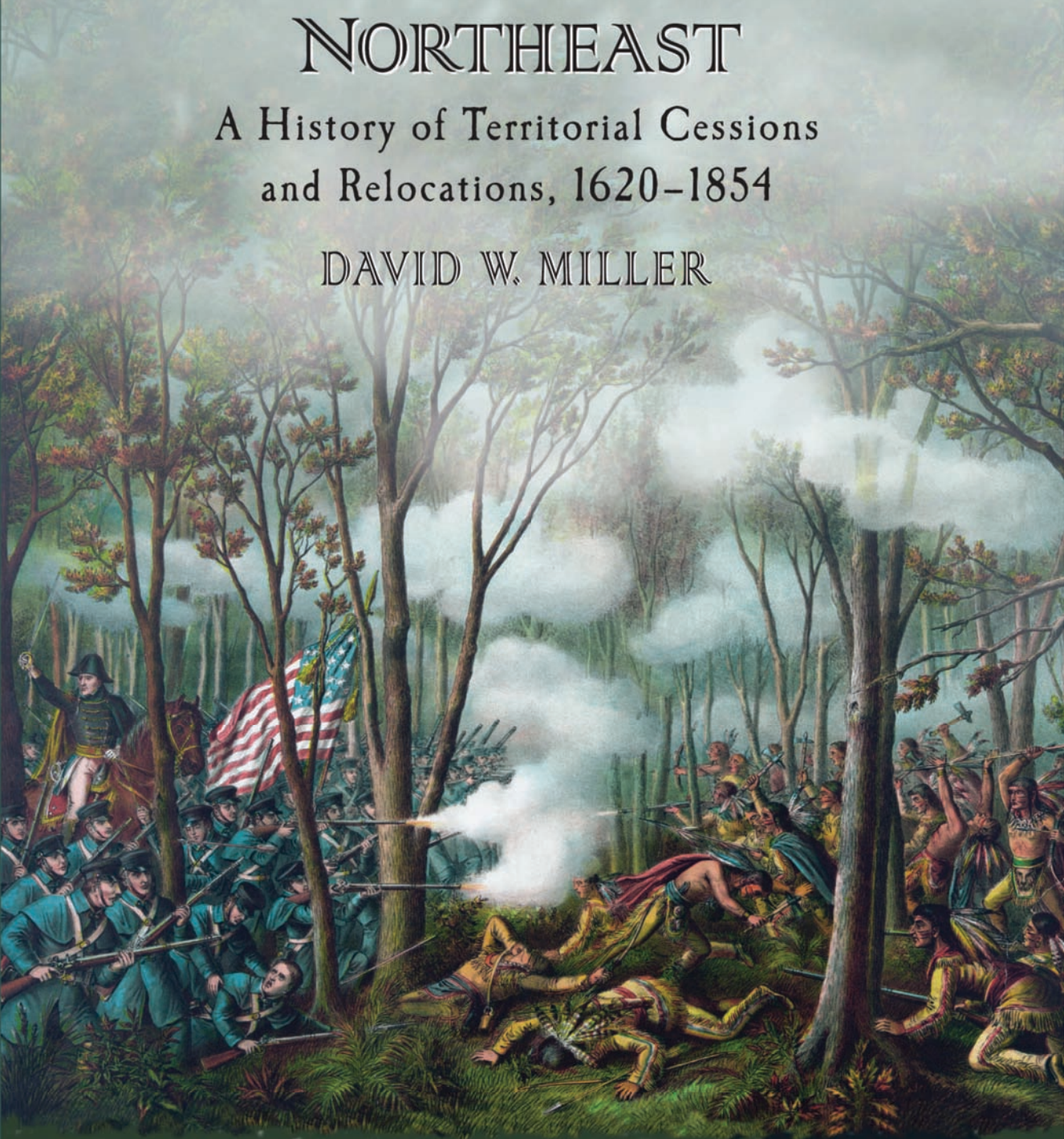


THE FORCED REMOVAL OF AMERICAN INDIANS FROM THE NORTHEAST

A History of Territorial Cessions
and Relocations, 1620–1854

DAVID W. MILLER



The Forced Removal of
American Indians
from the Northeast

ALSO BY DAVID W. MILLER

*The Taking of American Indian Lands
in the Southeast: A History of Territorial Cessions
and Forced Relocations, 1607–1840* (McFarland, 2011)

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and Relocations, 1620–1854*

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To
Steve and Roberta
and
Eric and Eric

How thousands of Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River and north of the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon Line between the time of the Pilgrims (1620) and the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and its implementation were forced to transfer 412,000 square miles of land to whites and move to the West.

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Preface

This book started as a study of the National Road. After finishing a biography of a Civil War icon, Quartermaster General of the Union Army Montgomery Meigs (*Second Only to Grant*), I was looking for subject matter of interest to me. I often have traveled from Virginia to Iowa, and at various points I have seen references to the National Road. Then as I started reading about early roads or trails pre-dating the National Road, I became aware of the pre-Columbus trails used by Indians and some of the early history of settler-Indian relations in the United States.

It didn't take long to reach a conclusion that the 17th- to 19th-century interface between the new settlers and the native Americans was an interesting subject. Also it didn't take long to realize that scholarly books were available on virtually every aspect of that interface. As I started to write I didn't go into the detail found in the books in my bibliography, but concentrated on what was actually said or written, contemporaneous with the events being related. That is what you will find in this book — no analysis or justification for what happened. The aim is to try to briefly relate what the individuals or collective communities did and said.

It has been a rewarding effort over the years, and I hope you find the fascinating history presented in a way acceptable to you. Even though I intended to keep the book short, as the chapters accumulated it became clear that I had written too much for one book. The solution was to concentrate on the natural division line between the Indian tribes — the Ohio River. Roughly, those living south of the Ohio River west of the Appalachians and south of the James River east of the Appalachians had a unique relationship with the settlers, as did those north of those rivers. Hence, two books, *The Taking of American Indian Lands in the Southeast*, published in early 2011, and this book.

For the research I have had the use of three outstanding libraries: the Library of Congress, George Mason University Library, and the Fairfax County Library. In the case of each not only was it their collections that were used, but also often the advice I received was helpful.

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CHAPTER 1

Kingdom of Saguenay (1497–1543)

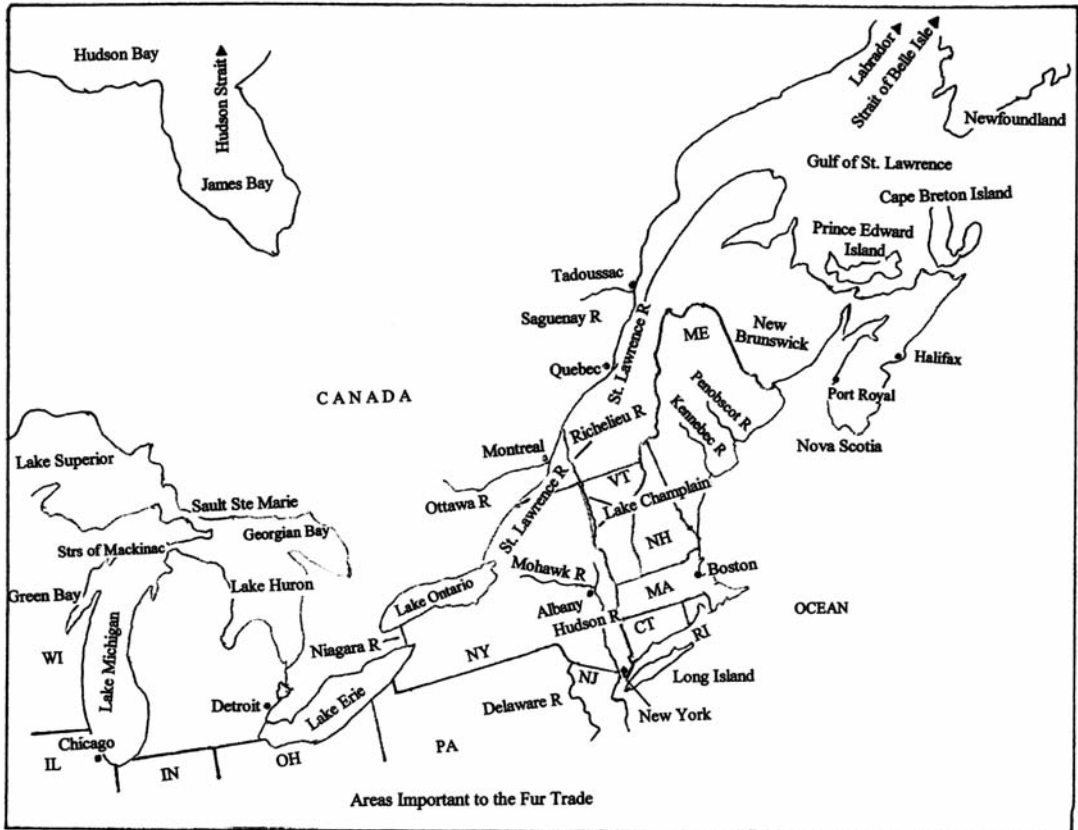
Following the discovery of the New World by Columbus at about 20 degrees north latitude, the Italian John Cabot, sailing under English colors searching for a route to the Indies, probably made landfall at Newfoundland, a land of notoriously large mosquitoes, near north latitude 50 degrees on June 24, 1497. On his return to England in August 1497, a trip taking only 15 days, one report was of “many fish of the kind that in Iceland are cured in the air and sell in England and other countries,” that is, cod, which could weigh 200 pounds. In sailing along the coast of Newfoundland, it is likely he sailed in the Grand Banks, a large shoal off of Southeastern Newfoundland with dimensions in the 200- to 250-mile range, which were teeming with cod. Fish were so plentiful that they could be caught by dropping weighted baskets into the water and then drawing the baskets back to the surface.¹ The name “Newfoundland” comes from the reference by Henry VII of England to “the newe found lande.”²

A Europe with many designated meatless days had a huge demand for fish, one which the New World could satisfy. The earliest authenticated fishing near Newfoundland was by a French vessel in 1504. By 1506 there was enough fishing by the Portugese that the home fishermen were protected by a 10 percent import duty on fish from the Grand Banks. Around 1521 Joao Alvares Fagundes of Portugal set up a year-round facility on Cape Breton Island where fish could be cured — cured codfish were easily transported; they could be stacked like cordwood. Foretelling the future of European–Indian relations, the facility was closed after about a year because of Indian hostility. Fishing and trading were acceptable, but moving in wasn’t.³

Ports in England, Holland, France, Portugal and Spain were busy. In 1519 one hundred European ships made summertime round trips to Newfoundland; by 1578 more than 300 (150 French, 100 Spanish, 50 English, 50 Portugese, and 20 to 30 Basque) took advantage of such a “great abundance of cod so that the hooke was no sooner overboard but presently a fish was taken.”⁴

Going to the Grand Banks was so commonplace in 1536 that a London merchant chartered two ships, one to fish and the other to carry 120 tourists. After a passage of two months to Newfoundland, the tourists ran short of food, some died of starvation and others were supposedly killed and eaten. The survivors arrived back in England after an absence of about six months.⁵

France’s interest in North America expanded with the voyages of Jacques Cartier, a Frenchman by birth, who had been to Newfoundland and Brazil and was introduced to the king as a person who could discover new lands in the New World for France. But first the Pope needed to clarify the earlier bull dividing the New World between Spain and Portugal.



This was accomplished by a papal announcement that the division only went to lands already discovered. Cartier acted on an assignment in 1534 to find a passage to China and to discover sources of precious metals. To get a crew for his two ships he arranged for an embargo of vessels headed for the Grand Banks, and, with a full complement, he left Saint-Malo on April 20 and reached Newfoundland on May 10.⁶

He sailed through the Strait of Belle Isle, which separates Newfoundland from Labrador, down the western side of Newfoundland, and then west across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the coast of what is now New Brunswick. In Chaleur Bay he made contact with the Micmac Indians, who for many years were friends of the French. The Micmac were anxious to exchange furs for hatchets, knives, and beads. Women, dressed in furs, traded their clothing, leaving themselves naked. Further up the coast of New Brunswick friendly contact was made with more Indians, and Cartier was allowed to take two teenage sons of a chief with him. After reaching an area near where the St. Lawrence River flows into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, he headed back to France, arriving on September 5, 1534.⁷

The result of his voyage was well received, and almost immediately he was promised three ships with which he headed back across the Atlantic on May 19, 1535, obligated to explore beyond Newfoundland and to discover far-away countries. Cartier planned to explore the Kingdom of Saguenay located somewhere inland of present-day Quebec, which the teenage Indians described as an inhabited country with riches comparable to what the Spaniards found in Peru. Cartier proceeded up the St. Lawrence River to Quebec (then Stadacone or Canada) where, on September 10, the Indian chief Donnacona came aboard

and found his sons well. Donnaconna discouraged Cartier from going further upstream to Montreal (then Hochelaga) since he wanted the French as his ally and not an ally of the chief at Montreal.⁸

Cartier persisted in his plan to go further upstream and reached Montreal on October 2. Donnaconna had reason to be concerned — to Cartier Quebec was a dirty, squalid village, whereas at Montreal he was greeted by 1,000 natives and found well-cultivated cornfields and a wooden citadel built for defense. To go further upstream from Montreal would have required using canoes to transit rapids in that area and to then go up the Ottawa River, which joins the St. Lawrence near Montreal, to the Kingdom of Saguenay, which, he was told, was peopled by bad people who were well armed.⁹

Cartier went back to Quebec and spent the winter there. By custom, Indians remained mostly naked during the winter, and the polygamous Hurons put young girls in brothels to stay until someone married them or they became “community drudges.” Brothels were also used for gambling. During the winter Hurons and the French suffered from scurvy. Even though the Indians knew of a remedy for scurvy, 50 of them died, and Cartier’s crew was reduced from 110 to 85. Notwithstanding the Indian courtesy over the winter, Cartier left for Europe on May 6, 1536, after kidnaping Donnaconna, his two sons, and two other leaders. His promise to return with Donnaconna was not fulfilled. Donnaconna died in France. The purpose for taking him to France was to convince the king of the existence of the rich Kingdom of Saguenay.¹⁰ Cartier should have been dubious when Donnaconna said the kingdom had “men [with] only one leg, [who] flew like bats, and never ate,” but he wasn’t.¹¹

Another Cartier voyage to America with five ships commenced on May 23, 1541, with an assignment to find the kingdom. When skeptics challenged Donnaconna’s tales of spices, oranges, and anus-less people, the king found them credible since the stories never varied and were sworn to be the truth “under pain of death for blasphemy.” He left France with proposed colonists, some from the jails, and horses, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and poultry. Selected for settlement was an area slightly upstream from Quebec; this was to be the base from which the search for the Kingdom of Saguenay would emanate. Before the start of winter Cartier sent two ships back to France with what he thought were diamonds and gold. During the fall Cartier, without success, made a modest effort to find Saguenay. In fact Saguenay was nothing but a figment of the Indians’ imagination, something Cartier may have surmised by this time. The winter of 1541–1542 brought out the hostility of the Indians to a permanent settlement. Thirty-five of the settlers were killed, and with spring Cartier decided to abandon the settlement and return to France, where he arrived in October.¹²

The search for the Kingdom of Saguenay was not over. On June 7, 1542, Roberval, given the title of Lieutenant-General and Governor of Canada, arrived in Newfoundland with three ships and some colonists. He went to where Cartier had spent the preceding winter and constructed a settlement with high expectations. In September he sent home two of his ships, wanting to learn the value of Cartier’s gold and diamonds, which were determined to be worthless quartz crystals and iron pyrite when assayed in Paris, and to arrange for supplies for the next year. The winter of 1542–1543 eliminated the gaiety that permeated the ships coming across the Atlantic. Food was in short supply, and near 50 deaths resulted from scurvy. A feeble effort was made to find the Kingdom of Saguenay in June of 1543, after which Roberval abandoned the settlement and was back in France on September 11, 1543. For the next 50 years France paid little attention to North America except for actively fishing the waters around Newfoundland.¹³

CHAPTER 2

Iroquois Conquests (1580–1653)

In the Northeast were the Five Nations (the English name) or the Iroquois (the French name), which contained five tribes concentrated mainly in central and western present-day New York. The Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas became the Six Nations in 1722 when the Tuscaroras came north from North Carolina. In addition to the Iroquois, the Algonquian language was used by the Hurons, a confederation of four aristocratic woodland tribes living east of Lake Huron and on the upper St. Lawrence River.¹

Having the same language did not keep tribes from fighting among themselves. The Hurons were essentially eliminated by the Five Nations in the 1640s in a battle over hunting grounds with perhaps also an intention of increasing the Five Nations' numbers, which had been depleted, maybe by as much as nine-tenths, over the preceding century by disease. Persons from a defeated tribe were commonly absorbed into the conquering tribe.²

Conflicts and competition between Indian tribes and among Europeans along the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes in the 17th century involved the fur trade. The Indians had little benefit from the Europeans removing the fish, but by trading furs they got European goods. Their lives were made much easier when they had copper kettles, knives, awls, needles, and axes, and they had a fondness for mirrors, beads, trinkets, and colorful cloth. They were also anxious to have guns, bullets, and gunpowder. All of these could be supplied by the Europeans at little expense compared to the price they could sell furs for in Europe.³ Furs from North America created opportunities for wealth when the Swedes captured the Russian port of Narva in 1583 and cut off Russian furs which the Europeans had relied on in the past.⁴

What followed was the wholesale slaughter of New World animals. The Dutch and French were importing about 30,000 beaver skins a year in the 1620s and smaller amounts of marten, otter, rabbit, deer, and fox skins. Beavers became a particular target when beaver hats became popular in Paris starting in about 1580. Between 10 to 20 million beavers were killed in the 17th century. By 1640 beavers were a rarity in New England.⁵

At first, in the early 1500s, the fishermen, more or less as a sideline, traded for furs with the friendly Micmac on New Brunswick and the Montagnais in southern Labrador. Those wanting furs from Newfoundland had to do their own hunting. The Beothuk — a gentle people occupying Newfoundland made hostile by contact with the Europeans, who kidnapped some of them — retired to the interior. This did not save them. Eventually English and French settlers hunted them like animals until they were exterminated.⁶

The value of furs on the European market created a demand requiring more than casual trading. A group of Indians positioned to supply this demand were the Montagnais, who occupied land to the north of the St. Lawrence River that included the mouth of the Sague-

nay River on the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The community at the mouth of the river, known as Tadoussac, had historically been a place where Indian hunters from the north came to trade their goods for those of the Indian farmers of the south. Over time it became the place to which European ships went to trade for furs. At its peak Tadoussac had 50 ships in its harbor during the summer trading days. The French, near the end of the 16th century, formed fur trading companies and took a proprietary interest in Tadoussac by placing a permanent trading post there in 1599.⁷

At the start of the 17th century that trade was essentially controlled by the Huron Confederacy and the Algonquin and Montagnais Indians north of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, who controlled the flow of furs to the ships that came to Tadoussac. However, to the south of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River was the aggressive Iroquois Confederacy of Five Nations (Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas), which was anxious to participate in the fur trade. At a minimum the members of the Iroquois Confederacy agreed not to attack one another. Each “retained full sovereignty over its own affairs.”⁸

Competition among those wanting furs drove the price up and resulted in diminishing profits for the traders. One way to overcome this was to grant a monopoly, which could be sold by the government and help replenish a depleted treasury. King Henry of Navarre, who wanted to claim Canada as a colony, promised a monopoly to four of his military associates, one of whom was Samuel de Champlain, if they would establish a colony. The first effort in 1604 was to put 79 men on the island of St. Croix, near today’s boundary between Maine and New Brunswick. After a miserable winter, they moved in 1605 to Port Royal, Nova Scotia, where they stayed until 1607. A return to France came about when their monopoly was cancelled.⁹

The next year some of those responsible for the earlier effort decided that a profitable settlement could be established without a monopoly, and in July 1608 huts were constructed in what became Quebec. Quebec had a weak start. Only 16 of the 25 men spending the winter of 1608–1609 there survived, scurvy causing many deaths. The force behind the settlement was Champlain, who was as much an explorer as a colonizer. Champlain made several trips to France to arrange for the financial backing necessary to sustain the colony, but eight years before his death in 1635 only about 100 settlers were in Canada.¹⁰

A Jesuit who was in Quebec in 1611 reported that “conversion of this country, to the Gospel, and of these people to civilization, is not a small undertaking.” “The nation is savage, wandering and full of bad habits; the people few and isolated. They are, I say, savage, haunting the woods, ignorant, lawless and rude: they are wanderers, with nothing to attach them to a place.... They have bad habits, are extremely lazy, gluttonous, profane, treacherous, cruel in their revenge, and given up to all kinds of lewdness.”¹¹

In Quebec, which was 100 miles closer to the Hurons than Tadoussac was, the Hurons saw an opportunity to enhance their trading position. They met with Champlain in 1615 when he joined with them in an attack on the Iroquois, and the next year an alliance was made with France. Their allies, the Algonquins and Montagnais, who had trading arrangements with the French, saw this as an effort to avoid the historical practice of taking furs through their territories to Tadoussac.¹²

The Huron–French connection was lucrative for both parties. The magnitude of the trade is reflected in the shipment of 12,000 to 15,000 pelts a year during the decade of 1619 to 1629. Once a year the Hurons would send about 60 canoes to Quebec by way of the Ottawa River. The furs came primarily from the Indians living to the north of the Hurons. The trade was interrupted for the years 1629 to 1632 when Quebec was in the hands of a

group of Scottish-English adventurers. After the French regained control of Quebec, the Huron sent a huge flotilla of 140 to 150 canoes the next year. As large a source of furs as this was, it was only about one-half of what was exported by the French. A hazard for these flotillas were the Iroquois, who often attacked them. For a time, starting in 1624, there was a peace agreement between the Iroquois and the Hurons and Algonquins while the Iroquois concentrated on subduing the Hudson River Mahicans so that they could ally themselves with the Dutch, who were carrying on a fur trade at present-day Albany, New York.¹³

For the Iroquois to attack the Indians north of the St. Lawrence was nothing new. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans they had forced the Montagnais into the subarctic. Between the time of Cartier's voyages and the establishment of European Quebec in 1608, some 14 villages Cartier saw on the north side of the river disappeared. When Champlain first conversed with the Montagnais at Tadoussac in 1603, they and the Algonquin and Maliseet Indians were celebrating a victory over the Iroquois. At a meeting with the Iroquois around 1608 Champlain was told of a war that had lasted for 50 years. One of the casualties was the village at Montreal, which was not to be found in 1585. Since contact with the Europeans brought on epidemics, these changes might have been a result of something other than warfare. In sum, during the 1600s the French were positioned between the Canadian tribes north of the lakes and the St. Lawrence and the Iroquois to the south, who were intermittently at war with one another.¹⁴

In the ongoing warfare between the Canadian Indians and the Iroquois, Champlain sided with his principal trading partners, the Canadians, and joined in attacks on the Iroquois in 1609, 1610, and 1615. This was sensible since the Hurons were in a position to collect furs for sale to the French; also about this time the Huron Confederacy of four or five tribes was almost twice as large as the Five Nations making up the Iroquois Confederacy, 30,000 to 16,000. Helping to maintain good relations between the Canadian Indians and the French was Champlain's support for intermarriage. Notwithstanding peace and trade treaties with the Iroquois made in 1624, 1633, 1645, 1653, 1665–1666, 1684, and 1688, the French and the Iroquois were enemies for much of the 17th century.¹⁵

A sea change in the strength of the Hurons occurred in the 1630s when smallpox killed perhaps $\frac{2}{3}$ of their numbers. The Iroquois also suffered in the epidemic. Part of the arrangement with the French was the agreement of the Hurons to accept missionaries. This was done reluctantly, and the Jesuits, although widespread in New France (Canada), did not convert many of the Hurons, who told the French, "We have our way of doing things, and you have yours." Some Hurons blamed the deaths on changes in their religion.¹⁶

A European competitor, the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands (commonly known as the Dutch Republic), wanting to exploit the beaver population of North America, came on the scene after discoveries by Henry Hudson, an explorer in the employ of a Dutch company looking for the Northwest Passage. He, with a crew of less than 20, sailed in the Chesapeake Bay, proceeded up the coast, finding the mouth of the Delaware River, and then came upon the river destined to carry his name and proceeded up it many miles to the Albany, New York, area. Although attacked by some Delaware Indians on his trip up the Hudson River, he also was able to trade with Mahican Indians. Particularly exciting was that furs were bought for "trifles." Following his return to Europe in November 1609 the Dutch saw an opportunity to place themselves between the English in Virginia and the French in Canada as competitors for the Indian trade, which many saw as the road to wealth.¹⁷

Hudson, a friend of Captain John Smith, of Jamestown fame, who shared Smith's

belief about a Northwest Passage to Asia, went the next year in the search for the passage on behalf of London merchants and left his imprint on the Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay, which became important in the fur trade in the late 1600s. This trip resulted in his death when the ship was trapped by ice within James Bay, to the south of Hudson Bay, and, without enough food for all, Hudson and eight others were cast off in a shallop with only some biscuits, and they presumably perished. The ship eventually returned to Ireland with only nine survivors.¹⁸

The Dutch, after several years of allowing open competition along the Hudson and Delaware rivers and three years during which the New Netherland Company had an exclusive right to make voyages, gave a charter to the West India Company in 1621. From 1623, when it was able to start operations, New Netherland, an area between the Delaware, Hudson and Connecticut rivers, including the Manhattan and Long islands, was essentially a possession of the company.¹⁹

Although a substantial number of furs were sent back to the Netherlands, as a financial matter the company lost money over the next 40 years. From a political point of view, a critical failure was in not peopling New Netherland. The Dutch had people on the ground year-round to organize the acquisition of furs from the Indians to be loaded on New Netherland ships, but, beyond this, little was done to establish settlers in the early years of New Netherland. The lack of settlers became important when competition for land developed as New England, settled by the Pilgrims in 1620 and the Puritans in 1630, started to expand to the west. In 1628 there were only about 300 people in New Netherland. Throughout its existence (1609–1664), even with some glowing propaganda, New Netherland had trouble finding people willing to emigrate. Conditions in the Netherlands were too good for emigration to be an attractive alternative.²⁰

Just as the Hurons saw Quebec as an opportunity, the Iroquois, primarily the Mohawks, saw one in the Dutch presence, but only after they disposed of the Mahican Indians, who controlled a water route from the Hudson River to the St. Lawrence River, called the Mahican Channel by Francis Jennings in his book *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*. Access to the St. Lawrence River was important to permit furs gathered by western tribes to be sold to the Dutch at present-day Albany (earlier Beverwyck), where the trading post Fort Orange was built in 1624. To obtain control of the Mahican Channel the Mohawks attacked the Mahicans, and even though the Mahicans were supported by the Dutch, the Mohawks prevailed, and in 1628 the Mahicans moved to the Connecticut Valley. The Dutch were pragmatists and to a limited extent accepted the Mohawks as trading partners.²¹

The traders at Fort Orange had a windfall in the years of an Anglo-French war, 1627 to 1632, when the British blockaded the St. Lawrence River and prevented trade goods from reaching the French at Quebec. Faced with an alternative of taking their furs back with them or trading at Fort Orange, many Indians found their way to the Dutch.²²

The demand for furs changed the typical lifestyle of the Iroquois and other Eastern Woodlands Indians. Before pelts became an obsession the pattern was for “relatively small, detached groups of men, women, and children” hunting in the “fall-winter-spring” and spending summers “in large, permanent or semi-permanent villages, where [the] women raised crops of corn, beans, and squash.”²³

The most important fur was that of the beaver, which do not reproduce in large numbers and were soon depleted in over-hunted areas. When the Iroquois exhausted the supply of beaver in their own areas they forcefully moved into the territory of other tribes. The Europeans were not the hunters that the Indians were and generally relied upon the Indians

to provide the pelts. Hunting techniques included “[breaking] beaver dams to lower the water in a pond and [thereby exposing] the quarry; ... stalk[ing] the beaver with iron-tipped spear, bow and arrow or gun; sometimes [setting] traps which they smeared with castoreum as a lure.”²⁴

The Dutch–Mohawk relationship did not proceed smoothly. The Dutch would have preferred to bypass the Mohawks in buying furs, and the Mohawks considered the Dutch cruel in their conduct toward them. When the Mohawks tried to deal directly with the French in 1641, saying they would “give a kick to the Dutch, with whom they no longer wished to have any intercourse,”²⁵ they were rebuffed. By 1640 the Iroquois may have used up the game and peltry in their historical lands. To get more fur they “expan[ded] trade with other tribes, expan[ded] hunting territories, [and] plunder[ed].” Each of these actions was opposed by the French, and in 1641 the first open warfare against the French started. The French were not in a strong position — there were only 300 ethnic French in New France at that time.²⁶

The French incurred the wrath of the Iroquois in 1642 by settling at Montreal and building a fort at the mouth of the Richelieu River, a key part of the Mahican Channel used by the Iroquois to trade and raid along the St. Lawrence River. The Iroquois were not able to stop construction of the fort but were successful in intercepting the canoes of the Huron and Algonquin carrying furs to the French along the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers. In 1644 and 1645 only about one-fourth of the trade destined for Quebec made it, and in two years of the 1640s no furs reached Quebec from the Hurons.²⁷

A short respite followed a 1645 treaty between France and her Canadian allies and the Mohawks, but it was only a lull before a major Iroquois offensive. Armed with 400 new firearms bought from the Dutch, in 1648 and 1649 they attacked Huron villages. The Huron decided to move and burned all their remaining 15 villages, and, tragically, many went to an island in Georgian Bay that could not support their numbers, and 5,000 died over the winter of starvation. Thereafter some went to Detroit and northern Ohio and became known as Wyandots, and some ended up near Quebec. However, a larger number joined the Iroquois. The Huron were at a definite disadvantage in fighting with the Iroquois. The French had a policy of only supplying guns to those Hurons who converted to Christianity. Since this was not many, the Hurons had fewer firearms than the Iroquois.²⁸

The Iroquois not only conquered the Huron but also warred with and conquered smaller tribes. Between 1649 and 1656 the Petun and Neutrals, located to the north of Lake Erie, and the Erie, located to the south of the lake, were subdued. The Iroquois did not move into the Ontario Peninsula, sometimes called Huronia, but used it as hunting grounds for several decades before being forced out by the Ojibwa in the 1690s.²⁹

The French saw the Iroquois’ objective to be diversion of furs to the Dutch and later the English. Pursuing an “if you can’t beat them, join them” philosophy, the French signed a treaty with all members of the Iroquois Confederacy in 1653. Under the treaty the Iroquois obtained the right to trade with the French, and the French were given permission to send Jesuit missionaries into the Five Nations. The Jesuits were more successful in converting the Iroquois to Christianity than they had been with the Huron.³⁰

CHAPTER 3

Jamestown, Plymouth, and Massachusetts Bay

England, during the 1600s, filled in a void in the New World. Spain was preoccupied with the southern United States, Mexico, and Central and South America, and by 1596 had spent the riches taken from the New World. France expended its exploration and settlement efforts in the northern part of North America and down the Mississippi River. It used the water routes of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers to support a thriving fur trade. It also sent explorers into the Great Lakes, and, via the Wisconsin River, down the Mississippi River as far as Arkansas. In 1671 and 1682 France claimed much of western North America as part of its New France. In the first half of the 1600s England established colonies along the eastern seaboard of the United States.¹

The French developed its claims by setting up trading posts, whereas the English early on made land ownership of the colonists a goal, and, as a consequence, the English colonies filled with settlers who multiplied and expanded so as in time to make the eastern United States essentially an English preserve.²

The 1607 settlement at Jamestown was a business opportunity undertaken by investors in the London Company, which had hopes, not fulfilled, of the colonists finding gold. Those transported to Jamestown, some 104 of whom were left there with “verie bare and scantie of victualls [and in] danger of the Savages,”³ were not well suited to establish a colony. Their instructions were to “not Offend the naturals, if [they could eschew it,]” and to trade with the Indians “for Corn and all Other lasting Victuals,” which was to be done before the Indians “perceive[d] [they] mean[t] to plant among them.”⁴

Located inside an area occupied by the Pamunkey Indians, a confederation of 14,000 divided into villages each with between 200 and 1,000 people, it did not take long for ill feelings to surface between the English and the Indians. These Virginia Indians are referred to as Powhatans, reflecting the name of one of the residences of their chief. Many of the settlers perished in the first years, some during the 1609 famine known as the “starving time,” and the colony was only maintained by new groups of people transported from England and food provided at times by the Indians.

Jamestown survived a 1622 war started by the Indians with a goal of eliminating the foreigners. A sudden attack killed 347 of 1,240 settlers, but those surviving struck back, and warfare continued until 1632, when a truce was reached only to be broken in 1644 with a Powhatan attack that killed 500 settlers along the James River, but the numbers were against them. By that time there were between 8,000 to 10,000 settlers in Virginia. The Powhatans surrendered in 1646 and in the peace agreement transferred their land claims to

the English with a reserved area for the Indians to live on under white supervision. Their population was down to 2,000 in 1669, whereas the colonists then numbered 35,000. A particularly cruel act of the colonists during the years of conflict was the poisoning and death of about 200 Indians at a peace conference.⁵

The second English settlement was that of 100 Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, desiring to advance “the Christian faith.” Although the leaders were individuals who had lived in Holland for 12 years to escape the rigors of the Church of England, over half of the Pilgrims were Anglicans who joined with the so-called Separatists for the chance to better themselves economically. One reason given for those living in Holland to move was that their youth were being “drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses, getting the reins off their necks and departing from their parents.”⁶

So far as is known the name “Pilgrims” was first used for the group on the *Mayflower* in 1622, and the name became commonly used in the 1800s. On the *Mayflower* the division was between the Saints and the Strangers. The leadership was that of the Saints.⁷

There are different views as to whether they planned to land in New England or if it happened as a result of their making a landfall at Cape Cod after a trying two months at sea and deciding it was time to get off the ship. The latter view is that of Louis B. Wright in his book *The Colonial Civilisation of North America 1607–1763*. In support of the view that the New England landing was planned, George F. Willison in *Saints and Strangers* notes that even though they had a patent authorizing their settlement in Virginia, the presence of the Anglican church in Virginia was the very environment they had fled from in going to Holland.⁸

Furthermore, they had been in contact with Captain John Smith of Jamestown fame, who was promoting settlement in the area he explored in 1614 and called New England. Smith published a tract in 1616 titled *A Description of New England*, which included a map carried to America by the Pilgrims. When Smith suggested he travel with them to America as a guide, the Pilgrims turned him down, saying it was “cheaper to buy his book than hire him.”⁹

The Pilgrims were a determined lot; they went forward notwithstanding Smith’s warning that “the [New England] savages [would] be hostile,” and, as Willison writes, the Pilgrims viewed the Indians as a “‘cruell, barbarous, & most trecherous’ people, whose practices were such that a mere recitation of them caused ‘ye bowels of men to grate within them.’”¹⁰

William Bradford, for many years governor at Plymouth, described the early months of the settlement after they landed from the *Mayflower* in December 1620: “In 2 or 3 moneths time halfe of their company dyed, espetially in January & February, being the depth of winter, and wanting houses & other comforts; being infected with the scurvie & other diseases, which this long vioage & their inacomodate condition had brought upon them ... scarce 50 remained. And of these in the time of most distres, ther was but 6 or 7 sound persons [who] fetched them woode, made them fires, drest them meat, made their beads, washed their lothsome cloaths, cloathed & uncloathed them; in a word, did all the homly & necessarie offices for them which dainty & quesie stomacks cannot endure to hear named.” During these months Indians “skulk[ed] about them,” but no interchange took place.¹¹

Miracle-like in mid-March an Indian who could speak English, Samaset, came to them, informed them about the country and brought to them the “great sachem” of the Wampanoags, Massasoit, who resided some 40 miles away. A peace agreement was reached with Massasoit, which continued for the next 40 years. Most importantly he also brought Squanto, another English-speaking Indian. Squanto had been kidnapped, sold in Spain,

and then escaped to England, and after returning to his tribal village and finding it destroyed by plague, lived with the Pilgrims and taught them to farm, where to fish, and smoothed over their relations with nearby tribes. Bradford saw him as “a special instrument sent of God for their good.” Squanto died in the fall of 1622. During his lifetime, Squanto manipulated the Indians by claiming the Pilgrims had control over the plague, which they could spread among them.¹²

The viability of the Plymouth settlement was undoubtedly influenced by a plague that swept through New England in 1616–1617. Bradford said that when the Pilgrims first visited an Indian settlement some 40 miles away, probably that of Massasoit, they found

the soil good and the people not many, being dead and abundantly wasted in the late great mortality which fell in all these parts about three years before the coming of the English, wherein thousands of them died. They not being able to bury one another, their skulls and bones were found in many places lying still above the ground ... a very sad spectacle to behold.¹³

John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay, the second New England colony, found a basis for the colonists' occupation of Indian land in this epidemic — he wrote that the Indians “are neere all dead of the small Poxe, so the Lord hath cleared our title to what we possess.”¹⁴

Several times, until his death in 1661, Massasoit went to Plymouth. On one occasion when Edward Winslow, an important figure at Plymouth, visited him and he was returning to Plymouth with Winslow, Massasoit sent word ahead that Winslow was dead. When both arrived at Plymouth, Massasoit explained what he did was an Indian custom to heighten the happiness when one safely arrived. At times Massasoit ceded land to the Pilgrims, reasoning that there were “none left to occupy it. The Great Spirit [having] swept its people from the face of the earth.” In 1639 Massasoit agreed not to part with any Wampanoag land without the Pilgrims' permission. Although friendly during Massasoit's years as sachem, in general the Wampanoags followed his lead in refusing to become Christians.¹⁵

Additional epidemics resulted in many more deaths in the 1600s. A contemporary observer said, “The bones and skulls ... made such a spectacle ... that, as I travailed in that Forrest nere the Massachusetts, it seemed to me a new found Golgotha.” To the Pilgrims the plague was not a happenstance — God had made “way for them.”¹⁶ A Dutch explorer was told in 1656 by Indians in the Hudson River area “that before the smallpox broke out amongst them, they were ten times as numerous as they are now, and that their population had been melted down by this disease.”¹⁷

Some sense of how the new settlers first saw America is found in the description by those landing at Plymouth in 1620: “What could they see but a hidious & desolate wildernes, full of wild beasts & willd men? And what multitudes ther might be of them they knew not.”¹⁸ Over the next 170 years the landscape was transformed. Those in New England cut down 260 million cords of wood. Virginians moved swiftly to clear land so as to grow tobacco — by 1700 half a million acres had been cleared of their trees.¹⁹ In Pennsylvania settlers had “to fall to work and swing the axe most vigorously,” for wherever one turned there was “nothing but endless forests.” The Indians were “not much inclined” to engage in such work. The axes did their jobs by 1748, when eastern New York and Pennsylvania were mostly level land with the “greater part of the country ... without woods.”²⁰

The Plymouth colony celebrated its harvest of 1621 by inviting Massasoit, who arrived with 90 hungry warriors, to join in a feasting that lasted for three days. This custom of Thanksgiving continued annually thereafter and in 1863 was made into a national holiday

by Abraham Lincoln. When the Pilgrims looked carefully at their supplies after the feasting, they found that they were less than at first calculated, and it was necessary to cut back on their weekly rations. A ship, the *Fortune*, arrived after the feast but brought only 35 passengers, who were warmly welcomed but who increased the danger of inadequate food for the winter months. The *Fortune* also brought a letter from the English “merchant adventurers” who financed the Pilgrims’ trip to the New World, complaining of their letting the *Mayflower* return empty so that they had no recompense.²¹

The harvest of 1622 was not enough to eliminate the need for short rations, but after a decision to allocate acreage to individuals and experience gained in growing corn, their 1623 harvest was bountiful, and the days of famine were over. As Bradford said, after privatization Plymouth had “corn sufficient, and some to spare.” The decision to allocate land conflicted with their agreement with the “merchant adventurers” and to the preaching of Deacon Robert Cushman, who saw it as self-love. He asked, “Why wouldst thou have thy particular portion?” and answered, “Because thou thinkest to live better than thy neighbor and scornest to live as meanly as he? But who, I pray, brought this particularizing into the world? Did not Satan, who was not content to keep that equall state with his fellows, but would set his throne above the stars?”²²

Although the Pilgrims had good relations with Massasoit’s Wampanoags, the attitude of the nearby Narragansetts, traditional enemies of the Wampanoags, was different. They sent a threatening message in 1621—“a sheaf of arrows bound with a large [rattle]snakeskin.” Not intimidated, the Pilgrims sent back the snake skin enclosing bullets. Nothing came of this threat.²³

A blot on the Pilgrims is their massacre of several Massachusetts Indians who were lured into an English headquarters at Wessagusset. They justified this by, perhaps deceitfully, asserting that the Massachusetts had plans to destroy them. A consequence of the 1623 massacre was the elimination of a rival trading post (Wessagusset), which a “merchant adventurer” sponsored to the north of them on Boston Bay. Up to the massacre, those at Wessagusset, traded peacefully with the Massachusetts, but after the massacre, carried out by Captain Myles Standish and men from Plymouth, it was no longer safe for them to stay at Wessagusset, and they elected to go to Maine and make contact with the English fishing fleet there. When Standish and his men returned to Plymouth they were joyfully received, and the head of one of the massacred, Wituwamat, who had been contemptuous of Standish, was placed on the battlements of the fort that had been constructed at Plymouth and was left there as a warning for many years. Willison, in *Saints and Strangers*, posits that the massacre had more to do with eliminating the competing trading post than a reaction to threats by the Indians. The Massachusetts Indians almost disappeared, not from the savagery of the likes of Standish, but from disease. Their numbers went from 24,000 to 750 by 1631.²⁴

Plymouth was followed in 1630 by the Puritans’ Massachusetts Bay colony in the Boston area. Then, as later, the government did not pay for or sponsor the settlements. Its part was to claim ownership of all of North America above Mexico and to grant charters giving one or more persons permission to settle and govern parts of the New World. As with the Pilgrims an important reason for the move was to protect their children, who the Puritans thought were being “perverted, corrupted, and vtterlie ouerthrowne by the multitude of euill examples ... of those Seminaries, where men straine at knatts, and swallowe camells.” A Puritan vanguard arrived at Salem under the leadership of Captain John Endecott in 1628.²⁵

The main emigration occurred in 1630 when about 1,000 came, and John Winthrop

was made governor, a position he held off and on for 20 years. This was three times as many as had gone to Plymouth in the preceding decade. Over the next two years several thousand more joined them. Massachusetts Bay was fortunate that it could be supplied corn and cattle by those at Plymouth. The demand enriched those at Plymouth and created a demand for more land. A 1634 Massachusetts order prohibiting private purchases from Indians without government approval was an effort to control a problem wherever whites were trying to settle on Indian lands.²⁶

The term “Puritans” covers a broad spectrum of religionists who came to America. Historian Louis B. Wright defines the term in the 1600s to include “those who objected to the authority of the bishops and opposed ritualism that smacked of the Roman Catholic liturgy.” “The Puritan group believed that essential truth in matters of church government, as well as in customs and ritual, was to be found by searching the Scriptures and not by heeding the promulgations of the bishops.” A number of Puritans and Pilgrims advocated separation from the Church of England, and others, such as those at Massachusetts Bay, wanted to purify the church. In either case this belief was dangerous in England at a time when James I claimed his right to reign to be a divine one. The name “Puritans” dates from the theological arguments of the late Roman Empire.²⁷

Descriptions of Indians encountered by the Europeans north of Virginia vary from Bradford, who saw them as “brutish and savage,” to that of Pennsylvania Indians, who a Mennonite leader, Francis Daniel Pastorius, described around 1700 as ones who “cultivate among themselves the most scrupulous honesty, are unwavering in keeping promises, defraud and insult no one, are very hospitable to strangers, obliging to their guests, and faithful even to death toward their friends.” Pastorius said the Europeans had many traits that baffled the Indians. For example, they found it strange that Christians “should have so many cares and anxieties as to [their] support and nourishment, just as if [they] did not believe that God [would] and [could] sustain and provide for [them.]”²⁸

What became clear was that the Indian life was much worse for those who stayed close to the Europeans and adopted aspects of the European life. William Byrd, a Virginian who headed a survey party in 1728–1729 laying out the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina, described a visit to an Indian town, Nottoway, of about 200, which he said was the largest group remaining in Virginia. The number of Indians in Virginia, by which he meant that part that had essentially been occupied by Europeans, had dwindled in large measure from “their ungovernable passion for rum, with which ... they [had] been too liberally supplied by the English that live near them.” Rather than working the Indian men chose to “continue in ... idleness and to suffer all the inconveniences of dirt, cold, and want, rather than to disturb their heads with care or defile their hands with labor.” By adopting firearms, rather than continuing to rely on bows and arrows, they came to depend entirely “upon the English, not only for their trade but even for their subsistence.” By their actions many settlers set examples of “deception and many other evil habits.”²⁹

Byrd describes an Indian custom that must have driven Puritans to distraction if the same persisted with Indians in the Northeast. Single Indian girls were encouraged to have “intrigues with the men,” and it was considered a “superior merit to be liked by a great number of gallants.” However, once married they were “faithful to their vows.” European travelers in the second half of the 18th century wrote that “women before marriage have a right to act with men as they please,” and when “an unmarried brave passes through a village, he hires a girl for the night, and her parents find nothing wrong in this.” But once there was a marriage generally such freedom ended.³⁰

To Massachusetts Bay, and to a lesser extent Plymouth, the Indians were not nearly the problem as were other religionists. The Quakers brought out the worst in the Puritans, who denounced them as “madmen, lunaticks, daemoniacks” with the “grossest collection of blasphemies and confusions that ever were heard of.”³¹ In 1658 the United Colonies, made up of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven, recommended that Quakers and other heretics be ejected from the colonies “under pain of death” and, if they should return, “to be put to death as presumptuously incorrigible.”³² Only Massachusetts Bay actually killed any Quakers. Massachusetts Bay also “slic[ed] off Quakers’ ears, brand[ed] them with hot irons, flay[ed] them with tarred ropes, [and beat] them senseless with iron rods.”³³

Why did the Indians allow the intruders to stay? As late as 1630 one estimate is that only about 4,000 whites were in Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York.³⁴ Angie Debo in her *History of the Indians of the United States* states it well:

An Indian who had to cut down trees and build his house with stone tools and tend his corn with a crooked stick or the shoulder blade of a bison knew how to appreciate an ax or a hoe, or who had to kill his game and fight his wars with bows and arrows, to appreciate guns. His wife, accustomed to working skins into usable softness or cooking in pottery vessels, was equally eager for a length of red cloth or an iron pot. And the beads and bells and ribbons and nose and ear jewels were desirable luxuries, to say nothing of the rum or whisky that could reduce a whole band to happy insensibility.³⁵

Another factor was the local Indians seeing the settlers as allies against other Indian groups. This was particularly true in New England, where tribes who had been weakened by disease (Wampanoags and Massachusetts) aligned themselves with the settlers to counter the neighboring Narragansetts, who had not been leveled by disease. In 1630–1631 the home country, perceiving danger for its American settlements, proclaimed that natives should not be furnished “with weapons and habiliments of warre.”³⁶

Various explanations are made for those settling in the colonies. England had too many people, many of whom were living in cities as a result of a movement to enclose farms, which forced families off lands owned by others. Settlers were encouraged by others, since the colonies created markets for English goods and could provide resources for England. Religion was a factor. Goals included the spread of Christianity, the formation of ideal Christian communities, escape from religious persecution, and to save the New World from Catholicism. Criminals in England were motivated to migrate when given that choice or decapitation. As summarized by one author, “They left the countries of their birth because they had not been able to get along there — whether spiritually, socially, politically, or economically.”³⁷ For whatever reason, by 1640 around 60,000 Europeans were in the Americas north of Mexico.³⁸

CHAPTER 4

Destruction of the Pequot

Where today is the Pequo[t]? Where the Narragansetts, the Mohawks, Pocanokets, and many other once powerful tribes of our race?— Tecumseh, 1811¹

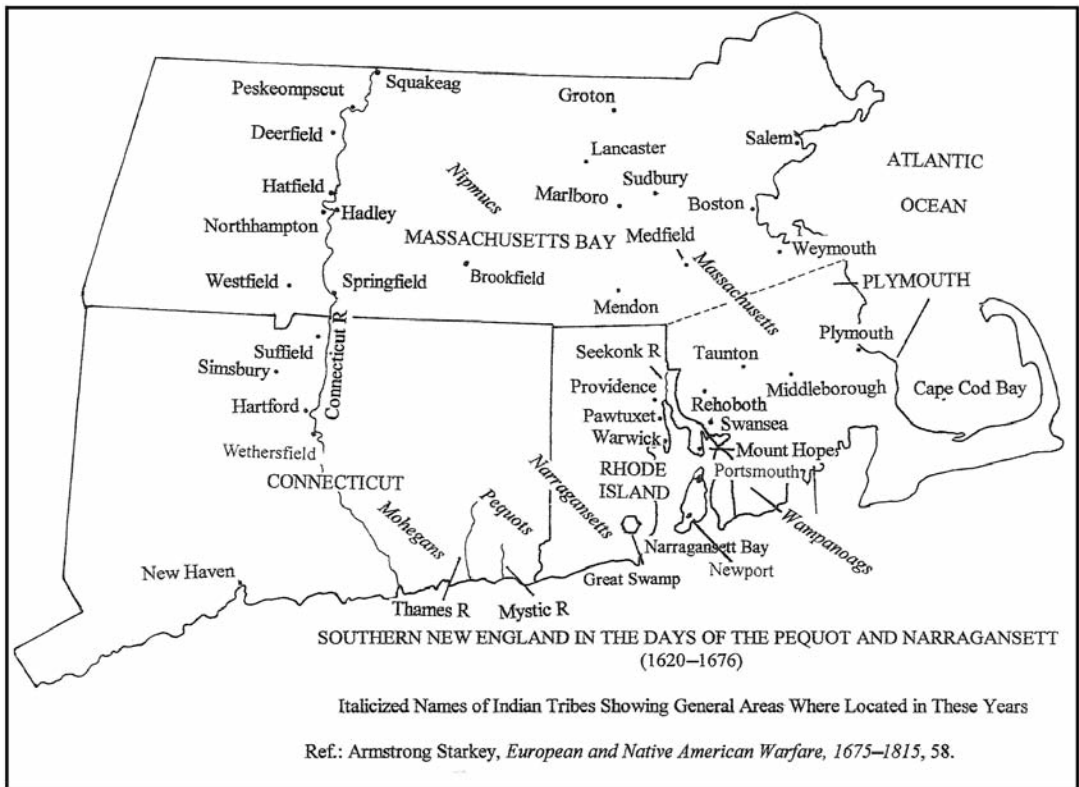
The increase in population in New England between 1620 and 1660 (102 to 31,000), which accelerated with the arrival of the Massachusetts Bay colony in 1630, required difficult adjustments for those indigenous to the area.² The first Massachusetts Bay governor, John Winthrop, reasoned that the Puritans could occupy unused land as follows: “As for the natives in New England, they inclose noe Land, neither have any settled habytation, nor any tame Cattle to improve the Land by, and soe have noe other but a Natural Right to those Countries. Soe as if we leave them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them and us.”³ The reasoning is good, but the implementation is difficult. Who was to decide what was sufficient for the Indians’ use?

Critical to the survival of the Plymouth colony was the treaty they entered into with the Wampanoags and their chief, Massasoit, in which each agreed to not harm the other. For a short period the new settlers could not live without the aid of the Indians, and they acted accordingly, but as their numbers increased they became arrogant and thought themselves superior to the natives.⁴

Historian Francis Jennings closely studied the settler–Indian relationship in New England for the period from 1634 to 1677 and concluded that the English approach was “(1) a deliberate policy of inciting competition between natives in order, by division, to maintain control; (2) a disregard for pledges and promises to natives, no matter how solemnly made; (3) the introduction of total exterminatory war against some communities of natives in order to terrorize others; and (4) a highly developed propaganda of falsification to justify all acts and policies of the conquerors whatsoever.”⁵ An insatiable demand of the settlers for more land during this period often caused conflicts.

Support for Jennings’ conclusions is found in the Pequot War of 1636–1637. In the words of William Bradford, “The Pequots fell openly upon the English at Connecticut ... and slew sundry of them as they were at work in the fields, both men and women, to the great terror of the rest” and also “assaulted a fort at the [Connecticut] river’s mouth, though strong and well-defended.”⁶ If this were the total background to what happened, perhaps there would be some justification for eliminating the Pequots, but it was not.

In 1636 the Pequots were hemmed in by the Dutch, who had trading posts up the Connecticut River, colonists settling the lower Connecticut River Valley, and the Narragansetts on the east. The initial event leading to war was the killing of everyone aboard a ship, including an Englishman, Captain John Stone, at anchor at the mouth of the Con-



necticut River. Pequots were not involved, but the guilty tribe was dominated by them. The colonists demanded that the Pequots hand over the murderers and make a payment. Although the Pequots, who were at war with the Dutch, said the massacre was in retaliation for the killing of an Indian chief, for whom ransom had been paid, which could have been done by either an Englishman or a Dutchman since the Indians could not tell them apart, they agreed to the English demands. However, the killers were not delivered, since they were said to have fled.⁷

Submission merely postponed warfare between the English and the Pequots. A killing of an English trading captain on Block Island by the natives there resulted in an expedition to the island, which was inhabited by Narragansetts. A force sailed from Boston on August 25, 1636, even though the Narragansetts had already punished those on Block Island. Instructions from the Massachusetts Bay government were for the soldiers “to put to death the men of Block Island ... to spare the women and children, and to bring them away, *and to take possession of the island,*” all of which was done⁸ (emphasis added). The women and children were sent off to slavery.

Notwithstanding that the Pequots were not involved in the Block Island killing, orders to the leader of the expedition, Captain John Endecott, directed that he also go to the Pequot territory on the Connecticut River and demand that the killers of both Englishmen be handed over. When he arrived he refused to wait until the Pequot chiefs could meet with him, and set about “burning and spoyling the Countrey.” Reacting to this the Pequots (without success), as Bradford states, tried to get the Narragansetts to join with them in a war against the English. The English were able to get the Mohegans (a splinter Pequot

group living nearby), the Eastern Niantics (living east of the Pequots), and the Narragansetts to join with them in the fight against the Pequots.⁹ The Narragansetts communicated to the English “that it would be pleasing to all natives that women and children be spared.”¹⁰ To their horror, this was not the case.

As it developed it wasn't Massachusetts Bay that took the lead in punishing the Pequots. Connecticut, whose first settlers came from Massachusetts Bay in the 1633–1638 period, had an understanding with Massachusetts Bay that they would only engage in a defensive war but proceeded to ignore this and went against the Pequots. The excuse for doing so was a Pequot attack on field workers near Wethersfield, Connecticut, on April 23, 1637, which ended with the deaths of six men and three women. The Pequot justified their action as revenge for the settlers at Wethersfield running a sachem from land they had previously agreed that he should have.¹¹

On May 26, 1637, an English force, mostly from Connecticut, attacked a lesser Pequot settlement on the Mystic River in an effort to avoid confronting Pequot warriors, which were expected to be at the main Pequot fort some five miles away on the Thames River. While their allies, some 600 Narragansett and Eastern Niantic, stood by, the English instead of capturing the village set it afire, and virtually all in it were either burned to death or slaughtered by sword and musket as they tried to leave. The Narragansetts were appalled: “It is too furious, and slays too many men.” Possibly 800 Pequots lost their lives, whereas the English had 2 killed and 20 wounded.¹² Captain John Underhill, who commanded a small group of Massachusetts soldiers, noted that this type of warfare was much different from that practiced by the Indians: “They come not near one another but shoot remote, and not point-blank, as we often do with our bullets, but at rovers, and then they gaze up into the sky to see where the arrow falls, and not until it is fallen do they shoot again. This fight is more for pastime, than to conquer and subdue enemies.... They might fight seven years and not kill seven men.”¹³

As viewed by historian Jennings, the Connecticut leader, Captain John Mason, elected to fight the Pequots by a massacre of non-combatants in a relatively weak village rather than to confront a strongly defended main village. Some Pequots who fled were surrounded on July 14, and about 60 warriors were killed as they huddled together in a swamp. The few remaining Pequots agreed in the Treaty of Hartford, signed September 21, 1638, to be distributed as vassals to the English Indian allies and that the name Pequot was to be spoken no longer. Jennings notes that after the Pequots were vanquished no one seemed to care about who had killed the Englishman, Captain Stone, which was supposedly the reason the Pequots were initially abused. Rather, attention was devoted to who should have the Pequots' former lands.¹⁴

The Narragansetts had some claim for the defeat of the Pequot. After the village was burned they were leaving the scene and encountered Pequots coming to the battle from the main Pequot village. Although driven back by the fury of the Pequot attack they joined with the English to overcome these Pequots. Later a remnant of 200 Pequots surrendered to the Narragansetts, who were forced to turn them over to the English. As a reward for not joining with the Pequot the Narragansetts asked for, and received from Massachusetts Bay, the right to hunt on what had been Pequot land.¹⁵

Bradford lauded the victory, saying that if the Pequot had been successful in getting the cooperation of the Narragansett Indians, they may have been able to carry out their plan of not coming to “open battle” with the English but rather to “fire their houses, kill their cattle, and lie in ambush for them as they went abroad.” In this way the English

“would either be starved with hunger or be forced to forsake the country.” Writing of the battle, Bradford, in a show of Old Testament righteousness, said, “It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stink and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the praise thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to enclose their enemies in their hands and give them so speedy a victory over so proud and insulting an enemy.”¹⁶

CHAPTER 5

Next Were the Narragansetts

Eager to claim the land of the Pequot, Connecticut rushed 30 men on to the land immediately after the Mystic massacre. They were to “maynteine [Connecticut’s] right that God by Conquest [had] given [them.]”¹ Massachusetts was not willing to concede this land to Connecticut; instead, it considered this an area for its expansion. Connecticut confronted Massachusetts by encouraging the Mohegans, who received many of the defeated Pequots into their tribe, to use the land. The Mohegans challenged any Narragansetts found hunting there. Connecticut was not intimidated by Massachusetts and, in 1638, required the Narragansetts to sign a treaty with them at Hartford. In the treaty Connecticut asserted control over the Narragansetts.²

While Connecticut and Massachusetts challenged one another over the Pequot lands and control of the Narragansetts, an independent colony of settlers landed at what was to become New Haven. The land, formerly occupied by a Pequot tributary, was emptied when Massachusetts soldiers murdered the men and dispatched the women and children into slavery. Ultimately New Haven was swallowed by Connecticut, whose charter from Charles II in 1660 included New Haven within its boundaries.³

With the Pequots disposed of, the Narragansetts had reason to be apprehensive. Their territory, which essentially became modern-day Rhode Island, was about 20 miles east to west, measured from Narragansett Bay, and 50 miles south to north from the ocean, and was fairly dense in population by Indian norms. To an extent they had a protector in Roger Williams, a Puritan who arrived in Massachusetts Bay in February of 1631 and immediately found himself at odds with the ruling hierarchy. To him, those in Massachusetts Bay were not pure enough since they had not separated from the Church of England. After four years of differences, Williams was banished from Massachusetts Bay. In prior years as a trader Williams had garnered the goodwill of the Narragansetts and, after banishment, received a gift of land from them that allowed him and his followers to move to the west side of the Seekonk River and to start a settlement, which he named Providence because of “God’s merciful providence unto [him] in [his] distress.”⁴

Over the next few years Providence grew as others fled from the rigorous Puritan doctrines insisted on in Massachusetts Bay. In 1638 a large group settled on the Island of Rhode Island in Narragansett Bay on land that the Narragansetts, with Williams’ encouragement, made available to them. This settlement became Portsmouth. The group was led by William Coddington and were followers of Anne Hutchinson, a mother of 14 who was ordered to leave Massachusetts because of her beliefs. Coddington’s group paid the Narragansetts “forty fathoms of white wampum.” At this time “wampum,” which was “white and purple beads made from shells,” was used as currency by the Indians and the English. Manufacture of

wampum was a valuable activity of the Narragansetts. Built into a right of each individual to interpret the Bible, a Hutchinson tenet, are disagreements within a congregation. One rapidly developed within the Portsmouth settlement, and Coddington led a group to the south of the island and founded Newport in 1639.⁵

When Connecticut, in 1642, warned Massachusetts of a possible Indian uprising, it set in motion action that diminished the independence of the Narragansetts. Ignoring Connecticut's claimed right to deal with the Narragansetts under the 1638 treaty, Massachusetts summoned the Narragansett chief, Miantonomo, to Boston for a confrontation over any planned uprising. He convincingly denied any plan, and Massachusetts refused to agree to Connecticut making a preemptive move against the Narragansetts. Miantonomo correctly perceived the future. Reportedly he wanted the Indians to become as one "as the English are, or [they would] soon all be destroyed."⁶ The Puritans were present in large numbers by 1642. Between 1630 and 1642 an estimated 20,000 emigrants came into New England.⁷

Soon thereafter Massachusetts inserted itself into what was happening to the Narragansett land. Samuel Gorton, a free thinker, and his family emigrated to New England in 1636. His independent ways and activity as a lay preacher over the next three years led to a conflict with the authorities in Plymouth. He was whipped and banished from Portsmouth. The title and thrust of a lengthy tract written in 1646 — that is, *Simplicities Defence against Seven-Headed Policy*, in which New England authorities were accused of setting up a corrupt religious system — illustrates why he did not get along with others in the New England establishment. When he moved to an area south of Providence he so aggravated the other settlers that they subjected themselves to the authority of Massachusetts in the hope of getting rid of Gorton and his followers, called Gortonoges.⁸ Massachusetts responded with a statement of October 28, 1642, delivered to the Gortonoges asserting that land disputes based on a "pretence of a ... purchase from the Indians" should be settled in Massachusetts courts.⁹ Since all settlers on Narragansett land at that time based their settlements on cessions from the Narragansetts, all were threatened by this assertion of jurisdiction.

In a show of independence the Narragansetts, in January 1643, sold a large piece of land just south of Providence, all of which was then called Shawomet and later Warwick, to the followers of Gorton. In a show of power Massachusetts summoned Gorton to Boston, where he agreed that Massachusetts had jurisdiction. Countering a showing of independence in what was to become Rhode Island, a confederation — the United Colonies of New England — was formed in May 1643 with the members being Massachusetts, Connecticut, Plymouth, and New Haven. None of the Rhode Island settlements were included.¹⁰

A change occurred in the Narragansetts when their chief, Miantonomo, wearing heavy armor (supplied by a Gortonoge) that impeded his mobility, was captured in a fight with the Mohegans.¹¹ He was turned over to the English, and at the first business meeting of the United Colonies on September 7, 1643, it was decided that he should be returned to the Mohegans, who were "to take away [his] life ... according to justice and prudence."¹² This was done by a Mohegan with a hatchet, which "clave his head." To justify its action Massachusetts claimed that the Narragansetts had gone to war against the Mohegans in violation of their 1638 treaty with Connecticut. This contention appears to have been a contrivance since Miantonomo had permission from the Massachusetts governor, John Winthrop, Sr., to go to war.¹³ Winthrop's explanation of the confederation decision is disturbing. He wrote that

taking into serious consideration what was safest and best to be done, were all of opinion that it would not be safe to set him at liberty, neither had we sufficient ground for us to put him to

death. In this difficulty we called in five of the most judicious elders ... and propounding the case to them, they all agreed that he ought to be put to death.¹⁴

On September 12, 1643, the United Colonies demanded that ten Gortonoges answer to a Boston court. The reply was that the Gortonoges were only responsible to “the state and government of old England.”¹⁵ The confederation acted to let the Rhode Islanders know that they were under the confederation’s jurisdiction. Armed men were sent to return some Gortonoges to Boston to be tried. Although convicted of blasphemy Gorton and his followers saved themselves from being hanged by claiming their rights as Englishmen. After doing hard labor they returned to Rhode Island to the surprise of the Narragansetts, who, upon finding out that the Gortonoges’ lives had been spared by their claiming to be Englishmen, agreed to put themselves in a comparable situation. Samuel Gorton was given a Narragansetts’ statement that they would be subjects of Charles I “upon condition of His Majesties royal protection.”¹⁶ Later when Massachusetts ordered the sachems to Boston, it met with resistance. The sachems said they had become subjects “unto the same King and States yourselves are.” In disputes “neither Massachusetts, nor [the Narragansetts were] to be judges; ... both [were] to have recourse” to England. Unfortunately, a weakened Charles I, who lost his head in 1649, did not prevent Massachusetts from declaring war against the Narragansetts in 1645.¹⁷

The reason for the declaration of war is not clear. In his book *The Invasion of America* Francis Jennings quotes from a letter written to John Winthrop, Sr., then-governor of Massachusetts Bay, by his brother-in-law that suggests selfish motives may have been involved:

If upon a Just warre the Lord should deliver them [the Narragansetts] into our hands, wee might easily have men woemen and children enough to exchange for Moores, which will be more gaynefull pilladge for us then wee conceive, for I doe not see how wee can thrive untill wee get into a stock of slaves sufficient to doe all our business.... I suppose you know verie well how wee shall mayneteyne 20 Moores cheaper than one Englishe servant.¹⁸

The threat of war was enough to bring the Narragansetts to a peace table and to an August 1645 treaty in which they agreed to pay a penalty, pay an annual tribute, and gave up claims to the former Pequot land.¹⁹

Massachusetts and those wanting independence from Massachusetts carried their arguments to England, where the King and Parliament were fighting a civil war. Williams went as a representative for the settlements in the Narragansett territory and was able to get a patent dated March 14, 1644, that put the civil government of the islands in the bay, Providence, and lands of the Narragansett Indians under the jurisdiction of the “Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay in New England.”²⁰

To be an Indian within Massachusetts Bay was not easy for those with strong convictions. Massachusetts had strict rules as to how Indians were to be treated in a religious sense. In November 1646 it specified that “no person within [Massachusetts’] jurisdiction, whether Christian or pagan, shall wittingly and willingly presume to blaspheme [God’s] holy name, either by wilfull or obstinate deniing the true god, or his creation or government of the world, or shall curse God or reproach the holy religion of God.... If any person or persons whatsoever, within our jurisdiction, shall break this lawe they shall be put to death.” Indian rites were forbidden — “no Indian shall at any time pawpaw, or performe outward worship to their false gods, or to the devill” under penalty of fines.²¹

Those seeking to convert Indians to Christianity were often misled by the Indian trait

of “listening with politeness and patience to a speaker, especially a stranger instead of interrupting to disagree or ask questions.”²²

Williams, who returned to England in 1653, carried a petition from the Narragansetts “that they might not be forced from their religion, and, for not changing their religion, be invaded by war; for they said they were daily visited with threatenings by Indians that came from about the Massachusetts, that if they would not pray, they should be destroyed by war.”²³ The petition was received sympathetically by Oliver Cromwell, who was at the peak of his power and who disliked Massachusetts’ independent ways. Massachusetts abandoned a war effort against the Narragansetts in 1654 when they learned of Cromwell’s reaction from Williams.²⁴

Nonetheless the Narragansetts were not safe. Private speculators took steps to get deeds directly from the Indians. The largest operator was the Atherton Company, which included as a partner the governor of Connecticut, John Winthrop, Jr. Atherton was not satisfied with a bogus deed for six thousand acres. In a larger plot the United Colonies fined the Narragansetts for various crimes. The fine was large enough that they couldn’t pay it without help from Humphrey Atherton, of Atherton Company, who took a mortgage on their land. When the Narragansetts, with great difficulty, were able to meet the mortgage payment, Atherton refused to accept the payment and claimed ownership of all remaining 400 square miles of Narragansett land. The plot failed when Rhode Island claimed the land. With Cromwell gone and Charles II on the throne in 1660, there was a rush by the colonies to obtain charters defining their boundaries. Connecticut’s charter included New Haven, but its claim for Rhode Island was rejected.²⁵

One of the tasks of the king on his assuming the Crown was to straighten out conflicts within the colonies. To do this, commissioners were sent to America. One specific inquiry was as to the validity of the instrument by which the Narragansetts had submitted themselves to England. Charles II told them, “If you have cleare prooffe that in truth these territoryes are transferred to us, you shall seize upon the same in our Name, and the same tract of land shall bee hereafter called the King’s Province.”²⁶ Finding “cleare prooffe,” the land that the Narragansetts had not sold or given away became the King’s Province and was placed under the administration of Rhode Island.²⁷ For the next ten years, the Narragansetts were relatively safe from those trying to take over their land. The commissioners voided schemes like the Atherton mortgage and put strictures on the colonies as to Indian lands: “No colony hath any just right to dispose of any lands conquered from the natives, unles both the cause of the conquest be just and the land lye within the bounds which the king by his charter hath given it, nor yet to exercise any authority beyond those bounds.” Grants made by “the usurped authority called the United Colonyes” were voided.²⁸ This action didn’t help New England, which was in need of land. In 1640 its population was roughly 15,000 to 20,000, 33,000 in 1660, and by 1700 it reached 100,000.²⁹

The commissioners cited the Bible for what they were doing. Psalms 115:16 says that “the earth hath [the Lord] given to the children of men” and, said the commissioners, “children of men’ comprehends Indians as well as English; and no doubt the country is theirs till they give it or sell it, though it be not improved.”³⁰ Of course, the Puritans also relied on the Bible to sanction their treatment of the Indians. One passage was Psalms 2:8: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”³¹ A humorist explained the Puritan reasoning by a fictitious town meeting: “Voted, that the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof; voted, that the earth is given to the Saints; voted, that we are the Saints.”³²

CHAPTER 6

King Philip's War

Plymouth's position was unique. Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island had charters or patents for their colonies, but Plymouth had neither. It maintained control over land within its claimed boundaries by its relationship with the Wampanoag Indians, who they protected from the other colonies. So long as the Wampanoags continued to only sell land with Plymouth's permission, it could maintain control of the colony. When sachem Massasoit, who had for years been cooperative with the colony, died, disagreements arose. His successor, Wamsutta, sold land without consulting Plymouth. Wamsutta died around 1664 under circumstances indicating his death may have been hastened by the English. He was succeeded by his brother Metacom, commonly known as Philip, who was summoned to Plymouth, where he agreed, under pressure, not to dispose of lands "without [the colony's] privity, consent, or appointment."¹

Metacom understood his agreement to apply for the next seven years. Approximately seven years later sales were made, and Philip drew the wrath of Plymouth, which was also concerned about information that the Narragansett and Wampanoags were preparing for war. Philip was forced to agree not to sell without Plymouth's consent, and Plymouth told him he would "smart for it" if he "went on in his refractory way."² This confrontation, which occurred in 1671, also dealt with Philip's admission that he had been planning an attack on English settlements and resulted in his surrendering weapons brought to the meeting. For the next four years there was fear on both sides.

