

Prairie du Rocher Reconnaissance Survey

February 2023

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Front matter disclaimer: This study has been prepared to explore specific resources and advise on whether these resources merit further consideration as a potential addition to the national park system through a Congressionally authorized special resource study. Publication or transmittal of this report should not be considered an endorsement or a commitment by the National Park Service to seek or support specific legislative authorization for the project or its implementation. This report was prepared by the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. For more information contact:

Division Manager, Planning and Compliance
National Park Service
Interior Regions 3, 4, and 5
[402-661-1900]
[james_lange@nps.gov]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This reconnaissance survey is a preliminary resource assessment of French Colonial historic resources in the area of Prairie du Rocher, Illinois. The assessment is based on Congressionally established criteria to be recommended for inclusion in the national park system. This survey was requested in a July 8, 2020, letter to Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt from Illinois 12th District Representative Mike Bost (see appendix A). This survey provides a cursory review and analysis of available information to determine whether a special resource study is warranted.

The reconnaissance survey assesses properties located across the landscape of the Middle Mississippi River region of Illinois that are related to French colonial settlement, administration, and culture, including some of the earliest European settlements in what would come to be known as the Illinois Country. The properties analyzed include buildings, standing ruins, a historic road, and archeological resources. Among these are Fort de Chartres, the center of French military and administrative power in the Illinois Country; the sites of four French villages including Kaskaskia, originally a Franco-Illinois village and later the most populous French settlement in the region; the sites of at least three Illinois Indian villages whose histories and fates were intertwined with that of the French colonists; the Pierre Menard House, home to a bilingual, influential merchant who rose to political prominence and who was also a prominent enslaver; a church and cemetery that represent the legacy of the French colonial parish system; and several excellent examples of French colonial architecture in the village of Prairie du Rocher that together demonstrate the endurance of French colonial cultural tastes long after the area had become part of the United States.

Survey Findings.

National Significance: Collectively, the properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, below, have the potential to be found nationally significant as outstanding representations of broad national patterns of United States history, and they represent complex and overlapping historical narratives that enhance understanding and appreciation of these patterns. Several of these properties also represent examples of a rare and nationally significant architectural style. Still others are archeological resources that may yield data affecting theories, concepts, and ideas of importance by contributing to understanding the evolution of French colonial culture in the Middle Mississippi River region. Further in-depth study is warranted to determine whether these properties retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic character. In particular, it is uncertain whether the fact that Fort de Chartres is almost entirely a reconstruction would compromise its ability to convey its historical significance. It is important to note that, as individual resources, few of these properties are likely to be found nationally significant under Criterion 1. For this reason the analysis focused on the power of the resources collectively to represent compelling narratives, a power that rests primarily on the properties dating to the French colonial phase (1703-1763) of the period of significance. There are the scattered archeological resources throughout the study area, and Fort de Chartres. Therefore if the resources representing the French colonial phase were removed from consideration in this study, then the collective significance of the entire study area is unlikely to meet the national significance criterion.

Suitability: There are existing national park units that represent the French colonial period in the context of Louisiana as well as in the Middle Mississippi River region, where the current study area is situated. In particular, the architectural collection at Ste. Geneviève contributes to compelling historical associations with French exploration and settlement of the interior of the United States in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and with the American territory that developed following the Louisiana Purchase. Collectively, the properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, below,

represent a compelling historical narrative of French immigration, settlement, cultural exchange and development, architectural expression, enslavement, religious practice, and political and military administration of the Middle Mississippi River region that enhances the narratives represented by Ste. Geneviève. Individually, however, few if any of the resources in the study area would be found suitable, as their stories would be duplicative and/or unlikely to sustain significance under Criterion 1.

Feasibility: The resources considered in this analysis consist of state-managed historical sites, privately-owned buildings and structures, and subsurface archeological resources. Fort de Chartres State Historic Site and the Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site each currently has an onsite office, museum, and visitor infrastructure such as walkways, restrooms, and interpretive resources. However, the archeological landscape within the study area is large, dispersed, and in varied private ownership. It is unlikely that a future study would find the inclusion of these archeological resources feasible. It is furthermore unlikely that the acquisition and inclusion of St. Joseph's Church (in active use by the Diocese of Belleville) and St. Joseph's Cemetery would be determined feasible. It is therefore preliminarily found that, *collectively*, it is unlikely that the properties described in the "Resources Analyzed for this Study" section, below, would be found feasible for inclusion in the national park system, given the size of the landscape and the need to manage a diversity of active uses including agriculture, active religious worship, and residential areas. *Individually*, while many of the resources might be found feasible for designation, most would likely lose their ability to convey national significance or to meet the suitability criterion, as noted above in the national significance summary. Possible exceptions are Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House, which may warrant further study to determine feasibility.

Need for National Park Service Management: The properties described in the "Resources Analyzed for this Study" section, below, are managed by a variety of owners of which some have a historic preservation mission while the others do not. There is no clear NPS management model for such a large conglomeration of mixed resources and uses. Furthermore, collectively, the study area has faltered in the analysis of feasibility in particular with regards to its archeological resources. As discussed in the suitability analysis, the removal of the archeological resources from consideration makes it less likely that the remaining resources would merit further study, with the possible exceptions of Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House. However, it is here determined to be unlikely that a future study would find direct NPS management of Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House – currently managed as state historic sites – to be a clearly superior option over management by the State of Illinois. This study does not recommend further analysis for these or any of the other resources in the study area at this time.

Conclusion.

Reconnaissance survey findings are preliminary resource assessments. These conclusions are not considered final or definitive, as they assess only the likelihood that the resources analyzed would meet the established criteria for inclusion in the national park system. Based on the information available, this reconnaissance survey **does not** find a sufficiently compelling reason to recommend further study of the properties described in the "Resources Analyzed for this Study" section, below, in order to evaluate their potential for inclusion in the national park system.

This reconnaissance survey finds that the area may have the potential to be a national heritage area, provided that a single coordinating entity could be identified. Such a management option may better suit the large size and dispersed resources within the study area.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Reconnaissance Survey Process.....	1
About the National Park System.....	1
Criteria for Inclusion in the National Park System.....	2
Resources Analyzed in this Survey.....	4
Historic Context	7
The <i>Pays de Illinois</i> and Kaskaskia Village.....	7
Fort de Chartres and the French Villages.....	8
The French and Indian War and British Illinois.....	11
The American Revolutionary War and American Illinois.....	13
The Economy of the Illinois Country.....	14
Slavery in the Illinois Country.....	15
Existing Conditions.....	19
Study Criteria and Analysis	22
National Significance.....	22
Preliminary Analysis.....	23
Additional Properties to Consider for Future Study.....	29
National Significance Conclusion.....	29
Suitability	30
Comparable Sites.....	30
Preliminary Comparative Analysis.....	33
Suitability Conclusion.....	35
Feasibility	36
Preliminary Analysis.....	36
Feasibility Conclusion.....	40
Direct National Park Service Management.....	40
Preliminary Analysis.....	41
Direct NPS Management Conclusion.....	41
Conclusion and Recommendations	43
Works Consulted.....	45
Preparers and Acknowledgements.....	51

Appendix A: Reconnaissance Survey Request Letter and Response

Appendix B: Criteria for Inclusion

Appendix C: National Historic Landmark Criteria

INTRODUCTION

This reconnaissance survey is a preliminary resource assessment of French Colonial historic resources in the area of Prairie du Rocher, Illinois. The assessment is based on Congressionally established criteria to be recommended for inclusion in the national park system. This survey was requested in a July 8, 2020, letter to Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt from Illinois 12th District Representative Mike Bost (see appendix A). This survey provides a cursory review and analysis of available information to determine whether a special resource study is warranted.

RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY PROCESS

While specific authorization from Congress would be necessary to conduct a special resource study (SRS) to provide definitive findings, the National Park Service is authorized by the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (54 U.S. Code 100507) to conduct preliminary resource assessments and gather data on potential study areas or sites. The term “reconnaissance survey” is used to describe this type of assessment. Its conclusions are not considered final or definitive, assessing only the likelihood that the resources analyzed would meet the established criteria. A reconnaissance survey examines the resources in a study area to provide a preliminary evaluation of their national significance, suitability, the feasibility of protecting those resources as a park unit, and the need for the National Park Service to do so directly. If a study area appears potentially eligible for inclusion in the national park system, then the National Park Service may recommend that a special resource study be authorized by Congress.

The Prairie du Rocher Reconnaissance Survey examines the resources of the town and surrounding areas in the Middle Mississippi River region of Illinois, defined as the stretch of the river from its confluence with the Missouri River near St. Louis to its confluence with the Ohio River at the southern tip of Illinois. This study summarizes the historic context of the areas included, describes their existing conditions, and identifies those entities involved in existing preservation and interpretation efforts. The criteria for inclusion of these areas in the national park system are preliminarily assessed.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. While numerous national park units were created prior to 1916, it was not until August 25, 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act formally establishing the National Park Service.

The national park system continues to grow and comprises over 400 park units in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These units include, but are not limited to, national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management to ensure both protection and enjoyment for future generations.

Units of the national park system are established by legislation passed by Congress and signed by the president, or are designated national monuments through presidential proclamation. Designation as a unit of the national park system assumes direct NPS management of a site or partial NPS management coupled with a partnering entity (or entities) within the established park boundaries. This designation entails NPS financial and personnel support of park management and the adherence to applicable laws and policies for NPS-owned properties and NPS actions.

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The following are the criteria a site must meet to be recommended by the National Park Service for inclusion in the national park system (see appendix B, section 1.3 for text).

1. Significance. Determinations of an area's national significance are made by NPS professionals in consultation with scholars, experts, and scientists following specific criteria. The National Park Service has adopted four criteria to evaluate the national significance of proposed areas. These criteria, listed in *NPS Management Policies 2006*, state that a resource will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources are evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria contained in 36 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 65.4 (see appendix C).

2. Suitability. A property is considered suitable if it represents a resource type that is not currently represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another agency or entity. Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the type, quality, quantity, combination of resources present, and opportunities for public enjoyment.

In addition to resource conservation, the fundamental purpose of all parks is to provide for the enjoyment of park resources and values by the people of the United States. Public enjoyment of national park system units are preferably those forms of enjoyment that are "uniquely suited to the superlative natural and cultural resources found in the parks and that (1) foster an understanding of and appreciation for park resources and values, or (2) promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources" (NPS 2006).

3. Feasibility. To be considered feasible, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. The area must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Other important feasibility factors include, but are not limited to, land ownership, acquisition costs, current and potential use, access, level of local and general public support, and staff or development requirements.

4. Direct NPS Management. Even if a resource meets the criteria of national significance, suitability, and feasibility, it will not always be recommended that the resource be added to the national park system.

There are many excellent examples of important natural and cultural resources managed by other federal agencies, other levels of government, and private entities. A proposed addition must require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector, and the evaluation of management options must show NPS management is the clearly superior alternative. Because a reconnaissance survey does not propose management alternatives, only a cursory discussion of need for direct NPS management will be presented here.

As noted above, the reconnaissance survey process allows for only a preliminary evaluation of the criteria for inclusion. Analyses provided in reconnaissance surveys do not determine whether a site is eligible for inclusion in the national park system, they merely assess the likelihood that a site would meet the criteria should a special resource study be undertaken.

RESOURCES ANALYZED IN THIS SURVEY

The buildings, structures, landscape features, and archeological sites in and around Prairie du Rocher are some of the oldest and most important representations of the French colonial presence in the United States. They represent political and cultural transitions from Native American (from the Illiniwek, or “Illinois,” people) to European dominance, the development of French colonial systems of administration and military power, French agricultural life in a remote colony, connections with other French colonial activities in North America, enduring French cultural character in an American context, and challenging narratives about systems of slavery, including the state of Illinois fighting for the Union during the Civil War despite having only recently abolished slavery.

The letter from Representative Bost requested that a reconnaissance survey be completed “to identify the national significance of sites in the area of Prairie du Rocher, IL and to determine their suitability as a National Historic Park.” The letter specifically requests three properties to be considered in the study, and names several others in the area that are also included in the study in order to “evaluate the region’s national significance and suitability for designation as a unit of the National Park System.” In total, these are:

- French Colonial Historic District, including contributing archeological resources
- Fort de Chartres
- Pierre Menard House
- Mellière Home
- Jesuit Windmill site
- Lee-Brickey Mansion site
- Site of the Church of Ste. Anne and Ste. Anne cemetery
- St. Joseph's Cemetery
- St. Joseph's Church
- Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail
- Bienvenue Home
- Creole House

Some of these resources contain subsurface archeological sites, including multiple village sites, fort sites, and related features that contribute to the French Colonial Historic District or to the Fort de Chartres National Historic Landmark; the Church of Ste. Anne site; the Jesuit Windmill site; and the segment of the original Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail that runs through the study area. The Lee-Brickey Mansion site is a ruin and Fort de Chartres is mostly a reconstruction. The remaining properties – St. Joseph's Church, St. Joseph's cemetery, Mellière Home, Bienvenue Home, Creole House, and Pierre Menard House – are intact and standing buildings or structures.

Archeological sites contributing to the French Colonial Historic District that are relevant to the current study, but that are not individually named in the letter from Representative Bost, are: the original sites of four French villages (Kaskaskia, Nouvelle Chartres, Ste. Philippe, and Prairie du Rocher); the Michigamea villages (“Kolmer site” and “Waterman site”); the post-1720 Kaskaskia Indian village (“Guebert site”); and the Fort de Chartres predecessor fort sites. The site of Nouvelle Chartres village, the Michigamea villages, and the predecessor fort sites are also included within the Fort de Chartres National Historic Landmark boundary due to the nationally significant information potential of their

archeological deposits. This report will highlight the importance of archeological resources alongside the standing structures and features within the study area.

Due to constraints on reconnaissance surveys this report analyzes only those sites named in Representative Bost's letter, although recommendations for additional properties that are worthy of study, should the area be recommended for a special resource study, are included in the National Significance section.

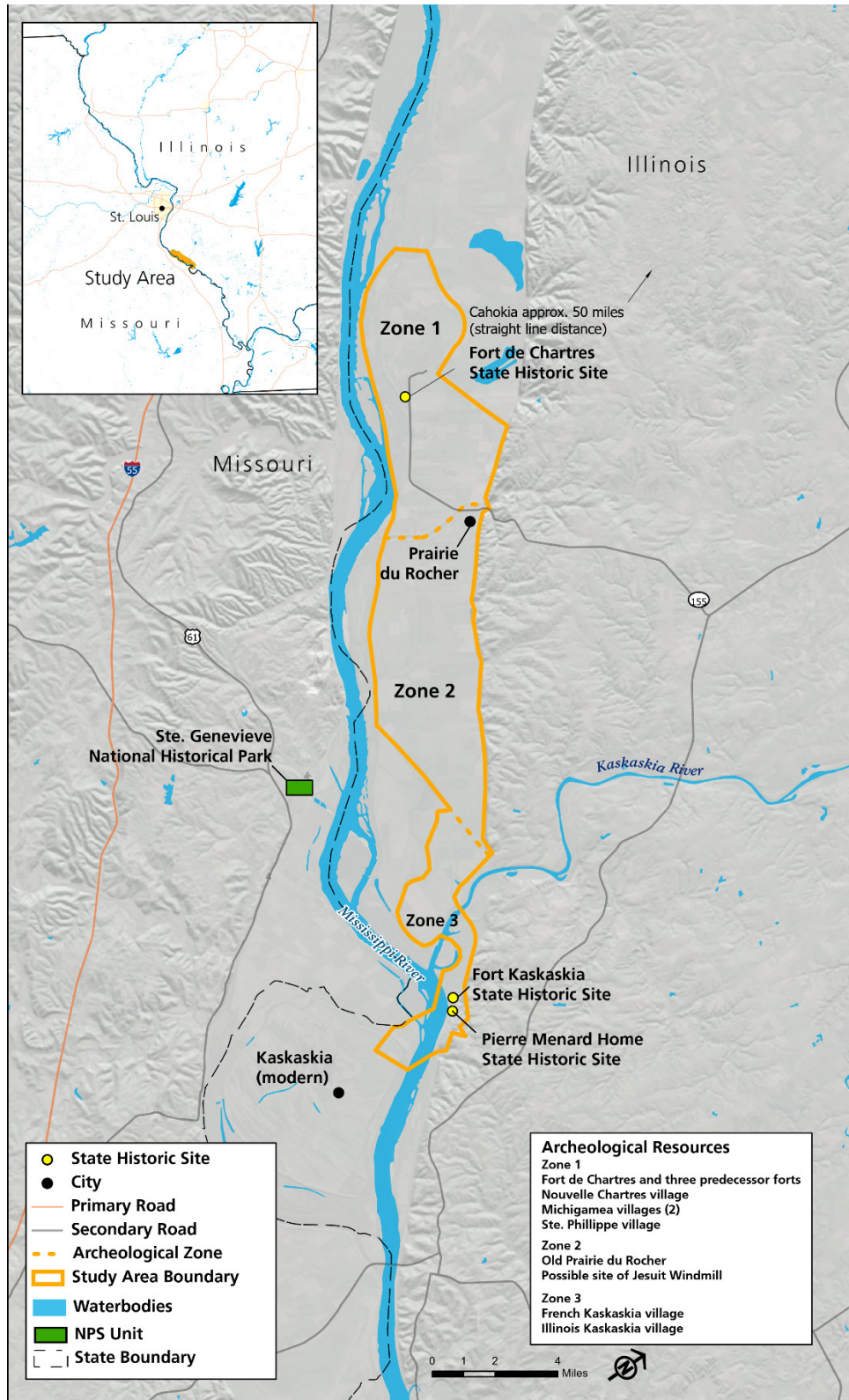


Figure 1. Map of the study area in the Middle Mississippi River region. The river's floodplain, the so-called American Bottom, is clearly visible, bound by bluffs on the eastern edge of the study area. The distance to Cahokia, a French colonial population center outside the study area, is noted. (NPS map)

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The *Pays de Illinois* and Kaskaskia Village.

