

**HAPPY**  
**325TH**  
**BIRTHDAY**  
**PEORIA**



The roots of Colonial Illinois run deep at the City of Peoria, Illinois. On the shore of Lake Peoria Native and European peoples established a settlement that celebrates its 325th birthday this year.

The founding of the Native and French settlement that became Peoria dates to 1691 when French soldiers, traders, and missionaries, joined several thousand Illinois Indians as they moved from the Starved Rock area, 65 miles upriver.

The Illinois tribes called this location Pimiteoui  
which translates as

IT BURNS PAST IT



and probably refers to fires of the large  
bottomland prairies along the two lakes.  
But the French came to call the location  
Au Pe (at the Peorias), which gradually  
became just Peoria.

**A**t the core of this settlement was a French fort and mission, constructed in 1691 as the main administrative center of the Illinois Country. The location of the fort was described as on the northwest shore of Lake Peoria about a mile and a half above the outlet (in the immediate vicinity of today's Detweiller Marina).



The adjacent Indian village was composed of over 300 longhouses, each one home to a number of families. At the time, this was the principal village of the entire Illinois tribe, and stretched an unknown distance along the lake shore.



The Mission of the Immaculate Conception was built by the Jesuits to serve this village, and the locale also became home to French traders and soldiers. Many Canadian traders married Illinois Indians creating a multi-cultural community known today as a *Metis* community. The Peoria of the 1690s was home to at least several thousand people.



This pattern of large Native populations hosting small French colonial populations continued after the founding of Peoria.



After living all together in the tumultuous 1680s in the upper Illinois River Valley The Illinois Tribe (consisting of the Peoria, Coiracoetnaton, Maroa, Kaskaskia, Tapouara, and Moingwena, Cahokia, and Tamaroa) along with the Wea and Piankashaw divisions of the Miami Tribe, subsequently created a number of new settlements across the Illinois Country.



These attracted French settlements and missions, which in turn became colonial and American towns. Some of these towns still exist today, but none are as old as Peoria.







# **WHAT HAPPENED AT PEORIA?**

**HISTORICAL EVENTS BEFORE THE AMERICAN ERA**

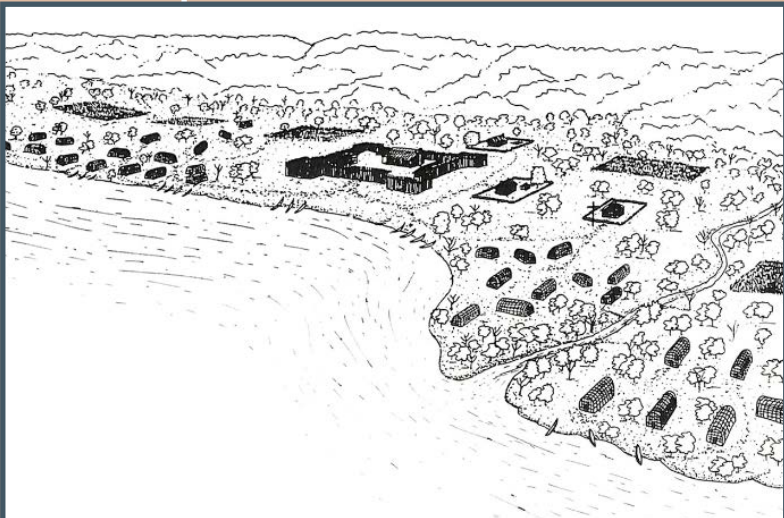
**A** long and complex array of historical events unfolded along the Peoria waterfront between 1691 and the 1820s. For example, there were between four and seven forts and stockades along the city's waterfront during the 130 years prior to the arrival of the first American settlers in 1819. Alongside these were one or more missions and uncounted home sites and meeting places. The Peoria waterfront was a remarkably busy place for a very long time.

**THE GRAND VILLAGE OF THE ILLINOIS TRIBE (HOME TO THOUSANDS OF NATIVE RESIDENTS), FORT ST. LOUIS (SERVING AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER FOR THE FRENCH MILITARY AND TRADERS, AND THE MISSION OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (CONTINUING THE WORK BEGUN BY FATHER JACQUES MARQUETTE IN 1673).**



**1691-1700**

**1700-1750s**

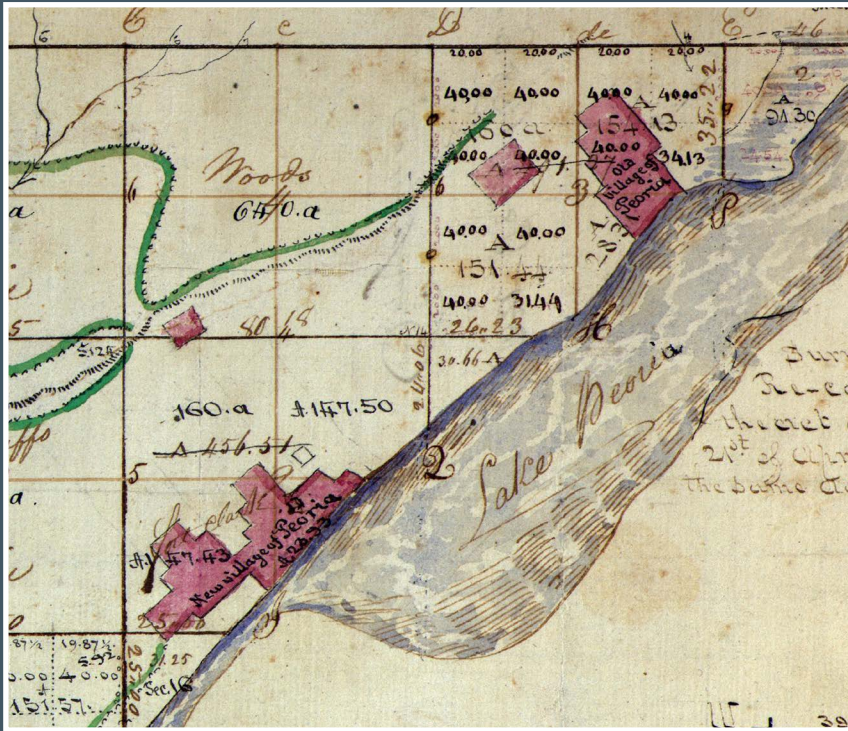


**A SEQUENCE OF TWO OR THREE ADDITIONAL FORTS, SUPPORTING TRADE ALONG THE RIVER, ALONGSIDE A SUCCESSION OF NATIVE VILLAGES PRINCIPALLY OCCUPIED BY THE PEORIA AS WELL AS PROBABLE METIS FAMILIES.**



click on picture to view or download map





click on picture to view or download map

1760S-1800

THE NEW FRENCH VILLAGE (OR LA VILLE DE MAILLET), LOCATED ALONG THE RIVER IN MODERN-DAY DOWNTOWN PEORIA. THIS SUBSTANTIAL TRADING VILLAGE WAS THE SITE OF MAILLET'S FORT AND THEN AN AMERICAN FUR COMPANY POST. THE TOWN WAS BURNED OUT BY AMERICANS SOLDIERS IN 1812 AND THE AMERICANS BUILT THEIR OWN FORT (FORT CLARK) THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

