

Daughters of Aataentsic is the inclusion of the writings, speeches, and publications of Wendat/Wandat women whose words, vision, and political ideology ring down through the generations and which remain searingly relevant today. Éléonore Sioui delivered a series of talks at forums in North America and abroad and she maintained a consistent message throughout: "consider the important role that Indigenous women had in healing communities impacted by colonial practices" related to "sexism, racism, poverty, lack of education, and patriarchal dominance" (p. 148-149). This is the motherwork of Wendat/Wandat women, the daughters of Aataentsic (Sky Woman).

Melinda Marie Jetté

College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
Franklin Pierce University, New Hampshire

Karen L. Marrero, *Detroit's Hidden Channels: The Power of French-Indigenous Families in the Eighteenth Century*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020. 304 pages. ISBN 978-0-88755-908-2. \$31.95 paperback.

In recent years, historians have increasingly recognized the saliency of Detroit as an important riverine node connecting Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, and Lake Erie. More than bridging a localized waterway that connected two Great Lakes, Detroit was also a site of political and economic importance linking the Atlantic Ocean to the continental interior and the Gulf of Mexico. More than just the envy of European empires, Wendat, Odawa, Myaamia, and Haudenosaunee homelands also overlapped and crisscrossed the Detroit region. Karen Marrero's *Detroit's Hidden Channels* fully explores the intersections of overlapping Indigenous homelands and European imperial efforts to regulate trade and diplomacy in the Great Lakes region, which resulted in an expansive and influential French-Indigenous family network centered at Detroit. Marrero draws upon the image of the *Chenail Écarté* – a narrow and navigable water route that flows into Lake St. Clair – to articulate her focus on the hitherto obscured histories of French-Indigenous families as well as her attempts to write a more inclusive and holistic history of the Detroit region. Marrero hopes to complicate and nuance the traditional Detroit-based histories that have focused solely or mostly on military conflict between the British, French, and French-allied Indigenous nations.

Detroit's Hidden Channels differentiates itself from other recent and innovative works about Detroit by Catherine Cangany, Tiya Miles, and Guillaume Teasdale, that have focused on Detroit as a transatlantic entrepôt, a multiracial community that began in

slavery, and an attempt to replicate the French agrarian society of the St. Lawrence valley, respectively. Marrero investigates and articulates how the French-Indigenous networks operating out of Detroit “managed to create multination conglomerates combining trade and diplomacy that allowed them to influence the course of European imperial power throughout the eighteenth century (xx).” To uncover these hidden channels of French-Indigenous family networks based out of Detroit, Marrero draws on myriad hitherto unexamined sources such as folksongs, parish registers, Indigenous languages, colloquial expressions, antiquarian societies, and genealogies.

Marrero provides a fresh interpretation of key events of the eighteenth century, such as the Fox Wars and Pontiac’s War, recontextualizing the “official version” of these conflicts by probing an array of hitherto unexamined sources. For example, through her examination of an “auditory artifact,” the folksong “Les Mascoutens,” Marrero points out the inconsistencies and intricacies of the 1712 conflict at Detroit. Marrero argues that locally based French-Indigenous family networks were at the centre of the conflagration that would launch a decades-long French genocidal campaign against the Meskwaki referred to by historians as the Fox Wars. Rather than a ploy of other Algonquian nations (Odawa, Illinois) to provoke and eliminate their Meskwaki rivals, or a French imperial narrative that suggests that Meskwaki ruthlessness and arrogance sparked hostilities, Marrero’s sleuthing suggests that the incident at Detroit which kicked off the Fox Wars may have been a highly localized event where some resident Meskwaki attempted to assault a baptized Meskwaki woman named Marie, whose godparent was Marguerite Ouabankikoué (of the Myaamia Crane band). Between 18 August 1710 and 16 April 1712, thirty-two Meskwakis were baptized at Detroit to incorporate the Meskwaki newcomers into the community not as slaves, but as full-fledged residents of a polyethnic space that overlapped Odawa, Wendat, Myaamia, and Haudenosaunee homelands. Marrero ponders whether the Meskwaki, who arrived in larger numbers in 1712, were seeking to undo the ties of spiritual kinship that bound the Meskwaki girl baptized as Marie, for whom Marguerite Ouabankikoué stood as spiritual mother. Regardless of the intended outcome, this dispute between Marguerite Ouabankikoué (and by extension her husband Pierre Roy) and the Meskwaki went awry, surpassing the bounds of a highly localized community dispute into a conflict that involved many Indigenous nations and accelerated into an imperial crisis.

