# The Struggle to Defend Indian Authority in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes Region, 1763-1794

**John Timothy Fierst**

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# Preface and Acknowledgments

In deciding which terms to use in the thesis to refer to different Native American groups, I have followed the nomenclature used by Helen Tanner in the *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*. Although the use of traditional names, such as Anishinaabe or Haudenosaunee, might be considered more accurate, most readers will be familiar with the terms that Tanner employs. I did not try to avoid using the term *Indian* or *Native American* but used them interchangeably. In places I have also used the term confederacy to refer to intertribal associations such as the Scioto Confederacy. Other historians, such as John Sugden, in *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees*, have done the same. Using this term I do not mean to imply more than association. I am unaware of evidence showing that the Indians in the Ohio Valley ever formally bound themselves together under official articles or agreements of confederation.

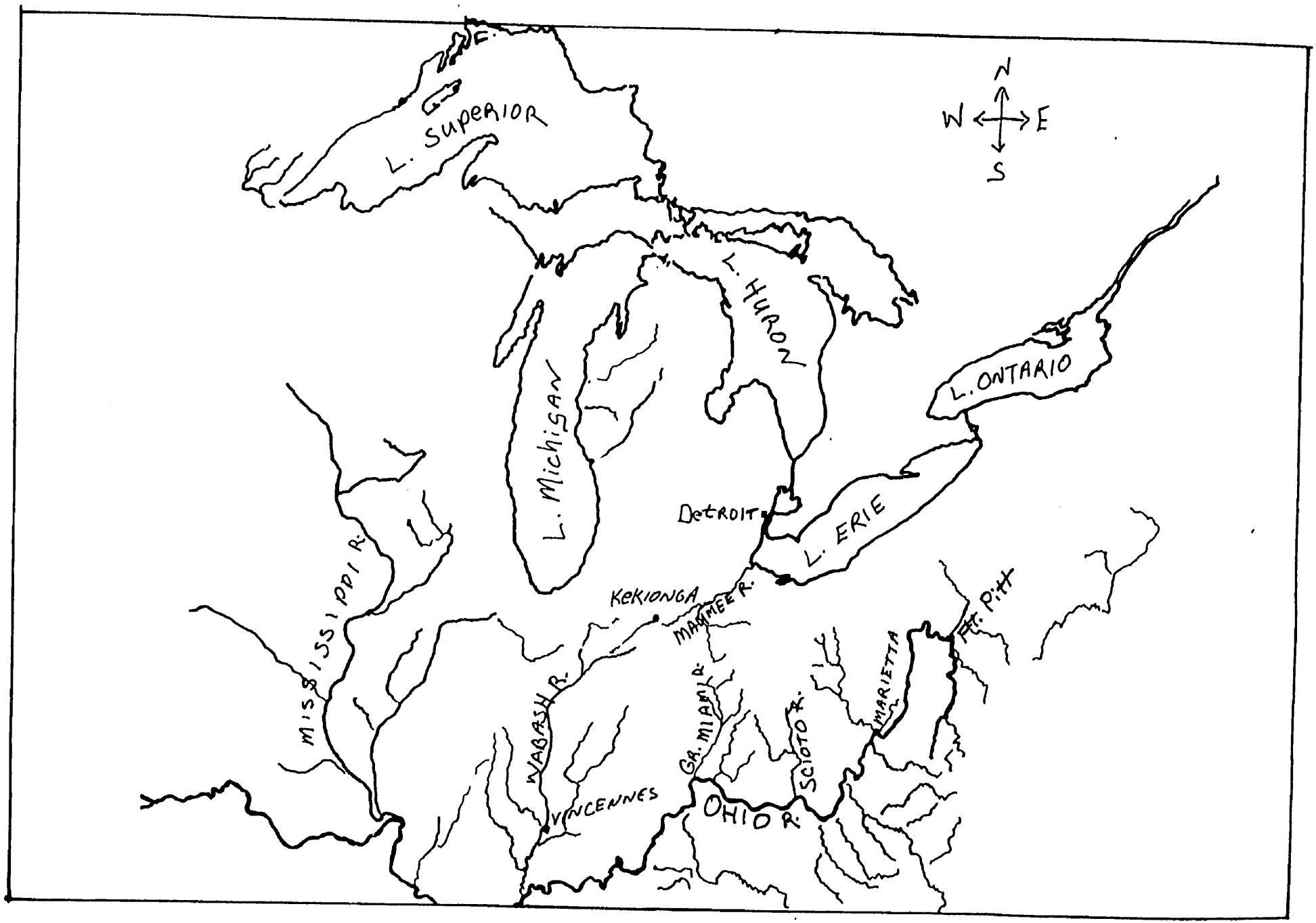
I would like to thank Dr. Francis Carroll for helping me to see this thesis through to completion. I could not have had a better advisor. From the reading we did together, I gained an overview of the nationalist period in United States history and an invaluable appreciation for the impact that international politics and diplomacy had upon developments in the North American interior. Dr. Carroll has always expressed confidence in my ability and has always been open

to sharing with me the knowledge he possesses. In the course of our working together, I was reminded time and again of why I like to study history.

I would also like to thank my parents, John Peter Fierst and Maureen O'Donovan Fierst, to whom this thesis is dedicated. Throughout my life they have been an unwavering source of love and support.

# Abstract

From the Seven Years' War in North America to the Battle of Fallen Timbers, 1754 to 1794, Native Americans fought to retain control of the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region. They fought to keep—first the British and after the Revolution the Americans—east of the Appalachians and out of the Ohio Country. White Americans looked upon the Seven Years' War, the Revolution, and the Indian Wars of the early 1790s as separate events, but for Native Americans of the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region they were all part of a forty-year-long struggle to protect their homelands. This forty year struggle is not well understood. The problem is that most historians have treated Native Americans as Britain's Indian allies. Indians involved in the struggle are not usually recognized as having authority in and of themselves. The purpose of this thesis is to review this prolonged struggle from the perspective of Indian authority. It is not written from an insider's point of view but from the point of view of what, from a reading of the literature, were clearly Native American interests. This point of view allows not only a clearer perspective on the actions and decisions of the Indians themselves but also a clearer perspective on the actions and decisions of British and American officials. Native Americans were not weak, dependent, and doomed. They were not pawns of the British or simply the victims of trans-Atlantic market forces. They held power in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region, and that power was wrested from them by acts of war.




Map 1: The Ohio Valley-Great Lakes Region

# 1. Introduction: Indian "Banditti"

In the treaty that brought the American Revolution to a close, Lord Shelburne, the British Prime Minister, wishing to keep the former colonists within the British commercial system, and therefore favoring generous terms of peace, advocated ceding to the new republic the region lying south of the Great Lakes and west of the Appalachian Mountains.[1] With the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783, American officials were most anxious to establish the authority of the United States throughout the newly acquired Northwest Territory.[2] This country, however, was under the control of the Shawnees and their

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1 For Shelburne's position see Charles R. Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States, 1783-1795* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1969), 4-5.

2 *Northwest Territory* is one of several terms used herein which essentially refer to the same region. *The Territory Northwest of the Ohio River*, or the *Northwest Territory*, was the official name the United States gave to the country north of the Ohio River, ceded in the 1783 treaty. The Great Lakes formed the northern boundary of the Northwest Territory, Pennsylvania the eastern boundary, the Ohio River the southern boundary, and the Mississippi River the western boundary. Other terms employed in the thesis are not so explicitly delineated. The *Ohio Country* and the *Illinois Country*, both within in the limits of the Northwest Territory, are older terms. The *Old Northwest* generally refers to those states carved out of the Northwest Territory that now make up a large part of the American Midwest, being the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. This is explained by R. Carlyle Buley in his preface to *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period 1815-1840*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1950), vii: "From this territory five states (and part of a sixth—Minnesota east of the Mississippi River) were eventually admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original states. As the United States moved on to the Pacific and a new northwest developed, the region north of the Ohio came to be known in American history as the Old

western confederates. The western Indians, who had fought alongside the British during the Revolution, had not been defeated in battle; nor had they participated in the peace process; nor had they signed the 1783 treaty. They were, in fact, quite angered by Britain's presuming to turn over their homeland to the Americans. And they were waiting to see if the new United States would honor

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Northwest." The *Northwest*, as Wayne Stevens uses the term in *The Northwest Fur Trade 1763-1800*, University of Illinois Studies in Social Sciences, vol. 14, no. 3 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1926), is more troublesome because it is inclusive of more than the Northwest Territory or the Old Northwest. Stevens employs the term ambiguously, sometimes using *Northwest* to refer to the *Northwest Territory*. *Northwest*, it would seem, is more a directional term, referring to the vast country lying northwest of the Atlantic Seaboard colonies, and therefore including large parts of Canada. Point of view is critical to understanding these terms, as is indicated by the use of *pays d'en haut* or *upper country*, which also appears throughout the thesis. In this case the St. Lawrence River serves as a point of reference. The St. Lawrence, the principal French route into the interior, flows from Lake Ontario to the North Atlantic. On the St. Lawrence the city of Montreal is located below the point where the Ottawa River, another major route to the west, joins the St. Lawrence. *Pays d'en haut* refers to the country above—up river from—Montreal. Like the term *Northwest* the term *pays d'en haut* is vague and inclusive. The boundaries of the *pays d'en haut* expanded as the fur trade expanded. In a broad sense the *pays d'en haut* encompassed all the country beyond Montreal, including that which became the *Northwest Territory* of the United States. Richard White in *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), x-xi, states that "strictly speaking it [the *pays d'en haut*] did not begin until the point where voyageurs passed beyond Huronia on the eastern shore of Lake Huron . . . . In the seventeenth century, the *pays d'en haut* included the lands bordering the rivers flowing into the northern Great Lakes and the lands south of the lakes to the Ohio."

the Ohio River boundary, guaranteed in the first Treaty of Fort Stanwix, signed in 1768.[3]

But officials of the United States had no intention of sanctioning a separate Indian state north of the Ohio River. In the eyes of the Americans the Indians had been allies of a defeated enemy, and their lands, which would be used to reward soldiers of the Revolutionary armies and sold to shore up the suffering economy of the new nation, could be confiscated by right of conquest.[4] Americans expressed this attitude in the new settlements and military outposts they began to construct north of the Ohio River in the post-war period.[5]

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3 See "Deed Determining the Boundary Line between the Whites and Indians" in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York: Procured in Holland, England and France, by John Romeyn Brodhead, Esq.*, ed. E.B. O'Callaghan, vol. 8., London Documents: 41-47. 1768-1782. (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1857), 135-37. Included with this document is a map of the Ohio River boundary. The context in which the treaty was fashioned is discussed in Dorothy V. Jones, *License for Empire: Colonialism by Treaty in Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 75-92.

4 Jones in *License*, 147-48, describes the U.S. as retreating from this position by 1789. See also, Walter H. Mohr, *Federal Indian Relations, 1774-1788* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1933); Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), 5-6; Francis P. Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 32-33.

5 On October 15, 1785, Major John Doughty and company landed at the mouth of the Muskingum and began construction of Fort Harmar on the west bank of that river—north of the Ohio. Seven days later, on October 22, 1785, Captain Walter Finny with seventy soldiers under his command reached the mouth of the Great Miami and on the east bank of that river built a block house—north of the Ohio. In 1786 near Yellow Creek (Steubenville, Ohio) the

Officials of the United States were eager to extend their authority over all the territory ceded in the peace treaty, and especially over that part bordering on the Mississippi River, which the French had called the Illinois Country. Toward this end, in the summer of 1787, Henry Knox, the United States Secretary of War, ordered Lieutenant Colonel Josiah Harmar, commander of the troops on the Ohio River, to build a post at the old French village of Vincennes.[6] Vincennes had been captured by the Americans during the Revolutionary War. The village with its population of nine hundred French and four hundred, often unruly, American inhabitants, was strategically located on the Wabash River. It lay along the historic Wabash-Maumee route, which connects the waterways of the Great Lakes to those of the Mississippi River basin. In the time of New France this was the route often followed when traveling between the provinces of Quebec and Louisiana. Travelers ascended the Maumee (or, as it was called until 1818, the Miami of the Lakes), crossed the height of land between the two river systems, and descended the Wabash, which flows in a southwesterly direction,

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United States constructed Fort Steuben—north of the Ohio. A second Fort Steuben was constructed in the spring of 1787 across from Louisville—north of the Ohio. See George W. Knepper, *Ohio and Its People* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1989), 59, and R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 95.

6 Gayle Thornbrough, ed., *Outpost on the Wabash 1787-1791: Letters of Brigadier General Josiah Harmar and Major John Francis Hamtramck and Other Letters and Documents Selected from the Harmar Papers in the William L. Clements Library,* Indiana Historical Society Publications, vol. 19 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1957), 5.

through what is now the state of Indiana, emptying into the Ohio. On the height of land between these two river systems, at the time of the building of Fort Knox, the western Native Confederacy, which opposed the advance of the United States into the Ohio Valley, had established Miami Town or Kekionga (presently the location of Fort Wayne, Indiana). Kekionga lay only 150 miles south of Detroit, where a British army was garrisoned.[7] In the post-revolutionary period, Great Britain continued to hold the fort at Detroit, along with six other western posts that stood on American soil. They did so in defiance of the terms of the 1783 peace treaty.[8]

Lieutenant Colonel Harmar arrived at Vincennes on July 17, 1787, to carry out his commission from the Secretary of War. He was accompanied by an interpreter, Barthelemi Tardiveau, a French-born American trader from Kentucky, and was joined in Vincennes eight days later by Major John Francis Hamtramck, who was to command the troops at Vincennes and to oversee the building of the new post.[9] About three and a half months later, on November 3, 1787, Harmar forwarded to the Secretary of War, Henry Knox, a ground plan of the fort under

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7 For the geography of the area see Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), especially maps 9 and 16.

8 For the names of the posts and their strategic importance see Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 3-4.

9 For Hamtramck's command see Harmar to Knox, 24 November 1787, Fort Harmar, Thornbrough, *Outpost*, 53-54.

construction, informing him that the new post on the Wabash had been named in his honor.[10] The construction of Fort Knox alarmed the Native Confederacy at Kekionga, the Spanish to the west, and the British at Detroit. It seemed clear that the Americans intended to realize the terms of peace signed in 1783, and that they would occupy the Ohio Country by force if necessary.

Fort Knox was to serve the Americans as a location for gathering intelligence. Reports of British activity around Detroit and Native activity on the Wabash and the Maumee were received at Fort Knox. From Fort Knox Major Hamtramck sent reports to his superiors, and this information was passed on to American policymakers. There was much to report, given that throughout this period an undeclared guerrilla war was being fought between Kentucky militiamen and Native partisans along the Ohio River. From Hamtramck's correspondence, officials in New York formed impressions and devised strategies for dealing with the growing hostilities. Hamtramck saw the major source of the problem to be the influence of British traders situated on the Maumee. Hamtramck alleged that the traders on the Maumee encouraged Native raids against the American settlements because the traders themselves profited from the buying and selling of livestock and booty gathered in such raids. "It is the traders who are every day inducing the Indians to go to war," Hamtramck wrote to Harmar on April 20, 1790. "They return to their village with plunder and

10 Ibid., 139, footnote no. 6., for the naming of Fort Knox.

horses which the traders get of them for rum or little or nothing, and so it must be until we get Detroit."[11] Arthur St. Clair, the territorial governor, expressed sentiments similar to those of Hamtramck. On May 1, 1790, in a letter to the Secretary of War, St. Clair denounced "the pernicious counsels of the English traders, joined to the immense booty obtained by the depredations upon the Ohio."[12]

This was also the point of view Barthelemi Tardiveau expressed in a report to General Harmar. Tardiveau was hardly a disinterested observer, given his own trading concerns:

> A great deal of mischief arises from a quarter that has been too long overlooked. The merchants at Michilimakinac send yearly a dozen of their factors with stores to Cahokia; those at Detroit are dispers'd throughout this country. If we are good-natur'd enough to see that the English government do not excite the Indians to war, we are too well convinc'd that the merchants, & especially the traders, men of low & interested principles, stop at nothing, and would rather spill rivers of blood than loose the only trade by which they can live. I have known their intrigues with the Indians; I have heard their inflammatory discourses. The nest of incendiaries ought to be broke up.[13]

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11 Hamtramck to Harmar, Fort Knox, 20 April 1790, *Outpost*, 232.

12 Arthur St. Clair to Henry Knox, Cahokia, 1 May 1790, *The St. Clair Papers. The Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair: Soldier of the Revolutionary War; President of the Continental Congress; and Governor of the North-Western Territory, with His Correspondence and Other Papers*, vol. II, ed. William Henry Smith (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1882), 136.

13 Tardiveau to Harmar, Post Vincennes, 6 August 1787, *Outpost*, 33.

American officials in the east had many sources of information concerning the warfare on the other side of the mountains. Citizens in the western counties of Virginia along the Ohio River made their desperate circumstances known in letters and reports. On October 4, 1789, for example, the county lieutenant of Harrison County wrote of attacks there, of cabins being burned, captives being taken, people being killed and scalped.[14] It was typical of reports coming out of Virginia's western counties. Many of the reports emphasized not only the loss of life but also the loss of property. When John May's boats were attacked on the Ohio River near Limestone Kentucky (one of the more publicized accounts) the goods and property lost in these attacks amounted to "several thousand pounds." The attackers were Shawnees and Cherokees, approximately fifty men, encamped at Paint Creek, on the other side of the Ohio, described in official correspondence as "banditti."[15] Western officials passed these reports on to state and federal authorities.

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14 Col. Benjamin Wilson to Governor St. Clair, 4 October 1789, *American State Papers. Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States, from the First Session of the First to the Third Session of the Thirteenth Congress, Inclusive: Commencing March 3, 1789, and Ending March 3, 1815*, vol. 4, *Indian Affairs,* (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832), 85. This source hereafter will be referred to as *ASPIA*.

15 For the attack on May's boat see, William W. Dowell to John Brown, 4 April 1790, *ASPIA*, 86; statement of Charles Johnson given before Henry Knox, 29 July 1790, *ASPIA*, 87; "Report of Buckner Thruston, Esq." 24 March 1790, *ASPIA*, 91.

Secretary of War Knox's assessments echoed the reports he was receiving from the Ohio Country. He concluded that hostilities seemed "to have been committed by the remnants of the Shawanese, and the banditti from several tribes associated with them. Although the said Shawanese, and banditti, aggregately, may not amount, at the excess, to two hundred fighting men, yet they seem sufficient to alarm the whole frontier lying along the Ohio."[16]

The characterization of native partisans as "banditti" out for plunder, and unrepresentative of anything more—outlaws who were encouraged by the English traders on the Maumee and who would have to be "chastised," according to St. Clair, and "extirpated," according to Knox—became the official line of the American authorities.[17] Courageous fighters, from a Native perspective, sacrificing themselves to halt the invasion of the Ohio Country, were in the words of the American Secretary of War greedy bandits out for plunder and ransom. "War is as much a contest of interpretation as it is a contest of physical force," writes historian Jill Lepore.[18] American leaders believed what they wanted to hear about Indian weakness and the pernicious influence of the traders on the Maumee, although what they were learning should, perhaps, have given them pause. Caught up in their own rhetoric, they seemed almost wishfully to be underesti-

16 Henry Knox to Josiah Harmar, 7 June 1790, *ASPIA*, 97.

17 St. Clair to Knox, 1 May 1790, Cahokia, *ASPIA*, 87; Knox to Harmar, 7 June 1790, *ASPIA*, 97.

18 Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), x.

mating the character, strength, and cohesion of the Native Confederacy gathering against them.

In the early summer of 1790, Knox received permission from President Washington for an expedition against Kekionga. On June 7 Knox instructed General Harmar that he was to prepare "to extirpate, utterly, if possible, the said banditti."[19] Harmar prepared to march against the Confederacy that fall. In the fall President Washington in apprising Congress that he had authorized Harmar to attack the Indians at the Miami Town used the same language as his Secretary of War: "Banditti of Indians from the northwest side of the Ohio" had made "frequent incursions" against American frontier settlements. Of late they had been "particularly active in their depredations" and "emboldened by the impunity of their crimes." He implied that they were motivated by lawlessness and greed—greed for "prisoners [to ransom] and plunder."[20]

Eighteen days before President Washington's address, Native forces under the direction of Blue Jacket and Little Turtle had defeated General Harmar's army, with an American loss of nearly 200 men. The following year Blue Jacket's and Little Turtle's forces would destroy an American army led by Arthur St.

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19 See Knox to St. Clair, 7 June 1790, War Office, *St. Clair Papers,* vol. II, 147-48; also Henry Knox to Josiah Harmar, 7 June 1790, *ASPIA,* 97-98.

20 See, "No. 14. Northwestern Indians. Communicated to Congress on the 9th of December, 1790, And referred to by the President of the United States in his speech to Congress of December 8, of which the following is an extract," *ASPIA,* 83.

Clair himself, with an American loss of 634 men. The St. Clair expedition was one of the most disastrous campaigns ever undertaken by a United States army.[21] The Americans were facing a reality far more complex than a few unscrupulous traders encouraging renegade Indians to raid American settlements for the sake of plunder. It would not be the last time that Native actions would be misinterpreted and Native force underestimated.

The political struggle for control of the Ohio Valley and the Illinois Country began with the Seven Years' War and continued into the decade of the 1790s. The purpose of the thesis which follows is to consider that struggle in light of Native American interests. After the defeat of New France and the signing of the Paris treaty in 1763, three powers began to struggle for control of what would become the Northwest Territory. These were: Great Britain, the Native Confederacy centered at Kekionga, and the Atlantic Seaboard colonies, who, at the time of the American Revolution, formed themselves into the United States. The outcome of this struggle was not determined until 1794 when a United States army defeated the Native Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The struggle for the Northwest has been viewed, more often than not, as a struggle between Great Britain and the United States, with the western Indian nations acting as British allies or pawns. This view of the struggle does not do justice to either Na-

21 See Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985). Chapters 11 and 12 cover the Harmar campaign; chapter 17 covers St. Clair's defeat.

tive autonomy or historical reality. The struggle in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region had a third side, which was Native American. The western Indians had their own objectives, followed their own diplomacy, and kept their own counsel. They were leery both of the United States and of Great Britain. They feared what they could not help but see as the occupation of their homeland, and they were determined to prevent this.

The thesis is divided into six sections which include this introduction. The second section, "Indian History?," is a selective review of current writing on Indian-White relations in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region. Its purpose is to build a perspective toward events in the Ohio Valley that does not sacrifice a Native American point of view to the universalizing tendencies of Euroamerican historians. Traditionally such historians have explained events in the Ohio Valley in terms of the political struggle of imperial powers.[22] The tendency lately has been to explain events in terms of the growth of transatlantic markets. This new economism, exemplified in Eric Hindraker's *Elusive Empires*, fails to take into account the multifunctionality of Native actions and reduces Native motivations to lucrative interests and economic ends.[23] Other historians have at-

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22 Examples being: Jack M. Sosin, *The Revolutionary Frontier 1763-1783* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967); J. Leitch Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier 1783-1815* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1975); Dale Van Every, *Ark of Empire: The American Frontier 1784-1803* (New York: Arno Press, 1977); Ritcheson, *Aftermath*; Robert S. Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defence of Canada, 1774-1815* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992).

tempted to address the need for histories inclusive of a Native American point of view. Gregory Evans Dowd, Richard White, Michael McConnell and others have done so with varying degrees of success.[24] Studies of Indian-White relations have tended to divide along *rationalist* versus *romantic* lines. Reacting to the tendency of *romantic* writers to portray Native people as *exotic other* Bruce Trigger in his work argued in favor of a universal rationalism shared by European and Native alike and demonstrated in Indian-white exchanges.[25] In a provocative paper delivered in 1995 at the seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, in Halifax, Peter Cook challenged Trigger's overarching rationalism.[26] Introducing the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to the study of Indian-white relations, Cook offered a way around the rationalist/romantic

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23 Eric Hindraker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

24 Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); White, *Middle Ground;* Michael McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

25 See Bruce G. Trigger *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985); see also Bruce G. Trigger, "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romantic versus Rationalistic Interpretations," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (March 1991): 1195-1215.

26 Peter Cook, "Symbolic and Material Exchange in Intercultural Diplomacy: The French and the Hodenosaunee in the Early Eighteenth Century," in *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1995,* edited by Jo-Anne Fiske, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and William Wicken (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 75-100.

divide, a way that does not sacrifice Native reality to the extremes of either rationalism or romanticism.

The third section of the thesis, "Indian Authority in the *Pays d'en Haut,*" describes the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region at the close of the Seven Years' War. Its purposes are: to identify the ethnic occupants of the region; to offer insight into the relationship between Native Americans and the French living in the interior; and to argue that a Native worldview prevailed in the *pays d'en haut,* one to which Europeans adapted themselves. The fur trade with the French, built on Indian foundations, played an important role in sustaining Native American culture and Native American authority in the *pays d'en haut.*

The fourth section, "Resistance to the Anglo-American Invasion," looks at Native opposition to Great Britain in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region between the close of the Seven Years' War and the opening of the American Revolution. Great Britain failed to assert control over the west. The purpose of this chapter is to argue that Native American strength prevailed in the west, a fact to which British officials in North America learned to accommodate themselves, after a period of fierce fighting (often referred to as Pontiac's Rebellion but better described as a war of resistance). The greatest threat to Native autonomy in the Ohio Country came from the rise in population of the Atlantic Seaboard colonies, and the increasing demand for western lands. The American Revolution

was as much about western expansion as it was about colonial independence from Great Britain.

