# Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country (Early American Studies)

*Robert Michael Morrissey*
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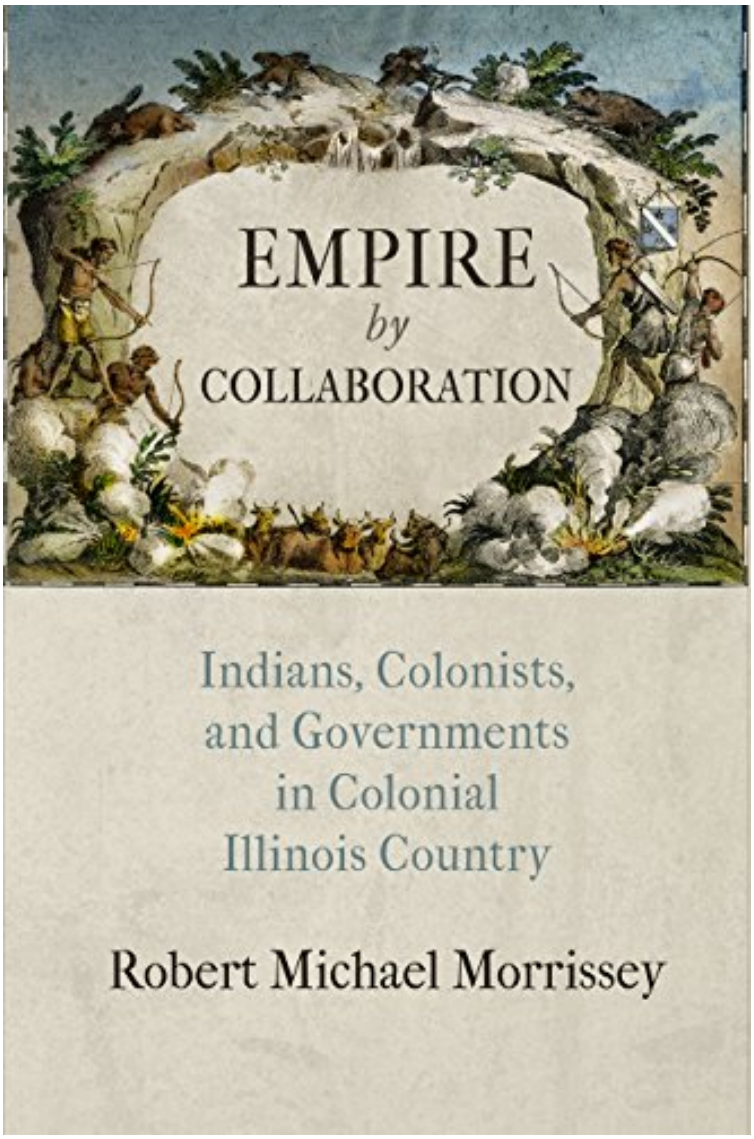




#1530641 in Books Robert Michael Morrissey 2015-03-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.10 x 1.30 x 6.10l, #File Name: 0812246993352 pagesEmpire by Collaboration Indians Colonists and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country Early American Studies | File size: 75.Mb

**Robert Michael Morrissey : Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country (Early American Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country (Early

American Studies):

0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerFantsatic0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. French IllinoisBy sylviascarletThis is a very interesting examination of the unique nature of the Illinois Country prior to statehood in 1818. This part of the Midwest did not develop exactly like other nearby areas because of its unique geography, environment, agriculture, and multiculturalism. The area was Indian and then French, but it developed somewhat like Quebec and somewhat like Louisiana. Then the British entered the area, and somewhat surprisingly, the French welcomed them. Also surprising is the extent of slavery in the Illinois Country. This book offers great insight into how people navigated wide cultural differences in a part of the US where French roots and slavery have often been overlooked.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A highly recommended bookBy Ann DubuissonThis is an outstanding book. Extremely well written, with new and well documented facts as well as new and important insights into the true stories of the settlement, prosperity, and eventual passing of the French and various Indian inhabitants in the Illinois area, during the late 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, and ending with the take-over by the English and Americans. Mr. Morissey's research is broad, thorough and up to date. The footnotes are almost as interesting as the text itself. This book is highly recommended.