Prior to the establishment of European colonies in what is now Canada and the northeastern United States, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (also called the Iroquois Confederacy or League of Five Nations) had grown powerful and began expanding rapidly out of their traditional home in what is now upstate New York. In the seventeenth century their ongoing conquests to the south and to the west into the Great Lakes region and the Ohio River valley, along with the devastating effects of European diseases, had induced a westward migration of Algonkian-speaking peoples such as the Illinois that shaped the political and social landscape in which the French began their colonial enterprises (Shackelford 2007, p. 198-200).

After nearly a century of exploring North America, *habitants* (inhabitants of French origin) began establishing successful settlements in the northeastern part of the continent along the St. Lawrence River. The first, Quebec, was founded in 1608 and became the administrative center of the colony of Canada. To the south in what is now upstate New York, the powerful Haudenosaunee Confederacy made French colonial expansion to the south and into the Great Lakes region difficult. With the Haudenosaunee to their south, the French explored and expanded west towards the Great Lakes and eventually reached the headwaters of the Mississippi River. In the 1670s, Louis Jolliet and Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette followed the Mississippi River southward from Canada to the mouth of the Arkansas River. On their return trip they ascended the Illinois River, and near a promontory later called Starved Rock (near modern Utica, IL) encountered a village of Kaskaskia Indians of the Illinois Confederacy, to which Father Marquette would return in 1675 and establish the Mission of the Immaculate Conception. The site of this “old Kaskaskia village” is currently the Grand Village of the Illinois archeological site (known as 11LS13 or the Zimmerman Site), managed by the state of Illinois as part of the Starved Rock State Historic Site. Following in the footsteps of Marquette and Jolliet, Robert Cavelier de La Salle completed the journey to the Gulf of Mexico and in 1682 claimed the whole of the Mississippi River valley for King Louis IV, naming the territory *La Louisiane* in his honor. The first permanent European settlement in the Mississippi Valley was Arkansas Post, founded by French traders in 1686 in the modern state of Arkansas (currently managed by the National Park Service as Arkansas Post National Memorial). By the end of the seventeenth century French colonists had established additional forts and trading posts in the modern states of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The colony of *La Louisiane* (Louisiana Colony) was at first based out of a fort at Biloxi established in 1699, then out of Mobile founded in 1702, until finally New Orleans was founded in 1718 and became its capital. (NPS 2016 p. 3; Brown 2005 p. 1-9).

French holdings in North America were called *Nouvelle France* (New France) and included the colonies of *La Louisiane* and Canada. The French government desired a series of settlements along the Mississippi River to strengthen its territorial claim and block the British colonies along the Atlantic coast from expanding west into the continent’s interior. The Middle Mississippi River region in which the study area is located was called *la Pays de Illinois* (the Illinois Country), a name loosely applied to a region that was formally part of the *Haute Louisiane* (Upper Louisiana) administrative unit of *La Louisiane* colony. However, it was difficult to convince prospective *habitants* to move to North America. Unlike in England where social, political, and religious struggles inspired citizens to flee and establish colonies on the continent, in general French citizens did not feel sufficiently pressured to do the same (see for example

Jaenen 1985, p. 7-8, regarding the Huguenots in France and *Nouvelle France*). The hardships of *Nouvelle France* described by early Jesuit priests were enough to serve as a deterrent and dampen interest in moving there. Instead of permanent settlements, French colonial activity was dominated by the missionary activities of priests and the trading activities of *voyageurs* (fur traders). Competing with the legitimate *voyageurs* were *coureurs de bois* (“forest runners”), bootlegging trappers who operated without a royal trading permit. *Voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois* sometimes fostered conflicts between Native American tribes to benefit their trade. This put them into conflict with the missionary priests, who desired peace and good order in support of their activities (NPS 2016, p. 3; Brown 2005, p. 1-9).

The tribes of the Illinois Confederacy were politically and militarily dominant in the *Pays de Illinois* prior to the arrival of the French, but the Haudenosaunee expansion disrupted this. They won a series of military victories against the Illinois that included the destruction of the old Kaskaskia village at Starved Rock in 1680. These conquests upset power dynamics in the region and had a ripple effect as displaced tribes came into conflict with each other. The Kaskaskia village moved down the Illinois River in 1700 to a location not far from its confluence with the Mississippi River, near modern St. Louis, Missouri, where attacks from the Sioux and other tribes induced them to move one more time, approximately 50 miles further downriver. In 1703 they established a settlement next to an existing village of the Michigamea on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River where it is met by a tributary now called the Kaskaskia River. The Michigamea were from what is now Arkansas but moved north and became part of the Illinois Confederacy. During these moves the Jesuit priests of the Mission of the Immaculate Conception had followed the Kaskaskia, and many of the tribal members had converted to Catholicism. Church services were conducted in both the Illinois and Latin languages. Through intermarriage with French *voyageurs*, the new Kaskaskia village increasingly became part of the French colonial world.

The Kaskaskia tribe had a mixed subsistence economy based on hunting, foraging, and agriculture, as well as extensive trade networks including a robust trade in enslaved Native Americans from neighboring tribes. The Middle Mississippi River region had tall grass prairie, trees for lumber, and rich, fertile soil in the American Bottom. It was an environment conducive to European-style agriculture, and the missionary priests built a windmill at Kaskaskia village to increase productivity. The village would emerge as the primary settlement in the *Pays de Illinois* during the French colonial period, and its archeological remains (including the “Jesuit Windmill site”) are among the properties analyzed in this study (Moore 1985, p. 24-26; Brown 2005, p. 3-9, 106, 152-7; Hechenberger 2007, p. 92-95; Shackelford 2007, p. 195-203; Sweatman 2010, p. 254-255; University of Illinois n.d.(a)).

Fort de Chartres and the French Villages.

The Illinois Confederacy was in decline during the eighteenth century. The combination of the Haudenosaunee conquest and devastating European diseases had disrupted their power, and subsequent conflicts with other tribes broke it. Their population declined steadily and by the end of the French and Indian War in 1765 there were estimated to be only 600 Illinois tribal members left. Meanwhile, French colonial presence and power grew in the *Pays de Illinois*.

For over a decade after its founding in 1703, Kaskaskia village evolved from a mission site and fur-trading outpost into a flourishing agricultural community that would remain an important stopping point for French *voyageurs*, traders, and travelers. Yet it continued to exist in a political and administrative limbo within *Nouvelle France*, having no government presence, no administrators or courts, and no garrison or fort. This changed with the founding and establishment of New Orleans as the administrative

center of *La Louisiane*, from which three men and their entourage set out in 1718 up the Mississippi River. One of these was Lieutenant Pierre Degué de Boisbriant, charged with establishing a fort in *Haute Louisiane*. The others were Marc-Antoine de la Loëre des Ursins and Nicolas-Michel Chassin, officers of the Royal Company of the Indies, a royally-chartered organization that was granted the rights to economically develop *La Louisiane*. The company would govern the colony until 1731, at which time it determined the venture to be unprofitable and returned it to the French crown. These three men established themselves first at Kaskaskia, the region's largest settlement, and later at Fort de Chartres (described below). They collectively comprised the Provincial Council, the new governing body of the *Haute Louisiane* that reported to the Superior Council of *La Louisiane* in New Orleans. By 1720 the *Pays de Illinois* had a garrison, a government, and officers in charge of its economic development. This represents the first major investment by European colonizers in what would eventually become the American Midwest (Ekberg 1998, p. 33-35; Brown 2005, p. 1-9).

Boisbriant soon set about his task of establishing and garrisoning a fort and selected a site approximately sixteen miles north of Kaskaskia village, near modern Prairie du Rocher. His reasons for siting the fort away from Kaskaskia are unclear. He may have wanted the fort centered between Kaskaskia and Cahokia – the region's two largest French settlements at the time – and among various Native American settlements, or it may have been because there was no suitable site near the town itself (See Figure 1, above, and Figure 2, below: note that Cahokia is outside the study area, to its north) (Ekberg 1998, p. 34; Brown 2005, p. 9). Years later the French attempted to build another fort at Kaskaskia, Fort Kaskaskia, but could only partially construct an earthen redoubt. Boisbriant's fort was completed around 1720 and named Fort de Chartres. By this time Kaskaskia was a bustling riverport town, and yet one of Boisbriant's earliest administrative actions as commandant was to break up the village along ethnic lines. Contemporary administrative records name several reasons related to tensions among the *habitants*, the Kaskaskia, and the Michigamea: to protect the virtue of the Kaskaskian women from the boorish behavior of the boatmen and *voyageurs* passing through; to protect Kaskaskian men from excessive drinking; to prevent the Kaskaskia from poaching the pigs of the *habitants*; and to enforce a racial policy that prohibited marriage between French and Native Americans (University of Illinois n.d.(a)). These reasons may reflect more on contemporary French attitudes than on reality, although they provide a usefully historical picture of the rough and tumble nature of the port town. In any case, the *habitants* and their families stayed in the existing village and the Kaskaskia were moved six miles up the Kaskaskia River where they established a new settlement (today known to archeologists as the Guebert site). The Michigamea created a new village up the Mississippi River not far from Fort de Chartres (Brown 2005, p. 9). Boisbriant provided for a church for French Kaskaskia, and a Jesuit mission for the new village established by the displaced Kaskaskia. By 1722 Kaskaskia had almost as many residents as New Orleans, and by 1750 it had as many inhabitants as all of the other local settlements combined (Brown 2005, p. 140; University of Illinois n.d.(a)).

Other French settlements began to spring up, including one just outside the walls of the recently completed fort which was separated from Kaskaskia village by the *Grand Bois* (Great Woods). This growing fort settlement came to be called Nouvelle Chartres and included the Church of Ste. Anne (completed ca. 1731), the site of which is one of the resources evaluated in this study. Meanwhile,

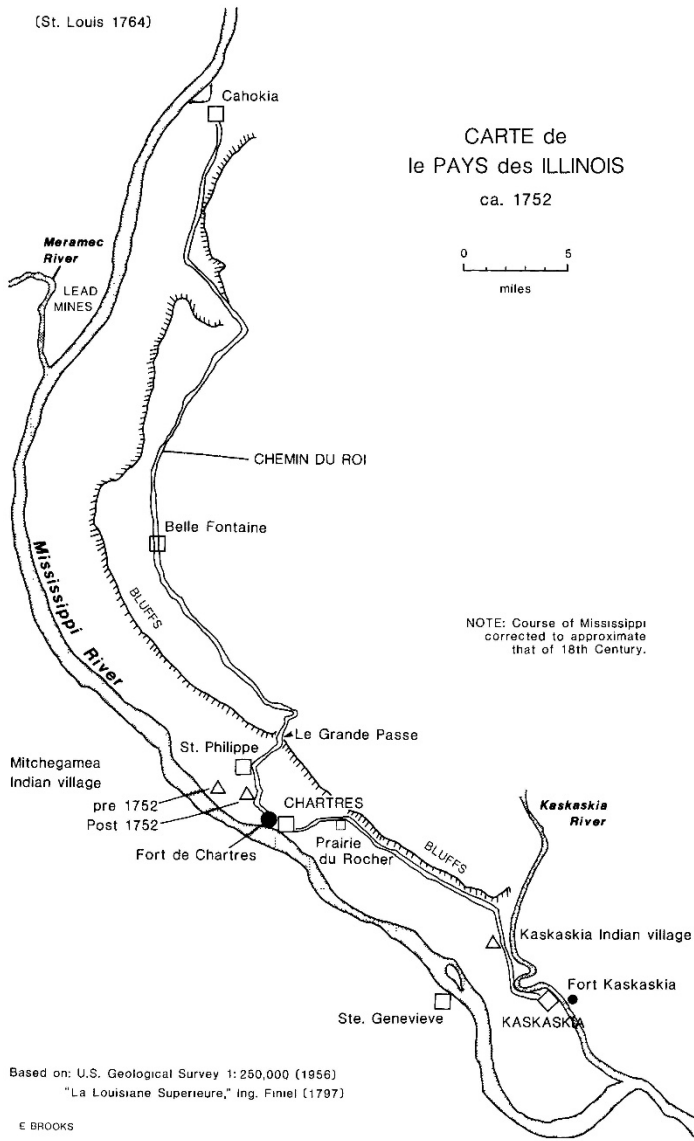


Figure 2. Map of French villages along the Middle Mississippi River in 1752. The "Chemin du Roi" (Royal Road) is also known as the Cahokia-Kaskaskia Trail. From Briggs 1990, p. 35.

Boisbriant received a sizeable land grant located a few miles from the fort, that would later become the site of Prairie du Rocher. Prairie du Rocher lists its official founding as 1722, although it would be more accurate to describe the area at that time as a scatter of farming tracts closely associated with Fort de Chartres. Throughout the 1730s land grants in the area of Prairie du Rocher were made to various applicants. St. Joseph's Chapel was constructed as a chapel of ease – a satellite church – associated with the Church of Ste. Anne, and contemporary correspondence began to refer to Prairie du Rocher as a village distinct from the fort. Another village, St. Philippe, was founded upriver from the fort in ca. 1723 by Philippe Francois Renault, a Parisian banker and member of the Company of the Indies who was appointed director of mining operations in the *Pays des Illinois*. It began as an agricultural tract to support his ill-fated lead mining operation on the west side of the Mississippi River, and grew into a village in its own right (Brown 2005, p. 69, 106-107, 114-118, 257-258; Dexter 2011, p. 25).

The churches in these villages played an important role in the lives of the *habitants*. The French state was Catholic, and religion was the basis of French civil society and was embedded in its

administrative structure. The Church in *Nouvelle France* oversaw missionary activities – such as the Mission of the Immaculate Conception in Kaskaskia village – and provided education, charitable works, and welfare services for the colonies. If approved by the state, an individual church could be erected as a canonical (formal) parish. These parishes – all of them in *Nouvelle France* overseen by the Diocese of Quebec – were social and administrative units, each headed by a *curé* (chief priest) who served as its spiritual leader, social advisor, and keeper of its official parish register of births, deaths, and marriages. Such records from the French colonial period are maintained to this day at St. Joseph's Church in Prairie du Rocher. An elected council of citizens oversaw the temporal affairs of their local parish, and necessary resources including labor were supplied by the local communities (Jaenen 1985, p. 4, 9, 11-13, 16-17, 22-23).

