least, as most Frenchmen.⁹¹

Although he recognized their human characteristics, Vivier stated that he “found in them [the Illinois] many qualities that are lacking in civilized peoples.”⁹² Vivier interpreted Illinois drunkenness and their subsequent conduct as a symbol of Illinois savagery. Informed by racial discourses that developed in New France, French drinking conventions, and biblical teachings regarding drunkenness, Vivier characterized the Illinois based on their patterns of alcohol consumption: “As a rule, the Illinois are very lazy and greatly addicted to brandy; this is the

⁸⁹ See Sayre, 138-139; Said, 38-41; Loomba, 98-99.

⁹⁰ Louis Vivier, “Letter from Father Vivier, Missionary among the Illinois, to Father ***” in *The Jesuit Relations*, 69: 143-149. The Illinois (also called the Illinois Indians or Illinois Confederacy) refers to a group of Indigenous communities that inhabited the Middle Mississippi Valley and connected watersheds between the Illinois and Ohio Rivers. These communities include, the Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Tamaroa, Peoria, Michigamea, and others. See Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 11-35.

⁹¹ “Letter from Father Vivier, Missionary among the Illinois, to Father ***,” 69:145-147.

⁹² Ibid.

cause of the insignificant results that we obtain among them.”⁹³ In a subsequent letter, Vivier provided a detailed description of alcohol’s influence on the Indigenous peoples of the Illinois Country,

The Savages — and especially the Illinois, who are the gentlest and most tractable of men — become, when intoxicated, madmen and wild beasts . . . they fall upon one another, stab with their knives, and tear one another. Many have lost their ears, and some a portion of their noses, in these tragic encounters.⁹⁴

Vivier’s description of Indigenous intoxication in the Illinois Country fits into larger French discourses regarding Native peoples. By the 1750s, most Euro-American writers did not question that Indigenous peoples were human, but argued they were inferior to Europeans due to their uncivilized and pagan lifestyles.⁹⁵ Indigenous divergence from European customs, religions, and ideologies, established a sense of European superiority over the Indigenous population of North America.⁹⁶ Vivier’s account acts as one example of how French officials used liquor consumption to construct and reinforce perceived racial hierarchies in the Illinois

⁹³ Ibid., 145-149. For examples of biblical teachings regarding alcohol, see: Gal 5:19-21, 1 Pet 4:3, Eph 5:18, Prov 20:1. For a discussion of the connections European officials made between Indigenous peoples and barbarous civilizations described in the bible, see Sayre, ix, xvi, 30, 81; Dickason, 29-40; 249-270. For a discussion of French racial discourse and its development in French North America see: Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism,” 322-349; Saliha Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire: Uniformity in French and British Colonies, 1541-1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁹⁴ Louis Vivier, “Letter from Father Vivier of the Society of Jesus, to a Father of the same Society,” in *The Jesuit Relations*, 69:199-201.

⁹⁵ Saliha Belmessous argues that by the eighteenth century the general French failure to civilize and assimilate (“frenchify”) Indigenous peoples led to the emergence of a racialized discourse that defined Native peoples as inherently savage. For a discussion of French perceptions of Indigenous peoples in North America, see: Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy,” 322-349; Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1984); Christian F. Feest, “Indians and Europe? Editor’s Postscript,” in *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, ed., Christian F. Feest (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 609.

⁹⁶ Deborah Doxtator, “Inclusive and Exclusive Perceptions of Difference: Native and Euro-based Concepts of Time, History, and Change,” in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective*, ed., Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 33-34; James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 39-86.

Country.⁹⁷ The public drunkenness of Indigenous peoples became emblematic of the savage character of the Illinois peoples, which contributed to French perceptions of superiority, and justified missionary work and colonialism more broadly.

In the French Illinois, Indigenous intoxication was a recurring symbol of Native backwardness that informed European perceptions of the local Indigenous population and contributed to the organization of a perceived social hierarchy. Jean Bossu, a French traveller and merchant in the North American interior, constructed a colonial discourse surrounding alcohol consumption, which justified French paternalism. In 1752, while wintering in the Illinois Country, Bossu employed a Michigamea hunter who had an affinity for alcohol.⁹⁸ Bossu interpreted the Michigamea's drunkenness and objectionable conduct under alcohol's influence as a sign of the hunter's weakness, and at the request of the man's wife devised a plan to stop his alcohol abuse. When the Michigamea was drunk, Bossu tricked the hunter to sell his son in exchange for a barrel of brandy. The following morning, Bossu coerced his devastated Michigamea employee to adopt sobriety in exchange for his son's return.⁹⁹ The Michigamea's debased character justified Bossu's cruel paternalistic plot to encourage abstinence. In a 1756 letter, Bossu provided a detailed description of alcohol's effect on Indigenous people in the Illinois Country, "The Indians are excessively fond of this liquor, and grow furious when they have drank too much of it . . . I have sometimes seen drunken Indians kill each other with hatches and clubs."¹⁰⁰ Bossu's accounts suggest that by the eighteenth century a definitive

⁹⁷ For a discussion of the racial hierarchy that French colonists constructed in North America, see: Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire*; Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialization," 322-349; Aubert, 439-478.

⁹⁸ Bossu recalled that after a successful day of hunting, instead of giving Bossu the peltries, the Michigamea sold the furs for brandy. On a different occasion, the Michigamea hunter broke into the King's Magazine and stole some brandy. Jean Bossu, *Travels through that Part of North America formerly called Louisiana*, trans. John Reinhold Forster (London: T. Cavies, 1771), 1: 119-123.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1:196-197.

French conception of racial hierarchy had developed in North America, which characterized Indigenous peoples as inferior based on their violent and uncivilized character.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Indigenous drunkenness fit conveniently into broader French conceptions of race, which reinforced French perceptions of superiority over Indigenous peoples and justified French paternalism.¹⁰²

On the west side of the Mississippi, Spanish officials constructed comparable colonial discourses surrounding Native drunkenness. In March 1766, four years after the Treaty of Fontainebleau transferred control over the west bank of the Mississippi to Spain, Antonio Ulloa arrived at New Orleans with a small party of soldiers, establishing a Spanish imperial presence in Louisiana.¹⁰³ In 1767, Governor Ulloa authorized Captain Francisco Riu to lead an expedition to establish Spanish control over the Illinois Country. Ulloa drafted a set of instructions to guide Riu's mission. Although he had never travelled to the Illinois Country, Ulloa constructed an image of the area's Indigenous peoples based on reports of Native intoxication:

When they go to excess, and they do that, either through their inclination to theft or because they are so fond of intemperance, and when they are reproached, they give the satisfaction that is demanded in just terms. But if anyone tries to take justice for himself, although with the greatest moderation, they are irritated to so great a degree that, forgetful of their friendship, they become the cruelest of enemies . . . In private they are like wild beasts in their uncouthness and brutality.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Bossu's commentary reinforces Guillaume Aubert's argument that by the eighteenth century, French officials asserted that that Native peoples were "inherently inferior beings with bad blood," which carried their inferior traits. Aubert, 477-478. For additional information regarding race in French North America, see: Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 439-478. For an additional primary source example, see "Duquesne to Rouillé, October 31, 1753," *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 843-851.

¹⁰² See James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 42. Sayre, xvi-xvii, 81-82, 138-143; Dickason, xi-xv. Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism," 439-478.

¹⁰³ Ulloa had 90 soldiers and three civil servants in his entourage when he arrived at New Orleans in 1766. Dianne Guenin-Lelle, *The Story of French New Orleans: History of a Creole City* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 103-104.

¹⁰⁴ "Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:10-11.

Ulloa presented alcohol consumption as a representation of Indigenous savagery. Historian Olive Patricia Dickason argues that the “wild man of the woods,” a popular folkloric figure in medieval and early modern Europe, influenced European perceptions of Indigenous peoples in North America. The “wild man of the woods,” or “*l’homme sauvage*” in France, was a primitive, sub-human group that lived in nature.¹⁰⁵ Ulloa’s description of the Illinois Country’s Indigenous population was an iteration of the “wild man of the woods” mythology that was reproduced in colonial North America to describe Native peoples and their behavior. Reacting to reports of Native drunkenness, Ulloa characterized the Indigenous peoples of the Illinois Country as backward and barbaric. Ulloa believed that the dangerous and dishonorable conduct of Indigenous peoples under alcohol’s influence justified paternalistic imperial policies, asserting, “brandy should not be permitted to be introduced among them [Indigenous peoples], although that liquor is the thing they most desire.”¹⁰⁶

Ulloa’s condemnation of Indigenous drinking is representative of a common set of discourses regarding Native alcohol consumption that developed amongst Spanish officials in Upper Louisiana. In 1768, Governor Ulloa instructed Captain Pedro Piernas to travel to the Spanish Illinois Country and replace Riu as Spanish commandant.¹⁰⁷ After arriving at St. Louis in February 1769, he was informed that a rebellion had broken out in New Orleans. Piernas was instructed to hand control of St. Louis to experienced French military commander Louis Groston Saint-Ange sieur de Bellerive and return to New Orleans.¹⁰⁸ Upon Piernas’s return, the newly

¹⁰⁵ Dickason, 63-84.

¹⁰⁶ “Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country,” 1:11.

¹⁰⁷ During his 1768 expedition to St. Louis, Piernas agreed to govern Spanish Upper Louisiana collaboratively with Louis Saint-Ange de Bellerive, the French Commandant in the Illinois Country, see Patricia Cleary, *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil: A History of Colonial St. Louis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 101-106. Appointed the first lieutenant governor of the Spanish Illinois Country, Piernas officially took control over St. Louis in May 1770 with broad administrative power. Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 73-75, 90, 93-95.

¹⁰⁸ Cleary, 102-104.

appointed Governor of Spanish Louisiana, Alejandro O'Reilly, requested a detailed report on the Illinois Country. Regarding the Illinois Country, Piernas wrote, "license, laxity of conduct, and vice are characteristic of its inhabitants."¹⁰⁹ He used alcohol consumption to highlight the debased character of the region's Indigenous peoples. Regarding the Native population in the St. Geneviève district, Piernas stated, "The Indians are found to be importunate, insolent, and perhaps murderous, because of the intoxication to which they are inclined."¹¹⁰ He expanded this characterization to include all Indigenous groups in the Illinois Country, stating that "when drunk they are importunate, beggars, insatiable, and tiresome."¹¹¹ Indigenous drunkenness was a symbol of Native barbarism and idleness. The violent Native conduct under alcohol's influence and the deference of intoxicated Indigenous peoples to work highlighted the difference between Spaniards and Indigenous peoples. These observations reinforced the perception of Indigenous backwardness and Spanish superiority.¹¹² Similar colonial discourses regarding Indigenous alcohol consumption persisted amongst Spanish imperial and colonial officials in the Mississippi Valley over the next four decades.¹¹³

In the British Illinois on the east bank of the Mississippi, alcohol consumption shaped imperial perceptions of the region's diverse Indigenous inhabitants. One of the first British military officers to reach the Illinois Country, Lieutenant Alexander Fraser, constructed a

¹⁰⁹ "Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly," 1:70. Carl J. Ekberg, *François Vallé and His World: Upper Louisiana Before Lewis and Clark*. University of Missouri Press, 2002), 100-106.

¹¹⁰ "Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly," 1:66, 70.

¹¹¹ The Indigenous nations Piernas identified in the document include: the Osages, Iowa, Kickapoo, Mascoutens, Potawatomes, and Ottawa. Ibid., 73-74.

¹¹² For a brief discussion of how perceptions of idleness influenced European perceptions of Indigenous peoples in North America, see: Sayre, 103.

¹¹³ For additional examples of Spanish colonial discourses regarding Native liquor consumption, see: "Durnford to O'Reilly [1770]," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 1:179-180; "Leyba to Galvez, July 13, 1779," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, 1:346-347; "Investigation Concerning Sale of Liquor at Arkansas Post to the Abenakis, May 19, 1787," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, 2:203-208; "Journal of Lorimier during the Threatened Genet Invasion of Louisiana, 1793-1795," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2: 94-96.

colonial discourse surrounding drink, providing insight into how British officials categorized their Indigenous subjects in the Illinois Country. Spurred on by the outbreak of Pontiac's War in January 1765, Lieutenant Fraser was tasked with leading a small British party to take control of the Illinois Country and placate belligerent Indigenous nations in the region with the help of Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, George Croghan.¹¹⁴ Upon his arrival at Fort de Chartres (the centre of French governance in the Illinois Country), local Native peoples took Fraser as their prisoner.¹¹⁵ After being released, in May 1766, Fraser travelled down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.¹¹⁶ The prevalence of alcohol influenced Fraser's description of the Illinois Country's Native population and he presented Indigenous drunkenness as evidence of Indigenous inferiority. Writing to Colonel Frederick Haldimand, Fraser argued that Indigenous peoples in the trans-Appalachian West had a nearly unequaled passion for drunkenness, and opined that "The Indians are Cruel, Treacherous and cowardly . . . They are in general great Drunkards."¹¹⁷

Fraser's commentary regarding Indigenous drunkenness is representative of the stereotypical discourses British colonial officials used to describe the Illinois Country's Native population.¹¹⁸ In July 1768 an anonymous author made generalizations about the character of the

¹¹⁴ Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter, "British Illinois, 1763-1778," in *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, ixli-li. Also see "Gage to Johnson, February 2, 1765," in *The Critical Period*, 427-428; "Croghan to the Lords of Trade, June 8, 1764," in *The Critical Period*, 262-263; David MacDonald, *Lives of Fort de Chartres: Commandants, Soldiers, Civilians in French Illinois, 1720-1770*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), 32.

¹¹⁵ Alvord and Carter, "British Illinois, 1763-1778," lii-liii; Clarence E. Carter, *Great Britain and the Illinois Country*, 39-41.

¹¹⁶ Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 262-263; "Fraser to [Haldimand], May 4, 1766," in *The New Régime*, 226-232.

¹¹⁷ "Fraser to [Haldimand], May 4, 1766," in *The New Régime*, 231; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 228. The term trans-Appalachian west refers to the geographical region west of the Appalachian Mountains constrained by the Mississippi Valley in the west, the Great Lakes in the North, and by the Gulf of Mexico in the South.

¹¹⁸ For additional examples, see: "Fraser to Gage, May 26, 1765," in *The Critical Period*, 515-516; "Gage to Hillsborough, February 3, 1769," in *Trade and Politics, 1767-1769*, ed., Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter (Springfield: Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, 1921), 488; "Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department," in *The Critical Period*, 334; "Review of the Trade and Affairs in the Northern Department of District of America [September 22, 1767]," in *Trade and Politics*, 37; "Memorial of Henry Van Schaak and other Traders to Sir William Johnson, Detroit, November 26, 1767) in *Trade and Politics*, 121-125.

Illinois Country's Indigenous people based on their patterns of alcohol consumption: "By the constant use of Spirituous Liquors [they] become Effeminate and Debilitated: so much that nothing can be apprehended, from such a Dastardly Race of Cowards."¹¹⁹ A year later, George Butricke, adjutant to Captain Thomas Barnsley, wrote from Fort de Chartres that "The Indians that live hereabouts [The Illinois Country] are a very mean, Indolent Drunken set of people, whom the French have entirely at their command."¹²⁰ By highlighting Indigenous difference from British colonial officials, Native drunkenness in the Illinois Country perpetuated British stereotypes of Indigenous savagery, and reinforced British conceptions of racial hierarchy.¹²¹ These negative stereotypes remained ubiquitous after Virginia took control over the Illinois Country in 1778. Building upon a well-established tradition, Virginian and later United States officials in the County of the Illinois continued to use Native drunkenness to categorize Indigenous peoples as an inferior "other."¹²²

Colonial discourses regarding Indigenous alcohol consumption were not always derogatory. By limiting their alcohol consumption, Indigenous groups complicated imperial and colonial stereotypes. For example, during Lieutenant Fraser's travels through the North American interior, he identified three communities that challenged British discourses surrounding Indigenous alcohol consumption, "I must except the Osages nor are the Arkansas or Chickasaws, so passionately fond of drink as other Nations are, These two are extremely like

¹¹⁹ "Letter from the Illinois to Gage, 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 340.

¹²⁰ "Butricke to Barnsley," in *Trade and Politics*, 496-497.

¹²¹ Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers*, 35; Alden T. Vaughan, "From white man to redskin: Changing Anglo-American perceptions of the American Indian," *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 4 (1982): 917-953.

¹²² For examples of colonial discourse surrounding alcohol during the American regime, see: "Proclamation by Clark, December 24, 1778," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 8:91-92; "At a Court, October 15, 1780," in *Cahokia Records*, 73; "Inhabitants of Kaskaskia to the Magistrates, May 25, 1782," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 287; "Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia," 607; "Proclamation Concerning Liquor Traffic, September 6, 1779," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 117-118.

each other and are more remarkable for their Attachment to the white people than any other.”¹²³

Fraser’s commentary provides additional insight into how European officials perceived Indigenous drinking. It was not merely the act of drinking that revealed the debased character of Indigenous peoples, but public intoxication and the subsequent conduct of drunken Indigenous peoples that reinforced racialized discourse. By avoiding public drunkenness, the Osage, Arkansas, and Chickasaw established a connection between their drinking conventions and elite concepts of acceptable drinking behavior, which informed Fraser’s assertion that these groups were “more remarkable” than other Indigenous communities he encountered. Fraser’s commentary is particularly interesting given the diverse reputations of these Native groups and the different relationships they had with Britain. The Chickasaw were British allies during the eighteenth century.¹²⁴ The Osage were known as strong and aggressive defenders of their lands, who had contentious relationships with the French and the Spanish during the eighteenth century.¹²⁵ The Arkansas (Quapaw) were an influential Native group in the lower Mississippi Valley, who played Spain and Britain against one another to promote their community’s prosperity after the Seven Years’ War.¹²⁶ As a result, Quapaw-British relations were contentious throughout the 1760s.¹²⁷ Despite the varied associations Britain had with these Native groups, Fraser constructed a complimentary depiction of these three Indigenous communities based on

¹²³ “Fraser to [Haldimand], May 4, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 230-231.

¹²⁴ Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2016), 19-22; DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 135, 153; Wendy St. Jean, “Trading Paths: Mapping Chickasaw History in the Eighteenth Century,” *The American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 3&4 (Summer/Fall 2003): 760-761, 765-766; Jim Piccuch, *Three Peoples One King: Loyalists, Indians, and Slaves in the Revolutionary South, 1775-1782* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 30-31, 117-119, 272-273; Robbie Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540-1715* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 212-214.

¹²⁵ Louis F. Burns, *A History of the Osage People* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 87-135; Gilbert C. Din and Abraham Nasatir, *The Imperial Osages: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983); DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 110, 124-125, 150-151.

¹²⁶ W. David Baird, *The Quapaw Indians: A History of the Downstream People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 21-53; Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 88, 98.

¹²⁷ Baird, 21-53; DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 128-130, 135-141.

their ability to limit public drunkenness. To colonial officials, Indigenous development, progress, and civilization was dependent on Native acceptance of European customs, knowledge, and lifestyles.¹²⁸ By inadvertently drinking in a way that colonial elites deemed acceptable, Indigenous groups were elevated to higher positions within colonially constructed social hierarchies.