A conflict arose between Rhode Island and Plymouth when Rhode Island's charter, obtained in 1663, included Philip's village. Plymouth contested the charter. This was only one of the boundary disputes between the colonies that the commissioners sent by the Council of Plantations in London were supposed to settle.³

Disputes between the colonies became of secondary importance when what is known as King Philip's War, or by historian Francis Jennings as the Second Puritan Conquest (the first being the Pequot War), commenced. Philip was unhappy with the treaty he was forced into in 1671 and made contact with other tribes over the next few years. Philip was also distressed by the efforts to convert Indians to Christianity. He said there was "a great Fear to have any of their Indians ... called or forced to be Christian Indians [sometimes called Praying Indians].... Such were in everything more mischievous, only Dissemblers, and then the English made them not subject to their Kings, and by their lying to wrong their Kings."⁴

The war started in 1675 when an Indian, John Sassamon, who had told the English that a war was being planned, died. Although at first the death was considered accidental, an accusation by a Praying Indian that three Wampanoag had murdered him resulted in a trial that was clouded at the outset by the fact that the accuser owed money to one of the

accused, Tobias, who was a counselor to Philip. The Wampanoags were convicted and executed. The indictment was of “laying violent hands on [Sassamon] ... and striking him, or twisting his necke, until hee was dead ... [and] did cast his dead body through the hole of the icyce.”⁵ The trial, conviction, and execution of the accused were, to Philip and others including some English, a miscarriage of justice.

At the time Increase Mather, a teacher at North Church in Boston and a prominent spokesman for American Puritanism, said the men “had a fair tryall for their lives.” He based this, in part, on the assertion by Tobias’ son, who was one of the three, who “confessed that his father and [the other accused] killed *Sassamon*, but himself had no hand in it, only stood by and saw them doe it.”⁶ Twenty years later Increase’s son, Cotton Mather, expanded on this statement. All of the convicted were to be hung and, on the 8th of June, two were “turned off the ladder at the gallows” and died immediately, but the third, Tobias’ son, hit the ground when the rope broke or slipped. Having been spared, and his father already dead, the son proceeded to confess to the crime as noted. The confession did not save him; he was shot a month later.⁷

The war started in earnest at the end of June. Violence broke out in Swansea when Indians looted some homes, and as they were running away, one was shot. Swansea was a relatively new Plymouth settlement (1667) and a thorn in the side of the Wampanoag since it intruded into land of the Pokanoket, a Wampanoag group.⁸ When some Indians came to the garrison and asked why the Indian was shot, and after they said the Indian was dead, an “English Lad saied it was no matter. The men indevered to inform them it was but an idell Lads Words but the Indians in haste went away and did not hearken to them.”⁹ The next day nine Swansea residents were killed in retribution.

Troops were sent to Swansea but did not immediately try to capture Philip, who gained allies and was able to move to the north. Philip was never in overall command of the Wampanoags, but rather the sachem of the Pokanoket was. Probably Philip never commanded more than 300 to 500 warriors in battle. Command in the Indian context is watered down. Chiefs and sachems, as noted by Roger Williams, would not act contrary to ways “to which the people are averse, and by gentle perswasion cannot be brought.”¹⁰

Attacks on other settlements in Plymouth followed in short order: Taunton on June 27, Rehoboth on June 30, and Middleborough on July 9. The war rapidly spread to Rhode Island and Massachusetts Bay. Massachusetts made an effort to have the Nipmuc Indians, who were located in the middle of present-day Massachusetts, declare their loyalty but soon found out to the contrary when the Nipmuc attacked Mendon on July 14. Shortly after that attack Philip escaped into Nipmuc territory, evading a force hoping to trap him in Plymouth. Although missing Philip the English captured one hundred women and children he left behind and decided to sell them into slavery.¹¹

An Indian tribe actively joining with the English were the Mohegan, who overtook Philip and separated him from twenty-three of his warriors, but Philip continued on with forty warriors and joined in with the Nipmuc. In August the Nipmuc were active in ambushing English forces and attacking Lancaster and Springfield. Fearful of what might happen along the Connecticut River, Massachusetts took steps to fortify settlements there. Their steps did not stop a series of assaults on settlements along the river in September and October — Squakeag, Deerfield, Hatfield, Hadley, Northampton, Westfield, and Springfield. Springfield had over 500 residents, and the Nipmuc, taking advantage of its defenders being elsewhere, burned 300 homes. Relief came when the Indians went into winter quarters.¹²

Something of a surprise to the English was the proficiency of the Indians with muskets. In September 1675 the deputy governor of Connecticut told the governor that the Indians were “so accurate ... above our own men, to doe execution, whereby more of ours are like to fall, rather than of theirs, [unless] the Lord by speciall providence, doe [deliver] them into our handes.”¹³ This could have been anticipated since the Indians’ preoccupation with hunting gave them skill in using the weapon. The warriors were also formidable marchers. To cover 30 to 50 miles in a day was not unusual.¹⁴ Also they could survive on “acorns, ground nuts, horse guts and ears, skunks, tree bark, rattlesnakes, and extracts from old bones.” Particularly effective in the New England of the 1600s was the Indian use of “the ‘secret skulking’ war: the raid, the ambush, and the retreat.”¹⁵

New England at this time is visualized by Douglas Leach in his book *Flintlock and Tomahawk* as an “almost unbroken expanse of forest [with] [h]ere and there ... a few acres of cleared land and a small cluster of houses — a village set down in the middle of the forest. [It] was a land of isolated villages and occasional towns, interconnected by a network of woodland paths which served as virtually the only means of access to most of the inland settlements.”¹⁶

New England was suffused with an anti-Indian hysteria. Fear of all Indians led to the confinement of 400 Praying Indians on Deer Island in Boston Harbor. During the war perhaps as many as 3,000 Praying Indians may have died in captivity. Fear and paranoia were warranted to a degree since many Praying Indians joined in the uprising. Indians accepting English ideas as to the soul and heaven and hell, according to Roger Williams, reasoned that the English “hath books and writings, and one which God himself made, concerning mens souls, and therefore may well know more than wee that have none, but take all upon trust from our forefathers.”¹⁷

Presumably not all believers accepted the notion that they should take up arms against their own kind. Samuel Gorton wrote about the pervasive idea that all Indians were enemies in September 1675:

People are apt in these dayes to give credit to every flying and false report; and not only so, but they will report it again, as it is said of old, report and we will report; and by that meanes they become deceivers and tormenters one of another, by feares and jealousies. There is a rumour as though all the Indians were in combination and confederacie to exterpate and root out the English, which many feare ... as though God brought his people hither to destroy them by delivering them into the hands of such Barbarians.¹⁸

This anxiety temporarily removed what proved to be a most important asset to the colonists, loyal Indians who had the knowledge and skills of those attacking the settlements. The panic let authorities in the colonies overlook the barbarity of those who went out to engage the Indians. One particularly cruel human being was Captain Samuel Moseley, who commanded a volunteer group of “servants, apprentices, seamen, and convicted pirates” with different traits than most of the militia, who were farmers or affluent citizens. Moseley was in many of the battles and made no distinction between a friendly Indian and an opponent. His hatred of Indians is illustrated by his writing in October 1675 of a captured Indian woman: “This aforesaid Indian was ordered to be torn in peeces by Doggs and she was soe dealt with.”¹⁹

A major concern of the colonists was what the Narragansetts, thought to have between one to three thousand warriors, would do. They refused to declare themselves or to hand over Wampanoag refugees. In November the United Colonies decided to send a thousand

men into the Narragansett territory. Rhode Island declined an invitation to send a contingent. On December 19 this force attacked a fortified Narragansett village at the Great Swamp and killed perhaps 600, of whom 200 to 300 were warriors; another estimate is 97 warriors and 300 to 1,000 women and children. The soldiers were led by Governor Josiah Winslow of Plymouth, the first American-born governor of an English colony. One suggested reason for the preemptive attack was to keep Narragansett's corn supplies from Philip's men.²⁰

There are some grounds to question the motive behind the attack. In July 1675 Rhode Island's governor, William Coddington, foretold what happened. In a letter to New York governor Edmund Andros he said Massachusetts aimed "to bring the Indians there to their owne termes, and to call that part of Rhode Island theirs."²¹ The Narragansetts, although not declaring their loyalty, did not participate in any major way in the 1675 attacks. The fact that the authorities "offered the prospect of the reward of Indian lands in addition to pay"²² lends itself to the conclusion that avarice may been a significant factor. Further evidence of this is the action of Massachusetts, in February 1676, asking for loans with a security of lands to be conquered. Those attacking the Narragansetts also suffered significant casualties (about 100 dead, 100 wounded), and even more important, the Narragansetts then joined in the war, attacked Pawtuxet, Rhode Island, and then marched northward to join the Nipmuc.²³

In December Philip made an effort to recruit the Mahican tribe, which was located north of Albany, to support the uprising with manpower and supplies but only succeeded in being attacked by the Mohawks of upper New York. The Mohawks were encouraged by Andros, who did not want the war to spread into New York. The Mohawks' surprise attack in late February was devastating. All but 40 of 500 warriors with Philip were killed, and another group of 400 dispersed.²⁴ No longer was Philip a major factor in the war.

The winter rest for the warring Algonquians was brief. Perhaps in a payback for the preemptive strike at the Narragansetts, February attacks were made in eastern Massachusetts — Lancaster, Medfield, and Weymouth. More raids in March, spread over much of New England, created panic in many areas. Northampton and Simsbury, on the Connecticut River, a garrison and Rehoboth in Plymouth, Warwick and Providence in Rhode Island, and Groton and Marlboro in eastern Massachusetts were targets. In March the Narragansetts lost their foremost leader, Canonchet, a son of Miantonomo. He refused to capitulate the entire tribe in exchange for his life and that of the 43 captured with him. All 43 were executed, and Canonchet, at his request, was beheaded by the son of a Mohegan who had killed his father in an earlier year. On being told that he was to be executed, Canonchet said that "he liked it well, that he should dye before his Heart was soft, or had spoken any thing unworthy of himself."²⁵

What started to turn the wind of war against the Indians were disease and hunger. A necessary pause was needed to plant crops and to fish. The Indians did not have ample granaries to fall back upon. Attacks continued in April and May over a wide area of New England, but the English were more successful in their efforts to combat the rebellious tribes by having more support from the Mohegan and Mohawk Indians. They also exacerbated the food supply shortage for the Indians by concentrating on ways to diminish what was available to them. Compelled to augment their food supply, the revolting Indians, referred to hereafter as Algonquians, camped at Peskeompskut on the Connecticut River, where there were many fish, and mounted raids on nearby settlements to gather food. A surprise attack on Peskeompskut on May 19, 1676, broke the will of many Algonquians, not because of the loss of life, which was heavy, perhaps one to two hundred, many of whom were

women and children and the aged, but for the interruption in the Indian food supply. The killings bordered on being atrocities. Those in Peskeompskut put up little if any opposition. Only one of the attackers was killed, but the English were ambushed as they left the area and had thirty-nine more deaths.

Evidence of a loss of enthusiasm was shown when the Indians returned from a successful attack on Sudbury, Massachusetts, in late April. On arriving back at their camp they did not show their usual jubilation after a victory. Rather, Mary Rowlandson, who was captured at Lancaster several months before, said that "they came home ... like Dogs ... which have lost their ears."²⁶

A United Colonies offensive along the Connecticut River starting at Hadley, which was successfully defended against an Indian attack on June 12, found mostly deserted Algonquian camps. This showed the lack of will to proceed with the war since the desertion of the camps meant the Indians were being deprived of fish and crops. The Nipmuc asked Massachusetts Bay for peace terms in early July, and on July 25, 180 Nipmuc surrendered at Boston. A discouraged Philip started back to his home at Mount Hope in Plymouth. He reached there, but on August 12 he and some followers were surprised, and Philip was killed. "His body was decapitated and quartered and his head ... sent to Plymouth, where it was marched through the streets on August 17 and left on display."²⁷ His wife and a young son were sold into slavery. Placing heads of the slain on poles was a practice engaged in by both sides and mimicked a common practice in European wars of this period.²⁸

June and July were months of revenge for the colonists. Many Narragansett were either killed in battle or massacred after surrender. Indians supporting the English could be horribly barbarous. Mohegans and Pequots asked for one Narragansett prisoner after a victory in which they supported Connecticut colonists. The prisoner had his brains knocked out but not before

they first cut one of his Fingers round in the Joynt, at the Trunck of his Hand, with a sharp Knife, and then brake it off.... Then they cut off another and another, till they had dismembered one Hand of all its Digits, the Blood sometimes spirting out in Streams a Yard from his Hand.... His Executioners ... dealt with the Toes of his Feet, as they had done with the Fingers of his Hands.... At last they brake the Bones in his legs, after which he was forced to sit down ... till they had knocked out his brains.²⁹

Many Indians surrendered when Massachusetts issued a declaration of mercy on June 19. Indians fleeing to New York, which was offered as an asylum by Governor Andros in May to those wanting peace, were often killed en route. New York offered to give refuge to those of Philip's followers wanting peace. About five hundred took refuge with the French. After the war less than two hundred Narragansetts survived, and their land was mainly taken by the English. Likewise the Wampanoag were few, and over the next century were mainly absorbed into the European communities. The cooperating Mohegans surrendered their land to Connecticut in 1681 in exchange for perpetual friendship and enough land for their people.

Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth took steps in 1676 to ensure there would not again be an Indian uprising. Massachusetts decreed that any Indian connected with English deaths should be executed or sent into slavery; Plymouth required adult male Indian captives within the colony to be disposed of outside the colony. In September 1676 Massachusetts recognized that the war was over when it hung two Englishmen for murdering six Praying Indians. A few months earlier they might have escaped with minor punishment. Massachusetts declared

a day of thanksgiving in October 1676, stating, "Of those severall tribes & parties that have hitherto risen up against us ... there now scarce remains a name or family of them in their former habitations but are either slayne, captivated or fled into remote parts of this wilderness."³⁰

Statistical facts relating to the war are that one-half of the 90 towns in New England were assaulted, 1,200 homes burned, 8,000 cattle slain, and out of a white population of 52,000 there were 800 English deaths, a death rate greater than that of the Civil War. But the death rate for the Indians was 10 times as great — 3,000 out of 20,000. Something like 60 to 80 percent of the Indians were killed, enslaved, or fled to other places. From the start, absent enlisting other neighboring tribes like the Mahican and Mohawk, an Indian defeat was likely, considering the more than two to one population ratio and the fact that many Indians sided with the English.³¹

Land was available to accommodate an increase in New England's population between 1670 and 1680 from 52,000 to 68,000. In 1670 25 percent of the New England population was Indian, and in 1680 it was between 8 to 12 percent. A prize up for the taking was the Narragansett land. Rhode Island claimed it as being within its boundary. The United Colonies claimed the land should not go to Rhode Island, arguing, among other rationales, that it was land won by conquest, but among themselves it was disputed as to who should get the land. Wrangling over ownership continued until 1686 when James II established an overarching government for the seaboard from New Jersey and Pennsylvania to Maine. In the intervening years it was the King's Province overseen by Rhode Island.³²

Increase Mather left no doubt as to the justness of the war in his mind. In 1676 he wrote *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New England*, which starts with the statement "That the Heathen People amongst whom we live, and whose Land the Lord God of our Fathers hath given to us for a rightfull Possession, have at sundry times been plotting mischievous devices against that part of the English Israel which is seated in these goings down of the Sun." In the next paragraph he refuses to place the blame for the war but damns the Indians: "As for the Grounds, justness, and necessity of the present *War* with these barbarous creatures which have set upon us, my design is not to *inlarge* upon that argument, but to leav that to others whom it mostly concerns."³³ Historians Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Tougias caution in their book *King Philip's War* that Mather "may not have known fairness to the Indians had it perched on his Bible."³⁴

As the war was coming to a close England sent Edward Randolph to study what caused it. In part he reported:

Some impute it to an imprudent zeal in the magistrates of Boston to christianize those heathen before they were civilized ... and that the ... magistrates, for their profit, put the lawes severely in execution against the Indians, the people, on the other side, for lucre and gain, intice and provoke the Indians to the breach thereof, especially to drunkennesse, to which those people are so generally addicted that they will strip themselves to their skin to have their full of rume and brandy....

Some beleeve there have been vagrant and jesuiticall priests, who have made it their businesse, for some yeares past, to goe from Sachim to Sachim, to exasperate the Indians against the English and to bring them into a confederacy, and that they were promised supplies from France and other parts to extirpate the English nation out of the continent of America.³⁵

As to the ability of the Indians to attack the settlers, Randolph said:

Massachusetts in the year 1657, upon designe to monopolize the whole Indian trade did publish and declare that the trade of furs and peltry with the Indians in their jurisdiction did solely

and properly belong to their commonwealth and not to every indifferent person, and did enact that no person should trade with the Indians for any sort of peltry, except such as were authorized by that court.... [Those having authority from the court had licence] to sell, unto any Indian, guns, swords, powder and shot [provided a specified payment be made into the treasury for such guns, powder and shot.]³⁶

In this manner "the Indians [were] abundantly furnished with great store of armes and ammunition to the utter ruin and undoing of many families in the neighbouring colonies to enrich some few of their relations and church members."³⁷

The powerful Abenaki, who resided in modern New Hampshire and Maine, fared better than did the tribes in Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Rhode Island. Disgusted with cheating traders and the occasional capture and sale of Indians into slavery, they also attacked the United Colonies. One of their leaders, Squando, had a personal score to settle. His wife and an infant son were intentionally capsized while traveling down a river so some English sailors could see if it was true that Indians could instinctively swim at birth. The baby drowned. Neither side hesitated to commit atrocities. One contemporary report was that the Indians "dashed out the Brains of a poor Woman that gave suck, they nayled the young Child to the dead Body of its Mother, which was found sucking in that rueful Manner, when People came to the Place."³⁸ Many English would kill any Indian they saw.

The Abenaki had an advantage over the Indians to the south. They traded with the French, who were anxious to supply them with arms and powder. They continued to fight until 1678 and gained a concession in the Treaty of Casco that required English settlers in Maine to pay annual quit-rents of one peck of corn per family to the Abenaki. At that point their coastal area was virtually abandoned by English settlers, but later warfare with the English was not favorable to the Indians. After England and France signed the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which ended Queen Anne's War in America, speculators encouraged settlers to come to the lower Kennebec River part of Maine. The French looked on this as an intrusion into their relationship with the Abenaki and through Father Sebastian Rale, who had a mission post many miles up the Kennebec, encouraged the Indians to force the settlers to move to locations to the south of the Kennebec. Conferences between the English and the Abenaki didn't accomplish this, and in 1722 when the Indians responded to an effort by Massachusetts to seize Father Rale by attacking the new settlements, Drummer's War commenced. In 1724 Father Rale's mission was raided, and he and a number of Indian leaders were killed. Killing Indians was made into a sport when Massachusetts offered large bounties for scalps, and groups organized to seek them out. The war ended in December 1725, after which time settlers and speculators continued their activities. Eventually the Abenaki were forced to move to the far north of New England and to Canada.³⁹

CHAPTER 7

The Fur Trade and Struggles Between the French, English, and Indians (1641–1753)

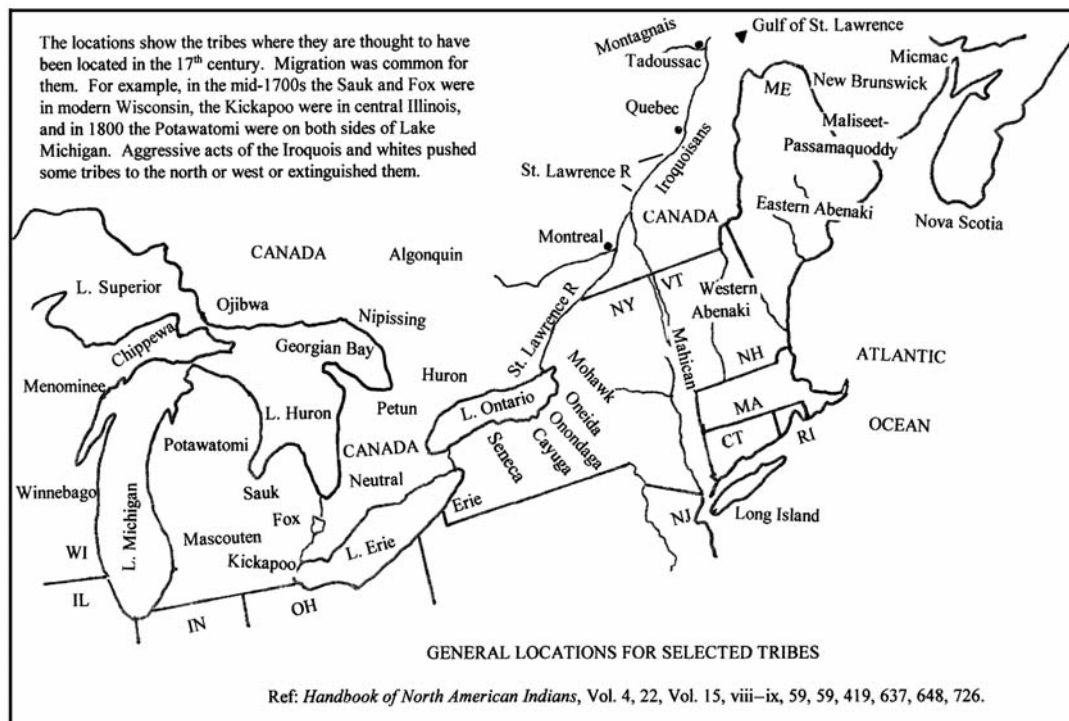
With its victories over tribes located between Lakes Huron, Ontario, and Erie, and south of Erie, starting with the Hurons in 1648–1649, the Iroquois Confederacy was in a position to pit the French and Dutch buyers against one another and, as stated by ethno-historian Alice Kehoe, became the “gatekeepers and toll-takers in international trade.”¹ But not all furs went through the gatekeepers. The Ottawa, located north of Lake Huron, collected furs from tribes west of the Great Lakes as the Huron had in the past.²

The Iroquois wanted to control the fur trade above and below the Great Lakes. In 1652 they expanded their authority to Lake Michigan and drove the Algonquin, Sauk, Potawatomie, Ottawa, and Miami westward to what became Wisconsin.³

The French changed their tactics after losing the Huron middlemen. Montreal became a gathering point for furs, and rather than having an Indian group doing most of the collecting, the French sent *coureurs de bois* into the north, and they brought back the furs to fuel the French fur trade.⁴ In Europe the accession of Louis XIV to the crown of France in 1661 brought different attitudes toward America. Louis made New France a royal province with a governor. Of second importance after the governor was the “intendant,” and the choice of Jean Talon for that position ensured ambitious efforts by France to consolidate and expand its claims.⁵ One of his first acts after arriving in New France was to march an army of 1,000 into Iroquois country to stop interruptions in the Indian–French trade. The Iroquois were drubbed. In due course the French decision to send more soldiers to New France, and a series of smallpox epidemics, brought most of the Iroquois to the peace table in 1665. The Mohawks held out for two more years, but by 1667 a treaty covering the Five Nations and the French was signed.⁶

Taking advantage of the 1667 peace treaty, the French moved up the St. Lawrence River into the Great Lakes, establishing a fort at the strait between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan from which it could buy furs directly from Indians in that area, and, close to the Iroquois, opened a trading post at the Niagara River on the southwest shore of Lake Ontario. Sixteen forts were also placed on Lake Erie. In 1668 the population of New France had grown to 3,000, one-third of whom were regular soldiers.⁷

Talon took other steps to announce France’s claims. A symbolic step was a ceremony at Sault Ste. Marie on June 14, 1671, before assembled Indians, at which France claimed possession of “all the countries, rivers, lakes and streams ... both those which have been discovered and those which may be discovered ... bounded on one side by the seas of the North



and the West, and the other by the South Sea.”⁸ Next, Talon ordered an expedition to make discoveries in the Mississippi Valley to be led by Louis Jolliet, who was either the first or one of the first Europeans to travel down Lake Huron to Lake Erie by way of the Detroit River. He was joined by Father Jacques Marquette, the ministering Jesuit at the Straits of Mackinac.⁹

They left the straits in two canoes on May 17, 1673, and reached the Mississippi River on June 17 after going down Green Bay and, by way of the Fox River, to a portage to the Wisconsin River, which carried them to the Mississippi. They continued down the Mississippi to the Arkansas River, at which point they turned back and returned to Lake Michigan by way of the Illinois River.¹⁰

Further exploration was delayed until 1678 because of France’s problems in Europe. Then Louis XIV approved a plan of Rene-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, to “discover the western part of our country of New France, and for the execution of [the] enterprise, to construct forts wherever [he] deem[ed] it necessary.”¹¹ Thirty-five-year-old La Salle had been in America since 1667 and had spent several years in the Great Lakes region, probably trading for furs.¹²

What followed were years of perseverance and courage during which La Salle traveled the Mississippi River to its mouth, reaching there on April 9, 1682, but only after a grueling backtracking from lower Lake Michigan to check on a missing ship he had sent back to Niagara with a load of furs. The backtrack of 1,000 miles over a 65-day period is described by John Anthony Caruso in his book *The Mississippi Valley Frontier*: “They dragged their canoes over ice, braved swift currents, paddled through cold rain that froze the clothes on their bodies, and they endured hunger and innumerable other discomforts.”¹³ Most of the journey was by foot across what is now Michigan and along the northern shore of Lake Erie.

The route to and from the mouth of the Mississippi was lower Lake Michigan, the St. Joseph River — a short portage between the St. Joseph and Kankakee rivers, the latter being a tributary of the Illinois River that joins the Mississippi — or in one case by a similar connection to the Illinois River by way of the Chicago River and the Des Plaines River, another Illinois tributary.¹⁴ Along the Illinois he found that the Iroquois had been there and had killed many resident Indians, including women and children, and pillaged the country. At the mouth of the Mississippi he formally claimed all lands draining into the Mississippi River, which he named Louisiana. His return was delayed by illness, but he reached upper Lake Michigan around August 1682. He decided to construct Ft. St. Louis on the Illinois (in modern La Salle county) to be a permanent settlement and a place of refuge for the Indians if the Iroquois returned. They did come back in 1684 with the encouragement of Governor Thomas Dongan of New York and at a cost to the Iroquois when the French marched destructively through their country. The Iroquois called back their war parties in 1690.¹⁵

La Salle's letters to Quebec describing Louisiana were received with scorn by a new governor, Antoine le Febvre, Sieur de la Barre, who convinced the king that La Salle's discoveries were useless. He stripped La Salle of his command of Fort St. Louis and of his seigniorship of Fort Frontenac, located on the north end of Lake Ontario, which had been given to La Salle in 1673, after a laudatory character appraisal by then-governor Louis de Baude, Count of Frontenac. La Salle returned to Quebec from St. Louis, did not try to convince La Barre that he was wrong, and sailed for France in November, 1683. Once there he persuaded the king to send him back to the mouth of the Mississippi, where he would proceed up the river about 180 miles to establish a fortified colony to be a depository for furs from Louisiana. The king also ordered that Forts Frontenac and St. Louis be returned to La Salle.¹⁶

What followed was an ill-fated expedition with four ships that, either by chance or by design, failed to find the mouth of the Mississippi and landed in Texas. One ship was captured by the Spanish, another wrecked on the shoals, and one returned to France. La Salle was "left in the wilderness of Texas with one hundred and eighty sick and starving colonists."¹⁷ Although he found a suitable place to build a fort, which was constructed, 30 men died from disease or fatigue. Next came a loss that completely isolated the party. Their final ship, which had most of their stores, foundered on a sand bar. La Salle decided to go over land to the Illinois country with 20 men. At first the trip went well, but then illness forced a stop of two months and the need to return to the fort. By this time, out of the 180 he had landed with there were only 40 left. La Salle determined to make another try to reach the Mississippi River and left on January 7, 1687, with 17 men. When some of the men were angered by one of the officers, who was a La Salle nephew, they killed him and two others while La Salle was at a camp six miles away. After the deed they decided the only way to escape punishment was to kill La Salle, which they did.¹⁸

The conspirators argued over where they should go, and two of the murderers were killed by other conspirators, and another one joined the Indians. Six men under command of Henri Joutel, a chronicler of these events and a La Salle nephew, continued on to the Mississippi. Most of those left at the fort in Texas were killed by an Indian band or surrendered to the Spanish.¹⁹

Developments to the south and north of the St. Lawrence River brought France into conflict with England. The British challenged France for furs coming from the subarctic area north of the St. Lawrence River. The Hudson Bay Company was chartered in 1670

and given, by the English monarch, a monopoly on trading rights over lands whose waters flowed into the James and Hudson bays. By 1685 it had a number of forts spread around the bays. The British supplied arms and ammunition to those trading with them. With the Atlantic Ocean accessible through Hudson Strait it did not have to rely on the St. Lawrence River, which was controlled by the French.²⁰

During the period from 1685 to 1713 the French and English struggled for control of the Hudson Bay trade. The battles differed from those that took place along the St. Lawrence in that the Indians did not ally with either. The Indians in the bay area played one European against the other by seeking the best price they could get for their furs. In 1680 the French were also trying to control as many as 800 free-booting *coureurs de bois* spreading out from Michilimackinac, at the Straits of Mackinac, preferring to only have 25 licensed traders. Their presence in the Green Bay area of Lake Michigan in significant numbers dated back to at least the 1660s.²¹

To the south of the St. Lawrence, New Netherland wanted more people to combat the threat from Virginians and New Englanders crossing its boundaries. The West India Company opened New Netherland to private interests, which could trade with the Indians and pay a duty on imports and exports, and offered free passage to immigrants. The population doubled from about 1,000 to 2,000 between 1638 and 1643. By 1664 it had a population of about 10,000, a large number of whom were not Dutch. As many as 700 may have been slaves. This population was threatened by the 40,000 in Virginia and the 50,000 in Massachusetts.²²

New Netherland's expanding population disturbed the Indians. A new director-general put in charge at New Amsterdam, later to be New York City, in 1638, Willem Kieft, proved to be inept in dealing with the Indians — for example, he attempted to tax them. He also increased the friction with the Indians by buying what is now Queens and the remaining lands in Brooklyn and allowing colonists to cultivate the land. The Dutch had a policy of buying any land used by its settlers, but the spirit of the policy was often violated by unscrupulous manipulation of the Indians.²³

From 1641 to 1643 the Indians went to war mainly around new settlement efforts — Staten Island, Long Island, Westchester County, and what was later Jersey City. The result was not good for the Indians — the whites kept the land, and more Indians lost their lives, about 1,000, than did the settlers. Kieft had a goal to kill all Indians near Manhattan, and the massacres he directed brought retaliation from the Indians, who laid waste to much of the southern part of New Netherland. In 1643 a drunken Kieft ordered the execution of 80 peaceful Wappinger Indians and laughed when “the severed heads of Indian men, women, and children” were used in a game of kickball. In 1645 peace treaties were made. The authorities in the Netherlands directed that there not be war “against the Aborigines of the country or neighbors of New Netherland without their High Mightinesses’ knowledge.” But such a declaration an ocean away could not control what was to happen in America, and periodic struggles occurred during Stuyvesant's years (1647–1664). Kieft, who did not get along with the colonists, was replaced by Peter Stuyvesant in 1647 and drowned on his way back to Europe. The New Amsterdam of this time had 150 to 200 houses, 1,000 residents, and 35 taverns.²⁴

A major change took place in 1664 when New Netherland became an English royal province by the simple expedient of English warships and 450 soldiers demanding its surrender and a subsequent treaty in 1667. Part of New Netherland was New Sweden, which the Dutch seized in 1655. The Dutch decision to surrender was propelled in part by a threat of plunder from “daily great numbers on foot and on horseback, from New England, joining

the English.” In taking over New Netherland the British also acquired New Amsterdam, later New York City, then a town of 2,500 competing with Boston as a trading port. Except for six months in 1673–1674, when the Dutch retook possession of New Netherland, it became New York. Ownership went to the strong. Much valuable land was turned over to private ownership during the Dutch years, and most of the Dutch families, such as the Van Rensselaers and Roosevelts, continued their ownership under the British.²⁵

The English were fortunate to inherit the goodwill the Dutch had with the Five Nations. Although the Dutch had deplorable relations with Indians in the southerly parts of New Netherland, their relations with the Five Nations focused around Fort Orange were relatively smooth. It helped that they provided in trade those items the Indians, mostly Iroquois, wanted, including guns. Those guns, in 1656, brought 46,000 furs to the Dutch’s Fort Orange, at the village of Beverwyck during the Dutch years and Albany, New York, when the English took over. Both the Dutch and the English wanted the Indians to come to the fort rather than trading with individuals who went into the forest to buy furs. The Dutch enacted laws in 1647 and 1652 prohibiting individuals from going into the interior to trade for furs.²⁶

France’s expansion of trade sites, after its 1667 treaty with the Iroquois, drew western tribes into the upper Ohio River watershed. The Iroquois worked to control furs coming out of what was to become Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio and attempted to eliminate the Illinois confederacy of a dozen affiliated groups of about 10,500 people. Iroquois war parties in the late 1670s and during the 1680s were unable to take control of this area and withdrew in the 1690s. However, the Iroquois claimed that the tribes in that area were their vassals.²⁷

Confronting the pugnacious Iroquois, the French invaded Iroquois lands during 1684–1687 with limited success, and the Iroquois attacked French Forts Niagara and Frontenac on Lake Ontario and elsewhere on the St. Lawrence. The French became more aggressive when Jacques-Rene Brisay de Denonville took the place of La Barre as governor of New France in 1685. With a combined force of 3,000 Indians and Frenchmen in June and July, 1687, he marched through Seneca land, destroying villages and food supplies. Not many Indian warriors were killed, and they struck back with fury. A raid of 1,500 painted Indians killed 200 settlers in August 1689. The threat was so real that prior to this time Fort Frontenac had been abandoned. Not all of the Iroquois wanted to continue the warfare. In June 1688, the Onondagas, Cayuga, and Oneidas joined in a treaty with the French in which they declared they were sovereigns of their land and desired to be neutral between the French and English. This treaty was overtaken in 1689.²⁸

The importance of the Iroquois to the British was explained to the English committee of Trade and Plantation on February 22, 1687, by Governor Thomas Dongan of New York:

The five Indian Nations are the most warlike people in America, and are a bulwark between us and the French and all other Indians[;] they goe as far as the South Sea and the North-West Passage and Florida to Warr.... And indeed they are soe considerable that all the Indians in these parts of America are Tributareys to them. I suffer no Christians to converse with them any where but at Albany and that not without my license.²⁹

The French and English went to war in Europe in 1689, called in America King William’s War and in Europe the War of the League of the Augsburg.³⁰ In America each side used Indian allies in attacking the other. Support for the French came from tribes north of the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. Settlements in New Hampshire, which split off from Massachusetts in 1679, and in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys of New York were targets. For example, the small community at Schenectady, New York, was attacked on the

night of February 9, 1690, by 200 French and Indians — 60 were killed and 27 captured. In return the English urged the Iroquois to raid the St. Lawrence Valley. Throughout the war the Iroquois rejected efforts by the French, to have them renounce the English. However, the Iroquois refused to cut off contact with the French, and there were groups within the Five Nations desirous of dealing with them. To keep those on the frontier from fleeing in March 1695 Massachusetts passed a law forbidding frontier residents from moving without permission. When the war ended, there was no large change in the relative positions of the English and French in America.³¹

The European peace settlement in 1697 (Treaty of Ryswick) did not end the French–English competition for the fur trade, nor the war between the Iroquois and the tribes allied with the French, which wanted to gain access to trading with the English at Albany. The Iroquois did not do well against the western tribes, and, after rebuffing the British efforts to keep them from dealing with the French and their allies, entered into a 1701 treaty agreeing to be neutral in dealing with the French and English. This stance was advantageous to the French, who wanted to block trade between its allied tribes and the English at Albany. As a neutral the Iroquois would not let these tribes transit their territory to reach Albany. In 1701 a strategically located Fort Detroit was built by Antoine de la Mothe-Cadillac. The fort controlled the water passage from Lake Huron into Lake Erie and kept the fur trading along that path in French hands.³²

The Iroquois lost many warriors during King William’s War and what followed, the number of warriors dropping from 3,500 to 1,100, and were not happy with the support they received from the colonies.³³ As a Mohawk sachem told it:

You Sett us on dayly to fight & destroy your Enemies, & bidd us goe on with Courage, but wee See not that you doe anything to it yourSelves, neither doe wee See any great Strenth you have to oppose them if they Enemy should breake out upon you; we hear of no great matter is like to be done at Sea, we hear nothing of itt; The warr must also be hottly Pursued on your Sides, what is it that our neighbors of [New] England and the Rest of the English that are in Covenant with use doe, they all Stay att home & Sett us on to doe the worke.³⁴

The Iroquois became careful in their dealings with the Europeans. In 1701, just before their peace agreement with the French was ratified, they ceded Canadian land in southern Ontario, some 800 miles in length and 400 in breadth, including Detroit, to the English. Even though the Iroquois could not stop the French from building Fort Detroit, they claimed they were “the true owners ... by conquest” of that land and the other land given over to the British. What they ceded had already been taken by combat by the Ojibwa, and the Iroquois did not inform the English that they had an agreement with the French to have hunting and fishing rights in the ceded land. Also they told the French that they would be neutral in any further war of the French against the English. To wean France’s Indian fur partners away the Iroquois allowed them to cross their land to trade with the English at Albany in 1696 when the French market went bust from oversupply.³⁵

Another war between the French and English, Queen Anne’s War (1702–1713) called the War of Spanish Succession in Europe, brought attacks on the New England colonies.³⁶ In a broad sense little happened in the colonies; however, as the following petition from the Massachusetts village of Brookfield — dated October 23, 1710 — shows, the distress could be severe:

The humbel petisian of you[r] poar Destressed people Heear caleth aloud for pity & help Therefor we Adres the Gieneral Coart that They would consider us and set us in sum way or othr where By we may have a subsistance so long as you shall se ca[u]se to continue us heere we Did

not com hear with out order neiter are wee wiling To goe away wit out order There Fore wee Are wiling to leave our selves with you to Doe for and with us as you think Best you knowe our Dificaltyes as to the common enenye and Besides That our mill Dam is Broakn so yt we have neither Bread nor meal But what we fetch 30 miles which is intolirable to bar either For Hors or man which puteth us upon in Deavering to rebuilding of it which is imposibel For us to Doe with out your pity and Helpe winter is so neear yt we must intreat you to Doe sumthing as sone as may bee nomore But are your pooar Destressed Begers.³⁷

At the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 France gave Hudson Bay and Nova Scotia to the British. In the two years preceding the war France expanded its trading range by establishing Kaskaskia and Cahokia on the Mississippi River near present-day St. Louis and Vincennes on the Wabash River. Between 1713 and 1744, when King George's War (1744–1748) broke out between France and England, conditions between the two nations in America were relatively peaceful except for French agents encouraging the Abenaki to attack English settlers advancing into Eastern Abenaki territory, essentially modern Maine.³⁸

Even though they are not too important in a historical sense, the raids that occurred along the frontier in the years 1689 through 1713 were cataclysmic to those trying to settle there. The French through this period had a formidable ally in the Abenaki Indians. It was a time of raids and counter-raids. Historian Francis Parkman described this as “a weary [period] of the murder of one, two, three or more men, women or children, waylaid in fields, woods, and lonely roads, or surprised in solitary cabins.”³⁹

A story about an Abenaki raid in 1697 shows the stalwart character of many living along the frontier. While her husband worked in the fields Hannah Dustin and her newborn baby and a nurse were captured by Abenakis. When the baby cried as the Indians were leaving through the forest a warrior smashed its head against a tree. Hannah and the nurse were taken north through the woods for more than a month by a party of two warriors, three women, and seven children. While their captors slept Hannah and the nurse found hatchets and murdered all but two of the sleeping Indians. After lifting the scalps of those slain, they were able to make their way back to their home, where Hannah found that her husband and children had survived the raid. Massachusetts paid her 25 pounds for the scalps.⁴⁰

French missionaries and Indian agents urged the Abenaki, Maliseet, and Micmac to oppose the spread of English settlements north from New England. Warfare broke out between the English and the Eastern Abenaki in 1722 when the Abenaki attacked an area around modern Brunswick, Maine. Massachusetts fought back, and hostilities spread. What is known as Drummer's War, using the name of Massachusetts' governor, ended in 1727 when the French were not giving the Indians enough military help and were not able to provide trading goods at as cheap a price as the British. Western Maine essentially became a land of the English, and the inevitable occurred after the French were defeated in the French and Indian War (1755–1763). The lower Penobscot drainage area in eastern Maine was claimed by the British, and by 1833 all of the most habitable areas in eastern Maine had been ceded to the whites.⁴¹

An ominous fact for both the Indians and the French was the sizeable populations in the English colonies in 1700— New England (Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island), over 90,000; Middle Colonies (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware), over 53,000; Chesapeake Colonies (Virginia, Maryland), about 88,000; and the Carolinas, over 16,000.⁴²

By contrast the Five Nations may have had as few as 1,200 warriors in 1709.⁴³ Although a small number in an overall sense, along the frontiers of the colonies it was a formidable

number. As observed in the *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws 1607–1789*, the Iroquois were a threatening force:

Warfare played an important role in [their] culture. The warriors were the defenders of their families, their clans, their communities. They were blood avengers of the enemies of their people. They brought home prisoners for either adoption or torture, to assuage the grief of families who had lost loved ones. On the warpath, they proved their manhood, their worthiness as patriots for their nation and protectors of their people. In practicing their skill at the craft of war, they gained manifold honors for themselves and provided models to the young. Little wonder that the more pacific decisions of the elders did not always coincide with the aspirations and obligations of the younger men and their war captains. War also channeled community factionalism outward against an alien group and thus relieved inward village tensions.⁴⁴

Over time warfare and disease greatly weakened the Iroquois vis-à-vis the French and English. This is reflected in the decisions of the Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas, in 1726, to give over to the British for protection a large amount of land south of what became Fort Oswego. The collective populations of these three tribes in 1690 has been estimated as 7,280 and in 1730 as 2,680. The Oneida and Mohawk had a similar loss, 1,720 to 980, collectively. The Five Nations in 1630, all together, are estimated to have had a population of 21,740. The integrity of what had become the Six Nations, with the addition of the Tuscaroras, who were driven out of the Carolinas in 1713, was definitely compromised in the 1720s when the French established a “strong position” at Niagara, which was made into a fort at the west end of Lake Ontario, and the English acted similarly at Oswego at the eastern end of the lake.⁴⁵

The fur trade was important to the English through the years 1713 to 1744, when the French and British were not at war. However, there were different opinions as to how it should be carried on. There was a thriving trade between Montreal and Albany of furs that the French had bought and were anxious to trade to the English so as to have the English trade goods that were preferred by the Indians. Albany merchants, often Dutch, were anxious to maintain this trade, as were merchants in New York, which was a stop on the route of the furs to Europe. London didn't like the support this trade gave to the French in their alignment with the Indians of Canada and in the Great Lakes area of the West. For a time London prevailed — New York prohibited the sale of Indian trading goods to the French in the years 1722, 1724, and 1725, but the profits were too great to shut down the Montreal–Albany link altogether, and it continued until Montreal surrendered to the British in the French and Indian War.⁴⁶

The British Board of Trade, the government committee of imperial administration, in a 1721 report wanted a policy of direct trade with the Indians that would be carried on in forts built in areas where “they may best serve to secure and inlarge [British] Trade, and Interest with the Indians, & break the designs of the French in these parts.” The Board believed the future growth of the colonies depended upon good trade relations with the Indians and wanted regulations enforced to stop the “unreasonable avarice of [the British] Indian traders.”⁴⁷ Two decades later Pennsylvania Governor George Thomas advised the Pennsylvania legislature about defiant traders using liquor to cheat Indians of their furs and wampum.⁴⁸

A direct challenge to the French trade route was the construction of Fort Oswego on the southern shore of Lake Ontario in 1727. Oswego also competed for furs that might have otherwise gone to Albany, and this prompted an Albany merchant to describe those trading with the Indians at Oswego as “a parcell [of] young wild brutes who for the most part have

no breeding nor Education, no honour nor honesty and are governd only by an unrulely passion of getting money by fair or foul means.”⁴⁹

Another point of friction between the British and the Indians was the land-grabbers. The British secretary of Indian affairs described what was happening:

The injustice the Indians have suffered with regard to their Lands, has contributed to drive Numbers to the French in Canada, & in general very much weakened the Attachment of our Indians to us. This hunger after Land seems very early to have taken rise in this Province, & is become now a kind of Epidemical Madness, every Body being eager to accumulate vast Tracts without having an intention or taking measures to settle or improve it, & Landjobbing here is as refine an Art as Stock jobbing in Change Alley.⁵⁰

The New York land grabs were carried out on a grand scale. Governor Benjamin Fletcher (1692–1698) issued many patents to speculators. One was for 50 miles of land on each side of the Mohawk River for an annual quit-rent of one beaver skin. Another was for 70 miles of the east side of Lake Champlain with a quit-rent of one raccoon. Some sense was brought to the subject when the legislature annulled these grants in 1699 when Fletcher was succeeded by a dismayed Earl of Bellomont, but avarice reigned supreme again when Bellomont was replaced by Lord Carnbury, who made several large grants, one of which was for a million acres. By 1738 most of the land along the sides of the Mohawk River had been patented.⁵¹

Pennsylvania traders carried out trade as envisioned by the Board. When some Delaware crossed into the Ohio River watershed in search of game around 1724, traders followed. The upper area of the Ohio River watershed was depopulated by the Iroquois in the 17th century as they sought to control the fur trade coming from that area.

King George’s War (1744–1748) presented an opening for the English to move westward. British blockades kept the French from receiving the supplies needed to deal with the Indians. By 1748 British traders were dealing with Miami tribesmen at the Indian town Pickawillany on the Great Miami River some 500 miles west of Philadelphia. There were many British traders competing in the forest lands of the Ohio Valley. One was George Croghan, who had “outposts with storehouses and living quarters on the Youghioghny, the Allegheny, at Logstown on the upper Ohio, on the Muskingum, at Sandusky on Lake Erie, and at the Miami village of Pickawillany.” The French, who thought of these areas as within their territory, orchestrated Indian raids on these outposts, including the destruction of Pickawillany, and by 1753 most of the British traders had retreated from the Ohio Valley. Competition between the English and French for the Ohio Valley Indian trade was a factor in bringing on the French and Indian War (1755–1763).⁵²

CHAPTER 8

Pennsylvania (1681–1754)

Pennsylvania, settled by Quakers and other religious sects since a Quaker principle was to let people worship as they saw fit, had steady growth after William Penn was given a proprietary province in 1681.¹ A Quaker's tolerance of all religions was a consequence of the belief that "God ... placed a principle in every man to inform him of his duty ... and that those that live up to this principle are the people of God." The person was paramount, not the religion within which he functioned. A contemporary Evangelical Lutheran said of Penn that everyone had the right to a "free and untrammelled exercise of their opinions and the largest and most complete liberty of conscience."² Penn's requirement of the first settlers was "That no Man shall by any Ways or Means, in Word or Deed, affront or wrong any Indian, but [if he should] he shall incur the same Penalty of the Law, as if he had committed it against his Fellow-Planter."³

Penn's earliest involvement with the New World was as one of the proprietors of a Quaker settlement positioned in West Jersey in 1675. Their relations with the Indians were good. The settlers took steps toward fairness such as having an equal number of white and Indian jurors in court cases involving Indians.⁴ After Penn received the proprietary grant for Pennsylvania and before he came to America, he wrote a letter to the Indians, who he addressed as "My Friends." Stating that the king had given him the land, he said:

I desire to enjoy it *with your love and consent*, that we may always live together as neighbours and friends.... I am very sensible of the unkindness and injustice that have been too much exercised towards you by the people of these parts of the world ... which I hear hath been a matter of trouble to you, and caused great grudgings and animosities, sometimes to the shedding of blood.... I have great love and regard towards you, and desire to win and gain your love and friendship by a kind, just, and peaceable life; and the people I send are of the same mind, and shall, in all things, behave themselves accordingly.⁵

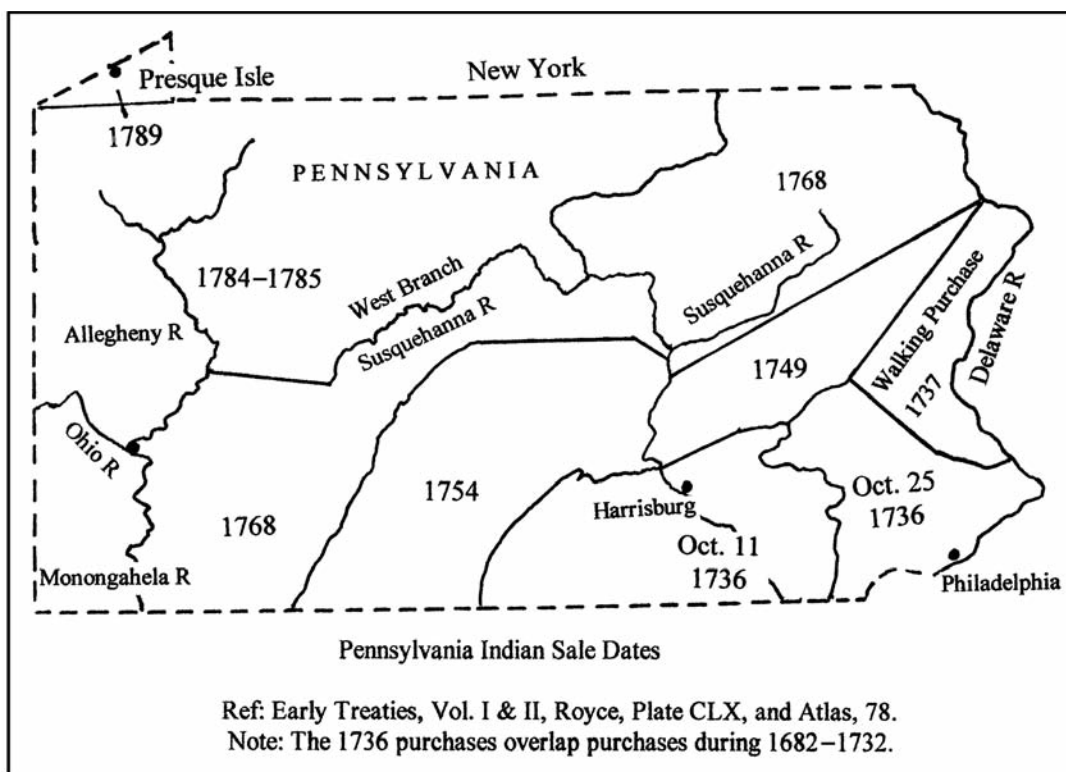
Penn's proprietorship was continuous, but his time in Pennsylvania was intermittent and brief. He was there during 1682–1684, back in England for 15 years, returned in 1699, and, after his departure in 1701, never returned. On his death in 1718 the proprietorship went to his children.⁶

In getting land for settlers Penn continued a policy followed earlier by the Swedes and Dutch in occupying land along the Delaware River. Purchases were made of the Indians. For the first deed to Penn in 1682 conveying land along the Delaware payment included "Twenty Gunns ... Two Barrels of Powder, Two Hundred Barres of Lead." The exact dimensions of the land transferred weren't precise enough for an exact location to be made on a modern map. The same can be said of a deed of June 23, 1683, with a measurement of "two days journey with an horse up into the country." A number of deeds were made by indi-

viduals and Delaware chiefs during the years 1683 to 1732. Maryland treated the Indians differently. Whereas Penn thought that Indians should have a “right to hunt, fish, and fowle in all places,” Lord Baltimore’s Surveyor General took the position that Maryland had conquered the Susquehannock and could bar other Indians from hunting in areas they had roamed in the past. In 1647 the Susquehannock had 1,300 warriors in a single village, but by 1698 a combination of “smallpox, war, and migration” reduced it to “about fifty men.”⁷

In 1732 Delaware chiefs sold lands drained by the Schuylkill River that had been in dispute. After that date Pennsylvania dealt primarily with the Six Nations, who were taking a greater interest in southeastern Pennsylvania, as the eastern Pennsylvania Indians, including the Shawnee and Delaware, moved westward into the Allegheny Valley.⁸

Although William Penn tried to treat the Indians fairly, an agreement made with the Delaware led to an unconscionable land grab, albeit not by William himself. In 1686 land was bought extending from a set line “back into the Woods as far as a Man can goe in one day and a half.”⁹ There being no record of the measurement ever being made there was a confirmation of the cession signed in August 1737 with agreement that “said Tract ... of Land shall be forthwith Walked, Travelled, or gone over by proper Persons to be appointed for that Purpose.”¹⁰ The walk was made on September 19–20, 1737, under conditions that would surely have astounded William Penn. “Thomas Penn, [William’s son,] the second lord proprietor, had a good trail cleared, hired the three best runners in the Province,” and, over a thirty-six hour period, was able to make the measurement cover half a million acres.¹¹



The size of Pennsylvania cessions increased dramatically starting in 1736. The Six Nations claimed that their interest in land along the Susquehanna had never been transferred. For an adequate compensation they were willing to cede their lands. This was done on October 11, 1736, in Philadelphia as to land east of the river and south of the Kittatinny Hills (northwest of modern Easton). The deed was worded in part as a confirmation of earlier deeds. Also included was land west of the river to the setting sun. A few days after the Indians left Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's acting governor, James Logan, realized the treaty should have released any Six Nations' claim to land east to the Delaware River. Conrad Weiser, who as a teenager lived a winter with an Iroquois chief and learned the Mohawk language and had been instrumental in bringing the Iroquois to Philadelphia to talk, was traveling with the Indians and was asked to get another treaty to cover those lands. This was done by a treaty of October 25, 1736. The total area covered by these treaties was about one-fifth of the modern state of Pennsylvania.¹²

One contemporary view was that Pennsylvania "purchased all their Lands from the Indians; and tho they paid but a trifle for them, it [has] the credit of being more righteous than their neighbors." During a treaty meeting at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1744 a speaker for the Indians summed up what had happened: "You know very well, when the white People came first here they were poor; but now they have got our Lands, and are by them become rich, and we are now poor; what little we have had for the Land goes soon away, but the Land lasts forever." At a conference with the governor of New York in 1745 a sachem observed that "when a small parcell of Land is bought of us a Large Quantity is taken instead of it."¹³

When the Six Nations ceded large tracts of land along the Susquehanna River in 1736, payment was made only for lands to the east of the river. In 1742 the lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, George Thomas, met in Philadelphia for a treaty with the Six Nations. Also present were Shawnee, Conestoga, Nanticoke, and Delaware. At the treaty the Iroquois were told the goods, the same as were given for the eastern land, were ready for delivery relating to the land west of the river.¹⁴ The list of these goods shows what niggardly payments were made for huge tracts of land:

500 Pounds of Powder	60 Kettles
600 Pounds of Lead	100 Tobacco-Tongs
45 Guns	100 Scissars
60 Strowd-Matchcoats	500 Awl-Blades
100 Blankets	120 Combs
100 Duffil Matchcoats	2000 Needles
200 Yards Half-thick	1000 Flints
100 Shirts	24 Looking-Glasses
40 Hats	2 Pounds of Vermilion
40 Pair Shoes & Buckles	100 Tin-Pots
40 Pair Stockings	1000 Tobacco-Pipes
100 Hatchets	200 Pounds of Tobacco
500 Knives	24 Dozen of Gartering, and
100 Hoes	25 Gallons of Rum ¹⁵

Very important on this list is the gunpowder. The Indians became very proficient with firearms but were always at the disadvantage of not being able to manufacture gunpowder. In the competition between the English and French for trade with the Indians, the quality and price of English goods made them favorites. Two especially prized items on the above

list were the matchcoat “strowds” and “duffil” made of English wool. One trader of the 1730s called the Indians “a strange wimsecall people” who “will have good Choise goods, and do understand them to perfection.”¹⁶

Viewed today, one feels sympathy for the Indians. They complained that this was not enough for the western lands: “If the Proprietor had been here himself, we think, in Regard of our Numbers and Poverty, he would have made an Addition to [the list of goods.]”¹⁷ Thomas said he did not have the “Keys [to the Proprietors’] Chest” and could not agree to more “Goods,” but that he would take the request under consideration and perhaps a “Present” would be made to them.¹⁸ In fact, a “Present” was made but did little to increase the payment for such a large amount of land.¹⁹

Even though what was paid for land looks unconscionably small, there is something to be said for what Thomas told the Indians in 1742:

It is very true, that Lands are of late become more valuable: but what raises their Value? Is it not entirely owing to the Industry and Labour used by the white People in their Cultivation and Improvement? Had not they come amongst you, these Lands would have been of no Use to you, any further than to maintain you. And is there not, now you have sold so much, enough left for all the Purposes of Living?²⁰

To Pennsylvania’s credit it often paid for land previously acquired to maintain good relations. William Penn also enhanced relations with the Indians by allowing them to “continue to live on his Proprietary lands as long as they wished.”²¹ However, it was not easy for the red men and whites to live close together. In 1675 the governor of New York warned the Delaware Indians of New Jersey not to “kick the beasts or swine belonging to the Christians.”²² The Indians were angered over “cattle and pigs of the white men over[running] and [damaging their] unfenced gardens and cornfields,”²³ and whites accused Indians of catching errant pigs. Conflict was reduced when most of the Indians moved westward and some northward.²⁴

Responding to the Indians’ complaint at the 1742 treaty about whites settling on land that had not been ceded, Thomas said, “Magistrates were sent expressly to remove them; and we thought no Persons would presume to stay after that.” The Indians interrupted and said, “These Persons who were sent did not do their Duty; So far from removing the People, they made Surveys for themselves, and they are in League with the Trespassers.”²⁵

To a degree one’s distress over how little the Six Nations received for its claims is assuaged by how they treated Delaware Indians who were trying to stay within the “walking purchase” lands. Since payment to the Six Nations in 1736 was for land the Delaware claimed, the Six Nations told the Delawares still living there to leave and go to places where the Six Nations could keep an eye on them. The Delawares were reproved for claiming land that had “gone through [their] Guts,” their having “been furnish’d with Cloaths, Meat and Drink, by the Goods paid you for it, and now you want it again, like Children as you are.”²⁶ At the treaty the Delawares were told they were “women.”²⁷ In Indian parlance “making them women” meant the Delawares “no longer [had] the power of making war.” This demeaning treatment of the eastern Delawares still in Pennsylvania caused hostile sentiments by the larger number who had moved to the Ohio country.²⁸

At the conclusion of the 1742 meeting the representatives of the Six Nations brought up two subjects repeatedly addressed at meetings with the colonies.²⁹ Often traders were accused of mistreating them. In this case the assertion was that the traders made the Indians “pay the dearer” when a “particular Sort of *Indian* Goods [was] scarce.”³⁰ To be fair, asserted

the Indians, since their “Hunting–Countries grow less every Day” and “Game [was] difficult to find,” they should be paid more for their “Skins.”³¹ The second subject was rum. They had “been stinted ... in Town” and wanted “the Rum–Bottle [opened] and [given to them] in greater Abundance on the Road.”³²

The Indians were of two minds as to rum. They knew it was dragging them down, but at the same time they wanted it. Pennsylvania authorities urged the Indians not to sell their furs for “that Destructive Liquor Rum, which robbed them not only of all their goods but their lives also,”³³ and the Indians at times asked the authorities to keep traders from bringing rum to them, but the supply was usually plentiful and the results terrible for the Indians. William Penn said that the Indians when “heated with Liquors [were] restless till they have enough to sleep; that is their cry, Some more, and I will go to sleep; but when Drunk, one of the most wretchedst Spectacles in the world.” A Delaware sachem vividly described the problem: “If People will sell it us, we are so in love with it, that we cannot forbear it; when we drink it, it makes us mad; we do not know what we do, we then abuse one another; we throw each other into the Fire, seven Score of our People have been killed, by reason of the drinking of it, since the time it was first sold us.... We must put it down by mutual consent; the Cask must be sealed up, it must be made fast, it must not leak by Day nor by Night, in the Light, nor in the Dark.”³⁴

The Indians did not receive much help from the English in curtailing the misuse of rum. In 1727 the governor of Pennsylvania, Patrick Gordon, was asked by the Iroquois to keep “traders [from] carry[ing] any Rum to the remoter Parts [the Allegheny branches of the Ohio River.]” Then, as later, the Pennsylvania government said that a Pennsylvania law prohibited “the selling of Rum and other Strong Liquors to the Indians,” and it was up to the Indians to enforce the law. Gordon told “the Indians on Allegheny” that “traders” could only give Indians “Some Drink to cheer” them after skins had been used to pay for goods. As for dealings between traders and Indians, Gordon told the Iroquois, “The Method of all that [trade is] to buy as Cheap and sell as dear as they can, and every Man must make the best Bargain he can; the Indians cheat the Indians & the English cheat the English, & every Men [sic] must be on his Guard.”³⁵ It is hard to believe this advice was consistent with Quaker tenets of the time.

During Gordon’s time, in 1733, a pernicious practice was brought to his attention by the Shawnee, namely, unlicensed traders coming to the Indians with rum and taking skins owed to licensed traders. Gordon took no forceful action, presumably relying on what he told the Iroquois in 1727: the “Woods are so thick & dark we cannot see what is done in them [and the] Indians may stave any Rum they find in the Woods, but ... they must not drink or carry any away.” In 1732 trader Edmund Cartlidge reported that several Indians said “the Govern[or] Cannott Rule his own people.”³⁶

In 1744, in part out of concern that the Shawnee in the Allegheny region would side with the French in case of war, then-governor George Thomas urged action by the Assembly. He recited that Pennsylvania “Traders in Defiance of the Law carry Spirituous Liquors amongst them, and take the Advantage of their inordinate Appetite for it to cheat them of their Skins and their Wampum, which is their Money, and often to debauch their Wives into the Bargain.” He despaired of gaining control over the traders since “the ill practices [were] carry’d on in the Woods, and at such a Distance from the Seat of Government that it [would be] very difficult to get Evidences to Convict them.”³⁷ The problem was shelved by events when the Shawnee aligned themselves with the French, who were trying to assert themselves in the Alleghenies. The Shawnee shortly thereafter moved out of the Alleghenies

and traveled down the Ohio. In general, their place was taken by Delawares moving westward from the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers. For the decade of 1745 to 1754 the Six Nations dominated western Pennsylvania, but the area was also inhabited by Wyandots and Delawares.³⁸

Another fifth of the state was acquired by deeds of 1749 and 1754. A full delegation of Iroquois under the leadership of Canasatego, the Onondago chief who was the speaker for the Six Nations at the 1742 treaty, arrived in Philadelphia uninvited in 1749. Their request for more payment for land already ceded was rejected, and they then offered to sell land east of the Susquehanna, and a bargain was struck. Then, in 1754, while colonial delegates and Six Nation chiefs met in Albany to agree to a cooperative plan of defense against French inroads, in a separate meeting Conrad Weiser negotiated a sale of land west of the Susquehanna. This sale was twice as large as that of 1749. Later transfers of the remaining Indian land in Pennsylvania occurred after the French and Indian and the Revolutionary wars, which in each case found most of the Six Nations on the losing side.³⁹

Conrad Weiser, made Pennsylvania's official Indian interpreter in 1732, asked the "Nations of Indians settled on the Waters of Ohio" in 1748 how many warriors each tribe had, and the answers were 307 Iroquois, 165 Delawares, 162 Shawnee, 100 Wyandot, 40 Chippewa, and 15 Mahican. By 1748 the frontier of the colonies was like a different country. In the New York–Pennsylvania colonies scarce an Indian was found within a 120-mile band along the seashore that was occupied by Europeans "so numerous [in some places] that few parts of Europe [were] more populous." Out of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia a robust trade was carried on with England. In general products of the land were traded for English manufactured goods. In 1729 over 200 ships were in and out of New York.⁴⁰

The British–French war-free years of 1713 through 1743 had a surge of immigrants into the northern colonies. Between 1710 and 1740 Pennsylvania's population went from 24,450 to 85,637, New Hampshire's from 5,681 to 23,256, and for all the northern colonies the increase was from 184,686 to 510,249. In addition to the English many immigrants were Scotch-Irish and German who, on at least two occasions, survived their first winters in America only by the helping hands of friendly Indians.⁴¹

During the French and Indian War (1755–1763) Pennsylvania sought to make amends for the "walking purchase" by offering the Delaware Indians 500 pounds. The offer was refused — a chief of the Delaware Christians, Teedyuscung, said the land was not his to give away.⁴² Later, during the war, Benjamin Franklin was sent to Lon-



Benjamin Franklin. Franklin challenged Thomas Penn to remedy actions that he thought "deceiv[ed], cheat[ed], and betray[ed]" Indians (Library of Congress).

don to see if the proprietors, including Thomas Penn, who had gone to England in 1741, would agree to address what Franklin called the “deceiv[ing], cheat[ing], and betray[ing]” of the Indians. When Penn said it was the Indians’ “own fault ... with a Kind of triumphing laughing Insolence,” Franklin felt a “thorough Contempt for him.”⁴³

CHAPTER 9

Iroquois Route to the South

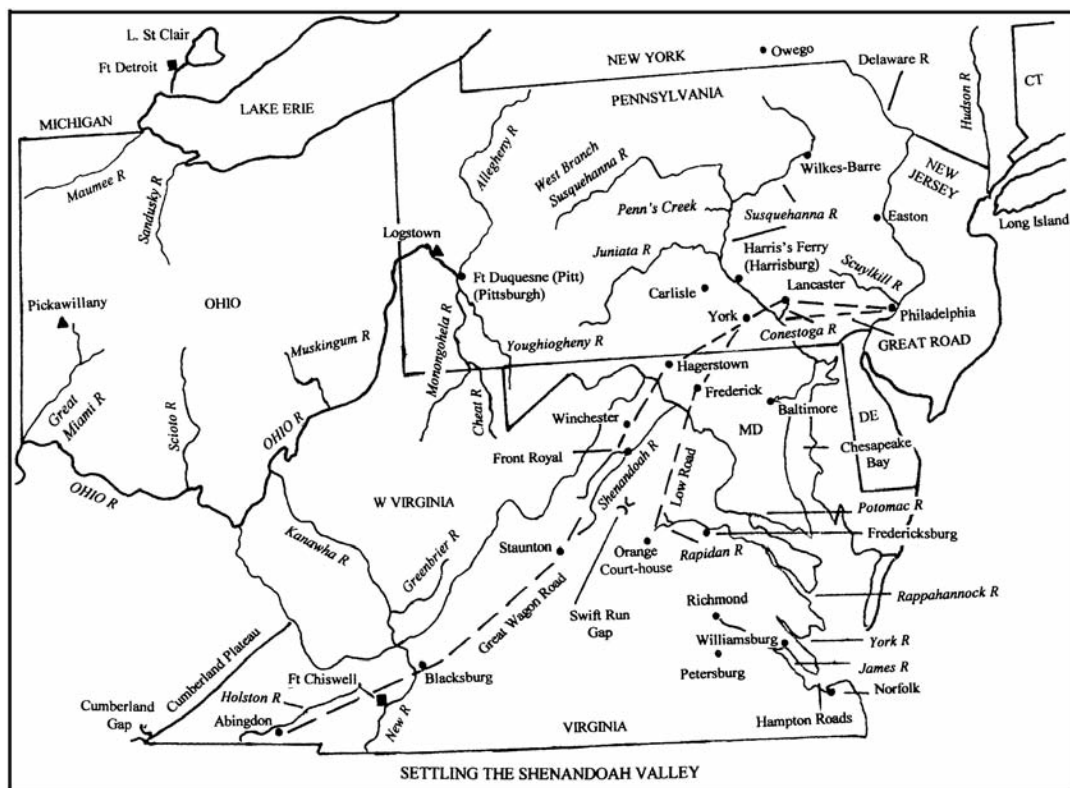
As Virginians moved westward they started to have conflicts with the powerful Five Nations. Although the Five Nations were far removed from Virginia, for a long period they were at war with the Catawba Indians in South Carolina and the Cherokees in North Carolina and came into contact with Virginia settlers as they traveled from the north to carry on warfare. One goal of the Iroquois was to bring back captives to be adopted into their ranks and thereby increase their overall numbers.¹ In 1722 the Iroquois admitted that they “had been guilty of a great many bad actions.”²

Lieutenant Governor Colonel Alexander Spotswood’s solution was to have fixed boundaries that would keep foreign Indians out of Virginia. To that end he went to Albany, New York, in 1722 to obtain a peace treaty with the Five Nations. His approach was much different than that of the Pennsylvanians. He started the meeting by accusing the Five Nations of violating “many Treaties which [had been] made for near fifty years,” and saying he was looking for “an everlasting Peace between [the Five Nations] and ... the Christian Inhabitants of Virginia [and] the several Nations of Indians belonging to and subject to that [Virginia] Government.”³ He was after their agreement and observance that “the great River of Potowmak and the High Ridge of Mountains which extend all along the Frontiers of Virginia to the Westward of the present Settlements of that Colony shall be for ever the established Boundaries between the Indians subject to the Dominion of Virginia and the Indians belonging to and depending on the 5 Nations.”⁴ The boundaries should be crossed only after receiving a passport from either Virginia or New York. Agreement was reached, but the understandings on each side were different. Spotswood thought the way was cleared for settlers to move into the Shenandoah Valley. The Iroquois did not agree.⁵

In dealing with the Iroquois, as explained by John Long, an Indian trader and interpreter, “the Iroquois laugh when you talk to them of obedience to kings, for they cannot reconcile the idea of submission with the dignity of man. Each individual is a sovereign in his own mind, and as he conceives he derives his freedom from the Great Spirit alone, he cannot be induced to acknowledge any other power.”⁶ “Usually an Indian chief lacked institutionalized power, his influence stemmed from his personal abilities as warrior, orator, and gift-giver and from his standing and connections. His role was to advise and request rather than to dictate because decisions rested upon the will of the people, perhaps expressed in tribal council.”⁷

After a 1742 skirmish between an Iroquois war party and Virginia frontiersmen, the governor of Pennsylvania, who thought the fault was with the Virginians, told the governor of Virginia that “if the Inhabitants of the back Parts of Virginia have no more Truth and Honesty than some of ours, I should make no Scruple to prefer an Iroquois Testimony to theirs.”⁸

Several conditions prompted the governor of Pennsylvania to sponsor a treaty meeting



between commissioners for Virginia and Maryland and the Six Nations, formerly the Five Nations, at the frontier village of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1744. Maryland was a relatively unsettled stretch of land granted to Lord Baltimore in 1632 and crossed by the Iroquois traveling to the south. Virginians, known as Long Knives by the Indians, wanted to clear up their rights to settle in the Shenandoah Valley, and the Iroquois, who had no settlements there, wanted to be guaranteed the right to travel through the valley so they could make war on the Catawba Indians in the Carolinas. These positions were set out during the treaty discussions.⁹

Pennsylvania's major concern was to maintain the Iroquois as an ally or a neutral in King George's War (1744–1748) between England and France:

These *Indians*, by their Situation, are a Frontier to some of [the colonies]; and from thence, if Friends, are capable of defending their Settlements; if Enemies, of making cruel Ravages upon them; if Neuters, they may deny the *French* a Passage through their Country, and give us timely Notice of their Designs.¹⁰

To reach a satisfactory arrangement, Pennsylvania wanted Virginia and Maryland to resolve disputes each had with the Six Nations, and suggested that “a Present now and then for the Relief of their Necessities, which have, in some Measure, been brought upon them by their Intercourse with us, and by our yearly extending our Settlements” would tie them closer to the British.¹¹

Maryland satisfied the Six Nations' claim that it had occupied land of the Six Nations without payment by making payments.¹² The Onondaga spokesman, Canasatego, on July 4, 1744, eloquently spoke to white-Indian relations:

Yesterday, you ... told us, you had been in Possession of the Province of Maryland above One Hundred Years; but what is One Hundred Years in Comparison of the Length of Time since our Claim began? Since we came out of this Ground? For we must tell you, that long before One Hundred Years our Ancestors came out of this very Ground, and their Children have remained here ever since. You came out of the Ground in a Country that lies beyond the Seas, there you may have a just Claim, but here you must allow us to be your elder Brethren, and the Lands to belong to us long before you knew any thing of them.

