

“Kankakee”: An Old Etymological Puzzle

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All the analyses offered for the venerable old Illinois and Indiana placenames “Kankakee,” including those suggested in the 18th century, have been incorrect. There are basically two reasons for this: 1) As written, the term “Kankakee” is nonsensical and unanalyzable; 2) the language the name came from became extinct and did not enjoy a solid linguistic examination and reconstruction until the the closing years of the 20th century. The French explorer Cavelier de La Salle was the first European to record the hydronym that in time would evolve into “Kankakee”. It was his name for the combined Illinois River-Kankakee River waterway. Monolingual La Salle commonly botched his Native placenames recordings. Fortunately, he did a reasonably good job recording this placenames.

For Richard Schmal

For three centuries the Native American placenames “Kankakee” has eluded interpretation. Historically this term applied to major wetlands located about 25 miles south of Lake Michigan and to an important river that ran through them. The stream has been radically altered by man since the early 20th century and effectively reduced to a shadow, however beautiful, of its former self; the Kankakee wetlands in their original glory no longer exist. But just as the Nature Conservancy of Illinois and Indiana is currently at work restoring parts of these wetlands, this paper will attempt to restore meaning to the placenames “Kankakee,” for this spelling has no meaning.

The Kankakee River takes its rise in extreme north-central Indiana on the west side of the city of South Bend and flows generally to the southwest before angling northwest into Illinois to meet the Des Plaines River southwest of Chicago. The meeting of the Kankakee and the Des Plaines Rivers marks the beginning of the Illinois River, a great tributary of

the Mississippi. Before it was artificially straightened, the Kankakee River meandered for three hundred miles through a valley only *eighty-five* miles long.¹

The Kankakee River first entered history in September of 1673 when the French explorers Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette, along with their five French-speaking companions, passed by the mouth of this stream on their return trip from their famous Mississippi voyage, a journey that took them up the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers to Lake Michigan. The western end of the Kankakee River as well as the confluence of the Kankakee-Des Plaines Rivers are visible both on Marquette's holograph map of the Mississippi,² drawn at Green Bay in the winter of 1673-1674, and on a map drawn in the late summer or early fall of 1674 at Quebec by Jean-Baptiste Louis Franquelin at the request of Louis Jolliet.³

The first European to float down the Kankakee, during the last two weeks of December 1679, was another famous French explorer, René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. And it was La Salle who came to know the river better than any European alive in his day, as he went up and down it seven times between December of 1679 and December of 1682.⁴ La Salle was also the first person in history to write a description of the Kankakee⁵ as well as the first to record a native name for it, which he spelled <Téakiki>.⁶ The fact that he wrote this name several times in slightly different forms, yet all reflecting the same pronunciation, gives his placenames credibility. Moreover, during the time La Salle spent in the Kankakee area, the native peoples that he was principally dealing with, the ones who controlled the watershed, spoke the Miami-Illinois language. Therefore, <Téakiki> should represent a term from that language.

It is important to note at this point that the river <Téakiki> also had a curious French name starting in the 1680s: *la rivière des Illinois*, "the Illinois' River." This moniker might appear to be a misnomer given the fact that, except for the brief appearance in the Kankakee area of the Tamaroa in

the summer of 1673,⁷ the early historic villages of the Illinois Indians were not located on the Kankakee. Why then did the French name the Kankakee "the Illinois' River"? The answer to this question relates directly to the study of our placenames.

The history of the Illinois Country and the Ohio valley reveals that where one river ends and another begins could be a matter of opinion. In other words, one people's tributary could be another people's main stream, and vice versa. Here are some examples. First, the once famous portage route known as the Aboite River in northeastern Indiana, which connected French Detroit to French establishments on the Wabash River, is today considered a tributary of the Little Wabash River. However, historically, the French thought of the Little Wabash as a tributary of the Aboite.⁸ Second, what the early Miami-Illinois-speaking peoples called the Wabash River was a stream that flowed from its source in western Ohio *all the way to the Mississippi*. In other words, what was known as the "Wabash" in late prehistory and early historic times was the river we know today as the Wabash *plus* the westernmost segment of what we call the Ohio River, i.e., that part of the Ohio downstream from today's Wabash and Ohio confluence.⁹ Third, what the historic Iroquois referred to as the "Ohio," which is a Seneca Iroquoian term that means "big river" just as "Mississippi" means "big river" in Algonquian, was composed of the Allegheny River, the Ohio as we know it today, and the lower Mississippi all the way south to the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁰ Likewise, the Kankakee and Illinois Rivers in early and middle historical times, according to a preponderance of evidence, were considered *one and the same river*, not two separate waterways as we think of them today. Therefore, the Illinois tribes such as the Kaskaskia and the Peoria actually lived on the "Kankakee" after all, since this river flowed from extreme north-central Indiana all the way down to the Mississippi, passing by such famous Illinois Indian village sites as the Starved Rock area and Pimitéoui on Lake Peoria in what is now the state of Illinois.¹¹ The separation of the

