Looking for Margaret Davenport

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On the northern bank of what's now called Arsenal Island in the Mississippi River between present-day Rock Island, Illinois (where I work) and Davenport, Iowa (where I live) stands the federal-style home of trader-turned-entrepreneur Colonel George Davenport. A British immigrant, he first set up shop there in 1816 as a sutler for the U.S. Army, which had arrived to defend its new territory from Native nations in the region. A decade later, he operated a string of independent trading posts from the Des Moines rapids near the present-day Missouri state line up to the lead mines at Galena, Illinois; he eventually joined up with the American Fur Company running out of St. Louis. As early as 1829 he began buying up public lands from under the homes and gardens of his indigenous associates. When the U.S. Army and Illinois militia violently expelled the Sauk and Meskwaki from their land west of the Mississippi in 1832, the government agreed to pay off their trade debts. Within months, the deaths of his two partners had made Davenport the largest single beneficiary of the government's payout. Just a year after the treaty was signed, he started building his home, at that time the grandest on the upper Mississippi.[1] I can see the restored house, now open to visitors, from the second-story window of my own home.

On the main floor of the restored home, visitors encounter the Davenport family tree superimposed on a sepia-toned historic image of the Iowa riverfront town that bears his name (Fig. 1). This implied link between civic

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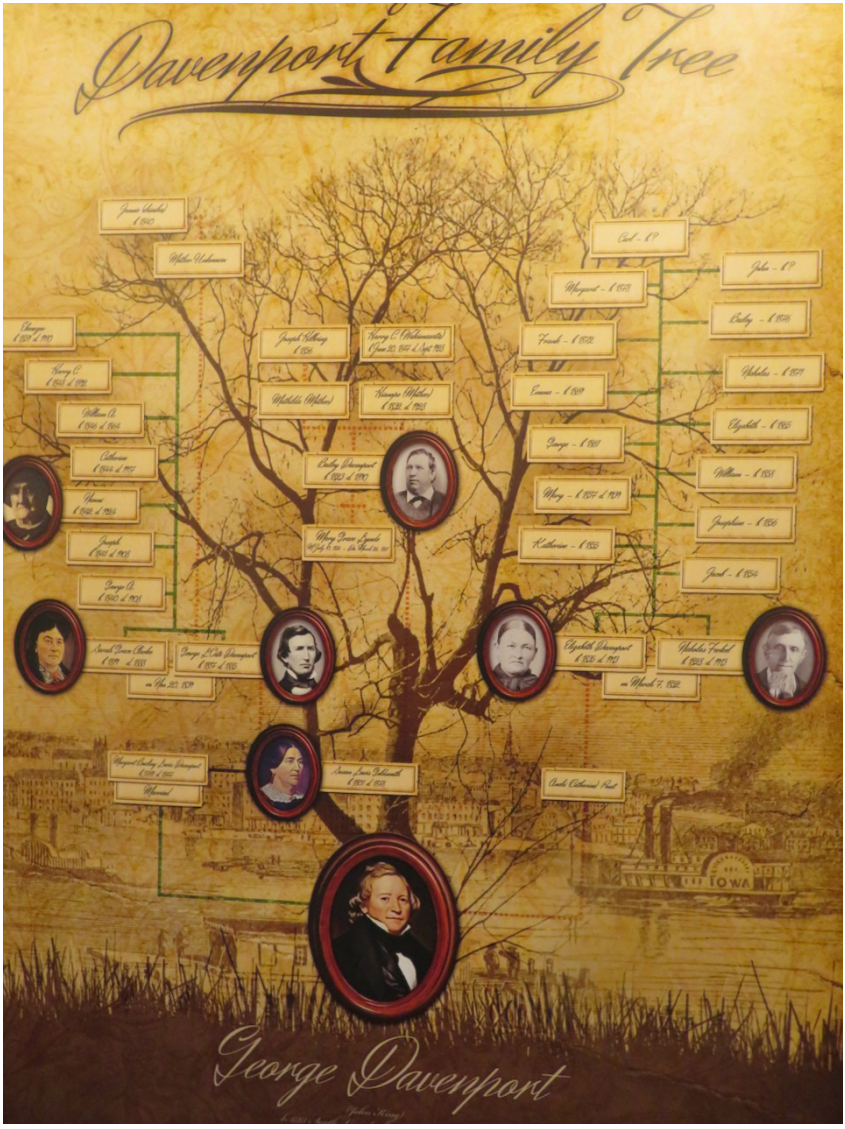


Fig. 1. Davenport Family Tree at the Davenport home. Colonel Davenport Historical Foundation. Photo by the author.

and personal history is more explicit on the Colonel Davenport Historical Foundation's website: "Davenport was a settler, provider, homesteader, businessman and counselor. His history equals the Quad City's history shaping its growth and development. On a much larger scale, it reflects the settling of the West."[2] Similar stories are repeated in the annals, historic sites, and museums of most every midwestern community, where figures like Davenport signify that Midwestern history begins with Euro-American settlement. Doug Kiel describes the "absolute replacement" of the region's complex, contested colonial past with a history that begins with settlement by European immigrants as "colonial amnesia."[3] Indeed, by the mid-1850s, when the first history of the city was written, Davenport was already cast as a central figure: adventurous, entrepreneurial, generous, fair. The trial of the thieves who killed him in 1845 may have provided inhabitants of the nascent river towns with the chance to remake the region as modern, bourgeois, and settled, casting off its history as an unstable outpost on the edge of empire.[4] During the preceding three decades, the multiethnic, multinational, and often extralegal relations that had sustained the upper Mississippi fur trade were overlaid by less flexible definitions of family, personhood, race, and property relations that cohered around individual white men and the official documents—wills, deeds, affidavits, trade agreements—that they produced. These in turn produced them as entities who stood "before the state" while casting others as "non-persons."[5] In this respect, Davenport's history, and the writing of it, reflects not just the story of one midwestern town, but the complexities of empire building that many white Midwesterners are reluctant to claim.

Yet those emerging definitions of family, and of the men who headed them, were often more prescriptive than real; official documents may have structured, but didn't supplant, lived experience.[6] The Davenport family tree posted on the wall of the historic home both reflects and deflects such experiences. Davenport's portrait covers the tree's trunk; branches hold placards with the names of his descendants. There is no accompanying text to clarify that some of these branches represent the extramarital dalliances of the Davenport men, who had children with Meskwaki women and servants both white and Black. Davenport's two sons, George L'Oste and Bailey, were the children of his stepdaughter, Susan Lewis. She had George at sixteen, just a year after she and her mother arrived on the island in 1816. And to the side of the trunk, a wandering root: the name of Davenport's purported wife, Margaret Bowling Lewis Davenport, Susan's mother. Fifteen years Davenport's senior and nearly 50 years old when she made the journey upriver to the island, she bore him no children. With her excess of surnames, she is marked, like other women in the tree, by the hint of narratives that gesture toward other origins, other sources.

Adele Perry points to family histories as critical corollaries of imperial and transatlantic archives, as the obscure origins and extraneous offspring

of colonial subjects must be "managed by practices of non-recognition" to mark the difference between colonizer and colonized. The Midwest is even less likely to recognize its colonial past than the Canadian locales that Perry studies; in spite of its ties to colonial governments of France, Spain, and Great Britain, the Midwest appears as territory already awaiting its American destiny.[7] When settler histories designate Davenport's accumulation of property and power as the region's origin story, then, they engage in what Jarrod Hayes describes in *Queer Roots for the Diaspora* as a strategic narrative act in which the "discovery" of familial roots amounts to a set of choices about which sources to follow, and which radicles to ignore. Hayes designates these lost traces, which by their erasure bring the heteropatriarchal family into sharp relief, as "queer" in that they rest on connections and forms of reproduction that challenge patrilineality.[8] Although it acknowledges "queer" relations by naming some of these marginal women and their offspring, the Davenport family tree disciplines and naturalizes familial relations through vigorous pruning of elements such as rape, incest, coercion, adultery, Blackness, and servitude that cannot be easily assimilated to a history in which Davenport's claim to property, and thus the claims of today's settler population, rests on his status as patriarch of the white family out of whose property and power grew banks and buildings, churches and post offices, hotels, pleasure parks, and settler history.