The parishes of the *Pays de Illinois*, however, functioned differently than those in the mother country, where His Most Christian Majesty the King presided over the national church of France as an arm of the state. In contrast, the villages in the *Pays de Illinois* had developed a level of local autonomy unfamiliar in France, and even in Canada. Although the commandant of Fort de Chartres was the King's official in the colony, a parish meeting consisting of the heads of households ran the routine business of the village. A locally-elected *syndic* (mayor) presided over these meetings, which took place after Sunday Mass on the steps of the church and which were attended by the parish priest. The priest was typically assigned by the Church, another element of the political and religious hierarchy. However, an anecdote from Nouvelle Chartres illustrates the independent attitudes of the French Illinois villagers. Having established Ste. Anne's church, the *habitants* requested that the Seminarian Fathers at Cahokia provide them a priest. The villagers were not satisfied by the incumbent, and so instead chose a Jesuit priest named Father Gagnon. This was shocking in a Catholic context – priests were to be assigned, not chosen – and also challenged the Seminarists' claim to jurisdiction in the colony. Yet despite forty years of official protests from the Seminarists, including a direct appeal to the King, the *habitants* of Nouvelle Chartres went about their business with their self-selected priest until he passed away. Fort de Chartres was the official administrative center of the region, but the local parishes like Ste. Anne's were the beating heart of the everyday civic and religious life of the *habitants* (Briggs 1990, p. 31, 33, 40-42).

It is uncertain exactly when the missions in the *Pays de Illinois* were elevated to parishes but by the late 1730s there were at least three: the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Kaskaskia; the Church of Ste. Anne in Nouvelle Chartres, which also oversaw the chapels of ease at Prairie du Rocher (chapel of St. Joseph) and St. Philippe (chapel of the Visitation); and the Church of the Holy Family at Cahokia (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970, but located outside of the study area) (Brown 2005, p. 106).

From the 1730s onward the colonial population of the *Pays de Illinois* grew slowly, with small settlements and their associated farms strung out as long lots (described below) mostly along the Mississippi River and separated by wilderness. Steady and significant immigration from France essentially ceased, so that population growth proceeded only from natural increase and from newcomers from Canada or from the less successful settlements of the lower *La Louisiane*. According to an official 1732 census, the population of Fort de Chartres and the four villages around it (Kaskaskia, Nouvelle Chartres, St. Philippe, and Prairie du Rocher) was only 729 *habitants*, soldiers, and enslaved persons, but this is almost certainly an under-representation of the actual population. By the 1750s there were approximately three thousand people living in the six French villages on the east side of the Mississippi River (including Cahokia, outside the study area), including an estimated one thousand enslaved Black and Native American persons. Meanwhile, the Native American population declined precipitously, both through attrition and assimilation, so that by the end of the 18th century, the Kaskaskia joined with the Peoria and Miami people. They were removed from Illinois in 1832 and forced to a reservation in Oklahoma where their descendants live today (Brown 2005, p. 114-115; Briggs 1990, p. 30).

The French and Indian War and British Illinois.

The Seven Years War (1754-1763, although formally declared in 1756) grew out of global colonial competition between England, France, Spain, and other European powers. The war manifested itself in North America as the French and Indian War, pitting France and its Native American allies against

England and its Native American allies, notably among them the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Despite early tactical victories in North America it became clear to the French that they were losing the larger war, especially after the colony of Canada surrendered to the British in 1760.

The *habitants* in the *Pays de Illinois* supplied soldiers for the war effort but no battles were fought there. Nevertheless, they feared an invasion especially as the tide of victory began to turn against their mother country, and the residents of Kaskaskia attempted once again to build a fort. However, just as Boisbriant had found forty years earlier, inspection of the area around Kaskaskia revealed that there were no strategically suitable sites. The best that could be managed was a partially-constructed earthen redoubt built around 1759 and named Fort Kaskaskia. It was destroyed by the townspeople shortly thereafter in anticipation of British occupation, and today the remnants are preserved at Fort Kaskaskia State Historic Site (Brown 2005, p. 145-147; NPS 2016, p. 28).

Nouvelle France was increasingly seen by the French crown as a poor investment. As the war effort continued to flounder, Louis XV decided to rid France of this burden and in 1762 he concluded the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau wherein Spain received New Orleans and all of *La Louisiane* colony. A few months later, in February 1763, France formally conceded defeat to England and through the Treaty of Paris ceded most of *Nouvelle France* to British control, including Canada and all claims in *La Louisiane* east of the Mississippi River, which included the *Pays de Illinois*. It was only afterwards that the existence of the Treaty of Fontainebleau was revealed: Spain retained control of New Orleans and French claims west of the river, including Ste. Geneviève and St. Louis (Brown 2005, p. 145-7).

It took a while for the British to establish a presence in the Middle Mississippi River region, and even longer to begin to establish administrative control. In 1765 a British garrison finally arrived to take possession of Fort de Chartres. Most of the *habitants* in St. Philippe left their homes behind as did many from Kaskaskia, while the village of Nouvelle Chartres was mostly abandoned, its residents undesirous of living in the shadow of the British garrison. In contrast, residents of Prairie du Rocher stayed in place, likely because it was a small, isolated village far enough from British attention. The *habitants* who left their villages settled in Ste. Geneviève or St. Louis on the west side of the river in what is now Missouri (Ste. Geneviève is currently managed by the National Park Service as Ste. Geneviève National Historical Park), or went downriver to New Orleans although some, especially those from Nouvelle Chartres, moved to Prairie du Rocher. As French fur interests moved their base of operations from Kaskaskia to St. Louis, British fur interests promptly moved into Kaskaskia. While Kaskaskia fared well under British rule and Prairie du Rocher remained a small out of the way village, the other former French settlements fared poorly. As if to signal the end of an era, the Mississippi River shifted its channel in the 1770s, destroying most of St. Philippe and threatening to do the same to Fort de Chartres. The fort was abandoned by the British in 1771 shortly before the river undercut and toppled its riverside walls, and much of Nouvelle Chartres also washed away. By 1854 the fort had been reduced to ruins. Today, only the stone powder magazine is an original standing structure. The British garrison moved to Kaskaskia where it occupied an old Jesuits' compound surrounded by a high picket fence, that they named Fort Gage in honor of the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America, General Thomas Gage (Brown 2005, p. 151-170, 282).

The British did not establish a civil government, and so the residents of the *Pays de Illinois* were subject to the military authority of the local British commandant. In 1774 the Illinois Country was formally reorganized under the civil government of the province of Quebec but was still without a local

government or civil courts. Plans for further administrative reorganization into the British colonial system were interrupted by the outbreak of the American Revolution. The British garrison was sent east, and Philippe-François de Rastel le chevalier de Rocheblave (1727-1802), a Frenchman from Ste. Geneviève turned British subject, was placed in charge of local affairs (Brown 2005, p. 168, 196-198).

The American Revolutionary War and American Illinois.

The American Revolutionary War began in 1775. It quickly spread along the Atlantic seaboard and early on threatened to engulf Canada as well. The Illinois Country was distant but not unaffected, in part because the Mississippi River provided a means for the French and Spanish to import arms for the revolutionaries.

In July 1778, the governor of Virginia dispatched Colonel George Rogers Clark and a company of militia to attack the British forces in the Illinois Country. They surprised the British forces and quickly occupied Fort Gage. Clark seized power and declared the Illinois Country to be subject to the Virginia Commonwealth. He established three judicial districts with positions to be filled by locally elected officials. One of these was centered at Kaskaskia and included Prairie du Rocher and what was left of St. Philippe and Nouvelle Chartres. As victory in the war seemed increasingly likely, the Virginia legislature declined to reauthorize a government for the Illinois Country and the colony's claim effectively lapsed in 1782. In September 1783 England signed the Treaty of Paris which ended the war and ceded to the new United States of America its territory from the Atlantic Ocean (south of Canada and north of Florida) to the Mississippi River. The Illinois Country by default fell under the authority of the Continental Congress which made no moves towards creating a government there. The courts established by Virginia continued to function in some places but not others. As more and more Americans moved to the territory from the east, the French population of Kaskaskia significantly declined as they chose to leave for the French towns in the Spanish-controlled territory west of the Mississippi River. This differed from the situation in nearby Cahokia, where local governance was more stable, and the French population continued to thrive. It was not until 1790 that Congress organized the Illinois Country as part of the Northwest Territory and established a civil government. This was the first time the Illinois Country had a government since 1765 when the French colonial administration left (Brown 2005, p. 169-193).

In 1818 Illinois became a state and Kaskaskia was chosen for its first capital, although it served that role only for a year from 1818-1819. The town suffered lows and highs of prosperity under American rule. In 1825 the Marquis de Lafayette, a Frenchman and one of George Washington's top commanders during the Revolutionary War, visited Kaskaskia as part of a national tour of the United States. In the early nineteenth century it was still an important economic center in the region but began a steady decline from the 1820s, exacerbated, if not caused by, steady erosion of its land and a series of significant floods. St. Philippe and Nouvelle Chartres were in decline at the end of the French Colonial period and never recovered from a shift in the course of the Mississippi River. Kaskaskia would suffer a similar fate. In 1881 the river broke into and captured the lower Kaskaskia River channel and destroyed most of the town, leaving its remains on the west rather than the east side of the river. The town was rebuilt but never fully recovered, and today there are no historic structures left standing in their original locations (one historic church was relocated). The town was submerged again during the devastating floods of 1993, and in 2010 the population was 14 people.

Of the original villages in the study area, only Prairie du Rocher, situated on higher ground away from the river, remains in place with its historic structures intact. For a century after France ceded the Illinois

Country, the residents of Prairie du Rocher continued to build their homes using a traditional French colonial poteaux-sur-sole (post on sill) construction method. This style differs from the heavy timber frame construction favored in the eastern United States and brought to Illinois by Americans moving west. An example of the continuity and change in American Prairie du Rocher is seen in the aptly named Creole House, built around 1800. It was originally constructed in the poteaux-sur-sole style and later doubled in size through an addition built using timber frame construction (Drury 1977; Gilster and Hahn 1972). There are other examples of continuity: the current St. Joseph's church in Prairie du Rocher was built in 1858 after its congregation outgrew the original church. Originally a chapel of ease, or satellite church, of Ste. Anne Parish centered in Nouvelle Chartres, St. Joseph's inherited the status and community of the Church of Ste. Anne when Nouvelle Chartres was abandoned. The British ended the French religious and administrative parish system, but nevertheless St. Joseph's Church inherited the sacred vessels and parish records from its predecessor, and they remain there to this day. The remains of Father Joseph Gagnon and Father Luc Collet, beloved priests of the Church of Ste. Anne, were disinterred from the church cemetery in Nouvelle Chartres and reburied at St. Joseph Cemetery in Prairie du Rocher.

By the 1880s most immigration from France into the French communities of Illinois ceased, and they became quickly integrated into the American economic and legal systems. Nevertheless, a distinctive French character survives to the present in Prairie du Rocher (Brown 2005, p. 257-258).

The Economy of the Illinois Country.

Prior to the French colonial period, the Illinois tribes along the Mississippi River were already engaged in a mixed-subsistence economy including hunting, foraging, and agriculture, and had extensive trade networks. Besides missionaries, the first French people in the Illinois Country were *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois* interested in fur. The new Kaskaskia village in the study area, like the original village near modern Utica, quickly became an important regional trading post. A 1725 census of Kaskaskia and Fort de Chartres lists 504 people total, only a handful of whom lived at Prairie du Rocher which was still considered attached to the fort. The census is known to be incomplete and the total number of inhabitants was probably closer to 600. The list of craft specialists identified in this census strongly suggests a market economy rather than an agricultural one: specialties were related to the fur trade and defense of the trading camps, such as gunsmiths, coopers, etc. Fur trappers in the Illinois Country focused on deer, bison, bobcat, and other goods that were initially traded north to Canada. As lower Louisiana was settled, trade reoriented southward. The *habitants* imported necessities and luxuries from France and traded with local Native Americans. Agricultural products rapidly displaced fur exports. While the *Pays de Illinois* was self-sufficient, the settlements of southern *La Louisiane* at first languished as the hot and humid climate was unsuitable for growing French staples such as wheat for bread, leading the *habitants* there to focus on cash crops such as sugar cane, indigo, and tobacco. Supplies from France were sometimes slow in coming, and the *Pays de Illinois* supplied the staples instead. As early as 1713, the whole population of lower *La Louisiane* depended on the region for sustenance, and by 1726 the *voyageurs* and *habitants* of the *Pays de Illinois* were being asked to produce oil (especially bear oil), tallow, and various meats rather than furs. Soon they were also shipping flour, peas, maize, okra, and onions (Brown 2005, p. 9-13, 78-81; Briggs 1990, p. 32).

As time went on, the settlement of Prairie du Rocher grew into a thriving agricultural community, distinct from Nouvelle Chartres, and as in the other local settlements its people were mostly craftsmen

and farmers. Records from the mid-eighteenth century show masons, carpenters, innkeepers, sawyers, and millers, but few *voyageurs*. The townspeople mostly produced agricultural commodities which they traded with local Native Americans for meat and hides, and with the fort for various imported goods. In contrast, Kaskaskia continued to flourish as a major fur trading center and remained so even after the transition to British rule (Brown 2005, p. 125-6).

Agricultural lots in *Nouvelle France* had a unique configuration known as long lots. In Nouvelle Chartres, for example, there was a rectangle of land – the commonfield – behind the town stretching along and away from the river. It was divided into narrow strips that ran its entire length, from the town to the bluffs, which on the modern landscape runs roughly from Highway 155 to the railroad tracks near the bluffs. Whereas in Canada the *habitants* built their individual homesteads at the ends of their lots, those in the *Pays de Illinois* clustered their homes in a nuclear village along the river and adjacent to the agricultural commonfield. This still allowed them easy access to the river and easy access to their individual long lots, but the close proximity of neighbors provided perhaps an added measure of security. Aside from the commonfield, a village was granted a common for use as communal summer pastureland among other things. While usage of individual long lots within the commonfield was determined by the individual owner, the opening and closing of the common was determined collectively at the parish meeting. Prairie du Rocher was granted a common in 1743 by the commandant of the *Pays de Illinois*, and it remained in use well beyond the French Colonial period. In 1809, a commission acting on behalf of the United States Congress affirmed title of the common for the village, and in 1919 revenues from the land were still supporting education there (Briggs 1990, p. 32, 41; Brown 2005, p. 70-73; Beuckman 1919, p. 409-410).

Ownership of the commonfield was different in *La Louisiane* than in Canada. In the latter there was a quasi-feudal *régime seigneurial* (seigneurial system) in which the King, nominally, though his officials, made large block land grants to individuals who, as landlords, were expected to encourage settlement and agricultural productivity by awarding small parcels to *habitants* free of charge. The landlord would then receive rent and taxes from his tenants. However, a royal ordinance for *La Louisiane* decreed that rather than seigneuries, land was to be granted in small parcels directly to individuals. Despite the fact that Boisbriant and Philippe Renault each received large land grants that they appeared to treat as seigniories, evidence suggests that rent and taxes were never actually paid (Brown 2005, p. 68-71).

Slavery in the Illinois Country.

There is insufficient evidence to state for certain whether slavery existed in the Illinois Country prior to the seventeenth century arrival of Europeans in North America, or whether slave-raiding by the tribes of the Illinois Confederacy emerged in response to new European markets. The major Illinois Indian population center of old Kaskaskia village at Starved Rock was well situated for access to bison hunting but also as a borderland between tribes to the east and west. It was a convenient base from which to conduct raids aimed at taking people captive and trading them as slaves. These enslaved people, mostly women, were taken and traded to replace Native American populations that had been decimated by European diseases and conflicts with the Haudenosaunee and other peoples to the north and east. The Illinois were among the most powerful peoples in North America in the seventeenth century, and the slave trade was an important basis for this power. After the Haudenosaunee destroyed the Illinois center at Starved Rock and many Kaskaskia resettled along the Middle Mississippi River, they maintained what they could of their trading networks including for enslaved people. The French entered

this scene with their own history of buying and selling enslaved people, mostly from Africa but Native Americans as well. In Canada and the Illinois Country, enslaved Native Americans were typically taken from plains tribes to the west, and so many were taken from Pawnee bands in particular that the French colonial term for “slave,” *panis*, is derived from that tribe’s name. Newly enslaved persons from Africa typically came from West Central Africa, particularly Sene-Gambia, the Bight of Benin, and Manega (modern day Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia, and Congo), where the Company of the Indies had a monopoly on the slave trade. Enslaved African people’s first stop in the French colonies was usually Port au Prince where people were distributed throughout the French Colonies. Both newly arrived Africans and people born into slavery in the West Indies were exported to *La Louisiane* (Morrissey 2015; Brown 2005, p. 7,52; Geggus 2001; Seck 2014).

