

Crossing the River: Attitudes of Invasion in the Revolutionary Ohio Country

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Abstract

In recent decades, ethnohistorians have successfully shifted historical discussions of North American colonialism from a tale of White “pioneering” to one focused on Indigenous Peoples’s experiences of, and responses to, imperial invasions. Too often, however, scholars have characterized the colonial impulse as a simple and singular phenomenon, one static across time and space. The case of the American invasion of the Ohio Country during the second half of the eighteenth century, however, demonstrates that the timing, nature, and pace of colonization depended upon two critical variables: perceptions and propaganda. Many Whites who entered Ohio as squatters, soldiers, speculators, or traders imported an irrational, nearly paranoid fear of the Ohio Indians, and Native Americans in general. At the same time, many Whites who ventured westward did so because they imagined the Ohio Country as an Eden that promised huge profits and easy living—a vision of paradise that informed the popular imagination through rumor, exaggeration, and advertisements. These twin impulses worked in synergy to fuel a superheated atmosphere of extreme covetousness and virulent Indian-hating in the Revolutionary Old Northwest which undermined attempts at cross-cultural compromise and drew Shawnee, Delaware, Ottawa, Wyandot, Miami, Mingo, and other Native Ohioans into a homeland war of attrition against not only White invaders, but also a particularly pernicious strain of colonialism.

On a June day in 1775 that began with a thick fog blanketing the Ohio River Valley, Nicholas Cresswell and his hastily assembled, ragtag crew of western adventurers suddenly thought their worst nightmares were about to come true. On an extensive tour of eastern North America, Cresswell, a 25-year-old English traveler and diarist, had insisted on seeing the famed Ohio Country for himself even after receiving numerous warnings of an escalating cycle of violence and retaliation between Indians and White settlers along the Ohio and its tributaries. Cresswell probably had heard rumors that the country west of Virginia and Pennsylvania was a wondrous Eden of striking beauty, rich soil, easily navigable waterways, and natural ports. Emboldened by an insatiable curiosity, the young Briton tried to ignore the frequent reports of shootings and scalplings along the river and set out from Pittsburgh toward the Mississippi—into the heart of Indian country—with the only itinerants he could find who were willing to float into danger with no real prospect of profit for their efforts. The expedition made it as far as Harwoodsbury, a young settlement in western Kentucky, where they heard fresh news of Indian attacks down the river. Terrified, the crew refused to humor Cresswell any further and insisted on turning around. News of renewed violence, Cresswell lamented, “has struck such a panic that I cannot get anyone to go down the Ohio with me on any account.” He was “much provoked” by his “disappointment,” and vowed “to return by the first opportunity.”¹

Although the conflict that prevented Cresswell from reaching the Mississippi had ostensibly begun the previous year when a group of Virginian “Long Knives” murdered the family of Logan, a Mingo war chief, increasing violence along the Ohio was actually part of a long-smoldering and seemingly intractable war between westering White settlers and the Shawnee, Delaware, Miami, Mingo, Ottawa, Wyandot, and other Indigenous Peoples into whose territory they pressed. Some eager Virginians had already taken the signing of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768—by which the British government “purchased” lands south and east of the Ohio River from the Six Nations who had no real claim to the territory—as a signal that, in spite of the 1763 Proclamation Line designed to prevent colonists from crossing the Appalachians, the western country was essentially open for White settlement. The treaty’s provision for a permanent boundary at the Ohio comforted the Indians little as they encountered increasing numbers of White invaders who simply ignored the authority of Great Britain, the colonies, the Indian nations, and treaties in general. To Native Ohioans, the Ohio River represented a permanent and inviolable boundary protecting their homes, crops, and hunting grounds from their expansive neighbors to the south and east. A growing number of frontier Whites, however, saw the waterway mainly as a highway offering easy access to what they perceived as available lands in a lush, if dangerous, wilderness.²

With the first White Kentucky settlements already established and tensions rising between the American colonies and mother Britain, by the summer of 1775 it seemed certain that the numbers of “Long Knives” crossing the river would only continue to increase. While constant rumors of murders and abductions spread

like wildfire among both Indians and Whites in the Ohio Valley, many among the region's Indigenous Peoples began to feel that the British government was indifferent to the fact that its subjects were violating the agreed-upon boundary, and that many of them simply murdered Indians who got in their way, often without being prosecuted or even questioned. Their families and villages threatened, some young Shawnee and Mingo men along the upper Ohio and Muskingum Rivers responded by raiding White settlements and taking captives. Indian-White relations in the Ohio Valley were particularly tense in the aftermath of the Battle of Point Pleasant of October 1774, during which Shawnee and allied warriors under Cornstalk attacked more than 1,000 assembled Virginia militiamen, but ultimately were forced to retreat.³

As they made their way up the Ohio toward Pittsburgh during the Spring of 1775 after an abortive attempt to reach the Mississippi, Cresswell and his party were keenly aware that their riverine highway bisected a battle zone. At Harwoodsborg, Cresswell quickly assembled a new crew to ascend the river and return to the relative safety of the East. He convinced whomever he could to accompany him to Pittsburgh. Often leaning toward intolerance and vanity, Cresswell was hardly thrilled to be sharing tight quarters with the diverse group of travelers that he managed to attract. This "motley, rascally, and ragged" crew consisted of "two Englishmen, two Irishmen, one Welshman, two Dutchmen, two Virginians, two Marylanders, one Swede, one African Negro, and a Mulatto."⁴ Although Cresswell professed bravery and accused his companions of cowardice, his journal entries show that he felt great anxiety as the party set out against the current. On June 19 he simply recorded, "In great fear of the Indians."⁵ Five days later a crew member went missing and Cresswell quickly presumed that he had been scalped. The crew was preparing to depart when the man returned the next day, hungry, but with his scalp intact. He had been out hunting and had gotten lost in the woods. On June 26 Cresswell repeated, "In fear of the Indians." An event two days later revealed the true depth of his—and his companions'—fears.⁶

This day, as they paddled up the Ohio, the men were at once startled when they saw, about 200 yards ahead, four canoes full of Indians. Then they suddenly noticed that there were six more canoes between them and the other bank so that they were "entirely surrounded." The crew wasted no time, "Everything was prepared for an engagement, all our lumber and a great part of our provisions were hoisted overboard."⁷ Already panicking, the men became frantic when they discovered that, of the 12 guns between them, five were waterlogged and unusable. "Mine happened to be in good order," Cresswell recalled, "and I loaded her with an ounce bullet and seven swan shot."⁸

The men deferred command of their three canoes to Cresswell who quickly tried to formulate a strategy for either escaping or engaging the Indians. Almost immediately, however, the attempt at calm deliberation and organization degenerated into terrified chaos. Tom O'Brien, a traveler in the commander's canoe (who was Irish and Catholic, Cresswell made certain to mention), dropped his gun into the

river and, realizing it was now unfit for use, "laid down in the bottom of the Canoe, begun to tell his beads and prayed and howled in Irish." According to Cresswell's account, Boassier, the other Irishman on board, "followed O'Brien's example. Weeping, praying, said Ave Mary's in abundance, at the same time hugging a little wooden crucifix he pulled from his bosom most heartily."⁹