As stepmother and grandmother of the men who would go on to become bankers, landlords, and politicians of the midwestern towns that grew up around their island home, Margaret Davenport is both essential and tangential to the family pedigree. But, like other women who circulated in the shatterzones of empire, she is a cipher.[9] She left no writing other than her "X" on a few deeds, no record of her marriage to Davenport, no certain record of a previous marriage. There is no clear evidence of children other than Susan, though a woman of her age would surely have had more.[10] There are portraits of other family members, but none of Margaret. Some accounts refer to Davenport's wife, but because Susan, Davenport's stepdaughter, was a central figure in the household and the mother of his children, visitors' recollections of "Mrs. Davenport," an identity she sometimes publicly claimed (or didn't deny), may have referred to Susan.

Despite her tenuous attachment to white settler history, Margaret's unwritten life casts her among other women who lived beyond the margin of recorded histories—uprooted, unmarried, illiterate, disembodied, entangled in unconventional and probably nonconsensual forms of family life—whose lack of archival legitimacy aligns them more frequently with the colonized than the colonizer. For these women, the decades of transition from colonial hinterland to a modern midwestern city anchored by the pioneer past would have created what Adele Perry calls a "lived and

uneven sort of imperial world."[11] In this essay, I follow the shadows cast by the elusive figure of Margaret to bring this complex and coeval intersection between family, racial identity, property relations, and the making of settler-colonial histories into focus, engaging in a version of what Saidiya Hartmann has called "critical fabulation"—"displacing the received account" to imagine lives themselves displaced from the archive.[12] It is a set of stories that, in following these queer roots, circle around Margaret, considering the similarly obscure lives of other women in her ambit, without ever locating her. This inquiry necessarily destabilizes the whiteness anchoring the settler narrative and, in so doing, suggests that Margaret's whiteness is predicated on various fictions and elisions, regardless of her racial identity. But if the work of history telling is ostensibly to create a balanced account, I recognize my attempt to find Margaret Davenport as one more invention marking not only my own, but all historical narratives produced by settler cultures.

A decade after Margaret's death, in 1847, Susan paid homage to her mother by inscribing her name on a towering obelisk when she had the Davenports' remains moved from the island to Chippianock Cemetery in Rock Island city. The obelisk is the most visible and durable testament to Margaret's existence and her connection to George Davenport, and its location in a settler cemetery on former Sauk lands (the name, reputedly Sauk for "City of the Dead," has been credited to Susan) entangles her in the strategies of replacing that "transformed the land into a text that … serv[ed] to legitimize and edify white American nationhood."[13] But although her recollections of her father are crucial to the many local histories that celebrate him, she had nothing to say about her mother at all, other than that for years and years, they were the only white women around.

If the previous decades of mobility in the interior required that settler families establish their legitimacy in colonized spaces by remaking it as white space—even for the dead—this history also allowed for identities to be remade. Certainly, George Davenport had such opportunities. Biographies cast Davenport, born in England as George King, as peripatetic, a sailor who journeyed from Britain to St. Petersburg to New York, who claimed to be part of the Sabine Expedition and the Siege of Fort Erie, who ended up at one of the nation's westernmost forts in the aftermath of the War of 1812. These exploits, if true, link him firmly to various locations where markers of markers of race, nationality, and status were unstable; it would have been easy to shed his name, to forge new relationships and leave others behind. Margaret may have been just as rootless as Davenport, and perhaps as opportunistic. She might have crossed paths with him when he worked as an army recruiter in Winchester, Virginia, between 1808 and 1810, but her life before that suggests some transience, and the

towns that modern historians speculate she may have lived in—New Orleans, St. Louis, Erie, Winchester, Cincinnati—were racially diverse border towns, the sites of army outposts, traffic in enslaved people, and wars of conquest. She may have been married to a soldier; if so, she seems never to have claimed his pension or bounty lands. Possibly she was a laundress who moved with the army. She almost certainly lost several children—for a woman of nearly 50 to have birthed just one or two children in 1816 is improbable.[14] Her life was likely one of hardship, one that drove her to accept an incongruous alliance with a man young enough to be her son, to move with him to territory still almost exclusively occupied by Native nations, and to consent to—or withstand—his sexual relationships with her daughter and with other women in her household.

By the early 1830s, however, the territorially and socially ambiguous zones through which both Davenports likely moved had become American and required white families to anchor them. Accordingly, when Margaret is mentioned in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century county histories and biographies, it is to mark the origin of the white family and thus to fix settler identity on the landscape. In 1867, for example, the "surviving members of the Davenport family"—Susan, her sons, and George L'Oste's children—presented to the Old Settlers Society of Rock Island County a wooden cane, made from a tree that George Davenport had cut down and used to build his original home on the island, in an area understood to be "an uninhabited waste, except by the red men." This was "the first house built by white men, in the county, and this tree was the first tree cut by a white settler." An undated interview with Susan confirmed that "For many years Mrs. Davenport [Susan] and her mother were the only white women in the country," and Susan's 1878 obituary reiterated that she was "the last surviving member of the original [Davenport family]" who, for years after her arrival on the island, "saw the face of no white woman save that of her mother." At the dedication of the new Rock Island courthouse in 1895, George Davenport was lauded in the local paper as "the first white settler" in the region and his son George L. as "the first white child," claims repeated in every local and county history I read.[15]

Their vaunted status as the "first white family" thus rests on an exclusivity that was relatively new when these commemorations began. For the Old Settlers of 1867, the past prominence of "red" families in the region consolidated this designation. The region had long been the home of white male trappers and traders, but town leaders regarded them as less central to the area's history due to their mobility, their French Catholic identity, and, often, their mixed-race families. They may have had white skins, but they were not Americans, not settlers, not quite pure. Margaret's gender and race were and are critical to establishing the area's *settler* identity: her presence and that of her child turned the transient male trader's lodge

into a home, a place to plant and reproduce property in whiteness that supplanted indigeneity. The story of the first white man's home propped up, quite literally, Old Settler legitimacy.[16]

Members of the Bowling family of Virginia were among those Old Settlers, and more recent historians shore up Margaret's Old Settler status through her connection to them. Anne Beiser Allen and Regena Trant Schanz describe her as the sister of Jeremiah and Ambrose Bowling, brothers who separately relocated to Rock Island and Davenport in the 1830s and 1840s. Allen posits that all three were children of a John Bowling and hailed from Winchester.[17] Jeremiah was indentured to a mattress maker in there in 1801, and an upholsterer named Jeremiah Bowling was living in Winchester in 1810, when Davenport was said to have been working as an army recruiter there. But Margaret wasn't living with Jeremiah then, at least not when the census takers knocked on the door. It's possible that she was there during the War of 1812; if Davenport was still there, perhaps he met and married her. It's not clear that Ambrose, who mustered for the War of 1812 in Arlington, Virginia, and moved to Ohio to claim his bounty lands there after the war, was a brother of either Jeremiah or Margaret.[18]

There is little doubt that multiple members of the Bowling family were close associates of George Davenport: Jeremiah's son James Madison Bowling worked with the Davenports, and Ambrose's oldest son, born in Indiana in 1825 well before his father's arrival in Rock Island, was named George Davenport. But there seems to be no definitive evidence that Margaret was their sister. When Ambrose's widow (also named Margaret) died, in 1871, her obituary noted that she was the "sister-in-law of Col. George Davenport," and author Harry Downer revises this information in his 1910 *History of Scott County*, asserting that "Colonel Davenport wedded a sister of Jeremiah Bowling."[19] In an 1891 civil court case, Rose Ann Mitchell, the elderly sister of George L.'s wife, testified uncertainly about her knowledge of Margaret's original name: "Margaret -------- was her name before she was married. Her maiden name was Bowling. She married a Mr. Lewis?" Mitchell didn't know when Margaret had married Davenport, and while she thought they were married in Winchester, she wasn't sure if Margaret had lived there.[20]