As for their differences with the *English* ... some of [the young Englishmen] would, by way of Reproach, be every now and then telling us, that we should have perished if they had not come into the country and furnished us with Strowds and Hatchets, and Guns, and other Things necessary for the Support of Life; but we always gave them to understand that they were mistaken, that we lived before they came amongst us, and as well, or better, if we may believe what our Forefathers have told us. We had then Room enough, and Plenty of Deer, which was easily caught; and tho' we had not Knives, Hatchets, or Guns, such as we have now, yet we had Knives of Stone, and Hatchets of Stone, and Bows and Arrows, and those served our Uses as well as the *English* ones do now. We are now straitened, and sometimes in want of Deer, and liable to many other inconveniencies since the *English* came among us, and particularly from that Pen-and-Ink Work that is going on at the Table (*pointing to the Secretary*).¹³

Agreement with Virginia was also reached with significant additional land rights given to Virginia. The Iroquois did not agree that in the 1722 treaty "the High Ridge of Mountains" was the Appalachian Mountains to the west of the Shenandoah Valley. To them the Blue Ridge Mountains were the boundary, and the English had no right to settle in the Shenandoah Valley to the west of those mountains. Consistent with this understanding, the Iroquois had moved their road through the area to the west, but when settlers came to live west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Iroquois were forced to move their road "to the Foot of the Great Mountain [from which] it [was] impossible ... to remove it any further to the West, those Parts of the Country being absolutely impassable by either Man or Beast."¹⁴

The Iroquois were not against a grant of lands to accord with what had happened but needed a right to use the "last made" road called the "Waggon-Road." As to that road, it "had not been long in ... Use ... before [whites] came, like Flocks of Birds, and sat down on both Sides of it" in breach of the 1722 treaty as understood by the Six Nations. Furthermore, if Virginia wanted to settle lands "on the Back of the Great Mountains in Virginia," that is, within the Ohio River watershed, it must get them from the Iroquois, who "conquered the Nations residing there."¹⁵

The Virginians asserted that only the Great King could remove the settlers, and that the settlers were "too powerful to be removed by any Force of [the Iroquois]." Nonetheless they were willing to pay "for any Right [the Iroquois] may have, or have had to all the Lands to the Southward and Westward of the Lands of [Maryland and Pennsylvania] tho' [they were] informed that the Southern *Indians* claim [the same] Lands."¹⁶ The Iroquois could use the road under the same terms as were in the 1722 treaty.

The Iroquois denied ever having been "conquered by the great King," but agreed, subject to being paid, to the broadest possible grant of land to Virginia. They would recognize "the King's right to all the Lands that are, or shall be, by his Majesty's Appointment in the Colony of *Virginia*." No one bothered to tell the Iroquois that the King claimed land from sea to sea. They also agreed to be neutral in the war between England and France. Notwithstanding this agreement, an indication that all might not go well beyond the "Great Mountains" was the fact that the "*Shawanaes*, from their Town on *Hohio*, were not at the Treaty." Trying to cover one of the bases needed for a land claim in the Ohio

River watershed, the Virginia commissioners at the Lancaster treaty, Thomas Lee and William Beverley, arranged a separate agreement by which they and other wealthy Tidewater land speculators bought 500,000 acres across the Appalachians in what was later Ohio and West Virginia.¹⁷

The “Waggon-Road” has had many names including “Great Philadelphia Road,” “Great Wagon Road,” “Irish Road,” and the “Pennsylvania Road”—the Great Wagon Road is used hereafter. In general the road went west from Philadelphia through York, Pennsylvania, Hagerstown, Maryland, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and into the Ohio River watershed and on to Abingdon, Virginia, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. To approximate travel on the road today, starting at the Potomac River, either U.S. Route 1 or Interstate Route 81 could be taken as they proceed southwestward through Virginia and into Tennessee. It was a course called the Great Indian Warpath, used for years by the Cherokee and Catawba in the South, and the Iroquois in the North to travel to and from their territories.¹⁸

Settlement of the Shenandoah Valley and further south in the 1720–1750 period in large measure came from Pennsylvania. In the early 1700s many German settlers in Pennsylvania had left their European homes because of religious persecution for their Protestant beliefs. At first William Penn encouraged them to come to Pennsylvania, but by 1727 the original Pennsylvania settlers, of about 50,000 by that time, who were located in but a small part of the present state of Pennsylvania, mostly close to the Delaware River, wanted no more. Nonetheless they came. In 1729 it was complained that Ireland appeared to be sending all its inhabitants to Philadelphia and that in time “they [would] make themselves proprietors of the Province.” In one week “six ships arrived, and every day, two or three arrive also.”¹⁹

The 1720s were a time of hardship in Ireland. Farmers were caught between landlords wanting higher rents and the church wanting larger tithes with the result that they could not cope with years of bad harvests. Writing to the Duke of Newcastle in 1728, the Bishop of London told of seven ships set to sail from Belfast to America with 1,000 passengers; he said, “If we knew how to stop them, as most of them can neither get victuals nor work, it would be cruel to do it.”²⁰

The trans-Atlantic trip could be terrifying. Gottlieb Mittelberger, who made the trip in 1750 to become an organist and schoolmaster in Philadelphia, wrote that the trip could take from 8 to 12 weeks and have “smells, fumes, horrors, vomiting, various kinds of sea sickness, fever, dysentery, headaches, heat, constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouth-rot, and similar afflictions, all of them caused by the age and highly-salted state of the food, especially of the meat, as well as by the very bad and filthy water, which brings about the miserable destruction and death of many. Add to all that shortage of food, hunger, thirst, frost, heat, dampness, fear, misery, vexation, and lamentation as well as other troubles. Thus, for example, there are so many lice, especially on the sick people, that they have to be scraped off the bodies.”²¹

The Iroquois of 1750 were bordered by larger communities: Boston (16,000), Newport, Rhode Island (7,000), New York (14,000), and Philadelphia (18,000). In the 1700s the colonies were a relief valve for England’s population explosion. England and Wales had about 5.5 million in 1700, 6.5 million by 1750, and roughly 9 million in 1801. Between 1750 and 1820 its population doubled. The increase was the result of a changing life expectancy brought about by better food, housing, personal cleanliness, and, perhaps, the intake of less cheap gin. Britain also used North America as a place to dump convicted felons, mainly in Maryland and Virginia. Over the 18th century 50,000 were sent. By 1670 Virginia expressed concern over “the barbarous designs and felonious practices of such

wicked villaines.” But the practice continued. With tongue in cheek Benjamin Franklin proposed an exchange of American rattlesnakes for British convicts.²²

Although there was no consistent requirement within the English colonies as to how Indian rights were handled, in New England, New York, and Maryland the practice was to require Indian approval before a grant from the colony was effective. What was consistent was the fraudulent, deceptive practices employed to make such a showing, sometimes facilitated by ardent spirits. At a Grand Council meeting with the Iroquois in 1755 a spokesman for the Mohawk accused a Colonel John Henry Lydius of being “a Devil [who] has stole our Lands, he takes Indians slyly by the Blanket one at a time, and when they are drunk, puts some money in their Bosoms, and perswades them to sign deeds for our lands upon the Susquehana which we will not ratify nor suffer to be settled by any means.”²³

Who Owns Land in the Ohio River Watershed

Not only were the English at war with the French starting in 1744, but also the colonies were not of one mind. Those in New York and New England wanted the Six Nations to join in the fight against the French rather than being neutral, as had been agreed to at Lancaster in 1744. But Pennsylvania favored neutrality. At a 1745 conference with the Six Nations called by George Clinton, governor of New York, Pennsylvania's commissioners prevailed on the Six Nations to remain neutral. Besides the Quaker aversion to war, Pennsylvania feared that a move by some of the Six Nations to go to war could lead to the more western nations, the Senecas and Cayugas, joining with the French and making war on Pennsylvania.¹

During King George's War (War of Austrian Succession) against the French, which went on until 1748, only the Mohawks of the Six Nations fought the French. However, many Iroquois warriors in the Ohio River country wanted to but never received approval from the Six Nations to do so. To keep Indians in the Ohio country from joining with the French, Pennsylvania had contact with the Miamis and the Shawnees. A trader, George Croghan, delivered presents, and Conrad Weiser, an interpreter respected by the Six Nations, met with an Indian council at Logstown, located on the Ohio River about 18 miles below the forks of the Ohio River (present-day Pittsburgh). They were able to commit the western tribes to trading with the English.²

Although the English and French were no longer at war in 1748, the struggle for sovereignty over the Ohio country started in earnest. Up to 1749 the French had not paid much attention to the upper Ohio River watershed. Indians in that area could bring their furs to French forts on the northern perimeter — Fort Ouiantenon on the Wabash River, Fort Miami on the Maumee River, Fort Sandusky on Lake Erie, and Niagara on Lake Ontario. The French did not even travel through much of the area. From the Mississippi River they had a travel route to the Great Lakes along the Wabash and Maumee rivers. When aggressive English traders worked their way through the Appalachian Mountains into the forested Ohio River watershed and won the Indians over to the higher-quality and cheaper-priced English goods, the French took notice, and their efforts to drive the English out brought repercussions. Indians in the area, including Miami, Wyandot, Iroquois, Shawnee, Choctaw, and Creek, attacked French supply and trading parties. On their part, the French captured English traders and took them, as criminals, to Detroit, where a fort was built in 1701.³

A French party under the leadership of Celoron de Blainville, sent in 1749 into the territory, put up signs with the royal coat of arms and buried a number of lead plates to “renew” possession by the King of France. The tribes were encouraged to attack or capture

English traders. The party found the area saturated by approximately 300 English traders and Indians who preferred English goods to those of the French. The governor of Pennsylvania was notified by the French that English traders were in territory never claimed by England and that he should forbid this in the future.⁴

Governor James Hamilton of Pennsylvania told his Assembly on August 8, 1750, that the “French still continue their Threats against the Indians who carry on Commerce with [English] Traders.” Croghan was confident in 1749 that the English could hold on to the Indian trade: “I Make no Doubt butt the French will Make use of unfair Methods they Can to bring over all ye Indians they can to there Interest, But I am of opinion that ye Indians are So well grafted in ye English interest that they will Nott be Esey Deceived by the French.”⁵

The English had a lot to overcome. Thomas Pownall, who came to America in 1753 and was later governor of Massachusetts, wrote in 1755:

The native inhabitants (the Indians) of this country are all hunters.... The French settlers of Canada universally commend hunters and so insinuated themselves into a connection with these natives.... Indians ... easily and readily admit them to a local landed possession: A grant which rightly acquired and applied they are always ready to make as none of the rights or interests of their nation are hurt by it; but on the contrary they experience and receive great use, benefit and profit from the commerce that the Europeans therein establish with them: Whereas on the contrary the English with an insatiable thirst after landed possessions have got deeds, and other fraudulent pretenses grounded on the abuse of treaties, and by these deeds claim possession even to the exclusion of the Indians, not only from their hunting grounds (which with them is a right of great consequence) but even from their house and home, as by particular instances from one end of the continent to the other might be made to appear.⁶

Historian Ian Steel summed up the situation on the other side of the Appalachians within the upper Ohio River watershed when he said that the “relatively uninhabited hunting area, [was] claimed by the Six Nations by conquest, the British colonies by charter, the French crown by discovery, and various American Indian tribes by occupancy.”⁷

On the ground there was activity. English traders, Croghan and Andrew Montour, on their own made treaties of friendship with two tribes related to the Miamis. Even though the Six Nations rejected the suggestion that some of the goods promised at the Treaty of Lancaster in 1744 should be delivered to Indians from the Six Nations in the Ohio country, Pennsylvania sent some by way of Croghan in 1751. When he arrived at Logstown a French Indian agent was already there who was reiterating the French demand that the Indians expel English traders. The Indians rejected this demand.⁸

In 1752 the French did more than threaten. A Miami tribe leader called “Old Briton” allied with the English in 1748 and built a fortified town, Pickawillany, on the upper Great Miami River. A surprise attack on June 21, 1752, by Chippewa and Ottawa Indians from the Michilimackinac region of the Great Lakes [Straits of Mackinac] led by a French trader overran the town, and the victors boiled the body of “Old Briton.”⁹

The English had more than trade on their minds. In 1747 influential English investors and colonial investors, living north of the Rappahannock River, formed the Ohio Company of Virginia and in 1749 were given 200,000 acres from the Ohio forks (modern-day Pittsburgh) down to the Kanawha River, and an additional 300,000 acres if 100 families were settled on the land in the next seven years and a fort erected. Another large cession of land, also south of the Ohio River, was given to the Loyal Land Company, mainly made up of Virginians living south of the Rappahannock River. The Crown ignored questions of Indian rights, a problem left for those in America to handle.¹⁰

The Ohio and Loyal companies took steps to find out what they had received. Exploring for the Loyal Land Company was Dr. Thomas Walker, who in 1750 led a party through Cave Gap, which he renamed Cumberland Gap for Lord Cumberland, into what is now eastern Kentucky. A year later the Ohio Company employed Christopher Gist, a well-known trader, to look for suitable land. With a boy servant he first traveled north of the Ohio River between the Muskingum and Scioto rivers, and then near the mouth of the Scioto. Next they crossed the Ohio and traveled for a month through eastern Kentucky. His instructions were to observe "Ways & Passes thro all the Mountain you cross, & take an exact account of the Soil, Quality, & Product of the Land, and the Wilderness & deepness of the Rivers & Mountains as near as you conveniently can."¹¹

Concrete steps toward settlement were taken in 1750 and 1752 by the Ohio Company. First a trading post was established at the point where Wills Creek enters the Potomac River (Cumberland, Maryland, today). Next a trail was blazed to the Monongohela River by Thomas Cresap, and then in 1752 the company jumped into the Ohio River watershed with a storehouse at the point where the Redstone Creek joins the Monongahela some 37 miles from the Ohio forks. Plans were made to construct a fort at the forks of the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers (now Pittsburgh). Gist, who was to make surveys for the company, settled, together with 11 other families, in the Redstone Creek area.¹²

In November 1751, Robert Dinwiddie became Virginia's lieutenant governor. Dinwiddie, a part owner of the Ohio Company, reported to the Board of Trade in London that the French were threatening to take over the Ohio River country. Other important names associated with the Ohio Company were George Mason, Richard Henry Lee, and George Washington.¹³

To confirm what had happened at Lancaster in 1744 the Virginians met with the Indians at Logstown in June 1752. The Six Nations' deed to Virginia in 1744 gave over all lands to the "Sun setting." The Six Nations said this did not cover lands west of the mountains, which could only be sold by them. However a Six Nations' representative, with perhaps undeclared reservations, agreed to not molest a proposed English settlement on the southeast side of the Ohio. The Virginians were also given permission to build a "strong house" at the forks of the Ohio. Pennsylvania supported the meeting since Thomas Penn understood that the Ohio Company would not claim any Pennsylvania land. Pennsylvania was also looking to the west since it needed to buy additional land to accommodate ten thousand new settlers that arrived in 1752.¹⁴

During this time the Six Nations were trying to retain at least an appearance of supremacy over the western tribes. When Pennsylvania and Virginia asked the western tribes to meet directly with them in 1751 and 1752, the Six Nations made a show of being in control. They ordained that a chief to speak for the Ohio Delawares, mainly located in the present state of Ohio, should be designated, and ordered the Delawares to funnel dealings with the English through that chief, Shingas. There was no likelihood of this Six Nations' action bringing on a confrontation with the Ohio Indians since it was the exact course already taken by the Ohio Delawares.¹⁵

An effort by the English to move at least some of the Indians into a closer relationship with the Europeans is recited in a Benjamin Franklin letter of 1753: "The English commissioners told the Indians that they had in their country a college for the instruction of youth, who were there taught various languages, arts, and sciences [and] the English would take half a dozen of their brightest lads and bring them up in the best manner."¹⁶ After considering the offer the Indians "replied that it was remembered that some of their youths had formerly been educated at that college, but that it had been observed that for a long time after they

returned to their friends *they were absolutely good for nothing*—being neither acquainted with the true methods of killing deer, catching beavers, or surprising an enemy.” Nonetheless they considered the offer “a mark of kindness and goodwill of the English to the Indian nations,” and therefore “if the English gentlemen would send a dozen ... of their children to Onondago, the Great Council would take care of their education, bring them up in what was really the best manner, and make men of them.”¹⁷

Considering that an object of Eleazar Whitlock’s school for Indians and whites operating in Lebanon, Connecticut, in the 1750s was to “purge *all the Indian*” out of students, Indians had good reason to be reluctant to enroll their children. Such a reaction is consistent with a belief that what might be considered less-developed societies, like so-called “civilized peoples, viewed their customs and manners as superior to those of other societies, and had little interest in abandoning them.”¹⁸

With rumors in 1753 that the French were going to invade the Ohio country, the first of three protests were sent to the French by the Ohio Indians. They were told not to come further than Niagara. When this was ignored, a second warning was delivered at Fort Le Boeuf, which the French began to build in July. The French were adamant — they would not stop.¹⁹

The third warning was delivered to the French at Fort Presque Isle (at present-day Erie, Pennsylvania) at about the same time a meeting was taking place at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, between September 22 and October 4, 1753. The Carlisle meeting is interesting in not only showing France’s determination but also illustrating how the Europeans dealt with the Indians. Benjamin Franklin, one of the Pennsylvania commissioners at the meeting, briefly describes what happened in his autobiography:

[W]e went to Carlisle, and met the Indians accordingly. — As those People are extremely apt to get drunk, and when so are very quarrelsome & disorderly, we strictly forbade the selling any Liqueur to them; and when they complain’d of this Restriction, we told them that if they would continue sober during the Treaty, we would give them Plenty of Rum when Business was over. They promis’d this; and they kept their Promise — because they could get no Liqueur — and the Treaty was conducted very orderly, and concluded to mutual Satisfaction. They then claim’d and receiv’d the Rum. This was in the Afternoon. They were near 100 Men, Women & Children, and were lodg’d in temporary Cabins built in the Form of a Square, just without the Town. In the Evening, hearing a great Noise among them, the Commissioners walk’d out to see what was the Matter. We found they had made a great Bonfire in the Middle of the Square. They were all drunk Men and Women, quarreling and fighting. Their dark-colour’d Bodies, half naked, seen only by the gloomy Light of the Bonfire, running after and beating one another with Fire-brands, accompanied by their horrid Yellings, form’d a Scene the most resembling our Ideas of Hell that could well be imagin’d. There was no appeasing the Tumult, and we retired to our Lodging. At Midnight a Number of them came thundering at our Door, demanding more Rum; of which we took no Notice. The next Day, sensible they had misbehav’d in giving us that Disturbance, they sent three of their old Counsellors to make their Apology. The Orator acknowledg’d the Fault, but laid it upon the Rum; and then endeavour’d to excuse the Rum, by saying, “*The great Spirit who made all things made every thing for some Use, and whatever Use be design’d any thing for, that Use it should always be put to; Now, when he made Rum, he said, LET THIS BE FOR INDIANS TO GET DRUNK WITH. And it must be so.*” And indeed if it be the Design of Providence to extirpate these Savages in order to make room for Cultivators of the Earth, it seems not improbable that Rum may be the appointed Means. It has already annihilated all the Tribes who formerly inhabited the Seacoast.²⁰

The official report on the meeting with the Ohio Indians, including the “Six Nations, Delawares [and] Shawonese,” shows the importance of providing “goods” to the Indians. Before any discussion could start, the Indians, “agreeable to the *Indian* Customs,” required

“goods” for the “Condolances” of “great Men” recently killed or “cut off” by the French and their Indians. An assurance that the “goods” were underway was not adequate. The “goods” needed to be “spread on the Ground before them.”²¹

The state of affairs in Ohio was discussed. The Indians said that when the French army marched to the “Heads of *Ohio*” they had been forbidden to do so by the Indians, but continued anyhow, telling the Indians they did “not like [the Indians] selling [their] Lands to the *English*” and that the French would “take Care of [the Indians’] Lands” and of them, stating that the “*English* give ... no Goods but for Land, [whereas the French give] Goods for nothing.” The French intended to “build four strong Houses.”²²

A final notice to the French recited that during Queen Anne’s War (1702–1713) the French sought peace with the Indians, and “when the Peace was concluded [the French] made a solemn Declaration, saying, Whoever shall hereafter transgress this Peace, let the Transgressor be chastised with a Rod, even tho’ it be [the French] your Father.” Yet, recently, the French “without telling [the Indians] the Reason [had severely treated a group of Indians] and now ... come with a strong Band on our Land, and have, contrary to your Engagement, taken up the Hatchet without any previous Parley.” “Therefore [the Indians would] strike over all this Land ... let it hurt who it will.” Speaking in “plain Words,” the French were told they “must go off this Land.”²³

The Indians made it clear that they also did not want people from “*Pennsylvania* and *Virginia* ... settling [their] Lands” and wanted Pennsylvania to appoint someone “to warn People from settling the *Indians* Lands, and impowered to remove them.” A change should be made in the English trading pattern. Rather than being “spread ... over [the Indians’] wide Country, at such great Distances, that [the Indians could not] protect them,” there should only be three “Setts of Traders [who would stay at fixed places, namely:] *Logs-Town*, the Mouth of *Canawa*, and the Mouth of *Mohongely*.”²⁴

A plea was made that something more than “Rum and Flour” be traded. More “Powder and Lead” were wanted. As for “Whiskey,” none should be sold in “*Indian Country*.” Unscrupulous traders were said to provide liquor “and get all the Skins that should go to pay the Debts ... contracted for Goods bought of the Fair Traders.” After the meeting, the English decided there was a danger in giving arms, ammunition, and similar goods to the Indians since they might end up with the French. As a precaution they were given to the trader Croghan, who could distribute them at propitious times. A short time later the Ohio Indians asked that Pennsylvania and Virginia build two forts in the Ohio country so as to “secure the Lands of Ohio” to which only the English and the Indians had a “Right to.”²⁵

The French and English jockeyed to get Indian support and warned one another to remove their traders from the Ohio territory. The French achieved an ascendancy by violent action and the construction of forts within the area. Many of the Indian tribes wanted both the English and French out of the territory. Virginia’s lieutenant governor, Robert Dinwiddie, in June 1753, reported on the new French forts and asked the Board of Trade for instructions on how to deal with the French, voicing his own opinion that the French should “be prevented making any Settlements to the Westward of Our present Possession.” Although some in London thought the French might have the better claim to the area, the Board directed that they be expelled either voluntarily or by force: “If You shall find, that any Number of Persons ... shall presume to erect any Fort or Forts within the Limits of Our Province of Virginia ... You are to require of Them peaceably to depart ... & if, notwithstanding Your Admonitions, They do still endeavor to carry out any such unlawful and unjustifiable Designs, We do hereby strictly charge, & command You to drive them off by Force of Arms.”²⁶

CHAPTER 11

French and Indian War (1755–1763)

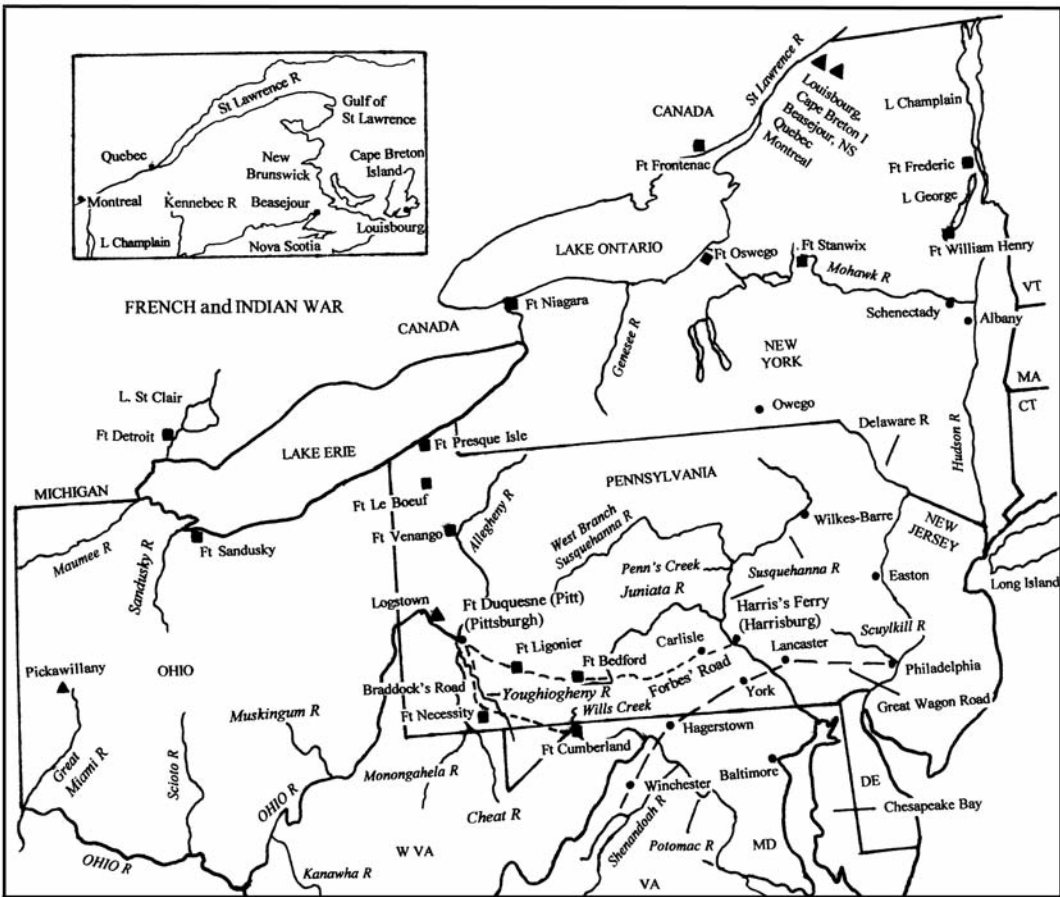
It fell to 21-year-old George Washington, an adjutant major in the Virginia militia, to take the message to the French in 1753. The message, delivered at the French Fort Le Boeuf on the Allegheny River in northwest Pennsylvania, asked the French to depart peaceably but had the veiled threat of military action by hoping for “an Answer suitable to [Governor Robert Dinwiddie’s] wishes for a very long and lasting Peace.” The answer: “[the French were] not ... obliged to obey” the summons.¹ The French were at a big disadvantage in America — they had a population of 60,000 in Canada, whereas the English colonies had over a million. On their side the French had treaties with the western Indians.²

Washington hurried back to Virginia through the cold of December. After an attempt by an Indian guide to shoot him and his sole companion, Christopher Gist, who was employed as a guide, and a fall into the freezing waters of the Allegheny River, he arrived back at Williamsburg on January 16, 1754. Dinwiddie reacted by taking steps to build Fort Prince George at the Ohio forks (Pittsburgh).³

With a promotion to lieutenant colonel Washington was in command of the 1st Virginia Regiment comprised of 159 men and 11 officers, which marched out of Winchester, Virginia, on April 18, 1754, headed for Wills Creek with orders to act on the defensive, but if “attempts [were] made to obstruct the Works ... to restrain all such Offenders, & in Case of resistance to make Prisoners of, or kill & destroy them.” Before Washington arrived at Wills Creek on April 23, the French, with 600 troops and 18 artillery pieces, forced the small group of 42 men at Fort Prince George to turn it over to them and renamed it Duquesne.⁴ In an effort to enlist some Six Nations and Delaware Indians in the cause, Washington told them his object was “to put [them] in possession of [their] lands, and to take care of [their] wives and children, to dispossess the French, to maintain [the Indian] rights and to secure the whole country for [them].”⁵

Washington moved about halfway to Fort Duquesne and waited at Great Meadows, about 50 miles from Wills Creek, for additional troops. Precisely what happened about a month later is not clear, but, without doubt, 9 French soldiers were killed, 22 captured, and the officer leading them also killed. The French dead were scalped by Indians who were present in addition to the 75 troops Washington had taken to intercept the French force, which was found encamped about 6 miles from Great Meadows.⁶

The French version was that the French officer carrying a letter for Washington found his force surrounded by the English and Indians. Two volleys by English soldiers killed some of the French, but the firing ceased when it became known the purpose of the French was to deliver the letter. After the French survivors were made prisoners the commanding officer was assassinated by the English, and the Indians “threw themselves in



between the French and their enemies.” Washington’s description was of a force secretly camped close to Great Meadows that made no effort to tell Washington of a mission to deliver a message but rather “ran to their Arms” when discovered. Washington stayed at Great Meadows, called his stockade Fort Necessity, and later surrendered to a larger French force.⁷

A technique the French used on Washington at Fort Necessity, and were to use in the future, was to say that if the fight should be resumed and the English overcome they would not be responsible for what their Indian allies might do. In the minds of the English this was more than a facile argument. Indians were known to be cruel to the vanquished. Historian Wayne E. Lee explains this trait: “A prisoner, particularly an adult male, became the target for the captors’ rage and grief at their ... losses. Elaborate and extended rituals of torture unto death existed in many of the Eastern Woodland cultures. Scholars continue to struggle to understand their exact meaning, but it is clear that at the center of the process was a tremendous outpouring of violent grief—an outpouring in which the whole town—men, women, and children—participated.”⁸

The English would not give up their claim to Ohio River lands. Their argument, mostly a façade to conceal a thirst for a greater American empire, was that the Iroquois had sovereignty over the land, and they had sovereignty over the Iroquois. The Iroquois only accepted the first premise, and the French accepted neither. In practical terms the French

ambassador to England said that “no Englishman would dare, without running the risk of being murdered, to tell the Iroquois they were English subjects.”⁹

Shortly before Washington was surrounded and defeated at Fort Necessity (July 1754), most of the colonies were meeting with the Six Nations at Albany, New York. Significant events occurred outside the formal discussions. Conrad Weiser, who spoke the Mohawk language and often was an intermediary with the Indians, was able to get a deed to Pennsylvania for a large amount of western lands that covered part of the areas claimed by Virginia under the 1744 Lancaster treaty. Another conflict was created when the Susquehannah Company of Connecticut got a deed to the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania (the Wilkes-Barre area). Consistent with these land grab conflicts, the colonies were not able to agree to a Plan of Union prepared by Benjamin Franklin and approved by their delegates at Albany in June 1754. In brief, the Albany conference failed to unite the colonies and Indians in a program to stop the French.¹⁰

To bring cohesion to activities in America, London set up two Indian departments. The northern one included Indians above the Ohio River, and the southern one those to the south. Superintendents of Indian affairs were appointed. During the French and Indian War, William Johnson, the northern superintendent, recruited Indian allies and led troops in battle. Johnson already had a record of keeping the Six Nations from joining with the French in the King George’s War of the 1740s. Until the colonies gained their independence, the superintendents were a focal point for Indian–British relations. However, the colonies did not always bend to the courses set by the superintendents. The military commanders had authority over the superintendents. The first southern superintendent was Edmund Atkin, who was replaced by John Stuart in 1762.¹¹

Important in any frontier fighting was what action the Iroquois would take. Johnson wrote to Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts after Washington’s defeat that the colonies “for the most part [were] Spending [their] time in squabbles & Chit, Chat, while the French [were] indefatigable in their endeavours, and spare nothing at this Critical point of time to pervert [the Six Nations], which I am Sorry to See them Succeed in beyond expectation & the more so, as it might be prevented.”¹² During the war Johnson, whose wife was a Mohawk, was not able to get the Iroquois to commit to the British — they dealt with both sides when to their advantage.¹³

Without a diplomatic solution the British proceeded to carry out a plan agreed to in London following Washington’s surrender at Fort Necessity. Enough British regulars would be sent to the colonies to allow campaigns against four French forts: Duquesne at the Ohio forks, Frederic on Lake Champlain, Niagara on Lake Ontario, and Beausejour in Acadia (Nova Scotia). Appointed as commander-in-chief of both regular and colonial forces in America was Major General Edward Braddock. His orders were “to recover the Territories belonging to His [Majesty’s] Colonies there & to His Subjects & allies the Indians, which the French have (most unjustly & contrary to Solemn Treaties subsisting between the two Crowns of Great Britain and France) invaded & possessed themselves.”¹⁴

Braddock was a poor choice. His arrival at Hampton Roads in Virginia in February 1755 started an acrimonious period during which he insulted and demeaned most of the leaders in the colonies. History could overlook his churlishness if he had shown merit as a military leader, but he hadn’t. He failed to heed Benjamin Franklin’s warning about “ambuscades of Indians, who by constant practice are dexterous in laying and executing them” and that a long line of soldiers could be attacked on their flanks and “cut like a thread into several pieces.” His response to Franklin showed an unwarranted confidence: “These savages

may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw America militia, but upon the King's regulars and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression."¹⁵

With over 2,000 men, at the end of May, he set out from Fort Cumberland (Wills Creek) to march some 100 miles to Duquesne. Complicating movement of an army was the observation of an eye witness that "the ground is not easy to be reconnoitered for one may go twenty Miles without seeing before him ten yards."¹⁶

An outnumbered garrison at Duquesne seriously considered giving up the fort but ultimately decided to attack Braddock. On July 9, whether with as few as 300, the number that Washington told his mother right after the battle, or as many as over 600 Indian warriors and 200 Frenchmen, as historian William Nester has recently written, Braddock's army was delivered a telling blow.¹⁷

Franklin, who assisted Braddock in obtaining wagons needed for his army, described the engagement thus:

The Enemy [allowed Braddock's army to] advance without Interruption till within 9 Miles of [Fort Duquesne]; and then ... attack'd its advanc'd Guard by a heavy Fire from behind Trees & bushes; which was the first Intelligence the General had of an Enemy's being near him.... [T]he Officers, being on Horseback, were more easily distinguish'd, pick'd out as Marks, and fell very fast; and the Soldiers were crowded together in a Huddle, having or hearing no Orders, and standing to be shot at till two thirds of them were killed, and then being seiz'd with a Pannick, the whole fled with Precipitation. The Waggoners took each a Horse out of his Team and scamper'd; their Example was immediately follow'd by others, so that all the Waggons, Provisions, Artillery and Stores were left to the Enemy.¹⁸

Washington, who had "four bullets through [his] coat, and two horses shot under [him]," recalled that "despite of all efforts of the officers to the contrary" the men "ran, as sheep pursued by dogs, and it was impossible to rally them."¹⁹ Among the wagoners fleeing was Daniel Boone.²⁰

The French and Indians suffered little — perhaps no more than 100 killed or wounded between them. No pursuit was made of the defeated — looting and scalping took precedence. Savagely the Indians tortured and killed some of the prisoners. One prisoner at Fort Duquesne reported what he saw:

About sundown I beheld a small party coming in with about a dozen prisoners stripped naked, with their hands tied behind their backs and their faces and parts of their bodies blacked; these prisoners they burned to death on the bank of the Allegheny River, opposite the fort.... I beheld them begin to burn one of these men; they had him tied to a stake, and kept touching him with firebrands, red hot irons, etc., and he kept screaming in a most doleful manner, the Indians in the meantime yelling like infernal spirits.²¹

Braddock would probably have had a better result if he had had a strong contingent of Indians in his force.²² He only had eight Indians compared to the 300 to 600 fighting with the French.²³ Braddock asked Governor Morris of Pennsylvania to invite Indians to join with him, but they responded that they did not get along well in the army, and most left. He lacked tact — one chief said, "He never appeared pleased with us; and that was the reason that a great many ... warriors left him."²⁴ Franklin wrote that Braddock had "too mean [an Opinion] of both Americans and Indians," and when 100 Indians and George Croghan joined him, rather than using them as "Guides, Scouts, &c ... he slighted & neglected them, and they gradually left him."²⁵ Washington must have been distressed over the lack of Indian support. In his opinion "Indians are only match for Indians; and without these, we shall ever fight upon unequal Terms."²⁶

A wounded Braddock died a few days after the battle. Although a poor leader, he showed much courage during the battle.²⁷ His dying words were “Who’d have thought it? We shall better know how to deal with them another time.”²⁸

In Pennsylvania the assembly, which reluctantly provided funds for Braddock, appropriated money to finance a militia. Action was required to protect the settlers.²⁹ On October 16, 1755, farms near the mouth of Penn’s Creek were attacked. This was about 40 miles above present-day Harrisburg on the Susquehanna River.³⁰ Some 65 miles east of Penn’s Creek a war party of Shawnees eliminated a settlement of Moravian Germans 75 miles northwest of Philadelphia. At York, south of present-day Harrisburg, in November 1755 decisions were being made as to “whether [to] stand or run? Most [were] willing to stand, but [had] no Arms nor Ammunition.” “People from Cumberland [were] going thro [York] hourly in Drovers and the Neighbouring Inhabits [were] flocking into [York] Defenseless as it [was].”³¹

The lack of preparedness can be traced to the attitude of the Quaker Assembly, which in April 1751 rejected a proposed fort that the proprietors wanted to construct:

As we have always found that sincere, upright Dealing with the Indians, a friendly Treatment of them on all Occasions, and particularly in relieving their Necessities at proper Times by suitable Presents, have been the best Means of securing their Friendship, we could wish our Proprietaries had rather thought fit to join with us in the Expence of those presents, the Effects of which have at all Times so manifestly advanced their Interests with the Security of our Frontier Settlements.³²

Franklin had a different attitude in 1756: “I do not believe we shall ever have a firm peace with the Indians, till we have well drubbed them.”³³

Of the other British objectives for 1755 Fort Beausejour was readily taken, and although there was some preparation to take Niagara, it did not reach the point where an offensive was mounted. Even though the British had a victory at Lake George, they were not strong enough to proceed to Fort Frederic.³⁴

To fill the void on the frontiers of Virginia, Dinwiddie, in the fall of 1755, promoted Washington to colonel and put him in charge of all Virginia forces. At the start he had 300 men to defend 300 miles of frontier.³⁵

Money was voted by the House of Burgesses for a 1,000-man regiment and 200 rangers. Washington made his headquarters at Winchester and eventually had about 1,500 undisciplined and untrained men. The best he could do was put small detachments in frontier towns. Although this must have helped some, Washington wrote that on a daily basis he had “accounts of such cruelties and barbarities as are shocking to human nature. It is not possible to conceive the situation and danger of this miserable country. Such numbers of French and Indians are all around that no road is safe.” The French, at Duquesne, orchestrated war parties against the settlers and supplied the Indians with gifts and munitions. By the end of 1755 they estimated that “more than 700 people in the Provinces of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Carolina, including those killed and taken prisoner” had been disposed of. The frontier was pushed back to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania.³⁶

During the war the Six Nations would not commit themselves to either side. Following the war more Indian strength was located in the Ohio Valley rather than with the Iroquois in the east. Particularly active in future Ohio were the Delawares and Shawnees, who responded to the French desire for raids, far and near, along the colonies’ frontiers. To

muster support of Indians still in the east, Superintendent Johnson gained favor with the remaining Delawares by “taking off their skirts,” which the Iroquois had figuratively put on them in 1742, and making them “men” again. This meant that in Indian councils they would speak for themselves rather than having the Iroquois speak for them. The weakened condition of the Iroquois forced them to accept the change.³⁷

In 1756 little changed in America on a grand scale. But the raids on settlers continued from Nova Scotia to the Carolinas. Those west of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania fled to the other side. Raids came close to Philadelphia. Washington reported that “upwards of fifty miles of a rich and (once) thick settled country ... now quite deserted ... from the Maryland to the Carolina lines: Great numbers below that, removed thro’ fear ... and the whole Settlement deliberating whether to go or stay.” Washington was trying to protect the frontier with 81 forts of varying degrees of sophistication, some no more than loghouses with thicker walls.³⁸ Washington told Dinwiddie: “I see inevitable destruction in so clear a light, that, unless vigorous measures are taken by the assembly, and speedy assistance sent from below, the poor inhabitants that are now in forts, must unavoidably fall, while the remainder of the country are flying before the foe.”³⁹

The French commandant at Fort Duquesne in July 1756 exultantly reported that he had “succeeded in ruining the three adjacent provinces, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, driving off the inhabitants, and totally destroying the settlements over a tract of country thirty leagues wide reckoning from the line of Fort Cumberland.... The Indian villages are full of prisoners of every age and sex. The enemy has lost far more since the battle than on the day of his defeat.”⁴⁰

In 1757 the English blockade of New France, crop failures, and diversion of supplies to black markets kept France from mounting an offensive campaign. Raids along the frontier were extended into Georgia. Fortunately it was relatively peaceful in South Carolina since it was in no position to defend its frontier. With more blacks than whites it held its reserve so as to guard against a slave insurrection. Hardest hit was Virginia — Washington reported the “French grow more ... Formidable by their alliances, while Our Friendly Indians are deserting Our Interest. Our Treasury is exhausting, and Our Country’s Depopulating, some of the Inhabitants fly intirely ... while others assemble in small Forts destitute (almost) of the necessary’s of Life.”⁴¹

Both European powers recognized that the Indians’ conduct in war was something different from what was normal to Europeans. A French comment was that the “Delaware and Shawnee ... have eaten an English officer whose pallor and plumpness tempted them. Such cruelties are frequent enough among the Indians of La Belle Riviere [Ohio River]. Our domesticated Indians softened by the glimmerings of Christianity ... are no longer cruel in cold blood, but one cannot say, however, that their character is changed.” An English prisoner from Fort William Henry described what happened to a soldier: “The Squaws cut Pieces of Pine, like [skewers], and thrust them into his Flesh, and set them on Fire, and then fell to powwawing and dancing around him; and ordered me to do the same. Love of Life obliged me to comply.... They cut the poor man’s Cords, and made him run backwards and forwards. I heard the poor Man’s cries to Heaven for Mercy; and at length, thro’ extreme Anguish and Pain, he pitched himself into the flames and expired.” Governor Dinwiddie tried to excuse the English use of Indians with vicious traits: “This is a barbarous Method of conducting War, introduced by the French, which we are obliged to follow in our own Defense.”⁴²

Militarily and diplomatically the English made major gains in 1758. Three forts (Louis-

bourg, Frontenac, and Duquesne, which was renamed Pitt) were captured. A key to the capture of Duquesne was a treaty negotiated at Easton, Pennsylvania, in October 1758. Representing the Crown was George Croghan, who had been appointed as deputy superintendent to William Johnson; in the main, those speaking for the English were the governors of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Importantly both the eastern and western Delawares were present with the Six Nations and several lesser tribes. The authority of the Iroquois to speak for them all was accepted. In exchange for the English agreeing to stop settlers from going west into Indian territories, the western Indians abandoned the French at Fort Duquesne, causing them to withdraw. The Indians were not eager to remain associated with the French, who had no goods at Fort Duquesne to supply them with.⁴³

No sooner was Fort Pitt in English hands than the traders wanted to get back into the Ohio River watershed. Communication with Fort Pitt was made easier by a new road, called "Forbes' Road," after Brigadier John Forbes, who commanded those who laboriously hacked through the woods from today's Harrisburg. Licenses were issued in 1759 by Croghan, who, as one of the earliest successful traders in that area, was knowledgeable about Indian ways. He fixed prices to protect the Indians, who might go back to the French if they were cheated. To make trades measurable he made the "buck" a benchmark — one fall buckskin would be the equivalent of one large beaver, four bucks would buy a blanket, etc.⁴⁴

The French were bested in 1759 and 1760. Quebec fell in 1759. As part of the surrender of Montreal in 1760 the British required, as a quid pro quo for allowing the French army to surrender, the transfer of all of Canada. The decision to take control of Canada may have been influenced by an April or May 1760 pamphlet co-authored by Benjamin Franklin, who spent most of 1757 to 1762 in London. Franklin argued that the colonies' security would be much enhanced by eliminating the French, who had "continually ... instigated [barbarous tribes of savages] to fall upon and massacre [English] planters, even in times of full peace between the two Crowns." Mere construction of forts along a future boundary with Canada would not provide security "unless they were connected by a wall like that of China, from one end of [the English] settlements to the other." Otherwise the Indians would "pass easily between [the] forts undiscovered; and privately approach the settlements [of the] frontier inhabitants." By displacing the French as suppliers to the Indians of "guns, powder, hatchets, knives, and clothing," which are "necessaries of life to them," peaceful relations would follow if the Indians were treated "with common justice." In one sentence Franklin identified a situation that anticipated future difficulties along the frontier. The "people that inhabit the frontiers" were generally "the refuse of both nations, often of the worst morals and the least discretion; remote from the eye, the prudence, and the restraint of government."⁴⁵

The North American victory did not guarantee that the French would not again have Canada. That was decided after two more years of war fought in far-off places and the final English triumph expressed in the February 1763 Treaty of Paris. Officially France's North American holdings were transferred to England and Spain, with England receiving all east of the Mississippi River except for New Orleans and all of Canada from ocean to ocean. Spain gave England Florida in exchange for Cuba and, in a separate secret treaty, France gave Spain New Orleans and the Louisiana Territory west of the Mississippi.⁴⁶

CHAPTER 12

War's Aftermath in the North (Pontiac's War 1763–1764)

After Canada was surrendered in September 1760, steps were immediately taken to assume the Indian trade previously dominated by the French. Major Robert Rogers, who led a successful ranger company during the war, followed the shore of Lake Erie to Detroit, which surrendered in November 1760. En route he told the Indians that “all the Rivers would flow with Rum — that Presents from the Great King were to be unlimited — that all sorts of Goods were to be in the Utmost Plenty and so cheap.”¹ For the time being the Indians were jubilant. But if they had been aware of Rogers’ reputation for “gambling, boozing, and wenching to excess,”² and in having been accused in the past of lying, cheating, and stealing, they would have rightfully been skeptical of such promises.

With the French out of the way, the English had to deal with many Indians who wanted them out of land west of the Allegheny Mountains. The Delaware chief Kittiuskund warned in 1758 that “all nations had jointly agreed to defend their hunting place at Alleghenny, and [to] suffer nobody to settle there.... And if the English would draw back over the mountains, they would get all the other nations into their interest; but if they stayed and settled there, all the nations would be against them; and he was afraid it would be a great war, and never come to a peace again.”³ Relations were also strained east of the Alleghenies. At a meeting with the Six Nations in September 1762 Indian Superintendent Johnson was told of a revelation to an Onondaga. The Great Spirit was angry to see “the white people squabbling and fighting for these lands which he gave the Indians ... and would, although their numbers were ever so great, punish them if they did not desist.”⁴

A British policy was needed. The French had maintained good relations by providing the Indians with guns, powder, clothing, and necessities as required. The Indians did not see these as gifts. Rather, the “presents” were “just ‘payment’ for renting the land for their forts and ‘tolls’ for access to Indian territory.” The Indians saw such giving as a natural act of those with more giving to those with less. This was not the way of the English commander-in-chief, Lord Jeffrey Amherst, who saw no need to purchase the good behavior of Indians. They were to be left to “live by their hunting [and to be left] scarce of powder.”⁵

Johnson, unsuccessfully, tried to guide Amherst to a different approach. On March 21, 1761, he wrote that “a little generosity & moderation will tend more to the good of His Majesty’s Indian interest than the reverse, which would raise their jealousy much more than it is now.” As for gunpowder the reality was that “they must suffer greatly if they can’t have some from you — refusing them now will increase their jealousy and make them all very uneasy I am certain, this Sir, I think my duty to make known to you.”⁶

Amherst was not doing as Whitehall wished. The secretary of state for the Southern Department, Lord Egremont, told him, "His Majesty's interests may be promoted by treating the Indians upon ... principles of humanity and proper indulgence.... The Indians are disgusted & their minds alienated from His Majesty's Government by the shameful manner in which business is transacted between them and our traders, the latter making no scruple of using every low trick and artifice to overreach and cheat those unguarded ignorant people in their dealings with them, while the French by a different conduct, and worthy of our imitation, deservedly gain their confidence." George III looked for restraint in the colonies when he instructed on December 9, 1761, that the colonial governors were not to "pass any grant or grants to any persons whatever of any lands within or adjacent to the territories possessed or occupied by the ... Indians or the property possession of which has at any time been reserved or claimed by them."⁷

Words alone were not effective in the colonies. A September 1761 proclamation issuing from Fort Pitt by Colonel Henry Bouquet forbidding hunters or settlers west of the Allegheny Mountains was generally ignored. Traders and land companies eagerly passed over the mountains. Squatters were everywhere in western Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York. In London, in December 1761, the Board of Trade directed the colonial governors not to issue land grants within "territories occupied by the ... Indians or property possessions of which at any time has been reserved to or claimed by them." Amherst, who was in command of all forces in America, weakened this direction by interpreting it as only prohibiting settlements that encroached on Indian land.⁸

Bouquet wrote to Virginia Governor Francis Fauquier in February 1762: "For two years past these lands have been overrun by a number of vagabonds who under pretence of hunting were making settlements in several parts of them which the Indians made grievous & repeated complaints as being contrary to the treaty made with them at Easton [in 1758.]"⁹ The Indians expected treaties to be followed. Croghan told Franklin that even though "Indians are of a fickle, uncertain temper," they "to their honor [never] attempt to dissolve a contract, justly and plainly made with them."¹⁰

In the Great Lakes area a war chief of the Ottawas, Pontiac, made plans for war. He and other chiefs held numerous council meetings in the fall of 1762. Warbelts were dispatched to villages calling for a council meeting in mid-April 1763. The English were aware of the general dissatisfaction. When a Delaware chief, perhaps Red Hawk, was questioned at Fort Pitt in January 1763 about the warbelts that had been distributed, he said the tribes were too divided to seize the war hatchet but warned that "all the Indian nations are very jealous of the English, they see you have a great many forts in this country and you are not so kind to them as they expected."¹¹

Amherst was not alarmed. On April 3, 1763, he told Johnson, "The Indians ... continue their old way of reasoning.... Our suspicions of their plots ... are mere bugbears.... As the war ... is now over I cannot see any reason for supplying the Indians with provisions; for I am convinced they will never think of providing for their families by hunting if they can support them by begging provisions from us."¹²

Pontiac, in his mid-40s, was described by Croghan as a "shrewd sensible Indian of few words [who] commands more respect amongst these nations than any Indian [he] ever saw could do amongst his own tribe."¹³ Pontiac had a vision in the spring of 1763 when he spoke to a gathering of various tribes, as if he were the Master of Life:

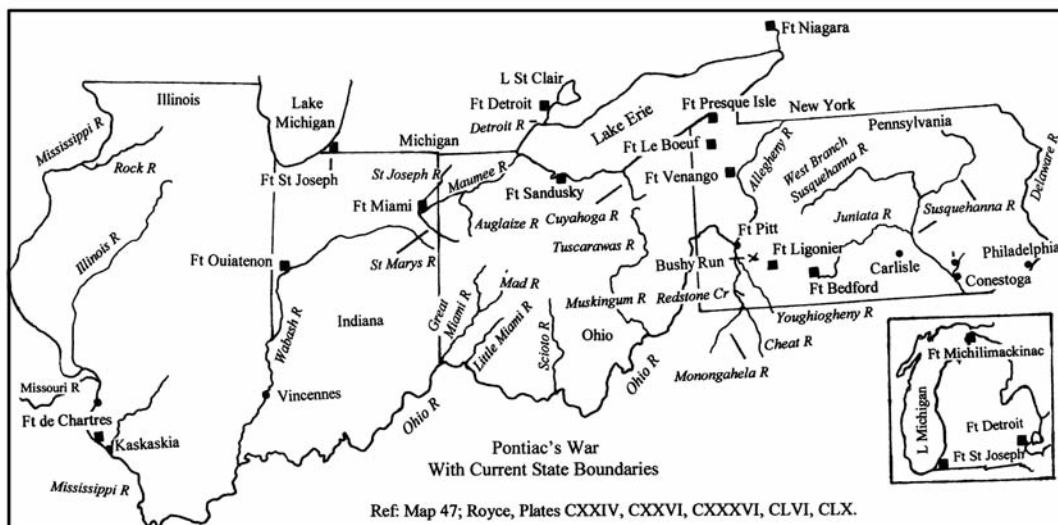
Listen well to what I am going to say to thee and all thy red brethren ... I love you, you must do what I say and [leave undone] what I hate. I do not like that you drink until you lose your

reason, as you do; or that you fight with each other; or that you take two wives, or run after the wives of others; you do not well; I hate that.... This land, where you live, I have made for you and not for others. How comes it that you suffer the whites on your lands? ... I know that those whom you call the children of your Great Father supply your wants, but if you were not bad, as you are, you would well do without them. You might live wholly as you did before you knew them. Before those whom you call your brothers came on your lands, did you not live by bow and arrow? You had no need of gun nor powder, nor the rest of their things, and nevertheless you caught animals to live and clothe yourselves with their skins, but when I saw that you went to the bad, I called back the animals into the depths of the woods, so that you had need of your brothers to have your wants supplied and cover you. You have only to become good and do what I want, and I shall send back to you the animals to live on.... As regards those who have come to trouble your country, drive them out, make war to them! ... Send them back to the country which I made for them! There let them remain.¹⁴

Amherst should have been concerned about a possible attack. He did not have much of a military force manning the various forts west of the mountains. In the colonies and Canada he had a total of 8,000 troops, but only about 2,000 of them were spread along the New York frontier, in western Pennsylvania and in the upper Great Lake posts.¹⁵

Pontiac was intent on capturing Fort Detroit as the first step in a general uprising. The fort could rely on about 140 men if it knew an attack was coming. Pontiac's plan was to gain entry into the fort and then attack. On May 7 he had some 300 admitted on the pretense of trading, a number with hidden weapons. He was frustrated when he found that the fort commander, Major Henry Gladwin, had been tipped off as to his intentions and had armed men posted around the Indians. Pontiac confronted Gladwin with a show of innocence: "We would be very glad to know the reason for this, for we imagine some bad bird has given thee ill news of us, which we advise thee not to believe."¹⁶ Pontiac left the fort without giving the command to attack. After another effort at subterfuge the Indians attacked houses outside the walls of the fort on May 10 and demanded that the British leave the fort. When this demand was refused the fort was attacked on May 11. The fort did not fall and was placed under siege.¹⁷

Indians easily took many small forts. On May 16 Fort Sandusky was taken by ruse by Wyandot warriors and Ottawa envoys. Fort St. Joseph, near Lake Michigan, was taken on



May 25 by Potawatomi warriors. Fort Miami, at the junction of the St. Mary and St. Joseph rivers, and its garrison of 12 surrendered to a combination of Ottawa and Miami Indians. Fort Ouiatenon on the Wabash River surrendered on June 1 without any loss of life to local tribes, who were under pressure from the Ottawa. A ploy at Fort Michilimackinac on June 2 was for the Chippewa and Sauk to play lacrosse outside the fort and then to suddenly rush into the fort and, as it developed, to slaughter most of those there. Forts Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle were taken by Indians from several tribes (Shawnee, Delaware, Seneca, Chippewa, Ottawa, Huron, and Mississauga) between June 13 and June 23. The technique at Presque Isle was to set the fort on fire.¹⁸

Pontiac passed the word to Indians to the east that the time to act had arrived, and Delaware and Mingo warriors attacked traders and settlers and threatened Fort Pitt at the end of May. Croghan's home was burned, and settlers nearby fled into the walls of the fort. Pitt had 289 armed men, ample provisions, and an experienced commander. Captain Simeon Ecuyer had served for over 20 years in Dutch, Swiss, and finally British armies. Included in the defensive measures were open beaver traps placed along the tops of the walls each night and the scattering of iron crow-foots in the surrounding ditches. With some difficulty Pitt withstood an attempted siege.¹⁹

One reaction to the uprising was germ warfare. Whether first suggested by Amherst from New York, Bouquet at Carlisle, or Ecuyer at Fort Pitt, an effort was made to infect the tribes with smallpox. Amherst wrote to Bouquet: "You will Do well to try to Inoculate the *Indians* [with smallpox], by means of Blankets, as well as to Try Every other Method, that can serve to Extirpate this Execrable Race." Bouquet probably had no reservations about this, having said he did not want to "expose good men against [the Indians and wished he could] make use of the Spanish Method to hunt them with English Dogs supported by Rangers and Some Light Horse, who would [he thought] extirpate or remove that Vermin."²⁰ Ecuyer made the attempt in July when he gave a delegation of Delaware, at the conclusion of a meeting, blankets used by smallpox victims. Whether from this or some other cause smallpox raged among the tribes during the summer and fall.²¹

Detroit suffered when a supply convoy consisting of 18 large bateaux, unaware of the siege, was traveling along Lake Erie. It was ambushed at a camping location 25 miles from the Detroit River. Some bateaux escaped, but most didn't, and the prisoners taken were killed in gruesome ways. According to *The Siege of Detroit in 1763*, edited by Milo Milton Quaife, they were divided into three groups. One group was forced to remove their clothes, and the "Indians ... discharged their arrows into all parts of their bodies. [When] they fell dead ... those ... not engaged in killing fell upon the dead bodies and hacked them to pieces, cooked them, and feasted upon them. Some [were] treated with different cruelty, slashing them alive with gun-flints, stabbing them with spears, cutting off their hands and feet and letting them bathe in their own blood and die in agony; others were bound to stakes and burned by children in a slow fire."²²

The chance of starving the Detroit garrison evaporated when a supply vessel, the *Michigan*, arrived on June 30 with provisions, gunpowder, and additional troops. Pontiac's alliance was fragile. In early July delegations to the fort from the Potawatomi and Huron wanted to make peace. Amherst was after annihilation. When he sent troops to Detroit he instructed that any Indians blocking their way were "to be treated not as a generous enemy, but as the vilest race of beings that ever infested the earth, and whose riddance from it must be esteemed a meritorious act, for the good of mankind. You will, therefore, take no prisoners,

but put to death all that fall into your hands of the nations who have so unjustly and cruelly committed depredations.”²³

When Pontiac was unable to capture Fort Detroit, his stature with other tribes fell. At a meeting with Chippewa and Shawnee, he was told, “Like you, we have undertaken to chase the English out of our territory and we have succeeded. And we did it without glutting ourselves with their blood after we had taken them, as you have done.... We did not do any harm to the French, as you are doing.... But as for thee ... after having brought them to thy camp thou hast killed them, and drunk their blood, and eaten their flesh.... Moreover, in making war upon the English thou hast made war upon the French by killing their stock and devouring their provisions.”²⁴

A blow to Pontiac was the September arrival at Fort de Chartres on the Mississippi River of a copy of the peace treaty of 1763 and what followed. The French commander, Major Pierre Joseph Neyon de Villiers, sent a message to the Indians in New France:

My Dear Children ... Open your ears so that it may penetrate even to the bottom of your hearts. The great day has come ... the Master of Life [has] inspire[d] the Great King of the French and him of the English, to make Peace between them, sorry to see the blood of men spilt so long. It is for this reason that they have ordered all their chiefs and warriors to lay down their arms.... What joy you will have in seeing the French and English smoking with the same pipe and eating out of the same spoon and finally living like brethern. You will see the roads free, the lakes and rivers unstopped. Ammunition and merchandise will abound in your villages.... Forget, then, my Dear Children, all the evil talks. May the wind carry off like dust all those which have proceeded out of evil mouths.... Leave off then, my Dear Children, from spilling the blood of your brethern, the English. Our hearts are now but one. You cannot at present strike the one without having the other for your enemy also. If you continue you will have no supplies.... I pray the Master of Life to enter into your hearts.²⁵

Pontiac was swayed and wrote Gladwin, saying he was ready for peace and that all his “young men [had] buried their hatchets.” Gladwin replied that he would forward Pontiac’s message to the general.²⁶

An effort to reenforce and supply Fort Pitt and the forts east of it took shape at Carlisle, where Bouquet had 460 men in mid–July. The road from Carlisle to Pitt (Forbes’ Road), some 180 miles long, was a rutted trail through a mountain wilderness. Such settlers as there had been were gone, the country was empty, and at first there was no sign of Indians. He arrived at Forts Bedford and Ligonier just in time to discourage attacks there. He left Ligonier, which was within a four-day march to Pitt, on August 4 and had no opposition the first day, but on the second the column was ambushed by Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo, and Huron roughly 26 miles east of Pitt. Bouquet formed his men into a circle around his pack-train and let his men take cover behind boulders and fallen timber. At the end of the day they still held their positions but had suffered 60 dead or wounded, and at the start of the next day the Indians were still there. The situation was desperate, and Bouquet took a chance. Soldiers in one part of the circle fell back, leaving a gap, which the Indians charged and were in turn surrounded and suffered 60 killed. This loss discouraged the Indians, and they withdrew and headed back to Fort Pitt. Bouquet praised the discipline of his men, who he said “disdained so much to touch the dead body of a vanquished enemy, that scarce a scalp was taken except by the rangers and packhorse drivers.” This battle at Bushy Run was a turning point for Fort Pitt, which Bouquet reached on August 10. A supply line of sorts was open from Ligonier to Pitt.²⁷

Although the summer ended with Forts Detroit and Pitt still in British hands, the land

between was all in the hands of the Indians. Nine forts had been destroyed. A diplomatic victory belonged to Johnson, who prevailed upon the Iroquois, other than the Seneca, to remain neutral. It was not the nature of the Indians to long stay committed to a war, and their enthusiasm diminished together with their ammunition and supplies. They needed to harvest their crops and to prepare for a winter hunt.²⁸ Gladwin suggested a tactic: "If your Excellency still intends to punish them ... it may easily be done ... simply by permitting a free sale of rum, which will destroy them more effectively than fire and sword."²⁹

Proclamation of 1763, Lawlessness, and the British 1764 Offensives

Perhaps a hurried product of Pontiac's War was George III's 1763 proclamation¹ prohibiting settlement of land "beyond the ... sources of any of the rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean." This line running north to south from the St. Lawrence River to Georgia was about 50 miles east of Pittsburgh and ran through Fort Stanwix in New York, leaving most of the Iroquois base land west of the line. There was a mercantile objective. The secretary of state (Lord Egremont) wanted to keep settlers from "planting themselves in the Heart of America, out of reach of Government where from the great difficulty of procuring European commodities, they would be compelled to commerce and manufactures, to the infinite prejudice of Britain."² As to areas where the Crown allowed settlements, the proclamation prohibited private purchases from the Indians.