In the Illinois Country, the exchange and consumption of alcohol reinforced imperial perceptions of European superiority over the local Indigenous population. Colonial officials interpreted recurring instances of Indigenous drunkenness and subsequent violence as a symbol of backwardness and inferiority. Native divergence from what colonial elites deemed acceptable alcohol consumption, contributed to the colonial construction of a racial hierarchy in the Illinois Country and justified colonial assertions of control.

Euro-American Consumption and Colonial Discourses

The Indigenous population was not the only social group in the Illinois Country that colonial officials classified based on their alcohol consumption. As historian Nancy Christie argues, in colonial North America difference was not only constructed based on race, but “frequently functioned in non-racial contexts.”¹²⁹ As Guillaume Aubert and anthropologist Audrey Smedley have shown, European concepts used to construct and maintain class divisions, such as blood purity in France and property ownership in Britain, were transferred to colonial North America and used to construct and reinforce class and ethnic divisions between Euro-American settlers and colonial elites.¹³⁰ In the Illinois Country, colonial discourses surrounding

¹²⁸ See Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 17, 25-28, 36-39; Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism,” 322-349.

¹²⁹ Nancy Christie, “Introduction: Theorizing a Colonial Past: Canada as a Society of British Settlement,” in *Transatlantic Subjects: Ideas, Institutions, and Social Experience in Post-Revolutionary British North America*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 16.

¹³⁰ Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 2nd ed, (Oxford: Westview, 1999), 51-88; Aubert, 439-478.

Euro-American alcohol consumption provide insight into how imperial and colonial officials established and maintained social divisions. Colonial officials interpreted the drinking and drunkenness of Euro-American settlers as a sign of their lower-class character.

In a 1753 letter to French Minister of the Marine, Antoine-Louis Rouillé, Governor General of New France Michel-Ange Duquesne de Menneville disparaged both the Indigenous and French Creole populations of the Illinois Country for their alcohol consumption. Duquesne stated, “This [liquor] trade is the more pernicious in that you can never be sure of the tranquillity in those regions of the Indians who when drunk kill with impunity because it is enough for them to say that they had no sense.”¹³¹ The Governor General considered French consumption equally troubling. “What puts the capstone on this disorder is the fact that the French who inhabit this post [Fort de Chartres] have become as drunken as Indians and to such a degree that they completely neglect their farms.”¹³² By equating the consumption of the Indigenous population and the Illinois Country’s French colonists Duquesne created an image of an uncivilized and backward French population on the periphery.¹³³

Duquesne’s condemnation of French alcohol consumption fits into larger French discourses regarding French Creoles in the Illinois Country and the North American interior.¹³⁴ Historian Robert Englebert argues that it was common for colonial representatives to classify French Creoles as “others,” based on their manners, social custom, and behavior.¹³⁵ Examining French travel narratives from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Englebert illustrates that French travel writers exploring the North American interior connected mobile fur trade

¹³¹ “Duquesne to Rouillé, October 31, 1753,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 845.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 845-846.

¹³³ For an additional example in which European and Indigenous consumption is compared, see: Bossu, 119-120.

¹³⁴ See Englebert, “Beyond Borders,” 207-208. For additional sources that discuss the social stigma surrounding excessive alcohol consumption in France and New France, see: Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture*, 9-19; Ferland, 187-189, 195-196.

¹³⁵ See Englebert, “Beyond Borders,” 177-178; Sayre, 114-115.

lifestyles with laziness and backwardness, while sedentary agricultural lifestyles were associated with modernity, intelligence, and prosperity.¹³⁶ Duquesne's letter shows that colonial officials constructed comparable discourses during French rule in Illinois Country; however, the drunken comportment of French colonists in the Illinois Country blurred the distinctions between trade and agricultural lifestyles. Duquesne's critique of French Creole alcohol consumption suggests drinking to excess was common amongst French merchants and farmers in the Illinois Country. Interpreted as tangible evidence of the debased state of the French Creole population, liquor consumption contributed to the construction of a social hierarchy in the Illinois Country, which situated imperial and colonial officials in a morally and socially superior position compared to French colonists.

As the French inhabitants of the Illinois Country transitioned from colonizers to being colonized after the Treaty of Paris in 1763, British officials interpreted French Creole alcohol consumption as a sign of their inferior lower-class character. The Anglo-French clash of cultures in the Illinois Country combined with a longstanding imperial and military rivalry to produce British contempt for the French.¹³⁷ Much like the racialized discourses regarding Indigenous peoples in North America, Britons defined themselves as superior based on cultural differences

¹³⁶ Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 191-196, 220-221.

¹³⁷ These anti-French sentiments were heightened in Britain during the eighteenth century largely due to the various wars France and Britain fought against one another. See Paul Mapp, "British Culture and the Changing Character of the mid-eighteenth century British Empire," in *Cultures in Conflict: The Seven Years' War in North America* ed., Warren R. Hofstra (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 23-60; Stephen Conway, "The Consequences of Conquest: Quebec and British Politics, 1760-1774," in *Revisiting 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Perspective*, ed., Phillip Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 141-146. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 1-6, 17-35, 87-90, 376-377; Jeremy Black, *Natural and Necessary Enemies: Anglo-French Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1986).

with France. Britons characterized the French as superstitious (devoid of true religion), unfree, decadent, and warlike.¹³⁸

British officials in the Illinois Country interpreted French alcohol consumption as one example of French Creole inferiority. Reflecting on his journey through the Illinois Country in 1766, Lieutenant Alexander Fraser compared French Creole and Indigenous consumption. Fraser argued, “Nothing can equal their [the Illinois’] passion for drunkenness, but that of the French Inhabitants, who are for the greatest part drunk every day while they can get Drink to buy in the Colony.”¹³⁹ He interpreted French Creole alcohol abuse as the manifestation of their inferior French character, stating that French Creoles “are for the most part, transported Convicts, or people who have fled for some Crimes, those who have not done it themselves are the offspring of such as those I just mentioned, inheriting their Forefathers Vices.”¹⁴⁰ British discourses surrounding French Creole drunkenness fortified British perceptions of ethnic superiority over their French subjects in the Illinois Country. An extension of anti-French sentiments common in Britain during the eighteenth century, Fraser presented these similarities between Indigenous and French Creole drinking practices as evidence of French Creole backwardness, which reinforced their lower class social standing.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ See Colley, 6, 17-35, 87-90, 376. Edward Watts, *In this Remote Country: French Colonial Culture in the Anglo-American Imagination, 1780-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 7-17.

¹³⁹ “Fraser to [Haldimand], May 4, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 228. For a discussion of British perceptions of French Creoles in the Illinois Country, see: Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 200-201. For a discussion of Britain and France’s long military struggle and its connection to anti-French sentiments amongst the British, see: Mapp, 23-60.

¹⁴⁰ “Fraser to [Haldimand], May 4, 1766,” 228

¹⁴¹ This sentiment can also be viewed as an extension of British contempt for Frenchmen who many British believed to be inciting and continuing to advocate for an opposition to British rule in the North American interior. See Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 194-196, 200-201; Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 101. For additional primary sources examples, see: “Fraser to [Haldimand] in *The New Régime*, 230; “Croghan’s Journal, August 1765,” in *The New Régime*, 36-37; “Johnson to the Lords of Trade, November 16, 1765,” in *The New Régime*, 118-119. “Eddingstone to -----, October 17, 1765,” in *The New Régime*, 106.

While the Anglo-French rivalry certainly lent itself to easy depictions of ethnic “others,” Anglo-American colonists on the frontier were not exempt from stereotyping colonial discourses. Replying to a letter from Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Johnson in 1766, Benjamin Franklin described the objectionable conduct of Pennsylvania’s frontier settlers, “It grieves me to hear that our Frontier People are yet greater Barbarians than the Indians, and continue to murder them in time[s] of Peace.”¹⁴² At a subsequent meeting in 1768, the Pennsylvania Assembly identified alcohol as one cause of Anglo-American violence. The Assembly informed Franklin and Johnson that drunken frontiersmen often committed violent acts against Native peoples, which incited Indigenous enmity.¹⁴³ By comparing Anglo-American colonists to Indigenous peoples, these reports demonstrate that Anglo-American liquor consumption and their violent conduct shaped colonial perceptions of British subjects in the North American interior, and helped colonial officials maintain class divisions within the social hierarchy of British North America.

In the Illinois Country, soldier consumption offers yet another example of how colonial officials interpreted and reacted to drunkenness. Due to liquor’s perceived medicinal value and ability to strengthen soldiers’ morale, alcohol was a common ration given to European soldiers in North America during the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁴ Military officers believed alcohol was only

¹⁴² “B. Franklin to Johnson, September 12, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 376-377. For an additional example, see “Report from Robertson, March 8, 1764,” in *The Critical Period*, 216-217.

¹⁴³ “Pennsylvania Assembly to B. Franklin and R. Jackson, January 19, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 156-158. For an additional reference to drunkenness amongst European inhabitants of the Illinois, see: “The Banishment of the Jesuits from Louisiana, July 9, 1763,” 91-92.

¹⁴⁴ For examples of rations of alcohol being provided to soldiers in the Illinois or trans-Appalachian West, see: “Report from Robertson, March 8, 1764,” 216-221; “David Lyster to George Moorehead, February 4, 1779,” in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 8:101-102; Henry Hamilton, “The Unpublished Journal of Lieut. Gov. Henry Hamilton,” in *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution* ed., John D. Barnhart (Crawfordsville: R.A. Banta, 1951), 126-127; “Clark’s Accounts with Virginia,” in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19:254-273; “Receipt of Farmar, March 4, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 160. For a discussion regarding the controversial nature of soldier rations, see: Paul E. Kopperman, “‘The Cheapest Pay’: Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth-Century British Army,” *The Journal of Military History* 60, no. 3 (1996): 446-447, 461-470.

beneficial in moderation and opposed drunkenness due to the conduct it incited amongst the soldiery.¹⁴⁵ The erratic and dangerous behavior of soldiers while intoxicated, led to the implementation of colonial regulations to limit their access to alcohol. For example, in 1767, Governor Ulloa suspended liquor rations for the 44 soldiers sent to the Illinois Country. The Governor reasoned that,

Since the serving of rations of brandy to the soldiers and sailors both on voyages and when halting . . . is an abuse, and from it results intoxication and disorder . . . liquor shall not be taken or included among the rations. The sailor or soldier who is in the habit of drinking may take it on his own account, but even so, he shall not be allowed to use it to excess.¹⁴⁶

Ulloa's proclamation outlines that the "disorder" of soldiers under the influence warranted governmental regulations, regardless of the perceived beneficial effects that small doses of alcohol purportedly brought. Across the Mississippi in the British Illinois, Captain Robert Farmar also prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquors to British soldiers in the Illinois Country to avoid the violence that drinking incited.¹⁴⁷ Soldier divergence from acceptable drinking conventions combined with military expectations for conduct and discipline to justify military officials' orders to prohibit the sale of alcohol to soldiers.

In the Illinois Country, colonial officials not only interpreted excessive alcohol consumption as a symbol of Indigenous inferiority, but also critiqued the drinking patterns of Euro-American inhabitants of the region. Public drunkenness of Euro-American colonists, French Creole settlers, and soldiers in the Illinois Country and the violent, dangerous, and

¹⁴⁵ Kopperman, 446-447, 461-470; Ferland, 211-224; "To Lord George Sackville," in *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe*, ed., Beckles Willson (London: William Henieman, 1909) 366-369. "To Major-General Amherst," in *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe*, 376-377. For an example of soldier violence while under alcohol's influence during the French Period, see: "La Jonquiere to Rouillé, September 25, 1751," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 368.

¹⁴⁶ "Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:1-4. For a source concerning French attempts to regulate the access of French soldiers to alcohol, see: "Order of Command for Macarty, August 8, 1751," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 315.

¹⁴⁷ "Proclamation of Farmar, February 13, 1766," in *The New Régime*, 154.

disruptive conduct that followed reinforced perceived ethnic and class divisions between colonial elites and their colonial subjects.

Upper Class Consumption

While local settlers and soldiers often bore the sharpest criticism for public drunkenness, inebriated imperial and colonial officials were not exempt from judgment. For elites, public intoxication brought a stigma that jeopardized social standing and risked dismissal from positions of authority. Though examples abound for the French, British, and Spanish regimes, this section focuses on two examples from the American period, which illustrate how elite drunkenness was treated in the Illinois Country.¹⁴⁸

Brigadier General George Rogers Clark, commander of Virginian forces in the west during the Revolutionary War, was scrutinized for his alcohol consumption. In October 1782, Virginian Governor Benjamin Harrison wrote to Colonel William Fleming, a member of the Governor's Council, requesting an inquiry into reports regarding Clark's alcohol consumption.¹⁴⁹ "A report much to his prejudice prevails here of his being so addicted to liquor as to be incapable of Attending to his Duty, by which the public Interest suffers much," Harrison explained.¹⁵⁰ Rumors of Clark's drunkenness were a blot on the General's character, and led to questions about whether he was able to perform his duties. As a result, Harrison requested an investigation

¹⁴⁸ For two additional examples, see: "Duquesne to Rouillé, October 31, 1753," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 845-846; "Jautard to [Forbes], March 14, 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 216-218. Conversely, temperance was used as a symbol of the upstanding character of individuals. For one example, see "Letter from Martinez de Yrujo," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2: 230-231.

¹⁴⁹ For a description of George Rogers Clark's background and involvement in the American Revolution in the Illinois Country, see Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 37-39; Frederick Palmer, *Clark of the Ohio: A Life of George Rogers Clark* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1929), 424; Lowell Hayes Harrison, *George Rogers Clark and the War in the West* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 77-78; William Nester, *George Rogers Clark: "I Glory in War"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012). For a biography of Colonel William Fleming and his role in the Virginian government between 1782 and 1783, see William D. Hoyt, *Colonel William Fleming on the Virginia Frontier, 1755-1783* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940), 175-210.

¹⁵⁰ "Benjamin Harrison to William Fleming, October 16, 1782," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19: 132.

to address the situation, and Clark's conduct was carefully scrutinized over the ensuing months.¹⁵¹

In October 1782, Joseph Crockett—commandant of Virginian forces at Fort Nelson—wrote to Governor Harrison to defend Clark's character, stating, “as for General Clark's conduct, last campaign whilst I had the honor to serve under his command . . . I cannot think he is deserving censure.”¹⁵² Crockett specified, however, that he was only willing to defend Clark's military character, not his private life.¹⁵³ This commentary speaks to contrasting perceptions of private and public drunkenness. Crockett believed Clark's conduct was acceptable if it did not disrupt his military administration. A double standard seemingly existed in the Illinois Country, where elite drunkenness in private was viewed far more leniently than the public intoxication of colonists and Indigenous peoples.¹⁵⁴

Despite Crockett's defense of Clark's conduct, in January 1783, James Monroe, a member of the Virginian House of Delegates and the government's executive council, wrote to Clark to reprimand his conduct and question his leadership of the Illinois Regiment.¹⁵⁵ Monroe's inquiry revealed Clark's affinity for alcohol and reinforced the likelihood that the rumors were true,

. . . several circumstances together with the little appearance of order or economy which we can discover have I must inform you, made more probable with the Board the several reports we have heard to your prejudice. That you are personally engaged in private

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 131-132.

¹⁵² “Joseph Crockett to Governor Harrison, October 24, 1782,” in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19: 142-144; Nester, 241. Fort Nelson was located on the Ohio River at the site of present day Louisville, Kentucky.

¹⁵³ “Joseph Crockett to Governor Harrison,” 142; Nester, 241.

¹⁵⁴ See, Kent, 49, 62; White, “Luxury and Labour,” 2; See Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture*, 288-292, 295-299; Brennan, “Towards a cultural history of alcohol,” 78-82; Martin, *Alcohol, Violence, and Disorder*, 131; M.M. Goldsmith, “Public Virtue and Private Vices,” 493.

¹⁵⁵ “James Monroe to Clark, January 5, 1783,” in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19:178-180.

speculation which at least do not promote the public interest & further that you drink to an excess.¹⁵⁶

Clark's drinking compounded the perception that he was an unsuitable military commander, and Munroe officially requested that Clark travel to Richmond to meet with Virginia's executive council to discuss his leadership and behavior.¹⁵⁷

As the investigation into Clark's consumption proceeded, he was deemed unfit to continue in his leadership position. By June, Clark had arrived in Richmond. He wrote to Governor Harrison, defending his military expenditures and his leadership of Virginian forces in the west. Disregarding Clark's defense, on 2 July 1783 Harrison wrote to Clark on behalf of the Virginian government to officially remove him from command of the Illinois Regiment.¹⁵⁸ Although Harrison made no reference to Clark's consumption of alcohol, the many reports of Clark's alcohol abuse reinforced the perception that he was unfit for command and contributed to his removal.¹⁵⁹

Clark was not the only colonial official whose credibility was called into question due to their rumored alcohol abuse.¹⁶⁰ Father Pierre Gibault, who we first encountered condemning alcohol consumption in the Illinois Country, was accused of drunkenness by the Illinois Country's Euro-American inhabitants. A priest of the Seminary of Foreign Missions presiding over the Illinois Country, and a prominent member of the French community in the region, these

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. For a short biography of James Monroe, see: "James Monroe, 1758-1783: Student and Soldier of the American Revolution," in *A Companion to James Madison and James Monroe*, ed., Stuart Leibiger (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 352-354.

¹⁵⁷ "James Monroe to Clark, January 5, 1783," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19:178-180.

¹⁵⁸ "Clark to Benjamin Harrison, June 16, 1783," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19: 240-243. "Clark's Accounts with Virginia, July 1, 1783," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19: 245-246.

¹⁵⁹ See Nester, 6, 232, 240-257, 275, 283; "James Monroe to Clark, October 19, 1783," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 19: 248-249.

¹⁶⁰ Various upper-class officials in the Illinois Country were accused of trading and consuming alcohol to excess, which functioned as an indication of their nefarious character, see: "Daniel Murray to Governor Carleton, March 31, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 4-6; "The Defense of Thomas Bentley, August 1, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 14-16.

allegations were a direct challenge to Gibault's credibility and social standing.¹⁶¹ By 1786, accusations of Gibault's affinity for alcohol had reached his superior Louis-Philippe Mariauchau d'Esgly, the Bishop of Quebec. With the threat of his removal looming, Gibault wrote to d'Esgly, passionately denying the rumors and queried, "how, I repeat, can that priest, zealous to perform the duties of his holy office, diligent in keeping watch over his flock, in instructing it on the most important points of religion . . . be known as one who gives cause for scandal and is addicted to drunkenness?"¹⁶² Gibault argued that the accusations against him were slanderous lies spread by inhabitants of the Illinois Country who were unwilling to hear the word of god.¹⁶³

Nearly two years passed and Gibault received no answer. This neglect may have resulted from the "administrative quagmire" in the American Illinois, as there was confusion regarding which Catholic diocese had jurisdiction in the Illinois Country.¹⁶⁴ During this silence, these accusations remained at the forefront of Gibault's mind. In May 1788, Gibault wrote a follow up letter to the Bishop of Quebec, noting that, "It seems by your silence that you have forgotten

¹⁶¹ "Father Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 534-537. For a discussion of Gibault's prominent societal position in the Illinois Country, see: Ekberg, "Agriculture," "Mentalités", and "Violence on the Illinois Frontier," 103. Appointed Vicar General in the Illinois Country after his arrival in 1767, after the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Gibault's title as Vicar General was contested as Bishop Carroll of Baltimore appointed Father Huet de La Valière Vicar General over the American Illinois in 1786. However, Gibault did not recognize this appointment because the American Illinois was not officially included into the diocese of Baltimore until 1791. See Craig, 52-55, 74-75, 93; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 366. For bible passages condemning alcohol abuse, see: Gal 5:19-21, 1 Pet 4:3, Eph 5:18, Prov 20:1.