Although Margaret's connection to the Bowlings was murky to those who knew her in the 1830s and 1840s, Susan preserved a connection. Susan's 1878 will provided for many women of the Bowling family: Sophia Bowling Copp Gipner and Julia Bowling Watts Bellows and her daughters.[21] Early in the twentieth century, Bailey Davenport's former hired man Claus Lamp recalled that "It was surprising all the folks who came to eat at Bailey Davenport's and who were assisted by him—all claimed to be relatives. One was Mrs. Swann. ... Jas Bellows was another. ... Sam Bowling was

another. He'd come and stay a week or two. He lived out in the country." Even J. B. Patterson, the Oquakwa, Illinois, newspaper editor who published the Sauk leader Black Hawk's 1833 autobiography, claimed to be a cousin. After Bailey's death, Patterson—who also hailed from Winchester—and his sister professed to be entitled to an inheritance by virtue of being Bailey's cousins, "and bearing the same relation, therefore, as the Copps, the Swanns, and the Bowlings, of this city."[22] Lamp, though, seemed skeptical about the claims of these relatives, implying that their visits to Bailey—in the mid-nineteenth century, certainly one of the wealthiest men in the region—were prompted by desires for assistance. These visits suggest that for decades Bailey followed his mother's wishes in acknowledging these transplanted relations. It's clear that Susan, if not Margaret, was part of a network that included Bowling women. Yet these were second- and third-generation relations. By the 1830s, kinship was largely framed in terms of marriage and immediate family, whereas the spaces through which both George and Margaret likely traveled en route to Rock Island were probably shaped by extrafamilial bonds of service, labor, comradeship, and care. Naming Margaret as a sister of the Bowlings confers on her a white settler pedigree through relations that may or may not have been forged by marriage.

Sylvia Van Kirk has traced this shift in the idea of kin relations to the arrival of white wives in fur trade society.[23] Thus when various women—all of whom arrived after Margaret—claimed or were given the status of "first white woman," these were declarations of legitimacy in which entitlement to property was limned by non-whiteness. One county history notes that early settler Susan Edgington, who arrived south of the Rock River in 1834, had often told her children that "for the first six months after coming here, she never saw another white woman," and that the local Indians marveled at her firstborn, for he was "the first white baby they had ever seen."[24] The Indians' alleged amazement was clearly a fiction used to amplify her significance as part of the vanguard of white settlement, since the Sauk, Meskwaki, Potawatomi, and Menomonee people she encountered were surely familiar with the Davenports. Netta Bartholomew Anderson, who collected the stories of pioneer women in 1912, speculates on the feelings of early settler Mrs. Clark, who arrived in 1828: "I have often wondered what the mother's emotions were as she watched the boat steam away on up the river leaving her there, the only white woman on the main land, her's [*sic*] the only white family, and the nearest neighbors (except for the Davenports on the island) a hundred miles away." Anderson noted that "Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Davenport" were the "only white women who were here from the first," but it may be that the "Mrs. Davenport" she referred to was Susan, who would have been about the same age as Mrs. Clark.[25]

Although other "first white women" either created their own accounts

or were acknowledged as such by later historians and family members, local histories uniformly elide details about Margaret, who is never named as an "Old Settler" and was not, in fact, the "white mother" who is most essential to the region's origin story.[26] It was not *she* who birthed the first white child, but her daughter; past her child-bearing age on arrival, she is merely tangential to the genealogy that establishes Rock Island as the origin of the white family and the economic and civic relations it spawned. She was never clearly identified as a white woman by anyone other than Susan, who had much to gain through her white motherhood. But when Margaret arrived on the island in 1816, what it meant to be a white woman in colonial territory had not yet taken shape; it was only when the United States wrested northwest Illinois from the Sauk and Meskwaki in 1832 that the white family became necessary to authorize settlement.

If Davenport did marry her, it was almost certainly not for her wealth or social position. He didn't marry her to create progeny. If he married her for sex, it wasn't exclusive. Love? Perhaps, but it may have been her daughter who captivated him; possibly it was Margaret who struck a deal for herself and Susan. It's likely that Davenport sought a woman with little to lose, willing to live among strangers, Indians, traders, and military men on the edge of society, who could farm and cook and harvest and preserve, spin and weave, beat rugs and clean floors, care for the sick and aid in childbirth. In this respect, Margaret was like other women living on the upper Mississippi when she arrived. Most of them, by far, were not white. When civic leaders and historians lauded the arrival of the first white families, they contrived a temporal separation between the Native past and settler presence. But the white family was a fabrication brought into being by its antithesis: the multinational métis family that, until the 1830s, had been the norm.

In 1978 Anna Bear, a white woman living and teaching on the Meskwaki Settlement near Tama, Iowa, offered her perspective on Susan's, and by extension Margaret's, identity. Married to Archie Bear, Jr., a descendant of George L. Davenport's daughter Chi ni ha (Jennie) Davenport, she recounted her family's genealogy in a letter to the editor. In passing, she described encountering a portrait of Susan at the State Historical Society in Des Moines (Fig. 2). This painting, made in 1861 by Stephen James Ferris, depicts Susan in a dark dress and lace collar and cuffs, oval loops dangling from her ears. Her black hair is coiffed above her ears; her cheekbones are high and her eyes dark. Bear remarked, "I saw, along with the family silver, which perhaps marked Col. Davenport as a wealthy man, a picture of the woman I understood to have been his wife, [which] clearly suggested she was a probably a full blood American Indian."[27]

Bear may be an unreliable source. She was wrong in assuming that Susan was Davenport's wife, and her speculation leaves ample room



Fig. 2. Stephen James Ferris, Portrait of Susan Davenport. Courtesy of State Historical Museum of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa.

for assumptions about "Indianness" based on appearance. Yet Bear would have understood the lived reality of Meskwaki people, for whom "Indianness" is constructed by both family relations and state power. Her contention that Susan was a "full blood" reasserts the volatility of identity that Davenport's settler descendants and local historians worked hard to secure in county histories, biographies, wills, and lawsuits. These forms of record keeping shore up boundaries marking not only the legitimate members of the Davenport family, but also the validity of property ownership, the definition of history, and the meaning of whiteness. Although Margaret is central to the Davenport family's "first white" claim, Bear's alternative history is influenced by indigenous genealogy. Acknowledging the racial intricacies of the interior by tracing the white settler family's Meskwaki correlate, she ends up destabilizing the identity of the white branch of the family.

In the Midwest, whiteness has been constructed in opposition to indigeneity at least since the 1830s. Midwestern regional histories

that fixate on the arrival of first white families echo those that Jean M. O'Brien has identified as "replacement" narratives. Milo Quaife's 1942 introduction to two settler narratives is typical: "Although the settler came to subdue a wilderness, it was not a vacant land. For unrecorded ages the Red Man had occupied it, developing a Stone-age culture which made but slight use of the natural resources of the country and which knew nothing of material progress or change. … [W]hen the two races came together the swift conquest and displacement of the red man by the white was inevitable."[28] Netta Anderson, writing about early white pioneer women, admitted that while her "woman's sympathies are with the weaker side and its lost cause, yet my common sense and pride in race arouse to the cry, 'The King is dead. Long live the King.'"[29] For both historians, the Native is a foil—their "queer" relations to property and kin are essential to defining settler property and family life. Indigeneity thus "haunts" settler geographies of place, identity, and ownership; indigeneity also haunts the Midwestern family and its claims to power, property, and purity that whiteness secured.[30]