In terms of fairness and truthfulness the 1763 proclamation is an outstanding document. It admitted "great frauds and abuses [had] been committed in the purchasing lands of the Indians," and directed that "all persons whatever, who [had] either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any lands ... which [had] not ... been ceded to or purchased by [the Crown should] forthwith ... remove themselves from such settlements."³

The proclamation was consistent with promises made to Indians during, and before, the war. As early as 1744, at the Treaty of Lancaster, the Indians were led to believe that their lands beyond the mountains were safe. In 1758, at Easton, Pennsylvania, when the English and the colonies wanted the Indians to desert the French at Fort Duquesne, Pennsylvania made a treaty with the Delaware Indians stating no new settlements would be made on their land. After Fort Duquesne was taken and renamed Fort Pitt in 1758, Colonel Henry Bouquet assured the Indians that the English would only come into the west as traders, not as settlers. To his credit Bouquet, in 1761, kept grantees of the Ohio Company from settling along the Ohio River.⁴ But Bouquet did not see the Indians as worthy people. When Jeffrey Amherst wanted to have "Small Pox [spread] among ... dissatisfied tribes" during Pontiac's uprising, Bouquet willingly did so, remarking that "it [was] a pity to expose good men against them, [and he wished they] could make use of the Spanish method, to hunt them with English dogs ... who would ... effectually extirpate or remove that vermin."⁵

If the population of the colonies had remained static, the Indians might have been secure behind the wall of mountains, but it didn't. In the Southern Colonies (Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia) between 1760 and 1780 the numbers almost doubled — the whites increasing from 432,000 to 780,000, and the Negroes increasing from 284,000 to 510,000. The increase in New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts,

Rhode Island, and Connecticut) was not as great: 450,000 to 665,000. The Middle Colonies (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware) went from 428,000 to 723,000. Looked at as an entirety, the colonies had 1.3 million whites and 0.3 million Negroes in 1760 and 2.1 million whites and 0.6 million Negroes in 1780. Of serious concern in England was the rate at which its population was going to America. Between 1760 and 1775 those leaving the British Isles numbered 125,000. To slow this transfer, which the English landlords feared would depopulate their estates, the British government in 1767 refused to approve a Georgia act subsidizing immigration.⁶

The winter of 1763–1764 brought death and destruction to some friendly Indians in Pennsylvania. Living in Conestoga, near Lancaster, was a small group of Indians of the same name. An argument between one of their members and a gunsmith resulted in a vigilante group of about 57, called the Paxton Boys after the town where they lived, to descend on Conestoga, where three men, two women, and a child were killed and scalped. The blood lust wasn't sated. On December 27 a mob of 100 broke into the Lancaster workhouse where the Conestogans who had escaped the earlier massacre were being housed for their protection and killed and scalped them all. Governor John Penn's efforts to have the mobsters punished brought no results other than a written remonstrance delivered to the governor and the assembly. The Paxton Boys were so brazen that 100 headed for Philadelphia in February for more slaughter only to be thwarted when they learned that the Indians there were being protected by the army. The Paxtons complained that the government was not protecting "the frontiers [which had] been repeatedly attacked and ravaged by skulking parties of Indians" but rather was protecting Indians and giving them presents while doing nothing to compensate traders whose goods were looted. As for the assembly, the frontiersmen saw themselves as being underrepresented. The remonstrance got no reaction by the assembly, but Penn, after frontier raids commenced in 1764, put a bounty on Indian scalps.⁷

Benjamin Franklin was outraged, writing:

Unhappy people! to have lived in such times, and by such neighbours! We have seen that they would have been safer among the ancient heathens with whom the rites of hospitality were sacred.... But our frontier people call themselves Christians! They would have been safer if they had submitted to the Turks, ... even the cruel Turks never kill prisoners in cold blood....

O, ye unhappy perpetrators of this horrid wickedness! Reflect a moment on the mischief ye have done, the disgrace ye have brought on your country, on your religion, and your Bible, on your families and children! Think on the destruction of your captivated country folks (now among the wild Indians) which probably may follow in resentment of your barbarity! Think on the wrath of the united Five Nations, hitherto our friends, but now provoked by your murdering one of their tribes, in danger of becoming our bitter enemies.⁸

Colonel William Eyre, asked by Superintendent Johnson to study the situation in the fall of 1763, stated how the Indians could be controlled:

The most Certain and Effectual Method to distress and Punish the Indians now, or at Any Other time hereafter should they Attack us, Will be, to Cut off all Supply of Every kind, or have any Intercourse with Them; its now in Our Power by being Wholly Master of the Country.... This [is] ... the most Safe and Certain Way, and that Without Putting the Crown to Expense, for the Indians having been So long used to Blankets, Arms, Ammunition, &c that the Want of These Articles would infallibly reduce them to great Miseries ... and Moreover Oblige Them to Sue for Peace and our Protection, in the most Abject and Supplicating Terms: They Cannot Scarcely kill Sufficient Food without fire Arms being so much accustomed to Them.⁹

A change in commanders, Thomas Gage for Amherst, who returned to England, was welcomed by the army. Captain Ecuyer at Fort Pitt remarked, "What universal cries of joy and what bumpers of Madiera are drunk to his prompt departure."¹⁰ Amherst sailed on November 18 for England. Amherst had been an arrogant martinet who listened to no one, whereas Gage, a 44-year-old professional soldier, who was commander-in-chief until 1775 and had been in America since Braddock's days, listened but had difficulty making decisions.¹¹

The most belligerent Indians in 1764 were those in the upper Ohio Valley, the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo. They were back at war against frontier settlers in western Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. John Penn proposed a scalp bounty, which was approved by Johnson and Penn's council. Johnson saw this step as "gratifying the desire of [the Pennsylvanians and] heartily wish[ed] success."¹² Since a "friendly" scalp could not be distinguished from an "unfriendly" one, it was a dangerous time for all Indians. During this period the expression "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" was in use.¹³ One looking for something good to say about Penn's action can note that the bounty for males 10 or older as prisoners (150 Spanish dollars) was more than for scalps (134 Spanish dollars).¹⁴

Pontiac's peaceful intentions changed as the new year was underway. He circulated a six-foot war belt north of the Ohio and south to the Gulf. But his magnetism was gone with the failure to take Detroit.¹⁵ In April of 1764 he wanted Villiers at Fort de Chartres to join with the Indians and told him that the British bragged that "they keep the French in their pockets & that they knock them in the head as little flies that sting them."¹⁶ Villiers was not persuaded. Not only did he refuse to help, but he also urged the Illinois Indians to have peace with the British. However, the French merchants at Vincennes, Kaskaskia, and Cahokia were not reluctant to sell ammunition and supplies to the Indians. A discouraged Pontiac was ready for peace, but a new leader, Shawnee Chief Charlot Kaske, came forward to spearhead those wanting to continue to fight.¹⁷

For 1764 Gage wanted two offensives to close in on the villages of the Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo along the Muskingum and Scioto rivers. Starting from Fort Niagara would be a force led by Colonel John Bradstreet, and from the south, starting from Fort Pitt, one led by Bouquet. Gage saw this plan to be one that would "terrify and throw the barbarians into greater confusion."¹⁸ To raise troops in Pennsylvania Bouquet offered to supply "those who shall take prisoners or scalps of enemy Indians [with] proper certificates and recommendations to enable the reward offered by [the] government." Bouquet's offer was less appealing in a postscript: "I hope the volunteers understand that it is not in my power to allow them pay."¹⁹

Bouquet did not start his campaign until October. His soldiers were instructed not to "hold any kind of friendly intercourse with [Indians] by speaking, shaking of hand or otherwise, but on the contrary to look upon them with utmost disdain and with that stern and manly indignation justly felt for their many barbaritys to our friends and fellow subjects. They will continue to be regarded as enemys till they submit to the terms that will be offered them and till they have in some measure expiated the horrid crimes they have been guilty of."²⁰

Bradstreet, who had shown his mettle under battlefield conditions, was considered by some as "tactless, boastful, and rude,"²¹ started in August. Although he had some authority to reach agreements with the Indians, and did so as he marched into their country, he was much too lenient in the eyes of Bouquet, who thought his agreements had "compromised the honor of the nation by such disgraceful conditions ... at a time when two armies, after long struggles, are in full motion to penetrate into the heart of the enemy's country."²² Gage

agreed, and he “annull[ed] and disavow[ed]” peace agreements reached by Bradstreet and directed Bouquet to go forward and to “attack and use every means to extirpate ... and listen to no terms of peace till they deliver the promoters of the war unto your hands to be put to death, and send the deputys to Sir William Johnson [made a baronet in 1755] to sue for peace.”²³

Before Bradstreet left Fort Niagara, Johnson held a large council meeting there, which began on July 11 and ended August 6. Johnson had an intimidating force of 1,500 regulars camped nearby ready to proceed into Indian country. Although certain hostile tribes were not present, including Pontiac and the Ottawa, the Sandusky Huron, and the Shawnee and Delaware of the Ohio Valley, many tribes there signed on to terms dictated by Johnson. This was not much of a sacrifice since Johnson agreed that in exchange for peace, no British would settle on or buy Indian lands, and Indians who had been in revolt would be pardoned.²⁴ The terms were particularly appealing when contrasted with threats communicated to a group of hostile Seneca: they would be reduced “to beggary without fighting, by ... debarring [them] of trade.”²⁵ The Seneca signed a treaty on the last day of the meeting.

Bouquet’s foray into Indian country was successful, and he returned to Pitt on November 28 with a number of envoys ready to talk peace with Johnson. This was accomplished without his men firing a shot in battle. On December 13, 1764, Gage wrote to Lord Halifax, secretary of state for the Southern Department, that “the country is restored to its former tranquility and that a general and, it’s to be hoped, lasting peace is concluded with all the Indian Nations who have lately taken up arms against his Majesty.”²⁶ Johnson explained to Gage the essence of the Indians with whom they had to deal. Subjection was not a concept the Indians could accept. They would never “ever consider themselves in that light whilst they have any men, or an open country to retire to, the very idea of subjection would fill them with horror.” They were a people “who consider themselves independent ... both by nature and situation, who can be governed by no laws, and have no other ties among themselves but inclination.”²⁷

Pontiac’s War in the years 1763 and 1764, which historian William Nester prefers to call “Amherst’s War,” cost the British army some 550 killed compared to perhaps 200 warriors. Losses to the Indians were not limited to warriors — hundreds died from smallpox. Suffering the most were the settlers, who may have had 2,000 either captured or killed and thousands driven “to beggary and the greatest distress ... and ... plundered of goods ... to the amount of not less than one hundred thousand pounds.”²⁸ Blame for the war can easily be placed on Amherst’s haughty manner and niggardly ways. After Amherst left, Croghan told the Lords of Trade that the “expense of giving favours to the many additional Tribes of Indians as are now in alliance with Britain since the reduction of Canada must be considerable, but I dare say it will be found the cheapest and best method in the end to cultivate a friendship with them in this manner.” War brought “nothing but fatigue and the devastation of [the] frontiers, and load[ed] the nation with debt.”²⁹

Frontiersmen Out of Control and the 1768 Treaty at Fort Stanwix

The Pontiac-led rebellion was a watershed of Indian resistance to westward expansion east of the Mississippi River. The future saw incidents of Indian raids on frontier settlements and battles with the militia and the army, but the increasing strength of the white man made such incidents nothing more than delays in the ultimate Indian displacement.¹

In July 1764 Whitehall decreed that all tribes would be under either the northern or southern superintendents (William Johnson in the north and John Stuart in the south). Chiefs were to be appointed for each village and each tribe, and any agreements reached by government representatives could be vetoed by the apposite superintendent. One set of trade laws would apply, and only those with a license could trade with the Indians. Land could be purchased from the Indians only by the superintendents after gaining agreement of the principal chiefs. Missionaries from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands would be permitted to proselytize. Muskets, but not rifles, could be sold to the Indians. No liquor could be sold. On paper it was a sound program, but on the ground one not capable of enforcement absent a substantial investment in men and funds, neither of which were ever adequate for an area larger than that of the existing colonies.²

In the 1760s Johnson built, in the midst of a forest north of the Mohawk River, a spacious mansion called Johnson Hall. Contemporaries described it as a “superb and elegant edifice.” Johnson lived there with many children (born to successive common-law wives) and others. One wife was the Mohawk sister of Joseph Brant, an important Mohawk chief. There were always Indians present. Although there were outbuildings for them, they camped on the lawn and wandered through the house. At a council at Johnson Hall on May 4, 1765, an Onondaga spoke his mind: “We were always ready to give, but the English don’t deal fairly with us. They are more cunning than we are. They get our names upon paper very fast, and we often don’t know what it is for — We would do more for the King, but it is hardly in our power, and some of us don’t like it because we are so often imposed upon.”³ A practical void existed in the West. Chief Kaskaskia in March 1765 still looked to the French: “Send us traders; we shall pay them well; we are rich in furs; our women and children are all naked since the French have ceased coming to trade with our Nation.”⁴ Officially the Indians did not receive help from the French, but French traders continued to sell them ammunition and supplies, and some of the French spread the word that a French army would again come to the area.⁵

Gage was worried about the Indians taking up the war again. On June 8, 1765, he wrote to Lord Halifax that a “general pacification [would be maintained] unless it is inter-

rupted by the lawless and licentious proceedings of the frontier inhabitants. If those people can't be kept within their boundaries and forced into a subjection to the laws, we must expect that quarrels will be renewed with the Indians."⁶ A year later more despair from Gage in a letter to Johnson: "I am really vexed at the behavior of the lawless bandits upon the frontiers, and what aggravates the more is the difficulty to bring them to punishment. The true cause of which is ... their flying from province to province, rescued by their comrades.... The disorder lies in the weakness of the governments to enforce obedience to the laws, and in some, their provincial factions run so high that every villain finds some powerful protector."⁷

In 1765 Gage sent Croghan, who had been deputy superintendent since 1756, down the Ohio River to expand English influence into the Illinois country, which was de facto under control of the French settlers notwithstanding the peace treaty of 1763. Starting on May 15, when he left Fort Pitt, he went down the Ohio to the mouth of the Wabash River, arriving on June 6, a trip of about 1,000 miles covered by traveling roughly 60 miles per day. During this trip Croghan often noted the plentitude of "buffaloes, bears, turkeys, with all other kinds of wild game" that they could kill out of their boats. The game was so abundant he estimated a single hunter could "without much fatigue to himself ... supply daily one hundred men with meat."⁸ Near the mouth of the Wabash his party was attacked, five killed and others wounded, and all captured by Indians who had been told by the French that he was "coming ... to take their country ... and [to] enslave them." Croghan told a friend he "got the stroke of a Hatchet on the Head, but my skull being pretty thick, the hatchet would not enter, so you may see a thick skull is of service on some occasions."⁹

When a Shawnee in Croghan's party left the impression with the Indians that a large party was coming behind them, the captors left, with the captives, and traveled in one day 42 miles through "thick woody country" on the way to the captors' village. Traveling about 30 miles a day for 6 days they came to Port Vincennes, a village with "eighty or ninety French families." Croghan described the French as "an idle, lazy people, a parcel of renegades from Canada ... much worse than the Indians." Vincennes was a "place of great consequence for trade, being a fine hunting country all along the Ouabache [Wabash], and too far for the Indians which [resided thereabouts] to go either to the Illinois, or elsewhere, to fetch their necessaries."¹⁰

From Vincennes they were taken 210 miles, through "exceedingly rich" land looking "like an ocean," to the captors' village, Ouicatonon, where the young Indians, who were their captors, were reprimanded by their chiefs.¹¹ From this point Croghan's party traveled up the Wabash, passing over "spacious and beautiful meadows," crossed over a nine-mile "carrying place" to the Maumee River and thence to Lake Erie and back via Detroit to Niagara, where he arrived September 26. The Indians north of Ouicatonon, some of whom were known to Croghan, were friendly.¹²

The 1763 boundary established by the King was ignored by those wanting to settle on Indian lands. In the summer of 1767 Gage sent regulars to clear the settlers from the Redstone Creek and Cheat River areas, which they proceeded to do. However, once the troops left, the settlers returned. This area is roughly where the present boundaries of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland meet — an area significantly west of the 1763 proclamation line, which was east of Pittsburgh. Gage was constrained by political considerations. He warned Johnson that great care must be taken in expelling the squatters: if "a skirmish happens and blood is shed, you know what a clamor there will be against the military acting without civil magistrates."¹³ The colonial governors were reluctant to act since expulsion

exacerbated the festering estrangement between the Crown and those living in the colonies. Furthermore, there was a dispute between Virginia and Pennsylvania over whose territory this area was within. Without enforcement of the proclamation line the settlements increased, as did the anger of the Indians.¹⁴

In June 1766 Johnson told the Board of Trade that “there has lately arisen a fresh discontent amongst most of the Indian Nations ... occasioned by many late acts of oppression, by murders, robberies, & encroachments on their native rights and possessions, and as these acts of cruelty and injustice continue or rather gain ground, the discontent and clamours of the Indians is daily increasing, and will in all probability end in a general war.”¹⁵ In an overall assessment Johnson said: “Our people in general are ill calculated to maintain friendship with the Indians. They despise those in peace whom they fear to meet in war. This with the little artifices used in trade, and the total want of that address and seeming kindness practiced with such success by the French, must always hurt the colonists.... [C]ould they but assume a friendship and treat them with civility and candour, we should soon possess their hearts and much more of their country than we do now.”¹⁶

Croghan’s thoughts were similar to those of Johnson: “Marching an army at an immense expense into their Country, and driving a parcel of wretches before us who we know won’t give us a meeting, but where they have the advantage of either beating us or running away, and then content ourselves with burning their villages of bark huts, destroying their corn, and driving them into the woods — This cannot be called conquering Indian nations.” It was much better to “flatter their vanity so as to gain their confidence.”¹⁷

The Indians were not safe along the frontiers, nor were they safe in areas long-settled — murders occurred in New Jersey. The Indians maintained some control if unwanted traders and hunters who came into their territory by robbing and, sometimes, murdering them.¹⁸

By 1768 there were some 2,000 settlers in the Youghiogheny, Monongahela, Redstone and Cheat valleys — areas to the south of Pittsburgh. The frontier was so lawless in April 1768 that Gage had to provide an escort for Croghan as he traveled from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh “in order to protect him from the frontier people who have threatened his life, and to plunder the Indian presents he was carrying with him.”¹⁹ Anyone along the frontier who wanted to kill an Indian need not worry — according to Gage “all the people of the frontiers from Pennsylvania to Virginia inclusive openly vow that they will never find a man guilty of murder for killing an Indian.”²⁰ Gage told Whitehall that the Americans were on a path to “throw off all subjection to your laws” and that one way to combat this was to “keep them weak as long as possible ... and avoid anything that can contribute to make them powerful.” Immigration should be controlled so that their numbers didn’t increase.²¹

Oratory in the Virginia House of Burgesses on March 31, 1768, described what was happening in the Pittsburgh area:

It will appear that a Set of Men, regardless of the Laws of natural Justice, unmindful of the Duties they owe to Society, and in Contempt of the Royal Proclamations, have dared to settled themselves upon the Lands near *Red Stone* Creek, and *Cheat* River which are the Property of the *Indians* and notwithstanding the repeated Warnings of the Danger of such lawless Proceedings and the strict and spirited Injunctions to them to desist, and to quit their unjust Possessions, they still remain unmoved, and seem to defy the Orders and even the Powers of Government.²²

A fear of retribution was a reason to stop this:

Late experience hath shewn us the Variety of Evils which the Inhabitants on the Frontiers suffered during an *Indian* War, nor can you have forgot the Torrents of human Blood which

drenched our Lands, and the cruel Captivity to which so many of every Age and Sex were subjected. No. The tender Heart of Man cannot so soon divest itself of the Feelings of Humanity, which were excited by those Scenes of complicated Misery.

And shall we, can we, permit these Banditti, these abandoned Men in Prosecution of their usurped Pretensions, to open afresh those Sluices of Blood, whose flowing hath been so lately stopt by the Wisdom, Fortitude, and paternal Care of our most gracious Sovereign?²³

The House responded with words:

Inhabitants of this Colony [should be warned] not to do any Thing inconsistent with the public Faith, as a contrary Behavior must necessarily draw on them great Calamities, which they will justly deserve, who, regarding their own private Advantages only, so incatiously risque the public Tranquility.²⁴

Neither lines on maps nor speeches in the House of Burgesses stopped settlers.

Whitehall wanted the colonies to agree to a boundary for Indian country and for the Indian superintendents to then negotiate that line with the Indians. The culminating treaty negotiated by Sir William Johnson was made at Fort Stanwix, where over 3,000 Indians from 16 tribes gathered. The council went on from September 19 to November 6, 1768. An essential element of successful negotiations with Indians was to supply them with food and presents in the course of the talks. Johnson was worried at the end of the negotiations that all of the work would be for naught unless he was sent “a large quantity of provisions ... as soon as possible ... as it [could] not be supposed that hungry Indians can be kept here, or in any temper without a bellyfull.”²⁵

The treaty line Johnson negotiated was far west of the 1763 proclamation line and included most of what is now Kentucky and Tennessee and the lands settled in the Youghiogheny, Monongahela, Redstone and Cheat valleys. The Stanwix line also ceded land south of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River and in northeast Pennsylvania not previously ceded. In New York the line went approximately from a point on the Delaware River common to the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey and then due north to Fort Stanwix. The treaty was only signed by representatives of the Six Nations even though it recited that “Sachems and Chiefs of the Six United Nations, and of the Shawanese, Delawares, Mingoes of Ohio, and other dependant Tribes” were present. When contacted by surveyors in the ceded land the Shawnee denied ever agreeing to the treaty. The Mingoes were Seneca Indians who had moved into the Ohio River valley.²⁶

Concerns over the Indians were soon sublimated to a bigger problem for the home country. A contemporaneous observation proved to be prescient. The Duke of Bedford thought the French presence in North America was, in a way, a plus for England: “[The French presence provided] the greatest security for [the colonies] dependence on the mother-country, which ... will be slighted by them when their apprehension of the French is removed.”²⁷ Without a doubt the colonies became more assertive between 1763 and 1775, as the English gave them plenty of opportunities for complaint.

CHAPTER 15

Land Schemes

The time between the proclamation of 1763 and the treaty at Fort Stanwix in 1768 was an inviting period for land speculators. George Washington told his agent, William Crawford, to go into what would be the “King’s part” between the Proclamation line of 1763 and any negotiated Indian boundary line and to “hunt out good Lands and in some measure mark and distinguish them for their own (in order to keep others from settling them).” This was to be done “snugly under pretence of hunting other Game.” As for the Proclamation line, he looked upon it “as a temporary expedient to quiet the Minds of the Indians [which] must fall ... in a few years especially when those Indians are consenting to our Occupying the Lands.”¹ Patrick Henry, in 1767, wanted lands near the Ohio–Mississippi junction explored — he recognized the “Task is arduous, to View that vast forest, [to] describe the face of the Country & such of the rivers Creeks etc. ... is a work of much Trouble, hazard & fatigue.”²

Speculators plotted and planned within and without the relatively slow step-by-step approach of establishing a boundary and then formulating a method of settling lands not within the protected Indian lands. Active in addition to Washington and Benjamin Franklin were Superintendent Johnson; Governor William Franklin of New Jersey, Benjamin’s illegitimate son; George Morgan, representing the Philadelphia firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan; Indian trader George Croghan, deputy superintendent for the Northern Department; and a number of others. Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry were among the speculators.³ Croghan wrote Johnson in March 1766 that “one half of England is Now Land Mad & Every body there has thire Eys fixt on this Cuntry.”⁴ When Croghan visited England in 1764 with a plan for controlling trade with the Indians, he was disappointed: “The people hear Spend thire time in Nothing butt abusing one Another and Striveing who shall be in power with a view to Serve themselves and Thire friends, and Neglect the Publick.”⁵

Fertile minds were at work. Croghan, Johnson, and others in 1766, starting with the concept of buying land from French habitants, tried for a grant of 1,200,000 acres between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. With Benjamin Franklin shepherding the request of the Illinois Company in London, it evolved into a grander concept of from one to three colonies between the Wabash and Mississippi rivers. Left to his own devices Franklin would have tried for 63,000,000 acres. Franklin was successful in getting government approval until Lord Hillsborough (Wills Hill) was appointed to the new position of secretary of state for the colonies in 1768. Hillsborough did not agree with the plan; one of his concerns was a possible “dispeopling [of] Ireland.”⁶

Justification for one large grant being sought, called the Indiana grant, was the need to compensate traders who suffered during Pontiac’s War. Croghan, in December 1765,

represented to Benjamin Franklin that he had had “public and private conferences with the Shawnese, Delawares, and Wyandotts, and the Several other tribes, who had robbed and murdered our Traders,” and they “cheerfully consented [to] requesting the representatives of the Murdered Traders, to accept from them, *a part of their Country*, on this side of the River Ohio [that is, south of the river.]”⁷ The Wyandotts were a subgroup of the Hurons who migrated to the Ohio Valley. Much the same group as was involved in the Illinois Company bought up claims from those who had been injured and pushed for retribution as the “Suffering Traders” organization. One of the promoters (Samuel Wharton), in 1767, wrote William Franklin that he “had an Opportunity of discovering the Inclination of Our frontier People, to settle On the Ohio, [and was] persuaded — We could soon convert a very considerable part of the Indian Grant, into Money.”⁸

To carry out this proposal, Johnson got the agreement of the Six Nations, who had not been involved to any large extent in “despoiling” the traders, for a wedge of land bounded by the Ohio on the north, the Little Kanawha on the west, the Allegheny Mountains on the east, and a westward extension of the Pennsylvania–Maryland boundary on the north. The cession, although made to the King, was to be used for the “benefit and behoof of the despoiled traders.”⁹ Beneficiary of the 1.8 million acres, called the Indiana grant, was the Indiana Company. This cession was not approved in London.¹⁰

The Indiana cession was but a small part of the land Johnson was able to acquire from the Six Nations in the November 1768 treaty at Fort Stanwix. Clouds on much of this cession were the claims of the Cherokee Indians to most of this land south of the Ohio River, and the lack of agreement of the Indians living west of the Allegheny Mountains, who hunted in what became Kentucky and Tennessee.¹¹

The Cherokee flaw was cured by two treaties negotiated by Stuart, who the Cherokee called Bushyhead and who was married to a Cherokee. The first treaty established several boundaries in future Kentucky. First was the Hard Labor line, which was extended westward to the Lochaber line, and then an extension westward was made to the Lochaber line, which, when laid out on the ground, was extended further westward to the Donelson line. In the end the Cherokee gave up its claim, which may have been mostly a manufactured one, to the eastern half of future Kentucky and much of southwest Virginia.¹² Stuart succinctly appraised the white–Indian relationship in a 1764 report: “A modern Indian cannot subsist without Europeans; and would handle a flint ax or any other rude utensil used by his ancestors very awkwardly; so what was only conveniency at first is now become necessity.”¹³

Johnson was also successful, in the Fort Stanwix treaty, in getting large cessions in eastern New York and in Pennsylvania. These included a large tract the Indians had earlier given to him and opened the headwaters of the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers to speculators. Land east and south of a line starting at Fort Stanwix was ceded. Roughly, the line went south in a straight line to the northernmost common boundary of New York and Pennsylvania on the Delaware River (Hancock, New York), and from there west to Owego, New York, from which it went southwest to the west branch of the Susquehanna River. Thereafter, it followed the west branch toward its headwaters, and approximately east of Kittanning, Pennsylvania, it went west to Kittanning and thereafter on the Allegheny River to the Ohio River. Huge areas in New York (perhaps one-sixth of the state) and close to one-fifth of Pennsylvania were ceded. It did not take long for well-known speculators, such as the Wharton brothers, William Trent, Croghan, and William Franklin, to get large grants in the ceded lands.¹⁴

The Fort Stanwix treaty ignored the reality of the 10,000 to 20,000 Indians of the Six

Nations, living in northern Pennsylvania and western New York, neither occupying nor hunting extensively in the future states of Kentucky and Tennessee. In approving the cessions the Privy Council was not troubled by the failure to gain agreement of the Indians, primarily the Delaware and Shawnee Indians, living west of the Allegheny Mountains (which run northeast from near Cumberland, Maryland, to the West Branch of the Susquehanna), who hunted in what was to become Kentucky and Tennessee. In the treaty the Six Nations claimed to be “the true and absolute Proprietors of the lands” ceded. The cession was newsworthy. The *Virginia Gazette* of December 1, 1768, reported that the Six Nations and their tributaries have granted a vast extent of country to His Majesty, and settled an advantageous boundary line between their hunting grounds and this and other colonies to the south as far as the Cherokee (now the Tennessee) River.¹⁵

After Stanwix a question posed in London was what should be done with the millions of acres of land south of the Ohio River available to the Crown. Speculators had proposals. The idea of a new colony came the closest to getting London’s approval.¹⁶ It would have been named Vandalia, to recognize that Queen Charlotte was “descended from the Vandals,” and encompassed 20 million acres.¹⁷

Between 1768 and 1775 efforts were made to acquire Ohio River valley land that had not been ceded to the Crown. In 1773 the Illinois Company bought large tracts at the intersections of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers and the Ohio and Mississippi rivers from local Indians. When Virginia governor Dunmore asked Dartmouth to approve of the purchases, he was rebuffed. Superintendent Johnson also rejected the transactions. Virginia had grounds to assert rights to Ohio River land north of the river since the 1609 charter to the London Company established an eastern boundary along the Atlantic coast, from which north and south boundaries would go from “sea to sea, west and northwest.”¹⁸

With a rupture in relations with the mother country appearing likely in 1775, speculators were stimulated. Major purchases directly from the Indians of lands not yet ceded to the King were made. In July Croghan made large purchases from the Six Nations of six million acres just across the Ohio River from Pittsburgh and of another 1.5 million acres north of the Ohio. Purchases were made near Vincennes by the Wabash Company in October 1775. Holding interests in the Wabash Company were Governors Dunmore (Virginia) and Thomas Johnson (Maryland). The first governor of Virginia after the Declaration of Independence, Patrick Henry, may also have had an interest in some of these purchases. In the South, Richard Henderson made a large purchase from the Cherokee at Sycamore Shoals on March 17, 1775. London was definitely being ignored.¹⁹

Settlers were not the only plague suffered by the Indians. Riches were also to be had from trading with them, and illegal sales of rum to the tribes were essentially beyond the control of the government. Alexander Cameron, a Scot living with the Cherokee as a Crown agent, said that “no nation was ever infested with such a set of villains and horse thieves. A trader [is] indefatigable in stirring up trouble against all other white persons that he judges his rivals ‘in trade.’”²⁰ Benjamin Franklin called Indian traders “the most vicious and abandoned wretches of our nation.”²¹ With much exposure in the New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio country, William Johnson described traders in 1770 as a “sett of very worthless fellows.”²² Walter H. Mohr’s book on *Federal Indian Relations 1774–1778* sums it up: “The English traders made themselves obnoxious to the Indians by cheating them in trade, by selling rum illegally, and by defrauding them of their lands.”²³

The independence of land ownership in America from the Crown was a concept espoused in New England in 1689 when many opposed the actions of Governor Edmund

Andros, whose authority was under the Dominion of New England, which was established by King James II to govern the colonies from Maine to the Delaware River. After the popish James II was replaced by William and Mary in England, the protestant colonials rebelled against Andros and the “horse leeches [his cronies] that [had] been sucking” at the populace for two or three years. Among the grievances against Andros was his denial of ownership of land by the colonists. The position stated by a Salem minister, John Higginson, was one commonly held by the New England Puritans. From the King New Englanders “received only the right and power of government ... but the right of the land and soil [they] received from God according to his grand charter to the sons of Adam and Noah [who were given the earth to be subdued and replenished], and with the consent of the native inhabitants.”

CHAPTER 16

Dunmore's War

The Treaty of Fort Stanwix in November 1768, ratified in 1770, was drafted by insiders anxious to get title to Indian lands.¹ The ultimate insiders were the superintendent and deputy superintendent of the Northern Department for Indian affairs, Sir William Johnson and George Croghan. Each had good relations with the Indians, Johnson with the Six Nations and Croghan with the western tribes.

To legitimize private purchases from Indians, Johnson put into the treaty the purported insistence of the Indians that sales recently made within the ceded land would be accepted as valid, and those lands should not go to the Crown. Also, a grant by the Six Nations to William Trent, an off-and-on partner of Croghan, of 2.5 million acres on the Ohio was part of the treaty. Then, to protect 200,000 acres near Pittsburgh that Croghan bought in 1749 from three Iroquois chiefs, if those lands were eventually found to be within the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania and claimed by the Penns, the treaty provided that the King should grant Croghan 200,000 acres elsewhere.²

Prior to the Fort Stanwix cession Croghan purchased many acres in the Lake Otsego region of upper New York, near today's Cooperstown, south of the Mohawk River. Hurried individual purchases from the Indians prior to the Stanwix treaty were so extensive that after the treaty Johnson said he knew of "no good place vested in the Crown." The Crown's lands were too remote to have current value.³

Following the Stanwix treaty, William Trent and Samuel Wharton went to London to lobby for the approval of the Indiana grant. Bad news came from London in 1769. Trent and Wharton reported to Croghan that Lord Hillsborough was refusing to honor the private transactions specified in the Stanwix treaty. Notwithstanding Hillsborough's action, two governors of New York, who received large fees for patenting land, were willing to give patents to Croghan. To pay the fees Croghan did a lot of legal maneuvering since he did not have the money himself and was in debt to many. He often engaged in deceptions in communicating with his creditors. His holdings in New York were greatly reduced by mortgage and sales. He left New York in 1770 and was not to return in part because of lawsuits against him and the presence of others ready to sue.⁴

Croghan operated in the Fort Pitt area between 1770 and 1777 living on a 1,600-acre farm called Croghan Hall, which served as a land office and trading post and generously received travelers. He resigned from the Indian Department in November 1771. This was an area of turmoil, and his talents in dealing with Indians came into play. With both Virginia and Pennsylvania claiming the area around Fort Pitt and each selling land, settlers flocked to the region. Pennsylvania opened a land office at what was then called Pittsburgh in April 1769 and over the next four months sold one million acres. Inroads were also made into the

eastern and southern part of the watershed by settlements along the New and Greenbrier rivers. Settlement was also proceeding along the Great Kanawha, whose mouth was roughly 200 miles downstream from Fort Pitt. Virginians who settled on Redstone Creek and the Cheat River south of Fort Pitt, well within the Ohio River watershed, were an irritant to the Indians.⁵ Many settlers in these areas based their ownership on “tomahawk claims,” that is, a cabin and blazed trees. Croghan Reported in 1770 that the “roads have been lined with waggons moving to the Ohio [south of the river].”⁶

As Vandalia stalled, the governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, was encouraged to think the Ohio Valley land south and east of the river would stay within Virginia’s jurisdiction. He appointed Dr. John Connolly, a close associate of Croghan, as Virginia’s western agent.⁷

To lay a foundation for future claims in the Ohio Valley south of the river, Captain Thomas Bullitt advertised in Virginia and Pennsylvania in October 1772 that he would go into Kentucky in the spring of 1773 as a surveyor. Bullitt and several others made surveys in 1773. Without success, Bullitt tried to get the Shawnee Indians in the valley to agree to the terms of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. The Shawnee would not concede that what were to become West Virginia and Kentucky were available for white settlers.⁸

The Shawnee understood the consequences of surveyors, who they called Red Flag men, coming on to their land. Settlers were apt to follow. Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* described another bellwether: “The [honey-]bees have generally extended themselves into the country, a little in advance of the white settlers. The Indians therefore call them the white man’s fly, and consider their approach as indicating the approach of the settlements of the whites.” The Shawnee could not stop the honey-bees, but they could and did act out against those exploring along the Ohio River. Early in 1774 they killed some of the whites on what they considered their land and tried to enlist other tribes north of the Ohio River (Miami, Wyandot, and Ottawa) to join with them, for, otherwise, in time the whites would be after their land. These tribes saw the problem as being remote from their areas and refused to join in.⁹

The area was ripe for an explosion. It was described as of 1772–1773 by a Moravian missionary:

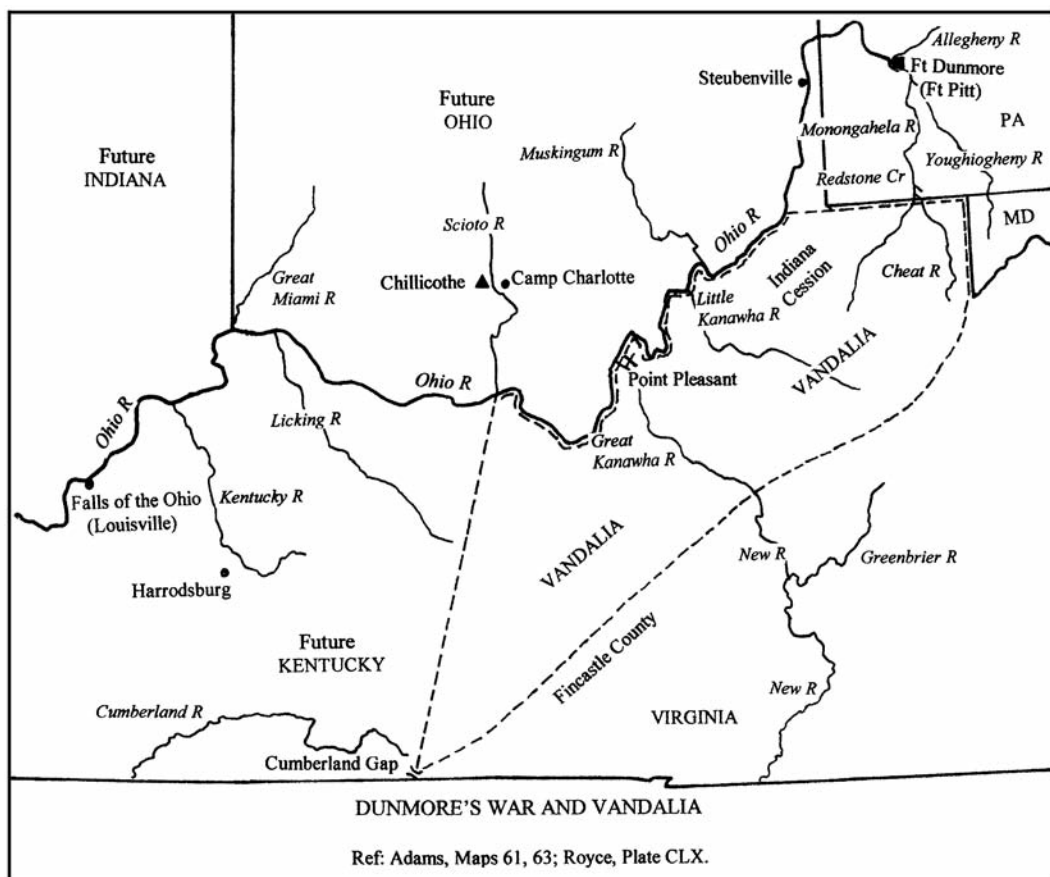
The whole country on the Ohio river, had ... drawn the attention of many persons from the neighbouring provinces; who generally forming themselves into parties, would rove through the country in search of land, either to settle on, or for speculation; and some, careless of watching over their conduct, or destitute of both honour and humanity, would join a rabble (a class of people generally met with on the frontiers) who maintained, that to kill an Indian, was the same as killing a bear or a buffalo, and would fire on Indians that came across them by the way;— nay, more, would decoy such as lived across the river, to come over, for the purpose of joining them in hilarity; and when these complied, they fell on them and murdered them.¹⁰

Surveying activities were curtailed when news circulated that “Indians had robbed some of the Land jobbers.” The Indians went on the warpath, essentially stopping efforts to settle along the Ohio River downstream from Pittsburgh. Although it is not clear as to who was responsible, the Indians were reacting to murders by whites. Among those killed were members of the family of John Logan, the son of a Cayuga chief, who, with others, was camped along the Ohio at the mouth of Yellow Creek near present-day Steubenville, Ohio. While Logan and other warriors were absent, a drunken party killed 13 red women and children, including all of Logan’s immediate family. Logan and eight warriors exacted their own brand of justice by crossing the river and scalping 13 Virginians. “War parties

went out and took scalps and prisoners.” “Great numbers of innocent men, women and children, fell victims to the tomahawk and scalping knife.”¹¹

The Indians' action gave Dunmore an excuse for what he probably wanted to do. Patrick Henry thought he wanted a war so that Indians could be driven off land he coveted. He declared war against the Shawnee and over the summer raised 3,000 militiamen to invade and destroy Shawnee communities on the Scioto River north of the Ohio. At a June 1774 confrontation at Point Pleasant, Kentucky, an Indian force of about 700, led by Shawnee war chief Cornstalk, attacked about 1,000 Virginians but was unable to annihilate them or force a surrender. Even though the loss to the Indians was about half of the 222 men killed or seriously wounded on the white side, it was a serious loss in view of the limited maximum force they could muster. The Virginians at Point Pleasant were under the command of Colonel Andrew Lewis, who was proceeding up the Kanawha River to join a force led by Dunmore headed from Pittsburgh to Chillicothe and other Shawnee towns on the Scioto River.¹²

After Point Pleasant Cornstalk's warriors were reluctant to continue the war. Consequently, Cornstalk met with Dunmore, who was positioned at Camp Charlotte, a fortified position near Chillicothe, to make peace. Although it is disputed as to what was agreed to — that is, if the Shawnees agreed to the Fort Stanwix boundary line and to give up hunting lands south of the Ohio, and if Dunmore recognized that the Indians should have lands north and west of the Ohio River — a truce was reached, and Dunmore took his men back



to Virginia, and the Shawnee over the next few years migrated westward to the two Miami Rivers in the western part of the present state of Ohio.¹³

Dunmore's report to the Earl of Dartmouth dated December 24, 1774, described, in part, what was agreed to: "[The Indians] should not hunt on *our Side the Ohio*, nor molest Boats passing thereupon.... In return he [gave] them every promise of protection and good treatment *on our Side*." Emphasis supplied. He exuded optimism in the report: "this affair, which undoubtedly was attended with circumstances of Shocking inhumanity, may be the means of producing happy effects; for it has impressed an Idea of the power of the White People, upon the minds of the Indians, which they did not before entertain; and, there is reason to believe, it has extinguished the rancour which raged so violently in our People against the Indians: and I think there is a greater probability that these Scenes of distress will never be renewed, than ever was before."¹⁴

Dunmore reported to London on the state of the frontier:

There are considerable bodies of Inhabitants Settled at greater and less distances from the regular frontiers of ... all the Colonies. In this Colony Proclamations have been published from time to time to restrain them: But impressed from their earliest infancy with Sentiments and habits, very different from those acquired by persons of a Similar condition in England, they do not conceive that Government has any right to forbid their taking possession of a Vast tract of Country, either uninhabited, or which Serves only as a Shelter to a few Scattered Tribes of Indians. Nor can they be easily brought to entertain any belief of the permanent obligation of Treaties made with those People, whom they consider, as but little removed from the brute Creation.¹⁵

Dunmore thought the best that could be made of such a situation was to "receive persons in their Circumstances, under the protection of Some of His Majesty's Governments already established." After the battle at Point Pleasant, Dunmore let the Indians know that the whites were in Kentucky to stay by building Fort Randolph near the Point Pleasant battle ground, that is, south of the Ohio River near the mouth of the Kanawha River.¹⁶

In the December report Dunmore summarized conflicts with the Indians from the time of General Henry Bouquet's punitive expedition of 1764 seeking revenge for massacres during Pontiac's War through the killing of members of the Logan family, which he condemned as acts "marked with an extraordinary degree of Cruelty and Inhumanity." He characterized the "back-woods-men [as] Hunters like the Indians and equally ungovernable," and said that even if he had immediately been informed of the white atrocities that "it would have been impossible for [him] to take any effectual Step, in the disposition which the People of the Back-Country were then, to bring these Offenders to Justice."¹⁷

In May 1775 "the great Man of Virginia," that is, Dunmore — called the "Big Knife" by the Indians — in keeping with the common reference to the Virginians as the long knives — tried to arrange a meeting with the Shawnees, Mingoies, and Delaware at Fort Dunmore (Pittsburgh) by citing "the uneasiness of [the Indians] for their friends detained [by the English, that is, hostages taken at the time of the truce]."¹⁸ When the Shawnee and Mingoies did not arrive on time, the Iroquois and Delawares met with then Major John Connolly at Fort Dunmore in June and July 1775. Notwithstanding that the Iroquois had expected to speak with Big Knife and were "surprised to find nothing but his bed, himself not to be found" and were "at a loss to account for the reason," the meeting included professions of friendship and a message for the Shawnee asking that they perform the promises made after the battle at Point Pleasant. The English asked that the Indians not hunt "on the South side of the Ohio" which was being "settl[ed] in great numbers."¹⁹

The weakened state of the Iroquois is apparent when they made a plea for “Ammunition [which they could not acquire for themselves since] game [was] so scarce.” They also wanted “a person appointed for the regulation of trade at [Fort Dunmore] as it would be very agreeable to all Nations and prevent Impositions on [the Indians] in [their] Dealings with [the English.]” Something of a slap in the face was administered when Connolly said nothing could be done immediately about regulation of trade since “the Great Man of Virginia [was] much engaged in Business of Importance.”²⁰

The meeting at Fort Dunmore in July 1775 closed with an assertion by the English that “the great Creator [had given them the] powers ... to preserve [their] Lives and Liberties and [their] property against every one who shall attempt to deprive us of them.” Coupled with the assertion was a promise the Indians could justifiably view with skepticism: “We will also exert ourselves to maintain you in the undisturbed possession of your natural right.”²¹ The promise may have been made in good faith, but important to its interpretation is what was meant by the Indians’ “natural right.” Clearly the whites saw that phrase differently than did the Indians.

Early Kentucky Settlements

The assertion that the English would “preserve [their] property against every one who shall attempt to deprive us of [it]” was ignored by Richard Henderson, who wanted to establish an inland empire within present-day Kentucky to be called Transylvania. After Dunmore appeared to have tamed the Shawnee at Point Pleasant, Henderson met with over a thousand Cherokee men and women at Sycamore Shoals (near present-day Elizabethton, Tennessee, and on the Watauga River), and the sale and purchase of 20,000,000 acres between the Kentucky and Cumberland rivers was completed.¹ Although the Cherokee claim of ownership of all these lands might be questioned, the treaty making the transfer asserts that they were “the Aborigines and sole owners by occupancy from the Beginning of time.”²

One not agreeing to the sale, which was for 10,000 pounds, which translated into a single shirt for some when divided between 1,000 or more Indians, was Tsiyu Gansini, known as Dragging Canoe. He observed that the whites had passed over the mountains and “settled upon Cherokee land.” He did not think this would satisfy them, and that future cessions would be sought, and “‘The Real People,’ once so great and formidable, will be compelled to seek refuge in some distant wilderness,” where they would “be permitted to stay only a short while, until they again behold the advancing banners of the same greedy host.” Eventually, when no further retreat is possible, “the extinction of the whole [Cherokee] race will be proclaimed.”³ Neither he nor his young warriors would accept this — they would “have [their] lands.” Dragging Canoe told Daniel Boone: “You have bought a fair land, but there is a cloud hanging over it. You will find its settlement dark and bloody.”⁴

Henderson, known to the Cherokee as Carolina Dick, wasn’t deterred by the Crown’s injunction against white settlements in that area. Nor did the laws of Virginia and North Carolina prohibiting individuals from dealing with Indian nations stop him. To Henderson the sine qua non was an agreement with the Cherokee, who had a limited claim over Kentucky. This would give the appearance of legality sufficient to induce “Emigrants or Adventurers” to pay 20 shillings per 100 acres so as to be able to settle on, as advertised, “Land purchased by Rich’d Henderson & Co.” Neither Dunmore nor the governor of North Carolina, Josiah Martin, thought well of Henderson. Dunmore described him as an “evill disposed and disorderly Person,” and Martin declared any sale would be “null and void.”⁵

In the hire of Henderson was Daniel Boone, who was “to mark out a road in the best passage ... through the wilderness to Kentucke” and to select and fortify a town site. For this service Boone was to receive 2,000 prime acres. Boone assembled 30 to 35 men at present-day Kingsport, Tennessee, located on the Holston River, to cut a path for settlers. Over two weeks the Warrior’s Path, which was only a rough trace through the mountains, was cleared and widened to the Cumberland Gap. Wagons could not quite make it to the

Gap nor be used beyond that point. Before reaching the Gap, wagons were either sold or taken apart and carried. From the Gap to the northwest the road deviated from the Warrior's Path but often followed "buffalo roads" until they reached the rolling country.⁶

Henderson was about two weeks behind Boone, who continued on into Kentucky to select a town site. He made his first transfer of title on April 3, 1775, writing in his journal:

Mr. Bryce Martin enters with me for 500 acres of land lying on the first creek after crossing Cumberland Gap northward from powels valey going toward Canetuckey river. RICHARD HENDERSON.⁷

A letter of April 1 advised Henderson that Boone's men had been attacked by Indians and that he should come apace.⁸ Henderson's diary entry for April 7 reads:

About Brake of day began to snow.... Received a letter from Mr. Luttrells camp that were five persons kill'd on the road to Cantuckie by Indians. Cap't Hart, upon the receipt of this News Retreated with his Company, & determined to Settle in the Valley to make corn for the Cantucky people. The same day received a letter from Dan'l Boone that his company was fired upon by Indians, kill'd Two of his men — tho he kept the ground & saved the baggage & c.⁹

For the 20th of April Henderson's diary states: "Arrived at Fort Boone on the Mouth of Oter Creek where we were Saluted by a running fire of about 25 guns; all that was then at Fort." Soon work was underway to build a fort at what was named Boonesborough. The work went slowly since the men had only been hired to make the road or to transport goods to this place, and they were off staking out land for themselves or hunting. In fact the fort was not completed until 1778. Other nearby early settlements were Harrodsburg, Logan's Station (sometimes called St. Aspah's Station), and Boiling Spring. However, the person with a vision for the future was Henderson.¹⁰

One of the mysteries associated with Kentucky is why, with such desirable land as that found in its bluegrass area, there were no Indian villages. A University of Kentucky archaeologist, A. Gwynn Henderson, has concluded that in 1775 the Cherokee and "other native groups, used portions of the region with permission of the Shawnee, who claimed much of it." Most Indian villages had moved "north of the Ohio River for safety, and ... returned in small groups ... to hunt and camp during the winter." This pattern of usage differs from archaeological evidence, which shows that "Kentucky ... was inhabited by native peoples for over twelve thousand years." During the period from 1000 to 1750 Indians "lived in large, fortified towns [with] over one thousand people [and] in smaller villages, and in single-family hamlets." Henderson believes "it is possible that many of the villages [were] abandoned shortly before the settlers arrived" and that this change was the result of "fear of reprisals from the British (after the fall of Fort Duquesne in 1758)." The lives of the Indians were probably changed by exposure to diseases brought by the whites. She writes of "multiple graves of from four to thirty individuals, [and of] mass graves estimated to contain the remains of over one hundred individuals densely packed into a small space."¹¹

Leadership at Boonesborough was assumed by Daniel Boone, who, in the summer, went back east to bring his wife and their daughter to Boonesborough. They were the first women to settle in Kentucky. Other women came, but during the early years of the Revolutionary War, Kentucky was an extremely dangerous place to be. Dunmore instigated Indian raids, as did the British governor in Detroit. Misfortune came in the summer of 1776 when three girls were captured by Shawnee bucks, who started back with them to their Ohio villages. The men of Boonesborough pursued and surprised the Indians a short

distance below the Blue Licks, shot the abductors, and recovered the girls. Two of the pursuers were to marry two of the girls.¹²

The "Colony of Transylvania," the name Henderson gave to the collection of early settlements, was short-lived. Settlers outside Boonesborough were not happy with the assertive stance taken by the Transylvania Company, and in 1776, at a convention called by George Rogers Clark, Virginia was asked to include Kentucky as a county within its jurisdiction. This was done in December 1776. James Harrod, who approached Kentucky from the Ohio River and established Harrodsburg in 1774 and 1775, was made a justice of the peace and a captain of militia. Twenty-four-year-old Clark was a savior of Kentucky in the war with the British by first working to get gunpowder into the country and later by leading men against the British in what became Indiana.¹³

CHAPTER 18

A New Force Emerges

England acquired a lot of real estate around the globe in the Seven Years War (French and Indian War), but, in doing so, it ran up a large national debt. In London it was decided the time had come for the American colonies to pay their fair share and to assume the responsibility of protecting themselves from hostile Indians. The heavy hand of taxation was not welcomed by the colonies, and when England coupled taxation with a policy of stopping smuggling, the way the colonists evaded England's restriction on American trade, the momentum for revolution was hatched.¹

Between 1763, when England made enemies by establishing an Indian sanctuary west of the Appalachians, and 1774, disagreements reached the point that New York asked for a meeting of colonial delegates in Philadelphia. All showed up, except for Georgia, and what is now known as the First Continental Congress met from September 5 to October 26, 1774. A Declaration and Resolves dated October 14, 1774, set out the colonies' disagreement with Parliamentary infringements of the colonists' rights. To put pressure on the Crown on October 20, 1774, the colonies agreed to a trade wall between England and America — a “non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement” was entered into by those attending. Congress scheduled a meeting for May 10, 1775, absent a satisfactory resolution of the colonies' grievances.²

Blood was shed on April 19, 1775, when Thomas Gage, Boston's governor, sent a force to seize an arsenal at Concord, Massachusetts. En route his soldiers were challenged at Lexington, and a British volley killed eight Minute Men, who were members of an elite militia formed by the Massachusetts Committee of Safety. The militia attacked the detachment after it reached Concord and harried it all the way back to Boston. With 49 dead Americans and 73 dead British soldiers, a Rubicon had been crossed.³

The Second Continental Congress convened on May 10 in Philadelphia. It recognized that the colonies needed an army, and on June 16, 1775, George Washington was selected to lead it. But Congress had not given up on seeking a peaceful solution with the Crown. On July 6, 1775, a declaration was issued as to why it had been necessary to take up arms.⁴

In Virginia Lord Dunmore was not acting as if peace would prevail — he wanted to arouse the Indians for a general attack on the frontier and fled to a British warship in June 1775. Dunmore's conduct was consistent with the King's proclamation in August 1775 that “the Rebellious war now levied ... is manifestly carried on for the purpose of establishing an independent empire.”⁵

Without a peaceful resolution, the attitude of the Indians would be important. In June 1775 New York told its delegates in the Continental Congress that the “importance and the necessity of attention to Indian affairs is deeply impressed on our minds, because our public

peace is more endangered by the situation of the barbarians to the westward of us, than it can be by any inroads made upon the seacoast." In July 1775 Congress established "three departments of Indians, the northern, middle and southern." In August 1775 Virginia ordered that Fort Pitt be occupied and assumed the responsibility of supporting troops along that frontier.⁶

Department commissioners met with Indians at Pittsburgh in October 1775, and it was agreed that the colonists would not cross the Ohio River to attack the Indians and that the Indians would not bother settlements south of the Ohio. Consistent with this policy, in May 1776 Virginia prohibited settlements north of the Ohio River.⁷

George Morgan, who was made Indian agent at Pittsburgh in 1776, followed this policy of neutrality perhaps as much in self-interest as in reflection of a Congressional policy. His ongoing trading in the Illinois country could be interrupted if warfare should break out with the Indians. When Congress changed its policy on May 25, 1776, saying it was "highly expedient to engage the Indians in the service of the United Colonies," Morgan continued to follow one of neutrality.⁸

Separation from England became a legal reality. On July 4, 1776, representatives of the 13 colonies endorsed the Declaration of Independence.⁹ Among the long list of actions enumerated to show George III's object of establishing "an absolute tyranny over these States" was the "raising [of] conditions of new Appropriations of lands" and "endeavori[ing] to bring on the inhabitants of [the colonies'] frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions."

CHAPTER 19

The Northern Frontier During the War Years

During the war years (1775–1783) there was little settlement west or north of the Ohio River. In contrast, significant migration and entrenching went on in modern-day Kentucky, Tennessee, and southwest Virginia. At the start of the war the Indians were courted by both sides. However, their predisposition was toward the British, who could convincingly point out that it was the Americans who were threatening to move ever deeper into Indian country, and it was the King that could provide them with what had become the necessities of life.

At the start of the war Governor Henry Hamilton in Detroit frightened settlers in Kentucky by issuing a proclamation urging them to leave American soil and offering a bounty to those joining the British army. Hamilton had the promise of a large number of Indians to harass the settlers and between threats and attacks drove all settlers, except for those families at Harrodsburg, Boonesborough, and St. Asaph, out of Kentucky. The Shawnee unequivocally threw their support to the British when their chief, Cornstalk, who was being held as a hostage at Fort Randolph, was murdered in November of 1777.¹

In January 1778, while at Blue Licks, where salt was being gathered by boiling the rich brines that were at the surface there, Daniel Boone, who was hunting for fresh meat, was captured by a group of Shawnees. They took him back to where those working to separate the salt were. Boone then talked the Indians out of going on to Boonesborough, telling them that everyone was inside the fort at that time and it would be too strong for them to take. Summer would be a better time to attack.²

In Detroit, where Boone and his companions were taken, Boone seemed to receive preferential treatment, including an Indian name and a squaw. His compatriots began to think he had done them wrong, and when they were released and back at Boonesborough, while Boone stayed in Detroit, some concluded Boone had acted treacherously. For his part Boone, on learning of a planned attack on Boonesborough, escaped riding a horse 160 miles to the Ohio River and then on foot to Boonesborough to warn of the planned attack. For some reason the Indians delayed their attack, and this gave the settlers time to put the fort in better condition, and when 450 braves appeared in September they were able to successfully resist what turned out to be a two-week siege.³

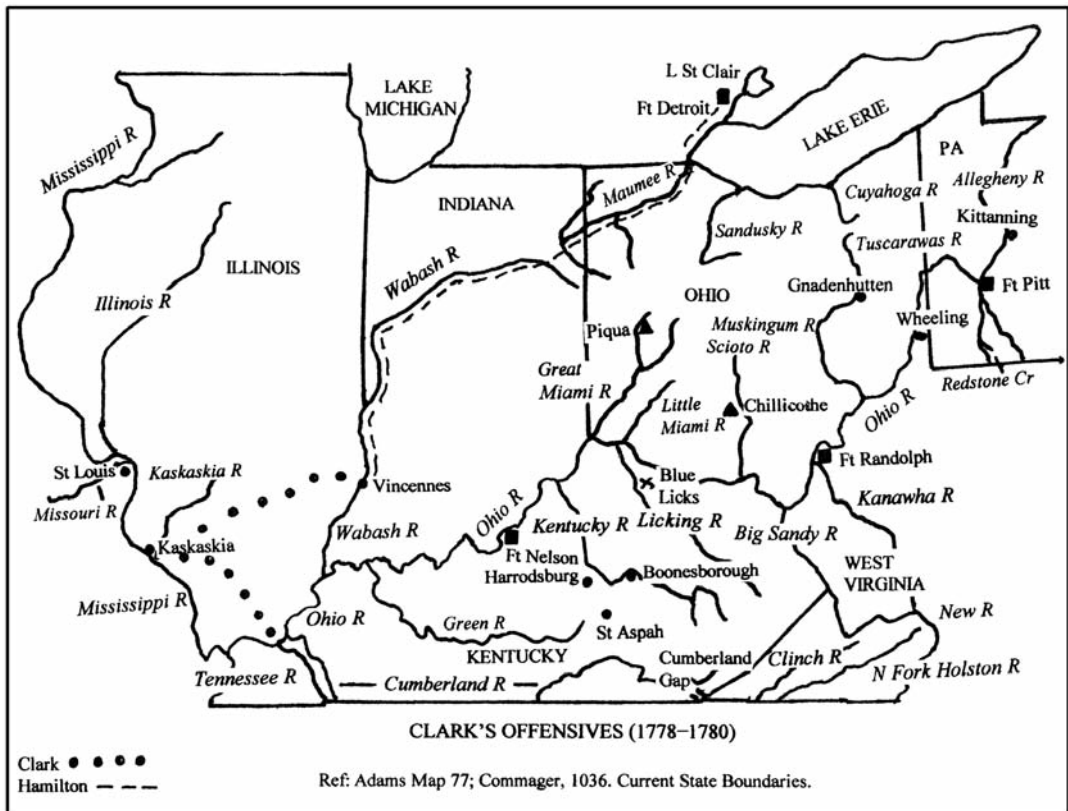
After the siege Boone wanted to return to North Carolina to join his wife, who had gone there after his capture. But, before he was allowed to leave, he prevailed in a court-martial at which he was charged with indiscretions in dealing with the Indians.⁴

In 1778 Kentucky went on the offense under the leadership of George Rogers Clark. Clark, who had a farm near the Ohio River some 40 miles below present-day Wheeling,

West Virginia, acted at the start of the revolution to get Virginia to recognize the Kentucky settlements and provide gunpowder so they could protect themselves. Then, in November 1777, Clark, who was Virginia's military commander at Harrodsburg, proposed to Patrick Henry an expedition north of the Ohio River during which he would convince the French living there that he "ment to protect rather than treat them as a Conquered People" with the aim of winning over their "Country men at Detroyet," making that place "an easy prey for [him.]" Clark thought Detroit could be taken with five hundred men.⁵

Henry agreed to the plan and, to keep it a secret, only consulted a few delegates. Legislative approval was obtained by tacking on to a bill — one that authorized the use of Virginia's militia against western enemies — the authority for "the Governor [to] empower a number of volunteers not exceeding six hundred to march against and attack any of [Virginia's] enemies." With a public set of instructions to enlist 350 men to defend Kentucky and a nonpublic set authorizing him to take them into Illinois country north of the Ohio River, by June 1778 Clark, after collecting soldiers on an island near present-day Cincinnati, informed them that Illinois, not Kentucky, was their destination. Many left, but, with the 175 remaining, he decided to proceed against Kaskaskia, located on the Mississippi River, an easier target than his original goal of Vincennes, which was located closer to Detroit.⁶ Clark was a vengeful man. He "expected shortly to see the whole race of Indians extirpated [and] for his part he would never spare man, woman or child of them on whom he could lay his hands."⁷

In preparing for an invasion north of the Ohio, Clark told Henry that Kaskaskia's res-



idents were able “to furnish [goods to] the different [Indian] nations, and by presents [could] keep up a ... friendship with the Indians, and [would] undoubtedly keep all the nations that lay under their influence at war with [America.]” He submitted that if Kaskaskia were not taken “in less than twelve month [America] would need to send an army against the Indians on Wabash.”⁸

After floating down the Ohio, to avoid detection his force left their boats near the mouth of the Tennessee River and walked through 125 miles of wilderness. Kaskaskia, halfway between the mouth of the Tennessee River and St. Louis, was caught off-guard and, being made up primarily of French inhabitants who were told of France’s alliance with the colonies, quickly accepted them as friends. Next, learning there were no British troops at Vincennes on the Wabash River, a small force went across what is now southern Illinois and captured it by the end of July. News of Clark’s success energized the Virginia Assembly — the County of Illinois was established for land west of the Ohio River and “adjacent to the river Mississippi.”⁹ The Continental Congress had no part in this operation.

These conquests challenged the authority of Hamilton. Hamilton, known as the “hair buyer” because of bounties supposedly paid for scalps taken by Indians who he encouraged to attack settlers in the Ohio country, gave up a plan to attack Pittsburgh and proceeded to recapture Vincennes in December 1778. Whether or not the British encouraged the Indians to take scalps, some Indians thought they could gain favor by doing so. Paying for scalps was not without precedence. The colonies had done so at times. Massachusetts did so in the 1720s to encourage frontiersmen to hunt for and kill Indians. South Carolina offered rewards for Choctaw scalps in the 1750s, and Georgia offered to pay for Cherokee scalps in the 1760s.¹⁰

Several packages, containing scalps collected over a three-year period, with an accompanying letter addressed to Colonel Haldimand, governor of Canada, dated January 3, 1782, were intercepted by American militiamen. The scalps were separated — 43 of congress soldiers, 359 of farmers, 193 of boys, 211 of girls, and 29 of little infants. The Senneka, who had the scalps, wanted them sent “over the water to the Great King” to show that the Senneka were “not idle friends.”¹¹ The scalps were marked to show how they were obtained. For example, the soldier and farmer scalps were marked to show if they were killed by bullets or hatchet and whether at night. The farmer scalps were marked to show if they had “died fighting for their lives and families.” A special mark was used for farmers who were “prisoners burnt alive” and for infants “ripped out of their mothers’ belly.”¹²

The Senneka letter accompanying the scalps, printed in the *Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligence* on January 14, 1783, closes: “Your traders exact more than ever for their goods; and our hunting is lessened by the war, so we have fewer skins to give them. This ruins us. Think of some remedy. We are poor; and you have plenty of everything. We know you will find us powder and guns and knives and hatchets; but we also want shirts and blankets. A little white belt.”¹³

Clark, not willing to abide with Hamilton in Vincennes, in the middle of winter marched some 180 miles under severe conditions and surprised him in February 1779. The British, who had gathered in a fort, were reluctant to surrender. To put pressure on them Clark had some Indian captives tomahawked outside the main gate. Hamilton, who was spending the winter there, lost the respect of those Indians inside the fort, who did not blame the Virginians for the killing but faulted the British for not protecting them. After Hamilton surrendered he and some other leaders were taken to Williamsburg as prisoners. Jefferson, then governor, approved of their being tried as war criminals and sentenced to

be kept incommunicado, in irons, and in a dungeon. They remained imprisoned for over a year and were finally paroled on the recommendation of Washington, who was concerned about how his soldiers might be treated if captured. Jefferson justified the action taken by asserting that Hamilton had hired Indians, well knowing that the "rule of warfare with the Indian Savages is an indiscriminate butchery of men women and children."¹⁴ Jefferson, who never traveled west of the Appalachian Mountains, may not have fully realized that this characterization also fit the conduct of many whites who were neighbors of the Indians.

Clark was unable in the summer of 1779 to carry out an attack on Detroit for a lack of troops. Nonetheless, his capture of Kaskaskia and Vincennes and the threat he posed to Detroit helped to frustrate a British "planned ... grand attack on the frontier" in 1779. If the attack had gone forward there were a significant number of settlers in the Pittsburgh area, specifically the Redstone settlement and Kittanning, ready to join the British troops. During most of 1779, Clark had a post at the Falls of the Ohio and had little presence in the Illinois country. Settlers were attracted to the Falls and the area around Clark's headquarters, and Louisville, at the Falls, was incorporated by an act of June 23, 1780.¹⁵

Financing the war with paper presses by the Continental Congress and the colonies became impractical as the amounts of paper money increased. With the value of the paper money falling Virginia looked to its western lands as a source of revenue. George Mason and Thomas Jefferson proposed the establishment of a land office to make sales. Opposition came from speculators who had claims that were not based on earlier grants from Virginia. Other arguments against land sales were that they would result in a migration from eastern Virginia, decrease land values in the East, and draw soldiers away from Washington's army. A comprehensive plan for land sales was enacted into law on June 22, 1779. A belief behind the land act was that if Virginia did not sell its western land the land would be "ingrossed by Settlers and none left for Sale."¹⁶

The Virginia land act brought a swarm of settlers and speculators into Kentucky, and the assembly, in 1780, divided Kentucky into three counties, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Fayette, each with its own surveyor and military director. George Rogers Clark presided over all the military directors. Clark concentrated on the war. He had permission from Virginia to mount campaigns against Detroit in 1780, 1781, and 1782, but none came about, primarily for a lack of manpower, money, and cooperation of the continental forces at Pittsburgh. Nonetheless, he was busy in 1780.¹⁷

Hamilton's successor at Detroit, Major Arent Schuyler de Peyster, launched attacks on Americans along the Ohio with a force including many Indians. These attacks had some success when artillery was used to take two Kentucky forts, but they withdrew to Detroit when Virginia troops arrived at the Falls of the Ohio. Learning of attacks in northern Kentucky on the Licking River, Clark led a punitive attack on the Shawnee in August 1780. The Shawnee abandoned their main settlement of Chillicothe but made a stand further north at Piqua on the Great Miami River (not far from present-day Dayton, Ohio). In addition to the Shawnee there were warriors from the Mingo, Wyandot, and Delaware. Clark, using a cannon, defeated the Indians but was not able to fulfill the desire of the new Virginia governor, Thomas Jefferson, that the Indians be "exterminat[ed], or [removed] beyond the lakes or Illinois river," since Jefferson believed "the same world will scarcely do for them and us."¹⁸ A successful attack from Fort Pitt was made on the Delawares in 1780, and they moved westward to the Scioto and Sandusky rivers.

Clark fell into disfavor with a new Virginia administration in the spring of 1780 when

large bills associated with his 1778–1779 expedition reached the government. His authority to independently order supplies was canceled, and he was told to forget about Detroit. Thereafter no significant military presence was maintained in the Illinois country. Virginia's western outpost became Fort Nelson at the Falls of the Ohio.¹⁹

The majority of the settlers in Kentucky, located considerably east of Fort Nelson, were not happy. They wanted forts in their areas, and Richmond, which became Virginia's capital in 1779, obliged by directing Clark to construct forts at the head of the Kentucky and Licking rivers and other streams. At the same time he was told, "You will very probably ask how the Business required to be done can be carried on without Money. The answer indeed is difficult."²⁰ The result was predictable—nothing was done. In September 1781 Clark was told to pull back from the falls to the mouth of the Kentucky River.