¹⁶² "Father Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec," 538. Louis-Philippe Mariauchau d'Esgly served as bishop of Quebec from November 1784 until his death on 4 June 1788. Regular orders, including the Seminary of the Foreign Mission, had long led the missions of the North American interior. However, after his appointment, Bishop Mariauchau hoped to use new recruits from Ireland for his North America missions, placing Gibault in a position of contingency, see: Terence J. Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism, and Canadianism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 2002), 34-35; Luca Condignola, "The Holy See and the Conversion of Aboriginal Peoples in North America, 1760-1830," in *Ethnographies and Exchanges: Native Americans, Moravians and Catholics in Early North America*, ed., A.G. Roeber (State College: The Pennsylvania State University Press), 78-79.

¹⁶³ "Father Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec," 541-547.

¹⁶⁴ Religious jurisdiction in the Illinois Country was not clarified until 1791 when the region was officially designated part of the diocese of Baltimore. See Craig, 52-55.

even to send an answer to some matters which necessarily cause me some embarrassment.”¹⁶⁵

Gibault sought to restore his pious image by reasserting his sobriety.

There was no reason that I should expect this neglect, since I have removed without difficulty whatever might have given cause for suspicion, however unjust, of my manner of living. It has been more than a year since I have had no liquors at my house, and I do not even drink a swallow now and then, either of wine or brandy. I think no longer about it. It is not a vow, nor is it a sacrifice; for, whatever may have been related to you, I never had any attachment for any kind of drink, and never did more than drink a swallow of brandy, as a traveler will, not even thinking about it when I had none.¹⁶⁶

The lengths Father Gibault went to in order to verify his temperance is illustrative of the seriousness of his rumored alcohol abuse. The bible’s condemnation of drunkenness meant that the accusations against Gibault fundamentally threatened his reputation and social standing. If labelled a drunkard, Gibault’s credibility and fitness to perform his missionary work could be called into question. Furthermore, he would have risked losing ideological and moral leverage over the Illinois population whose drunkenness he had previously condemned.

Elite members of Illinois society were not immune to the social stigma associated with public intoxication. As the Clark and Gibault examples demonstrate, drunkenness had the potential to alter the social standing of elites in the Illinois Country, especially if alcohol consumption led to a dereliction of their duties. Public drunkenness justified the removal of prominent members of society from positions of power, and this process reinforced the drinking hierarchy colonial elites constructed in the Illinois Country.

Conclusion

In the Illinois Country, alcohol was a lens through which the colonial environment came into focus for imperial and colonial officials. Critiquing the drinking conventions of colonists and the colonized, imperial and colonial leaders in the Illinois Country developed colonial

¹⁶⁵ “Father Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, May 22, 1788,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 583-586.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

discourses surrounding drink that highlighted racial, class, and ethnic divisions, which reinforced imperial perceptions of superiority. There was no single discourse regarding drink in the Illinois Country. Informed by distinct backgrounds and agendas of imperial and colonial officials, a complex and multilayered series of discourses regarding alcohol emerged over the Illinois Country's four regimes. That said, these discourses had many similarities. Imperial and colonial officials interpreted Indigenous, French Creole, and Euro-American divergence from European drinking conventions as examples of the fundamental inferiority of their colonial subjects. Colonial perceptions of the liquor trade contributed to the construction of a perceived social hierarchy in the Illinois Country, which justified colonial assertions of control. However, these colonial discourses distort how Illinois society functioned on the ground.¹⁶⁷ Although colonial discourses surrounding alcohol reinforced imperial perceptions of superiority and control, administrative impotence defined the Illinois Country's four colonial regimes.

¹⁶⁷ See Said, *Orientalism*, 12.

Chapter 2

“It would be difficult to deprive them of it”: Alcohol Regulations and Imperial Control in the Illinois Country

In the summer of 1751, the Governor of Louisiana, Pierre François Rigaud de Vaudreuil, drafted a set of instructions for Major Jean-Jacques Macarty Mactigue, the newly appointed French commandant of the Illinois Country, which outlined how to effectively govern the small settlements on the banks of the Mississippi. Vaudreuil informed Macarty, “The government of the Indians is the most extensive, the most difficult, and the most essential part of the command at the Illinois.”¹⁶⁸ With approximately 800 French inhabitants in the Illinois Country and a renewal of French-British hostilities in North America imminent, Vaudreuil understood that the maintenance of Indigenous alliances was vital to preserving French dominion over the region.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, “. . . to forestall the quarrels which are but too frequent between our French and the tribes of the country which are often the cause of ruptures with them,” Vaudreuil instructed Macarty to prohibit the liquor trade with Indigenous peoples “under any pretext whatsoever.”¹⁷⁰ Stationed at New Orleans, Vaudreuil was disconnected from the realities on the ground in the Illinois Country. As Macarty attempted to implement liquor regulations, the limits of French imperial power in the Illinois Country became evident.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ “Order of Command for Macarty, August 8, 1751,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 300.

¹⁶⁹ See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 137-138.

¹⁷⁰ “Order of Command for Macarty,” 301. Vaudreuil’s order to prohibit the alcohol trade was a renewed effort to regulate the liquor trade in French Louisiana. In 1706, French laws were established that forbid the liquor trade to Indigenous peoples and slaves at Mobile. Between 1717 and 1746, as the French colonization in the Mississippi Valley continued, the colonial government passed additional laws regulating liquor’s trade and consumption in New Orleans and Louisiana more broadly. See Jack D. Holmes, ed., “O’Reilly’s Regulations on Booze, Boarding Houses, and Billiards,” *Louisiana History* (Summer 1965): 293-300; Jack D. Holmes, “Spanish Regulation of Taverns and the Liquor Trade in the Mississippi Valley,” in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804* ed., John Francis McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 150; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 195; N.M. Miller Surrey, *The Commerce of Louisiana During the French Régime, 1699-1763* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), 273-276.

¹⁷¹ See “Macarty to Vaudreuil, January 20, 1752, in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 459-461; “Trade Agreement, May 6, 1754,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 853-857.

In the Illinois Country, a dialogue existed between colonial discourses and imperial policy. Colonial perceptions of the Illinois Country and its diverse inhabitants informed colonial policy on the ground, and the effectiveness of these imperial ordinances shaped the ongoing evolution of colonial discourses. Emerging out of these discourses, liquor laws were formal assertions of imperial control over the Illinois Country.¹⁷² However, imperial and colonial rhetoric established a more definitive perception of imperial control than truly existed in the Illinois Country.¹⁷³ As historians Richard White, Amy Turner Bushnell, Jack P. Greene, and Leslie Choquette argue, imperial power diminished on the outskirts of empire.¹⁷⁴ Located far from North American centres of imperial power, the Illinois Country was a peripheral region where colonial officials, colonists, and the colonized interacted, intermixed, and promoted their own diverse agendas.¹⁷⁵ Breaking down colonial discourses of superiority, this chapter argues that the ineffectiveness of liquor regulations demonstrates the limits of imperial power in the Illinois Country and provides insight into the inner workings of Illinois society.

Colonial Liquor Laws in the Illinois Country

In the Illinois Country, French, British, Spanish, and American officials identified the liquor trade as a social problem that required regulation. Whether responding to the violent conduct of purported drunkards, the poisonous effects of alcohol on intercultural diplomacy, or other social issues derived from the trade and consumption of alcohol, each imperial regime in

¹⁷² See Said, *Orientalism*, 1-25, 38-40; Loomba, 98-99.

¹⁷³ Leslie Choquette, "Center and Periphery in French North America," in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, ed., Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2002), 194.

¹⁷⁴ White, *The Middle Ground*, xxvii; Choquette, 193-203; Jack P. Greene and Amy Turner Bushnell, "An Introduction," in *Negotiated Empires*, 4-11; Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, 1-24.

¹⁷⁵ Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*; Alvord, *Illinois Country*, 190; Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 250-251; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 28-30; Briggs, "Le Pays des Illinois," 32-34, 40-42; John Reda, *From Furs to Farms: The Transformation of the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1825* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016), 2-3, 14-15, 18-19, 38-39; J. Frederick Fausz, *St. Louis: The First City of the New West* (London: The History Press, 2011), 103-135; White, *The Middle Ground*, xxvii, 52.

the Illinois Country attempted to regulate the liquor trade. Enacted to further imperial agendas, liquor laws exaggerated the level of social control colonial governments had in the Illinois Country.

Regulating the liquor trade was an important objective for British officials in the wake of the Seven Years' War. After the Treaty of Paris ceded France's North American colonies to Britain, the Board of Trade discussed how to profitably incorporate the North American interior into the British Empire.¹⁷⁶ Their major concern was building amicable and prosperous relationships with western Indigenous communities. After the outbreak of Pontiac's War in April 1763, Britain quickly set out to establish British law and order in the trans-Appalachian West.¹⁷⁷ The Royal Proclamation of 1763 acknowledged the "great frauds and abuses" perpetrated against Indigenous peoples and set out to decrease Indigenous enmity through the creation of an "Indian Territory," where unauthorized settler expansion was prohibited, and the purchase of Indigenous lands was regulated.¹⁷⁸ However, the "Indian Territory" was not unsettled Native wilderness as the Royal Proclamation suggested. The Illinois Country, located on the western edge of this region, was a *mélange* of Indigenous and French Creole settlements, whose inhabitants interacted in a complex system of intercultural exchange and alliance.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ The Board of Trade was a branch of the United Kingdom's Privy Council that in the eighteenth century was charged with overseeing Britain's domestic and foreign commerce. The Board of Trade was given advisory power, but was unable to act independently. See Karen Stanbridge, *Toleration and State Institutions: British Policy Towards Catholics in Eighteenth Century Ireland and Quebec* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003), 90-93.

¹⁷⁷ Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics*, 1:160-207.

¹⁷⁸ The "Indian Territory" encompassed a vast region west of the Appalachian Mountains, east of the Mississippi River, constrained by Labrador in the North and the Gulf of Mexico in the South. *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, London: Printed by Mark Baskett, Printer to the King's most Excellent Majesty; and by the Assigns of Robert Baskett. 1763. Ken Coates, "The Spirit of 1763: The Royal Proclamation in National and Global Perspective," *Active History*, accessed 16 May 2017, <http://activehistory.ca/2013/10/the-spirit-of-1763-the-royal-proclamation-in-national-and-global-perspective/>; Robert Englebert, "Much ado about nothing: The Royal Proclamation on the edge of empire," *Active History*, accessed 1 May 2017, <http://activehistory.ca/2013/10/much-ado-about-nothing-the-royal-proclamation-on-the-edge-of-empire>. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 27-51.

¹⁷⁹ See Englebert, "Much ado about nothing"; Donald Fyson, "The Royal Proclamation and Canadians," *Active History*, accessed 1 May 2017, <http://activehistory.ca/2013/10/the-royal-proclamation-and-the-canadiens>; Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 122-131.

Over the ensuing months, the Board of Trade drafted a more detailed plan concerning Indigenous affairs in the trans-Appalachian West. On 10 July 1764, the British government published a “Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs,” which established a set of rules to manage British-Indigenous relations in the Illinois Country and the North American interior more broadly.¹⁸⁰ British officials considered the liquor trade a form of exploitation that incited intercultural warfare and threatened British-Indigenous alliances.¹⁸¹ Consequently, the plan officially prohibited the liquor trade, stating, “. . . no trader shall sell or otherwise supply the Indians with Rum or other spirituous Liquors.”¹⁸²

The Royal Proclamation and the Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs misrepresent the level of control Britain had over the North American interior.¹⁸³ With a vast western territory to govern and a small imperial presence, Britain did not have the governmental or military infrastructure to enforce these regulations in the Illinois Country.¹⁸⁴ An official British presence was not established in the Illinois Country until 9 October 1765, when Captain Thomas Sterling arrived with approximately 100 soldiers at Fort de Chartres, the seat of French government in the region.¹⁸⁵ Sterling and his successors were tasked with reconstructing a judiciary system and implementing British law and order in an established colonial society where

¹⁸⁰ See “Plan for Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, July 10, 1764,” in *The Critical Period*, 273, 273 n. 2.

¹⁸¹ For a discussion of Britain’s concerns surrounding the violent conduct of Indigenous peoples of North America and the Mississippi Valley when under liquor’s influence, see: Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics*, 1:184-186; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 13, 20, 26, 55-57, 63-64, 155-157. A similar sentiment persisted during the American Period, see: “Colonel de la Balme to Luzerne, June 27, 1780,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 163-168. For a discussion about why imperial liquor laws were implemented in the North American interior, see Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 101-129, 155-166.

¹⁸² “Plan for Imperial Control of Indian Affairs,” 279.

¹⁸³ For a primary source example, see: “Shelburne to Gage, November 14, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 105-107.

¹⁸⁴ Carter, *Great Britain and the Illinois Country*, 18-23; Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 112-132; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 28-29.

¹⁸⁵ Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 194-195; Alvord and Carter, “The British Occupation of the Illinois Country, 1763-1765,” in *The Critical Period*, lvi; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 264-265.

French social and legal customs, in place for decades, were engrained.¹⁸⁶ With a small contingent of soldiers to enforce colonial regulations, the effectiveness of British liquor laws was largely dependent on local support.¹⁸⁷

Across the Mississippi, a similar dynamic hampered the implementation of liquor laws in Spanish Upper Louisiana. France officially ceded New Orleans and the trans-Mississippi West to Spain in 1762, and Spanish officials arrived in Louisiana in March 1766, when Governor Antonio Ulloa reached New Orleans with two companies of Spanish infantry.¹⁸⁸ Despite the small Spanish presence in Louisiana, Ulloa authorized an expedition to the Spanish Illinois Country in 1767. Captain Francisco Ríu was instructed to erect a fort, settle the region, and establish Spanish law and order.¹⁸⁹ To curb the purportedly dangerous and immoral conduct of Indigenous peoples and European settlers, Ulloa informed Ríu that “The introduction of brandy, not only to the savage tribes, but also to the settlement, shall be prohibited entirely.”¹⁹⁰ Following this definitive statement, Ulloa stipulated,

He who must absolutely have it [brandy] for necessary use, shall have a special licence for it. All above this amount that is taken there shall be confiscated, and shall be emptied into the river itself in the presence of the storekeeper, the subaltern officer, the surgeon and the offender, and a certificate of it shall be sent to the government.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ “The British Occupation of the Illinois Country, 1763-1765,” Ivi; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 265-265. For a discussion of the social customs that influenced British governance of the Illinois Country and North American interior after 1763, see Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier* 30-36; Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 130-132; Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 194-201.

¹⁸⁷ For an additional example of British alcohol regulations, see: “Proclamation of Farmar, February 13, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 154. For a statement regarding the small British, Spanish and Anglo-American populations in the Illinois during the eighteenth century, see: Englebert, “Merchant Representatives,” 63.

¹⁸⁸ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 200. For a discussion of liquor regulations in the Spanish Regime, see Holmes, “Spanish Regulation of Taverns and the Liquor Trade in the Mississippi Valley,” 160-174.

¹⁸⁹ “Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country to Establish a Fort and Settlement and his Rules for the Government of the Same, 1767,” in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:1-15.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 1:15; Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve*, 169, 311, 327.

¹⁹¹ “Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country,” 1:15.

By stating that a special license could be given to traders who needed to exchange alcohol, Ulloa undermined his definitive prohibition of the liquor trade. This caveat suggests that Ulloa was aware that the complete eradication of the liquor trade in Spanish Illinois was impractical.

Ulloa's comprehensive prohibition of the liquor trade and plan for the enforcement of regulations exaggerated the level of social control Spain had on the ground in the Illinois Country.¹⁹² Given the difficult task of learning the intricacies of Illinois social customs, appeasing local French and Indigenous peoples, and implementing Ulloa's directives with only forty-four soldiers, Ríu was unable to enforce Spanish law in the Illinois Country.¹⁹³ Over the following years and decades, Spanish officials reinstated and reasserted regulations prohibiting the liquor trade in Upper Louisiana; however, Spanish liquor laws remained largely ineffective.¹⁹⁴

Like the three previous colonial regimes in the Illinois Country, American officials quickly identified the liquor trade as a social problem that required regulation. On Christmas Eve 1778, five months after Lieutenant-Colonel George Rogers Clark and 180 Virginian troops captured Kaskaskia, Clark published a proclamation that prohibited trading alcohol with "red and black" slaves in the Illinois Country.¹⁹⁵ The following summer, the newly appointed County

¹⁹² See Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, 1:6.

¹⁹³ Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country to Establish a Fort and Settlement and his Rules for the Government of the Same," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:1. Cleary, 103-104; John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 89-101; Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 75-79. Due to his inability to implement Spanish law and his failure to control his unruly Spanish garrison, Ríu was recalled in August 1768. See Cleary, 79-101; Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 78-85; Gilbert Din, "Captain Francisco Ríu y Morales and the Beginnings of Spanish Rule in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 94 (Jan 2000), 121-145.

¹⁹⁴ For an additional example of Ulloa support for the liquor trade's prohibition, see: "Ulloa to St. Ange, July 26, 1767," quoted in Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 80. In a 1780 ordinance regarding the Illinois Country, lieutenant governor Francisco Cruzat prohibited the liquor trade indicating that similar legislation had been published between 1767 and 1780. Although I was unable to locate these specific ordinances, it is clear that Spanish officials reasserted liquor regulations in Spanish Illinois on various occasions after Ulloa's initial prohibition. See "Local Ordinances for St. Louis and General Ordinances Published by Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat from October 7, 1780 to November 24, 1787," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:240.

¹⁹⁵ "Proclamation by Clark, December 24, 1778," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 8:91-92.

Lieutenant of the Illinois Country, Colonel John Todd, supported a more stringent liquor policy. On 25 August 1779, Todd addressed the Court of Kaskaskia, described the dangerous effects liquor was having on the area's Indigenous inhabitants, and advocated for the liquor trade's regulation.¹⁹⁶ Nearly two weeks later, the magistrates of the Court of Kaskaskia responded.

Concerning the suppression of the infamous and unlawful trade in intoxicating liquors continually carried on with the savages, which has been always regarded in this colony as threatening it with loss and total and general destruction. . . the Court of this district makes express [the] prohibition and inhibition to all persons of whatsoever quality and condition, living in this district, to sell to, or cause to be sold to, to trade in, to give to, or exchange with, the savages and negro and red slaves, any intoxicating liquors or drinks under any pretext whatsoever and in howsoever small quantities.¹⁹⁷

Clark and Todd used liquor laws to assert social control, and yet these regulations were not unilateral assertions of imperial power.¹⁹⁸ Todd's attempt to regulate the liquor trade demonstrates an awareness of Illinois Country power structures. With a small contingent of Virginian troops Todd understood that American governance relied in part on appeasing the local French Creole population.¹⁹⁹ This reality is illustrated by the fact that he did not independently prohibit the liquor trade. The Court of Kaskaskia, comprised of elected magistrates, was given the autonomy to approve and officially enact Todd's recommended regulations.²⁰⁰ Todd sought local support and complicity in the exercise of American authority.