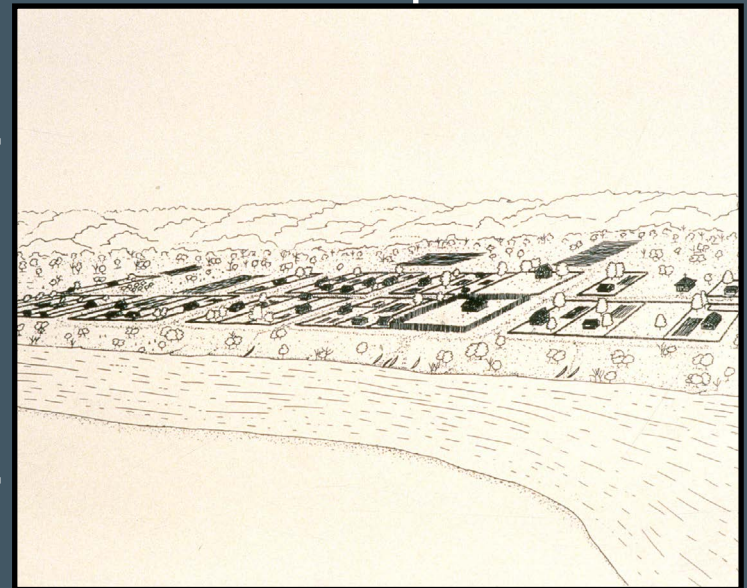


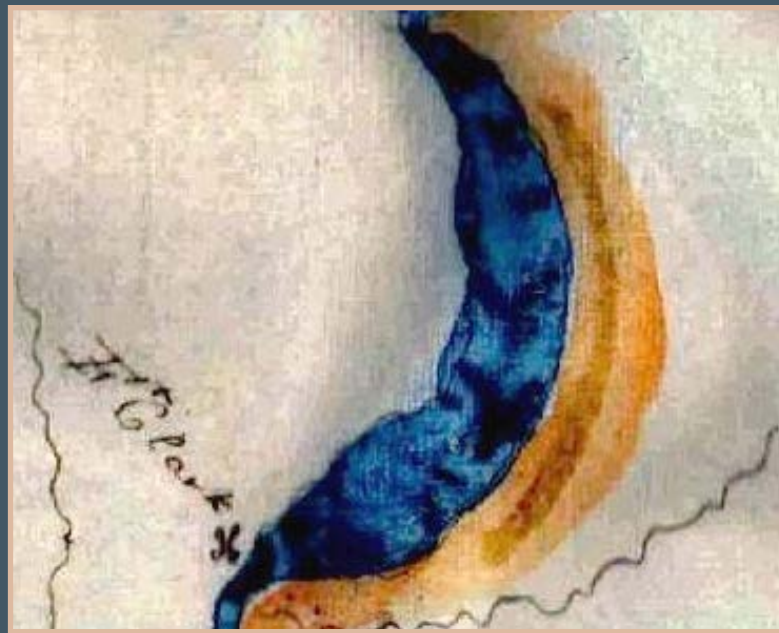
1770S-1812

THE OLD FRENCH VILLAGE CONSISTED OF FRENCH SETTLERS AND WAS LOCATED NEAR DETWEILLER MARINA. PORTIONS OF THE OLD PROPERTIES AND LOT LINES WERE RECORDED BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN THE 1820S.



click on picture to view or download map

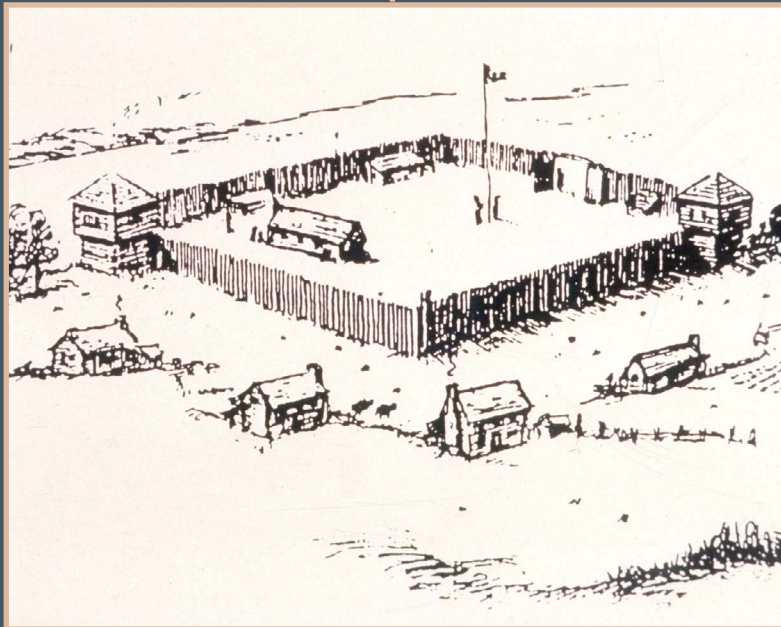




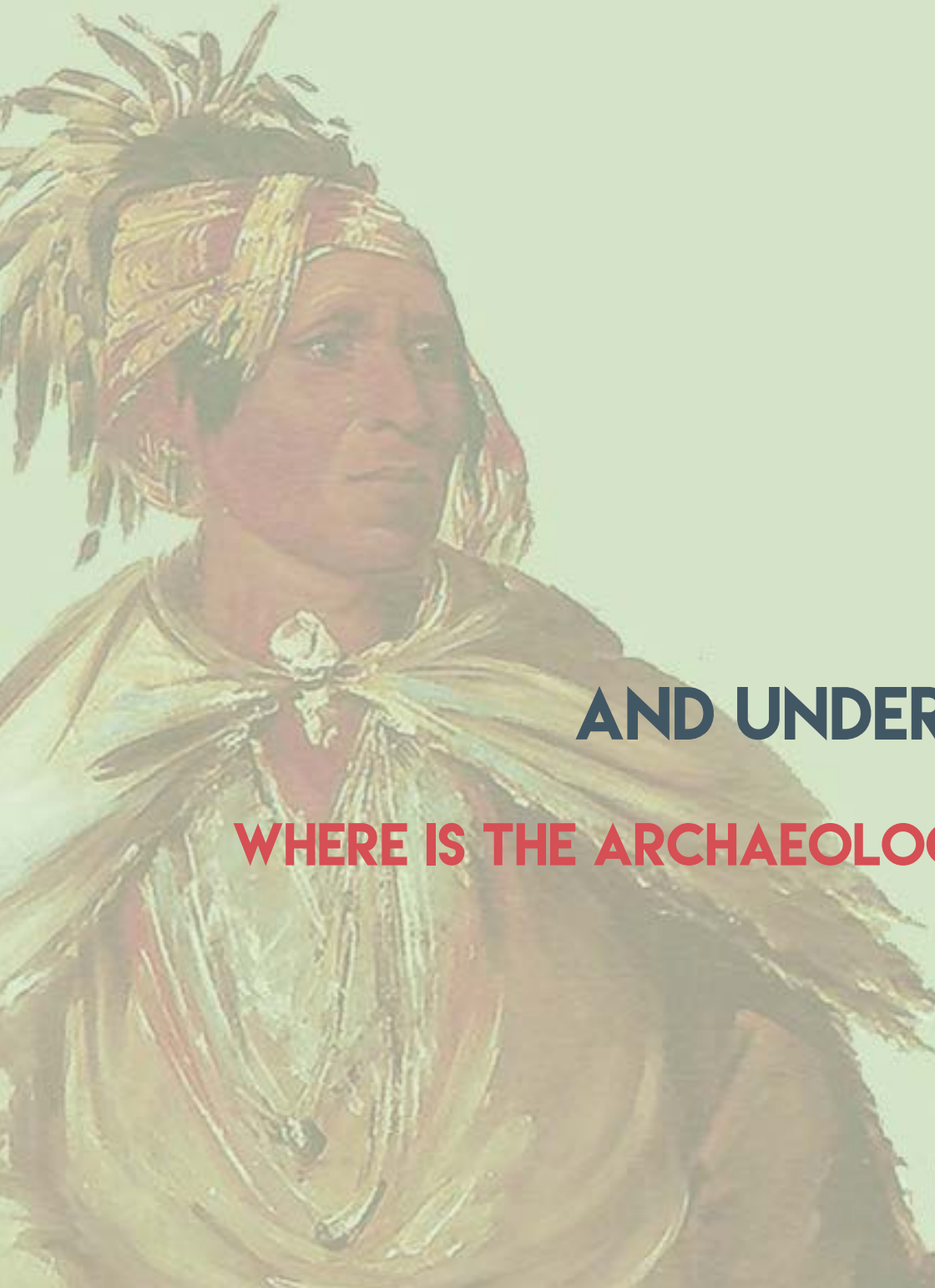
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1770s-1812