From the beginnings of colonial settlement in Illinois Country, the region was characterized by self-determination and collaboration that did not always align with imperial plans. The French in Quebec established a somewhat reluctant alliance with the Illinois Indians while Jesuits and fur traders planted defiant outposts in the Illinois River Valley beyond the Great Lakes. These autonomous early settlements were brought into the French empire only after the fact. As the colony grew, the authority that governed the region was often uncertain. Canada and Louisiana alternately claimed control over the Illinois throughout the eighteenth century. Later, British and Spanish authorities tried to divide the region along the Mississippi River. Yet Illinois settlers and Native people continued to welcome and partner with European governments, even if that meant playing the competing empires against one another in order to pursue local interests.Empire by Collaboration explores the remarkable community and distinctive creole culture of colonial Illinois Country, characterized by compromise and flexibility rather than domination and resistance. Drawing on extensive archival research, Robert Michael Morrissey demonstrates how Natives, officials, traders, farmers, religious leaders, and slaves constantly negotiated local and imperial priorities and worked purposefully together to achieve their goals. Their pragmatic intercultural collaboration gave rise to new economies, new forms of social life, and new forms of political engagement. Empire by Collaboration shows that this rugged outpost on the fringe of empire bears central importance to the evolution of early America.

"Drawing on an astounding array of documentary, linguistic, and material evidence, Robert Morrissey illuminates the fascinating world of the evolving Illinois Indian and French colonial towns that survived and thrived by partnering with one another and with a succession of empiresFrench, Spanish, and British. In explaining these innovative, flexible, pragmatic, and ambitious people, Empire by Collaboration dashes the old stereotypes of lazy French and dependent Indians."Kathleen DuVal, University of North Carolina"Empire by Collaboration makes an important and sophisticated argument about colonial Illinois Country. Morrissey shows how the fluid, intercultural relations that characterized initial settlement gave way within a generation to distinctly bordered communities of Francophone Christians and traditional Illinois. But these borders were not imposed from the imperial center; rather, the French community that emerged on this frontier was self-defined by culture, not ethnic origin, and as such, it is a fascinating case study of assimilation."Leslie Choquette, Assumption College"Empire by Collaboration is a superb contribution to Illinois Country studies. Painting on a broad canvas, Morrissey brings together Indians, French colonists, and European imperial rivalries in unprecedented fashion. Indispensable reading for anyone interested in eighteenth-century America, this book boldly pushes an often marginalized region into the mainstream of colonial history."Carl J. Ekberg, author of French Roots in the Illinois CountryAbout the AuthorRobert Michael Morrissey teaches history at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.IntroductionAn Earnest InvitationIn 1772, a pamphlet came off the presses in Philadelphia. Like many pamphlets of this era, it was a political manifesto, a rallying cry. Written by a subject of the British empire in North America, it painted an almost utopian vision of the future. Addressing fellow colonists, the author urged them to "strive to improve our situation." He confidently predicted a coming age of economic prosperity, telling his readers to expect "the perfection of their settlements." He counseled his audience to abandon outdated tradition and move forward into a brave new world of self-reliance and self-improvement. The author called for action, encouraging his audience to work for their own interests, in solidarity, as a wholly unified community. In many ways, like other pamphlets printed in the radical ferment of 1770s Philadelphia, this one was calling for change, for a kind of revolution.This pamphlet was not John Dickinson's famous Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania . Nor was it Thomas Jefferson's Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved. Instead it was an anonymous tract, surely obscure in its day, and almost totally forgotten now, titled Invitation srieuse aux habitants des Illinois [An Earnest Invitation to the Inhabitants of Illinois].