A particularly disgraceful incident in March 1782 aroused Indians north of the Ohio. The Pennsylvania–Virginia boundary line agreed to in 1780 by the two states left many settlers in Pennsylvania whose claims were founded on Virginia's earlier claim of sovereignty. In short, they were without standing in the eyes of Pennsylvania. Some saw the solution to be crossing the Ohio River and taking land from Indians. Some Indian attacks in the Pittsburgh area provided an excuse for such a move.²¹

One hundred and sixty or so men of the western Pennsylvania militia were welcomed by a Christian community of Delaware Indians at Gnadenhutten, about 100 miles west of Pittsburgh on the Muskingum River. For three days the militia made no decision as to what should happen; then, on Sunday, the Americans gathered 90 or so residents in the church and killed all the men, women, and children save one. On returning to Pittsburgh these men attacked another group of Indians living nearby, leaving more dead. The Delaware and others went on the warpath. Not every member of the militia agreed with the decision to kill the Indians. A recent analysis cites evidence that a bloodthirsty Indian-hating group, possibly as few as one-fourth of the militia, went forward with the executions while the rest stood by after strenuous arguments against a massacre.²²

One of the perpetrators of what is called the Moravian massacre was Charles Builderback, who, as a militia captain, was ordered to execute a group of the Indians. Going from one to another as the Indians were lined up facing a wall, he killed thirteen using "a large cooper's mallet before his strength gave out."²³ It was his misfortune in 1789 to be captured by the Shawnee on the north side of the Ohio and, being recognized, was "horribly mutilated [including the] cutting off [of] various organs before ... his misery [was ended] with the blow of a tomahawk."²⁴

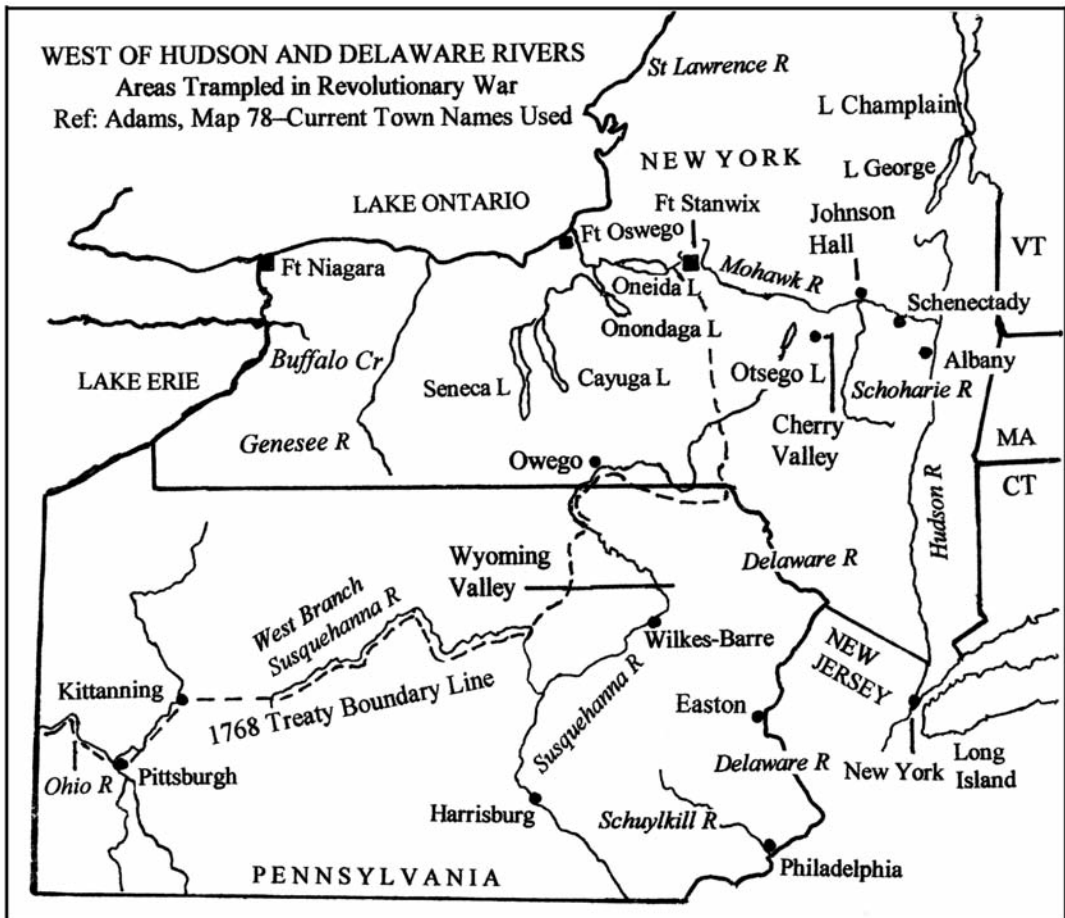
A second expedition of about four hundred men, who went into Indian country in May 1782 intending to attack Wyandot and Shawnee towns on the Sandusky River, did not fare so well. The Americans were forced to retreat, and their captured leader was slowly burned at the stake. But before this he was forced to walk barefoot on red-hot coals, was stuck repeatedly with burning sticks, and was scalped.²⁵

Readers should not rush to a conclusion that the Indians were barbaric compared to other races. In the time of Peter the Great (1672–1725) the Russians were as bad, if not worse. Robert K. Massie in his book *Peter the Great* describes the torture and death of the lover of Peter's first wife: "He was first beaten with the knout [a thick, leather whip about three and a half feet long] and burned with red-hot irons and glowing coals. Then he was stretched on a plank with spikes puncturing his flesh and left there for three days.... Finally he was impaled.... He suffered his excruciating final agonies with the sharp wooden stake in his rectum slowly gouging him to death." The English were equally cruel. For treason

the condemned “was strung up until ... almost dead from strangulation, then cut down, disemboweled while still alive, beheaded, and his trunk ... chopped into quarters.” Executions in England were spectator sport. Samuel Pepys in 1660 witnessed a major-general hanged, drawn, and quartered and wrote in his diary that the victim “look[ed] as cheerfully as any man could do in that condition.”²⁶ Writing in 1783 about alleged atrocities against Indians, George Washington said: “I must confess my mind revolts at the idea of those wanton barbarities of which both sides have in too many instances been the unhappy witnesses.”²⁷

In the summer of 1782 the British organized 1,100 Indians and advanced as far as Wheeling. Raids were carried out 30 miles east of Pittsburgh and at Blue Licks in Kentucky where a group of Kentuckians, including Daniel Boone, were trapped and up to 70 killed. This debacle caused “numbers of People [to take to] the Road, moving out.”²⁸

Clark was accused of dereliction in letting these advances take place, some thinking he had “become a Sot.” He struck out in November by taking a thousand men north of the Ohio and destroying the Shawnee village at Chillicothe and vast quantities of provisions. Another intimidating threat to the Indians was a gunboat, which the Virginia Assembly had constructed, that arrived at the mouth of the Miami River in July 1782. As the war wound down after Cornwallis’ defeat in 1781, the governor of Virginia, Benjamin Harrison,



who did not always agree with Clark, released him from service on July 2, 1783, with thanks for his past work.²⁹

Probably the most devastated frontier areas as a result of the war were the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys in New York. These were important areas since they were able to grow a lot of grain. The Six Nations did not act as a unit during the war. Within the tribes there were differences as well. In general the Senecas, Cayugas, and Mohawks supported the British, and the Oneidas the Americans. The Tuscaroras and Onondagas vacillated. Allegiance sometimes depended on who could provide the tribe with needed goods, and that was normally the British.³⁰

Mary Jemison, a white woman who lived most of her life as a Seneca, told of the effort of the Six Nations to remain neutral and the inducements of the British to gain their support. At a meeting at Oswego the English said:

The people of the states were few in number, and [would be] easily subdued.... The King was rich and powerful, both in money and subjects: That his rum was as plenty as the water in lake Ontario: that his men were as numerous as the sands upon the lake shore:— and that the Indians if they would assist in the war, and persevere in their friendship to the King, till it was closed, should never want for money or goods. Upon this the Chiefs concluded a treaty with the British Commissioners.... The Commissioners made a present to each Indian of a suit of clothes, a brass kettle, a gun and tomahawk, a scalping knife, a quantity of powder and lead, a piece of gold, and promised a bounty on every scalp that should be brought in. Thus richly clad and equipped, they returned home, after an absence of about two weeks, full of the fire of war.³¹

When Burgoyne marched down the Hudson River in 1777, he was disappointed in the help he received from Indians, who he disparaged as being useless. The companion movement by Colonel Barry St. Leger down the Mohawk Valley had active help from Indians, many of whom were Senecas. However, St. Leger thought, as the battle to take Fort Stanwix (at present-day Rome, New York) went against him, that the Indians were more danger to him than were the Americans.³² According to Mary Jemison, prior to this battle the British “sent for the Indians to come and see them whip the rebels; and, at the same time stated that they did not wish to have them fight, but wanted to have them just sit down, smoke their pipes, and look on. Our Indians went, to a man; but contrary to their expectation, instead of smoking and looking on, they were obliged to fight for their lives, and in the end of the battle were completely beaten, with a great loss in killed and wounded.”³³ The most effective use of Indians by the British was as raiders something they liked to do.

In July 1778 a combination of Tories and Indians destroyed settlements in the Wyoming Valley of northeast Pennsylvania located along the easterly branch of the Susquehanna River, and a short time later Joseph Brant, a Mohawk chief, destroyed a settlement in Cherry Valley near Otsego Lake in New York. In both cases a large number of inhabitants were killed.³⁴

In 1779 George Washington was acting defensively overall, but he ordered a punishing expedition against Indians who had been raiding the frontiers. He assigned the job in the north to Major General John Sullivan, who was told not to make peace until the Indians “had been severely chastised.” Chastise them he did — “crops, houses, orchards, and whatever else [he] could find” were destroyed. The land of the Seneca, Cayuga, and Onondaga were the focus of his army of 4,000. The Indians fled to Niagara, where they were sustained by the British. This situation was summed up by the observation of Major Jeremiah Fogg of Sullivan’s command: “The nests are destroyed, but the birds are still on the wing.”³⁵ In

the words of Mary Jemison, when they returned to their homes “there was not a mouthful of any kind of sustenance left, not even enough to keep a child one day from perishing with hunger.”³⁶

The following year the British carried out a destructive movement through the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys. At a meeting of 3,000 Indians, peace overtures from the Americans were contemptuously rejected. Warfare on the New York frontier did not let up in 1781. Parties of Indians reached down into Pennsylvania, and one expedition was within 12 miles of Schenectady. Destruction of whatever was available was the norm. The amount of devastation is reflected in an estimate made in Tryon County, New York, in December 1781: “Number of buildings destroyed ... 700, the number of farms uncultivated ... 1200, and the amount of wheat destroyed ... 150,000 bushels.” It was estimated that there were “380 widows and 2000 fatherless children” in the area.³⁷

The help the Indians gave the British during the war gained them nothing when the peace treaty was signed in 1783. This result had been predicted by Captain Pipe, a Delaware, who spoke to Colonel Arent Schuyler De Peyster, the British commander in Detroit in November 1781:

Some time ago You put a War hatchet into my hands, saying: take this Weapon, and try it on the heads of my Enemies, the Long Knives ... and let me afterwards know if it was sharp and good....

I received the Hatchet, well knowing, that if I did *not* obey, he would withhold from the necessaries of life, without which I could not subsist, and which were not elsewhere to be procured and had, but at the House of my Fathers! ...

Withal You may perhaps think me a fool, in risking my life at your call! and in a cause too, by which I have no prospect of gaining any thing; for it is *your* cause, and *not* mine to fight the Long Knives (the Virginians or American People). You both have raised the quarrel within yourselves; and by right, you ought to fight it out *Yourselves* and *not* compel Your Children, the Indians, to expose themselves to Danger for *Your* sake!

* * *

But Father! who of us can believe, that you could love a People differing in Colour to that of Yours, more than those (of such) who have a *white* Skin like unto that of Yours!

Father! Pay attention to what I now shall say! While *You! Father!* are setting me on Your Enemy, much in the same manner as a hunter sets on his Dogs at the game — while *I* be in the act of rushing *on* this Enemy of Yours, with the bloody destructive Weapon You gave me: I May *perchance* happen to look back, from whence you started me: and *what may I see?* I shall probably see my Father shaking hands with the Long Knives. *Yes!* with *those very People* he now calls his *Enemies!* and while doing this: he may be laughing at *my* folly, and having *obeyed* him and am *now* risking *my* life at his command. *Father!* keep what I have said in remembrance!³⁸

Indians Betrayed

In treaty negotiations to end the Revolutionary War there was maneuvering with respect to what land England should relinquish and to whom. Benjamin Franklin, one of four negotiators designated by Congress, suggested that Canada might be a future burden for England and could provoke future conflicts between the United States and Britain. He told Lord Shelburne, secretary of colonial affairs, that the “settlers on the frontiers [were] generally the most disorderly of the people, who, being far removed from the eye and controll of their respective governments, are more bold in committing offences against neighbours.” Reflecting that parliamentary debates had indicated a desire for “*reconciliation* with the Americans,” he surmised this “sweet word” indicated something more than just peace was the object. Stating that since the “English and their allies, the Indians” had burnt “many houses and villages,” reparations might be sought. This situation offered England an opportunity to set the tone for negotiations by offering reparations in the way of giving up its rights to Canada, a step that would take away a source of future quarrels. England could still retain the value of Canada by a guarantee of the right to free trade in the area without any duties. Also, enough land could be sold to raise funds to pay for “houses burnt by the British troops and their Indians; and also to indemnify the royalists for the confiscation of their estates.”¹ Shelburne was not persuaded.

What happened to the western lands was a matter of concern to France and Spain. In 1780 France, at the instance of Spain, tried to convince Congress that the western boundary of the United States should be the proclamation line of 1763, contrary to the instructions given to John Adams and John Jay when they were sent to Europe in early 1780, viz., a Mississippi River boundary and free navigation of the river. In October 1780 Congress stuck by its instructions, but when it was thought Spain’s aid might be received by giving up some navigation rights on the Mississippi, Congress, on February 15, 1781, instructed Jay to relinquish those rights below the 31st degree (approximately an east–west line along present-day Florida’s northern boundary). Spain wasn’t interested, and with the war essentially over in October 1781, the offer was not renewed.²

In September 1782 Jay, as an American negotiator, was told by the French what was presumably the joint France–Spain position, namely, England to keep land north of the Ohio River and Spain that below except for Kentucky and eastern Tennessee. Jay, without consulting Franklin, thinking France was going to propose those terms to England, agreed to a preliminary draft with England’s negotiator, Richard Oswald, which left Canada with England, and gave the United States a Mississippi River boundary and free navigation of the river.³

As agreed to in the treaty signed September 3, 1783, Canada remained with England,

and the United States received all land east of the Mississippi River, except for Spanish East and West Florida (roughly land below the 31st parallel from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic). In a separate treaty England transferred the Floridas to Spain. After 1783 Spain claimed its treaty with England gave it land up to latitude 32 degrees, 28 minutes, between the Mississippi River and the Chattahoochee River, and that it owned, on the basis of military operations during the Revolutionary War, land south of the Tennessee River between the Mississippi River and an eastern boundary that included large parts of modern Tennessee and Georgia.⁴ In 1795 Spain, out of fear of a possible alliance between the United States and England, agreed in the Pinckney Treaty⁵ with the United States to give up its claims above the 31st parallel.

The secretary of France's foreign minister, Comte de Vergennes, saw the 1783 treaty as a "dream" one for the United States by which England was trying to buy "the defection of the Americans" from the French sphere.⁶

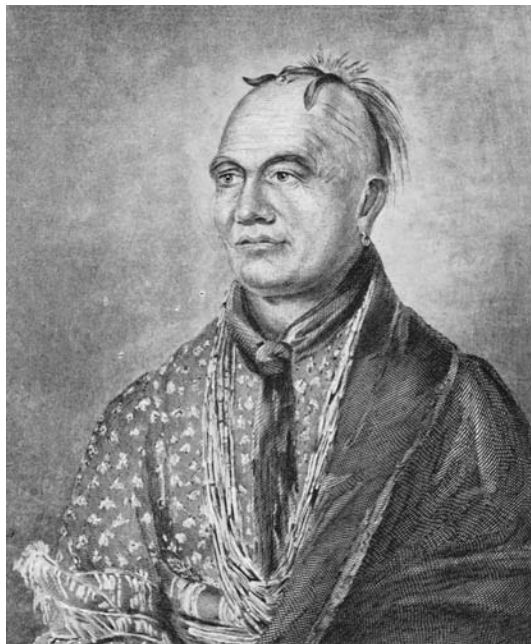
The British betrayed their Indian allies, who were not even mentioned in the treaty. Some voices in England complained. John Connolly wrote to Lord Shelburne, then prime minister, that the northern boundary of the United States should be the Ohio River:

No later than 1768 [England] enter[ed] into a solemn treaty with all the Indian nations on the British continent of America in the presence of deputies of the thirteen colonies, that in consideration of the Indians giving up certain large territory which should be the boundary between the whites and them, they would guarantee to them those lands of theirs beyond that line [that is, north of the Ohio River] and they are given up to those very people they were guaranteed against.⁷

Particularly upset with the treaty were Canadian fur traders who would have profited from furs from north of the Ohio if it had been preserved as Indian country. Shelburne evaded criticism by saying that in the treaty "the Indian nations were not abandoned to their enemies; they were remitted to the care of neighbours."⁸

With news of the treaty, Joseph Brant, the Mohawk chief who steadfastly supported Britain during the war, wanted to know if it was true that the Six Nations had been abandoned. First, in a message to Quebec's governor, Frederick Haldimand, he outlined the historic support given to Britain when it first came to America by the "Five Nations," who "were then a great people [who had] conquer[ed] all Indian Nations round about [them],"⁹ and the aid given when England "conquer[ed] all Canada," and the Nation's relinquishment of

a great Territory to the King for the use of his Subjects, for a Trifling consideration....



Joseph Brant. The principal chief of Six Nations whose father was a full-blood Mohawk and his mother a half-blood Mohawk. He had traveled to England and was an agent for the British in Six Nation matters (National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution).

This happened so late as the year 1768 at Fort Stanwix, and was gratefully Accepted and Ratified by the different Governors and Great men of the respective Colonies on the Sea Side, in presence of our Late Worthy Friend and Superintendent, Sir William Johnson, when we expected a Permanent, Brotherly Love and Amity, would be the Consequence, but in vain.¹⁰

Then he asked on

behalf of all the King's Indian Allies to receive a decisive answer from you, and to know whether they are included in the Treaty with the Americans, as faithful Allies should be or not, and whether those Lands which the Great Being above has pointed out for Our Ancestors, and their descendants, and Placed them there from the beginning and where the Bones of our forefathers are laid, is secure to them, or whether the Blood of their Grand Children is to be mingled with their Bones, thro' the means of Our Allies for whom we have often so freely Bled.¹¹

In his book *Crown and Calumet*, Colin G. Calloway states that a "major cause of Britain's neglect of the Indians was that the ministry that concluded the Peace of Paris was not the same one that had conducted the war." At a minimum the Indians expected "the Treaty of Fort Stanwix of 1768, which had fixed the Ohio River as the boundary between Indian land and white settlement ... to be respected." Lord North was told by Haldimand in November 1783: "These People my Lord, have, as enlightened Ideas of the nature & Obligations of Treaties as the most Civilized Nations have, and know that no infringement of the treaty in 1768 ... can be binding upon them without their Express Concurrence & Consent." As for England's betrayal, Iroquois warriors told the British post commander at Niagara that "if it was really true that the English had basely betrayed them by pretending to give up their Country to the Americans without their Consent, or Consulting them, it was an Act of Cruelty and injustice that Christians only were capable of doing, that Indians were incapable of acting so to friends and Allies, but that they did believe [the English] had sold and betrayed them."¹²

From the British standpoint it was shameful to ignore the Indians. From the Americans' point of view, they had been fighting most of the Indians throughout the war, and they refused to acknowledge any right in the Indians to the land between the Appalachians and the Mississippi. George Washington expressed his ideas on how the Indians should be treated in a letter of September 7, 1783. They should be told that the United States now owned their land and had the right to force them to leave it. However, it preferred to establish boundaries within which they could live. As settlers expanded to the west, land set aside for the Indians could be purchased.¹³

Kentucke (1782–1792)

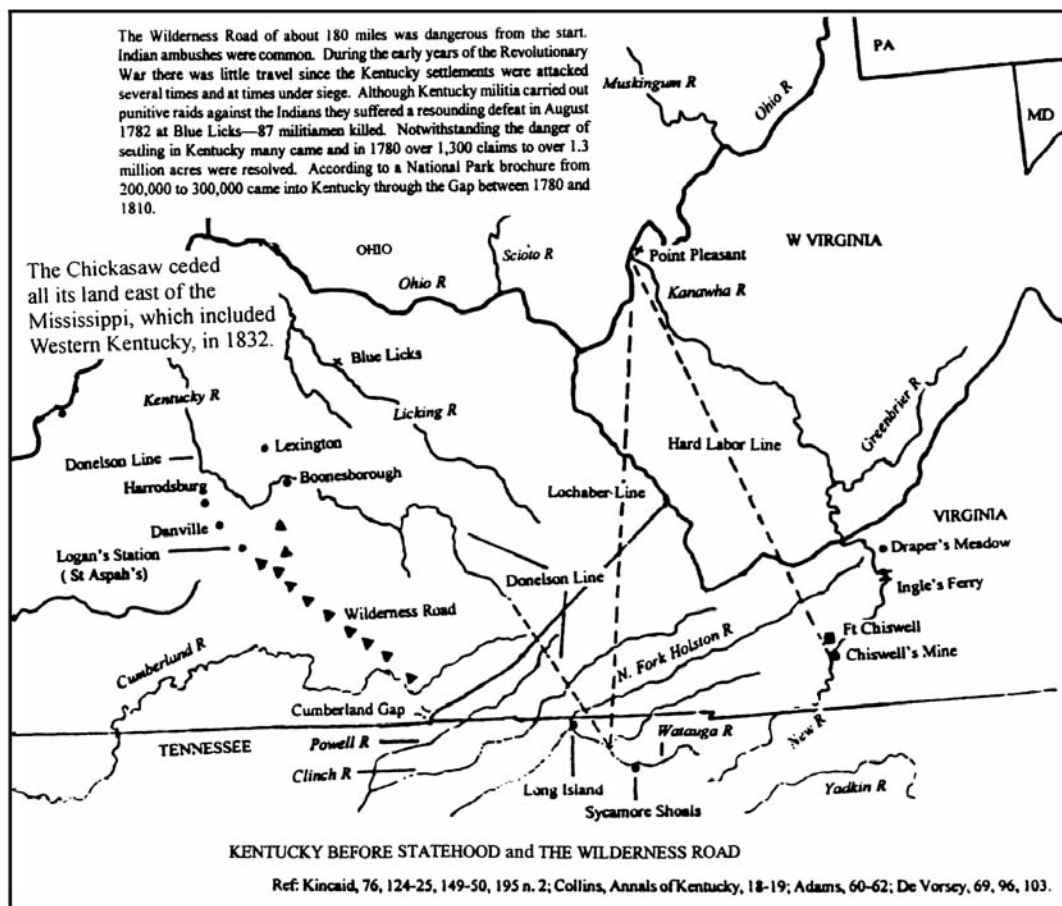
Between 1782 and 1790 the population in Kentucky went from 8,000 to 74,000.¹ Some of the migration was the result of a book published in 1784. John Filson's *The Discovery and Settlement of Kentucke* made Kentucke sound like the land of milk and honey. A map labels many aspects of Kentucky with an eastern boundary starting 321 miles along the Ohio River below Fort Pitt. Rivers and creeks are shown as well as roads ("some Clear'd, others not") and paths through the country. One road, that is, the one using the Cumberland Gap to cross the Appalachian Mountains, is described as coming from "the Old Settlements in Virginia to Kentucky thro' the great Wilderness."²

Towns are shown (e.g., Boonsburg, Harrods Town, Danville, and Lexington) as well as mill sites, homes, salt licks, and the like. North of the Ohio River the land is identified as Indian Territory. A hint of some danger to settlers is the inclusion of "stations or forts." However, the map neatly shows "wigwams" to only be to the north of the Ohio River. Notations of "Fine Cane land," "Abundance of Cane," "Abundance of Iron Ore," and "an extensive Tract ... which produces no Timber ... mostly Fertile, and cover'd with excellent Grass and Herbage" undoubtedly tantalized many a settler.³

A "station" in frontier terminology refers to "a group of log houses connected by a high wooden wall to form a primitive palisaded fort." A small station was described as "20 or 30 steps square, a house at every corner, & a family in each house." Typically the houses would be two stories high, with the second story being used to fire upon intruders. With time, and an increase in settlers, homes were constructed outside, but near the station.⁴ A station described in 1793 by territorial Governor William Blount shows the poverty of early settlers: "There are 280 people, men women and children, living in a miserable manner in small huts."⁵

Curiosities found as the whites settled in Kentucky are set out by Filson. Near Lexington were "sepulchres, full of human skeletons.... First, on the ground are laid large broad stones; on these were placed the bodies, separated from each other by broad stones, covered with others, which serve as a basis for the next arrangement of bodies. In this order they are built, without mortar, growing still narrower to the height of a man." This arrangement for burials was not one practiced by Indians in 1784. Also noteworthy were large bones "far surpassing the size of any species of animals [then] in America." The "bones [bore] a great resemblance to those of the elephant."⁶

Kentucky was said by Filson to be admirably located for commerce, not in relation to dealing with Philadelphia or Baltimore via Pittsburgh, but by use of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers as avenues for "the conveyance of the produce of that immense and fertile country lying westward of the United States." The rivers also were practical routes for goods coming up from New Orleans. "From New Orleans to the Falls of Ohio [at Louisville, Kentucky],



batteaux, carrying about 40 tons, have been rowed by eighteen or twenty men in eight or ten weeks, [at an expense] about one third of that from Philadelphia.” With the development of mechanical boats and the cutting of passages to shorten the water course the river route would be even more favorable. The cloud over this approach was the control over the lower Mississippi River by the Spanish. Even though by treaty Spain agreed that the river should “have a free and unmolested navigation,” experience taught “that treaties are not always to be depended on, the most solemn being broken.” The likely result is that “when the western country becomes populous and ripe for trade ... Florida must be ours.”⁷

Filson summarized his views about Indians⁸ starting with a description of where those east of the Mississippi River were located and estimated their total numbers to be 20,000 with the possibility of fielding 4,000 to 5,000 warriors. He describes their character and way of life at the time of his observations, which would not necessarily be how the Indians lived before the whites arrived:

The Indians are not so ignorant as some suppose them, but are a very understanding people [of] amiable disposition to those they think their friends, but as implacable in their enmity; their revenge being only completed, in the entire destruction of their enemies. They are very hardy, bearing heat, cold, hunger and thirst, in a surprising manner, and yet no people are more addicted to excess in eating and drinking, when it is conveniently in their power. The follies, nay mischief, they commit when inebriated, are entirely laid to the liquor, and no one will

revenge any injury (murder excepted) received from one who is no more himself. Among the Indians, all men are equal, personal qualities being most esteemed....

They live dispersed in small villages ... where they have little plantations of Indian-corn, and roots, not enough to supply their families half the year, and subsisting the remainder of it by hunting, fishing and fowling, and the fruits of the earth, which grow spontaneously in great plenty.

* * *

Some nations abhor adultery, do not approve of a plurality of wives, and are not guilty of theft; but there are other tribes that are not so scrupulous in these matters.... Among the Cherokees ... [f]ornication is unnoticed; for they allow persons in a single state unbounded freedom [but an adulteress is roughly treated.]

Their form of marriage is short — the man, before witnesses, gives the bride a deer's foot, and she, in return, presents him with an ear of corn, as emblems of their several duties.

The women are very slaves to the men.

* * *

Their kings are hereditary, but their authority extremely limited.... Every chief, when offended, breaks off with a party, settles at some distance, and then commences hostilities against his own people. They are generally at war with each other....

When they take captives in war, they are exceedingly cruel, treating the unhappy prisoners in such a manner, that death would be preferable to life. [When prisoners arrive] at their towns, they must run the gauntlet.... If one outlives this trial, he is adopted into a family as a son.

Filson ended his book with a peroration hailing the advantages of Kentucky with a prediction that “innumerable multitudes will emigrate from the hateful regions of despotism and tyranny; and [would be welcomed] as friends, as brothers”⁹ and partake of the happiness of those already in Kentucky.

During the post-war years new settlers streamed into Kentucky both down the Ohio River and over the Wilderness Road. Travel through the Cumberland Gap could be dangerous, and the practice was to travel in large parties. A news item in a New York paper of August 7, published by the *Kentucky Gazette* of September 29, 1787, spoke of “frequent murders committed in Kentucky and Cumberland on unwary travellers to and from these countries by the Creek and Chickamauga tribes of Indians [and of efforts by the State of Franklin] to give a check to the future progress of such a banditti of bloodhounds who make it their business to live by their predatory excursions.” A pleasant verse was: “Some to endure, and many to fail, some to conquer, and many to quail, toiling over the Wilderness Trail.”¹⁰

In a disturbing development on June 26, 1784, Spain closed the Mississippi River to American commerce. George Washington, who was proposing to Virginia that two canal routes to the West be constructed, namely, a connection between the James and Kanawha rivers, and a connection between the Potomac and Monongahela rivers, was not disturbed by the closure, an attitude probably shared by most Virginians east of the mountains. Washington wanted the west to be economically bound to the east, and this was not as likely to happen if the west could easily transport its goods down the Mississippi.¹¹ Patrick Henry saw it otherwise: “[He] would rather part with the confederation than relinquish the navigation of the Mississippi.”¹²

During 1787 there were those who had in mind a complete separation of the West from the United States. In February a group in the Pittsburgh area sent a memorial to the Pennsylvania government denouncing any agreement to give up the right of free navigation

on the Mississippi. The Pennsylvanians communicated their position to supporters of General James Wilkinson in Kentucky, and those in Kentucky passed the information on to settlers in the Cumberland region, that is, around what was to become Nashville. Attorney-General Harold Innes of Danville, Kentucky, a supporter of Wilkinson, wrote to Virginia Governor Edmund Randolph on July 21, 1787, telling him that in the near future the West would declare its independence. There is no evidence that Randolph, who had land investments in Kentucky, was disturbed by this speculation.¹³

Wilkinson, who had a checkered career during the Revolutionary War, was a schemer. Involved in both trade and speculation, he settled in Louisville in January 1784. He was able to obtain some sort of option to 2 million acres north of the Ohio and actively looked for investors. He left for New Orleans in June 1787 with revolution in mind. He wanted Spain to restrict navigation on the Mississippi since this would tend to gain support for a separate alliance of the west with Spain. While in New Orleans, on September 7, 1787, he presented Governor Don Estevan Miro with a proposal that would have Spain supporting a revolt that would result in the west splitting off from the United States and establishing a connection with Spain.¹⁴

Spain was approached by other groups in the West. Speculators, including John Sevier and former North Carolina governor Caswell, hoping to develop the Muscle Shoals (a 37-mile-long rapids) area on the Tennessee River (now northwestern Alabama) contacted Miro looking to expand to the south with an objective of an outlet to the Gulf of Mexico. Spain took the position that it could not help westerners to separate from the United States, but if separation took place it would deal with them. It reduced the anger to a degree by agreeing in 1789 for American use of the Mississippi with the payment of duties.¹⁵

This was a time of uncertainty as to whether a new Constitution would go into effect for the United States. The ninth and last required ratification of the Constitution, which had been submitted to the states on September 17, 1787, did not occur until June 21, 1788. Even thereafter the situation was still muddled as to lands claimed by North Carolina, which decided not to ratify on August 3, 1787.¹⁶

With all the flirtation with Spain, most in Kentucky were seeking an independent status within first the Confederacy and then, with the implementation of the new Constitution, the United States. "In January, 1786 [the Virginia legislature] stipulated that a [Kentucky] convention should be held ... in September, 1786; and that, if it declared for independence, a separate State should come into being after September 1, 1786; provided, however that Congress, before June 1, 1787, should consent, and agree to its admission into the Union."¹⁷ Attached to Virginia's approval was a requirement that disposal of public lands in Kentucky be retained by Virginia.

Political leaders in Virginia agreeable to Kentucky becoming a separate state included Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Richard Henry Lee. Washington reasoned, as did Jefferson, that "states [should not be allowed to] grasp at more territory than they are competent to the government of."¹⁸

The 1786 convention was not able to act. A convention in 1785 had called for an Indian expedition, and in the summer of 1786, George Rogers Clark impressed men and supplies with Governor Patrick Henry's approval. Part of the force, under Clark, went to Vincennes, and the Wabash Indians agreed to negotiate a peace treaty. Another part of Clark's force destroyed some Shawnee villages on the Great Miami. Resentment over Henry authorizing impressment in Kentucky of men who were then taken beyond the boundaries of the state, that is, north of the Ohio River, brought an end to the Clark expeditions.¹⁹

With so many men away in Clark's expedition, a convention in 1786 was not practical. On February 29, 1788, while the new Constitution was being considered, the Continental Congress was given Kentucky's petition for admission into the United States. When Virginia voted on the new Constitution in 1788 most Kentucky delegates opposed it. Behind this opposition was the willingness of a majority in Congress to not insist on free navigation of the Mississippi, Congress' failure to protect Kentucky from the Indians, and concern over what might happen to land titles being reviewed in federal courts.²⁰

Another Kentucky convention met on November 3, 1788. Wilkinson made known the proposal he had made to Governor Miro, but it became clear that the majority wanted to continue dealing with Virginia. On December 29, 1788, Virginia again agreed to Kentucky's separation and set a date of July 20, 1789, by which Kentucky should act. However, Virginia attached conditions to the separation that fueled the objections of those who thought it was in the best interests of Kentucky to remain part of Virginia. When Virginia was asked to modify the conditions, it did so, and another Kentucky convention met on July 26, 1790, and organized a state government, and Congress admitted Kentucky, which had a population of about 66,000, as the 15th member of the United States on June 1, 1792. Vermont had become the 14th on March 4, 1791.²¹

George Mason of Virginia made a commonsense observation: "If it were possible by just means to prevent emigrations into the Western Country, it might be good policy. But go the people will as they find it to their interest, and the best policy is to treat them with that equality which will make them friends, not enemies."²²

Defining Indian Boundaries in the Six Nations and North of the Ohio

During the war the Confederation essentially treated the Indians on its frontier as enemies. This was a posture forced on it by England's success in enlisting the Indians to their cause. The state of the Indians was such that they depended "upon the colonists for arms, ammunition and clothing," and the best the Confederation could do was furnish tobacco, powder, flour, and whiskey, and powder was not in great supply. Goods and presents were the *sine qua non* in dealing with Indians, and these the British could supply. Also, the British could always point out that the Americans were after Indian land, whereas the British were only interested in being trading partners. After the war in the North the Confederation competed with Canadian traders, who had the advantage of forts, never taken from their control, along the fur trading route of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, and in the South the British were equally active in controlling much of the Indian trade.¹

The Continental Congress made feeble efforts at the start of the war to provide goods for the Indians. It was frustrated not only by its lack of resources but also by suppliers' profiteering. A commissioner of Indian affairs, referring to the cost of buying goods to supply the Indians, said, "I could never have conceived the exorbitant prices demanded for Indian goods. No patriotism in trade, methinks."² Probably the most constant Indian supporter of the revolting colonies were the Oneida, who Philip Schuyler thought might be lost as an ally for lack of supplies: "I fear their virtue will at last yield to a continuation of distress which no human being can endure and that they will renounce an alliance which has exposed them to such abuse."³

After an armistice with England was agreed to on February 14, 1783, Congress took steps to advise the Indians that hostilities were over and to arrange a conference with them. British agents at Detroit and Niagara assured the American representative, Ephraim Douglass, a former Indian trader, that the Indians had been told to cease hostilities against the Americans but that no instructions had been received as to boundaries. Douglass reported to Congress that the Indians were "heartily tired of war and sincerely disposed to peace."⁴

Through the first years after the peace treaty was signed on September 3, 1783, commissioners appointed to deal with the Indians received instructions from Congress. But a complicating factor in dealing with the Indians was the dual sovereignty relationship under the Articles of Confederation. The slippery provision on Indian relations, Article IX, left open for controversy when the states or the Confederation Congress should handle Indian affairs — it states: "The united states in congress assembled shall ... regulat[e] the trade and manag[e] all affairs with the Indians, not members of any of the states, provided that the

legislative rights of any state within its own limits be not infringed or violated.” This provision was probably crafted by Virginia’s members in Congress so as to preserve its rights in relation to the northwest territory, over which it claimed jurisdiction until a cession to the United States in December 1783.⁵

Schuyler, one of Washington’s initial major-generals, often conferred with tribes of the Six Nations during the war. His importance in early military campaigns in New York and later in the war, out of uniform, his success in pacifying the Oneida and Tuscarora Indians, and his success in supporting the superintendent of finance and quartermaster general caused the British to mount at least three efforts from Canada to capture or kill him. In December 1783 he waited for Congress to give him instructions as to peace terms to be discussed with a deputation of Six Nations chiefs. While waiting for instructions he castigated the Indians for violating the treaties of 1775 and 1776 and told them that whatever peace terms were offered by Congress they should thankfully accept them.⁶ As for Indian complaints of surveyors crossing over the treaty line established at Fort Stanwix in 1768, Schuyler suggested that the Stanwix agreement and all earlier ones could be considered “void [because of the] unprovoked war which the Indians ha[d] waged against the Americans after pledging neutrality.”⁷

Washington, who was to step down as commander in chief of the army in December 1783, wrote on September 7, 1783,⁸ to James Duane, a New York delegate to Congress who headed a committee on Indian affairs, and outlined his thoughts on future Indian relations. He wanted to avoid “a wide extended Country to be over run with Land Jobbers, Speculators, and Monopolisers or even with scatter’d settlers” trying to “aggrandize a few avaricious Men to the prejudice of many, and the embarrassment of Government.” The “line of Conduct” toward the Indians should be to advise them that “[Great] Britain ha[d] ceded all the Lands of the United States,” and that in view of the Indians’ determination during the war “to join their Arms to those of G Britain,” a “less generous People than Americans” would make them “retire along with [the British] beyond the Lakes.” But, considering “them as a deluded People [who] are convinced, from experience, of their error in taking up the Hatchet against [the United States]” and that the “Country is large enough to contain” the Indians and the Americans, a veil could be drawn “over what is past” and a boundary established “between them and us beyond which we will *endeavor* to restrain our People from Hunting or Settling, and within which they shall not come, but for the purposes of Trading, Treating, or other business unexceptionable in its nature.”

Washington counseled moderation. “In establishing this line ... care should be taken neither to yield nor to grasp at too much.” The Indians should be impressed “with the necessity [the United States was] under, of providing for our Warriors, our Young People who are growing up, and strangers who are coming from other Countries to live among us.” Little did Washington know that the population of the United States was to increase from about 2.5 million in 1775 to 4 million by 1790 and to over 5 million by 1800, with 50 percent of the population in 1800 under the age of 15. The boundary should be respected; Washington would make it a “felony ... for any person to Survey or Settle beyond the Line.”⁹

Absent fast action on these matters he foresaw one of two results. The “settling, or rather over-spreading the Western Country will take place, by a parcel of Banditti, who will bid defiance to all Authority while they are skimming and disposing of the Cream of the Country at the expense of many suffering Officers and Soldiers who have fought and bled to obtain it ... or a renewal of Hostilities with the Indians.” He firmly believed that it would be a mistake to drive the Indians “by force of arms out of their Country; which as

[had] already [been] experienced is like driving the Wild Beasts of the Forest which will return as soon as the pursuit is at an end.” “In a word there [was] nothing to be obtained by an Indian War but the Soil they live on and this can be had by purchase at less expense, and without that bloodshed, and those distresses which helpless Women and Children are made partakers of in all kinds of disputes with them.”¹⁰

Congress took an important step by a proclamation of September 22, 1783, applicable to land within its jurisdiction. It forbade “settlements on lands inhabited or claimed by Indians” or the “purchasing or receiving [by] gift or cession of such lands or claims without the express authority and directions of the United States in Congress assembled.” Without such authority the transactions would be “null and void.” The committee on Indian affairs embraced Washington’s reasoning in a report of October 15, 1783, which stressed the need to establish boundaries with the Indians since “the United States stands pledged to grant portions of the uncultivated lands as a bounty to their army ... and the public finances [weren’t adequate] to extinguish the Indian claims upon such lands.” Boundaries were needed because “the increase of domestic population and emigrations from abroad [required] speedy provision for extending the settlement of the territories of the United States.”¹¹

The boundary Washington had in mind for the northern Indians was the Ohio River on the south and on the east a line from the “mouth of the Great Miami River ... to its confluence with the Mad River, thence by a Line to the Miami Fort and Village on the other Miami [Maumee] River [which] Empties into Lake Erie, and Thence by a Line to include the Settlement of Detroit.” Such a line would “with Lake Erie to the No.ward Pensa. To the Eastwd. and the Ohio to the Soward form a Government sufficiently extensive ... to receive ... a large population by Emigrants, and to confine The Settlement of the New States.” This would carve out an area for the United States close to the present state of Ohio. To Washington this was preferable to “suffer[ing] the same number of People to roam over a country of at least 500,000 square Miles contributing nothing to the support, but much perhaps to the Embarrassment of the Federal Government.”¹² A committee on Indian affairs recommended a similar boundary.¹³

Congress was not moving fast enough. General William Irvine, western military department commander (1781–1783) located at Fort Pitt, reported that 400 Virginians had crossed the Ohio and were settling on the Muskingum. He had no authority to control the settlers until Virginia ceded the Northwest Territory, which was not done until December 20, 1783, and not accepted until March 1, 1784. Prior to that Virginia claimed exclusive control of the area under the Articles of Confederation.¹⁴

In August 1784 Indian leaders told Spanish Governor Cruzat at St. Louis, “The Americans, a great deal more ambitious and numerous than the English, put us out of our lands, forming therein great settlements, extending themselves like a plague of locusts in the territories of the Ohio River which we inhabit.”¹⁵

Congress took several needed steps once the Northwest Territory was mainly in its hands. Men (George Rogers Clark, Oliver Wolcott, Richard Butler, Benjamin Lincoln, and Arthur Lee) were selected to negotiate boundary lines with the Indians. The negotiators were to keep in mind that the Indians’ land was conquered territory and that little money was available to extinguish Indian claims. On the other side, with encouragement from the British, the Indians thought the land still belonged to them and could only be taken from them by purchase.¹⁶ Speaking to the Six Nations in July 1783, William Johnson’s son, Sir John Johnson, who was in charge of Indian relations in Canada, said:

You are not to believe ... that by the line which has been described [that is, the treaty of peace boundary line] it was meant to deprive you of an extent of country of which the right of soil belongs to you and is in yourselves as sole proprietors. Neither can I harbor an idea that the United States will act so unjustly or unpolitically as to endeavor to deprive you of any part of your country under the pretense of having conquered it.¹⁷

At about the same time the Indians were told that Canada was but “a small part of the King’s dominion and [those] in Canada [did not have the] power ... to begin a war.”¹⁸ The British, in Canada, had an objective. Ideally they wanted to retain the forts along the fur trade route and to establish a barrier Indian state that would protect the fur trade from the Confederation.¹⁹

Clashes were inevitable. After a tour to the west in 1784, in part, “to examine ... Land [he held] upon the Ohio and Great Kanawha ... and to ... rescu[e] them from the hands of Land Jobbers and Speculators,” Washington was alarmed over conditions west and north of the Ohio. In a letter of November 3, 1784, he said, “Such is the rage of speculating in ... lands on the No. West side of the Ohio, that scarce a valuable spot within any tolerable distance of it, is left without a claimant.... This gives great discontent to the Indians.... Men in these times, talk with as much facility of fifty, a hundred, and even 500,000 Acres as a Gentleman formerly would do of 1000 acres. In defiance of the proclamation of Congress, they roam over the Country on the Indian side of Ohio, mark out Lands, Survey, and even settle them.” His prescription for precluding large purchases was to “fix such price ... as would not be too exorbitant and burthensome for real-occupiers, but high enough to discourage monopolizers.” He had no truck with squatters on Indian lands in violation of the Congressional proclamation; they were “fit subjects for Indian vengeance.”²⁰

When commissioners negotiated for the treaty of October 22, 1784, with the “Sachems and Warriors of the Six Nations,” they were not so charitable. The Indians were told,

You are mistaken in supposing that having been excluded from [the Treaty of Paris that you have] become a free and independent nation, and may make what terms as you please. It is not so. You are subdued people; you have been overcome in a war which you entered into with us.... The great spirit who is at the same time the judge and avenger of perfidy, has given us victory over all our enemies. We are at peace with all but *you*; *you* now stand out *alone* against our *whole force*.

When we offer you peace on moderate terms, we do it in magnanimity and mercy. If you do not accept it now, you are not to expect a repetition of such offers. Consider well, therefore, your situation and *ours*.²¹

The United States gave “peace to the Senecas, Mohawks, Onondagas and Cayugas” and required the Six Nations to yield “all claims to the country west” of a defined boundary.²² The Oneida and Tuscarora were “secured in the possession of the lands on which they [were] settled.” The boundary was in general a north–south line in western New York through present-day Buffalo to the northern boundary of Pennsylvania and then west on that boundary to the western boundary of Pennsylvania and south on it to the Ohio River. In return “goods [were] to be delivered,” and they were to “be secured in the peaceful possession of the lands they inhabit” east of the line. By the written word the Six Nations gave up any claims to land north of the Ohio River just as they had given up land south of the Ohio in 1768. Seeds of discontent were planted by the treaty. Ten years later a Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant, said the “commissioners conducted the business as it to them seemed best; they pointed out a line of division, and then confirmed it.”²³

This treaty, negotiated at Fort Stanwix by federal negotiators, was followed by an agree-

ment between Pennsylvania negotiators and the Indians whereby a large area in northwest Pennsylvania, about one-third of the present state, was ceded to Pennsylvania. This area is northwest of a southern boundary that the Six Nations agreed to in the Fort Stanwix treaty of November 5, 1768, between the Six Nations and the British. Except for the Erie Triangle all of Pennsylvania had been ceded to the state. Pennsylvania acquired the Erie Triangle, including Presque Isle, from the United States in 1788 and from the Indians in 1789.²⁴

After the Revolutionary War the Iroquois were mostly a footnote to the white expulsion of Indians from their native lands. Most Mohawks, with some Cayugas, Onondagas, and Senecas, moved to Canada, either to 675,000 acres on the Grand River north of Lake Erie or to other areas. The pro-colonist Oneidas were guaranteed 6 million acres but, at the urging of New York, later sold most of this land.²⁵

Of the Onondaga, who split their support for the contestants during the war, those remaining in the United States were about 300 with the Seneca at Buffalo Creek in western New York and 100 at Lake Onondaga, their old homeland near modern Syracuse. In 1788 they ceded to the state of New York all but a 100-square-mile tract. Later sales substantially reduced their holdings. The Cayuga who didn't go to Canada either joined the Seneca at Buffalo Creek or settled along Cayuga Lake. Within a few years they sold all but three square miles to New York.²⁶

The Seneca, who actively supported the British in the war, had some leverage in talks with the United States, which didn't want them to join forces with the independent-minded western Indians. This advantage was lost after General Anthony Wayne defeated the western Indians in 1794, and in 1794 a treaty was signed defining the Seneca boundaries in New York. In 1797 the Seneca sold most of their land to Robert Morris for \$100,000 but retained ten tracts of land for their use comprising 310 square miles. These became "four large reservations in western New York and six small ones along the Genesee River."²⁷

The Tuscaroras, who became the sixth nation in the Iroquois Confederacy in 1722 or 1723 had a village between the Oneida and Onondaga villages with scattered bands in New York and Pennsylvania. In the Revolution they mainly sided with the Americans. After the war some went to Canada, and those who didn't lived at different locations. When the Seneca sold much of their land they reserved a square mile for the Tuscarora.²⁸

Historian Anthony F. C. Wallace has succinctly stated much of the Iroquois Confederacy history after it encountered Europeans. "Between about 1701 and 1763 [it] did not suffer directly from imperial domination.... Iroquois hunters could range in relative safety throughout the Ohio Valley and along the Great Lakes in search of peltries." After 1763 when they could "no longer ... play off the British and French against each other," they made the mistake of "instigating and participating in the so-called Pontiac conspiracy." In 1768 they were "persuaded ... to sell their interest in the lands west of the Allegheny Mountains and south of the Ohio," which alienated them from the western Indians. Then, in the Revolutionary War, they chose the wrong side. The "bulk of the Iroquois warriors ... committed themselves to the side of their old allies the British," and as a consequence, the Americans "burn[ed] the houses and the crops in almost every major Iroquois town." "The aftermath of the war ... saw the Iroquois deprived of their land and of their diplomatic and military power, brought under the effective sovereignty of the United States, and confined to a few small reservations in the United States and Canada."²⁹

The availability of large areas of unsettled land in New York, Pennsylvania, and other colonies set off land speculation on a huge scale. No speculator outdid Robert Morris. He was an outstanding patriot during the Revolutionary War, almost single-handedly keeping

the new nation alive financially, often using his own resources to do so. After the war he embarked on exciting and novel ventures including the opening of United States trade with China. His entry into land speculation was launched with a purchase of a million acres in western New York in 1790, which he disposed of in Europe at a significant profit. The speculation bug consumed him, and before long he was part of the North American Land Company, which had “six million acres of land located in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky and what became Washington, D.C.” He over-extended and went to prison in 1798 for debt, only being released in 1801 after a federal bankruptcy law was passed.³⁰

Virginia only ceded land to the federal government north of the Ohio River and kept what would become Kentucky. Consequently, it had to deal with Indians in that area. A bill introduced in the Virginia legislature in 1784 by Patrick Henry and supported by John Marshall was an approach looking to the future. The bill came close to passage. It would have paid 10 pounds to white men marrying Indian women and 10 pounds to Indian men marrying white women. White men would receive 5 pounds for every child born of such a marriage. As for Indian husbands, they would receive an annuity for their clothing, and children between the ages of 10 and 21 would receive a free education.³¹

Another plan suggested in 1784, which had the support of Henry and Washington, was to settle religious whites near Indian settlements. These people, as an example for the Indians, would lead them to become industrious Christians.³²

Notwithstanding the abiding sentiment of this period, including that of Washington — which was that “a *large* standing Army in time of Peace [was] dangerous to the liberties of a Country” — a military presence was needed to protect the northwestern and southern frontiers. To do this, on June 3, 1784, Congress authorized a regiment of 700 men to be enlisted for one year. Congress also wanted to expedite the holding of treaties with the Indian nations, “*which it [thought could only] be done [with] the protection of an armed force.*” This was about one-fourth the size Washington proposed in May 1783 “to awe the Indians, protect ... Trade, prevent the encroachment of ... Neighbours of Canada and the Floridas, and [to] guard [the United States] from surprizes.”³³ Since Pennsylvania furnished most of the men, it chose the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Josiah Harmar, a Revolutionary War veteran who was a courier to France with news that Congress had ratified the 1783 peace treaty with England.³⁴

An early assignment for the regiment was to rebuild an abandoned fort, McIntosh, that was 30 miles down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh. Congress wanted this done so the regiment could protect commissioners scheduled to meet with Indians in 1785 at McIntosh. Harmar later let it be known that to leave the new fort unattended would lead to its demolition “by the emigrators to Kentucky [who prior to his] arrival ... had destroyed the gates, drawn all nails from the roofs, taken off all the boards, and plundered [the old fort] of every article.”³⁵

A treaty at Fort McIntosh on January 21, 1785,³⁶ was with the “Sachems and Warriors of the Wyandot, Delaware, Chippewa and Ottawa Nations.” A relatively small area in the northeast part of what is now Ohio was to be land for the Wyandot and Delaware. The Indian nations could punish citizens of the United States attempting to settle on their lands “as they please.” As with many treaties, an indispensable element to this treaty was rum. Arthur Lee assessed its importance to the Indians: “I [do not] believe that one coming from the dead to tell them that there was a place of happiness [Heaven] without rum, would gain any credit.”³⁷ The whites were only too willing to exploit this.

The Six Nations' treaty and that at McIntosh gave at least a flimsy basis for the Land Ordinance of May 20, 1785, under which there was to be a "gradual survey and sale of the northwest territory." In brief, surveyors would, to the extent practical, divide the land into six-square-mile townships bound by lines running due north and south and others running east and west at right angles. Each township was to be divided into 36 one-mile squares (640-acre squares called sections). Each north-south tier of townships, called ranges, would be numbered progressively to the westward, starting with the most eastern range. Townships within ranges would be numbered 1, 2, etc. from the southernmost township located on the Ohio River. This rectangular system, which was retained thereafter as a national system, made property locations relatively simple with, for example, a designation of Range 2, Township 4, Section 12. From what source the methodology came is hazy — some say it can be traced back to North Carolina, others give credit to the geographer of the United States, Thomas Hutchins, and the system is similar to one in use in New England at the time.³⁸

This process avoided what had been the bane of land titles below the Ohio. Under what has been called the "southern system," the settler who had a warrant for land laid out the boundary as he saw best for him — obviously bad land would be avoided, and boundaries would be drawn to include as much good land as possible. First, this created difficult problems for surveyors, and second, it was difficult for the next settler to know precisely what was already claimed by another. The difficulties in land titles in the South were compounded by squatters exercising the so-called "tomahawk claims."³⁹ The result was an opportunity for fortunes and fame for lawyers litigating land questions, including Henry Clay.⁴⁰

If it had proved practical to follow the terms of the ordinance, Washington's preference for development of these lands would have been accomplished. He wrote before the ordinance was passed:

Compact and progressive seating will give strength to the Union; admit law & good government; and federal aids at an early period. Sparse settlements in the *several* new States; or in a large territory ... will have the direct contrary effects & whilst it opens a large field to Land jobbers and speculators, who are prouling about like Wolves in every shape, will injure the real occupants & useful citizens; & consequently, the public interest.⁴¹

Chaos in the Northwest

The orderly development envisioned by the Ordinance of 1785 did not come about. Only four of the first seven ranges were surveyed between September 1785 and April 1787. This was not for a lack of effort but rather because of the rugged terrain and the threat from Indians, who had long ago learned that surveyors were to be followed by settlers. The Shawnee war chief Captain Johnny in May 1785 vowed that if the whites were to cross the Ohio, the Shawnee would “take up a rod and whip them back to [their] side of the Ohio.” Tecumseh, who tried to unite the Indians in the early 1800s, evaluated what had happened: “at first, they [the white men] only asked for land sufficient for a wigwam; now nothing will satisfy them but the whole of our hunting grounds, from the rising to the setting sun.”¹ In the period 1785 to 1790 the Indians had a good deal of success in protecting the Northwest Territory but the numbers and greed of the whites was destined to overwhelm them.

Making treaties with specified boundaries could only smooth relations with the Indians if they were enforced. The Indians were encroached on in major ways. Unfortunately the federal government was not even able to protect its own land. As to land of the United States “not within the limits of any particular state,” Harmar was directed to remove settlers or surveyors on it without permission. His soldiers drove them off up to 70 miles from Fort McIntosh, but as to those further down the river, the “number [was] immense, and unless Congress enter[ed] into immediate measures, it [would] be impossible [to] prevent the lands being settled.”²

A report to Harmar by Ensign John Armstrong, who was detailed in March 1785 to drive off “persons attempting to settle on the lands of the United States,” was that, notwithstanding distribution of notices that settlements on United States land were prohibited, people were “moving to the unsettled countries by forties and fifties.”³ Along the 70 miles of river between modern Wheeling, West Virginia, and the mouth of the Muskingum River, that is, the bottom boundary of the first seven ranges to be surveyed under the Ordinance of 1785, Armstrong found “one or more families living” on most bottoms. At the Muskingum “upwards to three hundred families” and “more than fifteen hundred on the rivers Miami [later Cincinnati] and Scioto [midway between the Muskingum and what was to be Cincinnati].”⁴

An example of the total disregard of written notices was found in an advertisement for an “election [to choose] members [for a] convention for the framing a constitution for ... governing ... the inhabitants” north and west of the Ohio River. Elections were to be held at the mouths of the Miami, Scioto, and Muskingum rivers. The advertisement explained the justification for the elections: “All mankind, agreeable to every constitution formed in America, have an undoubted right to pass into every vacant country and there to form their constitution.”⁵

The squatters were trying to exercise what they saw as a time-honored right. When challenged in Pennsylvania, they said the Penns “had solicited for colonists and they had come accordingly,” and that “it was against the laws of God and nature that so much land should be idle while so many Christians wanted it to labor on to raise their bread.”⁶ There was plenty of precedent to encourage squatters. They had been granted land in Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts in the 1770s and 1780s.

Armstrong met with the same resistance a month later. He told Harmar that a squatter leader, John Ross, did not believe the notices came from Congress, but in any event, “he [didn’t] care from whom they came, for he was determined to hold his possession,” and if Armstrong “should destroy his house he would build six more in the course of a week.”⁷ Harmar described the squatters as mostly “shiftless fellows from Pennsylvania and Virginia” but observed that he had “conversed with a few who appear[ed] to be intelligent and honest in their purposes.”⁸

Harmar soon got help. In May 1785 a council of chiefs from the Shawnee, Mingoes, Delawares, and Cherokee warned five Americans that “settlers would not be tolerated on the Indian lands.”⁹ The British encouraged this position by telling the Indians that the peace treaty with England had only put the Indians under the protection of the United States — it had not given land rights to the United States.¹⁰

Needing to be confronted were the western tribes, which were often raiding settlers in Kentucky and attacking those attempting to locate north of the Ohio River. The commissioners invited, among others, the Shawnee, Miami, Potawatomi, and Wabash to a meeting at the Ohio River near what is now Cincinnati in the fall of 1785.¹¹ Only a small number of Shawnee appeared but enough for the commissioners to proceed with a treaty. When the Shawnee balked at the terms offered, they were told the terms were “liberal and just; and [that they] should be thankful for the forgiveness and offers of kindness of the United States.” One of the commissioners was George Rogers Clark, who was not one to extend any compromise to the Indians. After a browbeating, the Indians signed the Treaty at the Mouth of the Great Miami on February 1, 1786. The Shawnee were to be confined to land in northern states to be Ohio and Indiana, which adjoined the land already set aside for the Wyandot and Delaware.¹² This treaty¹³ was never accepted by the Shawnee.

Army headquarters was far from most of the western tribes, and on October 7, 1785, Captain John Doughty was ordered to occupy the area at the mouth of the Muskingum River, about 140 miles downstream from Fort McIntosh. He was to burn cabins of squatters found en route and chase off those on government land near the mouth of the Muskingum. Headquarters moved down the Ohio to Fort Harmar at the Muskingum in 1786.¹⁴

Letters from those in the West painted an attractive picture of the land around Fort Harmar. An officer there, Jonathan Heart, wrote to a friend in Connecticut in January 1786 and said “the soil in its present Situation is more Luxuriant than the best manured gardens in Wethersfield”; “Deer, Buffaloe, Geese, Turkeys” were plentiful. The letter ended with enticing language: “Every consideration favorably invites the Eastern Emigrants to this Federal Territory their own Interest, the Happiness of Successors, their own importance in the Union, the Interest of the United States and I might almost add the Fate of the American Empire calls them from the barren Mounts of the North to these Luxuriant Fields.”¹⁵ And come they did.

Spring and summer of 1786 were dangerous times along the Ohio. Indian raids into Kentucky resulted in almost weekly murders. At the same time, Kentuckians launched punitive raids north of the Ohio that did not discriminate between peaceful and hostile Indians.

The Public Land Law Review Commission's *History of Public Land Law Development* published in 1968 summarized the Indian view of Americans after the peace treaty of 1783. "To them, Americans — whether speculating land companies, squatters, or traders — were land-grabbers who gouged in trade, offered cheap and inferior goods, were stingy about gifts, and watered their liquor."¹⁶

Congress wanted the army to make its presence felt even further down the Ohio. On June 22, 1786, it decided that Harmar should put a detachment at the Falls of the Ohio [now Louisville], "to protect the inhabitants from incursions and depredations of the Indians."¹⁷ The new fort — named Finney — was later renamed as Fort Steuben after Major John Francis Hamtramck replaced Captain Walter Finney.¹⁸

Neither treaties nor vocal threats stopped Indian raids into Kentucky. An effort to confront the raids was made in the summer of 1786 in an appeal from inhabitants of Jefferson County, Kentucky, to other Kentucky counties with the premise that all Kentuckians were committed by an "implied Compact ... to support and defend each other against [their] relentless and common enemies," and absent coordinated action, "the lives of [themselves, their] wives and helpless infants" would "most probably fall prey to Savage Barbarity." Indians living along the Wabash River were particularly aggressive at that time. "Scarcely a week ... passed ... without some Person being murdered."¹⁹ Jefferson County, which bordered the Ohio River from the mouth of the Kentucky River to about 20 miles beyond Louisville, was a prime target.²⁰

Congress was out of tune with those in Kentucky when, on August 7, 1786, it changed directions in how it dealt with Indians. New superintendents for a northern and a southern district were directed to "reject every temporary advantage obtained" by unjust acts. Many in Kentucky were interested in revenge.²¹

Rather than having undisciplined strikes at the Indians north of the Ohio, Virginia's governor, Patrick Henry, authorized the use of the militia, to be led by General George Rogers Clark, for a campaign. Along the Wabash were the Weas (close to modern Lafayette, Indiana), the Piankashaws (Vincennes), and the Miamis (Fort Wayne). A circulated proclamation did not result in enough volunteers, and Clark resorted to impressing men and supplies. It was decided that two invasions would go forward. Clark was to proceed up the Wabash, and Benjamin Logan — an early settler at St. Aspah, often referred to as Logan's Station or Logan's Fort, and at the time a member of the Virginia General Assembly — was to go north from Limestone, Kentucky, to punish the Shawnee.²²

During the months of September and October 1786 Clark marched from the Falls of the Ohio to Vincennes and then up the Wabash to the mouth of the Vermilion River. At that point his men mutinied, and his offensive was over. Logan's advance was essentially punitive. The often-aggressive Shawnee were, at this time, not particularly so. His movement was successful in the sense that several villages were destroyed, but in doing so the hostility of the Shawnee was heightened since no distinction was made between friendly and unfriendly villages.²³ Harmar's aide, Major Ebenezer Denny, was critical of Logan's raid, writing that "Logan found none but old men, women and children in the towns; they made no resistance; the men were literally murdered."²⁴

The aide's conclusions receive support from the unprovoked killing of the aged and, in the eyes of some, friendly Shawnee chief Moluntha. He was struck in the head with an axe by Captain Hugh McGary. In March 1787 a general court-martial was held to resolve charges and counter-charges based on the raid. McGary was found guilty of murdering Moluntha, after he had surrendered, and of "insulting and abusing Lieutenant-Colonel

Trotter ... for taking measures to prevent the Prisoners being murdered, and [for swearing] by God, he would chop [Trotter] down, or any other man who should attempt [to keep] him from killing them at any time."²⁵ Murder of an Indian chief was only serious enough that the punishment was a suspension of rank for one year.

Trotter, who was tried by the same court, was not punished for giving "his men positive orders to shoot down any man that killed an Indian after he was captured." The roughhouse nature of the Kentucky militia showed up in a charge against Colonel Robert Patterson that he "impress[ed] one Barrel of Rum at Limestone, where the Troops crossed the Ohio River." Patterson's action was only found to be irregular — a civil court would have to decide if it was legal.²⁶

A conference of the United Indian Nations (the Five Nations, Hurons [Wyandots], Delawares, Shawanese, Ottawas, Chippewas, Powtewattimies, Twichtwees [Miamis], Cherokees, and the Wabash confederates) was held near Detroit during the period from November 28 to December 18, 1786. A product of the conference was a "speech" that did not reach Congress until July 1787. Congress acted to let the Indians know the "speech" had been received. The "speech" put as "indispensably necessary that any cession of [Indian] lands should be ... by the united voice of the confederacy." All other treaties were "void and of no effect." The failure to have peace in the past came from the United States "manag[ing] every thing respecting [the Indians in its] own way" and ignoring the Indians' wish for a "general conference with the ... confederacy." To remedy this a spring meeting was proposed. In the meantime the United States should "order ... surveyors and others, that mark out lands" to not cross the Ohio, and they would likewise "prevent [Indians] from going over."²⁷

The Indians needed support from the British in Canada. A change in the governor of Quebec took place at the end of 1786. Sir Guy Carleton, then Lord Dorchester, who had fought the Americans in the Revolutionary War, took the place of Sir Frederick Haldimand. Dorchester was controlled by London's guidance that the Indians should be given assistance if the Americans tried to take by arms the forts ceded to the United States by the peace treaty. This conditional commitment was not made express by the British Indian agent, Sir John Johnson, who told the Indians that England was holding on to the forts in the Great Lakes area in part to give them security. The Indians should have paid more attention to the caveat that the King could not "begin a war with the Americans because some of their people encroach and make depredations upon parts of Indian country."²⁸

These forts, not surrendered until Jay's Treaty of 1794, were important to the British fur trade, which was bringing in 200,000 pounds each year to the government. The most valuable fur was that of the beaver, but the skins of marten, mink, fox, wolverine, lynx, and wolf were also traded.²⁹

Harmar had the impossible task of patrolling a frontier from Fort Pitt to Louisville, a distance of about 600 miles with less than 700 men. He had to deal with the Indians' hostility and with frontiersmen "averse to federal measures [wanting] to throw every obstacle in the way to impede the surveying of the western territory agreeable to the [1785] ordinance of Congress."³⁰

In 1787 Congress took somewhat incompatible stands. A committee put out a policy of purchasing Indian lands rather than dictating to the Indians what they would have to give up. But at the same time, the July 13, 1787, "Ordinance for the government of the territory of the United States Northwest of the River Ohio," referred to as the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, envisioned white settlement in most of the land above the Ohio.³¹

The Ohio Company

A report dated April 16, 1787, from the secretary at war, Henry Knox, to Congress discussed the “usurpation of the public lands by a body of armed men” and warned that “if such audacious defiance of the power of the United States be suffered with impunity, a precedent will be established, to wrest all the immense property of the western territory out of the hands of the public.” Several days later Knox wrote to the president of Congress about veterans wanting land “promised them”: “Too many have been compelled, by their necessities, to sell the evidences of their public debt, for a small proportion of the nominal sum.” “Unfortunately men now consider the lands promised them, as their only resources against poverty, in old age.”¹

On April 21, 1787, Congress agreed to sales of land in the four surveyed ranges provided the price should be no less than \$1 per acre, but payment was allowed by “Public Securities of the United States.”² Sales were few, and cash for the treasury slight. A weakness in the plan was the size of the plots made available. Few farmers had the money to buy 640-acre sections, the smallest sizes offered, nor did they want that much land. The Confederacy was also in competition with squatters and states selling their land.³

Coupling the disappointing sales results with Knox’s warning that intruders were usurping the Northwest Territory, Congress needed another approach to the western land.⁴

What broke through to lead to the first substantial settlement above the Ohio was a plan consistent with a provision in the 1785 Ordinance; that is, one allowing the use of *certificates of liquidated debts of the United States, including interest* at face value rather than at their market, or specie value. Rufus Putnam, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, took advantage of the opportunity to cash in depreciated paper promises of the government at face value rather than the pittance of specie that could be obtained for these pieces of paper. Joining with him was Benjamin Tupper, also a war veteran, who, as had Putnam, participated in surveying within the seven ranges. They chose the Muskingum Valley, west of the seven ranges, as a place for settlement.⁵

Through Massachusetts newspapers Putnam asked for a meeting of veterans interested in forming a “settlement association” aimed at the Ohio country to meet at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern in Boston on March 1, 1786. Out of this meeting came the Ohio Company, which proceeded to sell shares in its organization in exchange for Continental certificates. After accumulating \$250,000 in certificates a year later it was time to approach Congress and to push for a sale of a large plot of land in lieu of selling only townships and sections as provided for in the Ordinance of 1785.⁶ As an enticement to Congress the Ohio Company proposed “a large and immediate settlement of the most robust and industrious people in America” who would have “no intention other than the Federal Government.”⁷

Congress was not interested, and the Ohio Company's emissary, Reverend Manasseh Cutler, was on the verge of giving up when he was contacted by a schemer in a position to forward the Ohio Company plan. Colonel William Duer, an ultimate insider in both political and business circles and at that time secretary of the Board of Treasury, which handled land sales, together with some friends was willing to push for the Ohio Company plan if he and his friends could secretly profit by acquiring 5 million acres above the Ohio as compared to 1.5 million acres for the Ohio Company. Cutler was willing.⁸ He "was not above turning an honest penny in a land speculation which bade fair to be remunerative as well as interesting," and concluded that only by "connecting this speculation" could land be acquired for the Ohio Company.⁹

The Ohio Company was to offer to purchase a total of 6.5 million acres, 1.5 million of which would be for the Ohio Company. The remainder would be sold to the newly formed Scioto Company, which would be controlled by Duer and his friends and in which Cutler and an associate of his, Winthrop Sargent, would have a large interest. Agreement was reached between Duer and Cutler on July 21, 1787, and two days later Congress gave the Board of Treasury authority to sell large blocks of land to companies. Cutler offered to buy, and three days later the board agreed to sell. The Ohio Company bought outright 1.5 million acres, which was closer to 1.8 million when surveyed. The land lay along the Ohio between the 7th and 17th range lines and inland supposedly to the extent necessary to make up the 1.5 million acres. By use of government certificates at face value it paid the specie equivalent of 8 cents per acre.¹⁰

As for the additional 5 million acres, the Scioto Company had an option to buy at the rate of 66 and $\frac{2}{3}$ cents per acre. This land was located west of the Ohio Company's 1.5 million acres to the Scioto River and then north to an east-west line sufficient to make up the 5 million acres.¹¹

Cutler knew that to have a successful settlement there had to be stability in the area north of the Ohio. Before the deal with Duer he pushed for passage of the Northwest Ordinance on July 13, 1787, which Congress formulated as the way the Northwest Territory would be governed and ultimately brought into the Union.¹² At the time of the passage of the Ordinance secret meetings that produced the United States Constitution were underway in Philadelphia.