Though Quaife implies that this "coming together" in the contact zone resulted in displacement rather than anything more intimate, most men in Davenport's ambit married indigenous women. Throughout much of the fur trade era, partnerships "in the custom of the country" solidified relations between white traders and their native associates, often giving them access not only to furs, but also to other lucrative prospects in the interior.[31] Such alliances characterized the lead-mining communities surrounding Dubuque and Prairie du Chien before 1830, and almost all of Davenport's closest associates on the upper Mississippi had wives of Native descent, many of whom were probably Meskwaki: Antoine LeClaire (who was French-Potawatomi himself), Antoine Gokey, Amos Farrar, Russell Farnham, Samuel Muir, Jesse Shull, John Connolly, John Johnson, A. P. Van Metre, and François Bouthillier.[32] There is no evidence that Margaret was connected to any of the Native nations who were Davenport's closest trading partners. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary. It was well known that Marguerite LeClaire—like her husband, a product of a well-connected métis fur trade family—was Meskwaki. Histories written after her death in 1878 celebrate her as near-nobility, being a relative of Acoqua, a headman of the mixed-race village at Catfish Creek near the Dubuque mines. Trader and physician Samuel Muir's marriage, sometime before 1820, to a Meskwaki woman named Mawwaiquoi, or Sophia, was later rendered as a cross-cultural romance: she saved his life, Pocahontas-style, nursed him back to health after an illness, and paddled hundreds of miles down the Mississippi in search of him.[33] No such legend is attached to Margaret. Davenport did not petition for and never received lands set aside in 1824 for the children of Sauk and Meskwaki women and white men, as did many of his peers with Native wives. Perhaps most importantly, these nations

never claimed Margaret as their own as they did LeClaire, his brother, his wife, and numerous women to whose parentage they testified in these women's attempts to claim lands reserved for them in the so-called "Half Breed Tract."[34]

On the other hand, if anyone in the Davenport household had indigenous heritage, it might not be recorded in government documents, which generally refused the complexities of kinship and identity that characterized many fur trade families. The 1830 census of households on Rock Island had three categories: "free white persons," "free colored persons," and "slaves." In 1830 the Davenport household had three "slaves": a girl under 10, one between 10 and 24, and a woman between 24 and 36. There were two white women in the household who were probably Susan and Margaret. But Antoine Gokey's Native wife, Rose or Rosa, probably the Davenport's closest female neighbor on the island, was also listed as white. Antoine LeClaire and his wife Marguerite, both métis people embedded in the kin networks of fur trade families, lived nearby and were categorized as "free white persons."[35] In the alchemy of identity on the frontier, an indigenous person's self-presentation and mode of living would have determined their race over and above skin tone or parentage. Antoine LeClaire joked to visitors that he was the "first white man" to settle in Davenport, knowing full well that his "whiteness" was a product of his wealth and conduct rather than his father's heritage and culture.[36] Davenport's movements through the interior before 1816 would have provided him with plenty of opportunities to encounter indigenous women around the Great Lakes, in Dubuque, New Orleans, Natchez, or St. Louis. Many métis women whose white fathers were in the fur trade were educated in St. Louis, married white men, and were generally integrated into the society and customs of white people.[37] St. Louis was also a hub for the indigenous slave trade, and by the early nineteenth century, descendants of those individuals formed part of a diverse and hybrid serving class; some children of enslaved people would go on to marry into the families that had enslaved them.[38] It is not unimaginable that Davenport might have chosen a wife, or servant, from this population. It's possible that Margaret was descended from one of the indigenous nations of the Tidewater; colonial warfare created a kaleidoscope of shifting relationships fueled by adoption and the slave trade. These possibilities underscore that the "first white family" is a narrative of Midwestern roots that emerged in opposition to other forms of family that existed not only before, but geographically and temporally alongside, the "white" family.

Familial relationships between white and indigenous people are critical to the "queer" forms of kinship that settler histories use to validate legal claims on the land. In the annals of the Davenport family, replacement narratives, in which settler cultures take on the positive, "noble" characteristics of the former stewards of the land, rely on the idea that the white

sons of the white trader were valid inheritors by way of close relations with indigenous people that are framed as domestic.[39] Late-nineteenth-century historian Perry Armstrong defends Davenport's 1829 purchase of the land comprising the indigenous village of Saukenuk by arguing that it was motivated in part by "what may be termed family relations—not of kinship, but of neighborly intercourse." George L. and Bailey, Armstrong claims, were like brothers to their Sauk and Meskwaki playmates. They spoke these languages fluently, learned hunting, fishing, and canoeing alongside their compatriots, and entered the lodges of their hosts as freely as they did their own home. So well did they get on with each other, Armstrong claims, that "the white mother entertain[ed] no fears for the safety or contamination of her sons. … Thus were the sons of the wealthy white merchant raised on terms of perfect equality with the Indian children."[40]

This sense of equality, sanctioned by free "intercourse" between homes and families, is crucial to historians' legitimation of the Davenports' early property claims: George L., at just fifteen, was often described as the "first white settler" in Iowa. He built a home across from his father's on the west bank of the Mississippi in 1832, allegedly on the very day of the treaty signing that ended the Black Hawk War. Downer, in his 1910 county history, argues that "this was possible because George was a favorite with the Indians, had been adopted into the tribe and given the Indian name of Musquakie."[41] Years later, a friend of Susan's, Mary Durham, would write a poem in which Bailey's status as inheritor of "the lessons red men know" makes him a steward of their land. Channeling his voice, Durham justified his ownership of the Rock River bluff site known as "Black Hawk's Watch Tower": "And that is why I hold the land/From Mississippi to the shore/A sacred trust from Black Hawk's hand/To keep intact, as if, once more/ The Sacs and Foxes—those who roam/Were coming back to claim their home."[42]

In suggesting that interracial bonds between white boys and indigenous men functioned as a conduit for indigenous knowledge and practice, Durham and Armstrong both rely on and negate "queer" relationships by consigning them to the past. Settler replacement thus resists the uprootings and loss of origins that plagues migration by drawing on an imagined indigenous inheritance. Their gender allowed Davenport's sons to claim new roots in the Midwest not only because they had lived in Sauk and Meskwaki homes, but because, unlike many indigenous daughters of white fathers in the 1830s, they could inherit indigenous knowledge without losing their whiteness.[43] Armstrong and others were quick to cite close ties between the Davenports and their Sauk and Meskwaki neighbors as a defining characteristic of the family, but these early histories deny any possibility that either son could have been the child of an indigenous woman; moreover, they excise the sexual intercourse between these white sons and indigenous daughters in favor of intimacies that are purely neighborly.

Both George L. and Bailey had children by Meskwaki women outside of their legal marriages to the daughters of other early white settlers. George L.'s daughter, Jennie (Chi ni ha) was born in 1844, the same year that his white wife, Sarah, gave birth to their fourth child. Bailey's relationship with I yan o pee (Hianope) occurred before his brief marriage to Mary Grace Lynde; their son, Wah ke maw wit (Harry), was born in 1847 when I yan o pee was fifteen and Bailey was in his midtwenties.[44]

The Davenports' relations with Meskwaki women function similarly to the "neighborly relations" they may have held with Meskwaki men in that they imply consent. The idea that the Davenport family held in trust the land on which the Sauk and Meskwaki built their homes and planted their gardens suggests that the residents agreed to such a measure when they did not. Property ownership, then, like sexual relations with women, implies forms of magnanimous cross-cultural beneficence and protection by appealing to paternalistic understandings of masculinity and tamping down the possibility that claiming land and bodies was *not* consensual. Although I yan o pee and Jennie's mother, whose families were being banished from Iowa during the very years they gave birth, may have consented to these relationships, they almost certainly lacked the power to negotiate intimate relations as part of broader political and economic contexts in the way their foremothers had. For Jennie and I yan o pe, any attempts to manage their sexual lives would have occurred alongside, and perhaps because of, the loss of a land base.