Kankakee and Illinois Rivers into two conceptually distinct waterways did not occur until around the turn of the 19th century.

La Salle is very clear on many occasions about the Kankakee and Illinois Rivers' as being the same waterway. He states, "...the Illinois' river, called Teatiki (sic) by the wild people..." [la rivière des Islinois, appelé par les Sauvages Teatiki],¹² and, very plainly, "...the Colbert River (i.e., the Mississippi), into which flows the river of the Illinois, called Téakiki..." [le fleuve Colbert...dans lequel la rivière des Islinois nommée Téakiki se descharge].¹³ In fact, in La Salle's reports we can follow the stream's course from its source near present-day South Bend all the way to the Mississippi:

- 1) "...this river of the Illinois...is born in a marsh one and half leagues from that (the river) of the Miami (the St. Joseph River of Lake Michigan) [cette rivière des Islinois...naist dans un marais à une lieue et demy de celle des Miamis],¹⁴ and "the river of the Islinois takes its rise...only one and a half leagues away from that (the river) of the Miami..." [la rivière des Islinois prend sa source...n'est esloignée que d'une lieue et demie de celle des Miamis].¹⁵
- 2) La Salle tells about an important tributary of the Téakiki, the Des Plaines River, which had two names at the time in French: "...Teatiki...receives from the right (side) that (the river) of Chicago [Teatiki...reçoit à droite celle de Chicagou]¹⁶; "The Divine River falls into that of Téakiki, or of the Illinois" [la rivière Divine tombe dans celle de Téakiki ou des Islinois].¹⁷
- 3) La Salle then described the course of the river below the Des Plaines confluence: "By following the Teatiki River, from its confluence with the Chicago..." [En suivant la rivière de Teatiki, depuis le confluent de Chicagou].¹⁸
- 4) Finally, in speaking of the confluence of the Illinois River with the Mississippi, the explorer calls the mouth of

the Illinois "...the mouth of Teatiki..." [l'emboucheure de Tématiki].¹⁹

Pierre-Charles Delliette, a relative of La Salle's famous assistant Henri de Tonty, also expressed this same understanding of the river's original physical form in his firsthand accounts concerning the Illinois Country.²⁰ In fact, it was common knowledge throughout the French regime locally (ca. 1680-1763), and even later, that the Kankakee and the Illinois rivers were one and the same—and known as <Téakiki>. Indeed, in the 1760s, Father Pierre-Philippe Potier, who was in charge of the Jesuit mission at Detroit for nearly four decades in the mid- to late eighteenth century, was still using this same name for the Illinois River—*eighty years* after La Salle had recorded it.²¹ Potier was eminently well informed in all matters geographic and onomastic concerning the Illinois Country. He is an authoritative source for such data as they came directly from his own travels as well as from French traders working out of Detroit who plied the waters of the Kankakee-Illinois and who, according to the documentary evidence, knew the river intimately.

Within forty years after La Salle's recording <Téakiki>, people were already starting to wonder what this placenames meant, for La Salle had never gotten around to translating it. This is no surprise, however, for his failure to provide a translation for this native name exemplifies the sloppy, cavalier manner with which La Salle handled practically the entire corpus of native names that he was the first in history to record. His substandard onomastic work appears to have been yet another of the countless victims of his consuming economic and political interests. His obvious failure to consult the local natives over a *three year period* for the translations of these placenames appears to relate to his constant, pressing pursuit of the power, profit and glory of empire building.

In 1721, during a trip to the Illinois Country, the French Jesuit priest Pierre François-Xavier de Charlevoix became the

first person on record to offer a translation for La Salle's <Téakiki>. According to him, the placenames meant "wolf country".²² But since Charlevoix stated explicitly that he did not know what language the name came from, how could he have possibly known what the word meant? It is clear that he did not know what he was talking about.²³ However, Charlevoix did perform an important service to onomastics by providing another name for the Kankakee in the form <Kiakiki>, a name that local French were using at the time. <Kiakiki> is in fact the link that allows us to connect <Téakiki> and "Kankakee," for these terms, however different they appear on the surface, are one and the same.