The three boats drew together and the men "held a short and confused council."¹⁰ Cresswell decided that they should approach the cluster of six canoes in which they counted 23 Indians, attack, and then escape either by water or on foot into the woods. While the Indians sat watching the entourage's confused machinations from their boats along the shore, the terrified travelers noticed that these Native Ohioans appeared to be armed, each one holding a rifle. Meanwhile, the two Irishmen, "lay crying in the bottom of the Canoes and refused to stir."¹¹ Not one to miss an opportunity to applaud his own fortitude and humiliate his Irish companions, Cresswell described what happened next, "I set the muzzle of my Gun to O'Brien's head, threatening to blow his brains out if he did not immediately take his paddle. It had the desired effect, he begged for his life, invoked St. Patrick, took his paddle and howled most horribly. Dangerous and desperate as we imagined our situation to be, I could not forbear laughing to see the condition of the poor fellow." At the same time, Boassiers "pretended to be in a convulsion fit." Even after the others repeatedly splashed him with water, the man "refused to stir."¹² As Cresswell's fears mounted, he resolved to kill as many of the Indians as he could. He put another bullet on top of the ammunition he had already loaded into his gun. "I was determined to give some of them their quietus," he later recalled, "I confess I felt very uneasy."¹³

The tense and befuddled travelers slowly approached the Indians' canoes, ready to strike and then flee for their lives. Luckily for all involved, the leading canoe hailed the Native party before any shots were fired. Cresswell's men were greatly relieved to learn that, rather than hostile warriors, they had come upon a friendly hunting party of Delaware men and women led by the congenial Catfish. The rifles they had seen in each Indian's hands proved to be, in reality, paddles. "[O]ur fears," Cresswell astutely surmised, "had converted them into Guns."¹⁴

Catfish told the itinerants that they "had seen our confusion and laughed at us for our fears."¹⁵ After conversing for a while, the nervewracked Cresswell gave the Indians gifts of salt and tobacco "with which they seemed well pleased," and the party then continued on toward their destination, "very merry at the expense of our cowardly companions."¹⁶ Meanwhile, Cresswell sniped, "Boassiers brags what he would have done had his Gun been in order. O'Brien says he was not fit for Death. All of them make some excuse or other to hide their cowardice."¹⁷ Although it is impossible to determine how much of Cresswell's account was exaggerated, it is clear that the young Englishman was hardly immune to the almost paranoid fear of Indians that afflicted many White travelers and settlers in the Revolutionary Ohio Country.

The reactions of Cresswell and his companions upon encountering the Delaware hunting party illustrate one of the key forces which shaped White attitudes

and actions toward the Ohio Indians. This force was fear. Between 1774 and 1795, most Whites who crossed the river into Ohio either as squatters, land speculators, travelers, traders, soldiers, or government officials exhibited in word and deed a common sense of profound fear of the region's Indigenous Peoples, as if they were evil spirits inhabiting a "howling wilderness." Of course, one would expect anyone living in a dangerous and volatile region to experience some degree anxiety and apprehension. A particularly potent and destructive strain of fear gripped many of Ohio's early White inhabitants—a fear fueled by a prevailing ignorance of Native cultures, frequent cross-cultural misunderstandings, and various theories, stories, reports, rumors, and captivity narratives which combined to inform the collective White popular imagination throughout British North America and beyond on the supposed "nature" of Indians.

Nicholas Cresswell's narrative demonstrates that this extreme form of fear translated most often into violence within the Ohio frontier zone, as elsewhere. (The men and women in Catfish's hunting party very nearly received a hail of bullets rather than a greeting.) Collective fear and rumors of violence in fact worked reciprocally, fueling a cycle of killing and retaliation. This led to myriad rumors and suppositions which augmented Whites' indiscriminate fear of all Indians and, eventually, facilitated new acts of violence. This dark synergy of fear and violence lay beneath the competition for land in the Ohio Valley, and ultimately undermined all attempts for peace between Whites and Native Ohioans until the Treaty of Greenville instituted Indian removal in 1795.¹⁸

While much of the violence and misunderstanding between Indians and Whites in the Revolutionary Ohio Country was caused by fear, there were of course mitigating forces that attracted Whites across the river before 1795, and enticed many to spend the rest of their lives there. Would-be settlers imagined picturesque lands and plots of rich soil, exotic wild vegetables and fruits, and abundant game. Speculators envisioned vast tracts of open lands simply waiting for Whites to purchase and cultivate, fertile river bottoms, easily navigable passages, and natural ports. After the American Revolution, many of the nation's founders looked west to Ohio and saw a possible way to pay off the new republic's debts through land sales. Just as most Whites entering Ohio carried with them an exaggerated and extreme fear of the Ohio Indians, many also held an equally exaggerated and extreme covetousness for Ohio lands based largely upon preconceived notions of its supposedly limitless natural bounty. As with fear, positive exaggerations of Ohio's potential value were fueled by rumor and based on seeds of truth. The Ohio Country indeed was a bountiful and profitable place to live, farm, hunt, and invest. Even after crossing the river to find that Ohio was not exactly Eden, many accounts written by early White settlers, travelers, and preachers reflect the uncritical exuberance that had lured them westward in the first place.¹⁹

The White squatters, soldiers, travelers, speculators, traders, and government officials who in ever-increasing numbers streamed into the Ohio Country during the 1770s, 1780s, and early 1790s brought with them unrealistic and exaggerated fears as well as unrealistic and exaggerated expectations of profit and success.

These two impulses combined to undermine the potential for mutual understanding and cooperation between Indians and Whites, helped to perpetuate cycles of frontier violence, and fostered in White settlers a potent strain of what later would be called Manifest Destiny. Most believed that the Ohio Country could not be shared by Whites and Indians, that the presence of Indians would ultimately prevent White Ohioans from achieving true security and realizing their idealized visions of Ohio as an earthly paradise, and that Indian removal from Ohio and White dominance of the region was not only desirable, but inevitable.

One need not delve far into the diaries, journals, manuscripts, and letters written by Whites who crossed the river into Ohio to find unfavorable views of the Ohio Indians, and Native Americans in general. As had been the case in earlier frontier zones to the east, Whites in charge of negotiating treaties with Indians in council often went into peace talks with the assumption that Indians in general were duplicitous, untrustworthy, and “naturally” violent and vengeful. On the eve of talks with Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, and Sac representatives that would result in the Treaty of Fort Harmar of 1789, Major Ebenezer Denny, General Josiah Harmar’s favored deputy, predicted that “One-half [of the Indians] will come in, sign articles and receive presents, while the others are killing, scalping and doing every possible damage they can.”²⁰ Harmar himself later commented to a subordinate, “The savages may make the greatest professions of friendship, and be deceitful at last; therefore, never be off your guard with them.”²¹ Even more bluntly, the general explained to a friend that, in his view, “The savages . . . will continue their carnages and depredations until government raise a proper force to sweep them off the face of the earth.”²² Later that year Harmar was given the chance to do just that, commanding a force of 320 regulars and 1,100 Kentucky militia against Miami, Shawnee, and Delaware towns on the Maumee River. His army burned the main Maumee settlements but was ultimately surprised in a trap designed by Miami war chief Little Turtle. Harmar’s army suffered more than 250 casualties, and he was forced to retreat.²³

Other White visitors in the Ohio Country expressed shock and discomfort upon seeing Indians with painted faces, or upon witnessing ceremonial dances. When groups of Seneca, Delaware, and Wyandot arrived for treaty talks at Fort McIntosh in 1785, they appeared to Ebenezer Denny “a very motley crew—an ugly set of devils all.”²⁴ While visiting the Delaware town of Coshocton in 1775, Nicholas Cresswell’s Indian lover persuaded him to participate in a dance. Even though Cresswell was dressed and painted, and “danced round with little order” along with his Delaware hosts, he was nevertheless taken aback and frightened by the experience. Once the fire was kindled, the dancers, he observed, began “whooping and hallooing in a most frightful manner.”²⁵