¹⁹⁶ "Proclamation Concerning Liquor Traffic, September 6, 1779," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 117-118. Todd was appointed head of the Illinois Country's civil government in December 1778 and arrived at Kaskaskia to take up his post in May 1779. See James Alton James, introduction to *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 8: xcix-cii; Nester, 160.

¹⁹⁷ "Proclamation Concerning Liquor Traffic," 117-118.

¹⁹⁸ The implementation of liquor laws was a common occurrence during the American Period, the Courts of Cahokia and Kaskaskia repeatedly passed regulations prohibiting the exchange of alcohol with Indigenous peoples and in some cases African-American and Indigenous slaves. See "Court Record, November 1785," in *Cahokia Records*, 215; "Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia, July 5, 1789," in *Cahokia Records*, 607; "At a Court, October 15, 1780," in *Cahokia Records*, 73.

¹⁹⁹ Nester, 73-94; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 335-346.

²⁰⁰ Clarence Alvord, introduction to *Cahokia Records, 1778-1790*, lvii-lviii. Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 336-338. The District of Kaskaskia included Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, Chartres village, and St. Phillippe.

Informed by the ongoing dialogue between colonial policy and colonial discourses regarding Indigenous and African-American alcohol consumption, French, Spanish, British, and American officials regularly and repeatedly prohibited the liquor trade during the eighteenth century.²⁰¹ Liquor regulations were colonial assertions of control that projected an illusion of imperial authority. The Illinois Country's small colonial population, distance from centers of imperial power, and expansive territory, made the enforcement of liquor regulations impractical. Liquor laws required local support to gain traction.

Liquor Laws and Local Agendas

Many Euro-American inhabitants in the Illinois Country supported the prohibition of the liquor trade. Opposing the violent and dangerous conduct of intoxicated Indigenous peoples, the Illinois Country's French Creole inhabitants endorsed, drafted, and influenced the implementation of liquor laws. Although the local requests for liquor regulations suggest that local and imperial agendas were aligned, Illinois Country residents supported the implementation of liquor laws to further local and personal agendas.

In April 1768, a riot broke out on the streets of St. Louis. According to local reports, drunken Indigenous people, thirsty for brandy, scoured the frontier settlement and accosted local inhabitants, hoping to drink their fill.²⁰² This event prompted eighty-nine French Creole residents of St. Louis to submit a petition to Louis Saint-Ange de Bellerive, Spanish Commandant at St.

²⁰¹ Various examples highlight the persistence of this trend over the Illinois Country's four imperial regimes. See Holmes, "Spanish Regulation of Taverns and the Liquor Trade in the Mississippi Valley," 150; "Trade Agreement, May, 1754," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 853-857; "Orders for the Regulation of Trade, January 16, 1765," in *The Critical Period*, 400-401; "Daniel Murray to Governor Carleton, March 31, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 4-6; "Court Record, November, 1785," in *Cahokia Records*, 215; "Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia, July 5, 1789," in *Cahokia Records*, 607; "November 2, 1786," in *Cahokia Records*, 259; "Trade License Issued to Alexander Lowery, June 28, 1765," in *The Critical Period*, 401; "Agreement for Trade at Miamis Post," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 24; "Instructions Given by Clamorgan and Riehle Approved by Lieutenant-Governor Zénon Trudeau to Jean Baptiste Trudeau in Command of the First Expedition of the Company," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2:170.

²⁰² Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 75-77, 80-82.

Louis, and Charles-Joseph Labuxière, royal notary, judge, and district attorney in the settlement.²⁰³ The petition described the detrimental impact the liquor trade was having on the commerce, peace, religion, and security of St. Louis, and requested that St. Ange and Labuxière “prohibit the trade in *eaux de vie* with the savages.”²⁰⁴ Interestingly, the petition concluded that the signatories were willing to help enforce liquor regulations in St. Louis and its dependencies. To appease local inhabitants, St. Ange and Labuxière officially prohibited the liquor trade with the Indigenous population on 8 May 1768, under penalty of the a 500-*livres* fine.²⁰⁵

Considered in conjunction with Governor Ulloa’s support for liquor regulations in Spanish Upper Louisiana, this petition seemingly reveals a common opposition to the liquor trade developed between Spanish officials and the predominantly French Creole inhabitants of St. Louis. However, a historic debate exists regarding the petition’s true intentions. Historian Patricia Cleary considers the petition a legitimate request by St. Louis residents for the liquor trade’s prohibition in the wake of a drunken Indigenous riot.²⁰⁶ Conversely, historians Carl Ekberg and Sharon Person argue that the petition was a strategic exaggeration of local support for liquor regulations that was meant to appease Spanish officials and maintain local control over the economy.²⁰⁷ These interpretations are not mutually exclusive. Taken together they create a complex image of Upper Louisiana’s political and economic landscape, and exemplify how St.

²⁰³ A military commander in the trans-Appalachian West for decades leading up to the British Conquest of New France, St. Ange was relieved of his command at Fort de Chartres by Captain Thomas Sterling in 1765. That same year, St. Ange moved his garrison across the Mississippi River to St. Louis in the Spanish Illinois Country. With decades of experience as an imperial commander in the Mississippi Valley and local French support, Spanish officials left Bellerive under command of St. Louis between 1765-1770. See Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 11-79, 80-82; Cleary, 72-74, 94-96.

²⁰⁴ Quote translated from French, original text: “*nous vous supplions de défendre le commerce des eaux de vie avec les sauvages.*” See “Transcript of a 1768 Petition to Prohibit sale of alcohol to Indians in the Illinois Country,” *American Indian Histories and Cultures Database*, accessed 24 August 2016, http://www.aihc.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/SearchDetails/Ayer_MS_714.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Cleary, 94-96.

²⁰⁷ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 80-82.

Louis inhabitants navigated Illinois geopolitics to further their local agendas. Local commerce complicated the prohibition of the liquor trade. The fur trade drove the St. Louis economy, and alcohol was a coveted product in the frontier exchange economy.²⁰⁸ European merchants often needed to supply Native peoples with liquor to gain access to furs.²⁰⁹ As Ekberg and Person point out, certain signatories on the petition, such as French Creole traders Louis Deshêtres and Jean-Baptiste Sarpy, continued to purvey alcohol to Indigenous peoples.²¹⁰ By requesting the liquor trade's prohibition, while proposing that they personally help enforce liquor regulations, St. Louis inhabitants seemingly used this petition to benefit from the safety and security imperial regulation could provide, while also retaining the autonomy to police the liquor trade with an awareness of local realities.

During the American Period, local French Creole residents in the Illinois Country also used colonial alcohol legislation to further local agendas. As historian Robert Michael Morrissey argues, after the fall of New France, French inhabitants of the Illinois Country strategically mobilized, most notably through the use of collective petitions, to promote their community's prosperity and benefit from British rule.²¹¹ This tradition continued under the American regime.²¹² On 21 May 1779, the Magistrates of Kaskaskia petitioned County Lieutenant John Todd on behalf of the town's inhabitants. Seeking aid from the newly formed American government in the Illinois Country, Kaskaskia's residents asked Todd, "Not to permit anyone whomsoever, under a government so just and equitable, to trade in *eau de vie* with the Indians,

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 80-81; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 13-22, 27; Cleary, 63-68; Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 39, 130.

²⁰⁹ See "Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department," in *The Critical Period*, 334-335; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 43, 164; White, *The Middle Ground*, 94-96; "Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 545-546.

²¹⁰ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 81, 268 n. 44.

²¹¹ Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 209-211.

²¹² For a discussion of the legal history of the petition and the transition from individual petitions to collective petitions between the Illinois Country's French, British, and American regimes, see: Craig, 29-34.

since it is declared, proved, and recognised by authority to be the pest and general destruction of all this land.”²¹³ The petition also requested that Todd limit the access slaves had to alcohol. The strong local support for the liquor trade’s regulation is highlighted by the harsh punishment the petitioners requested for individuals who illegally traded alcohol, wherein petitioners stated, “. . . if it is done. May it please you to ordain that he who shall give, or exchange, intoxicating drinks with the Indians be expelled and shamefully banished from the colony as a person declared to be an enemy to peace and to public response.”²¹⁴ Reacting to and supporting these demands, Todd endorsed the petition’s requests, and in September 1779, the Court of Kaskaskia officially banned the liquor trade.²¹⁵

Considered from the perspective of French Creole signatories, the Kaskaskian petition of 1779 was also a strategic attempt to influence governance and restore French legal traditions under the new American regime. The petition requested that “he who shall give or exchange intoxicating drinks . . . or shall purchase provisions from black and Indian slaves, without a verbal or written permission from the masters of the said slaves, be condemned to a pecuniary fine according to the law of the Code of 1720.”²¹⁶ Also known as *Le Code Noir*, the legal code referenced in the petition was a French ordinance established to regulate slavery in Louisiana.²¹⁷ A set of shared legal and religious conventions, including *Le Code Noir* and *Le Coutume de*

²¹³ “Magistrates to John Todd, May 21, 1779,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 92-93.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ See “Proclamation Concerning Liquor Traffic, September 6, 1779,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 117-118.

²¹⁶ “Magistrates to John Todd,” 91, 93.

²¹⁷ Originally enacted in 1685, *Le Code Noir* was an imperial ordinance regulating slavery in France and its dependencies. *Le Code Noir* outlined the status of slaves and freed-slaves and set out regulations governing the master-slave relationship. Historian Carl Ekberg outlines that the first reference to using African slaves in the Illinois Country dates from 1720 and many African slaves were brought to the Illinois Country in the early 1720s. In 1724, a revised version of the 1685 *Code Noir* was officially applied to Louisiana, which included the Illinois Country. See Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country*, 145-147; Jennifer M. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 53, 198-199; Aubert, 473. Brent Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indian and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 122-132, 124 n. 81.

Paris, were key tenets of French Creole society in the Illinois Country during the eighteenth century.²¹⁸ This petition acts as one example of how Kaskaskia's residents used established administrative and legal channels to preserve French Creole culture and further local agendas in the aftermath of geopolitical change.²¹⁹

An example from Spanish Upper Louisiana illustrates the level of influence local inhabitants had on the construction of liquor laws in the Illinois Country. In 1793, Governor of Louisiana, Francisco Luis Héctor de Carondelet, drafted a series of trade regulations pertaining to Upper Louisiana.²²⁰ Stationed at New Orleans, Carondelet recommended that the Spanish Commandant in the Illinois Country, Zénon Trudeau, and local traders meet at St. Louis to discuss these ordinances before they were officially enacted.²²¹ Patricia Cleary argues that in Spanish Illinois the power of clerics and civil authorities was predicated on fostering harmonious relations with the region's inhabitants.²²² This dynamic influenced Trudeau's meeting with local traders, as French Creole and Spanish merchants were given the autonomy to decline proposed regulations, and enact new ordinances. Most notably, these merchants inaugurated a new law regarding the liquor trade, which stated, "No intoxicating beverages may be taken into the Missouri by anybody whomsoever for the purpose of trading, exchanging, or giving them to any individual, freeman or slave, under penalty of a fine of one hundred *piastres*."²²³ This document reveals two important points about Illinois society and the liquor trade. First, local merchants were given the autonomy to draft and implement liquor regulations. Second, that local officials

²¹⁸ Margaret Kimball Brown, *History as They Lived It: A Social History of Prairie du Rocher, Illinois* (Tucson: The Patrice Press, 2005), 110; Craig, 62.

²¹⁹ French customary law, most notably *Le Coutume de Paris* remained the legal code of the Illinois Country in the early years of the American rule in the region, see: Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 336-338; Craig, 79, 84-85.

²²⁰ "Proposed Trade Regulations for Spanish Illinois, July 20, 1793," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 3:191-199.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 191-192.

²²² Cleary, 188.

²²³ "Proposed Trade Regulations for Spanish Illinois, July 20, 1793," 3:195.

needed to reassert liquor regulations in 1793, indicates that the various liquor laws Spanish officials passed between 1767 and 1793 were ineffective.²²⁴

In the Illinois Country, local French Creole inhabitants and Euro-American colonists endorsed the implementation of liquor laws. This support for the liquor trade's prohibition suggests that local inhabitants and colonial officials had corresponding agendas. This interpretation is an oversimplification. Adapting to local realities and navigating geopolitical changes, the region's predominantly French Creole settlers used liquor regulations strategically, to manipulate the Illinois Country's legal and political systems to serve local agendas.

The Liquor Trade and the Limits of Colonial Power

Colonial liquor laws had a marginal effect on the Illinois Country. The limited military, political, and economic resources colonial governments had in the Illinois Country made colonial officials powerless to stop alcohol's exchange. French Creole merchants, Euro-American traders, and even colonial officials supplied Indigenous peoples with alcohol to confirm alliance relationships and obtain peltries. The liquor trade's persistence despite laws prohibiting the exchange of alcohol demonstrates that imperial authority was limited in the Illinois Country.

In October 1764, Sir William Johnson informed the Board of Trade that liquor retained an influential place in the North American interior's exchange economy. Earlier that year, the Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs incorporated the Illinois Country into the Northern District, one of two administrative regions established to manage Indigenous affairs in "Indian Territory."²²⁵ Superintendent of the Northern District, Johnson outlined that the liquor

²²⁴ A similar trend can be identified at Kaskaskia and Cahokia in the American period, see: "Inhabitants of Kaskaskia to the Magistrates, May 25, 1782," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 73; "At a Court, October 15, 1780," in *Cahokia Records*, 73; "November 12, 1785," in *Cahokia Records*, 215; "Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia," in *Cahokia Records*, 607.

²²⁵ The corresponding region was called the Southern District. See "Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs," in *The Critical Period*, 274, 281. Superintendent of the Northern District, William Johnson, informed the

trade persisted in the region, “many of the Inhabitants of the Frontier Counties in these Colonies keep Goods & liquor which they Sell to the Indians particularly such as live at no great distance.”²²⁶ Johnson considered the liquor trade a form of exploitation that British officials were unable to stop, “These people [European traders] sell at their own extravagant rates, blinding the Indians with one Article at a small price, whilst they take what they please on another... neither is there any Law can be expected here to suppress them.”²²⁷

Richard Jackson, a prominent advisor in British political circles during the reign of George III, outlined why the British Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs was impractical. He argued,

. . . the immense Extent of the Indian Country, & even of the British Frontier against that Country as described by the Proclamation, seems not to have been considered by those, who judge the Plan practicable, if it be difficult to prevent smuggling on the Coast of America, or even of Britain, it must be little better than impossible to prevent it, in the Wilderness of N. America, especially when it is encouraged by such a bounty as the Prohibition on the fair Trader to sell Rum, Swan Shot or rifled barrelled Guns.²²⁸

The limited imperial resources (military, political, and economic) in the trans-Appalachian West made British officials powerless to stop Indigenous and European traders from engaging in the liquor trade.²²⁹

Lords of Trade that he would observe the Northern District to be the lands North of the Ohio River, east of the Mississippi and West of the Appalachian Mountains.

²²⁶ “Johnson to the Lords of Trade, October 8, 1764,” in *The Critical Period*, 323.

²²⁷ Ibid. For additional sources describing the continuation of the liquor trade during the British Period in the Illinois Country and North American interior, see: “McIntosh to Richardson, April 15, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 215; “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, December 11, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 132-138; “Baynton, Wharton & Morgan against the Crown, June 12, 1766,” in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), 5:248-256.

²²⁸ “Jackson’s Opinion of Western Plans, November 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 424. Briefed about the conditions in North America by delegates on the ground, including Benjamin Franklin, Jackson was well informed about Britain’s attempt to incorporate the western interior into the imperial fold after 1763. “Jackson’s Opinion of Western Plans, November 1766,” 422-424, 422 n. 2.

²²⁹ Ibid., 422-423. Jackson’s comments represent a common perception amongst British imperial officials, see: “Croghan to B. Franklin, January 27, 1767,” in *The New Régime*, 500-502; “Review of the Trade and Affairs in the Northern District of America, September 22, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 61. For a discussion of imperial inability to regulate trade in Lower Louisiana, see: Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 125-126.

As Jackson predicted, local predominantly French Creole traders from the Illinois Country disregarded Britain's trade regulations and participated in a lucrative clandestine trade. In July 1766, General Thomas Gage informed the British Secretary of State H.S. Conway that "Advices from the Illinois mention an illicit Trade, whereby French Goods are smuggled up the Ohio and to the Lakes; and the Peltry of those Countries carried down the Mississippi to New Orleans."²³⁰ Two years later, British Secretary of State, Lord Hillsborough, informed Major General Thomas Gage that an illicit trade continued in the Illinois Country that was contrary to Britain's economic interests.²³¹ Although these sources make no explicit reference to alcohol, the demand for liquor in the Illinois Country's exchange economy makes it likely that alcohol was one of the illicit products being smuggled into the region.²³²

It was not just local merchants that disregarded trade regulations. Colonial officials charged with implementing liquor laws also ignored these ordinances. Accounts of the Philadelphia trading company Baynton, Wharton and Morgan from between 1766 and 1770, show that every year the company provisioned British officials in the Illinois Country with rum for the express purpose of supplying the local Indigenous communities, including the Kaskaskia, Michigamea, and Osage.²³³ Colonial officials in the Illinois County used alcohol to advance British interests.²³⁴ Reacting to local economic and diplomatic realities in the Illinois Country,

²³⁰ See "Gage to Conway, July 15, 1766," in *The New Régime*, 340.

²³¹ Hillsborough suggested that Gage collaborate with Spanish imperial officials in Louisiana to construct a policy that would impede illicit trade. See: "Hillsborough to Gage, June 11, 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 298.

²³² See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 55-57; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 53, 86, 223.

²³³ Papers of Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan (microfilm), reel 7, frames, 388-389, 419-422, 426-529, 539, 546-547. "Account of Baynton, Wharton & Morgan with Certificates of Commissary Edward Cole and Captain Gordon Forbes, September 13, 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 398-408; "Account of Baynton, Wharton and Morgan, September 25, 1766," in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 13: 400-404; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, "Appendix 1," 181.

²³⁴ Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 53-57.

British officials, such as Commandant Gordon Forbes and Commissary Edward Cole, used liquor to confirm Native alliances and trade relations.²³⁵

A case adjudicated by the Kaskaskia Court of Enquiry in 1777 further illustrates that both colonial officials and local traders subverted liquor regulations. After the outbreak of the American Revolution, Captain Hugh Lord and the small contingent of British soldiers stationed at Kaskaskia were called to fortify the British garrison at Detroit. The Illinois Country's government was left in the hands of Philippe François Rastel de Rocheblave.²³⁶ A former French army Lieutenant, Rocheblave had a contentious relationship with local Anglo-American traders in the Illinois Country who believed Rocheblave favored French merchants.²³⁷ In March 1777, Daniel Murray wrote to Governor of Quebec, Guy Carleton, on behalf of local merchants Patrick Kennedy and Thomas Bentley, outlining various grievances against Rocheblave.²³⁸ Murray argued that although Rocheblave had officially prohibited the liquor trade, he continued to give alcohol to Indigenous peoples in exchange for furs.²³⁹ The following September at a session of the Kaskaskia Court of Enquiry, Rocheblave denied many of Murray's accusations, but admitted to giving liquor to Native peoples, stating, "I made presents to all the Indians; no hostility was committed. Can this be the point which offends these gentlemen?"²⁴⁰ Rocheblave's uncertainty

²³⁵ Historian Richard White demonstrates that the exchange economy and intercultural diplomacy were intertwined in the North American interior. See White, *The Middle Ground*, 94-185. For an additional reference to the continuation of illicit trade in the Illinois Country, see: "Croghan to Gage, January 16, 1767," in *The New Régime*, 491-492.