The French system of slavery in *La Louisiane* was governed by the *Code Noir*, “Black Code” (1685), which despite its name also applied to enslaved Native American people. Native American slavery in *Nouvelle France* was further governed by the *Ordinance Rendered on the Subject of the Negroes and the Indians called Panis* (1709). Enslaved persons in the *Pays de Illinois* were treated as property and not as humans, and they were deprived of their most fundamental freedoms. They were forced to work in the farm fields, in the home, or at various tasks in support of the fur trade, all against their will and for the economic benefit of their enslavers. However, *Le Code Noir* provided a certain degree of legal status to enslaved persons and governed the behavior of those who owned them. For example, children of enslaved persons could not be sold until they were of age, and when an enslaver died a family of enslaved persons would be sold as a unit rather than individually. Enslavers – used here to mean individuals who traded or owned enslaved persons – could not kill enslaved persons or put them in prison without first going through the courts. Enslaved persons had to be fed and clothed “properly,” and had the right to take enslavers to court for violating *Le Code Noir*. Although enslaved persons were not legally allowed to carry on business or engage in trade, contemporary documents suggest that in the Illinois Country there were circumstances in which enslaved persons could earn wages and conduct private business for profit. These earnings might allow an enslaved person to purchase his or her freedom. If freed, formerly enslaved persons enjoyed the same rights as other *habitants*, and eighteenth-century court records suggest that race was not a significant factor in the determination of justice. Finally, *Le Code Noir* stipulated that enslaved persons had to be baptized and that they could be married through the Catholic Church (Brown 2005, p. 50-54). This is not to say that enslaved persons under the French system were in happy circumstances, and despite the written law there is evidence of institutional racism in the French administration. For example, there existed a policy that forbade marriages between *habitants* and Native Americans, although it was widely ignored in practice. And if the *Code Noir* was largely concerned with placing restrictions on enslavers in *Nouvelle France*, evidence suggests that in reality it offered little protection in the courts for enslaved persons who complained of abuse. In the end its purpose was to reduce enslaved humans to a state of submission and wither any hopes of revolt (Brown 2005, p. 186-7; Dexter 2011, p27-33).

Of the roughly 600 people living in Kaskaskia and Fort de Chartres (including Nouvelle Chartres and Prairie du Rocher) in 1725, 195 of them were enslaved persons, mostly people of African descent but many Native Americans as well. In 1752 enslaved people of African descent made up 40% of the population in Kaskaskia, and in the *Pays de Illinois* in general, 41% of households had at least one enslaved person. The Jesuit missionaries were the first to bring enslaved Africans into the *Pays des Illinois*, around 1720 or shortly before. They ran the mission and later parish church in Kaskaskia and also

operated a plantation and a brewery. During the French colonial period they owned approximately eighty enslaved persons who would have been forced to support these operations. Shortly thereafter Philippe Renault brought approximately 25 enslaved Africans into the region to work at his agricultural tracts in St. Philippe and at his mining operation on the other side of the river. Although the Company of the Indies promised to supply him with 25 enslaved persons per year up to 500 total, census records from 1732 – almost a decade after his arrival – indicate that he owned 22. The two most prominent enslaver families in eighteenth century Prairie du Rocher were the Louvière family and the Barbeau family, each owning around twenty enslaved persons (Brown 2005, p. 10-12,53,69; Carter 1910, p. 11; Dexter 2011, p. 24-25).

Slavery persisted during the American period. In 1787 the United States Congress established the Northwest Territory, which included the Illinois Country, through an ordinance that included a prohibition of slavery there. The territorial government did not enforce this provision and a small number of enslaved persons and indentured servants continued to live in bondage, especially in what is now southern Illinois (Bridges 2015, p. 296). Upon its admission to the United States as a “free state” in 1818, the new state of Illinois ratified a constitution which provided in Article 6 that “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should thereafter be introduced in the State except for the punishment of crimes.” And yet slavery was already there and would persist in the state until as late as 1845 despite the popular notion that the states north of the Ohio River were “free states” while those in the south were “slave states.” The census of 1830 counted 747 enslaved persons in Illinois, and the census of 1840 counted 331. Enslavement was not the only form of oppression tolerated in the new state. The first General Assembly passed so-called “Black Laws” which sought through oppressive measures to discourage the immigration of free or enslaved Black people into the state (Bridges 2015, p. 296; Snively 1901).

A vivid reminder of this legacy of enslavement in the North is the Pierre Menard House. Pierre Menard was born in Montreal and arrived in Kaskaskia in 1792. He established himself as a trader, part of an elite class of small-time merchants who became wealthy and influential through the import-export trade between Illinois and New Orleans. He was bilingual, allowing him to achieve success in politics at a time when elected officials above the county level were overwhelmingly anglophones. Menard was elected Illinois' first lieutenant-governor in 1818. He was one of the largest enslavers in the state, and despite the official prohibitions against slavery the number of enslaved persons he owned actually grew from seven in 1807 to 18-22 by 1830. These enslaved persons worked as farm laborers, oarsmen, and domestic servants. In order to protect his interests, Menard consistently supported political measures designed to preserve slavery in his state, including advocating a pro-slavery state constitution. As late as 1843, a United States Senator-elect from Illinois who needed money to set himself up in Washington, D.C. wrote to Menard and offered to "place in your hands some valuable negroes with power to sell them" (Bridges 1996). Menard's wealth allowed him to construct a two-and-a-half story French Colonial, Louisiana-style raised cottage in Kaskaskia, featuring a wide veranda supported by stone pillars and with a balustrade wrapping around the front. It was completed in 1815 and the daily tasks for its maintenance and upkeep fell to enslaved persons. Archeological studies have strongly suggested, but not yet confirmed, the location of the enslaved persons' quarters and related structures on the property. His house survived the destruction of Kaskaskia because it was located outside of town and on higher ground, out of reach of the Mississippi River. Menard lived there until his death in 1844. The house stands as a well-preserved testament to the long existence of slavery in Illinois even as it was

positioned to join the Union during the Civil War. (Brown 2005, p. 212; Ekberg 1998, p. 109, 227, 247; [Stratton and Flesher 1999 \(illinoisarchaeology.com\)](#); University of Illinois n.d.(b)).

As late as 1845 the descendants of the individuals enslaved by the French *habitants* continued to be enslaved. In that year the Supreme Court of Illinois finally decreed that these individuals, born before or since the adoption of the Constitution of Illinois, could not be held in slavery. A few years later in 1848 Illinois ratified an amended State Constitution which formally abolished slavery. But the citizens that year also adopted Article XIV which required that the first session of the General Assembly under the new constitution “pass such laws as will effectually prohibit free persons of color from immigrating to and settling in this state; and to effectually prevent the owners of slaves from bringing them into this state, for the purpose of setting them free.” The result was passage of the Black Exclusion Law of 1853 which added to the state’s already-harsh corpus of black codes and deepened the oppression of Black people. The movements of free Black people in the state were substantially restricted; they were prohibited from testifying in court or bringing suit against a white person; from voting; from gathering in public in groups of three or more; and from owning firearms or weapons. Despite this political and social culture of anti-Black racism, Illinois could technically be counted among the “free states” when, during the Compromise of 1850, the United States Congress attempted to balance the number of “free” and “slave” territories with “free” and “slave” states. A decade later Illinois entered the American Civil War on the side of the Union with a set of black codes that were among the most repressive in the nation. It wasn’t until the very end of the war that they were repealed (Bridges 1996; Bridges 2015, p. 296-298; Snively 1901).

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Randolph County, Illinois is located within the American Bottom (southwestern Illinois). This area is the flood plain of the Mississippi River extending from Alton, Illinois to the Kaskaskia River confluence, an area of about 175 square miles. This area shares certain historical and cultural connections with the resources that are now part of Ste. Geneviève National Historical Park. Riparian vegetation was stripped for use as steamboat fuel in the 19th Century, which accelerated riverbank collapse, changes in the river channel, and flooding. Multiple flooding episodes over the centuries, including catastrophic events, have reshaped the Mississippi River channel and floodplain, obliterating many historic structures, and in some cases entire villages (see Figures 1 and 2, above).

The village of Prairie du Rocher is the closest population center to the majority of the properties analyzed in this study, and as of 2020 had a population of 502 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). As in the past this area today is primarily agricultural, growing corn, wheat, and soybeans, while retaining its French colonial character. Beginning in 1948 through the 1950s, the federal government constructed a levee system to protect farmland and the towns of Modoc and Prairie du Rocher. In 2016, the levee was deemed unacceptable due to changing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standards and scheduled for decertification. Levee repair options provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) range from \$39 million to \$59 million, plus maintenance costs of at least one million dollars per year (The Steering Committee of the Community Foundation of Prairie du Rocher 2020, p. 9).

Tourism from local events such as “Rendezvous” and other Fort de Chartres events provide 50,000 visitors per year, according to the 2020 Levee District Strategic Plan (Ibid. p. 13).

The existing conditions of the properties considered in this study are described below.

Pierre Menard House

The Pierre Menard House is currently managed by the state of Illinois as the Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site, a satellite of Fort Kaskaskia State Historical Site. A footpath from the fort leads to the house, built between ca. 1802-1815 by the successful merchant, politician, and enslaver Pierre Menard. It is a two-and-a-half story French Colonial, Louisiana-style raised cottage that features a wide veranda supported by stone pillars and with a balustrade wrapping around the front. It was built on the outskirts of the original town of Kaskaskia, built into gently sloping land at the bottom of a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Its location allowed it to survive the flooding that destroyed the rest of the town. The official state summary of the property and on-site signage currently lack any mention of the fact that Menard owned enslaved persons, or of the suspected location (as-yet unconfirmed subsurface archeological deposits) of the enslaved persons’ quarters. The house is open for public tours by request and on a case-by-case basis, usually for large groups (University of Illinois n.d.(b); Illinois DNR n.d.(b)). The site was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1970.

Fort de Chartres

The fourth and final iteration of Fort de Chartres is currently managed by the state of Illinois as the Fort de Chartres State Historic Site. The other three iterations of the fort survive as subsurface archeological resources located outside the boundaries of the state historic site, and their condition is discussed below in the National Significance analysis under “NHL Criterion 6.” The state historic site is located approximately four miles west of Prairie du Rocher, and managed by the state of Illinois. It is the

location of the fourth and final iteration of a series of forts named *de Chartres* that served as the military and political center of the *Pays des Illinois*. (Note: before 2010 it was believed that there had been three iterations of the fort, and some sources including the state website still reflect this. For details, see the Criterion 6 narrative, below). Unlike its three wooden predecessors, the fourth fort was constructed of stone. Its southern walls were undermined by the Mississippi River and collapsed in 1772, at which time it was abandoned and the rest of it fell into ruins. The state of Illinois acquired the site in 1915, at which point only the powder magazine and some other structural traces remained above ground. Reconstruction began soon after. The powder house was stabilized, and in the 1920s the massive gatehouse was reconstructed. The guard house, chapel, and store house were reconstructed in the 1920s and 1930s, and in 1989 portions of the fort's walls were reconstructed on original wall foundations. The foundations of other structures are exposed and interpreted. The gatehouse has been remodeled several times since its reconstruction (Lissandrello 1975; Illinois DNR n.d.(c)). The site was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Historic Landmark boundary is different from that of the state historic sites, and was created to encompass the archeological remains of the predecessor forts, Nouvelle Chartres, and the Michigamea village.

Buildings and structures in Prairie du Rocher

The owners and current conditions of the Mellière Home and Bienvenue Home are unconfirmed, although the latter is owned by a private individual.

The Creole House is owned, preserved, and interpreted by a charity organization, the Randolph County Historical Society. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 3, 1973 (Reference #73000717) for its nationally significant architecture.

St. Joseph's Church remains in use as an active Catholic church, part of the Diocese of Belleville. Ownership of St. Joseph cemetery is unconfirmed, but it has been in continuous use since the mid-eighteenth century.

The Lee-Brickey Mansion, located in Prairie du Rocher, burned down in 1970 and all that currently remains is a one-story, heavily-deteriorated outbuilding with a gable roof and collapsing chimney. Its current owner is unknown.

Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail

The segments within the study area of this King's Road from Kaskaskia to Cahokia may survive as part of a 60-mile-long interpretive trail, but further study is needed to understand the relationship between the modern trail and the historic one. Part of the historic trail ran through the American Bottom which, as discussed above vis-à-vis the inundation of historic villages, is prone to destructive flooding. Currently the non-profit Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail Coalition works to "promote, preserve, protect and develop the historic, architectural, cultural and natural heritage of the Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail," although their literature acknowledges that the designated scenic route through the American Bottom is "promoted for touring" and merely "represents" the original route (Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail Coalition, n.d.).

Archeological properties.

Many of the resources analyzed in this study exist today as archeological sites, contributing to either the French Colonial Historic District or the Fort de Chartres National Historic Landmark, or to both. These include Kaskaskia village (including the Jesuit Windmill site); Nouvelle Chartres village (including the sites of the Church of Ste. Anne and Ste. Anne cemetery); Ste. Philippe village; parts of the original Prairie du Rocher village; the Michigamea villages (“Kolmer site” and “Waterman site”); the post-1720 Kaskaskia Indian village (“Guebert site”); and the Fort de Chartres predecessor fort sites. The existing conditions of these sites, including past research, integrity, and data potential, are discussed below in the National Significance analysis under “NHL Criterion 6.”

STUDY CRITERIA AND ANALYSIS

As discussed in the introduction, there are criteria set forth in law and policy that the National Park Service applies in determining whether to recommend an area as a potential new unit of the national park system through a special resource study. A reconnaissance survey undertakes only a preliminary analysis of the criteria for inclusion. This report will summarize the potential or likelihood that the resources would meet the established criteria of national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management. (See appendix B for the full text of the Criteria for Inclusion from NPS *Management Policies 2006*.)

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

An area is considered nationally significant if it is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource, possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage, has superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study, and retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

A cultural resource is considered nationally significant if it qualifies for designation as a National Historic Landmark. National Historic Landmarks are cultural properties designated by the Secretary of the Interior as possessing national significance under at least one of six criteria and are acknowledged as among the nation's most important historic places. They must also retain a high degree of historic integrity, which is composed of key characteristics of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Should a special resource study be authorized, the properties under consideration may be found to be significant under Criteria 1, 4, 5, and 6.

NHL Criterion 1 recognizes properties "that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained."

NHL Criterion 4 recognizes properties "that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction."

NHL Criterion 5 covers groups of resources known as historic districts, whose individual resources could not stand alone as National Historic Landmarks but that, collectively, demonstrate national significance. It recognizes properties "that are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture."

NHL Criterion 6 was created to evaluate archeological properties and recognizes those "that have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those

which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.”

Preliminary Analysis

NHL Criterion 1.

This analysis draws on the information provided in the historic context to describe the patterns of history represented collectively by the resources in the study area. Their significance rests primarily on their representation of broad historical narratives of French colonization of the Mississippi River valley and of various facets of cultural continuity and change over time. The resources in the study area represent the initial establishment and development of French colonial systems in the Illinois Country, but also tell other important and underrepresented narratives. The site of Kaskaskia village within the French Colonial Historic District, for example, is laden with significance in this regard. Traditionally histories are written from the European perspective, but the site of Kaskaskia conveys Native American history in which the French mission priests and traders were external actors in a story of people reacting to a rapidly changing and increasingly hostile world.

Another historical pattern represented by the resources in the study area is that of cultures in contact, who borrowed and exchanged ideas and material goods, and who changed each other just as they were changed. Kaskaskia for a time was an integrated, Franco-Illinois settlement. Although the population of French *habitants* grew as voyageurs married and raised families with Kaskaskia women, for many years the village was overwhelmingly Illinoian (mostly Kaskaskia but with people from other Illinois tribes). The village interacted with the nearby Michigamea village which predated it. The French and Kaskaskia were both heavily invested in trade and practiced different forms of agriculture. Circulation features within the study area such as the Mississippi River, the Kaskaskia River, and the ancient Cahokia-Kaskaskia Trail would have facilitated movement of people, trade goods, and ideas.