Regarding the dancing itself, Cresswell wrote, “This is the most violent exercise to the adepts in the art I ever saw. No regular figure, but violent distortion of features, writhing and twisting the body in the most uncouth and antic postures imaginable.”²⁶ He observed that the men tied deer hoofs around their ankles for

percussion, and shook hollow gourds to the drum beat. The women rattled bells and thimbles. "The jingling of these Bells and Thimbles," Cresswell found, "the rattling of the Deer's hoofs and gourds, beating of the drum and kettle, with the horrid yells of the Indians, render it the most unharmonious concert, that human idea can possibly conceive."²⁷ He was particularly stunned to see a "conjurer," who was "dressed in a Coat of Bearskin with a Visor mask made of wood, frightful enough to scare the Devil."²⁸

Indeed, for some the sights and sounds of Ohio Indian dances seemed nothing short of Satanic. On a visit to Marietta shortly after its founding, New England merchant and Ohio Company representative Colonel John May met the Delaware chief Captain Pipe and several other Delaware who were dressed and painted in preparation for a dance that evening. To May, the Indians seemed to be "dressed and acting like the offspring of Satan."²⁹ That night, lodging in a cabin near the Delaware's camp, May complained that he "got little rest" because "The Indians made one of their hellish pow-wows, which lasted till the hour of rising."³⁰

Beginning with the opinion that Indians were by nature untrustworthy, unreliable, greedy, violent, irrational, unreasonable, prone to drunkenness, or Satanic, many Whites—including those in charge of formulating and implementing official policy, fighting wars, and negotiating treaties—believed that meaningful cooperation and peaceful coexistence between themselves and Native Peoples was simply impossible. Increasingly throughout the Revolutionary period, White officials and frontier settlers alike expressed the sentiment that due to the Indians's problematic "nature," peace would not come to the Ohio frontier until its Indigenous Peoples were removed or exterminated. Even while negotiating treaties ostensibly designed to establish permanent boundaries between Indian country and the States, American officials often privately (and sometimes publicly) alluded to the impermanence of these measures, and to the inevitability of total White dominance of the region. With the certainty of religious faith, many Whites in the Ohio Country believed that the place would soon be entirely theirs, and viewed solemnly sworn treaties with the Ohio Indians as mere temporary expedients, signed with a wink and a nod. By the mid-1780s when the Ohio and Miami land companies received Congressional land grants to survey and sell tracts north and west of the river, the United States government, as well as many individual founders, were betting on this result.³¹

When Lord Dunmore's War broke out in 1774 between Shawnee and Mingo and the Virginian "Long Knives," it was not yet clear that a war of attrition had begun that would last 20 years and result in an overwhelming flood of White faces into Indian country. But in a letter to the Shawnee designed to pressure them into discontinuing their retaliatory raids on White settlements, Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor John Penn made a prescient prediction. "Brethren," he wrote, "it gives me great concern, and my Heart is grieved to hear of the difference between you and our Brothers, the People of Virginia. . . . It is a very wicked Thing to kill innocent People, because some of their countrymen have been wicked, and killed

some of you. . . . If you continue to act in this Manner the People of Virginia must do the same Thing by you, and then there will be nothing but War between you. Consider, Brethren, that the People of Virginia are like the Leaves upon the Trees, very numerous, and you are but few, and although you should kill ten of their People for one that they kill of yours, they will at last wear you out, and destroy you.”³²

Penn’s letter was remarkable not only because the Lieutenant Governor ascertained so early that the sheer numbers of settlers would contribute decisively to the conflict’s ultimate outcome, but also because he placed the responsibility of reinstating and maintaining peace squarely upon the Shawnee, ignoring the fact that encroaching Whites had sparked the war in the first place by squatting on Indian lands and by indiscriminately murdering Indians who had previously been friendly toward Whites.

Even in distant Philadelphia, the new republic’s first Secretary of War, Henry Knox, ascertained from reports filed by General Harmar and land speculator John Cleves Symmes that the conflict between the Ohio Indians and the frontier Virginians was intractable. In a report to Congress in 1787, Knox concluded that “the deep rooted prejudices and malignity of heart, and conduct, reciprocally entertained and practiced on all occasions by the Whites and Savages will ever prevent their being good neighbors.”³³ Interestingly, Knox found the “Long Knives” at least partially culpable for sustaining the cycle of violence, but saw no possible solution except for “Government” to keep both sides “in awe by a strong hand,” an unlikely scenario.³⁴ Knox astutely recognized that in the competition for Ohio Valley lands, retaliatory murders and scalplings by Indians and Whites had fostered a culture of fear and loathing which made escalation only more likely. “The one side,” he observed, “anxiously defend their lands which the other avariciously claim. With minds previously inflamed the slightest offence occasions death—revenge follows which knows no bounds. The flames of a merciless war are thus lighted up which involve the innocent and helpless with the guilty.”³⁵

Prominent military leaders in the Ohio Valley also felt that diplomacy and treaties would only delay the day that they believed inevitably would come, when American soldiers would ultimately dispossess the Ohio Indians and White farms, towns, and cities would transform the landscape. During the late 1780s, Generals Josiah Harmar and Arthur St. Clair (first Governor of the Northwest Territory), both ambitious men, each hoped to command the force that would finally “sweep [the Indians] off the face of the earth.”³⁶ Harmar was particularly eager to march against the cluster of Miami, Delaware, and Shawnee towns on the upper Wabash, the military and diplomatic headquarters of the tenuous Ohio Indian confederacy. With biting sarcasm, he wrote in 1788, “I sincerely hope that the new government will shortly be adopted, and that the next treaty . . . may be held with the savages with fifteen hundred or two thousand troops.”³⁷ Harmar held out no hope for diplomacy, as he was convinced that the Indians would continue to attack settlers, treaty or no treaty. Later in the year he warned, “The new government I hope will

soon operate, and expect in the course of the next year we shall not tamely suffer the subjects of the United States to be murdered by these perfidious savages. The savages are, in my opinion, hatching a great deal of mischief."³⁸ Shortly before he was given marching orders in 1790, Harmar wrote tellingly to a friend, "The Indians are exceedingly troublesome. I know of nothing that will cure the disorder, but government raising an army to effectually chastise them—all treaties are in vain."³⁹

St. Clair's recorded statements revealed that what officials told the Ohio Indians in council at times clearly contradicted what they communicated to policymakers in Philadelphia and settlers on the frontier, as well as what they privately believed. On July 13, 1788, St. Clair addressed a multi-ethnic council of Ohio Indians from different villages. He expressed regret that more Indians did not appear for the negotiations, and disappointment that violence continued on the frontier despite the fact that a treaty had been signed at Fort McIntosh three years prior, an agreement that was—from Congress's point of view—designed to curb ongoing raids on settlements. In his speech, St. Clair, in lyrical phrases imitative of Native orators, professed a true desire for peace with the Ohio peoples—a goal that was thwarted, he said, only because too many Indians refused to treat with the United States. "I had indeed hoped to accomplish a great and good work," he announced, "to have planted the Tree of Peace—to have brought all the Nations to have watered its Roots with us and sat together under its shade—to have removed all causes of complaint on both sides, and that having sprung from the same Earth to have infused the same spirit and have but one heart and one mind."⁴⁰