1830s



[click on picture to view or download map](#)



**AND UNDER PEORIA?**

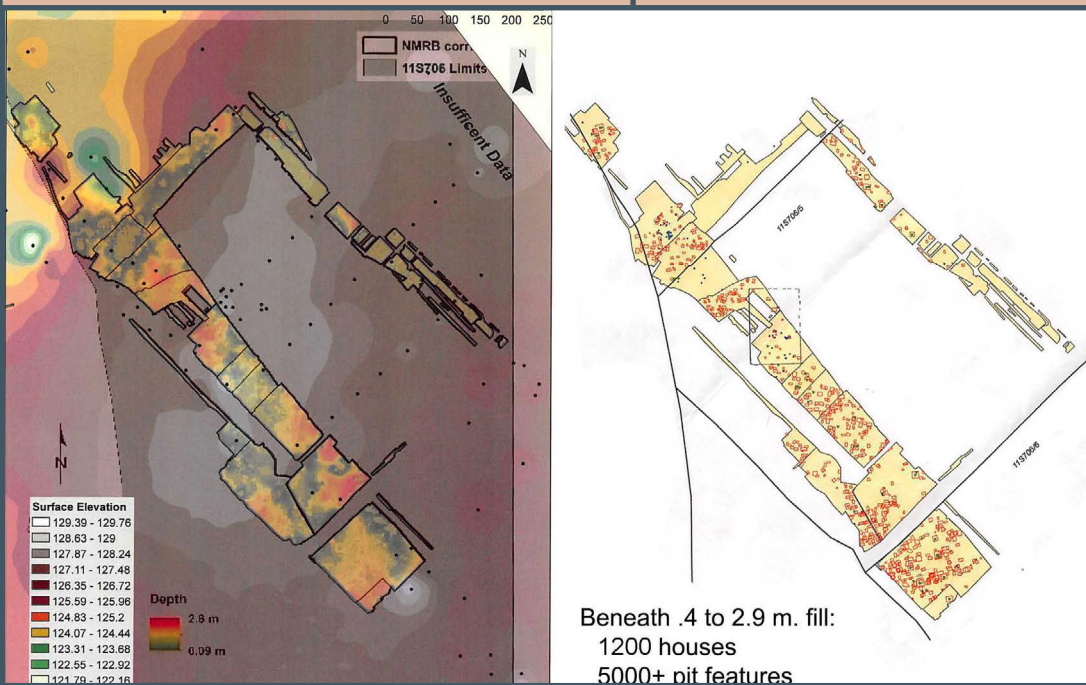
**WHERE IS THE ARCHAEOLOGY FOR ALL THIS HISTORY?**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE REMARKABLY DURABLE IN URBAN SETTINGS, PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE PROTECTED BY DEEP FILL, RAIL YARDS, OR OTHER FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT THAT DID NOT DIG DEEPLY INTO THE OLD SUBSOIL. FOR INSTANCE, FRENCH HOUSE REMAINS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FOUND BENEATH DEEP FILL IN **DOWNTOWN ST. LOUIS.**



**AT EAST ST. LOUIS, THE ILLINOIS STATE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY RECENTLY  
UNCOVERED AN ENTIRE 1000 YEAR OLD  
PREHISTORIC CITY, INCLUDING 1200 HOUSES  
AND OVER 5000 STORAGE PITS-ALL  
PRESERVED BENEATH OVER 3 TO 6 FEET  
OF FILL, RUBBLE, AND BUILDING FOUNDATIONS.**

click on picture to view or download map



2001

**AT PEORIA'S OLD FRENCH VILLAGE: THE FOOTPRINT OF AN 18TH CENTURY POST-IN-EARTH DWELLING WAS EXCAVATED BY ISAS NEAR THE CORNER OF ADAMS AND MARY STREETS. IT WAS LOCATED IN THE FRONT YARD OF A LATE 19TH CENTURY BUILDING, AND WAS PRESERVED ONLY 1 FOOT BELOW THE MODERN SURFACE. THE REST OF THE OLD FRENCH VILLAGE HAS YET TO BE FOUND.**



Click on book icons for  
books about  
French Peoria



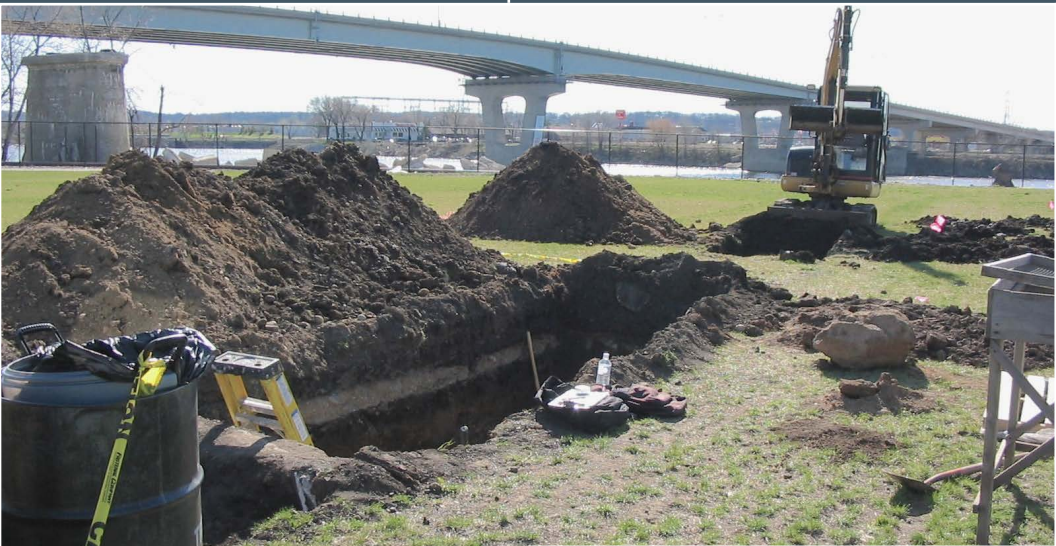
**French Peoria and the Illinois Country, 1673-1846, by Judith A. Frank**