The fifth section, "Refusal to Acknowledge Indian Authority," is about the struggle for control of the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region in the post-revolutionary period. George Washington's campaign against the Iroquois during the Revolution reflected the policies he later would follow in the west after becoming president. The focus of this chapter is on the complicated triangular diplomacy that began to take shape after the Paris Treaty of 1783 was signed between the United States and Great Britain. The Ohio Confederacy was not a participant in the peace treaty and continued to wage guerrilla warfare against the western settlements of the new United States. For the Indians, Great Britain in the end turned out to be a faithless ally.

The sixth section, or conclusion, is entitled "Loss of the Ohio Country." Resistance turned into all out war in the 1790s, which eventually led to the defeat of the Native Confederacy. The battle of Fallen Timbers and the signing of the Treaty of Greenville essentially ended Native resistance in the Ohio Country. The purpose of the conclusion is to summarize events leading to Fallen Timbers and to recapitulate arguments advanced in the thesis.

# 2. Indian History?

The legacy of war is shaped through memory and writing. "If you kill me and call my resistance 'treachery,' you have succeeded not only in killing me," writes historian Jill Lepore, "but you have also succeeded in calling me and my kind a treacherous people."[1] On August 20, 1794 an American army, the Legion of the United States, numbering 3,000 soldiers under the command of General Anthony Wayne, defeated the Native Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on the west bank of the Maumee River. General Wayne described the battlefield in a letter to Secretary of War Knox: "the ground being cover'd with old fallen timber probably occasioned by a tornado . . . render'd it impracticable for the Cavalry to act with effect."[2] The battle lasted less than two hours. A bayonet charge drove the Native warriors and Canadian militiamen from cover and sent them fleeing down the Maumee. No assistance came from Fort Miamis, the British garrison further down the river. Worse yet, the British officers at Fort Miamis refused to open the gates to those fleeing the battle and being pursued by Wayne's soldiers. With the loss at Fallen Timbers, the Ohio Country fell into

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1 Lepore, *Name of War*, x.

2 Anthony Wayne to Henry Knox, Grand Glaize, 28 August 1794, in *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms, Soldier, Diplomat, Defender of Expansion Westward of a Nation. The Wayne-Knox-Pickering-McHenry Correspondence*, ed. Richard C. Knopf (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1960), 352.

actual possession of the Americans. A year later, in August 1795, the Treaty of Greenville was signed, with Little Turtle being the last Native leader to concede to American terms.

"The main purpose and outcome of war is injuring," writes Elaine Scarry.[3] Both sides strive to "out-injure" each other. "Each side works to bring the other side to the latter's perceived level of intolerable injury faster than it is itself brought to its own level of intolerable injury."[4] Scarry identifies three areas of damage in war: embodied persons; material culture, or self-extension of persons (Shawnee villages and cornfields, for example); and immaterial culture—consciousness, political beliefs, self-definitions. The object in war is the third. "For it is the national self-definitions of the disputing countries that have collided, and the dispute disappears if at least one of them agrees to retract, relinquish, or alter its own form of self-belief, its own form of self-extension. In war, the first and second forms of damage are the means for determining which of the two sides will undergo the third form of damage. Both sides will suffer the first and second kinds of damage, but only one will undergo the third, and it is the designation of *winner* and *loser* that determines which side will undergo that change in the third arena."[5]

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3 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 63. Scarry is quoted in Lepore, *Name of War*, x.

4 Ibid., 89.

If the boundaries of the new United States actually did extend to the Mississippi River, as stipulated in the treaty that ended the American Revolution, armies would not have been needed to "chastise" and "extirpate" the Native Americans who occupied the Ohio Country. Scarry writes elsewhere of war that it is "a huge structure for the derealization of cultural constructs and, simultaneously, for their reconstitution."[6] The territorial construct outlined in the 1783 treaty, extending the borders of the new republic beyond the Ohio River, had not been, at the time of the treaty, substantiated. Nor could it be without the derealization, or deconstruction, of another competing cultural construct, one held by Native Americans who looked upon the Ohio River as the southern boundary of their own country.

In war injury is the means by which a winner and a loser are determined. It also serves to substantiate the winner and the winning issues. What are not substantiated are the once held constructs and beliefs of the loser. All the pain and death, the killing of both Euroamericans and Native Americans in the Ohio Valley, substantiated the cause of the victors, though certainly the warfare was also recorded in the dead and wounded bodies of Native Americans. Only one reality, that of the winner, prevailed.[7] Six months after the signing of the Treaty

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5 Ibid. 114.

6 Ibid., 137.

7 Ibid., 130.

of Greenville, Anthony Wayne returned to Philadelphia, as one historian has described him, "like a triumphant Roman general," entering the city with cavalry escort, greeted with a fifteen gun salute. *Claypoole's Daily American Advertiser* described the scene: Wayne "was ushered into the city by ringing of bells and other demonstrations of joy, and thousands of citizens crowded to see and welcome the return of their beloved General. . . . In the evening, a display of Fire-Works was exhibited in celebration of the Peace lately concluded with the Western Indians."[8]

It should come as no surprise that the history of warfare and diplomacy in the Ohio Valley has been written, for the most part, from a Euroamerican perspective. It has been a history of victory, and until recently historians have not tried seriously to consider that history from a Native American point of view and therefore have not accurately described the role Native Americans played in that history. In 1982 Dorothy Jones, in *License for Empire,* commented on how histories of the trans-Appalachian west continued to disregard Native perspectives: "In these detailed and excellent studies of British policy, the Indians appear as little more than stage props in a drama that was written, directed, and acted by the

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8 The description is Andrew R. L. Clayton's and together with the quote from "Claypoole's" can be found in Andrew R. L. Clayton, "'Noble Actors' upon 'the Theatre of Honour': Power and Civility in the Treaty of Greenville," in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830,* edited by Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 268.

British."[9] Since the publication of *License for Empire*, most historians, writing in the imperialist tradition, have continued to subordinate Native interests and to stress Native dependency; some others have sought a middle ground, to use Richard White's often quoted phrase, and have attempted to make more room for Native Americans in their histories. One of the purposes of this thesis is to challenge these views. By history in the imperialist tradition I am referring to those studies where the underlying commitment is to explaining some aspect of the spread Euroamerican culture into the interior of North America. The overall point of view in these studies is Euroamerican. Native Americans are viewed as part of the background against which Euroamerican actions are explained. Different historians follow different angles of interpretation, according to their interests, be those interests cultural, military, or economic. Nonetheless, the historian's underlying commitment to a Euroamerican point of view remains constant. Jack M. Sosin's *The Revolutionary Frontier 1763-1783*, for example, focuses on western expansion, the breaching of "the Appalachian mountain barrier to plant Anglo-American civilization in the interior valley of the continent." The point of view is that of the American colonials. Although Native Americans play a large part in Sosin's work, their perspective is not fully explained. They are part of the barrier to American expansion and viewed through the reactions of the Americans.[10] Another example, Canadian historian Robert S. Allen, in *His*

9 Jones, *License*, 124 (see note 34).

*Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defence of Canada, 1774-1815,* writes from the point of view of the British military in Canada. Allen describes how after the American Revolution crown officials secured the survival of Canada by deceiving and making use of Indian allies, upon whose fighting prowess the province was completely dependent. Whitehall, according to Allen, led the tribes to believe they would be supported militarily in their struggle for the Ohio Valley. British Indian policy in the post-revolutionary period was "based fundamentally on denial and deception, Machiavellian in style—manipulative, cruel, and successful."[11] Allen's analysis is open to criticism for its assumed credulity on the part of the western Indians, a credulity that simply did not exist. Indians acted in their own interests, not simply as a cats paw for the ministers in London. The book is also open to criticism for the defense of Canada thesis on which it rests. Emphasizing Britain's desire to defend Canada, Allen downplays Anglo-Indian tensions, ignores British ambitions in the Ohio Valley, and exaggerates the threat that the United States posed to Canada in the post-revolutionary decade.

Allen's focus is on policy; that of Eric Hindraker's is on economics. In *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800,* Eric Hindraker explains changes in the Ohio Valley in the eighteenth century in terms of the im-

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10 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier,* vii.

11 Allen, *Indian Allies,* 86

peratives of transcultural market forces. Hindraker uses the term empire to mean process, rather than a set of policy directives originating in London, for example, or Paris. The process he is referring to is that created by the people immediately engaged in colonization.[12] Hindraker identifies three competing "models of empire" in the Ohio Country: that of commerce, land, and liberty. The first two, empires of commerce and land, accompanied French and British colonization. Establishing empires of commerce, Europeans sought trade with native inhabitants, trade for economic resources. Establishing empires of land, they sought to export European populations to North America to exploit American resources "more invasively." The empire of liberty, the third empire, to which the American Revolution gave rise, was different fundamentally from the first two. It was a process in which people were free "to act outside older constraints of public authority" and in which the government supported "extraordinarily rapid expansion and exploitation of an open-ended national territory." In this account of the economic transformation of the Ohio Valley and the struggle between Great Britain, France, and the United States to establish dominion there, Native Americans again play a lesser role.[13]

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12 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, xi.

13 Hindraker's book is a recent and comprehensive study of the same period covered by this thesis. He claims to cover the years 1673-1800, but his principal focus, like the focus of this thesis, is on the latter half of the eighteenth century. It will be worthwhile here to outline the structure of his book and later in the chapter to bring forward his central arguments.

Other historians of the period have tried to change this mainly Euroamerican focus and to acknowledge the important part Native Americans played in the imperial struggle for North America. Gregory Evans Dowd in *A Spirited Resistance* demonstrates the advantages of using comparative and ethnohistorical methods when studying Native American history.[14] Employing these methods, recent historians, Dowd states, "have returned Native Americans to a larger, and perhaps more visible, early American drama." This new focus, concerned less with Euro-American institutions and perspectives and more with intertribal relations" promises a big picture with a Native American cast."[15] In *A Spirited Resis-*

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Hindraker divides his book into three parts. In "Part One: Empires of Commerce," he "examines the trading empires that connected the Native American populations of the Ohio Valley with France and Britain," presenting in broad outline the systematic trading patterns of both the French and the British. He also examines "the social and cultural effects of this trading system on Ohio Valley communities," arguing that trade had the power to transform Indian towns, polities, and cultures. In "Part Two: Empires of Land," he "explores the efforts of the European powers to extend firmer territorial control over the Ohio Valley." He compares the French settlements in the Illinois Country with colonization in Pennsylvania, and he discusses the effects of the Seven Years' War in the west and Britain's failed attempt after the war to extend comprehensive control over the Ohio Valley. In "Part Three: Empire of Liberty," he "analyzes the origins, progress, and effects of the Revolution in the Ohio Valley." He argues here that the war between Britain and her colonies intersected with the breakdown of imperial authority in the backcountry. The war of rebellion, he argues, "intensified conflicts over control of the land."

14 Gregory Evans Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, xii.

15 Francis Jennings in *Empire of Fortune*, for example, sets out to restore Indians to the central roles they played in the Seven Years' War. Jennings, so thorough in his research, is, nonetheless, frustrating to read. His self-assertive style overwhelms the evidence he

*tance* Dowd avoids "the limited tribal, institutional, and biographical scope of most studies" of American Indian history, which have pulled that history "away from the broad sweep of American history."[16] He succeeds in going beyond the limits of tribal history, and he does return Natives to a larger early American drama. He argues convincingly in favor of the cohesive forces at work in Native communities during the period. But in some ways *A Spirited Resistance* remains identity history, focusing, as it essentially does, on Native initiatives and responses. The bigger picture includes more than a Native American cast. The drama played out in the Ohio Valley after the Revolution included more than Natives and more than white Americans. It also included Canadians, both British and French, as well as others, such as the Spanish, in less influential roles. Historians must be for universalism, as one scholar has recently stated, "because it is the necessary condition for understanding the history of humanity, including that of any special section of humanity."[17] Native Americans were part of a large and complex world and must be understood as part of that world. For the post-revolutionary period *A Spirited Resistance* does not tell us enough about

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presents. Dowd is less frustrating, and the years covered in his book more closely correspond to the period covered in this thesis. Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies & Tribes in the Seven Years' War in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988).

16 Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, xii.

17 Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 277.

American ambitions in the Ohio Valley or about the problems the United States encountered there. Nor does Dowd say very much about the role of Great Britain in effecting the outcome of what was, for all intents and purposes, a triangular struggle for power. Each side in the triangle had certain advantages. The Indians possessed the land, the British, commercial and military power. The strength of the colonies, later the United States, lay in their ever-increasing population. Each side tried to play on the weaknesses and the divisions of the others. Focusing on one side of this triangle, as Robert S. Allen does on the British, as Dowd does on pan-Indianism, and as many frontier historians have done on the Americans, does not provide a full understanding of the history of Ohio Valley in this period.

One historian whose approach successfully joins ethnohistorical methods with those of the political historian is Michael N. McConnell. In *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774,* McConnell studies events from the vantage point of the Ohio Country and tries to reflect the view of Native American participants.[18] In making sense of events, he is careful to locate reasons for Native actions in local and regional concerns and within the context of Native systems of belief. His main point is that the Ohio Indians were not a conquered people. He sees the Ohio Indians in this period—the Delawares, the Shawnees, and the western Senecas—as struggling "to maintain cultural and po-

18 McConnell, *Country Between.*

litical sovereignty." Their choices were deliberate, aimed at preserving their way of life. To achieve this, they were flexible in their dealings with outsiders. They developed "a range of creative strategies from armed resistance to accommodation in response to ever-shifting threats and opportunities."[19] They succeeded in maintaining that autonomy and holding on to most of their country until 1794, doing so in the face of constant threats, threats from the British military, the Iroquois, and later in the period the Anglo-American settlers. The British and the Iroquois were never able to impose their will on the Ohio Indians. On the Ohio frontier, McConnell correctly argues, the British "maintained at best a tenuous hold, as was forcefully revealed when in 1763 Ohio Indians and their western allies nearly swept the British army from the region." Great Britain was unable, McConnell writes, "to transform de jure control over the Ohio Country into de facto authority over Ohio Indians."[20] It is clear to McConnell that the Ohio Indians were not dependent allies. They were not fighting a European war. From the first skirmishes of the French and Indian War in 1754 to the defeat at Fallen Timbers on the banks of the Maumee River in 1794, forty years, they were fighting their own war.

Their goal was "an Ohio free of British and French domination."[21] This statement by Richard White in *The Middle Ground* raises an important question.

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19 Ibid., 3.

20 Ibid., 4.

In the Seven Years' War and afterwards were Native Americans fighting to keep the Ohio Country free of British and French domination simply, or were they fighting to maintain control themselves. In *The Middle Ground* White has constructed an interpretive model of Indian-White relations in the Great Lakes region now widely accepted by historians currently writing on this subject. White's theory rests on the idea of a search for accommodation and common meaning mutually undertaken by Natives and Europeans. He postulates that the French, when they traveled beyond Huronia into the *pays d'en haut*, did not discover a new world. What they discovered was a world that had been shattered by disease and warfare. According to White, "between 1649 and the mid-1660s Iroquois attacks had fallen like hammer blows across the length and breadth of the lands bordering the Great Lakes and descended down into the Ohio Valley."[22] The world that had existed before the French arrived was no more. Only fragments of peoples remained in the *pays d'en haut*. The French were not discovering a new world. Instead, they—together with the fragments of peoples they found in the lands beyond Huronia—"were becoming cocreators of a world in the making." They were creating a shared world, one that was neither French nor Indian, but something of both. White's theory does not lack drama or change: the darkling interior of North America swept by disease and

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21 White, *Middle Ground*, 240.

22 Ibid., 1.

warfare; the Wagnerian hammer blows of the Iroquois; the opening up of close-knit societies through alliance, trade, and ritual; the reshaping of the *pays d'en haut* into a mutually comprehensible world that is both Native and European. White's book is a history of mutual accord, a history of accommodation. He distinguishes accommodation from acculturation, which "proceeds under conditions in which a dominant group is largely able to dictate correct behavior to a subordinate group."[23] On the *middle ground* there is no dominant group. Natives and whites are on an equal footing. In support of his mutually comprehensible world, White stated that in his study of Indian-White relations he "found that no sharp distinctions between Indian and white worlds could be drawn. Different peoples, to be sure, remained identifiable, but they shaded into each other."[24] White claims to be writing a new kind of history: "This book is 'new Indian history' because it places Indian peoples at the center of the scene and seeks to understand the reasons for their actions."[25]

But is this really "new Indian history"? Historians cannot simply return Native Americans, in Dowd's words, "to a larger, and perhaps more visible, early American drama," even if Euroamericans are now willing to share center stage. If we are to free ourselves from writing histories of victory, the drama it-

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23 Ibid., x.

24 Ibid., xi.

25 Ibid., xi.

self, so to speak, needs to be rewritten, with all parts of it objectivized, not least of all the point of view and social position of the historians doing the writing.[26]

The supporting role of willing allies, so often assigned to the Indians, which subordinates Native American agency and Native American strategy to that of Great Britain, has frustrated a fuller understanding of the political complexity of the Ohio Valley in the second half of the eighteenth century. In White's book Natives remain allies, precariously on the edge of becoming subjects, increasingly dependent on the generosity of their European benefactors, able to survive because they can force or persuade their European counterparts to negotiate beneficial trade relationships with them. But is this really new Indian history when it exaggerates the role of Europeans and downplays Native

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26 "The most critical sociology," writes French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, "is that which presupposes and implies the most radical self-criticism." Pierre Bourdieu, "*Sur l'objectivation participante. Responses a quelques objections*" in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 20/21: 67-68. Bourdieu insists that we must examine "the invisible determinations inherent in the intellectual posture itself. . . . This *theoreticist* or *intellectualist bias* consists in forgetting to inscribe into the theory we build of the social world the fact that it is the product of a theoretical gaze, a 'contemplative eye.'" Reflexivity "must constantly guard itself against this epistemocentrism, . . . which consists in ignoring everything that the analyst injects into his perception of the object by virtue of the fact that he is placed outside the object, that he observes it from afar and from above." According to Bourdieu, "what must be objectivized is not (only) the individual who does the research in her biographical idiosyncrasy but the position she occupies in academic space and the biases implicated in the view she takes by virtue of being . . . 'out of the game' (*hors jeu*)". Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant, "The Purpose of Reflexive Sociology (The Chicago Workshop)" in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 68-72.

authority and Native difference? In truth, neither the British nor the French ever did establish much control in the west. Natives were the authority in the interior, and Europeans adjusted to Native ways. Accommodation flowed in a westerly direction, French into Indian. Like many historians White tends to exaggerate the influence Europeans possessed in the interior before Native Americans were actually dispossessed of their country. It was a Native world that the French had entered and a Native world and a Native worldview that the Ohio Indians and their western allies were fighting to preserve between the years 1754 and 1794. Conditions were not such in the interior that Natives could dictate specific behaviors, the country was too vast for that kind of control, but nothing transpired in the *pays d'en haut* for very long that they did not countenance, that they strongly opposed. They directed where the traders were to build their posts; they gave permission to Europeans to build fortifications in the interior and determined the size and purpose of such establishments. It was the Ottawa who in 1752 initiated the attack on Pickawillaney in the Ohio Country, a trading post on the headwaters of the Great Miami River, where Anglo-American traders had established a base. The successful attack was the first skirmish leading to the Seven Years' War. To drive off the English was of interest to both French and Ottawa, but it was the Ottawa—fearing that the Miami and other nations to the south might, with the support of the Anglo-Americans, threaten their security—who planned the successful attack and brought the French along.[27]

The fall of New France marked the beginning of the end of such Native authority. With the French defeat Natives were left on their own to contain Anglo-American expansion into the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region. Quickly, however, British leaders themselves found it in their own interest to oppose the uncontrolled spread of white settlements beyond the Appalachian boundary, and the British military, together with the newly formed British Indian Department under the leadership of Sir William Johnson in the north, took on the role formerly played by the French, that of containing the assertive colonial Americans.

Relations between the British in North America and the Indians of the Ohio Country and western Great Lakes were never harmonious. The British may have triumphed over the French in 1763, but in the post-war period they were unable to dominate the western Indians or gain secure control of the western interior. The British-Native military and trading alliances in the northwest that followed the defeat of New France were tenuous at best, made out of interest and necessity, on the part of both the Indians and the British. Western Native leaders kept their own counsel and were capable of their own strategies and manipulations—diplomacy if you will, for British strategies often sacrificed Native

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27 For Ottawa-French negotiations leading up to the attack see James Newbigging, "The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance 1613-1763" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1995), 368-73.

welfare. British interests were not Native interests, though at times, in opposition to the Americans, the British and the Indians cooperated with each other. Native Americans were committed to preserving their political autonomy and protecting the Ohio Valley from white encroachment; these were their true interests. The real danger to Native sovereignty in the period lay to the south, in the hundreds of flatboats floating down the Ohio River and in the florescence of land claims encroaching upon Native hunting reserves west of the Appalachian Mountains. That is to say, the greatest threat to Native welfare, the same threat that challenged British colonial rule in North America, was the rise in population of the Atlantic Seaboard colonies and the spread of that population westward.

What Natives thought about the French and British as trading partners and military allies, and the language they used to adjust to these arrangements, was one thing, but it did not translate into an alteration of fundamental Native beliefs. There were not strong reasons for Native Americans remaking their world jointly with the French, not even the desire for European manufactures. They took what they wanted from the French and fitted it into their own world, their own system of beliefs, their own way of being and doing. That we are not likely to consider this, however, speaks to the deeper commitments of historians to a Eurocentric point of view. If we are willing to acknowledge Indian agency and Indian authority in the interior, we do not need White's elaborate scaffolding, the insistent metaphor throughout his book of a middle ground. Strong and

viable cultures have no reason to fundamentally remake their worlds. Therefore, for accommodationist theories to work, these cultures have to be portrayed as weak and vulnerable to change. Accommodationists have to be able to explain why such cultures are weak and vulnerable, and the answer always comes in the form of some previous catastrophe, something cataclysmic, something that has broken them up, fragmented them, disease or warfare generally, or trade, leaving them open to dramatic change. In the case of the northern Indians the real catastrophe was brought on not by Iroquois war parties, nor by the spread of disease, destructive as both were. Catastrophe occurred not in the late seventeenth century but in the late eighteenth century. It occurred in the period under consideration, the catastrophe they fought so furiously to prevent—their dispossession and the loss of their country.

The sources for writing the history of diplomacy and warfare in the Ohio Valley are for the most part non-Native. We cannot always document precisely how Native Americans acted at specific points in time. And we can rarely know through written evidence how Natives viewed circumstances, since their thoughts are seldom recorded. Written sources for Native American history, as Theda Perdue has pointed out, document change, which makes trying to recover a Native perspective a difficult and seemingly uncertain venture.[28] How do you

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28 Theda Perdue, "Theda Perdue responds to review of *Cherokee Women*," in *H-Net List for History of the Early American Republic*, [cited February 24, 1999]. Available from

explore the issue of cultural persistence when our resources and disciplinary tools equip us to plot change?

> Treaties realign boundaries or political relations, reports of missionaries and United States agents cite "progress," and even the speeches and memorials of native leaders as likely as not chart an ascent from "savagery." The problem is that anyone who reads seriously about native Americans, knows Native people, or even attends pow-wows confronts the ahistorical reality of Native America. Cultural persistence is as evident as change and probably means more on an emotional level to many Native people than the change with which historians are obsessed.[29]

As historians we are confronted with, in Perdue's words, "the task of constructing a narrative of the past that allows for persistence as well as change."[30] At the very least, the evidence for cultural persistence should be taken as a caution against exaggerated claims about change in Native societies. Given cultural persistence and given what we know about Native American groups participating in the conflict in Ohio, we can make judgments about which interpretations of Native behavior are more than likely accurate and which inaccurate.