What we consider the modern spelling "Kankakee" has actually been around for quite a long time, since at least 1816, when it appears on a map made by St. Louis resident René Paul.²⁴ It is likely that Paul himself was the creator of the "Kankakee" spelling since he was an important mapmaker and a surveyor; i.e., he was someone in a position not only to tinker with placenames and their spellings but also to see his spellings disseminated far and wide. Furthermore, Paul was bilingual in French and English, and his <Kankakee> is nothing more than a transliteration into the English spelling convention of an older, underlying French placenames, <Kinkiki>, attested, for example, in the papers of the Wabash valley trader Hyacinthe Lasselle in the late 1700s and early 1800s.²⁵ A variant French spelling of <Kinkiki> with an identical pronunciation in the form <Quinquiqui> was also in use by the late 1700s. We see it for example in the writings of the well-known Detroit trader Guillaume Lamothe.²⁶ Importantly, although Lasselle's, Paul's, and La Mothe's <Kinkiki> was commonly used in the latter half of the 1700s, this form had essentially been around since the early 1700s, for <Kinkiki> is simply a modest twisting of Charlevoix's <Kiakiki> from 1721.

There are two ways to explain how Charlevoix's <Kiakiki> morphed into <Kinkiki>. First, <Kinkiki> could

simply be a slightly twisted French pronunciation of the earlier French <Kiakiki>.²⁷ Alternatively, or in tandem with the pronunciation shift, <Kiakiki> could have been miswritten as <Kinkiki> and this new form then made its way into popular speech. Research into the history of placenames in New France reveals that the spelling of native names in French reports, letters, maps, etc., certainly could influence the way those terms were pronounced by French men and women who ventured into the wilderness. For example, the muddling of the illustrious Ojibwe-Ottawa hydronym *mi_igami* 'great water' by the French that resulted in the modern form "Michigan" can be traced all the way back to the name's "birthday" in 1669, the year it was recorded for the first time, independently, by both the Sulpician priest René de Bréhant de Gallinée and the Jesuit missionary Claude-Jean Allouez.²⁸ Both of these men, or the people who copied their reports, wrote an -n instead of an -m for the last consonant of this placenames. From that point on, "Michigan" spelled and pronounced with a final -n was *the* preferred form of this name among 99% of the French, from Green Bay to Quebec and to Paris.

Regardless of the precise route that <Kiakiki> traveled to become <Kinkiki>, it is clear that these two names are the same word. Hyacinthe Lasselle used both spellings in referring to the Kankakee River, and, tellingly, he once used both of them in different sentences of the same document.²⁹ The question now is, where did Charlevoix's <Kiakiki> come from?

In reality, <Kiakiki> is a La Sallian legacy in disguise, for this spelling represents the same Miami-Illinois word as La Salle's original <Téakiki>. Here we see in <Kiakiki> the result of an illiterative garbling involving regressive assimilation of the initial *t* sound by the second *k* of the original term, in other words, a process that made all three consonants of the term *k*.³⁰ In fact, Charlevoix himself certifies this: "...Theakiki, which by corruption our Canadians name Kiakiki."³¹

The following shows the evolution of La Salle's <Téakiki>:

<Téakiki> → (Tiakiki) → <Kiakiki> → <Kinkiki> → <Kankakee>. This sequence shows the evolution of the placenames as it has been used by the general French- and English-speaking public since La Salle recorded it.

La Salle's term also had a secondary evolution:

<Téakiki> → <Teatiki>. The use of <Teatiki> has survived in French historiography.³²

La Salle's original <Téakiki> and his variant spellings <Teakiki> and <Théakiki> appear to represent the Miami-Illinois dependent (conjunct) I.I. verb *teeyaahkiki* 'it is open country,' 'it is exposed land,' 'it is land in the open.' The components are the initial *teeyaa-* 'uncovered, exposed, open,' the final *-ahki-* 'land, country,' the dependent peripheral suffix *-k-* and the conjunct ending *-i*.³³ Although this analysis is supported by the historical physical reality of the Kankakee, the name does not necessarily describe the Kankakee today. Not only does the modern form of the name refer to a much smaller riverine reality than did La Salle's term, but also, like the linguistic reality of "Kankakee," the physical reality of the Kankakee has been distorted to such a degree that the historic Indians and French of the Illinois Country as well as the American settlers of the 1800s would be hard pressed to recognize the Kankakee today.