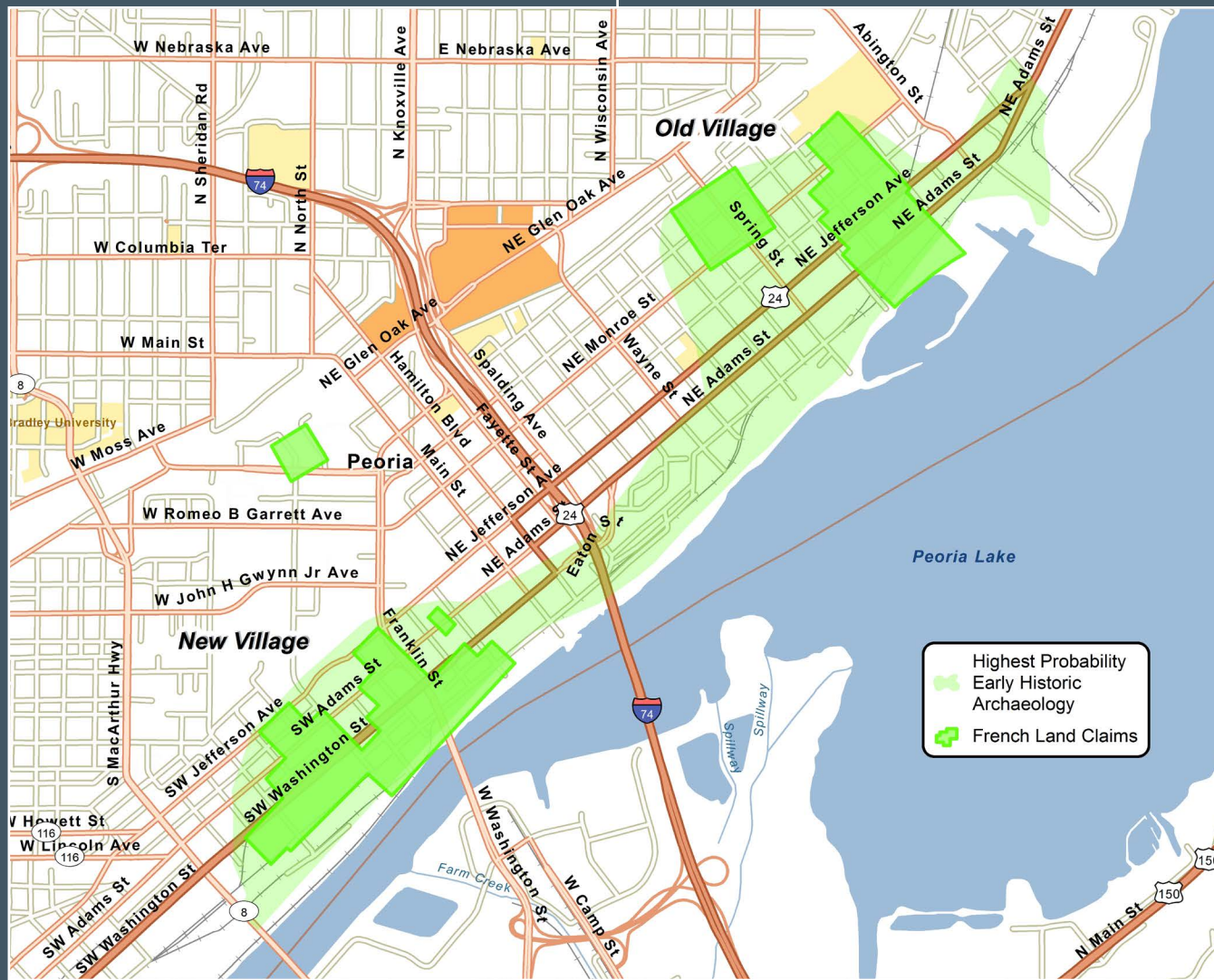
**At Home in the Illinois Country: French Colonial Domestic Site Archaeology in the Midwest 1730-1800, by Robert Mazrim**

2004

**AT PEORIA'S NEW FRENCH VILLAGE: BURIED REMNANTS OF THIS LATE 18TH CENTURY TOWN WERE DISCOVERED IN 2004, AND MANY MORE REMAINS ARE PROBABLY PRESENT.**



SO FAR AT PEORIA, THE REMAINS OF THE 130 YEARS BETWEEN THE 1691 SETTLEMENT AND THE INITIAL 1819 AMERICAN SETTLERS HAVE ONLY BEEN FOUND IN A FEW AREAS, BUT THE PRECISE LOCATIONS OF THE ILLINOIS/PEORIA INDIAN VILLAGES, JESUIT MISSION, AND VARIOUS FRENCH FORTS ARE STILL UNKNOWN. THE AREA OUTSIDE THE PRE-1939 FLOOD LEVELS ALONG THE SHORELINE NORTH AND SOUTH OF DETWEILLER MARINA IS CERTAINLY THE PRIME LOCATION WHERE SUCH REMAINS CAN BE FOUND.



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**PEORIA WAS THE EARLIEST** IN A SERIES OF  
NATIVE/COLONIAL COMMUNITIES IN THE  
ILLINOIS COUNTRY

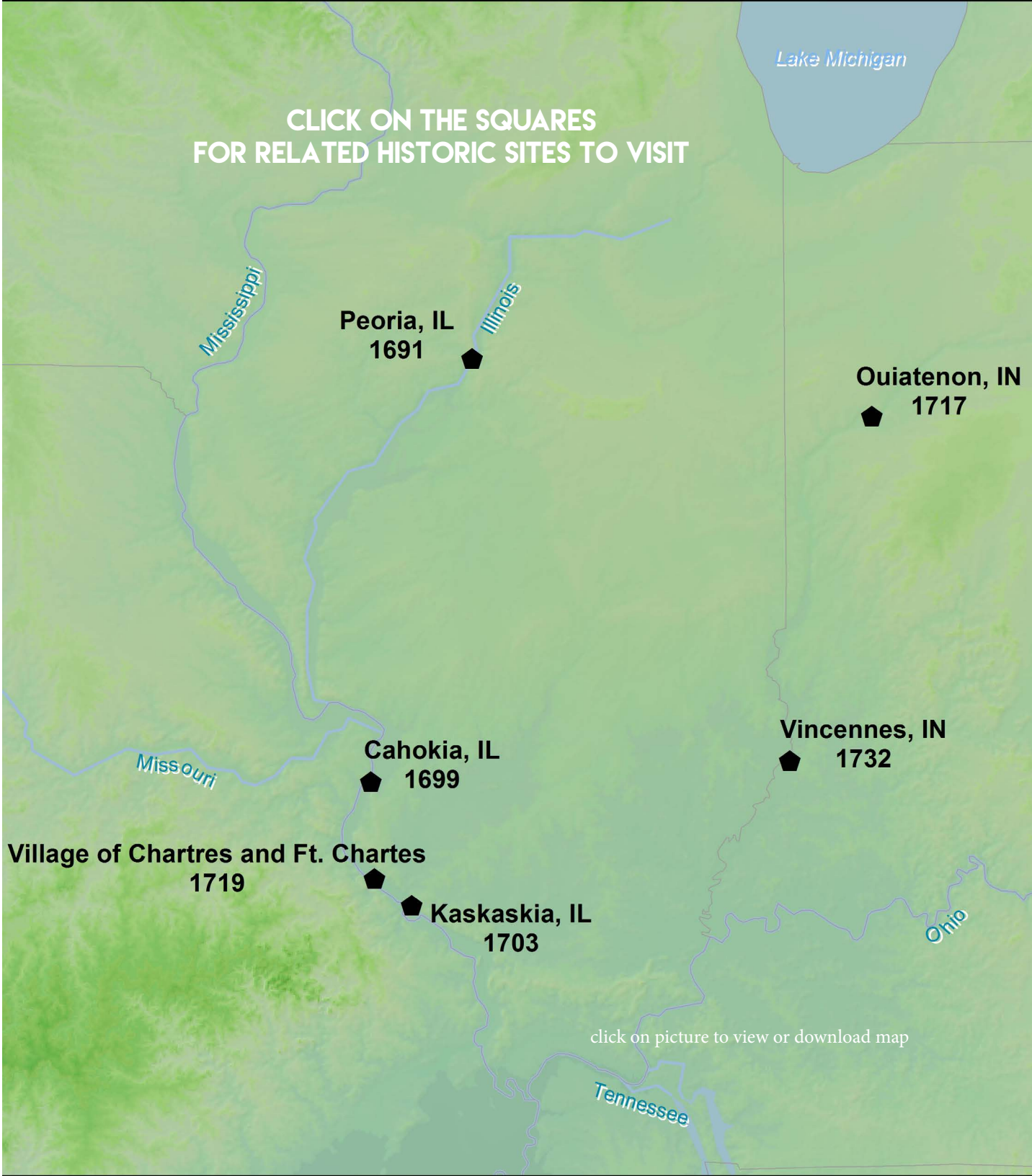
1691

PEORIA, IL

**(325 YEARS)** PEORIA, IL BEGINS WITH THE MOVEMENT OF FRENCH MILITARY, TRADERS, AND MISSIONARIES ALONGSIDE OF A VERY LARGE NATIVE POPULATION. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SHORT PERIODS WHEN THERE WERE FEW OR NO PEOPLE AT PEORIA THROUGH THE LAST THREE CENTURIES PEORIA HAS FOR THE MOST PART BEEN OCCUPIED CONTINUOUSLY FROM 1691 TO THE PRESENT DAY.

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE NO COLONIAL OR TERRITORIAL ERA NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS, OR STATE HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT IN OR NEAR PEORIA.