The idea of cultural difference should also serve as a caution to non-Native historians, a warning not to attribute western categories of thought and west-

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29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

ern motivations to Native American actions. Such reductionism lies of at the heart of Eric Hindraker's economic models. By stressing overarching market forces, Hindraker has a set of generalized (western) motivations at hand to explain behavior, and he does not feel the need to explore in much depth the Native context. Underlying Hindraker's analysis is a justification of colonialism in the overall prosperity it conferred, a theme which runs throughout his book, reminiscent of the oldest arguments used to justify the dispossession of hunting and gathering societies. Hindraker seems to support orderly dispossession, negotiated dispossession, but dispossession nonetheless. His argument is that the French and the British shared a common fundamental constraint on their activities in the Ohio Valley: "the need to justify imperial development by the benefits conferred on the European metropolis."[31] The costs of empire had to be justified, gains had to outweigh losses. In other words, in the case of the French and the British, commerce imposed limits, forcing them to restrain their colonizing efforts, to proceed in a slower, more orderly, more negotiated manner, a manner fairer to Native Americans, who were surrendering title to their homelands. Hindraker reserves most of his criticism for the Americans who did not share this restraint, especially for the striving class of American traders and settlers, whose "anarchic tendencies" were impossible to control. The U.S. government, he argues, won the loyalties of westerners by supporting their unbridled expansion-

31 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, xiii.

ism. As the rebellion progressed, the experience of war made it easier for Americans to justify dispossessing Indians of their lands in an ever more aggressive manner.[32]

The problem Hindraker runs into arises from, to use Peter Cook's phrase, "the habit of constituting economics and politics as relatively autonomous domains."[33] That colonialism "succeeded" and that the Ohio Valley was transformed by the advent of European trading networks—this is obvious. But what is at question is the nature and meaning of that process. Historians cannot afford to assume cause from a knowledge of outcome, and Hindraker it seems does this, assuming a universal response to market forces. Hindraker, for example, incorrectly attributes restraint on the part of the French and British in the backcountry to the workings of the commercial system itself. In fact, the reason for restraint on the part of the would be French colonizers was a lack of population and a fear of Native resistance, and on the part of the would be British colonizers, the reason for restraint was also a fear of Native resistance and a growing fear of the rising population of their own American colonies. We cannot assume that Native actors shared a commonly held western understanding of the changes that occurred, just, as Cook argues, we cannot easily apply the common-

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32 Ibid., xii, 186.

33 Cook, "Symbolic and Material Exchange," 75.

sense meaning of trade to exchanges "occurring in contexts that cannot be imagined as a kind of market."[34]

The extent to which Native polities and cultures in this period were transformed by trade is highly questionable. Hindraker treats Native Americans to the same disintegrating analysis Richard White does in *The Middle Ground.* The Illinois and Miami confederacies, according to Hindraker, "were disintegrating as effective units of political organization." He then exaggerates the extent of change, and he underplays the extent of cultural persistence. Was it trade or was it in fact warfare that introduced the most change into the lives of Native Americans living in the Ohio Valley in the eighteenth century? For Hindraker it is clearly trade; he spends only one paragraph on both Harmar's and St. Clair's defeats, though these were major victories for the Confederacy and serious humiliations for the United States. By stressing the transformative and inevitable power of transcultural market forces, are we not still writing histories of victory, though in a more subtle fashion? Are we not focusing again, not on Native American constructs, not on what was lost, deconstructed, but on what was established, substantiated by victory?

In a paper which he delivered at the Seventh North American Fur Trade conference, Peter Cook described Richard White's *The Middle Ground* as an attempt to transcend a theoretical division in current historical studies of Indian-

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34 Ibid.

White relations.[35] That division, between "rationalists" on the one hand and "romantics" on the other—between formalists and substantivists—was summed up in 1985 by Bruce Trigger. Reacting to "romantic" interpretations which portrayed Natives as exotic Other, Trigger argued that Native American trading practices exhibited an economic rationalism. Native Americans sought profit in exchange and were, in other words, as *reasonable* as their European counterparts. Within the constraints of traditional subsistence patterns and social customs they exercised their ability to reason pragmatically—that basic human cognitive ability which allows individuals to adjust cultural perceptions to accord with the real world. Trigger argued that rationalist and materialist analyses of cultural interaction explained more about "what happened to native people following European contact" than did analyses based on cultural relativism. He claimed that "the Indians' increasing familiarity with Europeans led to a 'cognitive reorganization' in which the rational component inherent in the mental processes of every human being began to play the dominant role in guiding native relations with Europeans, while religious beliefs ceased to play the important part that in many cases they had done in the early stages of the encounter." Trigger opposed "romantic" notions that suggested Natives were impervious to European influences, or not dependent on trade goods, or more attracted to the symbolic rather than the utilitarian value of such goods.[36]

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35 Ibid., 82-83.

Peter Cook sees in Trigger's distinction between rational and romantic and in the series of oppositions to which that distinction gives rise—rational, universal, utilitarian, and literal versus cultural, idiosyncratic, nonutilitarian, and metaphorical—"a deeply rooted tension in the theoretical underpinnings of modern social science." That tension, Cook senses, is traceable to "the basic taxonomies of Western thought." Cook himself would like to resolve that tension but does not want to do so by avoiding coming to terms with the issues that underpin the rationalist/romantic split. He argues that Richard White in *The Middle Ground* transcended the debate by not addressing it, by avoiding explanations that rested either on an overarching rationalism or on cultural persistence. White's positing of a new symbolic and institutional order mediated between Native and European, according to Cook, "merely delays the inevitable narratives of acculturation and resistance evoked in the book's epilogue." Cook finds support for a theoretical middle ground between rationalism and cultural relativism in certain strands of modern social theory. He is particularly interested in the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, who "has developed methods of accounting for social practices that avoid, on the one hand, constant reference to the concept of culture as being itself a motivating principle, and, on the other hand . . . Trigger's rationalist formulation, which relies upon the distinction between reason and cultural beliefs." In Bourdieu's view, setting up this opposition, between objectiv-

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36 Trigger, "Early Native North American Responses," 1195-1200, 1210, 1215.

ism and subjectivism, stands in the way of constructing an adequate theory of society.[37] Bourdieu has worked to "transcend the antagonism which sets these two modes of knowledge against each other and at the same time to preserve the insights gained by each position."[38] Rogers Brubaker clarifies Bourdieu's position on this need to transcend the antagonism between subjectivism and objectivism: "Instead of segregating the study of the symbolic realm (religion, language, education, art, ideology—in short, culture, broadly understood) from the study of the material economy, and thus in effect relegating the study of culture to an 'idealist semiology,' Bourdieu's substantive theory, like the vast theory Marx envisioned but never constructed, is premised on the systematic unity of practical social life." According to Brubaker, Bourdieu's argument for the need to transcend this opposition goes roughly like this:

> Objectivism explains social life in terms of mind-independent and agent-independent elements such as material conditions of existence; subjectiv-

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37 For an introduction to Bourdieu's work see Rogers Brubaker, "Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu," *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (November 1985): 745-75. On pages 746-47, Brubaker writes: "Sartre's voluntarism . . . and Levi-Strauss's emphasis on the causal power of structures operating independently of the consciousness of agents came to be seen by Bourdieu as antithetical poles of a basic opposition between subjectivism and objectivism, an opposition discernible in different guises throughout the history of social thought and constituting, in his view, the chief obstacle to the construction of an adequate theory of society."

38 The quote is from Pierre Bourdieu, *Le Sens Pratique*, 43, quoted in Brubaker, "Rethinking," 746-47.

> ism, by contrast, appeals to mind-dependent and agent-dependent elements such as the conceptions and beliefs of individuals. Neither of these one-sided modes of thought can comprehend the 'intrinsically double' nature of social reality. Social life is materially grounded and conditioned, but material conditions affect behavior in large part through the mediation of individual beliefs, dispositions, and experiences. Social life exists only in and through the symbolically mediated experience and action of individuals, but these individuals have been formed under definite material conditions of existence, and their every activity—including their symbolizing activity—depends on social facts existing prior to and independently of that activity. Subjectivism ignores the external constraints placed on agents by thing-like social facts and the social formation of every 'subject'; but objectivism ignores the 'objectivity of the subjective' and the 'reality of the representation,' because it does not recognize that the experience individuals have in and of social reality and the conceptions they form about it are partly constitutive of that reality. Only a theory based on a conceptualization of the relation between material and symbolic properties, and between external, constraining social facts and experiencing, apprehending, acting individuals, can be adequate for the human sciences.[39]

In getting around the rationalist/romantic opposition, Cook finds two of Bourdieu's concepts especially useful: the notion of *symbolic capital* and the concept of *habitus*. Symbolic capital "subsumes what people subjectively feel as honor, prestige, respectability, authority, and so on." It is this concept, Cook suggests, that is most relevant to understanding interactions between Europeans

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39 Brubaker, "Rethinking," 748, 750.

and Native peoples in the early period of colonization.[40] The second concept, *habitus*, is very relevant to the present discussion, dealing as it does with the persistence of social patterns. According to Cook, *habitus* refers to the "ways of being that are inculcated in each actor as he or she grows within a community. These are not rules that we follow consciously; instead, they are classificatory schemes that are transmitted, internalized, and put into practice every day without attaining the level of discourse: they are implicit in the social organization of space, time, and of the body itself. The ongoing application of these schemes produces the regularity or patterned nature of society that the outsider may observe, but that the actor experiences as the flux and uncertainty of everyday life."[41] As Cook explains, Bourdieu does not accept the notion of a subject "without durable dispositions, or ingrained habits of doing or thinking in a certain way. What looks rational to the observer may in fact be a matter of unthinking habit for the actor, while the 'rational' calculations of an actor may seem absurd to the outsider."[42] Bourdieu's ideas will be referred to throughout the thesis, but it is worth mentioning here that his first concern is with social reproduction, with the

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40 Bourdieu sees people as principally concerned with struggles over symbolic capital; see Cook, "Symbolic and Material Exchange," 84.

41 According to Brubaker, "the habitus is defined abstractly as the system of internalized dispositions that mediates between social structures and practical activity, being shaped by the former and regulating the latter"; Brubaker, "Rethinking," 758.

42 Cook, "Symbolic and Material Exchange," 83.

regularity and continuity of social practices. He questions what motivates actors to produce practices that seem to harmonize with others when they themselves are not consciously obeying laws or rules. Natives certainly had their own "interests" in response to Europeans, but how they arrived at their responses and what those responses meant to them should not be taken for granted, for their interests and their practices were rooted in the habitus of their own cultures. To say they acted rationally covers up a world of difference. Historians cannot blithely explain eighteenth century Native American responses to Euroamerican expansionism in terms of Western conceptions of social reality, for that ignores Native representations of reality, which differed. Ignorance of Native reality does not give historians freedom to generalize from a Euroamerican perspective and attribute Euroamerican motivations to Native American responses. Natives and Europeans did not necessarily share the same interpretation of events. If we agree with Bourdieu we need to be suspicious of theories that transcend culture, theories that ignore the dispositions of agents and account for human behavior "in terms of calculations that are cross-culturally comprehensible."[43]

For example, Eric Hindraker does this when he claims that Natives in the Ohio Valley in the second half of the eighteenth century began to overhunt game

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43 The quote is from Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*, rev. ed. (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987),xxi. It is quoted in Cook, "Symbolic and Material Exchange," 77.

populations and that they did so because the market rewarded prodigious short-term success: "The market challenged the ethic of sacral restraint in hunting by rewarding prodigious short-term success." Hindraker argues that success brought hunters status, and material wealth more than compensated for the loss of sacred meaning. Hunting for status created a new class of wealthy young hunter/traders who brought prosperity and *sweeping* changes to Native communities, undermining traditional systems of leadership. But consider what Hindraker must assume to make these assertions. Accepting the claim, for the sake of argument, that Natives actually did begin to overhunt game populations, one also has to accept that Natives Americans always practiced restraint in hunting; that they were sharing European meanings of wealth and status; that one could gain status in Native societies through the conspicuous consumption of material goods; and that overhunting was motivated by the desire for such status and not by an increase in the need for game. There are reasons to believe there was an increased need, attibutable to several causes: to a loss of hunting territories to white encroachment, to an increase in Native population in the Ohio Valley, caused by the same encroachment, and to the war Native Americans were fighting, the consequence of encroachment as well.[44]

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44 There are examples of overhunting in preparation for war in John Tanner's *Narrative*. When the Ojibwe living in the parkland south of the Assiniboine River prepare to go to war against the Sioux, they hunt game intensely to provide for their families in their absence: "We directed our course towards the Craneberry River, [Pembinah,] as we wished to select near

Instead of abandoning their own ways of being in and understanding the world and replacing these with Euroamerican concepts and responses to change, is it not more likely that Native Americans found ways of incorporating into their own worldview the material and social changes they were experiencing? This was what was occurring in Native communities, particularly in the west, before Euroamerican conquest and Native dispossession. Native Americans were in control in the west. They possessed considerable control over the fur trade, and for the time being the trade served as a means of sustaining their cultures. Until their dispossession, they absorbed the European influence. White fears of "going Indian" expressed this reality, a reality that nearly two centuries of French-Native miscegenation quietly reinforced. Canadian officials feared the effect of the loss of so many young men to the west: "Many of them settle among

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that place a favourable spot where our women and children might remain encamped, it being our intention to join a war-party then preparing to go against the Sioux. When we had chosen a suitable place, we applied ourselves diligently to hunting, that we might leave dry meat enough to supply the wants of our families in our absence." John Tanner, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner during Thirty Years Residence among the Indians in the Interior of North America* (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830), 119. If Native Americans in the Ohio Valley were overhunting game, it would be interesting to know what this represented to them. One cannot assume it represented a loss of sacred meaning, which is difficult to understand at any rate, being that their world was not divided apparently into the sacred and the profane. There are other considerations as well. The accumulation of material wealth was not practical and not supported by an ethic of sharing. Nor was success in hunting believed, necessarily, to be attributable soley to the skill of the hunter.

the Indians far from Canada, marry Indian women, and never come back again."[45] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecour captured both the European fear and the powerful attraction of the Native world when he wrote: "There must be something singularly captivating, and far superior to anything to be boasted of among us; for thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those Aborigines having from choice become Europeans!"[46] For Native Americans, the acceptance of European material culture—the use of firearms, the consumption of alcohol—did not represent a symbolic surrender of Native culture. The refashioning of a gun barrel into an ice chisel or a pipe stem did not symbolize a blending of two worlds. It represented an incorporation of European difference into Native reality. It is not accurate to assume the political disintegration of Native American communities and their subsequent resurrection under French sponsorship as EuroIndian communities. Nor is it accurate to dismiss eighteenth century Native Americans as allies of imperial armies or as unwitting players in transatlantic markets. The alternative is to acknowledge the authority they possessed in the North American interior. The Ohio Valley was a Native world. In the second half of the eighteenth century that Indian world

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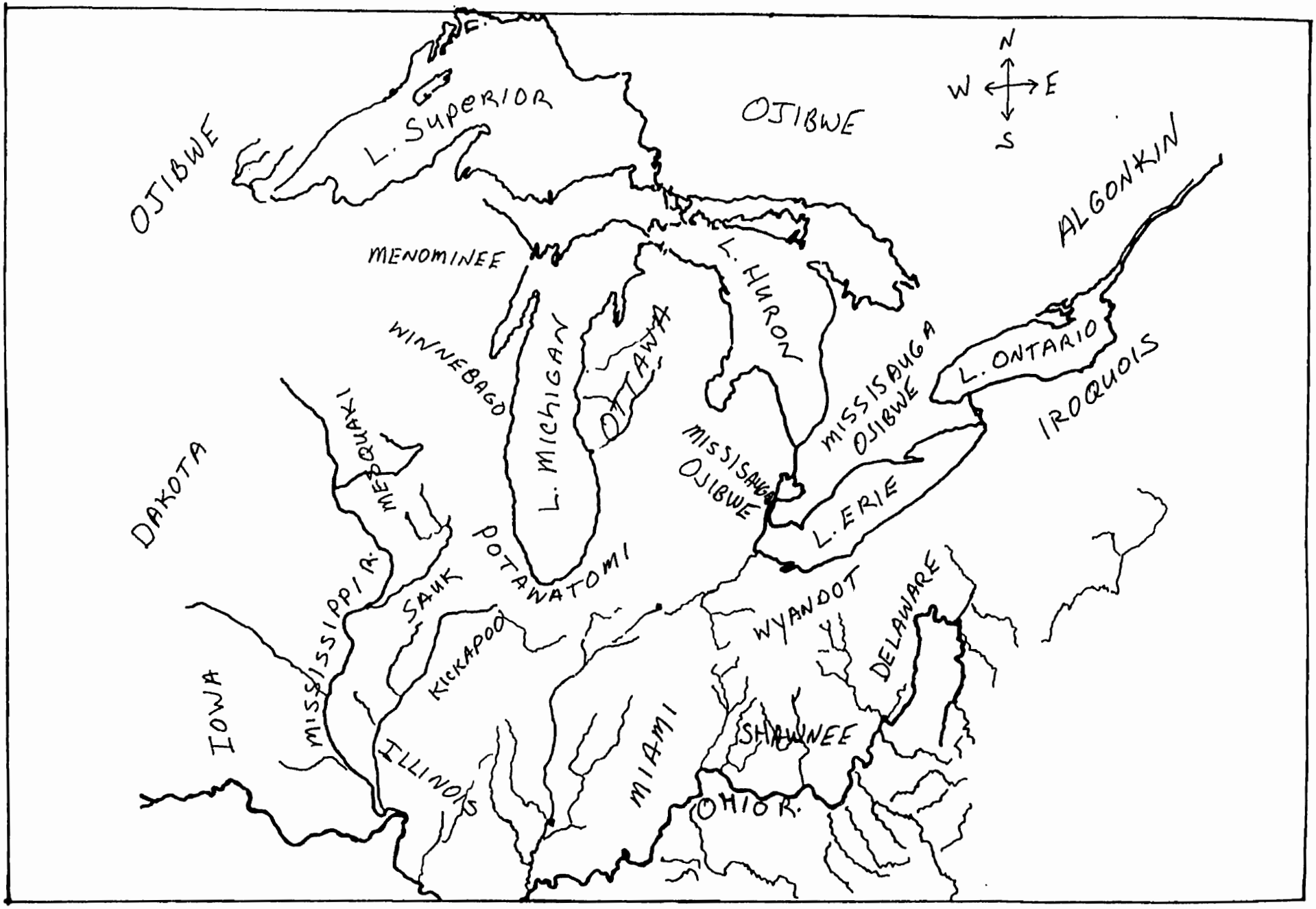
45 The quote is from Peter Kalm from *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America*, vol. II, 522, 563. It is quoted in W.J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier 1534-1760*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 90.

46 J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1957), 209.

was under siege. Everything was at stake. It explains the passion with which Native Americans resisted the planting of Euroamerican colonies north of the Ohio River.




Map 2: Tribal Distribution in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes Region

# 3. Indian Authority in the *Pays d'en Haut*

Studying Helen Tanner's *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, one appreciates the difficulties involved in trying to define precisely, for the period under consideration, the locations of different Native American groups in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region.[1] In the eighteenth century the lives of many Native Americans in this region were complicated, to say the least, by the warfare and dislocation that accompanied European encroachment on Indian lands. Interrelations among different Indian groups added to the region's ethnic complexity. In "Indian Villages and Tribal Distribution 1768, Map 13," Tanner divides the region into what appear to be separate tribal countries, with clear tribal boundaries.[2] But in the introduction to this map she cautions that "the picture of distinct tribal countries does not imply that each area was occupied solely by one tribal group."[3] Intertribal arrangements, concessions permitting hunting, and hospitality afforded to allies, travelers, and delegations, accounted for the diversity found within each of these "tribal countries." Nonetheless, Tanner's breakdown of the region into sections and then into "tribal countries" is useful in

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1 Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987.)

2 Tanner, *Atlas of Indian History*, 58-59.

3 Tanner, *Atlas of Indian History*, 60.

trying to make sense of the ethnogeography of what she refers to as the Great Lakes theater.

The northern section of Tanner's map encompasses the homelands of the Algonquins, the Missisauga-Ojibwes (or simply Mississaugas), and the Ojibwes. The Algonquins were located in the northeastern corner of the Great Lakes theater, in the St. Maurice and Ottawa River Valleys and surrounding territory. The other two groups, the Missisaugas and the Ojibwes, who were closely related to one another, occupied the expanses of land to the west of the Algonquins, along the northern shores of the Great Lakes. According to Tanner, the Missisaugas were concentrated principally on the northwest side of Lake Ontario ("in the vicinity of modern Toronto"). The Ojibwes lived to the west of the Algonquins and north of Lakes Huron and Michigan. The name Ojibwe, which "originally applied to a single village on the north shore of Lake Superior," according to Tanner, through usage took on "a broader linguistic and tribal meaning." Their territory was the broad Canadian Shield country surrounding Lake Superior. The people of this large territory shared a common language bond but were "locally differentiated by descriptive or geographic names."[4]

The principal locations of the very powerful Ottawas were on Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron, at the Straits of Mackinac, and around the northern half of Lake Michigan—L'Arbre Croche on the tip of Michigan's lower peninsula being

4 Tanner, *Atlas of Indian History*, 61.

one of their most important villages. The Potawatomies were located in southern Michigan, their country extending westward around the southern end of Lake Michigan, with a village at the mouth of the Chicago River and others along the western shore of the lake as far north as Green Bay.

In the western section tribal territories were somewhat fluid in the 1750s and 60s, not easily defined. Tanner attributes this to intertribal warfare and encroachment.[5] Up to this time the Illinois tribes—the Peorias and the Kaskaskias—had dominated central Illinois, but by the close of the Seven Years' War many from the Illinois tribes chose to migrate to the west bank of the Mississippi River. Other groups in the western section were the Kickapoos, Mascoutens, Sauks, Mesquakies (or Fox), Winnebagos, and Menominees. The villages of the Menominees were located at the mouths of rivers flowing into the west shore of Green Bay.[6] The territory of the Dakotas originally extended into western Wisconsin, but warfare between the Dakotas and the Ojibwes, which originated in 1736 and would continue into the nineteenth century, changed this.

In the southeast were located the countries of the Iroquois, the Delawares, the Mingos, the Shawnees, the Wyandots, and the Miamis. The Delaware migration to the Allegheney and the Upper Ohio River Valleys after 1724 was a deliberate strategy for dealing with European encroachment in eastern Pennsylvania.

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5 Tanner, *Atlas of Indian History*, 63.

6 Tanner, *Atlas of Indian History*, 64.

For similar reasons the Shawnees followed the Delawares, leaving eastern Pennsylvania, where they had been living in separate groups, and where they had been experiencing uneasy relations with encroaching white settlers and with the Iroquois.[7]

In the west the Shawnees would successfully challenge Iroquois leadership and would make clear the independence of the western nations from Iroquois control. The ancestral lands of the Shawnees were located in south central Ohio, where, after leaving Pennsylvania, they firmly established themselves again. They located their main villages along the Scioto River and its tributaries.[8] The hunting territory of the Shawnees extended south of the Ohio River into northern Kentucky. They also hunted on the Scioto Plains and in the Miami River Valley to the west. Further west was the country of the Miami, or the Twightwees, made up of three groups—the Piankeshaw, the Wea, and the Miami. Their villages (on the Wabash River) and hunting territories were located in what, for the most part, is present-day Indiana.

Many western Senecas, though members of the Six Nations, also migrated to the Ohio Country and built towns there among the Delawares and Shawnees, as early as the 1720s. This was the beginning of a westward orientation of the

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7 For the history of the Shawnee and Delaware migrations see McConnell, *Country Between*, 5-60. Most Iroquois, or Six Nations, towns were located in what is now upstate New York.

8 The headwaters of the Scioto River are located north of Columbus, Ohio. The Scioto flows south, through Columbus, eventually emptying into the Ohio River.

Ohio Iroquois, or Mingoes as they came to be called.[9] In the 1740s food shortages encouraged more Senecas to migrate. In moving to the Ohio Country the Senecas were also escaping the evils introduced to their communities by an intense trade rivalry between New France and New York. Alcoholism, violence, smallpox, and encroachment accompanied the establishment of Anglo-American trading posts in the proximity of Seneca villages. The faction of Senecas who moved to the Upper Ohio Valley preferred the French traders. With the French they had maintained close ties since the end of the seventeenth century. In moving to the Ohio Country they were also moving closer to French trading posts along the south shore of Lake Erie. According to Tanner, the Wyandots, who were settled in north central Ohio, in the vicinity of the Sandusky River, "exercised administrative supervision over land" in this section of the Great Lakes theater.[10]

Migrations to the Ohio Country were not haphazard affairs, as McConnell points out. They "followed patterns rooted in the customs of the local communities."[11] As bands of Senecas, Delawares, and Shawnees reunited in the Ohio

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9 Tanner identifies the Mingos as "independent splinter groups from the Iroquois towns, who rejected the authority of the Onondaga Longhouse and moved to the Ohio Country," see Tanner, *Atlas of Indian History*, 63.

10 According to Tanner, their leadership was "recognized and respected by the other tribes," see Tanner, *Atlas of Indian History*, 62.

11 See McConnell, *Country Between*, 23: "The natives' movement westward itself would have been the result of countless discussions as the villagers weighed the pros and cons of

Country they strengthened their own tribal identities. At the same time they developed "a growing collective identity with the Upper Ohio Valley," which was rooted in part, McConnell claims, in the challenges the Ohio Indians faced "from ambitious outsiders."[12]

Tanner's map of 1768 reflects the general location of Native groups in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region five years after the close of the Seven Years' War. That War had introduced significant changes in relations between Ohio Valley-Great Lakes Indians and the Euroamericans on their borders. In the Mississippi Valley, the Spanish had replaced the French, and in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region the British, who had replaced the French, were now in control.

This is what the European treaties claimed. In fact, Native Americans remained in control of the interior. With the fall of New France, they, with their French relatives living in the interior, were left alone to check Anglo-American expansion into the region. The threat of invasion alarmed them. In response to this new threat they sought effective ways to resist the Anglo-Americans, and their resistance at the same time entailed a struggle to redefine themselves.

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migration and arrived at a consensus on the issue. In some instances long-standing factional divisions within villages led dissatisfied minorities to vote with their feet and seek new homes elsewhere, thus preserving the harmony so highly valued within native societies."