Yet local histories follow other histories of colonial spaces by narrating threats to property as a danger to white women's purity. The "Indian at the window" trope in white women's colonial writing has long defined the Native male visitor as a sexual threat, and women's narratives of the upper Mississippi Valley also make use of this plot point.[45] Caroline Phelps lived and worked at her husband's trading house at Oquawka (Yellow Banks), Illinois, in the 1830s, and her diary—possibly edited by a descendant and first published in 1930—has her recalling the night when an "old chief … came to my window and said he wanted bullets and caps. … My husband was gone from home, and he looked so savage I felt a little afraid of him. … [H]e knew I was there and I was afraid he would break the window."[46] A 1908 county history describes how Susan Edington worried, in 1835, that her white baby could be raised as an Indian one. Indigenous visitors allegedly "took a great fancy" to her newborn son, "and the young mother received frequent and urgent offers to trade a papoose for the white baby. This added to her fears, for she was in constant terror lest the Indians[']' great desire to possess her offspring might lead them to a make a forcible exchange at some time when her husband was absent."[47] Susan Lewis had her own tale, later recounted by her friend, poet Mary Durham, in which a "tall Winnebago stepped catlike in" through the door and demanded a cup of coffee; while her back was turned, he pulled a knife.[48]

Each of these stories reaffirms the legitimacy of white families by narrating interracial intimacies and the children they produced as threatening. Phelps's diary, though, also describes a domestic life that was transient, unpredictable, and comprising mostly a shifting group of indigenous and Black women. Indian women provided her with housing, transportation, and care; they fed her and nursed her child.[49] Certainly Susan's story of an Indian man's unrealized threat to her purity reframes the likely reality that her domestic life as a young woman did not offer the stability, privacy, and forms of intimacy so crucial to defining the white family by the 1840s and 1850s. Through the doors of the trading post that was also her home passed white soldiers and miners, métis trappers and boatmen, Kickapoos, Menomonees, Ho-Chunks, Meskwakis, and Sauks. And it was, of course, a locus for the circulation of goods in the interior: lead from Galena, furs from west of the Mississippi, kettles, knives, guns, calico, strouds, eyeglasses, boots, peppermint, chocolate, rum. Brian Connolly has traced nineteenth-century literary and legal "fears of the circulation of bodies in public," manifested in tales of uprootings prompted by westward movement. Central to these fears were concerns about incest, which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as the symbol of an overly licentious, purely commercial subject.[50] The illiberal domestic environment—open, market-oriented, in danger of incestuous relations—that inspired the formation of the new liberal subject seems oddly congruent with the Davenport home, not only as a site for the circulation of goods and people on the frontier, but because it included people both free and unfree in a time and place in which the terms of freedom and consent were not always or consistently aligned with race.

Mid-nineteenth-century legal prohibitions on incest, especially, were meant to protect the white, bourgeois family; even well-meaning white abolitionists played a key role, in the 1840s and 1850s, in associating the horrors of incest with the fatherless Black family that it produced. If this association between race and licit and illicit forms of intimacy is primarily a construct of the archive, however, it cannot help us understand how the various women—Black, white, mixed-race, indigenous—who had sexual relationships with Davenport men experienced a domestic environment with multiple and changing sexual alliances. It is clear, however, that although Susan's status as mother to her father's sons is acknowledged in many local histories, her sexual relations with him are not. And as the Davenports' reputation as the "first white family" began to cohere around their investments in property, the men of the family engaged in sexual relations with women of lower racial and class status both inside and outside the household.

In the one published essay that focuses on Margaret and Susan, Anne Beiser Allen speculates that Margaret might have been motivated to

marry Davenport to support her children, and that she "was undoubtedly attracted to the young English adventurer," widely described in archival evidence as gregarious, witty, generous, and fair. Even as she describes Margaret's adventures—living among the natives, working through the hardscrabble life of a trader's wife to become the wife of a wealthy man—as a "romance," Allen hints at realities that undermine the ideal of the modern, heterosexual family. She notes that Margaret's "options were limited," her family far away, and she likely had no access to money if she had wanted to leave. Allen circumspectly alludes to the oddity of Davenport's sexual relationship with his stepdaughter when she notes that "Eastern laws did not yet extend beyond the eastern bank of the Mississippi. Polygamy was widely accepted among the Native Americans, and extra-marital affairs were not uncommon among the fur traders and military personnel who made up the society in which she now lived." The birth of George L., Allen admits, "must have been a frightening experience for the teen-aged Susan."[51]

Fifteen years old in 1816, Susan certainly would not have seemed too young for sex at that time and in that place. But comparisons to polygamy and adultery do not quite capture this relationship: Davenport never claimed her as his wife, and his paternal relationship to her would likely have trumped the lack of blood ties, making the relationship morally dubious even in a frontier context. Susan's stepfather would have been aware that if he wanted children with anyone other than a Native woman, Susan was the only woman he had access to. While proscriptions against sexual relations with one's children—whether consanguineous or not—had long been criminalized under religious laws both in the United States and Europe, it was not until 1823, the year Susan gave birth to Bailey and six years after George L.'s birth, that sex with a stepdaughter was outlawed in the neighboring Ohio Territory. Brian Connolly shows that secular laws against incest arose in the first half of the nineteenth century concurrently with the ideal of the bourgeois home, which was imagined as a place where the liberal (male) subject could be protected from the unbridled individualism of the nascent market economy. Connolly tracks fears that this subject, uprooting himself from his origins to become the self-made man so lauded by the new nation, might inadvertently mistake familial relations for market ones. Those who remade themselves for the market, in other words, risked impropriety in their encounters with others. Laws against incest thus arose to secure the middle-class family—and particularly the white male subject at its helm—from the dangers of "both excessive privacy and excessive publicity." If such laws arose to protect the white subject, in other words, Susan's later investment in whiteness cannot necessarily be aligned with consent.[52]

Davenport's relationships with other women in the household suggest that he used the privacy of the household to wield power over their

bodies, especially after 1830. Margaret and Susan labored in a diverse and ever-changing household, which included enslaved or indentured women of color and their children. An 1824 indenture record shows that a Black woman named Charlotte signed a seven-year contract with George Davenport for herself and her child. Slavery was illegal under the 1818 Illinois constitution, but indenture was a recognized loophole; moreover, the contract was signed just three weeks after Illinois voters rejected a proposal to hold a new constitutional convention, the purpose of which was to legalize slavery in the state.[53] A Black woman named Matilda, who would eventually bear Bailey Davenport's son, was born in 1835, the same year as Elizabeth, the daughter of a serving woman named Catherine. Both were born in the newly built home that signified the family's status. Who was Matilda's mother? Possibly Charlotte. In an interview made around 1910, Claus Lamp, who worked for Bailey, recalled, "Then there was a colored woman. Her mother worked for the Col. George Davenport, and this younger colored woman was his daughter—half-sister to Bailey also. Her name was Matilda. She was a wild girl; run out nights, so I don't know who her son's father was but Bailey was said to be the father of her son Joe."[54]

Lamp attests not only to the incestuousness of the Davenport family, he also links this kind of illicit circulation with Blackness. After relating rather matter of factly the intergenerational sexual coercion perpetuated by Davenport men on Black women, he suggests that it was Matilda who was "wild," who "run out nights." Lamp's suppositions are informed by decades of cultural associations between incest and the commodified Black body on the part of both slaveholders and abolitionists. Both Matilda and her mother were defined by circulation that excluded them from domestic security—as workers hired by the Davenport family, and for Matilda, her alleged surfeit of sexuality. Lamp also circumvents a clear assertion of fatherhood. Matilda's mother "worked for Colonel Davenport" but was a "half-sister" to Bailey; he claimed not to know who Joe Hilbring's father was but was pretty certain it was Bailey. In other words, it was not only the system of slavery that commodified and excluded Black bodies; in Midwestern towns where slavery was ostensibly illegal, the language and law of incest could mark the bodies of even free Black laborers as extraneous to the white family, especially when paternity was in question. Matilda's family was marked by the fatherlessness and transferal of sexual pathology that is part of what Hortense Spillers calls the "American grammar" that, even outside of the violence of chattel slavery, its displacements and ungenderings, encodes a "counter-narrative to notions of the domestic."[55]