CLICK ON THE SQUARES  
FOR RELATED HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT



click on picture to view or download map

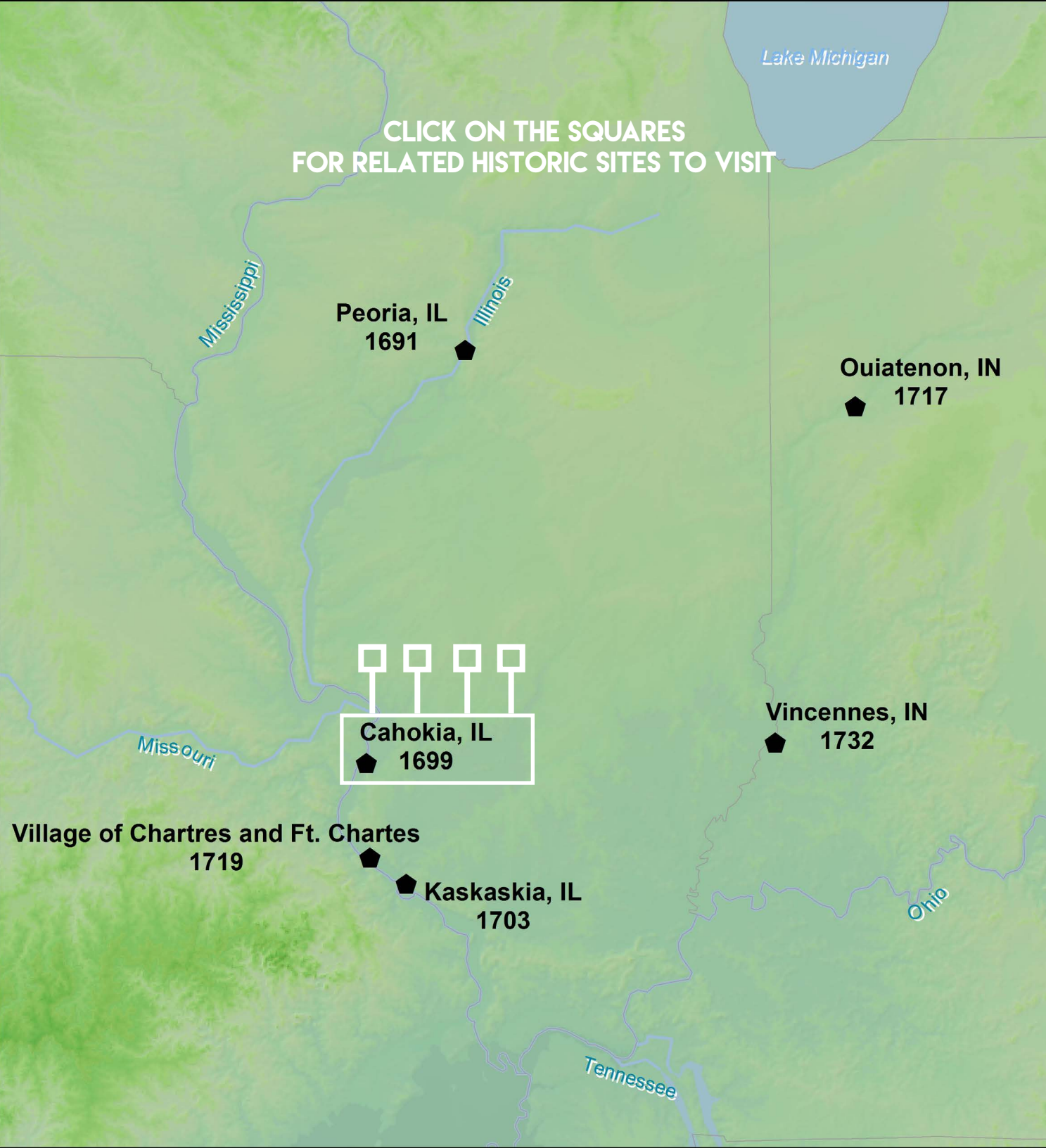
1699

CAHOKIA, IL

(317 YEARS) CAHOKIA, IL WHERE A COMMUNITY OF FRENCH CANADIAN TRADERS AND A CATHOLIC MISSION WAS FOUNDED IN A CAHOKIA/TAMOROA VILLAGE. THE VILLAGE HAS BEEN CONTINUOUSLY OCCUPIED TO THE PRESENT DAY AND THE CATHOLIC PARISH AT CAHOKIA IS THE OLDEST OPERATING IN ILLINOIS.

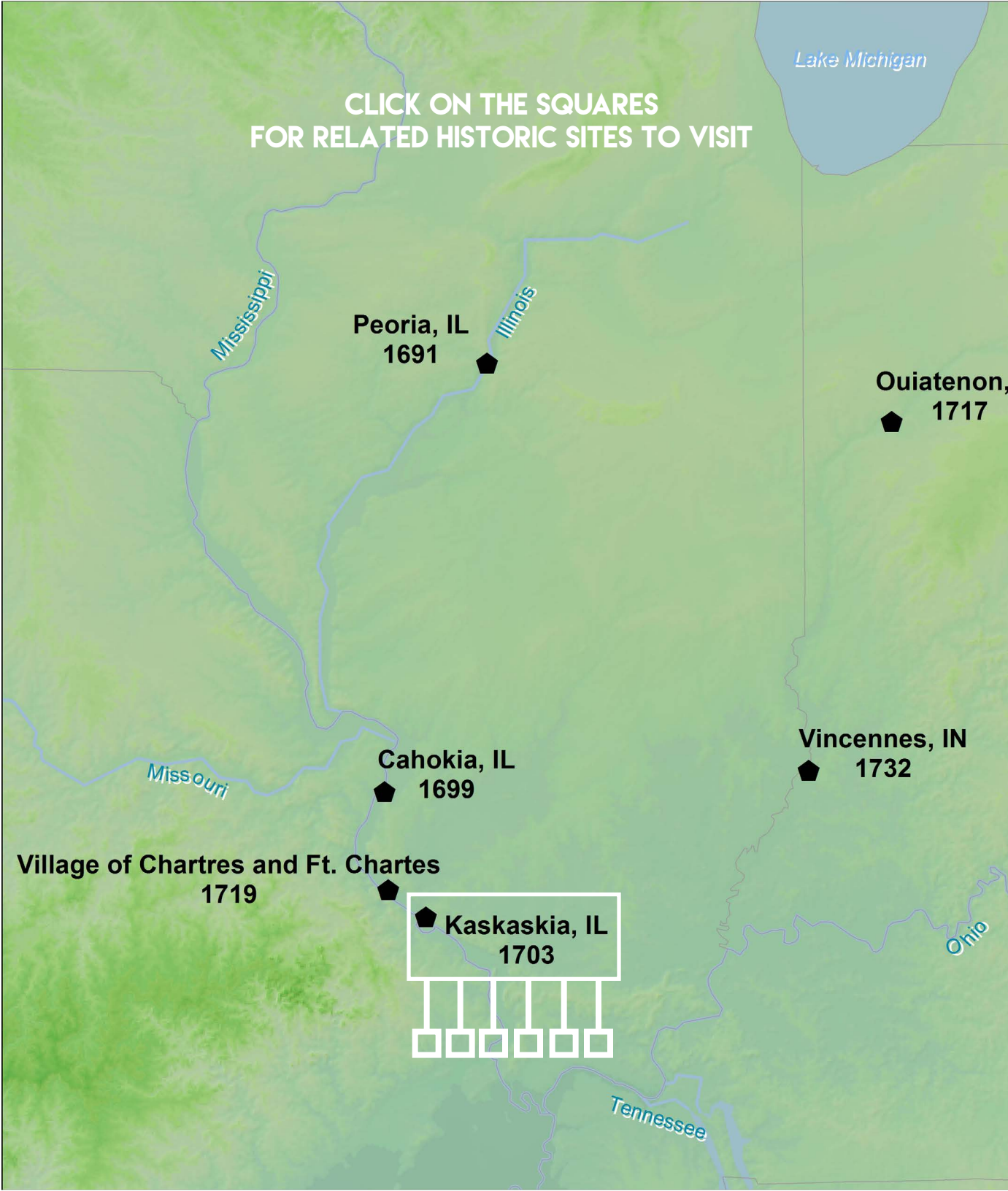
THERE ARE SEVERAL COLONIAL AND TERRITORIAL ERA NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK AND STATE HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT IN AND NEAR CAHOKIA.