A week before sitting in council and professing the goal of harmonious coexistence with the Ohio Indians, however, St. Clair expressed himself more candidly to Henry Knox. "The Western tribes," he wrote to the Secretary of War, "have been so successful in their depredations on the Ohio River—their settlements are so distant, and their country so difficult, they imagine themselves perfectly safe; and . . . by these incursions they gratify . . . their passions of avarice and revenge."⁴¹ St. Clair offered that even "a hollow peace" with those few Indians likely to appear for talks would be beneficial to the United States, as any such agreement would probably further divide the already shaky Native confederacy. This way, "The confusion that seems to prevail amongst the different tribes, might possibly be improved into a rupture."⁴² After all, St. Clair concluded, there existed little chance of a real or lasting peace when Whites had the collective means, and the will, to dispossess the Indians: "Our settlements are extending themselves so fast on every quarter where they can be extended—Our pretentions (sic) to the country [the Ohio Indians] inhabit has been made known to them in so unequivocal a manner, and the consequences are so certain and so dreadful to them, that there is little probability of there ever being any cordiality between us."⁴³ St. Clair's two statements, one to a group of Indians in council, and one to the Secretary of War, only a week apart, are more than simply inconsistent; they reveal that the Governor engaged in calculated duplicity in order to quiet and calm the Indians while the young United States gathered strength to complete what White settlers and

speculators had already begun—the total removal or destruction of Ohio’s Indigenous Peoples.

White settlers and speculators, however, were not drawn across the Ohio River simply out of the desire to kill or dispossess Indians. They had another powerful reason for crossing the river into the land owned and occupied by those whom they feared and loathed—the land itself. Ohio in the late eighteenth century was indeed a beautiful and bountiful place. The land offered vast forests of valuable timber, fields and bottoms with rich, fertile soils, a plethora of game, fish, fruits, and edible plants, and many wide waterways easily navigable by barge. But, as many settlers and travelers discovered, the Ohio Country was also, at times, harsh and unforgiving. Violent severe storms, the likes of which were exceedingly rare along the East Coast, were (and still are) common in Ohio. Floods, hail, lightning, and tornadoes alarmed those unaccustomed to severe weather, and caused extensive damage to crops and buildings. Cold and snowy winters could also lead to the loss of livestock, difficult hunting and fishing conditions, and in some cases, general famines. In short, the Ohio Country offered attractive benefits for settlers willing to risk Indian attacks, and the potential of good returns for speculators and government leaders willing to invest personal and public capital, but it was no paradise.

Upon first settling in or traveling through the Ohio Country, most saw what they expected to see after hearing exaggerated rumors of Ohio’s supposedly magical bounty—rumors augmented by land company advertisements. They found Ohio to be beautiful and lush, as described. Those who stayed, however, soon realized that, just as in the existing 13 States, Ohio lands would prove rich and hospitable for some, stark or even deadly for others. By the 1780s, however, “Ohio Fever” had begun in earnest and Ohio’s image in the popular imagination mattered more to would-be immigrants than its actual landscape. White Americans’ greed for Ohio lands turned out to be stronger than their fear and loathing of Indians. In fact, the seemingly oppositional impulses of exaggerated fear and extreme covetousness actually worked in synergy and, by the 1780s, undergirded the prevailing attitude among Whites on the Ohio frontier—that White Americans must inherit this paradise, and that the fearsome and unpredictable Indians simply had to go.

Most White travelers in the Ohio Country noticed two things first upon arrival, the rich soil and the dense and seemingly endless woods. One of the earliest White residents in Ohio observed that the area surrounding Pickawillany (near present-day Piqua) was “fine, rich level Land, well timbered with large Walnut, Ash, Sugar Trees, Cherry Trees,” and that it was “well watered with a great Number of Little Streams or Rivulets, and full of beautiful natural Meadows, covered with wild Rye, blue Grass and Clover.” Writing in 1751, this trader concluded that, “it wants Nothing but Cultivation to make it a most delightfull Country.”⁴⁴ One explorer found the lands around the confluence of the Ohio and Great Miami Rivers to be “a little hilly but rich beyond conception.”⁴⁵

A soldier on his way to war under General St. Clair stopped near the Muskingum to observe in his journal that, "We have seen nature dressed in all her pride. . . . The land is timbered with Sugar Maple, Oaks, Button-wood, Beach, Walnut and is very fertile."⁴⁶ Approaching Fort Washington and the infant settlement of Cincinnati, the same soldier noted, "a better tract of land . . . I never saw—and the timber exceeds all I ever saw—White oaks from 4 to 6 feet through and from 50 to 70 or 80 feet high without limbs and hold their bigness better than any I ever saw before."⁴⁷ Timber was so plentiful, in fact, that woodsmen at times felled large trees just for the purpose of harvesting an animal hiding in its branches. An inveterate traveler found himself intoxicated by the view from the Ohio River one February evening in "the most beautiful place I ever saw in my life. . . . [The Ohio] runs nearly in a westerly direction, and the setting sun at the extreme end, reflecting itself in the smooth water, and beautifully tinging the distant trees, rendered it at once one of the most sublime views I ever was witness to. The river looked like a little sea of fire before us; and, by the rapidity and smoothness of its current, seemed to be silently hurrying us on towards it."⁴⁸ Many others felt drawn into the Ohio Country by its beauty, still more by renown of its beauty.

Travelers, soldiers, and early settlers also found abundant game, fish, and wild edibles—at least during the warmer seasons. Along the Ohio River near the future site of the French settlement, Gallipolis, a traveler observed that, "Here buffaloes, bears, turkeys, with all other kinds of wild game are extremely plenty. A good hunter, without much fatigue to himself, could here supply daily one hundred men with meat."⁴⁹ While stationed at Fort Jefferson (present-day Greenville), a soldier recorded that, "Dear & bear are so plenty here it is common for them to run through our camp [and] sometimes knock down tents, men, etc."⁵⁰

Wild turkeys were particularly abundant. A traveler lodging at young Cincinnati found that settlers there relied "a great deal upon deer and turkeys."⁵¹ An early Marietta resident recalled later in life that wild turkeys were so numerous in the fall of 1790 that farmers had to scramble to secure their corn before it was ripe, lest their crops be destroyed by the animals. During that season, he remembered, a man killed 40 turkeys in one day with a rifle.⁵² One day in 1785, a party of Shawnees taught Major Ebenezer Denny their method for killing many turkeys at once. The Indians quietly approached a flock of the birds until surrounded by them. Suddenly, they let out "howlings and frightful screeches," scaring the turkeys up into the trees, at which point the men began firing. "In this manner," Denny happily recorded, "we sported with two flocks, until we had as many as we could conveniently carry home."⁵³

The rivers and streams of the Ohio Country also teemed with large and tasty fish. In a letter to a friend, General Josiah Harmar took a break from lobbying for war against the Indians to relate "the beauties of Fort M'Intosh." Specifically, he meant the great fishing at this outpost near the meeting of the Ohio and Beaver Rivers. "What think you of pike of 25 lbs.; perch of 15 to 20 lbs.; cat-fish of 40 lbs.; bass, pickerel, sturgeon, &c.? You would certainly enjoy yourself."⁵⁴ While

stationed at Fort Hamilton on the Miami River, Captain Daniel Bradley and others constructed a "fish dam" with a funnel and basket, and secured it in the river. The first night, in early September, they caught "about 800 weight of different kinds of fish," and on the second night they nearly doubled that quantity. Bradley reported that "We have more fish than the whole garrison can make use of."⁵⁵