Faulkner, however, did a remarkable job in reconstructing a clear image of the historical reality of the river and its environs. He explained that before the 1900s this watershed was an extraordinarily rich bioregion, as it lay where the great Carolinian hardwood forests of eastern North America, situated generally to the east and south of the Kankakee, met the great prairies of the mid-continent, located generally to the west. Right at this grand intersection of

primeval forest and ancient prairie sat a flat 1000-square-mile expanse of wetlands, marshes, and a perennially wet prairie stretching to the horizon. Woven into this fabric, which was essentially treeless except along the river's edge, were the Kankakee River, three significant lakes, and various micro-environments, including dry prairies.³⁴ The old Kankakee was no doubt a site to behold, as we can gather from these excerpts from La Salle's and Tonty's descriptions of it: La Salle says, "...one finds nothing but beautiful country as far as the eye can see, broken up from time to time by a few groves" [*on ne trouve plus que de belles campagnes à perte de vue interrompues d'espace en espace de quelques bouquets de bois*]. Tonty adds, "...as charming a country as you may find: it is simply plains adorned with groves..." [*pays aussi charmant qu'on en puisse voir: ce ne sont que plaines ornées de bouquets de bois*].³⁵ La Salle's comment "beautiful country as far as the eye can see," and Tonty's "plains" lend support to the *teeyaahkiki* analysis.

Algonquian onomastic morphology and syntax also support this etymology. Hartley's research into placenames in the Ojibwe language, a close relative of Miami-Illinois, demonstrates that verb-based place-names are very commonly of the type that we find in *teeyaahkiki*, i.e., an initial + a final + an I.I. (inanimate intransitive) verb ending. In Miami-Illinois as in Ojibwe this kind of construction represents very descriptive place-names, ones usually referring to *aspects of topography*.³⁶ In view of all the earlier attempts at deciphering the etymology of "Kankakee" and in light of other seemingly possible interpretations, the *teeyaahkiki* analysis is the best possibility for La Salle's <Téakiki>, the origin of "Kankakee".³⁷

Notes

1. Charles H. Faulkner, *The Late Prehistoric Occupation of Northwest Indiana: A Study of the Upper Mississippian Cultures of the Kankakee Valley* (Ph.D. diss. Indiana University, 1970), 26. Parts of the original wetlands have been restored, particularly at the Grand Marsh Lake County Park,

in the Beaver Lake area, and in the English Lake area. Richard Schmal, personal communication, 17 Feb 2004.

2. The original map by Father Jacques Marquette is in the Archives de la Société de Jésus Canada français, St-Jérôme, Québec, *recueil* 196. The best copy in print of this map is in Sarah Jones Tucker, comp., *Indian Villages of the Illinois Country*, vol. II, Scientific Papers, Part I, Atlas. (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1942), plate V.

3. Jean-Baptiste Louis Franquelin, 'Nouvelle Decouverte de Plusieurs Nations Dans la Nouvelle France En l'annee 1673 et 1674', in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Co., 1896-1901), 59:86; also, in Tucker, *Indian Villages*, pl. IV. The data concerning the Mississippi valley that appears on the latter chart came exclusively from Jolliet's memory since he had lost Marquette's written account and one of the priest's two original maps of the Mississippi voyage earlier that summer in a canoe wreck near Montreal.

4. Jean Delanglez, "A Calendar of La Salle's Travels," *Mid-America* 22, no. 4 (1940): 293-304.

5. See Pierre Margry, ed., *Découvertes et établissements des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale 1614-1754, Mémoires et documents inédits recueillis et publiés par Pierre Margry*, 6 vols. [reprint] (New York: AMS Press, 1974), 1:463-64, 2:247-48.

6. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:127 (autumn 1681). In addition to <Teakiki>, without an acute accent, La Salle also spelled the term <Theakiki>. See Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:246. In the present article, historically attested spellings appear between < and >.