CLICK ON THE SQUARES  
FOR RELATED HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT



Four white squares are arranged horizontally above a white-bordered box. The box contains the text "Cahokia, IL" and "1699" with a black pentagon icon. This indicates that clicking on the squares will lead to related historic sites to visit.

CLICK ON THE SQUARES  
FOR RELATED HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT

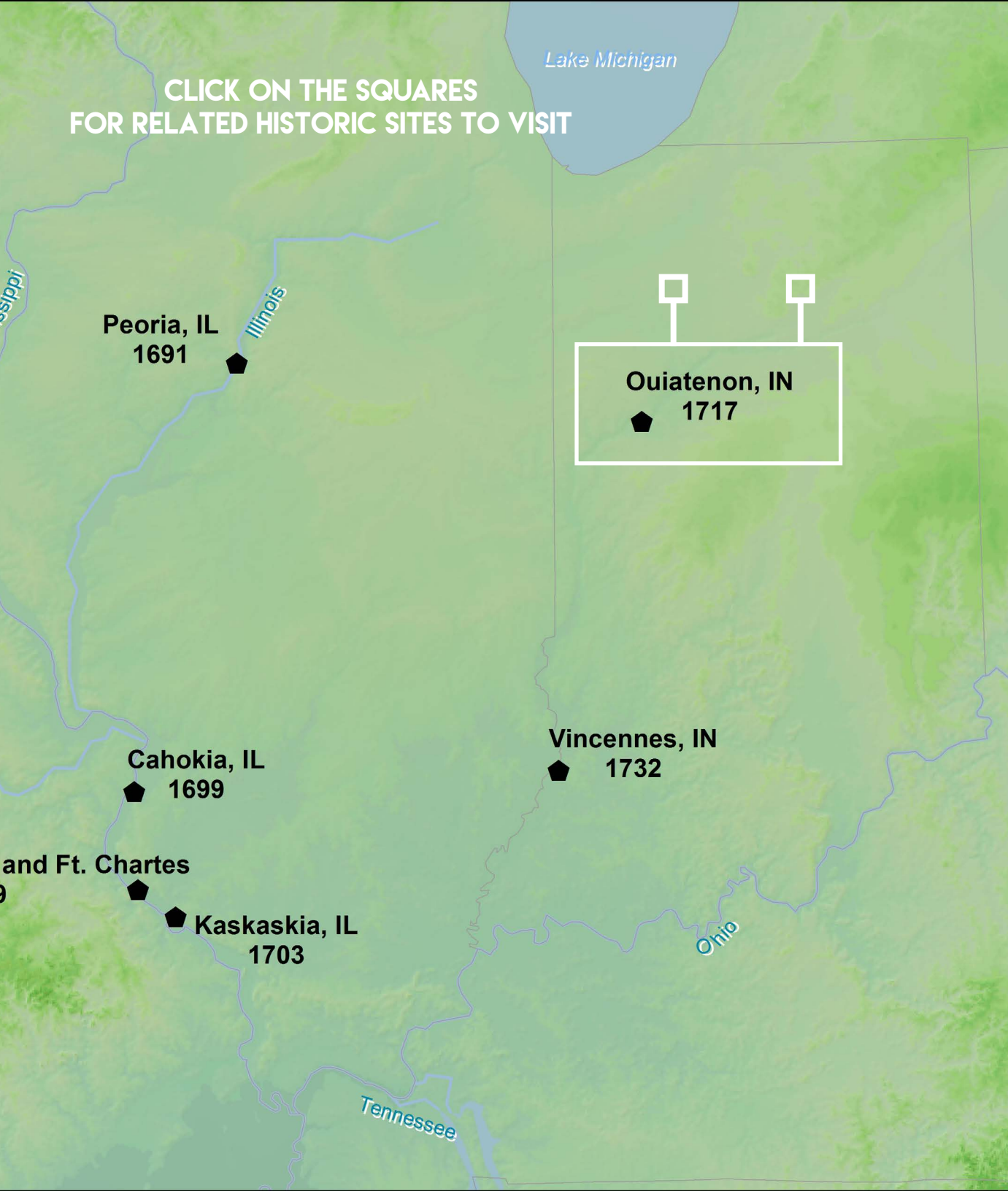


1703

## KASKASKIA, IL

**(313 YEARS)** KASKASKIA, IL, WHERE A KASKASKIA INDIAN VILLAGE ORIGINATING IN PEORIA WAS JOINED IN 1703 BY JESUIT MISSIONARIES AND FRENCH COLONISTS. THE COLONIAL AND AMERICAN TERRITORIAL PRESENCE HERE TRANSITIONED INTO THE FIRST CAPITAL OF ILLINOIS. THE VILLAGE WAS MOSTLY DESTROYED IN 1881 WHEN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER SUDDENLY CHANGED COURSE.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COLONIAL AND TERRITORIAL ERA STATE HISTORIC SITES, A NATIONAL LANDMARK, AND A FRENCH COLONIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT OF OLD TOWNS WITH FRENCH ORIGINS TO VISIT IN AND NEAR THE FORMER SITE OF KASKASKIA.



CLICK ON THE SQUARES  
FOR RELATED HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT

1717

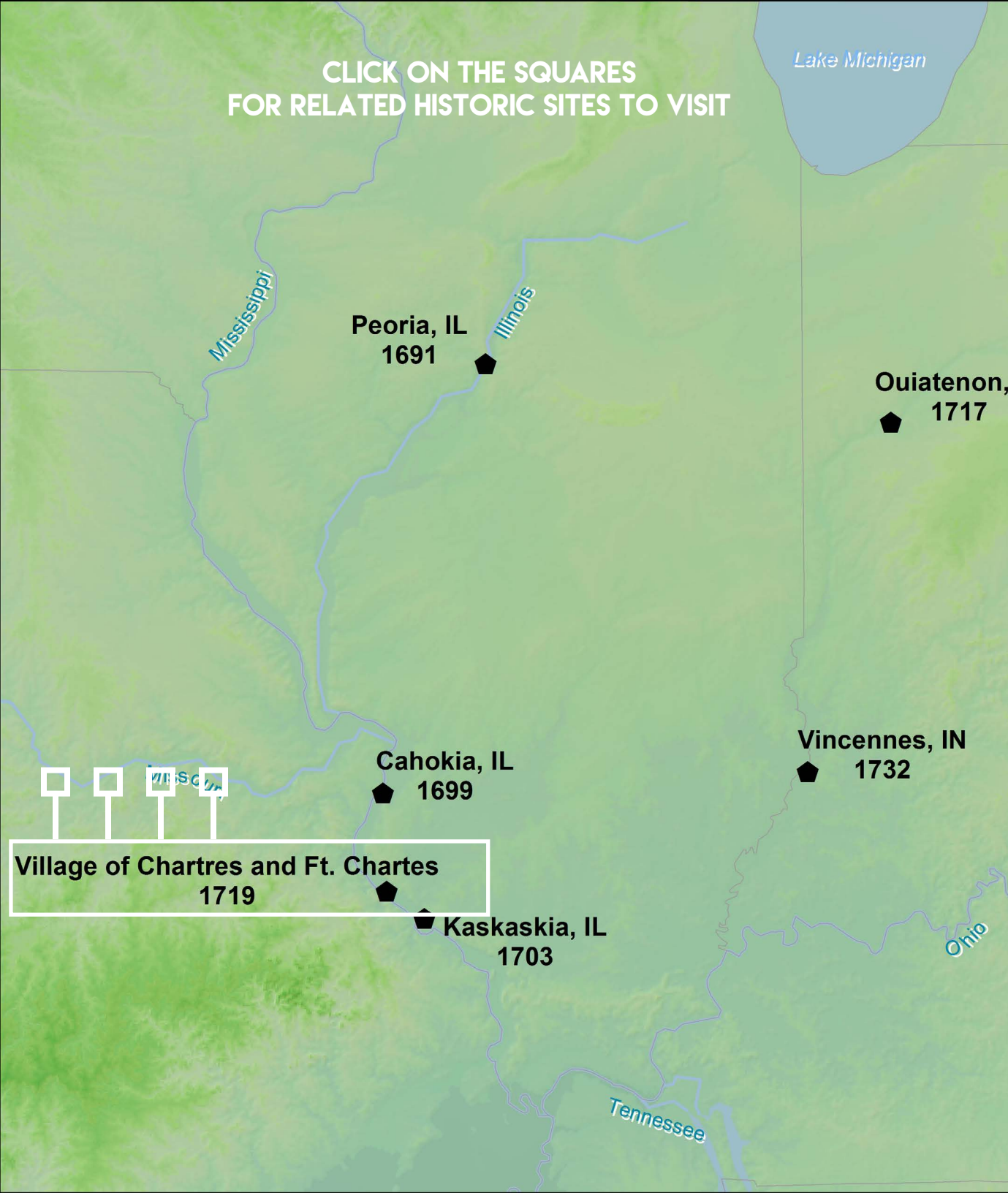
### OUIATENON, IN

(299 YEARS) OUIATENON, IN FOUNDED WHEN THE WEA INDIANS WHO HAD MOVED FROM STARVED ROCK REGION TO CHICAGO TO THE WABASH RIVER WERE JOINED BY THE FRENCH MILITARY (SIEUR DE VINCENNES) AND TRADERS. THIS SETTLEMENT LASTED UNTIL THE 1790S.

THERE ARE TWO COLONIAL/ TERRITORIAL ERA NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE HISTORIC SITE, AND NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK SITES TO VISIT AT OR NEAR FORT OUIATENON.

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CLICK ON THE SQUARES  
FOR RELATED HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT



1719

## VILLAGE OF CHARTRES & FT. DES CHARTRES

**(297 YEARS)** VILLAGE OF CHARTRES AND FT. DES CHARTRES (RANDOLPH COUNTY, IL) WERE FOUNDED WHEN THE FRENCH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS OF THE NEW LOUISIANA COLONY PICKED A SPOT ALONGSIDE THE MICHIGAMEA INDIAN TRIBE AS THE FORMATIVE CAPITAL OF THEIR ILLINOIS COLONY. OTHER FRENCH TOWNS, INCLUDING PRAIRIE DU ROCHER (1722), SOON SPRANG UP IN THIS AREA. OCCUPIED UNTIL 1780S.

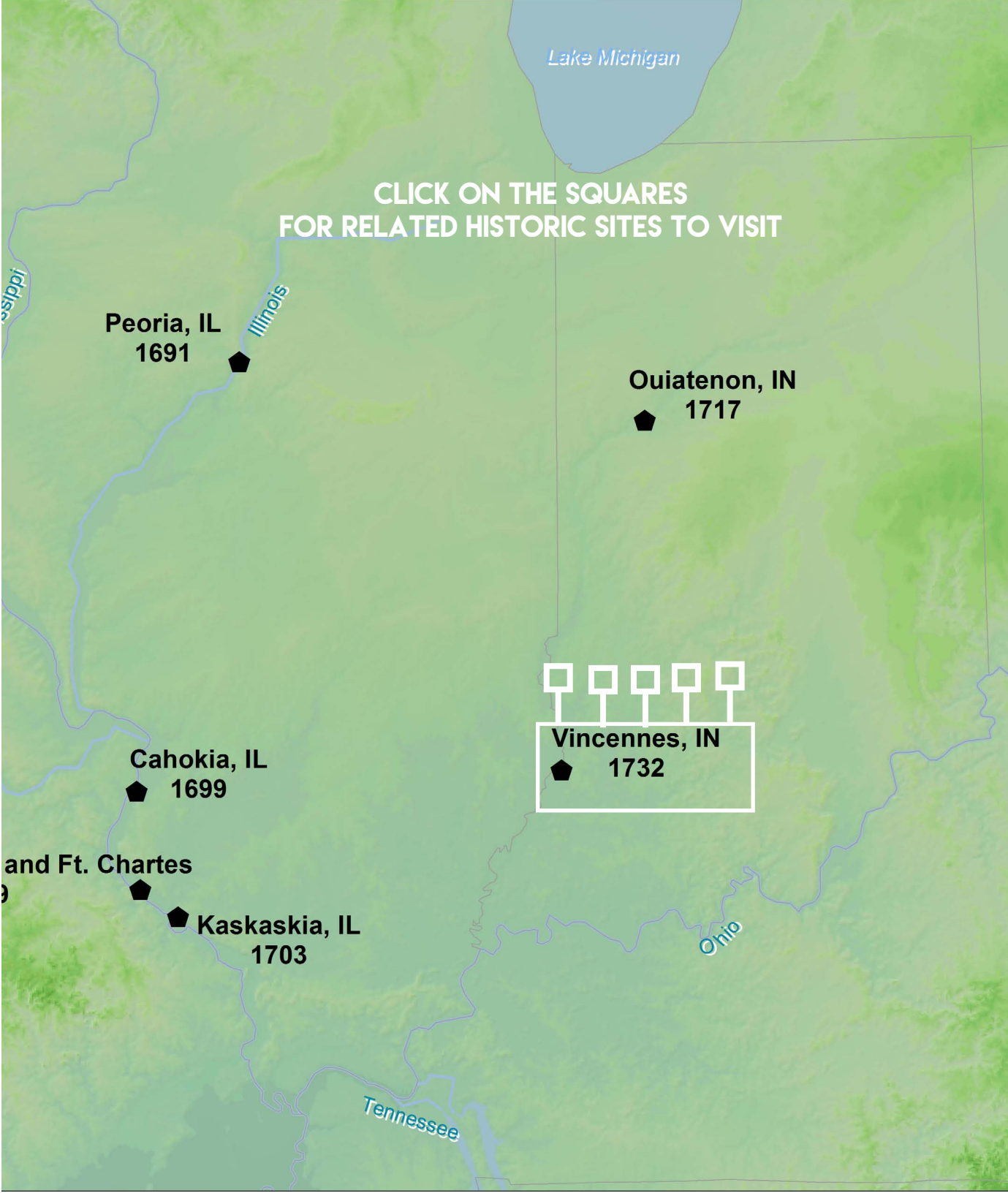
THERE ARE SEVERAL COLONIAL AND TERRITORIAL ERA STATE HISTORIC SITES, NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK, AND A FRENCH COLONIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT TO VISIT AT AND NEAR FORT CHARTRES.

1732

VINCENNES, IN

(286 YEARS) VINCENNES, IN WAS FOUNDED WHEN SIEUR DE VINCENNES BROUGHT FRENCH MILITARY, JESUIT MISSIONARIES, TRADERS, AND THE PIANKASHAW INDIANS TOGETHER. THE COLONIAL AND TERRITORIAL ERA GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS AT VINCENNES TRANSITIONED INTO INDIANA'S FIRST STATE CAPITAL AND THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY OCCUPIED TOWN IN INDIANA. THE CATHOLIC PARISH AT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL IS THE OLDEST IN INDIANA.

THERE ARE SEVERAL COLONIAL AND TERRITORIAL ERA NATIONAL REGISTER AND STATE HISTORIC SITES, AND A NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK TO VISIT AT AND NEAR VINCENNES. VINCENNES HAS A SEQUENCE OF FORTS NOT UNLIKE THOSE THAT STOOD AT PEORIA OVER TIME.