Their storied whiteness may have protected the fatherless Margaret and her equally fatherless daughter from being recorded in similar grammatical terms, but the Atlantic world in which both Margaret and Susan were probably born allows for at least the possibility that their racial identities were not always so clearly articulated or unchanging. If Margaret was

born in 1767 in King George County in Virginia's Tidewater region, she was born in the heart of slave-owning territory. She would have been born into a highly stratified society of elite planters, working-class whites who were often descendants of indentured servants, a handful of skilled white indentured servants, and enslaved Black people. King George County was the home of the Carters, Conways, Fitzhughs, Lewises, Taliaferroes, Skinkers, and, yes, Bowlings (or Bollings or Bolins)—all prominent slave-owning families. And what of Winchester, where Margaret may have lived and Davenport certainly did? Just over a third of Frederick County's population was enslaved in both 1790 and 1800, but the number of free Blacks, while much smaller, grew proportionally much faster. In 1782, perhaps in response to the freedom rhetoric of the Revolution, Virginia's assembly overturned a statute that had prevented the private emancipation of enslaved people. Thereafter, the rate at which enslaved people—both Black and mixed-race—were manumitted in Virginia rose, roughly until the passage of the Removal law of 1806, which required anyone freed after May first of that year to leave the state. Revolutionary language aside, efforts had turned toward preserving the carefully constructed color line that demarcated the difference between free and enslaved.[56]

During Margaret's adult years, Winchester's Frederick County had more free Blacks, proportionally, than most of Virginia, and some no doubt chose to leave the state to preserve their freedom. It's possible to imagine that Margaret was one of these. Perhaps she met Davenport while he was recruiting in Winchester and entered his employ. Whether forced or strategic, Charlotte, with a child to support, would do just that in Illinois in 1824. Such a bargain might have been made almost anywhere in the upper Mississippi after 1812. Indeed, given the mishmash of gradual abolition, indentured servitude, and slavery, any of the locations that historians have linked to Margaret—Winchester, New Orleans, Erie, Cincinnati, St. Louis—would have been cities where a woman of color might have existed in a limbo between servitude and freedom between 1780 and 1816. She might also, if she were light-skinned and determined, choose passing for herself and her remaining children. George King left England as a teenager and reinvented himself in the American interior as George Davenport, and the city is named after his aspirational identity, his foundational lie. Who is to say that a woman like Margaret might not bury her past to reinvent herself in the free Territory of Illinois if she had the chance?

Whatever racial status Margaret may have had in the East, her whiteness was built, in the Midwest, on her access to property. George Davenport's will, likely written around 1840, mentions Margaret by name more than any other archival document I have found. In it, he uses family designations to connect himself more firmly to his sons than to Margaret, Susan, or Elizabeth, and bestows property in accordance with the close-

ness of these connections. Davenport gave lifetime possession of significant properties and the profits from them to "Margaret Davenport and her daughter Susan Louis." Designating property to support a wife during her lifetime is consistent with legal practice at the time—wives were to be supported, not vested with the ability to create wealth.[57] But although the will refers to Bailey and George L. as "my son," Margaret is "their grand-mother" and Susan "their mother." It's possible that his failure to refer to Margaret as "his wife" was an oversight, but when it came to property, Davenport was scrupulous. His reference to his "natural" daughter Elizabeth reflects the family relation he ascribed to Margaret and Susan; to his minor child "Elizabeth, daughter of Catherine Pouit," he left one thousand dollars, to be managed by George L.: mothers and daughters, linked to one another, sons linked to him. There is no mention of Matilda—born the same year as Elizabeth—or her mother, whose Blackness denied to them both the real property and the property in whiteness limned by the family relations named in the will.

Certainly, there are aspects of gender at work here, as Davenport's "natural" sons are accorded much more than his "natural" daughters. Yet Cheryl I. Harris has demonstrated that in the United States ideas about who could own property and who could not have worked to create what she calls "the critical core of whiteness." In her incisive history of the legal processes through which whiteness became a property held by some and unavailable to others, she explains how the American legal system and the customs from which it emerged defined property in ways that made ownership through labor or occupation contingent on race: "Possession—the act necessary to lay the basis for rights in property—was defined to include only the cultural practices of whites," effectively excluding the culture-based property claims of indigenous groups and the claims of Black people, whose lack of property in whiteness continued long after they were no longer legally defined as property themselves. These exclusions "laid the foundation for the idea that whiteness—that which whites alone possess—is valuable and is property."[58] In this respect, the Davenport family tree, planted in property rights that emerged from the opening of public lands in the early 1830s, grew up around this "critical core of whiteness." Margaret, Susan, and Elizabeth are white because, in excluding other members of the family, the will bequeaths them this property too. And that bequest would have been invaluable to Susan, who likely bore the shame of incest—that she was her father's daughter and his sons' mother was public knowledge long after sex with a stepdaughter became a crime—to bear the white sons that would guarantee her future.

Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that Susan participated rather vigorously in generating the narratives upon which Davenport's reputation was built after his death in 1845. With little to no education and possibly not even literate, she never had the opportunity to write these histories herself,

but the stories she related formed the basis of community histories both during her waning years and for decades to come. Franc Willkie's 1858 book *Davenport Past and Present* contains the first biography of George Davenport, upon which all subsequent narratives are based. He gives credit to multiple individuals for supplying information about the early years, and all but one are eminent men of the cities of Davenport and Rock Island. Last on the list was "Mrs. Goldsmith, of Rock Island." This was Susan. She had arrived on the island a decade before any of the others listed, and thus some of the earliest anecdotes could only have originated from her recollections.[59] Having inherited a portion of Davenport's substantial property holdings, her financial stability was ensured by the city's growth. But the town's historical record would also be the guardian of her family's legitimacy and thus her own. Her stories, perhaps more than any others, lent these regional histories the veneer of romance, and she willingly, even eagerly, told her stories to any and all comers up until the time of her death in 1878.

For Susan, a story of Davenport as "settler, provider, homesteader, businessman and counselor" would have been the most useful version of the truth. Her mother's and her own identity as the "first white women" upheld that truth, and its power denied to others this exclusive ancestry and the property it conveyed. Elizabeth Davenport Ferkel tried to claim both, and lost. In 1891, after Bailey's death, she sued George L.'s heirs for the farm she lived on, which she claimed Bailey had given her. The ensuing legal struggle gave Elizabeth the opportunity to make her own public proclamations about her parentage, and newspapers in the area seem to have accepted that she was indeed George Davenport's daughter. Various articles published between 1890 and her death in 1913 described her as a "daughter of the late Colonel Davenport," "one of the children" of the city father, and as Bailey Davenport's "half-sister." The authors confidently stated that she was not only born on the island, but in the well-known home itself. Writers looking to satisfy a public hungry for frontier nostalgia unreservedly related that she had grown up on the island and, moreover, had been present to witness the aftermath of Davenport's murder—a key moment in the city's origin story.[60] Although she was never able to claim the real estate on behalf of herself and her own large family, she strove, and more successfully, to claim a portion of the region's settler history.