7. An occurrence that Marquette learned about from the

Kaskaskia. The location of the <MAROA>, or the Tamaroa Indians, on Marquette's map is reliable, given our knowledge of the accuracy of his cartographic work in general. See note #2 for the map citation. See also Lucien Campeau, "Les Cartes relatives à la découverte du Mississippi par le P. Jacques Marquette et Louis Jolliet," *Les Cahiers des Dix* 47 (1992): 47-53.

8. See "Chemin des Mis aux 8ias par eau...60 L...par charleau," MS. Pierre-Philippe Potier, *Gazettes*, 181, at the Archives de la Société de Jésus Canada français; John D. Barnhart, *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution, with the unpublished Journal of Henry Hamilton* (Crawfordsville: R.E. Banta, 1951), 116.

9. See Michael McCafferty, "Wabash, Its Meaning and History," in John D. Nichols, ed., *Proceedings of the 31st Algonquian Conference* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba, 2000), 224-28.

10. See La Salle's statement: "...une grande riviere que les sauvages appeloient Ohio et les autres Mississipi" (a great river that the Indians called Ohio and the others Mississippi), in Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:436; also a statement by Rémy de Courcelles' from ca. 1669: "...une grande rivière que les Iroquois appellent Ohio et les Outaouas Mississipy" (a great river that the Iroquois call Ohio and the Ottawa Mississippi), Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:181; see also De Gallinée's remarks on the Iroquoian hydrological conception for the Ohio River in Jean Delanglez, *Life and Voyages of Louis Jolliet (1645-1700)* (Chicago: Institute of Jesuit History, 1948), 41. In the term *ohi'yo?* |o-| is the simple noun prefix that carries no meaning, |h-| is "river," |-iyo-| is the verb "be big, be great/beautiful and | ? |, representing a glottal stop, is the required noun suffix, which also has no meaning. Blair A. Rudes, personal communication, 29 December 1997. Frenchmen were either unaware of the primary meaning of "Ohio" when they

translated it to “la Belle Rivière” (the Beautiful River) or they were simply waxing poetic. For another good example of the verb *liyo* in a Northern Iroquoian hydronym, see “Ontario,” which means “(the) lake is big”.

11. The placenames “Pimitéoui” has nothing to do with “place of fat,” which is another skewed La Sallian onomastic legacy. The French spelling represents the Miami-Illinois language term *pimiteewi* ‘it burns past’, an apparent reference to prairie fires. Analysis by David J. Costa, personal communication, 10 July 1996. This Miami-Illinois term is composed of the initial root *pimi-* ‘past, by’, the I.I. final *-itee* ‘by heat’, and *-wi*, the independent I.I. ending.

12. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:174. All English translations of Margry in the present article are the author’s. Parenthetical remarks are also the author’s. All French quotation appear in their original form, irrespective of modern French orthography.

13. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:245

14. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:170. Henri de Tonty, La Salle’s right hand man, concurs when he says, “...after going up the River of the Miami (St. Joseph River) about twenty-seven leagues, and having no one who could guide us in order to find a portage that led to the River of the Illinois (Kankakee)...” [après avoir monté la rivière des Miamis environ vingt-sept lieues, et n’ayant personne qui peust nous guider pour trouver un portage qui va a la rivière des Illinois], Margry, ed., *Découvertes*, 1:581.

15. Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:463.

16. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:174.

17. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:128.
18. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:174.
19. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:135.
20. "De Gannes Memoir," in Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner, eds., *The French Foundation 1680-1693*, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, vol. XXIII (Springfield: the Illinois State Historical Library, 1934), 393-4.
21. See "avril S. joseph [sic]," MS. Pierre-Philippe Potier, *Gazettes*, 166b, Archives de la Société de Jésus Canada français, St-Jérôme, Quebec. Moments before the traveler reaches the Mississippi, Potier correctly states "Le tiatiki coule et courre est" [The Tiatiki flows and runs east].
22. Pierre François-Xavier de Charlevoix, "Journal d'un Voyage dans l'Amérique Septentrionale adressée à la Duchesse de Lesdiguières, 17 sept. 1721," in Charles A. Bartlett and Richard H. Lyon, *La Salle in the Valley of the St. Joseph* (South Bend, Ind.: South Bend Tribute Printing Co., 1899), 115; also, Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66:348.
23. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 66:287. Charlevoix came to his translation in an interesting way. He equated La Salle's <Téakiki> with <Huakiki>, another Miami-Illinois language name for the Kankakee, recorded by the Jesuit Gabriel Marest in 1712. <Huakiki> represents Miami-Illinois *mahweehkiki* 'it is wolf country.'
24. René Paul, 1816, 'A Map Exhibiting the Territorial limits of several Nations & Tribes of Indians agreeably to the notes of A. Chouteau...', in Tucker, *Indian Villages*, pl. XLI. The latter is a chart designed for the American government. <Kinkiki> also appears on the map from 1812 drawn by the first American

governor of the Illinois Country, Ninian Edwards: Ninian Edwards, 1812, 'Illinois River leaving Peoria to go to Chicago', in Tucker, *Indian Villages*, pl. XXXV.