Written by an unknown author who identified himself only as "un habitant of Kaskaskia," it represents the voice of an obscure American colonial community.Kaskaskia was the largest of five French villages located along the Mississippi River in the Illinois Country, recently taken over by the British government at the end of the Seven Years' War. Founded as a mission and fur trade outpost at the end of the seventeenth century, here colonists had intermarried with Indians and settled agricultural villages. These colonies, together with the Indian alliances based around them, were an important part of the former French colonial empire, the midway point of a Creole Crescent stretching from Louisiana to Quebec. On the edge of empire, Kaskaskia was home to French Indians, Africans, and mixed-race peoples. The Invitation gives us a window into this forgotten world.The Invitation reveals an ambitious colony looking forward to the future. But what is more interesting is that it is a window into a distinctive political tradition that had formed on the margins of empire. The pamphlet celebrates values like self-sufficiency, advising the inhabitants of Illinois to stand on their own feet and promote economic development, education, and legal order. But where other political pamphlets of this era took these same values and called for colonial independence, the Invitation called for almost the exact opposite course of action. Rather than making an argument for independence, the farmers of Illinois were appealing to the empire to send them a government. They expressed hope not that they could be autonomous but that the empire would come and give them "advantages" that they could not create themselves: "We are true and zealous subjects of his Britannic majesty and we doubt not at all that in a short time . . . the administration of civil government will be established among us. We are able at present only to desire these happy results."It's a surprising message for the 1770s in North America. Here was a group of colonists calling for the British empire to send them government officials, regulations, and laws. Their worst problem was not oppression, monarchy, or an arbitrary government, their spokesman said. It was neglect. Although they had suffered a bit under "tyranny," what had mostly hurt them was too little investment, too little support, which led to ignorance and backwardness. The answer to these problems was not independence, less government. It was more government. What the colonists wanted was not some abstract notion of "freedom"; it was a more specific notion of "benefits" and "advantages."If the message is surprising, it is especially surprising to note that the inhabitants of Illinois were mostly French and mixed-race peoples calling for the British government, of which they professed to be "true and zealous subjects," to rule them. Unlike their Creole compatriots in New Orleans, who had recently rebelled against the Spanish government when the latter tried to take over their colony at the end of the Seven Years' War, the French colonists of Illinois seemed happy to put themselves under the authority of the British. As the pamphlet suggested, they were flexible and adaptable enough to want to learn to speak English and to live as Englishmen, to "experience the liberty and the wisdom of the laws of that great nation."In all sorts of ways, the Invitation seems unexpected. But the message was actually not new. Since 1673, the initially illegal colonists of Illinois had been striving to make a colony. Settling together around a Jesuit mission, French fur traders married Illinois Indian women and eventually began to farm. The opportunistic Illinois Indians welcomed the French as neighbors and allies, establishing their own permanent villages nearby. Together they made a thriving, enterprising, and in many ways autonomous colonial world. Like the author of the Invitation, they sought their self-interests and pursued their own goals.But these people could not do it alone. French and Indian peoples of this colonial region partnered with empire and from the beginning used the support of Quebec and Louisiana to their own ends. They did this not because they were "submissive" or "dependent" as myths would later holdfar from it. Indeed, many things they did in their remote colonial zone were positively contrary to imperial logic. Yet for all their autonomy, they willingly made their lives together with government authority and relied on it. The resulting cooperation produced a distinctive form of colonialism in early America and informed a distinctive political tradition that the author of the Invitation expressed in 1772. Even as the British colonists were calling increasingly for independence, here were French farmers calling for what this book calls empire by collaboration. Indeed, this was the key to their history. The authors of the Invitation came out of a long and interesting history of collaboration at the frontiers of empires.***This book explores the interaction of peoples and governments in the middle of the continent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America. Even from the very beginning, when the French at Quebec established a mostly reluctant alliance with the Illinois Indians, and Jesuits and fur traders planted defiant outposts in the Illinois River Valley beyond the Great Lakes Watershed, the Illinois was a territory in tension with imperial plans. In fact, much evidence suggests that the earliest colony in Illinois was not only unplanned but clearly opposite to the designs that French officials had for their North American colonial empire. Although the colony eventually became substantial, its relationship to the imperial governments in the Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes was frequently in question. Throughout the eighteenth century, as both Canada and Louisiana alternately claimed authority over the Illinois, and as British and Spanish authorities later tried to divide the region with a political border at the Mississippi River, there was considerable uncertainty about who really would control this colonial region, giving the inhabitants options as they played one government off another. Illinois became a haven for fur traders, farmers, missionaries, and Indians who sought to realize alternative visions for colonial life at the edges of these competing powers. Eventually the colonists and Indians of Illinois asserted a kind of self-determination that gave the community a unique identity within the French empire. And yet the colonists and Illinois Indians were not independent. They welcomed and partnered with empire in many ways.Scholars have often viewed the French empire as a failure, a backward system defined by weak would-be absolutists in