The next significant pattern of history presented by the resources in the study area is European colonization of Native American lands. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the impacts of European diseases and the Haudenosaunee conquest left chaos. Illinois power was broken and their population declined steadily. Meanwhile French power was ascendent and French colonial systems and culture began to assert themselves. Fort de Chartres became the region’s center of military and administrative control, the primary symbol of French power in the Illinois Country. Resources associated with the French villages that flourished in the study area represent defining aspects of French colonial life including the political and social roles of the Catholic Church; economic practices such as agriculture and fur trading; systems of slavery; and architectural tastes as represented by, for example, the Mellière Home. These villages, collectively, were important beyond the Middle Mississippi River region. The Illinois Country was a crucial part of *Nouvelle France* and even vital for its survival. When New Orleans and other settlements in lower Louisiana struggled to grow staple crops in the southern climate, the villages in the study area supported them.

Another significant pattern of history presented by the resources in the study area is continuity of French colonial culture in the midst of dramatic political and social changes. After the French and Indian War, a large-scale internal migration was precipitated by the arrival of the British garrison at Fort de Chartres in 1765. St. Joseph’s Catholic Church and St. Joseph’s Catholic Cemetery in Prairie du Rocher represent the struggle for continuity amid this upheaval. Residents of Nouvelle Chartres who moved to

Prairie du Rocher brought with them the sacred vessels and parish administrative records from Ste. Anne's Church. The remains of two of Ste. Anne's beloved priests were disinterred and reburied at St. Joseph's Cemetery. A former satellite chapel, St. Joseph's Church now became the locus of continuity for the Ste. Anne's community of worship. An important difference, however, is that the French colonial parish system had ceased to function and St. Joseph's did not perform the same formalized political/administrative roles as its predecessor.

The theme of cultural continuity and change is further represented by the buildings within the study area. Several demonstrate the continued use of French colonial architectural elements during the American period, for example the Mellière Home (dating to the very end of the French colonial period), Bienvenue House, and Pierre Menard House. Others exemplify change as the once predominantly French society became increasingly Anglo-American. The Creole House, originally constructed in the French colonial poteaux-sur-sole style, was later doubled in size but the addition was built in the English wood frame style. The Lee-Brickey Mansion was built in 1867 by the Frenchman Abraham Lee, but not in the French style, and was later acquired by a non-Frenchman, Franklin Brickey. The two were business partners and civic leaders. Finally, the Pierre Menard House was owned by a bilingual merchant who chose French-style architecture and yet was very much at home in his increasingly anglophone world, achieving financial success and rising to statewide political prominence.

A significant historical pattern presented by the resources in the study area relates to systems of slavery. The resources challenge typical narratives that slavery in America was defined by white Europeans enslaving Black people, and that the American Civil War divided free states from slave states which was cleanly synonymous with Northern states and Southern states. Instead, resources in the study area powerfully represent slavery in a "Northern free state," enslaved Native Americans alongside enslaved Black persons, and systems of enslavement among the Illinois Confederacy. These are underrepresented narratives.

Two of the properties described above are already National Historic Landmarks: Fort de Chartres (1960) for its historical associations and the Pierre Menard House (1970) for its exceptional architecture. These and the other properties in the study area are *collectively* (see Criterion 5 analysis, below), preliminarily recommended as nationally significant under Criterion 1 as excellent representatives of the cultural and historical complexities that informed the French colonial culture and the enduring French character of the Middle Mississippi River region.

NHL Criterion 4.

The standing homes analyzed in this study are examples of poteaux-sur-sole, a vernacular style of French colonial architecture and a rare property type in the United States. Relevant resources in the study area are the Mellière Home, Creole House, and Bienvenue House in Prairie du Rocher, and the Pierre Menard House in Elis Grove. As noted above, the Pierre Menard House was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970 for its exceptional architecture. The construction dates of these homes span a century from the very end of the French colonial period (Mellière Home, 1760s) to the eve of the American Civil War (Bienvenue House, 1860). The poteaux-sur-sole style is defined by closely set, unbraced vertical timbers or posts (*poteaux*) placed on a horizontal sill (*sur sole*), and was distinct to the colonies of *Nouvelle France*. English and Dutch settlers in the eastern United States preferred heavy frame construction, and this style moved west with the American frontier in the 1800s. French inhabitants along the Mississippi River tended to resist adopting frame construction even after they

were fully incorporated into the United States. Clusters of surviving poteaux-sur-sole structures in the United States are rare and found in Ste. Geneviève (Missouri), areas of Louisiana, and the present study area. Therefore the homes described in this section are preliminarily recommended as nationally significant under Criterion 4 as rare examples of a unique architectural style (Kniffen and Glassie 1966, p. 47-48; NPS 2016, p. 12).

NHL Criterion 5.

With the exception, perhaps, of the two existing National Historic Landmarks in the study area, the properties analyzed in this study may not sufficiently, *individually* convey the nationally significant historic narratives discussed in the Criterion 1 analysis, above. But *collectively* they may.

The Pierre Menard House was designated as a National Historic Landmark for its architectural significance, not for its association with historic events. However, the present study suggests that it may individually represent historical narratives related to European systems of slavery: further study is warranted. Fort de Chartres was designated as a National Historic Landmark for associations with historical events, specifically its significance as “the center of French civil and military government of the Illinois Country” and “one of France's most impressive fortifications in North America.” It may individually represent historical narratives related to the establishment of French military and administrative authority in the *Pays des Illinois*: further study is warranted.

Collectively, the resources in the study area reinforce each other and present the powerful, (preliminarily) nationally significant narratives described above such as the Native American context for the rapidly changing region that the first French colonists entered; cultures in contact; colonization of Native American lands; development of French colonial systems and culture; cultural continuity and change over time; and systems of slavery. Kaskaskia village, as noted above, is laden with significance for some of these narratives, but it exists today as a subsurface archeological site and may not be able to individually convey this significance. The village sites, both French and Illinois Indian, may collectively tell the story of one culture in decline and the other on the ascent, and together with the fort may speak to the development of French colonial economic, social, administrative, and military systems. The villages enhance the narrative told by the fort, and vice versa. The Kaskaskia village sites also add another dimension to the narrative represented by the Pierre Menard House about systems of slavery, by presenting a narrative of enslavement in the Illinois Confederacy. Finally, as noted above, the extant buildings and structures in the study area demonstrate, collectively, cultural and architectural continuity and change in a way that none of them do individually.

The properties in the study area are preliminarily recommended as nationally significant under Criterion 5, as collectively representative of the narratives discussed in the analysis for Criterion 1, above. Additionally, further study is recommended to determine whether two of the properties – Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House – do in fact individually convey any of these narratives.

NHL Criterion 6.

A comprehensive review of existing archeological literature is beyond the scope of the reconnaissance survey. However, the literature surveyed suggests that within the study area are archeological resources with data potential that may improve our knowledge of several important aspects of French colonial life, and that may address several of the themes from the National Historic Landmarks thematic framework

summarized at the end of this National Significance section. Archeological studies in the state of Illinois have tended to focus on the region in which the study area lies, the American Bottom, however they have disproportionately favored studies of Mississippian period culture, especially around the Cahokia phenomenon, and in response to the destructive potential of urban sprawl in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area (Shackelford 2007, p. 194). Still, Robert Morrissey notes that “the last thirty years has witnessed pioneering material culture studies on the French colonies” including within the study area, and much work remains to be done (Morrissey 2017, p. 20).

Archeological sites at Ste. Geneviève have revealed important information about the earliest settlement of the town in the 1750s, and its economic and social development in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (NPS 2016). The current study area can add to this knowledge of French colonial settlements in important ways, not least because it includes settlements that predate Ste. Geneviève. Excavations and remote sensing studies at the Ghost Horse site, for example, located in what was Nouvelle Chartres, have revealed intact deposits from perhaps as early as 1740 (Lynn 2006; McCullough et al. 2015). Two other sites considered in this study, the Jesuit windmill site at Kaskaskia and the Church of Ste. Anne at Nouvelle Chartres, date to the first quarter of the 18th century but the exact locations of their archeological remains are unknown (Brown 1973). These and other sites represent a period in early French settlement when intensive interactions between *habitants* and Native Americans shaped the culture of the developing French colony. In his survey of Illinois French colonial scholarship, historian Robert Morrissey noted important recent work on this period of “encounter and accommodation,” including a pioneering study by Sophie White that used material culture, especially clothing, to explore race and identity in *La Louisiane*, suggesting interesting differences between the *Pays des Illinois* and New Orleans in the mutability of identity and the rigidity of racial categories (Morrissey 2017; White 2012). Robert Mazrim, archeologist and director of the French Colonial Heritage Project, has noted that fewer than ten French colonial domestic sites have been excavated in Illinois, suggesting untapped information potential in the study area which could enhance and expand these lines of inquiry or inspire new ones (Lynn 2006).

This includes the potential to improve our knowledge of the lives of enslaved persons during this period. Morrissey has noted that “black slaves remain the least understood part of the social fabric in colonial Illinois” (Morrissey 2017, p. 20). Archeological resources at the Pierre Menard House could help change this. It is well documented that Menard held enslaved Africans at his home, but as is typical with people living on the margins of society, little contemporary documentation exists about their lives. In 1998, test excavations at the Menard House site found an intact midden interpreted as demolition debris associated with the original slaves’ quarters, and suggest that the subsurface remains of the quarters themselves may remain intact in the vicinity. Further archeological studies there could reveal important information about their living quarters, diet, and material culture, about which almost nothing is currently known (Stratton and Flesher 1999).

Finally, the study area includes the sites of the four iterations of Fort de Chartres which, as the military and political center of the *Pays des Illinois*, have the potential to reveal important information about life at the forts but also about colonial administration. Before 2010 it was believed that there had been only three iterations of the fort, but research by Margaret Brown has demonstrated otherwise (McCullough et al. 2015). A remote sensing study at the third, wooden fort site (the Laurens Site) has revealed intact subsurface features, including a possible large cellar, and has contributed new information about the fort’s footprint and interior structure (McCullough et al. 2015). The fourth, stone iteration of the fort

was first systematically excavated in the 1970s and 1980s, in response to public pressure to better understand its structure and improve the 1930s-era reconstruction of the fort that stands today. These studies, augmented by remote sensing, focused primarily on the exterior wall circuit at the northeast quarter of the fort and revealed its general shape; some previously unknown structural features, outbuildings, and internal features such as a mortar slaking pit; and the original depth of its foundations. The structure of the fort, along with an analysis of recovered artifacts, has been compared with other forts in New France in order to draw conclusions about the economy of the *Pays des Illinois* (Keene 1991). Unexcavated archeological deposits at the site may have the potential to answer new questions about life at the fort and about the administration of the colony.

The above analysis indicates that archeological resources throughout the study have the potential, at least, to contribute information that augments and enriches understanding of the study area's historical associations and significance. It is unclear at this time, however, whether the archeological resources throughout the study area can, in their own right, contribute data that answers nationally significant research questions, which is the standard for significance under Criterion 6. Further study, including the development of specific research questions and a comparison of archeological research in the study area with relevant research at nationally significant sites, is warranted to fully understand these resources and their potential for significance under Criterion 6.

Integrity.

The most pressing question for many of the resources in the study area cannot be answered definitively given the limited scope of a reconnaissance survey: while the resources may be nationally significant, do they retain sufficient integrity to convey that historical significance to a modern visitor? Further, in-depth study is needed to fully evaluate the integrity of key resources and answer this question. However, a preliminary analysis suggests that they do, either as standing structures or as information potential from subsurface archeological deposits.

The Pierre Menard House is a National Historic Landmark managed by the State of Illinois as a state historic site, and appears to retain sufficient integrity to convey its architectural significance as well as its proposed significance under Criteria 1 and 5.

Fort de Chartres is also a National Historic Landmark although, with the exception of its restored powder storage house, it is a reconstruction. Further analysis is warranted to understand the implications of this with respect to conveying historical significance.

The other extant buildings in the study area preliminarily appear to retain sufficient integrity to convey their historical significance under Criteria 1 and 5 and, for some, Criterion 4. St. Joseph's Church remains in use as a Catholic church, consistent with its historic usage, and its cemetery has been in continuous use since the mid-eighteenth century. The Mellière Home, Creole House, and Bienvenue House appear to retain sufficient integrity to convey their poteaux-sur-sole architectural style, although more study is needed for a definitive determination. They retain character-defining features such as vertical boards set on a wooden sill, and broad, low porches. These structures include alterations that may be benign or may be architecturally significant in their own right. For example, the weatherboarding that overlays some of the buildings' vertical post construction is a common alteration and does not necessarily compromise integrity. For comparison, at Ste. Geneviève the original vertical log walls of the Michel Placet House are covered by modern vinyl siding, yet it contributes to the significance of the historic

district (NPS 2016, p. 75). Alterations that incorporate identifiable Anglo-American elements from the eastern states (roof style, chimney style, heavy frame or balloon frame construction) such as can be seen on the Creole House may be architecturally significant.

The Lee-Brickey Mansion burned down in the 1970s and the site is currently an open field with a single extant associated structure: a one-story, heavily-deteriorated outbuilding with a gable roof and collapsing chimney. Further analysis is needed to determine whether it retains sufficient integrity to convey historical significance.

As discussed above under “Existing Conditions,” the portion of the Kaskaskia-Cahokia trail running through the American Bottom may not remain but the pathway may be preserved in the routes of modern roads, and other segments of the original trail may be preserved in the current heritage trail.

The archeological sites within the study area have conveyed important historical information and appear to possess further information potential. Although relatively little archeological research has been conducted on French colonial sites across Illinois, studies in the American Bottom at sites such as the Ghost Horse site, Laurens site, and Menard House slaves’ quarters have demonstrated that intact archeological deposits from the French colonial period remain in the study area.

In all cases, further in-depth study is warranted to determine whether these properties retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic character.

Periods of Significance and National Significance Themes.

The proposed period of significance for the resources in the study area is 1703-1881. This period begins with the founding of Kaskaskia Village at the confluence of the Mississippi and Kaskaskia Rivers. It ends after the decade during which most immigration from France into the French communities of Illinois ceased and they became quickly integrated into the American economic and legal systems, and with the catastrophic flooding of the Mississippi River in 1881 which inundated the lower reach of the Kaskaskia River and destroyed Kaskaskia Village.

Within this period of significance, it might be useful in some circumstances to think of two phases. Although there is a historical continuity between them, they are mostly defined by resource type: resources in the French colonial phase (1703-1763) which consist mostly of archeological resources as well as the fort and the trail; and resources in the Franco-American cultural continuity phase (1764-1880) that consist of standing buildings or ruins and the cemetery.

Several themes from the National Historic Landmarks thematic framework (see NPS n.d.(a)) apply to the resources in this study area. Fort de Chartres and the four villages, and Kaskaskia Village in particular, are relevant for the **Peopling Places** theme under its subthemes, migration from outside and within; and encounters, conflicts, and colonization. Because of the important and unique role of the Parish political and religious system in French colonial life, and for the cultural continuity they represent especially in the face of the British occupation of Fort de Chartres and the abandonment of Nouvelle Chartres, St. Joseph’s Church and St. Joseph’s cemetery in Prairie du Rocher and the site of the Church of Ste. Anne at Nouvelle Chartres are relevant for the **Creating Social Institutions and Movements** theme under its subtheme, religious institutions. The study area in general and the surviving poteaux-sur-sole buildings in particular are relevant for the **Expressing Cultural Values** theme under its subthemes, popular and traditional culture; and architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. Fort de Chartres, as the

center of French colonial authority and power in the Illinois Country, is relevant for the **Shaping the Political Landscape** theme under its subthemes governmental institutions; and military institutions and activities. As the home of a prominent businessman and elected government official who owned enslaved persons in a state that would continue to allow slavery up to the eve of its entry into the Civil War as a “free state” fighting for the Union, the Pierre Menard House is relevant to the **Developing the American Economy** theme under its subthemes workers and work culture, including slavery; governmental policies and practices.

Additional Properties to Consider for Future Study

There are additional resources in the study area that were noted during this reconnaissance survey but were outside of its scope, that could contribute to and strengthen the collective significance of the resources in the study area. It is recommended that these resources, briefly described below, be considered for inclusion within the scope of any study authorized by Congress in the future.