The Ordinance¹³ covers how property would pass at the time of an owner's death, provides for a governor, judges, and other public officers, and provides for the adoption of civil and criminal laws. A General Assembly for the territory would have representatives from townships or counties with at least five thousand free male inhabitants. The governor was to establish counties and townships for those parts of the territory where "the Indian titles shall have been extinguished." The territory was to have a delegate in Congress who could debate but not vote.

The Ordinance provided for the future admission of states "on an equal footing with the original States" and set out rights that were to be preserved unless altered "by common consent." As to the Indians:

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.¹⁴

Having heard similar assurances in the past that did not keep the whites from taking their land, the Indians could rightfully be skeptical. A fortiori, when the language has qualifications that could easily be used to accommodate the settlers and speculators after their land.

The Ohio Company acted rapidly under its land grant. Putnam, in his diary, stated: "April 1st 1788 having compleated our Boats, and Lade in Stores we left [the Yahoany] for the mouth [of the] Muskingum river and arrived there on the Seventh.... In a few days comminced the Survey of the Town of Marietta ... nor was a preparation for a place of Defence neglected.... From consulting the Several treaties which had ben made with the Indians ... [he] was fully persuaded that the Indians would not be peacible very Long."¹⁵ The defense work constructed was called "Campus-Martius," which refers to the Field of Mars, where Roman heroes walked.

Putnam and Tupper, who were with this first party, spent the rest of their lives in the west.¹⁶ Giving security a top priority, militia were organized, and "all the males more than 15 years old [were] to appear under arms every Sabbath."¹⁷ The company offered free land to "Warlike Christian Men" willing to settle at dangerous locations. Waterpower sites for grist and saw mills were also given away. Settlers were given a half-pint of whiskey to celebrate their first Fourth of July at Marietta.¹⁸

The Scioto Company had a rocky future. Duer, skillful at hatching a plan to get the land from Congress, had no intention of cashing in by selling the land parcel by parcel. Instead shares would be sold in Scioto to European purchasers to raise money to exercise the options on the 5 million acres, and large parts of the 5 million acres would be sold to others who would see it developed. His European salesman, Joel Barlow, a noted poet, misunderstood what he was to do on the streets of Paris. He unsuccessfully tried to sell small tracts of land rather than shares in the company.¹⁹

After 10 months of effort Barlow fell into the hands of an unscrupulous Englishman with a misleading name, William Playfair. Playfair's advice was to organize a French company, *Compagnie de Scioto*, and sell it 3 million acres, on the premise that the French would be more apt to buy land in the New World from a French company. Without any agreement for the 3-million acre sale, which couldn't be made in any case since Scioto had not, and never did, exercise its options, Playfair launched an advertising campaign to sell land in the city of Gallipolis (City of the French) to be established at the mouth of the Great Kanawha, "hinting that the capital of the United States would soon be moved there." He found enough takers to sell 150,000 acres, which the *Compagnie* did not own, and Barlow set off for America with 600 French immigrants. Unfortunately Playfair made off with the money, and Duer faced the task and expense of settling 600 immigrants.²⁰

Duer must be given some credit. He made an effort to smooth the way for the new settlers, some of whom elected to go no further when they found out, on reaching Alexandria in early 1790, that the future was not to be as glowing as represented by Playfair. Duer scurried about and purchased some land opposite the Great Kanawha from the Ohio Company, since Gallipolis was not located within Scioto's option lands, and had some huts erected. Those continuing on to Gallipolis were left with the daunting task of making their own way. Some later moved to a "French Grant" of 24,000 acres located further down the Ohio River, which Congress made available in 1795. Duer was not discouraged by the events surrounding the Scioto Company. In 1792 a new plot was to corner the market on government bonds. When he was able to purchase a lot of bonds, but not enough to control the price and the price fell, he ended up in debtor's prison, where he remained most of his remaining years. He died in 1799.²¹

Also handing out land north of the Ohio was Virginia, which had reserved land for military warrants if it found land reserved in Kentucky below the Green River for that purpose was not enough. Between August 1787, when it opened a surveyor's office, and a year later 1.5 million acres were located above the Ohio between the Little Miami and Scioto rivers.²²

From the Indian standpoint these acts spoke louder than any treaty. The land along the Ohio River between Pittsburgh and present-day Cincinnati was going to be settled by Americans. The prophecy of chieftain Metacomet, known as King Philip in the New England area, was becoming fulfilled — he said over 100 years earlier:

Brothers, — You see this vast country before us, which the Great Spirit gave to our fathers and us ... the foe before you ... have grown insolent and bold; ... all our ancient customs are disregarded; the treaties made by our fathers and us are broken, and all of us insulted; ... Brothers, these people from the unknown world will cut down our groves, spoil our hunting and planting grounds, and drive us and our children from the graves of our fathers ... and enslave our women and children.²³

Another large sale was made to John Cleve Symmes of New Jersey, one of the judges for the Northwest Territory, and a number of his friends. As Symmes saw it, there was an opportunity for “the lucky speculator [to] buy lands from Congress for five shillings an acre and sell it to the immigrants at twenty.”²⁴ This contract, dated October 14, 1788, was for a million acres on terms similar to those for the Ohio Company. In general the Symmes land was between the Great and Little Miami rivers along the Ohio River. Symmes made a number of sales outside the area he purchased, and it took Congress several years to address those sales.²⁵

Roughly much of the south half of future Ohio became available for white settlers in a legal sense if rights of the Indians were ignored.

Negotiating for an Indian Boundary for the Northern Tribes

The ease of traveling in the Northwest depended on whether you were going up or down the river. To go up the Ohio from Fort Harmar to Fort Pitt in the spring of 1788, a distance of approximately 180 miles, took eight days of “extreme hard work.” Settlers traveling the same stretch, with the current, did so in two days. The downstream time between Fort Harmar and Fort Washington, completed in 1790 at the mouth of the Little Miami (Cincinnati today), some 300 miles, was about four days. During the winter the rivers could not be used; as Harmar told Knox in December 1786, “The Ohio full and driving with ice — boats can not go up or down it.”¹ Heavy loads were transported on large flat boats called “Kentucky boats.” The army used both Kentucky boats and smaller, long, flat-bottomed boats (keels) or canoes for movement of the troops and lighter loads. Boats going up the rivers were at a great disadvantage if attacked by Indians.

The army kept count of the river traffic passing Fort Harmar along the Ohio. “From the 10th of October 1786 until the 12th of May 1787 ... 177 boats, 2689 souls, 1333 horses, 766 cattle, and 102 wagons”² passed Harmar presumably bound for Kentucky but in many cases for the north side of the river. Popular entry points to Kentucky were Limestone and the Rapids (Louisville). Those thought to be headed for those points together with their cattle and wagons were:

	<i>Boats</i>	<i>People</i>	<i>Horses</i>	<i>Cattle/Cows</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Hogs</i>	<i>Wagons</i>
6/1/87–12/9/87:	146	3,196	1,381	171	245	24	165
12/9/87–6/15/88*	308	6,320	2,824	515	600	9	51
6/88–12/88	208	3,406	1,655	394	407	0	123 ³

*None till March

Notwithstanding the guarantee that “the utmost faith shall always be observed toward the Indians” found in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, an ominous sign of the future were statements made during the debate on the proposed constitution for the United States passed on to the states for ratification on the 28th of September 1787. Alexander Hamilton wrote in December 1787: “The savage tribes on our Western frontier ought to be regarded as our natural enemies [and the British their] natural allies because they have most to fear from us and most to hope from them.”⁴

James Iredell, elected to the North Carolina governor’s council in 1788, spoke in March of 1788 of “Indian hostilities” on the American frontier: “I don’t suppose we have had six years of peace since the first settlement of the country, nor shall have for fifty years to

come.”⁵ As to the realistic threat from the Indians, a writer in the *New York Journal* wrote in January 1788: “The Aboriginal natives ... are so unequal to a contest with this whole continent, that they are rather to be dreaded for the depredations they may make on our frontiers, than for any impression they may make on our frontiers, than for any impression they will ever be able to make on the body of the country.”

Knox thought the situation was out of control in the summer of 1787:

The one side anxiously defend their lands which the other avariciously claims. With minds previously inflamed the slightest offence occasions death — revenge follows which knows no bounds.... Either one or the other party must move to a greater distance, or Government must keep them both in awe by a strong hand, and compel them to be moderate and just.⁶

In March 1787 Harmar informed Knox that “the prevailing feeling of the people ... upon the frontiers [was] that it is no harm to kill an Indian.”⁷

To Knox it was too expensive to spread federal troops throughout the area, and he proposed, instead, control along the Ohio River. Congress agreed. Troops should be positioned at “Venango (Fort Franklin on the upper Allegheny River), Fort Pitt, Fort McIntosh, Muskingum (Fort Harmar), Miami (Fort Finney near present-day Cincinnati), Vincennes (now Indiana), and on the Falls of the Ohio (now Louisville).”⁸

On July 21, 1787, Congress passed a resolution directing Harmar to go to Post Vincennes and tell the Indians that Congress was “sincerely disposed to promote peace and friendship between their citizens and the Indians.” Harmar did not show any tact. After telling the Indians that peace and friendship were desired, he “let them know that if they persisted in being hostile that a body of troops would march to their towns and sweep them off the face of the earth.”⁹

Harmar left Major John Francis Hamtramck to build a fort, later named Knox, at Vincennes, which was completed in mid-1788. The fort’s mission was “to curb the incursions of the Wabash Indians, into the Kentucky Country, and to prevent the usurpation of the federal lands, the fertility of which [had] been too strong a temptation to the lawless people of the frontiers who posted themselves there in force in the year 1786.”¹⁰

The Northwest Territory got a civil government when Arthur St. Clair, in Congress assembled, was elected to be governor on October 5, 1787, and Winthrop Sargent to be secretary. Judges were also selected: Samuel Holden Parsons, James Mitchell Varnum, and John Cleve Symmes. St. Clair was not without significant political and military experience. In his early 20s he served with the British army in Canada (1757–1762) and, using a sizeable legacy from his wife’s family, bought 4,000 acres in western Pennsylvania. During the years when both Virginia and Pennsylvania were claiming what became western Pennsylvania, he was at the center of political moves made on behalf of Pennsylvania to control that area. When the Revolutionary War began, nearing 40 years he participated as a colonel in the retreat of the American army from Canada in 1775. As a brigadier-general he served with Washington at the battles of Trenton and Princeton. Then, in 1777 as a major-general, he evacuated Fort Ticonderoga, which some thought to be impregnable, and, in reaction to public opinion, Congress recalled him from service. Although exonerated from blame at a court-martial held in 1778, he did not actively serve in the military thereafter.

His public service continued when Pennsylvania made him a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1785, and he was president of the Congress in 1787 at the time of his appointment as governor of the Northwest Territory. His immediate assignment as governor was to implement the decision of Congress on October 4, 1787, that “a general treaty [would]

be held with the tribes of Indians ... inhabiting the country northwest of the Ohio, and about Lake Erie" as soon after April 1, 1788, as convenient. At the treaty inquiry should be made as to "the causes of uneasiness among the ... tribes" and efforts made to "amicably settl[e] all affairs concerning lands and boundaries." St. Clair was given discretion. His instructions, in a letter dated October 26, 1787, told him to determine the "real temper" of the Indians above the Ohio River, and, if a treaty was needed, to hold one with all the nations if possible. In a treaty St. Clair could agree to an east–west line running to the Mississippi River matching the base east–west line established by the Ordinance of May 20, 1785, that is, starting where the Ohio River crossed the west boundary of Pennsylvania. Prior treaties could be discussed but no boundaries less advantageous to the United States agreed to. Every effort should be made to block "confederations and combinations among the tribes."¹¹

A letter of July 2, 1788, made a big change in his instructions. The acceptable east–west line was to be the 41st degree latitude, a change that would exclude the Indians from another wide swath of land, about 25 miles wide, in the Northwest Territory. That east–west line would come close to what is now Akron, Ohio. He was authorized to spend \$26,000 to obtain "a boundary advantageous to the United States," and, although not a primary object, if the opportunity arose, he should extinguish by purchase "Indian rights to the westward as far as the river Mississippi."¹²

A significant change occurred between the two letters. In Philadelphia starting on May 14, 1787, the drafting of a new Constitution for the United States was underway. The final product was laid before Congress on September 20 and transmitted to the states for consideration on the 28th. With the ratification of New Hampshire on June 21, 1788, it became a viable document. Congress set the first Wednesday in February for the election of the president, and the first Wednesday in March for the first proceedings of the new government.

The Indians had a much different boundary in mind. On November 19, 1787, they proposed to St. Clair one preserving to them land west of the Muskingum and north of the Ohio River. Past conflicting treaties were declared meaningless by the United Indian Nations in December 1786 in asserting that "you [Americans] kindled your council fires where you thought proper, without consulting us, at which you held separate treaties, and have entirely neglected our plan of having a ... conference with the different nations of the confederacy."¹³

A Moravian missionary, John Heckewelder, lived with the Ohio Indians during this period and spoke well of them. He said their belief was that the same Great Spirit created both Indians and whites, but the Indians had not changed, whereas the whites had become troublesome. "The Great Spirit, knowing the wickedness of [the white's] disposition, found it necessary to give them the Great Book and taught them how to read it [so] they might know what the Great Spirit wished them to do and what to abstain from." The Indians had "no need of any such book to let them know the will of their Maker; they find it engraved on their hearts."¹⁴ The missionary for whom Heckewelder worked, David Zeisberger, saw negative traits. He found them proud and haughty and without a desire to work.

In later years Heckewelder wrote a book, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations*, in which he set out how the Indians looked at what was happening in the West:

"No faith can be placed in what the Indians promise at treaties; for scarcely is a treaty concluded than they are again murdering us." Such is our complaint against these unfortunate people; but they will tell you that it is the white man in whom no faith is to be placed. They will tell you, that there is not a single instance in which the whites have not violated the engage-

ments that they had made at treaties. They say that when they had ceded lands to the white people, and boundary lines had been established — “firmly established!” beyond which no whites were to settle; scarcely was the treaty signed, when white intruders again were settling and hunting on their lands! It is true that when they preferred their complaints to the government, the government gave them many fair promises, and assured them that men would be sent to remove the intruders by force from the usurped lands. The men, indeed, came, but with chain and compass in their hands, taking surveys of the tracts of good land, which the intruders, from their knowledge of the country, had pointed out to them! What was then to be done, when those intruders would not go off from the land, but on the contrary, increased in numbers? “Oh!” said those people, (and I have myself frequently heard this language in the Western country,) “a new treaty will soon give us all this land; nothing is now wanting but a pretence to pick a quarrel with them!”¹⁵

Unlawful raids by Kentuckians north of the Ohio River complicated the army’s job. In October 1787 Jonathan Heart, writing to William Judd in Connecticut, said “the Virginians are continually killing and plundering — I am certain we shall forever have War with Indians until a different set of Inhabitants are settled on our Frontiers.”¹⁶ At this time Kentucky was part of Virginia. Harmar let it be known to Knox in December 1787 that it was “a mortifying circumstance, that while under the sanction of federal authority, negotiations and treaties are holding with the Indians, that there should be such presumption in the people of Kentucky as to be forming expeditions against them.”¹⁷

While St. Clair, on the American side, and Joseph Brant, on the Indian confederation side, planned for a meeting in the summer of 1788, the surge of whites moving into so-called Indian country above the Ohio River was the reality that each had to face. Those moving on to the unoccupied land often based their claim on “tomahawk” improvements, that is, establishment of a boundary by marking trees with axes. The settlers’ attitude was often that found in an advertisement of the time: “All mankind ... have an undoubted right to pass into every vacant country.”¹⁸

Proceeding down the Ohio River to Fort Harmar in July 1788, St. Clair gave Knox a sobering assessment:

Our settlements are [rapidly] extending themselves ... on every quarter where they can be extended — Our pretensions to the country they [the Indians] inhabit has been made known to them in so unequivocal a manner, and the consequences are so certain and so dreadful to them, that there is little probability of there ever being any cordiality between us — The idea of being ultimately obligated to abandon their country rankles in their minds, and our British Neighbors at the same time ... deny the cession of Country made by them.¹⁹

On July 15 government came to the territory when St. Clair was greeted by the “discharge of 14 Cannon” from Fort Harmar and the “huzzas of a large crowd” from the settlement of Marietta across the Muskingum from Fort Harmar, which was started in April 1788 under the direction of Rufus Putnam. St. Clair told them a “good government, well administered, is the first of blessings to a people.” Under “equal laws the passions of men are restrained within due bounds; their actions receive a proper direction; the virtues are cultivated, and the beautiful fabric of civilized life is reared and brought to perfection.”²⁰

Also at Marietta were Winthrop Sargent, the territory’s secretary, and two of the three appointed judges. The third judge, John Cleve Symmes, was still in the east trying to complete a purchase from the United States of a million acres between the Great and Little Miami rivers. The grant, referred to as the Miami Purchase, was issued by the Board of Treasury on October 15, 1788.

Joseph Brant tried to keep the Indian confederation together in 1788 but was not successful in holding on to the Senecas, led by Chief Cornplanter, who were ready to deal with the Americans. Brant complained that Cornplanter and the Five Nations under his leadership had “sold themselves to the devil—I mean to the Yankees.”²¹ In part to protect the Senecas, Congress built a fort, Franklin, in Seneca country near Venango, Pennsylvania, in 1787; the Senecas were told the fort would “protect [them] from injury the same as”²² it would the Americans. Not willing to surrender to the Americans were the Shawnees, Miamis, and Kickapoos. The Shawnee and Miami aggressively launched raiding parties into Kentucky in 1788. Brant held a confederation council in October 1788 at which the Wyandot proposed that peace be made with the Americans. When the proposal was rejected the Wyandot left.

Brant was a force to be reckoned with. About 45, he had a history of working with the British. His sister, Mary “Molly” Brant, had a long-time relationship, including 8 children, with Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of the British Indian Northern Department until his death in 1774. During the Revolutionary War, by that time recognized as a Mohawk chief, he actively sided with the English and participated in a number of battles. Brant, educated at Eleazar Whitlock’s school, which later became Dartmouth, went to England in 1776, met with the King and Queen, and, in addition to pledging the allegiance of the Six Nations, laid out how his tribe, the Mohawks, had been ill-used:

The Mohocks ... have on all occasions shewn their zeal and loyalty to the Great King; yet they have been very badly treated by his people in [America].... Our late great friend Sir William Johnson who never deceived us, [assured us] that the King and wise men [in England] would do us justice; but this notwithstanding all our applications has never been done, and it makes us very uneasie.... Indeed it is very hard when we have let the Kings subjects have so much of our lands for so little value, they should want to cheat us ... of the small spots we have left for our women and children to live on. We are tired out in making complaints & getting no redress.²³

Negotiations between the Indian confederation and St. Clair came to a standstill when, in July 1788, a small group of Chippewas attacked soldiers working to prepare a site proposed by the Indians for treaty talks at the Falls of the Muskingum (now Zanesville, Ohio), about 70 miles north of Fort Harmar. St. Clair’s reaction was to tell the Indians that any treaty discussions would have to take place at an American site and that no meeting would be held until he received “an immediate explanation ... and [he] demand[ed] satisfaction and the restitution of ... prisoners.”²⁴ The Indians tried to put what had happened in perspective. They complained to St. Clair: “From the misconduct of a few individuals who live at a great distance ... and are little concerned with a union with you, you have extinguished the council fire.”²⁵

An unbending St. Clair refused to meet with the Indians at any place but Fort Harmar. The Indians said that they were not authorized to go beyond the Falls of the Muskingum but that the confederation was ready to set a boundary line at the Muskingum, that is, they would give up any land to the east of the Muskingum. St. Clair haughtily rejected this offer. The Indians took this as an indication that the whites “must and [intend to] have [their] country” and said, “We now tell you we have our feeling and our spirit and must leave the event to the will of the Great Spirit, to whom we look [to] for justice.”²⁶ St. Clair was told that treaties with anyone other than the confederation would not be honored.

The secretary at war was worried. Knox wrote to St. Clair in December 1788 that “a protracted Indian war would be destruction to the republic in its present circumstances.” To Harmar, Knox said:

I most sincerely hope some expedients may be devised for avoiding an Indian war. This event would at present be embarrassing beyond conception. It has been with the greatest difficulty

that money has been obtained for the recruits, clothing, and stores which have been forwarded during the present year. If an Indian war should arise, it is greatly to be apprehended that it must languish for want of money. In this case it might be protracted to such a length as to produce extreme distress and disgrace.²⁷

St. Clair managed to conclude two treaties at Fort Harmar on January 9, 1789, which in themselves accomplished little. One was with the Six Nations, except for the Mohawks, who did not attend, and the other with the Wyandot, Delaware, Chippewa, Ottawa, Patawatima, and Sac nations. Basically these treaties confirmed those that had been entered earlier. Each treaty paid special attention to horse stealing. Stolen horses, whether by Indians or whites, could be reclaimed and the thief severely punished. The Wyandot let it be known that they claimed the land set aside for the Shawnee by the 1785 Treaty at the Mouth of the Great Miami.²⁸

In 1789 St. Clair told the new president that any effort to get agreement to a boundary at the 41st degree latitude would have been “very ill received [and may have] defeat[ed] entirely the settling of peace with [the tribes].” When St. Clair reported to the new president that the “general confederacy is ... broken,” he was speaking with a forked tongue. The Shawnee had a different assessment. To them the Fort Harmar proceedings determined nothing; they declared, “The lands belong to us all equally, and it is not in the power of one or two nations to dispose of it... We are united and must turn our faces to those encroachers.”²⁹

During the years 1784 to 1788 the army, which Congress made more stable by authorizing three-year enlistments, did little fighting and a lot of fort-building. It was just as well since the men did not measure up to Knox’s expectation in 1788 that recruits would be “men of the best character, for honesty and sobriety” and “perfectly sound in his organs and health and sufficiently robust to bear the fatigues of the military life.”³⁰ A 1791 advertisement in Philadelphia’s *American Daily Advertiser* sought the idealized recruit: “Young Men who wish to become Adventurers in a New Country ... may acquire a Knowledge of the Western World, subject to no expence; and after serving a short period, set down on their own farms, and enjoy all the blessings of Peace and Plenty.”³¹ The obligation to recruit was that of the officers, who needed to supply the requisite number for their companies in order to retain their commissions. William Guthman’s book *March to Massacre* describes the results: “Only the homeless and hungry, dejected and rejected, listened to the roll of the drum as the recruiting party moved from one street to another in the large cities and small towns.... Whenever regulations became impractical, the bottom of the barrel was scraped.”³²

St. Clair had much more on his mind than the difficulties with the Indians. He needed to lay a foundation for the civil government of the territory. Together with the judges appointed for the territory, he proceeded to write a legal code. For the application of the laws he established counties — the first, named Washington, encompassed Marietta and land west of the Pennsylvania western boundary to the Scioto River. On September 2, 1788, St. Clair reported to Congress that a government “had been put in motion — a County erected ... Courts instituted, and the Officers necessary for the Administration of Justice appointed.”³³

Other counties were established in 1790. First was Hamilton County, which covered settlements between the Great and Little Miami rivers and the village of Cincinnati, to which St. Clair moved the government and where Fort Washington was constructed in 1790. Next was Knox County, embracing Vincennes and generally the land east of the Great Miami River. Last was St. Clair County, which included the long-time French settlements

of Kaskaskia and Cahokia. The futuristic scale of St. Clair's efforts are highlighted by some of the laws adopted. "Children or servants [not obeying] their parents or masters [could be placed in] the gaol or house of correction, there to remain until he or they shall humble themselves to the said parents, or masters satisfaction." Probably the most ignored of his laws was the one against "Improper and Profane Language," which the law recited was "repugnant to every moral sentiment, subversive to every civil obligation, inconsistent with the ornaments of a polished life, and abhorrent to the principles of the most benevolent religion."³⁴ Not many living in the territory in 1790 were living the "polished life."

Washington's First Offensive in the West Flounders (1790)

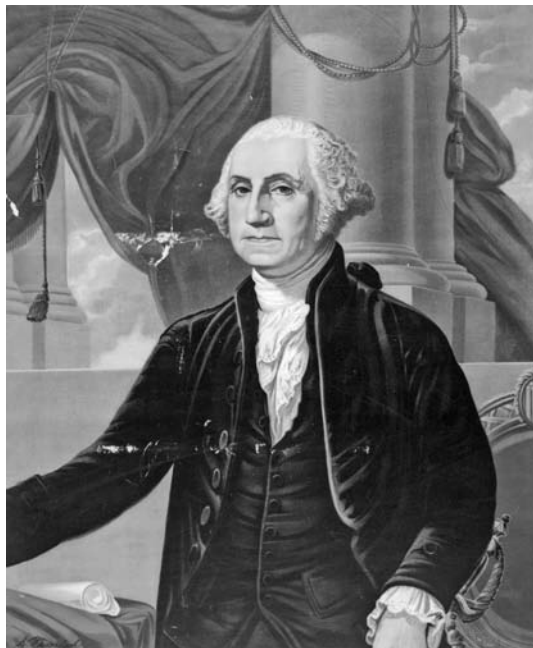
On April 30, 1789, at the age of 57, Washington appeared on the balcony of Federal Hall in New York City wearing a suit of brown broadcloth spun in Hartford to be sworn in as the first president of the United States. A dress sword in a steel scabbard hung from his waist. The new government, with a lot of debt, had powerful nations on three sides of its claimed territory, over half of which had few inhabitants. To the north were the British in Canada, who continued to occupy the forts important to the fur trade along the Great Lakes. To the west and south was Spain, which claimed much of the territory south of the Ohio River that England purported to give over to the United States in the Treaty of Peace, and which without dispute claimed land west of the Mississippi River.

As with many of his actions in office, Washington set a precedent by giving an Inaugural Address. In the address he took a tentative step in the relationship to be established between Congress and the president. Even though the Constitution placed a duty on the president “to recommend [to Congress’s consideration] such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient,” he merely referred Congress to the Constitution, which “designat[ed] the objects to which [Congress]’ attention [was] to be given.”¹

He had to deal with 13 states reluctant to have a strong central government. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, the “Constitution [was] in actual operation; everything [appearing] to promise that it [would] last; ... [but] in this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.”² The largest asset of the federal government was the land west of the Appalachian Mountains. Although the path to be followed as to these lands was set by the Continental Congress, there had been but little success in converting the land into the cash needed to pay off debts at home and abroad. Furthermore, the orderly progression of settlement Washington favored was not occurring. Waves of settlers were proceeding down the Ohio River and through the Cumberland Gap and south in the Holston River area in search of either free or cheap land. Trying to take advantage of this pent-up desire were land speculators looking for wealth by acting as the middlemen, sometimes referred to as land jobbers, between the federal and state governments and the settlers.

At the start of Washington’s administration the Indians let it be known they were unhappy with prior treaties. Henry Knox, carried over in the new administration as secretary of war, received a communication from the Indians showing little progress toward a long-term solution:

At the Fort Stanwix conference your commissioners settled everything as they thought would best suit them and be most conducive to their interests. They [selected] division lines and at



once confirmed them without waiting to hear our opinion of it and whether it would be approved by us or not, holding that our country was added to them by the King of England.... Such has been the language of your commissioners at every treaty held with us.... We are of the same opinion as the people of the United States; you call yourselves free and independent. We as the ancient inhabitants of the country and sovereigns of the soil say that we are equally free as you or any nation under the sun.³

For the Indians the avenues for aggressive action were limited in the year 1789. Kentucky's population of 74,000, 17 percent of whom were slaves, was too large for them to think of a large invasion. In addition to the people in Kentucky, the remainder of the Commonwealth of Virginia, of which Kentucky was a part, had 748,000 people. Raids were still possible, and travelers on the Ohio River were often attacked. In a unique scheme Kentuckians left poisoned food where it might be taken by marauding Indians. The *Kentucky Gazette* of March 15, 1788, warned people against eating food left in this way.⁴

The danger to isolated settlers was real in the summer of 1789. In Kentucky, over a period of 3 months, 17 settlers were killed, 15 wounded, and 5 taken captive. Seeking retribution a force of about 220 Kentuckians, led by Major John Hardin, marched into the Wabash region and killed "three Shawnee men, three squaws, a boy, and an infant."⁵ Hardin, a Kentucky militiaman, and an experienced woodsman, served with distinction in the Revolutionary War in Daniel Morgan's rifle corps. Major John Hamtramck in charge of the small number of federal forces at Vincennes regretted Hardin's action since it agitated the Indians he was trying to persuade to stay north of the Ohio River.

Those in Kentucky were dismayed at the inability of the federal forces to protect them. Harmar and St. Clair cannot be blamed. Congress only authorized a single regiment of 700 in 1784, and the pay was so low (\$6.67 per month for privates) that when the new



Top and above: George Washington and Henry Knox. Washington and his secretary of war, Knox, calculated how to resolve the conflict between settlers moving into the Ohio River watershed and the Indians claiming that land (Library of Congress).

government took office in 1789, the regiment was not up to strength, and those enlisting were often drifters found on the city streets. A small number of federal soldiers fulfilled Knox's view that "an energetic national militia [was] the capital security of a free republic; and not a standing army, forming a distinct class in the community."⁶

Knox, who succeeded Washington as commander-in-chief of the army in 1783 and was made secretary at war in March 1785, favored required military service of all men. He wanted a militia that could be called upon by the federal government and was divided into three segments: ages 18–20 would receive 30 days training a year, and the other segments, ages 21–45 and 46–60, would be trained for shorter periods.⁷ Congress did not adopt his plan but from time to time authorized Washington to call on a state's militia.

The governor of the Northwest Territory, St. Clair, told Washington on May 2, 1789, not to expect peace from "several nations on the Wabash, and the rivers that empty themselves into it," who were not parties to the treaties of January 1789. St. Clair's positive view of those treaties, that the "general confederacy [among the Indians was] entirely broken," turned out to be wishful thinking. Trouble was also expected from the Shawnee and Cherokee, who claimed the same land as did the Wyandot. At the treaty of January 1789 the Wyandot suggested a "post ... [located] by the United States, at the Miami village" would "overawe the nations on the Wabash."⁸ St. Clair doubted this could be done without a fight, which might even be joined in by ungovernable young Wyandots.

Knox reported to the president instead of to Congress as he had during the Confederation. In a June 15, 1789, report to Washington, Knox noted that "hostilities have almost constantly existed between the people of Kentucky and the [Wabash Indians]," with whom no treaty had ever been achieved. He was fearful that absent some "decisive measures" by the federal government, the hostilities might spread to all Indians northwest of the Ohio. "It is well known," he said, "how strong the passion for war exists in the mind of a young savage, and how easily it may be inflamed, so as to disregard every precept of the older and wiser part of the tribes who may have [a] more just opinion of the force of a treaty."⁹

Knox saw two alternatives for action. Destruction of the hostile tribes, or treaties with them defining "their rights and limits," which would be "observed on the part of the United States with the most rigid justice, by punishing the whites, who should violate the same." To him destruction would not befit a just government — "The Indians being the prior occupants, possess the right of the soil.... The land cannot be taken from them unless by their free consent, or by the right of conquest in the case of a just war."¹⁰ In any case the United States was in no financial shape to mount a war.

From a philosophical point of view Knox thought the Indians and Congress were starting from the same base. "Representations of the confederated Indians at the Huron village, in December, 1786, [were premised on the assumption] that they were the only rightful proprietors of the soil; and it appear[ed] by the resolve of the 2d of July, 1788, that [the Continental] Congress [agreed at least to the extent of] appropriat[ing] ... money solely to the purpose of extinguishing Indian claims to lands."¹¹ If true, the assumption in earlier treaties — that the United States owned the Indian lands by virtue of the victory over Great Britain and that the Indians were on it at the government's sufferance — had been jettisoned.

Knox estimated the strength of the Wabash Indians to be 1,500 to 2,000 warriors, and that the United States would need an army of 2,500 to engage them. Knox was for an amicable solution, but if incidents like those that had been occurring were allowed to continue, "[t]heir progress [would] deeply injure, if not utterly destroy, the interests and government of the United States in the Western territory."¹² Looking at the Indian situation on an overall

basis, Knox put the total population at 76,000, of whom 14,000 warriors lived south of the Ohio River and 5,000 above. As of August 8, 1789, the army could have 840 men but was short 168.¹³

On September 14, 1789, St. Clair told Washington that those in Kentucky could not be expected to “submit patiently to the cruelties and depredations of [the] savages [and that] they were in the habit of retaliation.” As for the “handful of troops ... scattered in [the Northwest Territory] [they might] afford protection to some settlements, [but could not] possibly act offensively by themselves.”¹⁴ He wanted increased power, including the right to call out the militia to supplement the regular army, so that he could use threatening language that might keep the Indians in line.

The military leaders in the territory were in favor of using force. Harmar wrote on July 16, 1788, that he “hope[d] the time is not far distant when an augmentation of the troops will take place, and that we may be enabled to sweep these perfidious Savages off the face of the Earth.”¹⁵ Hamtramck at Vincennes told Harmar in November 1788 that peace with the Indians was not likely: “Vengeance is their darling passion and forever [they] will have some old or new grudge to satisfy.... Altho’ the nations should determine to be at perfect peace with us, their young warriors in my opinion will always in a secret manner commit depredations unless prevented by a good chastisement.”¹⁶ In November 1789 Harmar wrote that “if the word *March!* is given ... a speedy movement [would] be made against the savages.”¹⁷

Washington was not ready to say “march.” On October 6, 1789, he directed the governor to determine “whether the Wabash and Illinois Indians [were] most inclined for war or peace.” However, he gave St. Clair authority, if hostilities along the frontier continued, “to call on ... Virginia and Pennsylvania, for ... detachments of militia.”¹⁸

At the time that Washington authorized St. Clair to “punish [the Indians] with severity” if necessary, he warned that “a war with the Wabash Indians ... be avoided” if possible consistent with “the national dignity,” noting that in view of “the present indiscriminate hostilities,” it was “extremely difficult, if not impossible, to say that a war without further measures would be just on the part of the United States.” Included in St. Clair’s instructions was the direction to act so that “inhabitants at St. Vincennes, and at the Kaskaskias, and other villages on the Mississippi” should be able to “possess the lands to which they [were] entitled, by some known and fixed principles.”¹⁹

In January of 1790 St. Clair was traveling down the Ohio and reached the settlement Losantville on the 2nd. While there he renamed the settlement Cincinnati to honor the Society of Cincinnati of which St. Clair was a member, as was Washington, who was its first president. The Society, dedicated to preserve the “exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which [the members] fought and bled,” was made up of officers from the Revolutionary War, or their “eldest male posterity.”²⁰ Fort Washington was constructed at Cincinnati early in 1790 to protect the Symmes settlements in the area, and Harmar transferred his headquarters there from Fort Harmar at Marietta in January.

Knox gave Washington advice on the Indian situation north of the Ohio on January 4, 1790.²¹ In his opinion the security of settlers could only be partially achieved by military patrols; full security could only be obtained by “offensive measures.” Starting with the premise that “the people of Kentucky are entitled to be defended” and observing that there had “been such a prevalence of hostilities as to render it uncertain who are right or who are wrong, the principles of justice ... seems to forbid the idea of attempting to extirpate the Wabash Indians, until it shall appear that they cannot be brought to treat on reasonable terms.” If a treaty was achieved and not followed, or if one could not be entered into and

hostilities continued, "the United States [would] clearly have the right to inflict that degree of punishment which may be necessary to deter the Indians from any future unprovoked aggressions."

Respecting Washington's direction that the Indians be contacted, in January 1790 St. Clair told Knox that he thought the effort for peace was "worth the making" but that it was likely the "Miamis, and the renegade Shawanese, Delawares, and Cherokees [were] irreclaimable by gentle means." When Hamtramck sent an emissary, a Frenchman, Anthony Gamelin, up the Wabash in April, his reception was not friendly. The Shawnee warrior and war chief Blue Jacket said the Indians thought the Americans intended "to deceive" them; "from all quarters, [they] receive[d] speeches from the Americans, and not one is alike." Many thought the peace overture was but an attempt "to take [the Indians' land] by degrees."²² In short Gamelin was told the Indians would only deal with the United States through their confederacy after receiving a commitment of trade comparable to what they had had with the British and a guarantee that Kentuckians would stay south of the Ohio.

The drumbeat from the Ohio continued. Harmar wrote to Knox on March 24, 1790: "No calculation will answer but raising sufficient force to effectually chastize the whole of those nations, who are known to be hostile."²³ St. Clair was blunt in dealing with the Wabash Indians. He told them in speeches sent with Gamelin: "I do now make you the offer of peace; accept it or reject it, as you please."²⁴ The Indians found these words to be menacing. After Gamelin reported on his reception, St. Clair canceled a planned trip up the Wabash. He concluded there was not the smallest probability of an accommodation with the Indians of that river. Consequently, St. Clair decided to mount an expedition. Harmar agreed, and Washington gave his approval.²⁵ St. Clair, after spending much of March through June in Illinois country, was back at Fort Washington on July 13 and in New York on August 23. The difficulty of traveling back up the Ohio is illustrated by the fact that it took St. Clair a month (June 11 to July 13) to travel from Kaskaskia to Fort Washington.

Over strong opposition Congress, by a bill passed on April 30, 1790,²⁶ increased the size of the army, not counting officers, to 1,216 men between ages of 18 through 46, not under "five feet six inches ... without shoes" with three-year enlistments. The bill didn't do much for morale. It increased the commandant's pay but cut that of all others, and perhaps an even greater blow was the decrease of the daily ration of liquor from one gill a day to half a gill.²⁷ Congress was well aware of what was happening in the West. Representative James Jackson of Georgia, in rebutting a suggestion that slaves could be emancipated and settled in the West, exclaimed that "the people of America like an overwhelming torrent, are rapidly covering the earth, and extending their settlements throughout this vast continent, nor is there any spot, however remote, but a short period will settle; from the deluge of people pouring into the country from every nation in Europe."²⁸

On June 7, Knox told Harmar "to extirpate, utterly, if possible, the [Indian] banditti." Although small in numbers, perhaps no more than 200, they were enough "to alarm the whole frontier lying along the Ohio." Since it was impossible to protect the "frontier, against solitary, or small parties of enterprising savages," the recourse was to seek them out with "continental troops and militia ... mounted on horseback." Such a force could cover 30 to 40 miles in a day and reach the eastern branches of the Wabash, where the banditti were thought to reside, in about four days. Care was to be taken to not alienate "friendly, or even neutral tribes." On August 24 Knox expressed his sense that the campaign would be "so rapid and decisive as to astonish [the] enemy."²⁹

There was pressure for action from Kentucky. On July 7, 1790, Harry Innes, the United States district judge for Kentucky, told Knox that over the prior 7 years 1,500 people had been killed, 20,000 horses stolen, and a substantial amount of property destroyed. St. Clair told Innes on July 5 that there was no possibility of a peaceful settlement with the people on the Wabash and he was preparing to move against them. The olive branch was withdrawn.³⁰ When representatives from the Potawatomi and Miami appeared at Vincennes to talk about peace, Hamtramck reported to Harmar that he “would have deceived them [about the American war plans] by making peace with them but it could not be done without giving them goods — that he [chose not to do.]”³¹

In a circular dated July 15, 1790, St. Clair advised that there was “no prospect of peace,” a plan of offensive operations had been prepared, and he was calling for troops from the militia county Lieutenants.³²

Although all was not going well on the ground, in Congress important legislation titled the Trade and Intercourse Act was enacted on July 22, 1790. The ground rules for dealing with the Indians were established.³³ Traders were to be licensed, and no land was to be purchased from the Indians by private persons or states. Land from the Indians would be acquired at treaties “held under the authority of the United States.” White persons trespassing on Indian land or committing crimes against Indians would be tried in the state or territorial courts.

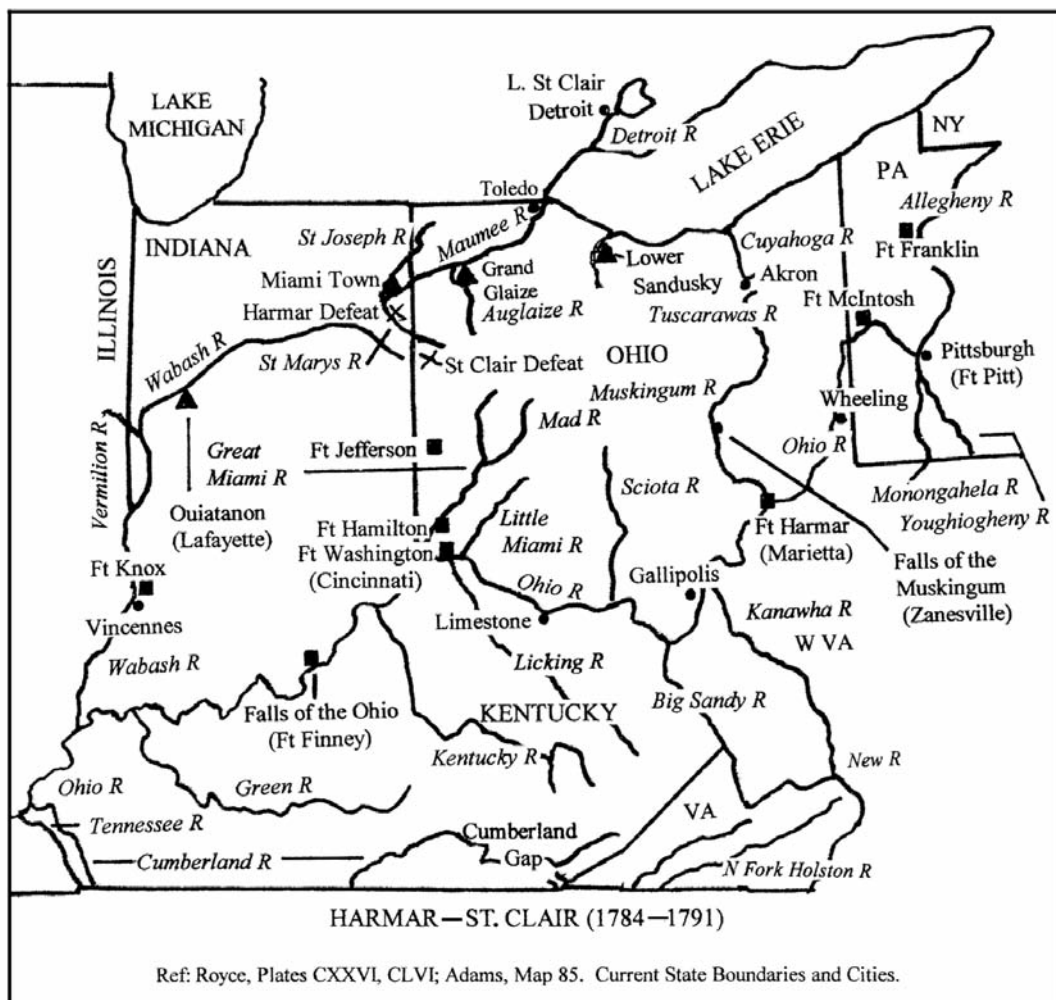
The jumping-off point for the expedition was Fort Washington, 300 miles downstream from Fort Harmar. The chance for a surprise was blown away when St. Clair, on direction from Knox to send, at a proper time, a message to the British in Detroit telling them of the expedition and assuring them that it was not to be directed against them, did so around September 19. The British not only alerted the Indians, but also “offered \$50 for an American scalp and \$100 for an American prisoner.”³⁴

This was only the beginning of a bungled expedition. The militia furnished by Pennsylvania and Kentucky were far from what was anticipated. Most had guns unfit for service or had none at all. Among the militia “were a great many hardly able to bear arms, such as old, infirm men, and young boys,” and they appeared “unused to the gun or woods.” The Pennsylvania militia, similar to those of Kentucky, contained many substitutes. Since Harmar’s force was to be made up mostly of militia, he had to be an unhappy commander. In the past he said that “[n]o person can hold a more contemptible opinion of the militia ... than [he did].”³⁵

Knox’s vision of a force moving as “unincumbered, and as light as possible,” one that would deliver “a sudden stroke” by destroying “their towns and crops” and show the Indians that the United States had the “power to punish them for their hostile depredations,” was not to be.³⁶

On September 27, 1790, a body of militia “was put in motion” from Fort Washington to make a road for the artillery for the first 20 miles on the way to the Miami villages about 170 miles away. The Miami villages at the confluence of the St. Joseph and St. Marys rivers, which became the Maumee River, which flows into Lake Erie, contained villages of Miamis, Shawanees, and Delawares. At the confluence today is Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the Maumee empties into Lake Erie at Toledo, Ohio. Three days later Harmar and the federal army of about 320 joined with a militia numbering 1,133 for the march to the Miami villages.³⁷

The first failing in the overall plan was that of Major Hamtramck, who did not leave Vincennes on time nor proceed far enough “to divert the Indians from assembling themselves in one body to oppose General Harmar.” Hamtramck left on September 30 with 330 men and on October 10 found a deserted village on the Vermilion River. At that point he turned



back for lack of rations when the militia officers speculated that their men would desert if placed on half rations. Hamtramck might have pushed on if he had believed in the expedition, but he didn't. He thought that "burning their houses and corn, and returning the next day" accomplished little. The Indians could "build [houses] with as much facility as a bird does his nest" and would be "perfectly comfortable on meat alone." Hamtramck didn't see any peace with the Indians until the British gave up their forts, since they were "daily sowing the seed of discord betwixt the measures of [the United States] and the Indians."³⁸

There was no stealth in Harmar's advance, which followed a trace made by George Rogers Clark in 1782. Ineptly, horses were not hobbled at night, and consequently many strayed away. Wiley Sword in his book *President Washington's Indian War* likened the army's advance to "a herd of elephants trampling through the underbrush." The force traveled between 8 to 12 miles a day with great care taken to alert the force to any attack that might be made. The Americans soon learned that they were not alone. The night of October 17 close to 100 of their horses were taken by the Indians.³⁹

When the main force reached the Miami villages on October 18, they were empty and the army went from town to town burning and destroying houses and corn. Enough plun-

dering went on for Harmar to issue an order declaring that straggling to plunder was “unsoldier-like” and that all plunder collected in the future would be “equally distributed amongst the army.” Those straggling were “in danger of being scalped.”⁴⁰ Harmar sent a small force of 300 under command of Colonel Trotter of the Kentucky militia to look for the enemy. When Trotter returned with nothing to report other than two Indians killed, his competitor for command of the Kentucky militia, Col. John Hardin, was given permission to make another search with the same force on October 19.⁴¹

Hardin had more enthusiasm for finding warriors than did many of his militia, who deserted shortly after leaving camp. Hardin ignored a warning that they might be entering an ambush, saying the Indians wouldn’t fight. He rushed forward without the precaution of first scouting the area. When they were attacked, all but nine of the militiamen took to their heels. The sturdy 9 plus 30 regulars stood fast, but, except for 6, were killed.⁴²

The inhumanity of frontier warfare is shown by the conduct of two militia captains who had spent the day with the main force burning and looting a nearby Shawnee town. After dark they hobbled a horse and placed it where they thought an Indian in the woods might try to steal it. When this happened they killed the Indian and “cut off his head and brought it into camp, and claimed at the least the price of a wolf’s scalp.”⁴³

Harmar started back to Fort Washington on October 21 after burning and destroying everything in sight. But after traveling about eight miles, he decided to send a force back to surprise Indians who would have returned to the villages. The surprise was on the 400 men, 340 militia and 60 regulars, who were ambushed. There was little for Harmar to do but claim a victory. His report to Knox made on November 4 after the return to Fort Washington said “our loss was heavy, but the head quarters of iniquity were broken up.”⁴⁴ Not less than 100 to 120 warriors were said to have been killed. Even if these numbers are accepted, the federal loss was greater—12 officers, 171 lesser ranks, and 31 wounded. But, to Harmar, this comparison was not discouraging—the army could have afforded a loss of two to one. Orchestrating the Indian tactics were a Miami chief and Blue Jacket, a Shawnee, who the American army would meet again. Blue Jacket was of noble appearance, about six feet tall, strong and muscular.⁴⁵

A natural intervention saved Harmar from further losses. The Indians planned to harass his force as it was strung out on its return to Fort Washington. A lunar eclipse, interpreted by the Indians as a bad omen, intervened, and no attacks took place. Many of those arriving back at Fort Washington on November 3 were unruly. The militia were hastily discharged. St. Clair’s report to Knox of a successful campaign was contradicted by a petition from Virginia counties to the governor warning that the “Indians, flushed with victory, will doubtless fall on our frontier as soon as the weather permits.”⁴⁶ Rufus Putnam in a letter of January 6, 1791, made it clear what the consequences were at Marietta:

Our prospects are much changed, in stead of peace and friendship with our Indian neighbours a hored Savage war Stairs us in the face the Indians in stead of being humbled by the Destruction of the Shawone Towns & brought to beg for peace, appear ditermined on a general War, in which our Settlements are already involved.⁴⁷

The Indians, elated with their success, were threatening “There should not remain a Smoak on the ohio by the time the Leaves put out.”⁴⁸

Knox wrote to Harmar on January 31, 1791, saying, “The general impression upon the result of the late expedition is that it has been unsuccessful; that it will not induce the Indians to peace, but on the contrary encourage them to a continuance of hostilities, and that, therefore,

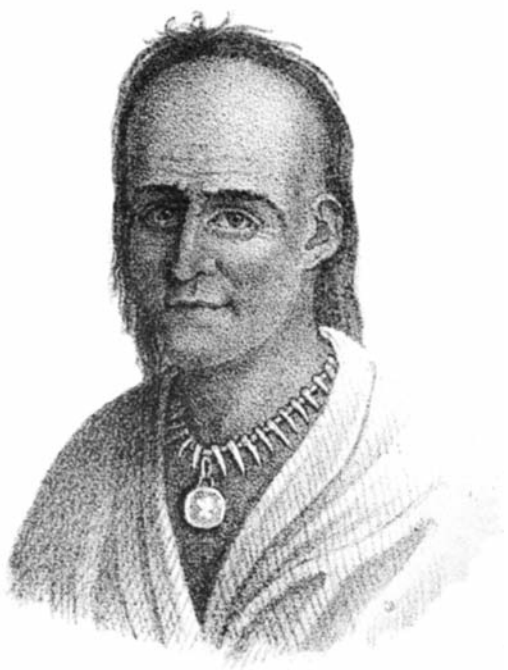
another and more efficient expedition must be undertaken." He recommended that Harmar "request the President of the United States to direct a court of inquiry, to investigate [Harmar's] conduct in the late expedition."⁴⁹ Harmar did.

The court meeting in September 1791 found no fault with Harmar's conduct, primarily the sending detachments off on October 19 and 21, which were ambushed, and said he "merit[ed] high approbation." Justification for Harmar dispatching what were in essence two small killing parties was that the actions kept the Indians from harassing the army as it returned to Fort Washington. St. Clair reasoned from the lack of harassment on the army's return "that the Savages have got a most terrible stroke."⁵⁰

Terrible stroke or not, Knox told Congress in January 1791⁵¹ that the expedition had not moved the Indians in the direction of a treaty. "Their own opinion of their own success, and the number of trophies they possess, [he said] will, probably, not only encourage them to a continuance of hostilities, but may be the means of their obtaining considerable assistance from neighboring tribes." They

could expect to receive encouragement in words and deed from the "malignant" whites in the area, that is, the British and traders. It was, he thought, "incumbent on the United States to prepare immediately for another expedition against the Wabash Indians." A force of 3,000 would be needed. The object would be to establish "a strong fortification and garrison at the Miami village ... with proper subordinate posts of communication." It would give cheer to people wanting "to purchase and settle the public lands" and, consequently, "assist in the reduction of the national debt." The regular force on the frontiers was inadequate since they were "nearly enclosed by the possessions, garrisons, and claims of two formidable foreign nations, whose interests cannot entirely coincide with those of the United States."

To not respond to the needs of the frontiers, in Knox's opinion, could plant "seeds of disgust [with] sentiments of separate interests [arising] out of the local situation, which [would] be cherished, either by insidious, domestic, or foreign emissaries."⁵²



Little Turtle. The chief of the Miami tribe who participated in the defeat of Josiah Harmar in 1790 and Arthur St. Clair in 1791 (National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution).

Another Failure (1791)

Although the Indians wanted to capitalize on their victory over Harmar, they were unable to get a British commitment to help them, and the winter of 1790–1791 was spent in attacking American settlements north of the Ohio, that is, at Marietta and Cincinnati. As a result, those living on the outer perimeters of those settlements abandoned their homes. Addressing Congress in December 1790 Washington acknowledged the need for action: “The aggressors should be made sensible that the government of the Union is not less capable of punishing their crimes, than it is disposed to respect their rights and reward their attachments.”¹

Loyalty of the Indians was bought by the British through generous gifts — an inventory of the period shows the variety of items supplied: “blankets, buckles, armbands, earrings, belts, fishhooks, awls, spears, mirrors, knives, razors, scissors, combs, thimbles, jew’s harps, rifles, pistols, powder, shot, flints, lead, beads, needles, tomahawks, pipes, tobacco, laced hats, flags, plumes, medals, coats, bridles, kettles, lace, ribbon and ... rum.” To the British the gifts were “a down payment for their future services and a guarantee of continued support,” but the Indians saw them “as rewards for past services ... and as an indication of British power and commitment.”²

Reality was forcefully brought to Washington’s attention by a letter dated January 8, 1791, from Rufus Putman, the Ohio Company leader in Marietta, which reported the death of 11 men, 1 woman, and 2 children at a settlement 40 miles from Marietta on the Muskingum River. Needed was immediate protection by federal troops, otherwise they were “a ruined people.” Without help no new settlers could be expected and those at Marietta would either “fall a prey to the savages [or] be so reduced and discouraged as to give up the settlement.”³

Washington acted by making St. Clair the major-general commanding. He was told that the “great mass of the people of the United States” did not want an Indian war, and the government’s “great policy” was “to establish a just and liberal peace with all the Indian tribes.” To that end Colonel Thomas Proctor was to contact the Miami and Wabash Indians. The message from the secretary of war to the Miami dated March 11, 1791, contained threats as well as an invitation for the Indians “to fly, to fort Washington” to agree to peace. Otherwise they would be ruined. “The United States [were] powerful, and able to send forth such numbers of warriors as would drive [them] entirely out of the country.”⁴ Congress laid a base for Knox’s statement when, on March 3,⁵ it agreed to add a new regiment to the army, thereby increasing its authorized strength, not counting officers, from 1,216 to 2,128.

St. Clair’s instructions⁶ were keyed to two dates. Proctor and others contacting the Indians were to be back by May 5, and by July 10 “a force of three thousand effectives at

least” were to rendezvous at “fort Washington.” If, before July 10, the Indians remained hostile, Brigadier-General Charles Scott of Kentucky was to take a force of not more than 750 “against the Wea, or Ouiatanon towns” to discourage Indian “depredations” along the “line of frontiers.” If St. Clair should think “a second similar blow” necessary, he could order one.

If St. Clair needed to march after July 10, he was to go to the “Miami village, in order to establish a strong and permanent military post at that place.” That post’s object would be to awe and curb the Indians. If the Indians were amenable to a treaty, after the triumph of “disciplined valor ... over the undisciplined Indians,” the terms should be liberal. Knox suggested a boundary line of the Wabash and Miami [Maumee] rivers. Knox observed that “Mr. Duer, the contractor for provisions,” was in the city and had “promis[ed] the highest exertions ... to furnish [needed] rations.”⁷

Secretary of State Jefferson was not enthusiastic about another expedition. On April 15, 1791, he wrote to Senator Charles Carroll of Maryland:

Our news from the westward is disagreeable. Constant murders commit[ted] by the Indians, and their combination threatens to be more and more extensive. I hope we shall give them a thorough drubbing this summer, and then change our tomahawk into a golden chain of friendship. The most economical as well as most humane conduct towards them is to bribe them into peace, and to retain them in peace by eternal bribes. The expedition this year would have served for presents on the most liberal scale for one hundred years; nor shall we otherwise ever get rid of any army, or of our debt. The least rag of Indian depredation will be an excuse to raise troops for those who love to have troops, and for those who think that a public debt is a good thing.⁸

Although Procter’s peace mission was scheduled to be finished by May 5, 1791, it was some time after that date before he reported a lack of success. The British commandant of Niagara refused to let him travel from present-day Buffalo, New York, to what is now Sandusky, Ohio, across Lake Erie so he could meet with the Miami. Another part of the overall plan was carried out. To discourage Indian raids on white settlers two raids were made on villages on the Wabash River by mounted Kentucky militia, one in May and the other in August.⁹

The militia in the first raid on the Wea village of Ouiatanon (close by present-day Lafayette, Indiana) met little resistance since the village warriors had gone to join over 1,000 other warriors gathering at the Miami villages in anticipation of an attack in that direction. Many helpless Indians were slain, Ouiatanon and several smaller villages burned, and crops destroyed. The militia were back south of the Ohio by June 15 with 41 prisoners, mostly women and children. Although the Indians were told to come to the mouth of the Little Miami River (Fort Washington) to talk about peace on July 1, when they arrived, the Americans would not talk. They had other plans.¹⁰

Perhaps in response to Washington’s order that Indian captives be treated with humanity, Scott of the Kentucky militia, who led the May raid, bragged: “It is with much pride and pleasure I mention that no act of inhumanity has marked the conduct of the volunteers of Kentucky on this occasion; even the inveterate habit of scalping the dead, ceased to influence.” During this period money was at times paid for Indian scalps.¹¹

Except for a later similar attack on Indians along the Wabash River by mounted Kentucky militia led by Lieutenant-Colonel James Wilkinson in August, nothing else about the campaign went well. And, although Wilkinson destroyed some Indian villages and captured some women and children, his attack mobilized the Indians to prepare for war. The tribes were outraged that Wilkinson’s attack came at a time when they were considering

peaceful negotiations with the Americans. Following the raid, red-painted tobacco was passed among Detroit tribes as a call for war.¹²

The success of the two militia incursions north of the Ohio were no bellwether for what St. Clair was preparing to do. These were swift strikes carried out over a period of days. Wilkinson's mounted militia covered 70 miles in less than three days. By contrast, when St. Clair started his major movement the first day, the army only advanced a mile and a half, and, over a 5-day period, 22 miles.¹³

If all went as planned a force of about 3,000 would be assembled at Fort Washington by July 10. St. Clair's ultimate objective was a just and liberal peace with the Indians. Knox told St. Clair¹⁴ that public sentiment was against an Indian war, except as a last resort. Physically what was to be accomplished was the establishment of a fort at the Miami villages with posts of communication connecting it to the Ohio River. If the expedition went forward Knox wanted to counter any British apprehensions by telling them of the American intentions but also that this "had better follow than precede the possession of the post" at the Miami villages. So as to keep the seat of government timely informed, the existing post rider from Philadelphia to Fort Pitt every other Friday would be augmented by adding the other Fridays. St. Clair was to set up an efficient method of communicating between the garrisons in the Northwest Territory.

Nothing went as planned. Every element needed for a successful campaign was missing. Some of the fault was that of St. Clair, but mostly he was the victim of chicanery in the upper levels of government. Knox's proposed army of 3,000 was nowhere to be found. On St. Clair's arrival at Fort Washington in May 1791 only 75 soldiers were there, and in other forts spread from Vincennes to Marietta, there were only another 189. Most of the surviving regulars from Harmar's campaign were not interested in an army that had not paid them during the year 1790. Without the needed manpower St. Clair could not start a campaign in July as had been originally planned. If Washington, who had been in the South, had not returned to Philadelphia around the first of August and put pressure on Knox, St. Clair may not have launched his offensive in 1791. A mystery is how, with all the problems he had getting supplies and men, St. Clair could ask Knox to tell Washington that "nothing ha[d] been left undone." He was optimistic, writing on September 18 that "every possible exertion [would] be made to bring the campaign to a speedy and happy issue," and on September 23 that "[a]ll seem[ed] now as if it would go well."¹⁵

Worse still, there was not enough food. In this St. Clair was the victim of the reckless greed of William Duer. Duer, whose effort to handsomely profit from the option to buy five million acres of Ohio land the Scioto Company received from Congress in 1787 had failed, had the contract to supply St. Clair's army. He was not an unlikely person to have the contract. During the revolution he had received similar contracts for the Continental army. What was different was that by 1791 he had lost much of the wealth he had initially inherited and had maintained throughout the revolution. In fact a year later he was committed to debtors' prison when an effort to corner the market on government bonds failed.¹⁶

Unfortunately for St. Clair the secretary of war was involved in land speculation with Duer at this time. While St. Clair was waiting at Fort Washington for men and supplies, Duer and Knox were busy negotiating a July 1, 1791, agreement with Massachusetts for the purchase of two million acres in Maine for 10 cents an acre. Although Duer received \$85,000 from the Treasury to purchase supplies for the army, he diverted much of it to land speculation and loaned \$10,000 to Knox. Even though Duer had agents ready to purchase what was needed at Fort Pitt and elsewhere, they had no money, and merchants were not willing

to make sales on credit.¹⁷ When Knox received complaints in June from General Richard Butler, St. Clair's second in command, Knox told Duer, in private correspondence, "For God's sake, put the matter of provisions on the frontier in perfect train." And again in July, "I hope in God you have made other and more effectual [arrangements] or you will suffer exceedingly."¹⁸

Knox compounded the supply problems by appointing an incompetent friend, Samuel Hodgdon, as quartermaster for the army. Not only did Hodgdon fail to show up at Fort Washington until September 7, but he was also an abysmal failure as quartermaster. An army that expected to construct forts en route to the Miami villages and that, at times, would need to make roads through forests on October 14 only had one frow and one saw. Instead of supplying 1,000 axes as needed, Hodgdon ordered 100. For three-pound cannons he supplied four-pound cannon balls; traveling forges did not have anvils. The list of Hodgdon's failures is long. Probably the most important was the failure to get food to the army as it traveled on its way to the Miami villages.¹⁹

While waiting to have his full army assembled, in mid-August St. Clair moved part of it six miles forward to Ludlow's Station, where there was "green forage" for the horses. A later House committee report attributed the move as intended "to deprive [the soldiers] of the means of intoxication, which were very plentifully supplied at Fort Washington."²⁰ On September 17 these troops moved forward another 18 miles to the Great Miami River and constructed an interim fort, Fort Hamilton, which was about "50 yards square" and was intended to be a link for supplies the army would need.²¹

His army of about 2,300, which left Fort Washington in September, was made up much more of militia and levied men, that is, men obligated for a limited period of service, than those in the regular army. Harmar, who was still at Fort Washington in the fall of 1791, thought St. Clair foolhardy to set out with such a collection of misfits. He was amazed that one as competent as St. Clair "should think of hazarding ... his reputation and life, and the lives of so many others, knowing ... the enemy with whom he was going to contend." Ebenezer Denny, who had been Harmar's adjutant and was an aide to St. Clair, wrote in his diary that the "bulk of the army was composed [of] men collected from the streets and prisons of the cities ... with the officers commanding them, totally unacquainted with the business in which they were engaged."²²

According to Winthrop Sargent, St. Clair's adjutant general, who was also the secretary for the Northwest Territory and an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati, the army, though bigger than Harmar's, was of the same poor quality. He described the men as "generally wanting the essential stamina of soldiers" who come from "the offscourings of large towns and cities; enervated by idleness, debaucheries and every species of vice [who could not possibly be] made competent to the arduous duties of Indian warfare." To top this off, they were "badly clothed, badly paid and badly fed."²³

The next link was Fort Jefferson, built between October 14 and the 24th about 44 miles from Fort Hamilton at modern Greenville, Ohio. The only significant evidence of Indians to this point had been the theft of 58 horses on September 27. But they were being watched by a young Tecumseh, a Shawnee who was later to lead the opposition to white settlers, and other spies.²⁴

As the army left Fort Jefferson on October 24, with 200 women and children in tow, without guides and relying on a compass to lead them through the wilderness, St. Clair knew little about what the Indians might have in mind. He was up against a deadline of November 3 to accomplish his mission. On that date the term of service of many of the

men expired, and he could only expect that they would not be willing to go forward. An officer, describing the situation, thought the campaign would have to stop: "forage entirely destroyed; horses failing and cannot be kept up; provisions from hand to mouth."²⁵ Many men were calling for their discharge.

The army arrived at a road St. Clair thought to be some 20 miles away from the Miami villages, but in fact they were near an upper branch of the Wabash River, considerably further away from the villages. For several days the army did not move. On the 26th through the 29th it waited for a supply of flour, which arrived on the 28th.²⁶

This was a time of discontent, with some levies claiming their six-month enlistments were up, and some militia were ready to return to Fort Washington. A small forward movement was made on the 30th, but the army did not move on the 31st, a day on which around 60 militia marched off. St. Clair sent the 1st regiment in pursuit to discourage any further desertions and to protect convoys coming with more supplies.²⁷

During this period it was apparent that Indians were in the area. When sentries disappeared St. Clair could not be sure if they were victims of Indians or deserters. His aide-de-camp, Major Denny, stated that "a knowledge of the collected force of the enemy, of this we were perfectly ignorant."²⁸ In fact about 1,000 warriors were nearby under leadership of Little Turtle and Blue Jacket, of the Miami and Shawnee, respectively.²⁹

With all of his other problems St. Clair was also extremely ill from gout. Many of the soldiers were also suffering from colds, and the weather was wet and cold.³⁰ A disgusted Lieutenant Colonel William Darke, one of the levies, wrote his wife shortly before the wrath of the warriors fell upon the army:

[We] have been since [August 29] crawling through Indian country. For an excuse for our idleness ... we have built two sorts of forts — though in fact we have been very busy doing nothing.... I expect we shall soon return as most of the levies' times will be out this month; and many other reasons — the food being all killed with frost long since in this cold country, and the horses dying every day; [also] I think bad management in every department. ... I in short expect by the last of this month we shall begin our march back, which if we perform as slowly as we seem to advance, will take us til March to see Fort Washington again. ... I expect we shall march ... early on [tomorrow] toward the Indian towns, where we, I believe, shall not find an Indian.³¹

As it turned out, those that survived got back to Fort Washington much earlier.

