



Several Area Communities Are Featured In New Book About Illinois Towns With Foreign Names

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THERE AND HERE Small Illinois Towns with Big Names



Histories and photographs by Laurent Pernot

Several River Bend communities are featured in a new book about Illinois towns with foreign names.

The local towns featured are as follows: Alhambra, Brussels, Collinsville, Delhi/New Delhi, Hamburg, Troy and Venice chronicled in "There and Here: Small Illinois Towns with Big Names."

A new book explores the history of more than 100 Illinois towns with foreign names, including several River Bend communities, along with the state's successive capitals, to weave a tapestry of 18th and 19th century Illinois, from Indigenous removal and slavery to mass immigration and Lincoln.

"Several River Bend communities carry real or imagined connections to Europe and Asia through their names and early histories," said Laurent Pernot, author of *There and Here: Small Illinois Towns with Big Names*. "The settlers reinvented themselves and built towns from scratch here with great bravery and sacrifice. They named them out of nostalgia or hope for the future. It came at a great cost in blood to them and the civilization they displaced, sometimes brutally."

Of the River bend communities featured in the book:

Alhambra, named for the red Moorish castle in Spain, had to overcome brutal hardship and rival town Green Castle to survive

Hamburg, a destination for early German immigrants, was a major commercial hub for apples.

Brussels' name honors its first priest, a Belgian.

Cahokia Mounds in Collinsville ushered the transition between Indigenous and European occupancy in this part of the Midwest.

Delhi and New Delhi affirmed the crucial responsibility of women in early towns, as well as the area's attachment to its Indigenous roots, though a link to India can only be surmised but not confirmed.

Troy, perhaps named to emulate the Trojans besieged by the Greeks, much as this small settlement felt besieged by tribes, saw a lot of death as Indigenous people resisted losing their ancestral lands

Venice started as an island and ferry hub, likely leading to the name. It was settled early in the 1800s soldiers who were rewarded with land, and those same soldiers played a key role in the final removal of Indigenous people from the area

While the road signs beckon — Athens... Cairo... Paris... Rio... Warsaw — few Illinoisans make the detour, and "There and Here" is an invitation to discover largely unsuspected towns and stories, ready to reveal that Illinois started off far more Scottish or German than we knew and that Illinois was once a place where coal was king over corn and where governors also were slaveowners.

“Laurent Pernot’s beautiful book unlocks the history and mysteries behind the names of many Illinois towns,” said Jan Kostner, former director, Illinois Bureau of Tourism. “There and Here is a wonderful exploration of the Land of Lincoln, giving readers many reasons to get off the highway and explore our state.”

Illinois in the 1700s, 1800s and 1900s was a place where women and men gave their new towns big names, out of hope, hubris, and maybe even denial. Often, the famous names are intentional, honoring settlers’ places of origin, or mythical or biblical locales. Some towns, like Argyle and Norway, once served as the main entry point for thousands of immigrants from those spots.

The e-book (\$14.99) is available on Google books and amazon.com and pre-orders for the print version (\$24.99) can be placed at www.laurentpernotbook.com. Delivery of the print version is expected in late December or early January.