Versailles and truculent colonists and Natives on the ground in America. And while there is some truth to that depiction, it is far better to see the French empire, and perhaps colonialism in general, in a different way. Moving beyond the question of success and failure, a better question is: what was the nature of colonialism? For instance, by recognizing the French government's inability to project power, we refocus our attention to the complex ways that the "empire" built strength through alliance with Native peoples. And if the government did not always control its colonists with strict legal order, understanding this fact opens up windows into how a distinctive kind of colonialism was achieved even through criminal activity and legal pluralism. Economically speaking, if the government never succeeded in establishing its mercantilist priorities, this only highlights the frontier exchange economies in which intercultural communities, black markets, and even creole cuisines were born as unintentional, if no less "imperial," creations. Far more interesting than the question of success and failure is understanding the nature of colonialism itself as a complicated system mutually created by diverse, entangled peoples.These realities defined the nature of French colonialism and early modern colonialism in general. And yet the theme of "failure," or at least "dysfunction," still persists in our understanding of the early modern French empire, since so much of the nature of imperialism was so unintentional, so accidental. In most parts of the early modern French empire, there was a persistent dialectic: colonists and Indians were generally hardheaded and defiant, intent on "resistance," while imperial officials remained flustered and inflexible, intent on "order." What is more, their interactions proceeded in what often looks like a comedy of errors, since they made almost all of their compromises in spite of their real intentions and sometimes without even knowing they were compromising. For instance, Indians and the French government accommodated their differences to make imperial alliances, but they did this unintentionally and only on the basis of what one scholar calls "creative misunderstandings." They never really saw eye to eye. And when it came to relations between French colonists and officials, compromises and accommodations were no less begrudging and tension filled. Rogues basically ran the economy in Louisiana and created a unique, contested system. But imperialists never stopped chasing after smugglers and trying to throw them in jail, and they never recognized just how much their colonies depended on black market activities. In general, would-be absolutists in charge of colonial governments never stopped pursuing their unrealistic dreams of ordre, even fantasizing about placing symmetrical grids on an obviously resistant colonial landscape. Rather than sitting down with the colonial population to "see eye to eye," so many imperialists kept up bullheaded efforts to "see like a state." For their part, rather than cooperating with government and shaping it to their ends, colonists and Indians remained resolute in practicing "the art of not being governed." The result was a frustrated, conflict-ridden, and dysfunctional kind of empire.But in this connection, Illinois presents us with an exception, one that shows a new side of the early modern French empire and a different side of early modern colonialism more generally. In Illinois, like everywhere else in the early modern French empire, Indians and colonists, slaves and officials, created an idiosyncratic order that was usually not what anybody intended. But they did this not by always clashing in a constant battle of hardheaded imperialists versus local rogues but through a rather functional and pragmatic collaboration. What is more, people in Illinois often made their collaborations consciously because they opportunistically saw compromise and working together as the best option for achieving goals. As a result, the "imperialism" that formed in Illinois was, in contrast to the typical themes of dysfunction and conflict, often characterized by compromise and flexibility, by diverse people purposefully acting to create a mutually acceptable order.The result was a remarkably stable colonial culture. In Illinois, colonists, Indians, and slaves created large families and farms, featuring huge wheat fields, flour mills, and big herds of livestock. Illinois was quite prosperous, producing up to eight hundred thousand livres of flour in a year, becoming an indispensable supplier of food for Louisiana. In addition, the colony was home to one of the most durable Indian alliances in all of the French empire. On the ground, both cause and consequence of this alliance system, French colonists and Illinois Indians developed a flexible interracial order based on a huge network of kinship and fictive kinship linking together French and Native peoples. This was different from anything that imperial authorities ever wanted, but it was functional and pragmatic.This book aims to complicate our understanding of French colonialism and empire in general by drawing new attention to the way that governments and peoples collaborated for mutual interests in frontier Illinois. It requires a reorientation of our thinking. Rather than conflict, this is a story of collaboration and compromise. As Ronald Robinson, influential historian of the British empire, observed, collaboration was always a major feature of imperial systems, across time and space. Empire could not work without collaboration, and every successful imperial system required that government officials gain the assistance and cooperation of many of the people they meant to dominate. Illinois is an object lesson of this principle and is only unusual because of how many peopleNatives, officials, traders, farmers, missionaries, even slavesworked together, often intentionally, to make a functional colony and culture. All of these people played active roles to make Illinois's idiosyncratic colonial order.This is not to suggest that Illinois was some kind of utopia of cooperation. As in all imperial situations, empire in Illinois was about power, and force and conflict were often involved. The most striking reminder of that power lies in the fact that almost half the people in Illinois were slaves. But in a place like Illinois, as in other borderlands situations, most peopleeven slaveshad options. Neither the government nor people on the ground could dominate. Perhaps imperialists in other places had fantasies of control, but in Illinois they could not achieve themin many cases they could not even begin to implement them.The would-be imperialists in Illinois admitted this