The army advanced another eight miles and on the evening of November 3 was about 97 miles from Fort Washington and at a place where there were "an immense number of old and new Indian camps."³² Camp was made on the bank of a creek that was a branch of the Wabash River. This was the last night for more than one-half of the army. Because of the nature of the camp site, militia were placed on one side of the river and the rest on the other. Since the army did not get to the site until late, the men were allowed to go to bed without completing normal defensive steps.³³

The army formed on parade with weapons before daylight on November 4 and were dismissed still before sunrise. Not long thereafter it became clear that the army was surrounded by Indians, who were firing from all sides. Indian tactics are described by Adjutant Denny's journal: "The enemy from the front filed off to the right and left, and completely surrounded the camp, killed and cut off nearly all the guards, and approached close to the lines. They advanced from one tree, log or stump to another under cover of the smoke of [the army's] fire. The artillery and musketry made a tremendous noise, but did little executions."³⁴ Adding to confusion was the wailing and praying of the women, who were in the center of the defensive square.³⁵

The Indians singled out officers, and as they were killed or wounded disorganization set in, and it wasn't long before St. Clair decided the camp should be abandoned and the army retreat. The retreat became a rout. Sargent said the "conduct of the army after quitting the ground was in a most supreme degree disgraceful.... Arms ammunition and accoutrements were almost thrown away, and even the officers in some instances diverted themselves of their fuses and cartridge boxes, exemplifying by this conduct a kind of authority for the most precipitate and ignominious flight."³⁶

It was, said a survivor, "every man for himself." St. Clair was later to write that the retreat was, "you may be sure, a very precipitate one. It was, in fact, a flight." Those fleeing went into the woods and, after bypassing the Indians athwart the road, fled eastward along the road. The battle was over by 9:30 in the morning.³⁷

Sargent wrote in his diary for November 4: "The troops have all been defeated, and though it is impossible at this time to ascertain our loss, yet there can be no manner of doubt that more than one-half of the army are either killed or wounded."³⁸

Fortunately for the fleeing survivors the Indians devoted their time to ransacking the camp and in savagely punishing and killing many of those unable to get away. Little Turtle and Blue Jacket failed to convince their warriors to pursue the retreating Americans after the Ottawas' medicine men predicted heavy losses if there was another battle.³⁹

When those retreating reached Fort Jefferson, St. Clair sent them on their way to Fort Washington since there were not adequate provisions at Fort Jefferson. His loss was devastating — out of 1,400 men 630 died or were missing, and only about 500 were without wounds. On the other side, the Indians had 21 killed and 40 wounded, and were urged by a chieftain to "war on, like men, forever." The heart of St. Clair's second in command, Richard Butler, who had been an Indian trader, a brigadier-general in the Revolutionary War, and a government representative dealing with and often dictating to the Indian nations, was cut into pieces and eaten by the victors. The Indians were led by three distinguished warriors: Little Turtle, Miami; Blue Jacket, Shawnee; and Buckongahelas, Delaware. Estimates of the number of Indians range from 1,200 to 3,000.⁴⁰

Even though Fort Jefferson was without adequate provisions, it was not abandoned. The first foot soldiers were back to Fort Washington by November 8. St. Clair made the trip of some 70 miles in three and a half days and immediately took to his bed for the next two weeks. Cincinnati was overrun by unruly, drunken men in need of clothing and wanting to be paid. Discharge vouchers, needed to get pay due, were sold by those anxious to leave or wanting money, in St. Clair's opinion, for whiskey. Desertions were common. St. Clair was not sympathetic and refused to furnish clothing unless the soldiers agreed to have the price deducted from their pay, and refused to pay since the records of enlistment had been lost on the battlefield.⁴¹

St. Clair had the painful job of reporting to Knox. His letter started with the statement, "Yesterday afternoon the remains of the army under my command got back to this place."⁴² On learning of the defeat Washington angrily told his private secretary, Tobias Lear, that he had warned St. Clair to "beware of a surprise! You know how the Indians fight us." Washington continued, "And yet!! To suffer that army to be cut to pieces, hacked, butchered, tomahawked by a surprise — the very thing I guarded him against!! Oh God, Oh God, he is worse than a murderer! How can he answer to his country? The blood of the slain is upon him — the curse of widows and orphans — the curse of Heaven!"⁴³ Considering the fact that Washington seldom had an army of over 5,000 during the Revolutionary War, he must have been bewildered as to why an army of over 2,000 could not be successful in the West.⁴⁴

Notwithstanding such damning criticism, St. Clair was found faultless by a Congressional committee investigating the defeat; it concluded that “the failure of the ... expedition [could] in no respect, be imputed to his conduct, either at any time before or during the action.” This was true as to his conduct under fire, but his leadership and judgment before the battle left much to be desired. The committee also noted that the orders to St. Clair to proceed were so “express and unequivocal” that he had no discretion as to whether to proceed or not.⁴⁵

St. Clair was a better politician than general. He lost his commission as a major-general, but through his own resources and the efforts of Knox, Duer, and Alexander Hamilton — for whom Duer had worked — who were not blameless for the disaster, he was not censured for his actions. He retained his position as governor of the Northwest Territory. St. Clair’s explanation of what happened was that defeat only came following an “obstinate struggle against a greatly superior force.”⁴⁶

Mad Anthony Prepares (1792–1793)

Each side had to decide what would happen next. Following the battle the Indians met near present-day Lima, Ohio. Unable to decide on whether to seek a peace treaty or to continue the war, another council meeting was planned for the spring of 1792. In fact the grand Indian council did not meet until August and September. In Philadelphia, Knox told the president on December 26, 1791, that he was afraid the “pride of victory [was] too strong ... for [the Indians] to receive ... offers of peace on reasonable terms,” but that nonetheless an effort should be made consonant with the “part of mankind ... who ... consider the Indians as oppressed.”¹

Washington and Knox were in agreement that the army had to be rebuilt and increased in size. The increase was at least partly the result of the belief that as many as 3,000 warriors had opposed St. Clair. Of additional concern was the unpredictable conduct of 15,000 warriors in the Southern tribes, among whom were “young warriors ... ardently for war.” A larger force was needed to protect “a frontier of immense extent surrounded by barbarous Indians.”²

Knox proposed that 5,168 men be committed to three-year enlistments at better pay. An increase in cavalry was required, and mounted militia should supplement the force, but, in general, the militia wasn't to be relied on. The force should be “disciplined according to the nature of the service.”³ After a heated debate, on March 5, Congress essentially agreed,⁴ provided the increased numbers were to be discharged “as soon as the United States [was] at peace with the Indian tribes.” The president was also given authority “to call into service ... cavalry ... necessary for the protection of the frontiers.”

An exercise of the presidential power came in 1794. Congress had enacted an excise tax on distilleries in 1791⁵ that some considered “unjust and tyrannical to mountain men.” “In the Appalachians and beyond, distilling was a practical method of using surplus corn.” Whiskey could be transported much easier than corn, and “kegs [of whiskey] were even used as currency.” Most of the opposition to the tax was quieted when Congress modified the law. But in western Pennsylvania there was organized resistance; those who followed the law were terrorized, and “federal marshals at Pittsburgh were roughly handled.” Anarchy was afoot, and the governor of Pennsylvania refused to enforce the law. President Washington called out 15,000 militia from four states, including Pennsylvania, and put down what was called the Whiskey Rebellion. Washington and Hamilton led the militia over the Alleghenies, and the resistance collapsed; two ringleaders were convicted of treason and were thereafter pardoned by Washington.⁶

Washington, guided by political reality rather than personal preference, selected “Mad Anthony” Wayne, who had connections with both Pennsylvania and Georgia, from a list of

Revolutionary War generals to command the enlarged army. His commission as major-general was tendered April 12, 1792, and accepted the next day.⁷ Washington candidly assessed Anthony as

more active and enterprising than Judicious and cautious. No oeconomist it is feared. Open to flattery; vain; easily imposed upon; and liable to be drawn into scrapes. Too indulgent ... to his Officers and men. Whether sober, or a little addicted to the bottle, I know not.⁸

The “Mad Anthony” tag was voiced by an angry deserter for whom Wayne refused to intervene.⁹ Wayne was opinionated. He wrote in December 1791 that there would not be “a permanent peace with [the hostile] Indians until they were made to experience [the American’s] superiority.”¹⁰ At age 47 Wayne was an experienced soldier, having participated in many of the Revolutionary War battles as a general officer who returned home to Pennsylvania in 1783 to a hero’s welcome. In Pennsylvania he spent two years as a member of the state assembly and was a part of the Pennsylvania convention that ratified the new federal constitution. The offer of the commission was timely. His efforts to manage a rice plantation, given to him by Georgia as a reward for his services in the state during the war, had failed, and his election to Congress from Georgia in 1791 was overturned on the grounds of fraud.¹¹

Washington was not committed to a military solution. The summer months of 1792 were used to extend peace overtures to the Indians. Either through misunderstandings as to whether the messengers were spies, or from Indian hubris, the messengers were killed. Rufus Putnam didn’t have much hope for peace, saying that “the Indians began to believe

them Selves invinsible.”¹² Knox, writing in August 1792, ruled out military operations that year: “The season of the year is too far advanced, the number of recruits too few, and the undisciplined state of the army such as to preclude any great expectations of ... important movements this season.” In no event should there be “another conflict with the savages with raw recruits.”¹³

Some success was achieved in the fall of 1792 when Putnam, at Vincennes, negotiated a treaty with Indians from the Wabash and Illinois areas. Putnam was authorized to state that the United States “required no lands of the Wabash Indians not [t]heretofore ceded.” Representatives from certain Wabash and Illinois tribes agreed to recognize American sovereignty and in return were given the imprecise promise that they should have lands “to which they [had] a just claim.” When news of this treaty was carried to the Indians in the Miami and Sandusky country, it fell on deaf ears. The Indians of that area wanted to reclaim land taken by the United States. Knox saw the treaty as a plus in “probably



Anthony Wayne. Wayne defeated Indian allies at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1795 (Library of Congress).

detach[ing] 800 warriors from the hostile Indians.”¹⁴ Except for the valuable appearance of a peaceful solution with these Indians during the year 1793, Putnam’s efforts went for naught when the Senate refused in 1794 to ratify the treaty over a concern that it did not specify that Indian lands could only be purchased by the United States, a principle Washington endorsed.

Overall 1792, until November, saw little offensive action by either the United States or the Indians. Lieutenant Colonel James Wilkinson, with a regular army commission dated in October 1791 and a promotion to brigadier-general on March 5, 1792, was in command at Fort Washington. He acted to improve the supply line between Fort Washington and the forts projecting into Indian lands by constructing Fort St. Clair between Forts Hamilton and Jefferson. This made the distance between these forts about 25 miles, the distance normally traveled by a pack-horse supply train in a day. In November an attack was made on a supply train in the care of 100 Kentuckians. The manpower loss was not great on either side, but the loss of most of the pack horses made the task of supplying the forward forts difficult.¹⁵

Wayne, headquartered in Pittsburgh and assembling recruits in the summer of 1792, carried out organizational changes decided on by Washington. The army was converted into the Legion of the United States and Wayne titled the legionary general. Sub-legions were made up of dragoons, artillery, riflemen, and infantrymen. Each of the four on paper had 1,280 men, making a total “exactly the same size as Caesar’s legions.” Wayne was a harsh disciplinarian who had punishment administered without delay. Punishment could range from death to branding the word “coward” on the forehead. Most common was flogging. Anthony took to heart Knox’s admonition that “another conflict with the savages with raw recruits is to be avoided by all means.” In November 1792 the legion was moved 22 miles downstream from Pittsburgh “to escape the blandishments the city offered [the] men” and the camp labeled Legionville.¹⁶

In the fall of 1792, meeting at the junction of the Auglaize and Maumee rivers (called Grand Glaize here), the Indians decided on how they should deal with the Americans. They were skeptical of the Americans, saying, “Every time the Big knives get ready to come against us, they ... send [a] message to us for peace.—Then they come to fight us.”¹⁷ The message coming out of a divided council in October 1792 was that the Indians would meet with United States’ representatives at Lower Sandusky in the spring if it was understood the boundary of Indian country would be the Ohio River, lands falsely held returned, and the intrusive forts destroyed. When the message was conveyed to Knox by the Six Nations, most of the conditions were not disclosed.¹⁸

In the process of agreeing to the meeting with the understanding that neither side would bother the other in the interim, Knox angered the tribes. The boundary line was not mentioned, nor were the intrusive forts, and he said the meeting would be at the Miami Rapids. He received a stern reply accusing the Americans of speaking “with a double tongue”—while seeking peace they were preparing for war. The reply said that without “steps to give up [the American] encroachments,” they could not restrain their young men. Knox responded in February 1793 saying a mistake was made in identifying the Miami Rapids and the meeting should go forward at Lower Sandusky. He continued to ignore demands regarding boundaries and forts.¹⁹

The decision to talk rather than fight upset Wayne, who wanted to move into Indian country in the spring of 1793. His message to Knox was that he hoped “every Idea of peace is done away —& that more efficient measures will be adopted to Complete the Legion” so

that peace could come “by the sword.”²⁰ Wayne’s army had grown after mid-1792 into a large, disciplined force. The soldiers were trained to aim “waist band high” to be most effective.²¹

The British, whose object was to maintain an Indian barrier between Canada and the United States, wanted to participate in peace negotiations. The orders from the Home Office in London were to maintain peace with the United States even if it meant giving up the forts still held by the British within the boundary of the United States. England already had its hands full — war broke out between France and England in 1793. This development did not bode well for the Indians, who needed British support to “see justice done [to them].”²²

With “the sentiments of the great mass of the Citizens of the United States ... adverse in the extreme to an Indian War,” Washington directed that there be peace discussions but, at the same time, was insistent that Wayne “prepare for a conflict with the savages.... No relaxation [was to] be made in the disciplining of the troops and most especially in making them perfect marksmen.” Wayne might rightfully have thought he was getting mixed signals. Knox communicated to him that a possible consequence of a war that could destroy tribes would be a world opinion grouping the United States with the “conduct ... of the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru.” With peace commissioners scheduled to travel into Indian country, Wayne was told that “their lives [depended] on an absolute restraining of all hostile or offensive operations.” Nonetheless, Knox authorized Wayne to proceed down the Ohio to Fort Washington with 2,000 soldiers. They arrived May 5, their movement being carefully observed by the Indians. Their positioning met with Washington’s approval. He wrote on May 6, “If the sword is to decide [the Indian issue] ... [it is necessary] that the army of government may be enabled to strike home.”²³

Commissioners for the United States, sent to negotiate “with the hostile Indians north-west of the Ohio,” were one from Massachusetts, Benjamin Lincoln, secretary at war during the Confederation before Knox; Timothy Pickering of Pennsylvania, who was to be secretary of war after Knox; and one from Virginia, Beverly Randolph, a former governor of Virginia. When they arrived near Niagara in late May 1793, there were no Indians to meet with them, but they were treated hospitably by John Graves Simcoe, British lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, acting in the place of the governor-in-chief, Lord Dorchester, who was out of the country. Simcoe’s surface show of friendliness disguised his true anti-American sentiments. His objective was to manipulate and support the Indians so that they remained a safety buffer for Canada and England’s forts held within the United States in such a way that no war was provoked between the United States and Great Britain.²⁴

The American commissioners’ job was to determine, by no later than August, if a treaty was possible so that Wayne could carry out an offensive if negotiations failed. Early in June the commissioners knew the Indians wanted the Ohio as a boundary and let it be known that the United States was ready to make concessions. In mid-July they were still at Niagara. They complained to Knox and Washington that “Wayne ha[d] cut and cleared a road straight from fort Washington, into the Indian country ... continu[ing] *six miles beyond*” Fort Jefferson, and the result was that warriors were leaving the council and delaying negotiations. They wanted Wayne to withdraw “cattle, horses, and troops” from the advance, and Knox issued the necessary order.²⁵

The commissioners arrived at the Detroit River on July 21. The Indians were still not ready to receive them at Sandusky, and in the end no meeting was held with the body of the Indians. The British closely monitored the exchanges between the two groups. The negotiations were complicated by the fact that the Indians were split among themselves.

Some, such as the Ottawas, Chippewas, and Potawatomis, located near the Great Lakes, were for taking a conciliatory position, but the preponderance of the Indians, led by the Shawnees, were insistent that any agreement would have to be based on the Ohio River as a boundary.²⁶

In hindsight the Indians passed up a good opportunity. Starting their instructions²⁷ the commissioners were reminded of the “extreme dislike of the great majority of the citizens of the United States to an Indian war.” They were to consider the “treaty of fort Harmar, made in January, 1789 ... as having been formed on solid grounds — the principle being that of a fair purchase and sale.” But if it was determined that some tribes with an interest in the ceded land were not included, or if the payment was inadequate, “liberal compensation [could] be made to ... just claimants.” The commissioners were authorized to, and they offered to, give up much of the land ceded at Fort Harmar and to otherwise treat the Ohio River as a boundary. In no event was the land that the United States had sold to the Ohio Company and the Symmes Associates to be surrendered. A one-time payment of \$50,000 in goods and \$10,000 per year thereafter could be offered. Provisions in their instructions reflect the difficulties inherent in dealing with the Indians. They were “to ascertain ... the names and numbers of the ... Indian tribes ... the names of the influential chiefs [and] their divisions of lands.” Boundary lines agreed to should be clearly identified. From a policy standpoint they should avoid “confirm[ing] the idea of [a] union, or general confederacy” of the Indians.

On July 31 the commissioners told the Indians that it was not possible to make the river Ohio the boundary and outlined many of the concessions the United States was willing to make. The Indians asked for time to reply to the U.S. position. A reply delivered on August 16 asserted that the agreement to meet with the commissioners had been conditioned on their “consent[ing] to acknowledge and confirm [the Indians’] boundary line to be the Ohio,” and absent that a meeting could not be held. In closing the Indians said: “Look back, and review the lands from whence we have been driven to this spot. We can retreat no farther, because the country behind hardly affords food for its present inhabitants; and we have therefore resolved to leave our bones in this small space to which we are now confined.”²⁸

The commissioners immediately accepted that the negotiations were at an end, and in a holier-than-thou message said: “We came hither ... to make a peace that would be beneficial to the Indians, as well as to the United States; ... the justice and humanity of the United States ... would not only have continued, but extended their beneficence to the Indian nations, and, so far as it depended on them, have rendered the peace as lasting as the hills; and we should have been extremely happy in laying the foundation of so much good.”²⁹

On August 23 the commissioners, after arriving back at Fort Erie, sent letters to Wayne, via the deputy quartermaster at Pittsburgh, telling him that there would not be a peace treaty. “No expense [was] to be spared” to get letters to him, several copies being sent at different times and on different routes, “with the utmost speed and certainty.”³⁰ Wayne did not get the message until September 11.

An unleashed Wayne, after a large desertion of Kentucky volunteers, and a fruitless offensive effort by other Kentuckians, decided to settle in for the winter with the legion six miles north of the most intruding fort, Jefferson. Writing to Knox on October 5 from his camp (Hobson’s Choice) near Fort Washington, Wayne outlined his lack of manpower, in part due to “a malady called the *influenza*,” and told him of his decision. He assured Knox that he would “not commit the legion unnecessarily.”³¹ Without any difficulty the legion marched from Hobson’s Choice to six miles north of Fort Jefferson in seven days, arriving October 13.

The encampment, which he called Greenville after his Revolutionary War comrade-in-arms, Nathaniel Greene, had an Achilles heel. A supply train going from Fort St. Clair to Fort Jefferson was ambushed. Without enough supplies at Fort Jefferson to sustain an offensive move or to feed and clothe the legion, on November 13 Wayne sent Wilkinson back 70 miles to Fort Washington for supplies. Wilkinson, who traveled with 500 infantrymen, made the trip without difficulty, but by the time he was back, the horses had eaten so much forage on the trip that it was necessary to immediately have another convoy from Fort Washington.³²

With the supply situation under control, Wayne decided to construct a fort some 30 miles north of Fort Jefferson at the battlefield on which St. Clair was defeated. The fort, named Fort Recovery, was completed without interference in December 1793. Enhancing the firepower of the fort was the recovery of cannon captured by the Indians in the battle of 1791, which were buried near the battlefield.³³

Mad Anthony Prevails — Treaty of Greenville (1794–1795)

The fate of the Northwest Indians in December 1793 hinged on the relations between England and the United States. The Indians in the Miamis' country, which was the home of the most belligerent tribes, were close to starvation during the winter of 1793–1794. This kept them from mounting attacks against Wayne and made them dependent on the British for food. Wayne reported to Knox in March 1794 that since January there had been no evidence of the Indians. He proposed to force a battle with the Indians by establishing “a strong post on the banks of the Auglaize”¹ in the midst of Miami country, which would compel the Indians to act or abandon their homes. Canada was the key to the Indians being able to resist the Americans, but in the opinion of the governor-general, Lord Dorchester, it did not have the manpower to fight the Americans if the Indian controversy should result in a war between the two countries.

There were several flashpoints where the two could end up in combat. In addition to the confrontation in the Northwest Territory, there were border problems in New York and Vermont. In February 1794, Dorchester, returning from England in August 1793, alarmed by the conduct of the Americans, told representatives of the Six Nations that “from the manner in which the People of the [United] States push on, and act, and talk ... and from what I learn of their conduct towards the Sea, I shall not be surprised if we are at war with them in the course of the present year.”²

Dorchester, fearing that Detroit was the object of Wayne's army, decided in February that Detroit should be defended by “occupy[ing] nearly the same posts on the Miami [Maumee] River which [the British had] demolished after the peace [of 1783].”³ Acting on this decision Fort Miamis was constructed and by July had its guns mounted.

Governor Simcoe carried Dorchester's Six Nations speech to the Miami, Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo, and Wabash tribes. On April 14, 1794, it was read to delegates of the tribes gathered at Grand Glaize, that is, at the intersection of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers. The Indians told Simcoe: “You have set our hearts right, and we are happy to see you standing on your feet in our Country.”⁴ Dorchester's speech plus British resurrection of its abandoned Fort Miamis, a few miles from Grand Glaize, caused Joseph Brant to urge all tribes to support the confrontation with Wayne. Probably 2,000 were gathered near Fort Miamis by mid-June. The British worked fervently to gather and provision the tribes.⁵

At this time an underlying dispute between England and America was the continued occupation of forts by the British within the United States. Dorchester, who wanted the Indian buffer to protect the forts, warned the Americans in the early part of summer that

“taking possession of any part of the Indian Territory, either for the purpose of war or sovereignty [would be a] direct violation of His Britannic Majesty’s rights.”⁶

Washington did not want a war with England and, in May 1794, dispatched the chief justice of the Supreme Court, John Jay, to England to work through the boundary questions and shipping disputes arising from British efforts to control the seas during its time of war with France. Jay assured the British that Wayne would not attack any pre-1784 British posts. On its side, England sent instructions to Canada that it should “prepare to evacuate the disputed posts and to maintain [a] peaceful status quo.”⁷ Since months could pass before communications from Europe would reach the Northwest Territory events there proceeded without a timely awareness of what was happening in the Jay negotiations.

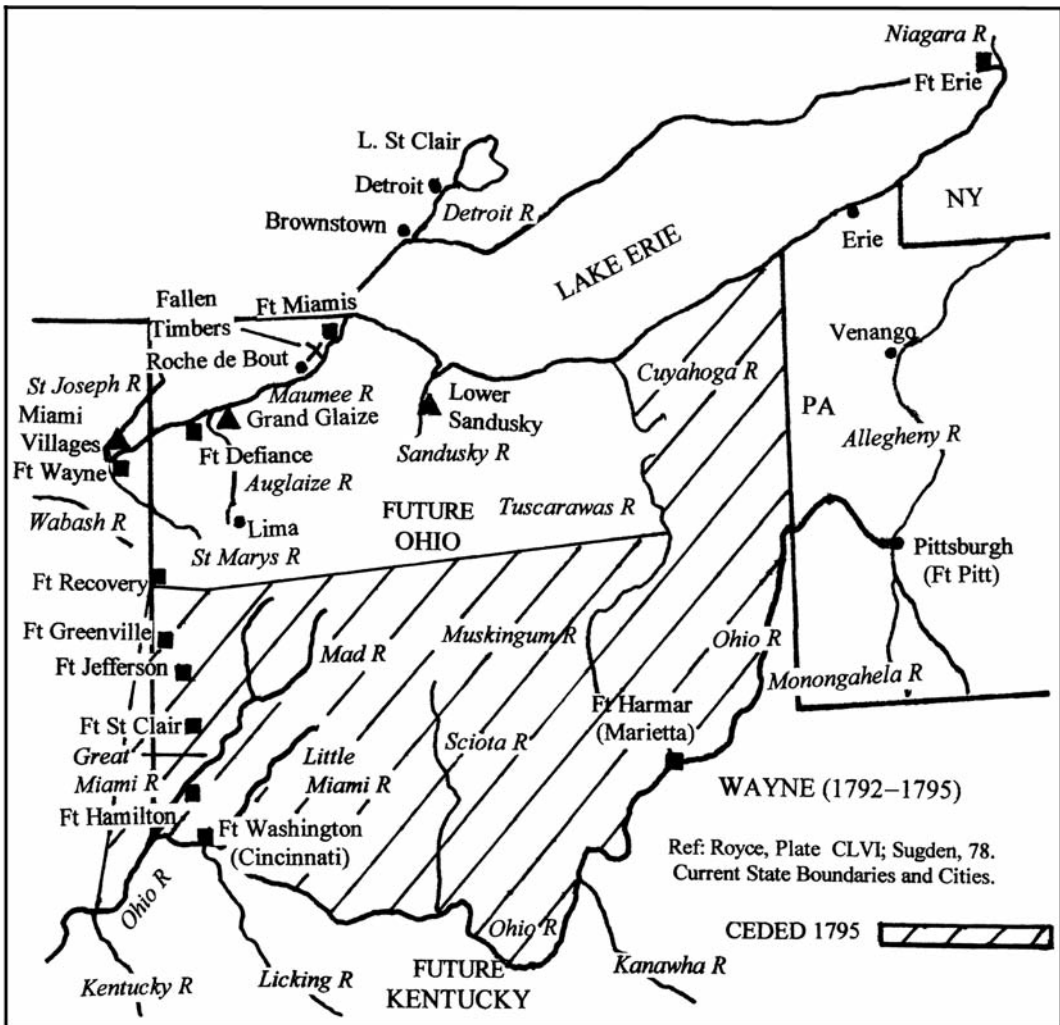
Unaware of the diplomatic developments in London, Wayne was intent on advancing into Indian country but was slowed by the failure of his supply system. The civilian contractors failed to stockpile sufficient rations for him to proceed and were not responsive to calls for greater action. Wayne seized all of their pack-horses and over a month’s time (mid-May to mid-June) was able to get the needed provisions.⁸ The construction of Fort Miamis outraged Washington’s secretary of state, Edmund Randolph, who wrote to the British ambassador that the construction was “an act ... calculated to support an enemy whom [the United States was] seeking to bring to peace [and that] honor and safety require[d] that [the] invasion shall be expelled.”⁹ Wayne sized up the situation: “The very quarter which [he] wish[ed] to strike at — i.e. the center of the hostile tribes — the British [were] in possession of.”¹⁰

The British presence made it mandatory that Wayne have more men. Although Congress authorized him to call on two thousand Kentucky volunteers, he was told that to get good volunteers he would have to wait until the harvest was in. He was going to face a sizeable force. The British had about 400 soldiers at the Miami Rapids (Fort Miamis), and the Indians had amassed about 1,700 in the area. For a time the Indian strategy was to attack Wayne’s supply lines. A fear that Wayne would send out cavalry to destroy their crops and confidence in their strength resulted in a change in the Indian strategy. They decided to attack Wayne’s forts.¹¹

To Wayne Fort Recovery was a symbol to be maintained. To the Indians it was a prize to be seized. At first the Indians successfully ambushed a large supply train traveling from Greenville to Recovery, but then, when they tried to take the fort, manned by about 200, they were repulsed and left the area on July 1. Wayne believed a considerable number of the British and the militia of Detroit were mixed with the “savages.” In the aftermath, accusations were made between the Indians from the Great Lakes region and those allied with the Shawnee. Many of the Lakes warriors decided to return to their homes. The failure highlighted the Indians’ need for help from the British. A cannon or two might have been decisive, and, but for Wayne digging up the cannon buried in 1791, the Indians might have prevailed.¹²

Little Turtle, who did not lead the attack on Fort Recovery, went to Detroit and told the British that absent their support the Indian confederacy would not continue with the war. No commitment was received, but Little Turtle was wrong about the continuance of the war. His Miamis were the least numerous of the key confederacy tribes, that is, the Shawnees, Delaware, and Miamis. Encouraged by the British Indian agent, Alexander McKee, Blue Jacket of the Shawnee was determined to continue the war. When Wayne received 1,500 mounted volunteers from Kentucky at the end of July he moved forward from Greenville with 3,500 men. Members of the legion carried a five-day ration of bread, two of beef and whiskey, and 24 rounds of ammunition.¹³

Probably Wayne was forcefully told by Washington to avoid any surprises. He fully valued and used scouts to keep informed as to what the Indians were doing. As his army covered at a minimum 10 to 12 miles a day, care was taken to construct breastworks each evening and to call the men to arms one hour before daylight each day. He informed Knox that he intended to take possession of the Indian villages and to destroy their crops. He anticipated that the Indians would be forced to fight. If the British should come out of Fort Miamis to help the Indians he would send his mounted volunteers to the British rear to interdict their supply line.¹⁴ Wayne saw the opposition to his movement to be formidable. He wrote to his son: “The most numerous body of savages that were ever assembled ... in America are now collected ... in our front.... From every information Governor Simcoe has solemnly promised to join the Indians with a large body of British troops and the militia of Detroit to cooperate against the Legion. It is therefore more than probable that we shall soon have an interview with this hydra ... and as the fortuitous events of war are very uncertain, I feel it my duty to prepare for the worst.”¹⁵



On the 29th of July the legion passed Fort Recovery. When it reached St. Marys River on August 1 time was taken to build a small redoubt named Fort Adams. Additional provisions reached them at that point on August 3, and over the next three days another 30 miles were covered. The abandoned area at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers known as Grand Glaize was occupied on August 8. Wayne thought of the area, which had "extensive and highly cultivated fields and gardens," as the Indians' "grand emporium." Wayne rewarded his soldiers with a gill of whiskey. Another fort, Defiance, was built. From this location Wayne intended to march toward "Roche de Bout, or foot of the rapids, where the British [had] a regular fortification, well supplied with artillery, and strongly garrisoned," that is, Fort Miamis. His understanding was that some 1,300 Indians were ahead waiting near Fort Miamis to attack him.¹⁶

Hoping to avoid a battle, on August 13, Wayne sent a message to the Indians telling them that the way to "preserve [themselves] and [their] distressed women and children from danger and famine" was to arrive at a peace treaty. As for the British, he said: "Brothers: Be no longer deceived or led astray by the false promises and language of the bad white men at the foot of the rapids; they have neither the power nor inclination to protect you."¹⁷ When this message reached the Indians on August 14 there was considerable debate with the British urging the Indians to fight.¹⁸

At a grand council meeting Little Turtle urged negotiations, noting that the "pale faces come from where the sun rises, and they are many. They are like leaves of the trees. When the frost comes they fall and are blown away. But when the sunshine comes again they come back more plentiful than ever before." The fever for combat prevailed. Little Turtle acquiesced, saying the "chief of the Miamis will follow." To deceive Wayne the Indians sent him a message saying they would meet with him in 10 days but that in the meanwhile Wayne should "sit down still where you are, and not build forts in our village[s]."¹⁹

Wayne did not sit still. Between August 17 and 18 he advanced to Roche de Bout. Anticipating that warfare would break out in earnest within days, Wayne constructed Camp Deposit at this site so that the legion could be relieved of much of its baggage. During these days the families fleeing from the legion gathered near Fort Miamis and were in dire straits. They needed food, and the British were unable to supply their needs. The British activity at Fort Miamis, that is, efforts to improve its fortifications and the arrival of additional soldiers, led the Indians to believe they would be supported in a fight against Wayne. From the British side, the hopeful belief was that the Indians would prevail over Wayne.²⁰

Wayne reported what happened next to Knox. In Wayne's words, the legion had a "brilliant success" on August 20 when the army advanced "about five miles" and came under "severe fire ... from the enemy, who were secreted in the woods and high grass." The legion formed into two lines facing "savages formed in three lines" in "ground covered with old fallen timber." Wayne ordered his "front line to advance and charge with trailed arms, and rouse the Indians from their coverts at the point of the bayonet, and when up, to deliver a close and well directed fire on their backs, followed by a brisk charge, so as not to give them time to load again." In "the course of one hour [the enemy was driven] more than two miles, through the thick woods." The "horde of savages, with their allies, abandoned themselves to flight, and dispersed with terror and dismay, leaving [the victorious legion] in full and quiet possession of the field of battle, which terminated under the influence of the guns of the British garrison."²¹

Wayne's estimate of the enemy was "two thousand combatants," which were only engaged with about 900 of his men; his remaining men did not get involved in the battle



Battle of Fallen Timbers. Mad Anthony Wayne’s victory, pictured here in Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum’s painting “Charge of the Dragoons at Fallen Timbers” (ca. 1895), led to Indian cessions of roughly three-fourths of the present state of Ohio (Ohio Historical Society, call number 424593).

because of the enemy fleeing. Other estimates are that his enemy numbered about 800. The poor showing by the Indians may, in part, have been the result of their waiting in the line of battle on the 18th and 19th without eating so as to increase the likelihood of surviving a gunshot wound to the stomach. On the 20th some had left the line to eat.²²

Following what is now called the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Wayne stayed on three days near the “field of battle, during which time all the houses and cornfields were consumed and destroyed for a considerable distance, both above and below fort Miami, as well as within pistol shot of that garrison ... among which were the houses, stores and property, of Colonel McKee, the British Indian agent,” who Wayne characterized as the “principal stimulator of the war ... between the United States and the savages.”²³

During this time there was posturing both by Wayne and those inside Fort Miamis. Major William Campbell, in charge of the fort, the day after the battle wrote Wayne asking, “In what light [he was] to view [Wayne] making such near approaches” to “a post belonging to his Majesty the King of Great Britain, occupied by his Majesty’s troops” since there was “no war existing between Great Britain and America.”²⁴ Responding immediately Wayne said, “The most full and satisfactory [answer] was announced ... from the muzzles of [his] small arms ... in the action against the horde of savages in the vicinity of your post,” a battle that, “had it continued until the Indians, &c. were driven under the influence of the post and guns you mention, they would not have much impeded the progress of the victorious army.”²⁵

Next day Campbell complained of “insults ... to the British flag flying at [the] fort”

and threatened to go to war if the insults continued. Wayne responded by demanding that Campbell “withdraw the troops, artillery, and stores” from Fort Miamis. Nothing came of any of the respective demands and threats. Wayne boasted to Knox that for the three days following the battle the British garrison was “compelled to remain tacit spectators to [the] general devastation and conflagration.”²⁶

The battle started several miles from Fort Miamis, to which the Indians fled looking for protection. To their disgust they found the gates of the fort closed to them. During the fight, which lasted about an hour, the legion had 144 casualties, 44 of whom died. Included in the casualties from Kentucky were 9 dead and 13 wounded. Wayne spoke well of the “mounted volunteers” who mustered out in October.²⁷

The legion left on August 23 and covered about 50 miles in 5 days, arriving back at Fort Defiance at Grand Glaize. En route it “la[id] waste [to] villages and cornfields for about fifty miles on each side of the Miami [Maumee].” There were still “a great number of villages, and a great quantity of corn, to be consumed or destroyed” in the area near Grand Glaize.²⁸ To complete an object of his campaign Wayne went to the Miami villages at the headwaters of the Maumee (the junction of the St. Joseph and St. Marys rivers) and in October built Fort Wayne.²⁹

Writing from Miami villages on October 17 Wayne noted that he had but a skeleton legion, a “body ... daily wasting away” as enlistments expired. The “pay, and scanty ration” were not enough to get the soldiers to re-enlist. He anticipated future fights to “protect ... convoys and posts.” His concern was merited. At that time “Governor Simcoe, Colonel McKee, and ... Captain [Brant were] tampering with the hostile chiefs.” Simcoe was insisting that the Indians “not listen to any terms of peace from the Americans, but to propose a truce, or suspension of hostilities, until the spring, when a grand council and assemblage of all the warriors and tribes of Indians should take place, for the purpose of compelling the Americans to cross to the east side of the Ohio.” In the interim he wanted the Indians to “sign a deed ... of all their lands, on the west side of the Ohio, to the King, in trust for the Indians, so as to give the British a pretext or color for assisting them, in case the Americans refused to abandon all their posts and possessions on the west side of the river.” As Wayne pointed out to the secretary of war, the British agents had a great advantage in that they had the “power to furnish the Indians with every necessary supply of arms, ammunition, and clothing in exchange for their skins and furs.” In October the Indian nations were divided on whether there should be peace or war.³⁰

Although the Indians may have only lost 40 warriors, they had, to the dismay of the British, limited interest in more fighting. Many were thinking of, or were, removing themselves across the Mississippi into Spanish territory. At a meeting in October, near the mouth of the Detroit River (Brownstown), the Indians demanded that the English commit themselves to going on the offensive against the intruding forts. At best they were given hollow words. Another meeting scheduled for the spring of 1795 was overtaken by events, namely the Jay Treaty.³¹

While Wayne advanced in the Northwest, the United States worked to defuse conflicting claims between the Six Nations and Pennsylvania. On July 21 Knox wrote to Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Mifflin that any settlement in the Presque Isle area should be deferred at least “until the campaign against the western Indians” was over.³² There was good reason for concern. At a meeting of the Six Nations at Buffalo Creek on April 21, 1794, a message delivered by Joseph Brant to representatives of both the British and the Americans showed the Six Nations tilting toward the British and the danger of a much larger force facing Wayne.³³ In part Brant, a Mohawk chief, in refusing an invitation for a treaty at Venango said:

At fort Stanwix [in 1783], your commissioners conducted the business as it to them seemed best; they pointed out a line of division, and then confirmed it.... At all the treaties ... since ... the idea was still the same.

* * *

We have borne every thing patiently for this long time past.... The boundary line we pointed out [that is, the Ohio River], we think is a just one, although the United States claim lands west of that line; the trifle that has been paid by the United States can be no object in comparison to what a peace would be.

... This country was given to us by the Great Spirit above; we wish to enjoy it, and have our passage along the lake, within the line we have pointed out.

... Our patience ... is exhausted.... We, therefore, throw ourselves under the protection of the great spirit above, who, we hope, will order all things for the best.³⁴

In October, at a meeting in Canandaigua, New York, an Indian delegation led by Cornplanter agreed to yield their claims to disputed lands in northwestern Pennsylvania, a triangular area including Presque Isle and present-day Erie, Pennsylvania. This gave Pennsylvania a good port on Lake Erie for which Cornplanter and the others were roundly criticized when they returned to their villages. Cornplanter had little choice. He cited Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers, instructions from England to the British in Canada to maintain peaceful relations with the United States, and the likelihood that the British would surrender their forts and posts in the United States.³⁵

A French disruption of communications between England and Canada caused those in Canada to first learn of a treaty between England and the United States, the Jay Treaty, which Jay signed November 19, 1794, from stories in American newspapers. Under the treaty, by June 1796, the British were to give over all of their posts in the United States. On their part, various Indian tribes, including the Shawnee, made peace overtures to Wayne in the winter months and were told that any peace would have to start with the terms of the Fort Harmar treaty of 1789. Wayne had told them of the British policy of maintaining peace in America while negotiations were going forward in Europe.³⁶

About January 1795, "sachems and war chiefs of the Chippewas, Pattawatamies, Sacs, and Miamies" agreed with Wayne to a cessation of hostilities in anticipation of a peace treaty. Treaty discussions were to start on June 15 at Greenville. The Shawnee were of the same mind. Blue Jacket declared in February 1795: "Our hearts and minds are changed, and we now consider ourselves your friends and brothers."³⁷

Reality was that the Indians could not maintain themselves without help from either the British or the Americans, and as the British pulled away from them, they had no real choice if they were to stay near their current villages. The Indians traveling to Greenville were distressingly without adequate food. During negotiations the tribes were provided with provisions, and from time to time given liquor. A chief of the Miamis asked for "some mutton and pork, occasionally."³⁸

To put the tribes' minds at rest when the "Fifteen Fires, with shouts of joy, and peals of artillery" celebrated the 4th of July, Wayne alerted them to the occasion and said they should "also rejoice, in [their] respective encampments." This was consistent with the ultimate conclusion of the treaty. In coming to Greenville the Indians ignored British efforts to keep them from talking with Wayne. Both the Chippewa chief, Massas, and the Shawnee, Blue Jacket, told how Colonel McKee of the British and Joseph Brant tried to keep them away. McKee accused Blue Jacket of being an enemy of the Shawnee "and [of seducing] the other Indians ... into the snares the Americans [had] formed for their ruin." After a treaty

was agreed to, a Wyandot chief, purporting to speak for all the tribes, said, "We do now ... acknowledge the fifteen United States of America to be our father," and Wayne responded on behalf of the United States by adopting them all. New Corn, a Pattawatamy chief, expressed the hope of the tribes: "Now, my friend, the Great Wind, do not deceive us in the manner that the French, the British, and Spaniards have heretofore done."³⁹ Several of the tribes asked that steps be taken to locate traders convenient to them.

The adoption of the United States as their protector was complete when Little Turtle of the Miami, who had argued that the Miami and others had not been a party to the treaty at Fort Harmar, and wanted different boundaries than Wayne imposed on the tribes, made it clear that the Miami accepted the final result. A sample of the colorful language used by the tribes during the negotiations is that of Massas, who said, respecting the treaty at Fort Harmar, that the Ottawas, Chippewas, and Pattawatamies "did not perfectly understand [some words of that treaty] at the time" it was made. As for their post-Harmar conduct, even though the tomahawk was thrown in the river at Harmar "the waters in [their] woods are not deep, and some foolish young men ... had arms long enough to reach to the bottom, and again take it out." Now the tribes wanted "to wipe away their bad actions, and to open their hearts to the voice of peace."⁴⁰ But, said Massas, they did not receive any compensation under the Harmar treaty.

Personal relations between Little Turtle and Blue Jacket after peace was declared were not good. Wayne wrote in 1796 of their being "rivals for fame and power" and of Little Turtle refusing to travel to Washington with Blue Jacket.⁴¹

As to claims of some tribes of not being compensated for land ceded at Harmar, Wayne, who wanted a treaty that "shall continue unbroken as long as the woods grow and waters run," said that "the true owners ... should receive a full compensation" for the land and noted that the United States had already paid twice for the land ceded at Fort McIntosh and at Fort Harmar. A Wyandot chief identified the difficulties in having Indian land cessions: "No one in particular can justly claim this ground, it belongs, in common, to us all"; "the Great Spirit above is the true and only owner of this soil, and he has given us all an equal right to it."⁴² Wayne avoided a hornets nest when he declined to draw boundaries between the various tribes in what was still to be Indian country.

The new secretary of war, Timothy Pickering, justified a treaty with a major land cession with a need for "indemnification for the blood and treasure expended." Pickering proposed an east-west boundary from the "mouth of the Cuyahoga River to the mouth of the Great Miami [River]."⁴³ In addition, a corridor to permit whites to pass through the Indian lands should be ceded. This was not enough for Wayne, who took the boundary to the Kentucky River in the Treaty of Greenville dated August 3, 1795.⁴⁴ Wayne hoped that the warring would stop. Before the treaty he declared, "I am as sick and tired of this kind of war as any man in America, the meekest Quaker not excepted." Wayne asked the Indians "to take every measure to restrain [their] young men from the bad practice of stealing horses."⁴⁵

Any Indians still hoping for help from the British probably gave up when word was received that the U.S. Senate ratified the Jay Treaty on June 25, 1795. The treaty was ratified by a vote of 20 to 10, just matching the Constitutional requirement for a 2/3 margin. The overall terms of the treaty were severely criticized by many and epithets cast toward both Washington and Jay. Thomas Jefferson wrote of Washington: "Curse on his virtues; they have undone the country," and Jay was guillotined in effigy. In fact Jay's main accomplishment was to get British agreement to abandon the forts in U.S. territory.⁴⁶

To make it clear that the Americans had to be dealt with, Wayne read to the tribes

parts of the Jay Treaty, in particular those dealing with abandonment of the forts. Wayne brooked no opposition, and when a voice vote was taken all those present agreed to the terms proposed by Wayne. The Shawnee strongly supported Wayne. In exchange for the cession of millions of acres the Indians were allowed to continue to live on approximately the upper third of what became the state of Ohio west of the Cuyahoga River, and to be paid \$9,500 annually.⁴⁷

As the treaty came to a close Wayne prayed that “the Great Spirit [would] enlighten [the Indians’] minds, and open [their] eyes to true happiness, that [their] children may learn to cultivate the earth and enjoy the fruits of peace and industry.”⁴⁸ Or, to put it otherwise, he wanted them to be more like the whites. Of course, the problem then and for years after was that many of the Indians did not want to adopt the white man’s ways.

In the second year of Washington’s presidency the Trade and Intercourse Act⁴⁹ was passed on July 22, 1790, in an effort to regularize relations between the whites and Indians. Trade with Indians was prohibited without a federal license, and the licensee was committed under penalty of law to follow “such rules and regulations as the President shall prescribe.” Exceptions were permitted for tribes surrounded by whites if the president so provided. The Act precluded sales of lands by Indians to any but the United States, and specified punishment for crimes against friendly Indians to the same extent as if the crime was against a white. The essential features of the act were written into the Treaty of Greenville.

When Washington delivered his third annual message to Congress on October 25, 1791, he expressed a hope that “coercion” would not be needed in the future “to attach [the Indians] firmly to the United States.” Ironically this message coincided with St. Clair’s effort to build a fort at the Miami villages. Washington favored “such rational experiments ... for imparting to them the blessings of civilization as may from time to time suit their condition.” In his fifth annual message, December 3, 1793, Washington proposed that the government participate in the trading, which should be carried on “without fraud, without extortion, with constant and plentiful supplies, with a ready market for the commodities of the Indians.” The government would not seek to profit from such trading.⁵⁰ In 1795 a trial effort for government trading was carried out, and in 1796 Congress adopted a system of government trading houses. The trading houses were not to “purchase, or receive of any Indian, in the way of trade or barter, a gun or other article commonly used in hunting; any instrument of husbandry, or cooking utensil, of the kind usually obtained by Indians in their intercourse with white people.”⁵¹

A fruit of the Jay Treaty was the replacement of the British flag at Detroit with that of the United States on July 11, 1796. The same happened at forts at Niagara, Oswego, Michilimackinac, and along the Maumee River. Having left his mark on the history of the new nation, Wayne died on December 15, 1796, at the age of 51. The preceding year he turned his command over for the time-being to his second in command at Fallen Timbers, James Wilkinson. If he had known how Wilkinson communicated to Judge Harry Innes of Kentucky on November 10, 1794, this assignment would likely have been different. Wilkinson wrote about Wayne’s campaign: “The whole operation presents us a tissue of improvidence, disarray, precipitancy, Error & Ignorance, of thoughtless temerity, unseasonable Cautions, and shameful omissions, which I may safely pronounce, was never before presented to the view of mankind; yet under the favor of fortune, and the paucity & injudicious Conduct of the enemy, we have prospered beyond calculation, and the wreath is prepared for the brow of the Blockhead.” After the Battle of Fallen Timbers Wayne thought a narrow escape he had while encamped at Fort Adams in early August might have been engineered by those

who thought as Wilkinson did. A large beech tree fell over, crushing the tent in which he was resting, just barely missing him.⁵²

Although the Indians no longer had many choices as to how their lives would be lived, their culture had values to be admired. For example, Joseph Brant once spoke sadly of the white practice of jailing those who have transgressed. He said:

Perhaps it is [best] that incorrigible offenders should sometimes be cut off [from society]. Let it be done in a way that is not degrading to human nature.... Liberty to a rational creature as much exceeds property as the light of the sun does that of the most twinkling star. But you put them on a level — to the everlasting disgrace of civilization. I seriously declare I had rather die by the most severe tortures ever inflicted on this continent, than languish in one of your prisons for a single year.... Does then the religion of Him whom you call your Saviour inspire this spirit and lead to such practices? Surely no. It is recorded of Him a bruised reed he never broke. Cease then to call yourselves Christians, lest you publish to the world your hypocrisy. Cease, too, to call other nations savage, when you are tenfold more the children of cruelty than they.⁵³

The hurdles facing the Indians in their new surroundings were well expressed by Little Turtle, who said during a 1797 visit to Philadelphia: “Here I am deaf and dumb.... When I walk through the streets I see every person in his shop employed about something. One makes shoes, another hats, a third sells cloth, and everyone lives by his labor. I say to myself, which of all these things can you do? Not one. I can make a bow or an arrow, catch fish, kill game, and go to war, but none of these is of any use here.... I should be a piece of furniture, useless to my nation, useless to the whites, and useless to myself.”⁵⁴

Taking Over the Northwest Territory (1801–1819)

Following the Treaty at Greenville in 1795 the Indians in the Northwest Territory were not pressed for additional cessions to any great extent. Washington and Adams concentrated on the much-weakened Six Nations and on Indians in the south, primarily the Cherokee and Creek, which were in contact with the leading edge of settlers moving west. Jefferson changed this and acted aggressively in the north and south. His vision of a nation of farms needed land on the frontiers. Following the revolution immigration into the United States surged. Population in the 13 colonies went from 2.4 million in 1783 to 4.0 million in 1790. Only 3.3 percent of the population lived in an urban environment of more than 8,000 residents. To most the pot at the end of the rainbow was land, and particularly cheap land.¹

During Jefferson's presidency (1801–1809) no wholesale movement of tribes from the east to west occurred, but there were 27 treaties or agreements that transferred millions of acres to the United States, most of it north of the Ohio River or west of the Mississippi River. He made way for westward movement by putting a large part of what was to become Missouri and Arkansas in the hands of the United States by a treaty in 1808 with the Great and Little Osage. At a present-worth value of about \$26,000, that is, converting the future annuities to be paid to the Osage to an equivalent treaty-time value, this was a magnificent bargain for the United States. But this was a time for excellent buys — France received about 3 cents per acre for the Louisiana Purchase. To move Indians out of the way of the advancing whites was nothing new. From the earliest days the Indians were forced to move westward. For example, the Delawares in the Northwest Territory had been in New Jersey when the Europeans arrived and the Shawnee in Pennsylvania.²

January of 1803 was a turbulent time. Spain's suspension of the right of deposit at New Orleans in the fall of 1802 created, said Jefferson, an extreme "agitation of the public mind" with "remonstrances, memorials, etc. ... circulating through the whole of the western country." Equally upsetting was the prospect of Spain transferring land west of the Mississippi River to France. To relieve the tension Jefferson was hoping to purchase New Orleans and the Floridas from France and wrote to James Monroe, the outgoing governor of Virginia, on January 13, 1803, emphasizing the importance of his mission to France as "a minister extraordinary, to be joined with the ordinary one [Robert Livingston]."³ A failure to make a purchase could lead to war and might make it necessary to contact England and entangle the United States in European politics.

In 1800 the Northwest Territory was divided into the Ohio Territory and the Indiana Territory. Jefferson wrote the energetic and ambitious governor of the Indiana Territory,

William Henry Harrison, on February 27, 1803, that “to be prepared against the occupation of Louisiana, by a powerful and enterprising people, it [was] important” to purchase and settle “the country on the Mississippi, from its mouth to its northern regions.” He presumed “that [the strength of the United States] and their weakness is now so visible [that the Indians] must see we have only to shut our hand to crush them, and that all our liberalities to them proceed from motives of pure humanity only. Should any tribe be foolhardy enough to take up the hatchet at any time, the seizing the whole country of that tribe, and driving them across the Mississippi, as the only condition of peace, would be an example to others, and a furtherance of our final consolidation.”⁴

Harrison was told⁵ to get land along the Mississippi, specifically from Kaskaskias, who had been reduced to a few families, and to thereafter go for cessions from the Poutewatamies and Kickapoos. While dealing with the Kaskaskia, Jefferson counseled that “the minds of the Poutewatamies and Kickapoos should be soothed and conciliated by liberalities and sincere assurances of friendship.” However, the means of getting land was left to Harrison’s judgment. Time was important. “The occupation of New Orleans, hourly expected, by the French, is already felt like a light breeze by the Indians.” It could be anticipated that “under the hope of [French] protection [the Indians] will immediately stiffen against cessions of lands to us.” To hurry Indian cessions, Jefferson told Harrison, influential Indians should be encouraged to “run in debt” since “when ... debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands.”

The Louisiana Purchase, agreed to in May of 1803 and completed in December 1803, didn’t slow Harrison down. He was working for a president “alive to ... obtaining lands from the Indians by all *honest and peaceable means*.”⁶ After the Louisiana Purchase Jefferson wanted to control the banks of the Mississippi so that the British could be kept from using it for “smuggling themselves and their trade goods into the Louisiana Territory.”⁷ Harrison was to obtain as much land as he could in what became the states of Illinois and Indiana.

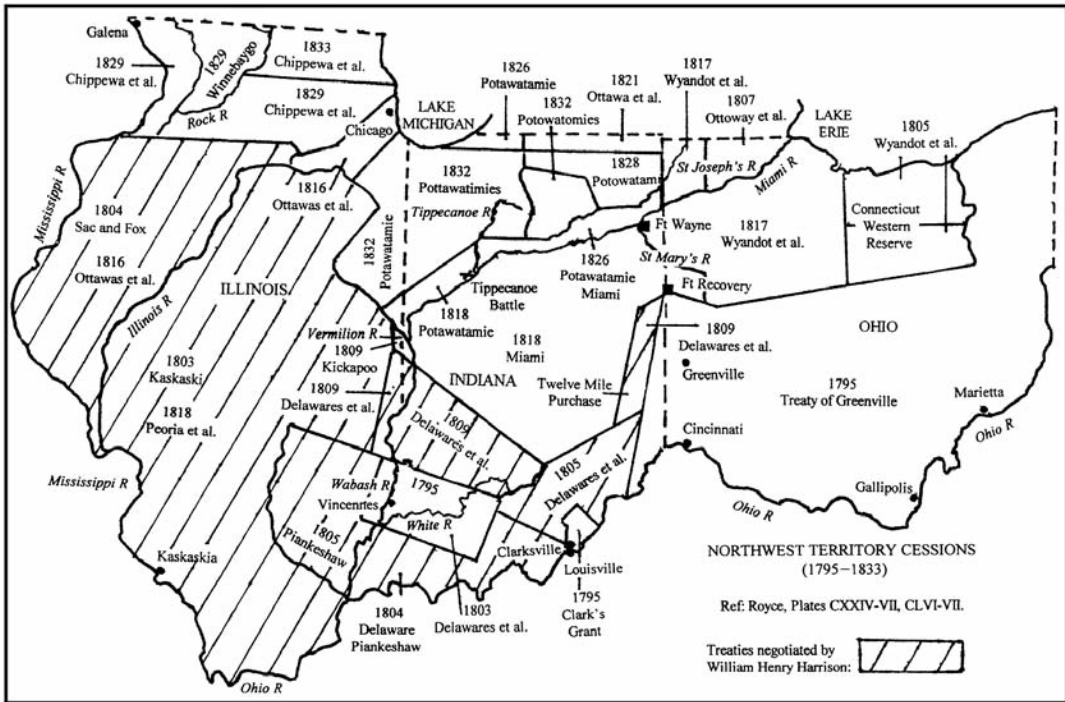
In dealing with the Indians Harrison was aware of their plight. Shortly after becoming governor he wrote to the secretary of war on July 15, 1801, about the Indians’ complaints of “ill treatment on the part of [United States] citizens. They say that their people have been killed — their lands settled on — their game wantonly destroyed — & their young men made drunk & cheated of the peltries which formerly procured them necessary articles of Clothing, arms and ammunition to hunt with. Of the truth of these charges I am well convinced.”⁸



Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was anxious to control the banks of the Ohio River and the eastern bank of the Mississippi River (Library of Congress).

Illinois Territory (Part of the Indiana Territory until 1809)

The first cession achieved by Harrison along the Mississippi was made by the Kaskaskia



Tribe of Indians on August 13, 1803.⁹ It covered roughly one-third of present-day Illinois and reserved 350 acres near the town of Kaskaskia and the right to locate another 1,280 acres. Consideration was an annuity of \$1,000, a house for their chief, money to support a Catholic priest for seven years, money to help construct a church, a current payment of \$580, and “to relieve them from debts which they have heretofore contracted.” Important to the Kaskaskia was the protection that the United States was to afford “against the other Indian tribes” and all others. The ceded land was, in general, between the Illinois and Wabash rivers. In suggesting this acquisition to Harrison in February 1803, Jefferson noted that former occupants of the land were essentially absent and the United States could claim vacated land by the paramount sovereignty of the United States.¹⁰

A youthful Harrison, appointed governor of the Indiana Territory in 1800 at age 27 and Anthony Wayne’s aide-de-camp during the Fallen Timbers period, proceeded in 1804 to get a cession of another third of the future



William Henry Harrison. Harrison aggressively got Indian cessions of lands along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers (Library of Congress).

state of Illinois. He was told to get cessions of land east of the Mississippi River from the Sac Indians, who lived mostly west of the river.¹¹

On November 3, 1804, the “united Sac and Fox tribes” ceded land on each side of the Mississippi River.¹² The cession of land between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers is described as Harrison’s “fraudulent Illinois purchase” by historian Allan W. Eckert in his book *A Sorrow in Our Heart*.¹³ With this cession and that from the Kaskaskia, the United States had paper title to the eastern bank of the Mississippi from the mouth of the Ohio River northward into present-day Wisconsin to the important trading center Prairie du Chien.

Harrison, according to Eckert, “conspired with his agents to get five minor Sac chiefs drunk and then coerced them into signing a treaty in which, for a payment of some twenty-two hundred dollars in goods and a one-thousand-dollar annuity, they sold to the United States” millions of acres.¹⁴ In a sense the fraud on the Indians was not great because the “Sac and Fox,” who made the cession, were not occupying the land in Illinois and received payment for it. The upper portion of the 1804 Illinois cession was “Potawatomes, Ottoways, and Chipeways” country, and the lower portion was essentially vacant except for those that would hunt in it from time to time. One object of the treaty was to stop “raids by the Sacs on settlers of the middle Mississippi River Valley and western Illinois.”¹⁵

The final treaty¹⁶ negotiated by Harrison during this period relating to Illinois was with the Piankashaw, signed on December 30, 1805. For a lump sum of \$1,100 and an annual annuity of \$300 about 2.5 million acres were ceded in southeast Illinois. Reserved for the Piankashaw were 1,280 acres. The Piankashaw had, “as long as the lands ... ceded, remain the property of the United States, the ... privilege of living and hunting upon them, in the same manner that they have heretofore done.” Furthermore, the United States extended the same protection to them as had been guaranteed the Kaskaskia.

Although the 1803, 1804, and 1805 treaties covered most of what became Illinois, later treaties made in 1809, during the Madison presidency, disposed of claims within Illinois of the “Delawares, Putawatame, Miamies, and Eel River Miamies,” and Kickapoo.¹⁷ But not all claims were extinguished. Loyal to the United States during the War of 1812 were the Potawatomi on the Illinois River, whereas those located elsewhere were hostile. Of an estimated 1,200 Potawatomi at least half were hostile. The Kickapoo of the Illinois had 400 warriors, all of whom were hostile. On September 1, 1815, the Potawatomi chief on the Illinois River (Black Partridge) sent a message to President Madison saying that he had just learned that in 1804 the Sac had ceded their, the Potawatomi’s, “Principal Hunting ground” lying on the Illinois River. He declared “that no Part of this River does or ever did belong to the Sacks [and] whatever Sale they may have made was wholly unauthorized.... We think you will see us righted, and not deprived of the principal hunting ground relied on for the Subsistence of ourselves our Women and Children.”¹⁸ The claim was recognized in a treaty of August 24, 1816,¹⁹ which, in general, relinquished to the “united tribes of Ottawas, Chipawas, and Pottowotomees,” “residing on [the] Illinois and Melwakee rivers, and their waters” the portion of the 1804 cession lying above an east–west line “from the southern extremity of Lake Michigan to the Mississippi river.” The tribes gave up their claims to the other lands in the Sac and Fox treaty of 1804, but were to have the right to hunt and fish on the land so long as it was the property of the United States.

In 1819 treaties²⁰ with the Kickapoo and “Kickapoos of the Vermilion,” who had been hostile to the Americans during the war, the United States was not generous. For cessions of their land in Illinois and Indiana they were given land in Missouri. This arrangement angered their neighbors, the Potawatomi, who were settled in northern Illinois. According

to the treaty commissioners, the Potawatomi, probably instigated “by white men” who did not wish to lose the business of the Kickapoo by their removal west of the Mississippi and an unwillingness “to see [white] settlements approximate to theirs, (as they think they will soon [be] if the [Kickapoo] cede their land,) have, by every kind of menace, endeavored to deter the Kickapoos from entering into any agreement with [the United States]; and they openly declare that, the moment the Kickapoos commence their removal to the west side of the Mississippi, they [the Potawatomi] will waylay, attack, plunder, and murder them.”²¹ These Kickapoo lands were, before and after 1819, included in cessions by other tribes.

Ohio

Ohio became a state in 1803, with the southern half of the state free of Indian title as a result of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795²² made after Wayne’s victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794. Parties were the “Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanoes, Ottawas, Chipewas, Putawatimes, Miamis, Eel-river, Weea’s, Kickapoos, Piankashaws, and Kaskaskias.” During Jefferson’s years as president Indian title was eliminated for the rest of Ohio, except for most of the northwest part of the state, by a treaty of July 4, 1805.²³ Signing were the “Ottawa, Chippawa, Potawatima, Wyandots, Munsee and Delaware, Shawanee.” The ceded land of some 2 million acres, together with that ceded in 1795, covered all of northeast Ohio.

There were three separate tracts in the 1805 cession. Roughly, the northern half was what was known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, that is, land claimed by Connecticut under its colonial charter, which by compromise with the United States in 1800 was relinquished in a political jurisdiction sense to the United States with Connecticut retaining the right of soil. Connecticut had, in 1792, given over the western part of the reserve to its citizens who had suffered during the Revolutionary War, and this part of the reserve was known as “Sufferers’ Land.” The remaining part of the reserve was that of the Connecticut Land Company. The third tract was roughly the southern half of the overall cession, as to which Connecticut had no claim. The United States paid somewhat more than 1 cent per acre for the third tract, as did the Connecticut Land Company for the other two tracts.²⁴

A provision in the 1805 treaty as well as in the final treaty affecting Ohio of the Jefferson administration — that is, a large cession of November 17, 1807, within northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan negotiated by William Hull, governor of the Michigan Territory, which was formed in 1805 — was the right “to fish and hunt within the [land ceded].” In each case the right was conditioned. In 1805 the right, denominated a “liberty,” would continue “so long as the Indians [would] demean themselves peaceably.” In 1807 the right, called a “privilege,” was much more limited — so “long as [the ceded land] remain[ed] the property of the United States,” which was not long considering the aggressive sales program of the federal government.²⁵ The population of Ohio went from 45,365 in 1800 to 230,760 in 1810, to 581,435 in 1820, and to 937,903 in 1830.²⁶

In 1807 the preamble was designed to rebut any claim that an unfair advantage was being taken of the Indians. It reads in part: “After a full explanation and perfect understanding, the following articles are agreed to.” The relative strengths of those negotiating is shown in Article VII, in which the “nations of Indians acknowledge[d] themselves to be under the protection of the United States, and no other power, and [would] prove by their conduct that they are worthy of so great a blessing.”²⁷ The price per acre in 1807 was somewhat better, close to 2 cents per acre, and a number of reservations of land were made. This

was a time when federal land was worth \$2.50 per acre at public auction. Payments were to be divided between “Ottoway, Chippeway, Wyandotte, and Pottawatamie.”

Part of the “perfect understanding” was a message sent by Jefferson. It said: “If ever we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down till that tribe is exterminated, or driven beyond the Mississippi.”²⁸

Indiana Territory

Federal control of most of the southern one-fourth of modern Indiana, which was a part of a territory in 1800 and became a state on December 11, 1816, was complete by 1809. Of roughly 7 million acres in that area, about 2.5 million acres were transferred by the Greenville Treaty of 1795. The remaining acreage, particularly that along the Ohio River, was acquired by treaties negotiated by the lion of Indiana Territory treaties — William Henry Harrison.

In Indiana his first achievement was in getting a boundary definition of land retained to the United States in the Treaty of Greenville containing “the post of St. Vincennes ... and the land adjacent, of which the Indian title ha[d] been extinguished.”²⁹ In a treaty of June 7, 1803,³⁰ with the “Delawares, Shawanoes, Putawatimies, Miamies, Eel River, Weeas, Kickapoos, Piankashaws, and Kaskaskias,” a boundary was agreed to, and a salt spring, and some adjoining land, was ceded to the United States, on condition of the signatory Indians getting 150 bushels each year to be divided among themselves. In a sign of the anticipated development of southern Indiana, provisions were included whereby if the United States got the approval of the “Kickapoos, Eel River, Weeas, Piankashaws, and Kaskaskias,” it could erect “houses of entertainment for the accommodation of travellers” between “Vincennes and Kaskaskia” and between “Vincennes and Clarksville.”

After the Louisiana Purchase an outstanding Jefferson priority was to get control of the northern shoreline of the Ohio River. This was completed in Illinois by the Kaskaskia and Piankishaw treaties of 1803 and 1805. In Indiana over half the northern shoreline, from the mouth of the Wabash River to the Falls of the Ohio (Louisville), was included in cession treaties with the Delaware (August 18, 1804) and Piankashaw (August 27, 1804).³¹ Each treaty covered the same territory. In addition to money the Delaware received commitments by the United States to assist them in becoming farmers. If the treaty of August 18, 1804, is to be believed, the “Delaware” signed because

the annuity which they receive from the United States, is not sufficient to supply them with the articles which are necessary for their comfort and convenience, and afford the means of introducing amongst them the arts of civilised life, and being convinced that the extensiveness of the country they possess, by giving an opportunity to their hunting parties to ramble to a great distance from their towns, is the principal means of retarding this desirable event.

On its part the United States was “desirous to connect their settlements on the Wabash with the state of Kentucky.”³²

In a short time other tribes were heard from. Little Turtle of the Miamis wrote to General James Wilkinson, the commander of the army, on October 6: “The Indians are astonished to find an agent of the united states purchasing our Lands from Indians that has no right to sell them and intierly contrary to the wish of all the Indians in this country.” As for Harrison, “He has done us more harm than any man that ever came into our [Country.] He has made new chiefs among us and payed no regard to the wishes of our former ones[.] He ... gave Indians titles to Lands that never had any and after words purchased the same

Lands from them for the united states.” The local Indian agent, William Wells, told Wilkinson that the Indians “would wish a war with the united states rather than sell [lands along the Ohio River shoreline] if they had any prospect of being supported by any foreign power.”³³

When reports of dissatisfaction of the Miami and Potawatomi over the August treaties reached Secretary of War Dearborn, he wrote to Wells that if “the Pottawattamies or Miamies [could] shew a good title to any ... of the [ceded] lands ... they may have reason to complain,” but the “President ... [would] not be driven by threats into any measures of accommodation.” The complaint against the Delaware treaty gained substance in March 1805 when three out of the five chiefs who had signed complained that they did not know what they were signing.³⁴

Dearborn’s reaction in May 1805 was to direct Harrison to meet with chiefs of the “Delaware, Miamies, and Puttawattamies” to satisfy them that what had happened was “open & fair.” Harrison was given up to \$300, which could be used to “quiet ... minds.” Harrison sent emissaries to talk with the Indians, who agreed to meet with Harrison at Vincennes. Harrison went beyond getting agreement to the August 1804 treaties in the Treaty of Grouseland (Harrison’s home near Vincennes), signed by the “Delawares, Putawatimis, Miamis, Eel River, and Weas” on August 21, 1805.³⁵

New land bordering the Ohio River, about the same size as that ceded in August of 1804, was transferred in return for “additional permanent annuit[ies] to [the] Miamis, Eel River, and Wea tribes” and an increased annuity to the “Putawatemies” for 10 years and a lump sum of \$4,000 paid at the time of the treaty. The United States also “engage[d] to consider the [Miamis, Eel River, and Weas] as joint owners of all country on the Wabash and its waters, above the Vincennes tract ... which ha[d] not been ceded to the United States” in the past. A caveat was included that this would not diminish any claim the Kickapoos might have. Outside the terms of the treaty, as directed by the president, Little Turtle was promised an annuity of \$50, and arrangements were made “to purchase a negro man for him.”³⁶

Jefferson was pleased and, in his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1805, said the government had “possession of the whole of both banks of the Ohio from its source to near its mouth, and the navigation of that river is thereby rendered forever safe to our citizens settled and settling on its extensive waters.”³⁷

The Shawnee were incensed over the action of the Delaware chiefs, and one chief, Tetapachsit, was accused by Tecumseh’s brother, Tenskwatawa, of witchcraft and was sentenced to death. He was “tomahawked by his own son and thrown alive into a great fire.” A nephew was also “seized and burned at the stake as a witch.”³⁸

More Indiana Land Ceded and the War of 1812

When Harrison convinced the “Miami, Eel River, and Wea tribes” to cede land along the Ohio River shoreline in August 1805 and as part of the treaty agreed that they were the joint owners of “all country on the Wabash and its waters, above the Vincennes tract,” he told the secretary of war that he could not avoid doing so because of their “persevering obstinacy.” Harrison didn’t perceive this as a future problem — it would “be no difficult matter to get them, in the course of a few years, to make a division of the land that they now hold in common.”¹ With major maneuvering he validated his statement in 1809. All it took was money.