25. Hyacinthe Lasselle Papers, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis. In French, <Kinkiki> and <Quinquiqui> are pronounced [k_kikí]. One of the amazing features of the placenames "Kankakee" is the fact that the French pronunciation of <Kinkiki> has been remarkably preserved in the modern English pronunciation of this placenames, which is [k_kIkí]. First, the initial syllable of the English pronunciation of this term, like its French counterpart, has a simple nasalized vowel, rather than a vowel plus the sound *n*. Second, and tellingly, the stress falls on the last syllable of "Kankakee," just as it does in the French pronunciation of <Kinkiki> ~ <Quinquiqui> —and, in fact, in every word in French having two or more syllables. "Kankakee" as an English language placenames should actually follow the same stress pattern we see in "Kentucky," and it would have, had it not been borrowed into English from French.

26. See excerpt of La Mothe's letter from 24 April 1782, in David A. Baerreis, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, Remedio Wycoco-Moore, "Anthropological Report on the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi Indians in Northeastern Illinois," in David Agee Horr, comp. and ed., *Indians of Northeastern Illinois* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1974), 136. A Guillaume Dagnaux known as "Lamotte" was in the company of Delatour at the Miami post in the 1700s. See Frances Krauskopf, *The French in Indiana, 1700-1760: A Political History* (Ph.D. diss. Indiana University, 1953), 104. A Guillaume de Lamothe was on his way to the Miami from Quebec with brothers and associates in 1726. *Ibid.*, 126. For Pierre-Guillaume Lamothe, *dit* Guillaume Lamothe, see www.usinternet.com/users/dfncls/lamothe.htm Website

observed 25 May 2003.

27. It should be noted that <Kiakiki>, <Kinkiki>, etc., represent placenames used by the *French*; the Indians never stopped using the original morphologically, phonologically, and grammatically correct placenames.

28. Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:159-60. For De Gallinée's journal, "Récit de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable dans le voyage de MM. Dollier et Galinée (1669-1670)," see Margry, *Découvertes*, 1:112-66; also, Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 54:221; and De Gallinée's map, in Gabriel Gravier, *Carte des Grands Lacs de l'Amérique du Nord dressée en 1670 Par Bréhan de Gallinée Missionnaire sulpicien* (Rouen: Imprimerie D. Cagniard, 1985). There would be nothing particularly noteworthy about the devolution of *mi_igami* to "Michigan" if "Michigan" were the end result of a century's worth of mutations going from Ojibwe-Ottawa into French, and another fifty years of change going from French into English. But that is not the case. (In *mi_igami* the symbol _ stands for the sound represented in English by the digraph sh.)

29. Lasselle Papers, "Licenses granted by the governor to Indian traders," 1802, doc. #566.

30. Regressive assimilation refers to a phonological process whereby a sound is changed by a sound that follows it. The discrepancy between the two terms' first vowels is insignificant, since Frenchmen who did not know the Miami-Illinois language often confused native *e* and *i*. La Salle correctly heard *e*; Charlevoix, who had immeasurably less experience with the Miami-Illinois language than even the monolingual La Salle, incorrectly heard *i*. Note that it was La Salle himself who created the meaningless variant <Teatiki>, which became <Tiatiki>.

31. Charlevoix, "Journal d'un Voyage," 115. Precisely, <Kiakiki> derives from a French pronunciation of La Salle's original <Téakiki> in the form <Tiakiki>.