Fort Kaskaskia State Historic Site. Fort Kaskaskia was constructed by the French around 1759 to defend the town of Kaskaskia during the French and Indian War. Its modern remnants include long earthworks forming a rough square with bastions at the corners. The historic site also includes Garrison Hill Cemetery and a Mississippi River overlook. Garrison Hill Cemetery, which is not under consideration in this study, was established in 1891 by the General Assembly for the remains of early settlers whose graves were threatened by the flooding of Kaskaskia. Fort Kaskaskia State Historic Site is currently managed by the state of Illinois. (Illinois DNR n.d.(a)).

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Located in modern Kaskaskia, this is the fifth iteration of the historic Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. The first church was founded in 1675 under the Archdiocese of Quebec, became a sanctioned parish in 1718, and has remained continuously active to the present day. The current building was constructed in 1838 at the site of the original Kaskaskia village. In 1894 another change in river course began and the structure was moved to its current location (Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail Coalition n.d.).

National Significance Conclusion

Collectively, the properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, above, have the potential to be found nationally significant as outstanding representations of broad national patterns of United States history, and they represent complex and overlapping historical narratives that enhance understanding and appreciation of these patterns. Several of these properties also represent examples of a rare and nationally significant architectural style. Still others are archeological resources that may yield data affecting theories, concepts, and ideas of importance by contributing to understanding the evolution of French colonial culture in the Middle Mississippi River region. Further in-depth study is warranted to determine whether these properties retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic character. In particular, it is uncertain whether the fact that Fort de Chartres is almost entirely a reconstruction would compromise its ability to convey its historical significance.

It is important to note that, as individual resources, few of these properties are likely to be found nationally significant under Criterion 1. For this reason the above analysis has focused on the power of the resources *collectively* to represent compelling narratives, a power that rests primarily on the properties dating to the French colonial phase (1703-1763) of the period of significance. These consist of

the scattered archeological resources throughout the study area (especially the site of French Kaskaskia) and Fort de Chartres. The historical significance of St. Joseph's Church, for example, lies mostly in its representation of the struggle for continuity amidst the upheaval of the British period. But while it inherited the sacred vessels, parish records, and community of worship from Ste. Anne's parish (now an archeological resource), it did not inherit the formal roles of a French colonial parish and only indirectly represents that historical theme as analyzed above. Therefore if the resources representing the French colonial phase were removed from consideration in this study, then the collective significance of the entire study area is unlikely to meet the national significance criterion. As noted later in this survey report, there are significant concerns about the feasibility of including the study area's scattered archeological resources in a potential NPS unit, and about the need for direct NPS management of Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House. Without these properties, it is unlikely that a future study would find the remaining properties in the study area, individually or collectively, to be nationally significant.

These findings are preliminary, and further study is warranted.

SUITABILITY

To qualify as a potential addition to the national park system, an area that is nationally significant must also meet the criterion for suitability. *NPS Management Policies 2006* state that:

An area is considered suitable for addition to the National Park System if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the National Park System, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the National Park System or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas (*NPS Management Policies 2006*, section 1.3.2).

Comparable Sites

Ste. Geneviève National Historical Park, Missouri. The park protects and interprets an outstanding collection of rare French vernacular vertical log houses, part of the first permanent European settlement in Missouri. The town of Ste. Geneviève was founded around 1750 by *habitants* largely from the *Pays des Illinois*, including from Prairie du Rocher. The population was boosted by French refugees who migrated there after the British took possession of lands east of the Mississippi River following the Seven Years War. Ste. Geneviève was moved to higher ground approximately three miles to the northwest of its original location after a flood destroyed much of the town in 1785. The park's resources are nationally significant under Criterion 4, "possessing a large and rare collection of French vernacular vertical log houses," and under Criterion 1 "with architectural resources complemented and enriched by contemporaneous examples of British American and German American architecture that contribute to

the compelling historical associations with French exploration and settlement of the interior of the United States in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and with the American territory that developed following the Louisiana Purchase.” (NPS 2016). While historical architecture is central to the significance of the park, it also protects and interprets archeological deposits that have revealed important information about the earliest settlement of the town and its economic and social development in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These properties collectively contribute knowledge to the NPS thematic framework under (I) Peopling Places, (III) Expressing Cultural Values, and (V) Developing the American Economy (NPS n.d.(b); NPS 2016).

Cahokia, Illinois. In 1699 priests of the Seminary of Foreign Missions founded the Mission of the Holy Family at an Illinois Indian village on the east side of the Mississippi River, at the mouth of Cahokia Creek. This mission became the kernel of a later European settlement called Cahokia, named after one of the tribes of the original village. The modern village of Cahokia claims, not without controversy, to be the oldest continuously-occupied European village in the erstwhile Illinois Country. The French colonial village “played a significant but secondary role in the history of the Illinois Country,” being less populous, less centrally located (*vis-à-vis* the administrative center at Fort de Chartres), and consequently less influential than the village of Kaskaskia (Ekberg 1998, p. 55). The Church of the Holy Family which today stands in the village is the descendent of the original mission building. Built in 1799, this *poteaux-sur-sole* log church was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970. The village also features a reconstruction of the *poteaux-sur-sole* Cahokia Courthouse, originally constructed in 1740 as a residence. As the oldest surviving courthouse in the state, the structure was dismantled and moved several times for exhibition purposes before eventually being returned to its original location, resulting in losses to the structure’s original fabric. Finally, the Nicholas Jarrot Mansion stands as a good example of Federal-style architecture on the frontier. This multi-story brick structure, originally constructed around 1810, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2001. The Church of the Holy Family is an active Catholic Church in private ownership, but is open for public tours. The Cahokia Courthouse and the Jarrot Mansion are both state historic sites managed by the Illinois Historic Preservation Division. The former is open to the public and the latter is currently closed for restoration (Ekberg 1998, p. 54-61; NPS 2016, p. 27; Illinois DNR n.d.(d)). Since the 1980s at least nine sites within the bounds of the colonial village have been investigated for archaeological resources. Testing in 2006-2007 uncovered well-preserve deposits, including an impressive *poteaux en terre* structure and the largest sample of colonial-era domestic materials found at the time (Mazrim 2011, p. 4-7).

Fort Massac State Park, Illinois. This French fort, constructed of earthworks topped with wooden enclosures, was completed in 1757 on the banks of the Ohio River. Its sole function was military: it served as a remote frontier outpost until its abandonment and ruin at the end of the French and Indian War. George Washington ordered the fort rebuilt in 1794, but it was again destroyed in the early 1800s. In 1908 the site became the state of Illinois’ first state park, and it was extensively excavated over several field seasons from 1939 until the outbreak of World War II. The structures standing at the site today are reconstructions. The Fort Massac Site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 at the national level of significance, and is currently managed as a state park by the Illinois Historic Preservation Division (NPS 2016, p.28; Walthall 1991, p. 82-85; Illinois DNR n.d.(e)).

Fort Kaskaskia State Historic Site, Illinois. The remains of this earthen redoubt near the largest population center of the *Pays des Illinois* lends itself naturally as a comparative property. Although it was not among the properties analyzed in this study, it has been recommended in this report for

inclusion in future study of Prairie du Rocher and its associated resources (see Additional Properties to Consider for Future Study, above), should a special resource study be authorized, because of its location and connections with other resources in the study area, and its potential to enhance their interpretive and educational value.

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, Louisiana. The six non-contiguous units comprising this national park unit preserve examples of natural and historic resources of the Mississippi Delta and interpret the development of cultural diversity in the region. Spread across southern Louisiana, the sites include a wetlands preserve; an 1812 battlefield and cemetery; and four cultural centers in different towns and cities in the region, including a visitor center in the Vieux Carre (“old square”) of the French Quarter in New Orleans. The cultural centers focus on interpreting the development of the unique history and cultures of New Orleans and southern Louisiana (especially Cajun culture) rather than on the preservation of a collection of architectural resources. The Vieux Carre is a National Historic Landmark district but actual NPS ownership of buildings there is limited (NPS n.d.(c); NPS 2016, p. 27).

Cane River Creole National Historical Park, Louisiana. This national park unit preserves and protects resources in the Natchitoches area of northern Louisiana that are associated with two mid- to late-18th century plantations, and interprets the development of the region’s distinctive Creole culture which emerged from a confluence of Native American, French, Spanish, and African cultures. Part of the park’s mission is to provide technical assistance to a broad range of public and private landowners and preservation organizations in the surrounding Cane River National Heritage Area, a largely rural, agricultural landscape featuring historic plantations, distinctive Creole architecture, and a multicultural legacy. The two plantations preserved within the bounds of the park, Oakland Plantation and Magnolia Plantation, were cotton plantations whose periods of significance span roughly from the first half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th. Both are National Historic Landmarks. At Magnolia Plantation, the slave quarters were in better condition than the main house and are the primary reason for the property’s national significance. These properties present opportunities for interpretation and education about plantation life during that period, including the lives of the enslaved persons who worked there (NPS 1993; NPS 2016, p.27).

New Philadelphia Town Site, Illinois. This was the site of a settlement founded by and for free African Americans prior to the Civil War, in order to afford them the freedom and agency to direct their own economic, religious, and political development. Many such communities formerly dotted the landscape of the “free states” of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, near their borders with the “slave states” of Kentucky and Missouri. However, New Philadelphia was not racially exclusive: in the 19th century it became a rare example of a thriving, integrated society at a time when the national conversation about race tended to focus on the need for separate societies. One prominent solution for the “race problem” at the time was to send Black Americans to Africa to establish colonies there. New Philadelphia demonstrated a counter-narrative, that Black and White people could live and work side by side. Today none of the town’s original structures or features survive as surface manifestations. The site was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2009 under Criterion 6 for its high potential to yield archeological information of major scientific importance to our understanding of free, multiracial, rural communities. It provides researchers an opportunity to explore the complexities of race and racism in the 19th century, and continues to offer archeological evidence of how race is reflected in material culture as well as a historical context for contemporary social and political issues. New Philadelphia was the subject of an NPS special resource study which found that it contributed knowledge to the NPS thematic framework

under the theme (I) Peopling Places, subthemes Migration from Outside and Within, and Community and Neighborhood (NPS 2020). Two nonprofit organizations – the New Philadelphia Association and the Archaeological Conservancy – own more than half of the property within the National Historic Landmark boundary. The site features an interpretive kiosk, an augmented reality station (smart devices can connect via QR codes), and the Burdick House, a small, renovated home dating perhaps to 1941 (NPS 2020, p. 28; New Philadelphia Association n.d.).

1908 Springfield Race Riot, Illinois. A site near Madison Street and the 10th Street Rail Corridor in Springfield, Illinois, has undergone preliminary assessment for potential inclusion in the national park system. The site consists of the subsurface structural remains of five homes that were burned during the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, which were uncovered by archeologists as part of investigations ahead of a federal undertaking. Subsequent evaluation through a reconnaissance survey determined that the site was eligible under criterion A for association with the riot, one of the worst race riots in United States history and a catalyst for the foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It was also determined eligible under criterion D partly because of the excellent integrity of archeological deposits that hold the potential to yield a significant alternative source of information about a community that was often portrayed unfavorably by contemporary sources. The reconnaissance survey found it likely that these resources would be found nationally significant if further evaluated, and therefore recommended the site for a special resource study (NPS 2019, p. 1-2, 9, 18-20), which was subsequently authorized in late 2020.

Preliminary Comparative Analysis

Fort de Chartres can be compared to Fort Kaskaskia and Fort Massac, both of which were French forts in the *Pays des Illinois* that have in more recent times been the subjects of archeological investigation. Fort Massac has undergone extensive archeological excavation and, like Fort de Chartres, has been partially reconstructed. Fort Kaskaskia survives as an archeological site within the current study area. Currently all three forts are similarly preserved and interpreted as historical sites by the Illinois Historic Preservation Department. But the importance of Fort de Chartres as the administrative and military center of the *Pays des Illinois* sets it apart from Fort Massac, a frontier military outpost, and from Fort Kaskaskia, a never-completed earthen redoubt. There is no comparable property better suited to represent the political and military life at the heart of the French colony (reference NHL Theme (IV) Shaping the Political Landscape).

Although Fort Kaskaskia is of secondary importance to Fort de Chartres and does not represent comparable historical themes, the two properties are not mutually exclusive within the study area. Fort Kaskaskia is closely associated with French Kaskaskia village and events there related to the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. For this reason, as recommend above, it is worthy of consideration for inclusion in a future study, should one be authorized.

Other comparable properties speak, ultimately, to very different aspects of *Nouvelle France* than those in the study area. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve and Cane River Creole National Historical Park preserve and interpret resources and historical values related to French colonialism in the United States. However, despite potential overlap in the periods of significance and in the representative themes from the National Historic Landmarks thematic framework, these parks, crucially, interpret the cultural milieu of southern *La Louisiane* and the later state of Louisiana. The unique

histories and cultures of northern Louisiana's Creoles, southern Louisiana's Cajuns, and the city of New Orleans itself are quite distinct from the culture that emerged in the *Pays des Illinois*. When filtered through these different cultural lenses, the historical narratives represented by similar property types – structures representing religious practices, economic practices, enslavement, etc. – could potentially tell very different stories. For this reason, the resources in the study area are not already adequately represented for public enjoyment by the resources related to French colonial activities and cultural development in Louisiana.

The New Philadelphia Town Site and 1908 Springfield Race Riot site are included in this analysis not for purposes of direct comparisons of adequate representation of historical themes, but rather as case studies for the ability of subsurface resources to serve as the primary contributing resources towards the national significance of a historic-era (post-contact) property. These properties lack extant surface structures or features dating to their period of significance. In this sense they are similar to the sites of Nouvelle Chartres, Ste. Philippe, French Kaskaskia (the Pierre Menard House excepted), and Fort de Chartres which is mostly a reconstruction. Yet their stories are so compelling that they were recommended – or preliminarily recommended, pending further study – as worthy of inclusion in the national park system. The New Philadelphia Town Site was designated a National Historic Landmark for archeological significance alone and during a special resource study received a positive finding for national significance. The 1908 Springfield Race Riot Reconnaissance Survey likewise resulted in a preliminary finding of national significance pending further evaluation, solely for the subsurface structural remains of five homes that could serve to represent one of the worst race riots in the history of the United States. These examples suggest that the archeological deposits and compelling historical narratives associated with the villages of Nouvelle Chartres, Ste. Philippe, French Kaskaskia, and Fort de Chartres have the potential to represent the potentially nationally significant themes of those sites; and that these sites could appropriately be recommended for further study even though there are few or no surviving surface structures or features dating to their period of significance.

Like the current Prairie du Rocher study area, the village of Cahokia and Ste. Geneviève National Historical Park include numerous resources from the French colonial period and early American period of the Middle Mississippi River region. As an occupation site, Cahokia rivals Kaskaskia in age and shares a similar history in that it was initially an Illinois Indian village in which a French mission was founded, later to become the kernel of a permanent French settlement. Cahokia, like the village sites in the Prairie du Rocher study area, includes intact archeological deposits that have yielded important information about French colonial life, and that have the potential to yield more. However, in comparison, the resources in the current study area have the potential to tell a compelling and multifaceted narrative of the political, social, and economic life of the *Pays des Illinois*. Three properties in particular can serve to illustrate this: Fort de Chartres was the political and military center of the *Pays des Illinois*; French Kaskaskia was the largest population center and most important village in the *Pays des Illinois* and was the first capital of the American state of Illinois; and the Pierre Menard House is already a designated National Historic Landmark for its exceptional French colonial architecture but, poignantly, is also an excellent and appropriate locus to tell the often-overlooked story of slavery in a “free state” of the North.

The multifaceted narrative presented by the cluster of resources in the study area distinguishes it from Ste. Geneviève National Historical Park. The primary significance of Ste. Geneviève derives from its outstanding set of architectural resources. As noted above (from the park's special resource study), even its nationally significant historical associations (Criterion 1) are connected to its architectural history. In

contrast, the Prairie du Rocher study area has the potential to enhance and expand the historical narrative (Criterion 1) presented by the resources at Ste. Geneviève by adding resources that represent the pre-existing political and social context from which Ste. Geneviève emerged. For example, Ste. Geneviève contributes to the NHL Theme (I) Peopling Places, which is also proposed for the current study area. But to the former's story of settlement by French *habitants*, the Prairie du Rocher study area adds the narrative of early engagement with, and later supplanting of, Native populations as represented through the subtheme "encounters, conflicts, and colonization." Both properties contribute to NHL Theme (III) Expressing Cultural Values for architectural expressions of French colonial culture, and to (V) Developing the American Economy for pursuits such as trading and agriculture. But to the latter, the Prairie du Rocher study area adds the narrative of enslavement and exploitation through the subtheme "workers and work culture." Finally, the study area may contribute knowledge to two additional NHL Themes – (II) Creating Social Institutions and Movements and (IV) Shaping the Political Landscape – through the inclusion of religious, military, and colonial administrative properties (i.e. St. Joseph's Church and Fort de Chartres).