President Madison was barely in office when Harrison wrote to the new secretary of war, William Eustis, that the white settlement at Vincennes “was cramped by the nearness of Indian lands.”² Then, two months later, in July he opined that Fort Knox, then at Vincennes, would be better positioned in Indian land above Vincennes. Madison’s approval to proceed was sent on July 15, 1809, with the caveat to not pay more than was usual.³

Harrison decided to meet with the Indians at Fort Wayne instead of at Vincennes, where “the facility of procuring spirits and the constant intrusion of bad men amongst them would probably render them unmanageable.”⁴ Another reason for going to Fort Wayne was his inclination to try for what was later called the Twelve Mile Purchase in eastern Indiana even though he didn’t have approval to buy it. He decided to meet at Fort Wayne with the Miami, Eel Rivers, Delawares, and Potawatomis, who would be easier to deal with since they were not occupying any of the land above Vincennes that he was after. His thought was that by offering them money for the cession they would then be inclined to pressure the Weas, Piankashaws, and Kickapoos who used that land.⁵

The Journal of Proceedings at the treaty sets out the enticements Harrison held out to the various groups. The Miami and Eel River were told they would benefit by having the Wea rejoin them rather than being on the land close to Vincennes — their annuity would increase by the sale of land of no use to them.⁶ When Harrison met with the four tribes he made the same argument, adding that the Wea were “poor & miserable [and] all the proceeds of their hunts & the great part of their annuities [were] expended in Whiskey.” Of course the whiskey problem was not new. In 1801 a Moravian missionary wrote that Indians in the White River area wanting to celebrate would often “go four or five days’ journey to the Ohio River and bring from five to six horse loads [of liquor].”⁷

The Miami were the only ones against the cession, and Harrison tried to convince them by asserting this was the only request for land their “new Father” would make of them. Some Miami chiefs were convinced, but others were not. Harrison on a couple of occasions

gave the Indians liquor. A Miami chief, Owl, said they were willing to sell some land near Fort Recovery (which was near the upper end of the Twelve Mile Purchase), but not the land above Vincennes, since the Wea were not present.⁸

In a final effort to get Miami approval, Harrison talked with the dissenting Miamis and learned that they objected to the Delaware and Potawatomis benefitting from land they did not own. Harrison carried the day by promising “the Putawatimies & Deliwares would be considered as participating in the advantages of the Treaty as allies of the Miamies, not as having any right to the land.”⁹ In the treaty signed September 30, 1809,¹⁰ Harrison satisfied all by calling the “Delawares and Putawatamies” allies and, in a separate article signed only by the Miamis and Eel Rivers, saying that “the greater part of the lands ceded ... was the exclusive property of the Miami nation” and additional compensation would be paid to them. The treaty required later approval by the Wea respecting the land north of Vincennes that was ceded and a \$400 annuity for the Kickapoos if they agreed to the land ceded. Of the 1,000 or so Indians present for the treaty signing, about 800 were Potawatomis and Delawares; others present were 106 Miamis, 53 Eel Rivers, and 2 Shawnee. Over October 1–3, Harrison delivered annuities and treaty goods.¹¹

About one month later the Wea agreed to the cession and received a \$300 annuity and a \$1,500 lump sum. Then, on December 9, the Kickapoo agreed to what was ceded earlier and added more land for additional consideration. The new cession made by the Kickapoo of around 10,000 acres was to be complete when approved by the Miamies, which did not occur until 1818.¹²

A critic of the treaty, historian Allan W. Eckert, believes that by dealing with “a select few peaceable chiefs of the Miami tribe and its Eel River branch, along with a handful of Delawares and Potawatomies,” Harrison received the land above Vincennes, about 3 million acres, for “\$7,000 worth of goods and an annuity of \$1,750.” In a note to the text Eckert says that the initial negotiations were with insignificant chiefs, but at the September signing “more important chiefs [signed] whom Harrison bribed with lavish gifts.”¹³

A study of the occupancy of the 3 million acres east of the Wabash River (about nine-tenths of the cession) concluded that a “dwindling number of Piankashaws ... shared use and occupancy with the Weas” and that the eastern two-thirds “was probably unused and unoccupied” in 1809. As for the one tenth west of the river, except for a Kickapoo village in the northern part, it was used for some hunting by the Kickapoo, Piankshaw, and Wea. But regardless of the extent the above Vincennes land was being used, it was clear that in the hands of the United States it would soon be occupied by settlers who would be over 50 miles closer to the junction of the Tippecanoe and Wabash rivers near the village of the Shawnee prophet Tenskwatawa.¹⁴

In addition to the land in western Indiana, to which Eckert made his criticism, the Twelve Mile Purchase in eastern Indiana, about 500,000 acres, was included. The occupancy study concluded that in 1809 the area was being used for hunting by some Delawares, Shawnees, and Miamis.¹⁵

Starting in 1805 Tecumseh, a Shawnee, worked to unite Indian tribes, north and south, in opposition to any more land cessions to the United States. The Kickapoo, living north of the 1809 cession, joined with the Sac as early as 1806 in asking other tribes “to join in a war against [the whites.]”¹⁶ Harrison was aware in 1807 that the British and Spaniards had made overtures to the “Delawares, Miamis, Weas, Eel River Tribe, Piankeshaws, Kickapoos, and the greater part of the Shawanos.” He pledged to the secretary of war on August 13, 1807, that a peaceable disposition would be made with the tribes.¹⁷

A confrontation was brewing. In 1807 Harrison was told by William Wells, a United States agent at Fort Wayne, that Indians from the Mackinac region “have continued to flock to Greenville which increases the fears of our frontiers.” Wells had a report that the upper lakes Indians “believe in what the Prophet [Tenskwatawa] tells them which is that the great spirit will in a few years distroy every white man in america that every Indian has made himself a *war club*.”¹⁸

Wells told Harrison that “the prophet keeps up a communication with the British,” and he believed “the British are at the bottom of all this Business and depend on it that if we have war with them that many of the Indian tribes will take an active part against [the United States.]” President Jefferson became concerned after a British attack on an American naval vessel in the summer of 1807 brought on the possibility of a war. Jefferson worried that in case of a war the Indians might lay waste to the northwest frontier.¹⁹

Years later, in 1818, John Quincy Adams opined that “all the Indian Wars in which we had been involved, had been kindled by the pestilential breath of British Agents and Traders, in whose intrigues and machinations the British Government had loudly and invariably disclaimed having had any participation.”²⁰

Harrison kept the secretary of war informed of the doings of the Prophet. In February 1808 he reported that the “disposition of the Indians [around Vincennes] is as friendly towards the United States as it ever has been” but otherwise for the Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa in the Detroit area. Then, in May 1808, he wrote that the Prophet was located on the Wabash below the Tippecanoe River and “had acquired such an ascendancy over the minds of the Indians that there can be little doubt of their pursuing any course which



The Shawnee warrior Tecumseh (left) and his brother, the prophet Tenskwatawa. They disliked Americans (National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution).

he may dictate to them, and that his views are decidedly hostile to the United States is but too evident.”²¹

In 1810 Harrison reported that the Prophet “has at least 1000 Souls under his immediate control (perhaps 350 or 400 men) principally composed of Kickapoos and Winebagos, but with a considerable number of Potawatomies and Shawanees and a few Chippewas and Ottawas,” and Harrison believed “the Shawnee Prophet [was] again exciting the Indians to Hostilities against the United States.” Harrison was sure that the British had furnished a “considerable supply of ammunition.”²²

The Prophet’s followers increased over time. In May 1810 Harrison wrote: “The Prophets force at present consists in the part of his own Tribe which has always been attached to him; nearly all the Kickapoos, a number of the Winebagoes, some Hurons from Detroit who have lately joined him, a number of Potawatomies, 20 or 30 Muskoos or Creeks and some straglers from the Ottawas, Chippeways and other tribes in all perhaps from 6 to 800. If the disaffection extends to all the Tribes between the Illinois River and Lake Michigan, the number will be doubled.”²³ In a truculent mood the Prophet’s camp refused to receive the salt annuity Harrison sent by boat.²⁴

The Indians were in dire straits. Harrison wrote:

The Indians of this country are in fact Miserable. The Game which was formerly so abundant is now so scarce as barely to afford subsistence to the most active hunter — The greater part of each Tribe are half the year in a state of starvation and astonishing as it may seem these remote Savages have felt their full share of the misfortunes which the troubles in Europe have brought upon the greater part of the world.²⁵

The Prophet and his brother claimed “that the Indians had been cheated of their lands” and “that no sale was good unless made by all the Tribes.”²⁶

William Hull, governor of the Michigan Territory, told the secretary of war on July 27, 1810, that “large bodies of Indians from the westward and southward continue to visit the British post at Amherstburgh [near Detroit], and are supplied with provisions, arms, ammunition, etc. More attention is paid to them than usual.” Harrison said the tribes receiving such presents were “the Miamis, Delaware, Shawnees, Potawatimies, Kickapoos, Chippewas, Ottawas, and Wyandots.” The British object was to “retain their influence [over] the most warlike of the Tribes, as a kind of barrier to Canada.”²⁷

In November 1810, Harrison refused to pay annuities to the Kickapoos “untill all or a majority of the Chiefs shall attend and formally and solemnly renounce the Prophets party and again put themselves under the protection of their father the President.”²⁸ Reports in May 1811 were about planned Indian uprisings and for a grand and decisive stroke. Governor Ninian Edwards of the Illinois Territory, established in February 1809, thought peace was “totally out of the question. We need never expect it till the Prophets party is dispersed and the bands of Pottowattimies about the Illinois river are cut off.”²⁹

Not everyone saw the Prophet in a negative light. John Badollet, a federal official in the Indiana territory, praised what Tenskwatawa was doing. He wrote in August of 1811 that he was trying “to Unite the Indians, to prevent their extinction” and that he daily led “two or three hundred men ... to work in an immense field.” Badollet described the Prophet’s town as one “of commodious houses” and one where “use of spiritous liquors [was] entirely abandoned.” He concluded that the Prophet was not to be feared and had accomplished more civilizing “than all the indian agents ... sent amongst them.”³⁰

Harrison took preemptive action on November 7, 1811. He marched against and defeated

the Indians at the Prophet's town near the junction of the Tippecanoe with the Wabash. Different estimates of the number of Indians in the battle are from 300 to 732. The battle laid the groundwork for a Harrison slogan used in the successful presidential campaign of 1840 of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," which unseated President Van Buren — a refrain to the slogan was "Van, Van is a used up man."³¹

Whether the result would have been different if Tecumseh, who was traveling in the south, was present is a subject for speculation. Harrison in August 1811 had high praise for him: he was "one of those uncommon geniuses who spring up occasionally to produce revolutions, and overturn the established order of things."³² The battle losses were small on both sides, perhaps 50 dead and wounded on each side, and when Tecumseh returned, he "dismissed the battle as a scuffle between children."³³ Tecumseh had a visceral hatred of the Americans, who had "killed his father and two brothers, destroyed his home, and murdered the Shawnee chief Cornstalk."³⁴

When war came with England in 1812 the British did their best to organize the Indians in the Illinois and Indiana areas, and the Prophet was still influential. On April 12, 1813, Edwards reported to the secretary of war: "By every other account that has been received for a long time past it appears that all the Indians West of Lake Michigan and on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers (except the Sauks & Foxes) have joined the hostile Confederacy." The Indians lost their fiery orator and leader, Tecumseh, when he was killed at the side of British soldiers on October 5, 1813.³⁵

The war went badly for the English in the north, and on July 18, 1814, Harrison and Governor Lewis Cass of the Michigan Territory held a peace council at "Greenville," and a treaty was entered into on July 22.³⁶ About 3,000 Indians assembled. The United States and tribes that had been loyal to them, that is, "Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanoes, and Senecas," gave peace to the "Miami nation of Indians," and to certain of the "Putawatimies, Ottawas, and Kickapoos." These tribes agreed to assist the United States in the war against Great Britain. It was difficult to get some Indians to join in a peace treaty since they were destitute and only the British were helping them.³⁷

The Treaty at Ghent dated December 24, 1814, which ended the War of 1812, ratified by President Madison on February 17, 1815, required the United States to end hostilities with willing tribes and to restore to such tribes "all the possessions, rights, and privileges" they had in 1811. At best this was a face-saving provision that did little for England's Indian allies. If a tribe didn't want to move to Canada it was going to have to deal with the United States. The governors of the Illinois Territory, Ninian Edwards, the Missouri Territory, William Clark, and Auguste Chouteau of the Missouri Territory, entered into many "Peace and Friendship" treaties during 1815 and 1816. The Sacs of Rock River did not stop hostilities until the next year, when they signed a "Peace and Friendship" treaty on May 13, 1816. They repented their conduct and asked for mercy.³⁸

Mopping Up in the Lower Northwest Territory (1817–1847)

Ohio

During the James Monroe presidency (1817–1825) over 25 treaties were signed, and the final large cessions needed to substantially eliminate Indian ownership in Ohio were made. The treaty of September 29, 1817, negotiated with the “sachems, chiefs, and warriors, of the Wyandot, Seneca, Delaware, Shawanese, Potawatomees, Ottawas, and Chippeway,” made a cession in the northwest quarter of Ohio of roughly 5 million acres, out of which the government agreed to issue patents to the Indians for about 1 million acres. The United States reserved the right “to make roads” over land retained by the Indians. By this time the Indians were savvy enough to have cash payments made in specie. Annuities on a forever basis were \$6,500, \$3,300 for 15 years, and a lump sum of \$500 was paid. Roughly converting the annuities to a present worth at the time of the treaty, the dollar amount paid for 4 million acres was about 4 cents per acre.¹

Before the 1817 treaty was approved and proclaimed by the United States on January 4, 1819, a supplementary treaty was made on September 17, 1818, in which patents were changed to reservations to be held by “the named Indians ... and their heirs forever, unless ceded to the United States.” The Indians would not be able to sell the designated land to others. This treaty scrapped the equal division among many named Indians of large areas kept by the Indians — the large areas were to be held “in the same manner as Indian reservations [had] been [theretofore] held [that is, for the tribe as a whole.]” The supplemental treaty was only with the “sachems, chiefs, and warriors, of the Wyandot, Seneca, Shawanese, and Ottawas.” Each of these tribes was promised additional annuities, and the Wyandot, Shawanese, and Seneca were given additional land.²

Commissioners for both of these treaties were Lewis Cass and Duncan McArthur. Cass, governor of the Michigan Territory from 1813 until 1831, was a commissioner for many of the treaties made in the Northwest Territory during these years and had a direct relationship with Andrew Jackson’s removal policy when he was appointed Jackson’s secretary of war in 1831. He was 34 years old at the time of the first treaty with a sterling career behind him. During the War of 1812 he fought “in the major battles along the Great Lakes border with Canada and against the Indian tribes allied with the British” and became a major general of volunteers.³

McArthur was a wealthy landowner and speaker in the Ohio legislature. Notwithstanding his wealth and service as a brigadier-general in the War of 1812, he retained a “gruff and cantankerous manner” and the dress of a backwoodsman — in 1819 an Englishman described him as “dirty and butcherlike and very unlike a soldier in appearance, seeming half savage.”⁴

The commissioners’ agreement to grant patents to the Indians in the treaty of 1817 may have reflected a more generous attitude toward the Indians than that found in Washington or a desire on their part to allow whites to, by hook or crook, get the land out of the hands of the Indians. October 6, 1818, was the date of the last treaty ceding significant acreage in Ohio, over 200,000 acres. This was an appendage to a very large cession made in the Indiana Territory covering most of central Indiana. Making the cession was the Miami nation.⁵

Ohio was all in the hands of whites when Jackson came into office (1829) except for a significant number of reservations in the northwest corner. These were largely disposed of in seven treaties between 1831 and 1836⁶ with the Seneca, Shawnee, Ottaway, and Wyandot. Most of these provided for a public sale of the ceded lands with the proceeds used to benefit the tribes except for certain deductions, for example, the “*minimum* price of the public lands per acre.” Emphasis on the word “treaty.” In essence the Indians were treated as if they had bought the reserved land at the “*minimum* price of the public lands per acre” and then sold it for a higher price.

Payment to the Indians was a mixture of money, land west of the Mississippi and west of Missouri (which became a state in 1821), and various agreements to support their transition by furnishing items and help they would need at their new locations: blankets, ploughs, horse gears, hoes, axes, Russia sheeting, rifles, cross-cut saws, grindstones, hand saws, drawing knives, files, gimblets, augurs, planes, braces and bits, hewing axes, scythes, frows, grubbing hoes, saw mill, grist mill, two pair of stones and a good bolting cloth, a blacksmith shop and blacksmith. It was common to agree to support the moving groups with supplies for their first year in the West.⁷

The “Wyandott” tribe did not agree to move and make final cessions of 109,144 acres in Ohio and 4,996 acres in Michigan in exchange for land in Kansas until March 17, 1842, during the Tyler presidency.⁸

Indiana

Four treaties in 1818, one in 1820, and one in 1826 transferred most of central Indiana, which achieved statehood on December 11, 1816. Making cessions were the Potawatamie, Wea, Delaware, and Miami. The Wea ceded all of its land in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, and the Delaware all of its Indiana land.⁹

By far the largest cession (roughly 9 million acres) was on October 6, 1818, by the Miami. Assuming a present worth of the \$15,000 perpetual annuity to be paid at about \$250,000, the price per acre was close to 3 cents. Some 49 sections of land were to be granted to individuals, and 6 reservations for the Miami nation were delineated. This treaty was proclaimed January 15, 1819, without any change in the grants made to individuals. Within 20 years most of the reservations were ceded back to the United States.¹⁰

On October 23, 1826,¹¹ the “Miami Tribe of Indians” ceded all Indiana land “north and west of the Wabash and Miami rivers,” but grants were made of about 22 sections to individuals and their heirs with the limitation that the land could not be conveyed without

the consent of the president. This limitation was a protection for the grantees, who otherwise may have been manipulated out of their grants by whites. The commissioners — Cass, James B. Ray (at the time governor of Indiana), and John Tipton¹² (then Indian agent for northern Indiana) — were well aware of whites cheating the Indians. Several treaty provisions dealt with payment of Miami tribe debts. About 100 sections were reserved for the use of the tribe.

The Potawatomi Indians claimed much of the northern one-fourth of Indiana. Starting in 1826 and continuing in 1828 and 1832, except for numerous reservations within the large tracts ceded, the Potawatomi transferred all of its claims in Indiana to the United States.¹³

Looking at the post-1830 treaties for Indiana it appears a technique may have been to convince the Indians to sign on to large cessions by making it appear they would have permanent Indian reservations within the large cessions. Then, within a few years, by some means they were convinced to move to the west from those reservations. A “Pottawatomie” treaty of October 26, 1832, for 22 or so cents per acre, ceded a large tract of land in northwest Indiana to the United States but established within its boundaries reservations for different bands. The long-term objective of the United States was suggested in the treaty: the “United States agree to provide for the Pottawatimies, if they shall at any time ... wish to change their residence.” It wasn’t long before this happened. In 1834 four treaties ceded earlier reservations of 14 sections of land to the United States for money. The price per acre ranged from 47 cents per acre to \$1.60. One of these treaties had a commitment to move west.¹⁴

With Indiana’s population going from 147,128 in 1820 to 343,031 in 1830 and 685,866 in 1840, buyers for the ceded land were plentiful. There were removal provisions in one of the 1834 treaties and in all of the 1836 treaties, which eliminated many of the reservations included in earlier treaties. The price paid for the reservations in 1836 was \$1 per acre.¹⁵

The same pattern occurred in regard to a treaty of October 27, 1832, made with the “Potowatomies, of the State of Indiana and Michigan Territory,” which ceded all land in the “States of Indiana and Illinois, and in the Territory of Michigan, south of Grand River.” That treaty provided for many individual patents without any restrictions and for a number of reservations for named bands. But, by four years later, all of the bands but two had ceded over their reservations to the United States and agreed to move west of the Mississippi River. In general the Indians were paid from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per acre for these cessions.¹⁶

To eliminate reservations was consistent with the instructions given by Jackson’s secretary of war to commissioners negotiating with the Potawatomi. Lewis Cass told them to “decline, in the first instances, to grant any reservations either to the Indians or others, and endeavor to prevail upon them all to remove.”¹⁷

The white Hoosiers did not like the reservations. In 1829 the General Assembly let Congress know this:

The continuance of these few savages within our limits, who claim so large a space of the best soil, not only circumscribes, in its practical effects, the usefulness of the privileges we enjoy as a free and independent State, but tends materially to impede a system of internal improvements essential to the prosperity of our citizens, and in a degree jeopardizes the peace and tranquillity of our frontier, which it is our right and duty to secure. It is evident, that, although the Indians within our boundaries have been supported by large annuities, although the game has greatly decreased, yet agricultural pursuits are almost entirely neglected, and thus the large extent of country they yet claim is not only unprofitable to them, but, by its contiguity to the [Wabash] canal, is calculated to retard the settlement, the revenue, and the prosperity of the state.¹⁸

It took two treaties to essentially clear the “Miami tribe” from Indiana. One, during the Jackson administration, on October 23, 1834, ceded several reservations, and the United

States agreed to issue many patents to individuals and for a reservation. No mention was made of the tribe moving to the west. Another Miami treaty during the Martin Van Buren presidency (1837–1841) dated October 6, 1838, ceded several relatively large tracts, reserved one relatively small area, and the United States agreed to grant patents to a number of individuals.¹⁹ Removal of the tribe was contemplated:

The United States stipulate to possess, the Miami tribe of Indians of, ... country west of the Mississippi river, to remove to and settle on, *when the said tribe may be disposed to emigrate from their present country...* And the said country shall be sufficient in extent, and suited to their wants and condition and be in a region contiguous to that in the occupation of the tribes which emigrated from the States of Ohio and Indiana.²⁰

By treaty of November 28, 1840,²¹ the “Miami tribe” ceded “all their remaining lands in Indiana” to the United States and agreed to move within five years “to the country assigned them west of the Mississippi.” Contact with the white civilization had been disastrous to the mighty Miami, who were finally prevailed on to go to Kansas in 1846–1847. Only 323 individuals made the move.²²

Depending on the situation, what happened in the Northwest Territory could be as expressed in the Columbus, Ohio, newspaper, the *Ohio State Journal*, on August 17, 1827:

Since the beginning of the present century, the tide of emigration has silently poured its thousands into the bosom of the wilderness. The forest has disappeared under the blows of the sturdy backwoodsman, and gay villages and tilled fields have arose on every side *to break the long chain of savage life*, and to establish in its place the social and peaceful habits of civilization [Emphasis supplied].²³

Or as stated in 1834 by Charles Fenno Hoffman’s words from “Ouisconsin Territory”:

However paradoxical it may appear upon paper ... there have been and are men on the frontiers whose dealings with civilized society ... whose exact attendance even to their religious duties, are such as to ensure them respect...—and that with these very men the rights and privileges, the property, the life of an Indian, do not weigh a feather.²⁴

Lead Mines and the Black Hawk War

Illinois and Southern Wisconsin

Persons rushing in the 1820s to exploit a rich lead-bearing region around Galena, Illinois, extending into Wisconsin caused a serious collision of whites and Indians. From 100 miners in 1825 the number went to 453 in 1826. Five million pounds of lead were produced in 1827 and 13 million pounds in 1829. The area was also being settled by farmers. Nothing was going to stop the influx into Indian country.¹

The federal solution in 1828² implemented by Cass was to extinguish the title of the “Sac, Fox, Winnebago, Potawatamie, Ottawa, and Chippewa” in southern Wisconsin, a part of the Michigan Territory until 1836, and northern Illinois “in the vicinity of [the] Lead Mines.” Without time to convene the dispersed Indians so as to properly obtain a cession, a temporary arrangement was made with the “Winnebago” and the “united tribes of the Potawatamies, Chippewas, and Ottawas” for a provisional boundary and an understanding that “any white persons [passing] into the Indian country, for the purposes of mining, or for any other purpose whatever,” should not be molested.

When the Jackson administration took office in 1829 the first treaties³ approved were for land claimed by the “United Nations of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatamie” and the “Winnebago” in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Some of this land had been included in the “fraudulent Illinois purchase,” which was restored in 1816 to the tribes when a Potawatomi chief complained to President Madison after the War of 1812.

In addition to paying money the United States granted a number of tracts of land to individuals who could only lease or convey the property with permission from the President of the United States. Provisions of these treaties⁴ incorrectly implied that the Indians, as a body, would remain in the general area of the cessions. For example, “fifty barrels of salt” were to be delivered at Chicago, “annually, forever,” for the “United Nations,” and for the “Winnebago” “three blacksmiths’ shops” were to be “provide[d] and support[ed] [for] thirty years.” A very rough calculation, totally disregarding the value of salt, blacksmiths, and “two yoke of oxen, one cart, and the services of a man at the portage of the Wisconsin and Fox rivers” would have the “United Nations” receiving 10 cents per acre and the “Winnebago” 15 cents per acre.

People streamed into Illinois in the 1830s. In 1834 a steamer ran from Buffalo to Chicago where lots, outside the business area, were selling for \$250. In 1837 a Philadelphia paper stated the “whole region (particularly the states of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin Territory) is filling up with great and unexampled rapidity.” “Illinois, in 1820, was a western frontier state; in 1840 it was ... spoken of as in the center of the United States.”⁵ Between 1830 and 1840 its population went from 151,445 to 476,183.⁶

A monster cession of some 5 million acres in northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin was made by the “United Nation of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatamie Indians” in a treaty of September 26, 1833.⁷ Members of the “United Nation” were mostly Potawatomi. In exchange the “United Nation” was to receive “not less in quantity than five millions of acres” west of the Mississippi. The United States assumed money and other obligations including the expenses of a deputation to “visit the ... country west of the Mississippi and thus be assured that full justice has been done.” One hundred thousand dollars were to be paid to individuals “in lieu of Reservations” and \$175,000 to those with “claims admitted to be justly due.” The largest claim was that of an agent of the American Fur Company (\$17,000).

The treaty was negotiated in the village of Chicago under conditions described by a British traveler, Charles Joseph Latrobe:

You will find horse-dealers, and horse-stealers,—rogues of every description, white, black, brown, and red—half-breed, quarter-breeds, and men of no breed at all;—dealers in pigs, poultry, and potatoes;—men pursuing Indian claims, some for tracts of land, others ... for pigs which the wolves had eaten;—creditors of the tribes or of particular Indians, who know they have no chance of getting their money, if they do not get it from the Government agents;—sharpers of every degree; pedlars, grog-sellers; Indian agents and Indian traders of every description, and Contractors to supply the Pottawattomies with food. The little village was in an uproar from morning to night, and from night to morning; for, during the hours of darkness, when the housed portion of the population of Chicago strove to obtain repose in the crowded plank edifices of the village, the Indians howled, sang, wept, yelled, and whooped in their various encampments. With all this, the whites seemed to me to be more pagan than the red men.⁸

Black Hawk War

Black Hawk was an unrepentant enemy of white settlers wanting to push his British Band of the Sac and Fox from land they occupied near the mouth of the Rock River in Illinois (now Rock Island, Illinois). He and his band fought with the British and Tecumseh in the War of 1812 and maintained contact with the British after the war. He did not agree with the post-war cooperative attitude taken by Keokuk, a Sac chief. Trouble began in 1823 when white settlers located on some of this land. Confrontations with the settlers culminated in 1827 when the whites burned the lodges of the Indians, who were away on a hunting trip. Protestations to white authorities were fruitless. A recurrence of this in 1830 caused Black Hawk to contact the British and an Indian prophet. Then, in the spring of 1831, after further conflicts, Black Hawk threatened forcible eviction if the settlers did not move, and rumors spread among the settlers about a planned Indian uprising. A volunteer army



Black Hawk. The leader of a group of Sac and Fox Indians who were violently attacked (Library of Congress).

hastily formed by Illinois governor John Reynolds was enough to cause Black Hawk to withdraw to the west side of the Mississippi. On June 30, 1831, the “band of Sac Indians, usually called ‘The British Band of Rock River,’” including Black Hawk, signed “Articles of Agreement and Capitulation” together with their allies in the Potawatomi, Winnebago, and Kickapoo nations. Under the agreement the “Sac and Fox Indians [were guaranteed] the integrity of their lands west of the Mississippi,” and “none of the British Band was to recross the river ... without express permission of the President of the United States or the Governor of Illinois.”⁹

The next year, on April 6, 1832, Black Hawk and “four or five hundred mounted warriors and their squaws and children, perhaps a thousand souls in all, crossed the Mississippi into Illinois ... below the mouth of the Rock River” with the intention of planting corn.¹⁰ Although the year before there had been indications that perhaps the British and other tribes would support what Black Hawk was doing, some, but not significant, help was given when Black Hawk faced armed resistance.¹¹

Over the next four months perhaps all but 150 of those crossing perished at the hands of troops who chased them through northern Illinois and what was to become southern Wisconsin or from other causes. Sadly, efforts of Black Hawk to surrender on three occasions were either not understood or ignored. Except for the end, the battles were not particularly noteworthy. At the end Black Hawk and a “miserable band” reached the mouth of the Bad Axe River intending to cross to the west side of the Mississippi River and were caught between a land force and an army steamboat. Between killings by both of these and casualties resulting from drowning, Black Hawk had 300 deaths. Some 150 managed to get across the river and were killed or captured by their traditional enemy the Sioux.¹²

Presumably the government thought the white troops accomplished what the Springfield, Illinois, paper, the *Sangamo Journal*, said on April 12 should be done: “These Indians must be taught to respect their treaties.”¹³ To Black Hawk violations by the whites justified what he did. He did not think the Sac and Fox cession of 1804 was valid, in particular in the Rock Island area where he had been born and was living when the whites intruded. As for the 1831 agreement, which he had “touched the goosequill to,” a promise of the United States to supply food for the winter of 1831–1832 was not kept, and he considered this to invalidate the agreement. His crossing into Illinois with women and children was not a warlike move that justified an ending that Governor Reynolds said was “more a carnage than a regular battle.”¹⁴

The names of those who had some participation is interesting: “Lincoln, Zachary Taylor, Jefferson Davis, Winfield Scott, Henry Dodge, John Reynolds, Henry Atkinson, Albert Sydney Johnston, Joseph E. Johnston, John A. McClernand, and Robert Anderson,” many of whom had important roles in the Civil War starting 30 years later.¹⁵

Shortly after the end of the war Winfield Scott, a brigadier-general in the regular army who arrived after the fighting and massacre of Black Hawk’s followers, and John Reynolds negotiated treaties with the Sac and Fox and the Winnebago, some of whom had helped Black Hawk. An object of the negotiations was to dispatch the Indians to the west. Reynolds had kept an eye on the Illinois tribes during the 1812 war and made his way after the war by land speculation. Scott won a gold medal from Congress for his leadership in the War of 1812 and was a solid soldier who would pursue policies of the government. His no-nonsense approach was demonstrated by his order to the troops he was bringing to engage Black Hawk who suffered from cholera. Drunken soldiers were required to dig their own graves since Scott believed drunkenness caused cholera. The troops that traveled from Buffalo to Detroit in July brought cholera with them. In Detroit there

were 28 deaths in two weeks. Day and night the death cart traveled the streets, and the cry "Bring out the dead" was heard. After the troops reached Chicago there were 18 deaths within 30 hours, and those who could fled the city.¹⁶

On September 15, 1832, land west of the Mississippi was exchanged for "Winnebago nation" land mostly in southern Wisconsin.¹⁷ Among various money and other obligations of the United States was one to establish a school. Some money payments were in recognition that the "country ... ceded by the Winnebago nation [was] more extensive and valuable than that given by the United States in exchange."

The "Sac and Fox" were forced to give up a vast acreage west of the Mississippi in Iowa (about one-fifth of the eastern half of what became the state that bordered the Mississippi River).¹⁸ The victor was able to justify its actions — the preamble said Black Hawk carried out "in violation of treaties ... an unprovoked war upon unsuspecting and defenceless citizens of the United States, sparing neither age nor sex" and that the severe punishment was justified "partly as indemnity for the expense incurred, and partly to secure the future safety and tranquility of the invaded frontier."

It is true that Black Hawk harassed white settlers, and perhaps as many as 200 were killed, but this was only after those he had sent with a white flag were made captives and one killed and two of his observers also killed. The punishment of the whole Sac and Fox nation is at least questionable. Those led by Keokuk did not join in the war. The cession treaty purported to cover this by saying "a large portion of the Sac and Fox nation" were involved. A more plausible explanation is that whites were ready to move into the fertile land of Iowa; three years earlier Keokuk refused a government offer to buy mineral lands west of the Mississippi.¹⁹

Even allies of the United States gave up land. A large cession by the "Potawatamie Tribe of Indians of the Prairie and Kaukakee," who had "been faithful allies of the United States" in the "late conflict with the Sacs and Foxes," was made on October 20, 1832,²⁰ in eastern Illinois. About 1 million acres were ceded, out of which 38 sections were reserved for named individuals. A payment of about 25 cents per acre was generous for this time.

Black Hawk survived and, after being held at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis over the winter, was released with his remaining warriors. They were taken to Washington, met President Jackson, and made a tour of eastern cities, attracting large and generally sympathetic audiences. Upon returning to Iowa he lived on the Indian reservation until his death in 1838. Black Hawk dictated "his side of the provocations and misunderstanding that caused the hostilities," which was published in 1833.²¹

There were lots of treaties during the Jackson years, but in the north there was ample land to satisfy the current needs of settlers by the start of his second term. In 1833 his secretary of war claimed that "the country north of the Ohio, east of the Mississippi [was practically] cleared of the embarrassments of Indian relations."²²

In Jackson's farewell address in 1837 he boasted ,

The States which had so long been retarded in their improvement by the Indian tribes residing in the midst of them are at length relieved from the evil and this unhappy race — the original dwellers in our land — are now placed in a situation where we may well hope that they will share in the blessings of civilization and be saved from degradation and destruction to which they were rapidly hastening while they remained in the States to which they were rapidly hastening while they remained in the States.²³

Jackson was a pragmatist in saying "in our land," but the Indians probably will always object to such a statement.

Michigan and Wisconsin through the Years 1807–1854

Michigan

Shortly after Michigan became a territory in 1805 its governor, William Hull, negotiated for a four-million-acre cession made on November 17, 1807, by the “Ottoway, Chippeway, Wyandotte, and Pottawatamie,” which included Detroit and extended into Ohio. Many reservations, preferably to be “laid out in squares [or] paralelograms,” were set aside for the Indian nations.¹ In the treaty the Indian nations “acknowledged themselves to be under the protection of the United States, and no other power,” a situation that changed with the War of 1812, in which some in these nations joined with the British and after the peace paid a price. Another victim of the War of 1812 was Hull, who had illustrious service in the Revolutionary War but was convicted of cowardice and neglect of duty for surrendering Detroit to the British, which he justified as a fear of a massacre of noncombatants by the British Indian allies in case of defeat. The president commuted a sentence to be shot.

To oppose the United States in a war usually had adverse consequences. On September 24, 1819, Lewis Cass, the military and civil governor of the Michigan Territory from 1813 to 1831, and the “Chippewa nation” signed a treaty ceding roughly 7 million acres to the United States, from which were reserved about 102,000 acres.² Cass knew the northwest well, having started out on foot for the Northwest Territory in 1801 at the age of 18, and rising to the rank of brigadier-general in the War of 1812, in which he fought with Harrison against the British and the Indians under Tecumseh. The payment of an annuity of \$1,000 in silver “annually for ever” calculates out to about one-fifth of a cent per acre, as compared to about the 1 cent per acre paid for the pre-war 1807 cession obtained by Hull. The reserved areas were ceded to the United States by the “Saganaw tribe of the Chippewa nation” by a treaty of January 14, 1837, and the tribe agreed to “remove from the State of Michigan.” The ceded land was to be sold, and most of the proceeds were to be paid the tribe. A year later the tribe was concerned that purchasers would combine to keep the price down, and another treaty of January 23, 1838, set minimum prices for which the land could be sold.

The last large cession in Michigan on August 29, 1821, by the “Ottawa, Chippewa, and Pottawatamie,”³ was before a forced removal to the west policy was adopted. Tracts were reserved for several villages, and over 20 grants were made to individuals that could not be leased or sold without permission of the President of the United States. Approximately 4.5 million acres were ceded at a payment of about 3 cents per acre.

Many of the reservations in the 1807 and 1821 treaties were ceded back to the United States in a treaty of September 19, 1827, in which “dispersed bands of the Potawatamie Tribe [were to be removed] from the road leading from Detroit to Chicago, and as far as practicable



from the settlements of the Whites” in exchange for 99 sections located elsewhere. Then, six years later, the 99 sections were ceded to the United States in a treaty of September 27, 1833, in which the “United Nation of Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatamie” ceded all of their land “in the Territory of Michigan south of Grand river,” and the Indians on described reservations were to “remove therefrom within three years.”⁴

When Andrew Jackson became president in 1829 over half of the lower peninsula of Michigan was legally in control of the United States. Jackson told Congress on December 8, 1829, that he would introduce a bill for moving the Indians across the Mississippi. The Indian Removal Bill became the law of the land on May 23, 1830.⁵

The first huge Michigan acreage cession during his administration occurred in 1836. Transferred by the “Ottawa and Chippewa nations” on March 28, 1836, was the eastern half of the upper peninsula and what remained of the lower peninsula — roughly 13 million acres. The United States agreed to remove them west of the Mississippi, “when the Indians wish it.”⁶ Many of the Chippewa went to Canada.

The “Menomonic nation,” on September 3, 1836, ceded about four million acres in Michigan and Wisconsin north of Green Bay, and the “Wyandott” nation ceded 4,996 acres in Michigan and 109,044 acres in Ohio on March 14, 1842, and agreed to move west of the Mississippi.⁷

The treaty that completed the total coverage of Michigan, in a gross sense, was not until October 4, 1842,⁸ in the presidency of John Tyler (1841–1845), who was thrust into that position when President William Henry Harrison died after only one month in office. Then the “Chippewa Indians of the Mississippi, and Lake Superior” ceded land making up

the western half of the upper peninsula of Michigan and a large area in Wisconsin. Although the treaty speaks of the possibility of the Indians being removed from the land, there is no specific provision requiring this.

Wisconsin

In pre-treaty years the occupants in what is now Wisconsin were Sioux, Sac, Fox, Chippewa, Menominee, Winnebago, and the United Nations Potawatomi, Chippewa and Ottawa.⁹ A white woman living in the area described the dress of the different tribes:

The Foxes wear dressed deerskin, soft and white, one half of their heads shaved clean, with a great bunch of cock's feathers on the top. The Sioux dressed in deerskin, colored black, worked with porcupine quills, their hair brushed up and tied on the top of their head in one large square cushion. The Winnebagoes had their blanket daubed with paint, and large rosettes of colored ribbons; hair in two square cushions on the back of the head. The Chippewas and Menomenees dressed plainly with nothing by which they could be distinguished.¹⁰

The treaty years saw a deterioration in Indian conditions. A 1834 description concerning the Menominee men said they were “nearly naked some with nothing but a dirty ragged blanket.”¹¹

The Chippewa, who laid claim to most of the northern half of Wisconsin, had a nomadic past, having been part of the Ojibwa north of Lake Huron in the early days of the fur trade, who moved westward under pressure from the aggressive Iroquois as did the Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Sac and Fox. In the 1760s and 1770s they were living and fighting in Wisconsin and Minnesota — their main adversary was the Dakota Sioux, who claimed some of the same areas as did the Chippewa. Their struggles went on so long that when a Chippewa chief was asked by Cass why they were enemies, his response was “because their fathers had fought.” The Sioux were hostile to most of the tribes in Wisconsin.¹²

To reduce warfare between the Chippewa and the Sioux, Cass held conferences in 1825 and 1826 to establish boundaries between the tribes. The first, along the Mississippi River at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, in 1825, was attended by the “Chippewas, Sioux, Sacs and Foxes, Menomonies and Winnebagoes,” and a Chippewa claim to “Upper Michigan, most of northern Wisconsin ... and northern Minnesota as far as the Red River” was recognized. In Article 10 Cass got a commitment of fealty: “All the tribes ... acknowledge the general controlling power of the United States and disclaim all dependence upon, and connection with, any other power.”¹³

Since not many Chippewa attended in 1825, Cass held another conference at Fond du Lac in 1826. In addressing the Chippewa Cass broached a subject important to the whites: “We ... wish that you would allow your great father to look through the country, and take such copper as he may find. This copper does you no good, and it would be useful to us to make into kettles, buttons, bells, and a great many other things.”¹⁴ At this second conference a boundary between the Dakota Sioux and the Chippewa was agreed to, and the United States was given the right “to search for, and carry away, any metals or minerals from any part of [the Chippewa] country.”¹⁵ Cass used a technique often employed by those negotiating with the Indians — a show of force and some bluster. The soldiers with him drilled and paraded, and Cass told the Chippewa: “You have never seen your great father's arm. Only a small particle of it [pointing to his soldiers].” “We advise you as friends and

brothers, not to offend your great father.”¹⁶ The treaty explains why a \$2,000 annuity was “to continue ... during the pleasure of the Congress”: “In consideration of the poverty of the Chippewas, and of the sterile nature of the country they inhabit, unfit for cultivation, and almost destitute of game, and as a proof of regard on the part of the United States.”

Later, when the whites wanted to carry out major recoveries of minerals, the Chippewa understanding of what was agreed to was for samples of minerals to be taken from the land, and as a missionary observed in 1842, the language was loose enough that the Indians could rightly believe this to be the case. But, as in most matters, the whites did not give the language an interpretation favorable to the Indians. The language on the territorial seal for Wisconsin said it all: “*civilitas successit Barbarum*,” that is, civilization succeeds barbarism.¹⁷

It took one more treaty, on August 11, 1827, to complete the southern Chippewa boundary. Agreeing were the “Chippewa, Menomonie, and Winebago tribes.”¹⁸ These boundary treaties laid a groundwork for large Wisconsin cessions in the 1830s and 1840s. As with most Indian groups, making treaties with the Chippewa was not easy. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, an Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie, described the independence within the Chippewa nation:

Their government, so far as they exercise any, is placed in the hands of chiefs.... The occasion which calls for action, brings with it an expression of the general voice. The latter is implicitly obeyed; and it is the policy of the chiefs to keep a little in the rear of public sentiment. The power ... of chiefs, is only advisory.... No formality is exercised in taking the sense of the village, or nation, as to public men or measures. Popular feeling is the supreme law.¹⁹

At the 1827 boundary treaty Cass solved the problem of who should represent the Menominee. He told the Indians that they needed a chief, otherwise they would be “like a flock of geese without a leader. Some fly one way & some another.”²⁰ Oshkosh was named, by Cass, as head chief and was first to sign for the Menominee.

Early in Jackson’s presidency a large cession around Green Bay and Lake Winnebago in east-central Wisconsin was made by the “Menomonee Indians” on February 8, 1831.²¹ The cession included land that the “President of the United States [could] set apart as a home [for] several tribes of New York Indians” who had moved to Wisconsin in the 1820s. The treaty, negotiated in the City of Washington, has language making it appear a sale of the land was clearly in the best interest of the Menominee: “Not yet having disposed of any of their lands, they receive no annuities from the United States: whereas their brothers the Pootowottomees on the south, and the Winnebagoes on the west, have sold a great portion of their country, receive large annuities, and are now encroaching upon the lands of the Menomonees.”

Dealing with the whites demolished the Menominee of that time. Felix M. Keesing, in his book *The Menomini Indians of Wisconsin*, states that during the period of the land sales the liquor made available by the traders is said to have brought them “to the lowest point of human degradation;” by 1844 it was reported that “there is no tribe upon all our borders so utterly abandoned to the vice of intoxication as the Menominies,” and “drunken rows” were a recognized factor in depopulation.²² The annuities did more for unscrupulous traders than for the Indians. A newspaper account of what happened when one of the annuities was paid in 1847 reads:

The tribe number about 2,500 souls. In addition to cattle and farming utensils ... and ... pork, flour, corn, salt, &c, they had \$20,000 in specie equally distributed....

As usual ... a large number of traders, black-legs and spectators were present in all some 300. For some days before the arrival of the Indian agent, a brisk barter was carried on ... for the furs

and skins.... After the payment, a cash business was commenced with the Indian, and continued until he was drained of his last dime. [Although prohibited] [l]arge quantities of [liquor] are annually sold under the very eyes ... of the government officers ... at an enormous profit ... 10 pounds of pork were made a legal tender for a pint of whiskey.²³

On September 15, 1832, as an aftermath of the Black Hawk War, the “Winnebago nation” made a big cession in southern Wisconsin.²⁴ As discussed earlier, in Chicago on September 26, 1833, 5 million acres in northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin was ceded by the “United Nation of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatamie Indians.” The 1833 treaty, together with that in 1831 of the Menominee, placed all the shoreline of Lake Michigan north of the Illinois state line to Green Bay in the hands of the United States — government ownership extended inland over much of the area from 50 to 70 miles.

After the death of maybe one-fourth of the tribe from a smallpox epidemic in 1834, a weaker “Menomonic nation,” back at the treaty table on September 3, 1836, ceded about four million acres in Michigan and Wisconsin north of Green Bay, and agreed to “remove from the country ceded, within one year.”²⁵ This treaty was designed to “open up the northern pine forests and the rivers to white lumbermen.” The Wisconsin territorial body was not satisfied — in its 1841–1842 session it demanded complete removal of all tribes in “Wisconsin.” The demand for land vastly increased between 1830 and 1850 as Wisconsin’s population went from 4,000 to 300,000.

Despite the Menominee debilitating addiction to liquor, a 1847 report on 300 who had turned to farming was positive: “On a late visit to their village (at Poygan), I counted sixty-two log houses, erected by themselves most of them comfortably furnished and occupied. They have cleared up from the heavy timbered lands small fields, which are well fenced, and fine crops of corn and potatoes occupy every foot of ground.” Unfortunately a few years later they were forced to abandon Poygan (near Lake Winnebago) and to move “to the forest fastnesses of the upper Wolf River.”²⁶

When Wisconsin became a state in 1848 pressure was put on the Menominee to move from land they still had in Wisconsin, and in a treaty of October 18, 1848, they ceded all their land in Wisconsin to the United States.²⁷ A Menominee chief told his tribesmen, concerning the Americans, “You don’t expect he has come to decorate your ears with silver ear bobs? No, he comes simply to get the balance of our country! ... He proposed to remove us across the Mississippi.... He says there is an abundance of all kinds of game there; that the lakes and rivers are full of fish and wild rice.” (His listeners interrupt: “Why doesn’t he go himself and live in such a fine country!”)²⁸

After the land promised them west of the Mississippi was inspected, the tribe was not willing to move. The president, who fortunately for them was a sympathetic Millard Fillmore, was told the land was not as represented, and he allowed them to stay in Wisconsin. A new treaty was made²⁹ that returned to the United States the promised land west of the Mississippi, and for them, a reservation of 276,480 acres was established in Wisconsin in 1854; they moved on to the reservation from their village at Poygan and from other areas. Some of the New York Indians ended up with land on this reservation. The Mohicans, and some other New York tribes, had claims for land around Green Bay dating back to 1821.

Although there are convincing indications that the Menominee treaties were signed under duress, it is difficult to argue that they, with a population of about 3,000, should have retained a claim to millions of acres. They were destined to be overwhelmed, and the efforts to relocate them or to reduce the area they occupied were reasonable in concept.

The “Menomonic” cessions in 1831, 1836, and 1848 were equaled area-wise by the

“Chippewa nation” on July 29, 1837,³⁰ after Martin Van Buren became president. When Van Buren was nominated as the Democrats’ presidential candidate in 1835, he said he would “tread generally in the footsteps of President Jackson.” Insofar as removing Indians from their ancestral lands, he was every bit as aggressive as had been Jackson. The Chippewa were an easy target. In his remarks to the Chippewa at Prairie du Chien in 1825 Cass said, “We find you are very poor. Your women and children have little to eat, and less to wear.” The condition of the Chippewa in 1832 as described by Schoolcraft was that “mere subsistence is the best state of things that is looked for.”³¹ How they became that way is described in *David Thompson’s Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784–1812*:

The Chippeways and other tribes made use of Traps of Steel; and of Castorum. For several years all these Indians were rich, the Women and Children, as well as the Men, were covered with silver brooches, Ear Rings, Waupum, Beads and other trinkets. Their mantles were of fine scarlet cloth, and all was finery and dress. The Canoes of the Fur Traders were loaded with packs of beaver, the abundance of the article lowered the London prices. Every intelligent Man saw the poverty that would follow the destruction of the beaver, but there were no Chiefs to control it; all was perfect liberty and equality. For years afterwards (1797) almost the whole of these extensive countries were denuded of beaver, the Natives became poor, and with difficulty procured the first necessaries of life, and in this state they remain, and probably forever. A worn out field may be manured; but the Beaver, once destroyed cannot be replaced; they were the gold coin of the country, with which the necessaries of life were purchased.³²

Arranging for the 1837 cession³³ was Henry Dodge,³⁴ who became governor of the Wisconsin Territory, which was established before Michigan became a state in 1837. Dodge was a true frontiersman, born at Post Vincennes in 1782, a brigadier-general in the War of 1812, who fought in the Black Hawk War of 1832. His custom was to wear “pistols and a Bowie knife in his belt, even on civic occasions.” Dodge saw the Chippewa cession as giving over 9 or 10 million acres of “extensive Pine Forests,” which were rapidly exploited.³⁵

Dodge told the Indians that the “Great Father ... sent [him] to pay [them] the value of [their] land; & not to deceive [them] in any thing.”³⁶ Perhaps in violation of that spirit he told the Chippewa chiefs to consult with their American subagents to determine the value of the land. The Chippewa negotiators wanted any annuities to last as long as the land. What they got were annuities for 20 years. They wanted a continuing right to hunt and fish and gather wild rice on the ceded land. Dodge allowed this but put in a white man’s out: they were to have those rights “during the pleasure of the President.” Although not mentioned in the treaty, the Indians expected to have access to the maple trees and the sugar from them, which played an important part in their diet. No mention of removal is in the treaty.

Schoolcraft, who was not a presence at the negotiations, wondered after the treaty was signed, “why it was that so little had been given for so large a cession, comprehending the very best lands of the Chippewas in the Mississippi Valley.”³⁷

In a 1842 cession the Chippewa surrendered the rest of Wisconsin lying along Lake Superior. The weak position of the Chippewa vis-à-vis whites, was demonstrated in 1844 when Isle Royale, “then valuable for its copper discoveries,” was ceded for “\$400 worth of gun powder and \$100 worth of fresh beef.”³⁸

In a treaty of November 1, 1837,³⁹ the “Winnebago nation” ceded to the United States “all their land east of the Mississippi river” and agreed to “remove within eight months” to land “west of the Mississippi.” The circumstances of the treaty are a stain on the administration. It was signed in Washington, D.C., by an Indian delegation that did not have

authority to make a cession. Compounding the travesty was the misleading of the Indians into thinking they would have eight years to move rather than the eight months specified in the treaty. About half of the Winnebagos refused to move and stayed in central Wisconsin.⁴⁰

Also in Washington were members of the Sioux tribe. On September 29, 1837, the Sioux gave up “all their land, east of the Mississippi river, and all their islands in the ... river.”⁴¹ Rough calculations show the land ceded in western Wisconsin was about 2.5 million acres, for which they were paid about 40 cents per acre.

An approximation of the price per acre for the “Winnebago nation” land is 40 cents, but it was a much less certain price than that paid the Sioux. The Sioux were promised a 5 percent per annum return on an invested \$300,000 “annually, forever.” The Winnebago also had a 5 percent per annum return on a sum, \$1,100,000, but “at the discretion of the President” it could be discontinued at any time.

Those negotiating with the Indians had a high standard to live up to. The Northwest Ordinance adopted by the Continental Congress on July 13, 1787, specified that “the utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent....”⁴² Was “good faith” shown when Dodge went after what he told his superiors was land of “nine to ten millions of acres,” which abounded “in Pine Timber” and in part was “well suited to Agricultural purposes” and on which discoveries were “reported to have been made of copper”?⁴³

Copper and Other Minerals

After Michigan became a state in 1837 it created a Department of Geology, which made surveys sparking interest in the Lake Superior region. The copper deposits, long used by the Indians to make arrowheads, bracelets, and the like, were on the minds of many Americans. Indian Commissioner T. Harley Crawford, who served during both the Van Buren and Harrison-Tyler years (1837–1845), wanted the United States to acquire all Chippewa land in the area. Assigned that job was the acting superintendent of Indian Affairs in Michigan, Robert Stuart, who had been an agent for the American Fur Company and was said by one contemporary to be “a severe man in all things.”⁴⁴ The Chippewa soon came under heavy-handed manipulation by Stuart.

Stuart told the Indians that even though they had already parted with the mineral rights to the land, referring to the treaty of 1826, the “Great Father [wanted] a new treaty, and to pay ... for [the] lands and minerals; he knows you are poor and needy.” But, he added, no “great price” would be paid. To round out the situation he told the Chippewa that the whites “are [as] numerous as the pigeons in the Spring” and that other tribes had “been sent west of the Mississippi, to make room for the whites.” To lessen any alarm resulting from such remarks he said at the present only the minerals were wanted by the whites, and that when the lands were required a home for them would be found in present-day Minnesota. According to some, Stuart told the Indians they could stay on the land “as long as [they] behaved well & [were] peaceable.” Stuart may also have told them that whether or not they signed the treaty the United States would take the land.⁴⁵

They, the “Chippewa Indians of the Mississippi and Lake Superior,” signed a treaty of October 4, 1842.⁴⁶ An Indian subagent at La Pointe, Alfred Brunson, told his superiors, including the Wisconsin territorial governor, John Doty, and the secretary of war, that 8 cents an acre for 11 million acres in 1837 and 7 cents per acre for 12 million acres in 1842

were not enough for land with good port sites, rich in copper, fish and timber. Brunson lost his job. The land, which was in Wisconsin and Michigan, included two-thirds of the southern shoreline of Lake Superior. The other third, in Michigan, had already been ceded in 1836 by the “Ottawa and Chippewa nations.”

The Indians at the time thought the whites would “work the mines, & the timber & [make] farms” but that they were keeping “the Birch bark & Ceder, for canoes, the Rice & the Sugar tree and the priviledge of hunting without being disturbed by the whites.” Maple sugar, the major sweetener used in the United States before 1860, was prized by the Chippewa. Treaty language was that the Indians would have “the right of hunting on the ceded territory, with the other usual privileges of occupancy, until required to remove by the President of the United States.” As for Indians residing in the “mineral district,” they could be removed “at the pleasure of the President.”⁴⁷

When James K. Polk, a Jackson protege, who had the vision of an America stretching to the Pacific Ocean and used the Mexican War to accomplish this, took office in 1845 another expansionist was made commissioner of Indian affairs. William Medill, the commissioner, wanted a western Indian enclave to make way for those whites wanting to travel west. The removal policy of Jackson had in essence created a barrier of relocated Indians and those already in the West to emigrants traveling to the West Coast. To make a break in that barrier Medill wanted to relocate northern Indians, including the Chippewa. Not only the Chippewa were against their removal — whites living in Wisconsin and Michigan were also against it. The Chippewa were fitting in well with the activities of the whites in those areas.

If the hero of the Mexican War, President Zachary Taylor, a second cousin of James Madison, who ran against and defeated Lewis Cass in 1849, had not died in office in 1850, it is likely the Chippewa would have been removed. Taylor’s successor, Millard Fillmore, a New Yorker who gained a reputation of being kind to the Indians, set aside a Taylor executive order signed on February 6, 1850, that cancelled usufructuary rights of the Chippewa in land previously ceded and ordered their removal to unceded land in Minnesota. Taylor’s action came as a great shock to the Chippewa, who thought “they had ceded only copper rights — not land rights — in 1842 and that under the 1837 and 1842 treaties they would never be forced to leave Wisconsin unless they acted improperly.” Only by giving up claims to land north of Lake Superior in 1854 during the presidency of Franklin Pierce were the “Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior and the Mississippi” able to get reservations in Wisconsin and Michigan.⁴⁸

After a visit to the Chippewa in 1846 New York newspaperman William Cullen Bryant wrote a poem, “The Seer,” which closes with the following:

I hear the tread of pioneers
Of nations yet to be:
The first low wash of waves here soon
Shall roll a human sea.⁴⁹

Notes

Abbreviations

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- Annals — Adler, Mortimer J., ed. in chief. *The Annals of America*. Vol. 1–4 (1493–1820). Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1968–1987.
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Chapter 1

1. Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 158–59, 170, 177–80, 184–85, 207, 472.
2. *Ibid.*, 184.
3. *Ibid.*, 225, 227–30, 273, 450, 471; Dickason, 95–96.
4. Sale, 261.
5. Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 237–38, 266–67, 272–73.
6. *Ibid.*, 340–41, 345–46.
7. *Ibid.*, 348, 355, 370, 375, 378, 380, 396–97.
8. *Ibid.*, 388, 391, 395–97, 403, 405–7, 416–17, 429.
9. *Ibid.*, 406, 411, 413, 415.
10. *Ibid.*, 40, 418–21, 430.
11. Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People*, 40.
12. Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 430–35, 437–43, 531.
13. *Ibid.*, 442–43, 446, 448–51, 454, 470, 479, 531.

Chapter 2

1. Jennings, Fenton, Druke, and Miller, xiii; Debo 9, 78.
2. Viola, 87; Ronald Wright, 123–24.
3. Dickason, 104, 138–39, 141.
4. *Ibid.*, 103.
5. Sale, 261–62, 290; Grove, 180.
6. Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 215–16, 270–72, 477, 479.
7. Dickason, 104; Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 477.
8. Jennings, Fenton, Druke, and Miller, 37–39; Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 39–40; Billington, 45–46.
9. *Ibid.*, 42–45.
10. *Ibid.*, 44–45; ANB, “Samuel de Champlain.”
11. Gaustad, 73.
12. Dickason, 122–24.
13. *Ibid.*, 126, 130; Handbook, vol. 4, 326.
14. Dickason, 101–3; Wheeler-Voegelin, 21; ANB, “Samuel de Champlain”; Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 40.
15. ANB, “Samuel de Champlain”; Dickason, 70, 123–25; Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 41–42; Handbook, vol. 4, 24; Jennings, Fenton, Druke, and Miller, 158–64.
16. Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 88–89; Dickason, 127, 129, 134.
17. ANB, “Henry Hudson”;

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54. *Ibid.*, 334–35.

Chapter 30

1. Morris, 442; Royce, descriptions, 656–61; Royce, plates CXXII and CLXI.
2. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1810): 107–11; Royce, descriptions, 676–77; *Ibid.*, plate CXII, parcel 67; *Ibid.*, plate CXLIV, parcels 68–69; Brittanica, *Micropaedia*, vol. 7, “Louisiana Purchase”; Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 244.

3. Jefferson Writings (Lipscomb), vol. 10, 343–45.
4. *Ibid.*, 370–71.
5. *Ibid.*, 370–73.
6. *Ibid.*, 359.
7. Jablow, 352.
8. Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 243, 251.
9. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1803): 78–79; Royce, plate CXXIV, parcel 48.
10. Jefferson Writings (Lipscomb), vol. 10, 371.
11. Wallace, 248.
12. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1804): 84–87; Royce, plate CXXIV, parcel 50.
13. Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart: The Life of Tecumseh*, 447.
14. *Ibid.*, 446.
15. Jablow, 354, 360–64, 366–70; Eckert, *Gateway to Empire*, 339.
16. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1805): 100–101; Royce, plate CXXIV, parcel 63.
17. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1809): 113–17.
18. Jablow, 399–400, 402; TP, vol. 17, 227–28.
19. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1816): 146–48.
20. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1819): 200–203; Royce, descriptions, 697–98; Royce, plate CXXV, parcel 110.
21. Jablow, 420; ASP IA, vol. 2, 197.
22. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1795): 49–54.
23. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1805): 87–89.
24. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1805): 87–89; Royce, descriptions, 666–69; *Ibid.*, plate CLVI.
25. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1805): 87–88, (1807): 105–7; plates CLVI, CLVII, parcels 53–54, 56.
26. Dodd, 71.
27. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1807): 105–7.
28. Wallace, 235; ASP IA, vol. 1, 745.
29. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1795): 51; Royce, plate CXXVI, parcel 26.
30. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1803): 74–76.
31. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1804): 81–84.
32. *Ibid.*, 81.
33. Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 258–59.
34. *Ibid.*, 259–61.
35. *Ibid.*, 262, 265–66; *Statutes at Large* 7 (1805): 91–93.
36. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1805): 91–93; Royce, plate CXXVI, parcel 56; Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 231, 271; ASP IA, vol. 1, 702.

37. Israel, vol. 1, 82.
38. Wallace, 233–34.

Chapter 31

1. Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 268–69, 271; ASP IA, vol. 1, 702.
2. Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 387.
3. *Ibid.*, 388.
4. *Ibid.*, 389; TP, vol. 7, 670–71.
5. Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 390–91.
6. *Ibid.*, 392.
7. *Ibid.*, 377, 393.
8. *Ibid.*, 395–97.
9. *Ibid.*, 399–400.
10. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1809): 113–17; Royce, plate CXXVI, parcels 71–74.
11. Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 405.
12. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1809): 116–17, 117–18; Royce, plate CXXVI, parcel 74; *Statutes at Large* 7 (1818): 191; Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 414.
13. Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart: The Life of Tecumseh*, 500–501, 758n566.
14. Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 360–62, 366, 380, 386, 414, 434.
15. Royce, plate CXXVI, parcel 72; Wheeler-Voegelin, Blasingham, and Libby, 336.
16. Jablow, 346; TP, vol. 7, 375–76.
17. Jablow, 348.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, 349; Wallace 310–11.
20. Calloway, *Crown and Calumet*, 76.
21. Jablow, 350–51.
22. *Ibid.*, 354.
23. *Ibid.*, 354–55.
24. *Ibid.*, 355.
25. *Ibid.*, 355–56.
26. *Ibid.*, 356.
27. *Ibid.*, 357–58.
28. *Ibid.*, 359.
29. *Ibid.*, 361.
30. Lucas, 241.
31. Jablow, 364–66; Morris, 183.
32. Calloway, *Crown and Calumet*, 46.
33. *Ibid.*, 195.
34. *Ibid.*, 230.
35. Jablow, 367, 381; TP, vol. 16, 314; Eckert, *A Sorrow in Our Heart: The Life of Tecumseh*, 673–78.
36. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1814): 118–20.
37. Jablow, 392–94.
38. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1815)

(1816): 123–48; *Statutes at Large* 8 (1814): 222; Royce, descriptions, 666–67.

Chapter 32

1. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1817): 160–70; Royce, plates CXXVI, CXXXVI, and CLVI, parcels 87–89.

2. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1818): 178–80.

3. ANB, “Lewis Cass.”

4. ANB, “Duncan McArthur.”

5. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1818): 189–92; Royce, plates CXXVI, CLVI, parcel 99.

6. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1831): 348–50, 351–54, 165–66, 167–70, 359–64, 364–65, 420–23, 502–3; Royce, plate CLVII, parcels 163–71, 182–83, and 211–13.

7. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1831) (1832): 355–64; Royce, plate CLVII, parcels 165–70; Prucha, vol. 1, *The Great Father*, 247.

8. *Statutes at Large* II (1842): 581–85; Royce, plate CLVII, parcel 259.

9. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1818) (1820) (1826) (1827): 185–92, 209, 300–305; Royce, plates CXXIV, CXXVI, and CLVI, parcels 98–99, 114, and 132.

10. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1818) (1828) (1834) (1838): 189–92, 309–10, 458–61, 463–66, 569–74; Royce, plates CXXVI, CXXVII, and CLVI, parcels 99, 142, 192–99, and 251–56.

11. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1826): 300–303; Royce, plate CXXVI, parcel 132.

12. ANB, “John Tipton.”

13. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1826) (1828) (1832): 295–99, 317–20, 394–97, 399–403; Royce, plate CXXVI, parcels 132–33, 146, and 180–81.

14. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1832) (1834): 394–97, 467–70; Royce, plates CXXVI and CXXVII, parcels 200–201.

15. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1836): 499–501, 505–6; Royce, plate CXXVII, parcels 209–10 and 218.

16. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1832) (1834) (1836): 399–403, 469–70, 490–91, 498, 513–16; Royce, plates CXXVI and CXXVII, parcels 181, 201, 204, 208, and 221–25.

17. Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 247.

18. *Ibid.*, 245.

19. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1834) (1838): 463–66, 569–74; Royce, plates CXXVI and CXXVII, parcels 192–99 and 251–56.

20. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1838): 569–74.

21. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1840): 582–86; Royce, plates CXXVI and CXXVII, parcels 256 and 258.

22. Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 259.

23. Buley, vol. 2, 45.

24. *Ibid.*, 126.

Chapter 33

1. Buley, vol. 2, 55–57, 146–48.

2. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1828): 315–16.

3. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1816) (1829): 146–48, 320–22; Royce, plates CXXIV, CXXV, and CLXXI, parcels 77–78 and 147–49.

4. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1829): 320–21, 324.

5. Buley, vol. 2, 109, 113, 157–58.

6. Dodd, 27.

7. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1833): 431–48; Royce, plates CXXV and CLXXI, parcel 187; Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 249n13.

8. Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 250–51.

9. Buley, vol. 2, 62–65; Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 254–55; ANB, “Black Hawk.”

10. Buley, vol. 2, 66.

11. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 65–66, 69–70, 73–74; ANB, “Black Hawk.”

12. Buley, vol. 2, 69, 75–78; ANB, “Black Hawk.”

13. Buley, vol. 2, 67.

14. *Ibid.*, 67, 77; Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 255; ANB, “Black Hawk.”

15. Buley, vol. 2, 60n67.

16. ANB, “Winfield Scott”; Buley, vol. 1, 251.

17. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1832): 370–73; Royce, plates CXXV and CLXXI, parcel 174.

18. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1832): 374–76; Royce, plate CXXXI, parcel 175.

19. Buley, vol. 2, 62–63, 66, 69–70, 79; ANB, “Keokuk.”

20. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1832): 378–80; Royce, plate CXXIV, parcel 177.

21. Buley, vol. 2, 78; ANB, “Black Hawk.”

22. Buley, vol. 2, 125.

23. Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 242; Richardson, vol. 4, 1513.

Chapter 34

1. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1807): 105–7; Royce, plates CXXXVI and

CLVI, parcel 66; ANB, “William Hull.”

2. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1819) (1837) (1838): 203–6, 528–32, 565–66; Royce, plates CXXXVI and CXXXVII, parcels 111 and 227–41; Bio. Dir. Cong., “Lewis Cass.”

3. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1821): 218–21; Royce, plates CXXVI and CXXXVI, parcel 117.

4. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1827) (1833): 305–6, 442–48; Royce, plates CXXVI, CXXXVI, CXXXVII, and CLVI, parcels 66, 117, and 188–90.

5. Satz, 10.

6. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1836): 491–97; Royce, plate CXXXVI, parcels 205–7; Wyman, 76.

7. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1836): 506–9; *Statutes at Large* II (1842): 581–85; Royce, plates, CXXXVI, CXXXVII, CLVII, and CLXXI, parcels 219 and 259–60.

8. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1842): 591–95; Royce, plates CXXXVI and CLXXI, parcel 261.

9. Keesing, 111.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, 9–10, 14–15; Wyman, 7, 10–11, 15–17, 22–25, 28.

13. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1825): 272–77; Wyman, 75.

14. Wyman, 75.

15. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1826): 290–95.

16. Satz, 8.

17. *Ibid.*, 9–10.

18. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1827): 303–5.

19. Satz, 9.

20. Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 263.

21. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1831): 342–48; Royce, plate CLXXI, parcels 158–62.

22. Keesing, 124, 138.

23. *Ibid.*, 138.

24. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1832): 370–73; Royce, plates CXXV and CLXXI, parcels 174 and 187.

25. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1836): 506–9; Royce plates CXXXVI and CLXXI, parcel 219.

26. Keesing, 139, 146–47.

27. *Statutes at Large* 9 (1848): 952–54; Royce, plates CXXXVI and CLXXI, parcel 271.

28. Keesing, 140.

29. *Statutes at Large* 10 (1854): 1064–68.

30. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1837): 536–38; Royce, plates CXL and CLXXI, parcel 242.

31. Wyman, 74–75.

32. *Ibid.*, 30.

33. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1837):

536–38; Royce, plates CXL and CLXXI, parcel 242.

34. ANB, “Henry Dodge.”

35. Wyman, 77.

36. Satz, 19.

37. *Ibid.*, 23.

38. Wyman, 78.

39. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1837): 544–46; Royce, plate CLXXI, parcel 245.

40. Prucha, *The Great Father*, vol. 1, 259–61.

41. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1837): 538–40; Royce, plates CXL and CLXXI, parcel 243.

42. Documents (Commager), 131.

43. Satz, 4, 13.

44. *Ibid.*, 36.

45. *Ibid.*, 37–38.

46. *Statutes at Large* 7 (1842): 591–95; Royce, plates CXXXVI and CLXXI, parcel 261.

47. Satz, 44–45.

48. *Ibid.*, 53, 55, 67–72.

49. Wyman, 73.

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