Matilda was not able to do the same, though she kept up property relations with Bailey his whole life. A few years after Joseph was born she married a German immigrant named Hilbring, and Joseph was given his last name (although he continued to live with Bailey and his mother), perhaps in an effort to obscure the Democratic mayor's intimacy with a Black woman in the years leading up to the Civil War. Bailey may have gifted the Hilbrings' farm in neighboring Henry County, Illinois, and throughout the 1880s, Claus Lamp supplied them with financial gifts—likely funneled

from his boss, who, in spite of never publicly acknowledging Matilda as his sister or his son's mother, continued to hold some sort of obligation towards her. Perhaps Matilda was the active force, compelling the four-time mayor of Rock Island to help her family, perhaps in return for keeping mum about their relationship. After her husband's death in 1887 left Matilda with upwards of three thousand dollars of debts to repay, Bailey cosigned as surety. It may have been his only appearance in the probate records, but his signature testifies to a connection—or obligation—that lasted forty years. If Matilda's kinship with the Davenports was kept under wraps, members of her family were aware of her origins. Her daughter Maggie asserted in 1910 that her mother's birthplace was "Government Island" (a common name for Rock Island), and when her daughter Mary died, her family recorded her mother's maiden name as "Matilda Davenport." For the Hilbrings, some of whom lived in Rock Island at century's end, it must have been understood that Matilda, hardworking wife of a German farmer, was a daughter of the Davenport family, born in their home on the island.[61]

And what of Jennie Davenport, I yan o pee, and Bailey's son Wah ke maw wit? Anna Bear recalled that while Bailey "completely disregarded his Indian family and was not well thought of by the tribesman [*sic*]" George paid for his own and Bailey's children to attend "an Indian School in the East."[62] Geraldine (Assawwanakaskamoqua) Davenport Stemmons noted in 1986 that Jennie, like Matilda and Elizabeth, was born in the island house during the very years the Meskwakis were exiled to Kansas. Jennie and her mother left at some point, but returned with other Meskwakis, probably in the early 1850s. Stemmons explained that "the party was stopped by soldiers. A note, written by George Davenport was produced by a woman identifying her and her infant daughter as the wife and child of George L'Oste Davenport. They were permitted to continue their journey." While Bear stated that George L.'s family was "neither Indian nor white," Stemmons described Jennie as a Meskwaki woman. She had "a light olive complexion, blue eyes and nearly blond hair flowing to her waist. She was … very pretty, dressed beautifully and danced very well. She is remembered by the Meskwakis due to her strong belief in the Indian traditions and her knowledge and skill with native medicines. She had her own 'bundle.'"[63] Jennie's mother's ability to call on Davenport's name—her unchosen origin—led her daughter home.

Jennie Davenport, Stemmons' great-great grandmother, married Black Hawk's great-grandson, and Stemmons' father grew up learning from Jennie. At the settlement in Tama, Iowa, where the Meskwakis purchased land in 1857 and where they still sustain their land base and culture, Davenport is a common surname. Stemmons' genealogy of the indigenous descendants of Bailey and George Davenport covers forty-three pages. In contrast, in 1961, a newspaper article reported that Mayme Davenport, "the Last Direct Descendant" of city founder George Davenport, had been

moved to a nursing home after living "in solitude," and some degree of poverty, in the family's large home. Davenport's family line, the article implied, would end with her.[64] If the roots of the first white family still have a hold on the historical imagination in this place, the "queer" family relations created by their ties to Black and indigenous people suggest not only past realities, but futures unimagined in settler accounts.

Saidiya Hartman found there was little more to say about Venus, the representation of enslaved Black womanhood, whose overwritten history precluded Hartman's ability to narrate a "romance of resistance" or even to bring her reader closer to understanding the "violence that destroyed them and named the ruin: Venus." Margaret existed and exists on the other side of the "play of power" that informs both history and its archive.[65] Her historical identity—like that of the Midwest—is her narrated whiteness that is shored up by those whom it excludes from the settler story. In its plagiaristic repetition of Davenport's biography after 1850, the story is the product of a sort of textual incestuousness. I found that my attempts to narrate other possibilities, other origins hung on the imperative of imagining the lives of women whom I defined by their distance from the various historical and archival mechanisms that produced the settler story as a white story: Charlotte and Matilda, I yan o pee and Jennie. Elizabeth, who sought to claim the property she felt her whiteness deserved. Susan, who patched the cracks in her past by narrating her own version of history, excluding unpropertied others with whom she had shared her island home. The view from the window where I write today looks out over the river to that island. The house that George Davenport built faces mine across the current. As a settler historian, I live on the results of our fictions.

Notes

1. For biographical information on Davenport, see Regena Trant Schantz, *The Trader at Rock Island: George Davenport and the Founding of the Quad Cities* (Moline, IL: Heritage Documentaries, 2020).

2. "History of the House," Colonel Davenport House, Colonel Davenport Historical Foundation https://davenporthouse.org/history-of-the-house.php. Accessed November 14, 2022.

3. Doug Kiel, "Untaming the Mild Frontier: In Search of New Midwestern Histories," *Middle West Review* 1 (fall 2014):10.

4. Jean M. O'Brien has shown that New Englanders crafted "modern" histories out of "fragmentary and disorderly archives" through efforts to "document precisely the people and events that set their modernity in motion." O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 16.

5. Imani Perry, *Vexy Thing: On Gender and Liberation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 44.

6. Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: Unversity of California Press, 2010).

7. Adele Perry, *Colonial Relations: The Douglas-Connolly Family and the Nineteenth-Century Imperial* World (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 4. Perry demonstrates that colonial family histories constitute "local configurations of imperialism and capitalism"; as unstable colonial locales were absorbed into nations, these messier stories solidified.

8. Jerrod Hayes, *Queer Roots for the Diaspora: Ghosts in the Family Tree* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), xxx, 20–21, 24. Hayes's definition of "queer" diasporic histories builds on the work of Stoler, Betty Joseph, Durba Ghosh, and others who have made histories of intimacy central to histories of colonialism. Joseph, *Reading the East India Company, 1720–1840: Colonial Currencies of Gender* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

9. Many historians recognize the absence of records of women's lives and experiences as central to the imperial project of consolidating empire around official histories. See, for example, *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, and Mary Elizabeth Perry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

10. Several genealogies and histories cite a marriage between Peggy Bolen and Crane Lewis in Frederick County, Virginia, in 1800 as evidence of her first marriage. Anne Beiser Allen, "Romance on the Frontier: Margaret Davenport and Susan Goldsmith," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 105 (winter 2012):296.

11. Perry, *Colonial Relations*, 47. There are several excellent studies of the complexities of this colonial world in the Midwest, including Tanis C. Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Mississippi* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996), and more recently, Nicole St-Onge, "Familial Foes? French-Sioux Families and Plains Métis Brigades in the Nineteenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly* 39 (2015):302–337. Although such studies often focus on politics and economics, I am also influenced by studies of how racial identities are recorded, traced, and narrated, such as Hayes, *Queer Roots;* Erik Dussere, *Balancing the Books, Faulkner, Morrison, & the Economies of Slavery* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998); O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*; Andrew R. L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray, editors, *The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2001); Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

12. Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 26 (June 2008):11.

13. Sarah Schneider Kavanaugh, "Haunting Remains: Educating a New American Citizenry at Indian Hill Cemetery," in *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History*, ed. Colleen Boyd and Coll Thrush (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 153.

14. Susan's last name, presumably that of her father, is variously rendered as Lewis, Lowis, and Louis. Several genealogists and historians suggest Margaret had a son named William when she arrived in 1816. See MSS 108, Darlene Ward Paxton Collection, Iowa State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa, and Allen, "Romance on the Frontier." Kirsten McKenzie has noted that colonial zones created opportunities for remaking identity in *Scandal in the Colonies* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2005).

15. "Old Settlers' Pic Nic," *Rock Island Daily Argus*, Sept. 5, 1867, n.p.; "Mrs. Davenport" and "Obituary," clippings in Susan Lewis Goldsmith scrapbook, George L. Davenport Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa; "Stone Is Laid," *Rock Island Argus*, Oct. 1, 1895, 3.

16. See O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting;* Susan E. Gray, "Stories Written in the Blood: Race, Identity, and the Middle West," in *The American Midwest*, 126.

17. Schantz, *The Trader at Rock Island*, 52–53; Allen, "Romance on the Frontier," 296.

18. "Upholstering" advertisement, *Winchester Republican*, Oct. 15, 1830, 4; Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester in Virginia: The Oldest Town in the Shenandoah Valley* (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2007 [1925]), 120; Frederick County, Va., Third Census of the United States, 1810 (Lehi, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations, 2010), NARA microfilm publication M252, 71 rolls, Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; *War of 1812 Pension Application Files Index, 1812–1815*, database online (Provo, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations, 2010).

19. Harry Downer, *History Davenport and Scott County*, vol. 2 (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1910), 118; "Death of Old Settlers," *Rock Island Argus*, Sept. 28, 1871, 4.