12 McConnell, *Country Between*, 20.

Their relationship to the French who lived in the interior raises many questions, questions not thoroughly addressed by historians. The French in the interior had a long history of interrelations with their Native hosts. Olive Dickason described the relationship this way: ""For a century and a half French and Amerindians lived and fought side by side in a symbiotic relationship that is without parallel in the colonial history of North America."[13] At the close of the Seven Years' War, French trading posts and forts could be found throughout the *pays d'en haut,* as far north as Lake Winnipeg. The close relationship between the French and the Indians of the Great Lakes raises interesting questions about the identity of these Frenchmen in the interior and about the nature of the fur trade prior to the defeat of New France.

Toward the close of the seventeenth century, an official edict was promulgated under Louis XIV in which all of the traders were recalled from the Great Lakes region.[14] The French only began to regarrison some of their remote posts

13 Olive P. Dickason, "From 'One Nation' in the Northeast to 'New Nation' in the Northwest: A Look at the Emergence of the Métis" in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America,* edited by Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown, Manitoba Studies in Native History 1 (1985; reprint, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1993), 29.

14 The edict was prompted by the complaints of the missionaries. According to the missionaries, as Louise Kellogg explains, "not until the great horde of traders and *coureurs de bois* had invaded the West did the Indians learn to crave liquor." The missionaries "also complained of the profligacy of the young Frenchmen, whom the freedom of the wilderness and the license of savage life led to scandalous excesses. Either the brandy-traders or the missionaries must go, wrote the zealous superior of the western missions. Such representations finally determined Louis XIV to withdraw all traders from the Great Lakes

after the Treaty of Utrecht had been signed in 1713. The fort at the straits of Michilimackinac, which served as a center of trade, they rebuilt in 1716, after relocating it on the mainland (Mackinac City, Michigan). Detroit, because of its strategic location in the straits between Lakes Huron and Erie (where Cadillac had built Fort Ponchatrain in 1701) served as the most important French post in the west. In the Illinois Country Cahokia and Kaskaskia on the Mississippi and Vincennes on the Wabash, were important French settlements, as was Peoria. Throughout the *pays d'en haut* emerged what Jacqueline Peterson refers to as corporate trading towns, located along "rivers, bays or lakeshores at important breaks in trade or portage points." Important French posts were located at present Fort Wayne, Indiana (Kekionga); Niles, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; and Green Bay, Wisconsin.[15]

Simply listing the locations of the French in the interior, however, reveals little about them and their relations with the native inhabitants of the *pays d'en haut.* Any discussion of French and Amerindian relations at the close of the Seven Years' War first has to account for the identity of these interior French, shaped as that identity was by a long history of French and Indian miscegena-

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region, and to resort to the earlier method of urging the Indians each year to come down to Canada to trade." See Louise Phelps Kellogg, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc. 1968), 259.

15 Jacqueline Peterson, "Many Roads to Red River: Métis Genesis in the Great Lakes Region, 1680-1815," in Peterson and Brown, *New Peoples*, 54-55.

tion. Understanding the nature of French and Amerindian relations will help in turn to appreciate the nature of the resistance Anglo-American expansionists encountered after the Seven Years' War.

How one views the nature of French and Amerindian relations up to the end of the Seven Years' War, will be influenced by how one approaches questions about the determinants of ethnicity. There are several established approaches to understanding ethnicity. Anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Harold Isaacs have stressed the primordial character of ethnicity, its rootedness in a *basic group identity.*[16] Ethnicity from this perspective is ancient, unchanging, inherent in the ethnic group's past, in the souls and bodies of its members, in their blood. At the other end of the spectrum, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan have defined ethnic groups as interest groups.[17] Ethnicity (particularly in a polyethnic society) provides a means for organizing groups around issues of social or economic interest. From this perspective ethnicity is instrumental and situational. At this end of the spectrum one risks imputing to Native Americans in the Great Lakes region a common ethnicity that they themselves would not have recognized. As David Maybury-Lewis has argued, the Indians of America,

16 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Harold R. Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

17 Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City,* second edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M. I. T. Press, 1970).

"a diverse series of distinct populations who were frequently lumped together by newcomers to the hemisphere," had a common ethnicity imputed to them without their recognizing it themselves.[18] Historians need to be careful when defining others in ethnic terms, a caution that applies as well to studies of the French in the interior. Jacqueline Peterson's idea of ethnicity lies somewhere between the extremes of primordialism and interest group ethnicity. For Peterson group identities are not fabrications. A group's identity begins at a certain point in time, even if not fully recognized by the group as such. That identity depends on a core of experiences and group characteristics which its members hold in common. In "Many roads to Red River: Métis genesis in the Great Lakes region, 1680-1815," Peterson traces the emergence of the Métis of the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region. The Métis of the Great Lakes, according to Peterson, were a people "in between," neither Native American nor French, "a unique hybridization of Native and Euro-American cultures." To emphasize the uniqueness of these interior French, she is at pains to stress their difference and separation from Indians and Europeans both. This separate identity of the Métis she bases in part on occupation (their involvement in the fur trade). Their separate identity, she claims, was recognized by outsiders. To support her argument for Métis distinctiveness, she stresses difference and the isolation of the Métis in the interior. Her

18 David Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State,* The Cultural Survival Series on Ethnicity and Change (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), 59-60.

arguments travel in two directions. On the one hand, she argues for heterogeneity in the hinterland (distinguishing the Métis from the surrounding native communities); on the other hand, she argues for homogeneity (identifying the Métis closely enough with Native Americans to distinguish them from Euroamericans).[19]

Richard White's arguments are similar to Peterson's, but serve a different purpose. White's purpose is to find evidence for his middle ground, his mutually comprehensible world, which is neither French nor Indian but a blend of the two. This is why, as stated before, he tends to find "no sharp distinctions between Indian and white worlds" but sees them shading into each other.[20] *The Middle Ground* is comprehensive and full of insight, so much so that it is easy to forget that White's overall analysis, which focuses fundamentally on European-Amerindian diplomacy, by necessity relies heavily on European documents and in large part has to remain impressionistic—a problem faced by all historians studying Indian-White relations in this period. According to Olive Dickason, "The silence as well as the ambiguity of the record presents a problem for the historian." Dickason claims that in trying to determine the prevalence of the mixing of races in New France the official record is less than reliable, as she explains: "The rarity of recognizably recorded intermarriages could be related to the prob-

19 Peterson, "Many Roads," 37-71.

20 White, *Middle Ground*, xi.

ability that many of them took place *a la facon du pays*—that is, according to the Amerindian way."[21]

The trouble with relying on French documents is that they tend to exaggerate French influence, French point of view, French authority. British documents do likewise, from a British point of view. Official documents and correspondence by nature focus on negotiation, control, and an assertion or a balancing of power. Reading through Richard White's impressive research, one is struck by how little control the French actually did possess in the interior. The French are part of an alliance, but they do not have the power to dominate or control it. They have influence, not control. They are viewed as traders and military allies. They supply trade goods and soldiers, and Native Americans reciprocate with furs and warriors. The military alliance is really a deployment of French troops at Native allowance. The arrangement is a commercial and military alliance that works to Native satisfaction as long as the French limit themselves to these roles.

From White's own evidence one gets the sense that Native Americans in the interior were resistant to French influence and that the French had to make their way into this Native American world—into these host societies—along Native pathways. One can use White's own evidence in support of an alternative interpretation: that Native American societies incorporated the European presence

21 Dickason, "From 'One Nation,'" 22-23.

and that that presence was not strong enough to fundamentally disturb Native cultures in the region until after the defeat of New France. Instead of a blending of two worlds, one can find in the evidence two competing systems of value and a struggle to control the conduct of the trade and to make it comply to the values of each. Native Americans, in this view, struggled to make the trade conform to their own expectations and interests, and they were largely successful at this until they lost control of the country, the resource base on which the trade thrived.

The conflict of values between Native Americans and French colonizers—the Native American system of value based on kinship and obligation, the official French system based on a determination to control the interior and eventually to extend colonization—is illustrated by the problems the French encountered during the Fox wars, as White described these:

> The French attempt to maintain a policy of force after many of their allies once more sought to number the Fox within the alliance, condemned French officials to nearly a decade of frustration following the victory of 1730. The Fox, unlike enemies of the alliance outside the *pays d'en haut*, had relatives and friends among the French allies. These people always formed a latent pro-Fox faction. When the Fox were strong and aggressive, these factions were too weak to dominate their villages. For example, Wilamek, a leading chief of the Potawatomis, was the offspring of a marriage between a Sauk and a Fox, and he had, in turn, married among the Potawatomis. In 1712, arguing against an Ottawa chief from Michilimackinac, K8ta8iliboe [sic], he had tried unsuccessfully to restore peace between the Fox, on the one hand, and the Potawatomis and French, on the other. With the outbreak of war, however, ties such as those of

> Wilamek did not vanish. The prevailing sentiment among warriors in a village might be anti-Fox, but pro-Fox warriors might war against them in the hopes of saving their own relatives.

Native insistence on kinship ties with the French is often presented as their calculative way of solidifying trade relations. Undoubtedly at times trade was their primary motivation for marriage; nonetheless, we have to keep reminding ourselves that we cannot so easily objectify the mental structures of eighteenth century Native Americans and imply that we know for certain how they understood intermarriage with the French. Interpreting kinship to mean primarily an agreement to trade distorts meaning, for kinship implied much more than trade. Native Americans functioned under a separate system of values, a system that in some measure was similar to the European system but in many ways was greatly different.

The purpose here is to emphasize the impressionism inherent in writing about Native American societies in this period. What is needed but impossible to achieve, because of a lack of evidence, is a systematic study of the changes in the social structures of Native American societies over time, what Bourdieu describes as a form of structural history which "in each successive state of the structure under examination" one searches for both the product of earlier struggles to maintain this structure and for the principle of later transformations of this structure. For the *pays d'en haut*, evidence does not exist to do this kind of sociological history. Even were the evidence available, such an undertaking certainly would

reach beyond the limits of this thesis. Short of this kind of study, however, questions can be raised about the evolutionism implied in Peterson's approach, and also about the static quality of White's analysis of French and Amerindian relations. Neither of their approaches serves as a model that accurately describes Native interests or takes into account the processes over time which shape one's sense of ethnic identity. Peterson's theory of a unique culture, a Métis culture different and separate from both Indians and whites, does not accurately describe the historical processes that shape ethnic identity. And White's theory of mutual accommodation imputes to Indians incentives that they did not possess.

Kathleen Neils Conzen and her associates view ethnicity, not as primordially given, nor as a collective fiction, but as "a cultural construction accomplished over historical time."[22] Neils Conzen and her associates are immigration historians. In their view ethnicity is "a process of construction or invention which incorporates, adapts, and amplifies preexisting communal solidarities, cultural attributes, and historical memories." Similar to Bourdieu's concept of habitus, ethnicity, according to this theory, is "grounded in real life context and social experience."[23] Immigration historians have become increasingly interested in the process of cultural and social change by which immigrants cease to

22 Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, and Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall 1992): 3-41.

23 Neils Conzen et al., "Invention of Ethnicity," 5.

be foreigners and yet are not one hundred percent members of their host societies. Ethnicity has become a key concept in the analysis of this process of adaptation, which is not the same thing as assimilation.[24] In explaining the purpose of their essay, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," Neils Conzen et al. argue that ethnicity is continuously being reinvented in response to change:

> Ethnic groups in modern settings are constantly recreating themselves, and ethnicity is continuously being reinvented in response to changing realities both within the group and the host society. Ethnic group boundaries, for example, must be repeatedly renegotiated, while expressive symbols of ethnicity (ethnic traditions) must be repeatedly reinterpreted. By historicizing the phenomenon, the concept of invention allows for the appearance, metamorphosis, disappearance, and reappearance of ethnicities. This essay will seek to illustrate the processes which we believe account for periods of florescence and decline, for continuities and innovations, for phases of saliency and quiescence, in the histories of particular ethnic groups.[25]

The focus of historians such as Neils Conzen et al., has been on Europeans in a modern setting, mostly on European immigrants to the United States in the

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24 Adaptation suggests "an active participation by the immigrants in defining their group identities and solidarities. The renegotiation of its 'traditions' by the immigrant group presumes a collective awareness and active decision-making as opposed to the passive, unconscious individualism of the assimilation model,"see Neils Conzen et al., "Invention of Ethnicity," 5.

25 Neils Conzen et al., "Invention of Ethnicity," 5.

nineteenth century, and while the *pays d'en haut* is hardly a modern setting, the analysis of the dynamic that takes place between host and immigrant offers insight into the dynamic that must have taken place as well between native and newcomer, given native authority in the interior. At some point in their history the French in the interior, in the *pays d'en haut*, ceased to be foreigners and became, not fully Indian, but ethnic Amerindians of one kind or another, French Amerindians.

The French when they first ventured into the *pays d'en haut* were often dependent for their survival upon their Native hosts. It could be a be a harsh and unforgiving country, where freezing or starving to death were not uncommon.[26] Survival in the *pays d'en haut* demanded knowledge and cooperation. Canadians gained the skills to survive from their Native hosts, and in doing so were participating in defining a new identity for themselves.

Beyond survival there was a clear attraction to Native ways for many of the French in Canada, as W. J. Eccles has written:

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26 To keep you alive, you might with luck be offered, as was the Jesuit Claude Dablon, a dish of rock tripe or a piece of the skin door of the lodge, see *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, vol. 55, "Lower Canada, Iroquois, Ottawas 1670-1672" (New York: Pageant Books Company, 1959), 145, 149-51. [Hereafter this series will be referred to simply as *Jesuit Relations.*] Rock tripe or *tripe de roche* was a black soupy mixture made by boiling certain mosses.

> The Canadians were in constant association with the Indians. . . . It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the Canadians early adopted much of the Indian way of life and became imbued with some of their character traits. Native foods such as corn, squash, and pumpkins found ready acceptance. Indian means of travel—the snowshoe, toboggan, and canoe—were quickly mastered. Many of the Canadians, who were inveterate pipe smokers, preferred to mix their locally grown tobacco with inner bark of the cherry or dogwood tree, a custom borrowed from the Indians.[27]

There was enough of an attraction to the Indian way of life to raise official concern in New France. According to Eccles:

> The Marquis de Denonville, governor general from 1685 to 1689, was appalled by certain attitudes and habits of the Canadians. Instead of laboring on the land, they preferred to spend their lives in the bush, trading with the Indians, where their parents, the *cures*, and the officials could not govern them, and where they lived like savages. Even when they returned to the colony these youths showed a shocking proclivity for going about half naked in the hot weather, as did the Indians. "I cannot emphasize enough my lord, the attraction that this Indian way of life has for all these youths," Denonville wrote to the minister. . . . The intendant Jean Bochart de Champigny in 1691 wrote in much the same vein, stating, "It is most unfortunate that Canadian youths, who are vigorous and tough, have no inclination for anything but these voyages where they live in the forest like Indians for two or three years at a time, without benefit of any of the sacraments."[28]

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27 W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier*, 89.

28 Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, 90.

At the same time, association with the Indians gave an important advantage to New France. An Indian way of life often made good bush fighters out of many Canadians and aided New France in the wars against the English colonies:

> The Canadians were closely associated with the Indians, waging war after their fashion, using their techniques and becoming as adept in the harsh, cruel methods as any Iroquois or Abenaki. There was therefore a demonstrable degree of truth in the opinion of the Canadians expressed by one French officer: "They make war only by swift attacks and almost always with success against the English who are not as vigorous nor as adroit in the use of fire arms as they, nor as practiced in forest warfare."[29]

This is not to suggest that all Frenchmen were becoming Indians but to stress both the authority of Native Americans and their influence upon the Frenchmen who associated with them in the interior.

That authority was often expressed in what the Jesuits criticized as a high-mightiness or independent attitude on the part of Native Americans in the *pays d'en haut*. Native Americans held to their own beliefs tenaciously and more often than not rejected the proselytizing efforts of the priests, or if they did accept the promises of the Jesuits they generally did so in a manner that incorporated those promises into their traditional way of thinking, into their own habitus. Throughout the *Jesuit Relations* there are many illustrations of this kind of incorporation. There are also many expressions of Native disdain for French

29 Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, 89.

power. The speech an Algonquin made to Father Jacques Bueux after the Iroquois had captured Father Isaac Jogues, was a graphic expression of Native disdain for French power. "High mightiness" was how Father Jerome Lalemant described this attitude among the Indians. Lalemant related the speech (below) to his superior in Quebec, in a letter he wrote from the Huron Country on June 10, 1642. He commented that "This is what is called speaking and acting like a Savage. I see but few among us who are not in danger of having the stomachs of those Barbarians for a sepulchre, if God do not protect us from the high mightinesses":

> This time we will see whether the Hiroquois fear you; whether they are afraid of your arquebuses; whether they dread your cannons, or whether they despise you. As soon as thy Brother reaches their country, the Captains will assemble, and, if the French name frighten them, they will speak thus: "Let us not eat the flesh of the Frenchmen; that flesh is not food,it is a poison, that will kill us if we taste it. Let us take them back to their brothers and countrymen." That is what they will say, if they fear you; and in the Spring they will bring back thy Brother and the two Frenchmen whom they hold captive. If, on the contrary, they despise you, they will call out, on the arrival of thy Brother and of the Frenchmen who accompany him: "Now let us eat, let us see how the flesh of the French tastes; let us swallow them all whole." Thereupon they will burn them; they will make them suffer a thousand torments; they will cut them in pieces and throw them by quarters into great kettles; they will eat them with pleasure; every one will want to taste them. "That is good meat, that flesh is delicate; we must eat some." A Captain will harangue, and incite the young men to go and hunt Frenchmen, so as to have similar feasts in

> their country. Then there will not be any French dwelling near which they will not lie in ambush, to surprise and carry them off to their shambles.[30]

Difference and Native independence were easily apparent to many who visited the *pay d'en haut*. Differences between Europeans and Indians lie in "the temperament of our senses, whencesoever it comes, whether from our birth or from our habits. . . ." wrote Father Druillettes, expressing in the seventeenth century, perceptions which share something in common with the concept of habitus. The good father not only acknowledged the great differences between Native and European but also recognized the source of those differences: "From this source, as I believe, arises the great difference that exists between the senses of the Savages and those of the French, or of the Europeans; for you would say, in many instances, that what is sugar to the one people is wormwood to the other." He then goes on to illustrate those differences as expressed by the senses. The French are fond of the smell of musk; "the Savages dislike it as if it were a stench." Their songs, he observes, "which are so heavy and dismal as to give us ideas of night, seem to them as beautiful as the blush of dawn. They sing amid dangers, in torments, and at the approach of death; while the French usually preserve a deep silence on all such occasions." The sense of taste is greatly different: "Salt, which seasons all viands eaten in Europe, renders them bitter to the

30 *Jesuit Relations*, "Quebec and Hurons: 1642," 22:282-85.

Savage taste. Their smoked meat, which to us is almost soot, is very savory to them. . . . I have never seen a Savage that did not abhor Dutch cheese, radishes, spices, mustard, and similar condiments."[31]

Evidence of the pervasiveness of Native beliefs and resistance to the changes European priests were trying to introduce in the *pays d'en haut*, is found in the *Jesuit Relation* for 1667. Father Francois le Mercier laments the lack of conviction of the Tobacco Hurons, who fled their country to escape the Iroquois:

> [They]formerly constituted a part of the flourishing Church of the Hurons, and had as Pastor the Late Father Garnier, . . . since their country's downfall, they have received no Christian nurture; whence it results that they are Christians rather by calling than by profession. They boast of that fair name, but the intercourse which they have so long had with infidels has nearly effaced from their minds all vestiges of Religion, and has made them resume many of their former customs.[32]

There are examples throughout the *Relations* of Natives retaining their spiritual practices despite the Jesuits. Native beliefs and habits persisted in the *pays d'en haut*. More than that, they constituted the prevailing worldview, little challenged by European difference. The Jesuits often expressed frustration over this. Claude Dablon wrote of the Indian that "after he has been brought up from infancy in this belief [vision quest] it is almost impossible to free his mind of this

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31 *Jesuit Relations*, "Iroquois, Lower Canada: 1656-1658," 44:277-79.

32 *Jesuit Relations*, "Lower Canada, Iroquois, Ottawas: 1664-1668," 50:307.

cursed superstition when he has grown old in it, or even passed some years."[33] Jacque Marquette that same year, 1670, expressed similar frustration: "The Outaouaks, superstitious to an extraordinary degree in their feasts and their jugglerries, seem to harden themselves to the teachings that are given them."[34]

When Native Americans did accept the Jesuit teachings, they did so in a manner, naturally enough, that incorporated the new beliefs into their own ways of understanding the world. The Christian god, for example, was put to Native uses. One warrior, about to go against the Sioux, invited the Jesuits to a feast and made this address:

> You have heard of the peoples called Nadouessi. They have eaten me to the bone, and have not left me a single member of my family alive. I must taste of their flesh, as they have tasted of that of my kinsfolk. I am ready to set out against them in war, but I despair of success therein unless you, who are the masters of life and of death, are favorable toward me in this undertaking. Therefore, to obtain victory by your means, I invite you to this banquet.[35]

Jesus easily became the god of war. Jean de Lamberville, quoted the Ojibwe captain, Iskouakite, as saying:

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33 *Jesuit Relations*, "Iroquois, Ottawas, Lower Canada: 1669-1671," 54:139-43.

34 Ibid. 54:173.

35 *Jesuit Relations*, "Lower Canada, Iroquois, Ottawas 1670-1672," 55:203-5.

> These black gowns who protect and give life to the sault by receiving our women and children into their house, and by praying for us to JESUS, The God of war. Yes, although the Nadouessi are about to attack us (as we have learned), we place all our confidence in the King of Heaven and earth, whom they preach to us. . . .[36]

But there was confusion over the nature of this god of war. The leader of a war party going against the Sioux importuned Claude Allouez to make him pray to God. The missionary refused because the man had "impersonated the devil, imitating his voice to make believe that the latter spoke by his mouth; and he had held feasts in his honor." What is interesting is the leader's response to the Allouez. According to Allouez, the man told him that this did not concern God, and that "he could counterfeit the devil without despairing of his salvation." It was his custom, he said. He said that "he had always done so before going to war; that no misfortune had ever happened to him; and that he had always made prisoners."[37]

The failure of the god of war, proof of his lack of power, on the other hand, could quickly lead to a loss of faith. Claude Dablon wrote in 1675:

> Some saki [Sauk], who have come from the bay des puants [Green Bay], cause a certain coldness among our neophytes. They tell Them that only children pray to God. Others say: How can we pray to God? He does not

36 *Jesuit Relations*, "Hurons, Iroquois, Ottawas 1672-73," 57:209.

37 *Jesuit Relations*, "Hurons, Iroquois, Ottawas 1672-73," 57:279.

love us; he loves only our enemies, for he always Delivers us into Their hands, and hardly ever Delivers any of them into ours.[38]

In his journal for February 1673 Claude Allouez recorded a similar encounter:

> The 10th [February 1673]. A band of young men who have blackened Their faces enter our Cabin in The evening, and say that they come to sleep in The Chapel so that God may appear and speak to Them in Their slumber, and promise to Deliver Their enemies to Them. This is in accordance with Their erroneous belief that Their genii speak to Them in their sleep. . . .
>
> The 20th [February 1673]. Two hundred warriors passed before our chapel, but none entered it, except one of those whom I had baptized some days before. I asked those who favored prayer to God why they did not enter, and they replied that prayer had caused them to die during the previous summer. . . . Last winter, a band of young Outagami defeated eleven canoes of Nadouessi [Sioux]; and they attributed their victory to prayer, for they had all come to pray to God before starting. Their account of the aid that God had given them induced the others to pray to Him. They did so last summer, and marked a cross on their bucklers; but out of the 19 [sic] that they numbered, 26 were captured or killed; while out of another band of 13, three were captured or killed.[39]

What we are describing is part of the reaction of host societies to the French newcomers. Natives had to find ways to fit the French into their world.[40]

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38 *Jesuit Relations*, "Lower Canada, Illinois, Ottawas 1673-1677," 59:233.

39 *Jesuit Relations*, "Ottawas, Lower Canada, Iroquois: 1672-1674," 58:51-55.

40 This view runs counter to James Axtell's view of the Jesuits role in the New World. See

One may ask whether or not the presence of the French in their midst was problematic for Native Americans. Did the French have ethnicity in Native eyes? In other words, were the French perceived as a distinct group, and, if so, on what understanding did that perception rest? The Indians of course perceived French difference. In general the French were probably looked upon as a group with lower social status; certainly those serving as laborers and canoemen in the fur trade, an inferior occupation which most Indians chose to avoid, were so viewed. They could also assume with confidence that many of the French over time would become Indians. At any rate, their mixed-blood children would become so. With good reason they had confidence in the transformative power of their own world; young Frenchmen, attracted to the freedom to be found in the *pays d'en haut*, often remained there, or else lived double lives. Instead of Indians becoming more like French colonials, as colonial officials had assumed, a reverse process seems to have taken place. The natural proclivities of the young French for life in the woods surprised the Canadian authorities, who at the end of the eighteenth century, with Louis XIV's edict, tried to halt the process. [41]

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"Agents of Change: Jesuits in the Post-Columbian World," in James Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 152-70. How much change can be credited to the agency of the Jesuits and other missionaries is difficult to assess. One could argue that the most important agents of change were not the Jesuits but the acts of dispossession and removal that accompanied the Anglo-American advance into the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region.