²³⁶ A French army lieutenant, Rocheblave arrived in Louisiana in 1751, and served in the French army in North America during the Seven Years' War. In 1765 at the time of British occupation of the Illinois Country, Rocheblave became the commander of St. Geneviève; however, conflict with the Spanish officials led Rocheblave to return to Kaskaskia. In the 1770s, Rocheblave was appointed commandant of the settlement upon British Captain Hugh Lord's removal. See Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 317-322.

²³⁷ Ibid. "Daniel Murray to Governor Carleton, March 31, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 4-6.

²³⁸ The Quebec Act of 1774 placed the lands between the Ohio River and the Great Lakes, including the Illinois Country, under the jurisdiction of the Governor and Council at Quebec. See Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 303-307.

²³⁹ "Daniel Murray to Governor Carleton, March 31, 1777," 4-6. This accusation against Rocheblave was reiterated during Thomas Bentley's trial, see: The Defense of Thomas Bentley, August 1, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 14-15.

²⁴⁰ "Court of Enquiry, September 11, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 22.

suggests that it was commonplace for colonial officials to provide Indigenous peoples with alcohol in the Illinois Country to solidify alliance relationships. A double standard seemingly existed. Colonial officials were allowed to disregard liquor laws and exchange alcohol to secure Indigenous alliances.²⁴¹

Rocheblave did more than merely defend his actions, he accused Murray and Bentley of illegally trading alcohol.

They complain that I have prohibited, under penalty of two hundred *piastres*, trade in *eau de vie* with the savages, while I allow myself to conduct this trade for beaver and otter skins. Everybody knows that this agreement originated with the inhabitants themselves and that Daniel Murray, one of my accusers, signed it of his own free will, judging it just and necessary; and that the agreement would have resulted beneficially had it not been for his cupidity and that of Thomas Bentley, the other of my accusers, both of whom have been the first to brave the numberless inconveniencies which might result both for themselves and their fellow citizens by its infraction.²⁴²

Rocheblave's statement paints a vivid image of Murray and Bentley, who, motivated by personal greed, disregarded imperial edicts and traded liquor on the frontier. Although the veracity of these accusations is uncertain, it seems plausible that Murray and Bentley purveyed alcohol to their Indigenous trade partners. Historian Peter Mancall argues the widespread Indigenous demand for alcohol made the liquor trade highly profitable, which led many traders to disregard liquor laws.²⁴³ Based on this economic reality, Bentley's arrest for illicitly trading with the Americans in 1778, and reports that his boats were loaded with rum that same year, it seems

²⁴¹ For a discussion of the importance of gifts in European-Indigenous diplomatic relations, see White, *The Middle Ground*, 94-185; Khalil Saadani, "Gift Exchange between the French and Native Americans in Louisiana" in *French Colonial Louisiana in the Atlantic World* ed., Bradley G. Bond (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 43-64. For a discussion of Indigenous desire to receive alcohol as a gift, see Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 48-57; Ferland, 228-229, 236-241. For a statement regarding alcohol's use in alliance relations, see: "Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department," 334-335; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 43, 164; White, *The Middle Ground*, 94-96; "Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec," 545-546.

²⁴² "Court of Enquiry, September 11, 1777," 20-21.

²⁴³ Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 39-54.

likely that Bentley and Murray ignored liquor regulations hoping to gain access to lucrative frontier trade markets.²⁴⁴

On the west side of the Mississippi, Spanish officials in Upper Louisiana were also unable to limit the exchange of alcohol. Upon his reappointment to the position of Lieutenant-Governor of the Spanish Illinois Country on 24 September 1780, Francisco Cruzat reported,

Notwithstanding the reiterated orders by our predecessors and ourself which expressly forbid any person whatsoever from giving to the savages who arrive at this post any intoxicating liquor to drink, under penalty of being severely punished, we see with displeasure that many persons, despising the wisdom of the said ordinances and reckless of public tranquility, give themselves up to drinking with the savages, in the hope of obtaining through this means their own private objects—without considering the effects of such a proceeding in a time so critical [as this], when melancholy experience ought to lead us to avoid dangers by preventing them.²⁴⁵

Motivated by potential profits and unimpeded by colonial governments, local traders freely exchanged alcohol in Spanish Upper Louisiana.²⁴⁶

Although it is impossible to know how many merchants were involved with the clandestine liquor trade, some traders were caught and reprimanded for selling alcohol in the Illinois Country. In September 1784, in the frontier town of Cahokia, captain of the militia, Francois Trottier, confiscated liquor from Issac Levy who was illegally selling alcohol to Indigenous peoples.²⁴⁷ Levy's conviction was seemingly a product of Cahokia's strong local government, rather than any widespread suppression of the liquor trade. During the American Period, Cahokia's court magistrates and militia worked cohesively, creating an effective law

²⁴⁴ "Court of Enquiry, September 11, 1777," 31, 33-36; Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 69-70.

²⁴⁵ "Local Ordinances for St. Louis and General Ordinances Published by Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat," 1:239-240

²⁴⁶ See Cleary, 105-106, 112, 186-188.

²⁴⁷ "At a Court, September 4, 1783," in *Cahokia Records*, 157.

enforcement system.²⁴⁸ Despite Cahokia's influential local government, it was impractical for local officials to police the liquor trade throughout the District of Cahokia.²⁴⁹

The Court of Cahokia's reassertion of liquor laws during the 1780s indicates that liquor regulations were generally ineffective in the settlement and surrounding region. In 1780, the Court of Cahokia prohibited the importation of liquor.²⁵⁰ Again in 1785, "The Court assembled to remedy the continual abuses, which are daily committed in this village through the liquor which is served to the savages, from which there results effects very dangerous and pernicious to the welfare and the tranquility of the public."²⁵¹ Four years later, little had changed. Alcohol continued to incite Indigenous raids and theft, and this dangerous conduct required action. On 5 July 1789, the Court of Cahokia proclaimed,

It is to prevent the dangers to which we are exposed from the savages who come to this village under the veil of union and friendship and who, on returning, kill, pillage and steal the horses that the court seeks means to remedy the evils which surround us. To this end, by resolution of the said Court, it is expressly forbidden all persons of what quality, condition and profession soever and under any pretext whatsoever, without the possibility of excuse, to sell, trade or sell at retail to the savages any intoxicating liquors of any sort.²⁵²

Informed by the cyclical dialogue between colonial discourses and liquor laws, court officials in the District of Cahokia, with the support of local inhabitants, enacted various liquor regulations during the 1780s. The Court of Cahokia's repeated ratification of liquor regulations over this decade suggests that these ordinances were inconsequential.

²⁴⁸ Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 358-378. See Clarence W. Alvord, introduction to *Cahokia Records, 1778-1790*, cxlvi-cl; Craig, 77-95.

²⁴⁹ See Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 36, 43; Ekberg, *François Vallé and His World*, 18-19. The District of Cahokia encompassed a region from Prairie du Pont, to Cahokia, to Peoria on the Illinois River. See Alvord, preface to *Cahokia Records*, lvii.

²⁵⁰ "At a Court, October 15, 1780," in *Cahokia Records*, 73.

²⁵¹ "November 12, 1785," 215.

²⁵² "Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia," 607.

Conclusion

It is useful here to revisit Governor Vaudreuil's instructions to Commandant Macarty. Vaudreuil believed that the liquor trade's prohibition would help establish amicable cross-cultural trade relations. As Macarty related in the following months, the prohibition of the liquor trade and strong French-Indigenous relations were incompatible. In January 1752, after a diplomatic meeting with the Peoria, Macarty told Vaudreuil, "These tribes as it seems to me are greedy for brandy . . . It would be difficult to deprive them of it, especially at the present time when we may need them."²⁵³ With a renewal of French-British hostilities in North America imminent and the small French population in the Illinois Country, Macarty understood he could not enforce Vaudreuil's recommended liquor regulations.²⁵⁴ Imperial weakness and Indigenous demand combined to make the prohibition of the liquor trade impractical.

Breaking down colonial discourses of superiority, the local influence on, and disregard for, liquor regulations implemented by the Illinois Country's successive colonial governments demonstrates that colonial power was restricted in the Illinois Country.²⁵⁵ A feedback loop existed between colonial discourses and colonial policy in the Illinois Country. Colonial perceptions of the liquor trade informed colonial policy regarding alcohol, which fueled the ongoing evolution of colonial discourses. Reacting to the perceived dangerous and disruptive effects of the liquor trade, successive French, British, Spanish and American governments of the Illinois Country attempted to regulate the exchange of alcohol. However, liquor laws overstate the level of social control colonial governments had in the Illinois Country. With the limited military, political, and economic resources on the periphery, liquor laws were largely

²⁵³ "Macarty to Vaudreuil," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 461.

²⁵⁴ See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 137-138; See "Duquesne to Rouillé, October 31, 1753," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 845-846.

²⁵⁵ See Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 63; Choquette, 193-203.

inconsequential.²⁵⁶ Adapting to the social realities in the Illinois Country, colonial officials, colonists, and Indigenous peoples undermined liquor laws to serve imperial, local, and personal agendas. Contrary to imperial ordinances, local realities governed life in the Illinois Country.

²⁵⁶ Cleary, 174; Green, *Negotiated Authorities*, 1-24; Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 63; Choquette, 193-203.

Chapter 3

“It is indispensable that our Indian tribes be provided with their accustomed goods”: Liquor and Social Power in the Illinois Country

European colonists in North America commonly identified the liquor trade as one factor in the cultural and demographic degradation of Indigenous peoples. Colonial reports from the Illinois Country established a causal link between Indigenous liquor consumption and Native destitution. In 1753, Governor General of New France Michel-Ange Duquesne de Menneville outlined that after bouts of drunkenness, Indigenous peoples in the Illinois Country complained that the liquor trade “leaves them as well as their wives and children naked.”²⁵⁷ During his journey through the Illinois Country in 1765, British Lieutenant Alexander Fraser observed that Indigenous peoples in the region were “Drunk, and were destitute of Clothing.”²⁵⁸ Additionally, while testifying in a 1777 court case between Thomas Bentley and Commandant of the British Illinois Philippe François Rastel de Rocheblave, Patoka, a Cahokia chief, asserted that his community’s young men, “never wish to see *eau de vie* when they are in winter quarters, because they drink up all their peltries and then their women and children go all naked.”²⁵⁹

For colonial officials, the connection between Native liquor consumption and nakedness fit into larger European notions about sartorial culture that associated the lack of clothing with backwardness and barbarism.²⁶⁰ Therefore, Indigenous drinking, drunkenness, and subsequent destitution fit into larger European discourses of Indigenous inferiority and savagery, which led to an accentuation of the detrimental effects that alcohol had on Native communities.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ “Duquesne to Rouillé, October 31, 1753,” *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 845.

²⁵⁸ “Fraser to Gage, May 26, 1765,” in *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, 515.

²⁵⁹ “Court of Enquiry, September 11, 1777,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 39. For additional primary source examples regarding the devastation liquor caused in Indigenous communities, see: “Banishment of the Jesuits from Louisiana, July 9, 1763,” in *The Critical Period*, 91-93; “Transcript of a 1768 Petition to Prohibit sale of alcohol to Indians in the Illinois Country,” *American Indian Histories and Cultures Database*.

²⁶⁰ White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians*, 1-20, 82-83, 108-109.

²⁶¹ See Witgen, 25-28, 55; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 15-16; Michael A. McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015), 319-320. For a discussion of how

Historians' direct reading of colonial sources regarding alcohol embedded this interpretation within the historiography of colonial North America. The liquor trade became part of a teleological narrative, used to explain European supremacy on the continent.²⁶² However, despite the poverty, hardship, and destitution, which often accompanied the exchange of alcohol, Indigenous peoples were not passive victims of the liquor trade.²⁶³ While chiefs like Patoka opposed alcohol's inclusion in Native society, many Indigenous traders actively sought liquor.²⁶⁴

Historian Daniel Richter, argues that "if we shift our perspective to try to view the past in a way that faces east from Indian country, history takes on a very different appearance."²⁶⁵ Richter's work is part of a new wave of historical literature that has placed Indigenous power, autonomy, and agency at the center of colonial North American history.²⁶⁶ Applying Richter's methodological template to the Illinois Country, this chapter analyzes the trade and consumption of alcohol from the perspective of the colonized Indigenous and French Creole inhabitants of the Illinois Country to re-examine how social power was configured in the region.

Sociologist Michael Mann defines social power as the ability to pursue and attain goals by exercising influence over other peoples.²⁶⁷ He identifies four major types of social power—economic, ideological, political, and military—arguing that in each unique social context, these

upper-class members of society often exaggerated the social ills of lower class consumption see, Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 158-160; Peter Clark, "The 'Mother Gin' controversy," 72.

²⁶² For various examples of this historiographical trend, see: Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 82, 124-129, 131-164; Stanley, "The Indians and the Brandy Trade," 489-505; Dailey, 45-59; Vachon, 22-32.

²⁶³ Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, xi, 129; McDonnell, 319-320; Ishii, *Bad Fruits of the Civilized Tree*.

²⁶⁴ Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, xi, 129, 169-170, 179; Ishii, 1-2, 5; George Colpitts, *North America's Indian Trade in European Commerce and Imagination, 1580-1850* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 141-143. It should be noted that there was both opposition and support for the liquor trade within Indigenous communities in North America. Historians have noted that a generational gap existed where young Indigenous community members consumed liquor, while older community members highlighted alcohol's detrimental impact, see: Mancall, 99-100; Hinderaker, 74-75.

²⁶⁵ See Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, 8

²⁶⁶ For additional examples of this historiographical movement, see: Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*; Ishii, *Bad Fruits of the Civilized Tree*. Michael A. McDonnell, *Masters of Empire*; Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*.

²⁶⁷ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, 1:6.

four sources of power are divided between different segments of the population who assert differing levels of social control.²⁶⁸ Social control refers to the ability of society's members to maintain order "by persuading, coercing, or educating individuals to accept and behave according to the principles and values—norms—of the group of which they are members, want to become members, or have been compelled into membership."²⁶⁹ In *Empire by Collaboration*, historian Robert Michael Morrissey examines the issue of social power in the Illinois Country. He contends that imperial officials, colonists and the colonized collaborated to promote their mutual interests because no single group had enough power to dominate the region.²⁷⁰ Complicating Morrissey's interpretation, an examination of liquor trade in the Illinois Country reveals that colonial officials, colonists, and Indigenous peoples had different levels of social power and, therefore, capacities to assert social control.²⁷¹

This chapter uses the liquor trade to explore the level of agency that local Indigenous, French Creoles, and Euro-American inhabitants retained in the Illinois Country during the colonial period. Historian Eric Hinderaker argues that in the North American interior, "Indians and colonists pursued their own ends," while "... empires, contrary to all expectation, became pawns in a complex of processes that neither [Britain nor France] could do much to control."²⁷² An examination of the liquor trade highlights the limits of imperial control, and provides insight into how Illinois society functioned on the ground. Indigenous demand for alcohol shaped the form and content of fur trade transactions and intercultural diplomacy in the region, illustrating

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 1:1-32.

²⁶⁹ Jesús de la Teja, introduction to, *Choice Persuasion, and Coercion: Social Control on Spain's North American Frontier*, ed., Jesús de la Teja and Ross Frank (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), xiii.

²⁷⁰ See Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 3-10.

²⁷¹ For select examples, see: "Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department," *The Critical Period*, 327-342; "Jean Girault to the Magistrates of the Court of Kaskaskia, August 24, 1779," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 111-113; "Court of Enquiry, September 11, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 39-40.

²⁷² Hinderaker, 32.

the authoritative economic and military power that Indigenous peoples held in the Illinois Country. Adapting to Indigenous demand, French Creole inhabitants of the Illinois Country used alcohol to carve out influential roles as middlemen in the continental exchange economy. Ultimately, the study of the liquor trade reveals the influential and powerful positions Indigenous peoples held in the Illinois Country, and demonstrates that between 1750 and 1803, the area's French Creole and Euro-American inhabitants gained power and authority in the Illinois Country by establishing connections with the region's Native groups.

Liquor, Intercultural Diplomacy, and Social Control

Alcohol's role in the formation and preservation of Indigenous alliances is illustrative of the agency, autonomy, and power Indigenous peoples held in the Illinois Country during the colonial period. In the Illinois Country, as in the North America interior, exchange was the basis of intercultural relations.²⁷³ In this colonial world, gift giving, commerce, and alliances were interconnected.²⁷⁴ Following Indigenous social customs, gifts were symbols of friendship that were required to establish fictive kinship ties, open intercultural trade networks, and establish alliance relationships between Indigenous communities and European newcomers.²⁷⁵ In her study of the Arkansas Valley, historian Kathleen DuVal argues that Indigenous military strength and the limited military, economic, and political resources of colonial governments enabled

²⁷³ See White, *The Middle Ground*, 94-185; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 6-8, 25-27; Witgen, 7, 107, 116-118, 127, 132-133.

²⁷⁴ White, *The Middle Ground*, 94-96, 104, 141, 145; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 8, 25-27, 77-79, 104; DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 19, 42, 72; McDonnell, 9-13; Mark Strezewski, "'The Indians Appear to be Wealthy': Economy and Identity during the late Fur Trade Period in the Lower Great Lakes," in *American Indians and the Market Economy, 1775-1850*, ed., Lance Green and Mark R. Plane (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 25-26; Colpitts, 55-57; Jon William Parmenter, "Pontiac's War, Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant Chain, 1758-1766," *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 4 (Autumn, 1997): 617-639; Desbarats, 609-610; Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 68. For primary source examples from the Illinois Country, see: "Macarty to Vaudreuil," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 459-461; "Johnson to the Lords of Trade, August 30, 1764," in *The Critical Period*, 307.

²⁷⁵ Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 50, 110, 202-204; White, *The Middle Ground*, 15, 97-105, 114-115, 140-141, 145, 177-185; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 25-27, 77-78; DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 19, 42, 72.

Native peoples to determine the form and content of intercultural relations.²⁷⁶ This examination of the liquor trade shows that a similar social dynamic existed in the Illinois Country. Indigenous demographic supremacy and military strength enabled Native delegates to dictate the terms of alliance in the Illinois Country.