Rather than fixate solely on figures like Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, Detroit’s first French commandant, Marrero fixes her gaze instead on members of French-Indigenous families, like the Roy, Bizaillon, Cuillierier dit Beaubien, Couc dit Montour families, who,

while anchored at the multicultural community of Detroit, operated as merchants, interpreters, and occasionally imperial representatives throughout Myaamionki (the Myaamia homelands), Anishinaabewaki, the Illinois Country, the Saint-Lawrence valley, and the Haudenosaunee borderlands. These French-Indigenous family networks weathered conflicts like the 1706 Odawa-Wendat-Myaamia crisis, the Fox Wars, the Seven Years' War, and Pontiac's War, to build a strong economic and political relations that ultimately diverted resources away from French and British empires to bolster an alternative configuration of power relations that transcended national and imperial borders.

Much like the work of Juliana Barr and Susan Sleeper-Smith, Marrero's study reveals how feminine agency in diplomacy, warfare, and trade played a central role in understanding how the French-Indigenous families centered at Detroit expanded their power and influence in both French and Indigenous worlds. Pierre Roy's marriage to Waapankihkwa (Marguerite Ouabankikoué) of the powerful Myaamia Crane band allowed the extended Roy family to establish an extensive trade and kin network throughout the pays d'en haut. An influential Odawa woman named La Blanche squeezed diplomatic gifts and favorable trade terms from the French to resolve a crisis resulting from the 1706 skirmishes that pitted the French, Myaamia, and Wendat against the Odawa. Her success demonstrates that Anishinaabe women could counsel either war or peace, as well as take an active role in the fur trade. Marguerite Fafard, a French-Algonquin woman, asserted her agency by abandoning her abusive husband Jean-Baptiste Turpin and fled to the Pennsylvania frontier where she married a Kahnawake Mohawk man named Katarioniecha, eventually assuming a position of authority and leadership at a Mohawk-English settlement called "French Margaret's Town" on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. While overlapping French and British governments vied for political, military, and economic control of the Detroit region, Indigenous and French women essentially called the shots. Marrero not only elucidates feminine agency, but also how gendered metaphors were utilized to negotiate the complex web of differing territorial, political, economic, and familial interests at Detroit. Indigenous representatives and French imperial agents alike utilized transgender kinship metaphors to articulate the duties and obligations of the French governor-general (or Onontio), who, in the ritualized language of diplomacy, and as the "father-nurturer" of the alliance, had to suckle his children by maintaining a flow of goods and alcohol.

A major theme that emerges in Detroit's Hidden Channels is the tension between localized French-Indigenous family networks and the empires attempting to control them, and how, in turn, these

family networks frustrated imperial grand designs. While French and British states failed to appropriate the straits at Detroit into their imperial superstructure, the French-Indigenous families would stretch their kinship ties across vast distances, utilizing Detroit's status as a transitional location as a pivot point for their commercial activities and socio-political alliances that transcended colonizing boundaries. Alternative and more enduring models of family networks, territorial occupancy, and kinship obligations would prevail at Detroit and would basically clash with the imperial edicts concocted by metropolitan ministers and colonial bureaucrats. The French-Indigenous family networks maximized their economic and political clout at the expense of French and British empires. Marrero even declares outright that "French-Indigenous family networks would gain complete ascendancy in Detroit and the upper country by the mid-eighteenth century (42)." In this sense, Marrero's work joins myriad other works in French colonial historiography that basically posit where imperial agendas failed to come to fruition, the Indigenous, mixed-blood, Métis, French-Canadian, and French Creole communities on the ground prevailed.

In the historiographies of the Great Lakes, the Illinois Country, and Louisiana there is now a relatively accepted notion that there was widespread continuity and mobility in French commercial, community, and kinship networks following the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Stating that French-Indigenous communities maintained political independence and sovereignty in relation to French, British, and American empires is by now somewhat of a truism, and that this particular narrative of colonial encounters is now well-established in the field of early North American history. This reviewer wonders if these narratives of impotent empires and resilient local French-Indigenous communities represent historical fact or simply an interpretive fad? While local knowledge, kinship obligations, and gender norms were undoubtedly important factors in interpreting sovereignty, French, British, and American imperial projects (however poorly executed) still had a profound effect on the social, cultural, political, and demographic landscapes of the North America through the introduction of trade goods, merchandise, technologies, global markets, disease epidemics, military alliances, and new cultural and religious practices. Perhaps it is time for French colonial historians to take the idea of empire seriously again? Despite this reservation and more general observation of the field as a whole, *Detroit's Hidden Channels* is compellingly argued and sheds important light on the French-Indigenous families and their far-reaching political and economic power emanating from Detroit.

Scott Berthelette
Department of History
Queen's University