41 In the *Jesuit Relations* are to be found glimpses of the frustation which priests and officials

Louise Kellogg in *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* described the Native reaction to this edict, which reveals a great deal about the role of the Canadians in Native societies:

> Nor did the plan of focusing the fur trade at Montreal succeed; the tribesmen would no longer take the long, tiresome voyage to the St. Lawrence, since they could supply themselves from the *coureurs de bois*, who swarmed in the western country, or obtain from the Iroquois English goods at a lower price than could be found at the French centers. Onanguisse, the famous chief of the Potawatomi, well expressed the feeling of most the French allies in his speech to the governor the year after the edict of evacuation had gone forth. "Father," he said, "since we want powder, iron, and every necessary which you were formerly in the habit of sending us, what do you expect us to do? Are the majority of our women, who have but one or two beavers to send to Montreal to procure their little supplies, are they to trust them to drunken fellows who will drink them, and bring nothing back? . . . You shall never see us again, I promise you, if the French quit us; this, Father, is the last time we shall come to talk with you."[42]

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must have felt, suggesting that the French were probably losing the struggle for spiritual allegience in the *pays d'en haut*. Father Dablon, in the *Relation* of 1675, gives an account of a young Frenchmen at the point of death: "The Young frenchman died in the Cabin of a savage, without Confession. Four months previously, he had passed by our Church; I had entreated him to come to confession, but he paid no Heed to me; and God, in consequence, did not choose that he should find again the opportunity which he had neglected." See *Jesuit Relations*, "Lower Canada, Illinois, Ottawas 1673-1677," 59:233.

42 Kellogg, *French Regime*, 268-69.

Onanguisse was expressing something significant about Indian authority, something Louis Kellogg accurately understood:

> The western tribesmen were not docile enough to respond to the missionary purpose, nor submissive enough to become civilized. In proud independence they maintained their native languages, religious rites, tribal customs, and intertribal enmities. They could not be molded into the nucleus for an agricultural settlement, nor did they desire to imitate the white man's ways. This has always been the kernel of the difficulty between the two races; neither would admit the superiority of the other. Historians have long lauded the French in America for their skill in dealing with the aborigines, have claimed that in this regard they far surpassed the English colonists. It is true that the French were adaptable and ingenious; . . . But they never in North America induced any large numbers of red men to adopt French Civilization.[43]

Both religious and secular authorities in New France sensed their lack of control. The Jesuit Etienne Carheil writing to Governor Frontenac from Mackinac in 1689 warned against the disaffection of the Ottawas. In providing the reasons for Ottawa disaffection, Carheil's letter shows Native Americans acting in Native American interest. The Ottawa were angered by the French overtures to the Iroquois. The Ottawas denounced the weakness of the French and the inability of the French to afford the Ottawas "protection." According to Carheil, "what most displeases them is, that the alliance of the frenchman, besides being

43 Ibid., 290.

useless to them through his powerlessness, is also injurious to them, both for commerce and for war." *Protection* for them had been a term expressing alliance, not a term expressing subordination to the French. They did not see themselves as weak or unable to take care of themselves without the French. Alliance with the French—protection—brought the Ottawa certain benefits. It meant that the French agreed to maintain their side of the fur trade; the Indian fur trade would be sustained. It also meant that the Ottawa and French fought together in war when their shared interests were at stake. It did not mean that the Ottawa could not survive without French protection. The French had acted cowardly, dishonorably, but in denouncing the French, essentially the Ottawa were expressing Ottawa interests and Ottawa authority, not Ottawa weakness. The French were becoming a bad bargain. The Ottawa understood their interests. Carheil wrote: "From this it will be seen that our savages are much more enlightened than one thinks; and that it is difficult to conceal from their penetration anything in the course of affairs that may injure or serve their interests."[44]

Later Carheil complained about the dissolute character of the French in the interior. He was, at the same time, perhaps unwittingly, expressing the failure of the missions. He attributed it to the brandy trade and prostitution, to the laxed French authorities, to liberty:

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44 *Jesuit Relations*, "Ottawas, Lower Canada, Iroquois, Illinois: 1689-1695," 64:12, 23-39.

> Lewdness has become Established not only through the liberty that the french have taken of admitting to their houses the savage women at all hours; but What has most Contributed to Establish it is the liberty, which they themselves have taken, of going to Seek those women in their villages. To such an a extent is this carried that many of the most dissolute do not hesitate to leave the french houses, and to go to live with the women in their Cabins.[45]

What his lament chronicled was not so much the lasciviousness of French and Indian relations, but the inability of the French to establish authority in the interior, outside their garrisons and missions. They certainly did not establish that authority in the hearts of the inhabitants of the *pays d'en haut*. It was a Native world capable of absorbing the French influence.

This is not to suggest that every Frenchman in the interior was turning Indian. But it is to suggest that a French-Amerindian ethnicity was in the process of being formed. And also, it is to suggest that the outcome of that ethnic formation was not a given. The French in the interior were not a homogeneous group, and responses to their Indian hosts would have varied depending on any number of social factors. Leaders in the French communities would have distinguished themselves from those socially beneath them. The attitude of French traders well-connected to Montreal probably differed significantly from those of the *coureurs de bois* or *habitants* who were less well off and less connected.[46] The

45 *Jesuit Relations*, "Lower Canada, Mississippi Valley 1696-1702," 65:227-43.

46 It would even have differed from the merchant elite who lived inland. Referring to

*coureur de bois* and the *habitant* might have found it easier to fit into Indian societies. They may have concluded that the conditions of life for them in the *pays d'en haut*, with an Indian wife and family, were better than they had known before.[47] Among the interior French there would have been "internal debates and struggles over the nature of the group's emerging ethnicity."[48] There would have been conflict, already made clear in the reaction of the Jesuits and government officials to what they viewed as libertinage in the *pays d'en haut*. All this was part of the process of redefining themselves, the process of ethnic group formation. "Ethnicization was not necessarily characterized by an easily negotiated unanimity about the identity of the immigrant group. More often the process was fraught with internal conflicts and dissension over the nature, history, and destiny of its peoplehood."[49] The fur trade society that emerged toward the end of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth century, under complete European control, with its hierarchical structure so well-entrenched, did not exist during the French regime.[50]

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Lotbinier's descriptions of the merchant elite on Mackinac Island in 1749, Jacqueline Peterson points out that for the French period "a relative lack of material status distinctions characterized the Great Lakes communities." See Peterson, "Many Roads," 48.

47 Jean de Lery in 1578 concluded that the conditions of life among the Tupinamba in Brazil "were somewhat better than they were for ordinary people in France," see Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples*, 13.

48 Neils Conzen et al., "Invention of Ethnicity," 5.

49 Neils Conzen et al., "Invention of Ethnicity," 15-16.

50 The structure Keith Widder describes was a phenomenon of the nineteenth not the

Marriages between whites and Indians tell a great deal about the inter-ethnic situation in the *pay d'en haut.* Choices made by the progeny of such marriages are a very important indicators of ethnic consciousness as well. Progeny assuming positions of leadership in host societies, which often took place in the *pays d'en haut,* reveals how deeply such French-Amerindian leaders identified with an Indian way of life.

In the larger world of the *pays d'en haut,* French-Amerindian identity was being formed within specific historical contexts. In the latter half of the eighteenth century that context was the rise and defeat in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region of a greater Indian nationalism. The battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 would crush the hope of establishing in the region a separate and autonomous Indian barrier state. In the latter half of the eighteenth century French-

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eighteenth century, after Native Americans had been defeated in the Ohio Valley and the British had gained more control of the trade. Widder writes: "Below the traders and clerks in the social hierarchy were the majority of Métis families, and the function of the head of household in the trade determined the family's status in the fur-trade society. Under-clerks, runners, voyageurs or boatmen, and their families made up the lower classes of the Métis social structure. Under-clerks assisted clerks in overseeing and keeping records of trading transactions with each Chipppewa customer. Voyageurs, many of whom were Métis, performed most of the manual labor, ranging from paddling canoes to cutting firewood. The runners occupied a place between the under-clerks and voyageurs; they served as crew leaders on board bateaux and canoes, and in winter they visited Chippewa hunting camps to supply needed trade items and collect furs." See Keith Widder, *Battle for the Soul: Métis Children Encounter Evangelical Protestants at Mackinaw Mission, 1823-1837* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999), 7.

Amerindian identity was being formed in the context of this struggle for national unity. It was being formed in reaction to the destructive pressures bearing down on Native American societies in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes area. "Particular moments of societal crisis, such as wars and economic depressions, have been periods of intensified invention of ethnicity," according to Neils Conzen et al.[51] In these moments the demands for loyalty and conformity to the host culture increase. It is possible that had Native Americans been successful in the Ohio Valley, French Métis culture may have evolved within a larger Native American ethnic consciousness. The development of a separate Métis identity or nationhood was not a given. It did not emerge self-consciously until after the loss to the Americans of the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region. The point of all this is to argue how closely-knit were the French and the Indians in the interior by 1763. This rested on more than a century and a half of kinship and ethnic group formation. It was not necessarily something that resulted from French policies toward Native Americans. Indeed it evolved despite many of those policies. This formation accounted for the strength of the French fur trade and for the strength of the resistance to Anglo-American settlement in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region.

The French fur trade could be called just as well, perhaps even more accurately, the Indian fur trade. The trade, resting on Native foundations, depended upon a Native resource base and Native methodologies for exploiting that re-

51 Neils Conzen et al., "Invention of Ethnicity," 13.

source base. Historians have tended to see the trade primarily from the perspective of the European trader, not that there have not been studies of Indians in the fur trade.[52] But the overall trade itself is more often than not seen as a European institution imposed upon the North American interior. Not enough thought is given to the control that Native Americans exercised upon the overall trade, nor enough thought to how they employed the trade to strengthen their own communities and pursue their own ends. With the fall of New France in 1763, it began to come clear that their way of life was being threatened and that the preservation of their autonomy was tied intimately with the survival of the fur trade.

Wayne Stevens published *The Northwest Fur Trade 1763-1800* in 1928, a classic study of the establishment of British commercial organization in the region after the fall of New France. He described his book as "a history of the rise of the British fur trade in the Great Lakes region during the latter part of the eighteenth century." The book is about trade—"the old story of relentless competition, demand for freedom from government interference or regulation, and pressure for special privilege through politics and diplomacy."[53] It was a period of consolidation that saw the emergence of the great Canadian fur trading con-

52 Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974) is a good example.

53 Stevens, *Northwest Fur Trade*, 8.

cern, the Northwest Company. Stevens throughout emphasizes the superiority of British commercial practices and the role British capital played in shaping politics and diplomacy. But there is an undercurrent in the book also: The British fur trade was built on the back of the Indian/French fur trade.[54] The strength of the Northwest Company was not simply due to British commercial organization and British capital. It was due also to its close ties, ethnic ties, to Native Americans in the interior. The strength of the Northwest Company was brought about by the wedding of British capital to the trading infrastructure already established in the *pays d'en haut*. In the forests the Indians remained in control. Their allegiance was important. They decided with whom to trade. The Indians desired trading partners on whom they could depend. Ever important to them was the continuance of the trade. The British were capable of supplying their needs. For the British traders to succeed, indeed for British imperial designs to succeed, as British military commanders in the region came to understand, it was important to court Native goodwill and to protect the fur trade. This was a delicate task, for neither the Indian mainstream culture nor the French sidestream culture in the *pays d'en haut* were very enamored of the British after the fall of New France.

That event, the fall of New France, was ominous for Native power in the interior. Up to that point one could say that Indians in the interior had been suc-

54 "The British . . . built upon the foundations which had been laid by their predecessors and former rivals"; see Stevens, *Northwest Fur Trade*, 15.

cessful in keeping control of the Great Lakes region and in maintaining their independence. They also had succeeded in absorbing the French influence. Absorbing the British and American influence after 1763 would be another matter.

# 4. Resistance to the Anglo-American Invasion

In 1996 Theodore Draper published *A Struggle for Power: The American Revolution* in which he theorized that the American Revolution was not fought to bring about democracy or egalitarianism, that it was not caused by the blundering of inept British politicians, rather that it was fought to decide who would exercise power over the American colonies.[1] Would it be the Crown, or would it be the colonists themselves? Draper identified the real cause of the War of Independence to be: "the growth of the power of the Americans, and the alarm this inspired in Great Britain." It is a very convincing thesis. In the tumultuous years between the closing of the Seven Years' War and the opening of the American Revolution, according to Draper:

> the struggle for power was marked by various ideological, constitutional, and political issues. But these controversies invariably turned on who had the power of decision to settle them. They were not intellectual exercises between rival groups of ideologues. In the end, the issue was dependence versus independence—colonial dependence on Great Britain, meaning that Parliament would make the ultimate decisions, or American independence, meaning that the assemblies would make the ultimate decisions. . . . In the end, the colonies had to wrest the power of decision from Great Britain before they could face the question of what to do with it. The struggle for power came first.[2]

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1 Theodore Draper, *A Struggle for Power* (1996; First Vintage Books edition, New York: Random House, 1997).

Why was right of decision suddenly so important? What gave rise to this struggle for power? Draper attributes it to the growth of American power, which in turn can be attributed to the rise in population of the Atlantic Seaboard colonies. In the eighteenth century many theorists held that population was the key to a nation's power, prosperity, and happiness. And the growth rate of the American colonies that century was increasing. It was estimated that the population had increased a hundred percent between 1750 and 1770, expanding from 1,260,000 to 2,312,000 souls.[3] This rate of increase was impressive. The population of America, the source of its wealth and power, could be expected to double every twenty-five years. In short, the American colonies had come of age. As Draper states, American colonials for the first time were beginning to get a sense of their own potential.

> Population thus gave Americans their first demonstrable sense of present and growing power. Long before the Revolution, Americans were told and told themselves how numerous they were, how much more numerous they were going to be, and how numbers added up to wealth and power. Even a population of little over 1 million was considered eminently respectable by mid-eighteenth century standards, and the 2 million reached by 1770 was regarded as a formidable leap.[4]

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2 Draper, *Struggle*, 518.

3 Draper, *Struggle*, 103.

4 Draper, *Struggle*, 107.

This rise in population was not unrelated to the portentous fall of New France in 1763. For it was the advance of Anglo-Americans into the country west of the Appalachians, territory the French claimed as their own, that induced the French to construct a line of forts to keep them out of the Ohio Valley, away from the *pays d'en haut.* Tensions in the Ohio Valley led to the opening skirmishes of the Seven Years' War. Those Anglo-American traders who in the early 1750s had tried to establish themselves at Pickawillaney in the Ohio Country, were harbingers, really, of the invasion of the west that would follow.[5] The expanding population of the Atlantic Seaboard colonies would spread westward across the mountains, and no authority in the region, once the French were defeated, would be able to stop its advance, not Great Britain, not the Native inhabitants of the region, and after 1783 not even the government of the new United States. Warfare at times would slow the advance, but in the long run, because of the overwhelming number of people crossing the mountains, nothing would prevent it.

If one accepts Draper's argument that the American Revolution was fought over power, then it can be argued that in large part it was fought over the west, even though the major battles were fought in the east and the Revolution has been viewed primarily as an eastern affair. The importance of the west in the minds of both American and British leaders is not given enough considera-

5 Newbigging, "French-Ottawa Alliance," 368-73.

tion in studies of the Revolution, but this is not to say that the leaders themselves did not know what was at stake. Indeed, the fall of New France was a mixed blessing for the British, when considering its impact on the seaboard colonies. American expansion now stood unopposed, and it was not certain that Great Britain would be able to contain the independent tendencies of her North American subjects. Draper refers to the pamphlet debate in Great Britain that took place after the Seven Years' War and centered on the question of whether to return Canada or Guadeloupe to the French. Returning Canada to the French would "check the forces of growth and tendencies towards independence of the British North American colonies," so went the argument.[6] "A French Canada was a guarantee that the American colonies would be forced to remain British."[7] According to Draper, "Influential British opinion was so suspicious of American intentions that the outcome of the Seven Years' War brought out into the open the most extensive forebodings of what to expect from the Americans if they were relieved of the French menace. These suspicions had been long in the making."[8] The British felt ambivalent about the success of their North American colonies. Britain gained commercial benefits and important naval supplies from the colonies, and British power was enhanced by their growth. But this would re-

6 Draper, *Struggle*, 11.

7 Draper, *Struggle*, 10.

8 Draper, *Struggle*, 25.

main the case only as long as the colonies did not grow powerful enough to break away from the mother country. It was held by some British politicians that the balance of power in Europe depended upon control of North America, which in turn depended upon the strength of the Atlantic Seaboard colonies.[9] British leaders closely watched developments in North America, anxious to assert British authority when necessary. Yet, given the great debt incurred by the long war with France and the concern in London over fiscal matters, there were limits to what the British ministers could do to reinforce their authority in North America.

If the British watched and apprehensively studied the growth of the Atlantic colonies, so too must have the Indians, who knew what encroachment meant from their experience in Pennsylvania. To the Indians what was so disturbing about the Americans were their growing numbers, their increasing settlements, their occupancy of the land. British authorities in North America were in a precarious position after 1763. They needed to assert control over what had been New France. This meant asserting control over the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region and its occupants. It also meant asserting control over the Anglo-Americans who were pushing into this region from the east. Given the meager resources of the British army in North America and the lack of support at home, it was an impossible undertaking. Britain would fail on both accounts.

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9 Draper, *Struggle*, 134-35.

The problem the army faced was how to take possession of the country that had been surrendered in the peace treaty or, as Dorthy Jones stated it, how "at least to establish enough of a presence there that the inhabitants would acknowledge it and consent to make the victor their primary European patron."[10] This on the surface must not have seemed a formidable undertaking. The British commanders no doubt assumed that their presence would be easy to establish. After all it was simply a matter of replacing the French garrisons and introducing British rule. But in truth the French had never controlled the interior. The Indians were in control, and the French had accommodated themselves to this reality, a lesson the British would learn in their own time. The Indians did not acknowledge the right of European powers to partition their land by treaty. Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of Indian affairs in the north, understood well "the jealousy which the Indians in general entertained of the increasing power of the English," and a year prior to the hostilities that occurred in the summer of 1763 he had warned his superiors against the precipitous occupation of the old posts and the construction of new ones in Indian Country.[11] To use Johnson's term, Native Americans had always been extremely jealous about the construction of European forts in their midst. They countenanced such forts as long as the forts served Native interests. But they were cautious about allowing

10 Jones, *License*, 37.

11 William Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 1 July 1763, *DCHSNY* 7:525-27.

European powers to gain footholds in the interior.[12] It is a mistake to assume that military posts at strategic points in the interior could easily be translated into control of the interior. All the stockaded posts really controlled was commerce. To the Indians the posts, like the trade itself, represented alliance not control. It was not possible to control the native inhabitants, nor was it necessary. What was necessary was to protect the trade and keep the friendship of the Indians. The presence of a post established a sense of permanence and propinquity. The post was more of an embassy and a trading center, and it was there at the sufferance of the Indians.

This clearly was not General Amherst's view, a commander with little respect or understanding of Native authority.[13] Amherst reduced the quantity of

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12 In the early 1750s the Indians wanted the British to build a fort to protect the Ohio traders, but they opposed settlements and other construction desired by the Ohio Company. They realized after a conference in 1752 that the Anglo-Americans were more intent on engrossing land than in building a fort to protect the trade. Mistrust and dissatisfaction with the British began to set in after that time. See Hindraker, *Elusive Empires,* 138-39.

13 Peckham described Amherst's character this way, pointing to the reasons for his failure to pacify the western tribes: "He was sent to this continent in 1758, and by his capacity for careful organization and his determination he had pushed the British troops from one victory to another. He was detailed in his orders to the point of 'fussiness,' and he kept a finger on every department and almost every company. His lack of imagination was no handicap in fighting this war [Seven Years' War], although it became a fatal weakness in the task of pacifying the French-allied Indians. He never learned to understand them and he would not listen to the advice of his able subordinates." See Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising,* forward by John C. Dann (1947; reprint, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 57.

gifts and provisions supplied to the Indians. His new order in the interior would be based on economy, discipline, merit, and not on bribery, as he explained to William Johnson:

> With regard to furnishing the latter with a little clothing, some arms and ammunition to hunt with, that is all very well in cases of necessity; but as, when the intended trade is once established they will be able to supply themselves with these from the traders for their furs, I do not see why the Crown should be put to that expense. I am not either for giving them any provisions; when they find they can get it on asking for, they will grow remiss in their hunting, which must industriously be avoided; for so long as their minds are intent on business they will not have leisure to hatch mischief.[14]

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14 Quoted in Peckham, *Indian Uprising*, 71-72. Fred Anderson has placed Amherst's miscalculations in perspective: "Amherst wanted these measures to reduce the disorders of a trade in alcohol that he rightly believed had gotten out of hand, to economize on presents that he knew had become too expensive, and to minimize Indian military capabilities that he feared had become too great. What he did, however, was disable Indian men from carrying on their fall and winter hunts, inhibit their ability to provide for their families and villages, and deprive them of a drug that had become an important part of their social life. Rather than improving their character by forcing them to become soberly attentive to the business of hunting, Amherst had begun to turn the Indians of the interior into sober (and vastly more dangerous) enemies. Far from keeping the Indians so busy that they had no time to hatch mischief among themselves, he had given them what they had never had before: a common grievance, and tangible evidence that the English would not hesitate to threaten their way of life." See Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 471.

Amherst was ignorant of the profound importance of gift-giving between the Indians and their European trading partners. It was a form of appreciation, even tribute of sorts, that was part of the exchange between the two sides and that kept the Indians in alliance. In a time of retrenchment, when the British army in North America was being reduced in size, when Parliament was against appropriating money for the military, and the colonial legislatures were refusing to lend assistance, General Amherst would have been well-advised not to violate Native trust.[15] Amherst would have been better off listening to William Johnson, a man who did possess an understanding of Indians. Historian Dorthy V. Jones has written that Johnson understood the British would never take possession of French forts in the Illinois Country "without first obtaining the friendship and permission of the Indians in between: the Shawnees, Delawares, Six Nations of the Ohio, Miamis, Kickapoos, Potawatomis, Piankeshaws, Weas, and then the members of the Illinois Confederacy."[16] Jones is worth quoting at length here. She describes what Johnson understood, and in doing so she also gives an accurate depiction of how Native Americans exercised control in the interior:

> The Indians' power was not one of numbers, although Johnson estimated they could have put eight to twelve thousand men in the field. Rather,

15 The national debt had practically doubled during the war and stood close to 146 million pounds sterling, see Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 562.

16 Jones, *License*, 67.

their power rested on their mobility, their ability to live off the country, and the fact that they held the transportation routes. The straits, the passes, the navigable rivers, the shores of the lakes were for the most part, in Indian hands.

Beyond all that was the communications network by which messages were passed from one end of the Indian Country to the other. The network antedated the coming of the whites and functioned effectively enough so that, for example, an invitation from William Johnson at Johnson Hall could be passed along well-established trade routes from New York to Green Bay on the western shore of Lake Michigan, there to be discussed by the Menominees, who might or might not decide to go and meet Johnson at a specified time and place. The hypothetical traveler of the 1760s would find that his passage through the interior did not go unmarked, and that his reputation ran ahead of him. He moved through a close web of Indian relationships so that what he said to the Delawares on the lower Muskingum would affect his reception by the Wyandots at Sandusky, and that, in turn, would determine whether he could even go on to the Ottawa settlement below Detroit.

He would find also that his hosts, the Delawares or Wyandots or whomever, would be full of news as to what the French in New Orleans were going to do, or of questions about the proceedings of a council at For Pitt. Rumors, allegations, wishful thinking traveled the communications network mixed in with accurate news, and a great deal of time and effort was spent by both whites and Indians in sorting one from the other. No story was commoner during this period than that of a united Indian front that would at the least be able to force acceptance of the Indians' demands and, at the most, would drive all whites from the continent. The story was never true, but, until the defeat of the western nations at Fallen Timbers in 1794, it was the dream of the Indians and the dread of the colonizing whites that it might be so.[17]

Amherst did not fully appreciate the closely-knit hostile environment, the heart of darkness, which the British faced in the Ohio Country. What Amherst's policies, together with the continuing encroachment of whites on Native lands, threatened was the survival of the French Amerindian trading culture that supported an Indian way of life in the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region. The cohesiveness of this culture was probably not easily discernible in the 1760s. Hindraker has written that the British tried to establish a distinction between French and Indians, but "The distinction was illusory from the start, since a métis population was already growing in the Illinois Country, and . . . Indian women continued to marry and bear the children of French men—of *habitants*, especially of the first generation, as well as *coureurs*."[18] The strength of that culture did not lie in appearances but in connections, in the kinship, ethnic, and commercial ties that bound that world together. An eighteenth century European, particularly an advocate of property rights and public order, would perceive only disorder among the French Amerindians. Hindraker has described such perceptions:

> The disorder of the trading culture resided not just in its careless disregard for property rights, but also in its wholesale capitulation to native cultural forms. Nothing symbolized and accelerated this capitulation so clearly as marriage between French men and Indian women. Such un-

17 Jones, *License*, 67-68.

18 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 112-13.