CLICK ON THE SQUARES FOR RELATED HISTORIC SITES TO VISIT

Peoria, IL  
1691

Illinois

Ouiatenon, IN  
1717

Vincennes, IN  
1732

Cahokia, IL  
1699

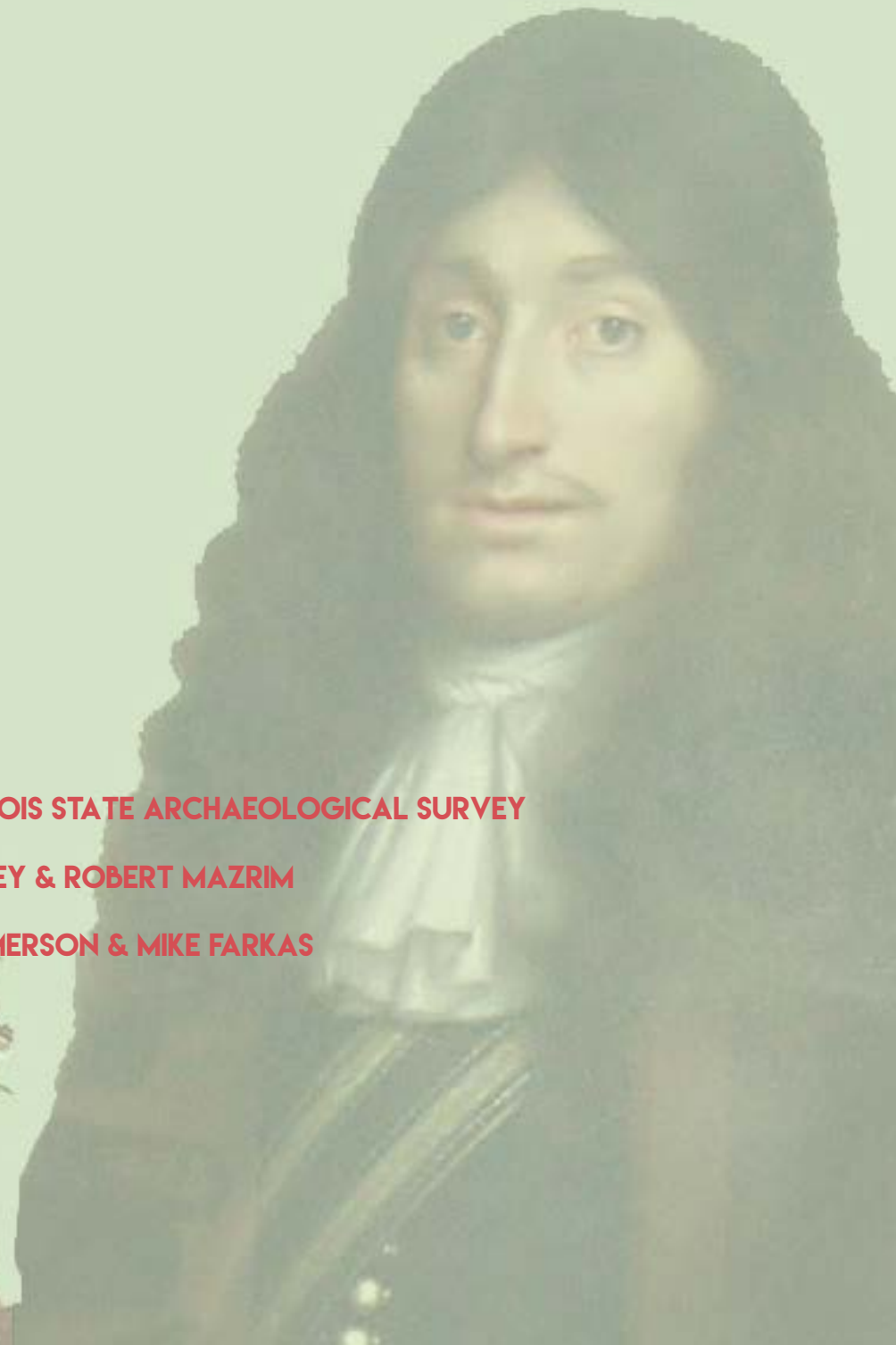
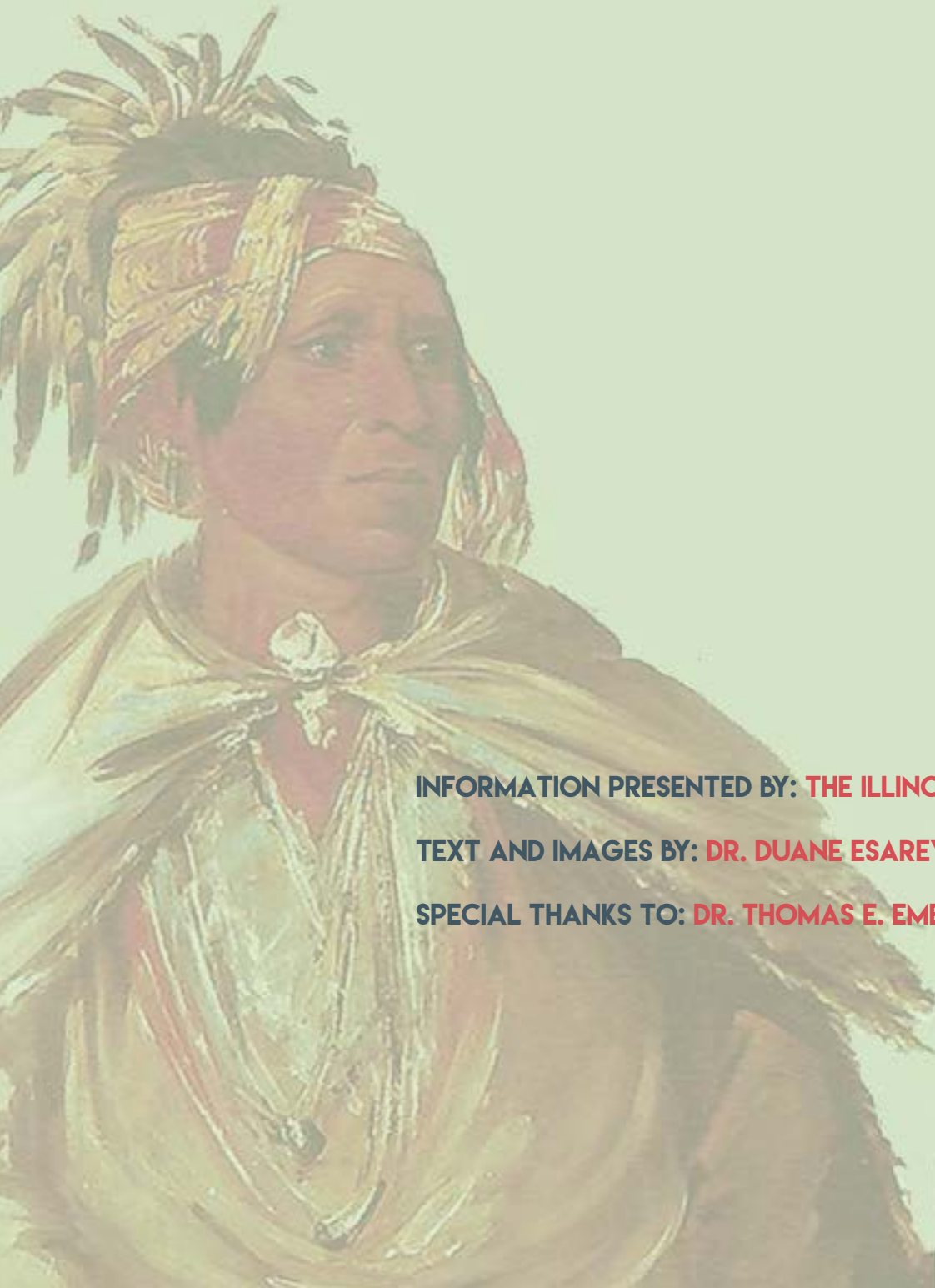
and Ft. Chartres

Kaskaskia, IL  
1703

Ohio

Tennessee

Lake Michigan



INFORMATION PRESENTED BY: **THE ILLINOIS STATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

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SPECIAL THANKS TO: **DR. THOMAS E. EMERSON & MIKE FARKAS**