The Euro-American population remained small over the Illinois Country's four regimes. In the 1750s, a half century after the official French colonization of the Illinois Country began, population estimates outline that between 750 and 2,000 French inhabitants resided in the area.²⁷⁷ After the fall of New France, the Illinois Country remained a series of small outposts in the Mississippi Valley.²⁷⁸ Robert Englebert contends that for an entire generation after 1763 "the numbers of Spanish, British, and Anglo-Americans in the heart of North America remained modest."²⁷⁹ For example, a 1773 census identified 844 European residents in St. Louis and St. Geneviève.²⁸⁰ Two decades later, Spanish Illinois' population remained small. Spain's 1794 Census of Upper Louisiana listed 1,998 European inhabitants in the Spanish Illinois Country's six settlements.²⁸¹ As DuVal argues, Indigenous peoples outnumbered non-Indigenous peoples in almost every region of the North American interior until the nineteenth century.²⁸²

²⁷⁶ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 4, 88, 101-102, 162-163.

²⁷⁷ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 7; Briggs, "Le pays des Illinois," 30-31; Allan Greer, *The People of New France*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 108. For primary sources describing French population statistics and military weakness during the French regime in the Illinois Country, see "Vaudreuil to Rouillé, May 15, 1751," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 261-265; "Celoron to Vaudreuil, August 4, 1751," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 285; Macarty to Vaudreuil, March 27, 1752," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 553-556; "Rouillé to Duquesne, July 9, 1752," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 649-651.

²⁷⁸ Hinderaker, 101.

²⁷⁹ Robert Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 63.

²⁸⁰ "Census of Piernas for 1773," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:61.

²⁸¹ "Report of Trudeau, 1791 and Census for 1794-95," in *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1: 322-326.

²⁸² Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 4; Witgen, 112-119. For additional primary source examples regarding the Euro-American population of the Illinois Country, see: "General Census of 1796," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2:140-143; "Census of Kaskaskia, 1787," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 414-419; "Census of Cahokia, August 27, 1787," in *Cahokia Records*, 624-630; "List of Americans in the Illinois, September 7, 1787," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 421-423; "Number of Inhabitants in Illinois, 1787," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 449.

Colonial correspondence from the Illinois Country establish a connection between these demographic statistics and Indigenous military power.²⁸³ In 1752, the French Commandant of the Illinois Country, Jean-Jacques Macarty Mactigue, informed the Governor of Louisiana, Pierre François Rigaud de Vaudreuil that due to the small French military presence in the Illinois Country, and the volatility of Indigenous alliances, the region's French settlers would be unable to effectively defend themselves against European or Indigenous attacks.²⁸⁴ Nearly four decades later, the Illinois Country remained a vulnerable series of outposts on the Mississippi. An Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia on 5 July 1789 included a definitive statement regarding Indigenous military power in the Illinois Country: "it is almost impossible to make opposition [to Indigenous incursions] on account of the lack of military force."²⁸⁵

The demographic supremacy of Indigenous peoples combined with the recurring reports of Indigenous attacks on European settlers in the Illinois Country, to create a palpable fear of Indigenous military strength amongst colonial officials, French Creoles, and Euro-American colonists on both sides of the Mississippi.²⁸⁶ Accordingly, colonial officials from each imperial

²⁸³ For additional statements regarding the military weakness of colonial governments and the military power of Indigenous peoples in the Illinois Country, see: "Macarty to Rouillé, February 1, 1752," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, Eve, 481-482; "Clark to Mason, November 19, 1779," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 8:129; "Croghan to Johnson, October 18, 1767," in *Trade and Politics*, 89-90; "Distribution of Troops, Feb 22, 1767," in *The New Régime*, 512-513.

²⁸⁴ "Macarty to Vaudreuil, March 27, 1752," 553-556.

²⁸⁵ "Ordinance of the Court of Cahokia, July 5, 1789," in *Cahokia Records*, 607. For additional examples that discuss Indigenous military power, see: "Trudeau's Report Concerning the Settlements of the Spanish Illinois Country—1798," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2:251; Henry Hamilton, "Clark Recaptures Vincennes, February 22 to March 5, 1779," in *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution*, ed. John D. Barnhart (Crawfordsville: R.E. Banta, 1951), 181; "Robbrird on the Mississippi—Madame Cruzat Capture—Her account, 1782," in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:214-215; "Shelburne Expounds his Western Policy to the Cabinet, September 11, 1767," in *Trade and Politics*, 13-14; "Major John Hamtramck to General Josiah Harmar, November 2, 1789," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 509-510.

²⁸⁶ For examples of Indigenous violence and colonial fear of Indigenous peoples in the Illinois Country, see: "Kerlérec to Rouillé, August 20, 1753," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 822-823; "Gage to Wilkins, October 11, 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 418-419; "Magistrates to Todd, May 21, 1779," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 90; "Report of Gov. Miró to the Marquis Sonora of Outrages Perpetrated by the Osage Indians," in *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:253-257. "Vaudreuil to Maurepas, March 20, 1748," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 53-54; "Hamtrack to Harmar, November 2, 1789," 509-510; "Fraser to Gage," in *The New Régime*, 130-131.

regime in the Illinois Country pursued non-violent means to bring about peaceful relations with Indigenous peoples, hoping to ensure the colony's safety, survival, and prosperity.²⁸⁷ Although Indigenous communities in the Illinois Country and surrounding region had different capacities to assert military power, the collective military power that Indigenous communities could harness and the Euro-American fear of Indigenous attacks combined to give Native peoples the authority to shape the terms of alliance in the Illinois Country.²⁸⁸

Alcohol's use at a French-Peoria conference on 1 December 1752 demonstrates that Indigenous groups dictated the terms of alliance in the Illinois Country. Following this conference with Peoria chiefs, Le Gros Bled and La Babiche, French Commandant of the Illinois Country, Major Jean-Jacques Macarty, informed Governor of Louisiana, Pierre François Rigaud de Vaudreuil, "Since these tribes make no account of anything but brandy I gave them some with some goods for their tribes, promising them more on their return from the Chickasaw with some French. . . They left satisfied to see me soon."²⁸⁹ Reacting to the Peoria demand for alcohol,

²⁸⁷ For examples of colonial governments in the Illinois Country seeking alliances, see: "Gage to Halifax, July 13, 1764," in *The Critical Period*, 282-284; "Macarty to Vaudreuil," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 459-461; "Reports to Raymond, May, 1750," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 197-200; "Instructions to George Rogers Clark from the Governor Patrick Henry, December 15, 1778," 5:61; "Edward Abbott to Sir Guy Carleton, June 8, 1778," in *George Rogers Clark Papers*, 8:46-47; "Carondelet to Trudeau, December 22, 1792," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 3:107-108; "Carondelet to Gayoso de Lemos, December 18, 1792," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 3:104; "Carondelet to Portell, July 20, 1794," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 3:324; "Croghan to Johnson, November, 1765," in *The New Régime*, 54; "Memorial of Timothé de Monbreun, November 11, 1794," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 355-356.

²⁸⁸ Although colonial officials often presented the Indigenous peoples of the North American interior as a homogenous fighting force, Indigenous communities in the Illinois Country and surrounding region had different capacities to assert military power. On the west side of the Mississippi, strong, relatively cohesive, Indigenous polities, like the Osage, dominated. On the east side of the Mississippi a different social dynamic existed. The *pays d'en haut* was comprised of various Indigenous villages that were distinct political entities. The military strength of these communities was derived from establishing collective military power through alliances with other Indigenous peoples, best exemplified through Pontiac's War. Various sources trace the history of powerful Indigenous polities on the west side of the Mississippi, see: Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*; DuVal, *The Native Ground*; Din and Nasatir, *The Imperial Osages*. For a discussion of the distinct Indigenous political entities in the *pays d'en haut*, see: White, xvii-xxx, 16-22. For a discussion regarding the challenge Indigenous communities faced attaining military unity, see: Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore, 1992). see: DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 164-195; Witgen, 166-167; White, *The Middle Ground*, 270-285.

²⁸⁹ "Macarty to Vaudreuil, December 1752," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 762-763.

Macarty provisioned the Peoria delegates with brandy to confirm a French-Peoria alliance. Due to the anti-French movement that was percolating in the Ohio Valley, confirming Peoria friendship was a vital objective for Macarty in 1752. Five years earlier, La Demoiselle, a Piankashaw leader, began agitating for a collective Indigenous uprising to remove the French from the North American interior. In the ensuing years, the Piankashaw and their Wea allies attempted to recruit the Peoria and other Illinois communities to their cause.²⁹⁰ This anti-French sentiment persisted in 1752. The limits of French authority in the Illinois Country and fear of an Indigenous uprising led Macarty to seek peaceful relations with the Peoria to protect the French outposts in the Illinois Country.²⁹¹ Macarty's desire to avoid Indigenous enmity placed Peoria leaders in a strong negotiating position.²⁹² Le Gros Bled and La Babiche coerced Macarty to undermine French liquor laws and provision them with alcohol to confirm and renew the French-Peoria alliance.

Following Pontiac's War, the salient role of alcohol in intercultural diplomacy was on full display as British officials met with Indigenous peoples to secure peace in the trans-Appalachian West and Great Lakes. Pontiac's pan-Indigenous coalition had largely disbanded by 1764, but Indigenous groups continued to impede the British occupation of the North American interior.²⁹³ In 1765, William Johnson instructed British Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs,

²⁹⁰ Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 177-183.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² For additional examples that highlight the connection between gifts, alliance, and military support in the Illinois Country and New France, see: "Macarty to Vaudreuil," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 459-461; "Raymond to La Jonquière," 105-108; "Reports to Raymond, May, 1750," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 197-200. For an Indigenous perspective see the testimony of Wea Chief, Les Grands Ongles, in "Raymond to La Jonquière, May 22, 1750," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 207-216. "Reports to Raymond, May, 1750," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 198-200; "Macarty to Vaudreuil, March 18, 1752," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 219-233; "Duquesne to Rouillé October 27, 1753, Quebec," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 841-842.

²⁹³ Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 259-265; Middleton, 167-199; Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 194-196, 198-200.

George Croghan, to travel from Fort Pitt to Fort de Chartres and negotiate peace with Britain's Indigenous enemies. British officials hoped that these negotiations would enable Britain's occupation of the Illinois Country.²⁹⁴ On 9 May 1765, Croghan met with a group of Shawnee, Delaware, and Seneca delegates at Fort Pitt. Kyashuta, a Seneca leader, emphasized that the liquor trade was vital to the solidification of alliance relations, stating, "If you have but little Goods, let us have them for our Skins, and let us have a part of your Rum, or we cannot put dependence on what you tell us for the future."²⁹⁵ For Kyashuta, rum was a symbol of Britain's good intentions and was a necessary gift to confirm a Seneca alliance with the British. Reacting to Indigenous demand, British officials provisioned Kyashuta and other Indigenous delegates at the conference with rum.²⁹⁶ Over the ensuing weeks and months, Croghan oversaw peace conferences with delegates from various Ottawa and Ojibwe communities and in each instance rum was requested to confirm alliance relations.²⁹⁷

When British officials arrived in the Illinois Country, they quickly adopted the diplomatic convention of providing liquor to Native delegates. The peace agreements Croghan and other British agents negotiated with Indigenous nations of the North American interior enabled Captain Thomas Sterling to travel to the Illinois Country and take formal possession over the

²⁹⁴ Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Cater, introduction to *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, ixli-li. Also see "Gage to Johnson, February 2, 1765," in *The Critical Period*, 427-428; "Croghan to the Lords of Trade, June 8, 1764," in *The Critical Period*, 262-263. Parmenter, 635-639; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 262-265; Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 199-200.

²⁹⁵ "Croghan's Journal, February 28, 1765-May 11, 1765," in *The New Régime*, 15-16.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 17-18. For an additional example that highlights the symbolic and practical importance Indigenous peoples assigned to liquor during diplomatic relations, see: "Croghan's Journal," in *The New Régime*, 1-2, 15-18, 46-52. For a secondary source discussion of the important roles presents played in intercultural diplomacy in New France, see Catherine M. Desbarats, "The Cost of Early Canada's Native Alliances: Reality and Scarcity's Rhetoric," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (1995): 609-611; Cornelius Jaenen, "The Role of Presents in French-Amerindian Trade," *Explorations in Canadian Economic History: Essays in Honour of Irene M. Spry* (1985), 231-250.

²⁹⁷ See "Croghan's Journal," in *The New Régime*, 1-2, 15-18, 46-52.

territory in October 1765.²⁹⁸ Yet, the British foothold in the Illinois Country remained tenuous over the following years. Lack of supplies, provisions, and settlers, as well as a constantly changing British leadership made Indigenous alliances integral to the preservation of British dominion.²⁹⁹ Following Native customs, Indigenous friendship had to be constantly renewed.³⁰⁰ George Morgan's description of a meeting with Kaskaskia delegates provides insight into why liquor and other gifts were necessary to confirm British-Indigenous alliances. Morgan argued that the Kaskaskia required "Sincere Marks of our Friendship," to renew their alliances with Britain.³⁰¹ This comment suggests that Indigenous peoples dictated the terms of alliance in the Illinois Country. A coveted European trade good due to its spiritual, social, and symbolic importance, liquor was one gift Indigenous peoples required to renew alliance relations.³⁰² Accordingly, rum was provided to Indigenous delegates at every diplomatic conference Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan recorded between British officials and Indigenous delegates in the Illinois Country from 1767 and 1768.³⁰³

The role that alcohol played in the European competition for Indigenous alliances during the American Revolution in the North American interior further illustrates the social influence

²⁹⁸ Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 194-195; Alvord and Carter, "The British Occupation of the Illinois Country, 1763-1765," in *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, lvi; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 264-265.

²⁹⁹ Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 144-149, 153; Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 194-197, 203-204; Carter, *Great Britain and the Illinois Country*, 46-76.

³⁰⁰ White, *The Middle Ground*, 173-185; Hinderaker, 111, 119; Desbarats, 609-614; DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 1-12; Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 112.

³⁰¹ "Account of Baynton, Wharton & Morgan with Certificates of Commissary Edward Cole and Captain Gordon Forbes," in *Trade and Politics*, 406.

³⁰² For a discussion of the Indigenous demand for alcohol, see: Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 41-48; Ferland, 227-241. The symbolic importance Indigenous peoples prescribed to alcohol was partially derived from liquor's prevalence in Euro-American society. Liquor was a key social beverage amongst Europeans, and as a result Indigenous peoples considered the liquor trade symbolic of European friendship, see Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 72-73; Ferland, 246-247; Ishii, 16; James Axtell, *The European and the Indian*, 246-247.

³⁰³ "Account of Baynton, Wharton & Morgan with Certificates of Commissary Edward Cole and Captain Gordon Forbes, September 13, 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 405; The Papers of Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan (microfilm), reel 7, frames, 432, 442, 449, 477-490. For a chart of this trade data see Mancall, "Appendix I," in *Deadly Medicine*, 181-182. For additional examples from the British Period, see: "Form of Instructions to the Commissaries of Indian Affairs March 24, 1767," in *The New Régime*, 529-531; "Letter from the Illinois to Gage, July? 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 340.

Indigenous peoples exerted as a result of their military strength. Learning of the American occupation of the Illinois Country in July 1778, British Lieutenant Governor at Detroit, Henry Hamilton, quickly made plans to retake Fort Vincennes on the Wabash River. The American Revolution in the North American interior was not a clash of continental armies, but a series of skirmishes between diverse fighting forces comprised of European soldiers, Euro-American settlers, and Indigenous peoples.³⁰⁴ Setting out from Detroit in August 1778, Hamilton commanded only 162 soldiers, two-thirds of whom were French Creole militia.³⁰⁵ Hamilton hoped to strengthen his military force with Indigenous allies during the journey to Vincennes.³⁰⁶ With Hamilton reliant on Indigenous military support, Native peoples shaped the nature of intercultural relations.³⁰⁷ Indigenous demand for alcohol exemplifies this reality. Native delegates expected gifts of liquor in exchange for their military support. On 26 October 1778, Hamilton met in council with the leaders of his Ottawa, Miami, Ojibwe, Wyandot, and Shawnee allies. Hamilton recalled, “Most of them complained, that I did not wet the Grindstone with Rum, and that they had great difficulty in sharpening their father’s axe.”³⁰⁸ Nearly five weeks later, on 1 December 1778, Hamilton hosted a conference with Wea delegates a mile outside of Ouiatenon to confirm their support for the British campaign against Vincennes.³⁰⁹ Hamilton

³⁰⁴ White, *The Middle Ground*, 366-378; McDonnell, 272-273; Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24; Cleary, 227-228.

³⁰⁵ See Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States: an intrinsic gift* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 116-117; White, *The Middle Ground*, 369-379.

³⁰⁶ See Reginald Horsman, “Great Britain and the Illinois Country in the Era of the American Revolution,” 103; White, *The Middle Ground*, 369-374; Henry Hamilton, “Clark Recaptures Vincennes, February 22 to March 5, 1779,” in *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution*, ed. John D. Barnhart (Crawfordsville: R.E. Banta, 1951), 181; McDonnell, 290-295; Chavez, 116-117.

³⁰⁷ For a discussion of Hamilton’s reliance on Indigenous allies, see: White, *The Middle Ground*, 366-379.

³⁰⁸ Henry Hamilton, “Detroit to Miamitown, Hamilton on the Maumee, August 6 to October 27, 1778,” in *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution*, ed. John D. Barnhart (Crawfordsville: R.E. Banta, 1951), 115.

³⁰⁹ See Henry Hamilton, “Ouiatenon to Vincennes, Hamilton Takes Vincennes, November 29, to December 17, 1778,” in *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution*, 134-135.

stated, “As it was necessary to sharpen the War axe of their Gentry, a feast of two hogs with a due proportion of what they called Milk (Rum) was prepared.”³¹⁰

Collectively, Hamilton’s journal entries reveal that the Indigenous peoples set the terms of alliance during the British campaign to retake Vincennes. Exploiting Hamilton’s reliance on Native military support, Indigenous delegates demanded and received gifts of liquor in exchange for their friendship and alliance. Hamilton could either satisfy Indigenous demand for alcohol, or lose their military backing.

Much like Hamilton, Lieutenant Governor of Spanish Upper Louisiana, Francisco Cruzat, scrambled to satisfy Indigenous demand for liquor to confirm Native alliances during the American Revolution. The region’s strategic position on the Mississippi River and Spain’s declaration of war against Britain on 21 June 1779, made Spanish Illinois a target for British officials in the west.³¹¹ With only a series of small outposts on the west bank of the middle Mississippi River, Spanish dominion was contingent on maintaining good relations and strong alliances with Indigenous peoples.³¹² After receiving a report that a joint British, Chickasaw, and Choctaw attack on Upper Louisiana was imminent, Cruzat addressed the officers garrisoned at St. Louis on 9 July 1782. He argued that the lack of trade goods, particularly brandy, was jeopardizing Upper Louisiana’s Indigenous alliances, which threatened Spanish Illinois’ security.

It is well-known that I am without any goods with which to make presents to the numerous parties of Indians who constantly gather at this town . . . Even brandy is hardly to be found in this town, although it is one of the articles most essential to satisfy the aforesaid Indians, and I do not know what may result from this lack of drink and the limited presents that I am now compelled to give them, at a time when our enemies are

³¹⁰ Ibid., 135. For another example of Indigenous peoples requesting that Hamilton provision them with alcohol, see: Henry Hamilton, “Detroit to Miamitown, Hamilton on the Maumee, August 6 to October 27, 1778,” 113.