> ions blurred the lines that distinguished a civilized people from a savage one, creating instead a hybrid society that, some feared had the virtues of neither of the original.[19]

Seen or not, understood or not, inhabitants of that world, under threat, could turn into a powerful, underestimated, opponent. British soldiers, officers, and settlers did not have to look far to discover Native enmity. The area around Fort Pitt at the end of the Seven Years' War was awash in Native enmity. For settlement had continued apace there even in the middle of the war. The roads cut by Braddock's and Forbe's armies had made it easier for whites to cross the mountains and settle in the Allegheny foothills:

> The Indians around Fort Pitt reacted to British presumptions by trying to undermine the security of their settlements, by seeking to confuse, threaten, frighten, and sometimes kill the trespassers among them. In the final stages of the Seven Years' War, the officers at Fort Pitt employed Delawares, Mingos, and Shawnees as spies. It was a baffling and unsuccessful experiment: the Indians withheld information, provided inconsistent reports of French activities, and created false alarms at the fort. . . . If a resident of the fort was mysteriously killed while he was out on his own, it was assumed that he was killed by a French-allied war party—but no one could be entirely sure. Horses disappeared from the fort with alarm-

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19 The quote is from Hindraker writing about French attempts in the first half of the eighteenth century to bring order to the Illinois Country. The description lends support to the theory of ethnic group formation put forward in the last chapter. See Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 112-13.

> ing frequency. Occupants of Fort Pitt anxiously studied the moods and comportment of visiting Indians, who seemed always to be *en masque*.[20]

Activities around Fort Pitt can be explained as part of an increasing Native alarm at the steady encroachments made by whites upon Indian lands. There was reason for alarm as well in the famine and disease that visited the Indian villages in the Ohio Country in 1762, the result of crop losses due to fighting the previous year.[21] Alarm gave force to the rising prophetic movements and the search for Native unity so well described by Gregory Evans Dowd.[22] Native leaders could point to the British as the source of Native hardships. Amherst's policies restricting provisions made it impossible for Indians to sustain themselves. Famine, disease, reduction of trade, military occupation, encroaching settlers—it amounted to an attack on a Native way of life, and could have been read, as the Delawares certainly read it, as an attempt to subjugate the Indians. The British were proving to be an affliction. The answer was to remove them at all costs, while Indians possessed the power to do so.

On May 9, 1763, led by Pontiac, the Ottawas living in the vicinity of Detroit, lay siege to the British fort there. Major Henry Gladwin commanded the fort, which lay under siege until October 31st. This was only one event in a gen-

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20 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 150.

21 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 152.

22 See Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*.

eral uprising throughout the backcountry. British outposts quickly fell to the Indians—Sandusky, Mackinac, Venango, Le Boeuf, Presque Isle among others. Fort Pitt, like Detroit, lay under siege. The British were nearly driven from the country. Pontiac was only one of many Native leaders who participated in this war of resistance. Hurons, Potowatomies, and Ottawas around Detroit joined under him to form what William Johnson called "a flying camp."[23] Because of Francis Parkman's famous book *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, Pontiac is credited with having organized and coordinated the entire uprising. Yet as early as 1761 war belts had been circulating throughout the Ohio Valley, the Illinois Country, and the Great Lakes region. Active in trying to coordinate a concerted attack on the British posts had been the Genesee Senecas.[24] Not only did the Indians attack fortified posts, campaigns were carried out against border settlements, driving back Pennsylvanians and Virginians who had been encroaching on Indian lands. These attacks served to further inflame the racial hatreds that had come to characterize fighting between Indians and settlers in the backcountry. The British reaction to the uprising was slow and ineffective. General Bouquet relieved Fort Pitt after an indecisive battle at Bushy Run. Though Boquet's and Colonel John Bradstreet's armies pushed into the Ohio Country, and Bradstreet went for-

23 William Johnson, "Enumeration of Indians within the Northern Department," 18 November 1763, *DCHSNY* 7:582-84.

24 Jones, *License*, 69.

ward to relieve Detroit, conditions were difficult for an offensive, and on their side the Indians were more or less willing to sue for peace. After initial successes, the Indians found they could not keep themselves supplied. Nor could they retain a united front. The war, it could be argued, ended in a stalemate.

Peace negotiations began in the spring of 1765. Michael McConnell summarized the outcome of the war this way: "On the Muskingum and later at Fort Pitt and Johnson Hall, Ohio Indians and Anglo-Americans came to accept that neither could conquer the other. That realization would set the tone of intercultural affairs for the next decade."[25] The British had learned to acknowledge and accommodate Native authority. It was less costly to protect the fur trade and to safeguard the Native alliance. A legacy of the uprising would be the continued fear of Indian retaliation, a fear that would manifest itself as late as the 1780s in British deliberations with the United States.

From 1763 to 1768 the ministers in London, through the two superintendents of Indian affairs in North America, John Stuart and William Johnson, attempted to coordinate Indian policy, regulate the fur trade, and take control of the situation in the interior. In the north the effort to take control of Indian affairs rested on Johnson whose strong character dominated British Indian policy in the region until the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768.[26] In 1763 the policy of fi-

25 McConnell, *Country Between*, 206.

26 At that time Great Britain returned control of Indian affairs to the colonial legislatures.

nancial retrenchment had to be dropped in order to counter the Indian uprising in the backcountry. Johnson used two strategies specifically to deal with the northern Indians. For one he would gather native leaders together in large councils,[27] preferring the effectiveness of this form of negotiation despite its cumbersomeness and expense. The other strategy he used was to work through the Iroquois as the titular leaders of the other nations. The British found it advantageous to bolster the pretensions of the Iroquois, though in fact Iroquois power and influence, particularly with the western nations, was on the wane. Dorthy Jones refers to this elevation of the Iroquois as the "Iroquois mystique."[28]

Johnson felt British colonials were underestimating Indian strength and that something needed to be done to avoid catastrophe, as he warned the Board of Trade in a letter dated November 13, 1763:

> It will appear clearly to your Lordships that the Colonies, had all along neglected to cultivate a proper understanding with the Indians, and from a mistaken notion, have greatly dispised them, without considering, that it is in their power at pleasure to lay waste and destroy the Frontiers. . . . Without any exageration [sic], I look upon the Northern Indians to be the most formidable of any uncivilized body of people in the World. Hunting and War are their sole occupations, and the one, qualifies them for the other, they have few wants, and those are easily supplied, their properties of little value, consequently, expeditions against them however suc-

27 For example, he did this at Niagara in the summer of 1764.

28 Jones, *License*, 21-35.

> cessful, cannot distress them, and they have courage sufficient for their manner of fighting, the nature and situation of their Countrys, require not more.[29]

In 1763, while the conflict in the west was raging, much thought was being given in London to a policy for regulating Indian affairs. In his "Sketch of a Report Concerning the Cessions in Africa and America at the Peace of 1763," John Pownall, secretary to the Lords of Trade, proposed that the country between the Appalachian ridge and the Mississippi River be recognized "as lands belonging to the Indians, the dominion of which to be protected for them by forts and military establishments in proper places, and with full liberty to all your Majesty's subjects in general to trade with the said Indians upon some general plan and proper regulation and restrictions."[30] On October 7, 1763 George III issued what came to be called the Proclamation of 1763.[31] It forbade English settlements beyond the ridge of the Appalachians, and it established the land to the west as Indian Country—still under the authority of the Crown but reserved for the Indians. There has been debate among historians concerning the significance of the proclamation. According to Dorthy

Jones, the British, in the face of so much Indian hostility, had adopted a policy of "nonconfrontation and accommodation to the Indians' position." The

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29 William Johnson to the Lords of Trade, Johnson Hall, 13 November 1763, *DCHSNY* 7:574.

30 Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 17.

31 Jones, *License*, 45.

Proclamation of 1763 was not "an espousal of the Indian cause"; it was rather an acknowledgment "of the limits of the possible in British administration of the backcountry."[32] What was very new was the attempt to work out one general boundary separating Indian lands from colonial lands.[33] Francis Paul Prucha described the proclamation as a dramatic departure: "It was in the Proclamation of 1763 that the first official delineation and definition of the Indian Country was made."[34] But there was a major problem with the proclamation. It would be necessary to safeguard Iroquois and southern Indians east of the line and Virginians who had settled in the upper Ohio Valley west of the proposed line. Eric Hindraker has drawn attention to another problem with the proclamation: There were divided notions about the permanence of the line proposed:

> The Proclamation Line, as it was soon called, reflected the divided counsels of the king's advisers. Conceived by Charles Wyndham, the Earl of Egremont, and drafted by the Earl of Shelburne, the Proclamation was originally intended as a prelude to further western development. It included provisions for granting land warrants to officers and soldiers who had served in the Seven Years' War, to be located on the western side of the Proclamation Line; the line itself was to be simply the first step in ensuring limited and orderly western expansion and development.
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> But Shelburne and Egremont had to contend with another powerful faction in the ruling circle, identified especially with the Earl of

32 Jones, *License*, 74.

33 Jones, *License*, 74.

34 Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 13.

> Hillsborough, which was much less enthusiastic about the prospect of western development. Eclipsing Shelburne just as the Proclamation took effect, Hillsborough chose to interpret the line as a more permanent western limit for the colonies. He was convinced that western growth would only damage the empire: inland settlement could never serve mercantilist interests in the same way that seaboard colonies did; they would create enormous, costly new administrative and defensive burdens for the crown; and if they succeeded they would only threaten to depopulate more useful parts of the realm—Irish estates (in which Hillsborough, not coincidentally, had a major interest) and profitable colonies, in particular.[35]

The permanence of the line was connected to another major obstacle—speculation. Large-scale speculative interests in lands west of the line, i.e., in the Ohio Country and further west—speculative interests shared even by officials like William Johnson, who were overseeing the boundary negotiations—suggested that the chances of a permanent boundary ever being seriously enforced were not very sanguine.

This is not to deny that Johnson sincerely wanted order and justice in the backcountry. He wanted first of all to bring order to the whole process of land acquisitions, and he proposed to do this by settling the current disputes along the border and then by slowing down through regulation future land purchases. Johnson believed that the Indians would accept the gradual expansion of the

35 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 165.

colonies. Orderly dispossession—Johnson's approach—never was enforced.[36] The London government in 1764 issued a detailed and comprehensive plan to regulate the Indian trade. It superceded all colonial regulations. It was well-conceived, even if unpopular, and costly. It allowed all British subjects to trade with the Indians, but it placed restrictions on individuals doing so. A license was required, and trade was only permitted at specified locations. The trader was also required to post bond for good behavior. To enforce the new regulations, the government appointed deputies and agents to act as justices of the peace in the interior. They were under the authority of the superintendents. The royal government also employed commissaries, gunsmiths, and interpreters to aid the Indians. Thomas Gage, the new commander-in-chief, put the regulations into effect in the north in January 1765.[37]

The plan failed. Complaints were loud and constant. Traders whose business was confined to Fort Pitt, for example, complained of Thomas Cresap's ille-

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36 Eric Hindraker faults the British government for this, for the breakdown of public order in the backcountry, for the failure to control the anarchism of the striving class of American traders and settlers in the region. But ambition was not limited to traders and settlers. Johnson himself was stricken with the fever for land—as were many from the upper reaches of colonial society. At any rate such criticism can be taken as a kind of whitewashing of colonialism, which has rarely been an orderly process, certainly not orderly when it is being imposed on people who do not want it. It is difficult to believe that dispossession, at any speed, would have been acceptable to the western Indians. See Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 185-86.

37 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 11-13.

gal operations on Redstone Creek and the Cheat River. Others further in the interior ignored both the agents and the regulations. They operated without licenses and traded directly with the Indians in their villages. The larger trading concerns, the merchants with clout, resented trading under the surveillance of the military, and they claimed that the new system gave advantages to the French traders based on the other side of the Mississippi, who could move through the Illinois and Ohio Countries at will. The plan was costly as well as difficult to enforce. Pressure from speculators to change the Proclamation Line and establish a boundary further west mounted and worked against efforts to bring order to the region. In the summer of 1767 with the passage of the Townshend Acts trouble began to heat up in the eastern cities, and the attention of the British government shifted away from the backcountry. Lord Shelburne, the secretary of state for the Southern Department, wanted to abandon the Indian Service altogether, withdraw the army, and allow the expansionists to create new colonies in the west.[38]

The need for a fixed boundary between whites and Indians became ever more urgent. The solution—the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix—ended up alienating the western Indians and bringing on further chaos. The Shawnees and Delawares in particular were disturbed, not only by the results of the treaty but also by the methods employed during the treaty process. One of the most disagree-

38 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 88.

able features of the treaty process was the use the British made of the Iroquois, which requires some explanation. According to Dorthy Jones, the position assumed by Iroquois spokesmen in the 1760s and by William Johnson was that "What the Iroquois had been in the past, they still were in the present."[39] Johnson took for granted Iroquois claims of conquest, and Johnson assumed, even though it was a European notion, that these claims entitled the Iroquois to sovereignty over the lands occupied by those nations they had subdued, including the Ohio Indians—the Shawnees, the Delawares, and the Wyandots. The Iroquois were entitled to do what they chose with the territory occupied by those they had subjugated.[40] Jones argues that such claims could only be made within a non-Indian frame of reference. She speculates that the idea of establishing a territorial empire with dependent nations who had lost the right to control and dispose of their own lands was not an Indian idea traditionally. Both the British and the Iroquois had much to gain by promoting the idea of Iroquois preeminence. For the British it made it easier to deny the claims of western Indians to lands the British desired. For the Iroquois, alignment with the British bolstered their waning reputation with the other nations as well as with the Europeans. "Even in decline, the Iroquois retained the center of the stage, if only in the thinking of those who were consolidating the hold of colonialism in North America."[41]

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39 Jones, *License*, 60.

40 Jones, *License*, 60-61.

William Johnson's instructions were clear, simple, limited. Johnson was to negotiate a new boundary. He was to get the Indian nations to agree to adjust the Proclamation Line westward to include areas that had already been settled. The new line south of present-day Pittsburgh would follow the Ohio River to the mouth of the Great Kanawha River and then head due south across the Virginia and Carolina backcountry. In London, the Earl of Hillsborough, opposed to further western expansion, reluctantly agreed to the adjustment because then the boundary would correspond to the actual pattern of settlement already established. Delawares and Mingos agreed to the new line for the same reason and came to Ft. Stanwix prepared to sell land already settled. But the original purpose of the treaty was defeated due in part to Johnson's machinations. The new line Johnson proposed embraced millions of acres of unsettled land on the upper Ohio. The terminus of the Ohio River boundary turn out not to be the mouth of the Great Kahnawha but the mouth of the Tennessee,[42] further down river, adding much of present-day Kentucky to the eastern side of the line. In private Johnson negotiated separate deals for various speculative interests—going against the strict guidelines established by the London ministry.

In early November of 1768 in upper New York the Treaty of Fort Stanwix was signed by colonial officials and the Iroquois Confederacy. The Iroquois re-

41 Jones, *License*, 35.

42 At that time it was called the Cherokee River.

ceived goods and specie worth more than 10,000 pounds.[43] The signing of the treaty, which was in large part an affirmation of arrangements that had been worked out earlier, did several things: It established a boundary between whites and Indians, setting the western terminus of that boundary at the Tennessee River, thereby ceding to Virginia nearly all of the Kentucky region. It asserted the rights of the Iroquois in the Ohio Country, recognizing their dominance over nations living there and, significantly, their right to dispose of lands occupied by those dependent nations. Most importantly, the treaty completely alienated the western nations, the Shawnees and Delawares especially, who rejected both the terms of the treaty and the presumptions of the Iroquois, denying Iroquois rights to dispose of Shawnee and Delaware territory. The results of the treaty offended the Shawnees and the Delawares on many levels. Dorthy Jones has gotten close to the heart of the matter in the following paragraph:

> Among the Delawares in 1762 had arisen the Prophet who gave voice to the Indians' sense of spiritual loss in their rapidly changing world. In the years to come another prophet would arise among the Shawnees who, with his brother Tecumseh, would seek to mobilize spiritual unease for political and military ends. The suggestion is made here that when these groups fought against the 1768 boundary arrangements they were doing more than denying the assumption of Iroquois dominance held by William Johnson and by the Iroquois themselves. They were denying the very frame of reference in which the assumption had any meaning, and

43 Jones, *License*, 35, 92.

> they were seeking to regain the Indianness of a world that repeatedly slipped away from their attempts to hold it fast.

The Anglo-Americans had crossed the mountains and now made claim to Kentucky. At the same time the British were withdrawing from the backcountry. In the face of the growing crisis in the east, British policymakers looked upon the backcountry as expendable. The forces for continuity and order had to abandon their efforts. The Indians were essentially on their own to protect their borders from invasion, and many of them relocated their villages north of the Ohio River. With the Anglo-Americans poised to invade the Ohio Valley, the native inhabitants of the country understood their vulnerability.

The Stanwix cession gave force to the rush westward.[44] The Virginia Council received a flood of requests for 1000 acre land grants. The first area converged upon was West Augusta (in southwestern Pennsylvania and West Virginia). Settlements were founded on the New, Greenbriar, Kahawha, and Monongahela rivers. Among the early settlers were deserters from the garrison at Fort Pitt. These first settlers were squatters, claiming the land by "tomahawk rights."[45] The *Virginia Gazette* carried the news of the Ft. Stanwix cession to the Carolina backcountry. According to historian John Mack Faragher "the agreement with the Iroquois altered the way backwoodsmen thought about the inte-

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44 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 73.

45 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 73-74.

rior." Soon afterwards Daniel Boone set out to explore *Kanta-ke*. "Boone, John Findley, John Stewart, and three others left the Upper Yadkin for Kentucky on May 1, 1769, their equipment packed on ten or fifteen horses."[46] George Croghan estimated that by 1771 five thousand families had settled in the area between the Alleghenies and the Ohio River.[47]

Racial hatred accompanied many of these settlers. Memories of brutalities committed during the uprising that followed the Seven Years' War were still fresh, and many of the newcomers brought with them an abiding contempt for Indians. Jack Sosin has argued that "Both the Indians and the frontiersmen had resorted to indiscriminate murders and retaliation in the decade preceding the Revolution" and that "the greatest menace to the stability of the frontier was often the aggressive, undisciplined settler himself. He regarded the Indian as an animal to be exterminated. . . ."[48] George Croghan in the fall of 1771 wrote that Indians did not consider themselves "safe even on the West side of the Ohio." The Pennsylvanians "thought it a meritorious act to kill Heathens whenever they were found." Shawnees and Delawares responded in kind by raiding across the Ohio into western Pennsylvania.[49] Warfare not diplomacy would determine the

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46 John Mack Faragher, *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), 70, 72, 76.

47 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 171.

48 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 82.

49 Croghan is quoted in Hurt, *Ohio Frontier*, 56.

outcome of the contest for the West. "Squatters and land developers were everywhere," Hindraker has written, "and the withdrawal of British power made the Ohio Valley a kind of Hobbesian world, where only sheer force could effectively determine the outcome of events."[50]

In reaction to the Ft. Stanwix Treaty, the western nations formed the Scioto Confederacy. The idea of a confederacy did not spring up overnight but had precedents in the war of resistance. The uprising in 1763 provided a framework for later cooperation among the different nations.[51] The Shawnees emerged as leaders. Disgusted with Fort Stanwix and Iroquois betrayal they quietly campaigned for support among both western and southern Indians. The first congress of the alienated nations met in the spring of 1770 at Chillicothe on the Scioto River.[52] Representatives of the Iroquois were not invited. "Brought together by more than a decade of harsh experience with British power, many of the region's Indians appeared willing to abandon accommodation and unite in a military confederacy, founded on their common interests, that was dedicated to

50 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 171.

51 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 156.

52 Hindraker describes the congress thus: "a large gathering of western Indians from throughout the valley converged on Chillicothe to discuss the Fort Stanwix treaty and to formulate an appropriate response. Colonial officials were astonished to learn through their informants that this great assembly, dubbed the Scioto Confederacy, agreed not only to cooperate with one another but also to seek peace with the Cherokees, the Creeks, and the other southern tribes in order to create a single, united front of Indian resistance to British power on the continent," Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 169.

keeping British settlers off of their lands at all costs."[53] Herein lies the origins of the guerrilla war that would characterize the Ohio Valley for the next thirty-five years and the origin of the guerrilla fighters as well, who Secretary of War Knox and President Washington in the 1790s would label "banditti." Historians have stressed the divisions among the Indians and the failure of the Confederacy to establish a unified front. And within specific tribes, historians often have pointed to the division between those who would take up the war club and those who would accommodate the Europeans, the war chief versus the peace chief. But such division is common in war time and does not mean that a single objective—to retain sovereignty—was not shared by both factions. The split with the Iroquois was a serious rupture. But too much has been made of the divisiveness among the Confederacy. The western Indians were no more divisive than were the Anglo-Americans at the time. After all, the Pennsylvanians and the Virginians were ready to go to war over the spoils of the Ft. Stanwix Treaty. The importance of the Scioto conferences were not that they failed to create unity among the Indians but that the Indians, following the leadership of the Shawnees, were now voicing and recognizing the need for unity to oppose the European advance across their homelands. This movement in the years ahead would only gain momentum.

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53 Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 170.

In the period between the Ft. Stanwix Treaty and the opening of the American Revolution, raids and killings, by whites and Indians both, seem to have been carried out quite frequently, particularly in the area ceded at Ft. Stanwix. The chaos was leading to all out war. Small encounters and rumors of war were rife throughout the Ohio Valley the year prior to the campaign the Virginians launched in 1774. On October 9, 1773, six men of Daniel Boone's party, including Boone's son, were killed by a mixed group of Delawares, Cherokees, and Shawnees on the west bank of Wallen's Creek in Kentucky.[54] In mid-April 1774 white traders on their way to visit the Shawnees villages were ambushed by Cherokees on the Ohio, and one man was killed. Shortly afterwards, Michael Cresap killed two Indians in their canoe at the mouth of Wheeling Creek. Cresap followed this by killing a Shawnee and wounding two others who were on their way home from Pittsburgh.[55] That spring the most infamous killing took place at Yellow Creek on the Ohio (Steubenville, Ohio), where members of the family of Logan were slain. Michael Greathouse was the perpetrator. Sosin and Mack Faragher give different accounts of the incident. There are many more. This is Sosin's account:

> The most brutal episode, one often erroneously attributed to Michael Cresap, occurred on April 30 when a party of border ruffians led by Michael

54 Mack Faragher, *Daniel Boone*, 92-93.

55 See Hindraker, *Elusive Empires*, 190.

> Greathouse lured a small band of Mingo across the river at Yellow Creek, plied them with liquor, and murdered all of them except for one infant—men, women and children were indiscriminately slaughtered in the butchery that wiped out the entire family of Chief Logan.[56]

John Mack Faragher gives a more disturbing account:

> a group of American ruffians lured into their camp a number of Mingos . . . plied them with rum, killed and scalped them all. They strung up the pregnant sister of the Mingo chief Logan by her wrists, sliced open her belly with a tomahawk, and impaled her unborn child on a stake. The Mingos would henceforth be sworn enemies of the Americans."[57]

Governor Dunmore of Virginia used the violence along the border as a pretext for launching a war to secure for himself and Virginia the country that had been ceded at Ft. Stanwix and that was now under dispute. Dunmore's War might be accurately renamed the War of the Stanwix Cession, as Dorthy Jones has suggested.[58] Virginia and Pennsylvania had competing claims to the Ohio Country. The Virginians stole a march on the Pennsylvanians by seizing Ft. Pitt after it had been abandoned by the British and renaming it Fort Dunmore, claiming it for Virginia. War with the Shawnees was a convenient excuse for the Virginians to tighten their control over Kentucky and the upper Ohio Valley. The

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56 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 86.

57 Mack Faragher, *Daniel Boone*, 96.

58 Jones, *License*, 107.

Shawnees tried to find a peaceful solution, but the bellicose Virginians wanted and launched their military campaign. As McConnell points out, Dunmore's opponents within Virginia "insisted that his only motive was to grab Kentucky and preempt any effort by the Penns to assert jurisdiction over the Ohio Country."[59] The Virginians launched a three-pronged invasion of the Indian Country. One major battle was fought: the Battle of Point Pleasant. The outcome was indecisive. Dunmore followed up the battle by marching his columns to the Shawnee towns on the Scioto River, where a preliminary peace was drawn up. Allegedly, the Shawnees agreed to the cession of Kentucky, thereby accepting the terms of Ft. Stanwix. But it is not certain that this is accurate. Due to the outbreak of the American Revolution, the official peace conference never occurred. Instead, the Shawnees intensified their fight to keep the Americans out of Kentucky.

That fight blended into the War of Independence in the west, as Indians and redcoats fought together against the Americans. In fact, for the western Indians, the American Revolution was no more than a continuation of the guerrilla war they had been fighting since the 1760s. They were determined to give no quarter to the American invasion of the Ohio Valley.

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59 McConnell, *Country Between*, 277.

