

*sk and sp* in Illinois

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The earliest records of the Illinois language, from the late seventeenth/early eighteenth-century, show frequent occurrences of the consonant clusters *sk* and *sp*.

However, both these clusters are totally absent from all records of the modern Miami-Illinois language when the documentation of the language resumes in the 1790s, being merged into simple *hk* and *hp*. In this paper I will examine the precise historical Proto-Algonquian origins of *sk* and *sp* clusters in Illinois, by gathering examples from the Illinois dictionaries and comparing them to their reconstructed Proto-Algonquian forms. In so doing, I will discuss the philological problems that arise when interpreting the phonetics of the missionaries' transcriptions. Finally, I will show how the distribution of these clusters in Illinois compares with those of the other Core Central Algonquian languages.