However, the ability of the study area to tell these narratives and to enhance those already told by the village of Cahokia and especially by Ste. Geneviève rests on a fragile foundation, for reasons similar to those discussed under national significance. As individual resources, it is unlikely that many – if any – of these properties would meet the criteria for suitability. For this reason the analysis in this study has focused on the power of the resources *collectively* to present and enhance compelling historical narratives. For example, while the Mellière Home, Creole House, and Bienvenue House in Prairie du Rocher are rare examples of poteaux-sur-sole architecture, they are not particularly outstanding examples especially compared to the outstanding collection at nearby Ste. Geneviève. It is only when conglomerated with the rest of the resources in the study area that they (and their architecture) become part of a compelling story. Furthermore, the ability of the resources in the study area to collectively augment the historical associations represented by Ste. Geneviève rests primarily on those properties dating to the French colonial phase of the period of significance. As will be seen below, these crucial properties seem uncertain or unlikely to meet the criteria for feasibility or direct NPS management. If the Pierre Menard House was to be removed from consideration, then the study area would lose its ability to convey and enhance another compelling narrative, that of "slavery in the north." Without these properties, it is unlikely that a future study would find the remaining properties in the study area, individually or collectively, suitable for inclusion in the NPS system given the existence of Ste. Geneviève.

Suitability Conclusion

There are existing national park units that represent the French colonial period in the context of Louisiana as well as in the Middle Mississippi River region, where the current study area is situated. In particular, the architectural collection at Ste. Geneviève contributes to compelling historical associations with French exploration and settlement of the interior of the United States in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and with the American territory that developed following the Louisiana Purchase.

Collectively, the resources listed and described in the "Resources Analyzed for this Study" section, above, represent a compelling historical narrative of French immigration, settlement, cultural exchange and development, architectural expression, enslavement, religious practice, and political and military administration of the Middle Mississippi River region that enhances the narratives represented by Ste.

Geneviève. Individually, however, few if any of the resources in the study area would be found suitable, as their stories would be duplicative and/or unlikely to sustain significance under Criterion 1. The few properties that might individually be found suitable also comprise the crucial foundation upon which the collective power of the study area's significance is built. But these same properties are uncertain or unlikely to receive positive findings under the feasibility or direct NPS management criteria, as discussed below. Without these properties – namely, the scattered archeological resources, Fort de Chartres, and the Pierre Menard House – it is unlikely that a future study would find the remaining resources in the study area, individually or collectively, suitable for inclusion in the national park system given the existence of Ste. Geneviève.

FEASIBILITY

According to the NPS Management Policies of 2006, to be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area found to be nationally significant and suitable must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. It must have the potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Important feasibility factors include land ownership, acquisition costs, staff and development requirements, access, existing degradation or threats to the resources, the socioeconomic impacts of designation, and public support. The evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected constraints on funding and personnel. (See appendix B for the full text of the factors of feasibility). Because reconnaissance surveys do not develop specific proposals for management, feasibility can only be discussed generally. Because reconnaissance surveys do not include public involvement, potential levels of public support cannot be assessed.

Preliminary Analysis

Size and boundary configuration. The study area – roughly the boundaries of the existing French Colonial Historic District (see Figure 1) – appears to be of sufficient size to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment. Preliminary analysis indicates that this area includes all of the resources comprising a district consisting of four French villages and at least three Illinois Indian villages, all historically under the protection of Fort de Chartres (or nominally so) which is also located in the study area. This results in a set of resources that collectively support the NHL themes discussed in the national significance section, above. However, it seems unlikely that this entire area could be set aside as a single national park unit, as will be discussed below. A definitive analysis is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey but a non-contiguous boundary configuration is an option. Such a boundary appears feasible since the study area's resources tend to be grouped around two poles connected by existing roads: Fort de Chartres / Prairie du Rocher in the north, and the Pierre Menard House in the south.

Around Fort de Chartres are clustered:

- the archeological remains of Nouvelle Chartres village (including the site of the Church of Ste. Anne and Ste. Anne cemetery);
- the archeological remains of Ste. Philippe village;
- the archeological remains of the Michigamea villages (Kolmer site and Waterman site); and

- the archeological remains of the predecessor forts.

Four miles to the east, within the village of Prairie du Rocher, are located:

- Mellière Home;
- Bienvenue Home;
- Creole House;
- St. Joseph Church;
- St. Joseph Cemetery; and
- the Lee-Brickey Mansion ruins.

Around the general area of the Pierre Menard House are:

- the archeological remains of the Illinois Kaskaskia village (Guebert site); and
- the archeological remains of the French Kaskaskia village (including the Jesuit windmill site).

Between these “poles” runs the remains of the Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail, assuming its archeological traces survive. The distance from Fort de Chartres to the Pierre Menard House is approximately 22 miles along existing roads (approximately a 30-minute drive), and this route passes through the village of Prairie du Rocher. The acreage of the entire French Colonial Historic District is approximately 14,080 acres (Brown 1973). Should the boundary configuration be non-contiguous and aligned with the footprints of existing state historic sites and private buildings, then the acreage would be considerably smaller. Fort de Chartres State Historic Site is approximately 20 acres (Lissandrello 1975). The acreage of the Pierre Menard House State Historic Site – as distinct from the overall acreage of the Fort Kaskaskia State Historic Site (approximately 200 acres) of which it is a part – could not be determined at this time.

The state of Illinois has signaled, via an official letter, a willingness to discuss the future of the Pierre Menard Home with the National Park Service. Nothing has been said in writing about Fort de Chartres.

The archeological resources are scattered throughout the study area including on private property, and the Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail likewise runs throughout the study area. It seems unlikely that inclusion of all of these resources within the unified boundary of a national park unit is feasible. For this reason, a non-contiguous boundary configuration is assumed for purposes of this feasibility analysis, which would include the individual footprints of each structure or existing historical site and which would exclude most or all of the archeological resources and the trail.

Land ownership patterns, and current and potential land usage. Land within and surrounding the study area is primarily rural and agricultural, and in private ownership. Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House are owned and managed by the state of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division. In the village of Prairie du Rocher, the Bienvenue Home is owned by a private individual and the Creole House is owned by a charity organization, the Randolph County Historical Society. St. Joseph Church is an active Catholic church, part of the Diocese of Belleville. Ownership of St. Joseph cemetery is unconfirmed. Ownership of the Mellière Home and the Lee-Brickey Mansion site in

Prairie du Rocher is likewise unconfirmed. Land usage is not expected to change significantly in the foreseeable future.

Access and public enjoyment potential. Prairie du Rocher is a small rural town (approximate population of 500) with limited accommodations and services. It is located approximately 65 miles south of an international airport in the city of St. Louis, Missouri, and can be accessed from the north by Interstate 64 or from the south by Interstate 55. State highways connect the interstate system directly to the village, through which Illinois Route 155 runs. Fort de Chartres lies approximately four miles west of Prairie du Rocher along the state highway, and the Pierre Menard House can be accessed from the village via rural roads and a state highway. Fort de Chartres and the Menard House have existing amenities for public enjoyment such as trails, interpretive signage, and onsite museums. The properties in Prairie du Rocher consist of privately-owned buildings and St. Joseph's Cemetery, which can be accessed by the village roads. Some improvements to local roads and infrastructure may be needed. However, this preliminary analysis indicates that access to the resources in the study area is feasible.

Current and potential threats to resources. Detailed condition assessments and threat analyses for the properties in the study area were not performed as part of this reconnaissance survey. However, preliminary research indicates that the principal threats to resources in the study area are flooding and neglect. As discussed in the Existing Conditions section, above, the levee protecting the area from Mississippi River flooding has recently been de-accredited by FEMA based on a USACE study, which suggests that the resources in the study area might be at a higher risk of damage or loss from flooding. An inspection of recent photographs of the properties located in Prairie du Rocher suggests that at least one of them is in a state of significant deterioration. Other structures in the village are in active use and appear to be maintained, although the degree of technical preservation treatment or restoration needed was not assessed at this time. The two properties managed by the state of Illinois appear to be regularly maintained, but further details were unavailable. A future study, should one be authorized, should support a basic technical assessment of the conditions and preservation needs of the properties in the study area.

Level of local and general public support, and economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system. Although support for creation of a national park unit was not evaluated through direct public engagement as part of this reconnaissance survey, there appears to be positive local support. As referenced in Rep. Bost's reconnaissance survey request letter, the owners of three of the properties analyzed in this survey have submitted letters committing themselves to discussions with the National Park Service over property ownership (see appendix A). The local community in general appears to support creation of a national park unit, due at least partly to concerns over FEMA's recent de-accreditation of their levee along the Mississippi River. Prairie du Rocher Chamber of Commerce President Amy Barbeau said in an interview that she hopes creation of a national park could lead to availability of "moneys that could possibly improve infrastructure," and potentially "funding for our levee repair and maintenance," along with funds to protect the resources themselves (Kelly 2020). Other local news sources have also reported on favorable support for creation of a national park unit (Moss 2019; Neely-Streit 2019). Furthermore, a recently-published strategic plan for the Prairie du Rocher/Modoc/Edgar Lakes Levee District includes among its "priority projects and initiatives" the goal of establishing a Prairie du Rocher–French Colonial District National Historical Park or expanding the Ste. Geneviève National Park to include the Prairie du Rocher–French Colonial District. Contributors to this strategic plan included numerous local groups and organizations including the Village of Prairie

du Rocher, the Prairie du Rocher Chamber of Commerce, the Community Foundation of Prairie du Rocher, the Community of Modoc, the Kaskaskia Regional Port District, the Randolph County Farm Bureau, the Randolph County Progress Committee, the Randolph County Commissioners, Les Amis du Fort de Chartres, and the Community Foundation of Randolph County (The Steering Committee of the Community Foundation of Prairie du Rocher 2020, p. 2-3, 19). It appears that the socioeconomic impacts of designation as a national park unit could potentially be positive, although it would likely take many years.

Costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation. A detailed evaluation of the costs associated with creation of a new national park unit in and around Prairie du Rocher is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey. Most importantly, a future study (if authorized) should carefully consider any obligations that the National Park Service would incur towards repair and upkeep of the local levees along the Mississippi River. As described above in Existing Conditions, repair options after the recent assessment range from \$39 million to \$59 million, plus maintenance costs of at least one million dollars per year.

Costs associated with land acquisition, development, restoration, and operation would vary depending upon the final property boundary configuration. As noted above, this preliminary analysis assumes a non-contiguous boundary configuration with the two state historic sites at the “poles” of the study area, and in which the properties in the village of Prairie du Rocher are under mixed ownership, some properties acquired directly by the National Park Service and others managed in cooperation with private owners. This assumption leaves the principal subsurface archeological resources outside of the park boundaries, which may have implications for the study area’s collective national significance under Criterion 5 (and therefore Criterion 1). This configuration is presented as a reasonable basis for analysis in this section, and may not necessarily be the best configuration. Further study is warranted.

Research into acquisition costs is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey. However, as noted above, at least one property owner is interested in donating their property to the NPS and two others are willing to discuss a property transfer. For consideration in a future study, should one be authorized: some properties in the study area may not be feasible for outright acquisition. For example, St. Joseph Church and St. Joseph Cemetery, both in active use, may be best managed and interpreted through a partnership with the Diocese of Belleville rather than outright acquisition. Although there are examples of national park units that include an active church, such as San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, this can necessitate complicated ownership and management arrangements.

Preliminary analysis indicates that development and restoration costs may not be an unreasonable burden. Fort de Chartres State Historic Site and Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site are already administered effectively as state parks, and both have existing visitor use infrastructure. The Fort de Chartres park grounds include an onsite museum and office building which houses exhibits depicting French life at the fort, as well as another structure for concessionaire services (souvenirs, refreshments). The site also includes interpretive signs and walkways that guide visitors around the site (Illinois DNR n.d.(c)). Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site includes an asphalt parking lot, sidewalks, and exterior restrooms (described on the state website as “handicap accessible”). The house’s ground level includes a small museum and an audiovisual room where an orientation video and exhibits educate visitors about the Menard family and area history. The basement includes a museum and a small office (Illinois DNR n.d.(b)). In Prairie du Rocher, the Creole House also has existing visitor infrastructure. The building is

maintained by the Randolph County Historical Society and is open to the public for tours and events. As noted above, however, further study would be needed to estimate preservation or restoration costs for the structures in the village, and at least one of them appears to be in a deteriorated condition that may require immediate stabilization and treatment. Initial development costs would include required cultural resource baseline documentation. At a minimum the site would require multiple cultural landscape reports; historic structure reports for the various architectural types represented; archeological survey and inventory for purposes of compliance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act; inventory and documentation of museum collections and archives; NPS Checklist for Preservation and Protection of Museum Collections (for curation and exhibit spaces); a historic resource study; and potentially an ethnographic overview and assessment.

Operations and maintenance costs, as well as potential staffing will also require further study to understand in detail. If park operations were configured such that Fort de Chartres served as a base for National Park Service staff who would travel to the properties in Prairie du Rocher as needed for maintenance and visitor use services, then operational costs for the properties in the village may be relatively low.

Feasibility Conclusion

The resources considered in this analysis consist of state-managed historical sites, privately-owned buildings and structures, and subsurface archeological resources. They are grouped roughly in two clusters, one at the north of the study area and one at the south of the study area. An existing state historic site sits at each of these “poles” of the study area: Fort de Chartres State Historic Site and the Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site. Each of these currently has an onsite office, museum, and visitor infrastructure such as walkways, restrooms, and interpretive resources. In the village of Prairie du Rocher, the privately-owned properties could be managed and interpreted by staff based out of Fort de Chartres, four miles away, whether or not they are acquired by the National Park Service.

The archeological landscape within the study area is large, dispersed, and in varied private ownership. It is unlikely that a future study would find the inclusion of these archeological resources feasible. A similar challenge applies to the Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail. It is furthermore unlikely that the acquisition and inclusion of St. Joseph’s Church (in active use by the Diocese of Belleville) and St. Joseph’s Cemetery would be determined feasible.

It is therefore preliminarily found that, *collectively*, it is unlikely that the properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, above, would be found feasible for inclusion in the national park system, given the size of the landscape and the need to manage a diversity of active uses including agriculture, active religious worship, and residential areas. *Individually*, while many of the resources might be found feasible for designation, most would likely lose their ability to convey national significance or to meet the suitability criterion, as discussed above. Possible exceptions are Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House, which may warrant further study to determine feasibility.

DIRECT NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MANAGEMENT

The final criterion for potential new national park system units is the need for direct NPS management. To be recommended as a unit of the national park system, an area must require direct NPS management, and NPS management must be clearly superior to other possible management options.

NPS Management Policies 2006 states:

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive National Park System status. (see appendix B).

Preliminary Analysis

The Pierre Menard House and Fort de Chartres are already protected and managed for resource protection and public enjoyment by the IDNR, as two state historic sites. A review of available materials for Fort de Chartres was inconclusive with respect to the need for direct NPS management and any support by the IDNR for this type of management was not assessed as part of the reconnaissance survey process. A review of the Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site website revealed that IDNR does not currently have the resources to staff the site for regular public tours. Currently, public tours must be requested in advance and typically larger groups are approved (Illinois DNR n.d.(b)).

A review of available materials for St. Joseph Church and St. Joseph Cemetery indicates that these properties are well maintained, however it is not known whether they are interpreted or maintained to preserve their historic character in accordance with standards that apply to the national park system. Further study is warranted.

A preliminary review of available materials for the Creole House suggests that this resource might have more extensive, and more technical, preservation needs than are currently being addressed.

The frequency and nature of historic preservation and interpretation activities at the Bienvenue Home, Mellière Home, and Lee-Brickey Mansion site are unknown, but they appear minimal. A preliminary review of available materials suggests that these resources may have more extensive, and more technical, preservation and interpretive needs than are currently being addressed.

The archeological resources in the study area were determined unlikely to meet the requirements for feasibility, and are therefore not analyzed here for direct NPS management.