basic fact and embraced it. Even at the very founding of the official colony in Illinois, when imperial officials were faced with a group of colonists and wayward former Indian allies living in the middle of the continent with no government and no laws, they wrote that they were powerless to oppose it. They could never arrest these people or stop them from pursuing their self-interests. So, contrary to stereotypes we have of absolutist French governors, they decided to make the colony an official part of the empire. "Seeing no possibility of preventing it," officials wrote, they decided to collaborate.And if they collaborated at the foundation of the colony, they continued to let the colonists shape their own colonial culture. A good example of this can be seen in the issue of intermarriage and race. In the early 1700s, Louisiana officials complained about how intermarriage tainted the "whiteness and purity of blood" of the French colonial population. But in Illinois, interracial families were a vital part of the local culture. Beginning in 1694, marriages between Frenchmen and Indian women formed the bedrock of the community, allowing the colonists and local Indians to form a strong bond through kinship. These intermarriages permitted an interracial order that rested on both integration and segregation, as Indian brides lived with French husbands, but Indian villages and the French stayed geographically separate. Serving the interests of many parties, perhaps especially the Illinois wives, this was a functional social order. As a result, arriving in Illinois, each new imperial commandant sent by Louisiana seemed to recognize the value of intermarriage and its usefulness to the colony. Time and again, officials on the ground actually condoned it and even participated, joining the interracial kinship networks that were at the heart of the colonial culture. They did this not because they "went native" but because they could see that on the ground, the system worked. It was a functional collaboration.And if the government followed the lead of the colonists, the colonists and Indians looked to the government officials, calculating that they were better off with imperial assistance than without. For instance, take Illinois Native peoples' approach to French imperialism. Rather than resisting French colonization in their region, the Illinois collaborated, professing "French hearts." This was not because they were dependent. Rather, it was because they used the French opportunistically to pursue their goals as a powerful, almost imperialistic people in their own right. Rather than resisting, they convinced local officials in Illinois to adopt their diplomatic priorities, to accept their enemies as enemies of the French. Climaxing in the near destruction of the Foxes, the Illinois-French alliance based at Fort de Chartres pursued a policy which, far from a French imperial design, was authored by the Illinois themselves.The French, Indians, and government officials collaborated purposefully in Illinois. A major contention of this book is that the collaboration that took place in Illinois between Indians and the French was more than simple "accommodation." As Richard White has written, Native people and Europeans on early American frontiers often got along by appealing to their faulty understandings of one another's interests and values. Rather than truly mediating their differences, they related to each other through "creative misunderstandings"joining in diplomacy, religious ceremonies, legal traditions, and even marriages without actually knowing what each other meant by their agreements. Their accommodations solved expedient problems but were necessarily temporary and in many ways nave.But in Illinois it was different. Interacting in permanent settlements that differed from most transient frontier environments, the diverse inhabitants of Illinois lived together, spoke the same languages, and intermarried. By the 1690s, the intercultural community in Illinois had moved far beyond the nave accommodations of the encounter phase and had begun to understand each other and produce much more durable agreements. Far from misunderstanding each other, they got along (and sometimes did not) because they truly saw eye to eye. Indeed, the most important collaboration in Illinois took place at the level of community, where different peopleIndians, Frenchmen, and slavescreated a cooperative and flexible system of integration and segregation that benefited most of its participants. But nobody was nave. This was not just accommodation; it was informed, purposeful collaboration.And if Indians and colonists formed solid collaboration, so too did imperial officials and colonists. The Illinois experienced little of the stereotypical drama of the French empire, where hardheaded imperialists tried to foster absolutism in the wilderness. Time and again, the colonists resisted imperial officials, establishing an idiosyncratic legal system, economy, and social patterns. But when colonists subordinated imperial regulations to their own priorities, imperialists came to accept it. At the same time, as they showed in their constant petitioning, as well as in many requests for government intervention, the Illinois colonists were not anarchists bent on autonomy and independence. They welcomed empire into their lives and did so willingly, not submissively. When the French empire lost control of the middle of the continent in 1763, the inhabitants even tried to partner with the British government, continuing their tradition of pragmatic collaboration.***Which brings us back to the Invitation srieuse, the opportunistic call for collaboration written by the anonymous Kaskaskian in 1772. While other colonists in North America were calling for independence in the 1770s, the inhabitants of Illinois wanted collaboration. Their reasons for doing so were rooted in an alternative political tradition in colonial America: a practical, pragmatic way of life at the heart of a distinctive kind of colonialism. The Invitation gives us a window into this lost world and, as the title suggests, is an "earnest invitation" for us to learn more.