20. From the deposition of Rose Ann Mitchell, Elizabeth Ferkler v. George L. Davenport, Civil Court Docket, Rock Island County, 1891, Darlene Paxton Collection, MS 108, Iowa State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa. James Madison Bowling married Margaret Pelletier, who thus became another Margaret Bowling, in Winchester in 1835.

21. Will of Susan M. Goldsmith, Rock Island County Will Abstracts, book C, 131.

22. Interview with Claus Lamp, Rock Island County History, box 55, notebooks 8–12, MS 27, John Henry Hauberg Papers, Augustana College Special Collections, Rock Island, Ill.; "The Wife's Portion," *Rock Island Argus* Oct. 1, 1895, 3.

23. Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 172.

24. Stanhope Blunt, "Rock Island Arsenal," *Historic Rock Island County: History of the Settlement of Rock Island County from the Earliest Known Period to the Present Time* (Rock Island: Kramer & Co., 1908), 9.

25. Mrs. K. T. (Netta Bartholomew) Anderson, "Some Reminiscences of Pioneer Rock Island Women," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* 17 (1912):64–65.

26. See, for example, Juliette Augusta Kinzie's account, *Wau-bun: The Early Day in the Northwest* (Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 2010), first published in 1856; Adele Gratiot, "Mrs. Adele P. Gratiot's Narrative," in *Report and Collections*

of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the years 1883, 1884, and 1885, Vol. 10 (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1888), 261-275; and J.T. Phelps Ewan, "Mrs. Caroline Phelps' Diary," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 23 (July 1930): 209-239.

27. Mrs. Archie Bear, Jr., "Letter to the Editor," *Toledo Chronicle*, May 5, 1978, n.p., clipping in Paxton Collection.

28. Quaife, "The Early Day of Rock Island and Davenport: The Narratives of J. W. Spencer and J. M. D. Burrows" (Chicago: Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelly & Sons Co., 1942), xvi.

29. Anderson, "Some Reminiscences of Pioneer Women," 64.

30. See Stoler, "Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen" in *Haunted by Empire*, 1–22; Coll Thrush, "Hauntings as Histories: Indigenous Ghosts and the Urban Past in Seattle," in *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence*, 75.

31. See especially Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, and Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737–1832* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

32. Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers*; United States Office of Indian Affairs, Central Superintendency, St. Louis, Missouri, vol. 32, "Claims under 1824 Sac and Fox Treaty, 1828–1837," Kansas Memory, https://www.kansasmemory.org/item/display.php?item_id=224663&f=00093829. Accessed March 25, 2020; B. L. Wick, "The Struggle for the Half-Breed Tract, *Annals of Iowa* 7 (1905):18–19; R. J. Bickel, "'Rat Row' in Keokuk," *Annals of Iowa* 33 (fall 1956):450–453.

33. Charles Snyder, "Antoine LeClaire, The First Proprietor of Davenport," *Annals of Iowa* 23 (fall 1941):86. The account of Mawwoquai is repeated verbatim in multiple county histories from the 1870s through the 1910s. This version is from *The History of Jo Daviess County*, 234–235.

34. United States Office of Indian Affairs, "Claims under 1824 Sac and Fox Treaty."

35. Bureau of the Census, *Fifth Census of the United States, 1830* (Provo, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations), 2010, images reproduced by FamilySearch.

36. Hayes, "Letters from the West in 1845," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 20 (Jan. 1922):42.

37. See Jay Gitlin, *The Bourgeois Frontier: French Towns, French Traders, and American Expansion* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010).

38. Peter K. Johnson, "Esclavage Rouge: The Nature and Influence of Indian Slavery in Colonial St. Louis," *Missouri Historical Review* 105 (2010):14–30.

39. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting.*

40. Perry Armstrong, *The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, with Biographical Sketches* (Springfield, Ill.: H. W. Rokker, 1887), 143.

41. Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County*, 802; Federal Writers' Project of the Works Project Administration for the State of Iowa, *Iowa, A Guide to the Hawkeye State* (New York: Hastings House, 1949), 224; "Claim House (Davenport, Iowa)," https://en-academic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/11548850.

42. Durham, "A Tale of the Trail," box 21 MSS 27, John Henry Hauberg Collection, Augustana College Special Collections, Rock Island, Ill.

43. See Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106 (June 1993), 1707–1791.

44. I have used the spellings provided by Geraldine Davenport Stemmons in Stemmons, *Descendants of Colonel George Davenport* (Geraldine Stemmons, 2014).

45. Brigitte Georgi-Findlay refers to this trope as the "darkening-of-the-window" scene. *Frontiers of Women's Writing: Women's Narratives and the Rhetoric of Westward Expansion* (Tuscon, AZ: University of. Arizona Press, 1996), 61.

46. J.T. Phelps Ewan, "Mrs. Caroline Phelps' Diary," 231.

47. "Biographical: John Edgington," *Historic Rock Island County: History of the Settlement of Rock Island County from the Earliest Known Period to the Present Time* (Rock Island: Kramer & Co, 1908), 9.

48. Durham, "The Lost Winnebago," Hauberg Collection, box 21, MSS27.

49. Ewan, "Mrs. Caroline Phelps' Diary."

50. Brian Connolly, *Domestic Intimacies: Incest and the Liberal Subject in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 14.

51. Allen, "Romance on the Prairie," 297–298.

52. Connolly, *Domestic Intimacies*, 18, 108–109.

53. "Col. Davenport Was among Early Galena Traders," *Galena Freeman's Journal*, Sept. 9, 1939, 4. On slavery and indenture in Illinois, see especially John Reynolds, *My Own Times: Embracing Also the History of My Own Life*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1879), 132–135; Adam Rowe, "The Republican Rhetoric of a Frontier Controversy: Newspapers in the Illinois Slavery Debate, 1823–1824," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (winter 2011):671–699; Lea VanderVelde, *Redemption Songs: Suing for Freedom before Dred Scott* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

54. Interview with Claus Lamp, John Henry Hauberg Papers. Another interviewee, Ida Schwatka, also remembered that "There was a mulatto boy who lived with Mrs. Lewis," Schwatka recalled. "He was Baily Davenport's son. A colored woman worked for him and she was the mother of the boy." Interview with Ida Schwatka, box 55, John Henry Hauberg Papers, MSS 27, Augustana Special Collections, Rock Island, Ill.

55. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17:2 (Summer 1987), 72.

56. Rebecca Aleene Ebert, "A Window on the Valley: A Study of the Free Black Community of Winchester and Frederick County, Virginia 1785–1860 (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 1986), 13–15.

57. Schantz, *Trader at Rock Island*, appendix 1, 386–391.

58. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106 (June 1993):1780, 1721.

59. Willkie, *Davenport Past and Present*, 4.

60. "Daughter of Island Married 50 Years," Mar. 6, 1902; "May Revive Case," *Rock Island Argus*, Apr. 18, 1903, 5; "Untimely End for Old Resident Here," *Moline Daily Dispatch*, July 7, 1913, 3; "Elizabeth Ferkel Is Fatally Burned," *Moline Evening Mail*, July 7, 1913, 19.

61. Bailey Davenport Probate Record, 1894, and Henry Hilbring Probate Record, 1892, County Clerk, Estate Case Files, 1834–1959, Rock Island, Ill., retrieved from Ancestry.com, *Illinois, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1772–1999* (Lehi, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations, 2015).

62. Anna Bear quoted in Darlene Paxton Collection, folder 5.

63. Michael D. Green, "'We Dance in Opposite Directions': Mesquakie (Fox) Separatism from the Sac and Fox Tribe," *Ethnohistory* 30 (summer 1983):129–140; Geraldine Stemmons quoted in Darlene Paxton Collection, folder 5.

64. Stemmons, *Descendants of Colonel George Davenport*; "Meskwaki Tribal Council," *Meskwaki Nation, Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa*, https://www.meskwaki.org/about-us/#meskwaki-tribal-council (accessed 21 August 2022); Keith Prescott, "Last Direct Descendant of City Founder Rests in Nursing Home," Apr. 26, 1961, clipping in Paxton Collection.

65. Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 9–11.