The waterways of Ohio seemed to promise a ready and inexhaustible supply of food, and insurance against starvation—at least until the winter freeze. Supplementing their diets with wild and gardened fruits and vegetables, as well as delicacies previously unknown by Whites, such as maple sugar, many early Ohio settlers were blessed with enough to eat, and a diversity of menu choices. Having just feasted on a surprisingly sumptuous meal of gammon, parsley, "excellent bread," with such luxuries as mustard and vinegar, John May was delighted. "In a word," he concluded, "we live superbly."⁵⁶

Despite the land's apparent abundance, however, in the Ohio Country, superb living could quickly give way to miserable and life-threatening conditions. Easterners and Europeans could not have anticipated the violence and sudden onset of spring and summer storms in the Old Northwest. During June 1775, an English traveler witnessed what he believed to be "The loudest Thunder and heaviest rain I ever saw."⁵⁷ Another British itinerant described an April storm which produced "the most dreadful explosions, and the most vivid flashes I ever experienced in my life." The storm was a kind "of which we can form no idea in the old country."⁵⁸

In May 1772, Moravian missionary David Zeisberger and his flock of Christian Delawares witnessed a violent hailstorm. The wind was so destructive that everyone in the settlement had to abandon their huts in fear of falling trees. Watching from a clearing, they saw "the storm lay low the trees, like someone cutting so much grass."⁵⁹

In a matter of minutes, the violent weather demolished much of the mission's corn crop. Almost exactly two years later, Zeisberger and the residents of Schoenbrunn suffered another "tremendous storm . . . which resembled a hurricane and damaged many houses and uprooted trees." He reported that "The air was full of fire."⁶⁰ Ohio storms could also produce flash floods, as Joseph Barker found out during his second year in Marietta. The water reached a height of six feet in his house after an April downpour in 1790.⁶¹

Western storms were certainly bad, but no natural phenomenon was as horrible to Ohio settlers as a famine. During the spring of 1790, Luke Foster and 200 other residents of Columbia, an Ohio River settlement later absorbed by Cincinnati, nearly starved to death. Terrified of the possibility of Indian ambushes, the hunters of Columbia refused to leave the protection of the town in search of wild meat. Meanwhile, the town's supply of corn, flour, and milk diminished to nearly nothing. Foster estimated that there was, at its worst, less than one pound of pork to be had in the entire village. Many people fled the dwindling settlement, and those who stayed subsisted on beargrass until hunting could resume.⁶²

Some newcomers to the Ohio Country also found that the winter season posed special dangers. Held captive and adopted by a Delaware family, James Smith became separated from a hunting party during the winter of 1757-1758, and nearly starved. With the land coated in a thick, icy layer of snow, Smith found it exceedingly difficult to get close to any game without the crunch made by his footsteps scaring it off.⁶³ Decades later, Francis Baily and his crew also experienced winter's wrath when they were shipwrecked and nearly killed on the Ohio River. The river had recently frozen, trapping their vessel, and then one day it began to thaw. A huge chunk of ice broke free and rammed into the side of the travelers' boat, smashing it to pieces, but miraculously sparing their lives. The men suffered only frostbite, but spent the rest of the winter marooned on the riverbank.⁶⁴

For every Ohio settler or investor whose enthusiasm was derived from seeing the country in person, many more were influenced by second-hand accounts. In 1787, Manasseh Cutler, Director of the Ohio Company, drafted what became one of the most widely read tracts describing the Ohio Country. It was published in French and English and circulated throughout the United States and Europe. In addition to announcing the fiction that treaties with the Indians had rendered Ohio "Ready for Settlement," Cutler exaggerated wildly and invented freely. The tract advertised, for example, that "Both the high and low lands produce vast quantities of natural grapes of various kinds, of which the settlers universally make a sufficiency for their own consumption of rich red wine. It is asserted . . . that age will render this wine preferable to most of the European wines."⁶⁵ With even more blatant fabrication, the Ohio Company publication claimed that, "Cotton is the natural production of this country, and grows in great perfection."⁶⁶

Blessed with a perfect climate, Ohio lands would support nearly any crop imaginable, Cutler predicted, "And it is probable that not many years will elapse, before the whole country above Miami will be brought to that degree of cultivation, which will exhibit all its latent beauties, and justify those descriptions of travelers which have so often made it the garden of the world, the seat of wealth, and the centre of a great empire."⁶⁷

As if his own feats of persuasion were insufficient, Cutler went on to quote St. John de Crèvecoeur, French consul to the United States, who gushed, "I consider . . . the settlement of the country watered by this great river [the Ohio] as one of the greatest enterprises ever presented to man." For poor farmers in search of opportunity, Crèvecoeur had some advice, "If a poor man, who had nothing but his hands, should ask me, 'Where shall I go to establish myself in order to live with the most ease, without the help of horses or oxen?' I would say to him, 'Go to the banks of one of the creeks in the Scioto bottoms; all that you will have to do will be first to obtain permission from the Indians from the neighboring village (this permission is no longer necessary since the treaty with them); second, scratch the surface of the earth and deposit there your wheat, your corn, your potatoes, your beans, your cabbage, your tobacco, etc., and leave the rest to nature. In the meantime amuse yourself with fishing and the chase."⁶⁸

As early as 1789, the Ohio Country was being marketed on both sides of the Atlantic as not only a terrific “poor man’s country,” but as the new nation’s future hub of agriculture, commerce, and “civilization.” Cutler envisioned Ohio as a cultural and political utopia where well-educated citizens would establish a peaceful and homogenous society free of oppressive European institutions, as well as the rowdy, discontented “rabble” which, some felt, plagued older American cities. In the Ohio Country, he forecasted, “there will be one advantage which no other part of the earth can boast, and which probably will never again occur—that, in order to begin *right*, there will be no *wrong* habits to combat, and no inveterate systems to overturn—there is no rubbish to remove, before you can lay the foundation.”⁶⁹ Just as Crèvecoeur’s prose was designed to tempt poor Americans westward with the impossible dream of a life of ease and abundance, Cutler’s pitch was intended to lure wealthy eastern investors across the river with the promise of a brand new, rich, clean, safe, and enlightened world designed by and for like-minded (White) people. Not surprisingly, Ohio’s first non-Indian towns and cities were settled predominantly by well-to-do New England families who expected to find—or create—settlements that conformed to these Utopian ideals.

Manasseh Cutler and the investors who formed the second Ohio Company were by no means the first, or the only, speculators to bet on the future value of lands across the river, and on the government’s ability to secure ownership of Ohio either by treaty or through force. Beginning in 1748, when wealthy Virginians formed the first Ohio Company, White colonists, and later, Americans of all social strata risked their lives and life savings’ in the hope that Cutler’s vision someday would be realized. However, increasingly during and immediately after the American Revolution, the backcountry farmers who were rapidly remaking the Ohio Valley piece by piece, and the moneyed and political interests who were formulating grand plans for the division, resale, development, and governance of the entire region viewed one another with suspicion. Both had legitimate reasons to worry.