Direct NPS Management Conclusion

The properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, above, are managed by a variety of owners of which some, such as the IDNR and the Randolph County Historical Society, have a historic preservation mission while the others do not. There is no clear NPS management model for such a large conglomeration of mixed resources and uses. Furthermore, collectively, the study area has faltered in the preceding analysis of feasibility in particular with regards to its archeological resources. As had been discussed in the suitability analysis, the removal of the archeological resources from consideration makes it less likely that the remaining resources would merit further study, with the possible exceptions of Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House. However, it is here determined to be unlikely that a future study would find direct NPS management of Fort de Chartres and the Pierre

Menard House to be a clearly superior option over management by the State of Illinois. This study does not recommend further analysis for these or any of the other resources in the study area at this time.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Collectively, the properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, above, have the potential to be found nationally significant as outstanding representations of broad national patterns of United States history, and they represent complex and overlapping historical narratives that enhance understanding and appreciation of these patterns. Several of these properties also represent examples of a rare and nationally significant architectural style. Still others are archeological resources that may yield data affecting theories, concepts, and ideas of importance by contributing to understanding the evolution of French colonial culture in the Middle Mississippi River region. Further in-depth study is warranted to determine whether these properties retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic character, especially Fort de Chartres which is almost entirely a reconstruction.

Individually, few of these properties are likely to be found nationally significant under Criterion 1. For this reason the above analysis has focused on the power of the resources *collectively* to represent compelling narratives, primarily on the properties dating to the French colonial phase (1703-1763) of the period of significance: the scattered archeological resources throughout the study area (especially the site of French Kaskaskia) and Fort de Chartres. If these resources were removed from consideration in this study, then the collective significance of the entire study is unlikely to be met. If the Pierre Menard House was also removed from consideration, then the study area would lose its ability to convey and enhance another compelling narrative, that of “slavery in the north.” Without these properties, it is unlikely that a future study would find the remaining properties in the study area, individually or collectively, to be nationally significant.

Ste. Geneviève National Historical Park, like the study area, tells the story of French colonial history in the Middle Mississippi River region. Collectively, the resources in the study area represent compelling historical narratives that enhance existing ones. Individually, however, few if any of them would meet the criteria for suitability as their stories would be duplicative with Ste. Geneviève and/or unlikely to sustain significance under Criterion 1. The few properties that might individually be found suitable in light of Ste. Geneviève also serve as the crucial foundation upon which the collective power of the study area’s significance is built: the scattered archeological resources, Fort de Chartres, and the Pierre Menard House. If these properties were to be removed from consideration, then it is unlikely that a future study would find the remaining resources in the study area, individually or collectively, suitable for inclusion in the national park system given the existence of Ste. Geneviève.

The resources considered in this analysis consist of state-managed historical sites, privately-owned buildings and structures, and subsurface archeological resources. The archeological landscape within the study area is large, dispersed, and in varied private ownership. It is unlikely that a future study would find NPS management of these archeological resources feasible. A similar challenge applies to the Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail. It is furthermore unlikely that the acquisition and management of St. Joseph’s Church (in active use by the Diocese of Belleville) and St. Joseph’s Cemetery would be determined feasible. It is therefore preliminarily found that, *collectively*, it is unlikely that the properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, above, would be found feasible for inclusion in the national park system, given the size of the landscape and the need to manage a diversity of active uses including agriculture, active religious worship, and residential areas. *Individually*, while many of the resources might be found feasible for NPS designation and management, most would likely lose their ability to convey national significance or to meet the suitability criterion, as discussed above. Possible

exceptions are Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House, which may warrant further study to determine feasibility.

Fort de Chartres and the Pierre Menard House are currently managed by the State of Illinois as state historic sites, and it is uncertain that a future study would find direct NPS management of these properties to be clearly superior. If a future study were to find that direct NPS management of these two properties is not the clearly superior management option, then analysis of the remaining properties would be moot for the reasons outlined in the national significance and suitability sections. Given the uncertainties raised above, this survey does not recommend further analysis of direct NPS management for these or any other resources in the study area at this time.

Reconnaissance survey findings are preliminary resource assessments. These conclusions are not considered final or definitive, as they assess only the likelihood that the resources analyzed would meet the established criteria for inclusion in the national park system. Based on the information available, this reconnaissance survey **does not** find a sufficiently compelling reason to recommend further study of the properties described in the “Resources Analyzed for this Study” section, above, in order to evaluate their potential for inclusion in the national park system.

This reconnaissance survey finds that the area may have the potential to be a national heritage area, provided that a single coordinating entity could be identified. Such a management option may better suit the large size and dispersed resources within the study area. Should a coordinating entity emerge, then a future national heritage area feasibility study could be considered. Information about evaluating and managing national heritage areas can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/toolkit-and-howtos.htm>.

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PREPARERS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

National Park Service, Denver Service Center

Julie Bell, Project Manager

John Valainis, Project Specialist (Cultural Resources)

Zach Wood, GIS Specialist

National Park Service, Interior Regions 3, 4, 5

Tokey Boswell, Associate Regional Director, Facilities, Planning, & Infrastructure

Alesha Cerny, Historian, Interior Regions 3, 4, 5

Natalie Franz, Planner, Interior Regions 3, 4, 5

Timothy Good, Superintendent, Lincoln Home National Historic Site

William Harlow, Architect (Historical), Interior Regions 3, 4, 5

James Lange, Division Manager, Planning and Compliance

Timothy Schilling, Archeologist, Interior Regions 3, 4, 5

Timothy Townsend, Historian and Chief of Interpretation, Lincoln Home National Historic Site

Other National Park Service Contributors

Cherri Espersen, Program Analyst, Park Planning & Special Studies Division

Patricia Henry, Historian, NPS National Register and National Historic Landmark Program

Deanda Johnson, Civil Rights Historian, Interior Region 2

Thomas Sheffer, Program Analyst, Park Planning & Special Studies Division

Erika Wudtke, Program Analyst, Park Planning & Special Studies Division

APPENDIX A: RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REQUEST LETTER AND RESPONSE

MIKE BOST
12TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION &
INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1312

1440 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5661

23 Public Square, SUITE 404 BELLEVILLE,
IL 62220
(618) 233-8026

300 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 4
CARBONDALE, IL 62901
(618) 457-5787

July 8, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

I am writing to request that the National Park Service (NPS) undertake a Reconnaissance Survey to identify the national significance of sites in the area of Prairie du Rocher, IL and to determine their suitability as a National Historic Park. Your prompt attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Prairie du Rocher is one of the oldest original French villages in America. The region and its fortifications, helped to establish the western boundary of the United States after the Revolutionary War.

A reconnaissance survey, conducted by the National Park Service, will evaluate the region's national significance and suitability for designation as a unit of the National Park System, and the need for National Park Service management of this historical resource. I believe the results will validate the area as worthy of National Park designation.

The Prairie du Rocher site interprets the French Colonial period of our nation's early development prior to our Declaration of Independence from England. The village, established in 1722, and Fort de Chartres were important stops between New Orleans and Quebec. The region thrived for nearly 100 years before Illinois became a state.

The area boasts a National Historic District established in 1974. Two National Landmarks, Fort de Chartres and the Menard Home, along with other significant assets, including the Milliere home (1735), Jesuit Windmill site (1720s), Lee-Brickey Mansion site, Church of St. Anne site (1721), St. Anne/St. Joseph's cemetery (early 1700s), St. Joseph's Church, the Kaskaskia Cahokia Trail (1600), and several others.

With this request I submit 3 properties to be considered for the establishment of the park. Copies of letters from willing owners that are willing to discuss terms to provide property to the National Park Service are attached. They are:

- Bienvenue Home, owned by Mr. Steve Gonzalez
- Creole House, owned by the Randolph County Historical Society
- Pierre Menard Home, an Illinois Department of Natural Resources asset

The community has authored a Strategic Plan for the next 300 years of their development and has held several public meetings to gain public support. According to local leadership, there is strong support and no expressed opposition. It is my hope, and that of the broader community, that the establishment of the park coincides with Prairie du Rocher's 300th birthday in 2022.

I urge you to give the most serious consideration to this reconnaissance survey request and look forward to the opportunity to directly discuss it with you. Thank you for consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Bost", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Bost
Member of Congress

RANDOLPH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY WHERE ILLINOIS BEGAN

April 16, 2020


To Whom It May Concern,

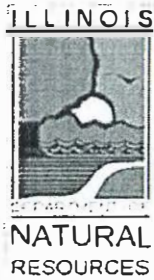
The RANDOLPH COUNTY ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY is the proud owner of the The Creole House located in Prairie du Rocher, Randolph County. The Creole House was added to the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1935 and to the National Registry of Historic Places in 1973.

It is maintained by volunteers of the Randolph County Historical Society and is open for tours and other events. It is fully furnished in a transitional style matching the years of additional construction. The earliest construction was before 1800. It is considered the best example of a Mississippi Valley Transitional House: French-American/Anglo-American.

Upon the formation of a Prairie du Rocher/Randolph County National Park District the Randolph County Historical Society will negotiate with the National Park District to transfer the property to ensure its continued presence as a valued resource in Randolph County, Illinois.

The Randolph County Historical Society Executive Board

Michael Baker, President 	Anna Gross, Trustee
Ruth Menard, Vice-President	Charles Lineberry, Trustee
Rose Mary Dashner, Treasurer	Colleen Schilling, Trustee
Emily Lyons, Creole House Committee	Reuel Smith, Trustee



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

June 24, 2020

State Representative Nathan Reitz
116th House District
Red Bud, IL 62278

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Representative Reitz:

Thank you for writing to express your support and interest in collectively taking care of our historic sites in your State Representative district. The Pierre Menard Home is a treasured State Historic Site that we want to see preserved for future generations to appreciate.

The National Park Service (NPS) shares a commitment to preservation and education with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and we are very interested in learning how we can collaborate with them to ensure that the Menard Home gets the best possible stewardship moving forward.

Please let this letter serve to confirm IDNR's interest in meeting with NPS to further discuss future ownership of the site and ways in which they could enhance the longevity of this site. We welcome the opportunity to participate in a reconnaissance study to delineate the specifics needed to make an informed decision on the best path forward in sustaining the beloved Menard Home.

Kind Regards,

Colleen Callahan By R.P.

Colleen Callahan
Director, IDNR
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702

CC: Bresha Brewer, IDNR Legislative Director

IDNR Office of Land Management

March 6, 2020

I Stephen E. Angely pledge to gift a 1750-1775 french Cajun house and portion of said tract known as the Bienville property for the establishment of a Federal Park District of early french heritage. The Bienville parcel is free of all encumbrances and must be surveyed and separated from said tract. The southern boundary starting from a field road extending to an established property line to the north along the bluff. Upon formation of the Grandis de Rocher Federal Park District above said property will be transferred to the District.

The Bienville house was built between 1750-1775 in the french Cajun style. It has two porches or galleries on the front and rear of house. Both gallery walls were white washed and the other outer walls are left in natural cypress wood. It is one room with a wood stove chimney access. It has a bedroom in its attic through a trap door and ladder for a terrace as was traditional to that type of home. It do have the iron single bed and rails in its 250 year old parlor. It has a dirt basement and chimney access for a cook stove. The basement functioned as a kitchen with a walk out door to the front under the gallery. The property has a large mill stone supposedly from the Old mill. It do have six sandstone piers from the small barn that was located just north of the driveway on the property. It has two cisterns. We built a wall and filled in the kitchen entry under the front gallery when the road was moved.

Stephen E. Angely



United States Department of the Interior

●FFICE ●F THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Mike Bost
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bost:

Thank you for our recent conversation regarding Prairie du Rocher, Illinois. I appreciate the information and stories you shared about the many sites and your interest in a National Park Service (NPS) reconnaissance survey of the area. On behalf of the Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt, I write to inform you that the NPS will conduct the requested reconnaissance survey.

The survey will determine if the sites in the region of Prairie du Rocher merit further consideration as a potential unit of the National Park System through a Congressionally authorized special resource study. The NPS will focus on the specific si

Thank you for your interest in, and support for, the NPS. Please contact Mr. Chuck Laudner, Assistant Director for Congressional Affairs, should you have further questions regarding the reconnaissance survey process. Mr. Laudner can be reached via email at Charles_Laudner@nps.gov or at (202) 513-7212.

Sincerely,

GEORGE
WALLACE

Digitally signed by
GEORGE WALLACE
Date: 2020 09 29
17:22:55 -04'00'

Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

APPENDIX B: CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

National Park Service Management Policies 2006

1.3 Criteria for Inclusion

Congress declared in the national park system General Authorities Act of 1970 that areas comprising the national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the national park system should therefore contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The National Park Service is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an act of Congress, and for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for units of the national park system and for additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the National Trails System.

To receive a favorable recommendation from the Service, a proposed addition to the national park system must (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources, (2) be a suitable addition to the system, (3) be a feasible addition to the system, and (4) require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. These criteria also recognize that there are other management alternatives for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

1.3.1 National Significance

NPS professionals, in consultation with subject-matter experts, scholars, and scientists, will determine whether a resource is nationally significant. An area will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the national historic landmarks criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (*Code of Federal Regulations*).

1.3.2 Suitability

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences

or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

1.3.3 Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost.

In evaluating feasibility, the Service considers a variety of factors for a study area, such as the following:

- size
- boundary configurations
- current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands
- land ownership patterns
- public enjoyment potential
- costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation
- access
- current and potential threats to the resources
- existing degradation of resources
- staffing requirements
- local planning and zoning
- the level of local and general public support (including landowners)
- the economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected availability of funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a yes or no conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell, or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access, or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values.

1.3.4 Direct NPS Management

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities, and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will

recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive national park system status.

Studies will evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and will identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would, in the professional judgment of the Director, be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives for NPS management will not be developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed in section 1.3.

In cases where a study area's resources meet criteria for national significance but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as "affiliated area." To be eligible for affiliated area status, the area's resources must (1) meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the Service and the nonfederal management entity. Designation as a "heritage area" is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas have a nationally important, distinctive assemblage of resources that is best managed for conservation, recreation, education, and continued use through partnerships among public and private entities at the local or regional level. Either of these two alternatives (and others as well) would recognize an area's importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service.

APPENDIX C: NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CRITERIA

36 CFR § 65.4 National Historic Landmark criteria.

The criteria applied to evaluate properties for possible designation as national historic landmarks or possible determination of eligibility for national historic landmark designation are listed below. These criteria shall be used by the National Park Service in the preparation, review, and evaluation of national historic landmark studies. They shall be used by the Advisory Board in reviewing national historic landmark studies and preparing recommendations to the Secretary. Properties shall be designated national historic landmark only if they are nationally significant. Although assessments of national significance should reflect both public perceptions and professional judgments, the evaluations of properties being considered for landmark designation are undertaken by professionals, including historians, architectural historians, archeologists, and anthropologists familiar with the broad range of the nation's resources and historical themes. The criteria applied by these specialists to potential landmarks do not define significance nor set a rigid standard for quality. Rather, the criteria establish the qualitative framework in which a comparative professional analysis of national significance can occur. The final decision on whether a property possesses national significance is made by the Secretary on the basis of documentation including the comments and recommendations of the public who participate in the designation process.

(a) Specific Criteria of National Significance: The quality of national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- (1) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or
- (2) That are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or
- (3) That represent some great idea or ideal of the American people; or
- (4) That embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (5) That are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or
- (6) That have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.

(b) Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are not eligible for designation. Such properties, however, will qualify if they fall within the following categories:

(1) A religious property deriving its primary national significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or

(2) A building or structure removed from its original location but which is nationally significant primarily for its architectural merit, or for association with persons or events of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or

(3) A site of a building or structure no longer standing but the person or event associated with it is of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or

(4) A birthplace, grave or burial if it is of a historical figure of transcendent national significance and no other appropriate site, building, or structure directly associated with the productive life of that person exists; or

(5) A cemetery that derives its primary national significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, or from an exceptionally distinctive design or from an exceptionally significant event; or

(6) A reconstructed building or ensemble of buildings of extraordinary national significance when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other buildings or structures with the same association have survived; or

(7) A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own national historical significance; or

(8) A property achieving national significance within the past 50 years if it is of extraordinary national importance.

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As the nation’s principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under US administration.



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