³¹¹ See Cleary, 222-248. Spain used their access to the Mississippi River to supply American forces in the Illinois Country during the American Revolutionary War. See, Chavez, 11, 31, 114-119.

³¹² Din, “Spanish Control over a Multiethnic Society,” 49-76; Din and Nasatir, *Imperial Osage*, 125-145; Fausz, *St. Louis: The First City*, 108-113.

making the greatest efforts to strengthen themselves by giving them the most splendid presents.³¹³

Imperial competition for Native allies placed Indigenous peoples in a position of authority in the Illinois Country. Historian Michael McDonnell argues that during the American Revolution in the *pays d'en haut*, Indigenous peoples navigated diplomatic channels strategically and played Spanish, American, and British officials against one another to “get what they wanted” from alliance relationships.³¹⁴ Dependent on Native allies to protect the Spanish Illinois Country, Cruzat scrambled to satisfy Indigenous demand for liquor.³¹⁵

In the Illinois Country, Indigenous demographic supremacy and military strength enabled Indigenous delegates to dictate the terms of alliance. Indigenous peoples set out to forward their own agendas through intercultural diplomacy.³¹⁶ Native peoples demanded alcoholic beverages, a coveted Euro-American product, to confirm and renew alliance relations.³¹⁷ Adjusting to Indigenous terms and disregarding liquor regulations, colonial officials provisioned Indigenous delegates with liquor, hoping to secure imperial dominion in the region.

Liquor, the Fur Trade, and Social Control

In the Illinois Country, and colonial North America more broadly, Indigenous social customs linked kinship, commerce, and military alliance in an intricate and intertwined system of

³¹³ “Council of War Held at St. Louis,” in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 2:40.

³¹⁴ McDonnell, 241, 268-306.

³¹⁵ For additional primary sources that discuss colonial officials using liquor to confirm Indigenous alliances, see: “Gage to Penn, June 2, 1765,” in *The Critical Period*, 516-517; “Fear of English Invasion of Upper Louisiana and American Invasion of Lower Louisiana—1800,” in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2:285-287; “Inventory of Papers, Instructions Etc., Delivered to Don Manuel Perez by Lieutenant-Governor Cruzat in 1787,” in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:263; “Effects delivered to Don Manuel Perez by Lieutenant Governor Cruzat in 1787,” in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 1:268; “Effects delivered to Don Manuel Perez by Lieutenant Governor Cruzat in 1787,” 1:264, 268; “Fear of English Invasion of Upper Louisiana and American Invasion of Lower Louisiana—1800,” in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2:285-287; “Raymond to La Jonquière,” 105-106; “De la Balme’s Address, September 17, 1780,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 184.

³¹⁶ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 4.

³¹⁷ See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 55-57, 63-84; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 53, 70-72, 86, 223.

frontier exchange.³¹⁸ Similar to its role in European-Indigenous diplomacy, alcohol became a salient product in the Illinois Country's fur trade economy.³¹⁹ Indigenous peoples demanded alcohol to enter into alliance and trade relationships. Conventional historical interpretations suggest that the liquor trade was exploitative, arguing that greedy European traders used alcohol to take advantage of Indigenous peoples.³²⁰ However, these exchanges take on a different character when an Indigenous perspective is considered. Native traders demanded liquor in exchange for furs due to alcohol's social and spiritual functions in Indigenous communities.³²¹ The continued use of liquor in fur trade transactions demonstrates that Indigenous traders set the terms of frontier exchange in the Illinois Country.

The Illinois Country was an economic battleground during the colonial period, where French, British, Spanish, and later American officials competed to extract profitable resources from the region to advance their mercantilist and market objectives.³²² In 1767, Deputy Indian Superintendent for the Northern Department, George Croghan, penned a letter to Benjamin Franklin, which argued that additional forts were needed on the Illinois and Wabash Rivers to

³¹⁸ See Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration*, 50, 110, 202-204; White, *The Middle Ground*, 15, 97-105, 114-115, 140-141, 145, 177-185; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 25-27, 77-78; DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 19, 42, 72.

³¹⁹ See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 55-57; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 53, 71-72, 85-86, 223; Ekberg, *Colonial St. Genevieve*, 148, 312; Ekberg, *French Roots*, 148-149, 219; Morgan, 115, 182-183.

³²⁰ See Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 12-28, 42-43; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 126-128; Stanley, 489-505; Dailey, 45-59; Vachon, 22-32; Denys Del  ge, *Bitter Feast: Amerindians and Europeans in Northeastern North America, 1600-1664*, trans. Jane Brierley (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993). For a primary source example that describes the liquor trade as a form of European exploitation, see: "The Proposed Colony of Charlottina: The Expediency of Securing our American Colonies c. 1763," in *The Critical Period*, 156-157; "Duquesne to Rouill  , October 31, 1753," *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 845-846.

³²¹ For a discussion of the social and spiritual functions of alcohol in Indigenous communities, see: Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 63-84; Ferland, 291-300; Ishii, 31-37.

³²² See Hinderaker, 1-2; Dale Miquelon, "Jean Baptiste Colbert's "Compact Colonial Policy" Revisited: The Tenacity of an Idea," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, 17 (1993): 12-23; Witgen, 116; Choquette, 193, 203; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 16; White, *The Middle Ground*, 115; Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 157; Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 61, 67-75, 85-86, 247-248, 255, 412-414; W.J. Eccles, *The French in North America, 1500-1783* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1998), 66-99; Cosimo Perotta, "Early Spanish Mercantilism: The First Analysis of Underdevelopment," in *Mercantilist Economics*, ed., Lars Magnusson (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 17-18. "Reasons for Establishing a Colony in the Illinois, 1766," in *The New R  gime*, 248-252.

prevent French and Spanish merchants from trading in the region. Croghan posited, “We shall be amply repaid for them [forts], in the great Sale of British Manufactories, in deriving an annual Revenue equal to our Expense, in having no Rivals in the Fur Trade, & in perpetuating Peace or Tranquility to our Colonies.”³²³ By removing French and Spanish competition, Croghan believed that Britain could make the Illinois Country profitable. Over the Illinois Country’s four regimes, imperial and colonial officials competed to gain access to the fur trade.³²⁴

As Chapter 2 demonstrated, colonial governments in the Illinois Country could not effectively regulate frontier trade. The fur trade was a vital, but also inconsistent, revenue stream for French Creoles and Anglo-American colonists alike. Euro-American merchants competed with each other in order to establish profitable and lasting trade relations with Indigenous peoples throughout the interior of North America.³²⁵ Colonial trade restrictions at particular posts were sore points for European traders, as these regulations gave competitors unchallenged access to Indigenous peltries. In 1767, ten Detroit merchants submitted a petition to the British Commissary of Indian Affairs at Detroit, Jehu Hay. They complained, “we find the trade here [Detroit] particularly limited and restricted, while the traders from Michilimackinac & the Illinois have Permission of wintering round us and thereby engross the Principal part of the Trade on which we chiefly depend for Remittances.”³²⁶ Kaskaskia’s residents expressed a similar

³²³ “Croghan to B. Franklin, January 27, 1767,” in *The New Régime* 502-503.

³²⁴ For additional examples of imperial competition for Indigenous trade in the Illinois Country, see: “Proposed Colony in the Illinois,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 133-138; “St. Ange to Vaudreuil, February 28, 1752,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 483-487; “Leyba to Galvez, July 13, 1779,” in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 1:346-347; “Commerce in the Illinois Country, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 381-382; “Letter from the Illinois to Gage, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 340.

³²⁵ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 245-246; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*, 103-104; Englebert, “Beyond Borders,” 33-34, 155-156; Hinderaker, 1-2, 32-39, 44-45; Cleary, 36-37, 270.

³²⁶ “Van Schaak and Other Traders to Hay, September 4, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 5.

grievance in 1787, requesting that trade restrictions be removed because traders from Detroit and Michilimackinac “engross all the fur trade.”³²⁷

This concern over access to the fur trade masked the fact that many Euro-American communities throughout the Great Lakes, Ohio Valley, and Illinois Country, depended on trade with Indigenous neighbors to meet basic subsistence needs at times of want. During the continent’s long frigid winters, food and provisions were scarce, and European settlers of the North American interior depended on Indigenous trade to secure the necessary provisions for their survival.³²⁸ In February 1752, French Commandant at Vincennes, Louis Saint Ange de Bellerive, described the reliance Vincennes’ inhabitants had on Indigenous trade, “what most disquiets me is that we have no more Indians at the post, which induces some of our inhabitants to leave the place as they can live only by the trade with the Indians.”³²⁹

Euro-American demand for Native trade goods provides a starting point to evaluate the nature of the liquor trade and its social implications in the Illinois Country. Operating in a pre-industrial trade economy, it was Indigenous traders who controlled furs, provisions, and other goods that imperial governments and Euro-American traders desired.³³⁰ In his seminal work,

³²⁷ “Joseph Parker to President St. Clair, October 2, 1787,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 410-411. For additional primary source examples regarding the competition for Indigenous trade, see: “Commerce in the Illinois Country, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 381-382; “Memorial of the French Faction to Congress, June 2, 1786,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 381-382; “Gage to Johnson, August 18, 1765,” in *The New Régime*, 76-78; “Review of Trade and Affairs in the Northern District of America,” in *Trade and Politics*, 37-39; “Johnson to Shelburne, May 30, 1767,” in *The New Régime*, 573-574; “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, December 2, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 121-125; “Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan to Johnson, December 28, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 464-466; “Croghan to Gage, January 16, 1767,” in *The New Régime*, 487-494; “Memorial of the French Faction to Congress, June 2, 1786,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 382; “Inhabitants of Cahokia to Congress, November 10, 1784,” in *Cahokia Records*, 571.

³²⁸ McDonnell, 255-256; Marjorie Gordon Jackson, “The Beginning of British Trade at Michilimackinac,” *Minnesota History* 11.3 (1930): 251-252. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 25-26.

³²⁹ “St. Ange to Vaudreuil, February 28, 1752,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 485. For examples from the French, Spanish, and American regimes describing the colonists’ dependence on Indigenous trade, see: Meurin to Briand, June 11, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 309. “Local Ordinances for St. Louis and General Ordinances Published by Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat from October 7, 1780 to November 24, 1787,” in *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 251-252; “Memorial by Bathelemi Tardiveau, February 28, 1788,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 462. “St. Ange to Vaudreuil, February 28, 1752,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 485.

³³⁰ Historian Michael Witgen argues that in the aftermath of European arrival, European colonists were surrounded by autonomous Native communities that controlled access to the vast majority of the continent’s land and resources.

Indians and the Fur Trade, historian Arthur J. Ray argued that Indigenous traders in the Hudson Bay watershed understood the value of their goods and were shrewd negotiators that often controlled the terms of exchange.³³¹ An examination of the liquor trade in the Illinois Country shows that Indigenous peoples in the North American interior asserted a similar influence on the exchange economy. Native traders in the Illinois Country could seemingly name their price, or more precisely in this predominantly barter economy, demand specific goods.³³²

Indigenous demand for alcohol motivated Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Northern Department, William Johnson, to propose an alteration to Britain's Indian policy. With nearly thirty years of experience building relationships with Indigenous peoples in Northeastern North America, Johnson was one of the most knowledgeable British officials regarding Native diplomacy.³³³ Following his 1764 statement regarding the liquor trade's persistence in the North American interior, Johnson argued that the liquor trade was essential to solidify and maintain Indigenous trade relations, and noted that "I am convinced, on a close examination of particulars, that the Trade will never be so Extensive without it."³³⁴ He identified four key reasons why the liquor trade needed to be permitted in the North American interior,

See Witgen, 25-28. For an additional example, see: Lucy Murphy, *Great Lakes Creoles: A French-Indian Community on the Northern Borderlands, Prairie du Chien, 1750-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6.

³³¹ See Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the eighteenth century," in *Rethinking the Fur Trade: Cultures of Exchange in the Atlantic World* ed., Susan Sleeper-Smith, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 320-343; Arthur J. Ray, *Indians and the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870*, 6th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 149.

³³² For primary sources regarding Indigenous demand for liquor, see: "Legras to Clark, August 1, 1782," in *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1781-1783*, 19:84-85; "Croghan's Journal," in *The New Regime*, 46-49; "Transcript of a 1768 Petition to Prohibit sale of alcohol to Indians in the Illinois Country," *American Indian Histories and Cultures Database*; Macarty to Vaudreuil, December 7, 1752," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 762. "Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, July 20, 1768, Kaskaskia," in *Trade and Politics*, 360; "Macarty to Vaudreuil," in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, 459-461.

³³³ See Alvord and Carter ed., *The Critical Period*, 17 n.1; James Thomas Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet: A Biography of Sir William Johnson*. 3rd Ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989).

³³⁴ "Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department," in *The Critical Period*, 334. In 1764, the Board of Trade drafted a plan to manage Indigenous affairs. Part of this plan included dividing North America into two administrative branches, the Northern District and the Southern District. See "Plan for the Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, July 10, 1764," in *The Critical Period*, 273-281.

First, the Extreme desire the Indians have for it, and the strong Requests the several Nations made for the sale thereof . . . Secondly, that as the Indians value it above any thing Else, they will not stick at giving such price for it, as will make good addition to the fund for the purposes of the department. Thirdly, that without it, the Indians can purchase their clothing with half the quantity of Skins, which will make them Indolent, and lessen the fur trade. And lastly, that from what I find, the Indians will be universally discontented with out it.³³⁵

Johnson characterized the liquor trade as a mutually beneficial form of exchange. By satisfying Indigenous demand for liquor, Britain could gain access to furs and attain high profits due to the value Native traders placed on alcohol. However, Johnson's suggestion to permit the liquor trade was a reaction to Indigenous demand, rather than an exploitative measure. Native requests for liquor influenced Johnson's recommended policy changes, as he believed that without alcohol, Britain's access to Native trade goods would decrease dramatically. Indigenous demand made the liquor trade necessary for British traders to obtain Native peltries.³³⁶

The Spanish Governor of Upper Louisiana, Fernando de Leyba's, description of the Spanish Illinois' trade economy indicates that Indigenous peoples shaped Spanish Upper Louisiana's exchange economy as well. In the 1760s and 1770s, Spanish officials in the Illinois Country competed for access to Indigenous peltries with British officials across the Mississippi.³³⁷ The outbreak of the American Revolutionary War in 1775, and Spanish declaration of war against Britain in 1779, raised the tension between these imperial rivals. Britain set out to expel Spain from the Mississippi Valley, hoping to eliminate Spanish competition for the fur trade and stop Spanish supplies from aiding the American forces in the

³³⁵ "Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department," 334-335.

³³⁶ For additional examples of Indigenous demand leading to an alteration in British liquor policy, see: "Orders for the Regulation of Trade, January 16, 1765," in *The Critical Period*, 400-401. For an example of the European fear surrounding Indigenous conduct under alcohol's influence, see: Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, xi, 12-28, 63-64, 82, 93-96; Cleary, 79-82; Colpitts, 78.

³³⁷ Cleary, 223.

North American interior.³³⁸ Imperial competition and Indigenous control over coveted peltries enabled Native traders to dictate the terms of exchange in the Spanish Illinois Country.³³⁹

Writing to Governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Gálvez, on 13 July 1779, Leyba declared that provisioning Indigenous groups with desired goods was vital to maintaining strong Indigenous trade relations. Leyba argued that “It is indispensable that our Indian tribes be provided with their accustomed goods.”³⁴⁰ Without rum and other European products, he argued “they will turn their backs disdainfully on us. . . no furs will come into our territory and the Indians will be won over to the English trade.”³⁴¹ Leyba’s commentary illustrates that Indigenous demand guided the Illinois Country’s exchange economy. Playing competing colonial traders against one another, Indigenous merchants sought trade partners that would satisfy their demands and provide desirable returns for their furs.³⁴²

The Indigenous influence on the liquor trade’s continuation in Illinois Country’s is effectively summed up in a letter Father Pierre Gibault wrote to the Bishop of Quebec, Louis-Philippe Mariauchau d’Esgly in 1786. Father Gibault served Illinois Country communities on the east and west banks of the Mississippi.³⁴³ Using alcohol to justify his general failure to convert the Illinois Country’s Native population to Catholicism, Gibault argued that Indigenous demand embedded alcohol within the territory’s exchange economy, “Since the savages sell their meat,

³³⁸ Cleary, 225; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 26; Kathleen DuVal, “The Education of Fernando de Leyba: Quapaws and Spaniards on the Border of Empires,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2001): 6-7.

³³⁹ See McDonnell, 268-271; Witgen, 132-133.

³⁴⁰ “Leyba to Galvez, July 13, 1779” in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 1:347.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1:346-347.

³⁴² For additional examples of the need to satisfy Indigenous demand for liquor to gain access to Indigenous trade goods, see: “To Jeffery Amherst,” in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 3:664-665; “To Cadwallader Colden, Johnson Hall, October 9, 1764,” in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 4:566; “From Ferrall Wade, September 29, 1770,” in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 7: 917. For a British traders’ description of how the inability to provide rum hindered their access to the frontier trade, see “From Collin Andrews and Others, April 27, 1762,” in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 3:720-721.

³⁴³ See Craig, 52-55, 74-75; “Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 534-547.

their oil, their tallow only for *eau de vie*, which the Spaniards and English find no difficulty in giving them, what shall the French do to have some of these commodities?”³⁴⁴ This rhetorical question indicates that Indigenous traders shaped the terms of exchange in the Illinois Country. The competition for Indigenous goods necessitated provisioning Indigenous traders with liquor to gain access to Native merchandise. Controlling furs and other provisions, Indigenous merchants had the autonomy to exchange goods with European traders that were willing to satisfy their demands.³⁴⁵

Historian Michael McDonnell argues that the historiography of colonial North America has reproduced the faulty assumption that the European traders provided the “main impetus behind efforts to undermine” imperial policies.³⁴⁶ The liquor trade in the Illinois Country flips this narrative. In the Illinois Country, diverse Indigenous groups controlled access to peltries, and utilized this influential position to play competing Euro-American traders against one another to obtain alcohol and other desirable European products. Indigenous demand for liquor persuaded and at times forced competing Euro-American traders to purvey liquor to Native merchants. Alcohol’s prevalence in fur trade transactions demonstrates the economic power and social control Indigenous peoples retained in the Illinois Country during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Alcohol, the Fur Trade, and French Creole Middlemen

³⁴⁴ “Gibault to the Bishop of Quebec, June 6, 1786,” in *Kaskaskia Records*, 545-546.

³⁴⁵ See Witgen, 132-133. For additional references to Indigenous demand for liquor influencing frontier trade in the Illinois Country, see “Jackson’s Opinion of Western Plans, November 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 424; “Memorial by Father Lafitau: On the sale of liquor to the Savages,” in *The Jesuit Relations*, ed., Reuben Thwaites, 67:41-43; “Memorial of Henry Van Schaak,” in *Trade and Politics*, 121-125; “Macarty to Vaudreuil, December 7, 1752,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 762. “Hillsborough to Gage,” in *Trade and Politics*, 249-250; “Macarty to Vaudreuil, December 1752,” in *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years’ War*, 762-763.

³⁴⁶ McDonnell, 257. For a discussion about how European officials misrepresented the fur trade as a symbol of European domination and Indigenous inferiority, see: Witgen, 54-56.