Squatters presented a threat to Ohio investors as well as to the federal government simply by claiming the ground they stood on. The act of squatting on lands beyond the Ohio River simultaneously challenged the power of eastern capital in the west, and the legal authority of the federal government. The mere presence of White squatters in the Ohio Country also provoked wars with the Indians that threatened to drain the new government’s budget and thwarted attempts to survey the country, a necessary step before individual tracts could be sold. Moreover, the “Long Knives” were notorious Indian-haters who were likely to continue to indiscriminately murder friendly as well as hostile Indians. Worst of all, founders of the new republic worried that White settlers in Ohio might easily be convinced—or coerced—to ally with another imperial power, and that a British, French, or Spanish Ohio would not only cut off American interests further west, but could threaten the existing States. Squatters, meanwhile, worried with good reason that once the government and speculating companies began surveying and selling tracts in the Ohio Country, they would be kicked off “their” lands, and

their investment of hard work clearing fields and planting crops in a dangerous territory would, in the end, simply benefit rich eastern investors with government connections. The growing mutual suspicion between investors in, and squatters on, Ohio Indian lands added another dimension to the protracted competition for control of the Ohio Country. This competition was grounded in the same twin impulses that attracted Whites across the Ohio River in the first place—boundless covetousness and a sense of fear and suspicion bordering on paranoia.⁷⁰

Even before the American Revolution, British officials expressed concern about the general character of the White “backwoodsmen” who lived between the Allegheny Mountains and the Ohio River, and who seemed to be moving ever westward. After his expedition against Shawnee and Mingo villages in late 1774, Lord Dunmore began to worry more about frontier Whites than about the Ohio Indians. In his official report, Dunmore accurately assessed the general restlessness and mobility of these people. “I have learnt from experience,” he wrote to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State to the American colonies, “that the established Authority of any government in America, and the policy of Government at home, are both insufficient to restrain the Americans; and that they do and will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them.” Dunmore continued, “They acquire no attachment to Place: But wandering about Seems engrafted in their Nature; and it is a weakness incident to it, that they Should for ever imagine the Lands further off, are still better than those upon which they are already Settled.”⁷¹

In addition to their seemingly incessant itinerancy, Dunmore also noticed in Ohio Valley settlers a distinct indifference and, in some, a blatant hostility to imperial authority, laws, and treaties. Dunmore observed that, generally, northwestern frontierspeople “do not conceive that Government has any right to forbid their taking possession of a Vast tract of Country, either uninhabited, or which Serves only as a Shelter to a few Scattered Tribes of Indians. Nor can they be easily brought to entertain any belief of the permanent obligation of Treaties made with those People, whom they consider, as but little removed from the brute Creation.”⁷² Dunmore, however, wrongly concluded from his observations that Whites in the Ohio Valley were likely to “incorporate with the Indians” because they, like the Native Ohioans, were “Hunters . . . and equally ungovernable.”⁷³

Others confirmed Dunmore’s unfavorable impression of Ohio Valley settlers and squatters as generally defensive of their perceived “liberties”—especially when it came to the “right” of preemption—but recognized that westerners’ attitudes were certain to increase and perpetuate conflicts with the Indians, and would not incubate cross-cultural alliances. After presiding over treaty talks at Pittsburgh between Delawares, Shawnees, and Virginians—negotiations intended to establish a lasting peace in the upper Ohio Valley—Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton came to the disturbing conclusion that “any Peace between those people [the Virginians] and any of the savage nations is liable to frequent interruptions from more causes than one.” “The Virginians,” Hamilton wrote in his official report, “are haughty[,] Violent and bloody, the savages have a high opinion of them as Warriors,

but are jealous of their encroachments, and very suspicious of their faith in treaties, the Virginians having furnished them with frequent cause.”⁷⁴ They had captured Shawnee and Delaware chiefs and treated them brutally, Hamilton learned. The Virginians have also, he found, “plundered, burnt and murdered without mercy.”⁷⁵

The enmity between frontier Whites and Ohio Indians only increased during the 1780s and 1790s as fear and apprehension gave way to simple hate. An Englishman touring the upper Ohio Valley during the 1790s recognized that “the most violent prejudices exist on both sides, between the Indians and those white people who live on the frontiers . . . so much so, that I have heard them talk with the same unconcern of killing an Indian, as of killing a deer or a turkey; and with a savage exultation they would mimic him in his dying agonies.” The traveler supposed that “it would be impossible to find a jury in the back parts of America, who would bring any one in guilty of murder, for causing the death of an Indian.”⁷⁶

Interestingly, even as colonial, and later, American leaders bemoaned the fact that squatters were aggressively claiming supposedly “open” lands under the pretext of preemption, many well-to-do easterners and government leaders were doing the same thing, only with more leverage—and more secrecy. In 1767, for example, George Washington began his long career as aristocrat-squatter in the Ohio Valley when he called in a favor from his friend and western resident, William Crawford. Washington asked Crawford to search out a tract of at least 1,500 acres of top-quality land somewhere in the upper Ohio Valley that could be secured quietly, as such a move blatantly violated the 1763 Proclamation Act prohibiting White settlement west of the Appalachians. The Virginia planter saw a clear opportunity to invest in Indian lands by simply taking them. He wrote to Crawford, “It will be easy for you to conceive that ordinary or even middling lands would never answer my purpose or expectation.” “No,” Washington insisted, “a tract to please me must be rich . . . and, if possible, level.”⁷⁷

He asked Crawford to find a way to “secure” such a tract “from the attempts of others,” predicting that “nothing is more certain than that the lands can not remain long ungranted, when once it is known that rights are to be had.”⁷⁸ Washington assured Crawford that “For your trouble and expense you may depend on being repaid.” Crawford immediately set out to accomplish this favor for his wealthy and influential friend.⁷⁹

Washington perceived that the standoff between Indians and Whites on either side of the Ohio afforded a unique opportunity to sneak in and secure contested lands. The Ohio Indians, he noticed, put up enough resistance against westering Whites to prevent a flood of squatters and speculators from entering the region. This was a fleeting circumstance, he felt. The Indians inevitably would be dispossessed, and Whites would come to own the entire Ohio Country one way or another. Thus, he reasoned, “Any person . . . who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good lands, and in some measure marking and distinguishing them for his own, in order to keep others from settling them, will never regain it.”⁸⁰

Although he was able to justify to himself, and to Crawford, maneuvering his wealth and power to essentially squat by proxy on Indian lands, Washington knew that, if publicly known, such land dealings would raise many eyebrows. "I recommend," he wrote, "that you keep this whole matter a secret, or trust it only to those in whom you can confide, and who can assist you in bringing it to bear by their discoveries of land."⁸¹ He warned Crawford that publicity could cause a land rush, or worse, incite the wrath of British governors. "All this may be avoided," Washington suggested, "by a silent management, and the operation carried on by you under the guise of hunting game, which you may, I presume, effectually do, at the same time you are in pursuit of land."⁸² Crawford succeeded in finding a suitable tract for Washington, and built several small cabins to proclaim its new "ownership." Ironically, however, Crawford struggled to keep the tract for his benefactor, as squatters less powerful but more mobile than Washington built their own cabins next to the ones Crawford had erected, and dared Crawford and anyone else to try and remove them.⁸³

For their part the "Long Knives" who squatted on Ohio Valley lands felt that their claims were more justified than those of remote investors, simply because they were physically there making "improvements" on the land, a condition traditionally necessary to validate claims of preemption. In 1785, soldiers under Ensign John Armstrong marched from the Ohio River into lands lying today within Trumbull, Mahoning, and Columbiana Counties, evicting squatters and burning cabins as they went. They were surprised to encounter fierce resistance, as some squatters insisted that no government or army could interfere with their "natural" rights to preemption. At Mingo Bottom, near present-day Steubenville, the regiment placed a man named Ross under arrest after he "declared" that Armstrong's orders "never came from Congress. . . . Neither did he care from whom they came, for he was determined to hold his possession."⁸⁴