# 5. Refusal to Acknowledge Indian Authority

In the spring of 1779, at the height of the Revolution, the Americans launched a punitive expedition against the Iroquois. This scorched-earth campaign laid waste to Iroquois villages and crops, defeated a Loyalist-Iroquois army, and among the Iroquois earned George Washington the name "Town Destroyer." "When that name is heard," said the Seneca leader Cornplanter ten years later, "our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling close to the necks of their mothers."[1] More than forty towns were burned down; 160,000 bushels of corn destroyed. Five thousand people fled to Niagara where they had to be fed and clothed by the British Indian department. Many starved in the fierce winter that followed. In the words of one historian, "Broken, the Six Nations never recovered."[2]

There is more to learn from this campaign, relevant to the thesis at hand, than there is in studying how the Revolution unfolded further west in the Ohio and Illinois Countries.[3] This campaign is important for its purpose, strategy,

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1 See Max M. Mintz, *Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois* (New York: New York University Press, 1999) for a description of the campaign. The Cornplanter quote can be found on page 4. It is taken from Franklin B. Hough, ed., *Proceedings of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, Appointed by Law for the Extinguishment of Indian Titles in the State of New York* (Albany, N.Y., 1861), I:160.

2 Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 122.

3 For the war in the west perhaps the best summary is still Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*.

and rhetoric and what these reveal about official attitudes and policies toward Indians, in particular about the attitudes and policies toward Indians favored by General—later President—George Washington. Washington was the person responsible for the kind of campaign waged against the Iroquois. His speech, his decisions, serve as a kind of blueprint of the policies toward Indians that he would follow after being elected president in 1789. In 1779 he was determined to break down the Iroquois, to subdue them militarily, to humble them. He would aim to achieve, through the destruction of people and material culture, the third objective of war as Scarry defines it—the destruction of consciousness, political beliefs, self-definitions.[4] Indians would be made to relinquish their own form of self-belief, self-extension. Washington called for a mission of destruction, and the Continental Congress approved the purpose of the campaign: to make the Indians "feel the weight of American arms."[5] Nathanael Greene, with whom Washington consulted, understood his commander's intentions: "to scourge the Indians at the proper season, driving off the Indians and destroying their Grain. . . ."[6] There was to be no negotiating. American arms would dictate terms. Later, in the 1790s, Washington would follow the same policy—non-negotiation. The Americans would deal with Indians only from a position of power.

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4 See above, page 16.

5 The words were spoken by Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania, quoted in Mintz, *Seeds of Empire*, 78.

6 Quoted in Mintz, *Seeds of Empire*, 78.

American arms would dictate terms of peace. American security would rest on subjugation. The Indians must be broken and humbled, as Washington made clear to Greene:

> The great objective of the expedition should be to give the Indians a severe chastising, anything short of that will not compensate for the trouble and expense in preparing for the expedition. I have no doubt the Indians will be glad to come to term when they see we are about to enter their Country in good earnest; but unless their pride is broke down and they sufficiently humbled Little benefit will result from any Negotiation that may take place. The British will soon spirit them up to commit the same depredations again as they did the last Campaign.[7]

There can be little doubt that Washington was thinking about the future expansion of the United States, which would depend on the subjugation and removal of the Indians. His official order to General John Sullivan repeated this concern about the future, about the need to drive off and terrorize the Indians. Nothing speaks more to the importance of the west in Washington's mind:

> The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more. . . . Our future security will be in their inability to injure us[,] the distance to which they are driven[,] and in the terror with which the severity of the chastisement they receive will inspire in them.[8]

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7 In Mintz, *Seeds of Empire*, 82.

Sullivan himself had doubts about the policy of chastisement. A devout Christian, he searched the Scriptures for passages approving such retribution and apparently found them there. He also found support in the divine and comforting rationalizations of Samuel Kirkland, the chaplain who accompanied Sullivan's army. At a Fourth of July celebration in 1779, before their march into Iroquoia, Sullivan and his eighty-seven officers, with two skulls held high, raised their glasses in a toast to the forthcoming campaign: "Civilization or death to all American Savages!"[9]

At the close of the Revolution Native Americans defending the Ohio Country essentially found themselves isolated. Their hope in desperate circumstances was to discourage incursions north of the Ohio River by making the cost of settlement too high for the United States. Their raids against the settlements were taken up in earnest again once the Indians understood the terms of the 1783 treaty and the intentions of American leaders. They could not stop the American invasion of their country on their own; sheer numbers made this clear. They needed to draw the British army actively into the struggle, and they needed to do so before a weak United States government grew strong enough to assert control over the backcountry. But the British followed a policy of non-commitment, and the British out of self-interest proved themselves to be an un-

8 Quoted in Mintz, *Seeds of Empire*, 89.

9 For this description see Mintz, *Seeds of Empire*, 98.

trustworthy ally, seriously betraying the Indian cause in the post-war period. To the Americans, in general, the success of their Revolution proved the righteousness of their cause, and they moved aggressively into the interior, confident they personified *liberty* and the advance of *civilization*. American officials denied Indian authority in the west by treating it as though it did not exist. In the post-war period (until forced to do otherwise) they negotiated with Indians who did not hold authority, and as the decade of the 1780s wore on, and all out war seemed inescapable, they used language to discredit Indian authority and the justice of Indian complaints.

The Indians were kept at a distance from the negotiations leading to the 1783 Treaty of Paris. They had to trust that their British friends would protect their interests. In Quebec General Haldimand worried that the Indians would be forgotten in the peace settlement and feared the cost of such betrayal.[10] Indian interests simply were not a part of the negotiations. At first the Americans came prepared to consider the idea of an Indian barrier state, but in the progress of the negotiations they realized that this would be unnecessary and that they could dismiss Indian interests.[11] Vergennes, the French minister, did raise the possibility of an Indian barrier lying between the United States and the Mississippi

10 Gen. Frederick Haldimand to Sir Guy Carleton, Quebec, 18 September 1782, in Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Historical Collections* vol. 20 (Lansing: State Printers, 1912), 57-58. The title of this collection varies. Hereafter it will be referred to as *MPHSC*.

11 Jones, *License*, 141.

River, but he only did so on behalf of Spain's North American interests, not on behalf of the Native occupants of the country.[12] Neither were Indian interests a priority of the British ministers. Great Britain was of two minds concerning the Americans and the American hinterland. As historian J. Leitch Wright has argued, on the one hand the British ministers wanted to reach an accommodation with the former colonists, and on the other hand they wanted to constrict American expansion and bring about the downfall of the new republic.[13] These two views were reflected in the different ministries that oversaw the peace process, the first under Lord Shelburne and the second under James Fox, which came to power when Shelburne resigned in February 1783. Both factions were aware that the American hinterland, the backcountry, promised to develop into a great market for British manufactures—"a market potentially rich beyond avarice"—provided Great Britain could control its waterways.[14] Lord Shelburne's idea was to let go of the Americans politically but to keep on good terms with them and keep them bound to Great Britain economically, hence his willingness to cede to them the region south of the Great Lakes and west of the Appalachians.

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12 Vergennes reasoned that the Americans might accept this idea, where they would not accept Spain's direct acquisition of the country, which the Spaniards were seeking. See Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1935), 217.

13 Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier*, x.

14 Ritcheson, *Aftermath*, 156-57.

His opponents, however, felt Shelburne had sold out British interests, in particular the interests of the fur traders, and they wished to assert British control over the interior. The status of the interior had been left very uncertain by the peace treaty. Brought to a hurried conclusion, the treaty was signed before a commercial agreement had been reached. The commercial status of the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region remained in question. In question also was a schedule for the withdrawal of British troops and the transfer of British posts on American soil. These developments held out to the occupants of the interior—the traders, the Indians, the British military commanders—the hope that the terms of the treaty might somehow be altered. The Americans had won claim to a vast country. But could they make good on that claim? Could they colonize the backcountry? The interior was still under the control of the Indians—as it had always been. Even if the Americans did succeed in colonizing the interior, there was no guarantee that the region would stay within political control of the new United States. There was not even a guarantee that the United States would survive as a nation. Britain may have conceded large sections of North America to the former colonies on paper; on the ground, Britain remained, for many years to follow, a powerful influence in these ceded territories. Those opposed to the cessions made to the Americans in 1783, worked, in the decade that followed, to destabilize the region and to bring it under British control. Indian interests clearly lay with those opposed to the treaty and in support of the fur trade,

though the Indians realized also, after the terms of the treaty came home to them, that Great Britain, out of self-interest, could turn out to be a treacherous ally.

Indians had just cause to be bitter about the peace treaty. They had not been defeated. In fact their greatest military successes had come late in the war, in defeating the Kentuckians at Blue Licks and overwhelming Colonel William Crawford's forces on route to Sandusky. They still controlled their own territory, and this would be a major diplomatic consideration until Fallen Timbers. Because they held their own territory they were able, largely, to keep the Americans south of the Ohio River for the next twelve years.[15] On April 21, 1783, the Americans suspended all offensive actions against the Indians.[16] The cessation of hostilities and the rumors of a treaty surprised the Indians. Joseph Brant traveled to Quebec to question General Haldimand about the truth of the rumor that the British had made peace with the *Bostonians.*[17] He wanted to know if it were true that the Indians had been "forgot and no mention made of them in said Peace."[18] Two days after the treaty was signed in Paris the Indians at Sandusky

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15 Jones, *License,*134.

16 Prucha, *American Indian Policy,* 32.

17 American rebels.

18 Joseph Brant's speech to General Frederick Haldimand, Quebec, 21 May 1783, in *The Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River,* edited by Charles M. Johnston, The Champlain Society (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 38-41.

were questioning Alexander McKee about its meaning, well aware of its contents. They told McKee that they understood that the Americans had thrown the English on their back and that the Americans were now encroaching upon Indian lands and claiming them by right of conquest.[19] A month later the Continental Congress of the new United States bore out their suspicions. The committee on Indian affairs proposed a policy for dealing with the Indians based on the notion that they could be treated as a conquered people. Accordingly, Indians needed to atone for their atrocities, and their lands could be taken from them as compensation.[20] The Indians hardly agreed. They had not been included in the negotiations and had not signed the peace treaty. They would abide by an Ohio River boundary, established in 1768 by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. That was the Indian line in the sand. They understood their rights, as Haldimand wrote to Lord North the following month:

> 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.[21]

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19 "Transactions with Indians at Sandusky," 5 September 1783, *MPHSC* 20:175.

20 See Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 32-33.

21 This quote can be found in Colin G. Calloway, "Suspicion and Self-Interest: The British-Indian Alliance and the Peace of Paris," *The Historian* 48, no. 1, (November 1985), 49.

Allen Maclean, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs at Niagara, wrote to Haldimand that the Indians appeared "to be very anxious & uneasy, they have heard of Certain pretended Boundaries, to which they never can agree if true."[22] British officials in North America had reason to fear Native reaction to the peace treaty. The Ottawas and Chippewas were voicing their contempt for the deceitful British who used the Indians to do their fighting.[23] Just as the Indians had proved to be a powerful ally, they could also prove to be a powerful enemy. The fear British military commanders expressed about the possibility of Indian retaliation was not simply rhetoric, not simply an excuse to remain in possession of the posts on American soil. Maclean believed the Indians would react moderately to the changes brought on by the peace treaty as long as the British remained in place, but he could "by no means answer for what they may do, when they See us Evacuate these Posts."[24] The British were not especially fond of the Indians either, as Colin Calloway has pointed out. The British looked upon them more as a necessary evil, there to help accomplish British ends. They did not respect them as fighters; they disliked the cruelty they practiced in war; and they complained constantly about the high cost of supporting the alliance.[25] But they understood their value and more importantly their power. And as long

22 Allan Maclean to Frederick Haldimand, Niagara, 18 May 1783, in Johnston, *Six Nations*, 35.

23 Calloway, "Suspicion," 44-45.

24 Allan Maclean to Frederick Haldimand, Niagara, 18 May 1783, in Johnston, *Six Nations*, 35.

25 Calloway, "Suspicion," 43-44.

as the Indians maintained that authority, one thing in the *pays d'en haut* remained constant: the best policy for a European ally to follow was to protect the trade and preserve Indian patronage. Without that patronage the *pays d'en haut* could still turn into a very hostile world. British leaders were willing to pay the high cost of patronage not so much for the sake of fur trade profits but for the sake of the political leverage it gave them in the interior. For the western Indians, ironically, the contemptible treaty pushed them further into the British camp, for now more than ever they needed the support of the British military. At Sandusky, on September 8, 1783, Deyonquat of the Delawares, speaking in council, admonished the Six Nations and the representatives of the British to be strong:

> Father! Listen! As also our Brethren the Six Nations, you have told us there is Peace. . . . We now inform you that the Virginians are already encroaching upon our Lands, and we desire you and our Father to be strong, and desire them to desist from encroaching upon us . . . .[26]

As much as the Indians despised the British, the Americans presented a greater and more immediate threat to their security. The Indians and the British, despite their mutual dislike, needed and therefore supported each other.

Haldimand proceeded cautiously with the Indians, remembering the trouble they had brought to Amherst at the close of the Seven Years' War.[27] The

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26 "Transactions with Indians at Sandusky," 8 September 1783, *MPHSC* 20:182.

report he received from Allan Maclean on May 18, 1783 detailing the sense of betrayal felt by the Iroquois[28] and the message Joseph Brant brought him three days later from the Six Nations undoubtedly alarmed Haldimand. Brant wanted to know if the British at the peace talks had betrayed the Indians who had so freely bled for their allies:

> I am now Sent in 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 . . . .[29]

The first order of business was to relieve Native suspicion about British intentions. Haldimand sent John Johnson to Niagara "to quiet the apprehensions of the Indians, by convincing them that it is not the Intention of Government to abandon them to the Resentment of the Americans."[30] He sent similar messages to the Indians around Detroit and those resorting to Michilimackinac, telling them that the King "still considers his faithful Indian Allies as his children and

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27 Calloway, "Suspicion," 44.

28 Allan Maclean to Frederick Haldimand, Niagara, 18 May 1783, in Johnston, *Six Nations,* 36-37.

29 Joseph Brant's speech to General Frederick Haldimand, Quebec, 21 May 1783, in Johnston, *Six Nations,* 40-41.

30 Haldimand to John Johnson, Quebec, 26 May 1783, *MPHSC* 22:123-24.

will continue to promote their Happiness by his Protection, and permission of their usual Intercourse with Traders, with all other Benefits in his Power to afford them."[31] In addition to this he granted to Joseph Brant and the Iroquois lands around Lake Ontario and on the north side of the Niagara River, where they could remove themselves if they wished to be outside the jurisdiction of the Americans.

It was a more difficult task to assuage the resentment of the western Indians. On May 6, 1783, Major De Peyster at Detroit wrote to Alexander McKee, the deputy Indian agent in the Shawnee Country, informing him of the peace that was at hand and instructing him to restrain the Indians from further hostilities. De Peyster also wanted McKee to "keep a look out for our own security."[32] McKee wrote back from the "Shawanese Town" that for the most part the peace would be observed by the Indians; however, he informed De Peyster, large parties of Mingos and Cherokees were constantly passing between the Shawanese Town and the settlements of Virginia to the south, which implied that they were conducting raids. The Kentuckians had been on the north side of the Ohio River not long before, explained McKee, and the Indians were suspicious that the British had abandoned them in the peace negotiations. McKee warned that if the Indians did not receive their usual supplies from the British, they would be

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31 Ibid.

32 Major De Peyster to Captain McKee, Detroit, May 6, 1783, *MPHSC* 11:363-64.

disappointed and "convinced in the opinion that they are to be cast off when their service is no longer required."[33]

Not only did the British want the Indians to lay down their arms and cease hostilities, they also wanted them to honor the peace treaty by returning all prisoners. But with the Indians so apprehensive, General Haldimand was not ready to introduce any dramatic changes to the status quo in the interior. That summer he ordered that all Americans coming to trade with the Indians be turned back. In July when Washington, at the request of the Continental Congress, sent General Steuben to Canada to arrange for the transfer of the military posts on American soil, Haldimand refused to discuss their transfer or even to allow Steuben to inspect the posts. In this volatile time, with the Indians so uneasy about the peace treaty, Haldimand greatly feared touching off another war. Alexander McKee gathered the leaders of the western nations in council at Sandusky between September 5th and September 8th that year.[34] The purpose of the council was to remove Indian uneasiness over the fear that their country had been given away in the peace treaty, evidenced by the increasing number of whites encroaching on Indian lands. McKee urged those present to free all prisoners and to put away their hostilities toward the Americans. He assured them

33 Captain Alexander McKee to Major Arent S. De Peyster, Shawanese Town, 24 May 1783, *MPHSC* 20:122-23.

34 "Transactions with Indians at Sandusky," 5 September to 8 September, 1783, *MPHSC* 20:175-83.

that the Ohio River boundary still stood and that the United States would not deprive them of their country on the pretext of having conquered them. The Indians had the right to their country, and they need not be bothered by the boundary line agreed upon between Great Britain and the United States in the peace treaty:

> you are not to believe, or even think that by the Line which has been described, it was meant to deprive you of an extent of country, of which the right of Soil belongs to, and is in yourselves as Sole Proprietors

It is uncertain how the Indians understood "right of soil." It was their country, they had fought for it. They continued to die for it. They had not given anyone rights to it or even the right to confer rights. They informed McKee that "it is the Gift of the Great God who made all things to us, and we have already spilt the best of our blood in defending it." They left Sandusky willing to wait and see if the Americans would honor the Ohio River boundary. They were willing to suspend hostilities against the frontiers of the United States, although, as McKee the next day wrote to John Johnson, "the conduct of the Americans has given too much grounds to the justice of their suspicions; having marked the Country upon this side of the Ohio as far as the neighourhood of Kooshawking [Coshocton] and Tuskawaras [Tuscarawas]. . . ."[35]

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35 Alexander McKee to John Johnson, Sandusky, 9 September 1783, *MPHSC* 20:183. Coshocton and Tuscarawas are towns in eastern Ohio.

British officials in Canada were more aware of the gravity of the situation than were the ministers in London. Haldimand feared a bloodbath in the back-country. He wanted the government to take precautions and urged that the posts be retained while in the hands of the British, that the country ceded in 1768 at Fort Stanwix be set aside as an Indian barrier state, and that the traders be allowed to move freely among the Indians, even in what was now considered territory belonging to the United States.[36] Haldimand's stance, his refusal to turn over the posts to the Americans, was later approved by the Home Secretary, Thomas Townshend (who on March 6, 1783 became Baron Sydney of Chislehurst). Sydney wrote to Haldimand in the spring of 1784 that:

> The management of the Indians requires great attention and address at this critical juncture, and I am persuaded, that Our retaining the Possession of the Posts will not even be detrimental to America, and may be the means of preventing Mischiefs which are likely to happen should the Posts be delivered up whilst the resentment of the Indians continues at so high a pitch. I hope the People of America will treat them with kindness, indeed *if they considered* it for a moment, their own Interest would prompt them so to do, but if they should be determined to pursue a different Conduct, you may assure those unfortunate People, that they will find an Asylum within His Majestys Dominions, should they be inclined to cross the Lakes and put themselves under our Protection ....[37]

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36 Stevens, *Northwest Fur Trade*, 92-93. Retention of the posts was a policy Haldimand had been encouraging as early as October of 1782, prior to the signing of the preliminary articles of peace; see General Haldimand to Thomas Townshend, Quebec, 25 October 1782, *MPHSC* 10:667-69.

Had the British immediately surrendered the posts, it would have demonstrated to the Indians, conclusively, that the British were unwilling to live up to their promises of support.[38] Great Britain could not afford to lose Indian assistance. What was at stake for Britain was the American interior. It is a side of the diplomatic equation that is not stressed enough. The heartland of North America, with its potential wealth, never ceased to be important to the British ministers in London, the peace treaty not withstanding. The rebellious republic across the Atlantic had gained its independence; it did not follow that Whitehall would allow the United States to establish itself in the country west of the Ohio River. The British policy that evolved—one of concern but non-commitment— served British interests very well: while the British would not openly support the Indians, they armed and supplied them and held them with promises of all necessary assistance. This policy of non-commitment protected the British fur trade in the region; it kept the United States at bay; it kept the western Indians in alliance; it kept open British options in the interior; and, though costly to arm and supply the Indians, it met British objectives without the commitment of large armies to the region. Essentially it was the same policy that had always worked

37 Lord Sydney to Frederick Haldimand, 8 April 1784, in Johnston, *Six Nations*, 45-46.

38 The Indians were assured of British support against American aggression. In the spring of 1783, for example, De Peyster wrote McKee, instructing him to inform the Indians "should the Enemy in the mean time enter their Country, we will give them every assistance in our power"; see Major De Peyster to Captain McKee, 20 April 1783, *MPHSC* 11:359-60.

once the importance and the power of the Indians were acknowledged: protect the trade and preserve the alliance.

George Washington, like his British counterpart in Canada, General Haldimand, was also aware of the potentially explosive situation in the Ohio Country. After touring the west in 1784 he commented in a letter to Jacob Read on the rage for land speculation that he saw there and on the growing discontent whites were causing the Indians:

> In defiance of the proclamation of Congress, they roam over the Country on the Indian side of the Ohio, mark out lands, Survey, and even settle them. This gives great discontent to the Indians, and will unless measures are taken in time to prevent it, inevitably produce a war with the western Tribes.[39]

Carried by the success of the Revolution, the terms of the Paris peace treaty, and the promise of wealth in western lands, great numbers of Americans crossed the mountains to stake claims in the Ohio Valley, overriding the concerns of the Indians. The Indians were left with two responses: to retreat or to resist. Many followed the older response of retreating to the west and crossed the Mississippi, into territory claimed by Spain. Some traveled to the northwest, beyond Lake Superior, opening new fields to the fur trade. Many others chose to resist, strengthening the Confederacy determined to contain the American ad-

39 George Washington to Jacob Read, 3 November 1784, quoted in Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 34-35.

vance. Indian strength surprised American officials. The nations that counseled together at Sandusky in 1783 included: the Six Nations, the Mingo, the Wyandot, the Delaware, the Shawnee, the Potawatomi, the Ottawa, the Ojibwe, the Creek, and the Cherokee. British officials also surprised the Americans by recognizing the Fort Stanwix line as the proper boundary between Indians and whites and by asserting that the Indians had not surrendered "right of soil" in the territory Britain had ceded to the United States at the end of the Revolution. The King could not give away what he did not have the right to give, so the Indians were told. This directly contradicted the position of the United States. United States officials asserted that the Indians had lost by conquest any rights to the Ohio Country. How the United States chose to deal with Native Americans in the ceded territory, therefore, was strictly an internal affair, a domestic matter. The United States was not dealing with foreign nations but with domestic wards.[40]

Americans proceeded under these assumptions until forced to acknowledge that they did not have control over the western Indians and that they needed a different approach to the problem.[41] That change of policy did not come until later in the decade. Prior to that change, officials proceeded on the assumption that terms could be dictated to the Indians. Between 1784 and 1789 the United States constructed a string of forts along the Ohio River boundary and

40 For a discussion of British support of Indian rights see Jones, *License*, 141-43.

41 Jones, *License*, 147-48.

dictated several treaties to the Indians.[42] Besides the official military posts constructed by the army, settlers built numerous stockaded forts or stations in the Ohio Valley. For Native observers, more ominous, perhaps, than the presence of the military north of the Ohio were the permanent settlements being established north of the river. On April 7, 1788 the galleys Mayflower and Adelphius with an advance party of 48 settlers arrived at the mouth of the Muskingum across from Fort Harmar to begin the settlement of Marietta (named after Marie Antoinette). On November 18, 1788 construction of Columbia, the first settlement in the Miami Purchase was begun, near the mouth of the Little Miami River. Oak clapboards for the blockhouse that was quickly constructed on the site had been cut beforehand at Limestone (Maysville, Kentucky) and floated across the Ohio.[43] On February 2, 1789, four miles below the mouth of the Great Miami River (on the Indian side of the Ohio), John Cleves Symmes, an agent for the Miami Land Company, established a settlement known both as Symmes City or North Bend.

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42 For a description of the posts see Bemis, *Jay's Treaty*, 3-4. For a general discussion of the period see, Jones, *License*,120-86; Horsman, *Expansion*, 32-65, 84-103; Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 26-50; Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier*, 1-102; and Colin G. Calloway, *Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

43 Richard Scamyhorn and John Steinle, *Stockades in the Wilderness: The Frontier Defenses and Settlements of Southwestern Ohio, 1788-1795* (Dayton: Landfall Press, 1986), 45-52.