Ethnohistorian Michael Witgen argues that alongside Indigenous traders, Euro-American merchants exploited “the overlapping circulation of indigenous and European goods to become power brokers” in the North American interior’s exchange economy.³⁴⁷ Witgen’s description serves as a useful framework to assess the role of French Creole traders in the Illinois Country’s fur trade. During the eighteenth century, French merchants constructed what Robert Englebert has called a “French river world,” a transnational French trade network built upon kinship and commercial ties to Native communities. This system linked French Creole merchants from the St. Lawrence Valley, to the Illinois Country, to New Orleans.³⁴⁸ Although French Creole inhabitants of the Illinois Country transitioned from colonizers to the colonized after the Seven Years’ War, geopolitical changes did little to alter the social realities on the ground.³⁴⁹ The French river world remained intact. The liquor trade acts as one example of how French Creoles navigated colonial politics and adapted to Indigenous demand to maintain lucrative and influential positions as middlemen or power brokers in the Illinois Country fur trade.

Jean-Baptiste Hubert LaCroix’s trade agreement with the Court of Cahokia in 1785 acts as one example of how local traders strategically navigated the frontier exchange economy to advance local and personal agendas. Prominent French Creole merchants in the District of Cahokia, LaCroix, Charles Gratiot, and Issac Levy were granted exclusive rights over trade from Cahokia to the mouth of the Illinois River in September 1779.³⁵⁰ Three years later, LaCroix negotiated a new trade contract with the Court of Cahokia that gave him private access to

³⁴⁷ Witgen, 55.

³⁴⁸ See Englebert, “Merchant Representatives,” 63-82; Englebert, “Beyond Borders,” 1-36, 125-175.

³⁴⁹ See Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 131.

³⁵⁰ “Clerk’s Record, August 1779,” in *Cahokia Records*, 463. LaCroix’s influence went beyond the frontier exchange economy. He was appointed sheriff and clerk of the Court of Cahokia in 1779. Additionally, LaCroix acted as a court justice at the Court of Cahokia in at various times during the 1780s, see: Alvord, introduction to *Cahokia Records*, li, lxii, 632; John Francis McDermott ed., *Old Cahokia: A Narrative and Documents Illustrating the First Century of Its History* (St. Louis: St. Louis Documents Foundation, 1949), 122.

Indigenous trade at Cahokia. In exchange for this trade monopoly, LaCroix was required to sell the meat, tallow, oil, furs, and skins that he received from Indigenous traders to Cahokia's residents at a regulated price. The court made one additional stipulation. Citing the erratic behavior that alcohol incited amongst the area's Native population, the magistrates forbade LaCroix to provision Indigenous traders with liquor.³⁵¹

As his monopoly was set to expire in 1785, LaCroix petitioned the court to renew and update the trade agreement, arguing that the contours of the Cahokian exchange economy had changed drastically over the previous three years. First, The Great Flood of 1785 had devastated Cahokia's infrastructure. In the wake of this catastrophe, LaCroix argued his access to Indigenous provisions was even more essential for the survival and prosperity of Cahokia's residents.³⁵² Second, LaCroix asserted that competition for Indigenous trade had increased considerably at Cahokia after the arrival of a group of Michilimackinac merchants who were restricting the access of Cahokia traders to Indigenous furs, oil, and tallow.³⁵³ LaCroix stated that the success of the Michilimackinac traders was the result of their willingness to satisfy Indigenous demands for alcohol, explaining that "these traders are trading before our eyes and up to our very doors not only in merchandise but also in what is more pernicious, drink, and are favoring the savages at a time when one cannot be too careful."³⁵⁴

Reacting to the hardship Cahokia was experiencing after the flood, and acknowledging alcohol's entrenched position in the Illinois Country's trade economy, the Court of Cahokia permitted LaCroix to trade liquor with the Indigenous peoples he encountered, noting that "For

³⁵¹ "Court Record, March 1782," in *Cahokia Records*, 125-127. For an additional example of the competition for trade at Cahokia, see: "Memorial of the French Faction to Congress, June 2, 1786," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 381-382.

³⁵² "Petition of LaCroix in Regard to Trade, October 29, 1785," in *Cahokia Records*, 575-579.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 577.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

the public good of this post . . . he [LaCroix] shall be free to trade in liquor with the savages with this reservation and condition . . . that he can only deliver liquor to the savages when they shall set out from this village and so that they do not drink in the said village and there results no damage therefrom.”³⁵⁵

LaCroix’s agreement exemplifies how local French Creole traders navigated colonial politics and Indigenous demand to retain influential positions in the Illinois Country’s exchange economy. LaCroix needed alcohol in order to compete with Michilimackinac traders for access to Indigenous trade goods, which Cahokia’s residents required for survival. Although LaCroix presented his trade as benevolent and in the interest of the broader community, he benefitted first and foremost from the revised trade agreement. He gained a monopoly over the liquor trade at Cahokia, and was re-established as a powerful middleman between Indigenous traders and Cahokia’s inhabitants.³⁵⁶

As LaCroix’s case illustrates, French Creole traders retained influential positions in the Illinois Country’s exchange economy after the fall of New France.³⁵⁷ In September 1766, while at Fort de Chartres, Captain of the British Royal Engineers Harry Gordon observed,

The French carry on the Trade all round us by Land & by Water; 1st Up the Mississippi, & to the Lakes by the Ouiascoasin [Wisconsin], Foxes, Chicagou [Chicago], and Illinois Rivers; 2ndly Up the Ohio to the Wabash Indians, & even the small Quantity of Skins or Furs that the Kaskaskia and Peoria’s (who are on our side) get by hunting is carried under our nose to Misere [St. Geneviève] and Pain Court [St. Louis].³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 579.

³⁵⁶ For a brief statement regarding frontier traders position between the frontier economy and the commercial export economy, see: Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 266.

³⁵⁷ For examples discussing the influence of French traders after the fall of New France, see: Englebert, “Merchant Representatives,” 63-82; Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier*. For additional examples of the continued influence of French traders in the Illinois Country after the fall of New France, see: “Gage to Johnson, August 18, 1765,” in *The Critical Period*, 76-78; “Croghan to Johnson, October 18, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 88-90; “Wilkins to Gage, September 13, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 388-391. “Review of the Trade and Affairs in the Northern District of America, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 38, 44-45; Memorial of Traders, September 20, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 379-382; “Johnson to Gage, January 15, 1767,” in *The New Régime*, 482-484.

³⁵⁸ Captain Gordon also noted that Pierre Laclède, spelt “Le Clef”, controlled the trade on the Missouri River and surrounding region. “Gordon’s Journal, May 8, 1766-December 6, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 300-301, 67 n. 2.

Similarly, after establishing a business presence in the Illinois Country in 1767, Philadelphia merchants, John Baynton and Samuel Wharton remarked that “The Influence of the French is so great, with the Numerous Tribes of Indians . . . That They have engrossed the greatest Part of the Trade.”³⁵⁹

Additional examples show that French Creole traders used liquor to solidify and maintain trade relationships with Indigenous communities. Following the banishment of the Jesuits from Louisiana in 1763, Father François Philibert Watrin outlined that French Creole traders continued to purvey liquor to Indigenous peoples in the Illinois Country despite religious and royal prohibitions.³⁶⁰ In 1764, William Johnson stated that the French traders in the Indian Country continued to supply Indigenous peoples with “prohibited goods.”³⁶¹ Considered in relation to Indigenous demand for alcohol in diplomatic and fur trade transactions, Johnson’s commentary suggests that French Creoles traders used alcohol and other illicit trade goods to satisfy Indigenous demand and obtain Native peltries.

By gaining access to Indigenous furs, French Creole traders established themselves as influential middlemen between Indigenous traders and European markets. Unimpeded by colonial governments in the Illinois Country, French Creole merchants had the autonomy to divert peltries along French trade networks to maximize their profits and further local and personal agendas.³⁶² In 1767, Major General Thomas Gage informed Superintendent William

³⁵⁹ “Baynton and Wharton to Maclean, October 9, 1767,” in *Trade and Politics*, 84.

³⁶⁰ “Banishment of the Jesuits, July 9, 1763,” in *The Critical Period*, 91-92.

³⁶¹ “Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department,” in *The Critical Period*, 337. For additional examples of clandestine trade continuing in the Illinois Country and surrounding region, see: “Hillsborough to Gage, June 11, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 297-299; “Gage to Conway, July 15, 1766,” in *The New Régime*, 339-341; “Croghan to Gage, January 16, 1767,” in *The New Régime* 491-492; “The Proposed Colony of Charlottina: The Expediency of Securing our American Colonies c. 1763,” in *The Critical Period*, 156-157. For an additional example, see: “Review of the Trade and Affairs in the Northern District of America, 1767,” 37.

³⁶² Englebert, “Beyond Borders,” 131-167.

Johnson that he was powerless to control the flow of goods, explaining that “As for the trade in the Illinois, and in general of the Mississippi, we may dispose of some Manufactures there, but whilst Skins and Furs bear a high Price at New Orleans, no Peltry gained by our Manufactures, will ever reach Great Britain.”³⁶³ While on 15 April 1768, British Lieutenant George Phyn reported, “The acquisition of the Country of the Illinois I am afraid will turn out to be but of small advantage to us . . .” because our colonial subjects, “will always dispose of their Peltry or whatever the Country produces at Orleans, because they get as good a price there, as if they were to ship them off.”³⁶⁴ However, peltries from the Illinois Country did not always go to New Orleans. French Creole traders navigated the economic and political climates in North America and adapted their trade networks to further their personal agendas.³⁶⁵ For example, during the American Revolution French Creole traders in the Illinois Country, such as Auguste Chouteau, reacted to the threat of a naval blockade at New Orleans and diverted peltries north to merchants at Michilimackinac and Montreal.³⁶⁶ Constructing vast trade networks from the banks of the Mississippi, French Creole merchants, such as Gabriel Cerré and Auguste Chouteau, became some of the richest and most influential Illinois Country residents under the Spanish, British, and American regimes.³⁶⁷ Their ability to influence the flow of goods in North America, highlights

³⁶³ “Gage to Johnson,” in *The New Régime*, 498-499.

³⁶⁴ “Phyn to Johnson, April 15, 1768,” in *Trade and Politics*, 242-243.

³⁶⁵ See: Englebert, “Beyond Borders,” 131-132, 144-167.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 131-167; Englebert, “Merchant Representatives,” 63-82.

³⁶⁷ For a discussion of Gabriel Cerré’s background and his position as an influential merchant in the Illinois Country, see Englebert, “Beyond Borders,” 87-124; Craig, 24, 32-35. For a discussion of the Chouteau trading empire after 1763, see Gitlin, *Bourgeois Frontier*; Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve*, 102-103; John Francis McDermott, “August Chouteau: First Citizen of Upper Louisiana,” in *Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley* ed., McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), 1-13; Shirley Christian, *Before Lewis and Clark: The Story of the Chouteaus, the French Dynasty that Ruled the America’s Frontier* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004).

the powerful position that colonized French Creole merchants maintained in the Illinois Country exchange economy.³⁶⁸

Anglo-American attempts to gain access to French trade networks further exemplify the economic influence French Creole traders had in the Illinois Country. One common way Anglo-American merchants tried to integrate themselves into French trade networks was through intermarriage.³⁶⁹ Thomas Bentley's marriage into the Beauvais family is a case in point. Originally from London, Bentley arrived at Kaskaskia in 1776, and married Marguerite Beauvais later that year.³⁷⁰ The Beauvais family, most notably, Antoine Beauvais and Jean-Baptiste Beauvais, were some of the most powerful merchants in Kaskaskia.³⁷¹ Bentley's marriage into this influential French family suggests that he understood and acknowledged that French Creole connections were integral to gaining access to the Illinois Country fur trade.

The liquor trade was seemingly another tactic Anglo-American merchants used to tap into Indigenous trade networks in the Illinois Country and the North American interior. In 1766, British merchant, Alexander McIntosh reportedly traded a Choctaw community 26 kegs of rum in exchange for raw skins.³⁷² Additionally, in 1776, Thomas Bentley was fined 50 *piastres* by British Commandant of the Illinois Country, Philippe François Rastel de Rocheblave, because

³⁶⁸For additional references to local merchants diverting goods to where they could earn the highest profits, see: "Gage to Conway, July 15, 1766," in *The New Régime*, 339-341; "Letter from the Illinois to Gage," in *Trade and Politics*, 340; "Commerce in the Illinois Country," in *Trade and Politics*, 72; "Henry to the Governor of Louisiana, October 20, 1777," in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 241-242; "Eddingstone to Unknown, Oct 17, 1765," in *The New Régime*, 105-106. For a discussion of the excessive price of transporting goods overland to Pennsylvania, see "Commerce in the Illinois Country, 1768," in *Trade and Politics*, 382; "Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly, October 31, 1769," 1:71-72; Abraham Nasatir, "The Anglo-Spanish Frontier in the Illinois Country during the American Revolution 1779-1783." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1928): 324.

³⁶⁹ Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 68-69, 73,

³⁷⁰ A document in the Kaskaskia manuscripts from December 1776 identifies Bentley and Beauvais as husband and wife. See Kaskaskia Manuscripts, 76:12:6:1. Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 78; Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 69-73; David G. Thompson, "Thomas Bentley and the American Revolution in Illinois." *Illinois Historical Journal* 83, no. 1 (1990): 3.

³⁷¹ Englebert, "Beyond Borders," 78; Englebert, "Merchant Representatives," 69-73.

³⁷² "McIntosh to Richardson, April 15, 1766," in *The New Régime*, 214-215.

one of his associates exchanged liquor with Lenape traders at Kaskaskia.³⁷³ Considered in relation to the Indigenous demands, the illicit sale of alcohol was seemingly an Anglo-American attempt to infiltrate the French river world and establish profitable trade relationships with Indigenous merchants. As Eric Hinderaker argues, after the fall of New France the vestiges of the old French trading empire endured.³⁷⁴ French Creoles remained influential middlemen in the Illinois Country, who used liquor to maintain commercial ties with Indigenous peoples, and retain access to the fur trade.

Conclusion

Examined from the Illinois Country facing outward, the liquor trade presents a new perspective of social power and social control in the Illinois Country. The liquor trade was not merely a form of European exploitation inflicted upon the Indigenous communities of the region. Rather, analyzing alcohol's role in the Illinois Country's exchange economy and diplomatic relations highlights the authoritative economic and military power Indigenous peoples retained in the Illinois Country during the colonial period. The military strength of Native communities and the European demand for Native goods enabled Indigenous peoples to shape the form and content of the fur trade and intercultural diplomacy. French Creoles, Euro-American colonists, and colonial officials adapted to Indigenous demand and social conventions to further personal, local, and imperial agendas. Using liquor to establish and renew commercial ties to Indigenous peoples, colonized French Creoles retained powerful positions as middlemen in the Illinois Country's exchange economy. The study of the liquor trade reveals the social power and

³⁷³ Kaskaskia Manuscripts, 76:10:29:1; 76:11:1:1, Fifth Circuit Court's Office, Randolph County Courthouse, Chester, Illinois. For additional examples of Anglo-American traders exchanging alcohol on the frontier, see: "Court of Enquiry, September 11, 1777," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 20-21; "Address of Colonial de la Balme to the French settled on the Mississippi," in *Kaskaskia Records*, 184.

³⁷⁴ Hinderaker, 80-81, 87-88, 91-93, 132-133.

influence that colonized Indigenous and French Creole population retained in the colonial Illinois Country in the face of geopolitical change.

Conclusion

On 4 September 1764, Jesuit priest Father François Philibert Watrin drafted a letter describing his order's banishment from Louisiana. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, the Jesuits were the subject of a growing controversy in France and Louisiana.³⁷⁵ Jesuit missions were deemed "hostile to royal authority," and French officials in New Orleans argued that the Jesuits were only concerned with the value of their estates, rather than their missionary work.³⁷⁶ This growing skepticism regarding the Jesuits led to the order's official expulsion from Louisiana on 9 July 1763. Agitated and angered by these accusations, Watrin defended the conduct and character of the Jesuit missionaries who worked in Louisiana and the Illinois Country.

Watrin presented the trade and consumption of alcohol as a symbol of the debased character of the Illinois Country's inhabitants, which impeded the spread of Catholicism in the region. He argued that the Illinois Country's populace included "a crowd of drunkards . . . who were perverting the savages by the brandy which they furnished to them."³⁷⁷ However, it was not just local merchants that provisioned Native peoples with alcohol. Watrin lamented that although the liquor trade "was prohibited by the law of the church and by the orders of the king," colonial officials ". . . who ought to have enforced their observance, were the first to distribute the forbidden liquor."³⁷⁸ Extolling the piety and temperance the Jesuits had instilled amongst a select number of Illinois inhabitants, Watrin outlined, "There were many others who preferred to deprive themselves of the most necessary provisions rather than to engage in so pernicious a

³⁷⁵ Alvord, *The Illinois Country*, 268-269.

³⁷⁶ "Banishment of the Jesuits, July 9, 1763," in *The Critical Period*, 62-68, 62 n.2.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 91-93.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

traffic.”³⁷⁹ Watrin presented the Jesuit discouragement of the liquor trade as an example of the virtues of their missionary work. “How much other fruit would not have been produced in this mission if serious effort had been made to stop the traffic in brandy,” he asked rhetorically.³⁸⁰

Watrin’s description of the liquor trade illustrates that a disconnect existed between colonial perceptions of control over the Illinois Country, and how Illinois society functioned on the ground. Watrin, like so many ecclesiastical and colonial officials, praised the colonists who practiced temperance, and characterized Euro-American and Indigenous drinkers as debased, corrupted, and inferior members of society. However, religious and colonial officials were unable to stop the exchange of alcohol. Disregarding liquor regulations, Euro-American traders and colonial officials continued to provision Indigenous consumers with alcohol in the Illinois Country.

Examining the liquor trade provides new insight into the nature of intercultural relations and the configuration of social power in the Illinois Country. Over the territory’s successive French, Spanish, British, and American regimes, Indigenous and Euro-American divergence from acceptable European drinking conventions reinforced colonial perceptions of superiority over the Illinois Country’s populace and justified imperial control. Emerging out of colonial discourses, liquor laws were formal assertions of authority over the Illinois Country. However, colonial rhetoric and liquor regulations exaggerated the control each imperial government had over their colonial holdings in the middle Mississippi Valley. The ineffectiveness of colonial liquor laws demonstrates that imperial power was restricted in the Illinois Country.

Complicating historical narratives and colonial discourses, which connected alcohol, Native destitution, and colonial supremacy, this research regarding the liquor trade shows that

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 92.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 93.

Indigenous peoples shaped the form and content of fur trade transactions and dictated the terms of alliance in the Illinois Country. Adapting to Indigenous demand, colonial officials, European colonists, and French Creoles used the liquor trade to carve out secure and influential positions in the Illinois Country. With an intimate understanding of Indigenous customs and a vast French trade network on the continent, French Creole traders maintained a prominent position in the Illinois Country's exchange economy through close kinship and commercial ties to the strong Indigenous groups. Ultimately, breaking down colonial discourses, the study of the liquor trade reveals that colonized Indigenous and French Creole inhabitants of the Illinois Country remained powerful, autonomous, and influential members of Illinois society, who profoundly shaped the territory's development between 1750 and 1803.

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