Irate, Ross told Armstrong that if his soldiers dared burn his house, "he would build six more in the course of a week."⁸⁵ The squatter sealed his fate when he "cast many reflections on the Honorable, the Congress, the Commissioners and the commanding officer."⁸⁶ Armstrong "conceived him to be a dangerous man," and sent him to stand trial in Wheeling. The soldiers then evicted Ross's many tenants in the town, and ordered them to move "to the eastern side of the Ohio" and to destroy their dwellings within "a few days," or the army would accomplish the task for them.⁸⁷

The United States government's seemingly harsh treatment of Ohio squatters during the late 1770s and 1780s reflected a mounting tension between westerners and the new republic's strategic and economic interests in the region. Many of the founders feared that after the Ohio Indians were subdued or removed, discontented western Whites would soon become pawns in an imperial competition for control of the Ohio Country. Upon concluding an extensive tour of his western properties, having attentively observed the attitudes of White frontier settlers, Washington astutely realized that rather than alienating White Ohioans, it was in the new

republic's interest to win their loyalty. This, he argued in 1784, could best be accomplished by opening trade routes to the western settlements and thereby offering a financial incentive for frontier Whites to remain friendly to the United States, and obedient under its laws. "The Western Settlers—from my own observation," Washington wrote, "stand as it were on a pivot—the touch of a feather would almost incline them any way."⁸⁸ Luckily for the United States, he noted, the Spanish had not yet tried to entice Whites in the Old Northwest to forge economic and political alliances down the Mississippi River to the south and west.⁸⁹

Washington perceived that, with the Spanish on one side and the British on the other, it was crucial that the United States establish control of Ohio and the Old Northwest. He thought that "The Western Inhabitants would do their part towards accomplishing it,—weak as they now are, they would, I am persuaded meet us half way rather than be *driven* into the arms of, or be in any wise dependent upon, foreigners; the consequence of which would be, a separation, or a War."⁹⁰ The way to avoid defections, Washington emphasized, was "easy, and dictated by our clearest interest.—It is to open a wide door, and make a smooth way for the Produce of that Country to pass to our Markets before the trade may get into another channel."⁹¹ Washington correctly predicted that commercial ties would ultimately be the strongest bond binding the west to the east, and would ensure the loyalty of even the most distant settlements well into the nineteenth century.⁹²

Immigrant Ohioans soon realized that they would have to share the frontier region with a multitude of Whites unlike themselves. Poor and middling English and Scots-Irish frontier families from Virginia found themselves intermixed with wealthy New England merchants, French, German, and Dutch immigrants, Moravian missionaries, and itinerants from throughout the northern and mid-Atlantic states who continued the tradition of squatting with the hope of someday securing legal title to "their" properties. Although the Moravians, led by Revs. David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder, established the Ohio settlements of Schoenbrunn, Gnadenhutten, and Lichtenau during the early 1770s, these towns had to be abandoned during the Revolution. The missionaries and their flock of Christian Indians ultimately found refuge in Canada.

The first permanent White settlement in Ohio, founded by New England Ohio Company investors in 1788, was Adelphia, situated at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers. Its name was soon changed to Marietta. Neighboring Belpre was established two years later and became, in effect, Ohio's first suburb. Joseph Barker and other Marietta residents who removed to Belpre left in order to escape the noise and bustle of the larger town but still relied on its markets and port to do their business. Losantville, established in 1788 on the Ohio and Great Miami Rivers, soon changed its name to Cincinnati and quickly found itself competing with Marietta for the distinction of having the busiest port in the Ohio Country west of Pittsburgh. Gallipolis was settled in 1790 by French immigrants who arrived to find that the deeds they had purchased from Colonel William Duer's

Scioto Company were worthless—Duer’s grant request had not been approved by Congress. To make matters worse, the French settlers, most of whom were Parisian doctors, lawyers, and other professionals, farmed so poorly that the town nearly starved during its first two winters. Although most of the original “French 500” left, those who stayed eventually purchased the tract from its legal owners, the Ohio Company. Most White settlers in Ohio, however, fared better than the “French 500,” and remained loyal to the United States because settlers, speculators, and founders shared the twin goals of open commerce and Indian removal.⁹³

By the time of the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794—the last battle in Ohio’s 20-year war—and the signing of the Treaty of Greenville one year later, the synergy of paranoid Indian-hating and utopian-mythologizing of the Ohio Country was beginning to break down. Whites who crossed the Ohio River eventually came to see that the place was like any other part of the United States—enormously profitable for some, disastrous for others, and somewhere in between for most. The old Indian-White dialectic also ceased to define conditions across the river as Native Ohioans began to move further west in order to preserve their lives and to keep their many distinct cultures intact. With the balance of power shifted in favor of Whites, largely due to simple attrition, settlers increasingly saw the Ohio Indians more as obstacles to land ownership and commerce than as terrifying representatives of Satan. White Ohioans still wanted the federal government to remove Indigenous peoples from the land, but for different reasons. For their part, those Indians who signed the Greenville Treaty and ceded the lands that make up most of present-day Ohio did so not because they were “conquered peoples,” but because they were already preparing to move further west, where they hoped to find more peace and autonomy than the Ohio Country afforded. Whites who crossed the river throughout the Revolutionary period also sought a kind of freedom they could not achieve in the east. Unfortunately for all, however, the impulses of fear and avarice had come before the ideal of peace.

Notes

1. Nicholas Cresswell, *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777*, 2nd ed., A.G. Bradley, Ed., (New York: Dial Press, 1928), 82.

2. Henry Jolley, “The Massacre of Chief Logan’s Family: Henry Jolley’s Account, 1774,” in Emily Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier: An Anthology of Early Writings* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 38-40; Logan, “Who Is There to Mourn for Logan?: Chief Logan’s Speech, 1774,” in *ibid.*, 40; For examples of the perceived inevitability of white settlement in and ownership of Ohio Valley lands following the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, see William Trent to John Baynton, December 1, 1768, in Kenneth P. Bailey, Ed., *The Ohio Company Papers, 1753-1817: Being Primarily Papers of the “Suffering Traders” of Pennsylvania* (Arcata, Calif.: Edwards Bros., 1947), 198; Col. William Preston to Lord Dunmore, March 10, 1775, in Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, Eds., *The Revolution on the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908), 5. This thinking continued to spread after the Revolution and was famously voiced in the following wildly optimistic and exaggerated tract: Manassch Cutler, *An Explanation of the*

Map which Delineates that Part of the Federal Lands Comprehended between Pennsylvania West Line, the Rivers Ohio and Sioto, and Lake Erie . . . (Salem, Mass.: Dabney and Cushing, 1787), 1-22. Also see St. John de Crèvecoeur quoted in Cutler, "These Beautiful Shores," in Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier*, 79; John May, "Marietta in Its Infancy: The Journal of Colonel John May, 1788-1789," in *ibid.*, 77.

3. Jolley, "The Massacre," 38-40; Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, Eds., *Documentary History of Dunmore's War, 1774* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905).

4. Cresswell, *Journal*, 87.

5. *Ibid.*, 89.

6. *Ibid.*, 91.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, 92.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, 93.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* 1:562-563.

19. Manasseh Cutler, *Explanation*, 1-22; St. John de Crèvecoeur, "These Beautiful Shores," in Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier*, 79.