At the same time, American commissioners signed several treaties with the western Indians. These treaties were coercive affairs, the Americans acting under the assumption that they were treating with a conquered enemy. As the price of peace, the Americans expected the Indians to cede to them large sections of land. At the second Treaty of Fort Stanwix, signed on October 22, 1784, between the United States and the Six Nations, the Six Nations were forced to cede their questionable claim to the Ohio Country. They were told that the United States must be compensated for the blood and treasure the late war had cost them and that the United States could claim the whole of Iroquois territory by right of conquest, if they chose to do so. In January 1785, at Fort MacIntosh on the Ohio River, where the commissioners met with representatives of the Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, and Ojibwe, the Americans again asserted that the land was theirs by conquest and that the commissioners were there to give not to receive, i.e., to dictate terms. In January 1786, the same procedure took place at Fort Finny at the mouth of the Great Miami River. But the Indians barely attended this conference. They had had enough of American coercive tactics.[44]

If the Indians had had any questions about American attitudes and American designs, they were now laid aside. The position of the Native Confederacy began to harden. Indian raids along the Ohio border increased in number and fe-

44 For the treaties and the coercive way they were managed see Jones, *License*, 150-53, and Horsman, *Expansion*, 19-21.

rocity. The campaign of terror was intended to discourage white settlement, to make travel on the Ohio River a dangerous, often deadly, undertaking, to keep the Americans out of Indian Country.[45]

The truth of the matter was that the United States was not in the position to dictate terms to the Indians. American officials ran into the reality that they were not in control in the west. Americans were facing the same question the French and the British had faced before them—how to acknowledge Indian authority without surrendering sovereignty over the country Indians occupied. The French and the British had gotten around this question by granting the Indians a kind of conditional ownership, right of soil. This would have meant little to the Indians. Whatever European charters claimed, the French had not really challenged Indian sovereignty; and the British had done so really only once, at the close of the Seven Years' War, and then had retreated from this position. The Americans were different; they intended to occupy the country to which they laid claim, and were doing so, and therefore presented the Indians with a challenge in fact, not a challenge in the abstract. This was a threat to Native autonomy and something the Indians could not ignore. The Confederacy chose to

45 Accounts of Indian raids into Kentucky and attacks along the Ohio River are numerous. They can be found throughout the *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* and the *Draper Manuscripts* at the Wisconsin Historical Society. They can also be found in county histories, contemporary newspapers, and personal memoirs and diaries. The author is not aware of any systematic study to date of the guerrilla war that took place along the Ohio.

resist American aggression. The Americans either had to subdue the Confederacy and assert political control over the Ohio Valley, or else they had to recognize Indian authority and independence. In the short run they chose to recognize Indian authority—conditionally. But the half-measures of this policy failed, leading to open warfare in the 1790s.

General Henry Knox, who became Washington's Secretary of War in 1789, was the person responsible for formulating a more pacific Indian policy for the United States.[46] The theory of conquest had caused turmoil. The difficulties the Union faced in the west after the Revolution had become quickly apparent, as well as the weakness of the national government to deal with these difficulties. The national government did not have the power or the resources to impose its policies. Instead, national authorities found themselves in a fight with state and local authorities over the right to regulate Indian affairs. It was as a Virginian that John Hardin led a force of Kentucky militia against the Shawnees in 1786. And it was under the authority of Virginia, not the national government, that George Rogers Clark in August 1786 led 1,200 militia up the Wabash to Vincennes and that Benjamin Logan in September attacked the Shawnee towns along the Mad River. Kentuckians were losing faith in the effectiveness of the government in Philadelphia, which seemed unwilling and unable to do any-

46 Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 165-70.

thing about the guerrilla war in which they found themselves entangled. Nor was the government able to secure form the Spanish rights of free navigation on the Mississippi River, on which the fragile western economy depended. The weakness of the national government threatened to undermine the success of the Revolution. The breakup of the new republic, which foreign observers were predicting, seemed inevitable, given the fiscal and political crises Americans were facing in the 1780s.[47] What was at stake for the United States was political unity. Unless the United States could put an end to Indian raids against the western settlements and bring order to the process of colonization, there was a great possibility that the new territories would break away and establish their own independent republics—either that, or else align themselves with the Spanish further west or the British to the north.[48]

General Knox believed that the United States could assuage Indian resentments by treating the Indians more fairly, by acknowledging their right of soil, and by protecting them from white aggression. He assumed that the Indians would feel more congenial toward the United States once they felt they were pro-

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47 The French minister Vergennes feared "that the germs of division now existing will produce much evil before the Republic acquires stability." Comte de Vergennes to Chevalier de la Luzerne, Versailles, 20 December 1782, in *The Emerging Nation: A Documentary History of the Foreign Relations of the United States under the Articles of Confederation, 1780-1789,* Mary A. Giunta, Editor-in-Chief and Project Director (Washington, D.C.: National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 1996), 729-30.

48 Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier,* 43.

tected. He also assumed that once the government in a limited way recognized Indian rights, Indians would assent to United States' control. Part of the solution lay in curbing American aggression on the frontier, and Knox was not opposed to using the army, woefully undermanned as it was, to police and control the Ohio River boundary.[49] In the summer of 1787 Congress authorized the use of federal troops on the Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiers, and Knox was authorized to remove whites unlawfully settled on Indian lands. That same summer Knox ordered Colonel Harmar to Vincennes on the Wabash where Harmar established Fort Knox under the command of Major Hamtramck. But the problem lay in the weakness of the central government and its inability to enforce laws for the general good of the union—a problem American leaders began to address at the Constitutional Convention that same summer. Knox was hampered by the inability of the American government to assert its authority. That gradually changed with the passage of the Northwest Ordinance (which created a form of government for the new Northwest Territory), with the adoption of the Constitution, and with the establishment of a stronger central government under George Washington.

On July 9, 1788, Arthur St. Clair arrived at Marietta on the Ohio as the new governor of the Northwest Territory, and a week later he officially established the territorial government. The seat of government, Marietta, was located

49 Wallace, *Jefferson*, 167.

north of the Ohio River.[50] It was certainly clear that the Americans were not going to honor an Ohio River boundary. Even so, the last thing the Americans wanted was an Indian war. The economy was extremely weak, as was the army, with its 840 officers and men in service, most stationed along the northwestern frontier. The idea of a standing army ran contrary to the idea of a republican citizen army. To deal with the problems the United States faced, as historian Paul Prucha stated, "this puny sword of the Republic was hardly sufficient."[51] Knox concluded that it would require 2,500 soldiers and $200,000 to crush the western Indians. It seemed more sensible to try and conciliate them.[52] The poorly attended treaty held at Fort Harmar in January 1789 reflected the new American view.[53] The Americans recognized Indian ownership of land and recognized that land had to be purchased from the Indians. But the treaty in reality was just as coercive as those that had proceeded it. The intention was to obtain even more lands in the northwest from the Indians, and the Native position, an Ohio River boundary, was not taken seriously. The United States wanted peace without real concessions. Knox's policies failed for two reasons: first, the federal government could not control violence along the Ohio frontier, and, second, the

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50 Knepper, *Ohio*, 70-71.

51 Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783-1846*, (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd., 1969), 15.

52 Ibid., 19-20.

53 Horsman, *Expansion*, 48.

United States government refused to recognize Indian authority north of the Ohio River. The point can be argued that the United States for its own survival had to assert control over the interior and that with the failure of Knox's initiatives the only alternative for the United States was to prepare for war. There was no choice if American administrators could not acknowledge Indian rights. In the end Washington chose to follow the same course he had against the Iroquois. He chose to subdue the Confederacy.

# 6. Conclusion: Loss of the Ohio Country

Once Washington and Knox had reached the decision to use the army in the Ohio Country, they had to justify their actions. The language they used to describe the situation along the Ohio portrayed the Indians as outlaws and the frontier whites as innocent victims of Indian malevolence. It presented the government of the United States as victim also, wanting a negotiated peace, yet left with no alternative but to strike back at an enemy who would or could not see reason. The reasons for taking the war north of the Ohio River were not the sensational excuses employed by government leaders. The reason for going to war was less about Indian atrocities and more about extinguishing Indian authority, destroying material culture in the Ohio Country. Material culture is what Elaine Scarry refers to as self-extension. Ultimately it was Scarry's third objective of war—destroying consciousness, political beliefs, self-definitions—that the United States government sought when they sought to "extirpate" the Indians. Such language was being used to cover less than honorable intentions. The word *extirpate* historically has several related meanings. It means to pull or pluck up by the roots, to weed—a gardening term.[1] It also means to root out, exterminate, or totally destroy a class, sect or nation. A third definition, "to root out, eradicate (an immaterial thing, e.g. heresy, vice, etc.)" corresponds to

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1 Native Americans in a sense were to be weeded from the republican garden.

Scarry's third objective of war.[2] Henry Knox, who often used this term, used it to cover over his own misgivings about the policy of the United States, which he in large part had shaped. Using the army to destroy the Indians ran counter to the idealism Jefferson had expressed in the Northwest Ordinance:

> "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.*"[3]

It also ran counter to Knox's own sensibilities:

> How different would be the sensation of a philosophic mind to reflect, that, instead of exterminating a part of the human race by our modes of population, we had persevered, through all difficulties, and at last had imparted our knowledge of cultivation and the arts to the aboriginals of the country, by which the source of future life and happiness had been preserved and extended. But it has been conceived to be impracticable to civilize the Indians of North America. This opinion is probably more convenient than just.[4]

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2 The definitions are taken from *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically*, vol. 1 (Glasgow: Oxford University Press,1971), 939; Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 114.

3 The author of the thesis italicized *"unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress."* The Northwest Ordinance is quoted in Wallace, *Jefferson*, 163.

4 Knox is quoted in Wallace, *Jefferson*, 168.

Republican idealism had run up against the realpolitik of the need to subdue the Indians and to destroy Native autonomy in the region. The way past this moral dilemma, was not to recognize the justice of Indian complaints and the legitimacy of the Native desire to remain politically autonomous, but rather to present war as "just and lawful" and to place the Indians outside the law ("banditti"). Not only was it necessary to place Indians outside the law, but it was also necessary to demonize them, to place them outside *civilization,* to make them the embodiment of pure evil.[5] Personifying the Indians as uncivilized and evil allowed Americans to present to themselves their own aggression in a palatable form. The enemy could be blamed for all suffering; there was no need to feel conscience-stricken; and there was less need for American leaders to explain their actions. With the cause perceived as just and moral, it made it easier for American authorities to convince a reluctant populace of the need to go to war, to kill and be killed. Americans leaders succeeded in their efforts to "extirpate" Native Americans from the Ohio Country, but they did so at a great cost to the new republic, not only in blood and treasure, but also in principle, in symbolic capital.

In doing so, American officials also risked political failure. There are detailed accounts of the three major battles fought between the United States and

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5 For a discussion of the purposes served by the "myth of pure evil" see Roy F. Baumeister, *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1999), 84-91.

the Indians in Wiley Sword's *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795* and also in John Sugden's *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees.*[6] Two Federal armies were defeated (one actually destroyed) before General Anthony Wayne on August 20, 1794 at Fallen Timbers provided American leaders with the victory they sought. The defeat of Colonel Josiah Harmar's army occurred in late October 1790. The purpose of his failed expedition was to destroy the Indian towns at the headwaters of the Maumee River. The destruction of Arthur St. Clair's army took place a year later. St. Clair's objective was similar to that of Harmar: to establish a fort at the headwaters, which would control Indian movements along the strategic Wabash and Maumee river systems. But on the morning of November 4, 1791, an Indian force of a thousand men led by Blue Jacket, Buckongahelas, and Little Turtle, surprised and routed St. Clair's army. Over 620 American soldiers were either killed or captured in the slaughter that day.

The first American defeat, Harmar's in 1790, raised the optimism and the hope of Native American fighters. The Indians had demonstrated that they could defeat an American army in open battle. Victory in the field gave them confidence. It also won the confidence of their British allies whom the Indians hoped to persuade to commit themselves to an active role in the conflict. Such

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6 Wiley Sword, *Washington's Indian War*; John Sugden, *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

open warfare was more likely to draw in the British. If Americans were sending trained armies into the interior and constructing military outposts, such activities could easily be perceived as threats to British interests as well. Some British officers were certain that the Americans were intent on seizing Detroit.[7] The British also were more likely to enter the fray on the side of the Indians if British military leaders felt that the Americans could be vanquished easily. So Indian victories, like the defeat of Harmar in the fall of 1790, were important.

After their initial victory, the Indians needed to press home the advantage they had gained, while *gichi-mookomaan*, the Long Knife, was still weak. Generally raids against the settlements were not undertaken in winter. But in January 1791, the Indians, led by Simon Girty, struck Dunlap's Station (17 miles north of Cincinnati), and that same month twenty-five Wyandots and Delawares moved down the Muskingum River and attacked and overwhelmed a blockhouse at Marietta.[8] According to General Rufus Putnam who was at Marietta but not in the blockhouse that was stormed, fourteen persons were killed and three captured:

> it is impossable for me to give you a Just Idea of the distress into which this event has trown the inhabitants especially those of the out Settlements—for my own part I have for Sometime ben of the opinon that the Spring would open with a general attack on the frontier in which event I

7 This had been Dorchester's fear since June of 1787, see Stevens, *Northwest Fur Trade*, 165.

8 Sword, *Washington's Indian War* 126-30; Scamyhorn, *Stockades*, 67-71.

> did not expect we Should escape unless Goverment Should timely Send Troops for our protection, which I was in hopes would be the case. But it Seems the enimy are ditermined to take advantage of our defenceless Situation and to wreak their vengence on the Inhabitants before any Succour can be had—[9]

Indians were also putting pressure on British officials to commit themselves to the cause. Blue Jacket wanted the aid of Great Britain's "young men."[10] Developments in North America were presenting an opportunity to the ministers, an opportunity of which they were slow at first to take advantage. This was due in part to the length of time it took to communicate between the frontier in North America and centers of power in London.[11] But gradually, beginning in 1790, a more aggressive policy emerged. If ever there was a time to strike the Americans and restrict their advance it was in the early 1790s. International developments, from a British perspective, seemed to favor this approach. And the leadership in Great Britain was open to the idea of intervention. The "imperious" William Wyndham Grenville, who very much favored the creation of an Indian barrier state, became Home Secretary in 1789.[12] Lord Hawksbury, who

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9 The misspellings and capitalization belong to Putnam's letter, see Rufus Putnam to unknown recipient, Marietta, 6 January 1791, in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, compiled and annotated by Rowena Buell, published by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Ohio (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903), 247-8.

10 Sword, *Washington's Indian War*, 122.

11 Ibid.

headed the Board of Trade, advocated the use of the military against the United States if necessary, to squelch a potential commercial rival.[13] Sir Henry Clinton, former commander in chief during the Revolution, had come into favor again with the King and ministry at this time. Clinton advocated encouraging the Indians, strengthening the posts, reinforcing Niagara and Detroit, even expelling Spain and the United States from the Mississippi Valley.[14] The British ministers understood the potential importance of the American hinterland to the Atlantic trade.[15] They feared that a hostile coalition—such as France, Spain, and the United States—could shut them out of the Mississippi Valley, and they considered the possibility of seizing the Floridas and New Orleans and gaining control that way. The idea of containing the Americans and unifying the Mississippi Valley under British rule had many supporters.[16] The opportunity presented it-

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12 Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier*, 45, 70.

13 Ibid., 60.

14 Ibid., 55-56.

15 By the spring of 1790, due to European shortages, orders were pouring into the United States for American grain, from France, Spain, Portugal, and even Great Britain. British mercantilists, who feared becoming dependent on the United States for the essentials of life, attempted in the 1780s to make Canada the granary of the Empire. The experiment failed. "Unable to build a sound and self-sufficient system upon that wintry, northern province, British statesmen could place ultimate reliance only on the American granary. Only the United States could dependably supply the staff of life for the sugar islands, the Newfoundland and St. Lawrence fisheries, the Maritimes, Canada, and Great Britain herself"; see Ritcheson, "The Anglo-American Community: Trade and Grain," in *Aftermath*, 185-203.

self in 1790 with the Nootka Sound controversy. The British government took issue with Spain's seizure of British merchant ships at Nootka Sound in the Pacific Northwest. At issue was Spain's claim to sole jurisdiction along the Pacific Coast. The controversy threatened to open into a general European war. In case of war, the British would have to cross through United States territory to attack Spanish Louisiana. This potential turn of events had its attractions for the British ministers. Perhaps an Anglo-Spanish war could serve as the catalyst for the British to separate the backcountry from the eastern United States? War never came; Spain capitulated to Britain's demands. Nonetheless, the Nootka controversy made clear that Great Britain had ambitions in the American interior.[17]

The high tide of Native resistance in the 1790s came with the defeat of Arthur St. Clair and his army. Afterwards the Indians were jubilant, and the Confederacy more united than ever.[18] It was rumored that the British had awarded Blue Jacket a commission and the half pay of a brigadier general.[19] The Americans on the other hand were shaken by the St.Clair debacle. "St. Clair had ben defeated, with a great Loss of men, and all his artillery, and Stores of every

16 According to J. Leitch Wright, "The concept of a unified Mississippi Valley, economically and politically dominated by Britain, linked to Canada and refuge for loyalists, reemerged in the latter part of the 1780s"; see Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier*, 47.

17 Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier*, 50-65; William Ray Manning, "The Nootka Sound Controversy," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (1904): 279-478.

18 Sugden, *Blue Jacket*, 128-38.

19 Sugden, *Blue Jacket*, 129.

kind,"Rufus Putman wrote, "the Indians began to believe them Selves invinsible, and they truly had great cause of triumph."[20] Henry Knox personally brought the news of St. Clair's defeat to President Washington. Washington was having dinner when Knox presented him St. Clair's communiqué from the Ohio. Richard Norton Smith gives this colorful description of that moment:

> St. Clair's opening words were enough to ruin anyone's meal: "Yesterday afternoon, the remains of my army got back to this place, and I now have the painful task to give you an account of as warm and as unfortunate an action as almost any that has been fought." In the few minutes available before the host must rejoin his guests, Washington was able to learn the deadly magnitude of St. Clair's rout. Two thirds of an army numbering 1,400 men lay dead or wounded, among them 35 commissioned officers. St. Clair's second in command, General Richard Butler, much admired by the attacking tribes for his valor on the field, fell while trying to organize a last, desperate resistance; the victorious Shawnees cut open his corpse and devoured his heart. St. Clair himself took eight bullets through his clothing; had he worn his customary uniform of rank, he, too, would have presented an irresistible target for the Indians.
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> Washington scanned the dispatch in silence, then returned to dinner and his wife's weekly levee. He would not keep his guests waiting, but neither could he restrain his emotions once the drawing room formalities were over. As Lear described it more than twenty years later, the president gave full vent to his anger, empurpling the air with oaths. Had not St. Clair brazenly disregarded Knox's instructions and Washington's explicit warning to heed the lessons of Braddock's rout? "Beware of a sur-

20 Putnam, *Memoirs*, 116.

> prise," Washington had drilled into him. "You know how the Indians fight." St. Clair had engaged in butchery, not battle. As far as the president was concerned, the white-haired veteran of Trenton and Brandywine was a murderer whose callousness was matched only by his stupidity.[21]

Washington, after he had recovered from the news, grew as determined as ever to subdue the western nations. Never would he compromise the western boundary. In March 1792 Congress authorized the creation of a standing army of 5,000 men.[22] The following April Washington presented Anthony Wayne a commission as major general and assigned him the task of subduing the Confederacy.[23]

Britain's reaction to the defeat of St. Clair was to fully encourage the Indians, to press the United States for cessions to the Indians (a barrier state), and to watch and to counter the Americans in the backcountry. The British were moving closer to open support for the Indians and war against the United States. In response to Anthony Wayne's advance from Fort Washington on the Ohio River, the British rebuilt and regarrisoned Fort Miamis on the Maumee River, in American territory. 1793 was a propitious time for Great Britain to openly support the Confederacy and to check the Americans. Revolutionary France, engaged in her

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21 Richard Norton Smith, *Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 124.

22 Smith, *Patriarch*, 125.

23 Sword, *Washington's Indian War*, 205-7.

own troubles, would not be able to assist the United States. And after Great Britain and Spain had joined together in 1793 to declare war on France, the English had little to worry about from the Spanish. War with the United States seemed certain, particularly when Great Britain began to seize neutral Americans ships in the Caribbean that were loaded with foodstuffs for France.[24] Sensing the moment, Lord Dorchester, the Governor General of Canada, made an inflammatory address that he circulated among the western Indians, urging the Confederacy to join with the British in breaking up the American settlements and establishing a new boundary line. Dorchester stated that "From the manner in which the people of the States push on, and act, and talk on this side, and from what I learn of their conduct toward the sea, I shall not be surprised if we are at war with them in the course of the present year."[25] His speech alarmed leaders in the United States.[26] It is little wonder that the Indians expected George III to "reach out his long sword against America once more."[27]

Lord Dorchester's speech was premature. Nor was it officially sanctioned. Great Britain did not go to war with the United States. The London min-

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24 Bemis, *Jay's Treaty*, 210-17.

25 Sword, *Washington's Indian War*, 258.

26 Ibid., 239-40; Wright, *Britain and the American Frontier*, 88.

27 Ibid., 83; Wright has taken this quote from a letter written in the south; see Price to Leslie Panton, New Seneca, 24 July 1793, in Duvon C.Corbitt, ed., "Papers Relating to the Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1784-1800," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 23 (1939), 387. It shows that the notion of British intervention had spread widely throughout North America.

isters had second thoughts about creating another enemy while they were at war with France, especially when the Federalist government under Washington was so cool to the French and French extremism. So once again Great Britain abandoned the Indian allies. The Indians were left on their own to face Wayne's advancing legion. At Fallen Timbers Wayne's forces charged and scattered the Indians. The soldiers and cavalry were well trained; they pursued and killed the Indians as they came upon them. The fleeing warriors retreated down the Maumee towards Fort Miamis, toward the protection of the British. But when the Indians arrived there the British commander, so not to be drawn into an engagement with the Americans, kept the gates of the fort closed to them. More than a battle had been lost. It was the end of a forty year struggle. Native Americans had been unable to absorb the Anglo-Americans. Fort Miamis fittingly symbolized post-Revolutionary Indian-white relations. Driven off by the Americans and betrayed by the British, Native Americans finally were being forced to give up their authority and let go of their world. The third objective of war was in the process of being achieved—eradicating an Indian way of life in the Ohio Valley.

Too often in the past historians have presented Native Americans as subordinates, less important than Europeans in the history of North America. Part of the reason is that there is less evidence to document the lives of Native Americans. But part of the reason also lies in the fact that the Indians were not victori-

ous and they were not writing the histories. North American history was shaped by Indian loss, by the Indian struggle against colonialism. American historians have tried to find a proper place for Indians in the new world drama. And yet little has been written about the meaning of the stand Native Americans made in the Ohio Valley in the post-Revolutionary period, about the important divide in Native power marked by the battle of Fallen Timbers. The current emphasis on mediation—on "go betweens" and "the middle ground"—tends to soften the reality of the Indian-White encounter in North America. Accommodationists would make that encounter our shared history, mutually comprehensible. But few non-Indian historians think of the loss at Fallen Timbers as *our* loss. Indigenous resistance to colonialism in North America followed a pattern that has repeated itself throughout the world. David Maybury-Lewis, for example, has drawn parallels between the westward expansion of the United States and the "Conquest of the Desert" in Argentina (1789–1880). General Roca rationalized the annihilation of the Indians on the Pampas the same way that military leaders in the United States rationalized "extirpating" the Indians in the Ohio Valley. As Maybury-Lewis states: "The killing of indigenous people is usually resorted to when outsiders wish to seize the lands and resources they control or when the indigenous populations are simply considered to be in the way of national destiny . . . ."[28]

28 Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples*, 4.

To fully present the past, historians must also write about loss. The patriotic historian Samuel Flagg Bemis has a chapter in his book on Jay's Treaty entitled "The Neutral Indian Barrier State Project." From Bemis's tone one senses that this "ambitious scheme," an Indian state, seems a bit preposterous to him, although he admits that this "might-have-been" had a tremendous possibility of taking place:

> This ambitious scheme would have cut the very heart out of the future American Middle West. Nowhere would the territory of the United States have reached north of the Ohio River. The plan in its fullest conception included an extension of the buffer state eastward across the newly settled areas of western and northern New York. Had the old Northwest Territory thus been separated and placed under nominal Indian control with actual British tutelage it would have been only a few years—unless the process was blocked by war—until tutelage over a vanishing race would have been replaced by an undisguised protectorate. White settlement then would have spread westward under the British flag. Chicago would have arisen the metropolis of a British state in the upper Mississippi Valley. . . . The results of the American Revolution would have been brought within bounds. Such is one of the might-have-beens of history which threatened to be a tremendous reality.[29]

Bemis, of course, assumes that the Indians were weak, dependent, and vanishing, which is the historiographical problem central to this thesis. The truth is that the idea of an Indian state came very close to succeeding and probably

29 Bemis, *Jay's Treaty*, 147-82.

would have been established if France and England had not been at war on the continent. Native North Americans have been consistently presented as weak, dependent, and doomed to extinction, unlike non-Native Americans. In reality they were none of these things. They held tremendous authority in the interior at one time. For centuries Europeans adjusted themselves to this reality, a reality into which many of the French in the interior and their offspring were absorbed. After the defeat of New France, Native Americans struggled for forty years to retain political control of the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes region, to hold on to the lands they inhabited and the resources those lands provided. It took all out war in the Ohio Country for the United States to finally wrest that authority from the Indians. The decisions and actions of the principals involved in that forty year struggle—Great Britain, the United States, the Indian Confederacy—are better understood in light of Indian independence and the power Indians possessed.

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## *Abbreviations:*

*ASPIA* *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*

*DRCHSNY* *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York*

*MPHSC* *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections* [title varies]

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