32. For the use of <Teatiki> in modern historical scholarship see for example Gérard Malchelosse, "La Salle et le Fort Saint-Joseph des Miamis," *Les Cahiers des Dix* 22, (1957): 91-2. La Salle's original <Téakiki> might have yielded its meaning at a much earlier date had La Salle not muddied the waters, so to speak, with the misspelling of the name in the form <Teatiki> (Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:248) La Salle's promoter in France, the abbot Claude Bernou, picked up this misspelling and used it right away on his map from the following year (Claude Bernou and M. Peronel, [1682], 'Carte de l'Amérique Septentrionale et Partie de la Méridionale Depuis l'embouchûre de la Rivière S^t Laurens jusques à l'Isle de Cayenne avec les nouvelles découvertes de la Rivière Missisipi ou Colbert', in Tucker, *Indian Villages*, pl. VIII.) Bernou was an influential force in the development of early French geographic conceptions pertaining to North America, including the spellings of native placenames, even though he did not know anything about the native languages. He exerted this influence because of his connection to La Salle and to various important people in France. Therefore, the Bernou map left its mark on Western onomastics with its errant <Teatiki>. Even though La Salle's many good, consistently formed renderings of <Téakiki> appeared in various publications, including Bellin's map of 1745 and De Vaugondy's influential atlas from 1750, his meaningless <Teatiki>, with Bernou's help, took root in the French lexicon and went on to have a very active life of its own—and not just in Europe but especially in the Illinois Country, right alongside <Téakiki> and *la rivière des Illinois*. See Pierre François-Xavier de Charlevoix and Nicolas Bellin, 1745, 'Partie Occidentale de la Nouvelle France', Louis C. Karpinski, comp. *Historical Atlas of the Great Lakes and Michigan*, (Lansing:

Michigan Historical Commission, 1931), 44. Bellin was a French naval engineer; Robert de Vaugondy, 1750, 'Amérique Septentrionale, dressée par les Relations les plus modernes des Voyageurs & Navigateurs et divisée suivant les différentes possessions des Européens...' (Paris). Manuscript map at the American Geographical Society, Milwaukee (AGS Rare A.T. 050 A-1757). A published version of this chart is in Karpinski, *Historical Atlas*, 97. See also <Teakiki> on the anonymous French government map titled 'Forts Français et anglais sur l'Ohio en 1755' in Marcel Trudel, *Collection de Cartes Anciennes et modernes pour servir à l'étude de l'histoire de l'Amérique et du Canada* (Quebec: Tremblay and Dion, 1948), pl. 67; and an official French map bearing the same spelling for the river's name: n.a., 1757, 'Carte de la Floride, de la Louisiane et Pays Voisins Par M.B., Ing. de la Marine', at the American Geographic Society, Milwaukee (AGS 800-A-1757).

33. See "teïahan8i...en plain air, qui n'a aucun abri, cabane au milieu d'une prairie" [outdoors, in the open, that which has no shelter, a house in the middle of the prairie]; "teïatapate8i, teïa8ate8i exposé a la veüe de tous" [exposed to the everyone's view]; "teïateheta qui decouvre son coeur" [one who reveals his heart]; "teïa8e a decouvert(,) en public" [out in the open, in public], in Masthay, ed., *Kaskaskia Illinois-to-French Dictionary*, 319. I would like to thank David Pentland for our discussion concerning the vowel length of the first syllable of *teeyaa-*. The combination of *-ahki-* 'land, country' plus *-k-*, the dependent peripheral suffix and *i*, the conjunct ending that we see in <Téakiki>, is discussed in the Illinois-French dictionary from the early 1700s: "-aki8i est une terminaison qui marque la situation, ou la difference des terres, -akiki pour le subjonctif" [-akiwi is an ending that marks the situation of or the difference between lands, -akiki for the subjunctive]. [Illinois-French dictionary], [early 18th century] (Manuscript at the Watkinson Library, Trinity College, Hartford). For reasons of general accessibility, I will cite the recently published

edition of this dictionary: Carl J. Masthay, ed., *Kaskaskia Illinois-to-French Dictionary* (St Louis: the editor, 2002), 55. What is curious about the final product "Kankakee" is that the -akee was taken by previous scholars to be *-ahki* 'land, country' in Miami-Illinois. But, in truth, the -akee of "Kankakee" actually represents the *-iki* of *teeyaahkiki*. It is in fact the *-nka-* of "Kankakee" that is a warped rendition of Miami-Illinois *-ahki*.

34. Faulkner, *The Late Prehistoric Occupation of Northwest Indiana*, 26.

35. Margry, *Découvertes*, 2:247, 1:582.

36. Alan H. Hartley, "Preliminary Observations in Ojibwa Place-Names," in William Cowan, ed., *Papers of the Twelfth Algonquian Conference* (1981), 31.

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