20. Ebenezer Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny* (New York: New York Times, 1971), 119.

21. Josiah Harmar to John Jeffers, February 1, 1790, in Denny, *Military Journal*, 246.

22. Harmar to Richard Graham, March 6, 1790, in *ibid.*, 249.

23. Helen Hornbeck Tanner, Ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 72-73.

24. Denny, *Military Journal*, 55.

25. Cresswell, *Journal*, 109.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. May, "Marietta in Its Infancy," 77.

30. *Ibid.*

31. The second Ohio Company headed by Manasseh Cutler and Winthrop Sargent (not to be confused with the failed first Ohio Company which formed in 1748) was organized in Boston in 1786 and received a 1.5 million acre grant from Congress on October 27, 1787. John Cleves Symmes's Miami Company petitioned for, and received, a grant of 2 million acres the same year.

32. John Penn to the Shawnees, August 6, 1774, in Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier*, 41.

33. Henry Knox report to Congress, July 10, 1787, in Clarence Edwin Carter, Ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. 2: *The Territory Northwest of the River Ohio, 1787-1803* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1934), 31.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. Harmar to John Jeffers, February 1, 1790, in Denny, *Military Journal*, 246.

37. Same to Thomas Mifflin, June 9, 1788, in *ibid.*, 228.

38. Same to John Hamtramck, October 13, 1788, in *ibid.*, 232.

39. Same to Joseph Howell, Jr., in *ibid.*, 253.

40. "St. Clair to the Indians in Council," July 13, 1788, in Carter, Ed., *Territorial Papers*, Vol. 2, 128; *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, Ed. Worthington C.

Ford et al., (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1904-1937), 28:424-426.

41. Arthur St. Clair to Henry Knox, July 5, 1788, in Carter, Ed., *Territorial Papers*, Vol. 2, 119.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Christopher Gist, "The First English Journal of the Ohio Country: Christopher Gist's Journals, 1750-1751," in Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier*, 14.

45. Cresswell, *Journal*, 76.

46. Daniel Bradley, *Journal of Capt. Daniel Bradley: An Epic of the Ohio Frontier*, Ed. Frazer E. Wilson (Greenville, Ohio: F. H. Jobs & Son, 1935), 12-13.

47. Ibid., 21-22.

48. Francis Baily, *Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 & 1797*, Ed. Jack D.L. Holmes (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 82.

49. George Croghan, "Croghan's Journal, 1765," in Reuben Gold Thwaites, Ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, Vol. 1 (Cleveland: A. H. Clark Co., 1904), 130-131.

50. Bradley, *Journal*, 25.

51. Baily, *Journal*, 91.

52. Joseph Barker, *Recollections of the First Settlement of Ohio*, Ed. George Jordan Blazier (Marietta, Ohio: Marietta College Press, 1958), 23-24.

53. Denny, *Military Journal*, 66.

54. Harmar to Francis Johnston, June 21, 1785, in Denny, *Military Journal*, 213.

55. Bradley, *Journal*, 52-53.

56. May, "Marietta in Its Infancy," 75; for references to maple sap and its uses, see Baily, *Journal*, 74-75; David Zeisberger, *Schoenbrunn Story: Excerpts from the Diary of the Reverend David Zeisberger, 1772-1777*, trans. August C. Mahr, Ed., Daniel R. Porter, III (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1972), 8-9; Barker, *Recollections*, 18. According to Barker, maple sugar was sometimes the only food keeping some families from starvation during times of scarcity in early Marietta and Belpre.

57. Cresswell, *Journal*, 89.

58. Baily, *Journal*, 126.

59. Zeisberger, *Schoenbrunn Story*, 4.

60. Ibid., 10.

61. Barker, *Recollections*, 21.

62. Luke Foster, "Recollections of an Early Cincinnati Settler: A Letter from Luke Foster, 1789," in Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier*, 81.

63. James Smith, "James Smith's Captivity among the Indians: The Memoirs of James Smith, 1755-1759," in *ibid.*, 25-27.

64. Baily, *Journal*, 59-67.

65. Cutler, *Explanation*, 11.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., 14.

68. Crèvecoeur, "These Beautiful Shores," 79.

69. Cutler, *Explanation*, 20 (emphasis in original).

70. For Washington's interpretation of the problematic nature of White frontier inhabitants in the Ohio Valley, and their potential significance in imperial rivalries, see George Washington, "Summary," in Archer Butler Hulbert, Ed., *Washington and the West: Being George Washington's Diary of September, 1784* (Cleveland: A. H. Clark Co., 1911), 98-103. For Washington's personal experience with squatters on his claimed lands see William Crawford to Washington, May 1, 1772, in C.W. Butterfield, Ed., *The Washington-Crawford Letters* (Cincinnati: R. Clarke & Co., 1877), 26; Crawford to Washington, December 29, 1773, in *ibid.*, 37-38. For White frontiersmen as violent Indian-haters see Baily, *Journal*, 106; Henry Hamilton to Guy Carleton, November 30 or December 4, 1775, in Thwaites and Kellogg, Eds., *Revolution on the Upper Ohio*, 129-130; Jonathan Alder, "Growing Up Indian: The Memoir

of Jonathan Alder, 1786-1805," in Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier*, 84-85; for the conflict between the federal government and land speculators, and White squatters, see House debate on western lands, May 28, 1789, in Thomas Hart Benton, Ed., *Abridgement of the Debates of Congress from 1789 to 1856*, Vol. 1 (New York: D. Appelton & Co., 1857), 99-101; Rufus Putnam to Washington, February 28, 1791, in Carter, Ed., *Territorial Papers* 2:338; Daniel Brodhead to David Shepherd, October 10, 1779, in Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ed., *Frontier Retreat on the Upper Ohio, 1779-1781* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1917), 96-97; Brodhead to Delaware chiefs in council at Coochocking [Coshocton], October 11, 1779, in *ibid.*, 97; Washington to Brodhead, November 21, 1779, in *ibid.*, 114-115; Henry Knox report to Congress, July 10, 1787, in Carter, Ed., *Territorial Papers*, 2:31-35; Report of Committee on Indian Relations, July 26, 1787, in *ibid.*, 56-57; Alexander Hamilton, "The Federalist No. 24," December 19, 1787, in Harold C. Syrett, Ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 421; Thomas Jefferson to David Campbell, March 27, 1792, in Charles T. Cullen, Ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 23 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 346; John Armstrong, "Rousting the Squatters: Ensign Armstrong's Report on Destroying Squatters' Cabins, 1785," in Foster, Ed., *The Ohio Frontier*, 73-74.

71. Lord Dunmore to Lord Dartmouth, official report of his expedition, December 24, 1774, in Thwaites and Kellogg, Eds., *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, 371.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*, 372.

74. Hamilton to Carleton, November 30 or December 4, 1775, in Thwaites and Kellogg, Eds., *Revolution on the Upper Ohio*, 129-130.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Baily, *Journal*, 106.

77. Washington to Crawford, September 21, 1767, in Butterfield, Ed., *The Washington-Crawford Letters*, 1.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*, 2.

80. *Ibid.*, 3.

81. Crawford to Washington, May 1, 1772, in *ibid.*, 26.

82. *Ibid.*

83. Crawford to Washington, December 29, 1773, in *ibid.*, 37-38.

84. Armstrong, "Rousting the Squatters," 72-74.

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*

88. Washington, Summary, 1784, in Hulbert, Ed., *Washington and the West*, 101.

89. *Ibid.*, 98-103.

90. *Ibid.*, 102.

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*

93. Barker, *Recollections*, 39, 50-51, 81.